

# MyCity



January / February 2017

# Letter From The Editor

**January / February 2017**

Hi Charlotte,

It's the beginning of a new year and My City Magazine is excited to bring you more entertainment options and articles on Charlotte's movers and shakers to start of 2017. In this issue, Becky with the good taste gives a review of the new Leisure McCorkle album, Kacie gives us an interview with Braxton Winston of "Charlotte Uprising" fame, and Martin "the Clown" Barry chats with local artist Sharon Dowell. We walk through the VisArt Video new location and share their comic strip, we stalk local stylists at Copper Willow Salon, and we notify you of the Men of the Beaver wall calendar. As always, Barry brings us his Micro Monsters and a solid advice column and we share a few local events with you. Also in this edition, we introduce you to Kristen Miller of Sew Red Shop and local author Ashley Davis (plus implore you to join the "Writing Revolution").

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

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



Ellen Gurley

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(This cover is of Joey Hewell and Scott Lindsley of the [TheCompanyStoreNoDa.com](http://TheCompanyStoreNoDa.com))



# Contributors this Issue



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*Owner / Editor*



*Cover Illustrator*



*Columnist*



*Columnist / Comics*



*Columnist*

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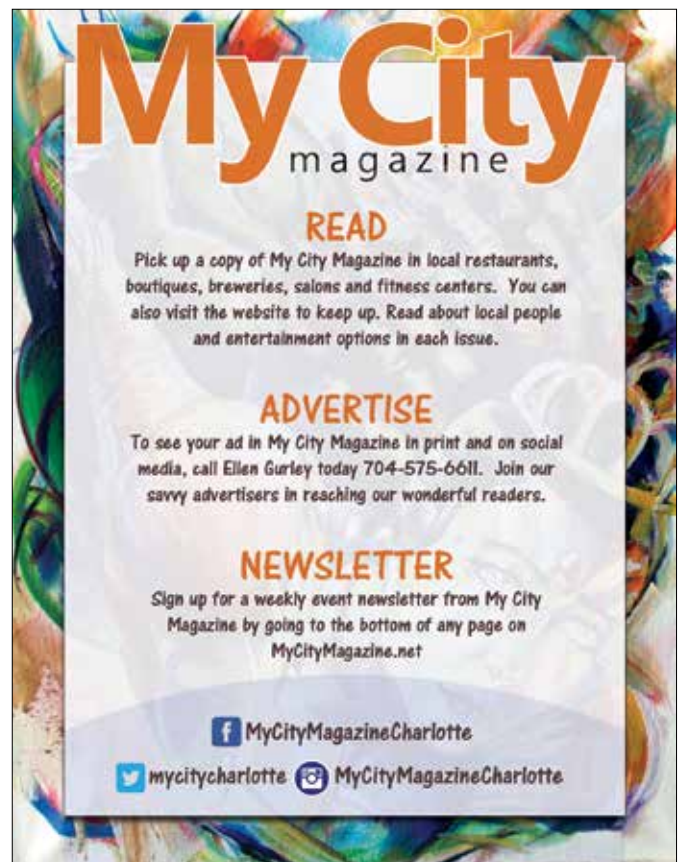
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\* comic strip of VisArt staff by Nic Rummel at Brut Tattoo





# Copper Willow Salon

Jenny Hawkins Fish & Brooke Chapman

words & photography by Ellen Gurley

The logical progression of a stylist is from student and assistant, to one's own chair, and then, finally, to salon owner. Jenny Hawkins Fish and Brooke Chapman (both from Orange Olive) have followed this natural sequence and are announcing to the Charlotte market Copper Willow Salon.

As for the name, Copper, for them, symbolizes artistic creativity and affection, while Willow, means to them stability and strength. Their dream was to have a place "to create magic, beautiful hair, and lasting relationships". They have brought their regular clients with them to this new concept and hope to attract some new ones, too (that's you). In the heart of SouthEnd, a trendy neighbourhood, you are sure to receive a hip style and enjoy the young energy from Fish and Chapman. They keep up with the latest buzz while making sure that you are maintaining your individuality.



With just the two of them in the space, they stay busy but never chaotic and it's rare to see a salon with such a user-friendly scheduling system. You don't have to download an app or learn any new software today. Simple. Call them or go to the website today to book an appointment. They are to be trusted to take care of you. Tell them My City Magazine sent you.

## Copper Willow Salon

2133 SouthEnd Drive., #105

Brooke 304-553-9967 | Jenny 980-253-7779

**Tues:** 9am-8pm | **Wed:** 10a-6pm | **Thurs:** 10am-8pm | **Fri:** 10am-6pm | **Sat:** 9am-4pm | **Sun & Mon:** closed

[CopperWillowSalon.com](http://CopperWillowSalon.com)





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# Ask The Clown

*What do I know I'm just a clown?  
Advice from Martin "The Clown" Barry*



**Q** Dear Clown,

How does one handle family gatherings when two or more individuals do not get along?

