



Connections ... R&B, Beach Music and Rock 'n' Roll by Gene Laughter

O.D. was so small back then. But gaudy. Loud! A carnival, of sorts, nestled there among the cottages, by the sea. This tiny resort was the summer gathering place for kids who migrated there each year for a season of sunning, beer drinking, fighting, loving, dancing, hell raising, hustling and fun. It was a mixed bag, as many were outcasts or there for pure escapism. One ingredient cemented a lasting relationship of this band of rebel individualists - a common love for the the black rhythm and blues music of that day.

Ocean Drive Beach was known in the 50's for this jive boogie music that blared from the many Rockola and Wurlitzer juke boxes. It was music that could not be heard "back home." This music was taboo!

In the Southeast, this R&B style of music, and many later tunes influenced by it, is now known generically as "beach music" - probably because, for many whites, it was first heard at the beach. We never heard the expression, "beach music" in those years at the beach.

Now, I'm not referring to the pretty, lily-white, blue-eyed, Anglo Saxon Embers and Catalinas variety of "beach music," with cute lyrics about the sea, sun and suds. Brothers and sisters, I'm talking about down-home, funky, sweaty, loud, shouting, thumping, cooking, rocking, chicken shack, gospel inspired negro boogie and blues!!!

This was R&B, or, "race music," played by, recorded for, and marketed to, blacks. It was known to the musicians, who made little bread for their endeavors, as "chitlin' circuit" music. It was not intended for a white audience; not until after 60 Minute Man "crossed over" and a large, national white audience was discovered.

Most white radio stations of the day would play the music of only a few black artists and the lyrics had to be squeaky clean. Nat "King" Cole, the Mills Brothers and the Ink Spots were a few of the exceptions that got air time. But along the Grand Strand, at South Carolina beaches, this suggestive negro music could be heard - in spades (no pun intended)! Slowly, a following of white fans developed that eventually grew into a cult, of sorts - a lifestyle!

Why at the beach? What was the reasoning, the rationale, of this black music finding its way to white O.D.? Perhaps we will never know. My guess is, it was because of O.D.'s proximity to Atlantic Beach, S.C.

This small negro beach developed between the beaches of O.D. and Myrtle as a gathering place for the maids of white vacationers and for negro locals. Most cottages of the time had a maid's quarters - a separate, but unequal, structure normally located behind the main cottage, by the street (a haven for beach bums!). Those that could afford it brought their negro maids along to handle the chores and the children! After dinner dishes were put away, the maids would congregate at Atlantic for R&R and R&B!

The juke boxes at the Atlantic Beach nip joints were serviced by the same guys who serviced, and owned, the jukes at O.D., and as records were changed on the jukes at Atlantic, the old platters would move up to the juke boxes of O.D. The music played on the Atlantic Beach boxes had a major influence on the music played at the white pavilions up and down the strand.

The records were changed on a weekly basis, and, at a nickel a play, they had to produce to stay on the boxes. Who was hot on the jukes at O.D. in the early 50's? Stick McOhee, Lucky Millinder, Amos Milburn, Joe Turner, Jackie Brenston, Ivory Joe Hunter, Margie Day, Louis Jordan, Fats Domino, Piano Red, Joe Liggins, Tiny Bradshaw, Wynonie Harris, Ruth Brown, Earl Bostic, Little Esther, the Clovers, Roy Milton, the Dominoes, the Ravens, etc., etc.

The phrase, "rock and roll" kept poppin up in the lyrics of these R&B tunes. "She rocks me with a steady roll ...," "There's good rockin' tonight ...," "I rock 'em roll 'em all night long ...," etc. This expression, of course, was black jive talk for "making love." It got right down to the nitty gritty!

A few years later the tag, "rock and roll," was hung on a completely different brand of music and a new generation went crazy over "rock" without knowing what this expression really meant!

R&B black recording artists must have split their sides in laughter when white DJ's started screaming the negro slang expression for fornicating, "rock 'n' roll," over the very same air waves that had banned their music ... because of its suggestive lyrics!!!



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Our daughter, Kim Summers, who works the door at S.O.S. functions, gave birth to a 9 lb. 6 oz. son on July 8. Matthew will attend his first S.O.S. this Sept.

