

# As Lupie Duran retires, she celebrates 46 years in the restaurant business

by Carl Fulmer

Lupie Duran has referred to herself as half Mexican and half hippie, but she is much more. She's a home-grown entrepreneur with deep roots in the small business and restaurant community. Her friendships run deep amongst a group of people who have shaped the arts, sports, cultural, and entertainment scenes in Charlotte. After breaking one ankle and fracturing another she decided to retire, turning the Charlotte and Huntersville locations of Lupie's Café over to her daughter Larkin and friend Amanda Dickinson. I interviewed Ms. Lupie at the bar of her legendary café on Monroe Road in a rambling hour-long conversation.

## LEARNING THE TRADE

Lupie was born in 1952 when her Taylorsville native mother was stationed at the Fort Rogers army base in California. Her father was Mexican. That's all she told me about him. When Lupie was 2, her mother was discharged from the service and left Lupie's father behind. Lupie was later told that her family would sit around before she and her mother arrived and talk about what color they thought she was going to be.

After her mother developed multiple sclerosis, Lupie went to live in the Thompson Children's Home or the orphanage off Margaret Wallace Road, where she learned her basic cooking skills. She shows no ill will or bad attitude toward this development. She had her aunt in the area and she loved working in the kitchen.

"My basic, basic [kitchen] training came from the cook at the orphanage, Miss Lilly May White," Lupie said. "When I started she gave me the option of washing dishes or being her assistant. She taught me how to do a job right the first time. She taught me how to delegate."

Lupie got her first real job at the old Carolina Theater downtown when she was 18 years old, making \$1.35 an hour. At the suggestion of her orphanage advisor, she saved up enough money to buy a VW Beetle. When the time came, they didn't want to let her buy the car. She was so close to graduating, she moved out of the orphanage.

"I went and lived with [my aunt and uncle] in their little trailer in the woods. She worked at the Meadowview Steak House [in Matthews] and called one night and said, 'We are in the weeds.' I had no idea what she was talking about. She told me to go to the closet, get a uniform, and come help us. So I did. I made more money in one night helping them tip-wise than I did working at the box office. That was my first restaurant experience."

From there, Lupie worked at the old Chateau on Morehead Street, Proposition 45,

**"My basic, basic [kitchen] training came from the cook at the orphanage,"**



photos by Daniel Coston

Mac Mac's Deli, and Alexander Michael's, to mention a few. In 1972 she got her first real experience running a kitchen at an upscale restaurant at the old Charlottetown Mall.

"I had a friend, Doug Clark, who had a place called Sydney's in the old Charlottetown Mall. Charlotte was definitely not ready for it at the time. He was way before his time. There was a lot of tableside prep. He had two Swiss friends who were chefs that helped train me in soups and sauces. If you get a basic education [in food preparation],

you can learn anything. At first they were not about training a woman and I was young. I told [Doug] that they had an attitude. He had one of the first best stocked bars I had ever seen. He said, 'This is what you do. They drink Stolli's. Have some with them after work.' I drink it to this day. They taught me how to drink. I've never had a hangover. Doug said, 'They're not going to give you all the info. Just watch.' That's anybody that has that attitude. Just watch. You're going to see what they didn't tell you."

## A BONGO IDEA

During this time Lupie made some of her longest friendships, including the late and infamous Don "Bongo" Swan and the man who helped create NODA, Paul McBroom. She gives most of the credit to one man for helping her create Lupie's Café and her choices for early menu specialties.

"It was Paul who got the lease on the original Lupie's building first. He helped me. When we were at Mac Mac's, he always had these bouncy ideas from one to another.

He researched the chilis and he came back [and told me what he had learned]. I said nobody's going to want Cincinnati chili but I was wrong. The Texas and Cincinnati were the two that sold. The vegetables and other things are what I added. I was totally wrong. Chili is something you can make a big pot of. Nobody else had it in Charlotte. A lot of people from up north go for what they grew up on."

There's a history behind the unique floor plan of Lupie's Café on Monroe Road. Originally consisting of just the upper level, its lower level was once a dance club. I asked her about it.

"Yeah, Margo's — Dress to Impress. I still have their sign."

Why did Margo's finally close down? At first, Lupie was reluctant to answer.

"I would say because ... they sold drugs. When we bought the building, we found a room with windows where you could see out and not see in that was secure as hell. [The owner] wasn't really smart. He would have customers that that pull up and leave real quick. I would get real busy and the parking lot would get real full, he would get real angry. On the side of the building he painted, 'No more packing.' He meant to write 'No more parking' but he couldn't spell that.

"I ended up owing the building because the man who did own it had all kinds of [tax] issues. I started seeing property investors coming by to check out the building and I said, 'Oh no, no, no. You're not going to come buy my building and up my rent when I made it a happening spot.' The owner let me put money in trust. The owner kept going to court but nothing was resolved. The judge let me buy the building. By that time, my place was rocking. I had saved up a third [of the value] in the process of waiting. I had never taken out any loans. It was a good feeling, to own your own dirt. When I saw that investor again I just smiled to myself and thought that this is one [property] you don't get."

**A NEW GENERATION**

After her recent injury, Lupie came to the realization that she just couldn't carry on in the same way she had.

"I give all my trust in Larkin and Amanda to do the right thing. Amanda has worked in Huntersville for 10 years. Amanda and Larkin share a brain. Amanda is the kid I didn't have to give birth to."

I asked what Larkin brings to the table. "Everything. She was raised here. She got off the bus out front. She spent her entire little life down here doing her homework.



Lupie Duran (right) with her daughter Larkin.

**"When we bought the building, we found a room with windows where you could see out and not see in that was secure as hell."**

Larkin decided that she did not like the after school thing. She could come to the café. The first week, there was a 'weirdo' down there sitting beside her and I kept looking and she was doing her homework talking to him. We were kind of busy. It came to my mind again and I came out and two of the guys from the kitchen were standing right there. I thought to myself, 'what am I worried about?'

"She's worked here since she was a kid. Her first Christmas, we were poor, we only had the upstairs part [of the building]. I had some bills to pay. There was this lady who was having a party at Christmas at Whispers. She ordered all this food. Larkin was on the table, playing in the dough. I had told her I can deliver it but I have my kid, it's Christmas, I can't stay. We get there and of course I get there and she wants me to do all this stuff.

"The next year rolls around ... she wants me to do it again. I tell her I can't do it. She says, 'Well you did it last year.' 'Yes I did, but this year my kid is a little bit older and she knows a little bit more about what Santa Claus is all about so no. I'm not doing this anymore.'

"Thank God things rolled a whole lot better and we didn't have to be in that situation and Larkin wasn't old enough to even remember it. You know. She's never been the type ... I gave but she didn't ask. I was raised from the time I was 13 in an orphanage. That makes you want different than your child. The things I didn't have, I wanted her to have. I wanted to experience trips and stuff like that.

"When I finally had enough money to take her to Toys R' Us I told her, 'Go get anything you want.' I'm thinking she's going to pick up that motorized Barbie car over there. She walks over to a \$9.99 Barbie and says,

'This is what I want, Mom.' I said, 'Really?' I mean, that's just way she is."

**CUSTOMERS ARE FRIENDS**

Lupie speaks lovingly of her best friend Don Swan, who could talk her into anything. "He was my best friend. You know he died at the back counter. He once talked me into finishing a case of Bud, taking off our clothes and running around the restaurant after closing," Lupie said, laughing out loud.

She speaks kindly of those people who have worked for her or been inspired by her, such as the founders of The Diamond, Dave Rhames (formerly of Pinky's, now Doffer's Canteen in Cramerton), Scott Whitman of Thomas Street Tavern, Candy and Greg at Alexander Michael's, Brian Wilson of the Thirsty Beaver and, of course, the now defunct Fat City.

I didn't know she had developed a connection with Carolina Panthers owner Jerry Richardson and his son late son John. Apparently, Mr. Richardson so enjoyed his meal the first time he visited, he gave Lupie a very special gift.

"Mr. Richardson ... the first time he came in ... he likes to come to places like this ... was sitting at the bar. I see him coming out of the bathroom, zipping his jacket up, and walked over with his shirt so neatly folded. He handed it to me. He said, 'I'm giving you the shirt off my back today.' I'm standing there in awe. That was the beginning of a very sweet relationship.

"His son John, who was more like his father than people realize, could walk through that door and tell everybody's name. If he didn't know them, he would ask.

"When he became sick near the end, a man came in and said, 'John is outside and he would like to come in.' I said, 'Well, what's

the problem?' 'He's in a wheelchair.' 'I'll be there to help you, then.' I turn around and tell the guys in the kitchen that they're going to bring in John and I'm going to help them. I go out and give John a hug. All of a sudden I turn around and there's Johnny, Rod, Archie [the kitchen staff] ... they're all right behind me. They're sticking their hands out to shake his hand.

"His roommate was the one helping, but he didn't understand why he was there. Later on, the roommate and I had a conversation,

**"I see him coming out of the bathroom, zipping his jacket up, and walked over with his shirt so neatly folded. He handed it to me."**

and he was asking himself, 'Why am I in this joint, and who are these people?' Before I walked out that door I knew what he was doing. John was coming to see people that he loved.

"I have Mr. Richardson's shirt here, but I have a print that needs to be framed, but I haven't figured out what to do. One day these two girls come in my door one Thursday when we're busy, and they have this big thing, and I was sure they were trying to sell something. They walk up to the register and ask,

'Is Lupie here?' Well, that would be me! She said 'Mr. Richardson sent you this.' I opened it, and it was a print he had made on the tenth anniversary of the stadium. He made 1,000 of them and killed it. I got number 18 of 1,000. He signed it, 'Thank you for taking care of my family.' Mr. Richardson, John and Mark had signed it."

**WORLD-FAMOUS LUPIE'S**

There are fans of Lupie's Café around the world. I heard about a group of Dutch tourists who, on a long layover in Charlotte, got to talking to a Charlottean who raved about Lupie's. They rented a van and drove to Lupie's, where they ordered all sorts of things from the menu. Nobody understood what they were saying but it was obvious that they were happy. Lupie contemplated this story for a moment.

"My brother has run into people in Canada who have heard of us. We are fortunate. I have flight attendants who don't live here but their parents do. They will adjust their schedule to be here when we run their favorite special. Meatloaf, chicken and dumplings, whatever. We're very, very fortunate. We have very loyal customers."

I asked Lupie if she would ever be back to work.

"Doing what we do here, it's a rhythm, it's a show actually," she says, snapping her fingers 3 times, "and I don't think I can take the same steps I used to. I watch my steps now. I'm not saying I won't step back in but at the moment ... no."

But she still does the baking.

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**BAR and VENUE and TAPROOM**



photo by Daniel Coston

## Celebrating The Milestone Club and music you can't hear anywhere else in town

by Daniel Coston

There's an old house on Tuckaseegee Road that's had many lives. Home, grocery store, church, and best known of all, longtime home in Charlotte for punk rock and many other subgenres of rock & roll. When the Milestone Club opened in 1969, it was originally intended to be home for artistic creative endeavors. By the end of the 1970s, it had become the place that many went to hear the music that they couldn't find on any other stage in town, which is where the Milestone has preferred to stay ever since.

The roll call of bands that have played the Milestone are nearly as famous as the stories are about the venue itself. Its "hole in the wall" nature. The dirt on the floor and the graffiti on the walls. The bathroom, dare you should enter it. It's a dump, but it's a world famous dump. When the Milestone used the "Rock On Ghetto Fortress" tagline in recent years, they weren't kidding. But neither were they kidding about its importance on the local scene, as well as those that have toured and ventured to this venue over the past 47 years.

Earlier this year it was announced that the Milestone Club had found a new owner, but that the renovations that would complete

the sale would total over \$150,000. With the recent closing of Tremont Music Hall and Tommy's Pub, and the impending closing of the Double Door Inn later this year, the news of the fundraising efforts that hit many in their hearts and wallets. How do you speak to that history, and the need to preserve it? When the Levine Museum of the New South approached me about an exhibition of my photos of the Milestone, I knew immediately that I wanted to be involved.

The Milestone Club is where I took some of my first-ever photos of a rock & roll show. It was December 31st of 1995. *Tangents* Magazine had only been on the newsstands for three months, and I started to become friendly with a number of bands that were living and rehearsing in an old warehouse on North Tryon Street. I had gone to high school with the guitarist for one of these bands, It Could Be Nothing. It was their New Year's Eve show with another band, Black Plastic, that I went to on that night. I had just started taking photos, but I wasn't taking it seriously yet. It Could Be Nothing wore an amazing collection of homemade outfits for the show, with the singer wearing a suit entirely made of duct tape. Twenty-one years later, *Tangents* magazine is three months into its second incarnation. I've never stopped taking photos since then, and one

of my photos from that show will be featured in the Levine Museum exhibition.

