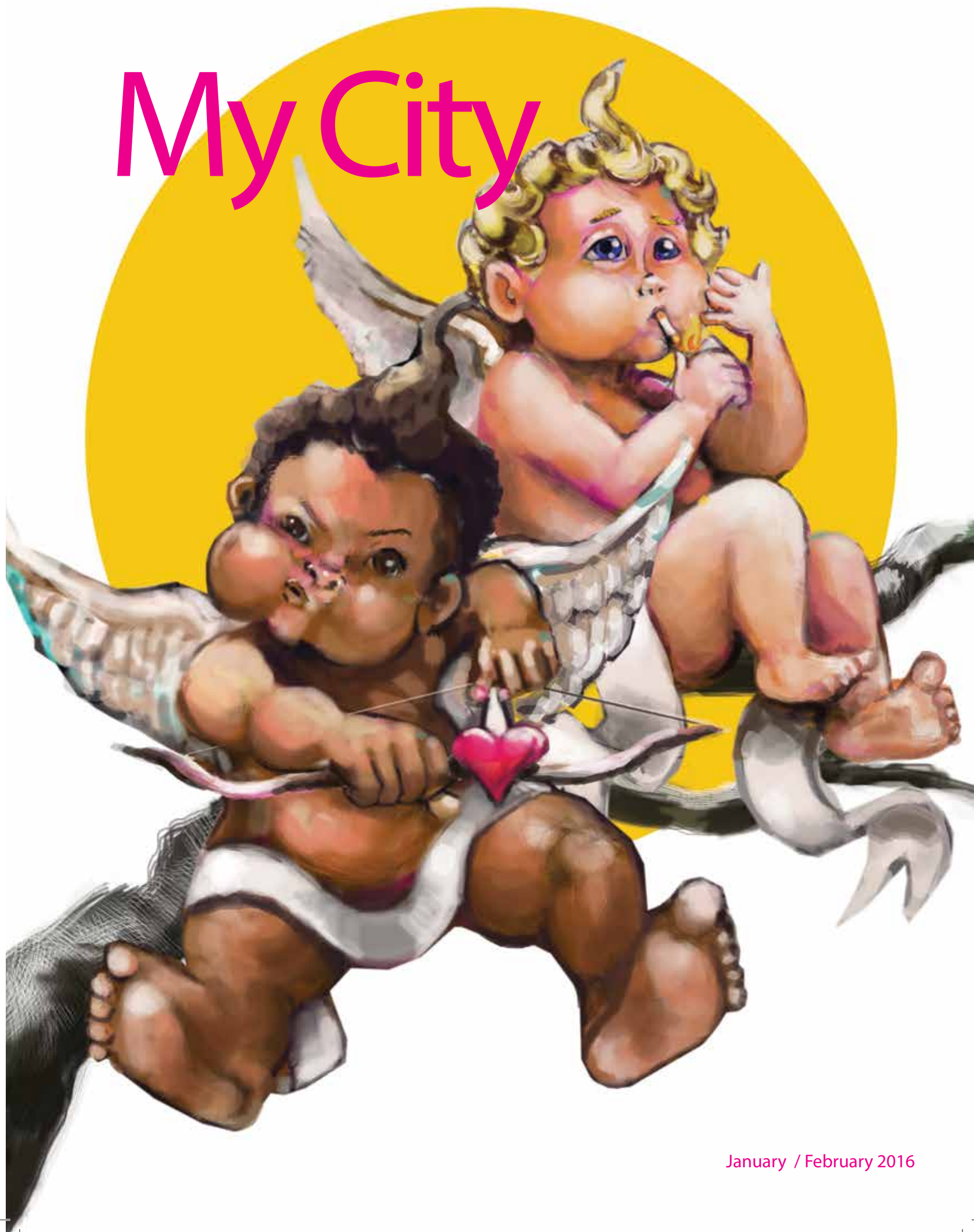


My City



January / February 2016

Letter From The Editor



We hope that you had an enjoyable holiday season. Now it's the new year and time for that new you. Then, before you realize it, it will be time to get that special someone that special something. We hope that you find ideas for both in this issue. Like every time, Martin "The Clown" Barry brings us his advice column and his comic strip (Micro Monsters). Guest writer, Gideon Smith, chats with Guitar Workshop's Tim Murray about some of his favourite Charlotte shows from days gone. We meet Billy Dunn of RE:DUNN Designs and learn about regional product WhiskeyWood. Becky Huskins, guest reviewer, takes us on a tour of the Nest at Songbirds Studios. Resident health nut, Mandi English, introduces us to the folks behind Gumbo (and Okra) and our beer girl, Amanda Dickinson, gives us a tour of local tap rooms.

