

*Going a bridge too far with Mandy Pierce Howard,  
Pete Reilly, Colin Clancy, the art of Erick Davis,  
our comics and The Dream Journal.*

# The Blotter

June 2011

MAGAZINE

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If at first you don't succeed, press, press,  
release.

Front cover, Erick "Dee" Davis work-  
ing with chalk at the Open Eye in  
Carrboro. See centerfold for more.

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## "Deep-fried, chocolate-coated, bacon flavored..."

Somewhat hard times for me. I had a little visit with the doctor back last summer, and the word was too much glucose in the old red-sauce. Apparently I would make a vampire swear off sweets. Do something, I was instructed by my mean old doctor, who, if she is reading this, I swear I'm just kidding. Put down that probe!

So I stopped putting sugar in my coffee and tea and kicked my ice-cream jones (you know, the old guy who used to deliver Good Humor on my street) and white bread/jelly/french toast habits. Found that I didn't need a new five-pound sack of Dixie Crystals every five weeks or so, and lost about twenty pounds of lumpen proletariat over the course of the summer. So far, that is. Nicely done, but only the beginning, says said doctor. And it's not all dieting, oh no, not by half. It's grinding away the make-believe miles on the treadmill. It's lifting dumbbells and sweating along like a daft cross-country skiing Norwegian on the elliptical machine. It's saying no, (oh my gawd!) thanks, to a piece of red velvet cake with butter-cream icing.

Of course I'd rather just sit and read. And if there were a just and gentle supreme being, then this would cause calories to fall away like rain-drops from a cedar-shake rooftop. But this is not my point. That is, it's only part of my point. The other part of the point is that I should be grateful that this is as hard times as things get for me. So far, I mean. I'm quite certain that in the fullness of time, the doctor is going to put on her wicked witch mask and make me do further abuse to my sweet-tooth, blood-vessel linings and whatever remains of my musculature.

Apropos of none of the above, in Dallas, Uncle Butch (yes, we have an Uncle Butch) enters his goods in the State Fair. Texas, like so many other things it does, has a massive State Fair. Everything happens there, everyone goes there, and everybygodone eats there. Butch enters his Garlic Jalapeno Dill Pickles for judging. If there are three things that go together, it's garlic, dill and jalapeno peppers. Oh, and vinegar. They're phenomenal pickles. My brother-in-law Chris teases me because I eat them with a knife and fork. I call it pickle respect. And because I am under oath, I can't even go into the details about how they are made. Every year, Uncle Butch sends me some, to replenish my dwindling supply. The mailman asks me why the box smells so good. I think he suspects something, but since pickles are not, say, typically used by drug traffickers to mask the trace aspects of



Heroin, his curiosity must travel places I cannot even imagine.

In the mean time, Uncle Butch waits for the word. Unfortunately, like a tumbling ski-jumper listening to the holy-smokes-he's-sure-falling-hard-isn't-he voice of the late Jim McKay, he knows the agony of defeat. And that, folks, is known as trying awful hard for a simile.

And now back to something relevant to my initial thought process. In my experience, Texas cooks know what they are doing. And at the Texas State Fair – the largest in the nation – winning often means deep-frying that which has never been deep-fried before. Oreos! Twinkies! Grilled-Cheese Sandwiches. Ice Cream. Beer. The theory is, if it exists, and it's edible, it can be deep-fried. Nay, it should and will be deep-fried. At gunpoint, if necessary. Deep-fried chocolate covered honey-roasted batter dipped and pure cane sugar sprinkled. My own personal suggestion to the deep-fry gods? A little tid-bit we Yankees like to call Drake's Cakes. Butterscotch iced, cream filled. I can imagine one of those sexy babies batter-dipped and dropped from a comfortable eight inches into oil so gold that Jason sets sail from Argos, then suddenly bubbling and spitting like a cat squirted with a lawn hose. Rescued and cooled on a sheet of Brawny towel, then drizzled with melted Hershey's chocolate.

Gack!!! My heart just double-tapped with the deadly accuracy of a Mafiosi *contractor*. OK, OK, so although I won't be darkening the concession stands in Dallas for a while, I guess I can hold the line here at home. And I suppose I can just say no and all to Moon Pies and Cheerwine, but the truth is a man only has so much self-control to spare.

