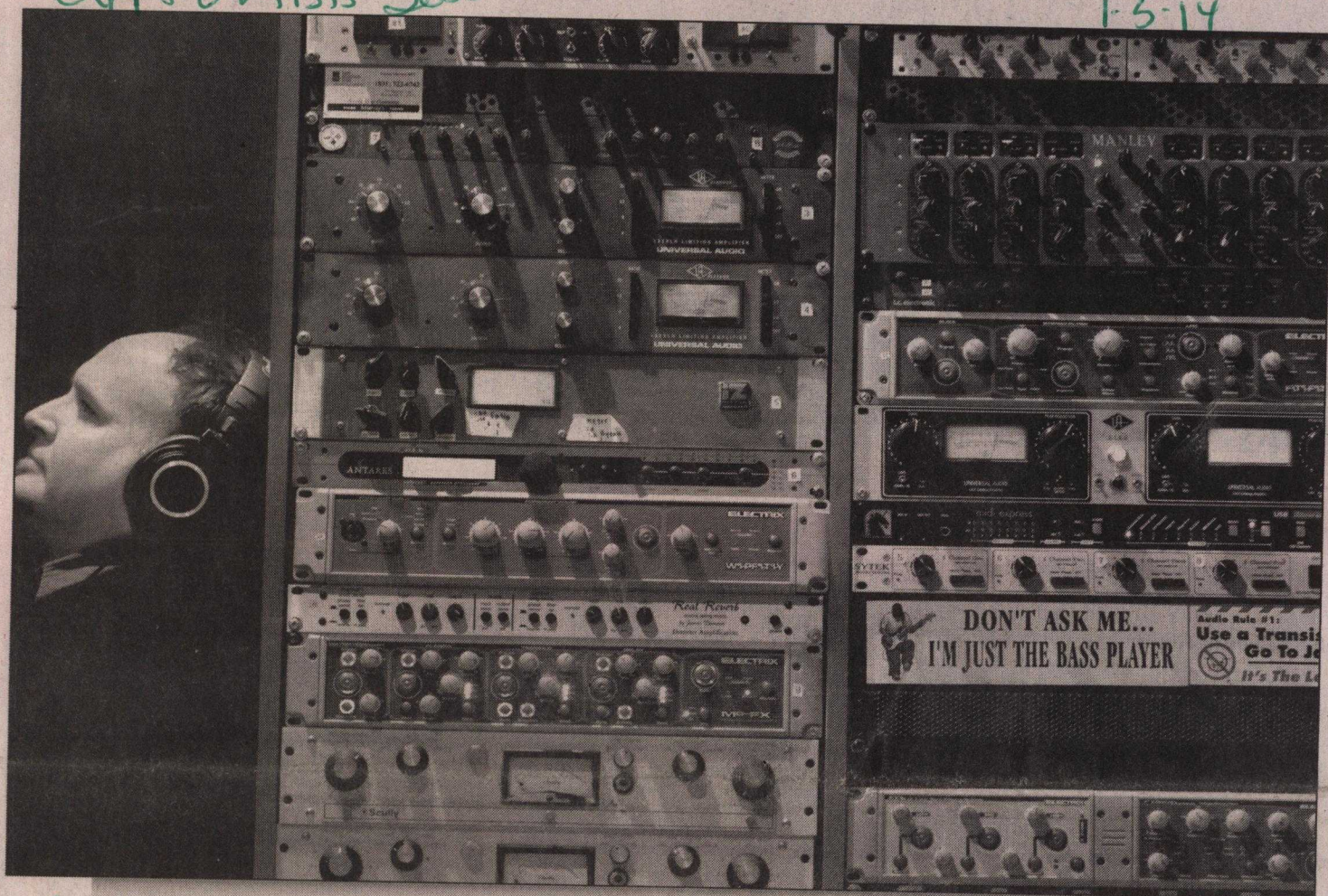


THE GAIL RICH AWARDS 2014

Art + Artists - 2000

1-5-14



ANDY ZENCZAK

Andy Zenczak opened his first recording studio in a storage unit and when he had enough work to expand, he just rented another unit. That was more than 15 years ago, and now Andy presides over the beautiful West Side recording space Gadgetbox Studios where he works as one of Santa Cruz County's busiest and most highly regarded recording producers. Trained as a musician, Andy has recorded, engineered and mixed the work of close to 400 musicians and recording artists. That's about 1,500 songs. In his role behind the glass, Andy has served as technical adviser, drill sergeant, cheerleader, father figure and therapist, while lending his hand as a musician from time to time as well. His job is both to lend technical expertise — he offers up the best in analog and digital technology — and to put the performer in the best position to succeed; he'll sometimes make performers do 20 push-ups before singing to give the record a specific energy. In the end, Andy is simply a collaborator, albeit an unsung one, that Santa Cruz's musical community has increasingly come to depend on.

