



GOLDEN GATE GROOVES

FROM THE EDITOR



We have news, Blues lovers! 🎸 I'm very pleased to announce that The Golden Gate Blues Society (GGBS) has a new President! Effective at the beginning of this month, Ms. Dorothy L. Hill, who most of you know from her contributions to this newsletter and to the world of Blues in general, was elected President of the GGBS to replace Vince Caminiti, who resigned his post at the beginning of 2010. We're very excited about the future with Dorothy at the helm. (See Dorothy's first message to the membership below, where she's pictured holding the award she received for being voted Blues Journalist of the Year at the 2006 West Coast Blues Hall of Fame awards.) I'm personally looking forward to the GGBS having a significant presence in the Bay Area Blues community and beyond as we move forward. I encourage all of you who haven't yet joined The Golden Gate Blues Society to please do so by going to www.tggbs.org and clicking on the appropriate link. 🎸 We also hope that you will attend our upcoming general membership meeting on **April 18, 2010** (and all future meetings), and let your voices be heard. We're listening!

🎸 For this issue of *Golden Gate Grooves*, Amy Lou sat down with local guitar goddess **Laura Chavez**, who holds the guitar chair in Blues belter Candye Kane's band. I think you'll all enjoy getting to know Laura a little better. (Candye's band also now includes a local bass player, Kennan Shaw! Hope that means the band will be performing in this area more often as, I must confess, it's one of my favorites.) 🎸 In an ongoing new series, On the Air, **Joseph Jordan** profiles local Blues DJs, who perform a critical role in getting the music we love out to the "masses." In this issue, Joseph highlights the **Byrd of Paradise** of KZSU-Stanford and **Johnny Cozmik** of KKUP-Cupertino. Joseph also presents a recap of the first installment of the GGBS Blues in the Schools and Libraries program. Stay tuned for more news about where this valuable program is headed next.

I'm very pleased to welcome two new contributors to the GGBS newsletter. **Peggy DeRose**, a Blues-loving multitalented woman based in the South Bay, presents her photographs of local Blues artists. I first met Peggy at the Redwood City Blues Jam at the Little Fox and rapidly gained an appreciation for her "eye"--on everything. I hope you'll enjoy her photos as much as I do. Also, **Ron Purser** presents his first CD review for *Golden Gate Grooves*. He reviews the new CD from local favorites, the **South City Blues Band**, entitled *Comin Home*. After reading Ron's review, I can't wait to hear the CD!

🎸 **Go out and support live Blues! See you on the Blues trail. -Deb Lubin** 🎸

FROM THE PRESIDENT TO THE GGBS MEMBERSHIP



I probably don't need an introduction as most of you know me from my many years on the Bay Area blues scene. My goal is to now apply that experience and love of blues to my new position as President of The Golden Gate Blues Society. I am honored to accept this awesome responsibility and believe that the Society will become a vital component in helping to further celebrate, preserve, and support the blues and the people who make the music. We began the Society a little less than a year ago and the possibilities are limitless for the future in what we can accomplish--we have only just begun.

An immediate goal will be to spearhead a drive to achieve a dynamic all-inclusive membership base with proactive Society management focused on accountability to members

and sponsors. I want the Society to be involved in multicultural events at the community level to broaden our exposure and educate and cultivate future blues fans.

I seek your help in moving the Society toward its full potential with your vibrant membership participation. I want us to be fearless and imaginative, to think outside the box, to be appropriately outrageous and extraordinarily creative. I want our members to say with pride, "I'm a member of The Golden Gate Blues Society" with the satisfaction that they have been an important part of the Society's success.

We intend to revive Society musical events, which are now in the planning stage. We will be holding a general membership meeting on April 18, 2010, which will include a



performance by E.C. Scott. We are putting together a team to produce competitive events to select a band to participate in The Blues Foundation's "International Blues Challenge." This will be an exciting series of local events at which our members will select the most deserving band to go to Memphis for the IBC finals February 2-5, 2011.

In the meantime, I encourage you to renew your membership to assist us in an effort to enhance the Society's revenue stream so that you will get real value and quality for your hard-earned money. We are cognizant of the economic situation and are offering a one-time discount for

this year's renewals at \$20 (vs. \$25) for individual memberships.

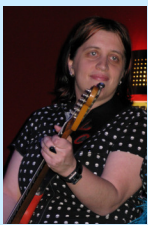
You will be hearing from me on a regular basis and I encourage suggestions and comments. We will only be as good as our members let us be and I say that with the knowledge that we have the brightest and most able members in the greater Bay Area blues community. Show me what you got with an e-mail to tggbs@presidency.com.

Let's Preserve, Celebrate, and Support the Blues with The Golden Gate Blues Society!

