



Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania
www.bscpblues.com

BLUES NEWS

Jan.- Mar. 2022



BSCP WISHES YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Peter Veteska and Blues Train

Alex D'Agnese, Peter Veteska, and Coo Moe Jhee

CELEBRATE A VIRTUAL BLUESY NEW YEAR'S EVE p. 13

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From your President...

As I sit down to write to you, my thoughts are on the wonderful Christmas Party we just had on December 5th. I feel extra deep appreciation for our Blues Society of Central PA for making this celebration possible once again.

Thanks to the work of many volunteers under the direction of Hannah Sherman, a feast brought everyone together to "break bread," nourishing both the body and the spirit. Then all were ready for blues music coming all the way from Chicago.

The Kilborn Alley Blues Band was extraordinary, infused with a high level of energy and talent. Mike Knott, our VP and Events Chairperson, is so committed to consistently getting us the best dancing band available. Another great show, Mike!

A big thank you to those behind-the-scenes persons who brought us all the elements that make for a memorable afternoon: Gary "Rocky" Rothrock, soundman; John Rignani and Kent Seidel, merchandise table; Buster and Dot Grubb, tickets and memberships; and all those who helped with setting up, parking, hauling, cleaning and multiple essential tasks.

No matter how good the band is, it isn't a party if the audience isn't up for it. You gotta love how BSCP members are right out there on the floor dancing to the very first song. Blues is in their blood and gets them moving. Even those in their chairs weren't sitting still.

I especially appreciated being with a group of people who made it possible for everyone to feel safe by getting vaccinated or tested. I can't tell you how much that meant to me to be able to get together with others with minimal risk involved.

Greg Hogg captured this joyous occasion with his camera. See p. 8 In Case You Missed It. All of Greg's pictures are on the website bscpblues.com under BSCP Photos.

I also want to thank Greg for putting together a Tri-State Blues Showcase for February 6, giving us something to look forward to in the upcoming winter months. See p. 4 for more details.

You can also see A Peek at the Past on page 9 to brighten up these long winter nights with thoughts of being able to take a blues cruise some day in the future. A blues cruise is on my bucket list!

Sadly, BSCP lost one of its beloved musicians and founders, Gary Harrington, who passed on November 26, 2021. His many blues brothers and sisters are feeling the loss deeply. His close friend, Mike Easton, writes about him on page 6. Gary is also featured on the website bscpblues.com under In the Spotlight. Google "That Girl Can Cook Gary Harrington YouTube" to hear a real blues classic.

As 2021 ends, BSCP Committee chairpersons are compiling an annual report which will be sent to members and posted on the website. Doing so gives us a time to reflect and to plan for the coming year.

2022 will no doubt be another year of challenges combined with the joys of being part of a community of blues music lovers. To celebrate, feel free to join in watching the BSCP Virtual New Year's Eve Blues Show and, if you are still awake, wish each other Happy New Year on the Zoom Social Hour after midnight. See p. 13.

Celebrating the blues,



Kathryn Gregoire
bluesmunga@gmail.com

Mission Statement

The Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation, promotion, support and enjoyment of the truly original American art form, the blues.

In Memoriam

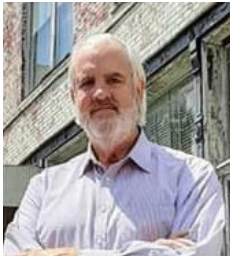
by Jackson Fogel



Willie C. Cobbs

July 15, 1932 - October 24, 2021

Willie Cobbs got his first taste of fame with his 1960 single "You Don't Love Me" for Mojo Records, which he recorded while living in Chicago. Cobbs continued to release singles under various record labels, finally putting together a full album, *Hey Little Girl*, in 1986 under the Wilco label. In the 70s and 80s, Cobbs also ran several nightclubs in Arkansas and Mississippi, and in the 90s and early 2000s he continued to release new albums, many under his own label.



William "Bill" Luckett

March 17, 1948 - October 28, 2021

Bill Luckett lived a long, storied life, and was ingrained into the blood of Mississippi in every way. He was the mayor of Clarksdale from 2013-2017, a gubernatorial candidate in 2011, and co-owned the Ground Zero Blues Club with actor Morgan Freeman. The club was named for the famous tale of Robert Johnson selling his soul to the devil and starting the Delta Blues, and Luckett hoped that Ground Zero would help reinvigorate the area culturally and economically.



Johnny Artis

November 10, 1957 - November 3, 2021

Johnny Artis was an East Coast artist whose music blended jazz, blues, Southern rock, funk, swing, reggae, and more. He became a local celebrity in his Virginia hometown, Alexandria, before playing venues all over the state, up and down the Potomac River, and even overseas for American soldiers stationed in Germany. He gained a prominent following in Washington D.C., where he had played at Madam's Organ every week since 1993.



Jill West

December 25, 1952 - November 25, 2021

When Jill West was not serving as a pediatric nurse, she was tearing up the Pittsburgh music scene as "Queen of Pittsburgh Blues." Her musical career started in the mid-70s, but she did not discover the blues until the mid-80s after singing with Bob Beach and listening to Koko Taylor. In 1991 she became the lead singer of the band that would become Jill West and the Blues Attack, a staple in Pittsburgh that opened for Koko Taylor and B.B. King, among others. West was also a founding member of the Pittsburgh Women of the Blues.



Sonny Rhodes

November 3, 1940 - December 13, 2021

Sonny Rhodes knew since he was 12 that all he wanted to do was sing the blues. As an adult, Rhodes recorded more than 200 songs for record labels on multiple continents and toured in the US, Canada, and Europe. Known for his lap steel guitar, his first major success came from his self-produced album *Just Blues* in 1985, which was followed by several records under both European and American labels.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The BSCP Annual General Meeting was held Tuesday, December 14, 2021, on Zoom. Board members gave their end-of-the year reports which will be posted on the BSCP website bscpblues.com. The following officers were elected at the meeting: President – Kathryn Gregoire, Vice-President – Mike Knott, and Secretary – Betty Heckert Knott. The board appointed Gary "Rocky" Rothrock as Treasurer.

