

Jill McCorkle
on early days

Larry Wheeler's
letter from the art world

The artful life of
Eliza Olander

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SEPTEMBER 2012
PREMIERE ISSUE
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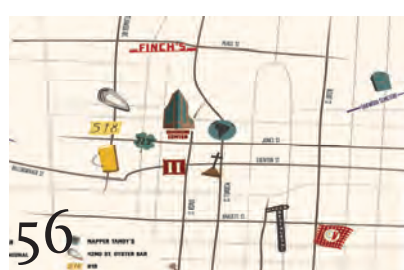
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Edvard Munch: Symbolism in Print



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Letter from the editor

Dear Raleigh,

Welcome to WALTER!

Welcome to a magazine that embraces and reflects all that is great about this City of Oaks. From art to entrepreneurs, from style to sports, from poetry to food and anything in between, WALTER loves it all.

For the last few months, we've been hard at work putting together a magazine that captures Raleigh's life and soul, one worthy of the energetic, gracious place we call home. It has been a thrilling labor of love. Everyone from our award-winning contributors to the people they're writing about and photographing is filled with the kind of buzzy enthusiasm that can't be manufactured.

They're excited, just as I am, because we feel in our bones that the time is right for a magazine that reflects the dynamic, fast-growing Raleigh of today. When I met with Orage Quarles III, the president and publisher of the News & Observer, earlier this year, he agreed: Raleigh needs a sophisticated, fun-loving, arts-loving, business-loving, spirited, city magazine.

I've been writing about people and places and what makes them tick for a long time. From my hometown newspaper in Pasadena, California, to reporting jobs in Washington, London, and a few spots in between – from book-writing to producing broadcast news – I have been lucky to tell a lot of stories. But never so lucky as now. After seven years in Raleigh as a writer and active community volunteer, I know there is no place like this one, and I am honored to have the chance to capture the best of our city in the pages of WALTER.

I am also honored to work with such talented people.

WALTER's correspondents, whose stories you'll read and photographs and illustrations you'll see, are second-to-none. Our publisher, Felicia Gressette, is deftly and graciously captaining our brand-new ship. Our ad sales force, led by Jennifer Demerath, has made magic happen overnight. And Jesma Reynolds, WALTER art director, has brought our prose to life with elegance. Fusing beautiful design, photography and illustration, she has drawn on her experience designing books, interiors, videos, fashion and magazines to create a WALTER that is more lovely than I could have imagined.

We all love Raleigh. It's a chart-topping spot that remains unspoiled. Though relatively small in size, our town boasts some of the country's best companies, museums, restaurants, and sports. We are full of smart people and the jobs they create. It's all so good, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* named Raleigh America's Best City.

America's best city needs its own magazine. America's best city needs WALTER. We want WALTER to become part of the life of our city, and part of your life, too.

Thank you for reading. Please take a look at our website, too, at www.waltermagazine.com, for more photographs, more writing, and updates between editions.

And please let us know what you think! I'd love to hear from you.



JULI LEONARD

A handwritten signature of Liza Roberts in black ink.

Liza Roberts
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WALTER

Raleigh's Life & Soul

VOLUME I, ISSUE I

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Contributors



JIMMY WILLIAMS

Photographer Jimmy Williams, who photographed Eliza Olander and her art for “The Artful Life of Eliza Olander,” journeys far and wide to capture “unique moments in time” for his global roster of advertising and editorial clients. Williams is known for his artistic approach to photography, embracing concepts and emotions, and interpreting them into tangible works of art. Between assignments, Williams enjoys working on fine art photography. His ongoing *Music Makers* series is a project dear to his North Carolina roots, honoring the musical legends and spirit of the South.



MARY E. MILLER

Mary E. Miller, writer of this month’s *At the Table* feature on the Porch Light Supper Club, has been a reporter and features columnist at *The News & Observer*, served as a special assistant to the provost at Clemson University, and started a textile design business. To her, it’s all storytelling, just employing different tools. She recently moved back to Raleigh after eight years in South Carolina, and lives with her husband, Bob Geolas, their four children and a menagerie of dogs, chickens and guinea pigs.



JULI LEONARD

Juli Leonard, who photographed Webb Simpson, Shaun Richards and others for *WALTER*’s debut issue, has published in international style magazines, online magazines, books and is regularly featured in daily newspapers throughout the United States. Her work has also been featured in two gallery shows. Juli currently works at *The News & Observer* as a staff photojournalist and photo editor. She spends her free time with her nose in a book, quarry swimming or scouring flea markets. She is the mama to one daughter, two dogs and a gerbil named Gilbert. They reside in Raleigh.



JILL McCORKLE

Jill McCorkle, who wrote this month’s *Reflections* essay on her early years as a writer, is the author of four story collections and six novels including *Life After Life*, which will be published in spring 2013. Five of her eight books have been named New York Times notable books. She has received the New England Book Award, the John Dos Passos Prize for Excellence in Literature, and the North Carolina Award for Literature. She teaches creative writing at N.C. State University.



LARRY WHEELER

Larry Wheeler contributed his *Letter from the Art World* to our debut issue. Larry has served as director of the North Carolina Museum of Art since 1994. Under his leadership, the museum has become one of the leading art museums in the American South. Larry was *The News & Observer*’s Tar Heel of the Year in 2000 and has been called “the godfather of the Triangle’s cultural boom.”



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DORIANNE LAUX

Dorianne Laux's *Dark Charms* is WALTER's first poem, and what a place to start. *Dark Charms* is from Dorianne's fifth collection, *The Book of Men*, published in August by W.W. Norton. She is the recipient of two Best American Poetry Prizes, a Pushcart Prize, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Guggenheim Fellowship. Since 2008, Dorianne and her husband, the poet Joseph Millar, have lived in Raleigh, where she teaches poetry in the MFA program at NC State University.



CHARLES UPCHURCH

Charles Upchurch, who contributed this month's story about cane pole fishing for our *Sporting* column as well as an enthusiastic paen to the Manhattan cocktail for *Drink*, is an award-winning writer with roots in every corner of the Triangle. A Durham native and a graduate of UNC Chapel Hill, he lives in Raleigh with his wife and two ginger-haired boys. He has also inhabited Dallas, New York City and the mean streets of Melvin Village, N.H.



IPPY PATTERSON

The Stokes' Aster bloom that accompanies September's *Just One Plant* column was illustrated by Ippy Patterson. She was born in Connecticut but grew up in a copper mining camp in the Atacama, the driest desert in the world. She has illustrated columns for *The New York Times* and has won silver and gold awards from the Garden Writers of America for her drawings in various books. Her work ranges from detailed rendering (realism, abstraction, fantasy) in pen, pencil and watercolor, to large charcoal life drawings. She lives in Hillsborough and is now writing/drawing "A Boogeyman Memoirs."



JOHN ROSENTHAL

John Rosenthal, who contributed his Amtrak Café, Raleigh 1974 for our *Freeze Frame* feature, has had his photographs exhibited throughout the North and Southeast, and purchased for N.C. Museum of Art's permanent collection. In 1998, a collection of his photographs, *Regarding Manhattan*, was published by Safe Harbor Books. He was awarded a North Carolina Visual Art Fellowship in 2008 for his photographs of New Orleans' Lower Ninth Ward. Rosenthal was a commentator on National Public Radio throughout the 1990s.



SHAWN ROCCO

Shawn Rocco, who photographed cane pole fisherman Billy Williams for our *Sporting* column, is a staff photojournalist with *The News & Observer* and an adjunct professor in the journalism school at UNC Chapel Hill. He has received numerous awards for his photography and multimedia from the National Press Photographers Association and others. In 2011 he was named Photographer of the Year by the NCPPA. He lives in Raleigh with his wife Joanna and their dog Cooper.

A photograph of the WRAL 5 station sign mounted on a brick building. The sign features the call letters 'WRAL' in large, blue, three-dimensional block letters, followed by a large blue number '5'. Below this, a white rectangular sign with a blue border contains the text 'WELCOME, WALTER!' and 'FROM RALEIGH'S HOMETOWN STATION' in black, sans-serif, all-caps font. In the background, a red and white radio tower with several antennas is visible against a blue sky with white clouds.

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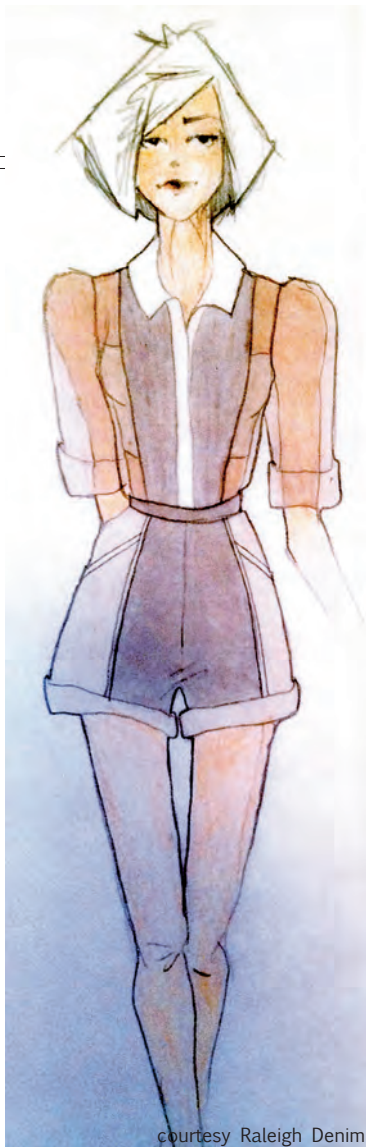
In case your Elizabethan history is a bit rusty, Sir Walter Raleigh was an English jack-of-all-trades at a high-octane level. An explorer and historian, a spy and a soldier, a writer and a poet, a member of parliament and an entrepreneur, Sir Walter was, for a time, a firm favorite of Queen Elizabeth I and the captain of her Queen's Guard. He was on her explorer speed-dial list, organizing several voyages, including the one in 1584 that established the first English colony in America on Roanoke Island. (You know, the Lost Colony.)

Perhaps more than anything, Sir Walter was true to himself. He risked the disfavor of his queen – and promptly received it – when he followed his heart to secretly marry the woman he loved, Elizabeth Throckmorton, one of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. The decision sent Sir Walter and his bride to the Tower of London. Not one to cry in his soup, he spent his time there writing poetry. And upon release, what did he do? He went looking for El Dorado, the fabled South American golden land.

Brave and indomitable, a Renaissance man in spirit and in fact, unafraid to live life to the fullest, Sir Walter sets an example we at WALTER aim to follow.

It's true, too, that like our hero, our city is a place of both innovation and tradition. Beloved by those who know it well, and a bit of a mystery to those who don't, this is a hardworking place with a wellspring of optimism.

Raleigh, North Carolina, couldn't have been named more aptly, and WALTER magazine couldn't have a better inspiration. 🍷



courtesy Raleigh Denim

RALEIGH DENIM ON THE MOVE

Raleigh Denim is venturing beyond jeans in a big way, the local fashion label's co-founder, Sarah Lytvinenko, tells WALTER. On Sept. 5, the hometown fashion house – brain-child of Sarah and Victor Lytvinenko – will present its newest collection at New York Fashion Week. Unlike last year, models will be wearing much more than denim.

"We're really excited to be building out full men's and women's collections," she says. "We've wanted to do this for a long time." Silk dresses, shirts, shorts and skirts are in the works, all of which stick to the brand's "classic aesthetic, focusing on fit and details." In the preview sketch here, Lytvinenko has depicted a sheer-paneled shirt and high-waist, two-tone denim shorts. "It's buttoned up, but a little bit edgy. Something I would wear," she says.

A comment from a friend a few months ago about a short haircut inspired the design aesthetic: "...something along the lines of 'subtraction as addition.' That's often how we approach design, and it fits right in with how we're inspired by math." Math, she says, is "one of the main ways we interpret the world around us." There's no question the denim duo is doing more adding than subtracting these days: In addition to the new collection, they're putting the finishing touches on a store in New York's NoLiTa neighborhood that will also debut during fashion week.

Raleigh Denim's new collection will be available at its Raleigh and New York stores by February 2013.

THE SYMPHONY, AL FRESCO

From Dvorak to Joplin, North Carolina Symphony music director Grant Llewellyn is firing up a free outdoor concert Sept. 9 to kick off the symphony's 80th anniversary season.

Join him at 7:30 p.m. at the Raleigh Amphitheater, just a short stroll from Llewellyn's usual digs at Meymandi Concert Hall.

It's the first date on a busy calendar for the symphony, which has scheduled a full-scale classical series of 14 two-night concerts in its 80th year.

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Ethan Hyman

ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?

Something tells us yes. For those of you planning your tailgating calendar, the Wolfpack has six games at Carter-Finley Stadium, starting Sept. 15 against South Alabama. UNC kicks it off Sept. 1 at home versus Elon, the same day Duke takes on Florida International at Wallace Wade. Cheers!



THE ROOTS AT HOPSCOTCH

The Roots, the Grammy-winning neo-soul act famous as late night talk show host Jimmy Fallon's house band – has a 25-year history and the fans to prove it. On Saturday, Sept. 8, local Roots lovers can catch their act at Raleigh's Hopscotch Music Festival, where the band will stop after headlining StartUpRockOn at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte.

Ahmir Thompson and Tariq Trotter, popularly known as “Questlove” and Black Thought, have been playing together since their days as Philadelphia music students. Last year, the band and John Legend collaborated for triple-Grammy-winning album *Wake Up!* Their critically acclaimed 11th and latest album, *Undun*, combines indie and neo soul elements.

The Independent Weekly's third annual Hopscotch Music Festival runs Sept. 6-8 at various venues (there's more in Charles Marshall's *Hear* column on page 64).

GETTING SPARKY

Food, art, film, music, poetry, fashion... circus tricks? Yes, most likely. You name the creative enterprise, and the



annual all-volunteer, open-source, creative potluck festival known as SparkCon is bound to have it. This year marks the festival's seventh anniversary. Hosted by its founders, Beth and Aly Khalifa, who run the Warehouse District's collaborative workspace Designbox, the free event is also a program of the nonprofit Visual Art Exchange. SparkCon takes place at venues across downtown Sept. 13-16. For more details, go to www.sparkcon.com



OPENING DAY

A time-honored North Carolina hunting tradition begins anew Sept. 1 when dove season opens. The 2012-2013 season for mourning and white-winged dove runs from Sept. 1-Oct. 6; Nov. 19-Nov. 24; and Dec. 15-Jan. 11. Go to www.ncwildlife.org for regulations and information on hunter safety education.

EDVARD MUNCH, PRINTMAKER

Edvard Munch made the headlines in May when his iconic painting, *The Scream*, became the priciest painting ever sold at auction, fetching an eye-watering \$119.9 million at Sotheby's. This month, a lesser-known – but no less powerful – body of Munch's work comes to Raleigh with the exhibit *Edvard Munch: Symbolism in Print*, opening Sept. 23 at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Scholars say these lithographs and woodcuts, from the Museum of Modern Art's collection in New York, comprise some of the artist's most daring and forceful images of the individual in modern life. The exhibit will run until Feb. 10.



