

ions

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What the world needs

MIKE QUICK

7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 18 at the Stained Glass Coffeehouse, Congregational Church, 225 Wilmot Road, Deerfield. \$15 (suggested donation). Call (224) 558-9022; www.stainedglasscoffeehouse.com; www.mikequick.net.

By MICHAEL BONESTEEL

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Mike Quick, who performs this Saturday in Deerfield, was sitting in his backyard one afternoon when suddenly he was, well, let him tell it: "I was strafed by three or four grackles who crapped on me and my guitar. It wasn't friendly fire. It was like, 'Listen up (you jerk); have some (crap)!'" And it occurred to me: "If you're sitting in the backyard with poop on your head, just remember it won't matter when you're dead."

Naturally, he crafted a song from the experience, but the tune went further than just an unpleasant encounter with bird poop and his own mortality. It developed into a beautiful, anthem-like piece, "House Full of Friends," with profound advice and homespun philosophy. Here's the chorus:

*Dream big, don't lie
Stand up for the little*

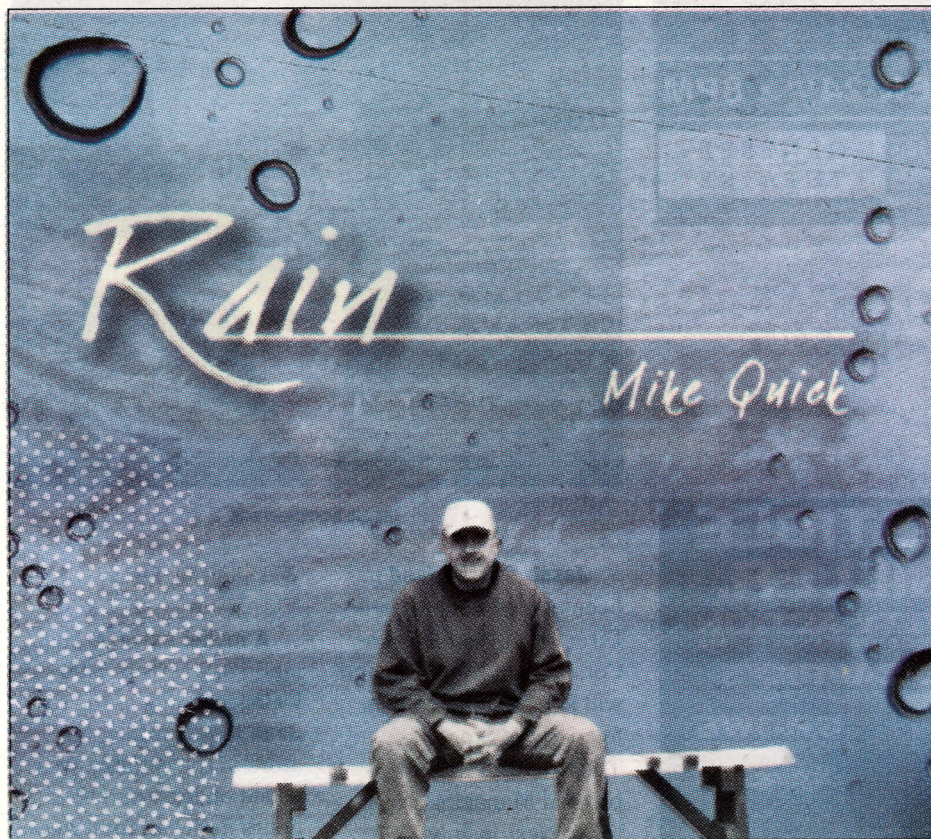
guy

*Hold on if you're all
alone*

*You have a house full
of friends when you finally
get home.*

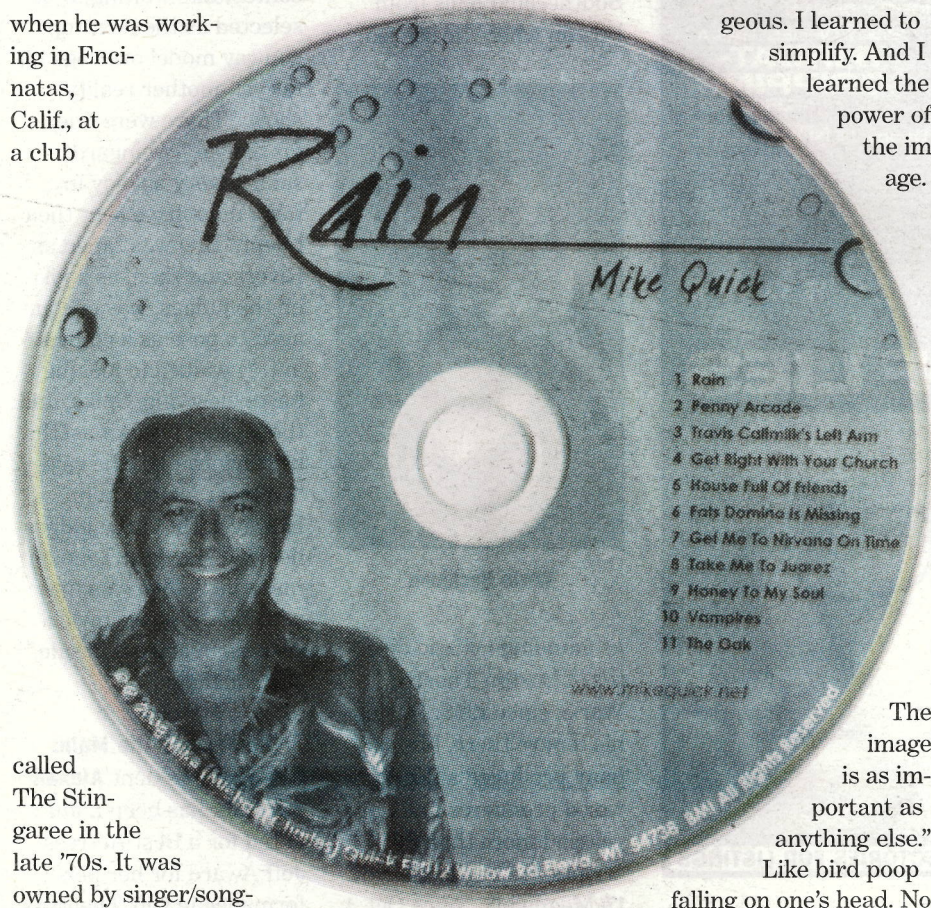
"These are simple words," he explained, "but they were hard for me to write."

If anything sums up Quick's approach to songwriting, it is that: simple words, complex ideas. He received some of his best lessons about songwriting



when he was working in Encinitas, Calif., at a club

geous. I learned to simplify. And I learned the power of the image.