WE GET LETTERS

"THE REAL BEAVER BOYS (PRIOR TO THE TIME SWINK AND JOE SCREWED UP A GOOD THING AND EVENTUALLY DROVE BEAVER CRAZY)!"

Much of what Swink said is true. (Editor's note: If much is true, is the balance untrue?)

Dishwashing and housecleaning duty was rotated nightly with the understanding that the dishwasher was free to round up whatever assistant, skilled in general house work, he could entice into that rat's nest. He was also assured (by hanging a towel on the door) that he would not be disturbed until all the house-keeping chores were complete to his satisfaction.

In the old days we never got a 10% commission, but the grocery bill normally ran about \$7 per week each, occasionally more if someone poured a 5th of Dixie Bell in the ice tea pitcher after mutual agreement to "put it on the grocery bill." Any leftover tea was the property of the dishwasher to use as he saw fit.

The work day is accurately described in Swink's article except that, in the good old days, each "zombie" went forth after eating a good nourishing breakfast. If eating breakfast was not possible, the "zombie" could spend that time giving himself whatever medication was necessary.

Lunch at Zane's came after the rebellion. Prior to that each Beaver Boy had to work out his own arrangements. I preferred a greasy hamburger from the nearby grill since everyone there knew me.

The reason everyone there knew me was that they had to step over me to get in when they went to work, on my first morning on the job in 1951...

One other thing that Swink omitted (editor's note; what was the first thing omitted?) from his article was that great natural event that all lifeguards, past and present, learned to look forward to, pray for, and sometimes delve into the occult arts to conjur up, if all else failed, ... A RAINY DAY!!! The sound of a torrential down-pour at dawn gladdens my heart until this day.

On rainy days Beaver went into deep depression. The rest of us went into the liquor store. Then it was time to steal Beaver's truck and make the rounds of the house parties.

Who would have ever thought that the best job any of us would ever have would only pay \$35 a week?

George Meyer, III

Thanks, George, for your sage, pithecanthropic and senile additions to the exciting, ongoing saga, "The Beaver Boys Visit Ocean Drive," soon to be a major motion picture.

"Bet you guys would have come up with some reason to call yourselves 'Beaver Boys' even if you hadn't worked for a man named Beaver!"

The Beaver Boys were a fine group of outstanding scholars and a credit to their generation. We were known as "Beaver Boys" in honor of our friend, mentor and employer, Walter Beaver. None of the lads were trappers or dealt in pelts.

"Have you collected on the bad checks sent in for S.O.S. memberships yet? It's hard to believe that members would "stiff" the S.O.S.!"

All but five have paid up. Three in Durham, one in Raleigh and one in Denver, NC. We'll post their names on the S.O.S. Honor Roll of Rubber in the next newsletter if they haven't paid up!

"What's the program for the September S.O.S. Migration ... has it been finalized?"

Not final yet. We'll get rolling on Wednesday, the 11th, and shuck 'n' jive through Sunday. There will be another newsletter, and maybe two, prior to the migration and we'll keep you posted. There are still a couple of big things up in air that we're hesitant to announce 'til we get confirmation. SOS VI will be a MONSTER!



JAX, FLORIDA ON THE S.O.S. MAP!

Funny how the S.O.S. catches on in different areas. A couple of years ago there were only a very few members from Raleigh. Now it's one of the leading S.O.S. cities. My guess is that Red's Beach Club, and a growing interest in Beach Music, played a big part there. Now Jacksonville, Florida is on a roll! Jim Money came up from Jax last Sept. and returned in March with some Florida friends. They must have spread the word for we've received a lot of membership applications from Jacksonville recently. The beat goes on. Welcome Floridians!

Return to Sender

KNOW ANY OF THESE '85 S.O.S. MEMBERS? THEIR MAIL IS BEING RETURNED. EITHER THEIR ADDRESS WAS WRONG ON THEIR APPLICATION OR THEY HAVE MOVED AND WE HAVEN'T BEEN UPDATED. IF YOU KNOW ANY OF THESE FOLKS, ASK 'EM TO SEND THEIR CURRENT ADDRESS!

