

**DURHAM ARTS COUNCIL
AND PARTICIPATING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS**

**CHAPTER IV
FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS
AND FINDINGS**

**CONDUCTED AS PART OF THE DURHAM CULTURAL
PARTICIPATION RESEARCH INITIATIVE**

JUNE 2002



ARTSMARKET

112 N. BLACK AVE. SUITE A
BOZEMAN, MT 59715
406-582-7466
www.artsmarket.com

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Focus groups are a powerful research approach, enabling us to hear perceptions and options from groups of people who are “focused” by what they share in common. The job of a focus group moderator is to ask neutral questions and follow-up probes, stimulating the discussion between the group members. In a successful group, people build on each other’s ideas, agree and disagree with each other and through their dialogue, provide great insight into how organizations or products are perceived, the potential motivators to build greater involvement or product use and the barriers that may stand in the way of winning a market segment as represented by the people around the table.

Focus groups are suggestive, not conclusive, in that they don’t represent the views of the population as a whole in the way a telephone survey would. But instead, they offer a depth of answers behind behavior, getting at the answer to, “Why do people like this behave in this way?”

The moderator outline is attached as an addendum at the end of this chapter. It was used as a general guideline for each discussion, though each group’s own dynamic means that questions are not always asked in the same order.

To be highly successful, groups are recruited carefully. For this study, we had six groups, each recruited by cluster and geography, so that members of each group shared a great deal in common. The intent was to focus on casual to moderate arts attendees, to learn how to deepen their knowledge and participation in the arts. All participants were recruited carefully to reflect the same basic level of knowledge. Each group then was recruited based on lifestyle/age group: parents, seniors, young adults. Each group was multicultural in composition.

The groups were as follows:

- Raleigh: Young Seniors/Empty Nesters (p. 6)
- Cary: Parents/Early Empty Nesters (p. 11)
- Durham: Parents (p. 16)
- Chapel Hill: Young Professionals (p. 21)
- Durham: Young Professionals (p. 32)
- Fearington: Seniors (p. 43)

Groups took place in April and May 2002. Comments were audio taped and transcribed, and the edited commentary follows.

HOW TO USE THE COMMENTARY

Each of the participant organizations has different marketing and audience development needs and issues to address. Some have to do with overcoming perceptions of place or destination – i.e., audiences that don't want to come to Durham or Raleigh – and others with image. Still others are overcoming basic market issues that have to do with the region's high mobility rates: newcomers simply don't know where to look. A good way to go through focus group comments is to read and highlight the key points that:

- ◆ Address your hypotheses as to barriers or issues to overcome through effective marketing and communications.
- ◆ Address opportunities for maximizing your audience development budget – i.e., better use of media.
- ◆ Address image issues and opportunities – i.e. brochures, materials.
- ◆ Address geographic issues – i.e., getting an audience to your venue.
- ◆ Address basic “lack of knowledge” issues – i.e., broadening your marketing reach.

From these points, it will be possible to develop responding marketing and audience development strategies that build upon your strategies being shaped in response to geodemographic findings.

REMINDERS

Focus group findings tend to sound overly negative. This is because human nature tends toward being critical when asked to comment on something: people rarely praise or give positive criticism, finding it easier to pick things apart. So put everything in context.

Don't try to address everything at once. There is an enormous amount of information contained on the next 40+ pages. Set priorities. Address these comments within the context of your audience development goals. If reaching a family audience is your top goal, focus on family respondent comments, and don't worry – for the time being – about the perceptions of young adults. Begin with the end in mind.

Remember that these are the perceptions of casual to moderate arts attendees. They don't have the depth of knowledge, understanding or loyalty of subscribers, repeat attendees or members, and so are naturally more vague in understanding what organizations do and how they communicate. This contributes to their critical comments. **The point in these focus groups is to understand where these casual attendees “come from” in their perceptions, attitudes, use of media and marketing, and overall cultural behavior so as to be able to more effectively attract casual attendees and transform them into repeat attendees.**

FOUR OVERARCHING FINDINGS

The focus group findings and implications are addressed in depth in the introduction to the overall report. There are four overarching outcomes of these discussions that are important for all participant organizations, and should form the basis of any audience development planning to attract the casual, inclined potential visitors. These are:

- ◆ As the region continues to grow, participant sense of geography gets smaller, and people tend to seek out more that is close to home. These casual attendees are largely oriented to what is closest to them. To win a regional audience will require more and more large-scale regional marketing and advertising. The flip side is an opportunity to focus marketing and advertising closer to home, and to deepen the impact of each organization within its own geographic area.

- ◆ Media use is increasingly fragmented, but the key source for arts and participation information across all age groups and most socio-economic groups is the Web. Currently, City Search is the only constantly mentioned tool for finding cultural and entertainment opportunities in the region, but this tool is constantly criticized for lack of content and as not being user friendly. There is enormous opportunity to consolidate information, across non-profit/for-profit lines, and create a solid and well-positioned Web site.

- ◆ Knowledge is thin, and images of most institutions aren't well formed. There is tremendous need for vastly more marketing through direct mail and advertising to win the attention of casual attendees who are inclined to participate. Most people in all focus groups had knowledge of only one or two of the participant organizations. Most had never seen the brochures before. Most didn't know about the events presented.

- ◆ The image that most marketing materials convey isn't effective and doesn't induce a desire to attend. Quality judgments are often made in response to brochures, and low-cost brochures telegraph "low cost" or amateur to these casual, inclined audiences. All organizations involved need to consider these comments as new season and event materials are created.

SYNTHESIZED, EDITED FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

RALEIGH: YOUNG SENIORS/EMPTY NESTERS

I'm Jeannie. I have two children in college. We enjoy sports, basketball and football – to watch. My husband and I belonged to the Symphony Pops series in the early 90s. We stopped going because they repeated stars over and over. We've been to some Broadway plays, about once a year, at Memorial Auditorium. We go to Raleigh Little Theater, but not that often. We don't go to anything that often.

I'm Anne. We came here in '97, from New York State. My sister-in-law and I go to a lot of plays. Late Night Catechism – boy, was that funny. We go to events at Duke University and NCSU – if only the parking was better there we'd go all the time. Evita. Memorial Auditorium is a good place. Michael Feinstein. The Rodin Show at the Museum. We like jazz music as long as it is on stage and not in clubs.

I'm Mary. Mostly, I go to ballgames my grandchildren are playing. I'm more into painting and pottery than performing arts.

I'm Roxy. I've been here 12 years, and we've gone to the Memorial, to Duke some, some of the colleges to watch student productions. It is more fun to watch the student productions at high school or college levels than the professionals.

Mike: I go to the art museum, the special shows. I go down to Art Space on First Fridays. I go to some plays. I moved from Washington, and I miss it. The quality is a problem. I go up to the Smithsonian. My beef is the quality: if there were only more professional performing arts rather than all community level work, I'd go more.

Ollie: I go over to that Maya Angelou festival in Winston Salem. I go to quite a lot of things. I wish I didn't always have to go other places to see the types of things I like.

Emelyn: I've been to several shows at the Art Museum, and Thompson Hall. I love to go in search of frescos in churches. I like going to historic houses like the Reynolds house, the American Art Collection. My problem is there aren't a lot of international things here. It would be a lot more interesting if there was more that was international in scope to go to.

Comments:

We have good smaller type things. I wish they would bring in more things from the outside, more like Rodin, like the Toulouse-Lautrec show. We lack that here to a certain extent. You see that all the time – people go when there is a big show.

I don't know, the arts here seem pretty good to me. There is something here for you if you look for it.

That's true, but publicity is very lacking. You don't hear about things unless you are a member. If you don't get the paper on Fridays and if it isn't Fiddler at Memorial, you won't know about it.

The Friday paper isn't that much help. You got those two lines of type. You still don't know what the play is about.

Thompson Theater has lots of good plays that the students do. But there is no advertising as to where it is, what it is, and unless you have joined for that year, forget it.

My problem is that I don't know what plays are for adults and what are for families.

My problem is they do the same plays over and over. Who wants to keep seeing the same shows?

Where do you go?

Well, access is pretty easy. You just go over to anything they do at Memorial.

We have been to Chapel Hill. We went to hear a student a cappella choir perform. We've not been to Durham for the arts, I don't believe.

Not knowing what is going on there keeps me from (Durham). I just don't have a pulse on it. And it would have to be a big thing to get me there.

Like that film festival thing they did that went on for two days. That got my attention.

Duke has plays that go on in the spring, but we never find out about it except by word of mouth.

And then there is so much going on in Greenville and Charlotte. What I want to know is, why can't we have shows like that here?

I wouldn't hesitate to go to Duke. I've never been all the way over to Chapel Hill.

The furthest I will go for plays is Sanford, and then it is with a group. Thirty minutes is it for me.

Durham organizations don't send us flyers, you know. If it isn't in the News Observer, you aren't going to find out about it.

(Show of hands), all get the News Observer.

Question: are there other places to go for arts/entertainment news? Weekly papers, maybe?

It would be a mistake to go looking there, like the Spectator or the Independent. That's all about the club scene.

I've used that Digital City Web site, but it's not what I would call a prime place to look. There isn't a dedicated site. It isn't that focused. It ends up taking more time than (looking at the) paper.

The problem is the work is all on our end as (attenders) to call and get on lists. For a while I was getting something from the Raleigh Symphony and the Oratorio group. I think they must have bought our name off a list. We've gotten calls from the Symphony.

Because information is fragmented, it's a problem. You get bits and pieces, with some reviews, and some news in detail. But you need information for both planning, and to help make a decision. And the way the paper covers it, you don't know until that week. First of the month calendars would be good.

I want to see more special events that focus on what is happening here in the region. And more (special) places. Like the Torpedo Factory. Or auctions. I love Art Space. I just wish there was more.

I want more that isn't ho-hum. The Symphony and the Memorial: after a while you don't want the same old, same old.

You are right. There are a lot of repeats. It is nice where we are able to go to see things that are new and novel.

Well, you can't expect that. We don't have the support for things here, like for a big institution. It would help if Raleigh had an image that was about the arts, or historical, or musical tradition. But it doesn't. Its image? Its image is sports. This region's image is sports, and the colleges, and the Research Triangle. We don't have an arts image.

And as a result, people's free time, it is all about following the college sports. We have great sports coverage.

