

*June is bustin' out with Jim Solomone, Luna Lee Ray,
Karyn Joyner, Alex Carl, Ross Leese,
a new Best In Show & The Dream Journal.*

The Blotter

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MAGAZINE



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Whataya want for nothing, press releases?

Front cover, "Bee dreams #1" from
the series "last light" by Luna Lee
Ray - see centerfold for more.

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"Deer and Grapes"

Chapel Hill is mulling a culling. Too many deer in town, it seems. I know the feeling. Lucky-thirteen years ago, I paid a horticulturalist to make a garden by my house for my then wife-to-be, K. A wedding present, if you will. A shade garden – we are surrounded on all sides by the deep green woods. That spring, she gathered the stone that pops naturally from the ground around these parts – glacial moraine precipitated from the melt of the last great ice age – and made a low walled oval. Bags of topsoil mixed with the strange crumbly stuff that abounds on my property – Chapel Hill gravel they call it. Back during colonial times it was mined from the local hills and carted in wagons to cities like Williamsburg, where it was used to pave roads. Less expensive than granite blocks or riverine stones for cobbling a street, and smoother to boot. Its selling point was that wet with rain it doesn't become muddy, it drains water through very well, and dries as hard as iron. Lay it smoothly and carefully and CHG holds up to traffic, and ruts are smoothed out by re-wetting and application of a rake and tamping. Wait a minute - what was my point? Oh, yeah.

Into this new garden went shade-loving, wife-loving flowers. Leather-leaved Hosta. Pastel blooming Columbine. Delicate, feathery ferns. Odd little pitcher plants.

And "down the hill," as we came to call all of the property not by the house in that same way that all Irishmen refer to non-Ireland as "away" I had her make us a vineyard. A beautiful thing it was. My horticulturalist friend had fetched in a backhoe and scraped away the topsoil, creating rows of short hillocks and ditches, and placed landscaping ties on their ends, each row of ties linked together with two thin ropes of plastic coated wire cable. These were intended for draping the grapevines as they progressed.

Between each wooden post, planted atop the hillocks, were lush strawberry plants. "These will be a two-fold bonus," my gardener told me. "As they mature, they will send out runners and these will take root. All the strawberry growth will keep down the weeds, and you can pick your own fruit!" I was enchanted.

Here came the vines, thirty of them. Seyvals, white and sweet, perfect for the Piedmont region's hot, humid summers. Hardy enough to handle the unpredictable winters here, where snow and ice might turn up in February just as easily as a false-spring morning in the sixties.

"Now that we've taken away the topsoil," my plant-lady explained, "these vines will work hard to root." Grapes like tough times. I didn't know that. She explained that this is why vintners planted grapes on stony hillsides in Spain and Italy, France and California. Well, alright then. Work hard, you grapes, I whispered that first evening, standing in my vineyard watching the spring sun set. Become sweet, so that I can make wine out of you.

Well, it would be a lie to say that everything went according to plan. The first summer the strawberries sprouted their beautiful white blooms, and the rabbits found them. A few (strawberries, that is) survived to create those hard white pellets that develop before they fill with gentle late spring rain and turn red and sweet. Rabbits either don't care for actual strawberries, or they have no patience. By summer's end, there was no evidence that strawberries had ever been planted there. I was disappointed, but K was optimistic. "We'll plant them again next spring," she promised.

The grapevines, on the other hand, flourished. So much new growth from the short rooted canes. Figs, and their infamous leaves, the Bible says, grow on fig trees. A fig tree only makes figs the third summer after it is planted. A patient man's fruit. Grapes, however,

grow on brand-spanking new vines. I was thrilled, for a while.

We lost most of the first grapes to cardinals and other songbirds that set up shop down the hill, but I hadn't figured on having a crop the first year, anyway. Chalk one up to experience, I told myself. Get prepared for next spring. When winter came, I read about pruning cane – where to make the cut so that the new bud would send forth a brand new cane and fruit. Standing in the vineyard in the cold, I snipped off dry cane and tied the remaining rooted bits to the suspended cables.