Edvard Munch, *Madonna*, 1895-1902, lithograph and woodcut, composition: 23 13/16 x 17 1/2 in., sheet (irreg.): 33 11/16 x 23 3/8 in.; Publisher: Edvard Munch, Berlin; Printer: M. W. Lassally, Berlin; Edition: approximately 150 in several color and compositional variations; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The William B. Jaffe and Evelyn A. J. Hall Collection, 114.1956; © 2011 The Munch Museum / The Munch-Ellingsen Group / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

RAVENSCROFT

RAVENSCROFT AT 150

Ravenscroft School kicks off a year of sesquicentennial celebrations this month with the release of a book on the school's history and expects a crowd of several hundred for its 150th anniversary gala in April.

A far quieter event, held last month, might go down as the most poignant marker of the school's big birthday. On Aug. 16, faculty and staff made a trip downtown to Oakwood Cemetery to pay their respects to the school's first teacher and principal, Jennie Massenburg Henry, whose grave has lain unmarked since she was buried in 1917.

Ravenscroft teacher Barbara Paul led the effort for the school to create and install a memorial stone and inspired dozens of faculty members to contribute to the effort.

"At the very heart of this is that we are adults who care about children and who want to teach the next generation," said Paul. "Mrs. Henry exemplified those same traits and set the path for all of us."



Elizabeth Throckmorton

GERGEN & CO. SET THEIR SIGHTS ON RALEIGH

If his name sounds familiar, maybe you've read his column on social innovation, *Doing Better at Doing Good*, in *The N&O*. Or maybe you've heard about Bull City Forward, the social entrepreneur incubator he operates in Durham, or Queen City Forward, the one in Charlotte.

But if the name Christopher Gergen (above, far right) is new to you, it won't be for long. Because this month, Gergen's bringing his passion for kick-starting entrepreneurial ventures that serve "the greater good" to Raleigh.

The HUB of Raleigh will be the latest spoke in the wheel of Gergen's network of entrepreneurial shops across the state. His goal is to "enable local entrepreneurs to create world-changing solutions."

The HUB has a slightly different twist than its predecessors, focusing more on

becoming a place for entrepreneurs to work and network together. "We're trying to create a very dynamic community and working environment for entrepreneurs that want to change the world," Gergen says.

His partners in the HUB are Jason Widen and Brooks Bell (pictured above). Bell owns the self-named data optimization shop that adjoins the new HUB space – tricked out with a café and groovy lounging areas – on the second floor of the Junior League building on Hillsborough Street.

Entrepreneurs will pay membership fees at varying rates depending on whether they want to work from one of six private offices or 18 co-working spaces or merely want access to the hive of activity Gergen is promising. Check it out at www.hubraleigh.com.



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Frankly, my dear, that's one pricey little man

Vivien Leigh's Oscar, the one she won for *Gone with the Wind* and accepted in 1940 wearing a long chiffon gown sprinkled with red poppies, has come to Raleigh for a spell.

Valued at more than half a million dollars, the statuette is part of *Real to Reel: The Making of Gone with the Wind*, an exhibit at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh from now to Jan. 13.

In addition to the Oscar, *Gone with the Wind* lovers can feast their eyes on costumes worn by Leigh, Olivia de Havilland and Clark Gable; the typewriter that screenwriter Sidney Howard used to bang out the script; and production paintings including the "burning of Atlanta" scene.

» Raleigh now

MARBLES TURNS 5



Like many of its biggest fans, Marbles Kids Museum is getting ready to turn 5.

Saturday, Sept. 29, is the big day, and the museum – which ranks as one of Raleigh's biggest tourist attractions – expects the all-day festivities to spill out on to the street.

Sally Edwards, the visionary who forged Marbles in 2007 out of the former Exploris and Playspace museums, is happy for a slice of birthday cake, but she's also hard at work planning Marbles' second annual Big Idea forum on Oct. 3. Red Hat president and CEO Jim Whitehurst will speak about innovation and creativity in business.

FORBIDDEN LOVE?

In 1994, Suzy Barile, a freelance writer in Harmony, N.C., inherited a box of books and papers from her great-uncle. In it were letters written just after the Civil War by her great-great-grandmother, Ella Swain, about the unlikely love she had for Smith Atkins, the young Yankee general occupying her hometown of Chapel Hill. As locals know, Swain was the daughter of David Swain, president of the University of North Carolina and a former governor of the state; Atkins

was one of Sherman's young generals sent to occupy Swain's proud city.

Barile's award-winning book, *Undaunted Heart: The True Story of a Southern Belle and a Yankee General*, is the subject of her lecture Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. at the Joel Lane Museum House on West Hargett Street. Tickets are \$15 and must be purchased in advance: call (919) 833-3431.

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CLASSICALLY URBAN



Lara O'Brien and Marcelo Martinez, photo by Tim Lytvinenko

Letter from the art world

by Larry Wheeler
director, North Carolina Museum of Art



RALEIGH: THE CITY OF THE ARTS, WHERE THE ARTS ARE LIFE, where the arts mean business, where the arts transform. Our city, to be sure, has a diverse array of arts programming for folks of all ages. Several of its arts organizations boast of being institutions of regional and national importance. Multiple communities of artists, visual and performing, give the city a creative pulse. So, how good are the arts in Raleigh, really?

Any city worth its salt wants to know how it stacks up against cities of similar size and bigger. Sports teams are often an arbiter. In our case, the Hurricanes and the Wolfpack bring periodic glory. But the arts. Are they New Yorky? As good as Atlanta? How about New Orleans? Minneapolis? Seattle?

Well, let me say right out of the chute that the arts in Raleigh are pretty damned good. We are fortunate to have an interesting mix of traditional offerings along with innovative groups that inspire creative reflection on issues of our time. And we have the funky, the cool. So, all together, Raleigh has the raw materials in its arts arsenal to give it a claim to be urban and urbane.

The new Raleigh, with its dramatic growth of an international population and a blossoming economy, is destined to be one of the remarkable cities of the 21st century. Already characterized as a cradle of the creative class and the axis of cool, Raleigh has the opportunity to use its dynamic and diverse culture to shape a destination admired far and wide – even in Atlanta and Minneapolis – for the quality and risk-taking of its arts and artists.

Which organizations currently have the strongest artistic reputations – from a regional and national perspective? The Carolina Ballet, the North Carolina Symphony, and the North Carolina Museum of Art seem the obvious choices.

Under Balanchine-trained director Ricky Weiss, the 15-year-old Carolina Ballet is evermore raising the bar. New

choreography for the storybook ballets and choreographic invention for new work provide local audiences with serious dance on a par with virtually any city in the country. This year we can look forward to the opening of the season on Sept. 13 with a world premiere and the ballet Symposium, based on Plato's Dialogues. The full production of *Nutcracker* will be a highlight of the holiday season. Carolina Performing Arts of UNC-Chapel Hill has organized a season-long celebration at many venues of the centennial of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, a revolutionary masterpiece. Carolina Ballet performs a new interpretation of this work in May. And the lovely *Giselle* concludes the season.

The North Carolina Symphony, led by internationally acclaimed Welsh music director Grant Llewellyn, mixes memorable performances of classical masterworks with equally memorable showcases of newer music by international composers. This year we can hear Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 7 (Leningrad)* and American works by the distinguished composers Copland, Ives, and Adams. And there will be a Stravinsky program, of course, celebrating *The Rite of Spring* in May.

The North Carolina Museum of Art exhibits one of the region's, if not the nation's, finest collections of art. One can engage with exquisite works from ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome, along with masterpieces from the Renaissance to the present day. American art, African art, and art of the 20th and 21st centuries are great strengths, as well. I like to think, of

course, that the new Thomas Phifer-designed gallery building is also a masterpiece. Special exhibitions such as the recent Rembrandt and Monet shows draw hundreds of thousands of people from around the world to Raleigh. In October we're presenting Still-Life Masterpieces, including works by Cézanne, Matisse, Renoir, and Manet. Edvard Munch's haunting, unique prints will be shown at the same time. Next fall look for Porsche: Seducing Speed.

One expects a lot from the big three; and they deliver a lot. But there are so many artistic gifts provided to us every week by a multitude of very fine cultural presenters. N.C. Theatre brings the best of Broadway. This fall we can enjoy *Catch Me If You Can* and *Shrek*. The renowned Ira David Wood's Theatre in the Park opens its season with *Next to Normal*, recipient of Tony awards and the Pulitzer Prize. Christmas in Raleigh is synonymous with Ira David Wood's *A Christmas Carol*. The nimble and inventive Burning Coal Theatre at downtown Murphey School will present a modern interpretation of Brigadoon and Shining City this fall.

The really big stars come to see us, as well. Lady Gaga and Elton John appeared recently at PNC Arena, along with an impressive array of hip-hop and country stars. Cirque du Soleil is scheduled for a stop this fall. The warm-weather music scene is as good as it gets. The NCMA's Bryan Amphitheater reliably presents the best of world and regional music. This summer Mary Chapin Carpenter, AfroCubism, and Trombone Shorty were greeted outdoors by enthusiastic crowds. The scintillating Shen Wei Dance Arts performed a site-specific premiere in the NCMA's new West Building over three nights in July – a remarkable, world-class event. The new Raleigh Amphitheater has added life to the inner city with its array of contemporary rock and club music.

Speaking of downtown. This is where the vibe of new Raleigh pulsates. This is where the city gathers – and does so in the name of the arts. On certain Friday evenings, one can face serious traffic in downtown Raleigh. People are pouring in for gallery walks, to hang out in cafes, to catch music in clubs, or to attend an opening at the new Contemporary Art Museum

(CAM). In its second year, CAM has become a magnet for a younger, hipper Raleigh and a catalyst for the redevelopment of a transitional sector of the city. Under Elysia Borowy-Reeder's direction, CAM presents artists who are making it big in New York, L.A., and other arts capitals of the world.


Joined at the hip, if the opposite corner is a hip, is Flanders Gallery. Kelly McChesney and Marjorie Hodges curate shows the likes of which one finds at Art Basel Miami. I cannot believe the knock-me-over reaction I had last June when I came upon the brightly knitted facade of Flanders – the porch, windows, door, and all – created by the itinerant artist Olek.

The CAM-anchored Martin Street scene is very cool. Even neighboring Raleigh Denim is an art gallery, sort of. Its autographed custom jeans and contemporary couture have found a second venue in New York. Hats off to Victor and Sarah Lytvinenko. Interesting dining options continue to spring up in the neighborhood, undoubtedly inspired by the success of Ashley Christensen's Poole's Diner, the gathering place of the arts set.

Heard of Hopscotch? In early September more than 150 of the hottest bands will perform for three days (Sept. 6–8) in at least a dozen venues in downtown Raleigh. USA Today asks, "Looking for a hip, new music festival? Try Hopscotch." And then there is Spark Con, Sept. 14–17, during which more

than 85 Triangle artists and performers come together in multiple venues for spontaneous collaboration and creative outpouring.

We have so much happening in Raleigh. It is certainly becoming a city where the arts shape its identity. I've raved about the new stuff and the big-deal arts venues, but there is so much more. Many fine galleries, including the impressive Gallery C, represent local artists. To acquire works by the legends of North Carolina art, particularly from the modernist tradition, try the Lee Hansley Gallery. To add to the palette, we have fine opera, impressive public art, and lively public arts festivals such as Artsposure and First Night.

Who could ask for anything more? 

This is where the vibe
of new Raleigh pulsates.
This is where the city
gathers – and does so in
the name of the arts.



BRINGING IT HOME
Webb Simpson keeps the U.S.
Open trophy at home on the
dining room sideboard.

A CHAMPION'S RALEIGH ROOTS

*U.S. Open Winner Webb Simpson
on what drives him*

by Liza Roberts

photographs by Juli Leonard

THE BALLOONS ARE THE ONLY HINT. TIED TO A MAILBOX and drooping toward the curb, they're the only thing that sets Webb Simpson's white brick house apart from its neighbors in this comfortable Charlotte neighborhood, the only indication that *something* might have been celebrated here.

Inside, on this summer Saturday afternoon, Simpson is in a T-shirt, playing on the floor upstairs with his toddler son, James, and chatting with his wife, Dowd, and his parents, who are visiting from Raleigh for the weekend. They talk of the baby on the way, a new big boy bed for James, the Diet Coke that needs to come out of the freezer.

There is no glitz, no retinue, no pretense. Except for the gleam of a silver cup on the dining room sideboard, there's no reason to suspect that this friendly, tousle-haired 26-year-old with the deflated balloons on his mailbox is the reigning U.S. Open golf champion.

"I can believe it, but I didn't expect it this early," Simpson says of his first major title, won in thrilling fashion June 17 in San Francisco. His final score of one over par was enough to win the Open in only his second appearance. With it came headlines and a \$1.44-million purse.

All that is great, but Simpson says he learned something even more valuable that week with Dowd. "The lesson I took away, and she and I talked about it that week, was that majors are majors, and you have to give them credit, but at the same time, it's four rounds and 72 holes just like every tournament we play."

Kicked back, smiling, and shoeless on a beanbag in his son's playroom, he makes you begin to believe it, too. That maybe it's no big deal: a U.S. Open title; a professional golf career that's catching fire; a beautiful, growing family; an army of supportive friends and relatives; a reputation as a straight shooter, a hard worker, a lover of the game, a calm competitor, a great guy.

No sweat.

No sweat? Can it really be so simple? Does it all really come so easily for Webb Simpson?

WEBB'S FANTASY GOLF FOURSOME:

'My granddad, Fred Webb, who is my Mom's dad; my dad; and Ted Kiegiel. These guys have been so influential in helping me develop. And where? Probably Pebble Beach. Pebble or Augusta, that's a tie, I can't make up my mind.'

Hard work and love of the game

"Webb dug it out of the dirt right here," says Ted Kiegiel, director of golf at Carolina Country Club in Raleigh who has coached Simpson since he was 9. Riffing on a famous quote by Ben Hogan about earning his game the hard way, Kiegiel says Simpson's no different: "He out-practiced everybody."

"He did not inherit any talent," says Webb's father, the self-effacing Sam Simpson, co-CEO of Raleigh real estate firm Prudential York Simpson Underwood. "His hard work is what did it. His hard work did it for him, and his love of the game."

Inherited talent or not, Simpson did show unusual promise as a young golfer. "I could tell that he was very gifted, just blessed, with natural talent," Kiegiel says. "Early on in his development, he could pick up and learn skills that were far beyond his years. He demonstrated all the qualities that you'd want to have to build a great player."

Kiegiel's not the only one who noticed. Raleigh noticed, too.

Racking up countless junior tournament wins, Simpson gained not just local but also national recognition even before he entered Broughton High School. After leading the Capitals to three state championships and becoming a three-time conference player of the year, Simpson ranked as Golf Week/Titleist's top high school senior in the country. As an Arnold Palmer scholar at Wake Forest, Simpson was ACC Freshman of the Year, a three-time All American, and 2008's ACC player of the year.

It's safe to say that much of Raleigh has been on active "Webb watch" for the better part of a decade.

A life of intention

That kind of consistent success from an early age is a decision, Kiegiel will tell you. Plain and simple. Unlike many talented, promising young players whose attention gets snagged along the way by girls, friends, or other sports, Simpson decided to stay focused. Unlike others who lose their passion and flame

out early, Simpson decided to keep it fun, and maintained that love of his sport. And since then – since his success has been established with PGA tour wins, worldwide fame, and sponsorship by Polo Ralph Lauren, Titleist and Geico – Simpson has made other decisions that have led him to where he is today. Big, uncommon decisions.

