

# A chapter in *rock history*

*Auringer's photos, design work featured in CREEM tribute book*

By **MIKE ARNHOLT**  
*VIEW* Editor

**LAPEER** — The publication this month of a tribute to the “golden age” of rock ‘n’ roll, Detroit style *CREEM: America's Only Rock ‘n’ Roll Magazine*, hit bookstores across the country with a strong local connection.

Hadley native, Lapeer High 1964 grad and now *VIEW* Production Manager Charlie Auringer was an integral part of *CREEM* for its first 17 years.

In 1964, Charlie left Lapeer and headed off to Detroit to college at Wayne State.

He was caught up in the energy and excitement of concerts by Bob Dylan, The Beatles and others.

“It was the music that hooked me on rock photography,” says Charlie.

He took classes in photography at WSU and hung out at a local head shop/record store, meeting other artists and writers, including Barry Kramer and Tony Reay, with whom he started *CREEM*, the irreverent and gritty self-proclaimed “America's Only Rock ‘n’ Roll Magazine.”

The magazine was the voice of, by and for rock ‘n’ roll in Detroit from 1969-88.

As one of the founders with a strong eye on graphics, Charlie shot photos: from backstage, on stage, in the crowd and from — we can say — other vantage points.

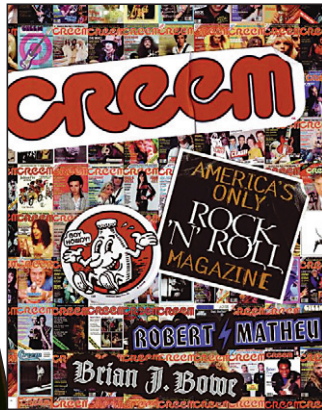
He shot local bands including the MC-5 and Mitch Ryder and national bands at



the legendary Grande Ballroom, Olympia Stadium and Cobo Hall, including Jeff Beck with Rod Stewart, Elvis and Cream, among others.

*CREEM* went national in 1971 and Charlie photographed David Bowie, Led Zeppelin, The Who, Rolling Stones, Kiss, Alice Cooper and many others while working with rock writers/editors Dave Marsh, Lester Bangs (characters featured in the movie *Almost Famous*) and others. His photos of rock legends Mick Jagger, Elton John and Leon Russell are among those that graced the covers of the magazine in its early years.

Along with his gift with a camera, Charlie had an eye for design, and by 1975 he had shifted his talents exclusively to the design, publishing and photo editing of “the best rock photographers in the USA.” Just as he does here each week at the *VIEW*, Charlie crafted the distinctive



look of *CREEM*, and his

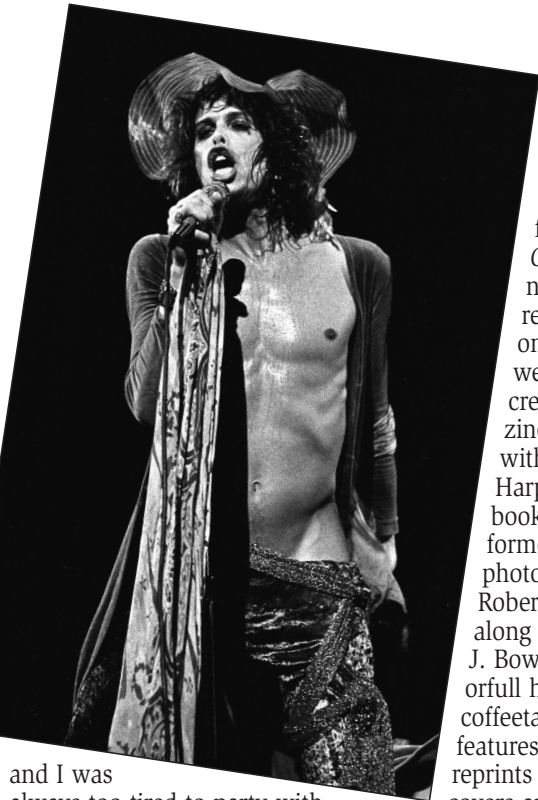


**Auringer and two of his photos, Mick Jagger and Steven Tyler of Aerosmith, featured in *CREEM* from the early '70s.**

stamp made an indelible mark on the look of the monthly magazine. He designed most of the magazine's over 200 covers in his 17 years at *CREEM*.

Charlie also took his interest in music even further to get a close and personal look at rock ‘n’ roll. He signed on as a roadie with Mitch Ryder and the Detroit Wheels in 1970-71.

“I traveled — by truck — to one-nighters all across the country,” Charlie says. The pace was hectic, “and I had a lot of fun, but it was the physically hardest work I have ever done in my life,



and I was always too tired to party with the band.”

The years he spent at *CREEM* are a slice of history today, but at the time “We were just having a lot of fun,” Charlie says.

His concert photos were electric, but he had fun with some of the off-stage shots. The book includes his shots of Kiss putting on their makeup at the magazine's Birmingham office, “in a bathroom down the hall shared with the dentist office whose patients were very surprised when they used the bathroom.” He was the sole photographer to get shots of the group “unmasked.” They were not published back then; “Kiss management strongly urged that we keep the mystery behind the makeup,” Charlie says.

*CREEM* left Charlie and Detroit in 1985 after the magazine went bankrupt, was sold and then headed to the West Coast. After a few years of attempting to bring it back, the publication faded

from view. *CREEM* has now been resurrected on a new website [www.creemmagazine.com](http://www.creemmagazine.com) and with the new HarperCollins book by another former *CREEM* photographer, Robert Matheu, along with Brian J. Bove. This colorful hardcover coffeetable book features historical reprints of stories, covers and photos

from its beginning with commentary from the editors and artists who were in *CREEM* over the years.

Charlie's passion for design remained, and he moved on to design Detroit's alternative newspaper, *Metro Times*.

And then after 40 years away he headed back to Lapeer in 2003 to design and help launch the all new *LA VIEW*, giving something back to his hometown.

Charlie still keeps his hand in music, remaining current by designing the bi-monthly *Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine*, ([www.bigcitybluesmag.com](http://www.bigcitybluesmag.com)), websites, CD covers ([www.jdlamb.com](http://www.jdlamb.com), [www.springfed.org](http://www.springfed.org)) and the occasional opportunity to shoot a photo for his musical friends.

Some of Charlie's classic rock photos will be soon available on a new website offering art quality framed photos to music fans at [www.backstagegallery.com](http://www.backstagegallery.com).