That spring, everything was wonderful. We were newly married. K loved her gardens, and had plans for putting in roses and tulip bulbs and clematis vines and a raised bed for vegetables. I bought out the stock of left-over Easter azalea one-quart pots and placed them around the hosta garden. They wouldn't get much sun there, but they would still bloom each spring. We were pleased with our efforts.

And the grapes! There were big emerald bunches on each vine, tight clusters, hard as nuts, waiting for the late summer sun to call them to make sugar. I scuffed in the bare dirt beneath my boots – for the strawberries had been eaten by the rabbits again. I put a folding chair out in the vineyard and listened to the bees revving their engines and the dry grass hushing as a warm breeze drifted over me.

The deer found us, of course, just after returning from a week's vacation at the beach. I should have expected it. Taking the kitchen trash out to the garbage can, I heard a rustle in the woods, just beyond the reach of the window lights. Then an alarm snort, like someone sneezing. Someone really big.

"Did you hear that, honey?" I asked when I came back. "Hear what?" she replied, covering her belly protectively. She didn't know it yet, but she was pregnant with our first baby. "Something out there. Lurking." "Lurking," she echoed.

The next morning the hostas were gone. Bitten off at the root. "What would do such a thing?" K asked. "I know!" I was frustrated and confused. "Every single one!" What defense was there? What would happen next?

We didn't have long to wait. The azaleas were stripped bare, as if a windstorm had furiously plucked each leaf. This time, though, they left evidence of their guilt. Hoofprints in the soft garden soil, like two fingers pressed down. Oh, God, I thought to myself. The grapes!

"Don't just stand there," K told me that evening. "Go pee in the vineyard!" I did.

The grapevines never really had a chance. Half of them were nibbled down to brown cane. I tried sprinkling hair I gathered from a bemused barber. I tried Irish spring soap, hanging in little bags made from pantyhose. I tried tin plates hung on fishing line. I peed like I'd never heard of indoor plumbing. But if this story has a muse, his name was Noah Vale. The deer left the remaining vines until the following summer, then chowed them all down.

I theorize that over the years the deer have come to see me as a good neighbor. Let's go over Garry's house. He's just been to Southern States again, and I think he has tomato plants!! I've tried putting in plants that deer supposedly don't like. I think what happens is that even if deer taste something and don't like it, they call over their mates to try it, as a joke. "Hey, Muriel, see if this tastes awful to you! It does? Ha! Me, too." So this summer, I'm just sitting in the yard, looking out in the woods while a flash of red-brown moves past and a tail flickers white like lightning. Didn't cost me a thing, and took my breath away.

Garry - chief@blotterrag.com

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CAUTION

A kind word, a gentle nudge, a playful slap on the wrist, the sweet swirly sound of a horsewhip singing through the air, the immediately recognizable snick of a jack-knife. All good fun, eh. Just good fun.

"Ticky Toes"

by Jim Solomone

I've been here for five months and no one knows I'm not crazy - not yet. But, I'm pretty sure the doctor with the long legs has suspicions. Sometimes she catches me looking at them - everyone else just looks at the floor or their hands. But I can't help myself, they're beautiful and she knows it. It's almost like she sits across from me on purpose. Every time; fifteen feet across from me. It could be that she likes me, but I'm sure I'm just a distraction for her. Maybe she's tired of listening to these people mewl about their fears. Or, their feelings. Good Lord, they can go on about their feelings. I don't really have any, or at least any interesting ones, so I make things up. But, these people with the clipboards aren't stupid, they'll figure you out if you're not careful. At night, I write things down to be sure that something I share today, calibrates with something I share tomorrow. No more than a thousand words, though. Anything less invites a lot of questions. It's not too hard if you work at it a little bit. I read them to my roommate, Martin, and

ask him what he thinks about it. He doesn't talk much, but I can sense when he thinks one isn't right because he makes a face like he smells pickled eggs.

Today, when she asked what was on my mind, I fidgeted in my seat a little for effect, but truth be told, I wasn't entirely happy with what I had prepared, so I thought I'd freestyle.

"A lot of things."

"Like what?"

"Well, you know things like spatiality."

"What about spatiality?"