called The Stingaree in the late '70s. It was owned by singer/songwriter Jack Tempchin, author of the Eagles hit "Peaceful Easy Feeling."

"I was writing songs before that, but pretty poorly," Quick recalled.

I learned a lot about songwriting from Jack, mainly about how less is more. He could write a song that seemed so simple, but gor-

"But

really.

Folk roots

Born in Eau Claire, Wis., Quick is a product of the so-called "folk scare"

of the mid-1960s and steeped in the music of the great folk and blues masters who influenced that era: Charlie Patton, Skip James, Mississippi John Hurt, Tom Paxton, John Prine and, of course, Bob Dylan.

The title song on Quick's latest CD is "Rain" (Froghorn Cleghorn Music) and it's about revisiting sweet memories of a past romance. Delivered with a voice reminiscent of Gordon Lightfoot's, but with a ragged, world-weary edge, Quick's songs delve into unique, personalized situations set against big issues such as the death of the family farm, Fats Domino and Hurricane Katrina, old time religion, racism and the magnificence of nature. Like the best folk music today, it sounds fresh and contemporary, yet grounded in the depths of a rich tradition.

There was a song in the early 1990s by the group Cracker that contained the line: "What the world needs now is another folk singer like I need a hole in my head." It's a rather cynical sentiment written during the height of the grunge era when folk music was probably considered the epitome of corny.

Today, however, we just might need another Dylan — maybe a whole posse of them, because one ain't gonna be enough.

Quick's warm, thoughtful songs offer something substantial for these troubled times. He's just the kind of folk singer we need for that posse.

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