

## Human Powered Aggression

The Battle-of-the-Bands Runner Up Talks to Us About the Local Metal Scene and Putting on a Fun Show



From left, Lenny "Dr. Death" Card, Ray Pessagno, Kevin Klaiber, and Tim Weidman of Human Powered Aggression.

The Rock Your Scene Battle-of-the-Bands Finals that took place on April 6th saw Prelude The Ruin crowned winner (see story on page 7). But a runner up that day was a local band on a metal mission. Human Powered Aggression, or HPA, combines metal, hardcore, and showmanship into an entertaining package everyone can enjoy. Most of the members are a little older than the average BoB participant, and they have some stories to tell. So they told and we listened.

Lead singer Lenny "Dr. Death" Card grew up in Johnson City and started his first metal band when he was only 10. The first concert he ever saw was KISS, and he remembers meeting Gene Simmons who appeared to be "six feet nine inches" in his high-heeled boots.

Lenny played in a variety of bands over the years—80s bands; he even tried out for country bands. One of his longest stints was with a metal-flavored hardcore-punk group called Shattered Society. Lenny's dedication to the music is evident when he tells of the time he was without a vehicle and had to wheel his equipment in a shopping cart from Music City when it was on Main Street by the Court Street Bridge over to The Taz on Binghamton's South Side. "People would be yelling 'Is that guitar for sale?' I'd say, 'No, but I need a ride!'"

Fun is a big part of HPA's approach. They love playing and performing, even if there's no money in it. "We can't count how many free gigs we've played," says lead guitarist Ray Pessagno. The band's get-up-and-have-fun attitude is infectious, and they report a steadily growing audience since they formed in 2010 and performed their first gig at On The Roxx when it was in downtown Binghamton—now the loca-

tion of Merlin's. They also credit the Battle of the Bands gigs at Adriano's with helping since the other competitors tended to be younger and brought out their own fans who might never have seen HPA before. Their shows with local band Recycled Zombies have also been particularly successful. They report getting along great with other bands, promoters, and venues, and had nothing but praise for BoB winners Prelude The Ruin.

HPA plays all originals by this time, no covers anymore, and are working on new songs all the time. Their genre is unmistakable; if you like everything from Black Sabbath to Pantera to Vision Of Disorder, then chances are you'll like HPA. As important as the music is to the band, putting on an entertaining stage show is just as important. "We're out to get you and grab you," Lenny says of their approach to performance. "They say always smile, even if you're f\*\*king up," adds drummer Tim Weidman.

The idea for HPA started between Ray and bass guitarist Kevin Klaiber in the late 90s. They left the local area and lived in Arlington, Texas, for a while and worked on further developing the band. Then they played a gig and another band ended up stealing their drummer. "So that was the end of that band," says Ray. The two eventually came back to the area where they hooked up with Lenny and Tim. Everyone in the band works various jobs to pay the bills, but would leave in a heartbeat if the chance came to work on music full time.

"Till the money makes it to where we can do what we want, what other choice do we have?" says Tim.

"I'll quit everything and just go do music,"

adds Ray. "That's all I want to do."

Tim suggests, "If I could make enough money to buy a frickin' Winnebago and take us all down as far as North Carolina I would set it up that way."

"I want to get down to Texas," offers Ray. "They've got a killer metal scene; the Dallas/Fort Worth area is killer."

But for now they're sticking to the local region. The Greater Binghamton area has a decent metal scene, they say, particularly in Endicott where HPA has played several gigs at the Downtown Quarterback. The band has also played in Syracuse, which has a bigger metal scene, and the annual Nickstock music festival that takes place at Champion Speedway just outside Owego. They have a show coming up on May 11th in Scranton with a band called Skin and Bones and are always looking for new gigs.

The band mourned the passing of Magic City Music Hall, which they considered a great local venue to see bands. And while on the subject of past venues, older readers may be interested to know that Tim's mother was the owner of the Lincoln Hotel on Clinton Street in its heyday. The Lincoln Hotel was a great place for bands and music, though you just had to watch your step lest you get thrown through the window by a gang of Hells Angels. Those were the days....

Human Powered Aggression can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/pages/Human-Powered-Aggression/131378160237926](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Human-Powered-Aggression/131378160237926).

## Jon Jones's Rise Continues Nearly Loses Toe in Match vs Sonnen

Endicott native Jon "Bones" Jones continued his march toward legend status April 27th when he defeated Chael Sonnen in the first round and retained his UFC light-heavyweight title. With the victory Jones ties Tito Ortiz for the most successful light-heavyweight title defenses. But what made this victory all the more epic and the stuff of myth and legend is the fact that Jones accomplished the victory while his big toe was hanging off the side of his foot.

Jones apparently got his toe caught somewhere in the mat during a takedown and wrenched it with such force the toe nearly came off. For the remainder of the match blood and bone projected out of his left big toe, which now pointed right when it should have been pointing straight.

Jones claimed afterward he didn't realize during the match the toe had been injured as badly as it was. So it was fortunate he dispatched Sonnen when he did, as speculation is the cage-side doctor would have stopped the match between rounds.

As it is, Jones is now being widely considered the second greatest MMA fighter in the world, behind only middleweight champ Anderson Silva. There are no plans at present to match Jones against Silva; Jones's next fight will likely be against top light-heavyweight contender Alexander Gustafsson.

## Jones Makes It Official with Jessie Moses

Jon Jones made it official March 31st, Easter Sunday, when he proposed to long-time girlfriend Jessie Moses. Moses, who is the step-daughter of Binghamton mayor Matt Ryan, is the mother of Jones's three children. She reportedly accepted, but no wedding date has been released as yet.