

EVENTS

• "A Choral Evening," 7:30 p.m. Thursday in the Koger Center. USC Concert Choir and University Chorus performs Poulene's "Gloria." Tickets at Coliseum box office.

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Monday, April 12, 1999

The Gamecock

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Where are all the Hootie heads?

Record sales have gone down, and radio stations seemingly have forgotten them. Is the mega-million era over for Hootie and the Blowfish?

Features Roundup
Associated Press

The eye-pleasing videos, the appearances on "Late Night With David Letterman," the Grammy Awards, the staggering record sales — they seemed like they would never end for Hootie and the Blowfish.

Now, two years later, the band has trouble getting radio airplay.

"You can't always control what happens," Hootie and the Blowfish bassist Dean Felber said. "You can try, but in the '90s, it's just too hard. People are just too fickle; they're too hot and cold. They don't want yesterday's band; they want today's band."

But Felber says he's not convinced Hootie's time in the spotlight is finished. "I think people keep forgetting that we've quietly sold a million records without the help of radio. I think if we were done, we wouldn't be selling albums," he said.

Hootie's first album, *Cracked Rear View*, sold more than 15 million copies worldwide. Their third disc, *Musical Chairs*, has sold about 1 million.

The Blowfish say they knew they would never sell 15 million copies of any album again.

"We've always been a live band," Felber said of himself and his mates, lead singer Darius Rucker, guitarist Mark Bryan and drummer Jim Sonefeld. "That's going to keep us going."

The band will blow out The Township today for a concert connected with

its "Monday After The Masters" golf tournament.

It brings them back home after a worldwide tour that took them to military bases in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Bosnia in December, where they saw the horrors of war.

Felber said a couple of soldiers at one base found a shallow grave with 15 bodies in it. The victims were blindfolded, hands tied behind their backs and bullets in the backs of their heads. "That was eye opening," Felber said.

While the band went to New Zealand, Australia and Japan to tour in February, *Musical Chairs* disappeared from the charts.

Two singles, "I Will Wait" and "Only Lonely," failed to catch on at radio, even though the album received some of Hootie's best reviews.

"It's the most bizarre thing in the world," Felber said. "Programmers at rock 'n' roll radio who got us started won't even touch us now."

Felber said about 80 percent of the people Hootie worked with at At-



Courtesy of Hootie and the Blowfish official Web site

Hootie and the Blowfish with Stevie Wonder at the 1997 Grammys, at which Hootie won best new musical group. Hootie's record sales have gone down considerably since then, with the new album, *Musical Chairs*, hardly getting any air play at the same stations in the southeast that helped make the band popular in the beginning.

lantic Records were let go during the band's first two years there.

But don't feel bad for the guys just yet. They sold out two large Florida outdoor shows three weeks ago and should be a good draw on the summer concert circuit.

"Now we don't have to convince them that we can sell out their shows."

"Now we can just say: 'Call the promoter who booked us in Florida.' That sets us up for the summer, and if our first few shows in May are good, then that means we'll be booked up in August and September," he said.

And Hootie will test the radio waters again by releasing "Wishing" as their next single.

"We're going to do it in a subtle way to see if rock radio will play Hootie and the Blowfish," Felber said.

Felber said the important thing is connecting with people and sometimes that takes work.

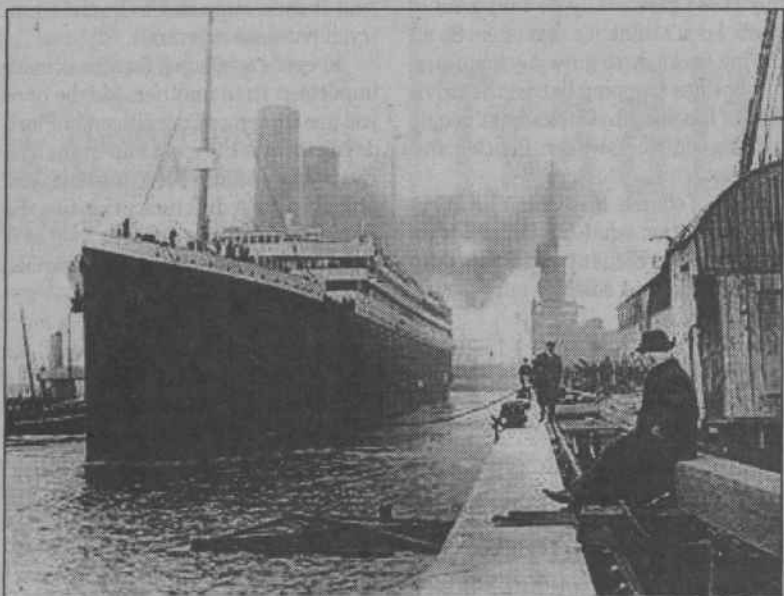
"The same stuff was happening when we started. It's not easy street," he said. "If you sit back, you're not going to get anywhere. It's just going to

"People are just too fickle. They don't want yesterday's band; they want today's band."

Dean Felber

bassist, Hootie and the Blowfish

Titanic boarding pass sells for \$100,000



Features Roundup
Associated Press

SEATTLE — An \$8 Titanic boarding pass that survived the ill-fated voyage along with its passenger has fetched \$100,000 at an auction.

The buyer was Jeffrey Trainer, an Allentown, Pa. collector who is in the trading card business.

The price began at \$5,000 on Saturday and zoomed to \$100,000 in less than a minute, said Cheryl Gorsuch, co-owner of the Tacoma antique store where the auction was held.

Trainer said he would "hoard the ticket for a little while and enjoy it."

The passenger, Anna Sofia Sjoblom, had "kept it for a while, so I may, too," he said.

