Welcome to *Copper* #69!

The aspens are starting to turn yellow here in Colorado, and [Rocky Mountain Audio Fest](https://www.rmaf.com) takes place October 5-7. Depending upon the machinations of publishing, it will either be forthcoming, in progress, or have already occurred. At any rate, I'm sure it will be/is/was a great show, once again!

Getting into this issue, **Larry Schenbeck** asks the musical question, "Why Do You Think They Call it Classical?"; **Dan Schwartz** is still recovering, so we'll revisit his memorial of **Paul Kantner**; **Richard Murison** remembers friends lost along the way; **Jay Jay French** remembers the birth of the [Beatles phenomenon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Beatles); **Roy Hall** remembers his school days; **Anne E. Johnson** brings us obscure cuts from all the incarnations of [Fleetwood Mac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleetwood_Mac); **Christian James Hand** deconstructs the anthemic MTV hit, "In A Big Country"; and I write about the difference between humility and hubris.

**Industry News** looks at the latest drama from [Sears](https://www.sears.com); and our friend **Rich Maez** brings us the first part of a feature on the glories of the [Monterey Auto Week](https://www.montereyautoweek.com).

*Copper* #69 concludes with **Charles Rodrigues** giving new meaning to [GUI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graphical_user_interface), and a [Parting Shot](https://leeb.com) that continues our automotive theme.

**Woody Woodward** is still on sabbatical, and we're looking forward to his return. We wish **Dan Schwartz** a rapid recovery.

*Copper* #70 will continue our [Vintage Whine](https://leeb.com/vintage-whine) series on phono playback with part 5, we'll continue Rich's piece on Monterey, and we'll have a feature on RMAF.

Thanks for reading, and I'll see you at the show! ...or, I'm glad to see you/it was good to see you, as the case may be!

Cheers, **Leebs**.
Why Do You Think They Call it Classical?

Written by Lawrence Schenbeck

Larry: Greetings, music lovers. Today we have a question or two for The Goddess of Conventional Wisdom—who has agreed to talk with us at length, in spite of her busy schedule. Our first question: Why do classical artists, and the Labels Who Enable Them, continue to record and re-record a handful of works that have already survived dozens of recordings, not to mention innumerable live performances?

Goddess of CW: Gosh, kid. Why do you think they call it classical?

L: I almost wish they didn’t.

CW: Maybe you’ll get your wish. I see from an article in some audio magazine that Gil Rose of BMOP is now calling it “the music formerly known as ‘classical.’”

L: So now it’ll be called . . . what? Oh, maybe that’s it: “What.”

CW: Always ready with the attempted joke.

L: Not really. I’d much rather discuss the Consequences and Corollaries of the Classical mindset, for example the Golden Age Illusion.

CW: Yeah, good luck with that. People who can argue for hours about moving-magnet versus
moving-coil will not only stick with their illusions, they’ll shop for more.

L: Actually, I don’t think MM vs. MC is that kind of argument. Or even an “argument.” But as Montaigne said, what do I know?

CW: Let’s get down to music. I understand you are consoling yourself in these dark days with familiar sounds. Tunes that have stood the test of time. Nothing, in short, like the stuff you raved about in your last column.

L: True that. Last night, gripped again by insomnia—brought about, I’m sure, by a combination of too many deadlines and too much breaking news—I turned to my hero Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904), specifically Symphony No. 6, in a performance that’s several years old now, James Gaffigan leading the Lucerne SO (Harmonia Mundi HMC902188). What magic! What wonderful, life-affirming, healing, tender, brave sounds! Why can’t they write ‘em like that anymore?

CW: Because you don’t really want them to. If it’s Dvořák you’re after, there he is. Already. In quantity. It’s not like someone else could ever do it again, or better. As the sign says, Fuhgeddaboudit. It was a Golden Age of symphonic composers, so there’s now (of course) a Golden Age of Dvořák interpreters too. Enjoy.

L: But I don’t really accept the notion of a Golden Age. I think we tend to imprint—whatever we hear first, or when we’re young, typically between ages 17 and 24, becomes our Favorite, Top Ten, Desert Island Disc, whatever. Eventually that may shut us off to new experiences, whether with the same music or with brand-new pieces in a different style.

CW: Hang on, I’m getting out my violin.

L: Hey, I’m not the one to be pitied and scorned! I’ve got credentials; I’m one of those omnivorous, open-minded musical adventurers. I should’ve been a rock critic, tossing out screeds and bon mots for the Village Voice.

CW: Hate to be the one who breaks it to you, but the Voice is no more. And you’re too old to become a rock critic anyway. So, what have you been up to?

L: Lately I’ve stumbled back into Dvořák’s chamber music. Several years ago I became blissfully aware of his String Quintet in G, Op. 77. A remarkable piece. Now a young-ish group, the Busch Trio, have decided to record all his music for piano and strings. So far I’ve heard the Piano Quartets (Alpha 288) and the Piano Quintets and Bagatelles (Alpha 403). Both are outstanding. Dvořák wrote his First Piano Quartet op. 23 in 1875, having won a grant that allowed him to turn down freelance viola gigs and concentrate on composing. He completed op. 23 in little more than two weeks, having finished the Serenade for Strings op. 22 in the two weeks before that. Melodies—nice Czech ones!—just kept pouring out:

The second movement is a set of variations. Listen to the way the Busch Trio and their mentor Miguel da Silva dive in:

Compare this slow movement to that in the Second Piano Quartet op. 87, written fifteen years later, at a point when Dvořák had achieved international fame. His handling of the materials is not only more assured, it works on a larger canvas, taking considerably greater risks:
The scherzo movements in these works are at least as well constructed, plus they are exciting. (I do wonder why Busch & Co. show up at photo shoots dressed like junior members of an early-'60s accounting firm. Maybe they're would-be Mad Men, or else they're hoping the anachronistic dignity of such covers will wear well.) Here's part of the scherzo from the Second Piano Quintet (!) op. 81:

Kudos to the Trio and guest artists Miguel da Silva and Maria Milstein, also producer Aline Blondiau. If I ever get the chance, I'm going to ask Didier Martin of Alpha/Outhere how he manages not only to sign such fine young artists but also to cultivate such a consistent "house sound"—never (to my ears) harsh in the treble, boxy, boomy, or overpresent.

CW: Gee, look at the time. Sorry, gotta get going.

L: Too bad. I wanted to tell you about other Golden Oldies I picked up this month. For example, a volume of Jan Willem de Vriend's Beethoven symphony cycle (Nos. 4 & 6, Challenge Classics CC72361). Also Liza Ferschtman's Mendelssohn (Challenge CC72748). Above all else, part 1 of Cuarteto Casals' Beethoven Complete String Quartets (Harmonia Mundi HMM 902400.02). The Cuarteto is a provocative bunch, so it could be fun.

CW: Wait a minute. I smell eau de déjà vu. Didn't you just complain about "a handful of works that have already survived dozens and dozens of recordings"?

L: Yes, but now I'd like to suggest a corollary to the Golden Age illusion, which is this: one never dips one's toe in the same river twice, and likewise one never actually hears the same music twice—even with the best/worst intentions (or perfect playback gear).

CW: Oh no no no. That's metaphysics or something. Thanks, but I gave at the office.

L: I happen to know you didn't, but here's a less abstract version: Edward Dusinberre has written an excellent memoir of life with the Takács Quartet, Beethoven for a Later Age: Living with the String Quartets. He talks about what it's like to work with three other high-strung professionals, how you negotiate your way toward a performance of, say, op. 127, and then another, and another. Each negotiation is different, each performance, each audience. All around you, life goes on. A violist departs; another arrives. Your colleagues grow old, or else they're less fortunate. Somehow Beethoven has to be re-created in spite of—no, because of—all this. Don't chide me about metaphysics and I won't kid you about Karajan, Fürtwängler, Böhm, Mengelberg, Bernstein, Kleiber père et fils. Did any of them stop history in its tracks by creating the perfect Fifth, Seventh, Missa solemnis? I think not. They just stuck their toes in the river.

