



# GOLDEN GATE GROOVES

## FROM THE EDITOR

*Deb Lubin*

The period since the last newsletter was published was very busy, with planning for upcoming blues society events, going out to hear our favorite local blues bands, and our annual pilgrimage to Memphis in May for the Blues Music Awards. The BMAs are a wonderful event that all blues lovers should attend at least once. This year in Memphis, we got to see many of our favorite musicians from the Bay Area, among them Rick Estrin and the Nightcats, including Kid Andersen; the entire Tommy Castro Band, which took home several awards; Laura Chavez and Kennan Shaw from Candye Kane's band; Maria Muldaur, and others with Bay Area ties. I had so much fun reconnecting with old friends both on and off the stage. 🎵



🎵 Meanwhile, the GGBS is rolling. We're getting ready for several big events that we're either sponsoring, partnering with, or supporting, including the 5th annual **Redwood City Blues Festival** in July, the first U.S. events of the European-based charity **United by Music**, the **San Jose Jazz Festival** in August, and events to select a member band to compete in the Blues Foundation's **International Blues Challenge** (IBC) in Memphis in February 2011, among others. Please look for information about all of these events in this issue of the newsletter. 🎵

🎵 In addition, East Bay musician/cat lover/pre-war blues specialist **Joel Fritz** reviews four CDs by local bands. SF-based singer **Cathy Lemons** reviews E.C. Scott's show at Angelica's Bistro in Redwood City following the first membership meeting of The Golden Gate Blues Society, and we remember guitarist/vocalist **René Solis**, one of the first members of the GGBS and a wonderful man who left us way too soon. RIP René; we will never forget you! 🎵

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](http://www.tggbs.org) and clicking on the appropriate link. 🎵 We also hope that you will attend any or all of the upcoming events discussed in this issue of *Golden Gate Grooves*. Starting with this issue, the newsletter will be produced quarterly rather than bimonthly.

🎵 **Go out and support live Blues! See you on the Blues trail.** 🎵

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

*Dorothy L. Hill*

Our first membership meeting and concert on April 18 at Angelica's Bistro was, by all accounts, a success. I want



to thank all the members who participated and assure you that we are working on the ideas and suggestions that you brought to our attention. It is a slow process, sometimes due to the lack of time and help.

Which brings me to my plea for members to contact me with offers of ways you can help. We need help staffing our membership tables at various festivals and events, among other tasks. **Please send me an e-mail ([info@tggbs.org](mailto:info@tggbs.org))**—we want to know who you are and how you are willing to support the society with a little effort and have fun at the same time.

Deb Lubin and I were in Memphis for the Blues Foundation's Blues Music Awards and connected with other blues societies and industry people. I believe that we reinforced The Golden Gate Blues Society's presence in the national arena, which will lead to many benefits for our members. Most notably, our long-range plan is to partner with California blues societies to coordinate tours for musicians and touring bands who find it difficult to book enough venues on the West Coast to justify the expense. We will be working on obtaining discounts for various festivals and blues magazine subscriptions. I brought back one copy of this year's Blues Music Awards poster featuring Buddy Guy, which he personally autographed. We will be presenting it for purchase at



our membership table during a silent auction at the Redwood City Blues Festival on July 24.

The most exciting news on the local front is that The Golden Gate Blues Society will be holding regional events to select a member band to compete in the Blues Foundation's 27<sup>th</sup> International Blues Challenge to be held in Memphis February 2-5, 2011. One of the assets of having an active blues society is the ability to showcase local talent and help propel them to next level in their career. Come out to our first challenge on Sunday, July 18, at Angelica's Bistro in Redwood City and see what we're talking about. Other dates are being finalized and will be announced soon. This will be a free event for members—vote to send your favorite band to Memphis.

Lastly, we are very pleased that Vince Caminiti will be bringing the jam back to the Little Fox in August.

We are supporting and/or sponsoring many events covered in this publication – grab your calendars now so you don't miss the fun! We are working hard on many fronts to bring you the blues. I encourage you to check our website frequently for updates on events and current information as they're announced.

Summer is here and it's festival time—get out and enjoy the sunshine and hear some great blues! See you on the front row...

