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15 Minutes

Charming!

By **Chrisanne Beckner**

Professional photographer **Charr Crail** started uploading her photos, including her self-portraits with music legends, in May 2004. Since then, her Web log, or "blog," has grown to feature outtakes of basketball star Ruthie Bolton, nudes done kamikaze style in public places, and a sexy shot of actress Juliette Lewis doing a backbend at The Boardwalk. With her individual and insider point of view, Crail has become one of an increasing number of Sacramento voices enjoying cyber-celebrity. You can find her at <http://charrmer.blogspot.com>.



Photo By Larry Dalton

Where do you shoot?

Well, I'm one of the house photographers, along with Kevin Graft, at the Empire. I also shoot out at The Boardwalk and the Roadhouse, and I have various clients who hire me to go and shoot bands for them--for Web sites most of the time but sometimes newspapers or magazines.

What's the best show you've shot in the last two months?

Oh, I don't think I can pick one. Last two months? I shot Blondie, I shot Juliette & the Licks the other night, and that was fabulous. I shot Hanson at the Empire recently. I shot Patti Smith very recently. I shot Dio, Anthrax, in San Francisco. That was totally fun. Thrill Kill Cult, Ministry. I mean, the list is endless.

And then these are the photos that are ending up on your blog, right?

Yeah. The blog that I have, I guess it's my personal photo diary. I just think that there are things that I see, and experiences I have, and people that I get to meet that I'm excited about, and I essentially do it for myself with the idea that someone might actually pay attention and look at it. Maybe they can have a little vicarious thrill.

How'd you get started [blogging]?

I've been an avid journalist--just, you know, personal diaries--since I was a teenager. I also have a very long journalism background, somewhere over 20 years, and so it's just kind of built in. I saw an article somewhere--I can't remember where precisely--but it talked about this specific Web site called Blogger.com. So, I went there. It's free. I was able to sign up for it. They had a system where you could actually upload your pictures, too, so it just seemed like a natural fit. So, the way that I kind of built it was around my personal interests: the rock 'n' roll stuff for the most part. There are other things, as well, but

they're supposed to be outtakes from these photographic experiences that I have. And then I essentially follow the journalism rule of a cutline with every picture, but they're extended cutlines. And sometimes I actually quote people.

Do people write to you once they see your site?

Yeah, I've had people write to me occasionally. ... It's usually pretty simple stuff. Every now and then, I'll get some more interesting commentary. I put something out one time. I guess I had sort of a mini-obsession with the devil-horns thing that I started seeing everybody doing at every rock show. ... People would thrust their hands in the air with this devil-horn thing. And I started wondering, "OK, where did that come from?" So, I put it out there with a photograph and started getting some responses where people said, "I don't know where it's from, but it's in Christian rock, too!" Or, "I know where it's from. It's Ronnie James Dio, and he popularized it in the '70s." ... And actually, for me, this came full circle, because not only did I find out that Ronnie James Dio popularized it, but just within the last month, I got to photograph Ronnie James Dio doing the devil horns onstage.

And that's on the blog, too?

Yes.

There are other Sacramentans blogging, right?

Yes. And it's fascinating just how varied and how deeply personal these blogs are. Mine is just kind of fun, and it's super fluff, but I enjoy it. But there are people who are talking about things that are so personal that most of us don't even have that kind of courage to actually say what it is that they're saying. And those are the ones that are the most moving, the most fascinating and the most rich. And the most inspiring, frankly, for me even, to open up and be more honest and just be more thoughtful about what I'm willing to reveal. I'm very inspired by the willingness of other people to expose themselves so that we can see the humanity in all of us. This is the greatest form of free speech that we're seeing right now.