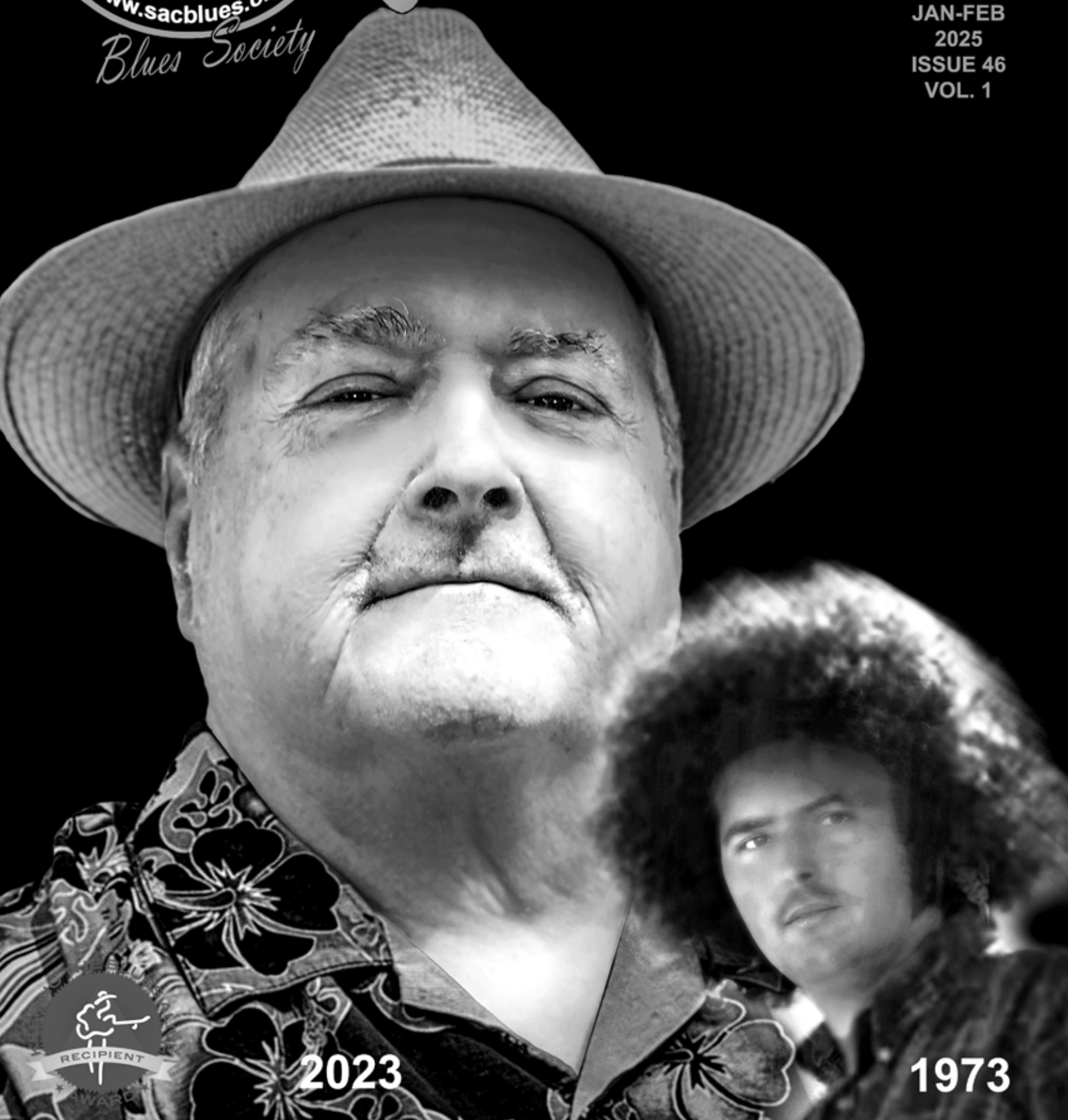


A bi-monthly publication of the Sacramento Blues Society



BLUE NOTES!

JAN-FEB
2025
ISSUE 46
VOL. 1



2023

1973

President's Column

By Barbara Katen

Happy New Year!



What a year we have had! Sadly, we've lost friends, including two people who are very special to the SBS - please see the "In Memoriam" sections for our tributes to SBS founder Jeff Hughson and beloved musician Fred "Deacon" Baker in this issue. (Also, please check out the Sacramento Blues Society "2024 Gone but Not Forgotten" <https://youtu.be/y5JhfGzHuwI?si=7q9FfG2rEoEIYWf8>, (thank you Bob Cosman). And we've gained some new friends.

My term as President of the Sacramento Blues Society expires with our SBS Board meeting on January 14, 2025. It has been an honor and privilege to serve as SBS President. It was a challenging year administratively and we got a lot accomplished; it couldn't have been done without the help of an outstanding and dedicated Board of Directors, excellent Committee Chairs and most importantly, YOU, our devoted SBS members.

I want to thank all our SBS Board members for their service (as volunteers, it truly is service and a labor of love for us). Sadly, Rex Smith, our Parliamentarian extraordinaire, will be stepping down from the SBS Board and taking a break (from my many phone calls I think, lol). His counsel has been indispensable to me during my term as President and he will be sorely missed by the entire Board.

On a cheerier note, we welcome Laurel Coppess to the Board of Directors. We are thrilled she made the decision and commitment to join the Board. It's always a huge win when a dedicated SBS member joins the Board. When you see Laurel out and about, thank her and give her a thumbs up for her decision to volunteer to serve our blues community.

It was also a lot of fun celebrating our 45th Anniversary with all of you! What a great year we had celebrating.

In this issue, please check out the article about SBS purchasing a commemorative anniversary brick for placement at the Blues Foundation in Memphis.

So, I am happy and confident in the knowledge that we ended 2024 with the Sacramento Blues Society in a good place. I want to thank all of you for your ongoing support and the important part you play in helping to keep the blues alive. And with your continued support, the blues will be here to stay! Let's all look forward to a fabulous, music-filled 2025.

See you at the Music.

2025 Committee Chairs

Hall of Fame - Sally Katen

Events - Mindy Giles

Membership - Linda McShane

Sponsorships/Fundraising - Open

Public Relations & Social Media - Mindy Giles

Volunteer Coordinator - Lynette Shumway

Blues in the Schools, Big Day of Giving - Rick Snyder

Merchandise - Lynette Shumway

Blue Notes Newsletter - Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley

IBC Competition - Shirley McCoy

Webmaster - Mindy Giles

Board of Directors Development - Open

Help keep the blues alive - Contact a Chair or Board Member to volunteer for the Board or a Committee!

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) is one of the oldest blues societies in California, founded in 1979. SBS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed to preserve and promote blues music as an art form. SBS has kept the blues tradition alive in the Sacramento area by promoting the local blues music scene, bringing internationally renowned artists to the region, educating students with "Blues in the Schools", acknowledging our local blues artists, providing a Musicians' Crisis Fund and publishing the **Blue Notes** six times a year. SBS is an affiliate member of The Blues Foundation (which honored us with a 2015 Keeping the Blues Alive Award) which provides educational opportunities for young people with The Blues Foundation's "Blues in The Schools" Program.

Board of Directors Meetings - 2nd Tuesday of each Month, 7:00 p.m.

All SBS Members in good standing are invited to attend.

Meetings are held via Zoom; to request an invitation, email: president@sacblues.org

2025 Board of Directors

Officers to be elected 1/14/2025

Barbara Katen

Renee Erickson Sullivan

Shirley McCoy

Laurel Coppess

Cari Chenkin

Rick Snyder

Lynette Shumway

Sally Katen

Julio Covington

Marcel Smith

Sacramento Blues Society Publications

Blue Notes, Bi-Monthly Newsletter -
Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley, Co-Editors

Layout - **Cari Chenkin**

Cover Design: **Bob Cosman**

Cover Photos - **Bob Cosman**

Printing & Mailing by: **Premier Print & Mail**

Blues Notes Ad Rates:

www.sacblues.org/advertising-rates

Weekly e-newsletter: **Jan's Jams - Jan Kelley**

Website: www.sacblues.org

Facebook: facebook.com/sacblues/
Instagram: instagram.com/sacramentobluesociety/
"X", formerly Twitter: [@SacBluesSociety](https://twitter.com/SacBluesSociety)

Blues In The Schools Update

By Rick Snyder (aka Rico)
Blues in the Schools Committee
Chair



There are many great quotes about the music business, but I'll refrain from sharing any here—though one or two seem especially fitting for this month's Blues in the Schools column. Instead, I'll simply say this: the business of music, especially live music, tends to come in waves.