Garry - [chief@blotterrag.com](mailto:chief@blotterrag.com)

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CAUTION

*I can too be political. Enough with the apologies, already. We're wasting precious time. Let's quit the finger-pointing and get down to business.*

Marni Goldschlag -  
hand-stitched  
sheer fabric



## "Tree"

The Blotter has been fortunate to have the opportunity to work closely with an artists' organization called Paintbrush Forest to help them publish a project called "Tree," the proceeds of which go to the Haw River Assembly, a watershed conservation organization. "Tree" is a children's

book, a coffee-table piece, both in one. A work of art. Many works of art. You've seen our ads, with our requests for donations and suggestions to purchase a copy or two. Well, we figure you want to see some of the art from the book. And we asked author and artist behind the project, Shelly Hehenberger, how she came up with the idea to include

other artists:

"When I first wrote "Tree" I fully intended to illustrate it entirely on my own as I have done with several other books. As a professional illustrator, I have always done my books alone and not in collaboration. Last year when I began to plan the work for this project, I decided that it would be much more fun to get to



Linnea Lieth - ink on  
paper



Jennifer Jeffers -  
photogram print

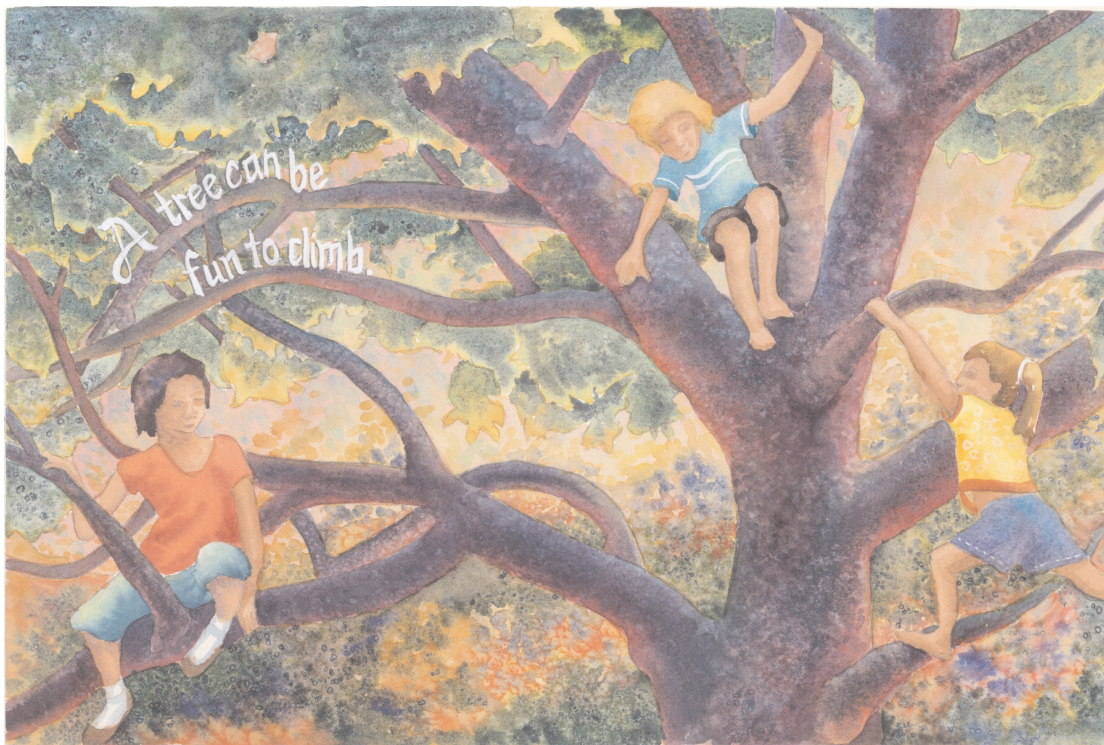


know other artists in my community by bringing them into this project. There is so much diversity in this group of artists and that has turned out to be the most exciting aspect of the project. We have professionals artists and adult students, as well as three high school students, and the mediums are as diverse as the artists. The wide range of mediums includes

watercolor, acrylic, and oil painting, pastel, photography, fabric work, collage, ink, graphite, colored pencil, and encaustic. This diversity is what I was most hoping for simply because if I had done the project on my own, the art would be entirely in one style. I have enjoyed getting to know these other artists, and certainly do not regret giving this project to this com-

munity. I hope to work on other similar projects in the future, and look forward to meeting more artists in this area."