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

## E.C. Scott and Smoke at TGGBS Membership Drive

*Article by Cathy Lemons; photos by Deb Lubin*

On Sunday, April 18, 2010, The Golden Gate Blues Society kicked off its first real membership drive at Angelica's Bistro in Redwood City, California.



The membership meeting took place from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. and afterwards, E.C. Scott performed for all of us plus the crowd that showed up at the Bistro just to hear her sing two sets.

I am a singer myself, and I have old school tastes, which means I like everything up to the late 1960s in blues,

R&B, and soul—and that's pretty much it. But I am now beginning to listen to my contemporaries, and with that said, this event was only the second time I had ever heard E.C. Scott sing, the first being a festival where we were both performing several years back—she was a headliner, I believe.

E.C.'s band opened up with the standard two songs, and then her impressive voice came out of the air—literally. I turned to see where she might be, and following the direction of everyone else's eyes, I saw a healthy, round faced, smiling woman with perfect white teeth coming down a long staircase, mic in hand, singing the R&B staple "I Can't Stand the Rain." E.C., to my mind, is not your standard blues singer—and she does not aspire to be cornered into just the blues genre. She defines her style as "Blues, R&B, and Soul with Hip Hop edges." After hearing her two sets of mostly self-penned material (and then exploring her CD sound bites from four CDs

spanning 1995—2003), I would call her a good old gospel-based R&B singer with Marvin-esque "Motown edges."

E.C. Scott is still in her vocal prime. Her voice is strong. She hardly needs a microphone—her voice is that resonant. She knows all the standard tricks of winning over an audience—the funny one liners about men with "big feet, the winks and the nods, the directing of the audience (in sections, no less) to sing choruses from some of her more rockin' songs, the churchy entrances and exits—all the touches of a seasoned performer. And she has tremendous confidence.



I would describe E.C. Scott's band as her downsized road band because I know she uses horns at festivals. Bill C. Ireton was on guitar, Jay Goudeau was on bass

and he was also introduced as her musical director, Clay Fuller, a youngster who looked to me to be fresh out of a



southern gospel church, was on drums, and the keyboardist was Gig Anderson, who played mostly synthesized horn parts.



She also had two backup singers, which greatly enhanced the gospel R&B feel and beauty of the music: Yvette Pylant and “Jimmy McCracklin’s only child,” Sue McCracklin.



The highlights of the first set were as follows: an up-tempo shuffle “Too Good to Keep to Myself” (*Masterpiece/Blind Pig/2000*) with some funny but empowering lyrics for women, and a Bobby Blandish 1 to 4 ballad, “Sweet Man of Mine” (*Hard Act to Follow/Blind Pig/1998*) that had a fabulous vocal vamp at the end where E.C., while sitting on a stool, laid the mic all the way down to her right hip and sang softly, all the while the mic picking up her voice perfectly. I loved the way she improvised the lyrics and notes against changing chords provided by the background singers on that vamp—lovely, lovely, lovely. I also enjoyed a song that I hate to admit I enjoyed—it was just so rocking—“I’m Here for the Party,” and I again loved the interchange between E.C.’s leads and the background vocalists. I also could not help but notice how quickly the audience got up to dance when she sang her rockers—they really responded and went wild!

For the second and final set I enjoyed “Just One of Those Days” (*The Other Side of Me/Black Bud Records /2003*). Again, I was completely won over by the refrain sung by E.C. and the girls—“doo doo doo doo doo;” E.C. also had the audience sing along. And it was fun. I also loved “If You’re a Good Woman” (*Hard Act to Follow*), which I thought she sang with a great deal of skill, playing with the rhythms within the song’s musical structure and using her voice in a softer and more feminine, feeling way.

I would say that E.C., as a performer who shared the stage with six other people, held the focal point always. She always held the audience’s attention. There was never a time when you could say that the guitar player was too loud (unusual in blues bands), in fact he was a bit too reigned in, or that the other instruments interfered

with her vocal line or those of her backup singers. There, in fact, were no missed notes, breaks, or beats—and the arrangements were well carved out and existed to enhance the songs’ meaning behind the lyrics and music.