Unlike the Double Door Inn, the Milestone has not been continuously open over the past five decades. It's had its stops and starts, ebbs and flows. Even on its better days, you made sure that you parked in their lot, and you used the restroom before you went there, so that you didn't have to use THAT bathroom. After a hiatus of several years, Neal Harper reopened the Milestone in 2005. We had first met through our mutual friendship with It Could Be Nothing. It was Neal who invited me to see the crop of new and cool groups over past decade. Wavves, Battles, Greg Ginn, Adam Franklin of Swervedriver, Oakley Hall, Kid Congo Powers, Owen Pallett, and more local and national bands than I can ever count. Some of the photos, you will also see in this upcoming exhibit.

The second thing that the Levine Museum agreed upon for this exhibit was that we had to include the work of Chris Radok. Chris was known by many names around Charlotte. Chris, Radok, Kodar. That guy. That weird guy. That weird guy that loved to put a fisheye lens in your face. Yeah, Chris was all of that, and more. When I started photographing music in earnest, Chris was the only other photographer in town. And he still



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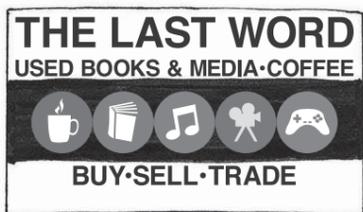
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photo by Chris Radok

Fugazi fans at The Milestone Club photographed by Chris Radok.

didn't talk to me for a couple of years. Chris was an individual, through and through. He shot what he wanted, when he wanted to. The shoot or the subjects had to have some interest to him. Anything else was "a job," as he once told me, and he really didn't care for something that didn't interest him.

My favorite story about Chris is the time that he and I were photographing Francis Ford Coppola. Each media outlet got ten minutes to photograph Francis, and it was my second-ever shoot for Charlotte Magazine, and I was more than a little nervous. Chris saw me waiting to take Mr. Coppola's photo, walked over to me, and said in my ear, "This is bullshit. I could be home watching cartoons right now," and walked off. All I could do was smile and laugh. Chris had no interest in the artifice, or the rules that often come with working in this business.

By that point, he had been photographing bands for over twenty years. The business of music photography can wear you down. You can work with some of the biggest names in music, and you can care about your work more than you're ever willing to admit, but it doesn't always pay the bills. It's something that I've dealt with at different times, and I'm sure that Chris did as well. His prickly demeanor was a defense mechanism to keep out of clutter that he sometimes had to deal with in his work. But thankfully, he never stopped taking photos, until the day that he was taken from us in 2012, and his friends have since organized and scanned the prints, negatives and slides that Radok left behind.

I recently went to the Levine Museum to look through Chris' color slides for this show. Yes, I said color slides. Chris shot color slides for various people, and himself for over twenty years. For many years, color slides were the gold standard for magazine publishers and record labels. There was no fixing color slides in post. You got it right the first time, or not at all. And yet, here were all of Radok's fantastic photos of legendary Milestone shows. Fugazi, Rollins Band, Bad Brains, and so many more. There were also a number of shows that Radok shot elsewhere, that he would have never admitted that he shot them. Kiss in 1977. The Rolling Stones in 1981. Def Leppard on the Pyromania tour. Flock of Seagulls at the Carowinds Paladium in 1983. I kept expecting Chris to walk in the room and growl, "How did you find those?" If I'd asked him about these shows, he would've shaken his head with his goofy, endearingly condescending look, and said, "It was a job." "Good gig, then," I probably would have replied.

I also came away from looking at these photos with an intense trepidation about exhibiting my photos next to his. Yes, I'm proud of my photos — I prefer to take the photos, and leave hyperbole to others — but Radok got great photos of now legendary bands. Twenty-five years or more after he took them, Radok's photos have a power that I would love to see in my work too, given time. But for now, I realized that Chris' photos were the star of the show.

I also realized that for all of our talk about the Milestone, neither of our archives had much in the way of photos of the venue itself. The bar, the stage area, the graffiti. Yes, even the bathroom. Sometimes a place can speak volumes about the people that inhabit a place, without said people being in the photo at all. I realized that this was my new charge for this exhibit. As often happens, the photos that you'll see in this show almost didn't happen. I had worked three events that day, and I had clients that were emailing me for photos that they wanted as soon as possible. Thankfully, that voice—the one in my head that has pushed me for over twenty years — said, "Daniel, go. You'll be glad you did." And once again, that voice was right.

I'm really glad that the Levine Museum of the New South has asked me to do this show. While I am still fully committed to my retrospective at the Charlotte Museum Of History, which is back up on their walls, the Levine show is a chance to speak to an opportunity we have at this critical moment to preserve the history and legacy that many of us that have spent many of our lives' greatest experiences in. The forthcoming loss of the Double Door Inn pains me in a way that is difficult to comprehend or verbalise. Talk is cheap, and land values in Charlotte aren't. So, we will do what we can, and carry on the message of life and hope to anyone that will listen.

One of my hopes with this show is to also open more conversation with those that attended or documented shows at the Milestone over the past 47 years. Did you take photos at shows by Nirvana, REM, Black Flag, Moe Tucker & Half Japanese, Sebadoh, or countless others? Do you have stories from those shows? Contact us at www.tangentsmag.com or at the Levine Museum, and let the conversation continue again.

At the core of punk rock, or any artistic expression, is the idea that an individual or group that create something that speaks beyond themselves. Speaks of its creators, for its creators, and for those that are receiving these works. On paper, combining a punk rock venue with a major Southern museum might not work. But life is not just lived on paper. It is lived by those who create said works out of their heads, or put them into the open air. To the likes of Nirvana, REM, Bad Brains, and millions of others that have played this old house. To those that ventured into its dark dwellings, night in and night out. To two kids — Jeff Clayton and Joe Young — who saw half of the Sex Pistols play at the Milestone in 1980 and soon formed their own band Antiseen that inspired other kids around the world to do what they had also done. And in so doing, whether it is playing three chords, taking a photograph, or enjoying a life experience, places like the Milestone Club can live on for as long as we sing its praises. And if that ain't punk rock, then I don't know what is.

Here's to Chris. Here's to the Milestone. Here's to museums, and eyes and ears that listen. Rock on.

# JOINTS, DIVES & HANGOUTS

## The first stop for used media is The Last Word

by **Cindy Sites-Wooley**

You're itching to add to your CD collection, you want a good book to read, and you're looking for an out-of-print DVD of your favorite Japanese film from 25 years ago. You only have an hour to spare and, like most people, the less you have to spend, the better. You could scour eBay on your smartphone, but it does feel good to spend your money locally.

I've been describing The Last Word as a locally-owned version of a 2nd and Charles store, but I realize that I've been selling it short. Like that national chain they buy and sell plenty of used music, books, movies, video games and gaming equipment. You

can even find action figures and memorabilia. But the thing that sets The Last Word apart from any similar stores that I've been to is the sense of community. The store holds Magic: The Gathering events, poetry slams, book signings, painting classes, and more. A couple of months ago, *Tangents* held a coloring contest there. Once there was even a wedding inside the store.

On my first visit, while I was at the cash register waiting for them to ring up my huge haul of books and CDs, I impulse-bought an illustrated bookmark of the Twelfth Doctor by a local artist named Ben Mirabelli. If Peter Capaldi's not your Doctor or if you're more into superhero characters, the artist has also drawn some bookmarks featuring fan art of

other characters. (There are also some free bookmarks that are decidedly less decorative, but still functional.) In a shelf next to the registers there are blank books for sale.

Having recently moved from its previous home out in the University area, the Last Word is situated ideally for the eventually completed light rail extension, at 5744 North Tryon Street. If you're heading north on North Tryon, it's on your right — look up above all the buildings for the white sign with multi-colored icons (a coffee cup, a book, a music note, a film camera, and a video game controller). Turn into the driveway before that big sign. You'll probably think you're heading into a U-Haul location, but you're in the right place. This location is a former

hardware store that's 50 years old — pretty ancient for a storefront in Charlotte these days. The Last Word's owners moved here in November 2015 because they wanted to own their building, and as a bonus, they got a lot more space.

As they get everything ready for a coffee bar like they had in the previous location, they're running a GoFundMe to help pay for it. Go to [gofundme.com/TheLastWord](http://gofundme.com/TheLastWord) if you'd like to help.

The Last Word also buys used media. You can bring it in any day but Monday, when the buy area is closed. As is the case in most used media stores, you can get cash or store credit for your items. See the store's FAQ for all the details.



"Foster's Grille 10-11-15" by Hannah Rochester Barnhardt

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— Cindy-Sites Wooley



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# LITERATURE

## Charlotte Author Chat with J. Matthew Saunders

by Micki Knop

Just over a year ago, J. Matthew Saunders came out with his first book of an exciting new series that takes on the Dracula mythos and presents readers with a whole new point of view. The story focuses on the creation of Dracula's brides and how they lived before their creation, their rebirth, and how they survived over the centuries. The series starts with "Book I: Yasamin."

**"Daughters of Shadow and Blood – Book 1: Yasamin" has been described as "Dracula" meets "The DaVinci Code." How did you come up with the concept for the new take on a vampire tale?**

I am a history geek, especially Eastern European history. I love obscure little details that get left out of the history books, and I really love it when those obscure details hint at supernatural things. I also like reading stories that incorporate real history and fantasy, especially stories that take historical events and explain what "really" happened. My favorite novel is "Dracula," and I've always thought the Brides of Dracula were under-used characters. So, basically, in "Daughters of Shadow and Blood," I just took all my favorite things and mashed them together.

**What tools do you use to keep all your thoughts, inspirations, and influences organized?**

In writing terms, I'm what's called a "pantser," meaning that I write by the seat of my pants. I'm not very good at outlining. I have a general idea of the story in my head, but I usually just sit down and write and see where the story takes me. I've been surprised by the plot twists I've come up with that way. Once the first draft is done, I revise and revise and revise some more until everything makes sense. It can be a messy process,

but it's also fun to see the order emerge from the chaos. I guess my organizational style is the same. I don't really have any "tools," other than some note-taking apps that I'm not very consistent with using and good old fashioned pen and paper. I also have a long and unwieldy bookmarks list in Firefox. From the outside it probably looks like a complete mess, but it works for me.

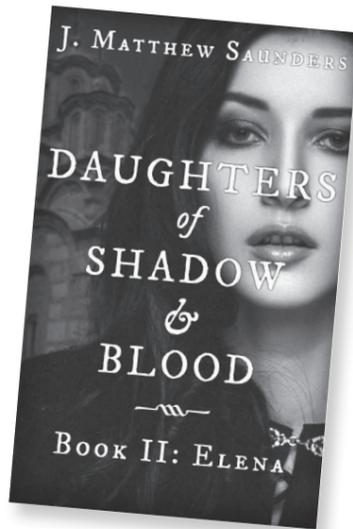
**Who is your go-to author for inspiration? Why?**

As far as writing goes, a lot of my inspiration comes from nonfiction authors. For "Daughters of Shadow and Blood," I drew a lot on Rebecca West, a British journalist from the early twentieth century who wrote a travelogue about a trip she took with her husband through Yugoslavia just before World War II, and also Jason Goodwin, an English university professor who has written several fiction and nonfiction books about the Ottoman Empire. Of course, I reread "Dracula" from time to time because I love how Bram Stoker is able to do Gothic horror so well.

The rest of the interview for "Book I: Yasamin" can be seen at [CharlotteGeeks.com](http://CharlotteGeeks.com). The second in the series, "Daughters of Shadow and Blood Book II: Elena" came out in April and has received favorable reviews. The author once again agreed to answer a few questions for readers.

**What were the main challenges you faced in writing this as opposed to the first one, "Daughters of Shadow and Blood – Book I: Yasamin"?**

Because I'm a huge European history geek, a lot of the action involves real historical events. Yasamin, the first Bride, is an Ottoman Turkish girl in the sixteenth century. Elena, the second Bride, is an Albanian peasant girl in Kosovo in the seventeenth century. One challenge in writing the second



book was how to gently remind readers of what happened in the first book without actually summarizing the plot. There is a delicate balance there. Another big challenge was making sure Elena had a personality distinct from Yasamin, with her own motivations and desires. I felt that was important for the success of the second book.