For more information on "Tree," the Haw River Assembly conservation group, to pre-purchase copies or to make a worthy donation, go to [www.paintbrushforest.com](http://www.paintbrushforest.com) or [www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com).



Marty Detwiler -  
watercolor on paper

## "Ode to a Black Widow"

by Mandy Pierce Howard

You gave him plenty of warning,  
And he, to me.  
But in a mother's defense, kids are always complaining  
About their clothes  
Itching.

You picked the son who could tell me,  
Who could describe  
The pain:  
Sensation. Location.  
Instead of the one who would only scream,  
And may've ended up in surgery,  
Or worse.

True to your reputation,  
You didn't bite until tight straps  
Restricted and confined you.  
You thought to were truly trapped  
When you unleashed your wrath.  
But your restraint, made it harder  
For me to act quickly  
and effectively.



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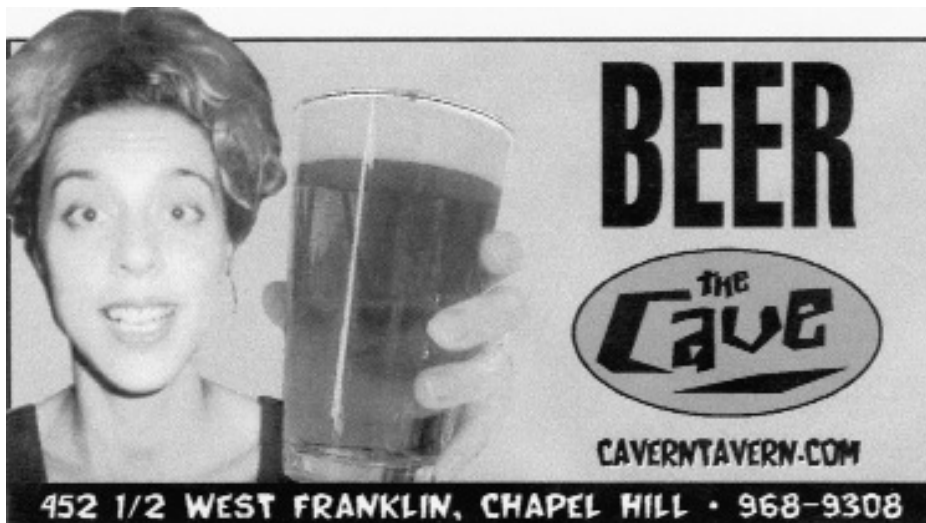


You clung to the shirt,  
When I peeled it away,  
Instead of his body.  
Which made it easier to scream,  
Then calm down  
while knowing exactly  
Where you lay.

All in all.  
I am appreciative for  
certain choices you made.

But it still feels good  
to look again  
-While my son sleeps fitfully with an IV-  
At your mother fucking squashed ass body  
On his favorite shirt.  
You piece of shit.

I will find your kin.  
And kill them all.



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Erick Davis - Carrboro, NC







## "She"

by Pete Reilly

She is not a lady.  
When she takes her place with the women around the ornate table  
topped with porcelain cups,  
she is buried alive.

If she were to release her soul from its cage,  
if she were to stand and set the tea to spilling,  
if she were to truly breathe;  
the button at her throat would break free,  
and her voice would shriek like a fierce hawk  
digging its talons into rabbit flesh.

She wants to soar above the fluttering and flapping of the little chickadees.  
She wants to dip her wings and be gone; over the rim of the mountains.  
She wants to skim the canopy of green where iridescent butterflies  
live their entire lives without ever traveling to the jungle floor,  
where the carpet of treetops are like clouds,  
where she can feast savagely on unsuspecting prey.

She will seek the wild places,  
where the sky speaks in thunderous afternoon storms.  
Places that set her heart to beating fast.  
Places that bring waves of loneliness,  
Places where she might lose her soul, and in the losing, find peace.  
Places where the sounds of little birds are not the whole of the world;  
but simply beautiful music played in the background of a much larger universe.

She will be dangerous.

### Best In Show

by Phil Juliano





She will seek out the men who clomp through town in their boots,  
and those that ride out to the country, trotting their horses.  
She will call to them,  
not in a self-conscious, coquettish trill;  
but the full-throated cry of a predator.