TRI-STATE BLUES SHOWCASE

by Greg Hogg



With the holidays behind us and winter's chill and early darkness bringing many of us SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), we search for fun activities to keep us going. As the NFL Conference Playoff games of January have now determined the teams vying for the NFL Championship on Super Sunday February 13th, what will we do on Sunday February 6th? How about if we share the afternoon with blues, dancing, food and libation?

The Blues Society of Central PA has a plan. A Tri-State Blues Showcase presentation of 3 talented blues bands from Pennsylvania, Delaware and New Jersey will entertain us on the Champions Sports Bar stage at 300 2nd St. Highspire, PA 17034. On Sunday 2/6 the doors will open at 1:00 PM and the music and dancing kicks off at 2:00 PM. Admission is \$15. So, who will our visiting bands be?

Kicking off our afternoon of blues at 2:00 PM from the "Diamond State" of Delaware, we will feature a 1-hour show by Wilmington's Billy Pierce Band. "Billy Got Slide" Pierce is an international recognized slide guitarist/singer who is a touring/recording artist and seasoned musician. He specializes in playing Louisiana-style blues with a Cajun twist, slide blues in a contemporary style of bottleneck guitar. Billy has 5 albums of blues music and his newest will be released by spring. Having friends in the "the business," Billy has been blessed to have session track help on his albums by Sonny Landreth, Charlie Wooten, Mike Zeto, Michael Doucet, Johnny Neal, Cindy Cashdollar and others. Along with Billy Pierce on guitar and vocals on 2/6, he will be joined by Chuck Whiteman on saxophone, Chris Sherlock on drums, Mike Williams on bass guitar and Suzanne Dayton on fiddle. Laissez les bons temps rouler!

Our 2nd band of the afternoon showcase, from our own "Keystone State"

of PA will be a double barrel presentation by the Sister Blue Band with their guest of Shakey Lyman from 3:30-4:30 PM. These folk are coming our way from Philadelphia, the "City of Brotherly Love." Working her blues band for decades, Sister Blue, though small in stature, is a mighty force as a guitarist and vocalist. The cracked Liberty Bell will certainly never heal with decades of Sister Blue's powerful vocals resonating through the streets of Philly as she jams. Readers here may remember her frequent visits to our BSCP Virtual Jams during the Covid shutdown. If you missed these, you can find them on the www.bscpblues.com under "Virtual Jam." Sister Blue and her band will be joined by their friend, Shakey Lyman, another very talented working blues artist who also virtually jammed with us. Playing alongside Sister Blue's guitar and vocals will be Mark Furman on lead guitar, Bob Holden on drums, Tom Donovan on bass guitar and Shakey Lyman on guitar, harmonica and vocals.



From the "Garden State" of New Jersey, the BSCP will complete our Tri-State Blues Showcase with the Don Evans Band from Pennsauken. Don Evans, guitarist, vocalist and recording engineer, has had an incredible career performing and recording with some of the "Who's Who" in rock n' roll. His eclectic background and years of experience makes Don a unique find in the Tri-State music scene and his creative approach to roots and blues music sets him high among the other guitarists in the area. After beginning his music education as a child with trumpet and piano lessons, he took up learning the guitar as a teenager. Following music opportunities in the West Coast during the early 70s, Don worked on and off touring for 3 years as the lead guitarist for Billy Joel and then, after years of session work and studio engineering in Venice, California, Don toured the world in 1982 with Eric Burden. Moving on to Reno,

NV, Don was chief engineer for Granny's House recording studio and worked with Kim Wilson, Whitesnake, Ronnie James Dio, The Byrds, Toad the Wet Sprocket, Dave Mason and others. Returning east in 2000, Don became established as a side man lead guitarist for many mid-Atlantic blues artists before forming his own band, The Don Evans Band. Joining Don Evans on Champion's stage from 5:00 -6:00 PM of Sunday 2/6 will be Bill Hyatt on bass guitar, Michael O'Rourke on drums and Michael Reinig (formerly of the Buicks) on saxophone.



In the event of a significant winter weather event of Sunday 2/6 the performance will be cancelled; otherwise, the show will go on! Pray for good weather!

Now I have a personal appeal to all of you reading this piece. The BSCP Board works very hard to provide our members and the general public with terrific blues entertainment. Our weekly Thursday evening blues jams, our 2-3 national blues act presentations with local band opening acts each year, our Mississippi Railroad events bringing blues from the MS Delta to us, our picnics featuring much of central PA's finest blues talent, a national blues act for our Christmas parties and now this upcoming Tri-State Blues Showcase on Sunday February 6th from 1:00 - 6:00 PM at Champions Sport Bar for a very reasonable \$15 admission. These offerings can only continue with your support. So, I'm asking you all to make a New Year's resolution to mark your calendars with upcoming BSCP events, budget a few extra bucks to join us and support our events and please spread the word to others: your family, friends, coworkers, in laws, outlaws, heck, to everyone; and bring a carful of friends along with you like we used to do at the drive-in movies. Like many good things "Use it or lose it"! Thank you, Greg Hogg

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF CENTRAL PA IS PROUD TO PRESENT

A TRI•STATE BLUES SHOWCASE



BILLY PIERCE
FROM THE DIAMOND
STATE OF DELAWARE **BAND**

SISTER BLUE
WITH **SHAKEY LYMAN**
FROM THE KEYSTONE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA



DON EVANS BAND
FROM THE GARDEN STATE
OF NEW JERSEY

LIVE AND IN PERSON!

CHAMPIONS 300 2ND ST, HIGHSPIRE, PA 17034

WWW.BSCPBLUES.COM

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 6TH 2022

AT CHAMPIONS
SPORTS BAR

DOORS OPEN AT 1 PM
SHOW STARTS
AT 2 PM

\$15



REMEMBERING GARY HARRINGTON

By Michael Easton

I'm not exactly sure when I had my first conversation with Gary. Maybe it was at one of his Howlers gigs at the Monday Night Blues show at Kokomo's circa 1996. Maybe it was at Mike's Music where he was working when I came in looking to buy an amp. Maybe it was when I interviewed him and Mitch Ivanoff for an article in Mode Magazine on the creation of BSCP and the emerging blues scene in the area. Doesn't really matter, as we became fast friends and that recently took us to a place where our friendship would be tested. The test of saving a friend's life.