PHOTOS BY SHMUEL THALER - TEXT BY WALLACE BAINE

Every January, for 18 years, we at the Sentinel have been saluting those who make up Santa Cruz County's forever restless arts community by throwing the spotlight on a handful of creative people living among us. The thing is, we could do it for another 18 years, and another 18 years after that, before we even begin to exhaust the list of those who provide this community with its artistic energy and vitality.

Why do artists and other creative types find themselves in Santa Cruz in numbers greater than demographic trends can explain? Maybe it's the weather, the picturesque beaches, the Left Coast anything-goes vibe or even the coffee. Your an-



GAIL RICH

swer is as good as ours.

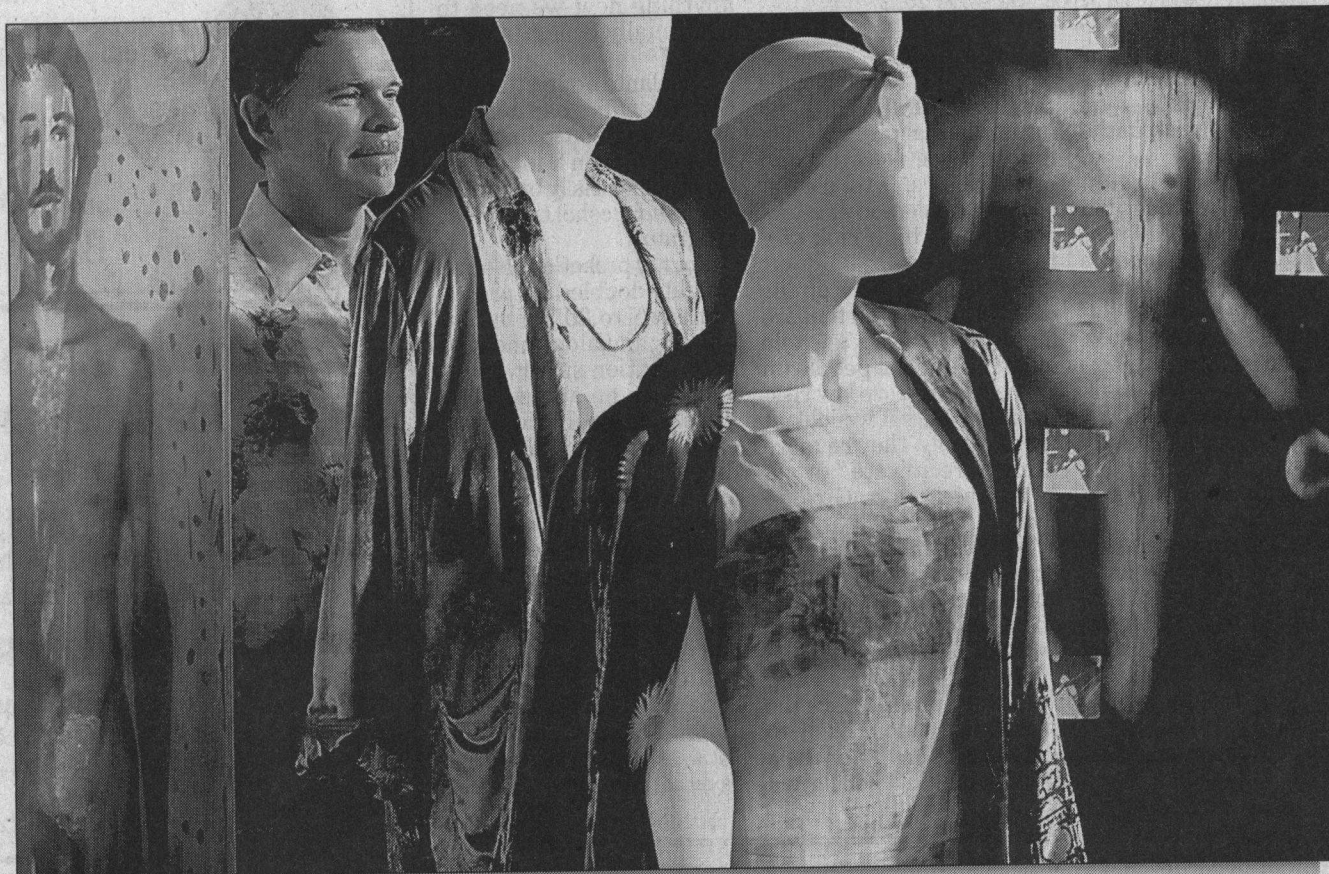
One of those creative souls was Gail Rich whose tireless work in promoting and cultivating the arts at the Sentinel, KUSP and other organizations has inspired the rest of us many years after her sudden and unexpected death at the age of 45.