We hope you enjoy this issue and thank you for reading. Don't forget to check out the exhaustive event listing on MyCityMagazine.net and subscribe to our weekly newsletter.

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Cover illustration by John Hairston, Jr. Hire him for your next commission or event (he does live art). john.hairston@mycitymagazine.net

Enjoy today and every day,
Ellen Gurley and the other My City Magazine personalities



Ellen Gurley

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Ask The Clown

Advice from Martin "The Clown" Barry



Q

Dear Clown,

My wife and I are new parents. We knew we would be facing late night feedings, battling illness and some grumpy times in addition to the joy of building our family. For the last three weeks in a row, our child has either not slept or has taken a very long time to get to sleep. This has had an impact on my work and our home life. I wanted to see what you would advise.

Sincerely,
Dreary Dad

A

Dear Dreary Dad,

The joys of a growing child and a developing brain can wear one down. I have two fine works in progress of my own. Seeing as how you have a newborn, I trust that you are seeing a pediatrician regularly. Please broach this topic with your doctor and perhaps a neurologist. Interruptions in sleep patterns can be devastating on development and on family life.

My best to you and your family,
The Clown

Q

Dear Clown,

My household is very busy. My children have a lot on their plates with school and extracurricular activities and also my husband has begun to add items of interest to the family calendar. I want to avoid situations where my children feel overwhelmed and my husband feels like his items are not as important. What's a girl to do?

Sincerely,
Management Mom

A

Dear Management Mom,

I can certainly relate to this. Kids have so much going on sometimes, it is a wonder we can do anything else but deliver them to each necessary spot. My best advice would be to have a family meeting and survey your children's feelings on the current schedule and discuss anything that needs to be cut or added. Get your husband's input here as well. Are there alternatives to the events coming up? If so, can these be an option? Don't forget to include your input. Hold that team together and make sure everyone finds a harmony.

The Clown

Do you have a question for The Clown? Write him at Martin@MyCityMagazine.net

Q

Dear Clown,

I have actually met you and I think this is a good thing you do for the city. I am distressed lately, though, and I need to see what you have to say. I have faced the death of six people dear to me lately. These deaths were far too soon and the losses were due to addiction or suicide. I wish I could have done something, anything, to prevent this for the people I mourn and those that mourn with me. Please send guidance.

Sincerely,
Hates to Lose

A

Dear Hates to Lose,

I am so sorry for everyone impacted by these losses. I was near speechless when I read your note. Losing friends to addiction or suicide is as confounding as it is painful. We ask ourselves if there was something we could have done or said to change this outcome. The answer to this is always YES. If you see friends close to you slipping into addiction, get in their face about it. Tell them that they matter to you and that you do not wish to see this poison take their lives. Hold an intervention and encourage them to get help. Suicide is trickier. One must see signs in order to identify what is happening and, at times, there are no signs. The best idea here is to always, ALWAYS let those close to you KNOW that they matter and that you are there for them. You have to temper this with knowing when to let them be and let them think. In short, be the friend you would want to have if you were in the same situation. Battle these forces with all the love in your heart and encourage others to do the same. My love to you and all the families and friends impacted. I hope we can make changes for each other daily.

Sincerely and with a heavy heart,
The Clown

Charlotte Tap Rooms

Amanda Dickinson



CraftyBeerGuys.com

Located in a restored house, in the heart of Huntersville, Crafty Guys is truly a neighborhood spot. Established in 2013, they have brought much needed beer culture to a once small town. The beer selection is handpicked by Certified Cicerone Christopher Westgard stocking around 450 bottles, 14 beer taps (two are nitro), and two wine taps. One of the things that sets Crafty Guys apart is the home brew supply room. You can stock up on your beer brewing supplies and grab a drink in the same spot. If you are interested in learning to home brew, you can attend a class there. They are taught on the second Saturday of every month and the cost is only 15 bucks. Some of you may recognize the name from seeing the logo around town at other pubs and breweries. This is because Crafty also does tap line installation, builds custom bars, and draught line cleaning for most of the breweries in Charlotte. They offer their services to Sugar Creek Brewing Company, Triple

C Brewing, Wooden Robot, BB&T Ballpark, and a long list of many others. Crafty Beer Guys are open seven days a week and their hours vary daily. They host beer tastings every Tuesday, wine tasting every Wednesday, and occasionally host live music and food trucks. Look them up on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for events and tastings.

BottledAndTapped.com

Owners Shelly Stevenson and Dan Johnson relocated to North Carolina via Castle Rock, Colorado under a year ago. Being submerged in Colorado's amazing beer scene, they had to bring a little of that with them to our fair state. Both started out as avid home brewers and they originally wanted to open

**Charlotte is a great beer
city and these tap rooms
are a big part of it.**

a brewery. Shelly tells me, they will be brewing out of the tap room in the future. One of the things that caught my attention, while visiting, was their beer and chocolate pairings. Yes, please! Patrons can choose from a flight or a single serving with each chocolate and beer chosen for compatibility.