During Gary's stay at Hershey Medical Center and later living with me for several months, he entrusted me to be his eulogizer. After talking to some of his family members and longtime friends from childhood, I found I'm missing a lot in the timeline in Gary's life, but hope I have enough information to paint a picture of the person he was and not just that blues playing cowboy with dreadlocks people would see at the BSCP jam.

Gary was born Gary Keith Harrington on June 23, 1954. Fourth son of Louis L. and Otelia P. Harrington. He had several siblings: Sisters Sandra (deceased), Phyllis D., and brothers Ronald L. and David W. Harrington.

Gary didn't fit the stereotype persons of color are often painted with. The more you got to know him the more you realized it. You couldn't lock him into a mold or box. His first love affair was with Western wear clothing as a small child. Wearing exotic skin boots, a wide brim suede hat and big belts wasn't just a fad, it was a lifestyle he held true to his heart. Many of the photos of him you'll find have him wearing the big, wide-brim hat. I recently came across some of his winter coats. Those, too, were what someone living in the open range would wear. One was a heavy tan suede coat with a fluffy sheep skin collar. I could easily picture him on the prairie wearing it.

In 1970, he played with fellow musician Mike McEnany in a band called Kobbi Twebo. Then in 1973 Gary graduated from HACC after taking music courses in arranging and composition. He moved to Arizona, living for a while on a Native American reservation. He felt at home

there because they looked at him as an equal. His final request was to have his ashes taken back to the reservation for final interment.

Gary's obvious love was music, and not just the blues. While his relatives included bluesmen Carey and Lurie Bell Harrington and Eddie Clearwater, he wasn't locked into playing one genre. Shake Gary's family tree and you better duck from all the falling musicians and instruments they played.

It may shock many to know Gary's all-time favorite musician was Todd Rudgren. Gary had great respect for him as a multi-instrumentalist, producer, arranger, band leader, recording engineer. Rudgren is everything Gary longed to be in the music business. Gary was well versed on at least 5-6 different instruments to the point he could play any seat in a band.

According to Gary's brother, David, the first instrument he took up was the autoharp, followed by the guitar. Gary got his musical start in his teens in a band called Soul Interpreters. It was a pretty large band from what Gary described, having a rhythm section, horns, background singers and some front singers. He was the drummer.

But music wasn't his whole life. He took on several day jobs to support himself and his growing collection of instruments during the 70's and through to the 90's.

That is when he took day gigs working at Bethlehem Steel, Samson's Communications and high end men's clothing stores. Later positions at Mike's Music and Dale's Drum shop and teaching at Meanchy Music led him to finally to open his own studio in Steelton. While going through some of his paperwork, I was surprised to find notebooks for cosmetology school with his name on them. He was studying to be a hair and makeup artist. He never mentioned it to me, but I'm guessing it was in part related to the stage and theatre.

He did play in a successful show band while living in AZ in the mid to late 1970's. In the mid 90's to 2000's he co-fronted the "Howlers," and later led his own band, "Gary Harrington and the Regulators." He also filled chairs with Octavia's "Earthblood" band and several other blues acts.

As a jazz musician he sat in the bass

chair with his childhood friend Danny Steuber until Danny passed a few years ago. For many years he was an orchestra pit musician for musicals and Revues at the Allenberry Playhouse. Gary could read charts and improvise where needed. Yes, Gary loved playing musical theatre. It goes back to his fondness for Todd Rudgren's "complete package" of being a musician. That may play a small part in him going back to school to study cosmetology. Theatre played a part in rock music during the 70's and has grown to big stage productions we see today.

What genre didn't he like? Well, Reggae, hip hop and rap come to mind. He hated when people would associate his dreads with being a Reggae musician. I was a witness to that mistake in a restaurant. Gary smiled in the guy's face but let me know how much he hated it after the patron left.

It was with the Howlers that Gary got an idea for a way to get the band more gigs. So, with the help of bandmates Dave Snyder, Max Drenning and a host of friends and fans, the Blues Society of Central P.A. was born in 1997. While Gary never served as President or a VP position in the club, he gets the credit for the idea and fruition. Gary helped write the original bylaws with me and Cecilia Jankura and helped come up with the BSCP name. He did serve as Sargent at Arms early on.

If it weren't for Gary, most of us would be just passing blues fans in the night. Gary was a community creator, giver and lover. For a lot of us our midlife friendships were a product of BSCP. Who reading this hasn't found new friendships thanks to BSCP and Gary's vision? Gary was very grateful for the creation of the organization. He told me he would have died years ago if it weren't for the friends he made in BSCP that came to his rescue in time of need. He created a community, and it was the community that came to his aid over the years. We were all his extended family.

Besides jazz and blues, Gary was also interested in the "Canterbury Scene," also known as Art Rock. It is a mix of progressive rock with musical backgrounds in classical, jazz, avant-garde, and improvisational music which started in Canterbury, England. Here again he defies being put

in any box. Any witness to Gary's blues playing will notice his unorthodox style of improvising that didn't always follow a standard blues progression. He mentioned it was difficult for him to find a bassist that could play where he wanted to take the music when he started to improvise. He was looking more for a Jaco or Jack player.

For those of us caring for Gary at my house, we all got schooled in his musical love affair. I have the YouTube Channel on my tv, and he spent "shifts" at a time watching concert footage late into the early morning hours and giving in-home lectures on the bands for anyone held captive. It gave others and me a new respect seeing alternate music through his eyes. I saw way more Darrell Hall videos

than I cared to see. Ha-ha.

Gary's other interest was the World Trade Center attack. He recorded hours upon hours of tv coverage of the attack and pointed out inconsistencies with the evidence that it was solely the planes that took down the towers. I won't go into his theories, but he had a strong sense about righting a wrong. He could easily talk for hours about his stance on the issue being a major coverup. One of his back burner projects was to piece together the evidence and create his own documentary on 9/11.

The final thing Gary was always ready to discuss was race relations. He was very passionate about equality or the lack of it. He would spend long conversations in person or on the phone with his

musician friends, not shying away from an awkward conversation most whites are uncomfortable having. I think what it taught myself and others is to listen to our other black friends when they have their story to tell. Gary's was a very emotional one.

