

FEATURES

Deep inside the knots: dreadlocks at UNCA

Corbie Hill

Features Reporter

People have very strong feelings about dreadlocks, they either hate them or love them. Dreadlocks have become an acceptable accessory of popular entertainers or television personalities, and appear all over Asheville's downtown.

In many parts of America, however, dreadlocks are a little-understood fashion statement only seen on television.

Andy Faulk, an undecorated sophomore, has had several sets of dreadlocks. He currently doesn't, but misses having his.

"They're seen as something cool in the American media, and I can understand that. I see a lot of people around town sporting 'locks. I'm supportive, but somewhat it makes you think they're doing it just to be cool or different," said Faulk. "I think that people should get them, but for the right reasons."

Dolly J. Mullen, an assistant professor in the political science department, began growing her dreadlocks many years ago. She and her son, Jamal, both wear them.

Many people expect those with dreadlocks to be unsuccessful political extremists, rather than college professors.

"A lot of people look down on dreadlocks," said Mullen. "Dreads make a strong statement about someone's political views, so you have to get past people's preconceptions."

"I see kids in supermarkets saying to their parents, 'See! She has dreads, why can't I?' And, I'm a college professor," said Mullen. "I probably couldn't wear my hair like this if I were a lawyer."

"Toni Morrison had dreads for a



COURTESY OF THIRDFIELD.COM

Bob Marley, with the old-school natty dreads, helped popularize both Rastafari and roots, rock, reggae.

while, and I'm pretty sure Alice Walker did too. I feel like I'm in good company."

Haircuts that deviate from what is expected immediately subject their wearers to prefabricated stereotypes. People with mohawks, men with long hair and girls with shaved heads can all be challenged by these prejudices. But there are many stereotypes that can be applied to short-haired men and long-haired women.

Anyone who grows dreadlocks has to be aware of the statement that they are making, intentionally or unintentionally.

A social precedent has made dreadlocks the mark of a dissident. "Jamal complains sometimes that people just see his dreads, and that

he's not just Jamal, but Jamal with the dreads," said Mullen. "He's had dreads since he was nine. I told him when he started growing his dreads that people would assume things about him, and that he would have to be an individual so much more powerfully to overcome that."

Though no one I interviewed claimed to be a Rastafarian, dreadlocks are indicative of that faith.

The Rastafarian faith originates with the belief that Haile Selassie, an Ethiopian emperor, who died in 1976, was a living god.

Haile Selassie's original name was Ras Tafari before his coronation, and many Rastafarians believe he still lives today, according to www.swagga.com, a Web site that

documents black culture and history worldwide.

Rastafarian dreadlocks are a symbol for African roots and defiance towards "Babylon," the white power structure.

A chapter out of the Bible, which Rastafarians believe has been improperly interpreted by past churches, supports the freely grown hair and beards, according to the Web site.

"(Dreadlocks) symbolize the Rasta's roots, contrasting the straight, blond look of the white man and establishment. It not only shows their roots, but it is supported in the Bible: Leviticus 21:5 (reads), 'They shall not make baldness upon their head, neither shall they shave off the corner of their

beard, nor make any cuttings in the flesh.' The way the hair grows comes to represent the symbol of the Lion of Judah, which represents Haile Selassie, the conqueror," according to the Web site.

Though he's not a Rastafarian, Andy Faulk found a spiritual connection through his dreadlocks.

"It felt good, letting nature take its course and letting your hair grow like it was supposed to. I felt like I could put my mind to more important things without having to worry about my hair," said Faulk.

Mike Cole, an undecorated freshman, doesn't have a spiritual connection to his dreadlocks.

"I've had dreads for about three years because I found a knot in my hair one day, and that's about it," said Cole.

There is also a contingent of UNCA students who don't have positive feelings about dreadlocks.

Jack Senchal, a senior math major, has a problem with people who let their dreadlocks get out of control.

"I have a problem with nasty hippie dreads," said Senchal. "If a person is going to get dreads they

should have them nice, and well maintained and clean. If it's just one, big, unkempt, nasty dread, then they should shave it off."

Dennis Woods, a junior multimedia arts and sciences major, is disgusted by dreadlocks.

"To me it's awful nasty, not washing your hair for a long time, letting it get all knotted up," said Woods.

