



CHARLOTTE'S TOILET TABLOID

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OPINION

Our dying city

POINT

I grew up in the Northeast U.S. in the early '80s under grey skies and darkening economies as jobs dried up and businesses began to close, I watched the towns I loved begin to die a slow death. As businesses left, so did the people. Once they were gone, the towns were essentially gone. Like many, I cannot return to the town I grew up in ... the people I loved, the school I went to, even the house I lived in. They're all gone, never to return.

My family moved to Charlotte, searching for a different life. As I look out across the city I've lived in for 33 years, I see shades of my childhood. That awful feeling of loss is returning, and I fear that Charlotte is now losing its identity and lifeblood. Except now, it is all due to prosperity.

With so many developers eager to shake off the Great Recession of 2008, apartments and office buildings are popping up all across town and destroying the fabric of the neighborhoods that they overwhelm. Developers rebuild in a location that has been left to rot. The neighborhood becomes more popular, and a wave of new people and new money turn it into something else entirely. Now, the game is bigger, the money is larger, and the race to cash in is faster than anyone is prepared to halt.

The list of what we've lost in the past year and what we may be about to lose is staggering. Near South End, the Radio Center apartments will be torn down, soon to be replaced by a grocery store. Much of what brought people back to South End ... Tremont Music Hall, Common Market, the food truck rallies, and others ... are being leveled for apart-

ments and office buildings.

In Plaza-Midwood, we lost Reflection Studios, the old church at the corner of Central Ave. and Hawthorne Ln. and Swing 1000. Businesses such as Beadlush and Tommy's Pub are being forced out of their current locations too.

When you push small businesses out of their buildings, many cannot afford to stay in Charlotte. They're going elsewhere, with towns like Gastonia and Belmont already angling to pick up these businesses.

The Double Door Inn? Yes, unbelievably, we are discussing the second-oldest blues venue in the U.S. being turned to rubble. The Double Door building is over 100 years old, but Central Piedmont Community College seems intent on turning it into another parking lot. All of this under a college president who prides himself on being a city historian yet has systematically destroyed the community around the college.

The question becomes, what is Charlotte turning into? You can stick a picture of a yuppie playing guitar on a billboard, but it will never replace Reflection Studios. You can tear down old buildings to erect new buildings in what used to be the Brooklyn neighborhood, but the people who used to live there are not coming back. When the people are gone, and what used to bring them to those places are gone, it's gone for good. The time has changed. The people have changed. They've gone elsewhere, never to come back. Sure, another crowd will come in, but they will be saddened by the stories that they've heard about what used to be there. They'll toast the memories in another

nameless bar, in another box that looks and feels like all the others.

And what will be left of Charlotte when all of these small businesses are gone? A series of big buildings with no character. Like the spaces that you see along barren highways across the U.S. Towns where developers pushed the growth along the highway but forgot that there used to be life in those torn down urban buildings. You pass those developments as you go somewhere else, but you never stop. Because there's nothing behind the buildings ... no culture, no vibrancy, no reason to visit or live there. Nothing to see here, just keep going. That, in our haste to show off our prosperity, is what is happening to our city. Just another dot on the map that looks like every other dot. So many people, but it's got no soul. And if we're not careful, the city will not come back. And the cycle that many of us tried to flee all those years ago begins anew.

What can be done? In Charlotte, we have come to accept losing our history with an on-going, sad shrug. We never save anything. It's happening again? Oh, well. A few people have gathered to put their voices and their money together to save a place they loved. And if they lost that building, the movement would then push to save the next place. We cannot save everything, but even if one business is saved, the results can change and even save the city. And, perhaps, also saving the people who were a part of the fight.

The future and what it means for us begins now. Our city is dying. Have you noticed? Do you care? Or have you already moved on? — J.F. Keaton

Fried chicken, hot asphalt and funnel cake: A story of Carowinds

by Cindy Sites-Woolley

Carowinds and I both were born in spring of 1973 and it's been a part of my family's life, in one way or another, for most of the years since. My two oldest brothers went to work there when the park and I were a year or two old. One worked at the jalopies and the other at the speedway cars, befitting their respective personalities.

My parents started taking me to Carowinds when I was two, and Mom and I got season passes every year starting when I was about seven. She was a teacher's assistant and had summer vacations like I did, so we visited the park on weekdays. On some of those mornings it felt like we had the place to ourselves, especially our beloved carousel. Mom always gave me quarters for the claw machine and bought us frozen lemonades. Although I sometimes felt uncool because I wasn't going to Carowinds with other kids, I wouldn't change those times for anything now that Mom's gone. Carowinds was ours, a place Mom didn't share with anyone else like she did with me. As soon as I smell the fried chicken, hot asphalt, and funnel cake, I'm nine again.

In high school I followed in my brothers' footsteps and got my own Carowinds job. They wouldn't let you work in rides if you were under 18, so I had to pay my dues in food service. At first I got assigned to the Grubstake burger place (currently a seafood joint) by the Carolina Goldrusher. When I was on patio duty I could see the now-defunct Blackbeard's Revenge ride, where my then-boyfriend worked. We waved our secret hand signals at each other across the way.

After two months at Grubstake I got to transfer to the games at Carolina Showplace, which still stand (more or less) next to Midway Music Hall. I was happy to trade the white shirt, khaki pants, and blue gingham apron of food service for a white and blue sailor outfit that was almost cute. With the microphone in my hand, I discovered my inner carnival barker and drew in plenty of players. I earned enough "star card" employee rewards to win a cup, t-shirt, and special name tag (the last of which I lost years ago). I could've happily worked there for years.

To my surprise, when I signed up for my third season at Carowinds I found myself

"promoted" to Hanna-Barbera Land — the upper half, which didn't include the carousel or Scooby Doo roller coaster. This half comprised the kiddie sky tower, Boo-Boo's Balloon Race, and a raft ride that was like a baby Rip Roarin' Rapids. I was issued two aggressively frilly yellow and white uniforms. For an hour every day I had restroom duty, which wasn't as bad as it sounds because the place was air conditioned and it got me out of the sun for an hour. It was cleaner than your average Target loo. What finally drove me to quit was the parents who would yell at me for telling their kids to sit down on a ride or stop running.

At the time I didn't appreciate how lucky I was to have a summer job at a theme park. In hindsight, it was like being a more respectable carnie: similar rides, concessions, and games, but with far fewer mechanical failures, much sillier outfits, and military-like grooming standards. It was the most diverse group of coworkers I've had: students, teachers, retirees, and performing artists of different races, ages, and genders. It's an experience that only a small percentage of humans ever have and I'm proud of it.

My last season at Carowinds was summer 1992. In the nineties I only went to Carowinds twice, both times to see bands at the Paladium. I saw Depeche Mode on the Devotional tour, and a fantastic triple bill of Hothouse Flowers, Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers, and Midnight Oil. From 2002-2008 I lived in Raleigh and didn't give much thought to Carowinds, except for the happy memories.

A couple of years ago, my husband and I started getting Carowinds season passes. We especially love the Goldrusher, the carousel, and those glorious two months of Scarowinds in autumn. The food's even gotten better. We can't really handle the fastest rides, but that's okay. Every carousel ride circles me back to those days with Mom.

Next year we can all look forward to some vintage refurbished amusement park rides that Carowinds is importing from Europe. Let's face it, some of us get sick too easily for Fury 325, but we still like having fun. Even though I can't handle all the rides I could 30 years ago, I hope I never stop loving that smell of fried chicken, hot asphalt, and funnel cake.

In future issues we'll be featuring the stories of a former Papa Smurf and a former Klingon.

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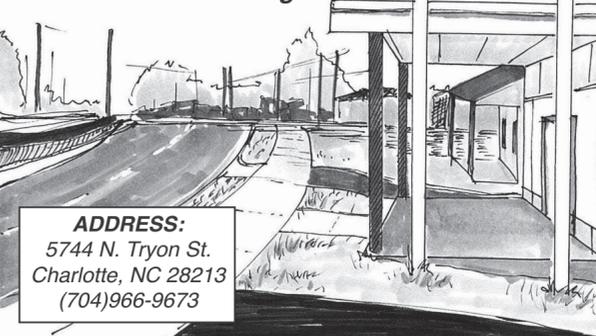
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My Song

My song is power
My song is strong
My song cry freedom
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Hold high your head
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Mother of the world

My song sings brother
My strong black man
our symbol of honor
And God's right hand

My song says children
Don't fear to dream
Of greater tomorrows
Carried on moon beams

My song says mother
Carry in your womb
Strong kings and queens
And reclaim your home

My song says fathers
Replant your earth
That your name will be carried
With each new birth

My song finds pride
And peace within
Knowing that one day
a new song begins

My song is power
My song is strong
My song cries freedom
'Cause it won't be long ...

— Raheku



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HUMOR

The General Assembly's big night out

Celebrating their enacting an anti-LGBT discrimination ordinance, the North Carolina General Assembly marked the occasion with an all-night party of drinking and hedonism that some have described as the weirdest and whitest orgy that Raleigh has seen in years.

"It was like an orgy," described one witness. "An orgy of uptight white people. Really ugly white people."

According to various reports, the celebration started innocently enough with a dinner at a local Fuddrucker's. But after Congressman Bob Rucho spiked the unsweetened tea with Bud Light and Red Bull, the party quickly began to get out of control.

In a matter of minutes, all of the assembly members were vigorously grabbing each other's torsos, as they formed a conga line through the restaurant. Several congressmen were later heard to be bragging about the length of their conga line.

Soon after, all of the congressmen, sweating profusely and shedding their clothing, decided to move the party to a nearby bar named the Brass Rail. All of the state's top Republican leaders were seen indulging in mud wrestling, mechanical bull riding while wearing various outfits, and a

strip-poker version of tug-of-war. Several congressmen seemed to enjoy this activity most of all, exclaiming to all, "I love pulling on a big rope!" while removing their pants.