"Okay, so like the difference between indoors and outdoors."

"Interesting."

"I thought so."

"What do you think about the differences?"

"Well, I don't think there is a difference. I mean everything is outdoors."

I should have stuck with the script.

"It's just that we've just enclosed outdoor space for convenience. But, I think we've also sheltered ourselves from reality -

we've created artificial dimensions that we slip in and out of like some kind of dream. I don't think our natural brains can handle the gear shifting and I think that's what is causing all this confusion for some of us. It's just not natural. Ask Ruth, she seems to stare through the walls, I bet she agrees with me."

"So, does this idea trouble you in anyway?"

"Well, yeah!"

"How so?"

"First of all, it's troubling because I don't think too many people get it. I think homeless people get it. I think our natural instincts encourage us to get it."

"How do you mean?"

"Like sleeping beneath the stars."

"Do you think everyone enjoys that?"

"Not everyone. I think the ones that don't are too addicted to the artificial dimension to let themselves experience reality. It's like smoking."

"Are you addicted?"

"Yeah."

"How does that make you feel?"

"Well, kind of . . . It makes me feel . . . It's hard to describe, but - -"

"I believe the word you are looking for is, conflicted."



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"I suppose. I was thinking weak."

After lunch, she invited me to her office for a one-on-one. Adorned with degrees of education on the wall, books, two stuffed chairs, and a good lamp, the room was nice enough. Maybe ten by ten and a half. In the corner were two pair of running shoes smartly set side-by-side. Big feet. Why hadn't I noticed her feet? I really wanted to see her calves. Runners have good calves.

Stupid desk – probably a hundred pounds, easy.

"Were you angry when the court sent you here three months ago?"

Three, only three?

"No."

"Were you relieved you didn't have to go to prison?"

"I don't know."

"Do you think justice is being served?"

"I don't know."

"Why is that?"

That's a good one – careful.

"I don't remember doing anything wrong."

"No?"

"No."

"You beat a man up so badly that you broke his orbital socket. He had to have multiple

surgeries."

"Haven't we been over this before?"

"Have we?"

I don't like where this is going.

"Yes, we have."

"I think I'd like to hear it again."

"He started it."

"How did he do that?"

"I was having a quiet dinner alone. They kept knocking on my door."

"The evangelists?"

"Yes."

"Go on."

"They saw me through the window - they saw I was eating, but they kept knocking. I opened the door and they asked if they could come in. I told them that 'in' wasn't real."

Good follow through.

"So you became upset because they interrupted your dinner?"

"Not entirely. Although, I had traveled across town through rush hour to the fish market and had to haggle a decent price with an old Vietnamese woman with three teeth—"

"So, you were having a stressful day?"

"No more than usual."

"Well, tell me what set

you off."

"Right. I hate the way those people talk like they just had pancakes with Jesus."

"Is that cause to disfigure them?"

Good one.

"I didn't mean to do that. It's just that . . ."

"Go on."

"It's just that I find the whole premise of their belief system to be ridiculous. And the expectation is that we are supposed to politely let them blather on about their lord and savior with those sickening smiles on their faces."

"Are you an atheist?"

"No."

"No?"

"Think about it. Saying that you're certain a god doesn't exist is just as preposterous as saying you're certain that one does."

"I see."

"Do you? I mean, do you really?"

Poorly played.

"I see, means that I understand what you're saying, nothing more. Tell me how you came to blows with them."

"I'm not entirely sure, but they were yammering on about my salvation and I think I said something like my salvation will come when the world is free



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of religions, or something like that. Then, they asked me why I would refuse the word of God.”

“What did you say to that?”

“I told them that their bible was poorly crafted plagiarism. There are a half-dozen other religions touting the same attributes as Jesus written thousands of years before. Christ. I told them they should start with Horus and work their way to Mithra. That is, if they had the strength to break the locks their church had on the sponges they call their minds.”

“What happened next?”

“Like I told the police, I don’t remember.”

“No?”

“No. I don’t think so.”

“You don’t think?”

“Well, I kind of remember losing control to some greater force.”

Nice lay up.