Choosing, for instance, in his early 20s, a family life over a night life, a family house over a trophy house. Long-term friendships over hangers-on. He has chosen balloons-on-the-mailbox

celebrations and his parents as confidants. He skipped the British Open just weeks after his groundbreaking U.S. Open win to be with Dowd for the birth of his second child. He Tweets about his faith, his love for his wife, and what he had for dinner, and often in that order.

It doesn't take a lively imagination to picture another scenario for a young, handsome, hotshot athlete with winnings in the bank and the world at his feet. Simpson's decisions to buck that tide result in what you see: a relaxed young dad surrounded by his family at

home on the weekend, soon to wash up and throw on a tux to serve as groomsman in an old friend's wedding. His parents will be there, too.

Overcoming doubt and hard times

Webb won't say his path has been easy. There have been times he has doubted himself. Twice, he almost lost his PGA Tour card. But he'll also tell you he just plain loves what he does, and he's happy to take the difficult with the good.

"Loving the game has really helped me in times where I've struggled," Simpson says. The passion is plain to see. His eyes sparkle with it, and his body leans forward to emphasize it. He is unabashed in his plain-spoken adoration of golf.

But it's more than love, Kiegiel says: "He wants to win. He just has that driving force in him, and that's been amazing for me to watch."



LOVING A CHALLENGE

'He doesn't get down,' says his mother, 'He gets engaged. His daddy always says: He's a fighter. He won't give up.'



FAMILY TIME

'He has started out with a great life, a great wife and family, and has nothing but good news to look forward to,' says Arnold Palmer. Above, Dowd, James and Webb Simpson play Table Topics, toddler-style.

Webb's competitive spirit and love of golf were stoked by his father, who saw the desire in his 8-year-old son. By the time Webb was 10, he was playing in tournaments and with his dad and his dad's friends, including Speck Underwood, Sam Simpson's business partner and Webb's godfather, at Carolina Country Club.

"He learned the integrity, he learned the honesty, he learned the sportsmanship from these men and his daddy," says his mother, Debbie Simpson. "He learned how fun the golf game could be, but he learned to want to win."

"Debbie didn't care how much golf I played, as long as I was out playing with Webb," Sam Simpson says.

His mom says young Webb – the fifth of six children – practically lived at the golf course. "I would drop him off in the summers at seven in the morning, or before, and sometimes the course wasn't even open, and he'd get there when the bag boys would get there," says Debbie Simpson. "And then one of us would pick him up at dark. During the school year, after school we'd go get a snack, and I'd drop him straight off. Same thing. Rain or shine. He wanted to learn how to play in the rain."

Play in the rain, hit around trees, try all kinds of "crazy shots," Simpson recalls. "I've always been kind of a kid at heart. Spending 12-hour days at the golf course, sometimes I'd get bored. I'd go drive stuff through the trees. I never was the best ball striker. That was something that kind of developed last year. I think I just





PICTURE THIS
A month before the arrival of Willow Grace, the Simpson family hold story time in her nursery.

learned to play using my imagination. That has been the greatest part of my game, is my mind.”

No small thing, if you ask Jerry Haas, who coached Simpson during his four years at Wake Forest. Using his imagination – perfecting those “crazy shots” – helped seal the U.S. Open title for Simpson, who nabbed the trophy with an unlikely, graceful chip from an awkward lie in the rough that landed within a few feet of the pin on the 18th green.

The steep and quirky Olympic Club course “really played into his hands,” Haas says. “It let him be creative.”

Calm under pressure

Another factor at work that Sunday, remarked upon by many, was Simpson’s ability to keep a cool head.

Phil Ratliff, who coached Simpson at Broughton, says that even then he played “with a great deal of poise and great humility...It calmed everybody else down, and people realized that good golf could be played under situations that would seem to be the most strenuous or stressful.”

Haas says something similar: “He was one of the rare kids who slowed down when the going got tough. And he’s the most honest kid I’ve ever had. By honest, I mean he never had an excuse for a bad shot or a bad play. He took full responsibility; he

never blamed anybody or anything. He knew he was responsible for all of his actions.”

Perhaps it’s unsurprising that Dowd Simpson, her husband’s constant companion, agrees that he has a solid head on his shoulders. “Webb is so rare,” says Dowd, a stage and film actress who met Simpson when they were students at Wake Forest University. “He is so kind and gentle, and yet he’s a fighter, and has such ambition, and he does such a great job of balancing that.” Like her husband, Dowd grew up in a big family, the eldest of five, in a Charlotte neighborhood not far from where the couple lives today.

Dowd was nearly eight months pregnant with Willow Grace, born July 28, when she accompanied Webb to San Francisco for the Open. She walked every single hilly hole of the course over four straight days. They communicated silently along the way, using private symbols. There’s one for “Do you need water?” and another for food. A third is a simple “I love you.”

“Webb says that he really relies on me to communicate how far his ball is from the hole based on my claps and woos,” Dowd says, “which really helps him and Paul (Tesori, Simpson’s caddie) when they can’t see the green from the fairway.”

Knowing Dowd was there, Webb says, “I had peace in the back of my mind no matter what happened.”

What happened is now enshrined in U.S. Open history, but it wasn't immediately clear to the couple, who waited out the completion of Graeme McDowell's round in the clubhouse, watching the slightly delayed coverage on TV. If McDowell made a 25-foot birdie putt, he would force a playoff with Simpson; if he missed, the Open title belonged to Simpson.

"We're watching him set up for the putt on TV, but outside, we're hearing that he missed the putt – it was a big sigh – so Webb and I were looking at each other thinking, 'Wait, did that just happen?' Then it is confirmed on television, it really did just happen...we just won the U.S. Open! It's crazy. I let out this huge scream."

After a head-turning stop at Wendy's on the way to the airport, the two – and the trophy, "in the big silver box it came in" – took a midnight flight back to Charlotte, talking, not sleeping, the whole way home.

Setting his own benchmarks

That trophy – a gorgeous, hand-engraved cup that lists U.S. Open winners going back to 1895's Horace Rawlins, sits gleaming on a sideboard in the Simpsons' dining room. It will be engraved with Simpson's name when he hands it back next year. In



NATURAL SWING
Webb was 8 when his father and others recognized his talent.

the meantime, he jokes he'll "write it on with a Sharpie."

Current high spirits and good fortune aside, it hasn't always been easy for Simpson. When he almost lost his PGA Tour playing privileges, advice from his college coach helped. "He said something about 'the only thing that matters in this game is that you're always getting better, even if it's just a little bit.' And I really took it to heart. I don't think about winning as much as I used to. It really helped me in 2010 when I was on the border of losing my card, but I knew I was a better golfer than I was a year before. I just kept working on it."

That mentality – that tournament wins are less important than personal improvement – gives Simpson an unusual ability to handle adversity, says Kiegiel, who still travels to advise and coach his former young charge. "He looks at life like it's already planned out. His faith is so important to him," Kiegiel says. "He's almost driving in a car that's on cruise control, and what will happen is meant to be. And so, he's at peace with that."

His faith is indeed central to Simpson; he says it informs his every day and every game and will largely form the subject matter of a new blog he's planning to write. *continued on page 94*

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at the
TABLE



THE PORCH LIGHT SUPPER CLUB SHINES

by Mary E. Miller
photographs by Lissa Gotwals



THE STORMING OF THE FRENCH BASTILLE WAS A HOT AFFAIR OF HIGH ideals, fueled by the restless hungering of many souls. Not, in other words, unlike the Porch Light French Garden Party – except that here in Raleigh 223 years later, only a pig was executed, tomatoes quartered, and sugar played the role of resistance, requiring seven assaults to conquer hand-made macaroons. *Alors*, for the three women chefs and friends who masterminded this Bastille Day feast, it was an historic, triumphant night that advanced their personal revolution to create a culinary republic devoted to local food.

Kelly Burton, Ollie Inglis and Genevieve Gerngross are the light, heat, brains and brawn of Porch Light, a community supper club they began in January. Their goal is to explore foods while meeting an unusual variety of people who are like-minded in spirit. Staging themed meals of seasonal local produce every six weeks, they have found a delicious way to spend precious free time and connect to others.

“It’s not exactly underground, but it is word of mouth,” says Burton, who moved to Raleigh from Albuquerque last year to be an instructor in the Natural Chef program at Central Carolina Community College in Pittsboro. In the classroom, she met Inglis and Gerngross, two students eager to further pursue and apply their techniques. After December’s graduation, the women decided to launch a supper club of sorts. They brainstormed for names. Porch Light felt right.

“We put the event online, send out emails, let people reserve a spot. When it fills up, there’s no more space. If you don’t make the list this time, you move to the waiting list, where we start for the next event. There are a some people who have been to several, but we always have a lot of newcomers. That’s what keeps it interesting.”

Rules are evolving, but simple: sign up, consider paying \$25

to offset cost of food, BYOB. Enjoy and spread the word. Dinners serve between 25 and 60 people, depending on the venue.



Linen frocks and seersucker jackets

Supper clubs, underground and otherwise, predate the French Revolution, remain particularly popular in the American South, and have been traced to many different points on the planet. Yet they can be insular, driven by social ambition or the pursuit of exotic trend.

Not this one. In an old house on a tree-lined street off Glenwood Avenue, bare-shouldered women in linen party frocks and lacquered toenails mingle with handsome sweaty men in rumpled gingham shirts and seersucker jackets. Twenties-era jazz tunes embrace the flirty twilight breeze. Ball canning jars hold rosemary-infused gin cocktails; iced buckets on the back deck present bouquets of open bottles of Bordeaux, Sancerre, and Pouilly-Fuisse. Guests, whose age range from 4-month-old girl baby

Riley to Ollie’s great-aunt Rebecca, resplendent in her eighth decade, mingle comfortably without the aid of name tags. Conversations do not begin with “What do you do?” The



food stars.

With a decidedly French twist on the bounty of the garden, the menu includes pork sausages that were just recently a Berkshire hog owned by a friend of Inglis' father — “a pig I had met,” as she puts it. All vegetables for the salads, the galettes, and the grilled ratatouille came from Tim's Garden, the organic farm off Tryon Road where Inglis works as manager.

Early in the night, Burton's white handkerchief linen tunic appears pristine, although she is nearly soaked through with sweat. With a laugh she turns the heritage pork sausages and rues her decision to volunteer for grill duty.

Inglis, standing in the kitchen wearing a vintage linen nightshirt she picked up years ago in France, dishes out roasted farm potato salad dressed in stone ground mustard and cornichons. She nestles the platter between the grilled ratatouille with basil garlic puree and the carrots she has picked, sliced and pickled. From the stove, Gerngross pulls a crisp buckwheat galette filled with creamy herbed ricotta

and summer squash. For three hours, these women never stop moving, refilling dishes and pitchers, accepting compliments, answering questions about what to do with extra zucchini, how to prepare the cubed chilled beets, divining the secrets of summer berry pudding, watching the macaroons get devoured.

By the end of the night, they look exhausted and elated, as if they are the ones who have been served a delicious, languorous and nourishing meal.

A love for cooking; cooking for love

The impetus behind the creation of Porch Light is as simple as the need to recognize faces at the grocery store, to learn a new place not by the map of roads, but by what grows and flourishes in the fields. And it is as complex as the need to defeat the bittersweet loneliness that comes when planned paths prove distasteful and are abandoned. It's about summoning the courage to go with the gut; about the deep-seated human need to communicate life's meaning through food.

Burton, who lives in Raleigh, spent eight years in New

Conversations do not
begin with
‘What do you do?’
The food stars.

Mexico running two restaurants with her sister, chef Jennifer James. She wanted to return to teaching. But in this new place, she yearned for a way to meet more people. Gerngross moved from New York city to earn the natural chef certificate. She, too, wanted to make friends in her new home.

Knowing more people wasn't so much Inglis' issue. "She's related to like 3/4 of North Carolinians," Burton jokes. Inglis' extended family pepper every event and always stay around to help wash dishes. But she is the kind of person who makes lots of friends and keeps them.

None of these chefs began their adult lives inclined toward the culinary, although a passion for food, for each, took hold in childhood. Burton studied economics, Gerngross, finance, and Inglis, environmental studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. At one point or another, each woman turned and faced the stove.

But love for cooking is not the same as cooking for love. For them, Porch Light entwines the two.

Two nights before their dinner, they sit together at Ollie's house in the Kirby neighborhood off Western Boulevard sipping ginger tea. In the throes of party prep, they sag a bit. Each works full-time in another job. Gerngross is director of sourcing for Campbell Wellness, a plant-based food production start-up based in Mebane. They estimate that the week before each meal requires 40 additional hours of prep work. They do it all: plan the menu, source the food, cook the food, arrange the decor, set up, break down.

Their first event, "Worship the Liver," featured pâtés and handmade seafood sausages. "We even made the cheese and crackers," Gerngross said. Other nights included Mexican (roasted North Carolina goat sliders, adobo roasted North Carolina whole fish), afro-disiacs (Southern soul-food like chicken and waffles, grilled oysters, peanut soup, collard-stuffed cornbread), and an

homage to Italy that featured a ricotta-making lesson and homemade pasta. There are many more ideas on the horizon.

At the moment, Inglis is confident. The first batch of macaroons she tried neared perfection. Burton frets over the summer pudding. Gerngross sighs at the thought of all that must happen before the party.

"It's crazy," she says, "but we love every minute of it."

So do those who have dined by Porch Light.

Friendships made; friendships revived

A day later in another kitchen, home owner and French Garden Party host Tracy Davis describes the kind of crowd she expects. A lawyer, writer, mother of three, and sister to the man whom Ollie dates, Davis has been an avid fan since "Worship the Liver."

"This is so not about a pretentious dinner party, or even about Raleigh's cool kid crowd getting together," she said. "The people are so different...so open." She chews over the thought. "Well...they are awake."

Over Porch Light platters, friendships have been born, and others long dormant have revived. During the last event at Tim's Garden, two couples who had not seen each other in 20 years gleefully reconnected. A meeting at another event led Genevieve Gerngross's fiancé to the marketing job he now holds. With each meal, the connections grow and are passed on, like a sourdough starter that is constantly refreshed.

"It's like soul candy," Davis said. "If offered to you, have some."

All meals, eventually, come to an end. Memorable are the sweet ones.

Most guests have gone. Two or three newcomers have already offered to host a future dinner. The chefs pack leftover food, *continued on page 90*



LES TROIS AMIES

ABOVE: Ollie Inglis, Kelly Burton and Genevieve Gerngross are the heart and soul of Porch Light.

HOMEGROWN GOODNESS

OPPOSITE: The organic produce that goes into Porch Light's finished meals is locally sourced from Tim's Garden, where Ollie Inglis is manager.





IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE
Taylor Homes of Fox Liquor Bar makes a
classic Manhattan.

fall's ultimate cocktail THE MANHATTAN

FALL IS WOODSMOKE. FOOTBALL AND OYSTER ROASTS. LEAVES gone to gold.

All of this nostalgia calls for a drink. Better yet, a cocktail. Something that captures the sublime and fleeting magic of the season.