Chocolates are supplied by 20 Degrees Chocolates, located on Selwyn Avenue, Charlotte. Bottled and Tapped boasts 16 taps, 4 wine taps and one nitro cold-pressed coffee tap. They also stock around 150 bottles and are pleased to fill growlers for you to take home. They are open seven days a week with occasional live music and food. Specials include \$2.00 cans on Wednesday and half price wine on Thursday. Check their events calendar for more information.

CorneliusDrafthouse.com

Located just down the road from Bottled and Tapped is Cornelius Drafthouse. Also opened under a year ago, they are already a go-to place for great beer in the Lake Norman area. They stock lots of cans and fill growlers for the lake crowd in the summer. It's the perfect place for grabbing some craft beers to take on the boat or for a picnic. Owners, Casey and Wes, try to keep the tap wall filled with mostly North Carolina beers. They have 16 taps and around 200 bottles which rotate seasonally. The interior of the space is decorated with mostly repurposed materials. They built the shelving and table tops themselves utilizing a lot of materials left over from the previous occupant. Wes and Casey wanted to instill a comfy, home-like atmosphere within the shop. They

only have one TV, but have a giant Jenga set for entertainment. They run specials throughout the week; Monday: \$9.00 mix and match 6 packs, Tuesday: half price wine, and Wednesday: 25% off growler fills. Look for live music coming in the warmer months. Cornelius Drafthouse is open seven days a week from 12-12.

SaludBeerShop.com

Salud hardly needs an introduction. Owner, Jason Glunt, opened his doors in March of 2012 with great success. Located in the heart of NoDa, Salud has cemented itself as a staple with the serious beer lovers in the Queen City. This place is always hopping, serving up 12 taps and tons of bottles. You can purchase a Crowler, which is a can filled and sealed on site, choosing from any of their taps. If you are hungry, grab a bite from Fud at Salud. Fud, connected to the bar, offers a menu filled with tasty sandwiches, salads, snacks, and the almost famous waffle-whichies. The future holds a Nano-brewery, with beers brewed by local home brewer Danny Deaton. Hours vary seven days a week, but be sure to join them for Sunday brunch.

GoodBottleCo.com

When you are in the SouthEnd, stop into Good Bottle Company.



Owner, Chris Hunt, has 12 taps, and, as one employee puts it, “an a**load of bottles”. They stock one of the best bottle selections in town with lots of beers you won’t see anywhere else. They host a ride club on Wednesdays encouraging people to pedal in. The taps and bottles rotate frequently so they are always fresh. One Saturday a month, Good Bottle holds a monthly breakfast at 9 AM, with cold brew coffee on nitro and treats from Your Mom’s Doughnuts. Check out the sale rack for half off bottles and 6 for \$6.00 cans.

TheBeerGrowler.net

Closer to uptown Charlotte, but also located on South Boulevard is, Beer Growler. The unique thing about this shop is that you can only purchase growlers or flights. This allows customers to sample many of the 45 taps in just one sitting. With that many beers to choose from, this is a nice option. The all-female ownership team works hard to bring some of the best craft beers available. They sell custom growlers in house, but you can bring your own to fill as well. Come in on Thursday when featured flights are only \$6.00.

Next time you are out, looking to grab a pint, check out one of these spots. You’ll be amazed at some previously unheard of beers. The staff members of all of these shops are well educated on what they serve and will happily help you pick out something tasty. Charlotte is a great beer city and these tap rooms are a big part of it.

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Micro Monsters

by Martin Barry

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NoDa Brewery. Same great beer. Now two locations.

by: Ellen Gurley

Sundays

location 1: closed

location 2: Tap Room open 1-6pm / Food Truck 1-6pm

Imperial Sandwich Company

Mondays

location 1: closed

location 2: Tap Room Open 4-8:30pm

Tuesdays

location 1: closed

location 2: "NoDable Series" (new beers released in their taproom) / Tap Room open 4-8:30pm / Food Truck : New Wrap Order 4-8pm

Wednesdays

location 1: Tap Room open 4-9pm / Run Club 6:30pm / food truck: Papa Libretto's Street Pizza

location 2: Tap Room open 4-9pm / Food Truck: Bleu Barn Bistro

Thursdays

location 1: closed

location 2: Tap Room Open 4-8:30pm / Food Truck: Tiger Yakitori

Fridays

location 1: Tap Room Open 4-9:30pm

location 2: Tap Room open 12-10pm / Live Music 6:30-8:30pm / Food Truck: Ooo Wee BBQ

