

<http://ereview.org/2010/12/17/the-lawrence-report-goodbye-2010/>

Johnny America

Once known as "the poor man's McSweeney's," the homegrown 'zine called Johnny America is feeling pretty flush lately with a Rocket Grant in its furry little wallet. Two such grants were awarded in Lawrence in 2010, both to publications.

Emily Lawton, Patrick Giroux, and Jonathan Holley released their first, hand-bound edition of *Johnny America* in 2003 (they still stitch each issue by hand), which they bill as "a little magazine of fiction, humor, and other miscellany brought to you by the Moon Rabbit Drinking Club & Benevolence Society."

Co-editor Lawton, according to the introduction of *Johnny America 8*, is "on a field mission to Osaka, Japan, seeking out new, futuristic outfits and unexpected snack food/cocktail combinations." Giroux is a Lawrence-based graphic designer. Co-editor Holley, also a Lawrence resident and an architect by day, reports on the Warholian windfall:

"For little endeavors like ours, having a bankroll — however modest — makes a world of difference in what we're able to do. It seems trivial, but having the funds to order a hundred dollars' worth of paper for issue 9 while we're still sending our eighth issue out to stores and awaiting payment for issue 7 — well, it's an amazing feeling if you've ever cashed in your change jar to buy silkscreen ink."



Johnny America is (from left to right) Emily Lawton, Patrick Giroux, and Jonathan Holley.

Image: photo composite courtesy of Jonathan Holley

He continues: "We used some of our Rocket funds to pay illustrator John Lee for the wonderful drawings he did for our latest, eighth issue. Patrick Giroux and I usually handle all visual aspects of the 'zine ourselves, and it was refreshing to bring someone new into the mix, and to compensate them with actual money instead of high fives and thank-you emails.

"We had such success with John Lee, we plan to court a couple of local 'guest illustrators' for #9 and #10, which we aim to release by summer's end. We're looking into scratch-and-sniff ink additives for our 10th issue. We get excited simply thinking about a collection of short stories with accompanying olfactory stimulation, and hope readers share our interest."



Johnny America logo/site stickers have been spotted in Jerusalem, Berlin, Prague, Pisa, Tokyo, Zurich, Algeria, and all across the USA. Image: courtesy of Johnny America

A selection of *Johnny America* story titles — *Taco Fairy*; *The Battery Lickers*; *Review: Wendy's Baconator*; *Some Beds I've Slept In, Part One*; *What It's Like To Be Poisoned*; and *The Little Bitch* — offer a sense of tone. And *Johnny America* always makes a good impression with heavy, textured stock and meticulously silk-screened covers. The cover of an early issue glowed in the dark.

Seven years on, *Johnny America* now sells around 200 copies per issue; the collective's current goal is 500. You can find it in Sydney and Melbourne in Australia; in Chicago and in New York City; at Atomic Books in Baltimore, Maryland, where John Waters gets his mail; and at Hammerpress and Prospero's Books in Kansas City. Lawrencians can pick up a copy at Love Garden, The Raven, and Wonder Fair.

(Kansas City's *Present Magazine* has a new interview with Jonathan Holley and Patrick Giroux by Jackie Emory here about *Johnny America*.)