“Try to describe it to me.”

“It’s impossible to describe because, well, you’re out of control. Maybe it was God moving me to drub these imposters.”

After dinner, Martin and I walked the long way, through the court, to the rec center to watch his shows. He doesn’t much

know what’s going on in them, but he likes the faces; sometimes, just the colors. An orderly who secretly refers to us as retards, stared at me from across the room. Even the ladies I play gin with grew uncomfortable.

“Hold on for a few minutes folks.”

Twenty paces to the other side where the couches are.

“You got a problem with me?”

“Go sit down, tough guy.”

“You got something to say to me, just say it. Don’t stare at me.”

“You heard me. I said go back to your card game. I got your number, just remember that.” He knows.

“What’s that supposed to mean, janitor?”

“The doctor told me to keep an eye on you and that’s what I’m doing.”

I grabbed Martin and we took the short way back to our room through the shiny hallways, up the stairwell to our floor. I counted the stairs once for emergency conditions, but now forgot how many.

“Martin, I need your help.”

He sat on his bed with his legs crossed and picked his feet

like he had walked across broken glass.

“Seriously, pay attention. I got to come up with something good tonight.”

He started rocking and began picking with both hands.

“For Pete’s sake, will you stop that?”

He went to his dresser and removed a stack of comic books from the bottom drawer.

“Martin, we don’t have time for those. I know it’s hard for you, but can’t you at least try to focus for a minute?”

“I’m looking.”

“I can see you’re looking. I need to you listen, not look. I told Dr. Legs today that god might have moved me to beat the shit out of two of his lambs. I’m in deep.”

“I’m looking.”

“Thanks a lot. The next time that lard-ass Winchell tries to take your dessert, I’m going to let him.”

Goddamn.

“I’m thinking I should follow up with voices, everybody here hears voices. Maybe I should lead with French voices. Or like French whispers. Maybe it wasn’t god after all – maybe I have a Frenchman in my head. What do you think?”

“Stop.”

“You think voices are overused? Yeah, maybe you’re right, but she wouldn’t know what to make of a Frenchman in my head. Maybe like music or something. Music is would be good. Maybe jazz. I could hum anything at it would sound like jazz. Okay, so like when I’m trying to think, I hear this saxophone playing. And, sometimes I have to raise my voice - - no, I have to ask what a lot. I’ll start tomorrow. I’ll keep asking Rudy



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to repeat what he's saying. No, that's no good, he stutters and it might look like I'm picking on him. I'll ask that new guy from New York. I can barely understand what he's saying as it is.

"Here."

"Yeah, I hear music. Not a bad, huh?"

"Look here."

"Look at what, the comic book?"

"Here."

"Yes, thank you, but I don't have time for Spider-Man right now."

"No, look, here."

"What, the spiders?"

"Spiders."

"What about the spiders?"

"In your head."

"What, like crawling in my ears?"

"No, ticky toeing in your head."

"Ticky toeing?"

"Ticky toes, yes."



The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

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

mermaid@blotterrag.com

Woke last night just before dawn. I had kicked my wife in the legs and she woke up as well, grumbling at me for doing such a thing. I had only a corner of the bedclothes over me, covering my torso and upper legs, but my calves and feet were exposed. I had kicked my poor wife because I had dreamed that the metal bottom of my Spitfire had been shot away by the cannon of a Messerschmidt BF109. We were over the Channel and suddenly I could see the grim cold gray water beneath me, and felt my feet slip off the rudders and thought that next my shoulder harnesses would somehow accidentally open, as if I hadn't put them on correctly, or the ground crew had slipped up so that although they were fastened acround me, they weren't attached to the airplane. "Bail out!" shouted a voice over the radio. It could have been a message for anyone, but I assumed it was mine, so I pushed back the canopy and went to climb out of the plane, instead of just dropping out. The engine noise was gone - the same burst of fire that tore away the bottom of the cockpit must have damaged the engine. Climb, boy, climb, I told myself. That's when I kicked and heard the pillow muffled shout and woke up as my dream Spitfire drifted into the water.

