

# Electric skateboards: The bad

**Austin Gonzalez**  
OPINION EDITOR

Last week, we talked about the benefits of taking advantage of an electric skateboard to go that final mile in your commute. There are several prominent drawbacks.

Eboards are rather new and there are some kinks to be worked out. Reliability is questionable. Online some users report perfect experiences, others have broken motors, belts, batteries, you name it. An eboard is not going to be as reliable as the bike you could of bought for the same money. Miles of high speed abuse and constant vibration caused my board to be put out of commission not once, but twice this summer. My experience with customer service was slow, but ultimately I got a new motor for

free. If your board stops working, they say you can kick push like a normal board. The key word is can; despite what any company tells you, the added resistance from the motor is significant and you will not want to push. For fun in the sun, eboards are perfect. As a daily driver, buyer beware and always make sure you have a plan B to get to work.

Electric skateboards also aren't cheap. Companies like Fiik, Evolve, Evo, Munk Board, Yuneec, and Altered easily charge \$699 to \$1999. If you're willing to take a risk on delivery taking years, crowd funded boards are becoming just as commonplace. At this point, there are five notable electric boards (Bolt, Marbel, Inbound, Stary, and Mellow) that each promise their own unique features starting as low as \$499. The market is growing rapidly. In a few years' time, eboards will go the way of

ebikes with a slew of options and additions for prices that are more reasonable than not, but until then, there will be compromises.

Eboards are not inconspicuous. There is a distinct whine from the outboard motors that people on the street will hear. People are also incredibly quick to pick up on the fact that you are just flying as if by magic. Some of the interactions are great. You'll hear kids scream, "WOW!" and they may even try to catch up to you. Other times being known on the block as the guy with the electric skateboard might not be something you want.

And then there are the Regular Joe skaters. The board will give you cred you've never had and most will argue you don't deserve. There's a distinct difference in the culture around boarding and eboarding. Eboarders want to go 25mph and feel like they're

going downhill, even when they're going uphill. Regular skaters will bemoan that you can't do trick on a 14 lb board and that you're cheating. People's opinions are all over the place. You get curious looks, confused gasps, and even angered glares. If you care terribly concerned with what people on the street think of you, jumping into the nascent and still forming culture of eboarding might not be for you until the public forms a collective opinion.

Most of the opportunities with eboards are growing pains. Try one out yourself and you'll find an easy and exciting way to travel. The promise of fun, fast, cheap, and convenient travel will prove eboards to be a great last mile solution for more than just city dwellers and university students. Just keep in mind, deciding to be an early adopter always has its caveats.

## Goose Island 312 Urban Block Party features a variety of music, Chicago favorites

**Kori Bowns**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Chicago is home to a wide range of neighborhood festivals, each with their own feel and atmosphere. Food and music fans flock to festivals to hear new bands, try local food, and see what Chicago has to offer. This past weekend, Goose Island Beer Company and Chicago's 93.1 WXRT radio station hosted The Goose Island 312 Urban Block Party. The event returned for a fourth year last weekend and featured two days of music, food, and beer.

The Goose Island 312 Urban Block Party took place on the block surrounding Goose Island's Fulton Street brewery on the Near West Side. The event was bordered by Fulton Street to the north, Walnut Street to the south, Wood Street to the east, and Wol-

cott Street to the west, all of which were partially closed off to accommodate the event. The block party got off to a slow start on the evening of Friday, September 18 due to thunderstorms in the city, but the event proceeded when lightning warnings subsided. Saturday's calm late-summer weather provided a more pleasant experience for attendees, allowing them to get the most out of their experience. Both two-day and one-day tickets were available for the event, and, as an attendee who only made it out to the Saturday portion of the event for a \$20 ticket, it was well worth it.