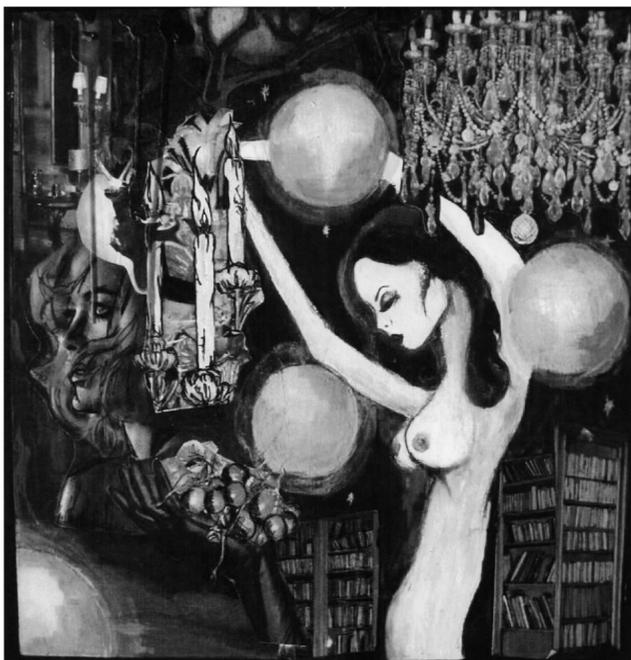
After Governor McCrory arrived late, several assembly members carried him to the dance floor where they danced the next few hours to a mixture of songs by the Village People and Soft Cell. "This music is a great way to blow off steam after a great day," said McCrory. "By the way, what's the meaning of that song, 'Sex Dwarf'?"

"I haven't had this much excitement since I got rear-ended in San Francisco," added McCrory.

All in all the Assembly seemed to enjoy their victory despite costing the state millions of dollars in revenue from companies nationwide. "Companies outside of North Carolina do business here?" asked one congressman. "That can't be true. Art Pope would've told us about it."

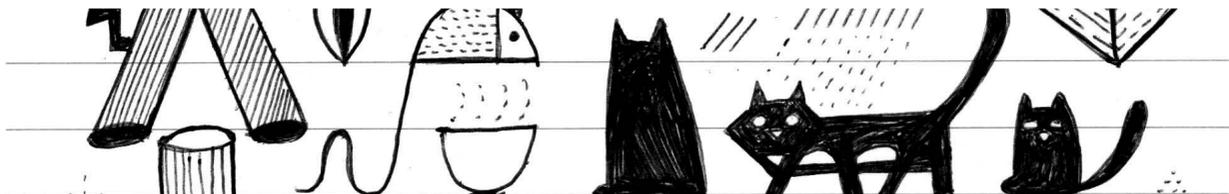
When last seen, the General Assembly had moved the party to an all-night abandoned warehouse where they all stripped naked and were painting each other in the colors of the American flag.

— J.F. Keaton



"Walspurgisnacht" by Mila Varushka

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Thomas Carr www.thomascarrphotography.com

Dedicated to lifting up black voices

If you've been anywhere near a stage in Charlotte over the last ten years, chances are that you saw, or saw the work of, Quentin Talley. Actor, poet, director, producer. Founder of OnQ Productions, which has brought new and classic stories of the black experience to Charlotte since 2006. Need a rhyme at a poetry slam? Talley has got it. Need someone to host a gala, complete with dance moves? Yes, Talley's done that, too.

Johnson C. Smith University recently honored Talley as one of this year's Arch of Triumph honorees, a recognition usually only given to those with decades of work behind them.

Daniel Coston interviewed Talley his experience with theater in Charlotte.

TANGENTS: What productions are you working on now?

TALLEY: We recently wrapped auditions and callbacks and started preliminary production meetings for our last show of this season, Toni Morrison's "The Bluest Eye," adapted by Lydia Diamond and directed by Kim Parati. The show runs June 1-11 at Duke Energy Theater at Spirit Square. All of this while planning our tenth anniversary season, which will begin in August.

TANGENTS: Talk about theater's culture. What does theater do for your life? How come Charlotte is where your company is located?

TALLEY: Theater for me has always been a place for self expression and is the ultimate platform of creativity to tell a story through multiple mediums of art (i.e. from costume designer to scenic to lighting, video, drama-turgy, history, etc.). Theater encompasses



Quentin Talley has been a constant presence on the Charlotte stage for the past ten years.

photo by Daniel Coston

so much. As far as the work that the company does, I feel it's truly important.

We are the only theater arts non-profit organization in the city that educates and produces professional theater that reflects the black experience. Culture and history live through stories. One of the most dangerous things that can occur for a people is failure to tell their own stories. It is at the peril of being falsely depicted and virtually erased from history that we fail to tell and re-tell, celebrate and preserve stories from our lives. Comparable to none other, the story is too vivid, too varied, too vibrant and too vital to American history ever to be forgotten.

OnQ has helped transform the Charlotte arts scene by filling a void in the cultural landscape by telling compelling stories, dedicated to lifting up black voices and viewpoints, authentically and artistically, through theater.

TANGENTS: Is there a dialogue that can happen with people through art and theater?

TALLEY: Oh, definitely. Theater has always provided a safe space to reflect and address issues that plague our society. It's an art form that is a timeless natural conduit for conversation.

TANGENTS: Are there more creative possibilities in working with a company of performers, as opposed to being a solo act?

TALLEY: Another definite. The more creatives in a room the better. Usually, it makes the project/performance. Even when I'm working on a solo project, it's not done in a vacuum, as I reach out to artists I trust to provide their critiques/ideas/opinions to make the project stronger.

TANGENTS: What do you hope that people get from your solo works or your larger company productions?

TALLEY: Whether solo or as the company, I hope audiences will see high quality, authentic work that speaks to the resilience of humanity.

Zombie Snott is great for hair

Anyone who has dyed their hair in a vivid hue not naturally found on human heads has dealt with dry hair and quickly fading color. Patrick Jason Boswell and Karl Klaudt, two well-known Charlotte hairdressers at Hair Klaudt Salon & Gallery in Plaza-Midwood, have set out to change that with Zombie Snott, described as "radioactive hair color that lasts long after you dye." This cruelty-free, fade-resistant hair dye comes in five colors: Ballistic Blue, Violet X, Blood Orchid, O Hell Yellow, and Gamma Ray Green.

"The number one complaint we get from customers and stylists is that their hair color fades too quickly," says Klaudt. "Zombie Snott is formulated to be more resilient." Zombie Snott is made in-house at Hair Klaudt. "For two years all of my spare time has gone into the creation of this hair color line," Boswell says. "The color absolutely lasts longer than any other color I've used before," says Charlotte stylist Ali Boone.

"I love the color, and I tell Karl and Patrick that every time I see them," says Melissa Myer. As Zombie Snott's self-professed guinea pig, Myer volunteered her hair to the research and development of the product for

a year before it was released in December 2015. "It's always really soft now, too," she says.

Zombie Snott's name is a nod to Boswell and Klaudt's rock 'n' roll roots. Boswell's band, Blanco Diablo, did the music that accompanies a Zombie Snott tutorial for stylists and a product introduction for customers. (In both videos, all the hair is of course designed and colored using only Zombie Snott.) Klaudt's zombie obsession also played a big part in the branding. "If I'm going to do something, I have to put my own special twist on it," says Klaudt, who's such a big fan of the undead that the Hair Klaudt website is located at ilovebrains.com.

Currently, you can find Zombie Snott at Hair Klaudt and Stashpad in Plaza-Midwood. Four ounce jars retail for \$13.99 each, and wholesale discounts are available for stylists. Zombie Snott can also be purchased on Etsy and Ebay.

Hair Klaudt Salon & Gallery is located at 1318 A8 Central Ave., Charlotte, N.C. 28205 and is open Tuesday through Saturday by appointment.

— Cindy Sites-Wooley



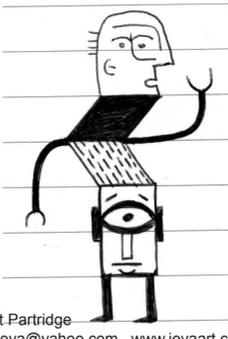
Dancing

There is no surface to mask the feeling, just raw nerves that you don't know how to numb.

So you whirl away on your bare feet against the cool hardness of the boards. Stomp, carve the air with your arms. Closed eyes block out all but the music that no one else will hear, and the crack of electric air on your pores and the sweat in that dip at the bottom of your back. Let your body feel fear, rage, pain, dread, need; Collect it and shoot it out through your fingers and your feet on the floor.

This is meditation, the only prayer.

— Cindy Sites-Wooley



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HUMOR

Totally Wrong and Completely Inappropriate Tales of Charlotte

JEFFERSON DAVIS

With the Confederate cabinet on the run from the Union Army, CSA President Jefferson Davis and his staff stopped in Charlotte in April of 1865 for further meetings, to find more soldiers for the quickly vanishing Southern cause, and maybe do some shopping. As they walked down Tryon Street, canvassing from one Starbucks to the next, word reached them that U.S. President Abraham Lincoln had been killed in Washington, D.C. a few nights before.

Upon hearing that Lincoln was dead, Davis jumped in the air, exclaiming "Whoopie!" Davis then proceeded to drink with anyone who was within his reach, while chanting, "USA! USA! Con-FED! USA! while doing the occasional cartwheel down the street. "It's a Carolina Comeback!" Davis continued. Davis then donned a lady's ball-gown with yellow cream tinges with lace fringe, shouting, "With this on, they'll never catch me now!" As Davis revved his souped-up General Lee as he drove out of town, Davis turned to the crowd and said, "And if anyone asks, the Confederate gold is in the basement of the Mint. You can find it if you look really closely at the Confederate Bill of Rights. It'll make a great movie someday!"