Saturdays

location 1: Tap Room open 12-10pm

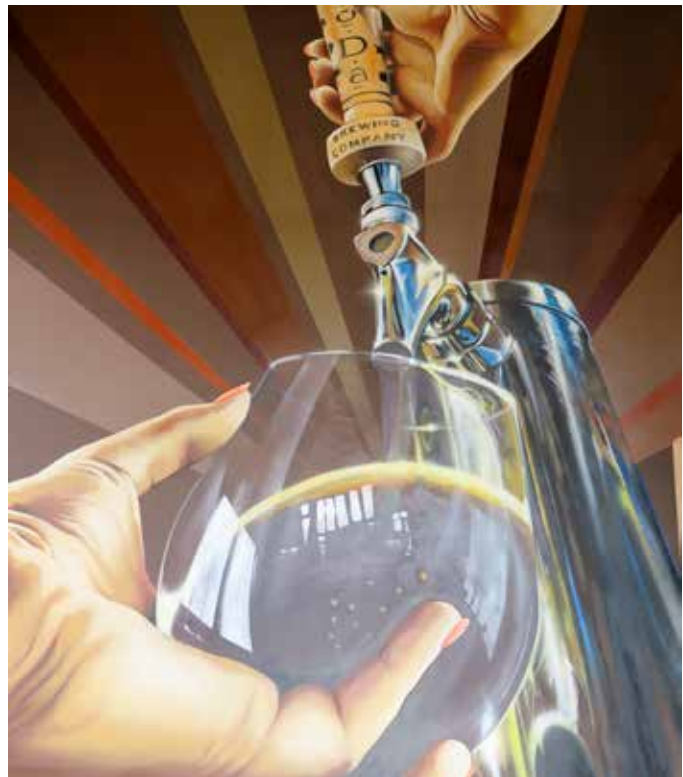
location 2: Tap Room open 12-10pm / Food Truck: Tin Kitchen

Locations

location 1: 2229 N. Davidson St.

location 2: 2921 N. Tryon St.

NoDaBrewing.com



Events In Your City

My City Magazine has the most exhaustive event listing in town. We kid you not and we know that we do as we've seen all of the rest. Why go to all the websites when you can go to just one and see the only go-to event listing in town? Subscribe to the weekly event newsletter while you are there. You can do this at the bottom of any page. We spend a lot of time on our list and want you to be able to enjoy it. We no longer have room to list all four pages of events that we normally run in our print edition, but we urge you to go to MyCityMagazine.net and subscribe today.

Here are just a few events in the Charlotte area for the months of January and February 2016:

Sundays @ Petra's

8-11pm 1st Sunday of the month -
Revival (old country, gospel, funk,
spiritual & traditional songs) w.Perry
Fowler / 2nd Sunday - Jazz Workshop
w.John Shaughnessy

Sundays @ Snug Harbor

karaoke w.Bryan Pierce

Sun., February 21st @ Belk Theater

Yanni

Mondays @ the Double Door Inn

Monday Night All Stars

Mondays @ Twenty-Two

Figure Drawing & Beer Tasting

Mondays @ Snug Harbor Fresh Grounds Presents:

"Knocturnal" w.residents: Justin
Aswell, A-Minor, Collectr, Ray + Bboy &
MC cyphers

Tuesdays @ Hattie's Tap & Tavern

1st Tuesdays 7-10pm Beard &
Mustache Club of NC monthly
meeting www.BMCofNC.com (+ tacos
& bingo)

Tuesdays on WCCB Charlotte

7-9am Troy's Everyday Eats w.Chef Troy
Gagliardo

Tues., February 9th @ the Fillmore

Willie Nelson & Family

Wednesdays @ Dilworth Neighborhood Grill

1st Wednesdays:
CarolinaBrewMasters.com meeting

Wed., February 10th @ the McGlohon Theater

Colin Hay

Wed., February 24th @ Knight Theater

an Evening w/ Dr. Atul Gawande

Thurs., January. 21st @ Mint Museum (uptown)

6:30-8:30pm Latin Music Concert
Series

Saturdays on WFNZ.com 610 AM Sports Franchise Radio

- 8-11am Ray Terry's About Your House
Radio
- 1st Saturdays every month 10-11am
MyCityMagazine.net 's Ellen Gurley
- Jan. 1 Chef Cat (Terra Flora, As You
Do, Bucha Fresca)
- Feb. 6th Joel Andrew Tracey of
Culture Initiative

Saturdays @ the Neighborhood Theatre

9am-1pm NoDaFarmersMarket.com

Sat., Feb. 6th @ the Fillmore

Queen City Brewers Festival

Sat., January 23rd @ the Fillmore

Indigo Girls

Sat., Jan. 30th @ the Fillmore

Chippendales

Sat., February 6th @ McGlohon Theater

Jimmy Webb (the Glen Campbell
Years)

Sat., February 20th @ Ovens Auditorium

The Beach Boys

Events on our website include: sports (for
January & February: Checkers, Hornets,
Panthers), activities, live music, plays, poetry
readings, book signings, comedy, theatre,
symphony, opera, dance, museums, art,
philanthropy, trade & interest shows, radio,
festivals, dance music, DJs, burlesque,
karaoke, speakers, film, fashion & so much
more. Here are just a few for this issue. Go to
MyCityMagazine.net and subscribe today.