Sometimes, it's just a small ripple, like the slower months between late November and February. Other times, it's a thrilling fifteen-footer that keeps you hanging on for dear life, cutting across the face of the wave, and reveling in the rush. The trick is learning how to make the best of both.

When the water is calm, it's time to replenish supplies, catch up on paperwork, and make sure you're staying visible so no one forgets you. When the big waves roll in, you're glued to your phone and email, booking gigs, securing sponsors and donations, thanking everyone who helps, and counting your lucky stars.

Right now, we're in the shorebreak, piecing together everything for our 20th Anniversary Blues in the Schools Celebration. The response has been incredible—we're fortunate to have local volunteers, bands, and venues stepping up to assist with this milestone event.

We've also been in communication with a very special guest headliner (who will remain a surprise for now). We're working to align the stars to make their appearance happen. Stay tuned—we'll keep you updated on all developments through social media. You can follow us on Facebook at Sacramento Blues in the Schools and Rico's Blues News. On BlueSky, find Rico's Blues News, with Sacramento Blues in the Schools joining soon.

In other exciting news, we've just booked our first BITS elementary school assemblies! On February 21, 2025, we'll present two Blues in the Schools programs for the kids at Earl Warren Elementary School in Sacramento.

With that said, we need your help to bring the power of music to more schools. Reach out to your kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, or even friends' kids and tell them about us! We're available to bring assemblies to elementary schools and to launch our Artist in Residence program for high schools.

The Artist in Residence program offers students a chance to work directly with a blues musician once or twice a week for five weeks. Together, they'll learn to play as a band, write songs, and dive into the music business. The program culminates in a performance during the Big Day of Giving at a Sacramento music venue.

No instrument? No problem! We have guitars, drums, keyboards, amplifiers, and even violins to loan or gift to deserving students.

If you know of a school that might be interested, please reach out! You can email me, Rick Snyder, at sacbits@gmail.com with any leads. Thank you for your continued support. Let's keep riding the waves together!

2025 Board Members Elected

We're pleased to announce the election of your 2025 Board of Directors, voted on by the membership at our Annual Meeting December 8, 2024.

Laurel Coppess has been newly elected to the Board. Re-elected are: Barbara Katen, Cari Chenkin, Julio Covington, Lynette Shumway, Marcel Smith and Sally Katen. They join Rick Snyder, Renee Sullivan and Shirley McCoy (whose terms continue through December, 2025) as your 2025 Board of Directors.

At our first 2025 Board meeting on January 14, the Board will elect the 2025 slate of officers, who will be announced via social media and in the March-April *Blue Notes*.

2024 Valerie Jeanne Anderson Volunteer Award

Photo by Bob Cosman

In 2016, to honor the late VJ Anderson, a stalwart SBS volunteer for many years, the Sac Blues Society created the Valerie Jean Anderson volunteer award. The award is intended to honor someone whose dedication, time, energy and efforts throughout the years on behalf of the SBS have been outstanding.



We're proud to announce the winner of the 2024 award – Board Member and 2024 Vice President Renee Erickson Sullivan. Renee joins the ranks of seven other outstanding volunteers, including:

2016 – Valerie Jeanne Anderson

2017 – Cynthia Jaynes

2018 – Daniel Hernandez

2019 – David Alcock

2020 – No recipient – Covid year!

2021 – TWO recipients: Liz Walker and Bobbie Felt Armstrong

2022 – Cari Chenkin

2023 – Linda McShane

Please join us in congratulating Renee, and thanking her for her service and contributions.

In Memoriam

Jeff Hughson

March 19, 1950 – October 15, 2024

By Mick Martin



What can anybody say about a friend and mentor of 60 years? Without Jeff Hughson, my journey as a blues fan might never have started.

I had put a notice in a national magazine called *Fantastic Monsters of the Films* and not long after received a phone call from a 13-year-old Jeff saying, "I like monsters, too." He was, of course, referring to the classic Universal fright films starring Boris Karloff, Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney Jr. and Claude Rains. More than that, we had the same taste in music -- specifically BLUES!

My dad dropped me off at the Hughson home in River Park and we walked into his man cave. There I saw more records in one house than I'd ever seen in my life at 14 years of age. There

were classic singles and albums by everyone from Muddy Waters to B.B. King, imports from England of EPs by the Rolling Stones, the Animals, the Pretty Things and more -- even a snapshot of him with Howlin' Wolf on the wall right next to one of the Wolf's discarded harmonicas.

We listened to rarities by the likes of Jimmy Reed, Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Mama Thornton and John Lee Hooker and, before we knew it, time was up, and I had to go home. Fortunately, my parents understood my fascination with "that weird sounding music" and allowed me to ride my bike from West Sacramento over the Tower Bridge to 16th and Broadway, where it wasn't long before I had a job -- at Tower Records.

A few years later, I was in the living room of Ed Fitzgerald helping Jeff compile a list of albums that just had to be in the library of the soon-to-have-it's debut -- KZAP. Jeff assumed the sobriquet of Flower Pig and free form radio began at 98.5 on the Sacramento FM radio dial with him serving up lots of blues. More adventures in the blues followed with us both having the same realization at Phil Givant's Sacramento Blues Festival on September 22, 1979 that our city needed a blues society, and Jeff became its first president.

We had so many adventures. He introduced me to Muddy Waters backstage at Freeborn Hall at UC Davis and allowed me to have the eyepopping experience of seeing Howlin' Wolf in the quad at UC Berkeley and many other great performers, including Keith Richards' shocking concert with the Rolling Stones at the Memorial Auditorium.

Jeff was inducted into the Sacramento Blues Society Hall of Fame in 2023. (Thank you, Mindy Giles, Sally Katen's Hall of Fame board members and Steve Holsapple.) An outpouring of love worthy of a genuine local hero!

Thank you, Jeff. I'll miss you until we both see our heroes again! Sail on. ~Mick ~

Dennis Newhall Remembering Jeff Hughson



I met Jeff when I was in college. I would hear him on KZAP and found his phone number through mutual radio friends. At that point, he was a fantastic source for rare records that I was looking for, and always had fun stories to tell about the musicians (mostly blues legends) that he had met and hung out with.

At the end of the 90s, Jeff pulled some reel-to-reel tapes out of his closet. These were recordings of all eight shows performed by the original line-up of the Beau Brummels for a reunion at the original Shire Road Pub. We picked out the best performance of each song and created a very professional CD album package. It was the first release from the record label we started along with Marty DeAnda: DIG Music.

We were very involved in the early days of the label as another opportunity presented itself: creating the Sacramento Rock and Radio Museum at the old Oasis Ballroom building on 20th at I Street. Here again, Jeff and I spent lots of time together turning up posters, handbills, photos, radio charts, and anything else we could acquire by begging, borrowing or swapping, that would help tell the story of the rock scene in Sacramento and Davis from the 1950s to the present day. It was a learning experience for both of us and gave us a chance to work together on some really interesting projects. Jeff was a walking Wikipedia of blues and early rock knowledge and he was always fun to be around. ~ Dennis Newhall, K-ZAP GM, www.https://k-zap.org/

Bricks For The Blues

By Barbara Katen

In commemoration of the Sacramento Blues Society's 45th Anniversary in 2024, the SBS Board of Directors unanimously voted to purchase an eight-inch by eight-inch brick which will be installed at the entrance to the Blues Foundation and the Blues Hall of Fame in Memphis.

While the finished brick won't be placed in time for those attending the 2025 IBC in January, it should be finished and installed this

summer. So, if any of our members plan a trip to Memphis later in the year, and plan on visiting the Blues Hall of Fame, look for our brick which will be inscribed as follows:

THE SACRAMENTO BLUES SOCIETY
45th Anniversary
Keepin' the Blues Alive! 2024

And if you take a picture and submit it to Cari, our *Blue Notes* Editor, it will probably (no promises) make it into an issue of the *Blue Notes* because we are proud and loud!