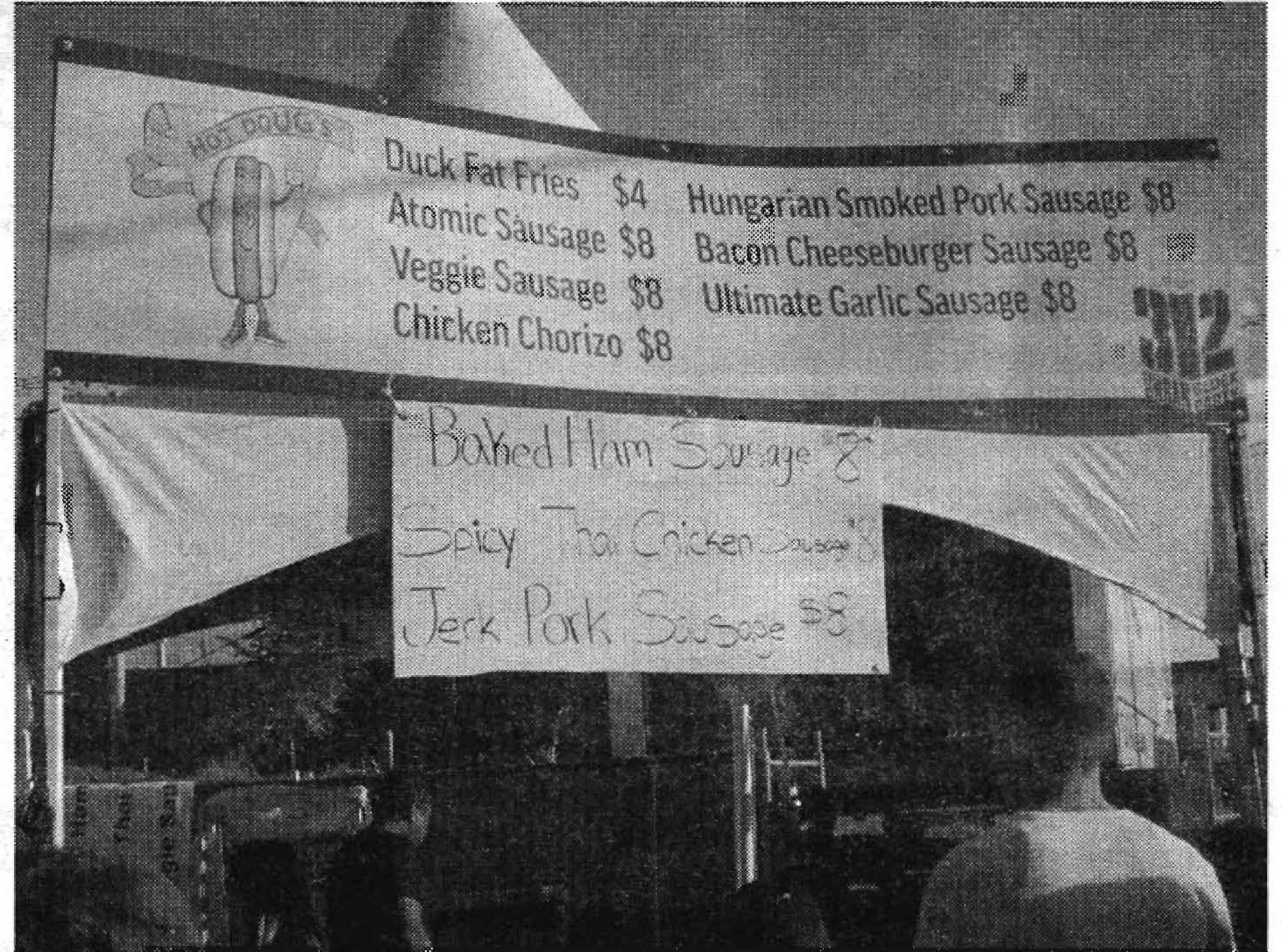
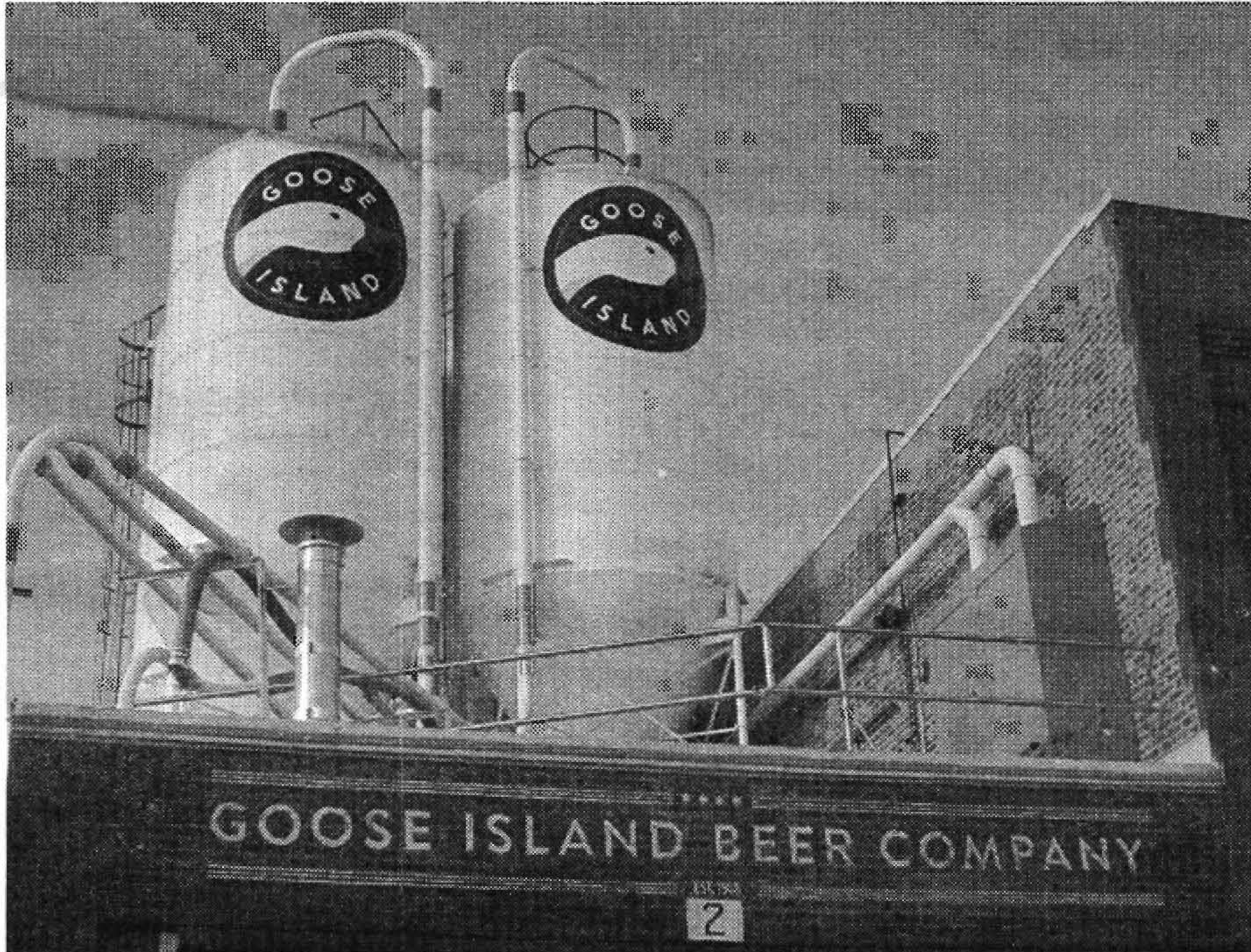
The musical entertainment at the event came from two stages, a large main stage at the end of Fulton Street and a smaller interior local stage for smaller acts. Friday's main stage lineup included Eleventh Dream Day, Calexico, and Tune-Yards; Saturday's main stage acts consisted of Local H, Jukebox the