CW: Maybe, but you miss the point. It's a jungle out there. We need you to tell us which one is best. We can't afford to audition ten different recordings of, say, op. 127.

L: There are no worthwhile shortcuts.

CW: Seriously? I happen to know that you own five complete sets of the Beethoven Quartets. Six, if you count the new Cuarteto Casals set, which you'll undoubtedly continue to collect as it comes out. And you're not going to tell me which is best? Even for op. 127?

L: I'm not.

CW: But isn't that your job? Come on, help me out a little.

L: If I do, it will lessen the experience you'll get for yourself. Your understanding of op. 127, in any
recorded performance, will be less authentic. It’s about what you bring to it.

**CW:** Okay, but shouldn’t I at least begin with one of the best? Can’t you offer at least that little bit of compassion to a poor, wandering beginner?

**L:** Huh. You’re not a total beginner. You’ve heard Steely Dan, right? As for Beethoven, he’s almost indestructible. So don’t try to find your Desert Island Disc right off the bat. Find *two* performances, listen to both with as much love and focus as you’ve got. Wait a couple years, then find two more. Lather. Rinse. Repeat. Over time—and I mean like ten years, twenty—you’ll build up more taste, more life experience, and a better sense of what’s in that music.

**CW:** You speak in tiresome clichés—which I love—but I know you’re right. So here’s my own corollary question: isn’t it possible simply to grow out of a piece, or even a whole composer?

**L:** You may grow weary of certain works. Give them a rest. Then leap back in, because you’ll be surprised at how much wiser, stronger, and more *fun* Mahler or Stravinsky has become since the last time you interacted with them.

**CW:** Oh, that’s clever, that is.

**L:** Just common sense. The work of getting to know the music can’t really be avoided, but the most pleasurable way to acquire that knowledge is *circular, over time*. Advance, retreat. Advance again. Like Beckett said, Fail. Try again. **Fail better.**

**CW:** Please, can’t we hear something nice *right now*?

**L:** No, but here is a bracing dose of late Beethoven from Cuarteto Casals. It may help you adjust your attitude toward direct, unmediated experience. You’re welcome.
Paul Kantner Is Dead, Redux

MUSIC, AUDIO, AND OTHER ILLNESSES

Written by Dan Schwartz

[Following the recent death of Jefferson Airplane lead singer Marty Balin, it seemed appropriate to revisit Dan's meditation on the passing of another Airplane band member—Ed.]

He died on Thursday, January 28th, 2016. The news hit me hard, and I was surprised at that. Not quite like Lennon, or Garcia for that matter -- I was so much younger then. But after the week's reflection, on reading endless online eulogies to him, the music, the times, I see it now.

After the Beatles — the reason I and countless others got into music — the Airplane was the biggest thing that happened to me when I was 13. My aunt gave me Jefferson Airplane Takes Off and Crown of Creation for my birthday. I bought a bass soon after, and immediately fell under the spell of Jack Casady, a spell that lasts until today (when I can say, cursorily at least, that Jack and I are friends).

The appearance of Casady was such an outsize event in my life, and in the life of many fledgling (and veteran) bass players that one really can’t say enough about him, so much so that the event obscured others. The Airplane’s singers of course, of which Kantner was one, were truly powerful, celebratory, frightening and impressive -- one of the great vocal trios of the time. And Jorma on lead guitar, well, he was all over the place, you couldn’t not hear him. Spencer on drums was his phenomenal self, pushing and pulling and coloring like mad.

You see where this is going: Paul Kantner (on rhythm guitar — mostly 12-string) went sort of unnoticed in the fury that whirled dervish-like all around him. Even on stage, he was unprepossessing, seeming to be the least among equals visually.

But now I’m listening to the Mobile Fidelity gold CD of Crown, and hearing for what seems like the first time how utterly essential he is to the whole. He’s the center, the body, the thing that everyone can fly off of. He actually plays the songs; all else is color. And it turns out, he was also the principal writer. How could I have not noticed how utterly essential he was? It wouldn’t be unfair to say he WAS Jefferson Airplane; as Mickey Hart of the Grateful Dead has observed, he was “the backbone” of the band.
And he’s gone.

When I heard the news, it was like hearing of the death of close friend. Even though the Airplane are many, many years gone, they’re still alive for me musically — or at least were until last week. I know this makes his death ultra-dramatic — it’s not quite as severe as it sounds. But there’s something essential to knowing that one’s early influences and heroes are still here, still walking around and sipping coffee at Caffé Trieste in San Francisco; a city he was from, where he lived his entire life (and not incidentally, where I intended to live but for circumstance).

When Lennon was murdered, it was personal. Even though I hadn’t listened to the Fabs in quite a few years, I grieved as if a family member had been killed. When Garcia died, it wasn’t a surprise — I knew he was in questionable shape. And I had seen him the year before.

But Paul Kantner’s death took me by surprise because I hadn’t been paying attention. And that was my error. I suppose we can’t pay attention to everyone everywhere all the time, and we had just had a beloved pet die — in my hands — a week before. But the next day it came out that their original singer, Signe Ettlin (before Grace Slick), died on the same day as Kantner.

Last fall, a friend who writes for Bernie Sanders’ website and I had the idea of trying to do some songs for his rallies. This brought us into contact with Kantner and the band, some of whom were very enthusiastic about Sanders using the song Volunteers. I discovered that Kantner had chosen to split all the royalties from the song with the whole band, way back when. He put his money where his mouth was.

With all that as preamble, I want to suggest a few songs to listen to, to hear what was so great about him. (None of these are audiophile records). I’m long past being objective about any of this, but, subjectively, what would I recommend? Try these:

“In Time” from Crown of Creation; Kantner at his most meditative and quietly psychedelic. The way the band handles the easy tension, as the song snakes to its conclusion is still, 46 years later, inspiring. In much of his writing from this period, you can feel the, um, “enhanced” perception that would develop from that altered view.

Lean close put your lips next to my face
Look further on past the surface
Orange, blue, red and green
Are the colors of what I feel
And my mind you know it starts to reel in time

“Fat Angel” from Bless its Pointed Little Head; a grey and foggy cover of the song Donovan wrote about the band.

Fly Trans-Love Airways
Gets you there on time.

“We Can Be Together“ from Volunteers; this is the man at his most expansive and seemingly political -- while remaining outsiders in Nixon’s America. Definitive. In fact, in reissue liner notes, he says the song isn’t not overtly political, not a call-to-arms, but rather a call to attention.

We should be together, my friends...
We can be together
We will be
“Wooden Ships”, Volunteers; co-written with David Crosby and Stephen Stills. I play this version for people to make a stark contrast with the CSN version, which to my ears is too tidy and much less fraught with emotional danger. Live tracked, with their trademarked vocal approach, and sounding like it’s about to fall apart (which, at least while the faders are up, it doesn’t do).

Blows Against the Empire. You’ve got to hear all of it, at least the first time. Then you can pick your songs — which will no doubt include “Have You Seen the Stars Tonight?”. Here he brought together everyone in the Bay to make a Hugo-winning science-fiction album. Some of it is sloppy and strident, some of it sublime, and all of it constitutes an extraordinary narrative.

There have been dozens of articles about Kantner since he died and most of those cite his writing on the albums Surrealistic Pillow and After Bathing at Baxter’s. Of those, I particularly like this:

As I write this, February 6th, 2016, it’s just been announced that Dan Hicks (of the Hot Licks, and the early SF psych band the Charlatans) has died as well, of cancer. Another hero. It’s too much. I mean, I didn’t like Glenn Frey at all, but still — they’re falling fast now.
As a kid in Minnesota during the early to mid-'60s, I was a fan of the Minnesota Twins. In spite of having a cut-rate stadium out in the then-sticks of Bloomington, 'way south of Minneapolis, and a payroll amongst the smallest in baseball, the team was often a contender, battling what we thought of as "big city" teams like the Yankees and the Dodgers.