What's On Your Playlist? *By Barbara Katen*

We want to know what you are listening to. Any genre, oldies, whatever music you listen to that fills your soul. THAT is what we want to know. Yes, sitting down to narrow favorites down to five songs is extremely hard, so I get it. Every single song on the list should evoke some sort of emotion when you hear it. So, think about yours and send me what you come up with to bkaten2@gmail.com with "Playlist" in the subject line. Please and thank you!

Doug Pringle

"I'd Rather Go Blind" - Etta James
 "Talkin' the Blues" - Leo Parker
 "So Fine" - The Fiestas
 "Crosscut Saw" - Stevie Ray Vaughan
 "One Night" - Elvis Presley

Paris Clayton

"Mohair Sam" - Slim Harpo
 "Hurt" - Johnny Cash
 "Five Miles Above" - Eric Bibb
 "In My Life" - The Beatles
 "Oh Yeah" - Johnny A.
 "Rock This House" - Hollywood Fats

Cameron Christensen

"For You" - Eric Bibb
 "Still the Rain" - Karen Lovely
 "Hoochie Coochie Man" - Muddy Waters
 "Devil's Daughter" - Othman Wahabi
 "Chain Gang" - Sam Cooke

MariLu Onweller

"Hold Me, Thrill Me" - Mel Carter
 "Imagine" - John Lennon
 "The Impossible Dream" - Various Artists
 "Bohemian Rhapsody" - Queen
 "I Will Survive" - Gloria Gaynor
 "Hello Mary Lou" - Rick Nelson

Michael Carter

"Last Two Dollars" - Johnnie Taylor
 "Look at God" - Koryn Hawthorne
 "I Smile" - Kirk Franklin
 "What a Wonderful World" - Louis Armstrong
 "Never Would Have Made It" - Marvin Sapp

John Primer & Bob Corritore at Harlow's For Final (for now!) Blues & Bourbon Production, October 30, 2024 *By Frank Farmer*



Photos by Frank Farmer & Cari Chenkin

John Primer is a contemporary of Junior Wells, Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, Magic Slim, and many other pioneering blues artists. It is a special occasion when he comes to Sacramento to play, and one not to be missed.



John brings his own compositions, with excellent vocals and guitar work and was



joined by Bob Corritore on harmonica and commentary in addition to ace all-stars Mike Hightower on bass and Jimmy Mullenix on drums. It was an awesome show, witnessed by a good crowd. The dance floor was hopping and it was all-in-all an evening of great music



for everyone there. What a SWELL way to close this very special Blues & Bourbon series.

Many in attendance were there not only for the music but to pay respect to our very own Mindy Giles (Swell Productions). This October 30th production of Blues & Bourbon, brought to us by Mindy, was the last Blues & Bourbon show that she will present, at least for a while. Optimistically, we call it a hiatus.



SBS Presidents, past and present, and SBS Board members attended this show to honor and thank Mindy for her contribution to bringing the best of live music to us. Her impact



on the Sacramento music scene has been immense and we are very grateful to Mindy for all she has done and the fabulous music she has brought to us. We look forward to seeing her at future



events! Thank you, Mindy!

IBC Update!

By Renee Erickson Sullivan, IBC Committee Chair

We are so excited to be sending two contestants to Memphis this year! Congratulations to Rowland and Tumblin' who will participate in the competition for a Band and to Matt Rainey and Bert Thomas who will participate in the Solo/Duo Competition at the International Blues Challenge January 7 – 11, 2025.

Thanks to the generosity of our members, we were able to reach our goal between our Go Fund Me Fundraiser, the "Jar" that has been passed around at our SBS Functions for the past several months and fund-raising events held by the musicians themselves. Thank you all so much for your support and for cheering them on!

A huge thank you goes out to our IBC Committee and other Board Members who jumped in to help make this happen. The SBS-Sponsored October 27 fundraiser for Kyle at Powerhouse Pub was a huge success, as was his self-sponsored show November 30 at Coffee Republic.

Matt and Bert also held successful fundraisers, including a show at the Fair Oaks Deli on October 10, which was reviewed in the November-December issue of the *Blue Notes*.

So, come January, Kyle & the band and Matt and Bert are off to Memphis! We hope to see some of our members there. If you are going, please let us know so that we can meet up with you. Be sure to keep an eye on our Facebook page for updates. Again, many thanks to everyone involved and the best of luck to Rowland & Tumblin' and Matt and Bert!

Rowland and Tumblin': From the Powerhouse to Memphis!

By Mindy Giles

Photos by Barbara Katen & Mindy Giles

If you were blindfolded and a friend led you into the Powerhouse Pub on the last Sunday afternoon of October, there might have been more than an inkling of some magical low-down time travel back to the 1950s and 1960s. All the bandmates in Rowland and Tumblin' revere the swath of the blues that rose up from Mississippi and found electric fuel in Chicago. They equally love the Gulf Coast swamp blues



and R&B of Louisiana and Texas from the same time. Led by Kyle Rowland on harp and vocals, Kenny Marchese (guitar), Mike Phillips (bass and vocals), and Myles Silveira (drums) had a full house and dance floor for the International Blues Challenge fundraiser that will help defray their expenses to Memphis to compete in the IBC January 7-11, 2025 on Beale Street.



For the uninitiated, over twenty clubs host the challengers and fans. In addition to featuring these final rounds of the prestigious blues music competition, the IBC event week offers seminars, showcases, master classes, film screenings, networking events, book signings, and receptions

for blues societies, fans, and professionals. It is truly a gathering of the tribe, and Kenny sees the truth of that feeling. "We are excited to be invited to the IBC and be part of a wonderful group of people that share our adoration for blues and roots music. Perhaps as important



as the competition is the chance to reunite with our musical family and meet new people and musicians. We are truly grateful."

Sunday's sets from Rowland and Tumblin' were peppered with several songs written and made famous by two international blues legends who personally mentored Kyle in style and showmanship- the great James Cotton and

the great Lazy Lester.

"How Long Can A Fool Go Wrong" James Cotton's 1974 philosophy drawn from nature-- ("How long can a bird sing—as long as it knows it's song...! That's how long a fool can go wrong."), then there's Cotton's rompin, drivin' "She's Murder" and a much-loved boisterous instrumental set closer, "The Creeper." "Sugar Coated Love" is Louisiana swamp blues Lazy Lester's famous 1958 song about his real gone baby. Another of Kyle's hero/teachers, he was a good friend.

Band song choices (blues and R&B hits of Guitar Slim, Syl Johnson with James Cotton's Blues Band, Sonny Boy Williamson, Jimmy Rogers, Muddy Waters, Percy Mayfield, Junior Parker) all allow Kyle's deep harmonica chops and his emotional singing to elevate songs of both hurt and celebration. Little Charlie Baty said many years ago "Kyle plays harp like a man, not all hopped up on nitrous oxide, but the way it should be played." Kenny's supple, clean guitar lines can build, breathe fire, and then meld back seamlessly to serve the song. Mike's beautiful melodic bass work soulfully blends with Myles' solid taste and time.

The IBC is a competition that looks to champion originality. Players are expected to build on great blues traditions but dig deep to find their own voice within that framework. So, Kyle was gracious enough to send me his thoughts on the set of all originals that they are going to give their audience of judges and fans:

- "Before You're Gone": Written at the beginning of our relationship, this song compares my initial sentiments for my now-fiancee to a substance addiction.
- "Nightmares of an Insomniac": A powerful slow blues, music written by and featuring Kenny Marchese. The words were written from a personal experience in my life, in which I struggled, and continued to do so, to sleep at night thinking about a traumatic experience.
- "Convict Number 1": This is just an old-fashioned love song, not about anyone in particular, but captures a relationship where one party has placed limitations on the other. The singer accepts that these limitations are for his own good and for the good of the relationship.
- "Burnin' Walls & Buildin' Roads": Lyrics such as "I've built these towers by which I'm bound" and "I've laid the rocks that make a river run wild" is me taking responsibility for my previous actions, overcoming them, and creating new possibilities.
- "The Return": A song I recently wrote based on Jesus' parable of the prodigal son, found in Luke 15:11-32.

We are all cheering for you four gents! May it be a great and grateful week.

Thank you to Murray and The Powerhouse Pub for donating the room for our event.

More info here: <https://www.kylerowlandblues.com/>

"Blue Sunday" Update

By Cari Chenkin & Barbara Katen

Photos by Cari Chenkin & Barbara Katen

"Blue Sunday" remains one of our members' favorite recurring SBS events. And we've had a great lineup throughout 2024, which we'll continue on into 2025.