Dorothy L. Hill

Laura Chavez: Kid in a Candy Store

Article by Amy Lou; photos by Deb Lubin



OK. She's not a kid. She's 27 years old and plays lead guitar for blues siren, Candye Kane. She is amazing and talented, the kind that makes you stop and listen; mutter an "oh my God" or a "hell yah!" when you hear her play. Life is good these days and the world is getting a real good look at our own guitar hero, Laura Chavez. She has the

drive, talent, and "it" factor to someday fill legendary shoes in the way that only a few could, and we are all rooting for our hometown girl. Much of the world has seen her, has heard her, and they love her. Her passport reveals the happy trails she has been on and it's getting fatter. Europe, the UK, South America, South Africa, and Australia are stamped in her living diary of her musical journey. Laura Chavez has done in the last 10 years what most musicians only dream about. She is nothing short of phenomenal with a six string and is one of the most exciting players on the scene today.

Let's get the chick thing out of the way, though, because it always comes up for comparison whenever a hot lead guitarist comes along that isn't sporting an Adam's apple.

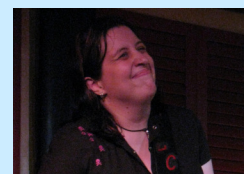
Women who play lead guitar have been making waves for years now and, in my most humble opinion, Laura stands out as more than a wave. She is a rare tsunami, hard to miss and easy to distinguish as extraordinary. She captures listeners everywhere she goes and gives them quite a show when she gets going. Note by note, she plays her red Fender Strat with pure emotion and intention, and with a command that leaves them wanting more.



Leaves some curious as to how it is possible that such

glorious sounds could come from such tiny hands, let alone a g-i-r-l. Well, those little fingers make a big rich sound that gets it right. The sounds coming from her guitar are never forced, but flow in a delightful harmony of rhythms and tones that carry the weight of a player well beyond her years and with a Zen-like quality of a guitar master in the making. It is amazing what Laura Chavez can do with a pick. She has earned her respect from the industry and from fans all over the world. Offstage, she is sweet, warm, and unassuming. She's young, but plays with the emotion and confidence of an expert in her field. To be at home on stage, whether it's an intimate smoky club or a festival in front of 80,000 people, is indicative that she was born to play guitar.

When she was just 23, she won the 2006 Northern California Regional "King of the Blues" guitar competition



and proudly showed how Queens can be Kings. She was recently featured in *Guitar Edge* magazine as a "Young Gun of the Blues," as well as other notable publications over the years whose writers

know a good thing when they see it. She plays for the love of it and considers herself lucky to have had all the opportunities to date. With her talent and the company she keeps, she is headed in the right direction. She has shared stages with some of the very best in blues today. She continues to surprise, impress, and blow people away when she plays that guitar. In January, Candye Kane told the crowd at San Francisco's Biscuits & Blues: "All this talk about her being so great for a girl, well she don't play with those parts!" Amen, sister.



Laura and I got together for coffee one day in February and chatted until they kicked us caffeine freaks out. I found her to be charming and down to earth. The great thing about Laura is, she is missing what most players in her caliber possess: a big fat ego. We talked for hours, and it's just not there. It is awesome to see this and rare for someone with her talent in this oftentimes crazy business of Me, Myself, and I. She lit up and delighted me when telling me her story. I appreciated her candor, humility, and time. She is unpretentious when talking about her life and career. I loved hearing it! I do believe that's what Joseph Campbell meant when he told us all to "Follow Your Bliss." I had asked her if she saw herself doing this when she was little and she said that, although she always saw music in her life, "I never thought I would not go to college and not become a doctor." She always wanted to be a doctor. It was no surprise for me to learn that she volunteered for 10 years at Stanford's Children's Hospital in Palo Alto because she loves kids. She admits to being a big kid herself. She owns every Disney movie and her favorite is Pinocchio. I'm betting she really did wish upon a star when she was a little dink. She loves to go to shopping at Toys R Us for her nephews, play board games, read, and watch movies. Like Johnny Cash, she loves to wear black. The wild red streaks in her hair reveal a hint of her inner wild child that pays homage to the punk rock she loves.

Laura was born on April 3, 1982 (a year after I graduated from high school, but who's counting). She grew up in Mountain View, California, with older brother Matthew and her proud parents, Tony and Catherine Chavez. They planted the seeds and nurtured her gifts with their love, belief in her, and support. Mom played the piano and the young Laura was drawn to music ever since she can remember. She got turned on to guitar at around 6 or 7 years old when brother Matthew, who is 10 years older, got into classic rock and was spinning Zeppelin and Hendrix records in his room. He eventually outgrew it. She didn't. She loved the hard-driving sounds she heard on guitar and asked her mom for guitar lessons. She started classical guitar lessons at age 8 from a man who shall remain nameless because he was narrow minded with the thought process that little girls should play the clarinet or violin and leave the guitars for the boys. When it got to the point that Laura would hide every time he came around for the lesson, mom pulled her out. She didn't pick up a guitar again until she was about 13. As a young teen, she got the bug to play again and mom bought her first electric guitar, an Ibanez. Found a great teacher in Greg Vaughn at Drapers Music in Palo Alto, who encouraged her and taught her to play the rock and roll she loved. Laura owns a few guitars now, but her favorite is the reddish orange Fender Stratocaster Relic.

