

# Features

## Xcapades: A great place to take a first date

By Dru Martin  
Staff Writer

### Review

So after a night at Xcapades all I can say is 'bahama-ma-blue-balls-guhga-fuhga.' Granted, it wasn't the best strip club I've ever been to, but the girls are all so nice, and we all know that personality goes a long way. For all the males out there, you'd like it even if you were blind. For all the females, well, you might like it too.

The rules and regulations boil down to three stipulations. Dancers must have a \$510 license for each year that they dance. Second, Buncombe County has an ordinance which says that the bottom apparel stays on. Last, but defi-

nately not least, patrons cannot touch the dancers in any way, shape or form. From time to time, rowdy rednecks have gotten a little grope in, but to no avail. The Xcapades dancers do not go that far and the customer is not always right.

In the last two years there have only been three arrests at Xcapades, which were all outside. The DJ attributed this low sparring number to behavioral modification. In other words, the guys do not fight because they want to continue to see the dancing ladies, and see they do. Xcapades has a total of 21 dancers with anywhere from six to nine on weeknights and nine to 15

on weekends.

Of course, all the dancers have the patented leg-on-the-shoulder move down pat and can thrust and thrive with rather magical appeal. However, once you start to talk with them, you'll see that nine out of 10 ladies just want to give you a lap dance. Lap dances go for \$10, \$20, or \$30, depending on how close you want to be with your temporary significant other. For those patrons that are a little more ambitious, shower dances are available as well. On average, a shower dance will go for about \$50 a pop and doesn't include a towel.

Scarlet, one of the lovely ladies of the night, claims that she brings home around \$800 per week, which entails four nights of taking it off for the boys. The average weekly income ranges from \$500 to \$1,500, depending on the frivolity of the dancer. Now, I know most of you ladies are

thinking, "How the hell did I end up in this job? It's time to dance!" However, before you begin an illustrious career in the titillating world of topless dancing, consider how accurately you can thrust your pelvis. The only reason I mention this is because guys know when you are faking the shake.

Xcapades has been a topless club for five years. The present manager, Darryl Callahan, is a sincerely nice guy. He is more than accommodating to his customers, but his dancers always come first. He hasn't had to throw many people out, but he's not afraid to draw the line if one of those pesky drunken rednecks starts bothering a dancer.

Not only is Xcapades a topless bar, but it's also an "Exotic Entertainment Sports Complex." There's no membership required, but the complex does include pool tables and

several televisions at the bar to capture your attention while changing that \$20 bill into all ones. Surprisingly enough, the bathrooms were extremely clean.

Most of the rhythmically-charmed thumpers of the entertainment complex are in their early twenties, although there is one dancer who is close to 50. When I asked Bobbi, a kinder, gentler, blonde entertainer, if the mid-40-year-old still had the goods, she emphatically replied, "Oh, yeah!" This just goes to show that if you have enough money and plastic byproducts, then you can dance until that feisty feeling leaves you.

So the overall verdict: I'd recommend Xcapades for the first date. There's no need to take life seriously enough to get embarrassed by going to a strip club. Besides, it would probably go down as your most successful first date ever (no pun in-

tended). If you go on Monday night there's cheap Icehouse Light. Who are you trying to kid? Everybody loves sex, or else films such as "No Slim Dickins Here" wouldn't be so popular. Besides, no one would be reading this if it wasn't for the fulfilling act of procreation.

So I say strip down those superficial walls and call it how it really is. You most likely won't come back after the first time anyway, unless you want to see the mystical motions of the 40-plus dancer. If you've seen the pearl, then staring at the shell becomes boring rather quickly. If you do go, make sure you bring two things. You definitely want to have a lot of ones because not tipping a dancer is worse than not tipping your waiter. If you're not going to tip, then don't bother going. Also, don't forget a friend so you're not the sketchy pervert sitting in the corner by himself.

## Wolfe house seeks volunteers 'Pushing' merely OK

By Beth Hoyle  
Staff Writer

The Thomas Wolfe Memorial, nestled among the businesses of downtown Asheville, is looking for volunteers.

"A lot of the visitor service that has worked here in the past has depended on volunteers," said Kim Hewitt, a historical interpreter who acts as the assistant manager at the Thomas Wolfe Memorial.

Until a few years ago, the staff of the memorial was very small, and volunteers were required to do frontline work, according to Hewitt.

The volunteers dropped from seven to two due to the 1998 fire, according to Hewitt.

