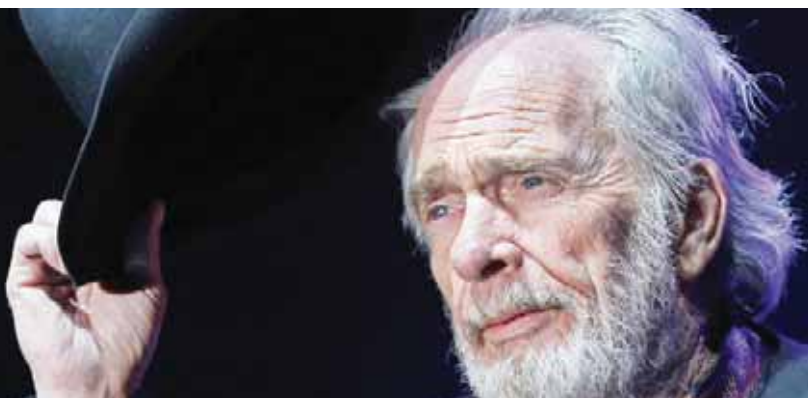


Remembering
Merle Haggard,
country's outlaw
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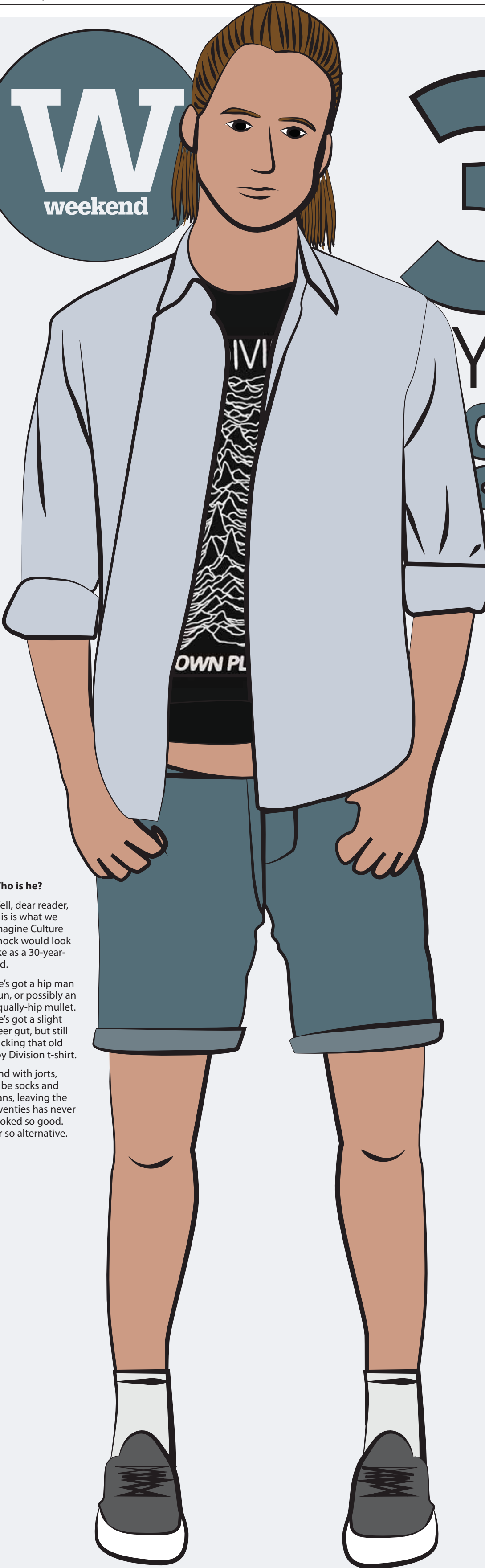
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30

YEARS OF CULTURE SHOCK

All grown up and still rocking its alternative vibe.

Weekend digs through the IDS archives to reminisce on some of our favorite past Culture Shock moments, all in preparation to welcome the big 3-0 with WIUX's always-free festival this weekend.

1986

The birth of the original Culture Shock, "an annual outdoor music festival put on by WIUX in early April," according to their website.

2002

Impossible Shapes, a local band, performed on the Culture Shock stage. Since then, they have shared the stage with Wilco and Interpol.

2007

From the IDS: With big-name national headlining acts and tent-covered stages, Culture Shock's organizers say they are getting "more excited and less nervous" as each day passes. Their event of the year takes over IU DeVault Alumni Center Field behind Alumni Hall for a full day and night of free concerts.

A departure from Dunn Meadow, Culture Shock was instead located at Alumni Field. Also this year, a performer named Totally Michael was featured and described as "skinny as hell, 6-feet tall and wears booty shorts." Definitely someone who sounds worthwhile to check out, then and now.

2008

Four years after their formation, Beach House rocked the Culture Shock scene and kept rocking into more and more fame in the years to follow. Where are they now? You can catch them on Coachella's 2016 lineup, fulfilling the destiny that began when they took the stage in Bloomington.

2009

From the IDS: The event will take a less-is-more approach this year by featuring fewer but better-known artists and starting later in the day, said WIUX Special Events Director Carrie Sloan.