Laura has given guitar lessons for years and enjoys it very much. She dabbled in drums and piano and played in the jazz band at St. Francis High school. Growing up, she loved all kinds of music, ranging from Led Zeppelin to The Smiths. She loved The Clash because "they encompassed so many styles." She was about 15 years old when she heard B.B. King for the first time. That was when she found her own nirvana and her life's calling. She was gonna play the blues.

She started listening to the greats and teaching herself at this point how to play blues like B.B., Freddie King, and Hubert Sumlin, and then shake it up like Stevie Ray Vaughan. Her mom took her to JJ's Blues in San Jose before she was old enough to get in to get acclimated. Fresh out of high school at 18, she signed up for Lara Price's blues jam at JJ's and the rest is local history. She joined the Lara Price Blues Band shortly after and this rocking band was her first dip in the pool at playing live, recording, and collaborating on original songs. Together with Lara Price, Bald Head Fred, and Jack Cannon, she made a splash and they rocked the San Francisco Bay Area for 8 years. Their self released CDs received some national attention. The band played hundreds of gigs at home and across the country, from cozy Irish pubs to prestigious venues, such as the Monterey Bay Blues Festival and the San Jose Jazz Festival. Laura stretched her wings musically by widening the gap in trying different styles and playing acoustically. She thanks Lara for the opportunities. I asked her "what was the first coolest thing you ever did?" She said, "playing the Garden Stage at the Monterey Bay Blues Festival when I was only 19 or 20 was pretty damn cool."

She is immensely grateful to Rene Solis, Debbie Davies, and Sue Foley. She says of long-time friend, Rene: "He has been so good to me and has given me really cool gigs." He has included her in some of his popular "Guitar Extravanzas" that feature three outstanding guitar players and a night of excellence in music. In 2007, he invited Laura to join Pat Wilder and Carmen Getit in his "Ladies Play the Blues" extravaganza, where she tore it up at the San Francisco



Blues Festival. When she was about 23 years old, opportunity came knocking again. Guitarist and friend Debbie Davies introduced Laura to Canadian guitarist Sue Foley, who became instrumental in her next step. Foley included Laura in her guitar circle of women who rock.

Foley has been writing a book that she's very passionate about, called "Guitar Woman." It will be a historical account and stories of women guitar players from all over the world. It has been in the works for about 7 years now and there is a chapter on Laura. Foley included newcomer Laura in her tribute to guitar women released by Ruf Records in 2005, called "Blues Guitar Women." The two-CD set



features an amazing array of guitar women. Laura got the first track out of 29 with the excellent cover of "Can't Quit the Blues," which she previously recorded with Price. It shows off her incredible feel for the blues and earned her a spot on the CD. Quite impressive for a relative unknown. Next stop in her journey: the fabulous and fun Candye Kane.

Candye was looking for a guitar player and, based on Foley's recommendation alone, hired Laura unseen in 2008. They have been playing together for about 2 years now and complement each other well. Laura digs the travelling and the variety of styles they play that range from blues to rockabilly, country with a zip, swing, and jazz. For most of 2009, they toured in an almost nonstop, amazing trip around the world. It was an exciting time for Laura

and a year filled with early morning wake up calls and late night shows. One time she spent damn near a whole day on an airplane, landed in Göteborg, Sweden, at 5 p.m. and was on stage ready to rock at 8 p.m. In February 2008, shortly after Laura joined the band, Candye discovered she had pancreatic cancer. The news saddened and shocked Laura, who had to come to grips with the universe's timing of things as well as being there for her friend through this most unexpected and uncertain time. They became close during treatment, surgery, and recovery. Their impressive first CD together, *Superhero*, released last year by Delta Groove, is the result of exchanging energies and connecting to each other during that time. The experience produced good songs and a new energy that proved to be healing and good for all. Amazingly, Candye was able to go back to performing just weeks after her surgery, so continent to continent they rocked, bluesed and bopped. They were part of Ruf Records' "Blues Caravan: Guitar & Feathers" live CD, which was recorded on tour in Germany in 2008 with Ruf's travelling showcase of blues singers Deborah Coleman, Dani Wilde, and Candye Kane with her new guitarist, Laura Chavez. A highlight for Laura in 2009 was coming home last May to play one of her favorite U.S. festivals, the San Jose Metro Fountain Blues Fest after their European tour. "A sweet homecoming," she said. Playing the main stage on 4th of July last year at Portland's Waterfront Blues Festival was something she'll never forget either.