Ghost, !!!, and Matt and Kim. The local stage featured a variety of DJs as well as performances by The Howl, Pelican, and Sidewalk Chalk.

In addition to live music, food from Chicago-area restaurants was also available at the event. Food at the event came primarily from three vendors. Beat Kitchen from Roscoe Village staffed a booth at the event offering a variety of pizzas, and Goose Island's own restaurant catered some of their popular choices. The most-anticipated food vendor, though, was Chicago cult favorite Hot Doug's, a restaurant that closed in 2014 and has only been doing rare special events since. Those who attended the 312 Block Party got a chance to try unique sausages from Hot Doug's, including their veggie sausage, chicken chorizo, baked ham sausage, spicy Thai chicken sausage, and many others, as well as their legendary duck fat fries.

As Goose Island is a prominent brewery in the city, the event also included the opportunity to try a variety of beers made by the company. In addition to the popular 312 Urban Wheat Ale and 312 Urban Pale Ale, 15 other beers were available on tap as well as two ciders from Virtue Cider Company. All of these were available for \$3 each at the event. In addition, Goose Island also offered a variety of special and rare beers out of their tap room at different times during the event.

Despite being plagued by bad weather for the first day, the Goose Island 312 Urban Block party was a great chance to experience some of the great things that the city has to offer as well as take in the last few weeks of summer with good food, good beer, and great music.



Photos by Kori Bowns

## WIIT 88.9 Reviews:

# 'Made For Pleasure' by The New Mastersounds

**Soren Spicknall**  
WIIT MUSIC DIRECTOR

Let's face it: after more than a decade or two of existence, bands that are known primarily for their jam rock or jazz fusion elements tend to settle somewhat into monotony, at least outside the context of a concert environment. On album, groups like Phish, The Greyboy Allstars, and Widespread Panic have ceased to be compelling, with each released track setting up the basic blueprint for a live jam session rather than standing on its own as a piece of musical art. While the American and English jam scenes no doubt contain some of the most talented and multifaceted musi-

cians of any modern genre, fans are almost exclusively hooked through groups' live shows, not through their relatively lackluster albums. That's why, in today's funk and jazz fusion environment, it's so refreshing to hear an album that is as fleshed-out, as genre-bending, and as genuinely exciting to listen to: "Made For Pleasure," the thirteenth studio album in fourteen years from The New Mastersounds.

On paper, the Leeds, England-based quartet seem like they may be setting themselves up for failure with a project as ambitious as "Made For Pleasure." Recorded in New Orleans (one of the fundamental centers of jam and funk) with a horn section from Northern California and guest vocals from North

Carolina-based soul vocalist Charly Lowry, the album contains songs that could individually be classified as belonging to very different genres, ranging from reggae to hard rock. While many such highly-varied fusion albums tend to fall flat under their own weight (see last year's puzzling Blues Traveler album "Blow Up The Moon," which contained uninspired contributions from a dozen washed up alt-rock bands like Hanson and Bowling For Soup), I'm pleased to report that "Made For Pleasure" is a home run for The New Mastersounds, and for their genre as a whole. While exploring a variety of influences and styles (as any jam band should), The New Mastersounds have simultaneously created compelling, taut tracks that

keep the listener actively involved in the music. As the album's title suggests, this LP doesn't come across as the concerted, international effort that it is. Instead, it feels like a light-spirited meeting of friends who just happen to be incredibly talented at their various instruments. In album form, these songs all stand on their own, and their combined strengths make for an album experience that is at once explorative and cohesive.

While no two songs on "Made For Pleasure" sound alike, they all share the same block party-style energy. This album is perhaps the best of the group's career so far, and is a high water mark for funk, jam rock, and jazz fusion in this decade. 9.3/10