

Dave playing with his band  
Photo by Rich Allen

Texas dates with The Who, a real popular British band, who at that time had just come out with a song called, 'I Can See For Miles And Miles.' They blew up their amplifiers on stage. We also went on tour with Paul Revere and the Raiders."

As a high school student, Dave played trumpet for the marching band, so playing the bass guitar wasn't preconceived. "To get started playing bass I first started playing the guitar, and I don't know how, but doggone it, I picked a bass that a friend of mine left at my house and started listening to records and playing along with them.

I played for a week, then I played for two weeks and I really liked it, so I said, 'That's it!' I sold my guitar, bought me a bass, a new amplifier and joined a band. I started playing at parties, high school dances and stuff like that. I played for nothing. I did that for a year or two. At the same time I was cooking at a restaurant to support myself. This was in San Diego."

We interrupted Dave to ask about what he'd done before the age of 18. "Before 18, boy, that was nothing. My whole family is from Shoffner, Arkansas. Lots of cotton fields. I moved to Houston, where I had a paper route and went surfing in the Gulf Coast. My life actually started happening when I was 18, and it happened right when I got out of jail. I'll tell you about that. It was, in my opinion, the best thing that ever happened to me.

# "There's No Time to Waste"

By Tina Touchet & Laurie Bell

Pondering over all the great things we've experienced in our lifetimes, many of us come to the conclusion that our lives really haven't been brimful with accomplishments. Some of us find our futures already cut and dried while others have to wait for a profession to show itself. "Little" Dave Shoffner, 27, has pursued and accomplished a couple of major professional talents in a very short period of time.

"You're programmed to get out of high school, go to college and be a doctor, but I didn't quite make it. I don't think I ever knew what I wanted to do."

Some of us Three Wire Winter students with less experienced talked with Dave about his two professions, photography and music, both of which he started after high school.

'When I was 18, I got a job as a 'roadie.' I set up equipment for a band in Houston, Texas. I had to carry the equipment around, set it up, run the sound and lights. They were asked to play

"I was going to high school, my mom and dad moved to Kansas City, and I stayed in Houston where we were living to finish up high school. I had my own apartment and, at that time, no one did that. You couldn't be 17 and have your own apartment. But anyway, me and a friend started going into stores and shoplifting eight-track tapes. The best thing that ever happened to me was the day I got caught and put in jail. I realized right then and there something was wrong."

"It was the lowest point in my life, to be sitting in a jail with all these old guys and them saying, 'What are you in for?' And I go, 'shoplifting a six dollar tape.' They were in for armed robbery and stuff like that. It just totally blew my mind. I stayed there for two days, and when I got out, it turned my whole life around. Since that time, I haven't taken one piece of bubble gum, nothing.

"Then, when I turned 21, I got my first club job. I started playing five nights a week, and

cooking five days a week. Eventually, I started making more and more money playing music, getting better and having more jobs, so I was able to stop cooking in 1971, and just play music."

Little Dave was playing with the Hana Band, a group from Southern California, when three of them got together one day and because one had been skiing here the year before, the three packed their cars and moved here in June, 1972.

"We got here and stayed at the Christie Motel which is now the Iron Horse Inn. We were just looking around town to see what was going on. Then we went to the Butcher Shop and asked if they would like a little entertainment on the weekends. They had just opened the Butcher Shop about six months before. They said, 'Yes, let's try it.' So we said, 'Far out! We got work!' We started playing at the Butcher Shop three nights a week and ended up playing there all summer long.

"The group decided not to play together anymore, because some of the guys wanted to go back to California. I decided three months after I moved here, that there was no way I was ever going to leave this town. It was just the greatest place in the world!

"The day after our group broke up, Anthony Matthews and Mary MacGregor came and asked me if I'd play bass for them. Since I was without a job, I told them I would. We started playing together at The Thunderhead in the Rathskeller. We did that for a while, then Mary left for Minnesota to do commercials and work on her career. Me and Anthony continued the duo thing. That was the summer of '73."

After Mary went to Minnesota, Dave and Anthony traveled to hang-gliding meets. They put up equipment and played for anyone who would listen, mostly songs about hang-gliding. Then when Mary came back she played with Rick Bear and Joe Ghiglia as a local band because they didn't want to travel.

Anthony, Dave and Kurt Gowdy recorded a soundtrack for ABC's American Sports film. Working with music in this way, Dave got into recording, a second field that he really enjoys.

"It's so much fun to be able to put together your own music in your own house, to record and have it come out sounding decent or at least decent enough to be played on the local radio station."