EUGENE DARNELL ... CHARLOTTE
 HENRY WOODWARD ... SPRING LAKE, NC
 SYLVESTER TRUNKETT ... NORTH MYRTLE BEACH
 JOHNNY SCOTT ... CAROLINA BEACH
 TERESA LAWSON ... RALEIGH
 GRACE STONE ... RALEIGH
 SPARKY STEWART ... CHARLOTTE
 JOHN HARPERSBERGER ... CHARLOTTE
 S.C. O'NEAL ... FAYETTEVILLE
 JENNIFER WATTENBARGER ... N. MYRTLE BEACH
 SAM GARRIS ... CHARLOTTE
 LARRY GREGORY ... RALEIGH
 TOM & DEE WOOD ... WINSTON-SALEM
 TERRE & JUDY SMITH ... PINNACLE, NC
 VICTOR LARKINS ... LAKE WACCAMAW
 CHARLES BOZZARD ... FOLLY BEACH
 HARRY BATES ... SAN ANTONIO

NAME THE S.O.S. NEWSLETTER

Send us your name for the S.O.S. newsletter. If your entry is selected, you'll get credit and two free memberships in the S.O.S. for next year. Send entries to SOS/POB 8343/Richmond, VA 23226.

DUCKS LTD. at O.D.

Ducks Ltd., H. Lee Brown's restaurant and bar with living room atmosphere, is the perfect place for a break from the beach music crowd. It's just a half block away from the "horseshoe" at 229 Main Street ... across the street from Hardwick's. Features oysters 'n' shrimp. 10% off the tab for S.O.S.ers!

IT WILL STAND IS BACK ...

'GOT A COPY RECENTLY IN THE MAIL. IT'S STILL THE QUALITY PUBLICATION COVERING THE BEACH BEAT. FOR SUBSCRIPTION OR INFO, WRITE I.W.S. COMMUNICATIONS, INC. P.O.B. 507, HARRISBURG, NC 28075.

S.O.S. DISCOUNTS

VACATIONING AT O.D. THIS SUMMER? DON'T FORGET TO TAKE ALONG YOUR S.O.S. CARD AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DISCOUNTS FOR S.O.S. MEMBERS!

10% Year 'round Discounts
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Coming up ... S.O.S. 5th Anniversary Migration ... Sept. 11th-15th
LATE BREAKING NEWS! SEE S.O.S. T.V. INFO ON BACK YOU MAY BE A STARR!

S.O.S. NEWS



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SOLO NOVEMBER PARTY ... WILL IT FLY?

We announced the plans in the last newsletter for a SINGLES BEACH PARTY planned for this November and, so far, the interest, as expressed by membership applications, has been sparse. If you are interested, you'll need to join NOW, or we're going to crash land the organization. We need at least 200 members to make this a reality. Don't worry, if SOLO (Singles Only Leisure Organization) doesn't fly, all money will be refunded in full. So, Be Young, Be Foolish, Fly SOLO!

SOLO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MAIL TO SOLO/ POB 8343/RICHMOND VA 23226

NO. OF MEMBERSHIPS AT \$12 EACH _____

AMT. (MAKE CHECKS TO SOLO) _____

NAMES _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE NO. _____ AGE _____



S.O.S. 'N' SHAGGING ON TV

Three TV shows are in the Offing!

1. AL MUNN & ASSOCIATES - Al filmed a 60 minute show, "Shaggin' on the Strand," at the '85 Spring S.O.S. Safari. This will air in all major markets in NC, SC, VA and GA between August 9 - 17! Check your local newspaper for exact time and station.

2. SC-ETV - A 30 minute show filmed at '84 S.O.S. MIGRATION. Still being edited. To be fed to all ETV stations by satellite in late '85 or early '86. More info later.

3. JACK WEBBER - Jack is an independent producer from Chicago who filmed a 60 minute show back in '81 at S.O.S. Migration. Jack has revived the project and editing final version. More info later.

More TV to come ... wear a smile in Sept.!

S.O.S. MEMBERSHIP CUT-OFF AUG. 15

No more S.O.S. membership applications will be accepted by mail after August 15. S.O.S. memberships will be available during daytime hours of the Migration, September 12 - 14 @ \$15 per person.

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