The document — an undamaged immigrant inspection card that served as a boarding pass for Titanic's third-class passengers — is believed to be the only such ticket in existence. Its price on Saturday makes it among the most valued of the ship's memorabilia.

Sjoblom, of Finland, had pinned the boarding pass inside her jacket for the 1912 voyage. She had borrowed the \$8 Titanic fare after she and three friends were bumped from the *Adriatic*, another ship in the White Star Line.

Titanic sunk on Sjoblom's 18th birthday. She made it onto a lifeboat that al-

so reportedly carried White Star Line chairman J. Bruce Ismay. The pass, still pinned inside her jacket, stayed dry.

Sjoblom's three friends died. When she arrived in America, Sjoblom headed west with her uncle, finally settling in Tacoma. She married and raised two children in Olympia, and died in 1975.

Her pass had been packed away with old photographs and postcards until a widower of Sjoblom's grandniece sold it to the antique store about six months ago, Gorsuch said. She would not say how much she paid or anything else about the seller.

But how it got to such a distant relation has left Sjoblom's direct descendants perplexed. Their varying theories have the pass vanishing long ago with Sjoblom's first husband, or being taken by a curious high school student whom Sjoblom lent a box of voyage keepsakes sometime in the 1960s.

"We never saw him again," said Sjoblom's daughter, Evelyn Hendrickson, 84, who attended the auction.

Relatives considered making a bid to bring the ticket back into the family, but William Hendrickson, Sjoblom's grandson, said the family couldn't afford it.

"Sometimes I think all the luck in our gene pool was used up when my grandmother got on that lifeboat," he told *The News Tribune* of Tacoma.

Christianity becomes cool

by Raymond McCaffrey
Knight-Ridder Newspapers

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — There was a laundry list of reasons why Randi Wilkerson drifted away from church when she went to college.

First, she fell in with a wild crowd that loved to party. Second, she moved away from home — and her Christian parents. But mainly, like others her age, the 23-year-old thought church wasn't cool.

"People think it's boring," Wilkerson says. "That's why I was rebelling. All the guys who went to my church were dorks. I thought,

'Is this what I'm going to have to marry?' I'd never been exposed to cool Christian people."

The term "cool Christians" might seem like an oxymoron. But for many people Wilkerson's age, being Christian and going to church is the hip thing to do.

College-age students are undergoing a spiritual reawakening, experts say, and in turn, churches are scrambling to reach them.

The result: More and more poster children of the so-called Generation Y, the "millennium generation," are dancing away Friday nights at Christian socials and spending Sunday mornings at worship services geared to them.

"It's because churches are getting a little bit more post-modern," says Wilkerson, who's part of Crossroads, the college-age ministry at Pulpit Rock Church in Colorado Springs. "They're not so traditional. That's what drove me around," she says.

"I think people are getting involved because they realize how fun it can be and that people who are Christian are not boring."

"They're not dorks," says Wilkerson, a stock supervisor at a Gap store.

The spiritual reawakening among today's college students also constitutes a resurgence of the so-called Jesus movement on campuses, which began in the late 1960s and proceeded through the '70s, says Tom Yeakley, director of The Navigators' U.S. Campus Ministry, based in Colorado Springs.

But by the early '80s, campus ministries that once had 1,000 members were down to about 50.

"We saw a very spiritually apathetic college student in America," Yeakley says. The decline continued until 1994 when "we saw an uptake again in spiritual hunger," Yeakley says. That spiritual hunger was initially gauged by the individual campus ministries and confirmed in surveys The Navigators handed out to more than 50,000 college students in each of two years.

In the '80s, only 10 to 15 percent of college students polled answered "yes" or "maybe" to one or both of the following questions:

"Would you like to be in Bible study?" and "Would you like to talk to someone about your spiritual life?" Over the past two years, 40 to 60 percent of college students have answered yes to at least one.

Jim Rottenborn, director of the college and career ministry at Woodmen Valley Chapel, witnessed the boom in the size of campus ministries while he was working with students at Miami University in Ohio.

"It just seems there's a definite growing interest among students in spiritual stuff," Rottenborn says. "In '91 ... the biggest group on campus had about 300 kids showing up. When I left in '97, they had about 1,200 showing up."

Yeakley says he doesn't think anyone really understands why there's a spiritual reawakening "other than God is at work again in the lives of this generation of students."

"It's because churches are getting a little bit more post-modern. They're not so traditional."

Randi Wilkerson
college student, Colorado Springs

That would be Generation Y, which according to Yeakley, consists of those born in 1980 or later — although some gauge the starting point as 1982.

"This is the leading edge of Generation Y, the millennium generation," Yeakley says.

"They are different than Generation X ... They're hungry spiritually."

The common assumption is that the booming economy in the '80s prompted Generation X to focus on getting high grades so they could "get a good job and earn a lot of money," according to Yeakley. Church wasn't in the picture. New methodologies are being used to draw Generation Y to church.

At Woodmen Valley Chapel, for instance, there's a special Sunday-night service at which Rottenborn focuses on a message from the Bible. However, students lead the worship, as well as gather to play games and just hang out.

"It's a lot more of a coffeehouse atmosphere," Rottenborn says. However, Rottenborn maintains that the most important part of his ministry involves one-on-one breakfast or lunch meetings with students.

"The idea is that I give time to the oldest guys in the ministry so that they can take on one or two younger guys," he says.

First Presbyterian Church has a Sunday school class designed expressly for college students. The church also has students and adult leaders who preside over on-campus Bible study groups at Colorado College and the Air Force Academy.

"I would say that's a scriptural kind of principle," says Mark Epperson, director of Young Adult Ministries at First Presbyterian.

"Jesus met people where they were, and that's why he was so effective," he says.

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