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The Chukker: Breaking up is hard to do

One last shout for The Chukker: Even though it seemed everyone was there — and like some Crimson Tide games and the Police concert at the Bama, eventually everyone WILL be there — people still want to know about the last big bang.

So here it was: Long, sad, funny, dark. So jammed with mourners you couldn't get to the bar or the bathroom without loads of patience and tolerance for claustrophobia.

By the way, I'd just like to thank the fire marshals for passing by that night, even though there were times the crowd could have used a good hosing down. It would have been all too ironic to shut the place down the night it shook apart. Guess there were barbecue grills smoldering on balconies somewhere.

Lots of fine old friends gathered around, including ex's, but what the heck. If you can't bury a ground-down axe (somewhere aside from my skull, that is) at the wake of a friend, when and where can you?

As all non-drinkers know, it's just bad etiquette to report on drunks when you're sober.

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But nobody's paying me Miss Manners' bucks, so, there was this one guy who kept staggering behind me, trying to lean his half-conscious head on my back. At first I thought nothing of it. Figured it was someone I knew, someone in need.

Then I sensed the hitching breath of someone struggling not to vomit.

So I inched forward. He shuffled up, inclining his noggin somewhere around the 11th vertebrae. It was like having a baby duck imprinted on me. A big drunk baby duck.

Finally, I took a giant step forward, at which time he slumped to the floor like somebody had yanked the skeleton right out through his neck. The floor was a good place for him. Gravity, for once, was a friend.

Then D.C.'s bass player did a G.G. Allen (the infamous and dead performance artist/rocker) tribute, dressed only in tiny G-string, high-top Converse sneakers and white socks, which inspired much stage-diving and a full-frontal flasher or two. Finally, a turn for the bizarre; up to then, it had been nearly high-school reunion sweet.

Speaking of costumes, there were the Osbournes, Hendrix, Sigfrieds and Roys, and of course, your friend Satan.

Cleverly, many folks came dressed as burned-out hippies, or bikers and drag queens. Fascinating attention to detail, and I'm telling you, those wigs were NOT coming off!

With the benefit of a nap earlier that evening and several Cokes from the bar, I hung in until the sun was fully up, IHOP-ing on the way home. When I left, there were still probably 150 people soaking up rays in the courtyard, or avoiding them in the bar.

Just one question: Where

Just one question: Where were all of these sad sacks for the past few years, when the club was sliding down the tubes? And where were they when the struggling bands were up on stage sweating their ends off for no money?

If I had to listen to one more stranger whine about how it stunk that the city council did this or Ludovic did that .

Fine, oddball Chukker-type places are like public radio. Cough up the bucks, or the signal fades.

Rowbear's song "Gypsy Business" (the reunited Club Wig closed with it) hit an emotional high point for a lot of folks: "I tried staying in one place / but everybody seems to move away / hey hey / hey hey / it was a sad, sad day / hey hey / hey hey / engines are rumbling far away."

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