Good news followed when *Superhero* was nominated for a Blues Music Award (formerly known as the W.C. Handy Awards) for Contemporary Blues Album of the Year by the Blues Foundation. The ceremony takes place in Memphis

on May 6, 2010. Laura is thrilled and honored by the nomination. She coproduced the album and cowrote six of the songs on it with Candye, and she is emotionally connected to it. The CD boasts an impressive group of guest musicians, Candye's son Evan Caleb on drums, and Paul Loranger on the bass. It is a nice blend of original and cover tunes varied in enough blues-based styles to romp and please the doowopper, the swinger, and the rocker without disrespecting the blues. The blues backbone driving it all keeps up the pace and Laura figures predominantly. It is a great CD to add to your collection. The liner notes alone made me go get a hanky. Laura really rips on the CD, especially the rockin' "Throw It in the Trash Can Love" and nails it tight on the Willie Dixon classic, "You Need Love." The swingy "Ik Hou Van Je (I Love You)" and "I Didn't Listen to My Heart" reveal a refreshing well of uncharted waters for Chavez, while her smoking hot solo on the bluesy ballad "I'm a Bad, Bad Girl" reminds us why we light lighters at concerts. She keeps it real and when she is in the blues, she is at her best. What a fine first collaboration this turned out to be. The CD was tastefully mixed and highlights Laura's playing sufficiently enough to leave you hungry for seconds. A follow up CD is something the fans can look forward to.

Personally, she was thrilled to meet some of her heroes along the way. Hubert Sumlin, Buddy Guy, whose autograph on her guitar she treasures, and the Blues Queen herself, Koko Taylor. One icon she would really love to meet someday is B.B. King. Her biggest guitar influences have been the Kings, T-Bone Walker, Hubert Sumlin, and the Vaughan brothers. She has been compared to the Vaughans and takes that as a huge compliment, as Jimmy Vaughan is one of her favorites. She looks forward to meeting him this summer when they play at the annual blues festival in



Edmonton, Alberta. About SRV she said, "If I could take anything from him, and what I loved the most about him, was his intensity and how the music just seemed to flow right through him." I looked at her and said "Laura, that is too funny because that is exactly what I think every time I hear you play." She just gave me her thanks in that sweet-shy smile of hers.

Laura has done a lot, yet she still shies from all the attention. Sometimes, Candye has to literally move her to the front of the stage to receive the adoration she so rightfully deserves. She's going to have to learn to get used to that. Candye is exceedingly generous in sharing the stage and introducing her band mates to the crowds. She tells her audience all the time that "God spared her from cancer so she could introduce the world to Laura Chavez." Now that's big love in my book and big love for the kid in the candy store.



There is a real confidence that comes from knowing your place in this world and living your bliss. Words like amazing, phenomenal, and incredible are used often when describing Laura. Flattered, she says the "old soul" references are the best compliments, because she has "always wanted to play it right and play it the best I could." With the creativity, travel, and musical variety that she gets these days, Laura Chavez has plenty of room to grow, strut her Strat, and leave a mark. The new year is already booked with a West Coast tour and then Europe again later this year. Being nominated for the upcoming Contemporary Blues Album of the Year award is not something that happens every day. But it's those kinds of things that keep happening to her. She has earned it and she deserves it. She is one of the few I know who could actually grace the cover of *Rolling Stone* some day with her red Strat in hand. Wouldn't it be a kick

to see that first teacher's face then? Some say success is sweet revenge and I think it's true, especially when people in your life did not believe in you. That's my two cents, of course. Laura could care less about things like that because she just wants to play. If you haven't seen her live yet, catch her when you can. You can find her online at www.myspace.com/lcrocks77 and at www.candyekane.com. She's great and I will end this piece with something I've heard so many times and it's true: Laura Chavez rocks.

Photos of Laura from Biscuits & Blues, San Francisco in January 2010 and from The Verve Lounge in Aptos in March. Photo on page 3, Amy Lou and Laura at Biscuits & Blues, January 2010.

CD REVIEW

South City Blues Band, *Comin Home*

by Ron Purser



I won't hide the fact that the South City Blues Band is one of my favorite Bay Area blues bands, having followed their development and live performances for the past several years. *Comin Home* swings, jumps, rocks, and takes off at times into R&B and jazz. Despite the diverse blending of styles, textures, and rhythms on *Comin Home*, the South City Blues Band delivers a consistent tone fest with a solid rhythm section. Throughout the CD, there is a certain purity and simplicity that is true to the blues form. Clearly, *Comin Home* showcases the band's lyrical humor, stylistic versatility, vocal harmonies, and, of course, superb musicianship. The wide-ranging collection may be a bit more laid back than the hard-driving groove of the Chicago blues, but you will be won over by the album's vintage swing tones and the jump-blues sound.

The 12-song album leads off with "Seven Nites to Rock," a fun song that immediately grabs the listener with its danceable rock style, vocal harmonies, and memorable lyrics. I found myself singing the backup vocals when driving in my car, "Monday...Tuesday...Wednesday...". The only original on this album is John Boutell's, "Misfortune," a soulful swing blues that has a cool introduction. Boutell carries the tune, both instrumentally and vocally, with John Lull on tenor sax laying down warm and rich solos and tasteful fills. Overall, the band sounds tight, but not over-

rehearsed. I would imagine the loose but tight feel is hard to pull off in a studio, but *Comin Home* achieves just the right tension. The next tune is a real tongue-in-cheeker, "Nosey Joe," a Leiber and Stoller R&B classic recorded by Bull Moose Jackson in the '50s, and again by Brian Setzer in the 1990s. Drummer Luke Piro sings lead vocals on this one, with Ray Figueroa holding down a steady bass line. On sax, John Lull punches in nice riffs and a swinging solo.