Sincerely, Hostess with the Mostest

**A** Dear Hostess,

The first thing to do is always invite everyone along to a family gathering. The second thing to do is not involve yourself in any of the conflict. You will find that they tend to naturally find their own spaces in the crowd without stepping on anyone's intended warmth.

It's a good thing, The Clown

**Q** Dear Clown,

I met someone that I identified with almost instantaneously and I want to make sure that we will continue to have time together. I want to invite them along to everything, but I do not want to overwhelm them. What is a guy to do?

Sincerely, Enthusiastic

**A** Dear Enthusiastic,

Certainly, do not invite them to everything immediately. Keep things loose and find out more about them. Ask about their schedule and ask when they have some free time to hang out. Make the appointments and keep them. If what you have seen is pervasive, they will begin to see the same thing and want to spend more time with you.

Be cool, The Clown

**Q** Dear Clown,

I am setting my resolutions for the new year and I was wondering if you did the same?

Sincerely, Goal Oriented

**A** Dear GO,

I never set resolutions because they will linger and gather dust as the year wears on and then, suddenly, it's November and I haven't done a thing. What I WILL do, though, is set a realistic string of small goals for myself month by month and hold myself accountable. This way, if I am a few weeks, or even a month behind, I can catch up to where I am supposed to be.

Wishing you success, The Clown

**Q** Dear Clown,

I have been wanting to write for some time and I have promised myself I will hit "send" after writing this. I am feeling a massive sense of dread for myself and others lately and I keep thinking it would be easier if I just wasn't around anymore. I am almost done with college and I have employment waiting, but it means that I will be on my own for the first time in my life. I am terrified. Help?

Sincerely, Fearing

**A** Dear Fearing,

When you say "easier if I just wasn't around anymore", I sincerely hope you do not mean ending your life. If this is the case, please seek help immediately. That is never a good solution and it hurts everyone you love to their core. I can understand your dread in being alone for the first time. I would advise that you visit your loved ones

(continued next page)



as often as you can, get out and do things that you love doing, and seek professional counsel to talk out the darker fragments of what you are feeling. I will also make you an offer. Find me, and you will instantly have another friend on your roster to drink, laugh, and hang out with. You can do this and everyone reading this is pulling for you.

Much love, The Clown

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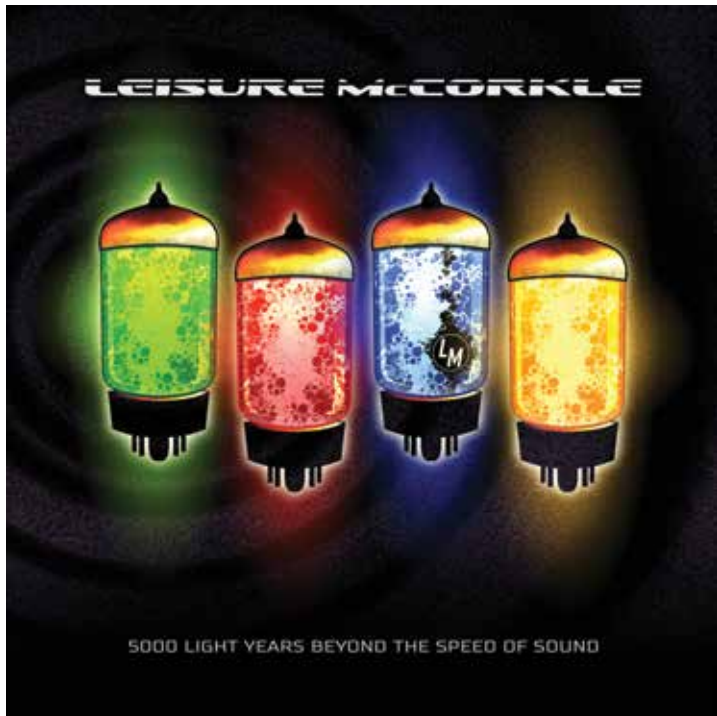
Do you have a question for The Clown? Write him at [Martin@MyCityMagazine.net](mailto:Martin@MyCityMagazine.net)





# 5000 Light Years Beyond the Speed of Sound: Leisure McCorkle

review by Becky Huskins



It's early morning in the country, about 6:30. It's still dark outside and cold in late November. You will be hard-pressed to be excited about anything this early in the morning with a 35 mile commute ahead of you, but I've decided to take a ride with Leisure McCorkle this morning. I pop in the CD of the new record (this isn't even the fully mastered version - I'm a lucky girl) and begin a beautiful morning drive.

The first track, "Warehouse", begins with just the light opening I need: catchy, smooth, and perfect to shake off my sleepy cobwebs. Next is "Transmission" with dreamy guitars and beautiful melodies bringing me to life as the traffic gathers and I leave the rural country behind me. The mood for the ride is set.