Whiskey Wood

WhiskeyWood.com

by Ellen Gurley





Drinking whiskey can be a very romantic thing. Furthermore, having accessories for said whiskey, can also be a very lovely thing. Unless, of course, you don't think your whiskey deserves an accessory. I know mine does. Lexington, SC's Chad Geary came up with the idea for Whiskey Wood around a campfire with some of his old college buddies from Western Carolina. Cherrywood is perfectly charred individually making these stirrers quite a treat. "The entire concept is that we don't change the whiskey. The idea is that you eat and drink with your eyes, then your nose, then

you taste it. We have just made the stirrer more attractive and more practical while eliminating the alcohol smell and bringing the campfire to your glass."

Chad states that each stirrer is intended for one use however I used some of mine multiple times and still enjoyed the smell. He is a very down to earth guy (he married his high school sweetheart) and he doesn't aim to intimidate you with his stirrers. He's not a lofty person and you don't have to be high falootin yourself to enjoy his product. Personally I think it's a brilliant gift for women and men alike. Treat someone or yourself.

I met him at Soul Gastrolounge in Plaza-Midwood to enjoy his stirrer and chat him up but, not to worry, you don't have to make an appointment with him to experience his product. His jars of 18 whiskey stirrers are sold locally at the Sporting Gent and at CLTCH for less than thirty bucks. You can also order more products from his website (including flasks and campfire-scented candles done as a collaboration with a candle company). From my Google searches, I cannot find anyone else who makes these whiskey stirrers so this is truly an original idea and a wonderful gift idea. Get some.



Tim Murray of Guitar Workshop on Classic Rock Concerts

Interview by guest writer: Gideon Smith

Guitar supermaster Tim Murray sat down with us to discuss some of his favorite classic rock band shows. It was really interesting to see his collection of tickets of concerts from the 1960's onward (Jimi Hendrix, The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, Allman Brothers, etc.) and listen to his memories of favorite shows. He is the owner of The Guitar Workshop in Charlotte where many musicians in the local scene have studied at one time or still study now. If you are looking for a guitar instructor



www.GuitarWorkshopCharlotte.com 2123 East 7th, 28204, 704-372-1689

look no further, Tim and company are the best you could ask for. Tim just lives for music, and never ceases to amaze me with his playing and ethereal understanding of the craft.

LED ZEPPELIN (June 9th 1972 Charlotte Coliseum) "I saw Led Zeppelin twice, on Led Zeppelin 2 and Led Zeppelin 3. The first time I saw them they were doing LZ 2, I don't have the ticket stub for that one but I found the advertisement for it on the internet recently. But they weren't the big band they later became. They were just starting. The first time I saw Zeppelin was in '72. It was very good. It was a very small, stripped-down stage. The second time they came out and did "Stairway to Heaven" before it was released."

JEFF BECK (Park Center) "Actually out of that group the Jeff Beck group was my more favorite one that broke off from the Yardbirds. Jeff Beck is still the man. I wish I had my Jeff Beck tickets. I saw him play in the Jeff Beck Jan Hammer band at the Park Center and then I saw the Beck, Bogert and Appice at the Park Center. Jeff Beck is a seventy year old wiz."

THE FACES, ROD STEWART, FREE "Rod was very fun. That's why I liked Rod so much. I saw them twice with Ron Wood when Ron was still in the band and... fun. Had a great time, good rock n roll. Had a great audience rapport. The first time I saw them Free opened up for them and that was Paul Rogers, you can't beat that."

LAMAR WILLIAMS AND THE FUNGUS BLUES BAND "In the Allman Brothers, after Barry died, there was a bass player named Lamar Williams who took his place. This was the band Lamar was in in Charlotte. It was called the Fungus Blues Band. The trumpet player in the band was one of my school mates, a guy named Stanley Graham. Stanley used to let me sit in with his band when Lamar would be playing bass so (technically) I played guitar with the bass player from the Allman Brothers (laughs)."