The album takes a turn more to its blues roots on "Somebody," a shuffle tune by Rod Piazza. One thing I like about this album is how Lull on tenor sax often takes the first solo; this is not a guitar-dominated CD. Next, the band pays homage to Albert King with a tight and straightforward rendition of "Oh Pretty Woman." It sounds like a big horn section on this cut, a nice touch. Boutell's eclectic talents for the blues vocabulary are evident in his masterful interpretation of classic Albert licks. For a change of pace, "Bad Behavior," written by Joe Wilson, is a soulful and classic slow blues, with a beautiful mix.

My favorite cut on the album is the band's cover of "Help the Poor," a minor blues tune popularized by such luminaries as B.B. King and Robben Ford. Every band member seems to shine on this tune. Boutell plays melodically, with feeling, and his fretwork is smooth and entertaining. Lull does a fine job backing Boutell, and Piro and Figueroa never miss a beat. This is a lock-tight band that anticipates each other's moves.



By this time, I feel like going out to jam, and “T-Bone Shuffle” is just icing on the cake. Now we get to hear the T-Bone Walker and Duke Robillard influences in Boutell’s playing. He nails this tune, with a feeling of ease. At times, drummer Piro’s vocals sound a bit weathered and strained, but for the most part, he conveys a light-hearted and laid-back sort of sound. The gritty cover tune, “My First Crime,” is from the James Harman Band, which had Hollywood Fats on guitar. On this one, Boutell takes it up a notch on the vocals to give it a more barroom blues feel.

On the jazzy-blues instrumental, “Comin Home Baby,” Figueroa on bass really holds the tune together; I would have liked to hear a solo from him on this one. Boutell and Lull trade solos, and it seems like they have a telepathic resonance with each other. Boutell’s prowess and mastery of the jazz-blues genre comes through on this tune, as he gets to exercise his fingers with a creative melodic solo – mixing chromaticism, octave playing, and other cool licks.

The last two cuts will have you spinning your partner on the dance floor. “Kidney Stew” is a slow swinging blues that would please the swing dancing crowd or West Coast blues fans. “Shake Your Boogie” is a jumpin’ get-up-and-dance tune. Both tunes showcase the West Coast groove, swing, and jump style that the South City Blues Band does



admirably well. And an honorable mention to Main St. Studios for the artwork on the CD case; the foggy scene on the front cover is matched by an artistic sketch of the San Francisco skyline on the back.

One final note. I thought Ray Figueroa was playing an upright bass on some cuts, but when I asked John Boutell about it, he replied: "the sound is very close, but it was his Kenny 'Blue' Ray P bass. I love how it gets that upright sound for an electric." So now you know.

Main St. Records, 2009.

Check out [The South City Blues Band](#) on the Internet.

GGBS Blues in the Schools and Libraries Update

by Joseph Jordan, Education Committee Chair

Photos by Janet Cheung, Librarian, Chinatown Library

The Education Committee of The Golden Gate Blues Society has just completed the first phase of its exciting and challenging Blues in the Schools and Libraries programming and will be continuing its successful foray into bringing blues appreciation and awareness to youth and adults in the months (and years) to come.



Our instructor/presenter for the first six programs, held in both Contra Costa and San Francisco counties, was master musician and highly respected Bay Area bass player, Henry Oden. Henry introduced over 400 children, ranging in age from toddlers

to teens, to the power and significance of the Blues. He performed songs, taught kids to count a beat, and, in each session, helped the youthful audiences "write" a blues song on the spot. In each of the hour-long presentations, he was

successful in encouraging the children to play guitar, keep time on a snare drum, and even sing the song just written. Oden brought in a little blues history, a little blues instruction, and a large portion of the magic of the Blues to youthful and highly enthusiastic audiences.



Watch [Golden Gate Grooves](#) for more information on exciting Blues in the Schools and Libraries programming in the months ahead, as we'll be showcasing the talents and

teaching abilities of any number of Bay Area Blues men and women.

There is no more important undertaking for The Golden Gate Blues Society than to bring the Blues to a new generation of fans and to the next crop of budding musicians.



Photo Retrospective: SF Bay Area Blues Musicians

by Peggy DeRose



JC Smith (Villa Montalvo, 2009)



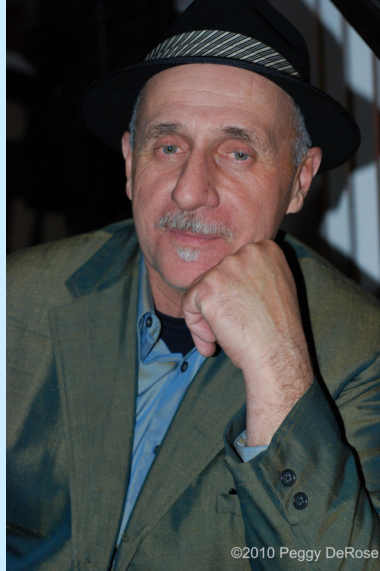
Kenny Neal (Fox Theater, Redwood City, 2008)



Ronnie Smith (Tommy Castro Band, Fox Theater, Redwood City, 2008)



John Nemeth (Biscuits & Blues, 2008)



Gary Smith (Poor House Bistro, 2008)



RJ Mischo (Biscuits & Blues, SF, 2008)

[Although RJ is no longer living in the SF Bay Area, he's near and dear to our hearts and is still considered "a local." Fayetteville, Arkansas, isn't THAT far away, right?]