By the time I reach "From Up in the Stars" I'm pretty much asking all of my recent musical crushes to kindly exit the vehicle. The guys repeating "do it all the time" was a nod to the Violent Femmes. This track also has the added kick from John Cates on percussion and drums. Track four, "And.....Anne", reminds me that I'm not what we would call a "musical person". I don't know chords, signature, or tempo. I experience music through feelings, emotions, and memories... and boy does this one take me back to being a college girl in the 90's.

Next song is "Our Love". I might be in my forties, but do we ever stop breaking our own hearts? This song tells me... no, we don't. (Also, side note, for those of you lucky enough to be playing the vinyl which is due out later this spring, here's where you flip the record, but I'm driving and will continue my love fest without missing a beat.) I keep hearing the influences I so love: Elvis Costello, The Cure, The Smiths, and local favorites like Hardsoul Poets, Jolene, and The Avett Brothers. The use of layered guitars that shimmer and chime definitely create a signature sound for this band and an immediate adoration for anyone that appreciates dream pop.

Oh, sheesh, "Acting Like a Friend". How did Leisure know the details of my divorce? Sure

to be a new favorite lyric in my head forever: "Why you acting like a friend of mine when you've been busy drawing battle lines? Trading secrets with the other side. You ain't no friend of mine...."

It takes us 7 tracks to get to what I think is the crown jewel of the record: "Why You Wanna Do Me Like That?" I definitely hear the ELO influence and make note to tell my friend who idolizes Jeff Lynne. The addition of Justin Faircloth on piano really clinches this song. On my drive, the sun is finally breaking the horizon and this song is my huge dose of caffeine. I'm awake now, Leisure!

"Turn it Up" is a love letter to all of us either right in the middle or even standing on the periphery of the business of music. Here's a good place to mention the talented personnel at work on 5000 Light Years. There's Lee "Leisure" McCorkle on vocals and songwriting, "Big Mike" Mitschele on bass, lead and backing vocals, songwriting and also producing the record, Grainger Gilbert on guitars, and Gary Guthrie on drums and percussion. Also credit to Chris Gargis for engineering this masterpiece recorded at Old House Studio here in Charlotte and Ben Moss for the awesome cover art. The sound achieved here is definitely one of guys who've been playing a long time both with and without each other. The end product is a tapestry of experience, world travel, and multitudes of stages we're all lucky enough to stand on the edge of just listening.

By the time I reach "Ghost Angeles" I'm on Arrowood Road leading myself to the site of my establishment livelihood. This song is so full of what-if's and maybes that I can almost believe anything is possible even in this ugly industrial park. "Maybe I'll move to Charlotte before they tear it all down." My feelings exactly.

In the final track, "The Loneliest I've Ever Been", Leisure manages something that not every band can grasp... the catchy, dreamy quality of palpable pain. Heartbreak never felt so free, I tell you. It's the perfect time and place to park the Scion and get on with my day, but I feel like Jack Black walking into Championship Vinyl still blasting the last track I heard before punching the clock. Just like the Energizer Bunny™, the sound on 5000 Light Years keeps going and stays with you. I'm guessing these guys knew just what they were doing and we're all lucky to get taken along for the ride

The album is available at Lunchbox Records, Repo Record, and online at <https://goo.gl/A9NDWY> and on iTunes.

Leisure McCorkle will be at the Evening Muse on Friday, January 20th, with Mike Strauss, kicking off the Blowing Bubbles World Tour 2017.

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# Structural Beauty: Sharon Dowell

an interview with Martin "the Clown" Barry



You have seen her work. Pieces have been showing up all over the city for the past six years. Walk by or through almost any building in Charlotte and your vision can be filled with her compositions and messages. Today, we would like to introduce you to the person behind the work and perhaps acquire a piece for your home. Ladies and gentlemen, please meet Sharon Dowell.

CLOWN: Tell the people a little about your background, your education, and formative times that made you the artist you are today.

SHARON DOWELL: Since the age of three, I always knew I wanted to be an artist. As a child, art was my escape. I grew up in Houston, Texas. I studied illustration and painting at UNC-Charlotte and went to graduate school for Arts Administration at Winthrop University. Mr. Williams, my high school art teacher, was a key mentor and encourager in my life. He taught me important lessons about letting go, happy accidents, and that not every piece of paper or canvas is precious. One must try different approaches and make mistakes to grow. In my 20's, I worked my way up to Director at Center of the Earth Gallery, a beloved contemporary art gallery in NoDa that was around for 22+ years.

That experience taught me how to talk about and sell art, it fine tuned my client development, and exposed me to the basics of running a business in the arts.

CLOWN: What artists would you say are influential to your style?

SHARON DOWELL: Mickalene Thomas, Hope Gangloff, Richard Diebenkorn, Cy Twombly, Wayne Thiebaud, and Henri Matisse. Their color palettes, compositions, and unusual application of materials inspires me.