When the Twins faced the Dodgers in the 1965 World Series, I was even allowed to lug a black and white portable TV into my school classroom---where we were able to watch Sandy Koufax do a number on my hero, bulky-like-me Harmon Killebrew. After skipping game 1 as it fell on Yom Kippur, Koufax threw in 3 of the remaining 6 games---imagine any major league pitcher being allowed to do that in our pitch-count era....

But I digress.

The Twins' Metropolitan Stadium out in the boonies was torn down in order to make way for the massive and bewildering Mall of America. The Twins moved to the domed Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome, AKA "Humpdome" near downtown Minneapolis; eventually, the dome was replaced by a shiny new open-air stadium, Target Field.

In the glitzy, megabuck era of professional sports in the 21st century, it's hard to recall an era in which team players were truly local, part of the community. The Twins' star outfielder Bob Allison lived near my relatives in the new suburb of Edina; other players lived in the area, and supplemented their fairly meager pay by selling cars or insurance in the off-season. And while they were local heroes, there was a sense of a team effort: showboating or displays of ego were considered crass, bad form. In a word, the players were, mostly, humble.

Moving to southern Illinois in the fall of 1966, the local major league team was the Cardinals. Aside from occasionally following the stunning work of pitcher Bob Gibson, I somehow never really got into following the Cardinals. Friends and I would occasionally listen and laugh as announcer Harry Caray would become increasingly incoherent during the course of a game---but that was about it.

Having moved south of Tampa around the turn of the century, I became aware of the Tampa Bay (Devil) Rays. Perpetual underdogs with a miserly payroll, they reminded me of the Twins of my
boyhood. Beyond that, they were not a good team, and their domed stadium was and is probably the worst in the major leagues. Once Joe Maddon appeared as Manager in 2006, things became far more interesting...though the team still lost. A lot. But because there was nothing really to brag about, the team and its players remained...humble.

Things started to click in 2008, and the Rays won their first Eastern Division title, over "big city" teams the Yankees and the Red Sox. They lost the World Series that year, but for the next few years, Maddon's development of young players and willingness to take a risk kept my attention. Then, in 2015, he moved to the Cubs....and I started following the Cubs, for the first time ever.

Initially, the team's scrappy attitude and the longtime Cubs curse kept things collegial and upbeat. I was happy to see them compete in division races in 2015 and win the World Series in 2016---admittedly, after a series of high-dollar deals.

My favorite player from the Rays, Ben Zobrist, had been brought from Tampa by Maddon. Despite having won World Series rings from both KC and Chicago, Zobrist was still modest, self-effacing, the ultimate team player. Aside from Zobrist, though---the team changed.

Chicagoans are not known for their humility. Even in the losing years---all 70 or so of them---Chicago fans were know to be loud and boastful. Perhaps the team reflected the character of the fans. Watching the theatrics of Javier Baez and other Cubs during their recent Wild Card game against my now-hometown team the Rockies, I was embarrassed. The Rockies were focused and low-key; they were now the underdogs that reminded me of those long-ago Twins...not the Cubs. Humility in the Cubs had given way to hubris ("excessive pride or self-confidence").

What's this got to do with audio? Oh, I think we've all seen companies change character once they gain a little success, forget their roots or the values that led them to success. I've worked for arrogant individuals as well as companies that have developed a culture of arrogance and self-importance.

I'm happy to work with folks who still put customers first, and who don't take things for granted.

Meanwhile: go, Rockies!
Lost Boys

QUIBBLES AND BITS

Written by Richard Murison

John MacCormick

My family moved to the city of Leicester, in the East Midlands of England, in the summer of 1968 when I was 13. My father had got a job nearby, where he struck up a friendship with a fellow Scot by the name of MacCormick, known by everybody as Mr. Mac. Dad was looking for a home to rent, and Mr. Mac told him there was a house available on his street, two doors along. Naturally, that’s where we moved to.

Mr. Mac had a son, John, who was two years older than me. But despite what was quite a large age difference (at least to a 13-year old) we soon became best friends. Over the course of the next two years we could always be found together, playing with a football (soccer ball) every free moment. John didn’t go to the same school as me – and in fact I don’t recall that he actually went to any school at all. He may have left school early, which was not unusual in 1968.

Over that couple of years John grew into a handsome young man. He was blond and blue-eyed, and an absolute magnet for all the girls. He began to go with me to many of my school’s social functions, and fitted in smoothly with my wider circle of friends. Every school day, all the pretty girls would at some point come to me to ask “How is John?”, which I suppose is better than them not wanting to talk to me at all! And being someone from outside the school circle also lent him a certain glamorous cachet.

Near where we lived was a local football club called Wigston Fields. They had quite a nice set-up with two full pitches, a practice goal, a club house, tea-rooms, and lots of field space. So John and I would regularly head on down there, often with other friends, and find a place to kick a ball around. One day, someone from the football club strolled over to where we were playing and asked John and I if we would mind playing for one of their teams. Apparently they were a man short, and needed a player plus a substitute. John was asked to play, and I got to be the substitute. John was barely 16, playing among hard men, but he played a cracking good game, while my contribution was that of a 14-year old unused substitute.
The opposition side was so impressed that they invited John to join their club, which he did. This team played on one of the most peculiar football fields I ever saw. One half was reasonably flat while the other rose up at quite an incline, so that the goal line was nearly 20 feet higher than the half-way line. On his first game for them, John scored a goal at the uphill end, quite a notable feat. Within weeks he was playing for their first XI. It was said that this was one of the local teams that Leicester City’s scouts would regularly watch.

**Mark Kenney**

When I went to high school, I immediately joined the choir. Guthlaxton School Choir had just begun to establish itself as one of the finest in the country, a status it held for a few years, and which I was privileged to have been a part of. The school choir would enter two or three major competitive music festivals every year, competing against adult choirs in musical competitions of an exceptionally high standard. The choir I joined in 1969 had just come off an amazing season in which they won every competition they entered, and for the next four years we would sustain that record, winning every single competition we entered, up and down the country. At one point there was an attempt to ban us, when another choir raised a formal complaint that we were somehow undermining competition, but that was quickly overturned.

Guthlaxton School formed part of a remarkable musical tradition in our county, Leicestershire. Under the leadership of Eric Pinkett, the Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra developed an unmatched reputation across the country, and was the subject of a prominent 1973 BBC documentary “The Other LSO” as part of which they were led in concert by the London Symphony Orchestra’s conductor, André Previn. Whenever the LSSO needed a choir, it was always our school choir which stepped in, and whenever our school put on a concert or an opera, the LSSO did likewise. Together we gave regular concerts at Leicester’s de Montford Hall.

Our school choir’s conductor, by some odd tradition, was also the conductor of the British United Shoe Machinery Company Male Voice Choir (the “BU”), and many of the boys would also sing with the BU. Usually the BU would enter the same competitions as the school choir, but in the Male Voice Choir section. We also enjoyed a winning competitive record at the BU, although not quite as comprehensive as the school choir’s.

Naturally, many members of the choir also had fine solo singing voices, not least of whom was a young tenor called Mark Kenney. He had the sort of voice that would just make you want to break out in a smile – a bit like Pavarotti in that sense. To this day whenever I hear “Take A Pair of Sparkling Eyes”, from Gilbert & Sullivan’s The Gondoliers, I always hear Mark Kenney’s golden tones. Mark sang in both the school choir and the BU. Whenever we put on an opera he always sung the tenor lead. He was also one of my circle of friends. Like John MacCormick, he too had a shock of naturally blond hair, and the sort of good looks that lent themselves naturally to a career on the stage.