**When is the third book due out, and what can we expect from it?**

Book III is due out in the spring of 2017. For those keeping score, when Bram Stoker describes the Brides, he says, "two were dark and one was fair." Both Yasamin and Elena have black hair. That's the only hint I'm giving right now, though. I'm continuing to explore some of the darker times in European history, and readers should expect to have all their questions answered, but I do have a few surprises in store.

**What is your best advice for wannabe authors?**

There is a lot of good advice out there for writers, and there is a lot of bad advice. The best advice I can give to new writers is to do what works for you. Never listen to anyone who says theirs is the One True Way. If you have to outline everything before you start writing, then outline. If you want to dive in without having any idea where the story will take you, then go for it. If you want to write short stories, write short stories. If you want to write novels, write novels. If you want to write in the morning or the afternoon, or at night, then do it. If some piece of writing advice isn't working for you, then try something else until you find what does work. What matters is that you're writing. Whatever you have to do to finish your story is the right way.

**Has committing to writing a 3-book series changed your writing process, and how so?**

On a good day, my writing process can best be described as "chaotic." I don't do much outlining, and often the story doesn't really come together for me until I'm well into the first draft. That being said, I knew before I started that the story needed to progress over the three books toward some final confrontation. I just wasn't sure what that final confrontation would look like, so beginning in the first book and continuing in the second, I dropped small story threads I could pick up later, but left them vague enough

Thank you J. for taking the time and we look forward to your future endeavors. You can find Mr. Saunders' books at Park Road Books, Barnes & Noble, and online. You can also find him on Facebook (The Writing of J. Matthew Saunders), Twitter (@jmattsanders), and on [writewrotewritten.wordpress.com](http://writewrotewritten.wordpress.com).

### Crashing in the Same Car

With so many hands on the wheel  
And so many feet on the brakes  
The gas-gulping truck with the gun rack  
Flipped end over  
End over  
End  
Until it ended.

— Cindy-Sites Wooley



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## FILM

# Make a movie in two days with the 48 Hour Film Project

by **Michelle Kirk**

Could you make a movie in just two days? Dozens of independent filmmakers around Charlotte will find out this August when the 48 Hour Film Project comes to town. The Project (also known as the 48HFP) is an annual filmmaking competition held in 130 cities across the globe. Anyone can form a team and sign up – no experience required. Team members may be amateur or professional filmmakers, but all must participate on a volunteer basis. At the official kickoff event August 12, project judges will assign each team a random genre, one character, one prop, and one line of dialogue to include in their film, which they have exactly 48 hours to make. The final product must be four to seven minutes

long, not including credits. Other than that, anything goes. Citywide competitions take place throughout the year, and the season culminates in a weeklong finale event called Filmalooza. There, the city winners join up to screen their short films, make connections within the industry, and contend for the grand prize, a showing at the Cannes Film Festival in France!

The 48HFP began in 2001, when two friends named Mark Ruppert and Liz Langston challenged themselves and their colleagues to make a movie in two days. They found the creative process to be intensely inspiring, and the project grew exponentially over time. To date, more than 30,000 films have been submitted by teams ranging in size from one to 160 members. Several major Hollywood actors and producers

have participated, including Dennis Farina and Nick Clooney. People are drawn to the challenge of the task and the rawness of artwork made with little time for editing or revision.

Two-time former participant Walker Spruill says the people that make up a team can make or break its success. Although no restrictions exist on the number of team members, it works best when teams are small and each person wears several hats. Too many cooks in the kitchen can make for unnecessary confusion and deliberation, which wastes time. In a task where decision-making time is scarce, each person must keep his or her own ego in check and trust in the expertise of others. Walker also advises using high-quality audiovisual equipment if possible and testing all gear in advance.

Make sure you know how to use your equipment inside and out, she says, to avoid unexpected technical difficulties. Finally, plan your filming locations in advance (stick to one or two, ideally) but be ready for plans to change at the drop of a hat.

If you'd like to participate in this year's 48HFP, there's still time. Registration costs \$160/team until August 2; late registration costs \$175/team and goes until kickoff day August 12. The fee includes two tickets to the premiere screening of all Charlotte film submissions at McGlohon Theater in Spirit Square August 26. The screening event, which is open to the public, will most likely sell out. For more information, hit up the 48 Hour Film Project on Facebook or go to [www.48hourfilm.com](http://www.48hourfilm.com). Grab those cameras and get rolling!

## PHOTOGRAPHY

# Bill Cunningham: *The Times'* ultimate event photographer

by **Daniel Coston**

What do you want to be when you grow up? Regardless of your age, you can always aspire to be or work towards something more. You can also grow up without growing old. In photography, I was lucky to have met some of those older photographers who pushed me to do more. Others, I followed, without ever having the chance to meet them. As I began to take over the event photography for *The Charlotte Observer* in recent years, one name was always at the top of my list: Bill Cunningham.

Bill was the fashion and event photographer for *The New York Times* for the last

40 years. He canvassed New York City on his bicycle, sometimes shooting up to ten events a day. If you saw the 2010 documentary on him, you know that he was a lifer. He was one of the last of a generation that saw photography as a calling and lived and slept it every waking moment. He was an individualist. He was forthright with his opinions. The work mattered to him more than any of the niceties and trappings that can come with the work that he was doing. And he loved what he was doing.

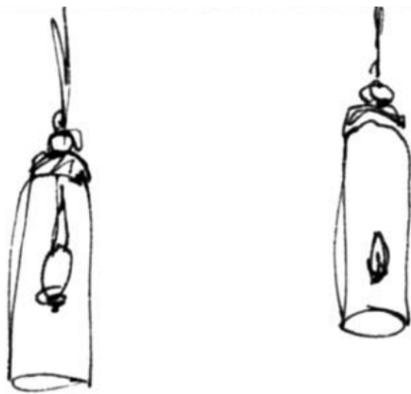
In an era where many in his field could not come to grips with social media, Bill embraced it. For the last several years, Bill narrated a weekly video for *The Times'* web-

site where he talked about what he had been photographing that week. His enthusiasm, even in his mid-80s, was infectious. Pardon my English here, but one of my most common pieces of advice to others about creating anything is to give a s—t. Care about your work and be proud of it. Push yourself to do better while allowing yourself to have fun in the journey. Bill Cunningham truly gave a s—t. To hear his Massachusetts-by-way-of-New York accent talking excitedly about new ideas that he'd just seen was inspiring and often made me re-think my own approaches to event photography ... and life in general.

Bill left this physical place in June for the

great gig in the sky, going out while still on the job. Just like Richard Avedon, Ernest Withers and the others whose work inspired me to think about the possibilities of what could be glimpsed through the camera. With his passing, an end to an era of event photography also passes. Events will continue to be covered by *The Times* for sure, but through the ever-eager eyes of Bill Cunningham, a certain world was captured forever. In his wake, all we can do is learn, adapt and grow, in the hope that someday, someone will look at our work in the very same way.

Here's to growth. Here's to ideas. Here's to giving a s—t. Here's to you, Bill. Thank you, and safe travels.



## Flight of Thoughts

Balloons buffet about my mind filled with fire and lead, yet taking flight. Perhaps they're bouncing off themselves and me, using thoughts to vault themselves like chaotic rocket bombs. It's all too much to contain; it must be leaking out my eyes so everyone can see the freak who can't keep it together

in front of the watchful world. You hold out one small shiny thing to catch me like a magpie, draw my skittering eye to one dot in the middle of an orange sky that's too full of fire to fly through, and you guide me to the ground where I plant myself in the green, becalmed for a change. — Cindy-Sites Wooley



"Crepe Cellar" by Hannah Rochester Barnhardt  
HannahBarnhardt.com hbarhardt80@gmail.com



## MUSIC

## Latency: Can you hear me right now?

Digital recording gear, even the cheap stuff, sounds pretty damn good these days. It seems like the final digital hurdle is reducing the slight time delay between making a sound and hearing that sound as recorded and immediately played back by a computer ... aka latency.

## FOLLOW THE SIGNAL PATH

It makes perfect sense if you think about it ... you strike a chord, that soundwave travels through air at about 800 mph to the microphone, which sends a voltage change down a wire at the speed of light, that voltage hits a mic preamp which amplifies its power, that now line-level signal hits an "analog-to-digital converter" which converts the voltages into a stream of ones and zeroes, the computer stores these bits/bytes onto a hard drive and also sends them to a "digital-to-analog converter" which turns them back into analog signals, which are fed into your headphones once again at the speed of light, finally traveling the short distance into your waiting ear canal. Whew! ... tired your ass out didn't it?

Ultimately it's the hard drive writing/reading function and the handling of those bits that create the bottleneck of latency. As you can guess, there's a lot of factors to improve

upon ... faster computer processors for sure, but OS coding that efficiently handles audio data and hard drives with fast write/seek times (oldschool mechanical SATA's suck ass, the new standard is no-moving-parts solid-state-drives, SSD's) all play equally crucial roles.

## HOW LATE IS LATE?

To the casual observer/listener you'd never know that this digitized audio was behind in time by a fraction of a second. BUT ... if you're the singer/player/performer and it takes a half a second for your performance to hit your headphones/speakers it sounds like a fucking eternity! Seriously, it's enough to completely throw off your rhythm.

So how much latency are we expected to grin and bear? Let's say you're working at a sample rate of 44.1 k and your computer's buffer (the setting that controls latency) is set to 512 samples. A mere 512 forty four thousandths of a second and the latency is not bearable, not even close. At 256 samples I find most performers are pretty much ok, but can still sense a certain hesitancy. At 128 samples it's starting to feel "right" and responsive, even for timing-conscious drummers. At 64 samples latency is diminished to where no one can feel it and

## HOME RECORDING

by Rob Tavaglione

performances are more accurate. I've occasionally achieved a 32 sample buffer and it is downright instant (or at least seems that way)!

Of course, there's a catch. Small buffers mean really hard work to computers, so they will begin to choke and sputter when the cumulative load of many tracks, lots of plug-ins and small buffers become too much.

## TIMELY SOLUTIONS

If you're tired of the "latency blues" try a modern recording interface. Older USB-based models simply don't have the data throughput/speed to excel ... firewire 400 (or 800) work almost fast enough but aren't really found anymore ... USB 3.0 shows promise with much more throughput, but is yet to be widely adopted (I hear the drivers are hard to implement) ... the current best utilizes Thunderbolt (the newest proprietary Mac protocol) which helps bring latency down to imperceptible levels (reportedly less than 2

ms). That's more than adequately fast, as in there's more latency introduced by sitting three feet from your speakers!

Here's an example ...

<https://us.focusrite.com/clarett-range>

Reduce latency by lowering your buffer size one increment at a time and see if good hard-drive performance continues when you reach your point of latency tolerance. If glitches start occurring, lighten the computer's load with fewer plug-ins, or fewer tracks, or track freezing/rendering ... or get a better computer!

Still not satisfied, you timing perfectionist you? ... find an interface that allows "direct monitoring" (basically splitting off your input signal and allowing you to hear it in your phones before it ever gets digitized). But even that choice has it drawbacks and complications; it's ideal for solo performers, but it's hard to implement for a whole band and can make punching-in awkward too.

So I still yearn for the not-too-distant future when faster interfaces and computers become the norm and they manage to complete their tasks faster than we can complain about them!

*Rob Tavaglione owns and operates Catalyst Recording, is a freelance writer, musician and audio educator.*

## If It Looks Sad and sounds sad, it's probably sad

by Daniel Coston

With only a handful of songs released over the past four years, It Looks Sad has received a large amount of national press and accolades. Formed in Charlotte in 2012, the quartet (Jimmy Turner, Josh Wilson, Aimee Jenschke and Alex Ruiz) have already toured much of the country and received glowing national reviews. All this for a band that has released one 4-song EP in 2014 and a few singles on the Carolinas-based record label Tiny Engines.

The sound of It Looks Sad recalls a time in the early 1990s when indie rock was young and the possibilities seemed endless. With the band still at work on their first full-length album, Alex Ruiz checked in with *Tangents* for a quick chat.

**TANGENTS:** How did It Looks Sad come together?

**ALEX RUIZ:** Just a bunch of friends and friends of friends who got together and decided to make a band.

**TANGENTS:** How would you describe the sound of this band?

**RUIZ:** We sound like that feel when you're half asleep and someone's talking to you, but you're too sad to care.

**TANGENTS:** How has the band's sound

changed from the beginning, to now?