Our November band was Val Starr & The Blues Rocket and our December band is Julie & the Jukes, which will occur too late to review in this issue, so look for that review in our Mar-April newsletter.

We're all set for a great start to 2025, with bands booked through May. Coming attractions include:

January – The Anthony Arya Band, featuring AC Myles

February – Mike Hammar & The Nails

March – Yahmo

April – Red's Blues

May – Rube & The Rhythm Rockers.

June through December "Blue Sunday" dates have yet to be booked, so I'm calling on all member bands, especially those that have not yet played a "Blue Sunday", to get in touch with me if you want to participate.

Sunday, October 20, 2024

On October 20, we didn't have a full moon but we did have the bluesy Zola Moon Band at our monthly Blue Sunday event. Well-known and well-loved in the Sacramento area, the band consists of the singer and band namesake, Zola Moon, Daryl Rowland on guitar, Daryl Singh on bass and Johnny Stone on drums.



The Zola Moon Band has a loyal following of fans that are willing to drive distances and show up wearing their dancing shoes for their shows. And it's understandable, as it's contagious! I had difficulty not moving and grooving at the table and a couple times stood up to get my groove on to their unique sound.

A personal favorite from the day was Zola belting out a rousing rendition of Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart." Oh, the memories that brought back of my first acid trip...LOL.

Other songs the band performed were: "Nightlife", "The Bottom", "Tell Mama", "Snake Eyes", "Bluesville", "Hot Texas Sun", "Angel from Montgomery", "I'd Rather Go Blind", "Rock Me Baby", "Walking Blues", "House of the Rising Sun" and many others.



It was an afternoon of good music. If you get the opportunity to check out the Zola Moon Band, go!

All in all, it was a good band, with good friends and a good time!



Sunday, November 24, 2024

Kicking off the holiday season with a pre-Thanksgiving show, Val Starr & the Blues Rocket tore up the Torch Club with their blend of high-energy rocking blues!



This was a special event for the SBS, as they were the very first band to play at our inaugural Blue Sunday event in August 2021! And with this appearance three years later, they did not disappoint.



With a full seven-piece band, Val was in her element and sounded



fantastic. The Blues Rocket was: John Ellis on bass, Kirk Hooper on drums, Timothy Brisson on guitar, Pamela Charles Arthur on keyboards, Marty



Deradoorian on saxophone, Frankie Munz on harmonica and vocals and of course Val herself on lead vocals and guitar. Playing a mix of Val's original tunes and tasty covers, the band entertained a

large crowd of fans and dancers.

Val, an amazingly talented artist in her own right, is conscientious about giving props to other female blues artists who influenced her. She did a three-song tribute to blues woman Debbie Davies,





singing two of Debbie's tunes and one of her own entitled "What Would Debbie Davies Do?"

She went on to offer homage to other blues women by playing an E.C. Scott song, and gave a shout-out to the late Sista Monica when she covered her "You're Only Good for One Thing".



The trend continued when she honored the late Deborah Coleman, covering Albert Collins' "If You Love Me Like You Say" in Deborah's style, as well as another of Deborah's covers, Koko Taylor's "I'm A Woman".



Their second set included a Bonnie Raitt-influenced cover of the Del Shannon classic "Runaway", featuring Frankie Munz playing FOUR harps at one time! That was followed up by another Bonnie Raitt cover of John Prine's "Angel from Montgomery".

Val's original tune "Big City Blues" brought the dancers flocking to the dance floor, and their cover of Queen's "Crazy Little Thing Called Love" kept everyone out there.

Thanks again to the wonderful Val Starr and the Blues Rocket, for a great time. See ya at the Torch Club for the next Blue Sunday!

Album Review

Marcel Smith - *From My Soul*

Little Village Records

By Steve Cagle



Marcel Smith ranks among Northern California's most distinguished contemporary blues and soul artists. With a career that spans decades, he has established himself as an exceptional performer of both spiritual and secular music, from his beginnings in the church choir loft to singing doo wop on the street corner, playing guitar in college cover bands and perfecting his vocals in popular gospel groups while still in his teens. With his latest solo recording, *From My Soul*, (the follow-up to Smith's solo debut, 2018's *Everybody Needs Love*) he continues to build on that foundation and expand his following to a national and global audience.

It was recorded at Greaseland studio in San Jose with studio proprietor, recording wizard and go-to multi-instrumentalist Chris "Kid" Andersen in charge, and released on the Little Village Foundation label. Marcel displays his dynamic vocal skills on a dozen songs, both originals and interpretations, which represent several musical styles and eras.

Smith co-wrote the first three songs with Anthony Paule, Christine Vitale and Larry Batiste, whom he had collaborated with as part of an Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra project. "I'm Coming Home To You" recalls the soul crooners of the early 60's, with the Sons of the

Soul Revivers providing the backup vocals. "If You Miss Me" is a smoky, late night slow dancer with delicate piano accompaniment and lush saxophone solo that compliment Marcel's voice as he glides effortlessly across several vocal ranges. "What Can We Do" evokes the vintage pre-Motown soul crooning style enhanced by robust backing vocals and flowing strings while lyrically addressing the social ills of the times.

The music then takes a major turn from silky retro soul to rousing social anthem with Little Richard's 1970 comeback hit, "Freedom Blues," rendered faithfully and forcefully, including a pounding backbeat by northern California's beloved drummer Derrick "D'Mar" Martin, now with Rick Estrin and the Nightcats but who coincidentally played with Little Richard for 15-plus years.

And just as suddenly the music switches back to smooth, late-night vintage-style soul with Willie Nelson's "Wake Me When It's Over," once again enhanced by string section and this time featuring a retro-60s xylophone solo.

Another burst of musical energy arrives with the Jimmy Liggins R&B classic, "Drunk," played for fun by Marcel and company with tempo raised, horn section jumping and street corner talking with a fine trombone solo from horns arranger Mike Rinta. It's followed by the breezy "To Be True," a song written by Jim Pugh (founder of Little Village Foundation and keyboard player throughout this record) for the Robert Cray Band when he was a member.

Marcel dusts off and updates a couple of songs from his 1993 album with the band The Soul Prophets. "Nothing Left To Burn" is mid/up-tempo guitar-and-horn-infused soul with impressive soloing from Kid Andersen that gives the song an Isley Brothers feel.

The Mississippi Soul Blues Man, Johnny Rawls, joins Marcel for a couple of southern soul chestnuts. The two powerhouse soul singers push each other to their respective peaks of excellence on the slow ballad, "There Goes My Used To Be," recorded in the early 60s by O.V. Wright, who Rawls worked for as band leader in his early career. Then they up the tempo on "Turn Back the Hands of Time," a song mostly associated with the late soul legend, Tyrone Davis.

The second reworking of a Soul Prophets song, "My Heart Told a Lie," is a deep soul ballad duet with Lisa Leuschner Andersen sharing the vocals with Marcel. The album officially wraps up with the George Jackson-penned "I Don't Want to Take a Chance," recorded most notably for Wee Willie Walker's 2017 album with the Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra, *After a While*.

The album concludes with an unexpected treat - a bonus track recorded live at Greaseland in October 2021, shortly after Marcel's mother had passed away. The song, "How Can You Mend a Broken Heart," was performed as a tribute to her. It clocks in at nine minutes, but there's nary a dull second anywhere therein. Smith puts heart and soul into his vocal reading of the classic tune, though at the time he didn't know it was being recorded.

With two timeless classics to his credit so far as a solo artist, we look forward to more masterworks from Marcel Smith.

In Memoriam

Fred "Deacon" Baker

April 15, 1950 – November 24, 2024

Fred "Deacon" Baker started his musical career early at the age of six, like many others, singing gospel in the church choir and was singing solos by the age of 10. His first instrument of choice was marching bands. While in high school he taught himself backed such notables as Doc Severinsen. His career in expand upon his vocals and harp playing, eventually lead-a popular fixture, playing with Johnny Heartsman, Arbess generally at Sam's Hof Brau and the Torch Club. Deacon HOF 2017) to join his band the BluesExciters and when it Rick von Geldern, Lena Mosley (HOF 2011) and Marshal *Biography*



the trumpet, which he played in high school and college harmonica and in college played in a jazz band that the Navy took him to various countries where he could ing him back to Sacramento, where he soon became Williams, and Omar Sharriff (all HOF members now), was encouraged by Ken Van Cromphaut (Obie Dee folded, joined up with the Sacramento Blues Revue with Wilkerson.(HOF 2014). *Excerpted from SBS HOF*

By Ken (Obie Dee) Van Cromphaut

Most people know Fred "Deacon" Baker for his mastery of the stage as a frontman, his soulful vocals, and his harmonica expertise. We shared the stage together for over 60 years. We performed for Jester Hairston ("Amen"), we played at the Monterey Bay Blues Festival, and at concerts and club venues throughout California. Deacon always got people up and dancing wherever we were.