CLOWN: When you landed on your signature style, did it come as an epiphany, or had you been building slowly toward what we see today?

SHARON DOWELL: It was a slow build during college. The more I painted, the more I discovered what I wanted to say and how to reflect my concepts. My UNC-Charlotte Professor, Jamie Franki, encouraged me with simple yet great advice, saying that when I hit on a piece that excited me, to create 6-10 more in that vein and have a show. I started to discover my style of texture, vibrant colors, and layers. I first began with heavily illustrative works depicting the melting pot of New York City conveying the variety of cultures, people, and styles I saw there. I was heavily sheltered growing up, so you can imagine how much the big apple blew me away the first time I visited. I then moved toward architecture as another way to capture the energy of place.

CLOWN: Your work conveys certain feelings and messages from this interviewer's perspective. What are the key things that you are hoping to convey to viewers in any given piece?

SHARON DOWELL: Intertwining themes course through my vibrant, layered works. Recent travels abroad have especially impacted my art. Interested in the documentation of memory and place, I strive to find beauty in often overlooked structures and spaces. At times, commentaries on the changing environment and political or social

references surface. I incorporate the vigor, tension, and perceptions of an environment, often reflecting a sense of locality and history. In my public art works, community and location are key to me in creating a visually stimulating space with which people will connect. Additionally, my background in arts administration lends me a unique perspective and capacity for creating and developing impacting and engaging public art. I enjoy the challenge of working within set parameters to find creative solutions, melding my artistic and business skills together. I firmly believe that creative place making communicates distinctiveness and generates connections across communities.

CLOWN: Is there a day that you do not create something, or are you putting something together every single day?

SHARON DOWELL: Alas, there are many days when I do not create: when I am applying for opportunities, meeting with clients or community leaders, or handling the often un-fun administrative tasks required to run a business. Since becoming an LLC a year ago, I am finding that a good chunk of my time is devoted to this.

CLOWN: What have you found to be frustrating in your work lately?

SHARON DOWELL: That censorship is still alive and well and in places where you would not expect.

CLOWN: Do you have pieces you have done that you keep all to yourself?

SHARON DOWELL: I have one that I painted of myself and my husband from back when we were first dating and everything was sparkly. It has our astrological chart lines imbedded in the background. Other than that, most everything is on the "For Sale" table.

CLOWN: You are commissioned to paint a huge piece anywhere in the world. What's the first choice?

SHARON DOWELL: Somewhere in Barcelona, please! It's next on my list to visit. The architecture and vibrant nature of the city intrigues me.

CLOWN: Your mural, A City On Its Side, tells the current tale of Charlotte through your vision. What would an ideal Charlotte look like to you?