MECK DEC

On May 20, 1775, a bunch of guys in Charlotte got together and got drunk. Really, really drunk. They drank, and they

drank. The men got very stumbly and very silly. They amused themselves by farting near candles, which they thought was really funny. Until they realized that their farts had blown out all of the candles, which meant that they could no longer see where the alcohol was. Plus, it was now pretty stinky in the room, so they did other things to amuse themselves. They joked about how backwards Gastonia was. They crank-called people, asking if they had Prince Albert in a can. Granted, telephones and Prince Albert would not exit for another hundred years, but the men were all so drunk that they collectively imagined that they had invented the telephone, and kept crank-calling others.

Around four in the morning, they all realized that they had spent the night drinking, and that their wives were going to be really mad. In order to cover their night out, the men put together a story that they had been up all night drafting a letter to the king of England, declaring themselves an independent state. They also decided to tell their wives that tavern owner James Jack had left on his horse with the document, as he had already left the party with a bad hangover and was known to be really bad with directions when he was driving drunk. So by the time James returned, the whole night would be forgotten. And all of the men stumbled home and told their wives, children and grand-children that story. For the rest of their lives. The End.

SHERMAN'S MARCH

In the spring of 1865, General Sherman and his Union army began a siege of looting and pillaging throughout the South. Homes and land were burned. Cattle were nervous. The Union soldiers were relentless in their siege of the South. They wrote lots of letters to Penthouse. They photocopied their bare butts and sent copies to Margaret Mitchell. In all, it was a pretty bad scene. Unless you were in the Union army.

Sherman had originally planned to come to Charlotte, having been told by Anthony Bourdain that they should visit Mac's Speed Shop. As they approached, they realized that with the large size of the army, the only way to get into town anytime soon would force them to use the toll lane. "Toll lanes!" exclaimed Sherman. "What a ridiculous waste of time and money." Twenty dollars a person will be kind of expensive in 150 years, but it was really expensive in 1865. "And you can't build another lane for 50 years?" Sherman continued. "What kind of charlatan comes up with this kind of clap-trap? Their governor must have been born a Yankee, too!" Sherman and his army decided to avoid Charlotte, and decided to enjoy the summer at Lake Norman, completely forgetting that the lake wouldn't exist until the 1960s.

CORNWALLIS IN CHARLOTTE

In March of 1780, British General Cornwallis and his army took over Charlotte after a

brief skirmish with local residents. Their thrill of taking over Charlotte was soon tempered by the realization that there was nothing to do downtown. "There's nothing here," Cornwallis reportedly said to a soldier. "I mean, there's things here, but none of this really interests me." They found that all of the good hangouts had closed early or were too expensive. They felt really old, walking through the EpiCentre. Cornwallis soon decided to abandon Charlotte, and maybe come back when they added some more things to do. Or when baseball season started up again. Cornwallis and his army decided to head up to Asheville, which they'd heard was a lot hipper than Charlotte. On the way, they decided to take a side trip to Kings Mountain, which they heard had really good moonshine.

LUKE MCCRORY

Pat "Luke" McCrory was born in Tattosine, OH. As a young boy, he dreamed of becoming Jedi Knight but was soon swayed by the corporate structure and dental plan of the Dark Side. McCrory eventually joined the Dark Side but would never admit that he'd done so and would get really whiny and defensive whenever it was pointed out. Under his command of the galaxy, film and television jobs left for other solar systems, the Ewok population was decimated when Ender became a haven for fracking, and Alderaan was blown up to make for an intergalactic toll lane.

Crap, this again

Crap. I can't believe that we're dealing with this again in North Carolina.

Crap. Not THIS again. For those of us who lived through the Mecklenburg County Commission's Gang of Five, it's the same problem again, only with bigger idiots. Twenty years after five bigoted dunderheads nearly wiped out any hope for arts and culture in mainstream Charlotte, we're dealing with the homophobia of others impacting the lives of many. Except now, it's statewide. The recent actions of the General Assembly prove again that knuckle-dragging fear is still alive and well, and ironically proving their own theory that evolution is not real. In truth, evolution is real, but only for those that are willing to accept it and evolve.

Leave it to the kind of people who you wouldn't want to leave your children alone with to make the laws about who can be in the bathroom with you. If it had just been a bill about uptight white men being afraid of who might walk into the lavatory, this would have been easier to take. But when it is singling out an entire race or group of people for discrimination, it goes deeper than that. Dan Bishop, Tim Moore, Pat McCrory and others are pulling thinly veiled hoods over a modern-day Jim Crow perspective, making their own laws in the hope that people can't afford to overturn them in the court system. All from a bunch of politicians who failed in Charlotte but found a dark home in

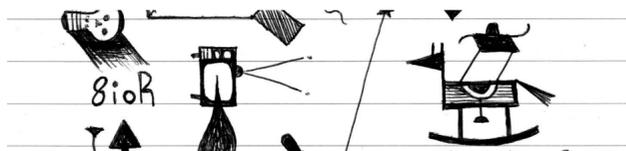
Raleigh's General Assembly. For the umpteenth millionth time in the past four years, our representation has let us down. And it is truly time to make a final break from them.

They will tell you that it's not their fault for the reaction to this bill. That this law does not use religion for the same prejudices that similar laws tried to do 50 years ago after the civil rights amendment. It's the fault of those who are now losing business and pride for this state during this debacle. Deny the truth, even more than three times, and the result is the same. Throw the grenade in the name of your Lord, and tell the victim that it's their fault.

This will not be easy. People will get hurt. Jobs and money coming to North Carolina will get lost. Those who detonate the bomb are usually not the ones that face or feel the aftermath. But if those who believe in what is truly right stay involved, stay strong, and stay voting, regardless of what others might do to keep you from voting, then this will be righted. Just like 20 years ago. It will not happen soon enough for many of us, but it will happen. As for those who caused all of this, they will never understand why people feel this way (That would go back to learning in a state that underfunds education and that whole weird thing about evolution.), but they will understand when they are out of a job. Which is something I, and many of us, look forward to.

I can't believe that I'm giving this speech again.

Crap. — J.F. Keaton



Scott Partridge jevajeva@yahoo.com www.jevaart.com

MUSIC

from the studio saying, 'Is it finished yet? Is it finished yet?' And I was like, 'Hey, do you want me to write a song?' I was starting to get a little annoyed, but I'm trying to rush it along. So when I got to the end, I was like, 'Well, I'll just hum this last verse because I don't have a lyric for it. And if they like it, I'll do some more on it.' Because if they didn't like it, then I wouldn't have to bother to put in hours and hours on something that they wouldn't record. It got messengered over to the studio that afternoon. And I was busy that day. I was working with somebody else in the studio, and I didn't hear from Glen. About a week later, I walked into a session that he was in, and I said, 'I never heard anything from you guys about that song.' He says, 'You mean "Wichita Lineman"?' I said, 'Yeah.' And he says, 'Oh, we cut that.' And I said, 'You cut it? But it wasn't finished.' And he said, 'It is now! When he got to the part that didn't have any lyrics, he just played that big Duane Eddy guitar solo, which turned out to be the best thing in the world.'

It has been a remarkable ride for Webb. One that began when he first heard Campbell's 1961 single "Turn Around, Look at Me." I had to ask. Knowing what he does now, what would Webb say now to his younger self, given the chance? Or would he say anything at all?

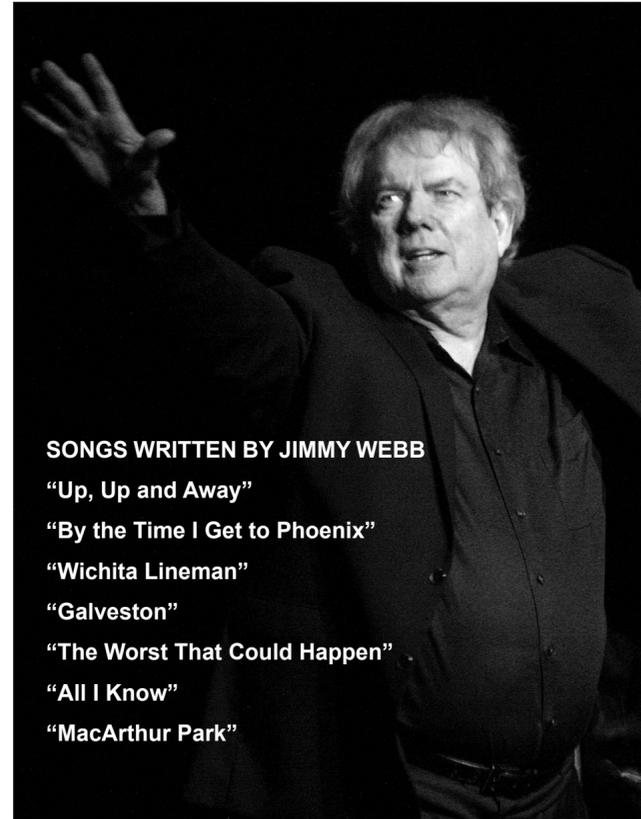
"I wouldn't say anything at all," replies Webb. "I was listening to my future. I didn't realize it, but I felt something when I heard 'Turn Around, Look at Me' that caused me literally to go to my knees by my bed in our little Baptist house in Laverne, OK and say 'Dear God, please let me someday write a song as half as good as 'Turn Around Look at Me.' And Lord, if you can find the time, please let me meet somebody like Glen Campbell to sing my songs.' And that's a fact.