The new sports arena in Raleigh, they try to bring in the arts. They brought in the Ice Capades.

I wish the Entertainment Center would be used more for entertainment. The problem is that it is too hot outside in Raleigh for outdoor concerts. Cary has really good outdoor concerts - the North Carolina Symphony goes there. But Cary has the budget for it.

There aren't many festivals in a 30 mile radius. City Market has its First Friday gallery thing, but there aren't enough galleries to make it worthwhile. It would be nice to have an artist gallery or two here in North Raleigh.

I want to see what the play is going to look like on the stage. Like that little photo of that boy for the Laramie Project play. That play is heavy duty, and that photo doesn't give you a clue what to expect. I'm too far along in my life: I don't go to plays I know nothing about any more. I just won't. I don't want to put myself through it

Any flyer that isn't (professional) is a turn off. Anything that isn't as good as the performance does a disservice. It sends the wrong message.

People here are so nice. The Box Offices. They are so wonderful to deal with. But I'll tell you what isn't: Ticketmaster. It is a pain. You have to talk to people who don't know where you want to sit, don't know about the Auditorium, don't know about the play. And then you have to pay all those surcharges. My advice is you go to the source.

I agree. Pay at the door. For me, that's never gotten in the way of going.

Well, I've been treated rudely at some box offices.

I don't go back if I'm treated rudely.

I'd like to come back to the fact that we need some traditional, annual activities to build excitement. We need all the arts to come together for a big festival. Lots of other cities have this: I don't know why we don't.

Well, there is that Eno Festival in Durham.

Yes, but that is mostly food and music. Not an arts festival.

Matthews, North Carolina - outside of Charlotte - now that's a good annual arts festival. We'll drive for that.

We have good crafts festivals. And the Sanford Pottery Festival. And the Cameron Antique Festival. These are all major events. You have to know they are coming though, to get in on it.

BUI (?) is appealing. I love the glamour, the décor. It is well done, with a variety of programs.

But there is no image or reputation.

We don't go over to Durham any more to the Duke plays. Twice we have taken vans over from our church. Both plays there were nudity on stage. They just walked around like that. It would have helped if there would have been something in the ads that said "R rated." We won't go to anything now if we don't know how it is rated.

We go in groups a lot.

Question: What do we need?

Better advertising.

More detail on what it (play, exhibit, concert) is.

More context.

More information two or three months in advance.

I'd like some collaborative ads, like one big ad with everything in Raleigh in it, everything in Durham.

More about all that is happening in the Triangle region.

We should be pushing Raleigh more. Push its identity as an arts community. We need a focal point.

We need more good quality. The top casts in the touring shows go to Charlotte, not here. Oh sure, we get the plays, but not the casts. Why do we have to keep taking the bus to Charlotte?

CARY: PARENTS/EARLY EMPTY-NESTERS

I've been in North Carolina since we moved here five years ago from Ohio, the Columbus area. I love the museums. I go to New York and take in things there once a year. I love the museums here and take my grandchildren. Durham – that one with the butterflies. And the dinosaurs. I go out to the arts about once a month. More if something special comes up like that pottery festival.

I've been here since '71. I came here to work and retired here. I have a season (ticket) with the Symphony, the Raleigh Little Theater, we go a couple of times a month. And I sing in the Concert Singers here in Cary. With the rehearsals, that's a lot. So it would take a lot to get us to move into doing other things beyond the Symphony and Theater. We go to Memorial Auditorium. I've maybe been over to Duke once or twice in twenty years. I never go to Chapel Hill. We went to that Life and Science Museum once.

We've been here four years. We came from New York. I joined the Cary newcomers club, and it has been wonderful. We go to plays and the symphony, and we invite groups to come and talk to us and give us programs, and so we are well educated on all that is available here. I just went to the Ballet and of course it was wonderful. We went to the Rodin at the Art Museum. I'm impressed with the quality around here. It is really very good.

I'm a native of Cary, maybe the only one. I moved away for ten years to Greenville, and am back. The traffic has become so bad, I won't go to plays and music here any more. I'll go up to go Washington, DC before I will drive to something here. I'll hop on the shuttle but won't fight the traffic. And the parking for the arts. And I love my arts. I am a musician and a woodworker. But things here have lost their accessibility.

I moved here nine years ago. I am originally from Boston. We thought originally this area was devoid of the arts, but it has been surprising: you just have to look around. There are museums, the Little Theater, the Symphony. We don't go to the smaller venues, though. I don't think we know enough about them to get us to go.

I've been here since '65. I've watched it grow. Raleigh Little Theater, the Memorial Auditorium. Friday nights. Page Walker Hotel jazz series, the Art Museum. Crowds are a factor. That's why I've decided that Cary offers a lot of good little things. Jazz. The Cary Town Band. You can walk to it, and throw in a donation if you feel like it. You get flyers in with your water bill, in advance.

We've been here 10 years. I'm from Portland, Maine. We haven't visited any museums in the area, though we go up to DC every year to see what is new at the Smithsonian. I love that, there is always something new to see there. And I always was a museum goer, back in Boston and all. But for some reason, I don't think of going to them here. Maybe the traffic and all. It is dreadful to have to get to places. And then, I do photography – I'm really into it. So that gives me the outlet I need, without having to go look at exhibits.

My wife takes art classes, too, so I know what you mean. She goes to the Cary Art League, and loves it. She's doing portrait classes now.

When I first lived here, I lived in Durham for two years, and I couldn't wait to move here. I went to the Bulls a lot when I lived over there. But now we point the car to Raleigh. Saturday mornings, we head that way.

The problem is that if you work outside Cary, the traffic is a pain five days a week. Going over to Durham: yes, you can say we live right next to it, but it is only 10 minutes to Raleigh Little Theater.

I don't know if it is a factor for any of the rest of you, but crime is an issue for me. Durham's crime rate is high. I won't go anywhere in Durham after dark. I won't walk to or from my car there, especially after dark.

I volunteer over at the shelter in Durham. I use my cell phone constantly when I go there. I have been jumped twice by teenage kids in downtown Durham. I will never go to anything at the Carolina Theater after dark.

Yes, I have a problem with that too, because some of my favorite artists play at the Carolina Theater.

That's what I like about going to Memorial Auditorium. When you park they have people out there stopping the traffic so you can walk across. It feels very safe.

The problem is that outside of Duke there is not a significant attraction in Durham for the arts. If there was something major, I'd fight traffic and all to go. The same is true of Chapel Hill's Memorial Hall.

We go to the forth of July festival over in Durham.

The arts groups here compete against intense pressure those of us who work have in the job market here. I work in the Research Park, and we have enormous pressure in my company, and I know other people who have the same thing, pressure to work longer and longer hours so we stay competitive. That's just the fact. It's not the high living days of the '90s. So even getting the mundane done, like doing the laundry, is hard. There isn't time to get it all done.

I keep thinking that the arts groups here would do a much better job of getting us if they would tug at our heartstrings a little more. Pull on our desire to get away from it all. Say, "You've put in enough time on the job this week. Give yourself a little break."

In the time I've been here, what occurs to me is that we've not had what I'd call a major attraction, a major icon built here like in many other cities. Something core to the city, something recognizable as the arts. You look at Raleigh, and you've got some sort of reflecting thing on Capitol Boulevard. But I don't think it will ever happen here. I don't think you'll see a major building or destination like that.

Yes, downtown Raleigh will never be anything. There is no reason to go there. There is finally something for the college kids to go to on Saturday nights, but compared to other cities of the same size, there is nothing. It is more fun to get on a train and go somewhere else.

The problem in getting us to go more to the arts is that the Triangle is not a city, it is a big region on a map. It is a great place to retire to. There is a lot going on.

I'd have to give up something, some activity that I enjoy it, to get myself over to Playmakers in Chapel Hill. I'd go for a great artist, go to see something special, but not to subscribe.

Durham? They don't have the venues to go to. If they have a symphony, it is a well kept secret here. Duke and the universities aren't much of a draw for us. You know, there usually is a folk season in smaller communities, but I haven't found one here.

Stewart is a great place, but a well kept secret.

Papers they read: 3 Wall Street Journal, 2 New York Times, 2 USA Today. All read the Raleigh and Cary papers, as well.

I use the Internet much more than the radio. (Others all agree.) I have the radio on in the car and in the morning, but I use the Internet to look for things to do.

If you look (on the Web) there is a lot more to do in a two hour radius than there is locally.

I don't agree. I think there is a lot to do here, just not well advertised.

I don't even look for the ads, because nothing - nothing - would get me to be a season ticket buyer. I'll go to a one time event as long as there is hype, and if a friend contacted me.

Don't say Durham, Say Chapel Hill-Durham. That makes it sound better.

(Display of brochures)

What I want to say is come on, where am I missing all this? I read the paper, I listen to the news. I listen to talk radio. Why am I missing all this? I mean, come on. Who knows all this is going on? What I am saying is, there is very little advertising that makes a splash so you know what is happening.

I don't see any of these materials day to day, so people aren't getting to me. I don't get any mailers. I don't see this stuff. Now you compare this to the advertising and flyers we all got for the new mall - well, you couldn't avoid it, you had to go.

I have to say I am generally not impressed with these marketing materials. They almost all seem like these organizations have limited budgets. Like they have no money. And I'd say if this is the best you can do...

I wouldn't know where the information on all these groups can be found. I wouldn't know where to start looking for it.

There are those local papers, like the Spectator. But they don't cover the arts: that's just for the club scene.

Raleigh Little Theater, little, cozy, you are right there, you don't need binoculars. It has loyalty, and they are good people. It gives you enjoyment in what is amateur. And it is still a good ticket value.

The Symphony almost priced itself out of my budget. They are almost at the point where it hits me.

Well, I hate to say this, but we all have budgets. Money is a big issue. (All agree.) We all have entertainment budgets. Sometimes I will go to a major event, and then you have to choose and not go to anything for a long time.

The Raleigh News Observer, it heads east, not west, in its coverage.

Getting tickets is hard, too, and knowing where to go. If it doesn't say Ticketmaster, you don't know where to buy tickets.

Advice:

Increase advertising. Be more eye catching.

Do more on "dot com" sites. A triangle dot com that lists everything.

Like this thing from the Durham Arts Council: I would never have picked it up. Because I will never think of going there. If they said "Triangle" rather than Durham...

