Mary's Danish 'Standard' is everything but

by Kimberley McGee

The new and improved "Mary's Danish" will be coming to our sandy city to provide an oasis of good sound and message Oct. 28, at the Huntridge Theatre.

Recently, I had a very kind conversation with Gretchen Saeger, a co-lead singer and contributing song-writer for the band, and she had quite a lot to say about their new rock sound.

"The main reason," said Saeger describing the band's change of style,"was because the band was almost breaking up."

Saeger explained the bands past album's were not a group effort. "Someone would come in and say I wrote a song and we would just all learn it," she said. This led to the band members feeling "alienated" from other songs on the album. "We just couldn't relate."

However, they seem to have gotten it together for the new album American Standard.

"On this album everybody wrote every single song," Saeger said. The band went into a downtown Los Angeles loft and wrote "non-stop. It was much more of a community effort." This new album "indulges" the different tastes of all 6 members.

"In order for a band to survive we have to become more in tune," said Saeger.

With Julie Ritter and Saeger's vox combo emitting deep wailing lyrics or uplifting bop, Standard has the tunes to make a few Top 10's. Their past album's lacked the "conviction and energy" that American Standard reeks of. Mary's Danish which consists of Louis Gutierrez on guitar, David King, guitar, Wag on bass and drummer James Bradley, Jr. poured into their third album, especially the rockin' track "Leave It Alone" which has already received airplay on popular radio. "Killjoy" starts off the album with a fast paced rock-hard sound while "Porcupine" rolls to a crescendo with Saeger and Ritter beautifully harmonizing.

Mary's Danish has appeared at many political and community benefits in their time. "We try to stay involved with the things we believe in," said Saeger.

But to classify them as a political band is a weary label, "To try to find a label for our band is silly. If being a political band is caring about whether you vote," she said, then that's what this band is. "I think it's a positive thing."

The band's lyrics are steeped in politics and issue related material which may classify them as political.

Their influences come from down home in L.A.

"Living in L.A. it's easy to get influenced," said Saeger, " this place is so disgusting."

"There are so many homeless, so much crime," said Saeger, "the bay is completely polluted. Last week a couple of my friends got bacterial poisoning (swimming) in Malibu."

Mary's Danish has evolved and surprised with this latest album and can be seen Wednesday at the Huntridge with special guests (and great new band) Failure and local band Opera Beggars. Tickets are on sale now and can be snatched up at the theater, Benway Bop or the Underground.

