

We Got the Beat ...Again

BY ALEXANDRA KLOSTER

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ILLUSTRATION BY ROB EDWARDS, CLEMSON U., S.C.

"I WENT TO A PARTY LAST SATURDAY NIGHT ..." † Can you hear those words without instantly downloading an image of a leather-clad Lita Ford railing around on her wantonly placed guitar? † Well, I can't. The music of my youth — the '70s, '80s and counting — is burrowed so deeply in my subconscious that even the most common words innocently strung together send me into a fit of flashback frenzy.

Especially the tunes of the "Me" decade, when I hit my adolescent peak, and boys and jellies were more important than careers with full benefits. Maybe I'm culturally deranged because I enjoy bands with spandex, fingerless gloves and three-times-around-the-waist-is-better-than-once belts. Bands rocked the nation's radio stations, threw fans in a tizzy with their one-hit wonders, inspired trends like unisex hair frosting and faded into obscurity.

Flock of Seagulls, Tiffany or Quiet Riot mean anything to you? Who's that little blond girl who donned crucifixes and lace? Whatever happened to the self-proclaimed Boy Toy anyway? Probably traded in fame for motherhood.

Fortunately for those who think the music went to an early grave, America's major media outlets are waking the dead. VH1's *Big Eighties* show, *It Came From The '80s* on MTV, as-seen-on-TV CD collections and local "Eighties for Ladies" bar nights are feeding the need for nostalgia.

But the love affair is, at best, bittersweet. The music excavates the most traumatic moments from a sealed tomb called memory. I embrace the musical genius of Milli Vanilli and the Nelson twins as much as the next gal, but should blue eye shadow, leg warmers and fluorescent pink fold-over socks (I admit under oath that I wore them with black pumps in hopes of just having fun like She-bopper Cyndi Lauper.) live on?

The diversity and originality represented by Color Me Badd, Menudo and the New Kids just don't make up for the reign of terror I caused. I'm barely 5 feet 2 inches now, but in high school I rose to a statuesque 5 feet 7 inches, thanks to liberal amounts of Aqua Net, a kinky perm and the talent of early-morning bathroom beauticians. I relished my newfound height until I nearly caused a major car accident. I was bouncing to Lisa Lisa and the Cult Jam when my aerodynamic hair KO'd the driver without missing a beat. Women like me are hunted down as threats to the ozone layer.

This is a dilemma. I'm a junkie. I can't even leave the house when a good Wham song comes on. I can't blame it on the rain. Soon you won't be able to

find a vein. Vacation is all I ever wanted. I have to believe that someday I'll be able to listen to K-Tel records or watch an *A-Team* episode guest starring Boy George without wondering, "Do they really want to hurt me? Do they really want to make me cry?"

Like, omigod, Alexandra Kloster is currently in rehab. She has surrendered her boss acid-washed jeans and Sebastian Bach posters as the first step to recovery.



Double Take

You may not rule the world yet, but you can start pillaging it with the new book *Cheaters Always Prosper: 50 Ways to Beat the System Without Being Caught*, by U. of California, Santa Barbara, student James Brazil (not his real name). A few Brazilian hints:

- There is such a thing as a free lunch. Place shards of glass in your dessert at a fancy restaurant or plant chewing gum on the booth of a low-class joint and sit on it. Then raise hell. The manager will come running with free food and gift certificates.
- Catch a free ride. Tell a car dealer you just got an inheritance and love the newest model, but you need to drive it for a day before you make a decision. Take a joy ride and, when you bring the car back, say you'll finalize the purchase the next day. Don't go back.
- Hot new wheels. If you need a new set of tires on your car but can't bear to cough up the 400 bucks, get yourself a \$35 rental car instead — and switch the tires. As long as your tires aren't bald, the rental employees won't notice when they check the car in.

Check out the full interview with scam artist James Brazil at <http://www.umagazine.com/u/rocks>.

Spare Time, Andy Farkas, East Carolina U.

Strip Tease