**RUIZ:** The new album we're working still has sounds like the EPs we put out. Maybe a little different.

**TANGENTS:** Where did the band's name come from?

**RUIZ:** It's a secret.

**TANGENTS:** You all play out of town a fair amount. Was that also a decision that you made early on?

**RUIZ:** I think every band wants to play out of town shows when they start out.

**TANGENTS:** What are the pros and cons of touring?

**RUIZ:** Touring is awesome. I personally like sleeping on people's floors. The only thing I hate is needing to pee all the time while driving and not being able to stop every couple of miles.

**TANGENTS:** Which recording do you think captures your sound the best, to date? Has that recording been made yet?

**RUIZ:** "Creature" was an old song that we didn't put on the first EP, but we all loved it and wanted to release it, and "Nagoya" was the first song we wrote together after the first EP came out.



photo by Daniel Coston

**TANGENTS:** Where do you draw inspirations for your songs?

**RUIZ:** Just the way we're feeling at the moment.

**TANGENTS:** How would you describe your audience?

**RUIZ:** The best. We appreciate everyone who comes to see us. Everyone's been really nice.

**TANGENTS:** Your music isn't easy to define. Do labels, or genre questions, get in the way of people discovering, or even enjoying music?

**RUIZ:** I'm sure it does. Not something I've really ever thought about though. People who like good music will find good music.

**TANGENTS:** Finish this sentence. When it comes down to it, It Looks Sad is ...

**RUIZ:** Trying to finish a record.

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## MUSIC

## Mike Strauss: Charlotte's humble Best Male Singer

by Daniel Coston

If you look at any local polls for best male singer, one name always shows up at the top of the list. Mike Strauss has carved out a devoted fanbase throughout North Carolina, and has largely done so without fuss or fanfare. Be it playing solo, with a trio, or his seven-piece full band, Strauss always has an inviting collection of songs, and his laid-back vocal that welcomes you in like an old friend. Then there is Mike, who for all of his accolades, is still a shy, friendly and unassuming guy, and who blushes every time I try to take his photo. I have had even hid in the back of his shows on some nights, so he wouldn't get distracted by my camera. And with his seventh album on the way, I look forward to more shows, more songs, and more covert photos.

**TANGENTS:** You're recording a new album. Yay! Tell me about it.

**STRAUSS:** Yep. We have started to record some new songs. We are working at Old House Studios in Charlotte with Chris Garges again. (We recorded our last CD there, *The Whole Skinny*, as well as a couple other albums when the studio was in Gastonia). We are trying to take a little more time with this new one and just record some things as time allows instead of trying to hammer out ten songs in two days like we have been known to do! I am excited about how things are going so far. It seems to be coming together quickly. We will see how it shapes up.

**TANGENTS:** Will this be another full-band affair?

**STRAUSS:** I was originally going to the studio to record some solo demos. That was the plan. Before I could even get those demos distributed to the band an opportunity came up and we started recording with everybody in the band involved. We just started with a couple songs and worked to get those semi-finished before moving on to record more songs. Right now we have 4-5 things started. We are going back tomorrow (January 2) to record a few more things and do some overdubs. Matt (Postle, the trumpet player) has arranged one song to include a whole brass section with tuba, two trumpets and two trombones. We might even have a few special guests on the recording. Maybe.

**TANGENTS:** What is it about having this large band, and this set of musicians that appeals to you?

**STRAUSS:** Well, I have had a 6- or 7-piece band for quite a while now. It's funny. I used to only play in trios for many, many years. I like having this group with me. It has grown very naturally. I didn't set out to have a horn section and then try to find players to fit the need. I ran into the right people and then thought, "What if we played some music together? What would that sound like?" Everybody in the band — Randolph, Jon, Molly, Matt and DK — everybody is so good and they all lis-

ten so well and play with a lot of attention to getting the most out of the song. We all get a chance to shine but everyone also has an eye on the bigger picture of making music and considering the song. I am lucky.

**TANGENTS:** When you're writing these songs, do you hear what this group can do with those songs? Or is it a surprise when the band gets hold of a song?

**STRAUSS:** Good question! I usually try to let the song dictate the direction it takes after it is written. They can find their legs in surprising ways. Basically I try to supply the outline and urge it along but I'm willing to follow when things stray from my plan. Usually you can feel when things are right or not so right. If the song is good it will stand up to being messed with. The trick really is restraint. It's easy to do too much. I like the subtraction method. We can try anything but take out what doesn't seem to be working... for now. Things can change over time.

**TANGENTS:** Talk about your band members. Who, what they bring to the band, etc..

**STRAUSS:** This version of the band has Jon Schigoda on upright bass, Molly Jay on trombone, Randolph Lewis on guitar, Matt Postle on trumpet and David Kim (DK) on drums. They all bring something great to the mix. Jon has played bass with me for about thirteen or fourteen years now. He knows exactly what to play and has a great feel. I always run my ideas by him first. Randolph is an important guitar player who has a unique style. He plays in a non-standard tuning that he invented and uses special levers (Bigsby Palm Pedals) to bend strings almost like a pedal steel player. He has great skills in arranging too.

Molly and Matt both have degrees in music and are great at coming up with interesting parts. They know all about theory, harmony, etc. They also bring a lot of excitement to the live shows. Molly has been with the group for many years now. Matt is the new guy in the band, but he has been with us for a few years. DK (David Kim) is a rock solid drummer who has a deep knowledge of many types of music and always plays the perfect thing. He and Randolph go way back and were in a couple of other bands together before playing with me. Everybody in the band listens to what the other person is doing and they are able to improvise on the spot. They play well together!

**TANGENTS:** Would you describe yourself as quiet, or unassuming? Is it easier to let the music do the talking?

**STRAUSS:** I guess so, yes.

**TANGENTS:** What musicians, or genres, influenced your sound?

**STRAUSS:** I love to listen to music and many, many people have influenced me. Guitar players, songwriters, vocalists. The list is too long. I guess I listened to all the usual



photo by Daniel Coston

heroes, Bob Dylan, Jimi Hendrix, Van Morrison, Tom Waits. I used to want to BE Stevie Ray Vaughan. Everybody I know did too! These days I listen to mostly instrumental, guitar-based music. I used to listen to heavy metal in the '80s. At some point you have to figure out how all the things you listen to distill down and represent you. Often you figure out what you can't do — or doesn't sound natural or authentic when you play, sing or write and that will lead you to what you need to do.

**TANGENTS:** How do you describe your music to folks that haven't heard you before?

**STRAUSS:** I need to work on this. I always say Americana or rock and roll. Rock 'n' roll to me means a little country, a little blues, a little jazz, a little swing. I don't have a good answer. I need one.

**TANGENTS:** You also sometimes play in the Plaza-Midwood Family Band. Describe that.

**STRAUSS:** The Plaza Family Band started on the playground of Plaza Weekday School in Plaza-Midwood. My daughters (both of them) went to pre-school there and I would hear things like "Lizzy's dad plays guitar too," or "Broderick's mom is a singer." After school

most parents would hang out on the playground while the kids played and eventually we figured out that we could make a recording as sort of a fundraiser to benefit the school. We could do that and hopefully make more money for the school instead of selling cookie dough or wrapping paper. Clifton Castelloe has a studio in his house and we would work on the CD in the mornings after dropping off the kids at school. We had a lot of fun doing it and we eventually recorded three CDs. We still play a number of shows together each year.

**TANGENTS:** You are often at the top of many local folks' top year-end lists. What's that like, all of these years on?

**STRAUSS:** It is always exciting and, I think, unexpected when something like that happens. It is great to have people appreciate what you do, if that means coming out to a show or buying a CD, or just wishing you the best. I never get over looking out while we are playing and seeing somebody sing along to one of our songs. It's a strange experience. I think if you can hang around long enough and try to be yourself eventually people will figure out there might be something to offer there.

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It is a dark time for the South. Although same-sex marriage is legal, the NC State Senate have driven the LGBT citizens from their counties and pursued them across the State. Evading the dreaded HB2, a group of freedom urinators led by Matt Starneswalker has established a new secret base in the remote Queen City of Charlotte. The evil lord McCrory, obsessed with finding young Starneswalker, has gotten a perm, cut off his genitals and burned his birth certificate in an attempt to disguise himself as gender neutral Pat...

Exterior: Carmel Commons shopping

center.

Pat, whispering to himself, "My NC Senate drone was right, Starneswalker is shopping here. Now to befriend him with alcohol so he'll give up the secret location of the urinators base!"

"Pat, what's up with the perm?" I asked matter-of-factly.

"Who's Pat? Let's get a drink broham, let's get a drink, I'm cool."

"Ok, lead the way," I said reluctantly as Pat slapped me on the back and led me into a nearby entrance. I marveled at the colorful lights and video games for a few minutes

until Pat appeared with two beers.

Suddenly I became uncomfortable as Pat steered me into a room with robotic rat wearing skinny jeans and playing an electric guitar.

"What the ..., Pat, we're at Chuck E. Cheese's?" I said as I noticed it was 11:05 a.m. ... on a Tuesday.

"Next round's on me, Matt." No shit I thought.

We quickly downed our craft amusement beers. "Let's take off Pat, before someone's rugrats show up."

"I need to pee, Matt"

Pat started walking towards the men's room when the manager said, "Not so fast, may I see your birth certificate?"

"I don't have my birth certificate, look, I'll go in the women's room, no one's here so ..." Pat pleaded.

"Sorry, no birth certificate, no tinkle. That's the law. Plus you have blood all over your khakis," the manager demanded.

"Wait a ..." Pat started. "Come on Pat, we don't want any trouble here," I said as we exited.

We walked and waddled across the parking lot to McDonald's.

# W M & T A R



Pat bolted toward the restrooms. "Excuse me, bathrooms are for customer's only," a fifteen-year-old girl in a golden arches uniform squeaked.

"Fine!" Pat yelled. "Give me some fries." Pat scarfed down his fries as he headed for the restrooms.

"Birth certificate, please. Ma'am, er, sir?" Said the Mc-Hitler-Youth.

"Please, I bought French fries!" Begged Pat.

"Pat, let's go next door to Jack in the Box."

"Ok, I'm about to pee my bloody pants,

Matt!"

We faced the same scenario at Jack in the Box and even Harris Teeter. The law is the law after all.

"Matt, I just thought if I disguised myself as a gender-neutral North Carolinian I could show everyone HB2 is no big deal. I hoped to trick you into divulging the location of the urinators' secret base.

"Oh, Pat. Everyone knew it was you, so they were giving you a taste of your own medicine. Let's jump in this Lyft and I'll take you to a place where you can go to the bathroom even without a birth certificate."

"Thank goodness," said an uncomfortable governor.

We arrived at Abari Game Bar. Pat hesitated at the restrooms. Each of the two doors had both the male, female and hand-capped symbol. "It means anyone can use either bathroom, Pat," I reassured him.

Pat ran in and came out several minutes later looking refreshed.

"So, now do you see why HB2 is so idiotic, and North Carolina has lost millions of dollars besides hurting residents who just want to be comfortable and use the bathroom?" I asked victoriously.

"Screw that, Matt! I'm going to get another birth certificate and make sure HB2 extends to all bathrooms and businesses State-wide." Pat spewed before passing out from excessive genital bleeding.

An Abari bouncer helped me dump Pat in an Uber with instructions to drop him at the nearest psych ward.

I sat down at the bar and ordered a boilermaker. "I started drinking at a kiddie arcade, and now I'm going to finish at an adult arcade bar. Keep 'em, comin' barkeep, keep 'em comin'."



story **MATT STARVES JOHN BURGIN art**

## MUSIC

## Sinners &amp; Saints: Two Men and a Van

by Daniel Coston

Two guys. One with a guitar, the other with a stand-up bass. Both sing. Songs of love, of drinking, of living and dying. And occasionally, more love and drinking. For the past few years, Charlotte's own Perry Fowler and Mark Baran have taken their stripped-down, distilled country-fried sound across the country. To stages big and small, far and wide. And they are probably on the road again, whenever you read this. If you get the chance to see them around Charlotte, do so, because they're usually not in town for very long.

Fowler and Baran checked in via email to discuss the life of a touring duo, and the music and experiences that come from that collaboration.

**TANGENTS:** How did you two come together?

**MARK BARAN:** I saw Perry play solo at Snug Harbor and his songwriting struck me in a way that I was compelled to ask if he ever wanted to add a bass player to the mix. He hit me up about a gig after a month or so and we started working together.