Mark left school at 16 and joined the Fire Service. I always wondered why he didn’t pursue a career in music.

**What Was His Name?**

I went to Loughborough University in 1973, and was assigned to a residential hall by the name of Royce Hall. Just about all the university’s students lived on-campus in those days (and still do today), and it was quite a shock for the majority of young 17- and 18-year olds who suddenly found themselves wrenched out of home for the first time and thrown together into a cultural melting pot. There we all were, inner city kids and country kids. Rich kids and poor kids. Northerners and
southerners. Pakistanis and Indians, Greeks and Turks, Arabs and Jews. Chinese, West Indians and Malaysians. Canadians and Americans. Even Welshmen from Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwllllantysiliogogogoch (I visited one at his parents’ house a few times which is why, to this day, I can still not only spell it, but pronounce it too!). I found I adapted quite easily, but there were a fair number of youngsters who didn’t.

But by far the most unusual presence in Royce Hall was the boy whose name I don’t remember. He was, I suppose, at the Q end of what we today refer to as LGBTQ, but in 1973 we had no terminology for such things. He had a lot of Boy George about him, but a good 10 years earlier. He had a totally androgynous look, although not in the fashion-driven David Bowie style of the day. He wore long wrap-around dresses whose vibe was half way between femme-fatale and African tribesman. He wore stiletto heels and makeup. He had long hair that he wore in sleek and shiny styles. So, during the course of our first term, when we spoke of him at all it was naturally in snarky terms. He was a person for whom life had not up to that point provided me with a handy pigeonhole into which I could place him. In fact, it would be many years before it did.

By our second term I got to know him slightly in the sense that we did speak on occasion. He had a notable presence about him which conveyed the fact that he was totally at home with who he was, and didn’t particularly care what you thought of him. The other memorable thing was that his circle of friends was fiercely protective of him, and was not going to allow any inappropriate remarks to pass unchallenged. He commanded a remarkable loyalty. And you didn’t need to talk to him for long to understand why. He had more presence than anybody I had ever met up to that time, and possibly even since. He was very quietly spoken, but at the same time, you felt you wanted to listen to what he had to say. At no time did I ever hear him attempt to justify himself, but he would speak thoughtfully on whatever subject was at hand. And by the end of our first year, the snarky remarks had all evaporated.

In 1971, at the age of 17, John MacCormick was riding pillion one night on the back of a motorcycle belonging to a friend. The friend failed to navigate a sharp bend at high speed and both were killed. Mr. and Mrs. Mac were at my parents’ house when they got the news. It was a horrible night, and one whose memory is still emotionally raw for me. It was a very long walk to school the following morning, knowing that the first thing all the girls were going to want to know would be, “How’s John?”.

Mark Kenney had a keen sense of community and public service, which is why he joined the Fire Service. One night in 1972, he got the call at 1:00am, and drove off immediately. He lost control of his VW Beetle in the pouring rain, just round the corner from the fire station. He died at the scene, aged 19. One of his best friends, who had just got a job as a hospital porter, found himself wheeling his mangled body from the ambulance to the morgue.

I went back to Royce Hall for my second year at Loughborough University in the fall of 1974. The boy whose name I forgot wasn’t there. When I asked why, I was told that he had passed away during the summer, having suffered from a brain tumour. He can’t have been 20 yet.

We tend to live very self-absorbed lives these days. We mostly enjoy a standard of living that might have seemed unattainable to our parents’ generations. And whenever I get the urge to complain about how something isn’t going the way I wanted it to, or hoped it would, I need to think back on three people – contemporaries of mine – whose lives were cut short before they even had the chance to get them started. What lives might John, Mark, and the boy whose name I forgot, have lived if they had been granted the opportunity? What would each of them have given to experience the things that I get to complain about?
Loving the Beatles (In Real Time)

Written by Jay Jay French

With the 50th anniversary of the Beatles’ “White Album” this November 22nd, and my position as the Beatles featured writer for Goldmine magazine, I am steeped in Beatledom at the moment. Within the next week I will have been to a listening session hosted by Giles Martin in NYC as he plays the new White Album remix and outtakes. I also will be doing an interview.

This article, reprinted with permission from Goldmine magazine, describes why I, along with so many of the readers of Copper, find ourselves, addicted to the Beatles through their incredible music.

Enjoy!

Loving the Beatles (In Real Time)

I was born in 1952.

When I am asked by my friends to regale them with stories of growing up in the 60’s, the conversations tend to gravitate around some of the shows that I saw.

I, seemingly, was always at the right place, at the right time.
I was 10th row center for the Hendrix/Band of Gypsies New Year’s Eve concerts recorded at the Fillmore, at the John Mayall ‘Turning Point’ recording, at MSG for all three of the Rolling Stones Thanksgiving 1969 concerts, at the Band’s “Rock of Ages” concert recording, the Dead’s first NYC show, The Allman Bros. first NYC show, first row for Led Zeppelin's first NYC show, 3rd row center for Johnny Winters’ NYC debut, Stevie Wonder's first headline at Carnegie Hall, James Taylor’s first Carnegie Hall show, The Allman Bros. first NYC show, The Who and Cream’s first ever appearance in 1967 at the “Murray the K” Easter show revue at the RKO theater in NYC….

The list can and does go on and on and on….much to the amazement and envy of those who hear these descriptions.

I can look back now and know that I was fortunate to live in NYC and attend these shows because that was just the way it was. There were thousands of others around my age who did the exact same thing….

We also have another thing in common.

We experienced Beatlemania in real time.

To experience the Beatles in real time may be the greatest gift of all in being born in 1952.

I truly believe that the music that stays with you emotionally for the rest of your life is the music that you listened to between the ages of 10 and 20.

That is the music that really is the soundtrack of your life.

You may learn to appreciate and even love music that you find later in life, but the music that formed your youth remains impregnated onto your psyche and has its own way to always take you back to a more innocent and special time.

The Beatles came into the baby boomer era in general, and to me in particular, when we were most in need of heroes (2 months after the JFK assassination) and man….did they ever deliver!

I was 11 when “I Want to Hold Your Hand” took over the airwaves and 18 when the release of Let It Be signaled The End.

In between, in real time, we listened to the radio (first AM, then, beginning in late 1967, the ‘new’ FM, in stereo!) for news of the next single or album.

I remember exactly whose house I was in when I heard a new album.

I remember waiting for the debut of each new single.

I was addicted to W A B(eatle) C, 77 on the AM dial.

I didn’t really care about the NY DJ “Murray The K” on the rival station WINS (1010 on the NY am dial) the self proclaimed 5th Beattle-he sounded like a fast talking used car salesman-and that is coming from a disk jockey world where they all sounded like used car salesmen!

I couldn’t wait to hear Dan Ingram, Scott Muni or Cousin Brucie debut each new Beatle single.

When people try to equate the Beatle phenomenon with anyone else, be it Elvis, Michael or anybody else one may try to name, I give you a snapshot of the WABC top 20 countdown survey from the week of April 7th 1964 to prove the near total domination of the Beatles (8 of the top 20 songs in the
nation that week!) and their influence on the pop culture of our music lives at that time. If you add the Searchers and Dave Clark 5 then you have 11 of the top 20 being British Invasion bands!

This was our soundtrack

This was our real time music life.

This is why we feel the way we do!

