

Songwriter Rand Bishop admits to 'Makin' Stuff Up'

From Tennessean music writer Peter Cooper:

Rand Bishop had pretty much given up.

"I'd been in the music business for close to 35 years and been through all the dynamics and the ups and downs, the struggles and the record deals and publishing deals," Rand said. "At the close of the last millennium, I felt like I didn't want to put my family through any more of that insecurity, and so I got out of the business."

But getting out doesn't mean staying out, as Rand documents in his new book, *Makin' Stuff Up*. Soon after he'd given up music in favor of sales, Rand got a call from songwriter Tim James. Tim had just been signed to Toby Keith's publishing company, and he said Toby was interested in recording the Bishop-James song "My List."

Long story short, Toby did record that song, and Rand got some powerful checks in the mail when "My List" became a hit.

Long story long . . . well, read the book. It's a combination memoir and writing workshop, with Rand spilling some great stories (the time he infuriated record mogul Clive Davis and thus sabotaged his music career is one) and offering advice on co-writing, song structure and the like.

The book has spawned a Web site (www.makinstuffup.net) and a song-coaching business, and Friday Rand will be at the Bongo After Hours Theatre (2007 Belmont Avenue) for a 7 p.m. workshop/concert/book reading/Q&A session.

Rand is a mild-mannered songwriting type these days, but the Bongo appearance will be filled with tales from his days as a rocker (he was in The Wackers, a group that a *Creem* magazine writer once called "The greatest rock 'n' roll band in North America"), as a popster, as a producer and as a struggling Nashville type.

"I had always thought of my past as if I had self-destructed at every turn, until I started writing about it," Rand said. "When I started writing about the decisions I'd made, though, some of them seemed more justified. Turns out I put in a lot of good, honest days of work."

So, how's Clive doing?

"I actually tried to get Clive to do a foreword for the book," Rand said. "I sent him a very contrite certified letter, and I know he got it. He hasn't responded."

Will Clive show up for a tearful reunion at Bongo? Unlikely, but for a \$10 cover charge you can see for yourself. Plus, the \$10 cover is good for \$5 off the book, which Rand will gladly sign.