**PERRY FOWLER:** Like all great romances begin, we met at a bar. Snug Harbor to be specific.

**TANGENTS:** How would you describe the sound of this band?

**BARAN:** Americana, indie, folk haha just

kidding. We get a lot of comparisons to the Avetts, sometimes to Violent Femmes, but as with any band the sound is a mix of our musical influences and sensibilities. Perry has a really broad range of influence, but for sure was brought up on that staple of classic and old country. I did not experience old country growing up, but came to find and love it later in life. To avoid the categories when someone asks me what we sound like I just tell them we are a two-man one-man band.

**FOWLER:** Chuck-a-chuck-a click-clack boom-pop boom-pop

**TANGENTS:** Was there a conscious decision to play as just a two-piece?

**BARAN:** When we started Perry played a stomp box that he built. It's a wooden box with a tambourine on top. We asked a friend Chad Shores to play fiddle for us and so for a brief time we were a three-piece. After Chad left we started playing with the drums and evolving to our current setup. From stomp box and a small kick, to small kick and snare, and finally a full kick and snare. Being a two-piece that can make a full sound is definitely something that makes us unique and is one of the things we get the most comments about. A lot of people say "I didn't realize there was only two of you." For me there is a little worry that if we expanded we might lose that magic.

**FOWLER:** Most definitely. Drummers are a bunch of drunks and full of drama.

**TANGENTS:** You all play out of town a lot. Was that also a decision that you both made early on?

**BARAN:** I think we both just decided that we were going to work really hard at giving this thing an honest go. Touring and getting out there is just part of that. It's been some of the most trying and rewarding things I've done.

**FOWLER:** Yeah, from the very beginning we decided that we didn't just want to be a local band. Touring is one of those things that it's either in you or it ain't. And we love to tour.

**TANGENTS:** What are the pros and cons of touring, and touring as just two people?

**BARAN:** The greatest thing about touring is meeting some really wonderful people and experiencing a little bit of the culture of the places we visit. However, when we get to a town we don't really see it as a tourist. We load in, play a show, crash on someones floor then head to the next town. It can be pretty exhausting. A five-hour drive followed by carrying equipment into a venue you hope doesn't have stairs, playing for an hour or three, then hoping someone will let you crash on their floor and not want to party till 4 in the morning. After days and weeks in a row it can wear on you. Perry and I are a bit like brothers. We are very similar so we get along really well together, and mostly are pretty quiet around each other. Every once in a while we can drive each other crazy and the more days you're in a car together for 5-6 hours the worse that can get. All that said, I wouldn't trade the experiences I've had for anything. We just think of it as paying our dues.

**FOWLER:** It's definitely easier to fit two people and their gear into a van than it is three or four. And it's also easier to keep track of two dudes' schedules as far as practicing and making time to go out on tour.



photo by Daniel Coston

**TANGENTS:** Which recording do you think captures your sound the best, to date? Has that recording been made yet?

**BARAN:** I think that our Love & Misery recording by Doug Williams of EMR Records captures our sound best to date. On that recording we still separated out a lot of the tracks in the studio. We have plans with our next recording to really focus on making the process as close to our live show as we possibly can and record as much in one take as possible to attempt to capture the energy of playing off each other.

**FOWLER:** I'm still on the fence. Don't get me wrong, I like all our recordings so far cause they basically all sound different since our instrumentation as far as the foot drumming has changed up over the years. I think each of our records has a different feel about them. We're in the process of deciding where we want to record our next full length and that's one of the things we've been asking ourselves. How do we want our next record to sound?

**TANGENTS:** Where do you draw inspirations for your songs?

**FOWLER:** A lot of people tell me my songs are really sad, even though a lot those songs are upbeat and sound like happy songs. I like to write about things like loneliness and depression and hard times and such, but give them a different feeling than what the words are actually expressing. Cause everyone has those feelings but not very many actually show it on the outside.

**TANGENTS:** Sinners & Saints seem to connect with audiences. Why do you think that is?

**BARAN:** I think I can answer this from an outside perspective because Perry's songwriting really spoke to me all those years ago at Snug Harbor when I first caught his show. There's a real honesty to his lyrics and melodies that I think most people can relate to. In addition to that, his songs are both uplifting and heart wrenching. It's a very cathartic experience. Hence "Love & Misery" even though that track itself is more about letting go of that self pity.

**TANGENTS:** Wildest Sinners & Saints shows, so far. Tell us!

**BARAN:** Ha, probably a house show we had at Perry's place years ago. Like most

of our stories begin "we had been drinking ..." Perry ended up throwing his neck out from playing like a madman and the floor of their living room sunk an inch from everyone jumping around.

**FOWLER:** Oh man, that's an entirely different interview. There was the time we played Heavy Rebel and were drenched in PBR and sweat afterwards because everyone kept throwing their beer at us. I guess it was a good thing because we were told that's how they show their affection for bands, by pelting them with cans. Theirs still had beer in them though. I'm not so sure. Then there was one time we stayed over at a dude's house in Virginia Beach (we had never met him until that night). He was apparently a label rep and was interested in signing the band we were touring with and he also approached us about signing us. Well, after our show, we learned that he had taken acid right before the show had started so he was tripping pretty hard by the time we got to his house. It was definitely a weird night. There's all kinds of weird and wild things that happen on the road.

**TANGENTS:** Do labels, or genre questions, get in the way of people discovering, or even enjoying music?

**BARAN:** Depends on the person. Americana ... what is that anyway? Some people find them helpful in discovering other music they love. They are usually open-minded enough to explore other genres as well. Others write off everything because it falls within a genre they are convinced has no value. Either way there is no escaping it because humans will always categorize.

**FOWLER:** I was talking to a guy yesterday about genres and how some bands can misrepresent a certain genre and turn some folks away from discovering other music that fits a certain genre. And he told me, "Well every genre has their Mumford and Sons." So yeah I definitely feel that attaching labels to things can hurt in a way. But also, there's SO MUCH music out there. And that's great and it's a beautiful thing, but at the same time, it helps to "classify" things just to make it easier to find what you're looking for. But we run into the genre thing all the time.

**TANGENTS:** Finish this sentence. When it comes down to it, Sinners & Saints is ...

**BARAN:** Americana.

**FOWLER:** A band, not a duo.

TANGENTS

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## MUSIC

## Nicholls and Pitkin are back in It's Snakes

by Daniel Coston

**H**ear music. Learn to play an instrument. Start playing music. This has been the jumping off point for many a musician. The sense of discovery, the joy of having every song and show be something new. For Hope Nicholls, that idea has never left her. For the past 35 years, Nicholls and her partner Aaron Pitkin have been leading figures in the Charlotte music scene. Fetchin' Bones, Sugarsmack and Snagglepuss have all featured their sense of youthful energy and punkish minimalism. For Snagglepuss, it was Pitkin that learned to play drums for the band. For their new band, It's Snakes, Pitkin has switched back to guitar, and Nicholls has taken up the drums.

It's Snakes harkens back to a time when surf guitar rock, garage rock and proto-punk all came from the same garage. Joined by bassist Darren Gray and guitarist Greg Walsh, Nicholls sings and screams while banging out a primal beat on a stand-up drumkit. It's loud, it's loose, it's all fun. Nicholls checked in with us via email to talk about the band, learning to play drums, and balancing work, family and music.

**TANGENTS:** How did It's Snakes come together?

**NICHOLLS:** We came together in our basement, starting with Aaron and Darrin jamming while I attempted to play along and not mess things up! Aaron had 20+ years of things he had been tinkering with on his acoustic guitar, ever since Fetchin' Bones was no more and he moved on to bass and drums. Aaron chills out almost everyday by playing his acoustic, not intentionally writing ditties, just noodling, whatever comes to him. Some things stick and become more song-like. They started playing some of those riffs and once I had a beat that seemed to work, I would try to think about singing. Once I could think about singing while playing drums, I could usually hum my idea, then finally sing it.

**TANGENTS:** How would you describe the sound of this band?

**NICHOLLS:** I think by nature of my rudimentary drumming, plus songs often started on acoustic, we have a touch of roots in our sound, but our roots are gnarled and odd. Inspirations include all disco-era dance and 70's African music, as well as Bo Diddley, ZZ Top, The Animals, Iggy Pop and the Rolling Stones. Darrin writes amazing, melodic bass parts that rock and really fill out our sound. His roots are as punk rock as it comes.

**TANGENTS:** Hope, this is the first band that you've ever played drums in. How did that come about?

**NICHOLLS:** I wanted to play drums in this band as a change and challenge to myself, to not just be a singer. I have been a frontman for many decades in many bands and I was ready to add something more in. I was not even sure it would work! Some days I'm still not. I want to get so much better. But during a show with Plaza Family Band, I had this realization that I was singing, playing a shaker and tapping my foot. I realized that was enough for me to play drums the way I care about drums. I am not trying to be Stewart Copeland. I like songs that have one beat all the way through; some of the best songs ever do. Being a virtuoso has never been important for me. I just want to be part of the whole sound and drums are the foundation. As a singer/drummer, I get to be the foundation and the cherry on top! Most importantly,



photo by Daniel Coston

Aaron, Darrin and Greg were willing to put up with my incompetence and baby steps as I learned how to play from scratch.

**TANGENTS:** How did you come to play drums standing up?

**NICHOLLS:** I started playing sitting down, but it's hard to sing with your tummy all scrunched up, so I decided to try standing. It was easy since I was just starting out. After we were rocking about 6 months, I switched and had a blast building a stand-up kit from pawn shops and eBay scores.

**TANGENTS:** In the last few bands that you've formed, you've chosen to play instruments that you had really just learned to play. What does that bring to a band's sound?

**NICHOLLS:** Aaron and I have always loved the sound of exuberance, the joie de vivre that novice musicians have. It's a punk rock thing: DIY and don't worry about being perfect. It's a soul thing: convey truth and feeling, things more important than being perfect. That's how we started playing together, without any training or experience musically, even in school, and we have always encouraged other people to do the same. We have always asked our friends to be in our bands, and if they happen to be musicians, all the better. It's most important to have a love of art and sound and performance; the rest falls into place.

**TANGENTS:** Talk about balancing playing music, while at the same time managing a full-time job and raising a family.

**NICHOLLS:** We decided to open Boris + Natasha when we wanted to have kids and needed a steady income that did not involve touring. During the following seventeen years, we did Snagglepuss and then when Amy moved to South America, we relaxed for a bit before starting It's Snakes about 1 1/2 years ago. I feel like one of the best examples anyone can set for kids is to show them passion. Ours is music. We have shown them by example what comes from working hard and having a blast. Our kids may not end up as musicians, but they will follow their own interests with gusto, and that is a great gift we have given them.

**TANGENTS:** Talk about the difficulties of establishing a band (or individual artist) in Charlotte now, as opposed to the Charlotte scene during the 1980s.

**NICHOLLS:** I think being a musician now in Charlotte is way easier. In the early 80's, there were very few people making music compared to now. There were very few clubs. It was way harder to find out about new music. Now we have places like School of Rock, things like satellite radio, the internet, a lot

of really great venues of all sizes. Music is everywhere simultaneously, not just in Charlotte, but globally. Being an original music maker is esteemed and originality is encouraged. The Charlotte audience back in the day did not understand what Fetchin' Bones was all about, partially because this was a non-college, small town market. It took us becoming popular in Athens and Atlanta for the press and mainstream to accept us. I think currently there is an amazing community of younger musicians in this town, doing awesome stuff. Musicians in Charlotte have always faced a choice to stay here, as we did, and make this place home or set off for more lucrative destinations like LA, New York, or Atlanta. With the internet and all Charlotte has now, I see that as less and less of a necessity.

**TANGENTS:** Do labels, or genre questions, get in the way of people discovering or even enjoying music?

**NICHOLLS:** Labels and genres are superficial. When people use categories to define their own art or other people's work, they flatten what should be multi-dimensional. I can't categorize any of my favorite bands or artists, and I think that's a very good thing.

**TANGENTS:** Finish this sentence. When it comes down to it, It's Snakes is ...

**NICHOLLS:** When it comes down to It's Snakes ... we just want to have fun and never stop!

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## MUSIC

## Temperance League takes an evolutionary step

by Daniel Coston

**TANGENTS:** New album. Discuss.

**JAY GARRIGAN:** This record is an evolutionary step for Temperance League. Bruce wrote songs that were a bit more psychedelic and had more perspective, and therefore needed more detail both in the foreground and background. Mitch Easter encouraged us to explore the studio, and I think we all dug a bit deeper into our parts and tones. It's also different mix-wise for the same reasons. We actually recorded a few more songs than are on the record, but decided cut them because they didn't fit the music landscape and theme. Bruce wrote a lot of songs, at least 1-2 a week for several months, and we kind of figured which were working and which may fit another record.