"As I came through the ranks, I got a job writing songs for Motown. I got a song on the Supremes Christmas album. Motown had Paul Peterson, who was on 'The Donna Reed Show' at the time. He'd had a hit with the song 'My Dad.' It was a ballad about how

much he loved his dad. Motown was going to do a single with Paul, and they came to me and said, 'You're our white guy.' They were always really cool. 'Give us your Paul Peterson song.' So I wrote 'By the Time I Get to Phoenix.' I showed it to the producers, and they hated it. 'Where's the chorus? You need to write a chorus.' And I wouldn't write a chorus. Finally, I said, 'I'll write another one, just give me back this song.' And they said, 'Here, take it. Keep this one if you feel that way about it.' I eventually wrote 45 songs for Motown, and when I left to take a job with Johnny Rivers' publishing company, I brought 'Phoenix' with me.

"Johnny Rivers later told me that the first time that he heard 'Phoenix,' he knew it was a hit. But he had already cut 'Poor Side of Town,' so he had what amounted to a number one with 'Poor Side.' He knew about Glen [Campbell]. They had played together on records. He knew that Glen was coming off of 'Gentle on My Mind' and was looking for songs. Johnny called Al Del Lory and said, 'Come on over, I have something something I want you to hear.' When Del Lory walked into Johnny's office, he played a test pressing of his recording of 'Phoenix.' When it was over, Johnny said, 'What do you think?' Al said, 'Why are you giving us this song?' And Johnny replied, 'Well, you can only have one hit at a time, Al.' And he was giving it to Al and Glen, and he did it for me. Al walked out of there, and within four or five weeks, 'Phoenix' was on the radio. The first time I heard 'Phoenix' on the radio, I almost ran into the divider into an 18-wheeler. I couldn't believe it because it had all come true.

"Whatever it took to get me from out there in the middle of the wheat field, which was a long way from anywhere. And whatever it took to get me from there to having me walk in the same room with Glen and having him look up and say, 'When are you going to get a haircut?' That was some magical transformation. There's probably an alternate universe where he didn't cut it. But thankfully, in this universe, he did cut it. So that's my story. I'm sticking to it."



SONGS WRITTEN BY JIMMY WEBB

"Up, Up and Away"

"By the Time I Get to Phoenix"

"Wichita Lineman"

"Galveston"

"The Worst That Could Happen"

"All I Know"

"MacArthur Park"

Advertisement for catalystrecording.com. The ad features a background image of a recording studio with various pieces of equipment like mixers, monitors, and speakers. Text in the ad includes: catalystrecording.com, soundcloud.com/catalyst-recording, 704.526.8400, High-voltage analog summing, Apogee Symphony Conversion, Triggering, replacement, tuning, Free revisions w/ total recall, New low rates for web-delivered mixing & mastering.

MUSIC

Bless These Sounds are makin' the rounds

Sometimes, two people playing music on stage sounds like two people. In rare cases, these two people can sound like a beautiful army of geniuses and misfits, singing and playing together as they reach towards the heavens in hopes of discovering the larger answer to life's many questions. Into this latter category falls the duo of Bless These Sounds Under the City. Before the duo came together in 2012, multi-instrumentalist Derrick Hines was a veteran of several Charlotte-area bands including X-Periment and Baleen. Albert Strawn had been playing solo shows around town. Their debut album was a swirling kaleidoscope of sound, mixing thoughtful pop-rock with amber psychedelic waves.

Daniel Coston interviewed both Strawn and Hines.

TANGENTS: How did you two come together?

DERRICK HINES: We met through a mutual friend. After looking at a few of my lyrics, he kept insisting I meet Albert. He kept saying how Albert was this amazing songwriter, and he thought we should collaborate. After an awkward, forced introduction, we never spoke again. He didn't give up. He dragged me to one of Albert's performances, and we talked more. I was blown away by the songs, and we found we had a lot of musical influences in common. I started going by to help with the recording of Albert's demo. Fast forward through ... me moving to Atlanta and swearing off performing, Albert taking a performance hiatus, and the both of us coming back to music. Albert called me and said he was ready to go for it and that I should come back to Charlotte.

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

- HINES:** Pros:
1. It's easier to be diplomatic about everything.
 2. \$\$\$\$\$\$ easy split
 3. We get along. Odds are a third person would ruin things. Ha! Ha!
 4. Two schedules are easier to work around. We only have to talk to one other person when trying to book shows.
 5. \$\$\$\$\$\$ travel costs
 6. When your food is missing, you know who ate it. So food rarely goes missing.

- Cons:**
1. Workload: Things take a little longer to get done when there are only two people and both have full time jobs.
 2. Farts: There's no one to blame farts on when there's just one other person.

TANGENTS: Talk about recording your second album at Chase Park Transduction Studios in Athens.

HINES: Andy LeMaster (Azure Ray, Bright

Eyes, Saddle Creek, etc.) is a genius, and we are lucky, honored and happy to have him. We all toss our ideas out openly and try everything that is suggested. Andy knows what he wants to hear and how to produce it, and we agree with the direction he goes in. It's really that simple, which is extremely nice.

The new songs definitely have a different feel from the first album but should complement it. Most every song from the first to the last will carry a different persona of sound and style. The basic gist of this new album centers around the beginning and ending of everything and a few events within/the center of the infinite symbol.

TANGENTS: Where do you draw inspirations for your songs?

ALBERT STRAWN: The first album was from personal experiences or just about what I was going through personally, and they/it needed to be expressed. I never even imagined I would record some of those songs on the first album. They originally came into existence purely for my survival.

This second album is still personal, but we tied a separate fictional story within that that tries to combine personal with imagination in hopes of moving towards being a stronger person. Love and hope are good things. Derrick is also writing more.

TANGENTS: You worked a local dance troupe last year. Talk about that.

HINES: There was/is a dance company in Charlotte called Baran Dance. We met them through Mark Baran of Sinners & Saints. Audrey Baran (the owner and main choreographer) loved our music, and we ended up collaborating with Baran Dance and a local photographer named Sara Woodmansee. It was an amazing experience of live music and live dance while visuals were being projected on a huge screen behind all of us. The show was called Dance Under the City Sounds. Beautiful friendships were formed, and we all got to share the unique experience of performing the show at Booth Playhouse. We also performed pieces of it at TEDxCharlotte and Pecha Kucha.

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

HINES: I think the purpose for genres and labels is to have a place to start when talking about music. I also think that people's listening habits have changed so drastically that labels should apply more on a song-to-song, or per album, basis rather than broad-stroking an artist. All the labels do now is make it harder for artists to get heard on a larger scale (radio, blogs, podcasts, etc.). If you don't sound enough like two or three popular bands of a specific genre, then they have little interest in spotlighting you.



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What's in Your Closet?

MUSIC

Don't Bassh this band

Jimmy Brown has seen his share of changes. A native of Ireland, Brown had traveled the world before moving to Charlotte and forming the popular band Matrimony with his wife Ashlee Hardee. Brown's latest change involves a new band, a new sound and location. Last year, Brown and brother-in-law (and Matrimony band mate) C.J. Hardee made their way to Nashville for a new project with Band of Horses bassist Bill Reynolds. The resulting sound, now under the moniker of Bassh, is miles away from the sound of Matrimony and allows Brown to further delve into the role of front man. Here, Brown talks to Daniel Coston about his plans for the band.



photos by Daniel Coston

TANGENTS: How did Bassh come together?

JIMMY BROWN: C.J. [Hardee] and I had been writing tunes together more and more, and they weren't sounding like Matrimony tunes, so we decided to make a record.

TANGENTS: What was it about the sound that the three of you (with Bill Reynolds) made that excited you?

BROWN: The timing felt right for all three of us, and the energy was there. We worked long days and nights and really put our guts into this one. When we listened back, the work sounded surprisingly good. I remember looking around the room asking the others if I played that part or if they did. It was a swirly few weeks, but a healthy dose of chaos seems to lend itself to these types of things.

TANGENTS: How would you describe the music of Bassh?

BROWN: Druggy emo/indie/rock/pop-type stuff.

TANGENTS: How are the lyrics that you're writing for Bassh different from what you wrote for Matrimony?

BROWN: I'm in a new place in life, new city, new friends, new outlooks, etc. It's only natural to write from that existence.

TANGENTS: How is being a front man for Bassh different from any other band that you've been involved with?

BROWN: I love the challenge of morphing into a new thing. I think we should be always evolving and pushing ourselves beyond

Bill Reynolds and Jimmy Brown (right) of Bassh.

what we've done, so this is uncharted territory for me. And I fucking love feeling scared and excited at the same time!

TANGENTS: What are Bassh's touring plans?

BROWN: US nationwide tour dates TBA soon!

TANGENTS: How are things in Nashville? You moved out there last year.

BROWN: I honestly can't imagine living anywhere else. Cool spot.

TANGENTS: What plans are there for Matrimony in the future?

BROWN: We got a show May 28 at The Fillmore in Charlotte to help raise money for the homeless folks of Charlotte. Aside from that we've no "plans," but Ashlee and I have written a few songs together recently, and we've been toying with the idea of cutting them. But, honestly, Bassh and her solo project are our focus for now.

TANGENTS: Finish this sentence. The future of Bassh is ...

BROWN: Release music, tour the world putting on crazy shows, write, record.