She will alight before a man,  
and notice every detail,  
the mud covered boots,  
the pants that reveal a disdain for puffery,  
shoulders that slope casually;  
but also the line of his nose too long, and his lips too thin.  
It will not matter to her, for he is no soft chittering bird.  
He is, like her, a predator;  
a hulking man, smelling of earth, and sweat, and sweet rum.  
She will not hesitate to close the space between them.

She understands the soaring hawk brings death;  
death of the world as she knows it.  
She will forever see her children, her husband, the world;  
through the cold and steady eyes of the hawk.  
There is no going back.  
The sky will be her new home; her only home.

She knows fear.  
All her life she has fought the flame and dammed the river;  
but the hour is late,  
and this time she will let the fire burn and the river rage;  
for even as the hawk flies free;  
it yields to the flow of wind against wing.  
It trusts itself to the invisible updrafts,  
and breezes that sweep in from the sea.

## DRAGIN

by Michael Cole



## THURSTON MOORE, SONIC BACHELOR IN: "THE ACCIDENTAL FLUXIST!"

by Chris Fox

"LOVE LIVING LA VIDA SOLO--

ONLY PROBLEM IS HAVING TO  
PAY ALL THE BILLS  
MYSELF! LUCKILY,  
I JUST LANDED A  
BALLER GIG:  
TEACHING KIDS  
TO PLAY GUITAR!!"



"BOYS AND GIRLS, WHEN THIS  
COURSE IS OVER, YOU WILL  
HAVE MASTERED THE  
INSTRUMENT  
IN THIS  
CASE!"



\*EMPTY\*



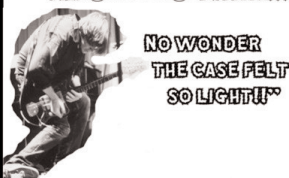
"Whoa!" "My mind's blown!"  
"I get it--I'm the instrument!"  
"The music is inside me!"  
"Play suicide notes, 'cause  
my old self is dead!"



\*SATORI  
ACHIEVED\*



"CAN'T BELIEVE I FORGOT  
THE @#\$%&@ GUITAR!!!"



NO WONDER  
THE CASE FELT  
SO LIGHT!!"



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## The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Please send excerpts from your own dream journals.. If nothing else, we'd love to read them We won't publish your whole name.

mermaid@blotterra.com

Today I was, half - asleep at "My Secret San Diego County Surfing Spot," as I awaited what was supposed to be some "Decent Waves." The "spot" was not known for Big Waves, but I love it because although The Waves are usually small, They are often Glassy. Besides, few others ever stop by this beach, which requires a mile hike from a paved State of California Park's service-access-only road.

Content that once again, I had The Beach all - to - myself, I was about to doze - off, when, out of the corner of my right eye, I saw a "Smoking - Hot Surfer, carrying Her Board, as She walked down that mile - long dirt road towards The Beach.

In disbelief, I continued to watch as She continued walking along The Beach, headed in the direction towards "My Lazing Spot." As She drew - closer, I stared in disbelief as I recognized that She was none other than Malia Jones. I first Saw Her Surf back in 1996. Since then, She has since developed into One Of The Hottest Surfers (in The Water, as well as Out-of-The Water).

She walked right up to where I laid, kicked sand between my toes, and said, "Hi, Cowboy! I heard that this is where you Hide - Out."

Grrrrrrrrrr, just when I thought that I had "died and that I had gone to Heaven," I was hit with a full - dose of "Cold - Hard - Reality; I heard my cell phone ring, and woke up from what proved to be only dream, as some darned United States Navy Commander called. (Heck, he was probably calling me to tell me that I forgot that yesterday was his birthday. I still have not returned his telephone call.....)

Grrrrrrrrrr, I was mistaken. After four tortuous hours of futile attempts at trying to return to that dream, I finally checked my cell phone voicemail, only to discover that once again (happens at least once each month for over a year now), that the US Navy Commander had "Cell - Phone - Pocketed" called me, with a telephone call lasting ten minutes or more. I detest hearing the muffled sounds of a cell phone being carried in someone's pocket.

No Malia Dream and no telephone call of importance. Now, I am truly miffed...