Dreads aren't a result of uncleanliness, according to Andy Faulk. People assumed that he was dirty because of his dreadlocks.

"I got the usual reactions when I had dreads. People who knew what they were talking about would say 'Hey, nice dreads,' and ignorant people would think I was dirty," said Faulk. "I batted. I kept myself clean. I just happened to have dreads."

Andy no longer has dreads, and why?

"Because it was the summer time, and they got really hot. I was working and it just got nasty so I cut them off," said Faulk. "I wasn't patient enough, and I guess that's what dreads are all about is patience, letting nature take its course."



"Toni Morrison had dreads for a while, and I'm pretty sure Alice Walker did too. I feel like I'm in good company."
-Dr. Dolly Mullen

New music venue to open downtown

Max Taintor

Features Reporter

The Orange Peel, a new live music venue in downtown Asheville, will hold its inaugural concert Oct. 25.

The opening show features Sonny Landreth, a Louisiana-based blues slide guitarist who plays an unorthodox guitar style. He simultaneously plays slide and makes fingering movements on the fret board for a unique sound.

He will be performing with Tift Merritt from the former group The Caribines.

Other upcoming shows include Galactic with Mofro, Junior Brown, Karl Denison's Tiny Universe, the power trio Medeski, Martin and Wood, and the band Pork Tornado, a side project of Phish drummer Jon Fishman.

The Orange Peel owners, Jack and Leslie Groeth, ran night clubs for over 12 years in New Orleans.

"They decided to come to Asheville to visit friends, and they loved it here."

"They initially wanted to get out of the club business but decided to give it another go."

"The Orange Peel has a mission to become not only a live music venue to rival any in the nation, but also to become a community center for cultural arts and events in Asheville," said Jack and Leslie Groeth.

"They consider it more of a social and pleasure club" than a concert hall.

Locally, The Orange Peel will rival the Asheville Music Zone, Stella Blue, and the Grey Eagle.

"As far as competition we're not looking at them like, oh, they've got big shows and we've got to be



COURTESY OF NEWSON MANAGEMENT

Karl Denison (above) and his Tiny Universe are among the first acts scheduled to perform at Asheville's newest music venue, The Orange Peel. The first show is scheduled for Oct. 25.

bigger and better," said Kris Baldwin, head bartender and office manager of the Asheville Music Zone.

"I plan to go to some of their upcoming shows, and just like all the other music venues in town, we try to keep it professional and courteous," said Baldwin.

Upcoming Orange Peel shows include an Oct. 27 date with Little Feat and special guest Blue Dogs. Little Feat has a large cult following and are a hit with the critics.

Their classic sound is a mix of Blues, R & B, country, and rock and roll.

Music enthusiasts in Asheville hope to find changes from the usual music venue at the Orange Peel. Many complain about the lack of room in various clubs, the cost of food and limited variety of activities at some venues.

"The atmosphere of Asheville music venues) certainly depends on whoever's playing, but the company is usually good and the drinks are too," said Mary Anne Bennick, a junior at UNCA.

"If they (Orange Peel) stick with what they love, and can intuit their customers' wants, it should be a fabulous place for Asheville to take full advantage of," said Bennick.

The Orange Peel is also planning theme nights, such as swing, contra or Latin dance nights, and special Sundays that could become pig pickings or hoodwinks.

Several bands previously booked at the Asheville Music Zone already appear on the Orange Peel's concert schedule.

For upcoming show, tickets and more information visit The Orange Peel Web site at www.theorangepeel.net.

Upcoming shows that won't suck

Jack of the Wood- 9/27- Sons of Ralph

Stella Blue-10/2-David Nelson Band

Emerald Lounge- 10/4- Strut
10/5-Magraw Gap reunion featuring Larry Keel
10/10- Snake Oil Medicine Show

Grey Eagle- 9/27-Count Clovis
10/11-The Hackensaw Boys
10/13-Larry Keel solo
10/18-James Mcmurtry

Get out there and boogie 'till ya fall over.

The Orange Peel

10/29- Karl Denison's Tiny Universe with Soulive

10/31-Bjorn Again

11/2-Sound Tribe Sector 9

11/9-Galactic

11/10-Pork Tornado

11/16-Junior Brown

11/24-Dick Dale

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