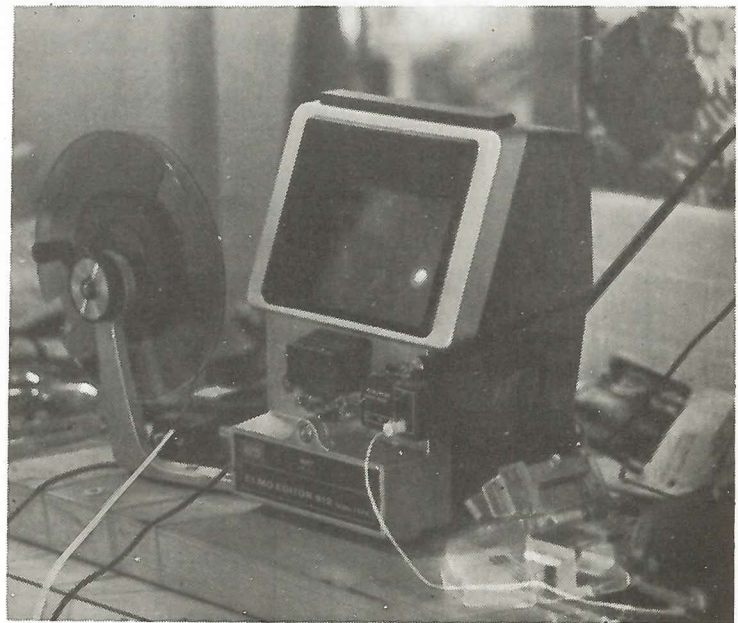
Since Dave has a musical background, recording is easy for him because of his good ear and his ability to balance sound. But besides playing in a band and recording music, Dave also makes home movies.

"We were playing at the Thunderhead with a packed house, and it was snowing tons and everyone was skiing, happy and having a good time. I was having the best time of my life. I had

to get a movie camera to take pictures of what was going on, so that in 30 years I'd be able to look back and have it preserved. So, I saved up a couple hundred dollars and went down to Rick Bear at the Positive Negative and said, 'Rick, I want a Super Eight movie camera.' So I got my first little Super Eight camera, and the day I got it, I was up on the slopes taking pictures of everybody.

"I kept taking more and more pictures. Everything I'd see, I'd start filming. My purpose behind that at the time was I wanted to be able to film this place, so that I'd be able to show the new people what it was like and have more or less a history of the times. So, I started taking more and more pictures and started getting asked to show my movies at parties. I'd go to a party and take my projector, and I'd show a ski movie or a movie I'd taken at the last party. People started asking me more and more if they could see my films, so by doing it more and more, I kept getting better.

Then Cassidy's opened in 1975 and the owners asked me if I would make movies for them, a video tape of skiers on the mountain. I filmed the skiers skiing down and showed them in the bar, so they could drink and have a good time and see themselves. This made the bar a lot of money, and me. So, I did that for a year. That was probably the most time I ever spent filming, several hours a day, three or four times a week. I was video taping and I also did Super Eight filming.



## Dave's own filmmaking room

"The end of that winter came and I had all that Super Eight footage, so I sat out here and made a 30-minute Steamboat ski movie of the year



## L.D.

before. Then I wrote a sound track and recorded it here. I seamed it all together and a week before the mountain was supposed to open, we advertised the showing of my new ski movie. Hundreds and hundreds of people came to see it. It went really good. Because of the movie, people started realizing that I did more than play Anthony's music."

Discussing many things that have happened to him, Dave told us, "What I have accomplished is, I keep getting better. Every day of my life since I was 18 years old has been better than the day before, with the exception of when Anthony died. That's the only thing that has ever got me down for a while. Every day is better because something better happens. That's what keeps me happy and trying to live up to my expectations."

This past year, one of Dave's highest accomplishments was the 1977 Winter Special Olympics film, about Steamboat's first winter games for the handicapped. "When I was working on the film, I was very confident that I was not going to whip out a bad product, but still at the same time, I was scared to death to show that movie. Here were all these people coming into the Brandywine, for one reason, and that was to see a movie that I had made. It's a Super Eight home movie, the same kind of equipment that your mom or dad have, except that it's a

little more sophisticated. To have so many great people, old as well as young, come and see something I had done and to enjoy it made the six months of work worthwhile, plus all the money and hours put into it. I've had four showings at the Brandywine. During all the showings, people were quiet and just watched. It was pretty neat."

After the film was over, everyone stood up and gave Dave a standing ovation. "The turn-out was interesting. The film has to go to the laboratory to get copies made of it now. It's eight millimeters now and it may be going up to 16 millimeters, I don't know. It's a hard thing to do when you take an eight millimeter film and try to put it on the professional market with the big guys. Taking it out of this little room here, with all the sound, the narrations, the editing, and competing with the big guys, ABC and NBC, is not an easy thing to do. People have done it and I think I can do it with this film, but it needs some more editing and I need to really make it more professional.