LYNYRD SKYNYRD (Charlotte Coliseum) So you were at the Skynyrd show in Charlotte, NC at the old Coliseum when Ronnie fell off the stage? "I must have thrown that ticket away (laughs), they got maybe a song and a half into the set and he was drunk and fell off the stage and broke his collarbone. They came out and did 'Freebird' for about 20 minutes. The Marshall Tucker band were semi-friends of mine. They were from Spartanburg, South Carolina and I worked at a music store off of Freedom Drive. I interviewed Toy Caldwell back then, so when I saw them with Skynyrd they were still called the Toy Factory. After they did that, they got their record deal and became the Marshall Tucker band. But, yes, Ronnie fell off and broke his collar bone and they had to take him away to the hospital that night."

ROLLING STONES: "I saw the Stones on July 6th 1972."

Stevie Wonder opened for them. We watched from the mezzanine (which was kind of behind the stage). They had an enormous carpet that was a big dragon and was probably twenty by twenty at least. The lights that were behind them went up and the mirrors came down. That was when they were young and it was incredibly good. It was classic. Gimme Shelter. They were doing all of their blues tunes. It was great. That's the reason for being. The Stones, Rod Stewart the Faces, the Chuck Berry inspired stuff I love to play. That, that's what inspired me ever since then. That's rock n roll."

WHICH ONES INSPIRED YOU THE MOST AS A MUSICIAN?

"All the guitarists, every one of them has something to offer. The Dixie Dregs was probably the best band I have ever seen; just how tight they were and just the musicianship of the band. Mahavishnu Orchestra. The first time I saw them play they opened up for the New York Rock Ensemble down in Columbia, South Carolina. I was standing on the side of the stage watching them play and that was overwhelming; the power that band played with. John McLaughlin is still, to this day probably, I don't know, I keep saying he is the best guitar player I have ever seen but technique-wise nobody can touch that. He knows when to play quiet and he knows when to play just with intensity. He makes his guitar talk like nobody I have ever seen. He and Tom Emmanuel are probably the two best guitarists I have ever seen in terms of technique."

WHO DID YOU MEET WHEN YOU SAID 'ARE YOU IN RATT'? "I met Tommy Lee. He was a very nice kid back then. He was very tall and very pale. He didn't have all the tattoos. I was doing a Christmas telethon down at the Radison. Apparently they were staying at the Radison as the night before they opened up for Autograph. The Autograph guys were walking around and I was practicing classical guitar. These two shoes walked up and stood right in front of me. I looked up and the guy looked like Frankenstein. He was really pale, young guy and he said 'That sounds real good.' I looked up at him a couple of seconds later and said 'Are you in Ratt?' and he said 'No I'm in Motley Crue. My name's Tommy Lee.' I said 'Hello, Tommy. I'm Tim.'"

FAVORITE SHOWS OF ALL TIME? "Poco would be one. Kenny Loggins is another (believe it or not) (when Firefall opened up for him). That would be one of the most amazing



concerts I have ever seen. The Beatles in Crosley Field didn't even register because you couldn't hear them and it was kind of like I was just in the same baseball field with them. The Yes show on the "Close to the Edge" tour was one of the most amazing things I have ever seen. The Elton John concert back in those days in 1971 or 1972 when I saw him. Cream and Hendrix. Hendrix all three times I saw him. The second time I saw him, after the Monkees debacle, he opened for them. He said he would never come back to this town. However he did because the money was too good. Chicago opened up that show and Terry Kath was there. He was Mr. Psychedelic with a burning guitar so Jimi was always kind of putting on a show to top Terry Kath (who was also burning). The third time I saw him was at the Atlanta Pop Festival and he did the 'Star Spangled Banner' with the fireworks shooting off. That was pretty special. Then the Rod Stewart and the Faces concert when I saw them down in Clemson. Free opened for them and that was one of my favorite concerts of all time. I like that rock n roll."



Okra Gumbo, Delicious!

words: Mandi English / photos: Ellen Gurley



If you have spent much time in Plaza Midwood, you know some of the core folks that help make up the community. One of my favorites is a tiny yogi with great, curly hair and a huge smile. For the uninitiated, a Yogi is a scholar and instructor of Yoga. Alicia Roskind is the architect of the diverse and peaceful yoga studio, Okra. Everyone has asked where the name came from. She giggles when I broach the subject.

She states that when trying to find a name, Okra was mentioned almost as a joke, but she loved it. To her, it embodies the feel of "local" and homegrown, home cooking and healing properties, and it adds a bit of whimsy to a space that truly makes you feel comfortable and at home.

All under one roof (at Okra), you will find yoga, massage, and a cozy tea and coffee lounge that serves locally roasted coffee by Pure Intentions and teas by Charlotte-based company, Tea Rex. Next door to Okra is the sister business, Gumbo (of course). What else would you name it? Gumbo, to Alicia and her new business

partner, Hal Smith, is “the perfect mix”. Hal moved to Charlotte in 2011. He has a background in retail and private equity. His passion is Chi Running which is a perfect mix with yoga and as it represents the discipline of being centered and balanced. He has always been into fitness and after settling in Charlotte, he was told of a great, new yoga studio in Plaza Midwood. The name? Okra! Hal delved into his yoga practice deeper and acquired his yoga instructor certification from Carrie Williams a few months back to go along with his certifications in Chi Running, Crossfit, and USA Track and Field.