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— Cindy Sites-Wooley



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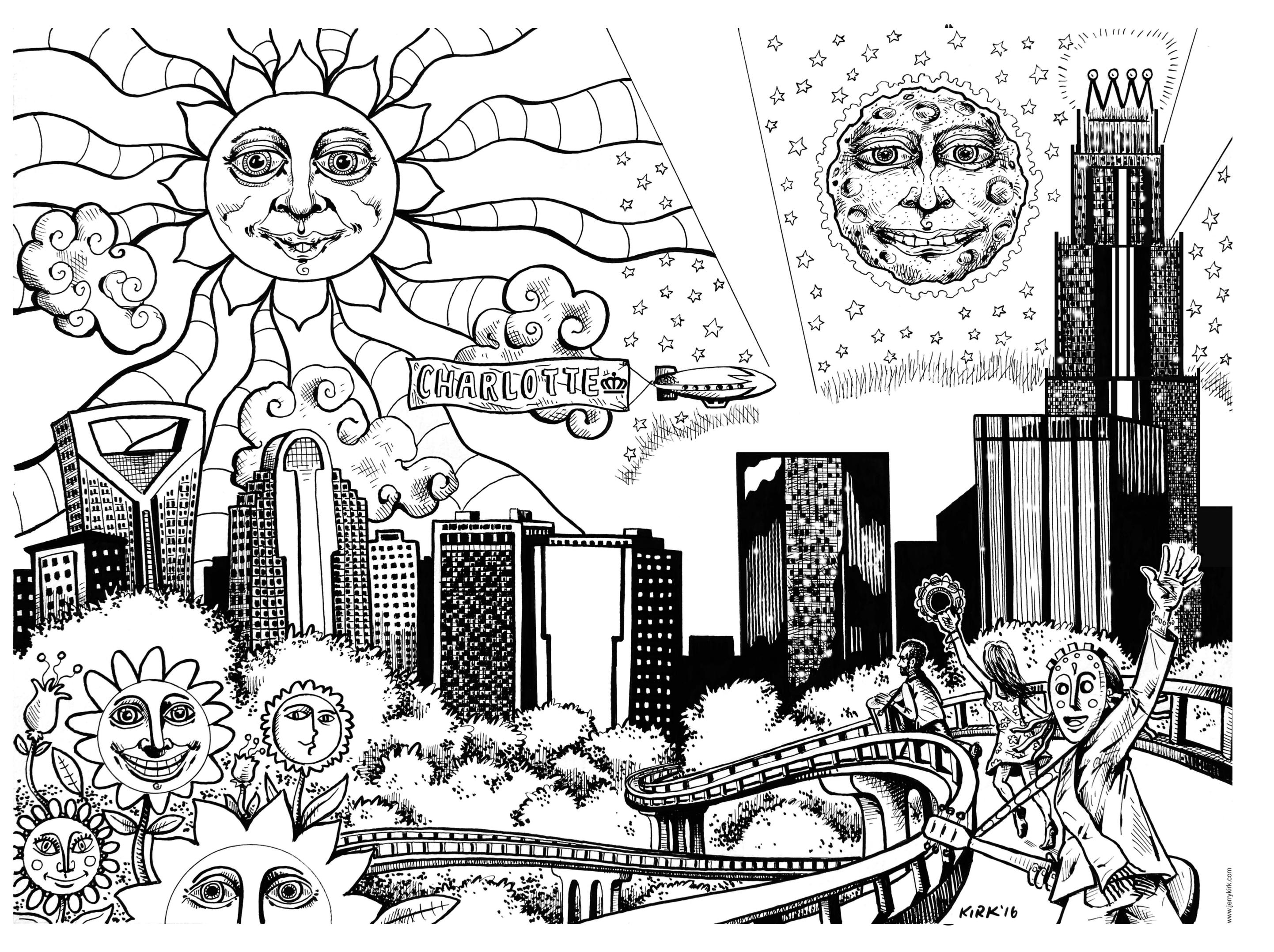
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CHARLOTTE

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MUSIC

How to save your digital music files for collaboration

The name of the game today is collaboration. Sure, it's conceivable that a project may be born and live its entire life on your laptop, but it's far more likely that some portion of your production will be done at another band member's private-studio, or at a guest musician's place, or with a hired mix engineer, or with a contributing producer or re-mixer. It's easy enough to get the files there (via Google Drive, Dropbox, WeTransfer, etc.), but the question is exactly what type of files are appropriate. There are four basic scenarios and norms ...

STEM FILES Sometimes another party needs tracks grouped together for a certain amount of sonic flexibility without need to alter the session at a molecular level, like above. With stems, we break our normal stereo mix down (with busses/subgroups)

HOME RECORDING

by Rob Tavaglione

FULL SESSIONS If both parties use the same DAW (digital audio workstation), use the same operating systems, have the same plug-in licenses and have great trust in each other, then swapping back-n-forth the complete recording session(s) is in order. This method requires a specific numbering/naming system so you can "go back in time" and eliminate changes that may have driven other band members to riot. There's a large amount of data to transfer only the first time; once both parties have the original basic tracks, then updates with new overdubs and session files are small. The drawback here is that achieving total system compatibility is difficult and seldom do second parties require such complete detailed session control.

into typically four to eight groupings (i.e. drums, bassy instruments, instruments, lead vocals, backing vocals, reverb, FX, misc. stuff) and create a stereo file for each using subgroups or busses. The recipient can line-up all eight files at time-line zero, push all faders up to 0 dB (unity gain) and have your exact mix ... but with the ability to mute or lower certain elements to taste. This method is how "stem mixing" is done and the same concept behind "stem mastering."

INDIVIDUAL FILES Sometimes all the individual elements are needed for transfer, but parties don't share the same DAWs. This is where file consolidation is used to create universally acceptable files. Here you'd

take each lane/track in the DAW and save it (sometimes called "bouncing" or "rendering" or "exporting") as a unique file, complete with everything included from that lane ... things like EQ settings, fader position, volume automation, pan (if it's a stereo file, but mono is okay too), plug-in processing, effects unique to that lane ... the whole shebang. Make sure that each file starts at timeline-zero so they can be lined up easily, even if they each end at their own unique completion point. Some mix engineers may ask you to remove all the plug-ins, all processing and all FX ... Some may ask for "normalization" where each file is made loud enough to reach a peak level of just under maximum. Whenever possible, you can select to create a time-stampable file type (Broadcast WAV — BWAV, AIFF, SDII) which allows easy file line-up too, regardless of starting point.

STEREO MIXES Especially when using guest musicians/singers, rough mixes are the ideal transfer medium. Why transfer multiple gigabytes of data like found in full session transfers or even the dozens of megabytes found with stems? For that matter, a rough mix for composing/rehearsing/training needs to be portable more than anything else, so don't even use a hi-fidelity WAV file when creating a lossy-but-adequate MP3

will do. Please use the highest rate available (320 kbps) if possible and a 256 k only if you must (in order to keep the size way down) ... as low-rate 128s sound like ass.

There are some rules that are followed to the T. Primarily, stay organized: As every file needs a clear and effective name that allows proper grouping and/or chronological order. Secondly, do no harm: Unless specifically requested so, do not change sample rate, bit rate, file type or time-stamp ... as some mistakes are fixable, others not so much. Avoid "the red." Any file you create must avoid any overs, levels that reach 0 dBFS, as such clipping can sound nasty and be problematic. Finally, save your settings: As common-sense as these file swapping procedures are, it's not uncommon to make a stupid mistake (or three) due to the fatigue of repetition. You have likely jacked the settings of your once-normal session into an alternate reality of file-bouncing madness, so save it as a unique entity that you can easily revisit to correct the inevitable fuck-ups.

Rob Tavaglione is a multi-instrumentalist and owner/engineer of Catalyst Recording, which was established in 1992 and has hosted over 650 recording projects. He can be contacted at www.catalystrecording.com.

The Grim Freaker reviews the Puscifer show

It's a busy life for the Grim Freaker. By day, I'm known throughout the world as the legendary masked man of wrestling. It is a tradition passed down from my grandfather, El Santo. At least, that's my story, as far as you know. When I'm not leading my legion of Freakamaniacs from victory to victory, I also enjoy gardening, making bundt cakes in my immaculately clean kitchen, and photographing rock concerts. What? Not manly enough? You got a problem with that?

A few months ago, I saw that Maynard Keenan and Puscifer were going to be playing in Charlotte with a wrestling-themed show. I thought, "Hey! Wrestling. Guys in masks ... This is my kind of thing." So I go to the show, camera in hand, ready to go man to man with Keenan. And the show

opens with wrestlers in the ring doing various moves. And I'm taking pictures, and the wrestlers keep going. And going. And I'm thinking, "Isn't there a show here?" Even for a legendary wrestler like me, all of this got kinda boring after 40 minutes.

Finally, Maynard Keenan appears at the back of the stage, hiding in the darkness in a wrestling mask and a big microphone that covered his face. Oh, I see, you waterboy gone wild. You're not man enough to face the photographers. And me. You cannot face me, Maynard. You're afraid of me, my bulging biceps and my big zoom lens. As for the music, Puscifer play diminished chords. Ooooooooh! You know who else played weird diminished chords? Rod McKuen. Never heard of him? EXACTLY. And now,

he's dead. So there.

You know what this show needed? An ass-whooping. Maynard Keenan's ass-whooping. One that hasn't been seen in Charlotte since Ricky Steamboat dropped a well-placed elbow on Ric Flair's pointy head. And by the way, can I get some love here for Ricky Steamboat? Who, unlike Mr. Flair, still lives in Charlotte, didn't rack up more divorces than Donald Trump, and didn't take a paycheck to give a pep talk to a Carolina Panthers opponent. See ya, Flair, and don't let Bill Diehl smack your ass on the way out. Whoooooooooooo!

Eventually, I got so bored by all of this wrestling tomfoolery, I went to the Southern Christmas Show next door. I bought strudel and found some lovely scarves that fit my

color scheme perfectly. So THERE!

This is by no means over, Maynard Ferguson. I mean, Keenan. You will bow down before me, Maynard Keenan! Bow down! Vengenance will be mine! I will kick your shiny leprechaun ass so hard, it will pop out the top of your damn wrestling mask. And I'll take a picture of it, with flash, and a fantastic assortment of strobe effects. Now that would be a Kodak moment. And all my Freakamaniacs will also take pictures of this, creating Kodak moments for everyone! And then we'll go to the coffee shop for strudel and quiet conversation.

I'm the Grim Freaker. I know king fu. I take pictures. I also crochet tea cozies that look like my wrestling mask. You got a problem with that?

Hand Over Balls

Yes we do drift ridiculous within each other.

I find myself wringing pieces of me from you.