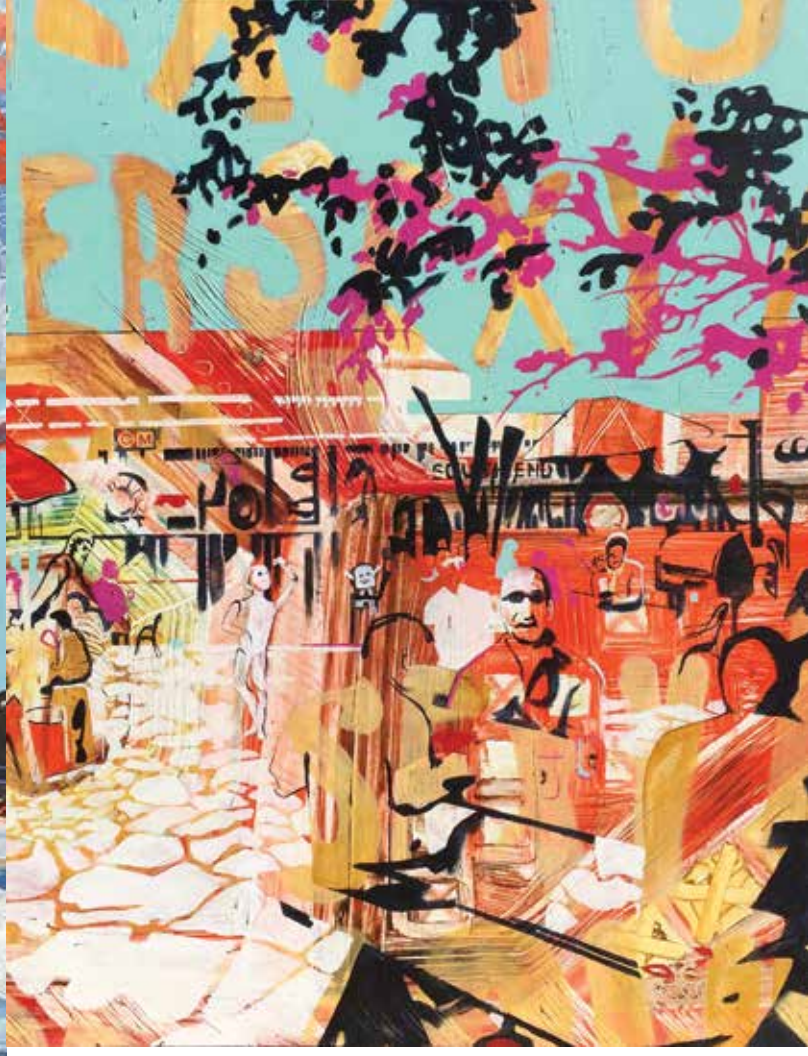
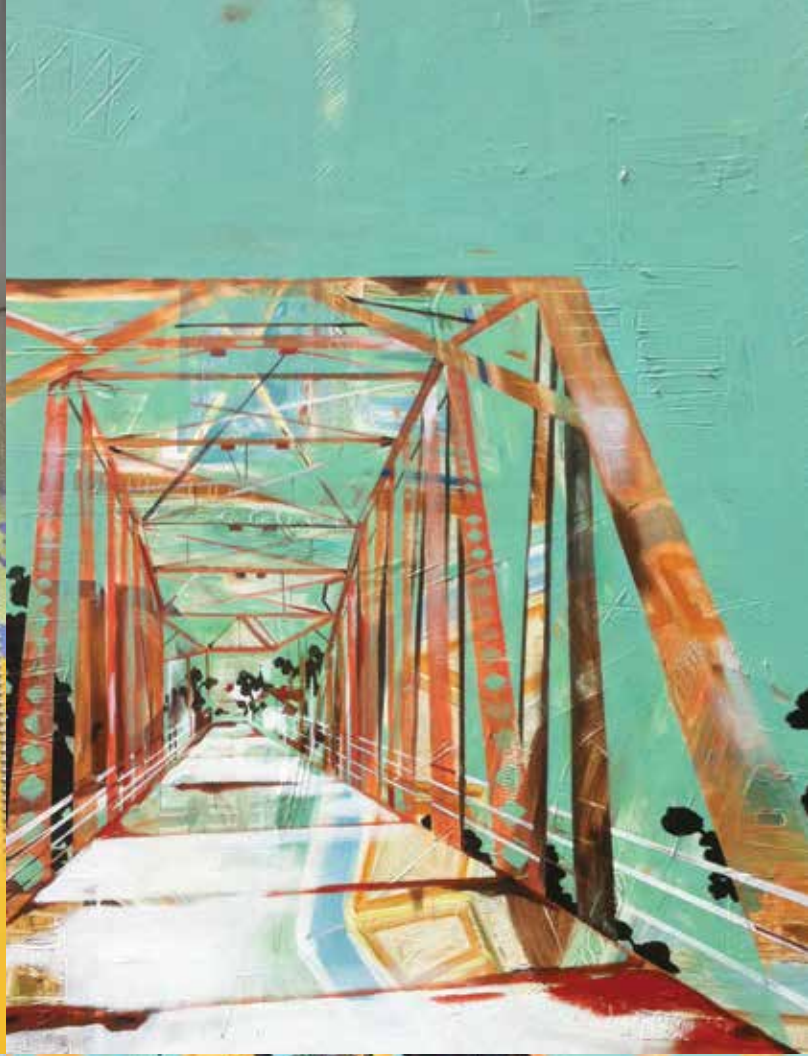
SHARON DOWELL: A place where people with conflicting perspectives and ideas can actually hear each other. We are so polarized right now in our thinking (nationally, too). It has been an odd year with a lot of strife; my husband and I have lost friends we have known and interacted with for years. Folks can pick and choose who they interact with much more easily than in the past. People can choose to live in bubble worlds wherein everyone they know agrees with them and is into the same things as them. Healthy dialogue is a challenge. It's a strange time. At TedxCharlotte 2016, I saw an excellent talk originally given at TedxCreative Coast last year: "10 Ways To Have A Better Conversation" by Celeste Headlee. If we could all watch that and take those tips to heart, our city and world would be much improved.

Sharon Dowell works list:

- A City On Its Side 2016 : acrylic mural 9'h x 25'w | UNC-Charlotte Center City Building, 1st floor
- Charlotte Buddy Bear 2014 : acrylic on prefabricated sculpture 2 meters h | Main Public Library (Tryon and 6th St.)
- Common Market Is Good : commission for Chuck Barger | Common Market SouthEnd owner 48" x 48"
- Midwood : Acrylic on canvas 36" x 60"
- They Never Saw The Ocean 2013 : acrylic on canvas 48"h x 120"w
- Transition : acrylic on canvas 48" x 48"
- Truss/Trust 2016 : acrylic mural 23'h x 30'w | UNC-Charlotte Center City Building
- Truss II : acrylic on canvas 72" x 48"

Check out more at [SharonDowell.com](http://SharonDowell.com)







# VISART VIDEO

by Ellen Gurley



My City Magazine occasionally catches up with the people down at VisArt Video. We are here to announce that they are still up to all good and are still the only game in town. Video rental isn't a thing of the past and if you think it is dying, then it is your responsibility to give it proverbial mouth to mouth. Not only does VisArt have the largest collection of films on the east coast, but they now stock so many action figures and collectibles that I can't even bring my kids in anymore. So pucker up and get your butts down there and set up that free membership. It will prove to

be healthy relationship lasting longer than you've ever experienced. They plan to set up their screening rooms at the start of 2017 and will be having lots of in-store events. We promise to keep you abreast of these happenings and look forward to seeing you there.

