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SCENE & HEARD

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SCENE & HEARD

A 'cracker' comes home

Eco-folkie Tom Shed to mix it up at Thomas Center

Tom Sheddan came to Gainesville in 1970, graduating from the University of Florida in 1974 with a telecommunications degree that has served him well.

But at heart, he is a musician, one who started in Gainesville's storied scene three decades ago, weaving in and out of clubs and working with late UF professor and Florida folk music staple Don Grooms. He also has rubbed elbows and — at times — picked strings with the Tom Leadon, David Beede, Ray Valla (Gabe's dad) and Cathy Dewitt, a longtime Gainesville musician whose WUFT-FM show "Across the Prairie" has featured Shed as a guest.

But on Friday night, Tom Shed, a self-professed "Florida cracker," will perform at the Thomas Center — his first gig in Gainesville in 10 years and one that follows an extensive solo-acoustic trail through the West and back.

So, what's the difference between Tom Shed and Tom Sheddan?

Well, Sheddan had a taste for acoustic country-rock and some covers. He also had a lot of hair. Shed has a taste for country-folk and eco-friendly originals. He wears a big cowboy hat. (Not that there is a correlation between hair, hat and three decades).

Plus, the performer dropped the "dan" from his stage name because of pronunciation issues, especially when introduced. "Nobody ever gets it right," he said.

Still, Shed's a Gainesville folkie in a cowboy hat; he sings stories, originals and many tunes from Grooms, and his message these days revolves around protecting his home

Shed some light

■ Gainesville's Tom Shed, then Tom Sheddan, worked closely with the late Don Grooms, producing Grooms' first album, "Walk Proud My Son."

■ Shed is a regular at folk festivals, including the Will McLean Festival in Dade City and last weekend's Gamble Rogers Folk Festival in St. Augustine.

■ Shed has written and performed soundtracks for some PBS documentaries, including the WUFT-produced, award-winning "Archie Carr, A Naturalist in Florida."

■ He plays guitar, banjo and mandolin.

■ Shed's concert — "History, Humor & the Human Condition" — starts at 8 p.m. Friday at the Thomas Center, 306 NE 6th Ave. Tickets are \$10.



ARNEE SHEDDAN/Special to The Sun

Tom Shed will perform his first show in Gainesville in 10 years Friday night at the Thomas Center.

state and its natural resources. His program, titled "History, Humor and the Human Condition," starts at 8 p.m.

He also calls it a "Florida state of mine."

"I'm from Florida. I'm from North Florida," he told an Atlanta audience last year. "I have to say that now because, like in North Carolina and North Dakota, there are differences."

His program embraces Florida State Parks, nature and keeping this region's water in, well, this region. There are also songs about alien abduction, unconventional Southern food and motorhomes.

After all, the show does promise humor.

ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE OF The Gainesville Sun MAY 11, 2006

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