**April 7th 1964**

**WABC  America's number 1 radio station**

1. Can't Buy Me Love - The Beatles (Capitol)
2. Twist and Shout - The Beatles (Vee Jay)
3. Do You Want to Know a Secret - The Beatles (Vee
4. Hello, Dolly! - Louis Armstrong (Kapp)
5. The Shoop Shoop Song (It's In His Kiss) -
6. She Loves You - The Beatles (Swan)
7. Suspicion - Terry Stafford (Crusader)
8. Glad All Over - The Dave Clark Five (Epic)
9. Please Please Me - The Beatles (Vee Jay)
10. Dawn (Go Away) - The 4 Seasons (Philips)
11. Stay - The 4 Seasons (Vee Jay)
12. Ronnie - The 4 Seasons (Philips)
13. Bits and Pieces - The Dave Clark Five (Epic)
14. The Way You Do the Things You Do - The Temptations (Gordy) 11
15. Needles and Pins - The Searchers (Kapp)
16. All My Loving - The Beatles (Capitol)
17. I Want to Hold Your Hand - The Beatles (Capitol)
18. Rip Van Winkle - The Devotions (Roulette)
19. Love Me Do - The Beatles (Tollie/Capitol)
20. Shangri-La - Robert Maxwell (Decca)

WABC Hot Prospects: April 7th 1964

From Me to You - The Beatles (Vee Jay)
This Boy - The Beatles (Capitol EP)
Roll Over Beethoven - The Beatles (Capitol of Canada)
I Saw Her Standing There - The Beatles (Capitol)
You Can't Do That - The Beatles (Capitol)
There's a Place - The Beatles (Tollie)
Thank You Girl - The Beatles (Vee Jay)
Please Mr. Postman - The Beatles (Capitol of Canada)
Ask Me Why - The Beatles (Vee Jay EP)

*This was the Beatles experience........ in Real time!!*
“It’s your move Roy. The bet is two shillings and hurry up, it’s almost lunchtime,” said my English teacher.

I dropped out of school when I was fifteen. Academia and I were incompatible and I happily left to work in a knitwear factory in Glasgow, my hometown. Mr. Milner, a holocaust survivor who carried a gun in the glove compartment of his car, owned the factory. Guns were (and still are) highly regulated in the UK so I always suspected that the gun was illegal. My job was to learn the trade from the bottom up with a view to management at a later date. I actually loved it, as I was working with machines and hanging out with grown men. They were (correctly) suspicious of me, a middle-class Jewish kid who didn’t fit into a working-class environment. The factory was well-run and I learned a lot about the business. It had many modern machines operated by Jacquard cards. These were a series of cards with rows of holes joined together like a chain. These cards gave mechanical instructions to the machines, thus controlling the patterns of the cloth. Invented in the 1800s, Jacquard cards were a precursor to the computer, and early IBM mainframes used punched cardboard cards to give instructions to the processor.

Another area of the factory used old-fashioned hand-operated machines, where an operator would
stand, legs apart, physically moving the control back and forth to open and close the needles while pulling the yarn, thus creating a garment. The operators were all women and one young woman, apparently for comfort, came to work wearing a mini skirt. This was in the early sixties before mini skirts were a fashion item, so seeing one, and the long legs below it, was almost too much for my 15 year-old hormones. I often made detours through the factory just to watch her legs move. I eventually got fired (the first of many firings); it had something to do with having a bad attitude and an overwhelming interest in girls.

My parents were aghast. What to do? In despair, they sent me back to school. As I had dropped out of public school, returning there was not an option, so they sent me to a school that taught the high school curriculum. It was called “Dimmers College,” and it boasted to be “situated ‘round the corner from Glasgow University”—a vain effort to confirm its credentials. Like the student body, the faculty was a group of failures and misfits who had little interest in teaching, but needed a job. I loved the place. Colleges in those days had their own school colors and I acquired a 6-foot long scarf which mimicked the ones worn by real students at the university. I felt very grown up and mature and would boast that I was a student in the West End.

Three teachers stood out in my memory.

Mr. Percival taught science. He never asked what we had learned, never gave us homework, and one day announced that we had completed the course. This was great as there were still weeks to go until the exams. It never occurred to us that completing the course had nothing at all to do with learning the subject.

As a curious kid I had an interest in trivia and had recently read that the gas pressure in domestic pipes was around 1-2 pounds per square inch (i.e. very low). Mischievous as always, I decided to check this out. We were working on an experiment that used multiple Bunsen burners. At the far end of the room was a gas outlet with a Bunsen burner attached. I disconnected the rubber hose at the burner, turned on the gas and blew down the tube. At first nothing happened then slowly, one by one, every flame died. The class experiment was ruined, but my experiment was a great success.

Mrs. McKinley, who taught math, was a good teacher but she was born with an odor issue. Her armpits were rank and perhaps because of this problem, she insisted on wearing sleeveless dresses. At first the smell was unbearable but as the lessons progressed the odor in the overheated classroom had a soporific effect and most of us fell asleep. One day while passing the principal’s office, he stopped me and asked me to deliver a message to her class. The stink that hit me as I opened the door made me gasp and I almost collapsed on the floor.

My all-time favorite was Mr. Cunningham, our English teacher. A chain-smoking alcoholic, he regaled us with entertaining stories about his life. He was very proud of the fact that he had visited the nearby Glasgow Botanical Gardens and stole the only cannabis plant they had. It was such a heinous crime that the Sunday Post, that most maudlin of tabloids, wrote about it. He was never caught and swore the pot he made was really good.

Cunningham was constantly broke so he would stop teaching around 11 AM and start the poker game. Out came the cigarettes and we would all play until lunchtime. Invariably he would cobble together enough winnings from us novices to buy lunch. The neighborhood was famous for its Indian restaurants. The food was fresh, cheap and hot. Over the school year the whole class developed a tolerance for the most scorching curries known to man. Although Cunningham’s teaching style was eccentric, he was an iconoclast and I liked him a lot. His subversiveness had a lasting effect on me. He did encourage my reading and introduced me to authors like John Updike, Joseph Heller and Saul Bellow.
Unsurprisingly, I failed every exam with the exception of English.
Fleetwood Mac just launched a six-month North American tour, tickets for which went on sale to the public in the spring. That a band formed 51 years ago still warrants that much lead time for ticket sales tells you a lot about the group and its fans: solid and steady in the long run, even if things get bumpy along the way.

It’s easy to forget that they started out as a pure British blues-rock band. In 1967 Peter Green, a guitarist with John Mayall and the Bluesbreakers, embarked on a side project, inviting along Bluesbreakers bass guitarist John McVie and then adding Mick Fleetwood on drums. Jeremy Spencer played slide guitar and piano. The band Fleetwood Mac was born, and their first album, self-titled, came out in 1968.

Here’s the sparsely arranged “World Keep on Turning,” a track from Fleetwood Mac, displaying Green’s gritty yet easygoing blues chops:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pM1HT_dXQjM

After recording at an astonishing rate of four albums in less than two years, Green abandoned his musical baby in 1969, thus establishing a revolving-door standard for Fleetwood Mac personnel. The most important subsequent arrivals were Christine Perfect – who changed her last name to McVie
after marrying John – in 1970 and Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham in 1974. All three of those songwriter/musicians either stormed or slunk out at one point or another, but today C. McVie and Nicks are on that current tour along with J. McVie and Fleetwood. The band, as they say, is back together – at least to a significant degree.

The fifth album, *Future Games* (1971) shows a profound stylistic change in the band’s sound, largely brought about by the addition of American guitarist Bob Welch, who would play on the next four albums as well. Welch had an R&B background, contributing a jazzy atmosphere that pushed Fleetwood Mac closer to where they needed to be to hit the big time.

“Lay It All Down” by Welch, is propelled forward by constant motion in the bass and a slightly off-kilter guitar riff between verses. At 1:03 you start hearing a funky backbeat wah-wah on harmonica, right out of R&B, that distinguishes this version of Fleetwood Mac from the original Green creation.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-37EaMNm2mY

Besides having an unheard-of number of songwriters in their ranks at all times, another of Fleetwood Mac’s defining traits is to include multiple guitarists; this has been true from the start. One who stepped in for a few seminal albums was British player Bob Weston. He and C. McVie wrote most of the songs on the 1973 record *Mystery to Me*, which turned out to be Weston’s final Fleetwood Mac project. The Weston/McVie style leaned heavily toward pop; combined with Welch’s R&B sensibilities, you end up with the sound that casual fans think of when you say “Fleetwood Mac.”