Tom Poole and Keith Crossan (Fox Theater, Redwood City, 2008)



Earl Thomas (Redwood City Blues Festival, 2009)



Ron Thompson (Poor House Bistro, 2007)



Kid Andersen and Rick Estrin (Biscuits & Blues, SF, 2008)



Carlos Velasco (Tip of the Top, Gordon Biersch, San Jose, 2008)



Magic Dick (superstar with the old J. Geils Band) and Tommy Castro (Fox Theater, Redwood City, 2008)



Jon Lawton (Tip of the Top, Gordon Biersch, San Jose, 2008)



Frank DeRose (Tip of the Top, Gordon Biersch, San Jose, 2008)



Kim Wilson and Rick Estrin (Biscuits & Blues, SF, 2008)



Aki Kumar (Tip of the Top, Gordon Biersch, San Jose, 2008)

Golden Gate Blues Society member band Tip of the Top will be appearing on the President's Stage at the Monterey Bay Blues Festival on Saturday June 26, 2010, from 5:50 p.m. to 6:50 p.m. Catch them if you can! Please support our member bands!

Join or Renew Your Membership in The Golden Gate Blues Society

We have many exciting things planned, including a general membership meeting at Angelica's Bistro in Redwood City on April 18, 2010, with a performance by E.C. Scott. More information to follow. Check the TGGBS website often!

Support us so we can support you!

To renew, go to <http://www.tggbs.org> or send a check to P.O. Box 2591, Redwood City, CA 94064.

Renewing Members in 2010: \$20 (a one-time discount)

New Members: \$25

Band Memberships: \$40



On the Air

by Joseph Jordan

In a world of pop and pap-saturated media formats, the rare oasis that is blues music radio provides crucial listening sustenance to blues fans and newcomers to the genre alike.

Although this music and those radio stations more often than not need to be specifically sought out, the disc jockeys (DJs) who program and play the songs should hold a special place in any blues-lovers heart. Largely unsung, and nearly always with no monetary gain, these dedicated producers/on-air talents/LP and CD spinners often turn us on to performers deserving of more recognition, and help us rediscover masters of the blues form. We are in their debt. Over the next several issues of *Golden Gate Grooves*, we'll be introducing you to several of the men and women broadcasters who provide our ears and give our souls the magic and majesty of the blues.

We start our journey with two Peninsula broadcasters, J.C. Smith (aka Johnny Cozmik) of KKUP and Byrd Hale (aka the Byrd of Paradise) of KZSU.

TGGBS: What are the call letters/location, radio frequency, times of your show, and do you stream over the Internet?

J.C.: KKUP-Cupertino 91.5. We air Thursdays from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. We are listener supported. We do not have an Internet stream.

Byrd: KZSU Stanford University 90.1 FM. Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon. We stream around the world.

TGGBS: How old are you?

J.C.: 54 years old and holding

Byrd: 55 years old

TGGBS: What do you do for a living?

J.C.: I am a professional musician.

Byrd: [I sell at] farmers' markets around the Bay Area, selling German bakery [goods].

TGGBS: When did you start your program.

J.C.: I started radio in the mid-'70s, took a break, started again in 1980 and have never left.

Byrd: September of 1991

TGGBS: What do you feel is unique about your program?

J.C.: [An] educational factor, because I mix the old stuff with the new stuff. We talk about where the original music came from 'cause the younger crowd hears the stuff for the first time brought to them this way, but they've heard it before in a lot of rock records and it's always interesting to go back in time and show where the real music came from... of that era...the precursor to rock and roll. And I guess one of my big focuses is the Chicago style blues.



Byrd: My perspective on the blues. It's the perspective I



bring from the years that I spent on the stage, off the stage as a spectator [and] listener, as a record collector, as a fan and promoter. I've been on the road, I've played clubs, I've led a band, I'm a published songwriter. I've done a little bit of all of it, not a lot. I've never made my living playing music, thank God. But I bring

the unique experience of someone who fell in love with the blues and dabbled in it from all the different ways you could. That love of it is still alive. I never got jaded or turned off to it. It's just as fresh today as it ever was. In doing the show every week, it's a learning process for me. I continue to learn more and more about the blues and what it is and where it came from and who does it and who doesn't do it by doing the show every week. It's actually an education for me.

TGGBS: In doing your show, what are some of your greatest joys?

J.C.: The phone calls. When I know I'm making someone's day, or if they haven't heard something for a long time and ask me, "Where did you get that? What is that?" It could have been something that's been around here forever, but they just never heard it.