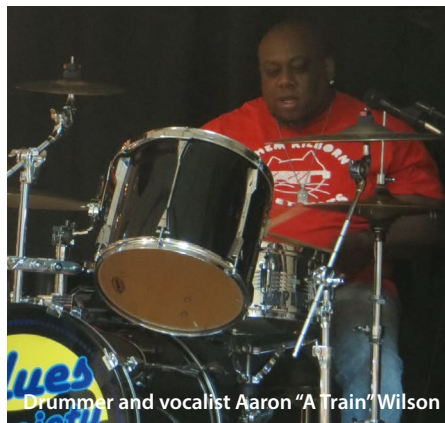
Gary's most recent plans were to form a band again and just blow the walls out playing what he wanted to play, not caring if anyone along the way was hip enough to follow what he was laying down. He wasn't a quitter. I can picture him sitting tall riding off into the sunset. Until we meet again, my friend.



In Case You Missed It

Pictures by Greg Hogg

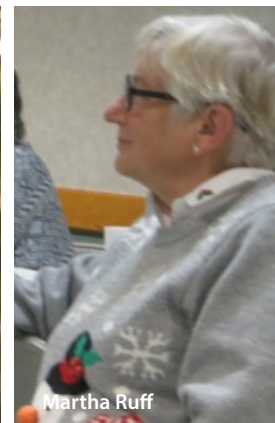
2021 CHRISTMAS PARTY



Drummer and vocalist Aaron "A Train" Wilson



Gall & Norman Boire



Martha Ruff



Lead vocalist and guitarist Andrew Duncanson



Bassist Chris Breen



Judy Kile and Greg Hogg



Mary Schubert



Kilborn Alley Blues Band



Betty and Mike Knott



Dan Eubank, Brenda Bechtold, Alicia Chase

For more 2021 Christmas Party photos go to bscpblues.com under More – Photo Gallery

A PEEK AT THE PAST

BSCP has a history of people getting together to travel to festivals and shows. Some of the happiest memories for members are the times they spent together on blues cruises. Here are pictures of Buster, Dot, Hannah, Gary, Mitch and Mike on a Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise in 2003.



Buster & Dot Grubb



Hannah Sherman on deck



Dot at Cruise Pajama Party



Gary Harrington



Mitch Ivanoff w/ Tommy Castro



Mike Null

SAVE THE DATES

Sunday April 24 – TBA

Saturday May 29 – Mom I Picnic

Sunday July 17 – Mississippi Railroad, TBA

September/October. TBA, Fall Show – TBA

Sunday December 4 – BSCP Christmas Party – TBA

DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. Please visit our website @ bscpblues.com for further information when artists are confirmed and for additional details on each function.

MEET YOUR BSCP BOARD MEMBERS!

By Hannah Sherman

Clark "Buster" Grubb



Growing up in Harrisburg and listening to the radio as a kid, Buster liked Motown and then rock and roll. His first memorable shows were at The Raven, where he was blessed to see many Motown and southern soul bands, including The Temptations, The Marvelettes, Gladys Knight and the Pips, The Isley Brothers and Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, who drew such a crowd that they spilled outside. He had a Freddie King album in the 70's but wasn't really aware of the blues until he met Dot in 2001 at Carnahan's and The Pub on Locust. I could just about say "and the rest is history" at this point, but we'll fill in a little more. He really got into Krypton City Blues Revue at the Pub on Mondays and planned to go to the Lochiel but it looked spooky. He says, "The first time I went there were cars everywhere and people laying all over their cars. Then I met all you wonderful blues people."

Besides Krypton City, Buster was greatly influenced by Big Jack Johnson. He went to Dale's Drum Shop to pick up a copy of Jack's CD "Roots Stew," put it in the player and it never came out until he took it to work where he played it all day and turned a lot of non-believers onto Big Jack. Other great early influences were Taj Mahal, Paul Butterfield, and Long John Baldry.

Buster's favorite blues events are big festivals from here to Clarksdale, Mississippi and Tampa, Florida, and blues cruises in the Caribbean. He now enjoys local shows, particularly BSCP's weekly jam and Tuesdays at the Grotto.

Buster has faithfully served the BSCP (Dot wouldn't have it any other way) for years as vice president, president, membership chair and archives chair (and as far as I know, we've enjoyed every minute of it). He says, "Blues saved my life, as Uncle Bill Carlisle used to say. It's the universal blues story. A community of people brought together in the context of music. Opens up the whole world."

When asked to name something people don't know about him, he replied, "I'm pretty much an open book." When questioned further he mentioned that he enjoyed the company of animals for most of his life: dogs, cats and horses.

As a PS, he said, "You got me thinkin' about that Butterfield album now. That will always be a winner."

Rocky Rothrock: "Dot's right-hand man. He lets her lead the way. He's done a good job with membership. He lets her do her thing and supports her. He's a mellow dude - that's for sure. He's like Dot's sidekick. Dot's the driving force and he goes along. He's a great guy." (Rocky was laughing the whole time he answered.)

Jackie Buchwald: "He's been one of the kindest people I've met, inviting Mark and

I into the blues scene of BSCP. I met Buster and Dot at Hannah's many years ago. He was very kind and inclusive from the get-go. We always have good conversations about mutual interests."

Mike Heiman: "Buster's a good man! I first got to know him hanging around the round table with Dot and then at Mike and Lynn Helm's wedding. What you see is what you get. Nothing phony about Buster. I really like that he's dedicated and honest. He manages to maintain relationships and has a good, broad overview of the members of BSCP. He steps up to the plate and is compassionate. Good listener. And broader vision. Thanks to people like Buster, the BSCP functions diplomatically and that makes it work. We survive and thrive even though we all come from different backgrounds and ideologies. He sets an example of tolerance and talks to everyone, welcoming new people."

Kathryn Gregoire. "I will be forever grateful to Buster for welcoming and bringing me onto the BSCP board, at the recommendation of Mike Heiman. He has provided me the nurturing, history, and guidance that I have needed to serve the Blues Society of Central PA. I couldn't have a better role model and mentor. I love watching Buster at the jam and other events. Everyone knows him - he is the heartbeat of the blues society. He quietly makes sure that everything and everyone is taken care of. You can always count on him."