On C. McVie’s “Just Crazy Love,” the appealing vocal harmonies -- McVie multi-tracked against herself -- predict the band’s megahits that would soon follow. But this group has never been one to blend in with the mainstream, no matter how popular they became. There are always distinguishing factors that set them apart and show they were still growing. Note the use of piano here, almost a stride style, that pulls the focus away from the guitars for a change.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmJtRnazW20

The next few years brought increasing success, peaking with the album *Rumours* in 1977. The following release, the double-disk *Tusk* (1979), managed less than half of *Rumours*’ sales. Maybe that was because it didn’t sound anything like what the pop audience had decided a Fleetwood Mac album “should” sound like.

A major influence on *Tusk*’s experimental nature was Lindsay Buckingham, an American singer, songwriter, and guitarist (yay, another guitarist!). A Talking Heads devotee, he was determined to bring Fleetwood Mac into the post-punk era. It’s also been suggested that the fan-puzzling, experimental phase of the Beach Boys’ Brian Wilson after their smash hit *Pet Sounds* might have been inspiring to Buckingham.

In any case, while it doesn’t seem so exotic from today’s vantage point, critics declared the album weird. Buckingham’s “That’s All for Everyone,” for example, is repetitive and unmelodic, letting its lyric phrases arc into each other and die out in a most un-Fleetwood Mac manner:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fx1H4h1gLwA
The last time the classic line-up of Buckingham, Nicks, C. McVie, J. McVie, and Fleetwood hit the studio together was for the 1987 *Tango in the Night*, which came close to recapturing the success of *Rumours*. And then Buckingham left the band.

But never fear: they found two more guitarist/singer/songwriters. The first album without Buckingham, *Behind the Mask*, from 1990, brought in Billy Burnette and Rick Vito. The latter wrote “Stand on the Rock,” a pop-leaning rock song that hints at influence from MTV royalty like Robert Palmer. Not the most original material, but it shows another developmental phase:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13fFoYkxEpA

And they weren’t done seeking new paths: the next album was a little bit country. For *Time* (1995), the band included Nashville chanteuse Bekka Bramlett. The songs she contributed are sticky-sweet, but the country sound gets a more grounded rock outing in Billy Burnette and Deborah Allen’s “I Got It In for You.”

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Np-UwGvA4Ho

An eight-year studio drought follows *Time*, until the 2003 album *Say You Will*. Anyone who thought Fleetwood Mac were has-beens had to bow to its No. 3 chart spot in the US— even if it was now categorized as “Adult Contemporary.” Christine McVie had left the band in 1998, so *Say You Will* was the first album since 1970 to contain no songs by her (although her voice appears on a couple of previously recorded tracks intended for another album).

Stevie Nicks penned the synthy “Silver Girl,” updating for the new century her penchant for analyzing the struggles of misunderstood, strong women in her lyrics.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtY7qaQVnmU

The current North American tour is not in support of a particular album. In fact, Fleetwood Mac has not released an album of new material in 15 years. But with the songs from their 17 studio recordings just as a starting point, I don’t think they’ll run out of music to play.
ARITE!! This is one of my favorite songs of ALL TIME!! Big Country’s "In A Big Country" is one of them jams that will immediately whisk you back to the first time that you either heard it, or saw the video, on MTV, if you are of that age. An anthem with their first song and one that also utilizes the band name as the song title, it could've been a recipe for disaster. Instead it became indelible if you were a child of the 80's. The album that it came from, 1983's *The Crossing*, proffered a couple of other mid-chart singles, "Chance" and "Fields of Fire", and helped establish the band's unique sound that immediately separated them from all other comers in that year. Kurt Loder's GLOWING review in *Rolling Stone* said it all:

"Here's a big-noise guitar band from Britain that blows the knobs off all the synth-pop diddlers and fake-funk frauds who are cluttering up the charts these days. Big Country mops up the fops with an air-raid guitar sound that's unlike anything else around, anywhere ... Like the Irish band U2 (with whom they share young, guitar-wise producer Steve Lillywhite), Big Country has no use for synthesizers, and their extraordinary twin-guitar sound should make *The Crossing* a must-own item for rock die-hards."

Big Country was built on the backs of the two guitar players Bruce Watson and Stuart Adamson, the latter also being the vocalist who had left the punk band The Skids citing "artistic differences." but brought that energy and ethos to his new band along with a desire to prove a point. Between the two of them they created the signature guitar sound that made their songs so recognizable. A critic once likened it to the sound of bagpipes and Adamson recoiled against it so vocally that it became a bone of contention for him for the remainder of his time in Big Country. This is unfortunate, as it really is quite an accomplishment and part of the reason that the radio legend John Peel once called him "Scotland's Jimmi Hendrix." It is thought that one of the decisions that plagued the band was turning down an appearance at Live Aid in favor of playing another show. A band named U2 took their place. And music is not the same after that day. What would the future had held for both bands had that
The song starts with an absolute barrage of drums courtesy of the impossible to pronounce Mark Brzezicki. The only over-dub in that drum part is the hand-claps, the rest of it is played by him. He's one one of my favorite drummers ever and his playing is without equal in 80's Pop Rock, as far as I am concerned. There is a drum-fill at the 3:10 mark in their song "Peace In Our Time" that STILL blows my mind and I've heard it a billion times at this point. If that isn't enough to convince you then I encourage a listen to the album version of Roger Daltrey's "Under A Raging Moon" which features a series of drum-solos played by some of the greatest ever and MB's contribution is so brilliantly executed that one will find oneself completely confused by what he's done. It's inside out and upside down. So bloody good. Mark motors through the entirety of "In A Big Country" with military precision that provides a back-bone groove that somehow still manages to march. He's a WIZARD I tell ya! And, yes, that is the HEAVILY gated and compressed 80's drum sound that we've all come to know and love. I'm fairly sure that the hi-hats are either triggering, or are played on, a drum-machine, which seems a weird choice. If Steve Lillywhite is listening, can I get some clarification please?!?

Tony Butler and Mark B. had been playing as a combo for a while before they joined Big Country and came as a bit of a "Matched Set," They certainly play beautifully together. The relationship between drummer and bassist is a unique in music. When you play with a bassist who "gets you" it is a sublime experience. These two are a RELENTLESS Engine Room. Holy smokes. Butler provides the drive that the song needs, especially with MB marching behind him, but also weaves a melody line throughout that helps to create the anthemic enormity that a song named "In A Big Country" would demand. It's perfect. From the bounce of the verse to the turnarounds and octave moves out of the chorus, I am getting chills as I listen to it and write this. Tony went on to take over the position of lead singer after the unfortunate passing of Adamson in 2001. He has also played bass for Roger Daltrey, Pete Townshend, and The Pretenders. His pedigree speaks to his abilities. This song is a wonderful example of his creativity. Powerhouse. His choices in the "break-down" are inspired, as his entire line during the choruses. The "stop-go-roll" bit. Man...i love this friggin' song. Start to finish.

Here's Christian's breakdown of “In A Big Country", track by track. Enjoy!

https://soundcloud.com/theklossessions/fhf-big-country

Bruce Watson is one half of the guitar sound of the band. His role was to support the brilliance of Adamson's choices. But, don't think for a minute that he is not integral. Sometimes the most creative person in a band is the one who knows when to come and when to go. Don't forget that the two guitar players had known each other forever and the style that they developed was done so in concert with each other. It is hard to know where one starts and the other stops. Just give the attached a listen, you'll see what I am talking about. The fact that the song's verses are based
entirely on the spiky, sineous, slippery, line that flows through it is another inspired choice. So few HUGE chords in a song so big. It's a trick pioneered by Pete Townshend and utilized fantastically here. He and Adamson are a wonderful complement to each other. The secret to the “sound” is the MXR Pitch-Transposer 129, by all accounts, guitar nerds REJOICE!