Gumbo embodies their love of wellness and supports a lifestyle of nutrition, community, fitness, and fun. So many of the products that they carry in Gumbo reflect this mantra. They feature carefully, crafted jewelry and exquisite candles, not to mention one of Charlotte's well known designer Caleb Clark's own fitness line of clothing (under his Enemy to Fashion umbrella). Caleb, famous for his edgy military/



apocalyptic street wear, has now released a chic and sassy fitness apparel collection for guys and gals. Fitting to what Okra and Gumbo represent, the line is appropriately named "Positive Vibes Only". Hal and Alicia share a passion for the products they carry and what each line represents. They will only stock garments, accessories, equipment, food, and shoes that they can really get behind wholeheartedly. There is a standard that is obvious and repeated, that they only want to carry a product that is created by people who are also passionate about what they do.

Hal explains that there is a story behind everything they carry from socks and foam rollers, to yoga mats. They also promote vegan-fare take home dishes delivered fresh from Nourish: one of Charlotte's organic / vegan delivery services. There are many criteria to be met by Gumbo's proprietors but the main ones for them are that they are well made, small batched, ethically sourced, and a US product as much as possible. If you ask them what their favorite merchandise is they will both answer with, "there are no favorites, we LOVE everything we get", but if you were to press Hal, there is definitely a brand that is dear to his heart. "Lem's shoes are

the perfect Chi Running shoe", Hal tells me, while handing me one of the lightest running shoes I have ever held. "They are created to have zero drop and help with the key point of Chi Running which is center balance and alignment".

It is very apparent, while speaking with these two wonderful people, that this shop was a labor of love. I watched it transform in a little over a month into a dream come true for Alicia and Hal. All the work was done by a skeleton crew of close friends and neighbors built with love.

Okra offers many workshops including meditation and AcroYoga (offering their first teacher training class coming in the new year). They make it easy to try out their classes. First time students get two weeks for \$20 wherein they get unlimited yoga. You cannot beat that. The best part is that right next door (at Gumbo) is everything and anything one would need for their yoga (or any fitness) practice and to feed your fitness fancy and wellness needs. Okra represents the healing and relaxation aspects of your life while Gumbo is a celebration of life and wellness making both worthwhile destinations in the little village of Plaza Midwood.

Get your Namaste on.

Okra
1912 Commonwealth Ave.
704-266-1443
OkraCharlotte.com

Gumbo
1916 Commonwealth Ave.
704-999-6630
GumboTheStore.com





THE NEST

AT SONGBIRDS STUDIOS

by Becky Huskins

So, I got one of those standard Facebook invites for a local show. Only this show was more local to me than usual as it was in Gastonia. What the whaaa? A show in Gastonia? You mean I don't have to drive to NoDA, Plaza Midwood, or all the way to Tuckaseegee to see an awesome band? I am down!

The show was being held at The Nest, a new music venue that touted itself as the only listening room in Gastonia. You bet it's the only listening room in Gastonia. I've never seen anything like this. It is a very calm and serene space set up with nice cushioned chairs, funky bulb lights and a beautiful baby grand piano in the corner. Being accustomed to typical rock shows with my punk rock-playing husband, walking into The Nest really caught me by surprise. Where's the graffiti? Where's the smell of unswept parties from weeks past? Where's the BAR?

I learn that is exactly the atmosphere owners Danny Kutcher

and April Perkins Smith are NOT going for with The Nest. They want an environment conducive to truly listening to music, not just treating it as background noise. It makes sense when you hear their band, Porcelain, who have played at many clubs around the state including The Nest, Rodi, and The Evening Muse. A band like Porcelain wants to be heard and appreciated, not just stifled out while people check texts on their phones.

I get the feeling the same can be said for the bands my husband and I have come to listen to tonight: Dust & Ashes from Charlotte, whose tagline says "Queen City Swamp Stomp", and The Paisley Fields, who describe themselves as "Queer Country from NYC". I don't know exactly what those descriptions mean, but I'm keen to find out. And here's exactly what I find out: these bands are awesome. They can be described with any words the bands like, but I'm going with awesome.

