

Editorial COMMENTARY

by Tom Starland, Editor and Publisher

Last Month's Cover

Last month we featured works by Colin Quashie, which are being presented in the exhibit, *The Plantation (Plan-ta-shun)*, which is still on view at Redux Contemporary Art Center in Charleston, SC, through May 6, 2012.

I expected to get some reaction due to the nature of the images, but I did not expect such a jump in downloads of the paper which took place in April.

Since Dec. 2011 we have been averaging over 80,000 downloads a month - a great reaction to our electronic newspaper. Linda and I even speculated - well more like dreamed of a day when we would see that number reach 100,000 - ten times what our circulation used to be when we were printing the paper. So, you might imagine our excitement when in just 9 days in April we had gone over 90,000 downloads. We had reached another step in the ladder leading to that magic number. Of course the pattern of downloads is that most come in the first ten days of the month and then they trickle down to sometimes nothing.

But something different was happening in April. By mid-month I put out an update on my Facebook page that announced that we had reach 100,000 downloads on Friday the 13th - amazing! I thought of the movie *Jaws* and said to myself - "We're gonna need a bigger goal".

Was this all due to Colin Quashie's images? I can't say it was and I can't say it wasn't, but it's the first thing people see when they get ready to download the paper - so I think he gets a lot of the credit and so do those folks who help spread the download link of the paper around to friends and contacts by e-mail.

So, in the last 25 years, we've gone

from printing 5,000 copies of the paper and spreading them around Charleston, SC, to eventually distributing 10,000 copies throughout selected areas of the Carolinas to now having 100,000 copies downloaded in the Carolinas and beyond.

I'm glad I'm not delivering those papers anymore and yet, in some ways wish I was still out there at times on the delivery trail. It wasn't as bad as some people imagined and it took me to places a lot of you have never been.

End of story - you would think, but it's not. The downloads just kept coming. Somedays it would only be 120, but many days it would be 700 - 1,000 and then there was day when it was 3,500. I can't give you the total just yet, but it's up there, way beyond anything I expected for an April issue. May and October have always been our biggest months.

Of course our April 2012 issue was our biggest issue to date, with 79 pages - until this issue came along with 82 pages. Maybe the deal is - the bigger the paper - the bigger the audience. I don't know, but we'll see what happens this month and maybe we'll learn something about what's going on.

Taking Notice

Not all those downloads are coming from people in North and South Carolina. I'm sure a lot of you readers noticed the ad we had from the High Museum in Atlanta, GA, during the last 6 months. The exhibit they wanted to promote to our readers ended in April, but other folks noticed it. Like the good people at The Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art in Virginia Beach, VA. You can check out their ad on Page 17. I hope some of the

[continued on Page 16](#)

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