We name this tribute in her honor because she exemplified the spirit of the arts in Santa Cruz County. Of the 120-plus artists honored in these pages over the years, few have gotten rich doing their

work — in fact, many dance close to the edge of poverty. But they all provide an example of what it means to make a living, and make a life, doing art. — Wallace Baine, arts editor

THE GAIL RICH AWARDS 2014

PHOTOS BY SHMUEL THALER - TEXT BY WALLACE BAINE



TOBIN KELLER

Anyone interested in what the life of a professional visual artist looks like should spend some quality time with Tobin Keller. Tobin has years of wide-ranging experience in all three of the tentpole aspects of the artist's life — as a teacher, as a curator and, of course, as a creative artist. After having studied art at the California College of Art and Mills College, Tobin showed up in Santa Cruz in 1981 and immediately made himself indispensable to what was then the Art Museum of Santa Cruz County, as well as the Open Studios program. That was before he landed a faculty position in the art department at Cabrillo College and took over as director at the always intriguing on-campus Cabrillo Gallery. All the while, he's been showing his artwork — most notably his portraits on glass plates that explore both the transparent and opaque parts of personality — in solo shows all around Northern California. In recent years, Tobin has found a new passion as a print designer for wearable art. Tobin, with his partner-in-fashion Barbara Bartels, has become one of the main dynamos behind the increasingly popular FashionART Santa Cruz wearable-art show.