GW - cyberspace

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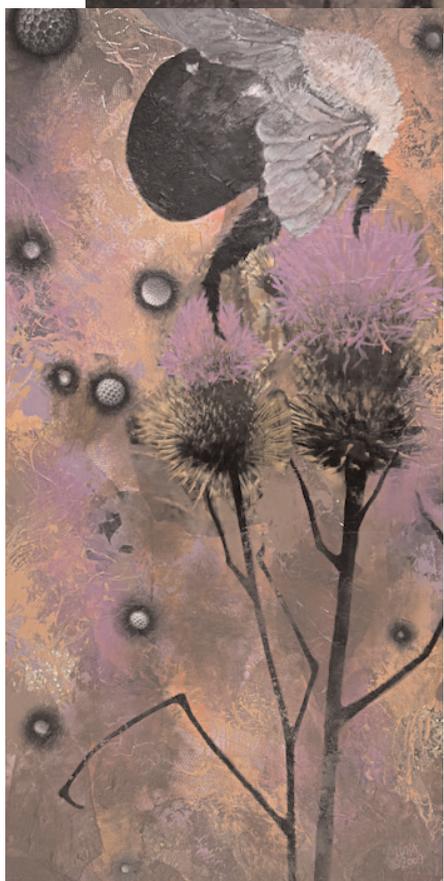
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Upper Left - "Loci" from the series "enraptured and ravenous."

Lower Left - "Energy is converted" from the series "enraptured and ravenous."

Upper Right - "The passion of the bees #1" from the series "one bee is no bee."

Far Right - "We give to you these things #1" from the series "one bee is no bee."

Lower Right - "Shapes in the shadows" from the series "last light."



Luna Lee Ray - Chapel Hill, NC

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"Maude"

by Karyn Joyner

What is it that causes two people to become close friends? In some cases it is mainly the passage of time. This was true of my friendship with Maude. We did share two interests - films and Oriental art. It was the latter that introduced us to each other. When my husband and I retired to a small town in the NC mountains, she was chair of an art study group there, and I quickly joined it.

From then on through our retirement years we saw each other frequently. We belonged to the same church, and the two couples would meet after church for lunch.

Maude was a tall, angular woman with a thin, high voice. I say this in the past tense because the Maude I knew is gone. (She is still alive however.) Her favorite topic of conversation was herself. You probably know someone like her. They seem to think that everything in their life is as important to others as it is to them. This irritated me, but I came to accept it in her.

She had grown up in the town we were living in, went to college, married, and raised a family in Washington, DC. In WWII she worked as a government code breaker, an occupation that surprised me, as she did not seem to have that kind of mind or interests. She and her husband retired to her home town.

After I'd known her a while, she and I and three other friends

formed a lunch group. We met monthly, and these lunches went on for years until age and its infirmities ended them. Maude's eyesight began to fail, and we bought her car when she could no longer drive. By then she was a widow and went to live in an apartment in a retirement community. She began to need a walker, and when we lunched together it was difficult to transport her, and she became irritated at trivial concerns, such as when a member of the group was late. However, she never complained about her infirmities, a rare blessing to her friends.

After several years in the apartment, she had to go into assisted living. By then she was legally blind and essentially bedridden. One time when I was visiting her, she said that with her misshapen toes she needed larger shoes, so I bought a pair I hoped she could wear. But she couldn't.

It became obvious that she need-

ed more attention than her friends could give her, and her children eventually took her to live near them in another retirement complex far away. She couldn't write, and when I called, she sounded confused. So I gave up. However she was on my mind in the ensuing months, and recently I tried to get news of her through the institution but got no answer. Then I heard through her son that she is in memory care in a wheelchair. She is probably near 90 now. I asked to be informed when she is gone. I'm sure my name means nothing to her at this stage, but hers lives on in me.

I am left with these thoughts - It is better to know than not to know. Isn't it? It is better to live than to die. Isn't it?