Byrd: Presenting the music. Being able to present music to people that they've never heard before. Or being able to present artists, whether they be live in-studio or on the telephone, to the audience. Being able to help the artists promote their careers, that really brings me some of the best joy because I am actually able to help the blues world continue in that way. Also, as I do all that, I help edify my radio station, which has allowed me to have the show for the past 18.5 years and I am extremely grateful to the folks at the station who've allowed me to continue to do that.



I'm very proud to be part of the Stanford radio family and proud to be able to do my thing there and that they allowed me to do it there.

TGGBS: *With regard to your show, what do you hope to do that you might not have done yet?*

J.C.: Just keep going, keeping the music alive, and somehow maybe the end result will be some of the Clear Channels will fall and blues music will take its rightful place, as it has in history, but as a forerunner. You'll notice at the GRAMMY Awards, the only time you'll see anyone on the television is Honeyboy [Edwards] or Pinetop [Perkins], but they've lived a whole life. Where's all that stuff? What about the up-and-coming people? What about the legacies and the bloodlines and the people that are keeping the music alive? I'd like to see those people and I'd like to see The Recording Academy recognize blues stronger, as a forerunner instead of a "nothing gets an award but the Beyonces of the world."

Byrd: Well, after 18 years, the only things I haven't done are (interviewing) certain artists that are still alive. I've interviewed a lot of artists. We've done blues marathons that have lasted up to 33 hours with multiple DJs. I did an 18-hour blues marathon all by myself one time. I've explored the blues in many different ways. I've done shows on rhythm and blues and food, I've done Louis Jordan's 100th birthday. I was on the air that day and celebrated it. I celebrated Muddy Waters' birthday and Gatemouth Brown's and Albert King's birthday, on their birthdays. They had passed away, but still... I had people on the phone that knew them and had played with them. What I haven't done is some of the artists that are still alive. And even some of the dead ones too, as I plan to do retrospectives on all of them, just to help me understand it and also help the audience and help the artists be remembered.

TGGBS: *What are the names of a few musicians, old or new, that you feel need more recognition?*

J.C.: David "Honeyboy" Edwards number one. Even though people know him, they still don't know. The legacy... he's the last button on the coat as far as being connected to Robert Johnson. People like him, and the new players that are just really strivin' to hit it hard. Chicago's got a host of 'em. I'd like to see more attention put on some of the up-and-coming guys. Sirius radio does a pretty good job of that. And I'd like to see more emphasis put on the difference between blues and rock and roll.

Byrd: J.B. Lenoir, Guitar Slim, Slim Harpo, Lightnin' Hopkins, George "Harmonica" Smith, and then, I'm not a big country blues guy, I never was, although I am delving into it more and more these days, and I think all the great country blues guys don't get enough recognition for their [contributions]. Even the guys before Robert Johnson, the guys that

influenced Robert Johnson... we know about them now by the great book that Elijah Wald wrote, called "Escaping the Delta," having to do with the roots of Robert Johnson and that it wasn't that he sold his soul to the devil at all. It was that he possibly had a photographic memory and he was able to hear a guy one time and pick up his entire style. Johnson even played from records. He played 78s (rpm) and learned guys' styles that way. He also saw some of them live and heard 'em on the radio too. He was an amazing guy that way. So, on both sides of Robert Johnson, before him and after him, there are so many guys that haven't gotten the recognition.

TGGBS: *Any young bucks that have caught your ear?*

J.C.: There are so many of them.

Byrd: Yes, and that's another area of my show that I'm most proud of. That I get to disseminate the incoming CDs at the radio station and I get to decide what I am going to play, and what is presented and that there is fresh new talent all over the United States... comin' out of Colorado, this kid Little Joe McLerran; a guy, Seth Walker, in Austin, Texas. There's a bunch of them. They put out CDs and we get 'em and we play 'em and it's fresh. The blues is alive, it's definitely very alive. It's doin' fine.

TGGBS: *Want to get anything off your broadcast chest?*

J.C.: I just hope everybody that reads this turns somebody on that isn't aware how cool the music is. When I first got into the blues, I didn't know too much. I knew B.B. King and Bobby Bland. Well, they were stars. I didn't know anything about the up-and-coming guys and the blue-eyed guys that were playing in the old days, like the Nighthawks back in the '80s and the T-Birds [Fabulous Thunderbirds] when they were playing the greasier stuff. I'm just happy that there were a lot of people that came before and admitted where the music came from like the Stones [Rolling Stones]. They had gotten a lot of their music from the blues unlike, say, Led Zeppelin, that ended up getting sued. I wish people would just call it what it is. And get more educated. People come up to me [as a band leader] and say, "Hey, you've got a great jazz band." I say, "I don't play jazz unless I'm out of tune."