What is to be said of Stuart Adamson? His voice is immediately recognizable. Every lyric in the song is a call to arms. From the first "HOT!" to the final "SHOT!" Stuart stands at the ramparts and commands us to follow his stare to the horizon in search of whatever answer it is lies there. The entire vocal is harmonized to create the feeling of all of us singing it—a brilliant conceit. I believe that it is Stuart and Tony harmonizing throughout. Good grief. And then the break-down. I am actually crying as I listen to it and write this. It IS Stuart. The build. The way he presents the hope as the fight comes on. The passionate delivery. The empathy displayed. "Come up screaming! Cry out for everything you ever might have wanted!" The whispered over-dub. It is painful to remember that Stuart’s alcoholism eventually gets the better of him and in 2001 he was found hanged in his hotel room in Hawaii. Similar to the death of another Scottish singer/lyricist hero of mine, Scott Hutchison of the band Frightened Rabbit, you wonder why he couldn't find the hope he professed in his own lyrics. How could he have not felt what is so clearly on display for the rest of us? And if he did, why was it not enough? As I listen now my heart breaks because this younger version of him had no clue of the highs, and lows, that life would bring him and the tragic loneliness of his passing. It adds a level of poignancy to the lyrics and performance of this, his most iconic, vocal. "You can't stay here with every single hope you have shattered." It is fitting and ironic that this song of loss and hope is the thing that he is known best for. It’s everything that he continues to do over his career distilled into one 4 and 1/2 minute treatise. His "Call To Arms."

The song took the MTV airwaves by storm, and put the ridiculous video into high rotation. It changed the lives of all of those involved and became a touchstone for any kid that grew up in the Era Of MTV. For a teenager who had just moved from his homeland of England to the John Hughes Film Life of high school on Long Island in 1983, it was the sound of a place a long, long, way away, and it is probably in the Top 10 songs of my life. There are people I know whose memory of the song is irrevocably linked to me— and for that I am eternally grateful to Stuart, Tony, Bruce, and Mark. It was a tremendous honor to get to show the listeners of KLOS in Los Angeles the pure brilliance behind what is, at first listen, a simple pop song. It isn't. And neither is its message. It is just a shame that its author couldn't continue to find the strength that he spoke of in his own lyrics. A great sadness.

RIP Stuart. May you have found the Peace you searched for. And thank you for this and all of the music that you and the lads recorded.

"Just 'cause it happened doesn't mean you've been discarded."

Listen to The Crossing in its entirety. The last remaster is a massive leap from the original version. It’s a HUGE record. The bottom-end will test your speakers and its sonic textures will push an amp to its limits as it drowns out the neighbors. EXACTLY how the band would've wanted it.

"Come up screaming!"

Until next time,

cjh

The RIDICULOUS Music Video:
It seems like only yesterday when Industry News wrote about Sears CEO Eddie Lampert. In fact, it was two weeks ago---but during that brief period there have been major developments.

And yet, really, things are pretty much the same.

On Monday, October 15, Sears finally filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Most would ask, "what took so long?" That question is answered by the title of this article on The American Prospect, which states the case succinctly, if brutally: "How Sears Was Gutted By Its Own CEO". As part of the filing, Lampert stepped down as CEO---but stays at the company's chairman.

It's impossible to follow the trail of the deals, restructurings, sell-offs and land-grabs that have occurred during Lampert's watch, unless you draw a diagram. You'd better have a damned big white board, too.

The primary creditor of Sears Holdings is ESL Investments, a hedge fund owned by...Edward S. Lampert. Much of the company's real estate has been sold to Seritage, a REIT (real estate investment trust) primarily owned by---you guessed it, Lampert. And by the way: much of that real estate is being leased out at a rate 2-4 times that being paid by cheapskate Sears.

As part of the bankruptcy, over 140 more stores will be closed by the end of 2018. Chapter 11 bankruptcy is designed to allow a company time to reorganize, with the cooperation of creditors; if it appears that reorganization will not salvage the company---and in this case, how could it?---the Federal Bankruptcy Judge will likely force the case into Chapter 7, liquidation.

At this point, a once-great company is on its last legs---and Eddie Lampert lives on a private island
Say what you will about the robber barons of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, but they built things—not dismantled them.
“The Pebble Beach car show is this weekend,” followed a little later by, “It’s all a bunch of stuck up, rich assholes.” If you’re the person sitting behind me and next to this guy on my flight to San Jose at the beginning of Monterey Auto Week, there are both truths and untruths in his opinion. Yes, the uber-rich gather, exhibit, and spectate there, but so do normal people. And the insulting part of his comment? I’ve never run into anyone during Auto Week who was anything other than gracious and enthusiastic. For a little more than a week each year, the petrolhead world meets on the Monterey Peninsula in California to celebrate and view the best of automotive design and manufacturing from the past 100 years or so.

I started going to Monterey thirteen years ago and have attended every year since. My early years were put together on a budget and included spending the night in a hotel after flying in and spending a Sunday at the week’s capstone event, the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance, then flying home the next morning. Since then my trips have become longer so I can take it in a number of the other events during the week, including Retro Auto, the Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion races at Laguna Seca, Concours d’Lemons, the Concorso Italiano, the Werks Reunion, and even one year at The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering. These are just a few of the events that take place during the week, but if you’re a car person, there’s more happening in a week than you can get to and absorb
anyway.

If you’ve heard about Monterey Auto Week or any of the events going on but have never attended and you fancy yourself a gearhead, shame on you. For one week, Monterey turns into the equivalent of automotive Mecca. Everything from modern exotics like McLarens and Aston Martins (so many, in fact, that they garner little attention) to restored and resto-modded muscle cars to curvy pre-war coachbuilt cars and just about anything else that’s motorized, wheeled (two, three, or four), or oiled is driving around. There are places where you can take home souvenirs like $10 t-shirts and others where you can buy a Ferrari at auction for $44 million. There are rare parts swap meets; historic art, books, and posters; and forums where the people involved in the automobile industry, from collectors like Ralph Lauren and Neil Schon to modern auto designers like Henrik Fisker and Frank Stephenson are available to talk. There’s generally something for everyone.

My week this year was limited to four days and just a handful of events so a lot went unseen, though that happens every year. I’ll try to describe each to you as best I can, beginning with some of the events I missed. It’s also impossible to describe the sheer sensory overload of the week. The noise, smells, and feel are those things like good wine or architecture that just have to be experienced in person to fully comprehend.

The Concours d’Lemons proudly celebrates “the oddball, mundane, and truly awful of the automotive world,” and it takes place on the Saturday at the end of the week each year. It’s a parody of every hoity-toity car gathering in the area. Held on the lawn of the Seaside city hall, this is the freak show of the week. The “Lemons” hosts everything from cars that have no business being driven, much less exhibited, to modified ghost-chaser camper vans and everything in between. Nothing is off limits. At the end of the day a “Worst of Show” award is given while spectators spray the recipient’s vehicle with Silly String. And the best part? It’s free!

Exotics on Cannery Row is basically downtown Monterey’s street party gift to the car world. Dozens of exotic hypercars line the curbs of Cannery Row along with representatives from multiple manufacturers showing new vehicles and public viewing of hundreds of cars that will be put up for auction within the next two days. Also free to spectators.