Hannah Sherman: "Ditto to what everyone else said. Buster's my brother and I love him."

SHOP at our STORE

The BSCP Website Online Store is now live with BSCP merchandise which can be purchased using PayPal, a BSCP Store eGift Card, or a Credit Card. www.bscpblues.com



BSCP Store Gift Card

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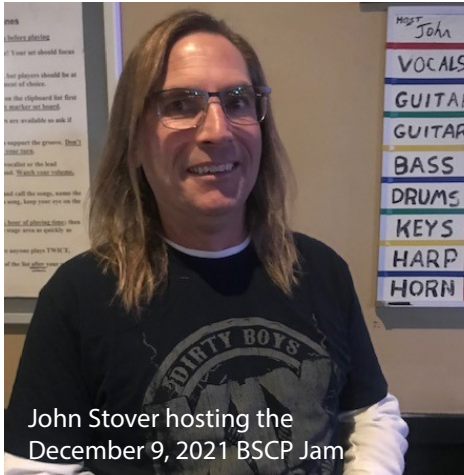
Quantity



In the Spotlight...

John Stover

By Hannah Sherman



John Stover hosting the December 9, 2021 BSCP Jam

Born in Enhaut and living in Harrisburg since, John became interested in the guitar after listening to his brother-in-law play. Around 1987, his then-girlfriend gave him an electric guitar and he noodled around on it until he found the jam soon after it moved to Champions (that girlfriend is now his wife of 33 years). He was listening mostly to rock until then and his favorite band of all time is Led Zeppelin. He also enjoyed AC/DC. He says his knowledge of blues was limited to rock bands, and that "The blues music in rock made me realize what I liked about what I liked."

John says about discovering the jam, "The whole thing was very strange about how I found out. I went to Rocky's house to work on his hot tub and asked him about the bumper sticker on his truck." John went to Champions for quite a while and finally started bringing his guitar, but it took a month or so until he actually signed up. At first he thought the jam was set bands, and it became a great influence when he realized it was different jammers every week.

Learning the blues made him want to play more than ever. The jam being a great inspiration pushed him to seek out guitar lessons from Todd Klucker and Gary Harrington. John states, "I had a lot of help from a lot of people. I was really pursuing getting up there. I got a lot of support from musicians and spectators equally."

Harley-riding John's favorite blues band so far is the most recent band he's seen - Popa Chubby. He also enjoys going to local events to support local bands. When asked what he likes best about the Blues Society he replied, "It has become kinda like a family. I would say I would show up even if there was no music. I want to thank everybody for their support. There were times I wanted to quit but they actually taught me the most. It's been a great experience that I wouldn't trade for anything."

Buster Grubb: "Very quiet, unassuming, and he always shows up. He always stays to help tear down at the jam."

Hannah Sherman: "Speaking with John made me realize that BSCP is a family to many of us and we would enjoy being together even without the music. John volunteers as a jam host and I can't thank our dedicated volunteers enough."

Rocky Rothrock: "John is a really hard worker and very dependable. He helps tear down after the jam every week even if he doesn't get to play. And he is an aspiring guitarist and vocalist who studies blues music and gets better every week. His dedication to the blues society is deeply appreciated. John is also the owner of his own business, Stover's Pool and Spa Service."

Lewis Bechtold: "He's quiet. I don't know where he's from. He plays guitar. He's at the jam more than me. He is always there at the end of the night to pack up. Nice guy."

George Bressler: "I guarantee that the boy has his heart in the right place. John started an outside jam on the sidewalk outside his store every Tuesday last summer and it drew the neighbors out with their chairs. When

the restaurant at Gullifty's/Cliff's Tavern shut down from Covid, the entire basement had been empty and it was a total disaster until two weeks ago. For example, there was a broken grease trap on the floor and grease had drained out all over the floor and there were broken items and restaurant supplies everywhere. John cleaned it up all by himself and it's beautiful now! This past week was the first jam there. He's a good-hearted person. He always, always stays to tear down at the jam. Very giving, unselfish person."

Todd Klucker: "I think he heard me talking about giving lessons at the blues jam. He took lessons for about six months, did his homework and was eager to learn how to play. Seeing him at the blues jam and finally getting up there broke the ice and now he's there every week. Other than being a friend I admire him for getting up there."



Vocalist and guitarist John Stover

hawk Roosts CD Reviews

by Bill "Nighthawk" Halaszynski

This column is a four times a year thing I try to do. Sometimes I feel like a dog chasing its own tail in attempting to do so. I want to cover as wide a swath of the music as possible. I also want to try and get my hands on music that won't be released until after the issue at hand is published in order to whet the whistles of fellow blues lovers for what's next.

What ends up happening is that when I get to year's end there are always good releases that sit here and stare at me with sad eyes because, although deserving, they didn't make the final cut during the previous twelve months for one reason or another.

I write this first column for the new year at previous year's end, which I find endlessly confusing. In order to get my head on straight with this, I find that it helps to look back at the very good music that fell through the cracks in order to clean the slate. So, here is my second annual catch-up round...



Teresa James and the Rhythm Tramps

Rose-Colored Glasses Vol.1

James is a music veteran and Houston native who plies her trade out of Los Angeles. Her sultry, soulful vocals inhabit this set of strong originals with joyous conviction. The concept at work here is the use of guest guitarists who also hail from the Lone Star State. Anson Funderburgh, Johnny Lee Schell, Lee Roy Parnell, Dean Parks, David Milsap and Snuffy Walden add just the right amount of oomph without stepping on the toes of James' Rhythm Tramps backing unit.

This set is, in a word, tasteful. It also packs an emotional punch, however, reflecting upon what it is to be human these days. Although James may be looking through rose-colored glasses for a promising view, she does so fully aware of the lesser angels that motivate some in this age. The result is a collection of songs filled with reality's pitfalls tempered by a sly survival instinct. Listening to this record feels like a soft, warm breeze at the close of an oppressively hot day.