Well, I disagree. The Cities here don't cooperate and here we expect the arts groups to cooperate. I don't sense it will happen.

Many events here are overpriced.

The cost of the Symphony is outrageous. The artists series is too much to spend. I went to the singer because I can't get that anywhere else.

I go see what I want to see. I don't buy a series. I would rather feed the homeless than contribute to those groups that way. If Cary had an art venue or a theater, I'd contribute. But hard to give to another city.

There is a lack of community here. Where we were from, there was community. I went to theater there. This is very transient. There aren't a lot of lasting relationships.

This is just a big suburb. There is no sense of community and pride like you'd have in a more stable area. There is no family here. You kind of don't bond with it.

That sense of being interested in investing (in the community) is missing

They need:

Better advertising

Come to me. Bring more to Cary or set up satellites.

Distribution of mailing lists isn't broad enough. Bring the information to me.

They aren't catching my eye. The brochures aren't good enough to catch my eye.

Get them to know my reality, and have them say to me "When was the last time you left work behind and enjoyed your family time at X?"

They need smarter advertisers. Don't just say "we do this" say why I should come.

Make a better case.

Right now, they are just a blur.

DURHAM: PARENTS

I'm a full-time mom.

I have a son home from college who is involved in the arts and always has been.

I'm a single parent of two daughters, very involved in the arts. One is in a rehearsal for her high school play tonight.

I just finished my Master's. I have an 11 year old son.

My niece plays piano, saxophone. We are very involved in the programs at St. Joseph, Duke and everywhere here in Durham.

My grandchildren (extended family) all play musical instruments. I am constantly taking them for lessons. We come here for classes. They are very involved in the arts.

I was a music major in college and tried to be a rock star for a while. We go see a couple of plays a year, and go to lots of music.

Comments:

There is a lot available depending on what interests you. There is lots of classical music. A lot of different things.

I used to live in San Francisco, and I find the arts are better here in that they aren't so overwhelming. In San Francisco you couldn't even pick out what to do. And there was sort of an elitism there where those who went were the ones who know.

Here getting involved in doing is as important as being in the audience.

Choral singing. Getting out and doing. It is such a wonderful thing about Durham. So, the caliber isn't quite as high, it doesn't matter as long as people get to participate.

Walnut Creek is wonderful. We used to have to travel two hours for shows like that. The Smith Center at UNC used to have more concerts until they decided to censor it. The Museum of Art is good for kids for outdoor concerts

The Nutcracker in Raleigh is \$60 a ticket but here it is \$13. I'd rather take my whole family to The Nutcracker here than sit home and not be able to go to Raleigh.

Walnut Creek becomes affordable when the United Way pays for kids to come in. Then your family can afford to go.

The Life and Science Museum, outside, is so beautiful. I love that Mondays are free for Durham Resident Days

And the Butterfly house there is great for our kids. It involves them in volunteering and getting into the museum.

It is expensive getting into the arts. And they are always raising money. That's why there is Center Fest to raise money.

But you don't see solicitations. The Arts Council or any other organizations.

We don't have billboards on the arts. Kids have to see them and see lots of ads and then it is "mom, can we do this?"

If you want to do artistic things, let's face it, you suck it in and pay.

I always look for free things. Carolina Parent is good for that. The Preview in the Harold Sun is okay. But you have to take the time to read all that fine print.

Advertising has to be so much more visible.

Parents work five days a week and have two days to get things back together. To do the grocery shopping and the laundry. How do you give your kids experience and get them involved in something exciting in that timeframe.

Well, you need more information in advance, and to remind you.

Chapel Hill has those kiosks on main street.

More flashy advertising that would catch the eye of kids would help. My kids have got to see the advertising and want me to take them, otherwise it will never get ahead of doing what needs to be done on Saturdays.

I wonder why groups don't ever advertise on PBS Kids or other cable.

Or why they don't make a deal with McDonalds or Burger King. Stuff schedules in the bags with the food.

I wonder about all the groups that used to be here that we could afford to go to. Lots of theater companies in Durham, it seems to me, have gone belly up, bankrupt. There is only the Young People's Performing Company left that is for children. But there, we can't afford the dues.

Seems to me that Raleigh has a lot going on. They have that new IMAX, the museums.

Our parenting group goes over there a lot.

Durham has smaller groups, but a lot.

Raleigh is more expensive. You can't take your whole family to an event in Raleigh and still pay the rent. Take you family here to something and it is \$50. Go to something there and it is \$200.

The quality is vastly different. Yes, it is better in Raleigh, but if access is the point, so what.

Ticketmaster is what did things in. You can't afford all the surcharges and now the prices are prohibitive.

Here in town, at the Carolina, we can go up o the ticket thing and buy tickets in your jeans at the last minute. In Raleigh, at Memorial Hall, it has to be a "big thing." The Carolina Theater is much more easy. Black tie versus jeans.

They have great artists at the Carolina Theater, too. And it is very affordable.

In this area where you have a lot of people who don't have a lot of experiences in the arts, access is much more important than quality. I'll go to NASCAR instead of the arts if it is going to cost so much.

Yes, I'd rather go to Nutcracker here than no Nutcracker at all.

They still have a ways to go with access. Look at all these brochures. Where are they serving our broad community. Where are the Spanish Language translations? We have a growing Hispanic population. Who is paying attention to them?

I think a lot that is out there isn't relevant. I don't want to take people to the Museum of Art. It isn't relevant. It is pretty offensive. Pretty snotty stuff. Pretty high end. If you have a degree in art it is okay.

We need the African art back.

I moved here from New York City. So much there was free. We'd see the concerts in Central Park. Illuminate your mind. There are quite a few free events here, concerts outside that are marvelous places for kids to dance and move.

Centerfest is not expensive.

I don't know how much schools do things here to boost participation: my daughter is too young yet for me to know. But do they hand out brochures or send flyers home with the kids?

Yes, hand them out at the assemblies. Those places are packed.

"Explore" is very family oriented, and you can go there without emptying your wallet.

Money, I am sorry, is a big part of it. When the economy was good, all these groups got too expensive. Did it turn into a monopoly on price? Or don't we have a choice?

The Library has story hours that are free. But have you noticed that all the toddler story hours at all the libraries are the same day at the same time. You can only go to one!

Where they look for information:

- 1) Internet
- 2) Independent
- 3) Spectator
- 4) Carolina Parent
- 5) Durham newspaper (name)
- 6) USA Today
- 7) New York Times via Internet
- 8) Radio
- 9) News 14

Malls are important places to find information. The new mall has kiosks all over.

The Boys Club is an important place because the kids are there.

For me, the Independent is the most reliable.

I use City Search on the Web, but I get frustrated, because it doesn't contain enough arts and entertainment and you have to know what you are looking for. Arts information is also posted too late, especially for parents.

You are right. It is hard. They have a page for the Triangle, and you have search for the name of the play or the organization. Carolina Theater has a web site once you find it.

Durham is really a neighborhood city. Lots of people go to the block parties rather than the arts, as it gets you into the idea of neighborhood.

Receiving advertising:

I get only a little of it in the mail. The Duke piece, I got.

Seems a lot of groups have been inserting into the paper along with the ads for Burger King, and I clean the junk out of the paper and put it right in the trash.

If they inform you separately in the mail it is much better than when it is an inset.

Advice to groups:

Improve graphics.

Advertise more.

Do more on the Internet and post the URL everywhere.

Get onto the arts page on the Web. Do a full listing for every week. Include prices, times, donations, seating, access, age of kids that are appropriate. Price. Age appropriateness. Tell us. Be family oriented in the ads.

Advertise "free" more.

CHAPEL HILL: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

My name is Dana, and I'm from New York. I've been here for about eight years, about half the time in Raleigh and half the time in Chapel Hill. In my free time, when I have any, I like going to concerts and music festivals. I was just thinking about a festival I'm going to in a couple weeks, Smile Fest in Union Grove.

My name is Arlene, I've been in the area for six years. I go to a lot of sporting events. I figure skated for 12 years, and I have two dogs and so we go hiking and we play a lot. I shoot a lot of pool. I like going to museums and zoos and things like that. I take day trips a lot, out of state and locally - a little of both, depending on how much time I have and how much money I have. I've gone to the shore numerous times around here, and I've been to the mountains a couple times. I go to D.C. and Baltimore and Atlanta, stuff like that.

I am Paul, and I've been here for eight months now. I'm from San Francisco. My wife and I have been going to a lot of museums. We were really impressed with the First Fridays in Raleigh, and we've gone there maybe four or five times. It's kind of like an art thing in a certain downtown area in Raleigh, where all these galleries are open late and have music and we enjoy that. We like to go to museums, and we also do a lot of shopping. That's another not quite cultural thing. I would like to see more theatre. When I was in the Bay area, I saw a lot more theatre than I see here now. There is not so much theatre here that I have been aware of, not of a big caliber. We like to go out to some of the night clubs and see the concerts, too. Local 506 and Cat's Cradle.

My name's Travis, and I've been in the area for eight years. For fun when I get free time, and free time is almost nonexistent now, I love to watch movies, whether they be rented, or I'll even go to see the bad ones at the theatre. I'm just a big movie fan. I also like sports. I used to go out and see them live more than I do now. Now it's more along the lines of television. I like walking and reading fiction and mythology, and that's about it.

I'm Julie, and I've been here for five years. I like to go to places like the museum in Raleigh and some other things when I have time, but I hate to go by myself and most of my friends usually don't feel like it, so I don't go as much as I'd like.

My name is Dave, and I've been in Chapel Hill and Carrboro for about 11 years now. In my free time, I tend to watch a fair number of sports, these days mostly on TV. I read, go to concerts, go to the Cradle a lot and a few other venues as shows I'm interested in come around. I haven't been to too much theatre.

Comments:

I've heard of the art museum in Raleigh.

I know the Carrboro Arts Center.

I've heard of Playmakers.

And, the Durham Arts Council, obviously.

Cat's Cradle is really big. There's pretty much always something going on there.

I just went for the first time to a show at Gough (?) rehearsal studios a few weeks back, and that was really good. That's new, too.

We have a lot of bands in Raleigh on Fridays and Saturdays.

In Cary they have an amphitheatre with a lot of classical music and things like that so people come out and bring picnic blankets and things and listen to the orchestra.