In the chill and early dusk, nothing fits the bill like a Manhattan. Just the thought of its urbane blend of whisky, sweet vermouth and bitters conjures up strains of Sarah Vaughan singing *Autumn in New York*.

"The Manhattan is the granddaddy of cocktails," says Alex Flynn, bartender at Foundation in downtown Raleigh. "It's simple, sexy and evokes something enduring."

Matty Bettinger, who holds court at the Glenwood South speakeasy C Grace, describes the Manhattan as having a rare, indelible quality that marks the passage of time by making it – if only for a moment – stand still.

"Drinks like the Manhattan certainly trigger sense memory," said Bettinger, "like a fragrance or a piece of music can – maybe that's the idea."

Indeed, part of a cocktail's mystique is that it can connect us to another time. Think Don Draper and Roger Sterling. Now go back even further, past the war, past the Roaring Twenties and prohibition, back to 19th century New York City.

Jeanette Jerome was a beautiful Brooklyn girl. She worked as a magazine writer in the city before marrying a titled British aristocrat. As legend has it, the young Lady Randolph Churchill hosted a party at the Manhattan Club and charged the staff with creating a signature drink for the event. The concoction of rye, sweet vermouth and bitters was a hit. Soon, all over town the smart set was requesting the Manhattan Cocktail. It was 1874.

Splendor in a glass

Back to the present: There are a handful of bars here in Raleigh that tee up a splendid Manhattan. But don't skip to my short list just yet. There's more to learn.

Any barman with Bulleit 95, Rittenhouse or Sazerac within reach will make your Manhattan with rye. After nearly disappearing in recent decades, rye has made a comeback. The sharp, peppery taste dovetails beautifully with sweet vermouth. Add bitters and a cherry or orange twist and you have splendor in a glass.

Some recipes allow for Canadian or other blended whiskies. Use scotch and you're drinking a Rob Roy. It is acceptable, however – and my personal preference – to request for your Manhattan that bluegrass-born Southern treasure we call bourbon.

In his piquant essay on sour mash, the novelist Walker Percy implores, “never monkey around with a good bourbon.” As a New Orleans denizen and a UNC man, WP knew his way around a bourbon drink.

Whisky martini, anyone?

To apprise the uninitiated: The Manhattan is akin to a whisky martini. Like a martini, it can be served on ice (Hemingway hated the slang “on the rocks,” ergo, on ice), but where's the fun in that? Serve it up.

Start with two jiggers of excellent bourbon. For my money, Evan Williams Black Label is fine bourbon at an excellent price. At Foundation, Alex Flynn leans toward drier, rye-heavy bourbons like Bulleit and Eagle Rare for Manhattan making. At C Grace, Bettinger opts for Knob Creek or similar small-batch selections with sweeter profiles. “If they don't want rye,” says Bettinger, “I'm going the other way, probably dialing the vermouth back a little.”

Ah, vermouth. It was a hearty soul who first mixed fortified wine and hard spirits. For decades, cocktails were made with larger portions of vermouth than typically used today. The Manhattan was likely the first cocktail to use it, predating the Martini. Sweet vermouth brands vary widely in taste, but the pros at Foundation, C Grace and Fox Liquor Bar swear by Carpano Antica (\$35.99/litre at Raleigh Wine Shop). Carpano invented sweet vermouth, circa 1786. Its luscious depth of flavor lives up to its birthright, and with it a Manhattan lives up to its name.

Dry vermouth makes a dry Manhattan. Equal parts sweet and dry vermouth make what is called a perfect Manhattan. But let's get serious.

Two ounces of bourbon (or rye) and a short ounce of sweet vermouth. The key is not to over-do the vermouth. Just enough to subtly soften the whisky but not upstage it. Combine in a mixing cup with ice and dash in a few quick bursts of Angostura bitters. Stir until cold and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish.

Admire your work. Let the light of the golden hour pass through it. Luminous, orange-amber and ageless, it

will soothe your ragged soul.

As you sip, consider: It is still debated whether Lady Randolph Churchill truly did inspire the original Manhattan. It comes down, at the end of the day, to a question of timing. In November of 1874, near the time of the party at the Manhattan Club, the spirited Lady Randolph was also reported to be in Oxfordshire, at Blenheim Palace. Her first son, Winston, was born at Blenheim on the 30th of that month, after all. Either way, I'm sure you'll agree: Civilization owes Jennie Jerome a debt of gratitude. 🍷



RECIPES

Whiskies, vermouths and bitters – even cherries – can vary in the making of Manhattans, yielding deliciously different results. Discover your own signature version. Here are three house recipes served at Raleigh's finest cocktail bars. Each is stirred with ice, strained into a chilled cocktail glass and finished with a garnish. Cue Sarah Vaughan, and enjoy.

C GRACE (\$9)

2 ounces Jim Beam Rye
1 ounce Cocchi Vermouth di Torino
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Garnished with house-brandied cherry

C. Grace 407 Glenwood Ave.

FOUNDATION (\$9)

2 ounces Old Charter Bourbon
3/4 ounce Lejon sweet vermouth
Dash of Fee Brothers Old Fashioned
Aromatic Bitters
Garnished with house-brandied cherry
(in season) or orange twist

Foundation 213 Fayetteville St.

FOX LIQUOR BAR (\$11)

2 ounces Russell's Reserve Rye
1 ounce Carpano Antica Formula vermouth
2 dashes Angostura bitters
Garnished with Luxardo brandied cherry

Fox Liquor Bar 237 S. Wilmington St.



PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

Shaun Richards with one of the bystander paintings that comprise his latest work.



ARTIST'S spotlight

SHAUN RICHARDS

by Liza Roberts

photographs by Juli Leonard

ON A TREELESS, DEAD-END STREET OF STORAGE UNITS, WAREHOUSES, and tinted-window flex space, the studio of acclaimed Raleigh artist Shaun Richards sits anonymously. High-concept, large-scale contemporary art like Richards' – art that is at once vivid and conceptual; art that has received both critical acclaim and an avid following – seems an unlikely product of such a charmless place.

But once a visitor enters, takes a paint-splattered seat and is surrounded by Richards' interior world made visual, the unlikely exterior recedes and then vanishes. Striking images of people, animals, and words are hung from clotheslines, tacked to walls, propped everywhere. Many are outsized, all bold but delicately rendered. And it begins to make sense that this quiet young man with loud ideas can make anything he wants, wherever he may be.

New medium

It's still in here: No music, no sound but the half-hearted whirl of an inadequate fan, and the kind of flat indoor heat you

forget about in a world of constant AC.

The image he's working on is also still: a watercolor of a lawn chair overgrown with kudzu. It looks like nothing else in the room, and indeed, watercolor is a new medium for him. "An old lady medium," he says, and therefore challenging, and therefore daring. He is painting gray shadows between the leaves with a watery brush, his eyes intent, head bowed.

He has embraced, as an artist, "the psychology of the things I'm drawn to instinctively," he says. In recent years that has included the worlds of marketing and advertising, and the ambiguity of gender. Last year's *Concession Stand* series featured stylized words – "sloganeering" – painted atop and within portraits



THE ARTIST AT WORK

Working in the "old lady" medium of watercolor is new for Richards. Here, he removes a protective strip from a painting of a lawn chair overtaken by vines, revealing the chair's white webbing beneath.

and other images: a skull, a tank, a Polaroid camera. Words like "Collusion," "Epic," and "Concession" were intrinsic to the images they illustrated.

Richards says he is interested in "those negotiations we make at the margins," and in questioning "notions of beauty, artifice, ethics and identity." His pieces often comprise many layers of paint, sometimes a dozen or more, as well as layers of collage, sometimes pages taken from books.

On the wall before him now is a finely detailed, practically life-sized oil of two dead deer, one atop the other. Road kill. The theme here is "bystander," or "the happenstance of circumstance," as he puts it, "how things left alone will right themselves, and how we're all grappling with the world around us." A deer – or two – run across the wrong road at the wrong time. A chair is forgotten, and then overtaken with vines. Some of these pieces will comprise his part of a group show at Flanders gallery this month.

Early recognition

Richards, now 34, found his footing quickly in the artistic community when he moved to Raleigh in 2007, winning an artist-in-residence spot at ArtSpace right away. Flanders Gallery then began to show his work, and his *Bootleg Romanticism* won

"Best in Show" at the Raleigh Fine Arts Society's 2008 North Carolina Artist Exhibition.

The judge of that show was Larry Wheeler, director of the North Carolina Museum of Art (and a *WALTER* contributor; please see Wheeler's *Letter from the Art World* on pages 28-29).

Wheeler made a visit to Richards' former studio shortly thereafter and has been a strong advocate ever since, buying a piece from

Concession Stand for his personal collection and keeping in regular touch. Deutsche Bank, the City of Raleigh, and Allen Thomas Jr., who serves as chair of the Contemporary Art Museum's Foundation board, all have Richards' art in their collections.

But even with blue-chip collectors such as those, it's not easy making a living as an artist. "Most of my life has been hand-to-mouth," Richards

says, even now. He recently created and sold 100 small paintings for \$100 apiece – a back-breaking effort he spent months to create – in an effort to raise the money he needed for a new computer, taxes, car repairs and supplies.

Richards says he's constantly aware, as he works on a particular piece, that "there's no guarantee what I'm working on is going to make me any money." He tries to make art without worrying about that kind of equation, and generally, it has worked: "The universe has given me what I needed when I needed it." Still, a

HE HAS EMBRACED, AS AN
ARTIST, 'THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF THE THINGS I'M DRAWN
TO INSTINCTIVELY.'



day job is a necessity, and so Richards spends most mornings and early afternoons working with industrial designer Matt McConnell, who creates everything from large-scale public sculpture to lighting design.

But once Richards is done with the paying job, the studio, and the meticulous, time-consuming work he does there beckons.

"I'm always trying to make the work better." 🐾

A QUIET MAN WITH LOUD IDEAS

RIGHT: Some of the studies Richards describes as "play-things" hang from clothesline across his studio wall. Inked fingerprints on Scotch tape form the basis of a few; Richards uses these small experiments to inform his delicately rendered images of people, animals and objects as he explores beauty, artifice, ethics and identity.

ABOVE: Photocopies and clippings, postcards and snapshots inspire and contribute to Richards' multi-layered approach. He has two tall file cabinets full of inspirations like these.





STOKES' ASTER

STOKES' ASTER, NAMED AFTER THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY Scottish botanist Jonathan Stokes, is a wonderful perennial many are surprised to hear is native to the Southeast United States.

Though it grows wild from coastal North Carolina westward to Louisiana, gardeners in our area have traditionally found their Stokes' Asters at the local nursery.

Back in the 1960s and 1970s, all Stokes' Aster (*Stokesia laevis*) sold were grown from seed. This produced plants with lovely blue flowers, but it also produced lax stalks. Lax, of course, is a technical plant catalog term for limp as a spaghetti noodle.

Fast-forward to the 1980s, when folks learned to propagate Stokes' Aster from root cuttings. Sturdy stems followed, and before you knew it, gardeners around the country were introducing cloned selections to preserve those sturdy stems and other traits lost when Stokes' Aster is grown from seed.

There were lovely purple and yellow-flowered selections, but the crowning achievement came from Mississippi gardener and florist Peachie Saxon.

Peachie's Pick was discovered as a seedling in Peachie's garden, and soon became the industry standard against which all other Stokes' Asters are judged. What makes Peachie's Pick so great is the abundance of sturdy, two-foot tall upright stems, topped in late June and July with clusters of three-inch ragged-edge blue flowers – a favorite of gardeners and yellow swallowtail butterflies alike. Unlike the more common seed strains, which can become weedy by seeding around the garden, we haven't seen a garden seedling from a Peachie's Pick in over a decade.

In addition to its beauty, Peachie's Pick can tolerate full to part sun and anything from fairly dry acidic soils to a pond's edge.

Tony Avent is an international plant explorer who has traveled the world in search of unusual specimens. He is the owner of Raleigh's Juniper Level Botanical Gardens and Plant Delights Nursery, which specializes in rare and unusual perennials, hostas, and plants native to the United States. Tony was the landscape director of the North Carolina State fairgrounds from 1978–1994.



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STORY of a house

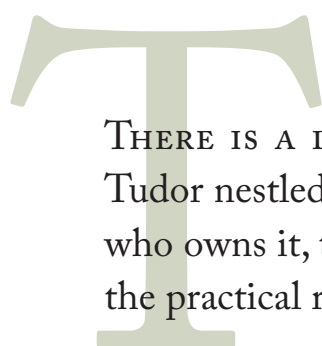




CLASSIC CHARM with a twist

by P. GAYE TAPP

photographs by
TONY PEARCE



THERE IS A DECIDED AMERICAN STURDINESS TO THIS 1930S Tudor nestled in an old Raleigh neighborhood. Like the family who owns it, the house exudes a classic charm while embracing the practical realities of modern family life.

It hasn't always been such a marriage of form and function; in fact, the house has taken a number of turns over the years. When the couple purchased the property over a decade ago, a full-blown restoration was desperately needed. My initial call to the house as interior designer was simply to add final touches to the living room and plan curtains in the dining room.

I've returned many times over the years to counsel, commiserate and confide. I've helped the house transform: Rooms have changed purpose; new ones have been added; design has evolved. The relationship a designer has with her client goes well beyond the paint and wallpaper swatch stages. It is all part of the story of a house.

Embracing entertaining

When the owners began entertaining, for instance, they found their small dining room wanting. Soon, a grand scheme emerged. A plan to flip the living room and dining room met their needs and an intimate sitting room and a formidable dining room took shape. This switch satisfied their love for entertaining – the lady of the house is a chef with some of the best secret recipes in the South and needed a venue worthy of her skills.

But the grand dining room was just the beginning: This house would prove to have permanent growing pains.

The next job for me was to assist with an substantial addi-

tion – including an informal living and dining area, and a master suite upstairs – to address the pressing needs of the growing family. The owner is part of a long-established family of builders, so plans for such an addition to this well-loved and lived-in house moved full speed ahead.

Another call in 2010 from the couple caught me a little off-guard. It seemed an update to the relatively new addition was in order. I was surprised, thrilled and then asked, "Why?"

It was time to refine things. Time had passed, and the clients wanted to add some special rugs. Overhead lighting needed to be addressed in the new living and dining areas. A new project began, the list increased, and we touched every room in the house.

A house that is home can't be static. It is at its best when changing to suit the desires and needs of a family. This house and family are on the move. More changes are in store, the children are fast becoming teenagers and a lounge or two of sorts are in the works. I've no doubt there will be more twists to come in this story of a house. 🌿

P. Gaye Tapp has been an interior designer for more than 25 years. A graduate of Meredith College, Tapp is a lifelong student of design, history, art and literature. She writes about her obsessions, past and present, in her blog, Little Augury. A born and bred North Carolinian, Gaye considers herself a true Southerner and bases her design aesthetic from that point of view, eccentricities and all.



A POP OF PINK

PREVIOUS PAGES: In the living room, a burst of vibrant color was part of the latest update. A French chair is covered in an old Indian sari while a second one is covered in textured pink and taupe damask. Traditional pieces complete the room.