M.C.R. - Anaheim



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### "Stitches"

by Colin Clancy

I want to tear the world apart  
and stitch it back together so the seams, like raised red threads  
on a baseball, become new mountains for us to climb.  
And under full moon I want to float turns graceful in champagne  
powder, choking on feathers, until nothing exists,  
or carve power steel into boilerplate ice  
to make curves like railroad tracks, or even just ride  
death cookies and hope not to lose control. I want  
to remember small things, like standing naked  
at the window in early morning, sipping coffee as the Amtrak  
rattled walls, its blurred passengers' second glances too late  
to be sure. And I want to remember times I've been most  
alive, like feeling the resonance of brass in my hands as I played  
taps to headstones at my grandmother's funeral or watching my grandfather  
struggle to his feet, knees of suit-pants soiled, and my brother's hand  
on his elbow after her ashes were in the ground. And I want  
to drive West with windows down in the nighttime, needle point  
running white lines on blacktop, and when tangerine  
sky appears in the rearview I want to mash down  
the gas til the bobbin whirs to see if I can outrun the sunrise.





## CONTRIBUTORS

**Mandy Pierce Howard** writes, "I pick up my Blotter at Quail Ridge Books in Raleigh, NC and always love the incredibly varied blend of published material. I love you even more after your encouraging submission page. Please accept the following submission which was written as we were moved from triage bed 13 to room 777 and I felt I better look on the bright side of things." She tells us she cries over insurance commercials, applauds when waiters bring her food and giggled uncontrollably when a friend made up a story about being raped. Poetry gives her a chance to place emotions in slightly more acceptable places. She is one degree away from fame, but refuses to drop names, unless, of course, that name is pertinent to the conversation. She is the wife of one, the mom of three, and the author of many first drafts. She is taking steps to become who she wants to be. And last but not least, she told us that while her poem was submitted simultaneously, "I really like you much better." And to that we give a rousing, but not prideful, "Yay!!!"

We saw **Erick Davis'** chalks hanging on the wall at Open Eye Cafe in Carrboro and asked the coffee lady about him. He comes in here all the time, she told us. When we met him, he was almost as enthusiastic about The Blotter as we were about putting him inside it. Like Buddhist mandalas, his chalk drawings were temporary beauty at our coffee hang-out. On a more permanent note, Erick's stunning mosaics are all around town, and he's working on new projects as we go to print. Check him out online in the December 5th Chapel Hill News and at [www.paintingwithrocks.com](http://www.paintingwithrocks.com).

**Pete Reilly** writes, "I've been an educator for most of my life. My essay "When the Classroom Door Swings Inward" was included in the anthology "Being Human at Work" published by North Atlantic Press. I have had poetry published in *BlueLine*, and *Perspectives* magazines. My blog, *Ed Tech Journeys*, won the Edublog's Award for Best Newcomer in 2006. In addition to my poetry, I am presently finishing my second novel, and a non-fiction work, "Teaching From The Inside Out". I live in Tomkins Cove, NY, with my wife Liz."

**Colin Clancy** lives next to Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. A recent graduate of the MA English program at Northern Michigan University, he worked as an assistant editor for *Passages North*. He spends his free time brewing and drinking beer, kayaking, biking, and skiing. His work has appeared in *Word Riot*, *Kippis!*, *The Lounge Companion*, and *CellStories*.

**Chris Fox** calmly, steadily, and somewhat stealthily churns out funny from Chapel Hill environs.

**Michael Cole and Phil Juliano** were recently at the comic convention at the state fairgrounds in Raleigh but I wasn't allowed to go. My life occasionally sucks like that.

Final Tidbits: Come to our benefit concert on May 21st - 10:00PM at the Cave!!! And if you need something good to read - and who doesn't - go get a copy of Ron Cooper's "Purple Jesus." There's a copy at the Durham Public Library!!! He's coming to Chapel Hill in June - to Flyleaf to do a reading and I expect to see you everyone there with clean shirts and smiling faces. We've been selling books and paintings and prints for our first release "Tree" for a couple of months but I still haven't seen your pre-order. Lots of fine people are helping with the project and we want you to do your part. Talk it up, think about who you like giving gifts to, and go on over to [paintbrushforest.com](http://paintbrushforest.com) or [pencilpointmountain.com](http://pencilpointmountain.com) and do it. While you're mulling that over, consider a donation to The Blotter ([www.blotterrag.com](http://www.blotterrag.com)) as your good deed for the year! And visit your local independent bookstore, they have hot cocoa! I don't want to hear any of you saying, "I'm bored." Got it? Good!

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xxooxooxox - The Blotter Gang



Photo: Joshua Craig

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