I know that's where Cary had fireworks, or was supposed to have fireworks, on the Fourth of July, sort of a town thing. There was one show I heard about there that I was sort of interested in, and I can't remember what it was.

Art and culture is...

I would say, and this may be going out on a limb, anything experimental or new.

I would think it would either be something in the visual arts or something in the performance art, I kind of separate them. A visual thing would either be a school of artists or a certain type of art show.

Something that broadens the mind to places where you normally don't go. Something that gives you stimulus, that would make you think things and explore things that you don't normally do.

I would say I look for entertainment mainly.

Author appearances where they may not be reading, but talking to people and things.

I always think of something that would be somehow enriching, something that we could be able to take something away from it. I could always go to a movie or stay home and watch television, but if I'm going to go out, I want to be able to bring something away.

I've taken a couple Durham Arts Council classes, and they were interesting. It's hard for me because it is so far away, and I was actually taking two classes at once, and it got to be a real pain to have to drive 30 minutes there and 30 minutes back two nights a week. It would be so much better if there was more of that sort in this area. I know the Carrboro Arts Center has some classes but, I wanted to take a ballet class, and I don't think they had one. I wanted to take an interior design class, and they didn't have one so I really had no choice, but it honestly took its toll on me, and I finally just had to quit because I didn't have time to keep driving out to Durham all the time.

The same thing happened to me. I was taking a pottery class at the arts center and that was a really great class, but there's a lot more in Durham I found. There's Claymakers, there's lots of different art classes in Durham, and I was also taking an African dance class in Durham, and there's nothing like that around here.

Durham...

It takes a half hour, it takes 20 minutes to one-half hour.

There is no direct route. You've got to go 15, 501 (?) and the traffic and the light is just unbearable at certain times during the day.

It's a lot longer time-wise than it is distance-wise. It doesn't seem like that, but the traffic...

I actually even thought about moving from Carrboro closer to Durham and Raleigh, but it just wasn't affordable and I couldn't find a place. I didn't move, but it got to the point where I wanted to move.

It has to be something that interests me personally to drive a lot. I have a lot of friends and family in Raleigh, so I frequently drive 45 minutes to get there and back, and that doesn't really bother me. I like things that entertain me, which is different for everyone else. I got a chance to see the Harlem Ballet, and I would have honestly probably driven six or seven hours to see them because it was amazing, and they did so much that's not typical ballet. I've gotten to see some other different things at UNC's campus that I would drive awhile for.

Information sources...

Actually through campus. My roommate was a big dancer, so when she heard Harlem Ballet was coming she said we had to go, so we went. I'd hear stuff through classes. Sometimes it would be a requirement that you had to go to so many of these types of events throughout the year, but generally everything I chose to go to, I was so glad that I was forced to find out about it, because otherwise I usually didn't find out about those sorts of things.

I usually go to Bingham on Chapel's campus. There is tons and tons of stuff on poster boards there.

A lot of the events find you. I barely actually look. Usually I just see a flier somewhere or something.

Independent and Spectators.

I'll look at some of those magazines also.

There's also the Best Bet section, I think that's what it's called, in the Friday paper in the News & Observer that has a lot of those things, and the Web site Triangle CitySearch.com usually has a lot of things.

I think it may have to do with changes in my work schedule and so forth, but over the last year and a half I've sort of stopped reading the Independent and Spectator. I still get them and still recycle them, but the stage in between where I read them just doesn't happen.

I never find anything I want to do in there. They have tons of stuff, and I keep going and going and for some reason I can never find anything that I really want to do, and when I do find that one or two that I do, I can't find anyone to go with me.

What's Up in the News & Observer.

But with CitySearch, those things are in Durham and Raleigh mostly, and that's again why you have to drive, because when I find out about something, it's usually from that area.

I subscribe to an e-mail list server called Weekender, and every Thursday it comes out and, I look at that online.

I get the Cat's Cradle schedule in the mail, so I see what concerts are coming.

Get mail from arts and cultural organizations?

I don't.

I do.

I get mail from the arts center.

I guess some of the stuff. Some bands once I've seen them a couple times I get on the list, and I start getting postcards when they're going to be coming to the area.

It's word of mouth.

I get mail from Flicker, and we'll go see that every month. That's experimental film that they put on at Cat's Cradle once a month. We'll go see that, but I wouldn't know unless they send me the flyer.

I'd look forward to it.

I'd probably sign up to get it, and then when it came to my house, I'd just automatically throw it away, because I get so much mail that I have to go through, and I have so little time. I work until 7 or 8, and I come home and I eat and take the dogs out. By that time, I don't want to go through all the mail.

I'm the exact opposite. I get no mail other than bills, so every time I go to my mailbox, I scrutinize every little bit of it, even the junk mail – I will just read like it's required reading. So if I were to get stuff like this one, for example, it would really impress me. If I were to get stuff like that, I would definitely look at.

For me, for it to work, it has to be far enough in advance. If I get something that says it's this weekend or two weekends away, I generally can't go, but if I get something that has like a month or a month and a half ahead, I can stick it onto my refrigerator and then I can plan my life around that, rather than actually getting it and saying it's two days from now, I can't go.

I have the same problem as you do. A lot of my friends won't go with me, and I don't like to go alone. I'll go to a museum by myself, or I'll go to the zoo by myself, and I've done both of those, but that's really about it. I don't like to go to concerts by myself, I don't like to go to festivals by myself, and a lot of my friends don't want to do the same thing.

It depends on what it was and how much I wanted to see it. Like the Empire of the Sultans I would have kept that because interested in it and there was some others that I probably wouldn't have been interested in and I probably would have thrown those away, but a lot of things like there was something that I would've automatically thrown away, because it was really wordy right away, and I just don't have time for that. I don't have time to keep going through all this junk mail, and that's what I would have classified it as.

The Web is almost only it for me because I'm at work all day, and I have the high speed internet connection. If I have a minute I will see what's going on this weekend, and maybe start thinking about it.

Triangle CitySearch.com is one of the best resources around here. You can look at things like Yahoo for movies or something like that, but generally Citysearch is one of the better Web sites that I'm aware of.

If I look on the Internet, I'm usually looking for something specific. If there's a band that I'd really like to see, I go on the Internet and look at their site to see if they're coming around the area.

I'm more likely to find things that way. I'm more apt to look at say band schedules than venue schedules.

Citysearch is really good because they rank things for you, too, like best dance performance in area, and then you can go and it will give you three or four of them, where they're coming in Raleigh.

I wanted to do some sort of community theatre, and I put in community theatre, Chapel Hill. I wanted to participate, but I started finding stuff that I was interesting in maybe attending, but they still didn't have a lot of. I enjoy going to musicals because I'm from the Northeast and I used to go to Broadway all the time, and I miss that, and there still really isn't a lot of that in this area either. I was looking through some of these, and Rent is coming and there's some other things that have been up in the Raleigh area.

Radio...

I listen to radio, and a lot of times they'll have commercials for those sorts of things, but at the same time you tend to block out radio commercials. You're just thinking, will they play music sometime soon? I know my parents lived in the Charlotte area and used to get something from a large theatre there that did a lot of the Broadway shows, and that was a big help because that would come months in advance and you could go ahead and plan and have tickets. That would be a real big asset to me to have that because a lot of times I don't hear about something until a week or two before, and tickets are really expensive, and if it's not something you've planned to go, so you don't want to spend \$50 on something you haven't budgeted for that.

What kinds of things are amazing?

Just certain performers that you'd like to see. Things that you've already known about and you're interested in, or certain types of performances. I'm really interested in African performances, drumming and dancing, so if I hear of any of that in the area, I'll just mark it down. I'm on a list serve where I get all kinds of local performances of world music, and they give me information. Some of the things that are on there are just that weekend, and sometimes it's planned like a month in advance.

The only things that I'll buy tickets to in advance are concerts because you want to get good seats. If I knew that they were more like Broadway shows, I'd probably do that as well or sporting events when I want to see a certain team come to town.

I used to go see a lot of professional wrestling when they'd come to North Carolina, that or stuff like a comedy. I went to see Kevin Pollock when he was in Raleigh, I guess it was over a year ago now, but stuff like that that just jumps out at me.

I have a mental ever-expanding list of bands that if they're in the area, I'll go see them.

Quality...

Generally, the plays and things are pretty good. I like community theatre, I used to do a lot of it, but here you have to have head shots and that sort of thing, so I guess it is more of a professional caliber than my little hometown of Salisbury, so it's better than New York, it's not San Francisco, it's not D.C., but for this state I think it's a pretty good caliber.

For me, Durham hasn't been very good artwise. There's just not a concentration. I like to be able to go to several galleries in an evening if I'm going to go out, and there's not like a little section or area. That's why I'll go to Raleigh over Durham for art.

I think it varies a little from area to area. In the concerts, you get some really great shows here. Pretty much everybody except the bands that just don't ever come into the southeastern U.S. Probably visual art I think is weaker because there's not as much in the way of large museums.

I have to agree with you there. The music is very strong here – Iggy Pop, David Byrne – I mean, big bands. I like the North Carolina Museum of Art, which everyone told me I'd hate, but I really enjoyed myself.

Motivation and word of mouth...

The big thing is recommendations from people who you already know have similar interests. There are a couple people that I frequently see at various concerts through the year, and that's mostly when I see them, but people on the e-mail lists who like some of the same bands, and things tend to generalize pretty well from that.

One thing that when we were talking about museums, we were only talking about the art museum. Really there's nothing else. I went to the science one in Durham, which is for children. I was extremely disappointed, except the butterfly place was cool only because it was it's own little ecosystem, and I thought that was neat, but the entire museum other than that I was so utterly disappointed.

I think there's a lot on campus around here. There are so many good universities, there's a lot to see. Most of the cultural events I've gone to have been through either Duke or UNC, Chapel Hill.

It's not a museum, but the first time I went to the planetarium I was amazed.

Although at the same time I've generally felt like once you've made one visit to the stuff you don't need to go for a long time unless there's a special exhibit you need to see.

Right. I don't think there's a lot of choices.

In Durham, there're one or two galleries and that's about it.

List serve e-mails?

I'd definitely welcome it.

It depends on if it's stuff that I'm interested in, if you could let me know what dance events or what certain arts events are because there are certain musical things that I'm not going to care about, but if you could specify that these are my interests, that would be better.