SUNNY DISPOSITION

ABOVE: The sunroom was once a screened porch just off the dining room. The original brick floor remains, and the ceiling is painted an old shade of brown. A 1920s cane chair sits by a pair of antique Chinese tables stacked on top of each other. Linen curtains cover the windows and doors and are accented with a Greek Key border, a motif that runs through fabrics in chairs in this room and the living room.

OUTDOOR LIVING

OPPOSITE: An expansive addition and saltwater pool were added to give the owners ample room for entertaining. A patio and fireplace plus a wide porch for lounging invite people out of doors.



A WORTHY VENUE

ABOVE: The dining room table is painted in the Chinese style with gold leaf Chinese figures, butterflies and flowers. It's now an elegant room worthy of wonderful meals. The pebble-patterned goldenrod flatweave rug adds a modern touch.

COZY NOOK

LEFT: A comfortable sitting area off the kitchen is a wake-up call of citrusy color and comfort and is used most mornings by the family.





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My town

DOWNTOWN PIONEERS

NC State Football Coach Tom O'Brien
and his wife Jenny pull for city living

N.C. STATE FOOTBALL COACH TOM O'BRIEN AND HIS WIFE Jenny will tell you they wouldn't live anywhere else. Not just Raleigh, which they love like the Wolfpackers they are, but the actual city: downtown.

The two say they jumped at the chance to move here in 2007. Not that they didn't love Boston, or the decade he'd spent as head coach at Boston College. "Boston is great, but it's a pro town," O'Brien says today. "Here, it's college sports."

College sports and heated rivalries: "It's something we wanted to be part of," he says. "If you're in the ACC, you should be in the state of North Carolina."

Not many would argue. But when the O'Briens decided they wanted to live not on a quiet, leafy street near campus, but in the middle of downtown Raleigh, it did raise an eyebrow or two. Downtown, then, was a bit of a residential desert.

"I'm so sorry" was the reaction Jenny O'Brien remembers from her new friends.

The O'Briens, city-living enthusiasts from their empty-nest years in Boston, were undeterred. They didn't want to "upsized"; they wanted to be able to walk places; they wanted to learn their new city; they wanted to be downtown. But five years ago, they didn't have a lot of company. Their building, the Quorum at West Jones and Harrington, was just being completed, and it was one of only a few residential buildings of its kind. "When we moved in, a lot of restaurants weren't even open on the weekends," Jenny O'Brien recalls.

Five years later, the neighbors, the landscape and life downtown have completely transformed, and the O'Briens say they've been vindicated. "It's improved a lot," says Tom O'Brien. Today, their immediate neighbors include Meg

Lowman, the new director of the Nature Research Center, and former N.C. Senate majority leader Tony Rand. Their weekend restaurant options are too numerous to list and their off-campus lives revolve around the walkable neighborhood that surrounds them.

Most of the O'Briens' favorite places can be spotted from the floor-to-ceiling windows of their ninth-floor condo, where 180-degree views of the city show everything from the spire of Sacred Heart Cathedral to N.C. State's Centennial campus and the WRAL tower, tricked out as a sparkly Christmas tree during the holidays.

All in all, Raleigh – and downtown – suit the O'Briens, they say. "It's been better than we thought it would be," Tom says. "And right now is a good time to be at N.C. State. Academically and athletically, everything's headed in a great direction."

When Tom and Jenny O'Brien head out the door, here's the direction they take:

Friday mornings during football season, the two have breakfast at one of their favorites: **Big Ed's in City Market**, **Finch's** on Peace, and the **Mecca** on East Martin are on their short list.

Every other morning on his way to work, Tom O'Brien says he gets his coffee at the **Dunkin' Donuts** on Hillsborough Street; "Dunkin' Donuts coffee is an old habit from our Boston days." Carter-Finley Stadium's just a bit further down the road, making for an enviable, straight-shot commute.

When Jenny O'Brien goes out for a walk, she heads to **Oakwood Cemetery** for its beauty and quiet, she says. Other strolls take her to the free museums nearby. **The Museum of**



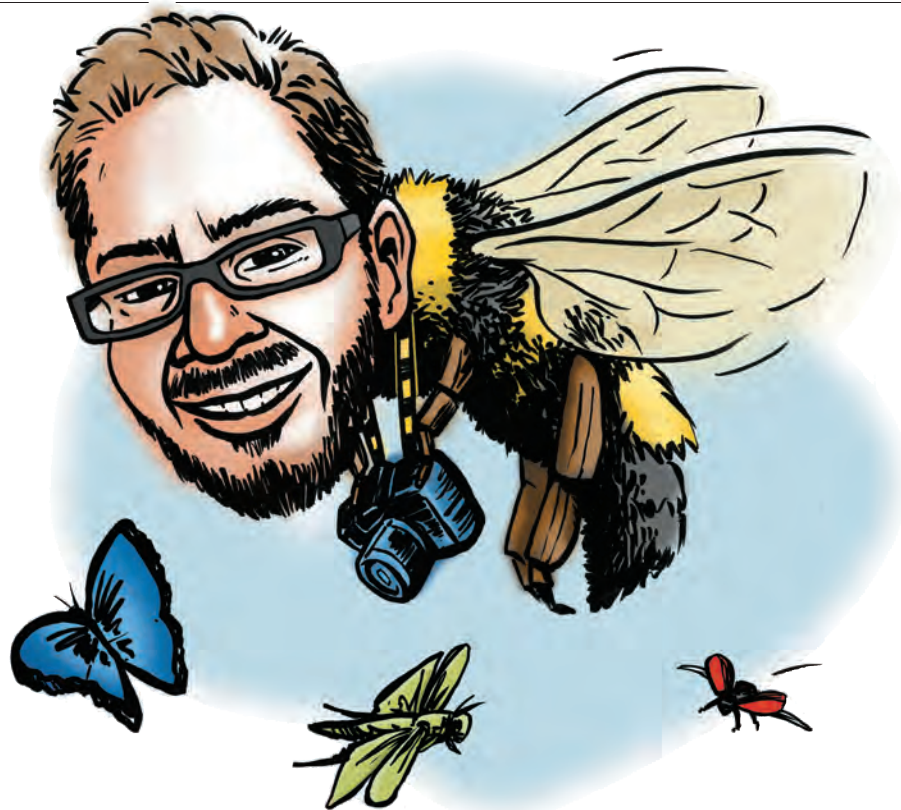
photograph by Casey Toth

Natural Sciences and its new offshoot, the Nature Research Center, are her top picks.

And when the two go out for a bite, they don't have far to go: Napper Tandy's on North West Street is known to look the other way if a patron is interested in smoking a cigar on the terrace, Tom O'Brien notes. Other favorites within a stone's throw include 42nd Street Oyster Bar, 518 West, and Natty Greene's. Their top choice is Second Empire Tavern.

The O'Briens also enjoy an occasional show at Memorial Auditorium or the Raleigh Amphitheater – “There are great things going on there,” Jenny O'Brien says – and if they could wave a wand, the O'Briens would re-create “Fridays After 5,” the weekly free downtown concerts they loved during their 15 years in Charlottesville, Va., when Tom was head coach at UVa. “I suggest they do something like that here,” he says.





THE MUSINGS OF A NEWCOMER

IF YOU HAD TOLD ME IN JANUARY THAT, AFTER 17 YEARS in San Francisco, I'd soon be relocating to Raleigh, North Carolina, I would have told you to take your crystal ball back to the shop and have Merlin give it a good once-over. Maybe a twice-over.

Not that I knew anything about North Carolina. I didn't. But I knew this about San Francisco: People don't leave.

Despite the occasional deadly earthquake and "summers" that have been described as Mark Twain's coldest winter, folks keep crowding into the seven-mile by seven-mile City by the Bay, driving real estate prices through the Victorian roof and ensuring there are no available parking spaces, ever.

And, if somebody does leave San Francisco, he inevitably heads for Hollywood or New York. Or Paris. Not – beg your pardon – North Carolina. I mean, we lived across the street from Golden Gate Park! That was essentially our front yard.

What could possibly compel my wife and me to pack up our lives in cardboard boxes, cram everything into a 16-foot

Penske truck, and drive 2,800 miles across these not-so-United States, to land here, in Sir Walter's namesake city?

Well, by now, hopefully, you've noticed that the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences downtown has opened its gorgeous new wing. Ten years in the making, the Nature Research Center sports a giant 70-foot globe that crowns Jones Street: the SECU Daily Planet.

That was the great attractor that drew us with planetary force across the continent. The NRC's mission, embodied by that planet, is to communicate science not just to the region but to the entire world. And I've come here to be a part of that mission.

But I'm not a scientist. I'm... a comedian. A science comedian.

I know that probably sounds like an oxymoron or an odd pairing, for sure, but I am a stand-up comedian who sifts through the language and concepts of science in search of comedy gold. Or at least Fool's Gold.

My role at the museum is to help the researchers here communicate science to the public in engaging ways – live on stage and through multimedia. And I have an awesome job title: Curator of the Daily Planet. It sounds a little ominous, almost like a supervillain, doesn't it?

But I work with superheroes, not against them.

That's how I feel about the scientists and educators at the museum. They are superheroes, dedicated to cracking the mysteries of the universe – from microbes to galaxies – and sharing the bounty, spreading knowledge and passion, inspiring the next generation of scientists. They are one radioactive spider bite away from being comic book heroes.

Comedians, if I may, are a bit like scientists: We, too, go out in the world and make our observations, scribble them in little notebooks, and analyze them, seeking patterns and connections.

But, unlike scientists, when we present our conclusions, we don't mind being laughed at. In fact, we prefer it that way.

That, then, is what this column will be: the odd thoughts nabbed from my meandering stream of consciousness and scribbled in my notebooks. The musings of a science comedian, a newcomer here, a transplant, a fly on the wall, just landed.

My initial observations...

It's very hot. And the people are terribly nice. Could there be a connection? That legendary Southern hospitality – what's the source? Do personalities somehow reflect the local climate? Folks here are measurably warmer than the cold, foggy inhabitants of San Francisco.

Perhaps we can find an historical explanation. Ever since the Gold Rush of 1849, San Francisco has drawn caffeinated people from all over the world, seeking their fortunes, in a zero sum game: competing for a limited pot of gold. Maybe that fosters a different mentality than raising renewable crops alongside your neighbors?

And homegrown folks waiting for plants to grow are bound to be a tad more patient than drifters with pickaxes and gold nuggets in their eyes.

Hey, these are the theories of a comedian, not a scientist.

But North Carolina's balmy climate and lush vegetation definitely feed my favorite hobby – insect photography. (If your first thought was: "photographs taken by insects?" then you are my ideal audience).

Of course, I am the one behind the camera. And bugs are my favorite subjects. I chase them around like they're movie stars and I am the insect paparazzi.

Our small yard – within the Beltline – is an entomological gold mine.

Beetles and spiders and crickets and bees. Colorful katydid nymphs that are as new here as we are. A praying mantis! A pair of mating butterflies that christened our house before we did. And a bunch of critters that I'll need help identifying. Good thing I work at a science museum.

With a notebook and a camera and a 32-gigabyte memory card, I'll be on the hunt for tiny revelations.

My biggest discovery, so far, is that my wife and I don't miss San Francisco. Our theories – our crystal balls – didn't predict that.

Sure, we no longer have Golden Gate Park as our front yard, but we traded an apartment for a bungalow and traffic noise for birdsong. We've hardly had time to explore Raleigh – let alone the Triangle or the state! – but we love our little house, our yard, and our neighbors.

We could do without the mosquitoes. 

**'I am
the insect
paparazzi.'**

Brian Malow is Curator of the Daily Planet at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. He is a science comedian, writer, and consultant who has worked with NASA and the National Science Foundation. He produces videos for Time Magazine and photographs insects in his spare time.

CATCHING UP

WITH ASHLEY HARRIS



JOB

Owner and founder, Vermillion, a designer boutique at North Hills shopping center. Married to CP Harris and mother of Betty and Annie Fleming, ages 3 1/2.

THE LOOK

It's classic and functional. I wanted to wear an outfit today that I could spend time with my girls in, go to work in and out to dinner later with a friend.

THE CLOTHES

I'm wearing a Celine striped top and Veronica Beard black shorts. I love a pocket. I also have on orange (my favorite color) Loeffler Randall wedges.

GO-TO PIECE

It's a toss up between The Row skinny jeans in black or denim and The Row black blazer. I can wear the skinny jeans with anything, and they are very flattering.

DESIGNERS

Lela Rose, Proenza Schouler, Nili Lotan, J.Crew, Balenciaga, Megan Park, Lululemon and Veronica Beard.

ESSENTIAL GOODS

Natura Bisse, anything from their Tolerance line, for skin care. Pureology Miracle Filler treatment for tangles. Any shea butter body soaps at Whole Foods. Burt's Bees lip balm and Balenciaga perfume.

**URBAN EXPEDITION**

Proenza Schouler Aztec sweater layered over striped henley; MiH boyfriend jeans with exaggerated cuffs, Balenciaga suede oxford wedge, Anya Hindmarch navy cross body bag.

DESIGNERS

I really love getting to know a designer and watching that designer evolve and flourish while staying true to their original vision. I'm a colorist at heart and therefore really appreciate when designers take risks with color combinations...especially pretty ones!

STYLE ICONS

Aerin Lauder, who I had the privilege of meeting this fall in Miami, where she proved to be just as stylish in person. Phoebe Philo, fashion designer and creative director of Celine. Both women have a classic and relaxed approach to fashion that I enjoy and admire.

OLDEST PIECE IN CLOSET

I have a Pucci dress from 12 years ago that still looks current. I also have a Lela Rose emerald green trench coat from when I opened, seven years ago, that still makes me swoon.

MOST RECENT PURCHASE

For my 35th birthday, my husband bought me a 1970s vintage Chanel gold chain bracelet.

FALL TREND

Proenza Schouler graphic tees. I love the acid yellow/grey graphic tee screened with an aerial photo of the Himalayas paired with their tweed skirt. It creates an unexpected, cool look. I'm also excited about the mountain Aztec sweaters we have in from A.L.C. and Proenza Schouler.

**LADY ON THE EDGE**

Proenza Schouler graphic Himalaya tee and acid green tweed skirt; Balenciaga lipstick rose clutch and cobalt glove heel; Anndra Neen mixed metal bangle; The Woods necklaces featuring Druzu diamonds and silver prayer beads.

What would Nancy read?

by Nancy Olson



NORTH CAROLINA WRITERS ARE SMART, FUN, AND GENEROUS, AND I am lucky to have become friends with so many of them since I moved here in 1981. Raleigh was a different place then: There was a limited selection of ethnic restaurants; the drama and music offerings were scant; and there were no independent bookstores to be found. That last part changed when I opened my bookstore in 1984. Raleigh's thirsty readers came aboard right away, and together we've thrived ever since, getting to know and love our native storytellers along the way.

My best luck was being part of the North Carolina literary renaissance in the 80s, which led to Quail Ridge's specialization in Southern literature. I rode the coattails of Chapel Hill's Algonquin Books and its gifted local writers including Kaye Gibbons, Clyde Edgerton, Jill McCorkle, and, recently, Lee Smith. These talented authors wrote (and still write) such good books that it was pure pleasure to read and promote them. The reading public fell in love, and I did too.