Please enjoy this comic strip of VisArt staff by Nic Rummel at Brut Tattoo.

[VisArtVideo.net](http://VisArtVideo.net) | 3104 Eastway Dr., 28205 | 704-343-3031





# VISART

VIDEO

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# Men of the Thirsty Beaver 2017 Calendar

by Ellen Gurley

If you've ever been down Central Avenue, then you've seen the Thirsty Beaver. However, if you've been lucky enough, then you have been inside for some actual honky tonk action. Now-a-days, the Beaver is sitting in between high rise condominiums as Plaza-Midwood has become one of the most construction-busy neighbourhoods in town. The building owner refused to sell and the Beaver sits there giving growth and development the proverbial middle finger. It's pretty amusing, but all jokes aside, the owners of the Thirsty Beaver, Mark and Brian Wilson, have always been active members of the community. Part of that is practicing philanthropy. Having recently lost their parking lot (and any other space that was beside the venue), they had to think of other ways to raise money for charity. The lot was where they threw festivals for different causes. That brings us to the birth of the Men of the Thirsty Beaver Saloon 2017 Calendar

You can purchase one online, at the Thirsty Beaver, or at the Tippy Burro, the recent restaurant opened by the Beaver folks. This project benefits the [www.BeTheMatch.org](http://www.BeTheMatch.org) Bone Marrow Registry. The calendar is super comical, with the owners and regulars poking some good old-fashioned fun at pin-up modeling. Molly Poe designed the heck out of it and Chris Edwards graciously donated his photography. My City Magazine thinks that it is a collector's item. Creators say "there is no way that we could showcase all of the incredible characters and friends" in this year's 14 month calendar. Perhaps we can see one next year. What are you waiting for? Go get one

[MenOfTheBeaver.com](http://MenOfTheBeaver.com)

Thirsty Beaver Saloon, 1225 Central Avenue  
Tippy Burro Saloon & Cantina, 2711 Monroe Road



# Micro Monsters

by Martin Barry



## Events In Your City

By Ellen Gurley



Here are just a few events that include **BEER, WINE, or FOOD** in the Charlotte area for the months of January and February 2016:

**Sundays @ NoDa Company Store** : 12-8pm Free Burger Brunch

**Mondays @ Lebowski's** : 1/2 off bottles of wine

**Tuesdays @ NoDa Brewing Co.** : "NoDable Series" (new beers released in their taproom 4pm) / Tap Room open 4-9pm

**Wednesdays @ JJ's Red Hots** : kids eat free (w.purchase of an adult combo)

**Thursdays @ Twenty-Two** : 1/2 off wine by the bottle

**Fridays @ Triple C Brewing** : Vitos Pizza (food truck)

**Saturday., Feb. 4th @ the Fillmore** : Queen City Brewers Fest

Events on our website include: sports, 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. Go to [MyCityMagazine.net](http://MyCityMagazine.net) and subscribe today.



# Ash Davis: A Life Through Letters

a review by Ellen Gurley



On National Letter Writing Day (December 7th 2016), I attended Ashley Davis' book signing for A Life Through Letters. After having sat on a stack of letters his father had written for more than twenty years, Davis has recently dedicated an entire book to explaining them. Essentially and ultimately, I think we all wish that we had said something to someone before death comes in. Robert Gray Davis was a father to three boys and a pastor to hundreds of people in his years on this earth. With a shaking hand, he wrote letters to many people, wanting to tell them how they affected him or what he regretted not telling them. It's beautiful and not many of us are afforded this luxury.

Davis was lucky enough to be able to read these words and ultimately share them with us. His father penned letters to past colleagues, to a building, to his sons, to a pill, and even to strangers. He wrote to a man whose name he never knew. When Pastor Davis was a child, he remembered a man that a neighbor would wheel out into the sun daily. The man never moved. He just laid there. His name becomes "Stone Man" in this letter and it is very telling. Pastor Davis regretted never asking his name or how he came to be "Stone". I wonder how random my letters would be. In fact, so does Davis. He not only urges us to purchase and read this book but he wants us all to join the "Writing Revolution". I, for one, would love to see people putting actual pen to actual paper again. Davis is urging us all to write just one letter. If you cannot remember how to do that, that's okay, he is kind enough to have put us some letter writing tips on his website. He truly believes that "connecting with others through writing has the power to create a huge a lasting impact on others". My City Magazine agrees.