Byrd: I would like the people that want to participate in the blues world to please be very careful. If you want to play the music, if you want to be on the radio and do the music or be in a band and do the music, please study it, please get to know what it is. If you don't know, then ask somebody. Listen to your local blues DJs and make sure they know what they're talking about too, because this music has been misrepresented in the worst of ways to the point now where there are situations on the radio and even on stage where things are being called blues that just aren't. I think



it's a complete travesty. These guys [bluesmen] would be spinning in their graves, or maybe they are if they are hearing what's going on with some of this stuff. It's just horrible. You have promoters out there who, really for monetary reasons, will book rock and roll acts in what they're calling a blues festival and they try to call it blues. And that is a travesty, 'cause these promoters are actually representing the music and there are a lot of people depending...the people in the audience are depending upon these promoters [who] are supposed to know what they are doing. And then you have the audience walking away thinking, "Oh, so that's a blues guy or blues woman too," when they aren't, they're something else. And the thing I have to say about this other music, it's not bad music, it's not wrong, it's just not blues. If it's not blues, don't call it that. That's a perfect summation of what I'm trying to get off my chest. If you don't know what real blues is, then you need to find out.

TGGBS: How can a blues society like The Golden Gate Blues Society assist you?

J.C.: Get that place [a blues jam location] back up and running, keep the festival [the Redwood City Blues Festival] going and keep turning people in that part of the Bay (the Peninsula) on about the music.

Byrd: Start promoting the blues in your area. Start presenting blues, real blues. Support the blues. Live shows, yes. Find the blues guys in and out of your area, the touring ones and nontouring ones and support them in your area. Make the blues community proud to be part of your project and then it will all work in unison. If a blues society in my area starts booking real blues shows, I'll support them 120%. I'll help them any way I can. In other parts of the

country, and even in California, it's the blues societies that put on blues shows. The club scene is pretty weak and lax in that. So it takes a blues society, that's what I've heard. And around here, I don't see a lot of blues being presented in clubs. They're a few in our area that do a good job, but they're few and far between. So if someone was going to have a blues society in this area, I think that it would be perfectly fine. I don't think they'd be competing with clubs since they're not enough blues clubs anyway in San Mateo County. So if a blues society were going to exist around here, I think it would be perfectly fine and it would be their duty to present a blues show. I don't think it would be out of line to do one a month, hell, one a week, if they had a nice blues jam. (laughs)

TGGBS: How is blues incorporated in your day-to-day life?

J.C.: It's my job. Blues is my business and business is good.

Byrd: Having been totally ensconced in it all these years, the music is always in my head, I'm always hearing songs, whistling them, relating to them, thinking about them. I'm always comparing real life situations [and] relating that to blues situations or seeing how blues situations relate to my own life. It's ironic how close they really are. That's the thing about the blues. The blues is like a living thing that is part of us, those of us that fell in love with it. It's not that we can't get away from it, it's that it's part of us. It's not that I even have to think about it, it's just part of me, and I can't say I am a bluesman, 'cause the bluesmen were the guys that started this stuff, but I love the blues, and because I love it, I am like someone who is in love, and when you're in love, you just can't get that other person out of your mind. That's how the blues is for me, it's just always there.

Upcoming Blues Events that Caught the Editor's Eye (SF Bay Area and Slightly Beyond)

March 31: The Perfect Age of Rock N Roll Blues Band, Great American Music Hall, San Francisco *(The Golden Gate Blues Society is a partner organization in this evening's presentation. Look for us at the artists' table!)*

April 1: Pat Wilder, Biscuits & Blues, San Francisco

April 2: Maria Muldaur, Biscuits & Blues, SF

April 2: Daniel Castro, The Mojo Lounge, Fremont

April 3: Stan Erhart, Bobby G's, Berkeley

April 7: Curtis Salgado, Biscuits & Blues

April 9: The Jackie Payne Steve Edmonson Band, Lou's Pier 47, San Francisco

April 10: Steve Freund, Bobby G's, Berkeley

April 14: Daniel Castro Band, Lou's Pier 47, San Francisco

April 16: Tip of the Top, with special guest Andy Santana, JJ's Blues, San Jose

April 17: Ron Hacker, The Saloon, San Francisco

April 18: **The Golden Gate Blues Society general membership meeting**, performance by EC Scott, Angelica's Bistro, Redwood City

April 23: The Delta Wires, The Mojo Lounge, Fremont

April 23: Daniel Castro, Lou's Pier 47, San Francisco

April 24: The Delta Wires, The Saloon, San Francisco

April 25: Sue Foley and Peter Karp, Biscuits & Blues, SF



TGGBS General Information

Please visit our website (www.tggb.org) for a listing of links to Bay Area (and beyond) blues clubs, our member bands' websites, a listing of local blues radio shows, and a host of other blues-related links.

We encourage Letters to the Editor of *Golden Gate Grooves*! Please let us know what we can do better, what we're doing right, and your comments about anything blues-related you'd like to share! Contact me at deblubin@sbcglobal.net.

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The Golden Gate Blues Society is a nonprofit affiliate of The Blues Foundation, based in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of The Golden Gate Blues Society is to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the Blues in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area through:

- Sponsorship and promotion of Blues performances;
- Education programs and publications on the performance, interpretation, preservation and growth of the Blues as an American art form; and
- The financial as well as moral support of the San Francisco Bay Area Blues community.