Seeing Charles Frazier receive the National Book Award for *Cold Mountain*, a book launched at Quail Ridge, and one I consider a masterpiece, has been the highlight of my bookselling career. Frazier was a customer for many years before its publication, and I treasure our literary conversations during that time. He visited the bookstore frequently, and we found we admired many of the same contemporary authors. It was particularly gratifying, after his own book was published, to hear admiring readers tell him that *Cold Mountain* had changed their lives: Powerful testimony to the written word!

As much as I love *Cold Mountain*, it is only one of many books by North Carolina writers that have played an important part in my reading life. How can any of us forget Kaye Gibbons' *Ellen Foster*, introducing a feisty little orphan who searched for a place where she belonged, and *A Virtuous Woman*, about a widower and a young girl who find and hold on to each other for dear life. Both books were

"anointed" by Oprah for her book club.

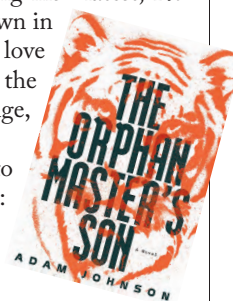
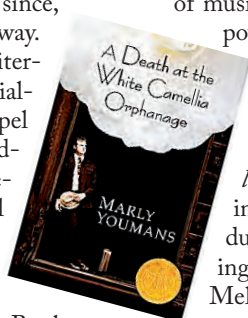
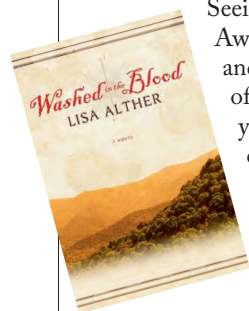
Clyde Edgerton's *Raney* established his popularity with his comedic and moving story of a young, newly married couple of difference religious backgrounds. I've loved all his books, including his latest, *The Night Train*, a story set in a racially divided N. C. town in 1963, where a friendship is forged through two boys' love of music. It gives us powerful hope that music has the power to change, and perhaps hearts can change, too.

What am I recommending now? Thanks to Mercer University Press for two great novels: Marly Youmans' *A Death at the White Camellia Orphanage*, which tells the heart-wrenching story of a young boy who travels the rails during the Depression era, and Lisa Alther's fascinating historical novel, *Washed in the Blood*, about the heritage of the Melungeon people in the Appalachian mountains. Alther's riveting new book, *Blood Feud*, chronicles America's most infamous fighting families, the Hatfields and McCoys, and is told with skill and humor. It reached the *New York Times* bestseller list in June.

I also highly recommend *The Orphan Master's Son* by Adam Johnson, not just because we're related (yes, I'm a name dropper), but because it is a remarkable novel set in mysterious North Korea – bleak – but full of love, courage and humanity.

These books all have in common the elements that make for the great reading. I hope you enjoy them, and I look forward to sharing more of my favorite books with you next month!

Nancy Olson is the owner of Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh. Named Bookseller of the Year by Publisher's Weekly, Quail Ridge has been the city's leading independent bookstore since 1984. 'What Would Nancy Read?' was inspired by the impromptu, crowd-drawing verbal recommendations Nancy makes to readers whenever she's in the store. www.quailridgebooks.com





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Travis Long

TOM MAXWELL HAS TO BE ONE OF THE FEW ARTISTS performing at the Independent Weekly's Hopscotch Music Festival (Sept. 6-8, see Raleigh Now, page 24) who have performed on *Late Night with David Letterman*. In 1997, he led Chapel Hill's legendary Squirrel Nut Zippers through a rousing version of the band's hit "Hell" before a national television audience – a performance that still generates praise on YouTube.

Maxwell is just one of many storied Triangle musicians performing at this year's Hopscotch, which takes place at venues throughout downtown. Many of these local artists are to be found in smaller type on Hopscotch's promotional posters, and you'll have to visit some of the more intimate venues to see them. But it's well worth the effort. These artists – ranging from Raleigh's hardcore pioneers Corrosion of Conformity to the multitalented Chuck Johnson – were some of the original exporters of the North Carolina's local music scene.

For three years now, Hopscotch has successfully imported a lineup of bands like these – as well as gigantic indie rock heroes and a seemingly never-ending list of "it" bands from all corners of the country – to Raleigh. It's a testament to the creative force and vision of Hopscotch's brass.

But it's also a testament to the Triangle's national reputation as a living history of eclectic indie rock. Much of that history will be on Hopscotch's smaller stages. And you can bet that some of the festival's headliners – no doubt inspired by some of these local icon – will be making the rounds themselves, paying homage to that history.

Here's just a smattering of some of the notable local music history that will be on display:



courtesy dB's

The dB's, left, originally from Winston-Salem, have long been considered one of the original forerunners of southern jangle pop popularized by R.E.M (yes, it's becoming semi-fashionable to say "jangle pop" again). The band's original leaders, Peter Holsapple and Chris Stamey, went on to earn national reputations as performers and producers in their own right. The dB's recently released their first album in 25 years

("Falling off the Sky") that is as effortlessly relevant as their original records were. The dB's play at midnight on Friday, Sept. 7, at *The Long View Center, 118 S. Person Street*.

Pipe burned loudly on stage and on seven-inch singles during a stretch in the early 1990s. The band's debut EP, "Ball Peen," was a must-have for local music connoisseurs and for the playlist of any respectable college radio station. Since Pipe's heyday, frontman Ron Liberti has become a nationally-renowned graphic artist whose iconic rock posters tell a local history of their own. Check them out at ronliberti.com. Pipe's scheduled to play at 10:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 7, at *Slims, 227 S. Wilmington Street*.



David McClister

Jennyanykind and **Roman Candle**, above, two of the Triangle's most fiercely loved twang-pop bands, made memorable pop records in two different decades. Both bands caught immediate fire with major record labels and suffered the inevitable and impossible hurdles that follow. The songs from those early records, however, continue to impress today. Now Mark Holland of Jennyanykind plays compelling delta Blues and Roman Candle, currently based in Nashville, continues to write smart, lasting pop anthems with the occasional barroom stomp. Catch Mark Holland at 9 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 8, at *Deep South the Bar, 430 S. Dawson Street*. Roman Candle is set to play *continued on page 92*



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Q&A: JOHN ALTSCHULER

with Billy Warden and Greg Behr

BEFORE HE MADE HIS NAME SERVING UP HOLLYWOOD HITS, JOHN ALTSCHULER served up kabobs at Crabtree Valley Mall and hung his hat in a mobile home behind one of our long-gone Grocery Boy Jr.'s. The writer-producer talked to WALTER about the famous fans of his hit show, "King of the Hill," about where Woody Woodpecker (Altschuler's latest big-screen-character-in-the-making) would be happiest in Raleigh, and what our capital city is doing right.

Q: Lana Turner had Schwab's Drug Store. Your past includes Bwana Bob's. What and where was it?

A: Bwana Bob's was in Crabtree Valley Mall, right next to the old movie theaters. We were WAY ahead of our time. We served international cuisine in Raleigh in 1980. Currys, kabobs, teriyaki. We also had a full bar and live music. We did reasonably well but not well enough to counter the ridiculously large amount of time and effort.

Q: What's the reaction in Hollywood when you mention Raleigh?

A: When I first moved here, I got a parking ticket and had to go in front of a judge. I said, "I'm from North Carolina," and the judge just nodded his head as if to say, "It's OK, you'll figure it out." But it's kind of nice that people here

don't see you coming. It also helps that I'm not particularly bright.

Q: One of former North Carolina Gov. Mike Easley's favorite TV shows was "King of the Hill" (which John and fellow UNC-CH grad Dave Krinsky executive-produced for years). Did the Gov's affection earn you a knighthood or other perks?

A: He did invite me to the Governor's Mansion which, I have to admit, was fun for someone who grew up in Raleigh. The only other perk I got was a plaque – I believe I'm in the Order of the Old North State or something along those lines.

I think for him and a lot of people in North Carolina, the show was very relatable because it was about a guy – Hank Hill – of a certain generation trying to cope with a world changing



Billy and Greg have a long list of friends, frenemies and flirtations they're eager to exploit for WALTER's readers. Once a month, they let us listen in as they catch up.



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all around him.

Q: Is there something intrinsically funny about Raleigh?

A: When I moved there in the '80s, Raleigh was very Southern, yet you had all these people moving for IBM from up north. So, it was a little collision, a little social experiment. All these Northerners butting against Southern social traditions and seeing how they changed each other. It's funny to see a guy from New York become a little redneck.

Q: Of all of the characters you've written, who would feel most at home in Raleigh and why?

A: I get the impression that Gerald Goode (of the short lived ABC animated series "The Goode Family") would probably fit in well. He'd be one of the transplants saying, "We want to be like San Francisco, segregate your litter!"

Q: You're working on a script for a big-screen Woody Woodpecker. In the Raleigh status-sphere, where would Woody best fit?

A: Woody Woodpecker is a true anarchist. He can go into any part of society and feel perfectly at home – but everyone else there will hate him. So, Ravenscroft or a trailer park, Woody would be happy anywhere.

Q: What's up next for you?

A: Mike Judge, Dave Krinsky and I are working on a series for HBO. We pitched it as "Falcon Crest in Silicon Valley." It's inter-



WRITER-PRODUCER ALTSCHULER

esting because the Valley is one of the few places left with larger-than-life characters. It's such a weird culture. And we're already discussing that RTP and the Silicon Hills of Texas are the other main tech areas.

Q: A lot has changed in Raleigh since your days at Bwana Bob's. Have you been back lately?

A: We've been back and it's clear somebody in Raleigh is doing something right. It has everything you could want, so it's cosmopolitan. There are museums, but there also odd places like the movie theater where my kids can get a burger while they watch the show. Of course, I can't go near Cary without getting lost on the Inner, Outer, Beltline, Cary Expressway.

Q: People say Raleigh is a great place to raise a family. How badly is your family suffering because you're no longer in Raleigh?

A: It's pretty bad. My son was having to go to a school filled with Hollywood kids and actors. You can imagine how insufferable that is. My daughter asked to move because there's such a focus on materialism here. Plus, it's in the high 70s and crystal clear and we went to Malibu yesterday. You can imagine how awful that is. 🌿

Billy Warden and Greg Behr run GBW Strategies, a communications firm based in Raleigh (despite heavy lobbying from Dubai). Their work has been covered by publications such as Details Magazine and published by Fast Company.com among others.



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CHARMAN DRIVER JOINS THE CIRCUS

I LIKE TO GET HIGH. I EXPECT MY CLIENTS TO DO IT AND I'D LIKE TO SUGGEST YOU DO it, too. Of course I'm talking about that natural high one gets through exercise. It releases endorphins – substances in the brain that produce a natural boost in your mood. Exercising makes you feel good. You'll also eat better, sleep better and look great because of it.

When I was asked to write a health and fitness column for *WALTER*, I jumped (high) at the chance. I've spent over a decade preaching the gospel of physical fitness as a Pilates teacher, boot camp instructor and, more recently, as a Duke-certified integrative health and wellness coach. I know first-hand what physical fitness can do for you – mind, body and spirit.

The truth is, not everyone gets as excited about this fitness stuff as some of us do and there is no one-size-fits-all form. I could wax on and on about the depressing number of sedentary folk in our country, state and city, but I'm not going there because I went on a run this morning. Can you guess my mood? Plus, my job is to be a part of the solution.

What motivates one person to dismount the couch and turn off the TV or get out of bed early to exercise is different from what works for another. If you could just find something – anything – to get inspired to exercise, what would that thing look like? Or maybe you simply want to inject life into your old workout regimen and try something new.

So how will you get your high? That's where I come in.

Think of me as your guru of movement. (I almost wrote guinea pig, but thought better of myself). I will discover and experience "adventures" in health and fitness in our great City of Oaks and tell you about them. I aim to think outside the gym and use my expertise to shed light on a variety of possible active life endeavors. I hope that you come away informed, inspired and motivated to create a healthy lifestyle through exercise.

Ditch the gym, join the circus

In my boundless pursuit of the high life, how appropriate that my first adventure for WALTER would be to join the circus! That's right, I said circus. Cirque de Vol, "a creative movement arts studio," has come to the Warehouse District in downtown Raleigh. Their website reads, "Ditch the gym, join the circus."

I'm in! I flipped for Cirque's out-of-the-ordinary variety of creative movement programs including trapeze, aerial silks, acrobatic yoga, hoop dance, stilt-walking, juggling, fire dance and laughter yoga – no joke!

In the end, I chose aerial silks for the sheer beauty and athleticism that I associate with Cirque du Soleil. I've seen those amazing acrobatic performers suspend, swing, spiral, fall and fly through the air on long, and colorful fabrics (silks) that hang securely from a high ceiling. Cirque de Vol claims that anyone can do this, and that no experience is required.

A wide smile stretched across my face as I walked into the sunlit studio and watched as my instructor – the lovely Liz "Bliss" Roberts – unfurled the gorgeous red fabrics that tumbled to the floor. Liz started talking about wrist locking, foot locking, tying, wrapping and gripping and then it was if I was hearing a foreign language – a frown across the brow

quickly replaced my smile.

She then explained how participating in aerial silks helps to build strength, flexibility, coordination and balance in the body (you're speaking my language now, sister) and continued on in my native tongue as to how this form allows people to "get" into their bodies by exploring movements in the air, defying gravity. (The smile is back).



We began on the floor with a short yoga-like warmup and moved on to the conditioning portion of instruction. Liz is a skilled and patient teacher and (gradually) the language became clearer as I learned challenging poses that allowed me to wrap, climb, flip, invert and drop in these gorgeous silk ribbons. Wow!

A cool-down signaled the end of my hour-and-a-half long session. I never once thought about the time what with all the laughing and fun we were having. But make no mistake, I worked deeply from my core, enlisted all major muscle groups (and some minor ones I didn't know existed), increased my heart rate, perspired a great deal, and even flexed my brain muscles.

On my way out the door, Liz (now I get the "Bliss" moniker) shouted after me, "It's addictive, isn't it?" I hollered back: "It sure is!"

For more information about Cirque de Vol Studios, go to www.cirquedevol.com. A drop-in Intro Aerial Skills class is \$30.

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Sporting

CANE POLE FISHING

Billy Williams keeps a tradition alive



by Charles Upchurch
Photographs by Shawn Rocco





TO CATCH A FISH

PREVIOUS PAGES: Using simple cane poles, Billy Williams (in the red cap) and friend Michael Smith see what's biting on Falls Lake.

IN HIS ELEMENT

LEFT: Billy Williams knows Falls Lake "like one of his own children."

I HAVE A NEIGHBOR WHO SPORT-FISHES ALL OVER THE WORLD. HAWAII, Costa Rica, the Atlantic Gulf Stream. Marlin, tuna, sailfish. I told him I was writing a piece on a guy here in Raleigh who is an aficionado of another kind: Huck Finn-style cane poles. Bass, perch and crappie.

He shot me a look. "Those guys are serious."

Turns out, Billy Williams is not only one of those guys, he's the guy. Also turns out, he's not an aficionado at all, but something more authentic, more rare. He is cane pole fisherman, natural born.

If you've been to Boondini's, the sandwich shop on Six Forks Road that Williams has owned and worked in for 26 years, you've seen the pictures: Falls Lake, Lake Jordan, Shearon Harris, Neuse River, Haw River, ponds, creeks and backwaters with no names at all. Lots and lots of fish.