"With the movie, all I care about is showing it to people. I'm not in it for the money because filming is my hobby. I wouldn't want to turn filmmaking into a five day a week job. Right now, my filmmaking is whenever I feel like doing it, I do it. This past year, the Special Olympics film is the only one I've done. That's perfect! One a year, if it's good, is fine with me. But you never know. If Warner Brothers called me, I'm sure I'd go out there. It would be better than playing bars five nights a week for a while. I'd like to keep it pretty much low key.



## Dave's recording machines

"It's more fun doing it just as a local thing, and what I like more than anything is showing it to my friends. That's the best thing in the world and that's why I do it. That's why this last showing went so good. There were a lot of people there that I didn't know. I want to try to reach the long-term residents from here. I love

older people. I want to be accepted by them. At the last show, a lot of people there didn't know me, and now they do. I think it's a really nice feeling to have people come to see your work."

Dave has aspirations about future filmmaking ventures. "This next film I want to do, during the summertime, is a film called **Routt County Pioneers**. It will be a 30-minute documentary on the history of the county and talking with the old ranchers. I want to get some of their experiences down on film with their voices. I can't wait to do that movie. I think it will be neat."

Blending nature-filled environment and serene tranquility surrounded by majestic Steamboat mountains, Dave marvels at working in this atmosphere. "I love being able to wake up in the morning, walk right over here (tape deck) and work on a tape or walk in there (film room) and work on a film. At the same time I like to look out of the window and say, 'All right man!' to myself. It just kind of gets me excited. A lot of times I wake up in the morning and I start getting butterflies about mixing down a tape. What I like best about doing it, is I am getting something accomplished without wasting any time. There is no time to waste in this environment."

Dave then explained to us how to mix down a tape. Record on four separate individual tracks with each sound on a different track, so as to balance it out. For instance, you may record a bass on track one, a guitar on track two, put a piano on track three, and a voice on track four.



## L.D. Taking a Break

Then you have mixed all four down so that they sound good. That way, it's all mixed, and you don't have to touch it. Whereas, with the original you have to adjust and blend the sounds.

The group that Dave is currently playing with is the Whitfield-Ward Jamboree. The Tugboat is frequented by the group and is referred to as their second home. The members of the group are Thom Ward, who plays the guitar and mandolin, sings and writes, Greg Whitfield Scott, who plays guitar and sings, and Dave, of course, who plays the bass, writes and occasionally sings. Altogether, the group may make seven hundred to a thousand dollars a week and play in places such as Jackson Hole and Vail where they often receive complimentary ski passes also.

Many off afternoons, Little Dave spends his free time working on his own original production of "Deep Powder", a series of cartoons or animated films, which center around the adventures of a super hero, mountain skier and home town resident called Deep Powder. Each new adventure Dave creates has a vicious villain who invents ingenious way of debilitating the ski world and heroes. In his latest adventure Captain Annihilator (the villain) captures Deep Powder (the super hero) and is planning an avalanche to kill the leaders of major nations

while they are skiing in Colorado. Just before the Captain carries out his plan, Deep Powder escapes and arrives on the scene. He and Captain Annihilator race down the mountain where Deep Powder catches the captain and saves all the world leaders from total disaster.

When filming, Dave must move each doll very slightly to take a frame or several frames. He takes several shots to show each character's motion. The settings for these adventures are small home-made scenes which Dave puts together himself. The clothing comes ready-made, fitted especially for G.I. Joe dolls. Deep Powder also has a hand-knitted ski cap, mittens and other winter clothing which Dave one time unexpectedly found at a second hand store in Minnesota for a nickel apiece. The next adventure will have spaceships that project strange and unusual sounds that Dave will produce in his studio. The theme song is "Jim Dandy" played by Black Oak Arkansas and the words will be changed to "Deep Powder to the Rescue", instead of "Jim Dandy to the Rescue".

"What I enjoy most about playing music for a living, besides the fact that I love music is, it's a lot better than washing dishes. What else would I do? After playing music it is hard to work a normal job. I couldn't be happy cooking in a restaurant. What really makes me happy is being able to create film and music and helping people have a good time. I have a lot of great friends in this town, so many good people. Everyone is here for a good purpose and that's to smile and have a great time."



**Little Dave working on his cartoon**

Another achievement of Dave's was the production of the Steamboat Album. It was recorded in Dave's own living room where he was the recording engineer for the album and played the bass. Rolly Wahl and Anthony Matthews contributed a lot to see the album become a reality. Some of the songs on the album are; Colorado Country Lady, Rabbit Ears, and A Song For Steamboat. The album is produced by Yampa River Records and is distributed in local stores. The album is attractively displayed with winter and fall photographs of Mt. Werner on the front and back cover.



**"The Adventures of Deep Powder"**