I don't like getting mail, e-mail or anything. I'd much rather there be a place where I could go to access the information on my own because I get overloaded with all this stuff, and I'd like it available but I wouldn't want to be bombarded by it.

I agree. I'm just the way she is with her mail, with my junk mail in the e-mail. I get so much spam and junk mail that often I just don't even bother with it, unlike my written mail.

I would actually like to get it as e-mail as long as it was mostly a fairly terse description of things that says, "this band is playing here at this time," without getting any further descriptions. I can recognize it and act on it, or if I don't recognize it I can look it up.

Maybe a quick description like, This is a bluegrass band, or, This is a play about a boy, a sentence or two.

Or if it was in an e-mail just an event name, date, time and a single link.

I don't want an advertisement from them, I want to know what's happening rather than getting, "This is the greatest thing. New York Time's says this..."

Plus I would want something that would be thorough enough to have a whole bunch of things listed, but brief enough on each thing so that you could kind of scan it and see what you recognize.

I'm on this list for world music, and that's the only thing like that that I'm on, and I really like that because it takes from all these places around the area that have performers, and it just takes the stuff that you're interested in and sends it to you. It's much better than me getting something from the art museum or something saying, "These are the 500 events that we'll be having this month." Instead I get one e-mail every week or something. They have a long description, too of what the band is all about. They know what I like, so that's what I like about it, like specifically this is what I would want to see, and it's stuff that I wouldn't know where to find because it's at all different kinds of places.

I would rather get a concerts in the Triangle mailing, all scheduled upcoming concerts in the Triangle than a Cat's Cradle mailing and a Walnut Creek mailing and a mailing for every single thing.

A single calendar mailing would be good.

That would be very good.

Customer services...

A year and a half ago I used the Internet to buy a ticket to a concert at Duke, and I picked up the ticket at the will call window, and my e-mail showed a \$4 shipping charge for the tickets. Now I'm not sure where they shipped it, but...

If you buy tickets through Ticketmaster, you're getting ripped off. You spend so much money in service charges. \$6 surcharge for each ticket.

A lot of times you can't buy them anywhere else other than Ticketmaster. They don't give you the opportunity.

The Cat's Cradle and places like that really do a wonderful job of making tickets available without letting you be held up and have Ticketmaster take the contents of your wallet.

I generally go to performances that are smaller and not as expensive and the kind of events where you can usually just go and buy a ticket there, or buy it locally fairly cheaply.

I've found in general, and this is probably from working in sports for 13 years, you put people in charge of tickets and they are power hungry. They just think that they've got you under a

barrel and they are just going, "Do you want this ticket or not, because someone else will buy it." People are not very helpful when you are buying tickets.

If you think that's bad, you should see the people in charge of parking.

Price.

I'm a big Janet Jackson fan, and I've never paid lots for concert tickets. I'm one of those people who always sits on the lawn, I think it's a better experience, but then she came around I shelled out \$75 for me and a friend apiece. By the time they shipped them and surcharged me I probably spent \$175 on two concert tickets, but for me, because she's such a great performer, that was big. I used to be a big Dave Matthews fan, but now I'm just sort of like, "Oh, maybe if tickets were \$10 I would go," but I think it depends on the boisterousness of the event.

I'd say \$20 to \$25 is my pretty much max range unless it is something I love. I paid \$50 some for WWF tickets.

I'd never pay more than \$55.

I disagree with that. I mean, you're getting somebody's live performance right there. I think that's worth a lot more to me than a concert.

What do you think you should pay for a play like Rent?

I'd probably pay probably \$40 to \$50.

I've paid about the same for shows that were in Charlotte. Like Cats and Phantom of the Opera and things, but about \$50 is my max.

The thing here in this area is you do have a lot of single people who are paying rents for apartments and things like that, and you have a lot of state workers in this area who cannot afford outrageous prices, so when you start hitting \$20 or \$25 for certain things, that's well more than people can spend.

I won't pay more than that unless it's something I have to see, like a once a year event. I would pay a lot, but maybe just once a year.

If I'm paying a borderline outrageous price to get in the door, I will pay a good bit on top of that to get the best available seat. I would much rather pay \$60 for the front section at the Creek than \$25 for the lawn.

Maybe I'm cheap, but I used to go to a lot of plays where I'm from and they would have this place called Tickets, and you would go there the night of the play, and right before the play started they'd show the prices and they'd be anywhere from 50% - 75% off.

Things here, in comparison, are generally more expensive the day of is what I've found, at least for music.

Motivators to attend more?

Find me a date.

I think putting the information in the Spectator and the Independent, like newspapers that are known for compiling notes for this kind of cultural events. PineCone, I don't think they have anything in there, and a lot of events that they have listed I don't ever... I didn't know there were nearly as many bluegrass events going on somewhat locally.

If you make the flyers, you can pretty much stick them anywhere you want. I know at least on Carolina's campus, you would see just anyone randomly coming by and putting them up.

To get me somewhere, the parking is very important. The public transportation here is pitiful. The busses don't run at night, there's no cabs, and if there's no parking, I won't go. I just don't want to go drive around and have to park on the street eight blocks away.

That's a good point with the Durham Arts Council. One of the reasons I hated going to their classes was because there's really nowhere to park, and you're in downtown Durham and there's a big parking deck next to it, but that's a parking deck and here I am like a young tiny woman by myself, and if I don't feel safe going somewhere I don't want to go, so if they even had just more security guards or something. You want to feel safe where you're going because that definitely deterred me from going to Durham Arts Council, and I talked to a couple other people who said that they wouldn't go to classes out there because they felt unsafe.

I don't drink and drive, and that's just one of my rules, and so a lot of these things if I want to go, I'd have to find a designated driver or go with people because I just can't take public transportation. Where I was, you could go have a couple cocktails, call a cab, get on a bus and then you're home, and now it's just such a hassle.

I definitely enjoy going to shows and events that are nearby. I've been living in town in Chapel Hill and Carrboro and I bike everywhere, so drinking and driving is never an issue.

Probably about half the time I go to the Cradle or things like that I walk.

Same with me. I live right there, and same thing with the art center. That's why I wouldn't go to Durham and take my pottery class because I could walk to my art class right in town.

Very rarely do I go out because I'm always just amazed at how early things close. There are so many times I've thought afterwards we'd get a quick bite to eat and it's like a ghost town and everything is closed. Everywhere in this area.

I kind of feel like if I'm going to go out and I'm going to get dressed up to see a Broadway show, why go for that two hours and not do anything? You want to make it a special night.

That's even if I'm going to the museum. I go stop in like Durham, have dinner, go to the museum and then probably stay out in Raleigh and go out to a couple clubs, maybe see a band.

To make sure that nights of plays or things like that, if they would have restaurants open. Even in just my small town, on nights of plays several restaurants would all stay open much later and their business was great, so I think that would be a big help. If you had more of an artsy area where you have restaurants, museums and plays and all that, even though it would be kind of hard to do at this point in this town.

DURHAM: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

My name is Chris, North Central University. I'm in a dance group. We performed at Showtime, and basically I'm an all-around guy. I love to have fun and hang out and I can basically get along with anybody.

I'm Cheryl, 23, from Chapel Hill, about four years back and forth.

My name is Brian, and I was going to Florida, went to school in Boston, then a PhD at Duke University. Afterwards, just seeing the area and working with the church in the area and dealing the ministry, helping students to learn how to relate faith with their vocation. I'm 33 years old. I've been in the area since 1991, that's when I started my PhD work.

I'm Cynthia and I'm not from Durham, I am from Kings Mountain, and I came back here for grad school. I have a master's in history, and love working with people. I've been here about nine years.

My name's Brian, and I've lived here for the last two years. I moved to the area to attend Duke. I graduated a week and a half ago, and I'm moving in a couple of months. I'm on my way to Atlanta.

My name is Nikki. I'm 22, born and raised in Durham, and basically I like meeting a whole lot of different people. I like shopping, hanging out with my niece.

I'm Carmelita, and I'm born and raised here, so I've been here all my life. I'm 30, I have three boys, I actually live by Central, on the corner of Central and Oscar, and been married six years in August. I just love meeting new people and doing different things, and I love travel.

I'm Chris, and actually grew up in Chapel Hill and lived in the area most of my life, Mississippi a few years, southern Virginia. I'm 30 years old, and I've been a sales consultant for V Technology.

My name is Tobin, and I will be 31 in a couple weeks. I'm from California originally and then lived in DC for awhile and Boston for awhile and here in Durham for 2 ½ years. I'm in the PhD program at Duke in environmental policy.

My name is Julie, and I am ___ years old. I'm not originally from here, I'm from Maryland. I went to Burlington and when I graduated from there, I went to London for six months and then moved to this area so I've been here for about two years now. I like plays. Basically I like anything creative and that has to do with art, but I find that I don't go to a lot.

I'm Sara, and I'm 32. I'm originally from Brooklyn, and came down in 1990 to go to school and work now at Chapel Hill.

My name's Alex, and I'm from the city of Chicago, been here about eight years. I guess I do a lot of ultra long distance wilderness foot traveling so I walk through the mountains a lot of the time. Just spent a year Asia and now I'm back and just kind of readjusting.

Comments: What is arts and culture in Durham and the Triangle?

Rent.

I saw a play in that little theatre that's back behind Memorial.

I've been to a Pow-wow.

Bluegrass festivals, outside Ashville.

A couple years ago they had a festival and put on several concerts at the old Durham ball park and I think those were pretty successful. They had a wide range of music.

They have a beer fest.

Yes, they have a beer fest there every year, and I go to that every year.

There's a blues festival I go to that every year -- that's in September.

It seems like there's a lot of variety, which is somewhat secret. From what I understand, there is a lot of stuff out there as far as music, plays, events, but it seems like not everyone really has full access to what's going on. People aren't really sure what's out there. I've been here for 10 years, and I know that there's beneath the surface a lot of great events, but I'm not really sure how to find them. Most of what I went to was either at Duke University -- music performances, presentation on different plays. I went to the art museum in Raleigh, but I know that there's a lot more cultural events out there, and I kind of got a sense of that when you go on 9th Street they occasionally advertise an outdoor concert, something in e-mail. Just a huge variety and this is a very rich area, but it's not what you would necessarily think about on the surface. That's my impression.