Not only does Williams fish with a clutch of 11- to 14-foot, single piece, cured and varnished cane poles without a speck of metal on them, he buys them as "blanks" – naked cane – and meticulously rigs them with a configuration of line and knots that is both simple

and surgically exact.

"Don't call it bamboo" were the first four words he said to me, peering over his glasses. I asked Williams if he knew of anyone else in the area who takes cane pole fishing as seriously as he does. He considered the question briefly.

"No," he said.

There are fish out there

Williams is a man who does not waste time. You might not expect this from someone who spends a considerable amount of it in a two-man boat fishing with a bamboo, er, cane pole. But it is precisely this passion that has him thinking two beats ahead.

After all, there are fish out there. And equipped with his cane poles, 25-horsepower



WEIGHING IN
RIGHT: Every catch gets
the scale treatment.

outboard, sonar fish finder and a few decades of working local shorelines, Williams doesn't waste a moment finding them.

Which isn't to say that he doesn't appreciate what so many of us do about the sport. After all, fishing on an Indian summer day with a Wal-Mart pole, hook, bobber and a morning's supply of worms can be one of the most languorous and satisfying wastes of time one could hope to enjoy. It is, y'all.

But Williams will tell you there's a right way and a wrong way to do it, and that there's nothing more pulse-quickenning than the pull of a Carolina panfish on the far end of a cane pole.

"It's the action," said Williams, his eyes intent. "You can catch big fish on a cane pole because the spring and constant tension wears the fish out – and you feel everything."

Talk like that will drive a man to a general merchandiser like McLambs LP Gas & Supply in Benson. They've sold hardware and cane poles since 1940. Fact is, single piece cane poles are hard as heck to find.

"It's a vanishing art," said Bill Gregory, who ran a flyfishing shop near Boondini's and has fished with Williams on occasion. Much like Williams – same genus, different species – Gregory sees the world through a fishy lens. He has fished some of the most legendary, trophy-rich freshwater in North America.

"I know some hard-core anglers," said Gregory, "but I never saw a single one who had the look, the appreciation, that Billy does when he tells you about a spot he found on Falls Lake

where a tree has fallen – he knows that lake like one of his children."

Gregory mused about fishing with his own son, now barely three. "It will be with a cane pole like Billy's," he said.



A life on the water

The pictures in Boondini's tell a story of a life on the water. And here in the Neuse River basin, water is everywhere. There are 123 fishing lakes and ponds listed in Wake County, by far the most of any county in the state. And those are just the ones with names. There are hundreds more farm and woodland ponds, mostly nameless, each one a keeper of memories, each holding the promise of hard-striking bass and bluegill.

Many of them are immortalized on Boondini's walls. Williams knows every detail, and can remember every day he spent fishing on them, because each day was different. The water, the bite, the company. Even at 61, for Williams, it is never twice the same.

He could tell us about growing up in Williamston, and fishing the brackish water of the Cashie River with the cane pole his father gave him. Maybe he'd describe the Haw when it's running low and clear, and how, when you're pulling white bass out with abandon, you may see a bald eagle doing the same. Or the time at Falls Lake when he and a buddy hauled in 80 crappie. Eighty.

He would relate all this without sentiment.

A son and a daughter are grown, *continued on page 91*



A photograph of a sculpture made of bicycle wheels and gears in a field. The sculpture is constructed from various bicycle components, including wheels, gears, and handlebars, arranged to resemble a plant. One large wheel forms the base, with several smaller wheels and gears attached to it. A smaller wheel with a gear in the center is positioned to the right, and a handlebar is visible on the left. The sculpture is set in a grassy field with trees in the background. The title text is overlaid on the top half of the image.

The Artful Life of ELIZA KRAFT OLANDER

by Liza Roberts

photographs by Jimmy Williams



A PLACE FOR WHIMSY

PREVIOUS PAGES: Giant whirligigs by North Carolina artist Vollis Simpson dot a meadow at Olander's 55-acre North Raleigh retreat.

A CHEERFUL WELCOME

LEFT: Giant metal daylilies made by Beechwood Metalworks greet arriving guests.

HER FRIENDS JOKE THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE THEIR PASSPORTS stamped when they enter Eliza Kraft Olander's universe. It's not hard to see why. She lives in a world of another kind.

It's a place where whimsy and sophistication live side-by-side. Where gigantic Dr. Seuss-style flower sculptures bloom, and Thomas Sayre earth castings tower out of a sweeping meadow. Where a life-sized T. rex made of scrap metal glowers across a graceful, winding driveway, and classical statuary adorns a rose garden.

Here, a geometrically precise meditation maze is painstakingly mowed into a shady field, 20-foot whirligigs spin in the wind, and a chicken coop looks for all the world like a tiny Chartres Cathedral.

Edgar Allan Poe's own gothic bookcase lives here, under the same roof as a sparkling, amethyst-encrusted fireplace inspired by a dream. So do works of art by Picasso and Chagall, and dazzling chandeliers made just for Olander by the artist Jay Strongwater.

Art of all sorts is clearly at home here, and it's a good place to be a plant, too. She babies many carefully tended gardens where weeds are sometimes considered an unexpected gift, and where

sculptures made from oil cans peek from behind the hydrangeas.

In Olander's world, there are no rules. The high, the low, and the fanciful live happily side-by-side, bound by one thing: Olander is charmed by all of it, and she wants you to be, too.

Olander's world is substantial in size – 55 North Raleigh acres – as well as in scope, encompassing the universes not only of art and gardening, but also philanthropy, music, wine connoisseurship, and an ever-expanding circle of friends and admirers.

They all come to her, and why not? There is always something to see and something brewing at Olander's. It usually involves wine and fundraising.

Olander personally gives more than \$1 million to charity every year, and she raises more, often with events at her home. "Charitable work is my heart and soul," she says.

She is the force behind the Triangle Wine Experience, a wine event and auction that has raised millions for Raleigh's Frankie Lemmon School for children with developmental disabilities. She and the chef Ashley Christensen, a close friend, have together raised more than \$1 million for various charities in the last decade through wine and food events, Olander says.



WILD AT HEART

TOP: A bronze figure, a scrap metal flower, and a Chartres-style chicken coop keep company.

A GARDEN OF THEIR OWN

LEFT: Olander's beloved dogs claim a prime spot with a view of sculptures by Phil Hathcock and others.

A PASSIONATE GARDENER

ABOVE: Olander comes by the green thumb naturally: her mother, Cornelia Kraft, is an avid gardener who once served as the vice president of the Garden Club of America. Olander gardens without gloves and embraces what nature brings. "I love weeds. If they happen and they're beautiful, you have to nurture them." Over the years, her son Michael – "A magical person to me, my baby boy. He's a touchstone, a rock" – has given her countless pieces of folk art by Joel Haas.



GOOD COMPANY

ABOVE: "It's really important to surround yourself with generous, kind people who have good souls." Enjoying an early-evening glass of wine are, from left, Olander's son, Michael Olander Jr.; Michael's girlfriend, Jessica Mayhew; Olander; Olander's boyfriend, Brian McHenry; Brian's daughter, Amanda McHenry Keese, and Amanda's husband, Cody Keese. "My friends come from all walks of life. It's not about what you do. I rarely ask people what they do. I wonder what they are."

A PASSION FOR WINE

LEFT: "Food and wine, that's my spirit," she says. The glass-fronted wine cellar off the dining room holds 3,600 bottles with another 7,000 upstairs and more than 13,000 bottles off site. She credits friends Didier Loustau, a former senior wine buyer for Dean & DeLuca, and Tom Black, a winemaker and collector, for educating her. Quoting the 1964 Lulu song "To Sir with Love," she says "They've taken me from crayons to perfume with wine."



She has also had a vital role in turning Raleigh's Band Together into the fundraising juggernaut it is today, raising more than \$500,000 a year for local nonprofits. Also a longtime and substantial supporter of the YMCA, Olander is proud to point out that the Kraft Family YMCA in Apex is named in honor of her parents.

Olander has the resources to give because she earned them. Together with her former husband, Michael Olander, Eliza created a \$100-million restaurant business of Applebee's and Burger King franchises. Now, with beau Brian McHenry by her side, Olander devotes herself to giving back. It's a way of living that began 15 years ago, Olander says, when she took stock of her life.

"I researched who I was, what I had done. And I realized that I had been in the right place at the right time. I fell into building a really good business and living like I do today. So I had to ask myself: When you die, who have you loved, and who has loved you? Do you leave behind something that does good? Or are you just moving forward without thinking? I decided I had to accomplish things on purpose. I realized that my mission in life was to help others. It had to be that way." 🍷

CASTING FROM THE EARTH

When Olander bought this tract of land, it was an untended former chicken farm. She initially got lost on the property; then she bought a tractor and a "brush hog," and cleared it. "I've always wanted to have a lot of land. An environment for safety, security, renewal, soul." As the fields were cleared, "there was room for a lot of things." Cue nationally renowned artist Thomas Sayre, who lives in Raleigh. He is famous for his public art. *Gyre*, his monumental three-ellipse installation, rolls across a field at the North Carolina Museum of Art. Here, by using a long exposure, photographer Jimmy Williams captures Olander and her family around the base of Sayre's sculpture.



The Whirl

Welcome to The Whirl! And consider yourself invited.

Every month, WALTER will highlight a sampling of the social events that make our city sparkle. You'll find parties of every sort, from fund-raisers to concerts to private get-togethers, and meet some of the folks who bring our community together in a spirit of celebration.

This month, come join in as one young Raleigh couple throws a Mad Men-themed housewarming party, and as music fans pack Flanders Gallery. Enjoy the beauty of the North Carolina Museum of Art and CAM Raleigh for a fabulous First Friday night out, and savor a community Sunday supper at downtown's Capital Club 16 restaurant.

It's all part of the Whirl. ~



Kathy and Steve Pretzer



Steve Pretzer and Bryan Bell



Kim and Mac Collie

MAD PARTY

When Kathy and Steve Pretzer bought the house of their dreams in Raleigh, they knew any old housewarming wouldn't do. A Mad Men theme was cooked up, inspiring throwback duds and hairdos a-plenty.



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ART AND JAZZ

NCMA's weekly Art in the Evening featured a jazz trio and a relaxed vibe.

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T BY ALEXANDER WANG

The Whirl »



José Lerma exhibit



Pat Schultz and Amber Ivins



Cara Lewis with daughter Jane

FIRST FRIDAY

Raleigh's monthly art open house known as First Friday was the occasion for CAM to open its doors after hours.



Muhsinah

ART OF COOL

Flanders Gallery became a music venue for the night on Aug. 3, when Muhsinah, a touring member of rapper Common's band, put on a solo performance for an enthusiastic Raleigh crowd.



AJ and Trese Simmons



SUPPER CLUB

Downtown restaurant Capital Club 16 had a packed house of people of all ages for its July Sunday Supper, an event it put on with the Raleigh Wine Shop, the Commonplace Cooperative, and Lumina Clothing.

Submissions for The Whirl: Please let us know if you have pictures from your event to share. Contact Liza.Roberts@Waltermagazine.com with The Whirl in subject line.



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Raleigh gigs

photograph by Casey Toth



RALEIGH RICKSHAW

CHIP SCHLEGEL, WHO WORKS BY DAY FOR OUTDOOR RETAILER REI, has been pedaling a downtown bicycle rickshaw by night for the past year. Inspired by a ride he and his girlfriend, Laura Gregory, took one evening after a performance of *Rent* at Memorial Auditorium, both became rickshaw drivers.

Between 5 p.m. and 3 a.m. three nights a week, brides and grooms, late-night revelers, and conventioners have all taken advantage of Schlegel and Gregory's cardiovascular fitness to get from point A to point B. WALTER asks Schlegel what it's all about.

Q: Do you have to be in incredible shape to do this job?

A: The job is very little about being in shape. It's more about personality. Talking to people. No one wants a ride from a grumpy driver.

Q: How heavy is the load?

A: The rickshaw weighs 100 pounds before anyone gets in it. We carry two

adults. I'd have to guess what they weigh.

Q: How far do you go on a given night?

A: Between 15 and 20 miles.

Q: Can you eat anything you want, with all of that exercise?

A: Yes, I can. And I do. Anything in sight. I'm ravenous. "We eat six

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bunches of bananas a week,” adds Gregory.

Q: What do you do if it starts to rain?

A: Get wet.

Q: How do you stay motivated?

A: I have a personal motto: I have to go faster than the people walking on the sidewalk. Otherwise, they’d have no reason to ride. And my personal mantra is Safety, Fun, Money. “That’s his mantra, not mine,” says Gregory.

Q: What’s the best thing about the job?

A: It’s the best job in the world. I get paid to ride my bike, and I get to be part of everybody’s party, every night.

Q: What’s your favorite street in Raleigh?

A: For money, it’s Fayetteville. That’s where all the people are. But personally, I really like some of the side streets around City Market.

Q: What’s the fastest route between Glenwood South and downtown?

A: From the Marriott downtown to Glenwood, a rickshaw will almost always beat a cab. We can skirt around one-way streets and go around the Capitol to the left. Our other ad-

vantage is beating the traffic on Glenwood by riding between the traffic and the parked cars.

Q: Any other tricks?

A: Rickshaw methodology is to avoid the hills. For instance, don’t take Davie to the Pit. Go up Fayetteville to Hargett.

Q: What have you learned about Raleigh that you didn’t already know?

A: Everything. I knew very little about downtown before this. It’s been a huge education.

Q: What else would you like to tell us?

A: (Reading from notes) In 2011, Raleigh Rickshaws – there are about 20 of them – drove 57,369 miles in just under 23,000 hours. We burned 2,466,000 calories. We saved \$30,000 in gas, and 55,647 pounds in emissions. All at zero cost to the public. 🍃

Raleigh gigs

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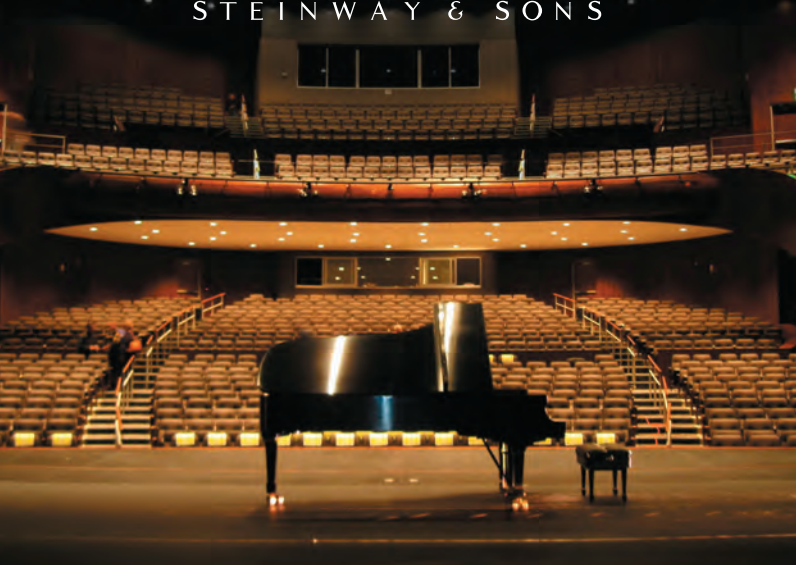
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Reflections

by Jill McCorkle

Acclaimed novelist Jill McCorkle remembers starting out...and finding a friend in Nancy Olson of Quail Ridge Books



Lissa Gotwals

MY FIRST STEP INTO THE PUBLISHING WORLD WAS IN THE FALL OF 1984. I was 26 years old and my publisher, Algonquin Books, was only a year old. There is no shade of green that can adequately describe how little I knew about the book business beyond sitting down and reading one, and so my trip to Jacksonville, Fla., for the Southeastern Booksellers Conference was a learning experience in all ways imaginable.