**TANGENTS:** This is the fourth TL album. What separates it from the other Temperance League albums?

**GARRIGAN:** Bruce has an interesting vision for the recordings, much like Bob Dylan where what we record isn't necessarily what we do, or how we sound live. It's peculiar if you think about it — how can you get at least six instruments to work together via two speakers? How can you get all the excitement, passion, emotion, ache, elation and the unplanned moments you feel deeply captured within two little speakers? How can you do that when you have six people trying to do just that in a coordinated effort based on intuition over reading charts? It's quite



photo by Daniel Coston

perplexing, but we somehow do just that. I think it has a lot to do with the band being together for 7-plus years (I joined four years ago by the way, and still the new guy).

Playing live and recording are two very different art forms, and in my opinion, you can't approach them the same way and be genuine to the moment. In this instance, we embraced more of the studio and the artistry that can come from doing just that.

**TANGENTS:** Has your lyrical focus changed on this new album? (I.e., what you're writing about.)

**GARRIGAN:** Bruce usually gives a nod to

our last record and gives a preview of the next in the songs and through his lyrics. I'll have to defer to Bruce or Shawn on the lyrical subject matter.

**TANGENTS:** You did this album with Mitch Easter again. Describe the awesomeness of this.

**GARRIGAN:** Mitch Easter is one of the greatest rock & roll engineers of our time. He really understands the mechanics of timeless gear and microphones, and knows how that translates within the aesthetics of a band's performance and a song's mix. Also, he's a heck of a nice guy, and knows how to get the best performance out of the band.

**TANGENTS:** What are your plans with this album's release?

**GARRIGAN:** The good folks in Temperance League are most interested in playing live and making great-sounding records. It's what we are good at, and works for us. I think anything else would be icing on the cake, and while we're hungry and curious, we're not necessarily in line for cake.

There is another aspect to your questions that isn't easy to answer. If this batch of songs resonates strongly with people, maybe we'll have longer touring weekends in our immediate future. There are bridges that we'll talk about crossing if they make sense. I think "plans" outside of those terms seem like wishful thinking.

We want to make good records and play great shows. Anything outside of that doesn't seem real to us, and I think our collective experiences with the music industry have shaped our attitude. I can't speak for all band members, but I think while we may be in the group for different reasons, we all can agree that we want to keep playing rocking shows and making great-sounding records.

And, we enjoy each other's company. This is the first band that I've been in that craves hanging out with other. So with this release, there will be more of that!

**TANGENTS:** Your live shows have a celebratory, throw it all in the air kind of feel. Would

you describe TL's shows as a release?

**GARRIGAN:** I think a few things about Temperance League live shows. First, you have to know that we're not afraid to have a good time and we're there to have fun! If the muse hits us one way or the other, we usually ride it out and see where it goes. Second, every show is unique. While we write definite parts for the record, Chad and Bruce encourage the rest of the band to explore the moment. It's quite invigorating to experience the band ebbing and flowing a bit from the record.

**TANGENTS:** Have you thought about recording a live album?

**GARRIGAN:** We'll probably put out a b-side record before a live record, but I think we've casually mentioned a live record made at The Thirsty Beaver.

**TANGENTS:** Does each band member have a role in the group? If so, what are they?

**GARRIGAN:** Bruce is the songwriter, and we usually try to express his vision. He will rein us in if we are getting too far out (usually me). Shawn and Chad tend to have production mindsets. Shawn is really good at organizing us in the studio. Chad is really good with sequencing the songs on the records. We all have ideas to contribute, some more or less depending upon the song. While we all love rock 'n' roll, we all come from a slightly different place, and I think that adds to what we are trying to do.

**TANGENTS:** Complete this sentence. On any given night, \_\_\_\_\_ might happen at a Temperance League show?

**GARRIGAN:** "An Uber ride to FossCross" — yes, an inside joke. I think this band has been through everything and then some on the live front. Nothing surprises me anymore, and to be honest, I'm a bit disappointed if something extraordinary or surprising doesn't happen. We're a damn rock & roll band, and we mean to keep it that way.

**TANGENTS:** In the end, is it all just rock & roll, or is there more?

**GARRIGAN:** Personally speaking, while wisdom tells me there is much more to life, I don't think I'd like to do or be known for anything else but music. For the band, I think rock & roll is our life. It's our escape from our day jobs. It's our moment to dream of something ... different, more colorful and much louder. Many people give up their rock & roll dreams, and I'm so thankful for the opportunity to play with six crazy pals who focus on what racket we can make next.

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### Explosion

The quiet broke  
The words pounded  
The feelings erupted  
The gates opened  
The vibe flowed  
Words untold ...

— Raheku

## MUSIC

## Sammies do it all on their own

**TANGENTS:** New album. Tell us about it.

**WILL HUNTLEY:** We laid down most of the tracks at Echo Mountain in Asheville a couple years ago. Shortly thereafter, everyone in the band had life changing events. I had kids, Joe [Huntley] married. C.R. [Rollyson] married. Several of us moved ... just a lot of change. We laid down a lot of tracks and started to realize these eight needed their own album. They told a story of change, so it felt right. We reconvened at Charles Holloman Productions (CHP) and spent more time on vocals. Everyone had their punch list. We mixed it with Charles, and with tons of small sessions, got it all together. Sometimes just shooting the shit, probably more talking than working, but it's tough to have those conversations at a restaurant or home with distractions and all. It was also our first foray into doing it all on our own — for real indie style. Man, there are so many tools out there now for DIY musicians. It's great to have options, but again, it all takes time.

**TANGENTS:** Where have you guys been since the last record?

**HUNTLEY:** Swimming in the river of life. Enjoying ourselves a bit. Spending weekends at home instead of traveling playing bars and clubs. It's like we kicked up so much dust, we had to stop and let it all settle before we could see where the hell to go.

**TANGENTS:** How was the recording process for this record different than the previous albums?

**HUNTLEY:** Each album has been recorded somewhere different and with different guys behind the board. Not by design though. We were in the church side of Echo Mountain, and that was calming, I don't think we ever did more than three takes. They had all of the awesome Moog products that most of us cannot afford. (My wife would have a heart attack if I bought a 4K keyboard, but I will one day.) Moog products (and company structure) should be put on pedestals. I really believe in them, and I support the Bob

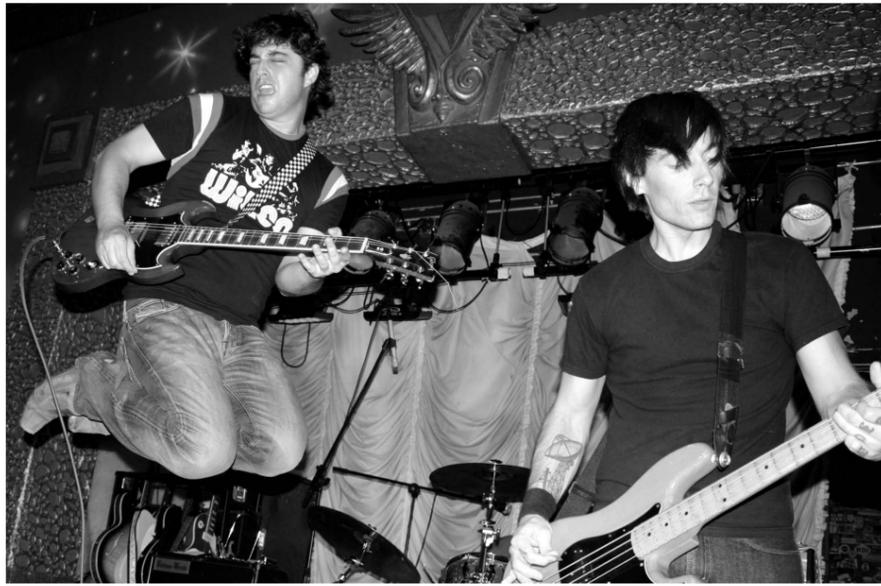


photo by Daniel Coston

Moog Foundation when I can. So, you can hear the nice analog synth. In between the songs is primarily a microKorg though, recorded at C.R.'s house and properly blended at CHP. Process-wise, we had our ducks in a row prior to setting foot inside Echo, so there was no songwriting happening on those recording dollars. Drum and bass record well together, but this time we did rhythm guitar and drums as a backbone. On some songs, we added bass lines after the fact. Some we tracked all at once.

**TANGENTS:** How has your sound changed since the first album?

**HUNTLEY:** Good Lord, we were all full of piss and vinegar back then. Young, dumb, reckless, like good boys. We were out to make money playing music, trying to be famous, and we had the work ethic. I just think we lost the vision at times. Times in a band have certain windows. But, you have to grow, and we have. It's funny, I was talking to Benji [Hughes] one night about the subject, debating if some songs had a place, and he said something along the lines of, "Man, it's a point in time you capture, and

that's okay. That's where you were then, and you can be somewhere else now. But they all have a place, and it's okay for an album to stray." The Sammies have always been hard to pin down. People always ask, "What do you sound like? Who do you sound like?" That's a hard question for me to answer well.

**TANGENTS:** What are your favorite songs on this new album?

**HUNTLEY:** Musicians are not the best judge, because a lot of times you get the songs they enjoy playing on what instrument they hold down. Again — Stones reference — Brian Jones would play the "Pink Panther" or something like that when they played "Satisfaction." He hated that song, and most of us would call him crazy.

**TANGENTS:** What are your touring plans for this new album?

**HUNTLEY:** We'll show up anywhere we are wanted, and money is not the object. I'd love to hit the road so to speak, but we also know that is easier said than done. We will probably hit weekends real hard, do as much of

the East Coast as we can. I'm also a fan of alternative venues. I don't know why bands have to play in bars primarily.

**TANGENTS:** Favorite shows in Sammies history. Discuss.

**HUNTLEY:** The toga party first CD release show! We were on point, well-practiced, feeling like the sky was the limit.

SXSW the first time ... 2005 or 2006? The festival was not as corporate. Austin is a great town, but every damn place we played was upstairs, so lugging that equipment got old quick. But all worth it.

CMJ, can't recall exact year. There is a YouTube video somewhere. Josh threw his beer into a light at the end of "Trainwreck." It exploded. Nobody cared. They wanted us to come back.

**TANGENTS:** You play barefoot onstage. How did that come about?

**HUNTLEY:** Not all of the time, but cords would get stuck on my shoes, I'd be kicking at them, trying to play and eventually would just kick off my shoes. When I wised up, I just started taking them off prior. It also allows a nice feel if you get too close to the edge of the stage. I guess. I'm not a true hippie though. I prefer shoes most other times.

**TANGENTS:** What would you all say to the versions of yourself that recorded that first Sammies album?

**HUNTLEY:** Dude, don't be so nervous. You've got this, and you can sing. Don't let others dictate how. You already know how. Don't try more than three times at a song without moving on. You can come back.

**TANGENTS:** Finish this sentence. Things that go well with rock 'n' roll are ...

**HUNTLEY:** Cold beer, cigarettes, good times, good company and that "High Fidelity" moment of remembering what song played when something else happened you deem important in your life.

## The Grim Freaker reviews whatever the hell he wants

## MUMFORD &amp; SONS

So I'm sitting in my immaculately clean fainting couch, reading a book about my grandfather El Santo (as far as you know), and I get a call asking me to photograph Mumford & Sons. "Heck yeah," I said. Let me grab my camera gear, slap on some baby oil, and I'm ready to take photos like a real wrestler.

When I got to the venue, I was thinking, "Yeah, European dudes rocking out with acoustic instruments. Like real men!" I hadn't been this excited since I pulled that blood capsule prank on Ric Flair in the Boston airport. Boy never saw that coming! Whoool!

Instead, all I see are a bunch of pretty boys trying to rock out with electric instruments and then falling back on their acoustic guitars. Judas! It was nothing but a bunch of twig boys swishing their girly hair around like it's going out of style. Oh wait, it *is* going out of style! Note to acoustic bands that want to rock. Please stop trying to remake the first Strokes album. Even the Strokes couldn't remake their first album. And somebody tell the Strokes and other haircut rock bands that they owe Jonathan Richman & the Modern Lovers a pony for ripping off their sound. I'm not messing with that Marcus dude in the middle, though. The guys works out too much. Lay off the power bars, dude!