I would agree with that, and I was trying to think where I would get information about something, and I don't know how many people really read the Independent, but most of the stuff in there is not Durham, and they don't even have it categorized. There's not like an insert or something like that. I rarely want to go to Raleigh for something, especially at night, so the fact that there isn't like a local Durham paper or anything like that that you could just read, it makes it hard to find.

Culture, using broad strokes? Just gallery art showings, plays, movies. Not necessarily locally produced, but the art films at the Carolina Theatre and I think like Brian mentioned, there's a lot of well-kept secrets. I don't know why they're well kept. I think another good point was made that the city of Durham is kind of overshadowed in, you know, these little free weeklies. There are local papers here, but they're usually shoved underneath the big stack.

You certainly have to do a lot of digging or rely on fliers that you see up and down 9th Street or on NC Central campus or on Duke University campus or things like that -- you just have to be observant of your surroundings. That's how you figure out events that are happening. It's neat that everything seems to be produced on a grassroots level to a large extent, but that also makes it difficult for broader audiences. A lot of niche focus, you know, entertainment or programs that are going on out there that are difficult to find sometimes.

Earlier I was walking around and on the bulletin board there was a 10th Annual Edible Art thing, and I'm like, 10th Annual? Wait a minute! This has been going on for 10 years?

News and information on the arts...

I rely on your basic print ads, radio ads, newspapers. I'm pretty busy, and I don't go take the time to look for certain things unless they jump out at me.

For people at Duke University, probably the primary source of information is the Chronicle.

If people were serious and people really want to get the information out, particularly to that huge community, then that's where they have to advertise, and it would be really nice if somehow they could somehow produce a Web page or some source, a clearing house of information well categorized, the different types of information, and then you just advertise through the Chronicle and the major newspapers, and you could go to this Web site if you want to know what the major art events are in the area.

One problem with using print ads, though, is that it's very expensive. Even the Independent charges a lot, so for smaller places that aren't pulling in a lot of money out of revenue, it's hard to invest a big chunk of money in ongoing ads, even in the Chronicle. The Chronicle is really expensive, too, for print ads.

Right, which is why you see people at Kinko's and then outside on the street with staple guns doing their best to promote a concert or an art showing or whatever it is.

We just get on the streets handing out flyers because if you go to the radio and newspaper, it's very expensive, and basically if you want to get the word out and keep some money in your pocket, you're going to find the cheapest means of doing that.

The bigger the population, the more we go back to doing things grass roots, and it's amazing how there's like this pattern.

I have a friend that he just started promoting this club off Hillsborough Street, and at his first party he had maybe 10 people there then he kept pushing it. He pushed it on the streets, Long Beach campus handing out fliers, and now it's to the point to where they have to turn people down. It took maybe a month to do that.

And then you look at like a place like, on the Hillsborough again, that Latino night club that opened up maybe about eight months ago and they've done virtually no advertising. They just started that place, and that place there's lines around the block Thursday, Friday, Saturday and

Sunday night. They make a killing, and there's a whole culture surrounding that, too. There're street vendors outside, there's people who are selling other things outside. That whole stretch of Hillsborough Road, the whole demographic is changing along that road and it's fantastic, and these businesses are actually functioning and they're being successful. The grocery stores are doing well, the restaurants are doing well. That night club is doing fantastic. It's probably one of the most successful businesses as far as the profit margin is concerned, because nobody had an interest in Hillsborough Road before.

The demographic has changed and apartment complexes have kind of sprouted up, like Duke Manor apartments and things like that, that are within walking distance of that particular night club, and they've done a good job with a relatively ignored neighborhood or just like a street that you bypass, which is really what it was before, and now it's actually lively, and while still it's only garages and tire shops, it's growing into something that you would see in Chicago or New York, and I think that's why a lot of people gravitate towards 9th Street.

Motivation to attend?

Word of mouth.

Newspapers, TV.

Newspaper.

I watch TV.

News and Observer does a good job. The Independent and the Spectator are things I pick up every week religiously.

Radio.

K97.5,

That's the problem. The only good hip hop station is out in Greensborough, and they say nothing about Durham locally and things that are going on, like there's great hip hop shows that go on at the Cat's Cradle that you never hear about listening to one of the two.

We're back to word of mouth, and then we're also back to effectively they're separated, just like in any other community, there are separate cultures and separate things that attract other people, people who are interested in different styles.

I listen to AM radio a lot, too. I listen to Dr. Joe Brown.

It's more Raleigh focused. You're going to hear about something going on in Raleigh.

Regional participation, going to Raleigh, Durham...

Raleigh's not a destination for people in Durham, I don't think.

I think of downtown Raleigh where you have the museums. Things are established, like buildings that have typical showings or things that are just continuous, like you know you can always go to this place for something. That's what I go to Raleigh for.

I go to the Art Museum. Often for a special showing, I'll find out about it and go up there for that.

I've gone to Raleigh to do most of the stuff that I've gone to -- to see musicals and go to plays, and I've gotten over to the Art Museum as well. I think it's really hard to draw people from Raleigh to Durham unless it's a huge, well-publicized event, because they don't consider Durham to be a destination of the arts.

There's no real signature place you would come to in Durham.

Maybe to the university, but Durham proper I don't see it as a destination.

Downtown Durham I think has got a bad reputation.

It used to be free to park after hours across the street and then they decided to charge \$2 no matter when you park.

So if you want to go to a nightclub and dance at 11:00 at night, there's no parking.

I think part of it is a sense that you have like the old Durham, like Durham that's been around for a long time, and now you have all these little communities like southern Durham that's just lots of new construction, lots of new areas, and a lot of the new transfers will live out in southern Durham in these little communities.

Then you have northern Durham, which is known to be a bit older, and then the Durham city, so it's really a sense of these different sections of Durham that you think of very differently.

I've lived in Durham for almost 10 years and I've never even been to the Mall or down Chapel Hill Blvd. and that area.

You just don't have a reason to go to it. You have no reason to go down there.

What Durham doesn't have that Raleigh has is really a downtown. We have a downtown, but it's scary.

You drive downtown and all the store-fronts are empty.

The first story of all the office buildings are mostly empty.

There're no restaurants at all.

Empty, run down.

There's the Jet Café, the Jamaican restaurant, there's a Latin grill that just opened up about a month ago, this really great place.

Then you've got that hot dog bagel place that's been open for years.

There's just not a whole lot to come downtown for until you get over to Bright Leaf.

Or until you get past downtown into east Durham and then you get into neighborhoods there, and there's food there and there's stuff to do there.

I was a member of the Art Council and used the dark rooms downstairs. I used to come the Carolina all the time, and then they changed the parking policy. I just makes it hard to come downtown. It's a little thing but a big thing. Maybe it's just my own personal thing, but it's annoying.

They need that revenue to build more parking is the problem. If they plan to build a department store there, they need to pay for it.

The city has the revenue, they're talking about doing the train -- it's obviously going to fail, the whole commuter train, which is just going to be a waste of all of our money I believe.

What arts organizations are known and attended...

Muchas Vegas dance is really good. They do a lot of different programs with the youth theatre in Durham as well as different functions.

And the Haystack, they have wonderful programs.

The American Dance Festival.

Yes, the ADF Festival, it's affiliated with Duke loosely, but that's probably the most welcoming as far as all the Duke activities that go around. It seems like at NC State and NC Central and UNC Chapel Hill and Duke University there's always a lot of things going on, but I'm not affiliated with any universities so I never really hear about it or you maybe hear a little clip about it but it never is as inviting.

I would love to go to things at Central or Duke, but I just sort of feel like I'm not a student. I graduated from college and I don't know if I would be welcome on a college campus. I mean, are they're going to ask me for my student ID?

Not to mention I don't have anyone around here to go with. All my friends live in Chapel Hill, so that's one big thing for me. I won't go out around here because there's no one to go out with.

Actually the other part that, basically our students don't even participate. It would be like people from the community that go and support like the plays and stuff.

There's a theatre company in Carrboro that I saw a Shakespeare play at, I can't remember its name.

There's a gallery on Duke Street, an art gallery and they have showings. I forget it's name, but... Honestly how could you remember it's name? It's always closed, you know? You know what I'm saying? You'll walk past it on your way home, you're kind of drunk and stumbling past back home from the bars, and go past these galleries and, sure, you keep it in mind, but then you go back on Saturday afternoon and it's just locked up tight. They keep like southern diner hours, like 4:00 a.m. to 11:00.

You can hear music in places. What's that place on Broad Street? Bully's Basement? Yeah, you can hear music at the Ringside, Foster's will have something.

I've gone to the Carolina Theater.

The Double Take Film festival that just went on, yes, I saw several movies there.

They weren't at the local theatres like, Monster's Ball and In the Bedroom. I came here to see those, and different, like that play here, with Jim Henson.

I always hear about tons of great things there, but I don't hear about them. I'll hear about them after the fact, like, I went to go see this great thing, or I'll hear this is coming up and I'll look for more information and I can't find it, and if I don't do it immediately I would forget about it if I don't pick up the phone right then.

Use of the Web and print media...

If you go to the library and wait for 30 minutes and get on for 30 minutes, and by the time I throw out my junk mail I don't have time to look at anything else.

E-mail could be a help.

If something runs into me in the Independent -- I don't get it religiously, but I usually pick it up. If I'm just sitting around and not doing anything else I'll look at it then, but, once again, I'm not going to look very much because with my schedule. I've gone to the art museum, and I'm definitely going to go back again, but there's nothing to do during the day, so when I have two nights off, so I either want to sleep or I want to get together with my friends, and a lot of times that involves just sitting around and chatting and having a meal as opposed to going to see something where we have to be quiet or pay attention or something like that.

City Search.

I use City Search.

News and Observer maybe.

Is it just CitySearch.com?

The only reason I know about that is because it is actually advertised.

I have probably used CitySearch once, but it would be if you're looking for something. It's kind of hard to just browse around. If I have friends that are coming into town, I don't think I'd even go to CitySearch -- I mean, you have to know what you're looking for. You have to be like, "do we want to see a movie, do we want to go to this or that...?"

I would go to the Independent.

It was actually just a couple of weeks that I did this, and I went to the Independent, I went through the Spectator, I went to City Search to get ideas for them.