Algonquin didn't have an actual booth inside the designated hall where various publishers from all over were set up; instead we had a card table right there at the entry, where I stood beside a blown-up picture of my novels and smiled and spoke to people as they passed. In fact, I have never seen a Wal-Mart greeter without having flashbacks of the moment and my incredible insecurity as I stood there in what looked like Sunday School attire in the most uncomfortable shoes I have ever owned in my life. I smoked like a fiend at the time but knew that standing there puffing was not really going to make people want to come over and ask about my books. So I did that other thing people do when filled with insecurity and intimidation in a large group of people; I looked around in search of a warm and friendly face in hopes of having an

exchange with someone so I would at least look like I knew what I was doing.

And there she was. Energetic and impish with a smile and shine in her eyes that only someone without a pulse would not be completely charmed by. I met Nancy Olson and within seconds had confessed to her my great discomfort and how I was brand new at all of this. What surprised me was that she had the same confession. She was just opening her own bookstore in Raleigh, something exciting that she had long wanted to do. We stood together and talked a little and then a few more times, I found myself moving back to the comfort of her conversation. By the time we said our good-byes, we were in agreement that if she decided to have a reading at her store, I would be it.

continued on page 93

DARK CHARMS

Eventually the future shows up everywhere:
those burly summers and unslept nights in deep
lines and dark splotches, thinning skin.
Here's the corner store grown to a condo,
the bike reduced to one spinning wheel,
the ghost of a dog that used to be, her trail
no longer trodden, just a dip in the weeds.
The clear water we drank as thirsty children
still runs through our veins. Stars we saw then
we still see now, only fewer, dimmer, less often.
The old tunes play and continue to move us
in spite of our learning, the wraith of romance,
lost innocence, literature, the death of the poets.
We continue to speak, if only in whispers,
to something inside us that longs to be named.
We name it the past and drag it behind us,
bag like a lung filled with shadow and song,
dreams of running, the keys to lost names.

Freeze frame

reflection and photograph by John Rosenthal

I COULD IMAGINE WRITING A STORY THAT WOULD BEGIN with this image. There's an air of mystery about it; melancholy perhaps. The result of a simple play of light? The composition is strong, I can feel it, but, really, what is being composed? Are there notions that float around in the lights and darks? Hey, this is a photograph, not a poem, though I confess the distinction sometimes escapes me.

I know this: A photograph belongs to its viewership, which is either drawn to it, or indifferent to it, but the moment of its creation belongs to the photographer, and that moment is, almost by definition, a good one.

And this was a very good one. The day was bitterly cold, a gray February day. Snow was threatening. I'd arrived at the station about 9 a.m. to catch the Silver Star to New York City, a 10-hour trip. The train was a little late and I'd begun to clap my hands together and blow breath into my gloves. Time has rendered me quaint, hasn't it?—standing there on the platform beside my big clunky suitcase with my camera bag slung over my shoulder, an unpadded canvas sack containing an SP 500 Pentax, three lenses (protected by wash cloths), and 20 cassettes of rolled film.

I'd been eyeing the café's steamed-up side window. Condensation had confused reflections, softened shadows. Three old guys drinking coffee and reading newspapers looked as if they'd been painted in a dull light. But painted by whom? Why, Edward Hopper, of course! I didn't know any other painters who'd painted what they'd seen through a window. The content of Hopper's painting escaped me, but so what? A diner, a café. Close enough.

I took out my camera, attached my 50mm lens, and looked through the viewfinder. Nothing took hold. Bleached men in a nondescript place. I stepped back a few feet. Now there was a railroad track in my frame, and then silently, within the same frame, there were songs. I heard them. Of course I did. It's one of the laws of my life. Railroad tracks mean train songs. Train songs mean lonesomeness and wandering. They mean a lost America. You learn to sing singing them. You learn to cry hearing them. John Henry. Burl Ives. Casey Jones. Jimmie Rodgers, Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan. Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah. I'm a thousand miles away from home, sleeping in the rain. Don't say I never warned



AMTRAK CAFÉ
raleigh 1974

you when your train gets lost. Notions, words, songs, do float around in photographs.

But I hadn't made one yet. I was in visual possession of a railroad track, a steamed-up window and a few old guys. Hurry, something. Hurry, dog. Hurry, little kid running by. Hurry, southbound train. Hurry, man in the black coat and



the beautiful hat, and, incidentally, sir, where in the hell did you come from? Slow down, Silver Star. Give me a few more seconds.

Where did he come from, that silhouette standing in front of the magazine rack? In my mind he was only a mystery, but that was enough. The Stranger. Call him anything you want.

Call him a lovely piece of negative space in a room too busy with reflections. I clicked the shutter.

Occasionally someone will say, "The old train station. How cool."

Last week someone said, "I've always liked your Edward Hopper photograph." 🍃

at the TABLE *continued from page 41*

nibble at desserts and wash it down with rosé.

"The macaroons are awesome, Ollie," someone says.

Inglis winces with a happy shrug, admits her own private war and victory. "It took seven batches to get them right," she says. Four worked, three she had to pitch. "Seven!" Burton and Gerngross murmur with a mixture of empathy and respect. Not everyone would go that far to master a skill, or simply give of themselves, especially for people they don't know. Really, it's revolutionary.



For more Porch Light photos, go to www.Waltermagazine.com.

For information about Porch Light's upcoming events, go to www.porchlightraleigh.blogspot.com. And for information on Tim's Garden on Dover Farm Road in Raleigh, go to www.facebook.com/timgarden.

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Sporting

continued from page 73

the poles they used still in place in Williams' garage. He probably has 20 or more. Some are beautifully aged. Others are young cane, acquired from a source in Johnston County by way of Mississippi, newly fitted with 6-pound line the same way his daddy did it, anchored with a clinch knot two feet from the tip, run up to the last node and tied off with a nail knot, the bobbbers, shot and hooks set at various depths. A 16-foot aluminum boat, rigged to the teeth, stands at the ready.

After all, there are fish out there, and memories to keep. 🐟





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Hear *continued from page 65*



courtesy Mac McCaughan

at 12:30 a.m. on Thursday, Sept. 6, (in truth, that's early Friday morning) at *Slim's*, 227 S. Wilmington Street.

There's no need to retell Superchunk's lasting influence on small, independent rock bands sweating it out in virtually every college town in America. But bandleader and Merge Records founder **Mac McCaughan**, above, may be just as well-known in local circles for his solo output (often under the Portastatic moniker). Sporting a mix of lo-fi ballads, Brazilian love songs, and cranky guitar pop, McCaughan has penned some of his durable songs during Superchunk's off-seasons. Catch Mac at 10:30 p.m., Saturday, Sept. 8, at the *Lincoln Theatre*, 126 E. Cabarrus Street.

And then there's **Tom Maxwell**, right. When one of Maxwell's early local bands (the wildly underrated What Peggy Wants) was winding down in 1993, he told me about his new group that planned to bring back a fiery brand of 1930's swing music. I could barely get my arms around the concept, so I expected that would be the last I'd hear of it.

It wasn't. Less than a year later, the Squirrel Nut Zippers were one of the most talked-about acts in town. Soon the whole country, including Letterman, was talking about them.

In the Zippers, Maxwell was a defining character in a cast chock-full of them. His solo work, appropriately stripped down, still combs the fringes of folk, jazz and pop through several full-length offerings, including last year's exceptional *Kingdom Come*. Maxwell plays on Thursday Sept. 6, at 9:30 p.m. at *Slim's*, 227 S. Wilmington Street.

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courtesy Tom Maxwell

Charles Marshall moved to Raleigh from Washington, D.C., about 10 years ago. He started writing occasional music columns during the 1990's but stopped to start a band of his own, the Balsa Gliders. Charles practices law with Brooks Pierce as a media lawyer and litigator. He has three young children but pledges to never write a column about children's music

Reflections

continued from page 86

Saturday, Oct. 20th, 1984. It was a first for both of us, scheduled right during the UNC-N.C. State football game. I arrived on time and then the two of us sat and waited. And we sat and waited and all the while we talked and laughed until I almost forgot that we had just hosted the reading where nobody came. Then we decided that I should wait a little longer to drive back to Chapel Hill because of game traffic and because by then the skies had opened up with a thunderous downpour. Those poor people, we mused, sitting at a football game in the rain instead of coming to Quail Ridge Books for a reading. Finally, I left and we vowed to try it again. Next time would be better. And it was and so was the next and the next. In 1996 when Fran had damaged much of Raleigh, Nancy's husband, Jim, met me at the store, which still had no electricity, to sign stock.

In remembering that first reading, Nancy has always added that right after I left, a carload of people from Lumberton arrived for the reading so disappointed to have missed it. If I didn't know what an honest and trustworthy woman she is, I might wonder if she had made that up the same way a parent covers for a forgetful tooth fairy or missed invitation. I have told this story for years now, because as anyone in the book business knows, Quail Ridge Books is a frontrunner among independent booksellers and was the recipient of the Publishers Weekly Bookseller of the Year Award. Nancy Olson is one of this country's most admired and revered booksellers, and there is not a publicist out there not scrambling and pushing to get her author booked there. I am only one of thousands of authors and readers who are avid disciples, drawn to that same enthusiasm and passion I witnessed 27 years ago. In fact, it is said that when Nancy's cash register rings, some dearly departed booklover gets his or her wings. 🦋

Jill McCorkle is the author of four story collections and six novels including Life After Life, which will be published Spring 2013. She teaches Creative Writing at NC State University.



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WEBB

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He has been vocal about his faith in public – filling his Twitter feed almost daily with lines of Scripture, thanking God for his blessings – but in conversation, he sticks to the secular.

Believing God has a plan for his life doesn't mean Simpson leaves well enough alone. "It's not like I wake up and don't want to go to the course and try to improve," Simpson says, "where I think other guys might have that problem. They just play as their job."

Family comes first

Not giving up, mastering mistakes, and dedicating himself to golf in full would seem to leave time for little else. But it's clear, after spending some time in the warm and busy Simpson household, that for Webb, his family comes first.

"In my parents, I saw a strong marriage and a great relationship between them that made me feel comfortable, safe, and loved, and that's one of the things I want to emulate for our children," he says.

Dowd is right there with him. They're devoted parents to James, now 20 months, and baby Willow Grace, and devoted partners to each other. "I want to make sure Webb still knows that he's first, and that I'm his wife first."

Dowd says the two of them – used to living out of suitcases for weeks at a time on tour – love nothing more than a quiet night at home. To celebrate his U.S. Open win in the one day he had at home before flying to Connecticut to play in the Travelers Championship, Webb says they "did laundry, hung out, kind of relaxed."

The pair clearly share a common vibe. Perhaps that's one of the things Webb's dad saw in Dowd when he met her at a Raleigh party the summer she was a rising sophomore at Wake Forest, and, in an oft-told story, jokingly offered her \$100 if she'd take his son – then about to arrive at Wake as a freshman – on a date. "If he's half as cute as you are, I'll do it for free," she replied. Cue melting hearts in all directions, and then, fast-forward to the meet-cute apex: In his first week at Wake, Webb spots a beautiful girl across the room at a party, hopes she might be

WEBB

the one his dad told him about but fails to muster up a hello. The next day, a mutual friend brings the same girl over for an introduction, and it's her, Dowd Keith, the girl his dad has told him about. The rest is history.

Can you blame Webb Simpson for feeling like his life is pretty nicely mapped out?

On that map there is always Raleigh. This fall, Webb will be back in town to headline a fundraising tournament his sister, Blake Fricks, is organizing Nov. 14 at Raleigh Country Club to benefit Neighbor to Neighbor, the Southeast Raleigh nonprofit that benefits at-risk youth. She is its development director.

Meanwhile, there are tournaments to play, a blog to launch, and new baby girl to help care for as Simpson enjoys his year as U.S. Open champion. At only 26, his career in many ways is just beginning.

Golf legend Arnold Palmer, whose scholarship Simpson held at Wake Forest, described Webb in an email as "one of the great competitors in the game today." Says Palmer, who should know: "He has started out with a great life, a great wife and family, and has nothing but good news to look forward to."

As Webb Simpson heads toward the door this Saturday afternoon, eager to be on time for his friend's wedding pictures, his hair is wet from a two-minute shower, his tuxedo shirt is not yet tucked in. But he obliges a visitor without a glance at his watch. Sure, he'll hoist that silver cup and smile for the camera; sure, he'll answer one more question. He takes his time to kiss his wife, mother, and little boy goodbye, bids gracious farewells to everyone else, and shows no urgency, no impatience. As the kitchen door closes behind him, the clock says 3:40 p.m. Not a second later than the time Simpson said days in advance he would have to leave that day. It all comes down to decisions. So far, Webb Simpson's got that part down. 🏊



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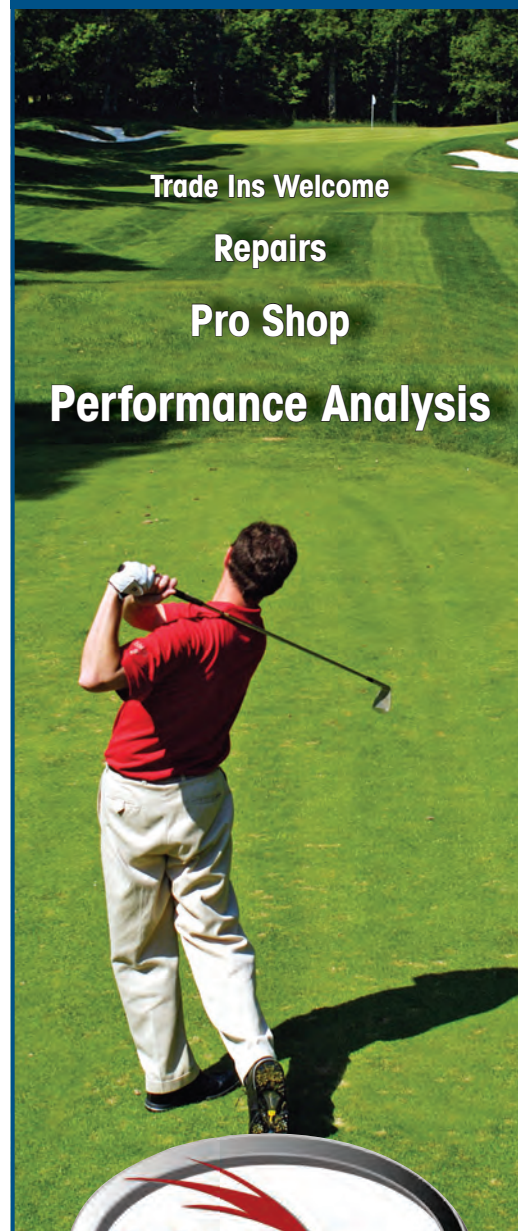
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