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"The Breeze"

By Alex Carl

the tot and the father sit on the bench
outside the supermarket
the upscale market with beans from Hawaii
and the matrons with silvered hair.
father buys the chips and the sushi
the rolls packed in the plastic box.

tot
with hair over eyes
holds a chip
crunches
and then again.

the rowed trees in the planters lean
toward the wind
and do the dust and dirt down the brick walk and the dead leaves of last winter.
unh

says the tot.
arm out
father scoops
turns tot's head to his chest
and shields tot's face with dark haired fingers.

father knows
this breeze cannot harm
not this breeze
at least.

tot does not know
and
father does not think.

he shields.
the breeze stills them
then passes
into sun.
father lets go.
tot eats a chip.

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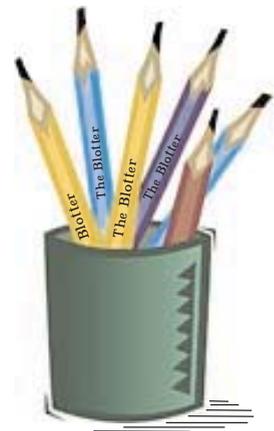
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“late”

by Ross Leese

a pale moon is staggering
in the sky

while an artificial
lamplight

bounces from four
walls

before entering my
eyes

like a
prophecy.

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with

GASOLINE STOVE



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It is with great pleasure and pride that we announce our winners:

First Prize: “Wakan” by E. G. Willy

Second Prize: “Fair, Balanced...And Dead” by Steve Swatt

Third Prize: “Going to Graceland” by Ruth Moose

Needless to say, we’re thrilled by the quality and quantity of the response to our call for entries. You people have been working very hard, and we’re proud of you.

Congratulations from the staff at **The Blotter Magazine**.

CONTRIBUTORS

Jim Solomone currently resides in Playa Negra, Costa Rica. His work has appeared, or is soon to appear, in ARTWASH, The Innisfree Poetry Journal, Dead Mule, and the Sierra Nevada Review. Jim has recently completed his first novel, *Gunning's Yaw*, and is currently in Costa Rica working on his second. In addition to his humorous, character-driven prose, he has written a collection of poetry titled, *All this Living*. ** **Luna Lee Ray** was born in Queens, N.Y, and received her BFA in print-making at the Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Or. in 1988. She has lived and shown her work in Oregon, Hawaii, Arizona, and New Mexico, before settling in Chapel Hill in 1998. In addition to painting and showing her work, Luna also offers classes in watercolor, acrylic, and mixed media painting through the ArtsCenter in Carrboro. Of her work, she says: "My work is informed and inspired by the natural world. I spend many hours outdoors, with my sketchbook and camera close by. Still, I am not interested in simply depicting nature, but rather using the forms and processes I find there in a metaphorical, suggestive way. Technically, I am interested in richness and layers and combining materials in evocative and exciting ways. I want to draw the viewer into a deep and complex world." Luna's work is on display at FRANK, the NC Triangle's newest gallery. Located at 109 E. Franklin Street, FRANK is an art collective in downtown Chapel Hill that opened to rave reviews on April 9th. Luna will be speaking about her bee series of paintings on Thursday, June 24th, at 6PM. This talk is free and open to the public. She also participates in the Orange County Studio Tour every November. ** **Karyn Joyner** graduated from UNC, Chapel Hill, taught English in Myrtle Beach, SC, raised a family there, retired to NC and currently lives in Burlington with her husband Charlie and dog Sunny. ** **Alex Carl** sent us but his poem, a kind word, and his name. That's how he rolls. ** **Ross Leese** of South Yorkshire, England, is an uncomfortable thirty. He tends to be far too miserable, far too often. He's hoping that when the revolution finally happens, somebody might tell him about it. Or at least point him in the right direction. He's thinking east. Or maybe west. ** **Phil Juliano** is our cartoonist, because if there was ever a time that called for cartoons, this is that time.