Funderburgh is afforded two opportunities to strut his stuff and provides varied pieces of his signature sound. "Takes One to Know One," is hopeful and upbeat. The guitar soars alongside the swinging horns and slyly declarative vocals. The gritty New Orleans feel of "Wish it Into the Cornfield," benefits from Funderburgh's down and dirty fretwork as well as some slightly surreal lyrics telling the harrowing story of a beleaguered war veteran.

"All You Ever Bring is the Blues," benefits from John Lee Schell's searing guitar and Darrell Leonard's Film Noirish horn arrangements and trumpet solo.

Lee Roy Parnell's lilting slide propels the slinky "Things Aint' Like That," while Snuffy Walden's guitar adds a strong counterpoint to the horns and voices on "Rise Together."

All the 1st rate guitar work throughout adds

to this record's success. In the end, however, it comes down to James' vocals and keyboards along with songwriting partner/bassist Terry Wilson and the Rhythm Tramps who set the table and then bring it on home.



Carolyn Wonderland

Tempting Fate

"Fragile Peace and Certain War" leads off Tempting Fate at a breakneck pace. Wonderland's wailing slide guitar is more than matched by her emotive vocals on this tale of life in the no man's land of the cultural and economic battlefield that forms today's America.

She follows that harrowing vision with the two steppin' abandon of "Texas Girl and Her Boots." These two seemingly incongruent subjects fold together her personal view of life and how to live it as well as humanly possible.

Snarling "Broken Hearted Blues" laments failed love in explicit detail. "Crack in the Wall" utilizes Tex-Mex balladry to examine border life in the here and now. Liting western swing illuminates "On My Feet Again," a tale of resilience aided by friendship.

While this is a very strong effort throughout, it's the final two covers that finish things off on the strongest note possible. Jimmie Dale Gilmore duets with Wonderland on the Bob Dylan classic "It Takes a Lot to Laugh, It Takes a Train to Cry." They mine a subtle groove aided by Cindy Cashdollar's lap steel. Gilmore's plaintive vocals blend perfectly with Wonderland's Texas croon. Together they mine every ounce of regret and loss the song holds.

The Grateful Dead's "Loser," closes things out with a blistering guitar duel between Wonderland and Dave Alvin while her desperate vocals threaten to wake the dead. It's a gripping conclusion to a classic modern Texas guitar album.



Charlie Barath

Just Me and My Friend(s)

Too many times when I encounter a record that claims to cover the breadth of Americana/Roots music it's lacking in authenticity, instead filled with a hodgepodge of licks and concepts that approximate our native musics. Harp man/singer/ composer Charlie Barath's brilliant Just Me and My Friend(s), however, is the real deal.

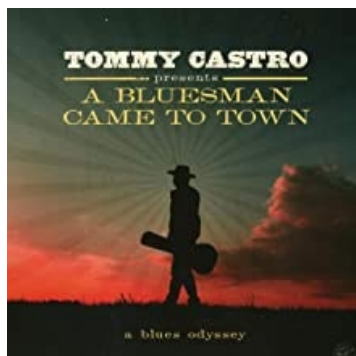
He combines a music-ologist's knowledge with the intimate feel of well-worn practitioner of the individual form at hand. Beyond the musical, there's also an exact sense of place. He captures the area of eastern Ohio/West Virginia panhandle/southwestern P.A. intimately in past and present-day settings.

Barath is adept at taking varied musical settings and placing them into his own particular/peculiar world. "Highball and a Covered Dish" is a perfect example of his magic. Straight-up post-war Chicago blues is the vehicle used to tell his tale of being raised Polish in Belmont County, Ohio in glorious detail.

Tragic folk epic "Ohio" tells of 19th century wanderlust that leads to a violent demise on the burgeoning frontier.

Barath also uses Honkytonk, Western swing and country blues to paint his vivid portraits. This record is highly recommended if you are a lover of American music faithfully played. That the songs are so well written with imaginative lyrics is an added bonus.

CD Reviews



Tommy Castro

A Bluesman Came to Town, a blues odyssey

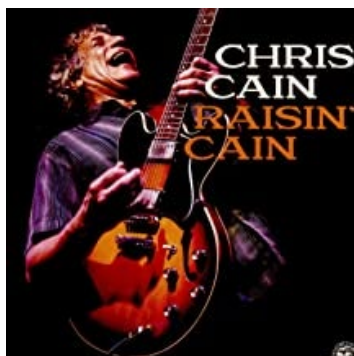
This is Castro's magnum opus. He uses his trademark soul drenched blues rock sound to great effect in service to the story at hand. A young man in the country is enticed by the blues to travel in search of his dreams. The story itself is fairly typical, examining the rewards and pitfalls of life on the road chasing elusive success.

It's in the execution that this record truly shines. The songs stand on their own while moving the story forward. There's enough variety in styles and approach to keep things fresh.

Standout tracks include Gospel flavored "Child Don't Go," Funky, horn driven "Hustle," Roadhouse lament "I Got Burned," and Chuck Berry influenced "I Caught a Break."

The collection's centerpiece is the burning slow blues "Blues Prisoner." It encapsulates the story's emotions, hopes and struggles into five minutes and fifteen seconds of searing regret.

The antagonist soldiers on through addiction and self-doubt to one day make it back home and settle down with the love of his life where he then serves as catalyst to the dreams of others.



Chris Cain

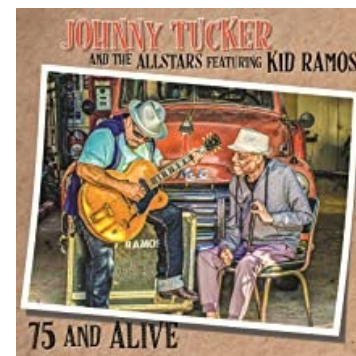
Raisin' Cain

Chris Cain has long channeled the spirit of BB King in his music. On his latest, *Raisin' Cain*, he ups the ante with an even higher energy level than usual. For me, this is a throwback to King's mid to late 70's live sound that I first experienced in the flesh. The electric piano and more up-front funk feel of that era is present here. While Cain's vocals don't quite share the same range as King's from back then the emotional impact is just as strong.