[ALifeThroughLetters.com](http://ALifeThroughLetters.com) | [ash@alifethroughletters.com](mailto:ash@alifethroughletters.com)

Instagram & Twitter: [@ashdavisletters](https://www.instagram.com/ashdavisletters)

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# Kristen Miller of Sew Red

words by Ellen Gurley

Having dabbled in sewing her whole life came in handy when Kristen Miller found herself in Arizona. She had moved across the country with a loved one and soon found herself trying to monetize her skills in a new area. As a nod to her grandmother, Miller is self-taught in pattern-making and sewing. She also took fiber studies and costume design at UNC-Charlotte. Deciding to become her own boss, she dove into a few ideas for clothing that came from her schooling. She paired that backbone with her, then, environmental inspirations, and that, as they say, was a wrap. Enjoying the whole process of experimentation, she found that she really had a knack for fashion and, almost by accident, actual stars were purchasing her custom wares under the moniker Sew Red. Steve Stevens has been spotted on stage with Billy Idol wearing some Sew Red fringed bells and Kat Von D frequently makes purchases from Miller. Boast worthy.



Miller started off cutting up XL men's T-shirts into halters and even dresses. The reception for this line was very good. She moved to California from Arizona and started on her no-wedgie shorts, pants, skirts, and more ideas to test the waters. That is when her "business just took off. Sales started pouring in".

In a marriage of ingenuity and industry, Kristen now sells pieces to people all over the world while back in Charlotte with us. She likes mixing dressy with casual and while she is known for her iconic, fringed bell-bottoms (her signature piece), she still enjoys crafting a tie-dye, pencil skirt.



You'll find designs that are fun, flirty, ethereal, and (think) rocker. She likes an exaggerated silhouette to be present throughout her shop. Support local and treat yourself to a custom item from Kristen Miller of Sew Red Shop today. She has a kid's line in the works with leopard print, baby fringe, and velvet bells. Stay tuned for that. Call it bohemian/boho or gypsy, see that it's handmade and dyed, and know that it's all perfect for anything from yoga to a music festival. Pick your poison. [SewRed.Etsy.com](http://SewRed.Etsy.com)

# Civic Virtue: an interview with Braxton Winston

Interview & Photos by Kacie Smagacz



"Don't listen to the media." "You can't trust everything you read on the internet." "The news is always biased, that's why I don't watch it." "I only watch Fox, MSNBC is run by liberals." "I only watch MSNBC, Fox is run by conservatives." Sound familiar? The problem is often that our major news sources are, in fact, laced with bias and also get their funding from corporations even bigger than themselves. Therefore they are limited in regards to what they can say, issues they are allowed to address, and there are also limitations on whom they are permitted to give a voice. Think about that for a minute. The ones we rely on for the truth of our nation are often motivated to convince you of something based upon who is paying their bills. If that sounds scary, it is because it is. Braxton Winston is beginning a production company that will be the opposite of these standards. Truth-telling, when it comes to media, is a major challenge. From false adver-



tising to emotional manipulation, a story is not simply facts as it is backed by feelings and history and it is motivated by convincing the listener/reader to change their minds on something. Virtuous Productions, Winston's latest venture, is based upon what he calls "civic virtue".

SMAGACZ: What is civic virtue?

WINSTON: Civic virtue is an important concept when considering Republican forms of government, meaning a state in which supreme power is held by the people and their elected representatives and which has an elected or nominated president rather than a monarch. Citizens that live in a republic must be dedicated to the common welfare of their community even at the



cost of their individual interests.

SMAGACZ: How did this all come about for you?

WINSTON: I found out about the death of Keith Lamont Scott on my way home from work. I was coaching a football game not far from the scene of the crime on Old Concord Road. I decided to stop and bear witness. Soon after, I began live-streaming the event (a task that would ultimately become a responsibility during the ensuing days and weeks of protests and other actions).

SMAGACZ: So, you fell into the role of relaying facts as they happened? Sounds a lot like what



photojournalism used to be, and should be, in its purest form. You were in the moment and largely used your phone and the internet to show those not present the truth of what was happening. What do you plan to do from here?

WINSTON: I am still actively defining what my exact role needs to be moving forward. I know that I am now a citizen journalist who has a duty to disseminate the facts as they occur, here in Charlotte, in regards to our citizen's demands for justice and equality under the law. At the same time, I find myself as an active member in the movement to realize those same ideals. I am working on forming an

organization that will enable that type of work in the long term. I have also pledged myself to help locate and assist the next generation of leaders who will be necessary for the new ideas we need to defeat the status quo.

