



Through
THESE EYES
Jim Williams, Columnist

**It's more than
'just music'**

My wife and I were talking some time ago about technology and our reliance on it.

I remember several years ago, many websites closed down in protest of an impending bill in congress called the Stop Online Privacy Act, or SOPA. I remember reading an article on the economic impact of such closures on commerce and basically how addicted we are to the technology we use. And there have been threats of many other closures and actual closures over the years since.

Being a "junkie" myself when it comes to today's wealth of gadgets and what they add to our everyday lives, I didn't think too much of Katie's comment about it being sad that we have withdrawals when we can't access what we've become addicted to. Who doesn't start a pot of coffee in the morning and then go over to the computer and go to Facebook, CNN, check their mail, or whatever else may interest them? I know I do, and when it doesn't work I start to get the wiggles in my knees and it makes me want to jump and shout.

While I understand it is unfortunate that we seem to need to text, email, chat, or any number of things that do not involve direct human communication; we also rely on our cars to get us to work, the gas that goes in the car, and the electricity that makes all of our technological advancements possible. We all rely on something that 50 years ago we didn't have, or have much of. So it appears that phone calls, letters, and face-to-face conversation are going the way of tube televisions, and our inability to live without the creature comforts without some sort of symptom of withdrawal is now inevitable. You can't go out to dinner without seeing virtually everyone with their phones positioned about six inches from their faces. Goodness, what would they do otherwise? Perhaps converse to

the person they're with?

Along with the Internet and the pantheon of other technological wonders is that damn phone or some other technological marvel that allows you to carry your entire music collection, or allows you to "stream" it from something called the "cloud." This actually started about 35 years ago with the advent of the CD. All of your old, dusty, crackling albums were being replaced with digital equivalents that rendered your trusty LPs obsolete. CDs were great, they didn't scratch, they didn't have any hiss, and were virtually distortion-free. You got a small case with album art, and all of the other information you got with a traditional long-play record.

Now we're looking at the obsolescence of the CD and CD player as a viable way to listen to our favorite music. Today, streaming rules.

When I was a kid, I couldn't wait to go to the record store and pick up the latest Springsteen or Stones album, put it on the turntable, and listen to the record while reading the liner notes. I wanted to know who wrote the songs, who played on the album, who produced it. In the case of older albums, I wanted to know what year it came out. Of course I wanted to listen to the music, but the music wasn't complete without a history of what went into making that record. And that album cover was just the right size to clean your favorite herb while listening to the latest offerings from Keith and Mick.

The discussion with Katie, and my bemoaning the state of today's music, made me think of a favorite movie of mine, and one of the best scenes regarding music ever filmed. The

1982 movie, "Diner" takes place in Baltimore in the late 1950s, and starred a cast of young actors including Mickey Rourke, Kevin Bacon, Steve Guttenberg, Daniel Stern, and Ellen Barkin. Stern and Barkin were a young married couple going through what young married couples go through. They were drifting somewhat, trying to figure it all out. Stern's character "Shrevie" was a serious music fan. He alphabetized and categorized his record collection and knew all there was to know about the music he loved. Shrevie's wife, played by Barkin, just wanted to listen to the music.

Shrevie's wife, Beth, was listening to some music one evening, and while going through his collection Shrevie noticed some of his albums in the wrong section, or not alphabetized correctly. When he asked Beth about this, she exclaimed, "Shrevie, it's just music!"

That was the wrong thing to say. I've had very heated exchanges with people about this very statement, and no, it's not just music. It's a part of your life, it takes you back to when you were young and were going to live forever; or when you met your first girlfriend, or your first kiss. Music is magical. It can make you laugh, or it can make you cry. Music is truly a history of your life, and in some ways a peek into your future.

If Shrevie was around, (and maybe he is), I don't think he'd like the way music has evolved, or at least the way you listen to it. Something always seems to get left behind as we move on to bigger and better.

And I'm not so sure that is always a good thing.



PHOTO PROVIDED

Roger Fairfield, Sharlene Weed, Rep. Daniel Bonham and Dwane Krumme were in Salem last week to discuss housing issues with legislators.

HABITAT: Program directors lobbied in Salem

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and advocacy to 28 Oregon Habitat for Humanity affiliates.

More than 25 Habitat supporters met with 40 legislators. House Bill 4007 would generate sustainable funding for homeownership assistance programs and emergency shelter and affordable rental housing. The advocates also requested a ballot

referral that would amend the Oregon Constitution to allow municipalities to use certain bonds to finance affordable housing. The bills are expected to move out of committee by mid-February.

Sisters Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, community and hope. Since 1991, 63 families have purchased their homes with affordable financing through the local organization. For more information about Sisters Habitat call 541-549-1193 or email info@sistershabitat.org.

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