But Deacon the man, was so much more than to musicians young and old. He was a Christian in the scriptures and held bible studies at his his God, his family, and his friends. He also spon- was a need he met the challenge with wisdom, Godfather to my daughter Angel, "Uncle Freddy" being ordained, married Lisa and me.

His passing will leave a big hole in the hearts of Brother.

By John Noxon

I was once told Fred "Deacon" Baker was a rail- by night. Fred was a railroad man and maybe that's no-nonsense conductor's "load them up" voice, mixed a roaring locomotive doing 110mph down the tracks

I first met Deacon at a music event in Sutter Creek and then playing a tune and I thought, "Wow, he's on that harp—how can he keep that up" !! I had the erhouse Pub, Constable Jacks, the Sacramento Jazz needed with the bands The Sacramento Blues Revue and other volunteer musicians at the Loaves and Fish- very house he grew up in here in Sacramento near the for him.

Ride those tracks Deacon—the road goes on forever...



the entertainer most people saw. He was a mentor ready to help anyone in need. He was well versed home and at his church. Deacon was devoted to sores and counseled people in recovery. If there understanding, and compassion. Deacon was to my daughters Angel, Jessica and Jennifer and

so many he has touched in his life. He was my



road man by day and a blues singer/harp player where he got his rhyme and rhythm. Deacon had a with rail-yard humor and a soulful harp that turned into when he got to cookin'.

maybe 30 years ago. I remember hearing him singing playing an impossible 16th note tongue-stutter solo privilege of jamming on keys with Deacon at the Pow- Jubilee and numerous SBS events, including when and the Blues Exciters. Deacon was a regular with me es Thanksgiving Jams. He lived his last years in the tracks — a place I'd like to think of was an inspiration

Hall of Fame & Johnny Knox Jam

Updates *By Sally Katen*

Wow, can you believe we are already into 2025! The years seem to be flying by! Here is a short update on this year's events.

The Johnny "Guitar" Knox Pro Jam will be Sunday, June 1, 2025. at the Torch Club, The Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony (at Harlow's) and Afterparty (at the Torch Club) will be on Sunday September 28, 2025.

I hope to see everyone at these events, as they will be pretty awesome. Johnny's Pro Jam allows the local musicians & HOF



Members play together at the Torch Club and show off their skills while honoring Johnny!

Each year the Sacramento Blues Society receives nominations of people in the Sacramento area who have been either a Performer (musician/vocalist) or Non-Performer (supporter of the blues) for 20 or more years, who are deserving of recognition.

The Hall of Fame will again honor some local musicians/supporters who are deserving of recognition for their 20+ years serving the community.

Looking forward to the New Year!

Interview with Otis Mourning

By Jan Kelley

Photos from <https://www.davetmusic.com/otis-mourning-saxophone>

I've been witness to a fabulous, versatile horn player during several events and finally was able to pepper him with some questions that were on my mind. I hope you have the pleasure of



hearing him play some day if you haven't already. Let me introduce you to him...

Blue Notes (BN): How did you get your start in music?

Otis Mourning (OM): I had two older brothers who played in the school band and at age nine I started playing the clarinet

BN: Who were your biggest music influences?

OM: Bunky Green, Pete Fountain, Grover Washington Jr., David Sanborn, Coltrane, and of course Lenny Pickett! Those are just some of the reed players. My first music teacher was John Muehleisen, who had a huge impact on my playing and understanding of music; the man who assembled a group of eight- and nine-year-olds into a Dixieland jazz band called Jazzin' Juniors, which continued up to high school; and Craig Faniani, a music teacher in Rio Americana High School.

BN: You play such a variety of instruments in your music; how did that come about? Lessons or self-taught?

OM: I started on clarinet at nine, started on the saxes in middle school, started on percussion when I joined the Beer Dawgs. I started playing the EWI [Electric Wind Instrument] about six months ago. Lessons until after high school graduation.

BN: Who have you played with in the past?

OM: I played with a R&B band called Masi and Soul right out of high school (later it became the Rhythm Coalition); formed The Wooden Nickel band with Matt Perrine and the former lead trumpeter with Maynard Ferguson, Stan Mark. Which became The Wooden Nickel Jazz Band.

I've also played with the Ringling Bros and Barnum and Baily Circus, where I turned down a full-time job offer. I learned that shortly after that, their train had derailed, resulting in 15 people being injured and two fatalities.

I played with Early Times at the Torch Club for several years and then Bawb Pearce asked me to join the Beer Dawgs, and I must've played with them for 33 years, where I had incorporated bongos, congas, and rubboard just to keep myself busy when I wasn't playing the sax. Then Bawb moved to Texas, and I worked with a lot of different type groups. I was fortunate to play with the band called 10th Ave Band, a six-piece group lead by the trombonist/singer/arranger Ed Zimbrick out of San Jose. We traveled internationally at least six times a year for 10-14-day tours. We went all over the UK three times. Ireland/Scotland/Wales. All over Australia four times. All over New Zealand, Sweden, Finland, Mexico, China.

BN: Currently with?

OM: Mostly freelancing at present, the Katie Knipp Band, many jazz legends over the years like Diane Schuur, Myron Floren, and Kay

Starr.Titan Hot 7, the Beer Dawgs, Valerie V. Weinberg, the Deano-holics, Sister Swing, Peter Petty, Another Brick in the Wall.

BN: What bands/artists do you enjoy listening to?

OM: Depends on my mood at the time – Coltrane, Paul Simon, Bonnie Raitt, St. Vincent. Weather Report is an all-time favorite

BN: If you could play anywhere with your dream band, who would it be?

OM: Early in Sting's solo career when Branford Marsalis was with him, I'd love a gig like that. Very cool original music with liberty to improvise. I played with a Pink Floyd cover band for a while. That was fun because the sax player with Floyd was always a wild card in that he didn't really have a script like everyone else in the band.

BN: What advice would you give to aspiring musicians thinking of a career in music?

OM: I wish I had followed my dad's advice and gone to school and got a degree in something. You can still pursue your musical ambitions 100% but the reality is it's getting harder to make a living in music. If nothing else, get a music teaching degree. That being said, my advice is to of course practice, practice, practice. Also choose the instrument you're drawn to but don't limit yourself to just that instrument. Play anything you can get your hands on. Sing. It'll open up a lot more gigs for you. I highly suggest learning some guitar or piano or both. It'll be invaluable in your understanding of chords and voicings making composing music a way simpler venture. Also, listen to all music. Blues/R&B, Jazz, Classical, etc.

BN: Do you have any funny or interesting stories about your time in the music industry?

OM: I've been doing the festival circuit for 46 yrs now. Humor on stage and off is a prevailing aspect among the musicians. It's all part of the show folks! There's an abundance of smart and witty people and it definitely rubs off on you. When you're on stage and have that adrenaline going, humor tends to rear its unpredictable head. I'm never afraid to blurt out whatever comes to mind on traditional jazz or blues gigs, but I have to refrain myself constantly from speaking my thoughts when I'm on other types of gigs where it would be out of place. Of course I can't always control myself!

BN: What are your thoughts on the current state of the music industry?

OM: I don't think it's great. It's definitely harder to carve out a living in general. I work with a lot of older musicians, and it's often said that musicians in general are making the same money today as they did 70-80 years ago. With the popularity of DJs and streaming services live musicians are definitely not valued as much as they used to be.

BN: How do you handle creative differences with bandmates/ collaborators?

OM: Ha! I've been lucky I haven't had to deal with too much of that. Unless you're on a big-time level on tour with a big-name act where you're not the boss, you have the option of quitting the gig or firing someone if you're in charge.



BN: What do you wish you could tell your younger self about making it in the music industry?

OM: 'For Pete's sake practice more!' That is for starters. Also, I would tell myself to be more motivated and focus more on promoting my own personal musical projects...and live a healthier lifestyle.

BN: What do you consider your greatest achievement so far and what goals do you have?