Retro Auto began as a place to buy and see historic automotive memorabilia and has evolved into a sort of upscale indoor flea market where everything from antique posters from the Mille Miglia to cufflinks made out of the wheels of rare crashed cars to furniture made from auto parts to hundreds of automotive books in various languages to maybe that antique French foglight lens you’ve been looking for over the past decade can be found for sale. There are vendors for just about everything here. Retro Auto takes place at the Inn at Spanish Bay is open to the public and free.

The Quail, A Motorsports Gathering is not open to the public, and is not free. The Quail is a semi-private Concours event that is limited to 3,000 people to prevent crowds. Tickets are hard to get and have to be purchased well in advance (there’s a waiting list), though for your effort and determination you can stroll around the lush Quail Lodge & Golf Club amongst examples of the world’s rarest cars with the likes of Nick Mason and Mark Knopfler on your way to gourmet cuisine. As the years go by, tickets get more expensive and harder to obtain. It’s quite an experience but it ain’t cheap.

The auctions. There are dozens, including all of the big names: Mecum, RM, Russo and Steele, Gooding & Co., and what seems like dozens of smaller auctions everywhere you look. RM and Gooding & Co. have a lock on most of the truly high-end vehicles offered up each year, and they charge to view the offerings as well as attend the auctions. Bidders must register. The less upscale auctions may also charge to view or attend, but prices are usually lower.
The events I did get to attend this year all had one thing in common: it was unusually warm and as you go further inland it gets even warmer. Northern California has been dry this year and there was a fair amount of fine dust everywhere until you got to the golf courses where a lot of the events were held. Bring sunglasses, a hat, and sunscreen.

I started the week with the **Rolex Monterey Motorsports Reunion**, otherwise known as the historic races. Racing takes place at the WeatherTech Laguna Seca racetrack, which sits in the hills outside of Monterey. Getting to the track means driving on an access road that could be a circuit itself, snaking around hills and dips until you come to the parking area, basically a dry field.

Competition cars from the 1900s all the way to modern racers are grouped with like cars and make heated and very spirited laps around the track, doing exactly what they were intended to do: rub paint and slide sideways while trying to go as fast as possible. Ultra-rare Ferraris from the 1960s can miss corners and run into the gravel while Le Mans Porsches from racing’s golden age battle their way around the track. There are no limits to where you can wander around the track or stands, including the pits, and walk right up to everything, peer inside, look underneath, and speak to owners, technicians, and drivers. Ever wanted to know how to tune a quad set of double Webers? Someone here can tell you.

Cars that you thought you’d only see in books sit in stalls being worked on, tuned, and warmed up in front of their trailers. The technicians are happy to answer questions and let you take pictures and drivers will tell you all about the ins and outs of what it’s like to drive the cars. I spent quite a lot of time talking to the owner of a silver 1960 Ferrari 250 GT SWB and how much work he’s done to get the car competition ready. Ed, the owner, purchased the car as an auction queen with a lot of shine but a number of incorrect parts and bad repairs and has spent the last few years bringing the car back to original racing spec at considerable expense. The little 3.0L V12 made a hard, nasally noise when revved to warm up before heading out of the pits towards the track entry gate, followed by a red 250 GT SWB that was driven by Stirling Moss in the past, along with about 10 other cars from that era.
There were hundreds of other racers, including two of the three Ford GT40s from 1966 when Ford finished one, two, and three to finally beat Ferrari and win the 24 hours of Le Mans; Aston Martins, Lancias, Corvettes, various Bugattis from the 1930s, BMW “Batmobiles,” historic Alfas, and just about everything that’s ever been shod with rubber and driven in anger. All of the cars here are raced as intended without getting dangerous. Drivers have respect for what they’re piloting, but the cars actually compete. The sound of engines, pops on downshifts, and the smell of hot tires is everywhere. When walking along the fence around the track you can watch cars descend through the Corkscrew or stand at the Dunlop bridge that crosses over the straight and hear everything rev to its max as it passes under you. If you go, be sure to buy a bottle of water or two from the Boy Scouts near the entrance. It’s bright, hot, and dry out there and you don’t want to have to deal with a dehydration headache later.

The highlight of the day came just as I was about to leave. Tucked into a corner behind a trailer was a 1957 Maserati 450S, the car that I have at the top of my “what would you buy if you had the money to buy anything” list. Bright red, curvy, and in perfect condition, this was the world’s fastest racing
car in 1957. I’d been looking for this car every year in Monterey for about the past 10 years. Here it was, battery charger connected and rear tires being replaced. I spoke for a while to Lucy, the owner along with her husband Joel, who told me the history of the car and how its racing career ended when the heir to the Kleenex fortune [that would be Jim Kimberly, I think--Ed.] bought it and found it so powerful that it scared him, retiring it soon after. It was purchased by Joel and restored over a few years until it was completed in 2008. It’s been racing around the world ever since.

The next day was the annual Werks Reunion Monterey, the largest Porsche gathering of the year in the US. The Werks Reunion is located near Laguna Seca at the Corral de Tierra Country Club and admission is free, as the event was originally set up by the Porsche Club of America to promote ownership. Porsches of every kind are displayed and prizes are given in almost two-dozen categories. Most awards go for maintenance and originality. If you’ve ever heard the phrase, “There’s no such thing as a special 911,” the Werks Reunion both proves and disproves that point. If ever there was an “everyman’s sports car,” it’s the Porsche 911. There were hundreds on the greens and it has to be the least rare sports car in Monterey. Every model, every year, every variant, they’re all represented in multiples here and shown by people who know every detail about their cars and take pride in the fact that they run as well as (or better than) new, which makes them truly special to their owners. 356s in every color you can imagine are there, some in concours condition, some in daily driver condition. Rally cars are there, as are a few dozen 914s. There are also endless rows of Boxsters and Caymans, modified custom cars, and a handful of racing cars from every decade since the 1950s. There was even a plum colored 911 convertible with a purple interior—probably not something you’d see everyday.

If you own a Porsche and would like to discuss the finer points of, well, anything at all with fellow owners, this is the event for you. There are tents with Porsche swag, maintenance manuals, posters, coffee mugs, shirts, wheels, tires, IMS bearings, tools, and whatever kind of racing accessory you’d ever care to put in your car or garage. The entire gathering is an endless supply of everything Porsche, set amongst the trees and cushy grass of a country club golf course where the sun beats down on you and burns the top of your ears (ask me how I know).

To some extent, Werks is overwhelming. The sheer number of cars that look so similar and have the same shape, all lined up in perfect rows next to cars that are just like them is unlike any other car show I’ve ever seen. At first everything seems the same and then after a while you walk around and you realize that every car is just a little bit different based on the whims of their owner. There’s the guy that painted his wheels gold and put them on his orange GT3 having a conversation with the couple with the roof rack on their C4S to carry their bikes or skis around who just made arrangements to go to Sonoma with a woman who agreed to drive them all there in her white Cayenne Turbo with the red leather interior.

I’ll admit that the Werks Reunion gets to be a little much for me. I come to Monterey to see the rarities, the things I’ll likely never see again the rest of my life. This an event where you’ll see dozens of variants of cars you’ll see everyday. Werks is a gathering of people with a shared passion for a marque that really hasn’t changed the basic design of its flagship car for over 50 years because it hasn’t needed to. The Werks people celebrate their cars. They can tell you every detail about how they’ve improved power or braking, even while arguing about the merits of air-cooling vs. water-cooling with the guy next to them. If you own, plan to own, wished you owned, or are just a fan of Porsche in general, the Werks Reunion should be a required experience at least once in your life.
We'll have Part 2 of Rich's coverage of the Monterey Auto Week in *Copper* #70---*Ed.*
“. . . Now, here’s a rather novel FM tuner. All you do is say in a loud voice, ‘Bill, can you find some Vivaldi for me, please?’ or, ‘Bill, go see if the Cleveland Orchestra is on the public-radio station.’ . . .”
Christine’s Cousin

PARTING SHOT
Taken by Bill Leebens