"Hush Money" swaggers out of the gate with a tale of what it takes to keep a high maintenance relationship on course. Stinging single notes drive the guitar intro on "You Won't Have a Problem When I'm Gone" as the song's narrator recounts what led a tense relationship to a bitter end.

Throughout, Cain relies on tried-and-true licks and song structures. It seems that the world gets the blues every couple of decades, and in this current time of need he steps up with the goods to salve the pain and fortify the soul. The Church like feel of "Down on the Ground" exudes sympathy for the everyday travails we all face.

"Born to Play" sums up Cain's personal journey through the blues. References to King and Ray Charles solidify his motives and bring into sharper focus just how true his passion is for the music.



Johnny Tucker and the Allstars featuring Kid Ramos

75 and Alive

Tucker and company rip, roar and wail throughout this set of improvised on the spot classic sounding post war West Coast Blues. He and guitarist Kid Ramos are blues survivors who mesh instinctively and the hand-picked band jumps into the fray with abandon. The liner notes describe a process that had Ramos calling out various grooves that the ensemble inhabited while Tucker provided lyrics that came to mind in the moment. The result sounds vaguely familiar yet vital.

Carl Sonny Leyland's piano is a standout as are Bob Corritore's contributions on harp. Ramos captures the spirit, not to mention licks of Albert Collins on "Snowplow." "Hookline" serves as tribute to Earl Hooker as Ramos and Corritore trade off some tasty licks. This record stands out for its confident vocals and incredible instrumental interplay that expertly captures a sound seemingly long ago lost. Roll on gentlemen, roll on.

TIME TO CELEBRATE! New Year's Eve Virtual Show

7:00 PM – 1:00 AM

Join us to watch a virtual blues show on Blues Society of Central PA Facebook Group page

Featuring

Dr. Mo, Rocky Rothrock & Gordy Keeney, Ken Swartz, Linda Null & Tim Geisweit,
Blues on the Loose, Bobby Gentilo Band, and Peter Veteska & Blues Train

Followed by a Zoom Social Hour.

Show Host: Bobby Gentilo

*More TBA. Please check bscpblues.com for updates.

Blues Bands Beat

by Jack Roberts



Christian Churches United as part of their effort to raise funds for the homeless.

And then there's Central PA blues icon Clarence Spady. Spady recently recorded a single at Right Coast Records in Columbia - home of yet another Central Pennsylvania blues man, Bobby Gentile.

We've yet to hear it, but Tyler Faulkner, who works for Blue Nola Records, said the single, "If Only We Could," will be released this month. So stay tuned for details. No doubt there will be lots to come.

Meanwhile, the Lancaster-based band Blues on the Loose reports its plans for 2022 are "loose," according to BOTL front man, vocalist, and harmonica player Lewis Bechtold. Then again, how could they not be?

"Last year I was running a tour-de-force of venues to see what was out there," Louis said. "I've settled that we will cut back and focus on growth. I would like to take the first couple months to re-initiate our catalog of original songs." Meanwhile you can dance to BOTL at Club 551 in Lancaster on February 19 at 9 pm, and they do have some festivals lined up which we will reveal in future columns.

Many of their prospects were altered by changes in the band's lineup and scrambling to salvage the band through the COVID-19 pandemic. "Now we seem stabilized at four members," Bechtold said. "I have written a few more to add to them and need time to culture them into their best presentation - also some new obscure blues covers to continue to fill out our performance repertoire. So, we're taking a wait-and-see approach to the New Year and wood-shedding in the meantime. With so much of our society up in the air, changes by the moment, what else can one band do?"

Randy Bucksner, of Mystic Alpacas fame, just sent us a last-minute message to say that Blues Night will be coming back to Tellus360. Once again, it will feature Blues on the Loose and The Mystic Alpacas. Other details - time, stage, etc., are yet to be worked out.

Finally, there's news from Octavia, of Octavia Blues, she's been writing, too,

but not just songs.

"I've been writing a bio, and a collection of thoughts, poetry, and impressions as well," Octavia said in a recent interview, adding, "I write all of the time!"

Her band has been fairly busy, mostly playing at their regular venues: 551 West and The Distelfink Inn, aka The Dirty Ol' Tavern, both in Lancaster. Part of the challenge of late, she said, is finding enough performers to play gigs she's booked. "For band leaders, it is very chaotic," she said. "I must find subs for this and that."

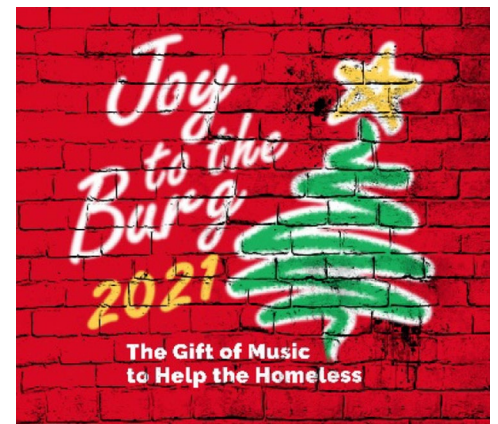
And these days that often means younger musicians, who are often less familiar with the blues.

"Bass players and drummers in their 20s," she said, noting that there is a bright side to it. "It's awesome to share the music with the next generation of kickin' musicians."

Let's hope they get the message. Then again, with Octavia, how could they not?

Be sure to check out the BSCP website bscpblues.com for current events and gigs in Central PA.

Got some Blues News you can use? Please email it to ragtime_willi@hotmail.com. Hope to hear from you soon.



Joy To The Burg 2021 will be available at Karns grocery store locations and on the Joy To The Burg website for CDs and downloads.

It seems a lot of local blues bands are feeling the blues these days, mostly because of the challenge of booking in these times. But they're not giving up, and we appreciate that to no end. So, what are these folks doing in times when finding work isn't all that easy? Read on!

The Nate Myers Band is finishing up work on a 10-track CD they plan to have finished by the end of this month. That album, "Speak Easy Prophet," is, Nate says, a tribute in New Orleans funeral style, to the band's former drummer, Chad Salvaggio, who died in January of 2020, after playing with the band for about seven years. Chad's work is featured on eight of the 10 tracks on the album.