OM: My greatest accomplishment so far is raising two amazing sons despite my worst efforts. Musically I feel that somehow surviving as a musician and still surviving is an accomplishment. I'm not a particularly proud person but I am proud that I'm comfortable playing just about any style of music.

My goal is to release a recording of original music next year and see what happens. Otherwise, it would be nice to be in the right place at the right time and get a gig with a big name and get that wider exposure.

BN: What is it that you would want your fans to know about you?

OM: On the one hand I'm an open book when you're talking to me in person but otherwise, I keep my boring little life to myself. I feel so lucky getting to do what I don't hate for a living and am so grateful to work with and know all of the absolutely amazing people I've met along the way. I've had so many unbelievable life experiences because of music, and I will never take it for granted.



Torch Club
JANUARY
 FRI 3RD - BILL MYLAR @ 6PM
 SAT 4TH - PETER PETTY @ 9PM
 FRI 10TH - RICHARD MARCH @ 6PM
 SAT 11TH - AKI KUMAR @ 9PM
 SAT 18TH - JINX JONES @ 9PM
 THU 23RD - CHICKENBONE SLIM @ 9PM
 SAT 25TH - ISLAND OF BLACK & WHITE @ 9PM
 SUN 26TH - SBS W/ ANTHONY ARYA FEAT AC MYLES @ 4PM
 THU 30TH - LEW FRATIS @ 9PM
FEBRUARY
 SAT 1ST - ELVIS CANTU @ 9PM
 FRI 7TH - BILL MYLAR @ 6PM
 FRI 14TH - RICHARD MARCH @ 6PM, THE GOLD SOULS @ 9PM
 SAT 15TH - MERCY ME @ 9PM
 SUN 23RD - SBS W/ MIKE HAMMAR & THE NAILS @ 4PM
 FRI 28TH - LEAPING BLENNIES @ 6PM
 www.torchclub.net

My Blues Valentine

Since February is the "month of love", we thought it would be fun to hear from some of our members about who their Blues Fantasy Valentines are.

Shirley McCoy

In fantasy land, my blues valentine is Pat Faherty from Canyon Lights, formerly of GA-20. Something about the afro and the overall



resemblance to Magic Dick- he just is the epitome of cool and just shreds that classic Chicago style blues. If you get a chance to see Canyon Lights, I highly recommend it, not only for the ear candy but for the eye candy!

Barbara Katen

In my seemingly overly active "dream world," Boz Scaggs is my imaginary husband and Tab Benoit my imaginary side guy. Boz has been my forever favorite, my warm and cozy, comforting cup of hot cocoa and Bailey's, sitting at home in front of the fireplace guy. His voice and music make me feel warm and fuzzy. He's home. Tab, on the other hand, is my rowdy occasional shot of Fireball on nights out! The timber and gravel in Tab's voice, not to mention his humor and good looks, also makes me feel warm. Just differently. LOL.



Jan Kelley

For years now, I have fantasized Kenny Neal as a blues artist I want to know more intimately. I know I'm not the only woman who feels that way! In addition to his talent, he's got a gorgeous, inviting smile to go with his good looks and a warm personality that invites a personal connection. Just sharing a dance with him one time made my heart flutter!

Photo from <https://intrepidartists.com/artists/kenny-neal/>



Bob Cosman

Dear Susan Tedeschi, Will you be my Valentine? When I heard "Just Won't Burn" for the first time (wow), and the album of the same name (double wow) I was hooked. It didn't hurt that you were from Massachusetts (as am I). Gee, you could have been my next-door neighbor.

Sometime in the late 90s you were at the Boom Boom Room in San Francisco, and I waited, leaning against the wall for what seemed like hours, for the curtain to open and my favorite singer to perform so close to me that I could actually reach out and touch her if I wanted to.

I saw you later in a big concert venue after you had hooked up with that "Derek guy" with a really big, really good band. Wonderful! Then there was a Blues Cruise that we were both on. We actually spoke a few words at a party in someone else's cabin. Remember?

I think that the last time that I saw you I took a gazillion pictures of you performing at The Big Blues Bender (some of the best shots were with that "other guy"). Anyway, I have to go. I hope that you see this someday and give me a call and tell me that you would love to be my Valentine! If my wife and that "other guy" will let us.

Photo from <https://susantedeschi.com/>



Sacramento Blues Society Celebrates 45th Anniversary

December 8 Year-Ending Event Caps Historic Year

By Jan Kelley

Photos by Bob Cosman, Bob Hakins & Mindy Giles

Oh, what a night! The lines were double deep outside the Harlow's door this evening of the SBS Annual Holiday Membership party, everyone anxious to get the party goin'!



Celebrating 45 years as a Blues Society, the SBS is the third longest-running in the United States, producing many events throughout the years by local and internationally known blues artists in a host of locations in addition to programs that are beneficial to the community.



internationally known blues artists in a host of locations in addition to programs that are beneficial to the community.



This show featured the fiery, funny and fantastic Chicago guitarist/vocalist Nick Moss along with the fabulous Dennis Gruenling on harp, Rodrigo Mantovani blasting it on bass and the young Pierce Downe, drummer extraordinaire.



Together they are the Blues Foundation's award-winning 2024 Best Blues Band, and they proved to us tonight just why they are.



The house was full of so many SBS members, it was a delight to see. Liz Walker performed the emcee duties wonderfully as Barbara Katen, the current SBS President, declared the December Meeting had come to order.



Kudos to all of Santa's elves – Mindy Giles, chief Elf and our Swell guru, along with Liz and Barbara, Lynette Shumway, Earl Withycome, Esther and Ernie Vasquez,



Michael Carter and the Harlow's staff who have served us well through the years – all who contributed their time and efforts into seeing things went smoothly.

Performing many of their songs from their latest CD, *Get Your Back Into It* and others, Nick & company soon got the

dancers up on their feet with Moss playing Little Charlie's Gypsy Jazz guitar and Dennis ,with his finely honed harp playing, wit and personality shining through. After a few songs,



Nick switched to his Stratocaster and the second set he played his Les Paul. What talent! Nick is by far a perfect band leader, generously allowing each player to showcase their own unique talents. The audience was amazed and thoroughly entertained by this awesome band.



Moss's slide guitar stanzas on, "Living In Heartache," another great song, showcased his mastery on slide guitar, while capturing Gruenling's roaring harmonica behind him.



"It Shocks Me Out" had Rodrigo Mantovani putting forth a bass line that couldn't be equaled while captivating Moss, standing by nodding his head, as well as the audience. Each of these men are extremely talented musicians.



When they played "Bones' Cantina," a truly romantic rhumba/cha cha number that showcased Rodrigo's fantastic bass playing, one could imagine a scene of a couple dancing in elegant fashion, as in a movie.

During the band's break time, Linda McShane, the 2023 recipient of the Valerie Jeanne Anderson Volunteer Award, presented this year's award to Renee Erickson Sullivan, who has served the SBS in many capacities over time - Treasurer most of all. Congratulations, Renee!



The audience was asked how many of us have been SBS members for its 45 years of existence – no one raised their hand – a few of us did for 40 years, then more as they counted down – however, Derek Washington had not yet arrived at the party, and this man certainly qualified for the 45-year bracket! Dr. Derek, sax man, radio broadcaster, and one of the first presidents for the SBS, filled that role many times throughout the years, keeping the organization going when there were tough times financially. Thank you, Derek!

Holiday Gala, Con't. from P. 12

The band's performance was about to be completed, but the enthusiasm of the audience for the show called out for an encore, which they delivered beautifully, leaving us all completely satiated.

One wonders what lies in store for the SBS 50th Anniversary Membership Party in 2029...surely a challenge following this.

New Member's Perspective on SBS Holiday Gala

By Michelle Blaisure

As a long-time blues lover, I finally decided to become a member of Sac Blues Society. This was my first time becoming a member and the opportunity to see a great band free, along with the membership, was too good to pass up!

This year's 45th Annual Holiday Gala was a rousing success. I didn't anticipate the long line to get in, but although the wait was long, everyone was in a festive mood, so the time passed quickly. Inside it was a full house and the crowd was eager to see the highly acclaimed 2024 winner of Blues Band of the Year, The Nick Moss Band.

Boy, what a treat! The band, known for their high energy, bold, Chicago-style blues, is an incredibly gifted foursome and their uncompromising skills were on full display. Each musician in their own right is a master of their craft and together their tight, captivating sound got us movin'; and shakin' to the beat, whether on the dance floor or in our seats.