The Union Board helped by sponsoring Destroyer, the nom de plume of Canadian indie rocker Dan Bejar, this year.

"We decided to work together by each sponsoring a particular artist," Sloan said, adding that the festival's new format would give it "a little more bang."

2012

From the IDS: Event managers from WIUX arrived at Dunn Meadow, the planned location of the festival, at 6 a.m. to find the field flooding and no sign of a break in the storm on the radar.

"We called the rental company and found out they couldn't set up a tent while it's raining," Special Events Director Alex Bulli said. "It seemed kind of silly because we got a tent because it was raining."

Yes, you read that right. Where does Culture Shock go when Dunn Meadow has more resemblance to Monroe Lake? This time, it turns out, they went to the Bishop. The 18+ age restriction that was then in place didn't hurt turnout, and, as always, the show went on.

2013

From the IDS: Saturday, direct sunlight beamed onto the ground, and combined with the remnants of drifting cigarette smoke.

The combination created a luminous, hazy effect on all that could be seen in Dunn Meadow. This haze settled over the hundred-person crowd. There was not a drop of rain in sight.

2016

This weekend, Culture Shock returns with headliner Neon Indian. Whitney, White Reaper, Hoops, Dasher, Brenda's Friend, the Underhills, Spissy and Brownies in Cinema are all slated to perform throughout the day Saturday as well.

We can't yet say what our favorite moment will be, but we can make some educated guesses.

Hoops, stopping in Bloomington during their eastern-United States tour, is definitely one we will be watching out for. And watching Neon Indian (hopefully) perform Polish Girl will make our inner high-school hipster smile and rock out.

Who is he?

Well, dear reader, this is what we imagine Culture Shock would look like as a 30-year-old.

He's got a hip man bun, or possibly an equally-hip mullet. He's got a slight beer gut, but still rocking that old Joy Division t-shirt.

And with jorts, tube socks and Vans, leaving the twenties has never looked so good. Or so alternative.

1937-2016

‘Sing me back home’

Rememebering country music legend Merle Haggard



TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Yesterday, I almost cried over an AP alert in the hair care aisle at CVS. Merle Haggard, one of country music’s most successful artists and the voice of country counterculture in the 1960s and 1970s, died Wednesday on his 79th birthday.

Haggard wasn’t just a country singer. He was the country singer. He was cutting his stuff out of Bakersfield, California, not Nashville. His sound was rougher, more raw.

He was country’s outlaw, and with his band, the Strangers, spent decades releasing songs that made country music history. His music was authentic, none of this cookie-cutter sameness and “bro country” that defines the Billboard charts today.

When he wrote about turning 21 in prison in “Mama Tried,” he meant it. He spent his 21st birthday in solitary confinement at San Quentin State Prison, doing time for burglary. He talked openly about his prison time.

He was in the audience when

Johnny Cash famously performed at San Quentin in 1958.

And that authenticity resonated with listeners.

From 1966 to 1987, 38 of Haggard’s singles hit No. 1 on the Billboard country chart, according to the New York Times. What’s more, 71 of his songs were Top 10 hits, 34 of them in a row from 1967 to 1977.

Since 1963, he’s recorded more than 70 albums, according to Rolling Stone. His 1970s hit “Today I Started Loving You Again” has been covered by more than 400 artists. He was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1994 and was a Kennedy Center honoree in 2010.

But all those numbers and all those accolades don’t even begin to touch what Haggard’s music meant to me. Say what you will about country music, but my love for Haggard’s work goes much deeper than just a song on the radio.

“Mama Tried,” “Swinging Doors” and “Bottle Let Me Down” sound like summertime. They feel like ice

cream running down your arm and chocolate on your face and smell like sweat and sunscreen and campfire smoke. My dad and his friends used to croon these songs during camping trips when my sister and I were young.

“Silver Wings” feels like loss and resilience. It opens the door to the deepest place of my heart and was the first shining glimmer of hope during some of the hardest days of my life.

“Daddy Frank (The Guitar Man),” “Sing Me Back Home” and “Okie from Muskogee” smell like unfiltered Camel cigarettes and peanut butter cookies and taste like popcorn and Diet Coke.

Songs like this were the soundtrack to my teenaged Friday nights, when I would opt to spend my evenings with my Pappaw, my grandfather, my best friend and closest ally.

“Today I Started Loving You Again” tastes like teardrops and mascara, and feels like the edge of a dog tag digging into your palm and

the feeling your lungs are going to collapse. It was the song playing in the room as my family and I watched Pappaw take his last breaths in March 2014.

There has never been a time when I wasn’t listening to Merle Haggard. His voice and his music were so strongly woven into the fabric of my life that he’s become a part of who I am.

In an interview last year with Men’s Journal, Haggard was asked what he wanted his legacy to be. His response?

“I don’t know. It’s not over yet.”

As with any other artist who dies, there’s a lot of talk of legacy going on right now. Haggard’s career has already changed the landscape of country music and touched lives around the world and no doubt will continue to do so. That’s the beauty of it.

It’s not over yet.

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