And no doubt they'll be playing the tunes at their most regular venue, The Grotto Pub in East Pennsboro, where they play every Tuesday from 7-9 pm - doing the first set themselves and getting people up to jam for the second one. Sounds like a deal!

Did someone say CD? Oh, yeah, we did. For the second year in a row Don Johnson's band, The Don Johnson Project, recently recorded a Christmas blues song "Merry Christmas, Baby" for the "Joy to the 'Burg" CD. Performing it on the CD are Dominic Lacavone, Vinny Hunter, Ken Reiner, Tom Lowery, and, of course, Don Johnson.

The CD is available online at www.JoyToTheBurg.com, as is last year's CD, which also features The Don Johnson Project. Last year their contribution was "God Rest Ye Merry Gentleman."

The project was organized by

BLUES BOOK CORNER

By KATHRYN GREGOIRE



WOMAN WITH A GUITAR: MEMPHIS MINNIE BLUES

authors studied Minnie's songs, organizing them by poetic, psychological and social categories: crime, doctors and disease, doors, dirty dozens, duets, food and cooking, horses, trains and travel, mad love and work. The song chapters are followed by a discography of Memphis Minnie, who sang on 184 issued sides of records and played on an additional 38 issued sides from 1929 to the 1960s.

A prolific song writer and outstanding guitarist, Minnie was a very popular country blues musician. She influenced numerous performers including Big Bill Broonzy, Memphis Slim, Tampa Red, and Chuck Berry and was the role model for many female blues singers.

A book club meeting highlight was Hank Imhof playing Memphis Minnie's songs for us and sharing his videos by Del Rey.

Hank writes "I thought I first heard Memphis Minnie aka Elizabeth Douglas on a CD put out by Maria Muldaur, the song was 'You Can Be My Chauffeur'. In reality, I had been introduced to her music by many different artists and the list just kept growing.

"I then heard Del Rey who studied Memphis Minnie extensively and does an amazing job performing her works in her style. So, after seeing Del Rey for the third time I bought her DVD lessons on Homespun Home | Homespun and dug in. Del is a good teacher and I started really enjoying working on new material of Minnie's presented by Del Rey.

"I first performed 'Ain't Nothin' in Ramblin' on a 1963 Harmony/Kay archtop. I thought that song represented a look at Black Lives Matter from the 1930's. 'Hoodoo Lady' was on an Eastman dreadnought and I was interested in this song as it was a look at the very real beliefs in the supernatural and the magic powers that are in that realm. From time immemorial human beings have always been influenced and swayed by the supernatural and still are today.

"The last song was 'Drunken Barrelhouse Blues' which I performed on a 1930 National steel Triolian similar to what Minnie may have used. For the book club I played a part of Del's lesson on 'Drunken Barrelhouse Blues' for everyone to listen to Del and her approach and love of Memphis Minnie and her music.

"Minnie played with the boys so to speak. She learned and matched and then excelled at guitar and the blues. She could play solo, duo with one of her two husbands and as part of an ensemble with piano, bass, drums etc. She played Delta style and then any of the blues styles that grew out of the Delta. This included work with some jazz artists also.

"All of this in what basically was a man's world of blues music at the time. She has definitely become one of my favorites. She was strong, smart, beautiful and quite the musician; in all ways quite inspiring and amazing."

Book club members offer some of their thoughts on the factors that contributed to her phenomenal success.

Tom Cook notes that Minnie was unique in playing her guitar with no f holes which reduced feedback. He suggests looking at the Payers Vintage Instruments website under arch top guitars to see what one looks like.

Linda Null believes Minnie's lyrics have stood the test of time because they continue to be relevant. For example, she says, "there is one line that stuck with me from 'Nothing in Rambling' - I was walking through the alley with my hand in my coat, the police started to shoot me, thought it was something I stole"

"There are a lot of stories in her lyrics! For example, my take on some of the songs: 'Me and My Chauffeur Blues' (women can just hire a man when she needs him), 'In My Girlish Days' (about a pregnant teen regaining self-esteem), 'Bumble Bee' (a somewhat erotic song), 'Jockey Man Blues' (about being a dominant woman), 'If You See Mr. Rooster' (about a man who takes off), 'Hoodoo Lady' (about a sneaky woman)."

Linda also considers Minnie's use of rhythm to be amazing. "Listen to 'Frankie Jean' (about a horse). You can hear her Minnie change strumming to replicate a horse trotting (she whistles great in this one, too). In 'When the Levee Breaks,' her picking really highlights the story line. And 'Black Cat Blues' and 'Ice Man?' Just wow!"

The BSCP Blues Book Club meets on Zoom the third Monday of the month from 11 am – 1 pm. To participate, please email bluesmunga@gmail.com.

Eager to learn more about female blues artists, the book club members selected *Woman With Guitar: Memphis Minnie's Blues* by Paul and Beth Garon. This biography, written in 1973, was re-released in 1992 following a surge of interest created by female musicians who discovered and were inspired by her music and the strength of her character which made her successful in a man's world.

A major fan, Bonnie Raitt, financed a headstone for the grave of Memphis Minnie in 1996. The inscription on the back of her gravestone reads: "The hundreds of sides Minnie recorded are the perfect material to teach us about the blues. For the blues are at once general, and particular, speaking for millions, but in a highly singular, individual voice. Listening to Minnie's songs we hear her fantasies, her dreams, her desires, but we will hear them as if they were our own."

Memphis Minnie was born in Algiers (Orleans parish), Louisiana, on June 2, 1897, the oldest of the 13 children of Gertrude and Abe Douglas. Minnie's given name was Lizzie, but she was known as "Kid" while growing up in Walls, Mississippi. She first left home with her guitar at age 13 or 14 for Beale Street in Memphis, where she took on the name Minnie which she continued to use for all her personal and professional documents.

Most of the somewhat limited information about Minnie's early life was gleaned from her youngest and only remaining sibling, Daisy. Book club members lamented that more information about Minnie's life was not recorded. The first 87 pages of the book followed by 50 photographs of Minnie, her family and friends, and music related documents gives the reader a sense of the hard-working, high-energy, dynamite woman she was.

Using the paranoiac-critical method, the



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