I especially loved when Nick thanked us for having them, commending the members on the Sacramento Blues Society being the third oldest in the country and then saying, "Some of us know each other, some of us are strangers or newly acquainted, but no matter your religion, who you voted for or who you sleep with, we can all come together and share our love of the blues".

I couldn't agree more! I loved this amazing group and hope they come back soon. What a great night!



Mark Hummel's
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MARK HUMMEL CURTIS SALGADO
 SWEET MARTA NICK MOSS DENNIS GRUENLING

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Album Review

Katie Knipp - *Me*

By Julio Covington



It is not every day you see a musician and an artist take a form of music and format it into their distinct, unique, eclectic, exciting, exuberant, fantastic, bluesy...rocky..jazzy.. head-banging form!

Yep.. our Sacramento Blues resident is being who we all love to see: Herself!

Sharing life experience with down right suburban survival skills.. Katie Knipp is on a roll with her newest release, *Me*!

Using her operatic and theatrical style is an experience in music when you see her live!! And live on stage she is.. extremely comfortable and sharing.

Katie Knipp doesn't hold back what she loves to live.. playing live music for live audiences!

In Katie 's own words.."And although I do not know what it is like to be in the shoes of somebody facing so much adversity on a daily basis, whether because of race or sexual orientation, I do know one thing, and that is that I am going to stand with those that are discriminated against. I'm going stand up for them and fight with them."

Yep.. I admire and stand up with my friend..Katie Knipp

A Casual Conversation w Tommy Castro

By Daryl Hawkins

For well over 30 years, Tommy Castro and the Painkillers have been delivering incredible performances, not just in the Bay Area and greater Sacramento, but all around the world! It's no wonder he has won three BB King Entertainer of the Year Awards. In total, Tommy has racked up 10 Blues Music Awards over the years and he's still going strong!

What's next for this bluesman? The possibilities are endless! He's gearing up to release his 17th album since his solo career began in 1994. His newest album, *Closer to the Bone*, promises to be his most straightforward, raw blues album yet—perfectly showcasing the essence of Castro's four-decade career. Get ready for an electrifying journey!

Blue Notes (BN):What was your inspiration, how did you get your start in music and why the Blues?

Tommy Castro (TC): My big brother Raymond played in some rock & roll bands. He was the coolest dude in the neighborhood. So I wanted to be like him. I loved the sound of live music.They would rehearse at our house sometimes.

BN: Who are your biggest musical influences?

TC: BB King , Freddy and Albert King, Taj Mahal, Elvin Bishop, Carlos Santana, Buddy Guy, Muddy Waters, Ray Charles, Little Richard , Chuck Berry, John Fogerty, Alvin Lee, Wilson Pickett, James Brown, The Stones. I could go on.

BN: What do you think you would be doing now if you weren't a musician?

TC: I would be an entrepreneur. I would have a small business or something where I'm self employed doing something I enjoyed. A taco stand on a beach somewhere maybe Ha Ha!

BN: What were some of the first blues songs you learned?

TC: "It's My Own Fault", BB King; "You Got Me Running", Jimmy Reed

BN: What does the blues mean to you?

TC: It's music that was created out of the suffering of the African American people. I never forget that. They created a sound that I love and has given me a life I could only dream about. But those dreams have come true. I have supported myself and my family and can't begin to express my gratitude.

BN: What have you learned about yourself from the music?

TC: I'm a slow learner but I never give up. I have a good amount of grit. That's why I'm still here.

BN: Who are the musicians you would most like to meet (that you haven't already) and why?

TC: Keith Richards , Bob Dylan, Joni Mitchell, Bruce Springsteen Mavis Staples, Paul McCartney. Would have loved to meet Muddy. But have met BB, Buddy, John Lee, Bobby Bland , Etta James, Taj, Keb Mo and Ray Charles to name a few.

BN: How has the music changed your life?

TC: It's all I know. It's always been with me so it hasn't changed my life, it is my life.

BN: How/Where do you get inspiration for your songs?

TC: Living.

BN: What advice would you give to aspiring musicians thinking of pursuing a career in blues music?

TC: Don't! Ha Ha! I would say find your thing. Be authentic. Take any gig that comes your way. Play out every chance you get. Learn to master social media

BN: Who would you consider to be your mentors (musical or otherwise)?

TC: Taj Mahal, Carlos Santana, Johnny Nitro and Johnny Ace, Ronnie Baker Brooks and Tinsley Ellis, to name a few.

BN: What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?

TC: Not drinking for over 20 years

BN: What is your most treasured possession?

TC: My 1966 Fender Stratocaster that I bought from Johnny Nitro

BN: Has your time touring and playing influenced and/or changed your musical journey? And if so, how?

TC: Well I have met so many amazing artists that I have learned or borrowed from. It's ongoing.

BN: If you have a life motto, what is it?

TC: Do the next right thing.

BN: If you were to have a dinner party and could invite any four people, living or dead, who would you invite and why?

TC: Alan Watts, Keith Richards, Taj Mahal, John Lennon

BN: NOW, JUST FOR FUN, PLEASE ANSWER THESE RAPID-FIRE TRIVIA QUESTIONS. If you don't have an answer for one or do not wish to respond, just go to the next question.

BN: Favorite album of all time?

TC: *Giant Step* - Taj Mahal

BN: Favorite movie?

TC: *Young Frankenstein*

BN: Favorite food?

TC: Ice cream

BN: Favorite book?

TC: *Way of the Peaceful Warrior*, Dan Milman

BN: Favorite city or place?

TC: Santa Cruz, CA

BN: One thing you can't live without?

TC: Coffee

BN: What poster, if any, did you have on your wall growing up?

TC: Cream *Disraeli Gears*

BN: If you could snap your fingers and change anything in the world, what would it be?

TC: Peace, of course!

For more information on Tommy Castro, please visit: <https://www.tommycastro.com/>

Ed Smith's Annual Holiday Party

By Barbara Katen

Photos by Barbara Katen, Mindy Giles & Cari Chenkin

Our esteemed Sacramento Blues Society Platinum Sponsor, Ed Smith of www.Autoaccident.com held his 42nd Annual Holiday Party on Friday, December 13th at The Center on Sierra Oaks Boulevard in Sacramento.

Ed graciously extended



invitations to our entire SBS membership, which were sent to all our members through the weekly SBS Blues Blast email. Kudos to our members that attended and were treated to a buffet supper, cocktails and some great blues delivered by SBS member band, Chrissie O'Dell and the Real Deal.

The dance floor was constantly packed and the fabulous music kept the party atmosphere going all evening. A lot of mingling and mixing with Ed's many friends kept the conversations at the tables lively and introduced SBS to many of the guests. A great time was had



by all.

Thank you, Ed, for your continued support and a great Holiday party!



Message from the Editor *Gratitude to the Blue Notes Team!*

By Cari Chenkin

I'm writing this as the last days of 2024 wind down, and thought it would be a good time to acknowledge and thank the Newsletter Committee members and content contributors who do such an excellent job of providing the content for the *Blue Notes*.

First and foremost, thanks to my co-editor Jan Kelley for her hard work, advice and invaluable editing skills. Thanks as well to our ace cover designer and photographer Bob Cosman, who always comes up with exciting ways to execute my visions for our covers.

Kudos to Barbara Katen, who not only contributes her President's column, but also her "What's on Your Playlist" and many other articles as well. Thanks go to Rick Snyder, our BITS Chairman, who keeps us updated on the BITS happenings, and to IBC Chair & Co-Chair Renee Erickson Sullivan and Liz Walker, for providing IBC coverage. Gratitude also to Sally Katen, for providing Hall of Fame content.

I also want to thank the contributors of reviews, interviews and other articles, including Daryl Hawkins, Frank Farmer, Steve Cagle,

Mick Martin, Laurel Coppess, Julio Covington, Lynette Shumway, Shirley McCoy, Deb Lubin and newbie Michelle Blaisure.

Thanks to our PR and Events Chair, Mindy Giles, for her coverage of SBS events and our Little Charlie Baty Scholarship program. I also want to give props to everyone who has contributed their photos: Bob Cosman, Bob Hakins, Steve Martarano, Frank Farmer, Barbara Katen, Julio Covington, Mindy Giles, Janet Hongola, Liz Walker, Tina Abbaszadeh and Jan Kelley.