## KURT VILE June 11, 2016

Man, there were some prissy indie rock kittens at this show. Starting with the motorcycle wannabe mama and her baldy boyfriend, who rambled incoherently, and accused anyone that got near them of being an ass. The Grim Freaker then had to deal with Drunk Girl flipping her hair around like her wig was about to fall off. I haven't seen that much grease flying around since the last Wrestlemania. Did your parents mean to drop you off at Dead & Co. and left you at this show instead? Please don't ever breed, you two, but if you do, call the World Wildlife Fund. They like being notified when some new freaky-ass species shows up on the planet.

And while you're back at your double-wide, tell all of your fussy indie friends to shut the hell up and listen to the music that you're supposed to be here listening to. Good God, you all get a couple of craft beers in you, and suddenly it's a Rascal Flatts concert! Paying \$35 to sit around and drink while talking to your friends isn't a concert, it's Facebook Premium. (Available starting next month via Paypal, or an App. You have read about this online.) You pride yourself on being into hip and cool things other than Ted Nugent, then stop acting like his audience.

Me and my Freakamaniacs are coming to your Doublewide, indier than thou, and we're taking you out. Man, to man-bun. Your trailer is easy to spot. It's the one with the Pavement sticker on the side.

## LORETTA LYNN WANNABEE

Sorta cool local record store, except when they don't have what I want, and I instead have to buy the new Monkees album at FYE.

So I hear that this kinda good looking alt-country is doing a free show at a local record store. And I'm like, YEAH! And it's Record Store Day. I can finally buy that ambient music boxset I've been looking for (gotta get your beauty sleep when you're the greatest wrestler in the world), and take some photos. Let's rock!

So I show up in my tights, wrestling mask, and 1920s boater hat (gotta look stylish for these kinda country folks), and this finger sandwich of a radio station intern comes over and says, "I'm sorry, you must have prior approval to photograph this artist," and won't face me when I try to answer her. What I really need in my life is to get fussed at by some snooty-ass intern who couldn't get hired by TCBY for the summer.

They did not respect the Grim Freaker! I know when I've been insulted! I know when

I've been insulted! I left the store, and got a manicure and pedicure, and got my sparkly Mexican wrestling mask steam-cleaned. While I was still wearing it! And looked good doing it! So there!

I'm calling you out, Krap Kountry intern! Here's hoping that my hordes of Freakamaniacs overwhelm your Facebook page with rude comments about your figure. Oh wait, you don't have one! So there! Here's hoping that you are forced to intern for Nickelback for the rest of your life! And get your radio station to play more than a bunch of ball caps and ass hats! I'm calling you out, kinda good-looking country singer. If I want to listen to Loretta Lynn, I'll listen to Loretta Lynn. You ain't woman enough to have me take your picture! When your thunder thighs turn into flabulance, your days are numbered! You'll have to get another job as a photographer, and you'll come to photograph my event, and I'll NOOOOO!!!!!! My intern will show you the door. And I will stand on top of my immaculately clean Victorian reclining couch and scream, "Victory is mine!!!!!!!!!!!!!! YEEEEEEAAAAAH!!!!!"

No, I'm not bitter about it, though.

I'm the Grim Freaker. I wrestle Big Men and Twig Girls, I take photos, and I crochet lace doilies that look like my wrestling mask. You got a problem with that?!

## HUMOR

# “Senior Goth Night” at Cure concert a rousing success

PNC Pavilion were thrilled with the success of their inaugural “Senior Goth Night” promotion, which brought droves of geriatric music fans to the recent Cure concert.

Black tour buses began showing up at PNC Pavilion, hours before the gates were to open, so that attendees would be sure that they wouldn't be late. Waves of seniors, wearing black with comfortable shoes, streamed into the amphitheater. A sea of dyed blue hair and dyed black hair could be seen amongst

of their happy, yet mopey faces.

“They were one of the nicest crowds we've ever had here,” said one of the venue volunteers who were brought in to help with crowd control, and directions to the bathroom. “They even pouted with impeccable manners.”

Once inside, fans could enjoy the concert, or relax in a series of stations designed for the evening. Headphones were available for listening to more relaxing goth music, or a special Yanni channel, if the goths were ready for their nap. Special TV rooms gave

fans the option of watching episodes of The Young Ones or re-runs of Wheel Of Fortune. A special dance floor was also set up for those that wanted to dance to the Cure, or take part in a Zumba class.

“This is the future for many concertgoers,” said Bill Ozment, head of PNC Pavilion's public relations. “Much of the audience that come to concerts like this are getting older, and we have to adjust to it. And quite frankly, I'll do a show for geriatric goths over a bunch of hipster bro-country idiots any day. Older

goths don't tip over the porta-potties. They'd hurt their back, and their bladders aren't as strong as they used to be.”

For some, however, the sight of once-rebellious musical movement turning into senior living was hard to take. “Out in the parking lot today, I saw a Bauhaus on a Cadillac,” said another volunteer. “I should have directed them to the correct space, but a little voice inside my head said, “Don't look back. You can never look back.”

— J.F. Keaton

## Nickelback joins HB2 fight by playing North Carolina

With numerous musical acts boycotting North Carolina over House Bill 2, the rock band Nickelback announced that they were joining that fight — by playing in the Tar Heel state.

“Our audience is kinda dumb,” admitted singer Chad Kroeger during an interview, “but even we think that this bill is a bad idea. So, we decided to take a stand, and we're proud to say that we'll be playing all over North Carolina until the bill is repealed.”

When asked what will make the N.C. government take notice of the band's actions when other boycotts have failed, Kroeger replied, “Oh, they'll notice. We gave them all tickets — right up front. And their families, too. They'll be sitting there,

and we'll come out and play all of our knuckle-dragging hits at full volume. For several hours. Which is pretty easy to do, since it's all the same song anyway. Then we'll blow stuff up and set stuff on fire. If that doesn't break the impasse, I don't know what will.”

When asked about Nickelback's decisions, state legislator Tom Apoopoo replied, “Oh, dear God, no. Send me to Detroit, force me to watch all of Michael Moore's movies, anything but that!”

When asked about it, Governor Pat McCrory said, “Hey, that sounds great. I've heard really good things about Nickelback. Can we get tickets?”

— J.F. Keaton

## Senator Phil Berger dons dress as a warning

Standing outside a Target bathroom while dressed in a dowdy spring dress, N. C. General Assembly Senate leader Phil Berger spoke to the media about the need to keep men dressed as women out of restrooms. “We created HB2 for incidents just like this. The fact that I, a middle-aged and somewhat creepy looking male, can dress up as a woman and walk into a bathroom, proves all the more why the governor and I acted the way that we did.”

When asked where he found the wrinkled dress and blouse, and the clumsily-applied makeup, Berger replied, “From my

mother. There are advantages to still living at home. See, Dad?!”

Berger also stated that in order to prove the merits of HB2, much of the General Assembly are prepared to do the same throughout North Carolina. “We'll do whatever's necessary. Bathrooms, baseball games, bar mitzvahs. We'll put on women's clothing and hang around in bars. Let this be a warning to Jennifer Roberts, Roy Cooper and others. If you thought that we were ugly before, just you wait.”

— J.F. Keaton



Scott Partridge

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## Astrology predictions from your mom

If today is your birthday, I didn't have time to bake you a cake.

**AQUARIUS:** I threw out all of your comic books. You weren't reading them anymore, anyway.

**PISCES:** You're going with that person? Really? Did you meet them at the police station?

**ARIES:** Your childhood home? We had it bulldozed because someone offered us cash for the land. Didn't we tell you?

**TAURUS:** Can you go tell your father that he's being a dumbass. Again.

**GEMINI:** Grandchildren? Where are my grandchildren!?

**CANCER:** Why yes, we did feed paint chips to you when you were young. The doctor said that it would build up your immune system. What's the matter?

**LEO:** I gave your toys to the neighborhood children. You weren't playing with them anymore, anyway.

**VIRGO:** Can you come and pick up all of your old things? We need the space for the B&B that we're going to run out of your old room.

**LIBRA:** I'm thinking about voting for Trump. Are you okay with that?

**SCORPIO:** Do you have space in your apartment for us? Your father and I are thinking about downsizing.

**SAGITTARIUS:** The sun rises in the morning, and sets in the evening. The moon rises and falls. The sky speaks to beautiful blue clouds, day in and day out, and the green grass warms our weary feet. And that is why we love your sister more than you.

**CAPRICORN:** You know I love you. That's why I nag the heck out of you.

— The Swarthy Swami

HUMOR

Completely Wrong and Totally Inappropriate, Vol. 2

LOONIS MCGLOHON

Loonis McGlohon was one of Charlotte's best ever musicians. McGlohon rose to fame as musical director for both WBT and WBTV during the '50s. He interviewed the likes of Billie Holliday live on WBT radio and hosted WBTV's first-ever jazz program "Nocturne." McGlohon would go on to accompany artists such as Judy Garland and collaborate with everyone from writer Alec Wilder to longtime newsman Charles Kuralt. Two of McGlohon's songs were sung by Frank Sinatra on his 1980 album "She Shot Me Down." He also invented death metal.

During the '80s, McGlohon would go to meet with the likes of bands such as Corrosion of Conformity and Cannibal Corpse with kind encouragement to play death metal. "You're playing some nice music, boys," McGlohon would say, "but you need to play heavier and louder. Work more with that Black Sabbath-like drop-D tuning, and make sure to sing like a really angry Cookie Monster. That way, no one will know when you're singing about puppies, flowers or the end of the world." When the bands would ask why McGlohon wasn't playing this music himself, he'd smile and say, "Well, boys, this music is played better by young men like yourselves. Besides, Sinatra doesn't like to sing songs in minor keys."

Loonis McGlohon. Writer, musician, all-around nice guy. And inventor of death metal. Miss you, Loonis.

NAMING OF CHARLOTTE STREETS

During the 1800s, many streets in Charlotte were named for the towns that they led to, such as Monroe Road or Camden Road. Even more were named for their functionality. Trade Street had been a trading route for American Indians while College Street once was once home to all the colleges in Charlotte. Church Street was lined with a number of churches.

This thinking also applied to the naming of other streets in Charlotte. Mint Street was named for the big freaking leprechaun that used to roam that road, threatening to kill anyone who accused him of being magically delicious. Stonewall Avenue was not named for Stonewall Jackson, contrary to legend, but was named for the giant wall that Donald Trump's grandfather Adolf Drumpf built to keep Gastonians out of Charlotte. Colony Road was named for the colony that had gotten really lost on their way back from Okracoke, while Independence Boulevard was named for those who believed in the Meck Dec ... as well as the big freaking lep-

rechaun, the giant wall on Stonewall and the deed to the Brooklyn Bridge.

Then there's Sharon. Well, you know, she got around a bit. You know wot I mean? Of course, she created a different name for herself in every part of town so that the locals would think they weren't all talking about the same Sharon. So, Sharon became Sharon Road, Sharon Avenue, Sharon Amity, Sharon Road West, Sharon Lakes. And on those occasional wild nights ... Elizabeth Avenue.

Don't ask about Morehead Street. Or Dick Road or Cowboy Lane.

RANDOLPH SCOTT

Randolph Scott was a popular cowboy actor for nearly four decades. Raised in Charlotte, he would serve in the U.S. Army and later move to Hollywood. He would become the epitome of the handsome American cowboy and the idol of millions. He would also be single-handedly responsible for the population boom in Charlotte over the latter half of the 20th century.

In the early spring of 1967, the city of Charlotte was dying. Much of its community was aging out and others were moving to more bustling locales such as Locust. Strange crystals were appearing in the

hands of Charlotteans under the age of 30. Mayor Stan Brookshire knew that he had to act ... and act fast.

He called together all Charlotteans of child-bearing age to Freedom Park on a Saturday afternoon. "Good people of Charlotte," Brookshire said from the podium, "this city needs you more than ever, and needs your children. Find a partner, say hello, and create babies. Now!" The entire crowd looked at each other in bewilderment. They weren't used to doing this sort of thing in public. They all had just met, and prom season was still two months away. In a moment of desperation, Brookshire took off his cowboy hat and shouted, "You'd do it for Randolph Scott!"

The crowd responded by talking off their cowboy hats, singing "RAN-dolph SCOTT!!!!" in unison, and they all began to fornicate. People visiting from California were amazed that all of these people could make love in public without exchanging money or thank you notes. They soon took stories of "free love" and "love-ins" back to California, and the Summer of Love soon took hold across the world. A year later, Charlotte's population numbers had exploded, and the city's future was assured. All thanks to Randolph Scott.

— J.F. Keaton

Belk to start selling band t's?

Hi everyone! It's Barbie Triplett, your favorite store clerk at Hot Topic. And I've got some really big news for you guys!

