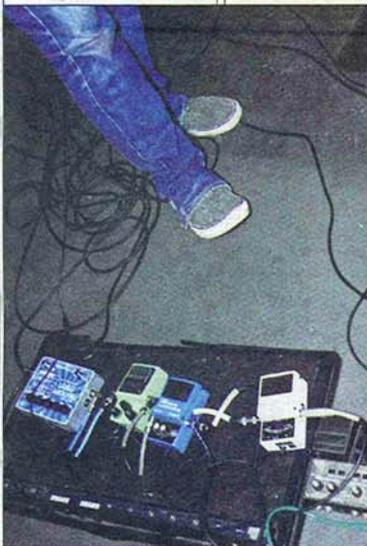


SURF ROCK

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## COLD FUSION

Northeast Florida instrumental quartet **Antarctic** — a little bit Don Caballero, a little bit Tortoise — crushes what seems like nine songs' worth of melodic and time shifts into every tune. With fits and starts, abrupt 180s and unpredictable arrangements, the music of Antarctic is not for the faint of heart, but if you like your indie rock served dense and unapologetically complex, you'll get off on this stuff. Antarctic releases its new CD, with guests Fin Fang Foom, on Saturday, Dec. 26 at Eclipse, 4219 St. Johns Ave., Jacksonville. 387-3582.



## GREAT WHALE

"While other bands slag around the scene for years, half-heartedly spouting about contracts, management deals, and not getting anything done, the guys of **Whaleface** played countless shows, self-financed/pressed a well-received CD/EP in their first year, and had fun doing it." That's the ethic espoused on the Jacksonville melodic punk band's MySpace page. Though the band has an easily sellable sound, they choose to go the DIY route, to good effect. Their new album, "Mind Your Pros and Cons," is full of catchy, radio-friendly punk. Whaleface releases its new CD on Saturday, Dec. 26 at Jack Rabbits, 1528 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville. 398-7496.

Laramie Dean (center) with tour mates Agent Orange.



# California Dreaming

**SURF ROCK DISCIPLE LARAMIE DEAN GOES THE DISTANCE IN PURSUIT OF HIS MUSICAL IDEAL**

**LARAMIE DEAN with AGENT ORANGE**

Tuesday, Dec. 29  
Jack Rabbits, 1528 Hendricks Ave., Jacksonville  
Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door  
398-7496

Laramie Dean had to get to California. In 2004, the surf rock guitarist received an inside tip that Dick Dale had an opening for a guitar tech. For Dean, this was an opportunity to work with the undisputed King of the Surf Guitar, the man whose wild take on "Misirlou" achieved pop cultural prominence as the theme for Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction." Even though Dean had met Dale only briefly and was taken aback by Dale's no-nonsense attitude, he had to give it a shot. Within a week of

hearing about the job opening, Dean, his wife, and his three cats drove from New Hampshire to The Golden State, cutting diagonally across the country.

When Dean and company arrived in California, they met a "crazy guy in a parking lot in the desert" who took them out to Dale's ranch in Twentynine Palms, where Dale was "dressed up in his gladiator outfit." ("Long story," adds Dean.) After Dean completed an interview with Dale's operations manager, the surf-rock virtuoso walked in to tell his visitor, "You better know your shit!" Dean was hired.

While taking a massive journey on such short notice might seem insane, Dean knew that the chance of touring alongside Dale and witnessing his guitar prowess nightly would

prove beneficial to his own playing. "It's funny," he says. "Not a lot of people drive 3,000 miles to meet somebody, but that's what I did."

Twelve years before he got the gig as Dale's guitar tech, the surf rocker was instrumental in Dean's musical evolution. At a time when Dean was interested in "spy" guitar (music in the vein of the "Dr. No" theme), a clerk at a New York record store recommended The Ventures, Link Wray, a Dale compilation and a then-fresh Agent Orange reissue. The guitarist was attracted to the instrumental sound and fell comfortably into the genre, delving into the likes of The Phantom Surfers and The Mummies.

In spite of an appreciation for surf music, he initially had no interest in surf culture. Having grown up in New York, he envisioned the scene as made up of "guys saying 'dude' all the time." Even as his playing gravitated toward surf rock, he had an aversion to the name. "I avoided the 'surf' tag," he says. "I wanted 'instrumental.'"

By the time he moved to New Hampshire in 1995, he had come to terms with the label. An engineer at a studio enjoyed what Dean was doing and referred him to Joe Queer of pop-punk band The Queers. The two struck up a friendship, and it was Joe who secured Dean one of his early gigs.

From there, Dean grew committed to his playing, gradually shifting from being a lead guitarist in a surf band to performing solo. Noting his carefully overdriven guitar tone, he describes his all-instrumental work as having "an old-school sound with the driving rhythm." In addition to sizzling original compositions, he ably rolls through classics of the surf canon: "Pipeline" by The Chantays, "Mr. Moto" by The Bel-Airs, "Penetration" by The Pyramids and "Banzai Washout" by Dale.

To add an extra jolt to his musical persona, Dean throws in some lighthearted theatrics. One of his recent 7" records is designed around '60s-style drag racing ("I have a tape loop that sounds like you're on a race track," he mentions). Tying in with that theme, breaks in his live performances are accompanied by sips of water from a gasoline cap. His show also features smoke and aural snippets from classics like "Plan 9 from Outer Space" and "Creature from the Black Lagoon." Taking inspiration from the antics of '90s surf band Man or Astro-man?, Dean says, "I want to entertain people the way I want to be entertained."

Away from the stage, his personal life is now dedicated to the aesthetics of surf-rock culture — a distant cry from his early opinions. "Surf culture is like sand," says Dean. "It gets in everything!" From driving a 1950 Oldsmobile with an AstroTurf floor and bamboo-covered interior to his sizable collection of old albums, toys, flicks and comic books to his home in Southern California, he and his wife revel in kitsch and nostalgia for a period when surfing ruled American culture.

But the music is what pulled Dean toward the style and what keeps him going. He just completed a new single, and after finishing his extensive run alongside Agent Orange, he'll join ska drummer Korey Kingston in a new band that should hit the road early next year.

Now that Dean's immersed in the surf, is there any turning back? "No, this is it. It's the only thing I can see myself doing," he says with a laugh. "It's the only thing I want to do." □