"Due to the fire, our visitation has dropped tremendously," said Hewitt. "It has started to pick up a little more as more people are vacationing, but the fact that the house itself is closed has had a negative effect on our visitation."

The house is closed due to the damage inside and insurance problems that was caused by the fire.

The memorial lost only about 15 percent of the artifacts that were in the house during the fire. The main damage was in the entirely burned dining room. Other damage came from smoke and water, according to Hewitt. The visitor center contains some artifacts that were not harmed in the fire. As more damaged artifacts are restored, they will also be put on display in the visitor center.

"We definitely will reopen (the house)," said Hewitt. "We don't have a definite date set yet, and that is partly because we are still waiting for

the final plans from the architect. We hope to get the plans sometime this summer, and at that point I think the state will probably set a timeline goal."

Hewitt said she does not expect that the house will be ready to reopen before the year 2001.

The tours are now held outdoors, going around the house, and still focus on Wolfe's childhood.

Special programs have also been developed. Starting at 2 p.m., tours of downtown Asheville are given with a focus on the downtown that Wolfe would have known. Also a program is presented at the visitor center concerning the changes of household appliances at the turn of the century in the afternoons.

"Over the course of the summer, we hope to see visitation increase, and we want two or three volunteers to try out this summer," said Hewitt.

Those who want to volunteer do not have to have background knowledge of Thomas Wolfe. "What's really important is that they like to talk to people because that would be the main work that they would be doing."

"It is also important that they (those wanting to volunteer) are interested in a museum and historic site atmosphere," said Hewitt.

The information that would be required to run the tours for the house and work the visitor center sales desk is provided to the volunteer.

Volunteers are trained by watching others give tours and by reading a basic training packet as well as other materials given to them.

Being a volunteer "really gives you a better understanding of people," said Hewitt. "It is a really good way to learn how to deal with different kinds of people."

Volunteering also helps one feel as if he/she is giving something back to the community.

Volunteer applications can be picked up at the Thomas Wolfe visitor center. Volunteers are needed for the weekdays, for three or more hours at a time.

By Wendi Williams  
Staff Writer

John Cusak and Billy Bob Thornton star in Mike Newell's latest film from 20th Century Fox, "Pushing Tin."

Newell is also known for his direction of "Four Weddings and a Funeral" and "Donnie Brasco."

"Pushing Tin" follows the lives of two New York City air traffic controllers in a testosterone-filled battle of wits and egos that only ends because the movie ends.

The opening scenes reveal the heart-pounding, fast-paced world of TRACON (Terminal Radar Approach Control). This central control area is responsible for the three major airports in New York City, Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark, as well as approximately 47 other smaller airports.

One of the controllers boasts that they have more lives in their hands in a single shift than a surgeon will have in an entire career.

In other words, they get as much "tin" lined up in order to "push" as many planes through as possible to keep the flights on schedule, and to avoid mid-air collisions.

The film is billed as a comedy, but it has a very serious storyline, with occasional comic relief. Cusak plays the big-shot controller, Nick "the Zone" Falzone, who

cannot allow himself to be wrong. His ego couldn't handle it and neither could his job. Thornton is the mysterious newcomer at TRACON, Russell Bell, who brings with him the reputation of being crazy enough to let a 747 fly right over his head just to experience the turbulence.

The macho rivalry starts with their jobs and continues with their wives. Cusak has an affair with Thornton's wife, Mary (Angelina Jolie), and nearly loses his own wife, Connie (Cate Blanchett), because of it.

It takes a bomb threat in the control room and the need to land a lot of planes in a very short amount of time to bring the two rivals down to the same level. The two are forced to work as a team, against both of their better judgments, to keep thousands of people alive. It comes down to the wire to save the passengers, or save themselves.

Their ultimate bonding experience happens when Thornton gets Cusak out on the runway to experience a little 747 turbulence of his own.

The acting in this film was very well done, especially by Thornton and Cusak. The two veteran actors brought a lot into an otherwise lifeless plot. Too much time was spent on the effects of the affair between Cusak and Jolie, and not enough time on the actual conflicts encountered at TRACON.

Glen and Les Charles, who wrote and produced "Taxi" and co-created "Cheers," wrote the story. Unfortunately, "Pushing Tin" doesn't live up to the legacy the writers have set as a precedent.

Don't write this movie off just yet. It is worth going to see, but don't expect much more than good acting and a couple of oversized egos.