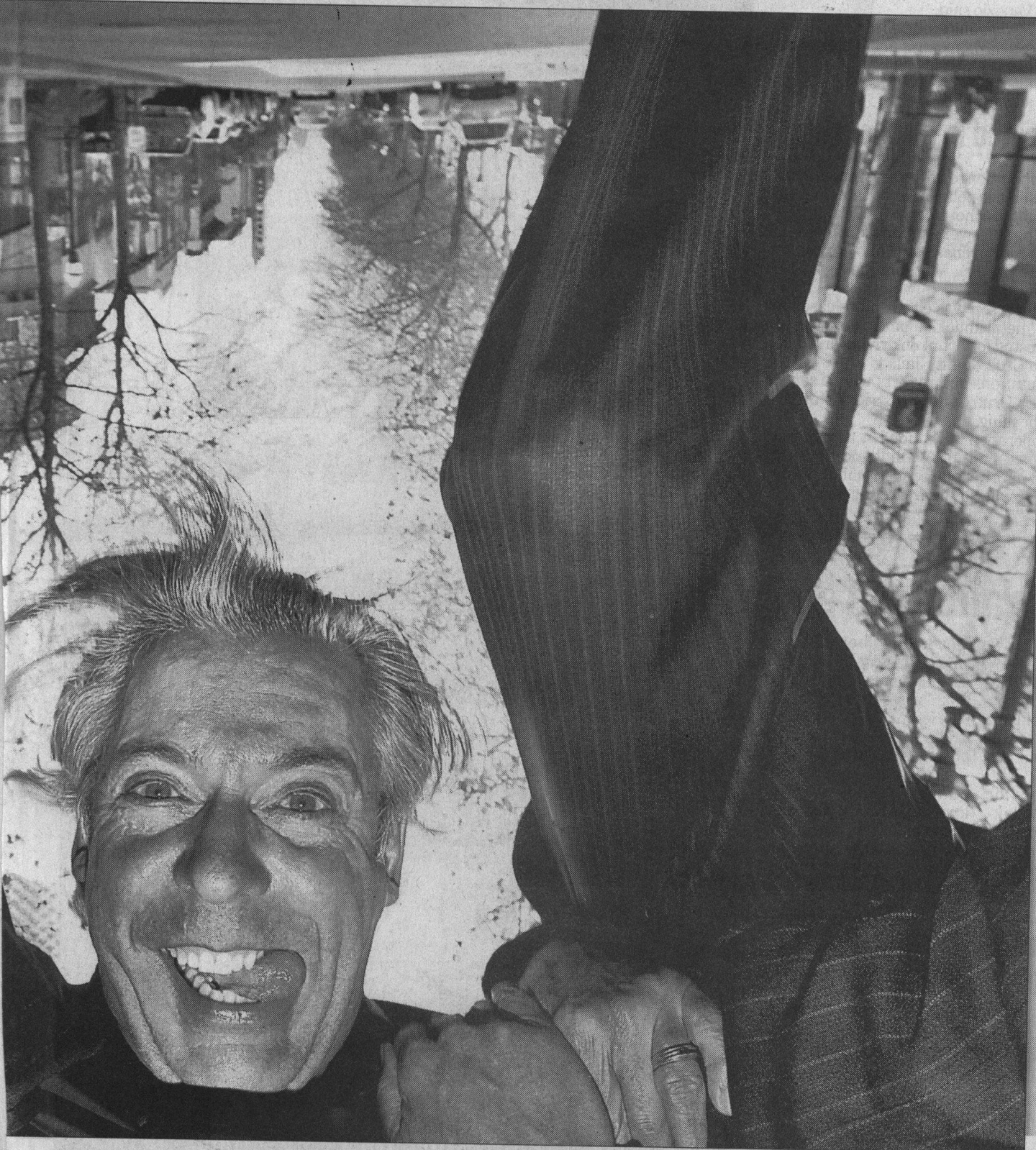


CLIFFORD HENDERSON DIXIE COX

There are many reasons why improv theater has taken root in Santa Cruz and become a bona fide artistic tradition. Two of those reasons are named Clifford Henderson and Dixie Cox. The founders and directors of the Fun Institute — partners both on and off stage — have become, as their organization's name suggests, missionaries for fun, through improv. As the two veteran actors and teachers will tell you, improv isn't just for actors. It's for anyone who wants to be more clear, spontaneous and genuine in his or her day-to-day relationships with others. Clifford and Dixie have been teaching improv games and techniques for more than 20 years, mostly in their home venue, the Broadway Playhouse, but also for a wide variety of corporate and non-profit clients. Outside of teaching, they run their own improv group, Loose Cannon Theater. And Clifford has launched an exciting second career as a novelist, with her fourth book due this year. One of their most high-profile gigs is as improv group leaders at the famed Esalen Institute in Big Sur, the birthplace of the Human Potential Movement. The fact that they have been part of Esalen's offerings for years proves that what Clifford and Dixie are doing has the potential to change lives.

ABRA ALLAN

It came like a comet out of the sky, a moment that forever changed Abra Allan's life. In 1974, Molly Heaster, the long-time owner of the San Jose Pacific, was ready to make a change to hand over, as a gift, her business to her daughter, but Abra took a deep breath and dove in. She was able to walk, Abra had already built a studio for bringing in gifted dancers from around the world, as well as being the driving force behind the Pacific Week celebration every April. Since taking over, she has moved the studio from a transitional space to a thriving center of dance, both a studio for teaching and a performance venue where a wide range of dance styles — from traditional to innovative — and a performance venue where a wide range of innovative choreographers come to find their voice. She has turned Motion Pacific into the gift that keeps on giving.



IF YOU GO

THE 18TH ANNUAL GAIL
RICH AWARDS

WHEN: Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m.

WHERE: The Rio Theatre, 1205 Soquel
Ave., Santa Cruz

COST: Free

DETAILS: www.artscouncilsc.org/gail-rich-awards

RICHARD STOCKTON

Stand-up comics are supposed to live out of a suitcase and crack jokes in front of a brick wall for skeptical strangers five nights a week, and Richard Stockton has certainly paid his dues on that score, in comedy clubs, feature films and on national television. But when he's not out on the road, Richard marines in Santa Cruz, which is both his hometown and his muse. The author of the hilarious self-help parody "Fondle the Fear" and the creator and host of the popular "Planet Cruz" comedy show, Richard has worked intensely hard in recent years to create a distinctly Santa Cruz comic aesthetic and a local comedy counterculture, as a performer, writer, storyteller, musician and radio host. Gifted as both a ham and an idea guy, he's been incredibly generous in lending his talents to all sorts of local events with his sharp comic instincts and relentlessly upbeat energy. These days, Richard is on fire creatively, with an ambitious brand new one-man show titled "Are We There Yet?" that seeks nothing less than to be the definitive account of the crazy journey of the Baby Boom generation from the viewpoint of a boy from Bakersfield who once had a fascinating encounter with Janis Joplin. Ask him about it some time.



JULIE JAMES

Yes, there is a jewel behind Jewel Theatre Co. — or, more accurately, a “Jule.” That is the Santa Cruz company’s artistic director Julie James, on whose strong back Jewel has been carried for nearly a decade. The life of a working theater actor can be a challenge and it was back in 2005 that Julie, a long-time Equity stage actor, decided to step off the carousel and start her own theater company, or at least produce one show and see where that might take her. That collection of one-acts on the theme of love was a success and Jewel has been thriving ever since, producing four shows a year, from *Sondheim* to *Steinbeck* to *Stoppard*, giving audiences high-quality live theater you might only expect in bigger cities. In 2011, Jewel moved into the offices once occupied by Actors’ Theatre in downtown Santa Cruz and from that perch, Julie — who also performs as an actor on stage as much as her schedule allows — and her small but hard-working staff, which has included both her parents, are hitting their stride with big plans for 2014 that should solidify Jewel’s position as the pre-eminent theater company in the area.

call back in 2009, from her friend Molly Cruz dance studio Motion in her life and she wanted a. Sure, it was a shock, dancer since she was g reputation around town Northern California, as still vital National Dance over Motion Pacific, she pace into a beautiful new y. Motion Pacific is now a eaching where instructors , jazz, tap, contemporary y of provocative and audience. Abra has s on giving.