My hands twist and bend until you are limp and ragged.

The soul you stole lies naked and broken on the floor. Drunks and happy couples trip

over the fragments scattering me towards the exit to be revealed on the street in the light.

— Jerry Lee Kirk

MUSIC

Hectorina. What a concept.

Many bands run screaming from the idea of concept albums. Is it art-rock? Is it prog-rock? Is it going to involve gnomes and fairies? And will I be able to dance to it? Others, however, fully embrace the idea that all such things can exist together and put it out there for all to see and hear. Hectorina is one of those bands.

Hectorina first came to be in 2010 when it was originally christened as Dylan Gilbert & The Over Easy Breakfast Machine. After Gilbert, bassist Zachary Jordan and drummer John Harrell III renamed the band as Hectorina in 2012, they began working towards a larger presentation of their emerging sound. "Collywobble," a 2-LP concept album released in 2013, has been turned into a stage play and exposed the band to a wider audience. The band has since released two more EPs.

Gilbert discussed all of these things in a recent interview with Daniel Coston.

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

GILBERT: We've been labeled prog and math rock, which is flattering, but I don't think we're so technically efficient. I'd say we're somewhere between post-punk and soul music.

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

GILBERT: I love this question. The answer is "absolutely." A lot of people in our culture are too quick to label something or categorize it, often before they even experience it. I've found that most music (and art in general) takes some level of focus and openness to really connect with. It becomes less about questions of "like or dislike" or "this genre or that genre" and more about mood and timing for you as the listener or experienter of the art.

TANGENTS: Talk about the new album.

GILBERT: We wanted to do something more akin to traditional pop or soul albums like the ones we listened to growing up. We wanted to record songs that sounded cohesive together.

I think the most noticeable change in our music thus far is our ability to relax and hold back as players and arrangers. With "Collywobble," we had this kitchen sink approach, and our newer music is becoming increasingly patient.

TANGENTS: Talk about working with Daniel Hodges on your last two albums.

GILBERT: The man is a genius. Unfortunately, he's also one of my best friends, so there are plenty of times when we butt heads, but he always helps me clear away

the bullshit and pushes us to go further.

TANGENTS: The idea of concept albums can make some music fans go a bit sniffy. What made you want to tackle it?

GILBERT: The rock opera was a way to shake up the writing process. I wanted to take on something big and not overly serious where I could explore more aspects of songwriting as a challenge for the band and myself.

The inspiration was in the challenge of making something big that pulled from all of our creative skills. It was our first album together, and I think giving ourselves the feeling that we were in over our heads, right off the bat, has given us the confidence to continue.

TANGENTS: Is it hard to keep a Charlotte base while still touring elsewhere?

GILBERT: Geographically speaking Charlotte is in a great spot. It's so easy to plan an East Coast tour from here.

TANGENTS: Which recording do you think captures your sound the best?

GILBERT: I'd say the most recent record, but of course we're still moving towards what we truly hear in our heads. I'd say that the music we're making now renders past efforts lovingly obsolete. We always want to top ourselves.

TANGENTS: Where do you draw inspirations for your songs?

GILBERT: Geez. Anything. A newspaper article, a life experience, a vague feeling ... anything can be a song.

TANGENTS: What does being a hardcore music fan like yourself bring to creating one's own music?

GILBERT: I think it's a double-edged sword. I've often mentioned to John and Zach that I feel like we're purists in some ways about music, and that may be a difficult thing to overcome. We're hard on ourselves. We ask ourselves, "Would we listen to this crap?" a lot.

TANGENTS: A lot of your songs have a strong literary sense. In an age where a lot of music has over-simplified lyrics, what do you look to achieve with your lyrics?

GILBERT: That's an extreme compliment. Words are something I put particular effort into because it comes less naturally to me than melody. Lyrics can easily feel generic and out of touch. I don't want to write down anything that doesn't have meaning for me. Nonsensical lyrics can work sometimes, but the artists that I look up to had something to say about the times they lived in, and I want that too.



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MUSIC



Jimmy Webb's songs have been performed by Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash, Joe Cocker, Billy Joel, Tom Jones, Linda Ronstadt, R.E.M, Frank Sinatra, James Taylor, The 5th Dimension, Isaac Hayes, The Supremes and many, many others.

Up close with master songwriter Jimmy Webb

by Daniel Coston

Jimmy Webb. Pronounced Jimmy Freaking Webb around my house. Webb first rose to prominence in 1967 when his song "By the Time I Get to Phoenix" became a hit for Glen Campbell. Over the next few years, Webb wrote and arranged some of the greatest songs of that era and in the eras that have followed since. "Up, Up and Away," "The Worst That Could Happen," "All I Know," "The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress." He also wrote and arranged "MacArthur Park," which Campbell cited as his all-time favorite song at a show in Charlotte in 2006. But of those songs with Campbell, "Phoenix," "Wichita Lineman," "Galveston," "Where's the Playground Susie" and many more will always hold a special place in the hearts of those like myself. To this day, I can be any place and in any state of mind, and all I have to hear is, "I am a lineman for the county, and I drive the main road," and the world stops again for a few, beautiful minutes.

With Campbell now battling through the final stages of Alzheimer's Disease, Webb is now touring as a one-man show based on his songs for Campbell. "I'm doing this tour as a tribute to someone who's very dear to me," says Webb, calling in from his current home in the Northeast U.S. "Someone whom I spent the better part of 50 years partnering with. Someone who mentored me when I first came into the business. Someone who was singularly interested in advancing my agenda as a songwriter and pushing my star higher. Even at the expense of his own career, he never failed to do something nice for me whenever he could. He recorded somewhere in the neighborhood of 85 Jimmy Webb songs. "It's about Alzheimer's a little bit. It's about Glen and how suddenly he was taken away from us. He was a young, stalwart guy that would've gone on many, many more years. There would've been a lot more records. That's the terrible thing about that disease. It takes away who you were and who you've been. In that sense, it's my heart-on-my-sleeve tribute to this sweet guy who was just

unparalleled in his raw talent. In his ability to musicalize, to embrace all kinds of genres, all kinds of writers. He had this whole pre-Glen Campbell life as a covert influence in the pop music business, because he played on so many different records." Webb has also found the show as a way of coming to grips with the decline of Campbell's health in recent years. "I would have never felt comfortable doing this show I'm doing as long as Glen was performing. But now I feel like I'm out there. I can do some trumpeting on his behalf. Because for many, many years he was underrated. He was never given the credit that he truly deserved."

From the start, Webb and Campbell came from different places but found a common ground in the music. "His politics were leaning to the right. My politics were, I'm not afraid to say this, leaning towards the left. It made it very difficult for us. In fact, the first thing that Glen ever said to me was, "When are you going to get a haircut?" But somehow we managed to walk that fence together and create some pretty enduring works of art together, for two guys that didn't agree that much."

The friendship didn't end with the songs that the two collaborated on. Campbell would introduce Webb songs to other artists, such as bringing Webb's "The Highwayman" to Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristoferson and Waylon Jennings. Webb also introduced songs from other writers to Campbell. "I played 'Southern Nights' off of Allen [Toussaint's] record for Glen at my house, and he grabbed the record and went running out of my house with it. He didn't even say goodbye. Then he would take it into the studio and work on it, because he always works on these hooks, if you will. As soon as you hear that, you already know it's a hit. And he was so good at that ... the beginning to 'Wichita Lineman,' which we wrote with [Wrecking Crew bass player] Carol Kaye."

Ah yes, "Wichita Lineman." "I wrote it all in one afternoon, in about two or three hours," recalls Webb. "It was a very intense thing, because Glen and [producer] Al De Lory were calling me every five minutes

HUMOR

The trouble with Pat

You've seen the news stories. You've seen the Facebook posts and the mass emails. Many want to paint Gov. Pat McCrory as a monster, a living and slimy embodiment of the wayward direction that North Carolina has taken over the last four years. In his term as governor, McCrory has sold his native Charlotte up the river, down a toll road and through Douglas Airport. But the truth is more complicated than any blog or spin doctor can explain away, and too lengthy to be explained by a bumper sticker.

The recent conundrum over the I-77 toll lanes has brought McCrory's petulant king routine to new lows. First, say yes to a bad contract that the county doesn't want. Then, tell everyone that they can't change the decision. Then, let his former colleagues on Charlotte City Council "decide" on the toll lanes, while quietly telling them that a no vote will kill all road plans in Mecklenburg County. For those who have known Pat over the last 20 years, his first term as governor has been problematic. They say he really is a nice guy. He wouldn't let Raleigh determine his actions. But he does ... over and over again. There are a lot of Charlotteans who voted for McCrory in 2012 based on the McCrory they once knew. When asked to explain his recent actions, they've been left to shuffle their feet and stammer and wonder if they can make a donation to the Roy Cooper campaign without telling their golf buddies.

McCrory first came to prominence in the Charlotte City Council and then as mayor for 14 years. Throughout that time, Charlotte media gave a pass to Pat and his high-class frat boy act. He's the goofy mayor in a soft mayor form of government? No problem. He can't pronounce any names other than Smith and Jones? It's kind of endearing. He changed opinions as soon as he saw a dollar bill? His intentions are good. The problem is, McCrory came to expect this fawning coverage from the media and continually lashes out at anyone for pointing out the truths that he will never face up to. The Republican party is still fighting the theory of evolution, and McCrory's inability to learn from his mistakes are exhibit A.

His troubled karma also runs alongside (or over) the dogma of the Republican party. If you never admit that you're wrong, you were never wrong to begin with. It's a very

Buddhist philosophy for an ideology that would ban all Muslims from the U.S. We'll adopt their philosophies and food, but they can't stay here if they don't look like us.

