



# THE BLUE BANNER

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## Traveler opts out of city living

**ERIKA WILLIAMS**  
ewilla6@unca.edu - Contributor

Reflected in the wire-rimmed circle of glass which rested on the musician's nose, the dusty workshop itself became a sphere.

His old almond eyes, glistening like they could recite the knowledge of the world, rarely strayed from his wife while he spoke with an earthy, yet eloquent tone.

"I build homes, sometimes like castles for the people in Toxaway," said **Rob Olrech**, fiddling with the grey hairs of his beard with a calloused hand that was splattered with black caulk to match his jeans.

Olrech, who has no permanent residency but in the heart of his wife, **May Goring**, said he would never own a house like this. Olrech said he doesn't think anyone really needs to own a \$3 million home.

"I could drive you around the county, and show you about 50 houses I have built or renovated, and I am proud of that. Someone has to do it," Olrech said.

He spent many years of his life working odd jobs in exchange for food and shelter.

"I never really thought of myself as a homeless person, just hoboing around, I guess," Olrech said. "I spent some time living in my car, camping and in cabins."

**David Williams**, one of Olrech's previous employers, said he works harder than anyone he ever

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## 'Sexy Evil Genius' offers a devious delight

REVIEW



**LARISA KARR**  
A&F Editor

The lights were dim, the alcohol was flowing and trouble was afoot.

So began the opening scene of "Sexy Evil Genius," a new play brewed up from Asheville's warped and wonderful Dark Horse Theatre collective.

"Dark Horse Theatre is my company, and I have a lot of roles actually," said **Emily McClain**, the mastermind behind Dark Horse. "We have a guest director, Stephanie Hickling Beckman, from Different Strokes theater. I actually got Stephanie the rights to the show by calling the agent of the author, it was authorized and then I wrote the script for it."

Based on a 2013 film of the same name starring Michelle Trachtenberg and Seth Green, theatrical adaptations of film are nothing new for the seven-year-old company.

"We tend to do dark comedy like 'Heathers' and 'The Last Supper,'" McClain said. "I look for stuff that has one set. This was set in a bar, and so it was made for that. It also just has to have a dark undercurrent of craziness."

A theater major in college who ended up rebelling "because of the studying," McClain reveals that Dark Horse's slow but steady gallop started because of a dare

in 2008.

"I was hanging out with friends at a lake house and somebody said that they would like to do *Heathers* on stage and I said, 'I'm doing it,'" McClain said, "That being our first show, we had about 13 people. It was a ridiculous, huge cast of all my friends, so they were impossible to rein in."

"Sexy Evil Genius," their ninth production, is a demented treat to relish and enjoy, as it provides an chance to observe a series of amusing interactions between odd characters through the course of one drunken evening.

Beginning with tension-filled banter between a salesman and a free spirit, it is revealed they have both been asked by the same person, **Nikki Franklin**, to come to the bar. And yes, both characters are, it turns out, her exes.

Zac is the salesman, disgruntled by the fact that he's at a bar drinking martinis stuffed with olives when he could be at home, eating dinner and not engaging in such precarious behavior. **Miranda**, a former junkie fiercely dressed in black, sips her absinthe with cool precision from the other end of the bar, taunting Zac's white-collar lifestyle all the while.

At this point, **Miranda** reveals her knowledge that **Nikki** is also an alleged murderer and as they start discussing the periods in their life when they were together with **Nikki**, a third character appears.

**Marvin Coolidge**, a suave jazz man who is part of a group called the **Re Bops**, twirls his way into the bar, also revealing his past as **Nikki's** former lover.

This is the only thing any of them really have in common.

Zac, a goody-two-shoes



Photo by Makeda Sandford- Staff Photographer.  
Scott Bean and Desmond Zampella performing "Sexy Evil Genius."

who vomited blueberry pancakes on **Nikki's** shoes after prom, was her first boyfriend. Left in the dust because she deemed him too boring, **Nikki** later developed a heroin addiction and consequently, a relationship with the rough-and-tumble **Miranda**, who she met in rehab. **Nikki's** relationship to **Marvin**, however, did not seem rooted in a seminal period in her life. Rather, it sounds like he is one of many recipients of her sprees of lust.

As they delve more into the timeframe and details of the story, the suited individual seated at the bar reveals their presence and what ensues is nothing short of mayhem and madness.

**Desmond Zampella**, an actor from Florida, discussed both the positives and pitfalls of playing **Marvin**, a character who ultimately had more of an impact on **Nikki's** life than the audience is initially led to believe.

"I didn't like that he was



Photo by Makeda Sandford- Staff Photographer.  
Emily McClain and Zampella share a moment.

manipulative.  
You shouldn't

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## Queer Studies Conference comes to "Lovetown"

**TIMBI SHEPHERD**  
jshephe3@unca.edu - A&F Asst. Editor

Queer studies scholars from across the country gathered on UNC Asheville's campus this weekend for the university's

biennial Queer Studies Conference.

Attendees began arriving Thursday, just one day after April Fools' Day, pranksters transformed the city's "Welcome to Pepsitown" billboard, rendering

its message "Welcome to Lovetown."

This literal sign of change reflects a set of questions **Joe Urgo**, interim provost, asked the crowd while introducing the conference's keynote

speaker, **LGBT rights activist Urvashi Vaid**.

"Will society look the same 50 years from now? Except that then we'll have queer generals waging unjust wars? Queer embezzlers ripping us off?

Queer moguls exploiting low-paid queer workers?" **Urgo** said. "Or will the LGBT movement lead us to something more equitable, something less violent, something more humane?" These are just a few of

the questions with which **Vaid** grapples in her work, **Urgo** said, indicating that this kind of critical inquiry is what the Queer Studies Conference is all about.

"This is the hard intel-  
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