First off, The Paisley Fields are

a three-piece that included piano, a little light percussion, banjo on some songs, and guitar on others; all pulled together with some extraordinary harmony by James Wilson and Anna Volpe. These folks may be young and Midwestern, but they were heavily influenced by classic country and it shows. The songs were beautiful and the lyrics were touching and timely (with marriage equality currently being so celebrated). They sang a song called "Windows Fogged Up in Your Pick-Up Truck" which, Wilson said, he wrote about his husband. It was a really sweet and lovely song which Wilson said they had to gauge the audience before playing (due to its content). He relented with "we're all friends here, right?" and happily played on to the joy of all of us. Oh! And they also sang a transcendent cover of "Under the Bridge" by The Red Hot Chili Peppers, which did my 40 year-old heart all kinds of good.

Next up was Charlotte's own Dust & Ashes. I just have to say, if you haven't seen this band, I feel

sorry for you. I do. They are that good. My husband and I were trying to describe them on the ride home and I'm still grasping for the appropriate adjectives. Rootsy? Americana? Powerful? Haunting? Beautiful? All of the above, for sure. All of their instrumentation from the percussion to the flute to the fiddle was stellar, but we paid special attention to the song that featured an old-school metal saw. You just have to see it and hear it, people.

These ladies also had a great time interacting with their audience and indulged when they were asked to play some Blondie cover songs from an earlier show and then ripped the room open with a T.I. song. Listening to them getting their tunings together and laughing with their friends and fans felt more like watching a practice than a show, and it was so much fun.

I don't get out much, (that's motherhood for you) but apparently D&A made quite the splash at Charlotte Pride this past year and have received some acclaim in local publications as reader's picks. They are a great representation of our Charlotte music scene, and also really gracious to boot. But aside from how great these bands were, what really spoke to me was how great this room was. First off, the sound was incredible. It was rich and full and seemed to consume

every space. I'm no musician myself, but as a club show veteran I know what sounds good and this certainly did. At one point, Himes of Dust & Ashes exclaimed, "man, this is a legit listening room!"

Another feature, I noticed, was how comfortable the room was. The chairs are padded, the lighting is dim and pretty, the flooring had a painted pattern, and even the walls had art. It's not your typical club-like look and felt very homey to me and that also speaks to the atmosphere itself. James Wilson of The Paisley Fields said it felt like "playing in a living room" and as a patron it felt like I was sitting in one. I also really loved how the audience interacted with the artists almost in back and forth conversation. It wasn't like some drunk yelling "play one more" from the back of the club, but more like an informal jam session with the band's friends watching.

There's no bar in The Nest. It's a different experience when everyone isn't racing to the bar or sloshing beer on your shoes all night. I'm not a hater of adult beverages, but they should be a bonus not a necessity. Most all shows at The Nest are all-ages (so children are welcome). Check the calendar ahead of time to make sure the content is something you'd like your children to experience.

Overall, it felt like a house party. A house party in the most spacious

and quality-sounding house you ever sat in to hear a band. The only thing missing was my bunny slippers and I may take them next time. I don't doubt I would be welcomed regardless. I think I can sum this up for musicians by saying this is the kind of place you could take your mama. You know how sometimes you'd like for your mom to come and see you play, but you really don't want her to stand in a smelly club or have some drunk hitting on her? No worries about that at The Nest. Keep The Nest in mind the next time you want to go out and see some quality music. If you're in Gastonia, it's right down the road. And if you're not, folks, it's STILL right down the road. Seriously. It's only a few exits away and worth the short drive for such an auditory treat.



Billy Dunn of RE:DUNN Designs



by Ellen Gurley



To say that Charlotte born Billy Dunn is an artist would not be a fitting description. He is more of a craftsman ... of functional art. His business name is RE:DUNN and is a play on words combining his last name and his mission statement. He reuses, repurposes, and reclaims many materials that were discarded by you or sourced by himself through years of collecting. Sometimes he doesn't see the finished product when picking up unwanted things to recycle into his art. Often times, he lets things sit there for many years before they get a new life but, more often than not, he quickly acquires items and breathes new life into them.

His large-scale wood tables are what first caught my eye. Billy makes very robust pieces for personal and business use by his clients. I've seen hostess stands, farm tables, and butter knife mirrors. I've seen the interior and exterior of many businesses who have commissioned him for seating and décor (5Church in Charlotte and in Charleston, the Frock Shop, and Charlotte's Art Twentytwo just to name a few). Having worked

in art departments and the film industry, the lot of his time is eaten up by designing and building homes, however Dunn gets art done in his spare time. He has to. It gives his life purpose.

Dunn lived in the concrete jungle of Los Angeles for many years and found himself using more industrial pieces to produce his craft. Now back in Charlotte (a tree rich environment), he is using more natural ingredients (if you will) to crank out pieces. No matter where he lives, his process is organic and full of character and he wants to include his client in the process. Let's take advantage of his craft while he's here in the South in the off chance that the wind may send him west again. Have a consultation with him and hire him today. You'll be glad that you did.

Photography from
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