SMAGACZ: From personal experience, it becomes tricky to speak on virtue or reform within our own political systems without people tuning out or accusing you of some sort of anti-patriotic motives (when, in reality, it truly is the opposite). Transparency and accountability only make us greater and stronger, more respectable, and united. It seems to me that with Virtuous Productions, you are seeking to tackle some taboo subjects that the mainstream media dances around for fear of losing their funding and to not ruffle too many feathers. How do you plan on doing this?

WINSTON: America is the greatest nation on this planet. It is also one of the world's most troubled nations and is imperfect, having been built upon the potential of what it could become. The Nation was built by the subjugation of the rights of many for the economic benefit of a few. It did promise avenues for groups to prove they are worthy of rights or equal protections under the law, but these rights would only be afforded in incremental steps. White, Christian, heterosexual, native born, males were the only true recipients of full rights under our founding documents. Every other group, including but not exclusive to, women, people of color, indigenous, and gays have all been catching up bit by bit and throughout the generations. The Greek virtue of "arete" is a moral virtue that boils down to working to achieve one's full potential in

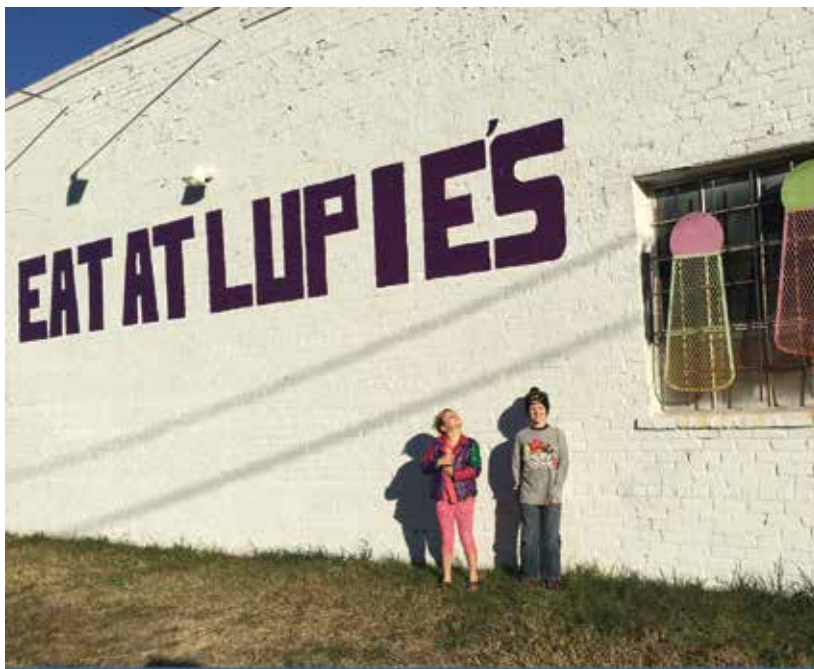


excellence. The fulfillment of our purpose, as a nation and as individual Americans, is to live up to that full potential. We must continue working to achieve our full potential of excellence of all areas. We believe the US Constitution is a living document. When American people are empowered under their rights, under the Constitution, we are able to form a more perfect union. When we become more perfect, America gets closer to achieving arete.

SMAGACZ: What are your initial goals with Virtuous Productions?

WINSTON: This traditional production company will focus on three (3) initial projects: 1) This will be a long-form documentary that will express the chronological account of the streets of Charlotte following the death of Keith Lamont Scott culminating with my arrest outside of BOA Stadium (on Sunday, September 25th) and my address to the mayor and City Council the following day. The documentary will make heavy use of existing live-streamed footage, interviews of front-line participants, and other footage that was captured by independent photographers and media outlets. 2) It will feature a series of viral videos that depict some of the more provocative and inspirational moments from the "Charlotte Uprising", using first person footage from the nights on the streets of Charlotte and the ensuing days and weeks. These will be used in attempt to keep control of the narrative that was the "Charlotte Uprising" by showing the facts as they occurred on the streets. 3) You can expect a weekly 30-60 minute live-stream program focusing on issues in social justice. All individual Americans have remarkable potential. We CAN greatly impact society if our lives are fortified by civic and moral virtues. Too often we

suffer from institutional and systemic ills that strip us of our rights as a matter of convenience and comfort for some. These conveniences and comforts have caused a severe erosion of civic virtue, a philosophy held high in considering how to maintain a healthy Republic. There is a necessity for individual citizens to do the deeds that are necessary to stabilize and push forward our Republic. When citizens are full of civic virtue and are pushing toward achieving arete, hard work gets done and good things happen. For the groups who have been left out of the immediate promise of full rights under the law by our Framers, it is imperative that the nation is filled with citizens flush with civic virtue and are always moving with purpose to arete.



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## BLOWING BUBBLES TOUR 2017

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MIKE STRAUSS**



photo by Carlos Odi Castilla

**THE EVENING MUSE**  
**1 / 20 / 2017 @ 10PM**