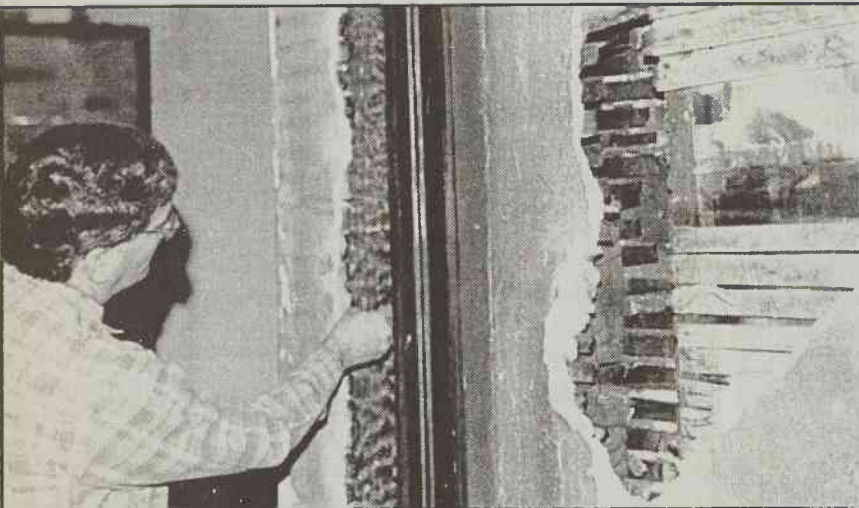


PHOTO BY PATRICIA GONZALEZ-DEAVENPORT

The Thomas Wolfe Memorial wants volunteers to help give tours of the outside of the house.

## No Soup Nazi at The Noodle Shop

By Erica Shusha  
Staff Writer

The Noodle Shop, located in downtown Asheville, serves up fresh and healthy authentic Northwest Chinese food, from wonton soup with edible wood-fungus to ginger and scallion shrimp.

If it is time to satisfy your taste buds with the most authentic Chinese food around while eating in a friendly relaxing environment, The Noodle Shop definitely fulfills with their tasty selections.

"We've only been open for less than four months, and our business is doing spectacular," said Jing Wang, owner of The Noodle Shop. "I wanted to open an authentic Chinese restaurant, unlike the fa-

miliar Americanized Chinese restaurants, in order to introduce some real Chinese cooking," said Wang.

Wang previously worked at the family-run business at China Inn on Biltmore Avenue and jumped at the chance to open The Noodle Shop downtown in the location formerly known as Burgermisters.

"The Noodle Shop is unlike any other restaurant around, the closest comparison resides in Atlanta," said Wang.

"I wanted to serve the Asheville area this food where normally only the big cities cook up authentic food, but even still, this is my own creation," said Wang.

The Noodle Shop is a family-run business, according to Wang.

The Noodle Shop serves noodle bowls from Szechwan to Shandong while choosing vegetable or chicken stock for your base. In addition, you have the choice of a variety of noodles: angel hair; linguine; fettuccine; or rice noodles.

"Beside the noodle bowls, we serve rice platters with either

brown rice or steamed rice," said Wang.

The Noodle Shop's rice platters range from spinach tofu to baby bok choy with ginger and garlic sauce.

"We even created the soup, The Asheville Noodle, with chicken, beef, shrimp, crabmeat, carrot, radish, napa, cilantro and spinach," said Wang.

The Noodle Shop also serves a wide selection of different appetizers daily, from the popular spring rolls to spicy and sour napa and Chinese pancakes.

The Noodle Shop brews premium teas like black, jasmine and ginseng tea from Wang's hometown.

To display Wang's great taste in food and decorating The Noodle Shop serves their noodle soups in huge handmade pottery bowls, while your tea brews in small individual teapots.

"We appeal greatly to the health nuts in Asheville," said Wang. "All of our food is MSG free, only two selections on the menu are made

with corn starch and we never use canned vegetables; they're always fresh.

"Our food doesn't use any sauces, that's Northeastern Chinese," said Wang. "In our rice platters, we only use salt, sugar and soy sauce, nothing else."

The Noodle Shop's prices range from \$4.95 to \$12.95, and they offer daily specials.

Lunch hours are Tuesday to Friday 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and dinner hours are Monday to Thursday 5 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. Open Friday and Saturday from 5 p.m. to 10:30 p.m., closed Sunday.



PHOTO BY TRAVIS BARKER

The Noodle Shop, located in downtown Asheville, offers authentic Chinese cuisine.

### Review