You know Belk department store? The one that my mom always goes to? But we never do because it's so big and so expensive? Well, my old boss Ms. Harper just got hired to be their CEO (whatever that means), and she made me a store manager! I'm like really important now! OMG! LMAO!

Belk is so big you could fit, like, 20 Hot Topic's inside. So that's what we're going to do! First off, we're replacing all of those

stuff, high-priced evening wear clothes with t-shirts! All of your favorite bands like One Direction and all the other groups that were popular when we were in elementary school. For those who prefer a more classy look, all of your classic t-shirts will also be available! Misfits, Ramones, Star Wars and Justin Bieber before he got old and weird.

So, now we've got a whole store full of old clothes that look like my mom and dad's clothes. But you can't just throw them out. That's, like, wasteful, and poor people might actually wear these clothes if they had to.

So, what to do? I know! Spangles! Spangles on everything! This is gonna be awesome! We're gonna have a whole store of Bedazzled and spangled clothes! And hairpray! Lots of hairspray! And girls, all of our clothes are gonna be under ten bucks! That's right! You can go on, I mean, a major shopping spree, and your mom won't have as much of a reason to yell at you! And you can tell her that you now shop at her old favorite store! OMG! How about that?

I know your parents are gonna be upset about this change. Belk has been this really

big store, I mean, forever. The Belk family is supposed to be really important. I think one of them signed the Declaration of Independence. But change is good. Change is constant. And if we have more change in our pocket, we can do more shopping! And let's face it, girls, we're the next generation, and we know what we want. And ripped jeans and shorts are going to look awesome at next year's prom!

I'm Barbie Triplett, and I'm modern southern style. Or something like that. See you at the mall!



# LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

## Charlotte can do better than North Carolina

North Carolina, you continue to outdo yourself in the dumbassery department. Most states realize pretty quickly that a new law that they just enacted is costing them a lot of respect, and lots of money. But nooooooo. Your governor files a federal lawsuit, the specifics of which were just shot down by a federal appeals court just a few weeks ago, thereby assuring that more legal and business money will be leaving North Carolina for years to come, and still have the same result. How very Berlin Bunker of you. Meanwhile, your General Assembly Cabinet of Dr. Caligari shuts down an HB2 repeal, while simultaneously voting to spend \$2 million on public relations for the very same problem that they created, and are continuing to create. Carolina comeback? More like an ipecac.

Many people have told me that I should boycott North Carolina and leave the state entirely. Well, I did. In 1998. When I originally left this state of potholes and potty-minded politicians, Pat McCrory was just an annoying mayor of Charlotte. But even then I realized that I didn't need him to continue my worldwide chain of topless dinner theaters. Looking out now from my office tower in Bahrain (the sunsets here, with the dual suns, look just like that scene in the original "Star Wars," by the way), I'm glad that I made that move. I'm just using the original *Tangents* staffers to draw your advertising dollars to my wallet, all while answering to your call to leave this state behind. Feel better now?

North Carolina, I don't know how to say this any other way, but you have an abusive relationship issue with your politicians. You complain to your friends that your representatives don't make you feel safe anymore. That

they've changed. That they used to seem so nice, so well-dressed. And then you convince yourself that the next four years will be better, and you re-elect them. Over, and over again.

For the record, McCrory was never the nice guy that he pretended to be. Anyone in the Charlotte media that was on the re-

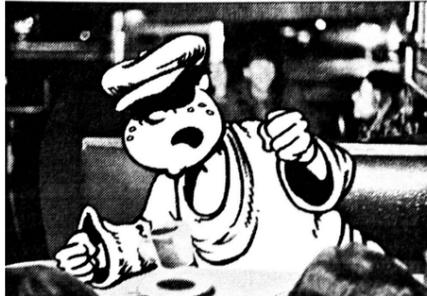


photo by Daniel Coston

**North Carolina, I don't know how to say this any other way, but you have an abusive relationship issue with your politicians.**

ceiving end of one of his whiny crank-calls (I'm sorry, Mayor/Governor, I should say, "reaching out to members of the news media") about some perceived slight can tell you that even then, he chafed and burned like one of his own over-starched shirts. He never was what he was perceived to be, and is now even worse. Kind of like a certain coffeehouse in North Davidson that tossed copies of *Tangents*. What do they both have

in common? A lot of old hype, and coffee that tastes like coal ash.

I see a lot of North Carolina's skull-numbing numbskullery from my office in Bahrain (where yes, I can see your house from here). There's the superintendent in Eastern North Carolina (who by the way, looks as amazingly pervy in his PR photo as most of the General Assembly) who banned a local resident after they discovered that the county was excluding students from a school program. That resident, by the way, was 2016 NC Literary Hall Of Fame honoree Clyde Edgerton. North Carolina is all about messages, they say. Here's the one I get from that school system. Welcome! You're here to learn. Wait, you learn something? Get out of here. We don't need no education, we just need thought control.

Cut the cord, North Carolina! Get a restraining order, Charlotte! Your representatives don't represent you anymore! Don't just post an angry rant on Facebook or Twitter, do something about it. Remember the mistakes that they made when you have the chance to vote. Don't forgive and forget, just forget them. Only then will North Carolina truly be represented by people that live in this state, and their diverse ideas and visions. As for Charlotte, be proud of who you are, and not who others in the state want you to be. They call you the great state of Mecklenburg? Maybe it's time for that thought to become reality. Hmmmmmmm ...

Stand up, Charlotte. Stand up, North Carolina. Be proud. Be strong. Now go get the hell out of my office. I'm busy watching the sunsets.

— Dickie Typoe



"Soco Gallery 2-03-15"  
by Hannah Rochester Barnhardt  
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### Thoughts of a Bi-polar Challenge

What is the requirement  
To develop the necessary  
experience  
That builds confidence

Each day as a new ray shines  
I achieve the exhilarating emptiness  
That invites the new dawn  
To conquer the image of what is  
meant to be.

I pray for a miracle to  
Lift this veil that covers the sun  
shine  
But the sensational joy that leaves  
me painful  
Can only be illusions that keeps me  
forever  
In doubting hopes.

My spirit wonders if life can ever be  
Like an easy Sunday morning,  
The ones that I chose to remember  
As if just yesterday ...

Off i wander to escape the  
despairing bleakness ...

Instantly I am returned to reality..  
To the prison that has confined me  
To this jovial dark room that is my  
world

Can I ever live life according to the  
instruction  
That is labeled on my salvation ...  
Or can I live to be free..  
To be me ...

— Raheku



"We Have Been Warned" by Jerry Kirk

jerrykirk.com

# OPINION

## And now, a message from Big Dumb America

You've heard about us. Maybe you know some of us. And soon, maybe you'll be one of us.

We live in homes all across America. In trailer parks, in mansions. And occasionally, even a Governor's mansion. We make lots of money, or very little money. We're white, mostly, and we still think that we're the majority in America. We're on TV and talk radio, and we like a lot to consume a lot of TV and talk radio. We like to convince ourselves that we're thinking for ourselves, all while searching out other people that look and think just like us.

We don't like smart people. We're not smart. We're proud of our simplicity, our t-shirts and ball caps. And their designer labels, too. Dubya taught us to fear smart people. They might come up with a different answer than us. Smart people can think rationally, and work out problems without yelling or screaming. We don't know how to do that. That scares us. We don't trust people that are smart. They must be terrorists!

We attack people on social media without actually looking into the facts. Body shaming, crime victims, cancer patients. It's

all a game to us. Facts are for people that like to read, and stuff like that. That would require thinking, and we don't like people that think. That takes time, and we don't like to take time. We like the way that anger makes us feel, and allows us to act to ask without thinking. We then don't know why people get mad at us later for saying those things. It felt good to us at the time. Isn't that enough?

Politicians don't understand us, but they'll do whatever we want for our votes. They fear smart people, just like us. They'll do all of sorts of stupid things to appease us. In Congress, in the North Carolina General Assembly. We've never read the rest of HB2, and how it would affect us. That would require reading, and we don't like to read. But hey, it's all about drag queens trying to pee next to me, right? We also demand that politicians care more about us. And then we vote out of anger, regardless of whether or not the candidates care about us.

The rest of the world fears us, but is strangely drawn to our pushy ways. Our blue jeans, our Middle Class Trailer Trash sensibilities. The rest of the world can hate

us, but they follow and parrot our culture, all while forgetting their own. The rest of the world spent thousands of years building up a legacy of art, culture, and the possibilities of a new and enlightened world. And we destroyed all of that with TV and bro-country. That seems like a fair trade.

We vote for Trump, and we don't know why. He's got big hair. He's tanned in really weird places. He mishears information, or just hears what he wants to hear, and proceeds to flame the world via social media. His version of an apology is blaming somebody else for reacting to his own mistakes. Oh wait, that's why we vote for him. He's just like us. We like to rail against authority, but secretly, we want to be authority. Be the Man. The White Man. Be the bully that we hated in school, but always want to be. Isn't that the American Way?

We're Big Dumb America. Pronounced Murica. Pronounced duh, or uhhhhh, or just with a flurry of obscenities. We're here. We've everywhere. We don't have a lick of sense, and we aren't going away.

Thank you, and goodnight. Now go fetch me a Bud Light, I'm hungry.



"Heist Brewery 11-20-15" by Hannah Rochester Barnhardt

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"We Have Been Warned" by Jerry Kirk

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CHARLOTTE'S TOILET TABLOID

STAFF

- Daniel (Irredeemably boring delinquent who has delusions of adequacy) Coston
- Carl (Preposterous mucous-eating pitiful sideshow freak) Fulmer
- Cindy (Shameless exhibition of genetic deficiency) Sites-Wooley
- Lewd (Perverse congenitally clueless plague upon humanity)

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My Muse

Okay all, I have found my muse, and he goes something like this ...

I read the poems of  
Listervelt Middleton today  
And man if you only knew,  
The power behind each word  
My heart could not subdue  
The discontentment  
The pain and shame  
The pride (which some do hide)  
Anger, resentment, hatred  
Was all leaking inside

His nourishing food filled my belly  
And quench my thirst  
and made me hunger,  
which left me parched ...

man this brother knew  
to reach inside of me  
and make my body move,  
to the groove ...  
causing every element  
within my soul  
wake and reach and hold  
and claim the desire and hunger  
to grown and develop  
to sing and to bring  
to all a new song ...

the song of my mothers  
the song of my fathers  
the song of my ancestors  
the song I sing ...

— Raheku

# The Comedy Zone

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**STEVE BYRNE**  
AUGUST 4 to 6  
HBO  
Chappelle's Show  
Sullivan & Son  
CONAN  
Tough Guy Show

**THE BET AWARDS**  
August 11-13  
CBS  
The Show with James Corden

**GARY OWEN**  
August 18-21  
Ride Along  
BET  
Think Like a Man

**THIS IS NOT HAPPENING**  
SIRIUS  
AUGUST 25-27  
"BIG" Jay  
Oakerson  
The Jim Carrey Show  
UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES  
THE DAVE ATTEL

**LIL DUVAL**  
SEPT 1-4  
BET  
GUY CODE

**SEPTEMBER 16-18**  
**SINBAD**  
abc  
Bulldog

**FX LEAGUE**  
**STEVE RANNAZZISI**  
FX'S THE LEAGUE  
SEPT 22-24  
WINNER

**BOBBY COLLINS**  
SEPT 29 to OCT 1  
Bravo  
FOX  
VH1

Wednesday - Saturday  
**October 5-8**  
**JON BEEB**  
LAST MAN STANDING  
WINNER  
NBC

**OCTOBER 13 - 15**  
**TOM SEGURA**  
CONAN  
SHOWTIME  
NETFLIX

**DOUG BENSON**  
ONE SHOW ONLY  
Sat 10/15 @ 4:20pm  
DIA

"Original King of Comedy"  
**DL HUGHLEY**  
October 21-23  
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Dancing with the Stars  
BET  
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# TANGENTS

I know where I'm going and I know the truth, and I don't have to be what you want me to be.  
I'm **FREE** to be what I want.  
— Muhammad Ali



Charlotte's Toilet Tabloid

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MILESTONE PHOTO EXHIBIT  
THE LAST WORD DIVE REVIEW  
J. MATTHEW SAUNDERS INTERVIEW  
CHARLOTTE 48 HOUR FILM PROJECT  
BAND INTERVIEWS, HUMOR, ART & POETRY!

## Tales of Bongo, Stolis and the Richardsons As Lupie passes the torch



photo by Daniel Costan

Share it with a friend, and for God's sake ... Don't pitch this rag!

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