To be fair, McCrory has also taken the blame for the actions of his fellow Republicans in the N.C. General Assembly. The truth is, no one can corral the runaway freak show that is the General Assembly. The reason that the Assembly doesn't like McCrory is that he's not as angry and venomous as they are. Regardless of who wins in November, the state will spend years recovering from the damage that they have wreaked on our economy and the mountain of legal bills they've spent advancing their regression of the state's profile. They also see McCrory as an authority figure, which they naturally detest. It's natural that a bunch of rich, privileged white guys would like to take North Carolina back to the golden days of their youth, i.e. pre-Civil Rights era, and lash out at anyone who they see as "the problem." It also keeps them from looking in the mirror for their answer.

Part of McCrory's problem is that he has a desperate need to be liked by whoever is around him. Unfortunately, he spends most of his time in Raleigh, and that's where the money for his 2016 campaign will come from. Because McCrory has abandoned Charlotte, the city will not get him elected governor again. Even when the Democrats basically handed him the keys in 2012, he barely carried Mecklenburg County. For decades, the rest of North Carolina could not be convinced to vote for a governor from Charlotte. Now, they are McCrory's only hope of being re-elected. Because of that, the Raleigh McCrory will continue to dominate the airwaves, leaving Charlotte further and further behind.

The truth is Pat McCrory is not a monster. At least, not yet. He is a person who many people in Charlotte respected. He is also someone who has been misled, who let that trust fall to the ground and shatter into an ongoing mess. And it is a mess that he will never acknowledge. It is said that a monster, either physical or imagined, only becomes real when it comes crashing to earth. It makes the monster all the more human. All the more real. All the more complicated. And in so doing, all the more dangerous.

— J.F. Keaton

Escape from Purgatory

Suburban streets stretching out across the artificial landscape like the fingers of a hand slowly squeezing out the life of everything in its grasp.

Young man stares out his bedroom window at pastel houses, blacktop driveways and close — cropped lawns all in a row like the winning property on a giant monopoly board.

Sprinklers erupt like geysers. Lawnmowers jitter and hum, weed eaters whirr and chop. Damned to an existence of scorn and disgust is the family with unattended yard.

Young man dreams of the distance finds refuge in books, movies and that secret place where the dull throb Of dying hearts can't be heard.

The 'planned community' is safe, serene, enclosed and comfortable except behind certain doors. Some lives

are a lie. Restless children lose themselves in video; little hands hold keys to empty houses and grey lives.

The middle-class American test-tube environment is in full effect waiting for the inevitable explosion as houses are built closer together and trees slowly disappear.

(Thoughts of a different life are quickly absorbed by the couch or drowned out by the canned laughter of television sit-coms.)

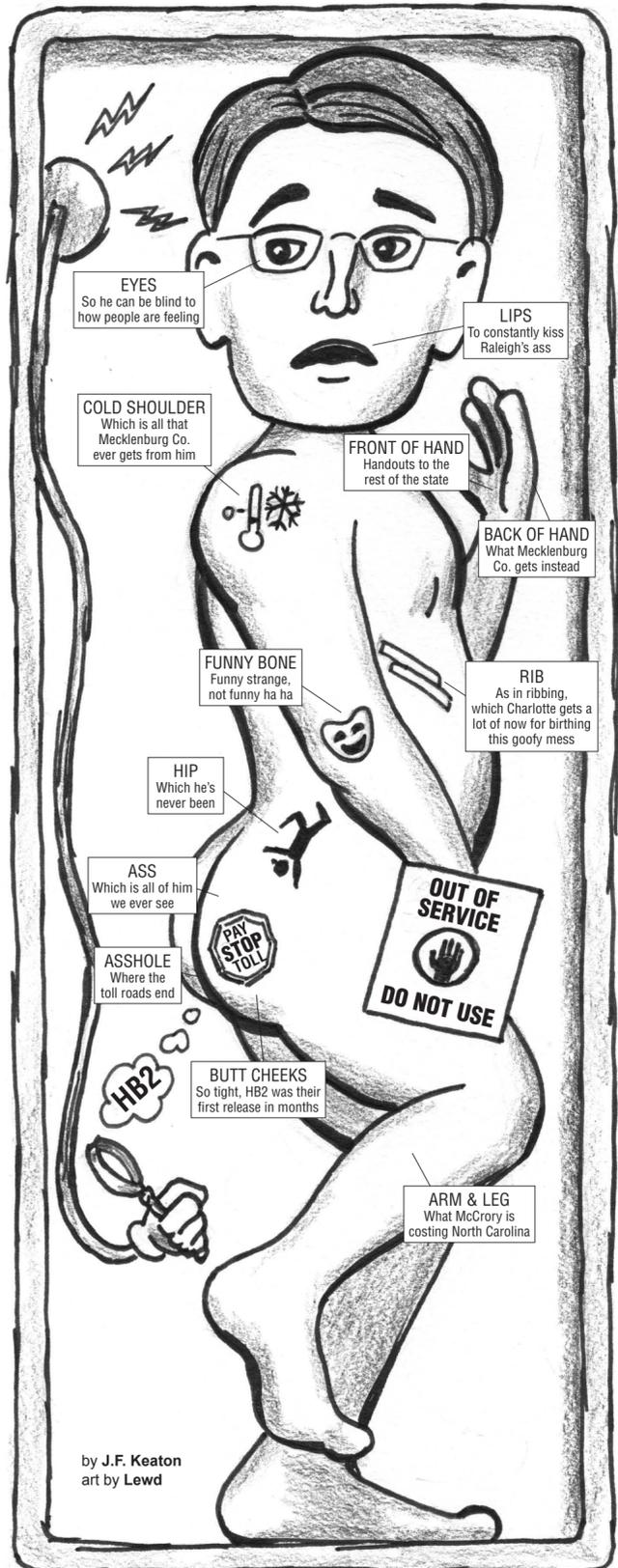
Young man watches and waits for his day. It's enough for now to fill his head with that image of himself escaping, walking away with suitcase in hand as behind a blue-fire scorches the horizon while music builds to an ominous crescendo ...

just like in the movies.

— Jerry Lee Kirk

Pat McCrory OPERATION*

*Brain, spine and heart sold separately ... but available for a generous campaign donation.





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ConCarolinas: Where the wild geeks play

by Micki Knop

It may be chic to be geek, but all the hardcore 24/7 geeks know where to be June 3-5: ConCarolinas. It caters to many traditional fandoms (Star Wars, Star Trek, the Marvel and DC universes and horror films to name a few), but also gamers, writers, podcasters, filmmakers, scientists and charities. Con goers can focus on their interests by attending panels on specific topics or try out a little of everything. It is family friendly but with a little more for adults in the late-night panels and performances.

Special guests include author Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Saint-Germain vampire series) who is Guest of Honor this year. She will be featured in several panels and available for book signings and photographs. Bill Blair (winner of 2014's Guinness Book of World Records for Most Special Effect Make-up Characters Portrayed in a Career with 202 characters) will discuss the challenges of playing all those characters and the makeup process. Artist Guest of Honor Ursula Vernon will have several of her pieces on display and will talk about what it is like to be an award winning Webcomics Choice Award winner. Charlotte's own cosplay hero DJ Spider will be on hand with her classic comics-style cosplays and spinning her wicked mixes on Friday night.

Musical performers include comedy rock star Mikey Mason (songs include "She Don't Like Firefly" and "Scoobythulhu"), multi-instrumental/vaudevillian phenoms This Way to the Egress, and the ever-popular Victorian chamber metal act Valentine Wolfe. Also performing will be variety acts such as Nerd-Vana (Raleigh-Durham's best Nerd Burlesque and Variety Show, for that late-night fun mentioned before) and sketch comedy group Pineapple-Shaped Lamps.



Bill Blair



Chelsea Quinn Yarbro



Official ConCarolinas 2016 badge

The highlight this year will be the Star Trek Master of the Carolinas Quadrant contest, in honor of the classic TV series' 50th anniversary. It will test contestants on not only their knowledge of all things Star Trek, but costuming and talent, with some great prizes. If Star Trek isn't your thing, attendees can follow local paranormal investigator Tina McSwain through her many tracks on ghost hunting and all things paranormal. Or, flip-flop around by attending panels on such topics as The Year in Science, Doctor Who Trivia, How to Write a YA Novel, or Geeky TV: Highlights For The Coming Year. Kids' activities will run throughout the con as well, including a Live-Action Hungry Hungry Hippos game.

If you are a hardcore cosplayer or just starting out, you are encouraged to come in costume and even sign up for the costume contest, but you better do it quickly as there are just 25 spots available and no walk-ins allowed. Either way, be prepared to have your photo taken.

More information can be found at the ConCarolinas.org website. There you can check out all the great guests, events, art show & gaming info, and course membership information to attend.

Editor's Note: At press time, ConCarolinas announced television, film and Broadway star Nana Visitor (best known as Kira Nerys on Star Trek: Deep Space 9) as the 2016 Media Guest of Honor.

Mother's Whispers

"Hush," she whispers, softly in my ear, With a woeeful smile, she says: "No fear. I'm with you. I am always here. And know that you are loved my dear."

they could remove. When things got sour, and my hopes got destroyed, I waited for mother's whisper to return my joy.

My mother whispered both day and night When things were bad, or just all right. She whispered words of wisdom and love Her whispers were blessings from up above.

Despite the pains that she was feeling, My sorrows always need more healing. And when she had no whispers left, She turned on her smile and gave it her best.

I lived for those whispers, she never knew, The pains and sorrows

And now in life when things get gray, I close my eyes to hear her say "I'm with you. I'm always here. And know that you are loved my dear." — Raheku

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HUMOR



"a beekeeper's DIARY"
by J.T. Davidson ©2016

The day has finally arrived. I've avoided it until now. 'Twas time to go see the "Body Worlds" with Gyonne.

She's a health geek & yoga teacher. Me? I believe some things are better unseen. Synecdoche, bliss & all that.

Isn't this amazing? Look it's nerves!

I will not barf. I will not barf...