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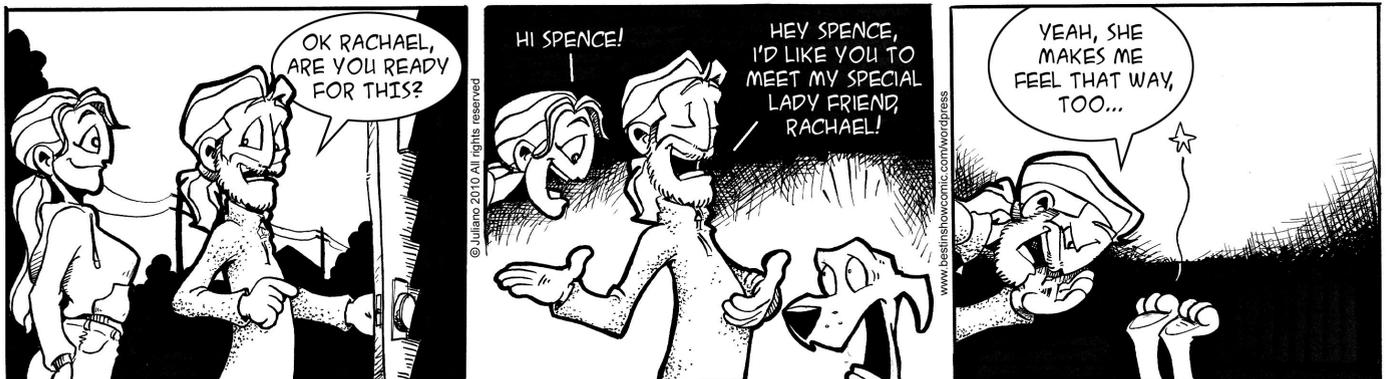
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Final Tid-Bits:
 Big thanks to the judges of our fiction contest, who took time out of busy schedules to help us out. Summer cometh, with all of the accoutrements of sun, heat and hanging by the pool. I had a lot of fun with my recitation at the Nazim Hikmet Poetry Festival in Cary. Great poetry, fellowship, great food! Check it out at www.nazimhikmetpoetryfestival.org My laptop is still receiving resuscitation, so I'm carrying my faithful Kindle instead, to keep up with my reading, although I owe restitution to my wife for my frivolous e-book purchases. As if there could be such a thing! Also, I'm dusting off the old Algebra texts, and seeking absolution. Algebra? For pity's sake. Haven't we found a cure for that yet? If you're a stay at home parent with a rising middle-schooler, you'll know what I'm talking about. Visit your local independent bookstore, they have air-conditioning and plenty of things to read - I don't want to hear any of you saying, "I'm bored."
 Got it? Good!

Best In Show

by Phil Juliano



Roller Derby

Doors 5:30 PM

Saturday, May 15

Carolina Bootleggers vs. Cape Fear All-Stars
Carolina All-Stars vs. Detroit All-Stars

Saturday, June 12

Carolina Bootleggers vs. Columbia Quadsquad
Carolina All-Stars vs. Dutchland Rollers

**Dorton Arena
NC Fairgrounds Raleigh**

Photo: Joshua Craig



Advance tickets, group discounts,
and more info available at:

CAROLINA ROLLERGIRLS.COM

\$4 OFF

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2 Ways to Save!

1. **Redeem Online** by entering **2010BLOT** in the promo code box at CarolinaRollergirls.com. \$1 OFF each adult or child ticket, up to four (4) tickets.
2. **Bring this Coupon** to the Box Office for \$4 OFF one (1) adult, or \$2 OFF one (1) child ticket on game day.

No substitutions or rain checks. Cannot be combined with other promotional offers. Limit one coupon per person. No cash value. No copies accepted. Expires 11/21/10.

31st annual

Festival for the Eno

2010

July 3rd, 4th and 5th

10 am - 6pm Saturday, Sunday & Monday
West Point on the Eno ~ Durham City Park
Parking at Durham County Stadium

Featuring: live entertainment on 4 stages,
paddling on the Eno River, backyard chickens,
Hands On Clay, food from around town and
around the world, a juried craft show, Sustainable
Home and Garden Expo, 95% Trash Free Festival,
critters, games, environmental education, biodiesel,
solar and renewable energy workshops.

Early Bird Tickets on sale May 15.
Visit www.enoriver.org for more info.

The Festival for the Eno is presented by the Eno River Association.
All earnings benefit water protection in the Eno River Basin.



Illustration by Kimberly Ridge