For their "eagle eyes" and editing prowess in finding all my silly typos and layout errors, I'm grateful to Mindy Giles, Jan Kelley and Barbara Katen.

Thanks and appreciation are also to due the folks at Premier Print & Mail who do an excellent job of printing and distributing the hard copies of our newsletter.

Thanks to ALL these contributors working hard behind the scenes, all SBS members can be proud to show off our *Blue Notes* newsletter. I hope you'll forgive me if I say I'm pretty proud of it too!

A Casual Conversation with Gino Matteo and Jade Bennett

By Shirley McCoy



Bennett-Matteo Band made a rare NorCal appearance at the Redding Roots Revival Festival at the end of September. I sat down to chat with the husband-and-wife power duo who have been traveling and touring up and down the West Coast and Arizona in their RV together for the last couple of years.

Blue Notes (BN): Tell us a little bit about both of your backgrounds in music, how you ended up meeting and started playing music together, and when this happened.

Gino Matteo (GM): I've been on the road in some form or another since I was a teenager, playing guitar for a lot of blues singers and soul singers and funk singers and jazz singers and some gospel stuff. I met Jade when I was coming home from a tour and a friend of mine was having a jam session and he asked me to come down and I went down there, and she came down with her band at the time. They played a set, and I sat in with them and I was just blown away by her voice. It just floored me.

Jade Bennett (JB): I grew up in Southern California, in Redlands and I was always really secretive about singing until I was about 20-ish and then I decided to just start going out and singing and met him at a jam and he got me into really doing it for a living. He encourages me to keep doing it.

GM: She's the best singer I've ever met, it's crazy! The second she started singing I was not only smitten, but I was just blown away at the character and tone of her voice and also the fact that it didn't seem like she was trying to sound like anyone- she sounded like herself, which is like, the rarest thing in roots music. I just really love that- there's no put on with Jade...

BN: Both of you toured with Sugaray Rayford for a long time. Tell us

a little bit more about those times.

JB: Those were great times. I learned a lot. I sang backup for Sugaray. I learned a lot from him. He is a great singer and a great performer.

GM: Absolutely. He was awesome. One of the best performers I've ever seen in my life. He can get a crowd like very few other people who have ever lived can. He's badass. I was with him for a long time.

BN: You guys were living down in SoCal for a while. What was it that made you decide to try out the RV living?

JB: Me. I always come up with these crazy ideas and he goes for them, he's very enabling. It kind of just worked out because the tiny house/RV living movement was kind of going on and we were going to do it and then we waited and then with COVID and everything it was just, like, the perfect time to do it.

GM: For me, it was the minimalism aspect of it- I really like the idea of owning hardly anything. Society will tell you have to have this and this and this to survive- what if I don't need that and is it okay? We never park on the street or in public- we're always off in the wilderness somewhere. COVID hit and we were like well, we always wanted to do it anyway. It was perfect timing.

BN: What are some of the challenges you've come across being on the road full time?

GM: There are sacrifices, 100%.

JB: I think the pros outweigh the cons, which is why we always have such a positive outlook on it. But there's bad things about it- like you can't just go and take a hot shower on the dime, you've gotta heat up the water, you've gotta make sure you're not filling up your tanks too fast, and emptying your tanks...

GM: The optimistic part of me says that the challenges make me more aware of my existence. I'm really conscious of how much I use water and electricity-wise. Just use less, smaller footprints, keep to ourselves, stay small... That's kind of our thing.

BN: What have been some of your favorite places you've played at/ traveled to?

GM: My favorite place in the whole country is always going to be New Orleans. New Orleans is my favorite city in the world. Alaska was really beautiful...

JB: I loved Eastern Tennessee; Pennsylvania's cool.

GM: I really, really like the Pacific Northwest. We're in Portland now. I like the Pacific Northwest in the summer and New Orleans in the winter. That'd be my ideal route.

BN: Do you have any advice for up-and-coming players in the music world?

JB: Don't do it if you're looking to make a living- do it because you really love to do it, and you have that drive because it's hard, but it can be rewarding.

GM: Always remember why you're doing it- and if it's for money don't. You won't have a lot of it, and there's usually easier ways to make money. I have a monk outlook now where I'm like 'I'm gonna live in my RV and write my songs and put them out and we'll put out music and if people like it, great.' Keep practicing.

BN: What is your life motto?

JB: When something bad happens, or you're in a pickle or something like that, at one point you're going to look back on this,

Get Your Blues Fix on the Radio!

When you need a shot of the blues, and you're not going out to get it live, get it over the airwaves! See the list below of area radio blues shows for your enjoyment. Compiled courtesy of Mindy Giles.

Day	Times(PDT)	Station	Website	Dial	Blues/Roots Show	Host(s)	NOTES
Fridays	5pm-5:20pm	K-ZAP	k-zap.org	93.3FM	<i>Rush Hour Blues</i>	Various	Blues is part of the station format
Mondays	12pm-2:30 pm	KZFR	kzfr.org	90.1FM	<i>Blues Bayou</i>	Preston Powers	
Saturdays	10am-Noon	K-ZAP	k-zap.org	93.3FM	<i>Mick Martin's Blues Party</i>	Mick Martin	
Saturdays	6am-9am	KDVS-FM	kdvs.org	90.3FM	<i>Buried Alive in the Blues</i>	Big Dave	
Saturdays	7am-9am	KZFR	kzfr.org	90.1FM	<i>Bon Matin!</i>	Hondo	
Sundays	2pm-4pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Blues Spectrum</i>	Various	
Sundays	4pm-6pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Blue Garage</i>	Michael Axleman	1st & 3rd Sundays
Sundays	6pm-8pm	KDEE-FM	kdeefm.org	97.5FM	<i>Sunday Blues Blend</i>	Tim White	
Sundays	12am-2am	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Juke Joint</i>	Russ Roy, Scott "Phil Harmonica" Hickman	
Sundays	12pm-2pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Hallelujah Hollaback</i>	Meri St. Mary	Bi-weekly-SOUL/ GOSPEL
Sundays	12pm-2pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Freedom Highway</i>	Various	Bi-weekly- FUNK/ GOSPEL/SOUL
Sundays	8pm-10pm	KDVS-FM	kdvs.org	90.3FM	<i>Front Porch Blues</i>	JD Esquire	
Thursdays	2pm-4pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Funky Grooves</i>	Mystic AI	Bi-weekly, blues is part of the mix
Thursdays	2pm-4pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Sierra Soul Train</i>	Husky LePew	Bi-weekly, blues is part of the4 mix
Thursdays	10pm-12am	KZFR	kzfr.org	90.1FM	<i>Basically the Blues</i>	Tom L., Papa John Miles	
Tuesdays	9pm-10pm	KDRT-FM	kdrf.org	95.7FM	<i>Juke in the Back</i>	Matt the Cat	http://www.jukeinthe-back.org/
Tuesdays	2pm-4pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>So Many Roads</i>	Thom Myers, Dr. Derek Washington	
Tuesdays	12am-2am	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Music for Grown Folks</i>	Husky LePew	Bi-weekly, blues is part of the mix
Tuesdays	12pm-2pm	KVMR-FM	kvmr.org	89.5FM	<i>Groove Cafe</i>	David James	Bi-weekly, blues is part of the mix
Tuesdays	7:30pm-10pm	KZFR	kzfr.org	90.1FM	<i>Zephyr Soul Stew</i>	Tim G.	2nd, 4th & 5th Tuesdays
Wednesdays	10pm-12am	KZFR	kzfr.org	90.1FM	<i>Creole Stomp</i>	Hondo, Kyle, Bill & David	

And, of course, let's remember to mention our own Board of Directors member Shirley McCoy, who does radio interviews and hosts a monthly show "Frankly Zappa" on the third Tuesday of the month at 10 pm on KZFR in Chico!

Bennett Matteo Band, con't. from P. 16

whether it be good or bad; it's going to be something in the past so try not to stress over it.

GM: Just keep to yourself and be kind. You can't take it with you- whatever the monetary or physical thing you're grabbing on in the world- you can't take anything with you. So just chill until the next episode...

For more information about the Bennett Matteo Band, please visit: <https://www.bennettmatteoband.com/>.

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Blue Notes is the official
bi-monthly newsletter of
the Sacramento Blues
Society.

Editor: Cari Chenkin

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