I think there's an aesthetic in psychology sitting in front of a computer. You can take a print publication and read that on your couch as opposed to on some stiff chair on some silly machine, you know? I just prefer to get out on my front porch and to read the paper as opposed to having to be quarantined to this.

I think that a lot of people do, though, use the Web. A lot of my friends do, and I think that maybe there is, it's not well advertised, but if there was a Web site for arts in Durham that would be a great place because again, going to the Independent is fine, but you have to read through everything that's in Raleigh and Chapel Hill before you could even find one ad for anything in Durham. There's a lot of stuff that's kind of overload sometimes, so if you know you don't want to go to Raleigh, you could just go to a Web site, then it wouldn't cost that much for all of these organizations to advertise, and they could have a calendar of things going on.

It would be really nice, for a Web site like that to have a beginner's guide that would explain all the different types of entertainment. Say, "This is this sort of entertainment, this is contra dancing, this is musicals, this is whatever." That would spark interest for what to look for, then links to those different groups to get a sense and maybe a little section for the highlights for the week, just really user friendly sort of stuff.

Motivation to attend arts...

A lot of plays don't interest me, though, because you don't see a lot of different types of plays, you just have Shakespeare. I don't like Shakespeare.

To me, you're sort of limited. This is my deal. I'm sort of limited when I go to a play or something. I like to socialize, I like to be around people, I like to talk.

You can't talk to your friends there.

Yes, at a play you just have to sit there and pay attention, you know? That's not what I want to pay my money for.

There's a community theatre in Ashville that it is somewhat interactive, and it's more intimate than just being boxed in your little seats, just being confined. You can actually spread out, you can bring your own bottle of wine, or 40 oz. bottle of malt liquor. It's totally grassroots, and it's

in an old industrial neighborhood. There's nothing particularly fancy about the area, but they put on all kinds of plays and a lot of their plays are based on screenplays from movies. They do a great job, and it's really exciting, it's really entertaining.

I think that is really sad that Durham doesn't have is really a good outside venue for any kind of concert. The weather here is pretty good most of the year.

When the weather is nice, I would like to outside. So when I think about it, I do like going to plays, but when I think about spending two hours inside when the weather is nice, no. I wish there were more bars here that had outside seating. I don't like to go to the bars because why would you want to be inside? Or restaurants even, so I think that's something that we could maybe take advantage of.

There's been a few new bands that are somewhat noteworthy, not that I'm particularly interested in their music style, but musically I think it's come a long way from where it was. It's not quarantined to the northern tip of the Triangle and just isolated from everything like it was. I think the potential is there for people to travel to Durham, but as far as touring bands, like headlining bands, will choose Raleigh or they will choose Chapel Hill. There're just not the enormous venues in Durham to promote bands and to encourage bands to come here. And generally there's an apathetic population here just wouldn't support it anyway, I don't think.

Price...

\$40 bucks, that's like four people.

Sometimes I do think about where the money's going, but most of the time \$40, no.

If it's something that I know I'm going to enjoy then yes.

I'd say the comfort zone is \$10, \$15 to try something new, but just to get out and try stuff, I'm not going to get out and try something that's got a \$40 price tag right off the bat. I'd have to be pretty bored to say the least.

For Double Take Film Festival, I spent over \$75 for tickets to go see various films, but that's a different game. That was something that I was particularly interested in, and I went to see exactly what I wanted to see.

It cost \$20 for the Jazz Fest, and it was absolutely worth it. I'd pay \$50 a day for that.

I paid three times this to buy season tickets to ADF. I have a pass because I know I'm going to enjoy ADF, and it's 10, 12 weeks worth of stuff and I can choose times and days, but in terms of getting people to try something new, I don't think you're going to do it with a \$40 price tag.

I wonder if all these art groups could get together and form like a little guide with just all the different stuff in there, maybe put little coupons together, first time thing, to try to pull people in?

It's not terribly convenient, but one of the good things is that there are three distinct communities here that have options available so if you're looking for something to do and you don't care about having to drive for it. You can look at Raleigh, you can look at Chapel Hill and at Durham and find something pretty much anytime you're looking for something interesting to do. I like the fact that it's three distinct communities. It is kind of a pain to go over to Raleigh. It has to be a special occasion for me to do it, but it is an option. It's available to be able to go over there and see one of the Broadway musicals or go over and listen to symphony or something like that. It's available. You just have to be willing to go do it.

If I'm going to be entertained, especially on a grassroots level as we've been saying, then I'd rather not have to pay a lot for it. I'm definitely happy to support them, but I'm also really happy to support myself, so I'd rather do that first.

Motivation and marketing...

For most of these groups, I wouldn't go if it was free. It doesn't seem like it's for me.

If I was on the museums' mailing list or something like that, and I got fliers on things that were being shown next, if it got into my mailbox, then yes, absolutely. When it's quarantined in the back pages of the Independent or the Spectator, I generally just don't pay attention to that. I'll read the major features, but I won't go through each and every thing. I won't sift through all that stuff that I generally am not interested in, but if it arrives in my mailbox, for sure. I would go to three of these things on the spot, if I knew well enough ahead of time.

If I asked to be on somebody's mailing list and was expecting the fliers when they came out, like a friend of the museum list, then yes.

More information. I tend to go out and look for it, though.

Last week one of my friends called me and said that the author of Jerome Dickey was going to be at Barnes and Noble and I'm like, Yes. I got his autograph and had a wonderful time and it was fabulous.

I could have something really easy, something that I could just visually scan that gave me a sense of what's all the major arts in the Triangle is, like these the major features this month, saying "This is the greatest thing of the year." Kind of highlighted to get me in the door.

It's interesting that they have this program that's been going on annually -- it's a fundraiser, and it's interesting that it's been going on for ten years and it must be successful.

The arts groups should band together more so that they start to build a sense of community, so that you think that there is an arts community as opposed to this isolated thing out there somewhere. I think that would really help in a lot of ways.

It would help Durham, and they would help each other because then you can advertise other people's events at your events, you're already going to be getting that target audience of people who like to go and do these things. It may be too expensive to hire someone to design a Web

site if it's just you and your little theatre company, but not if you're 50 organizations that could all chip in for that, or a monthly newsletter kind of thing. They could share mailing lists. I just think if they got together more, and I think that it's really interesting, this idea of building this 5,000 seat theatre. I honestly don't think that Durham can support the kind of events that they're going to need to justify such a theatre. I heard about it and I thought it was a crazy idea at the time. I know it's their concept of revitalizing downtown, and that's one of the reasons why I don't think that's going to work. I don't think it's the sort of thing that Durham could do well. Durham could do well at becoming more of like the eccentric arts. Like Raleigh is where you go to see the more traditional musicals and big concerts, and Durham could theoretically revitalize some of these tobacco warehouses to be small community theatres where you could go to see small music. I think that that could be a strength.

The problem is, and this is a completely different issue, but you have Duke University right there that has a big theatre, and anything that's big is going to go there, and then you have Raleigh that's not that far away for that kind of large crowd. I don't think we can draw it, and Durham is still largely a blue collar town. It's not the sort of place where you have 5,000 go to shop or go see a play.

It also depends upon who they intend to book in this arena, if they are going to limit it to family oriented or good clean fun, so to speak. I don't think it's going to be filled, but there're a lot of musical outfits out there, and there's a lot of theatre troops out there who can fill a 5,000 theatre.

There's not a lot for 19 to 29 year olds.

Make it easy to try new things.

Make it inviting.

Is there any place you can go that has a listing of who all these people are?

How would you find these people if you wanted to?

If I called the Arts Council here would they know about these guys?

Durham Arts Council, maybe they would be willing to help get the word out, briefing that's going on within the city of Durham, and that could evolve into something like the Independent, something that people look forward to week by week, or biweekly or monthly. Just a resource guide that's all encompassing, and that's split into different sections, so for the playwright arts or visual arts, you could go to that section, and I could go to my music section and Sara could go to her drinking section, and you could all find something satisfying.

FEARRINGTON: SENIORS

My name's Diane, and I've lived in Chapel Hill for almost 40 years and raised a family of five kids here. I'm not quite retired. I especially enjoy the Playmakers, and I love to go to museums, but I tend to go more to museums when I'm on vacation than when I'm at home. I don't really go here.

I'm Bev, and I've lived here for two years. I moved from Rochester, New York, and before that Los Angeles and Chicago, so this is smaller city, better than Rochester but smaller than Los Angeles and Chicago for me. The arts that I've always enjoyed are opera and classical music and theatre. I was just starting to find my way around between Raleigh and Durham and Chapel Hill -- it's confusing.

My name's Barbara, and I've lived here nearly five years. I was born in St. Louis and lived most of my life in Michigan, and that's where I moved from. I was raised going to museums and the theatre and musical opera in the summertime. Here, we've enjoyed the Playmakers. Some people had stopped going because their plays are such downers, but they loved to go but they were tired and depressed, and we can discuss, but all the theatre here, and all the arts.

My name is Bette, and we moved here eight years ago from Cincinnati, Ohio. Cincinnati, as you may or may not know, has a large arts community, and during our working lives, we probably didn't take advantage of what was available to us, so now that we retired recently, feel that we're able to do more. We have subscriptions to Playmakers and the Broadway Series and the symphony on individual basis based on the programming. We also try to, we haven't done this as well as we'd like, there's wonderful programming here at the Music School, there'll be performances and things. We have done that a few times and we must do this more. Museum-wise we go to the North Carolina Museum in Raleigh when something brings us the Rodin exhibit or whatever, but I can't say... I'll probably go once a season to see what's new. I probably don't find myself in Durham as much. We haven't gone, for example, to the dance festival in the summer. We were going to do that but we just haven't.

My name's Shelly. I'm a native of Durham, born and raised and gone to school. I have a wife and son, and I'm retired now. Basically I like movies, plays and arts. I mainly live right here, and I attend a lot of stuff when we go on vacation. I like plays and art. I know where everything is, and I have attended a lot, and when I do go out I like it, but I just probably take for granted because I am a native. We moved, like I said, in '94, but I'm from Durham.

My name is Val (M). I'm originally from New Orleans. I went to Cincinnati to go to school and spent the rest of my career there, and I've been here about five years. When I retired, I was Director of Civil Rights for the Environmental Protection Agency, and I served on the board at the art museum in Cincinnati, on the minorities committee and participated with the minority community in Cincinnati. The reason I moved here, when I came to visit, I looked at the weekly newsletter and noticed the cultural things that were available here, and so that was the reason why I chose Chapel Hill over a place I was looking at in South Carolina.