Bodies taken apart with no skin, fragm to get into it. Blood systems were my favorite, in brilliant macabre red.

LOOK at all these slices of the organs.

I've officially seen one too many metastases.

It's so beautiful, isn't it, Hon?

Brains, innards & penises. everywhere.

After the 4th or 5th body, I started to get into it. Blood systems were my favorite, in brilliant macabre red.

By the end, my brain was overloaded.

Once home, I found renewed passion in the simple things, especially out in the apiary with the honey bees.

Baby, look at this beautiful frame of bees!

Eww, BUGS! you are so GROSS!

The experience gave me a new perspective of simply being human.

so, what have you learned today?

well, that underneath it all we're all the same! disgusting!

I feel small, humbled & in awe.

Once home, I found renewed passion in the simple things, especially out in the apiary with the honey bees.

Baby, look at this beautiful frame of bees!

Eww, BUGS! you are so GROSS!

SCARLETT CHARLOTTE BY SHELLY DAVIS

THE QUIET DARKNESS OF AN ALLEY BEHIND THE MANOR THEATRE IS BROKEN BY SHRIEKING AS ONE SCARLETT (LAST NAME UNKNOWN) IS HURTLLED 25 YEARS FORWARD THROUGH SPACE-TIME.

AAIEEEEE

MERE SECONDS BEFORE, HER REALITY WAS CHARLOTTE 1991. NOW, SHE EXISTS IN CHARLOTTE 2016. A RELUCTANT TIME VOYAGER VIA A MYSTERIOUS VORTEX.

THINK, SCARLETT. THINK. THIS SHOULD BE EASY ENOUGH. WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE LOST? CALL SOMEONE. RETRACE STEPS.

ROBERT SMITH?

OKAY, FIRST I'LL FIND A PAYPHONE. THEN, ON TO ATHENS AND THE PTERODACTYL CLUB!

Petra's

BAR AND VENUE AND TAPROOM

Charlotte, N.C. What the heck are WE thinking?

When I last spoke to you, I had returned to this Godforsaken home of sweet tea and over-cafeinated politicians for one last rodeo. From my palatial offices looking out over Bahrain, I had it all planned out: Return for one special 20th anniversary issue of *Tangents*, stick around long enough to mess with people's minds, and leave this land of sports dabs and Super Bowl drops once and for all. Thank you, good night and bite me.

But something happened. Much to my surprise, you found our issue, and you liked it. You didn't sound sad. You sounded glad. We arrived without tags, packages, boxes or bags. Maybe, indeed, *Tangents* was just a little bit more. You wrote and told us how much you enjoyed our surprise issue. And more importantly, you said that you'd buy ads in the next issue. Suddenly, I found myself actually thinking about doing more issues of *Tangents*. You made me care about you, Charlotte. I'm not supposed to care about you. Damn you, Charlotte!!!

So here we are again. In our original form, *Tangents* filled a void in Charlotte that reflected the yin and yang of those strange times. We were proud of our flared collars and frayed edges. We talked about local art, music and culture on the same level as other cities and countries. We talked to local musicians and artists, month after month. When *Tangents* left Charlotte to conquer the rest of the world, I thought to myself, "Someone else will figure out this model and create something pretty cool." I also thought that nobody outside of Charlotte would ever buy Pat McCrory's frat-boy act as leadership. Well, I was wrong about that (so far), and as

it turns out, the only thing that could ever fill *Tangents'* void was *Tangents* itself.

Tangents was, and is once again, a collective of people who want to create something different. Some of the folks who were involved the first time around are here again. However, *Tangents* has to be something more than a bunch of middle-aged farts, who used to be younger farts, talking about 20-year-old farts like those farts still smell fresh. Or something like that. So the proverbial doors of *Tangents* are open again. You want to write something? Talk about something? Actually DO something? Sooner or later, life is more than just complaining on social media about nothing going on while doing nothing. Email us at tangentsmagazine@gmail.com. Accost us in the street. Make this happen.

While we have a nice website/blog now, our heart is still proudly in print. Much like vinyl, it's what we grew up with, and it always looks better at yard sales than those tacky CDs. Each issue will be different and reflect wherever we are at that point and time. You don't like everything we create? Fine. That means that we're alive, and that you're thinking and breathing. Who knows, maybe if this gets enough web traffic, I'll finally achieve my dream of selling *Tangents* off to Condé Nast. We may have to grow more beards and post more cat videos before that happens. Until then, it's time to damn the torpedoes and create something that the next generation might want to recreate again in 20 years.

Rejoice, for the song truly has no ending. And by the way, you can still bite me.

— Dickie Typoe

OPINION

COUNTERPOINT

Our growing city

"Remember the Alamo!" Or as they say in Charlotte: "Remember the Knife and Fork!" Or it could be Athens Restaurant, Pterodactyl Club, 1313 Club, Park Elevator, Fat City, 23 Studio, Center of the Earth Gallery, Pat's Time for One More, The Coffee Cup, Carolina Theatre or Fat Tuesday. The list goes on and on.

We all have fond memories of these places. Well, maybe not Fat Tuesday. But according to the Small Business Administration, "About half of all new establishments survive five years or more, and about one-third survive 10 years or more."

And, let's be honest, owning a music venue or art gallery or actor's theater isn't the greatest money-making scheme around.

Cool places that add to the cultural fabric of our great city close all the time. They have since the city was founded. You can read about several of them in "There Was a Time: Rock & Roll in the 1960s in Charlotte and North Carolina" by one Daniel Coston.

Most of these places are transient at best. The business owners don't own the property that house their businesses, and they know that they can be booted out at any time.

Some, such as Hart Wizen Gallery have relocated and thrived. The owners of Bead-lush and Common Market SouthEnd plan to relocate too.

Uptown Charlotte, South End and Northside are filling up with new apartments because tens of thousands of people are moving here every year. In fact, Charlotte is leading the nation in projected population growth. The newcomers want to be here because of our wonderful quality of life. They

will contribute to the diversity and quality of our music scene, art scene and theater scene, and they will pay to hear our music and see our art and plays. I don't know of any creative types who will argue against that.

The growth of Charlotte and new development is increasing the diversity and quality of restaurants, coffee shops, breweries, supermarkets and outdoor activities.

As well as taking away a lot of music venues, galleries and theaters, new development has brought us Charlotte Metro Credit Union Uptown Amphitheatre Charlotte, The Fillmore Charlotte, Knight Theater, CPCC's Dale F. Halton Theater, and I'm sure there will be more to come.

And we still have Neighborhood Theatre, Visualite Theatre, Snug Harbor, Petra's Piano Bar & Cabaret, The Rabbit Hole, Puckett's Farm Equipment, Smokey Joe's Cafe and The Dirty Hippie among other venues.

As expensive apartments and national retailers move uptown, the fringes of town will expand, and the cool clubs, the small art galleries and the local theater groups will move a few blocks away where they can afford the rent.

I will certainly miss the cozy, tree-covered patio at Common Market, just as I miss the muffalettas and great bands at Fat City. The best we can do is to support our favorite hangouts now and appreciate them while they're here.

There await more cultural adventures that we haven't even dreamed of. The only constant is change.

— Lewd

Going straightedge means staying in control

I'm happy to say that I am a teenager who frowns upon drugs and alcohol. I don't even smoke. Not only does smoking make you smell bad, it gives you premature wrinkles. That's definitely not a chance I'm taking.

Yeah, I get called "boring" and "granda," but I don't care. I've seen so many kids throw their future away and their grades fall into a downward spiral. They seem to stop caring about anything, and it's not cute.

I've decided not to be a part of that list. I want to keep my mind, body and life clean. I don't need the excitement of mood altering-substances. I have so much I want to do, and I won't let these unhealthy stimulants get in my way. Being straightedge is a commitment that I'm determined to stick with for the rest of my life. It gives me a feeling of satisfaction and self control.

When it comes to drugs and teenagers, trust me, looks can be deceiving. Some of the kids you would least expect to do these things are regular users. Some people seem to think that I do drugs. They think that I'm the typical rebellious teen. How wrong they are!

I try not to surround myself with "bad influences" because I've learned in my past 16 years that peer pressure is real. People always want to be accepted and fit in. You become who you surround yourself with. I denied this for years but finally realized how true it is. I personally won't

stand for someone who brings trouble into my life.

Drugs are about "out of this world" experiences. But I'm a realist and quite enjoy being in control. And, honestly, it's okay to be a realist. It doesn't mean you have to be negative.

I first heard the term straightedge in middle school. I've always listened to classic punk music, and when I came across the band Minor Threat, I heard their song "Straight Edge." I liked the idea of rebelling against people's idea of what it means to be a rebel ... and proving that you can't judge a book by its cover.

Too many great people have died from intoxication and addiction. I'm sure they wouldn't want us to follow in their footsteps. A few artists who have joined the straight-edge movement are James Hetfield from Metallica, Tyler the Creator, Henry Rollins from Black Flag, and Zach Blair from Rise Against.

I understand some of these kids' frustrations. They may just be trying to look cool when they drink and do drugs, but they need to understand the many dangers. They need to take a wide perspective and see how their actions now will affect their lives in 10, 20 or 30 years. I'm writing this to share my opinions and spread awareness on this topic. I hope more teenagers will think about their future before they follow the crowd.

— Marlené Diaz Russell

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Behold! The glorious artwork of Jerry the Kirk! You can find it on page 10 of this very magazine. It's almost perfect, no? All it needs is a little color ... and that's your job!

We're going to take this coloring craze to the next level. Color our centerspread with anything you want, any way you want, and we're going to award a prize to the most creative at The Last Word on Saturday, June 11.

Entries will be judged by Jerry Kirk, Lewd, Tom Davidson and Shelly Davis. The tiebreaker goes to Dickie Typoe.

Go to TangentsMag.com for details on how to submit your entry.

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