What's attractive about cultural life here?

The first time I came, I noted I think there must have been about six different plays being performed the same weekend I was here between Chapel Hill, Raleigh and Durham, and I love plays, live plays, and so that's basically when I chose this area. It really did live up my expectations. I enjoy the plays both over at UNC and at North Carolina Central, and I enjoy having Sunday brunch in the museum in Raleigh.

Your Broadway plays here don't get quite the quality of the touring companies and you get them quite late. I still haven't gone and seen anything that I haven't already seen, and a lot of people go to New York to do that, too. It's more accessible. I just feel more comfortable here going over to UNC for a play or a concert or an activity or even driving back down to Raleigh, it's easy.

Raleigh/Durham...

People here tend to say, "Oh, that's in Raleigh," you know? One is 30 minutes away and one's five minutes away, but it's all the same, and this whole area is a metropolitan area within my range.

The drive between Raleigh and Durham seems easy to us, too. We'd never not go because it's in Raleigh. I think those of us who move here to retire or start a new life have a different kind of mentality probably. We're more adventuresome, we didn't mind reaching out and meeting new people, new experiences. We didn't come to limit our activities or anything. Do you think that's fair?

I don't think driving is any problem.

I really do think about not going here or there because of the driving, and maybe you're right, that's because I've been here, and to me just that I-40 between here and Raleigh and even Durham can be daunting sometimes. I haven't tried it since my husband died 13 years ago, and we used to do it a lot more than I do now that I'm by myself, and I keep meaning to do more things and think, "How do I get there by myself and where do you park the car?" I must admit that where you park the car is more important than getting there.

When I was younger, I did a lot, but as I get older I do less than I did when I was young. I tend to just take it for granted.

Getting involved in the arts...

You've got to reach out if you're going to live a life. Life doesn't come to you.

We have friends who like live theatre, and we would go to Raleigh for something. We'll go on in and have dinner first. I think lack of parking more than not knowing where parking is. I think that's probably what keeps me more from downtown Durham than anything. I just need to go through it to know how to do it the next time.

I agree with that. If I just do it once and find out where it is, then I'm okay.

Speaking to your point of having been here, I think that it is very different because you have an established life, you have your flagships that you go to, and if there's a new grocery store opening up but you always went to Kohl's, then you don't really feel a great need to go to the new grocery store, but you also have your own friends and where they live, so it's a comfort level. The rest of us don't have that.

When you're moving in and your looking to start a whole new set of patterns it is easier.

How did you start the new cultural and arts attending patterns? Recreate what it was like to wind your way through, finding out the arts, when you first moved here.

The first time I visited here, I was told about a jazz show theatre they had in Cary. I've been looking for it, and haven't been able to find it again since then, and they told me about it and I went to see it the very first time I was here, and I enjoyed it very much.

We are very fortunate that people tend to organize here. There's a group that gets bussed and they go down, they just did this for the choir group. They did this for the women's celebrity series, they do it for a lot of things, and they have a bus and they all get on and there are 15, 20, 25 of them and go down to Café Marie or something like that, and they have dinner and they go to theatre and then the bus brings them back. We have never done that, but we have other people who have said we're all going over to the Duke Gardens and they're having music tonight at the Gardens, and have the lunch and so we did that. The thing in Cary, the North Carolina Symphony in the summertime, I saw that in the paper, but the first year we were too late for it - the bus tour. The second year we made plans, we went to it and we got other people to go to it.

Social motivators...

Sure. It's very rarely done as a solitary endeavor.

I think that makes a difference. I think I would go to more things, too, if I were in a particular group that did group things and they let you off at the door and then you got on this bus and then went home again.

Finding out about the arts...media use...

I've never heard anybody come and make a pitch to us or put an ad in our newsletter saying, for group rates or anything like that, no. We have to do it on our own.

Every Thursday or Friday on my computer I get what's happening in the area.

It's Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill. Everything that's happening, I don't know. I can get it to you. I can't remember the name of it. I have so much stuff on my computer.

I get it on Thursday, and it tells everything that's happening in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill. Theatre, the arts and the clubs -- everything.

Sure, my computer. I know what time it's going start, the whole nine, and when I go, I enjoy everything, the whole environment.

Well, I look in the papers. I used to work for a newspaper. But we get a lot of information from our friends here as well. We tend to talk things through a lot as a group in advance.

I read a lot of newspapers. We listen to NPR. We've gotten on a few of the mailing lists.

Quality...

I'll probably definitely go to New York, I mean, I go here, but also I go to New York.

I really, really love opera, but we went to La Boheme this year, and the soprano was terrific, the tenor was, you know, he couldn't carry it, but it was nice. The music was nice, but it wasn't traditional so I didn't like it. They updated it, and I didn't like that as well. It was okay, but it wasn't what I wanted it to be, which is wonderful.

I think the amateur stuff I've seen has been very good here.

Yes, I would agree.

I don't go to the museums unless they have a special exhibition. The permanent collection doesn't change.

Once you've seen it, you've seen it, and so you go when they change it.

Again, when I'm like in New York or Chicago, I always go to the art museum.

I've never said, "Oh, I can hardly wait to go to the museum."

I went for the Linda McCartney photo exhibit, and I thought that would be neat, and it was really great, and I went when the director spoke about pieces and actually told us things about them. When somebody took me and explained things to me, that was very different.

When I go to Chicago, I go right to Impressionism. I just spend hours. New York the same thing, so I haven't been over to Raleigh, I haven't had any reason to go.

My sense is that they've done a lot of really kind of interesting things to try to make the museum more lively. I mean they have the outdoor amphitheater.

On Sunday after church I go to brunch at the museums and wander around. The food is very good.

I used to do that in Rochester, so I could do that, I just haven't thought of it ...

I would say even to the high school and junior high or middle school level. I've even seen a middle school play that was superb. These kids in sixth, seventh and eighth grade, their costumes and the lighting and the sets were unbelievable for a group of kids 12, 13, 14 years old. And the high school productions are quite good, too.

Someone told me that you just don't want to miss the Chapel Hill High School's musical productions, that they are so good.

I was living in Cincinnati, which has such a strong background in opera, so I support what she said. We go up to New York and just get a fix on the Broadway shows.

I think we are blessed with the ballet company here that is just a whole lot better than ever, so I think ballet-wise we're fine. The symphony I think it's erratic, although I think it's very good for that level. Visual arts I would only go if it happens to be someplace where I wouldn't make an extra effort. You see so much young talent in visual arts in this greater area.

If you look, there's a lot of gallery space, not only in the traditional sense. It may be Charlie's Bar and Grill that has great art. I'm thinking retro, it's like places that will hang young artists, young mindsets. I think that I don't feel the need there, but I think probably play-wise, if you make a distinction from the local theatre, and it certainly is every bit on the part of local theatre. We go to Cats in Cincinnati, but if you're talking about the stuff that should be really good or getting things that are new or special, we went up in March to see The Crucible. That's not ever going to be in Durham, it's just not going to happen, so if you want to see that kind of thing, you really do need to go.

I enjoy the amateur theatre, especially at North Carolina Central. I think they do a very good job at North Carolina Central with their amateur theatre. It's student theatre. That's what I meant by amateur, and I think they do a good job. I enjoy their plays over there at North Carolina Central.

Well those campus things go through stages. The first year we were down here, there was a lighting director was into the strobe lights, but I think you get those trends and they have been downers.

I've dragged my husband to a couple things recent and he was like, "Where did you find that?" I think you can find, maybe not the larger groups doing things, but you can find small groups out there.

Durham...

I go.

I used to, years ago.

There was some new film that they did at the Carolina Theater, and then there was a concert that we went to.

They've done some local stuff that's been very good. North Carolina Theatre, too. Local plays written by young people over at North Carolina, at the University of North Carolina.

I supposed safety is something to think about, but if you've lived in a major city like we have...

Attending events on the college campuses...

There's no parking.

There's no parking. I have some friends that felt they had died and gone to heaven when they found something or other as a parking place, but then they came out and they found that they had a \$150.00 ticket. There was this opening and they just slid into it and they didn't see the sign.

What about campus-based arts organizations and events...

I used to go at night, and now I've been going Sunday afternoon, and all those old people like me tend to go real early. You have to go in the daytime, and if there's an athletic event going on, forget it. So you go further and further away, and since I do know people, I can park in their driveways, actually, all the way to Franklin Street.

Parking is a problem, but I think that if the Playmakers has a problem, from everyone I've talked to, it's their choice of plays. I know a number of people who have stopped getting season tickets simply because they said they didn't want to walk out of a play feeling down.

I've gone to some things over at NC State. They are good, and the price is right.

Price...

Well, I'll pay for what is good. We spend what it takes for tickets at the Met. I think Playmakers is an incredible bargain. We'll go to Charlotte. Sometimes you get the third run of something here, though.

I spend on what I think is worth while. Nothing else.

Classes and life long learning...

One of the things that bugs me is how the organizations here think you should give them all these hours and year long commitments as volunteers. They think we should always be available. And there is no consideration of our schedules.

Yes, the attitude here is that we should be available. I'm sorry, but I live a busy life, travel, and after spending years as a docent, really...

I've taken some painting classes, and would probably go to Carrboro.

Being donors...

One of the things you have to learn when you move here – people told us to expect it – is that here in North Carolina it is a very closed society. The people who are on the boards here, who are involved, are native. They stick with their own. They are polite, but they don't really want us retirees from the outside to be involved. They talk down about us. So you try, you know, going to a few benefits, and then you kind of give up. What's the point?

Yes, I know what you mean. I've had the same feeling. We really have to make our own social life. That's why Governor's Landing is so good. We create our own community.

I think I might give to something here if I was asked, and if I felt they cared. But you know, I get that nice, handwritten letter every year from the development director at the museum in Cincinnati, and I don't get one from anyone here. So I am not ashamed to say I give my contribution back there.

Okay, I'll admit it too. I give to arts organizations I used to attend. I still have my memberships at the Art Institute and the Met.

Here, the problem seems to be that groups expect us to become volunteers, and then on top of it to be donors, and yet they don't seem very interested. You should tell them how we feel.