E.C. is indeed “a woman in control” as she likes to tell her audiences. And I understand that her point in making this statement is to empower women—to inspire them to take chances and take big steps toward their dreams—to essentially stand up and be counted. But I have to end by saying that as much as I admire E.C. Scott for being in control and also for making a real difference in blues in terms of its promotion, I still would like to see her let it all go once in a while—just in the right place and at the right time in a song. I believe, since I have heard real sensitivity in her singing, that she is capable of that. All great blues singers make us weep—and I would like E.C. Scott to take a chance and expose more of her tender side. I think it could only enhance her considerable talent.

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NOTE: For those readers who are not familiar with E.C. Scott’s accomplishments in the blues business, she is President and CEO of ECS Productions out of Union City, California. This company, which she single-handedly formed, has produced over 90 episodes for the television program “E.C.’s Jook Joint,” which has aired on over 300 stations nationwide—an impressive feat and a most vital one in a decade where blues has been taking a back seat to other original American art forms.

**Check out E.C. Scott's websites for more info:**

<http://www.ecscott.com>  
<http://www.ecsproductions.com/>

**Check out Cathy Lemons' website to find out more about her and her musical partner Johnny Ace and see the review of their new CD, lemonace, in this issue:**

<http://www.lemonace.com/>

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## CD REVIEWS

by Joel Fritz

### Steve Freund, *Lonesome Flight*



Steve Freund embodies the American Dream. Born in Brooklyn, he fell in love with the blues and learned to play the guitar. As a young man, he moved to Chicago, determined to play the blues with the masters. Within a short time, he was. He made up his mind to do

something most people wouldn't give him a chance of doing and, through talent, a few decent breaks, and perseverance, he succeeded. Like Harry Golden said, "Only in America."

This CD features Freund playing with musicians he often plays with in Bay Area clubs: bassists Burton Winn and Randy Bermudes, drummers Robi Bean and June Core, and harmonica and guitar player Scot Brenton. The recording was produced by Freund and Brenton and has a live sound. It's nicely mixed with vocals out front and all instruments audible.

Steve Freund is one of the few guitar players who can surprise me. I have trouble predicting how a Freund line will turn out. Fortunately, the surprises are pleasant. He works within the blues tradition in his own way. Freund's vocals are effective. He doesn't do vocal tricks. Like the pre-WWII blues singers, he uses his low tenor/high baritone voice to tell the story.

*Hey, Big Bill* is a tribute to Big Bill Broonzy. Broonzy played well in a variety of styles ranging from ragtime and a constant bass Delta sound to a sophisticated single-string approach. He's impossible to imitate in the context of a single song. Freund's finger-picked accompaniment captures Broonzy's spirit without imitating him.

*Lonesome Flight* is a slow blues in '50s Chicago style. Scot Brenton's harmonica complements Freund's guitar as the two play fills together. The song is about the death of Freund's father. It's set in the mold of traditional "Death Letter" songs. The instrumental breaks are duets between Freund and Brenton.

*Boogie in the Rain* uses the John Lee Hooker as filtered through Canned Heat boogie beat to power a simple song about California weather. Brenton takes a tasty two chorus harmonica solo.

*LaMorr is Blue* is a jazzy instrumental with a Charlie Christianesque feel. Robi Bean's restrained, but swinging

percussion and Burton Winn's bass lines fit the tune perfectly.

*Wind Is in My Face* is a minor blues with a touch of Otis Rush feel. The lyric has Rush's feeling of hopelessness. Freund's guitar has a clean sound and attack that's more relaxed than Rush's.

*Guitar Doctor* is an instrumental that conjures up B. B. King with some touches that aren't part of King's vocabulary. The tone is pure King. The guitar lines are Freund's.

*Still Pickin'* is a loping instrumental with an infectious first chorus played on the bass strings.

*Tough Times* is a song by John Brim. The title is self explanatory. Freund and Brenton team up on guitar and harmonica for the stop time accompaniment behind the vocal. The instrumental verses are Chicago style duets, with each taking the lead while the other plays an obbligato.

*100 Tompkins Ave.* is an instrumental that begins with a B. B. Kingish first chorus. It's clear that Freund is playing the guitar as it goes in directions King would never take. Like King's early work, this tune has a jazzy feel with a melodic spirit.

*On Highway 101* begins with a *Rollin' and Tumblin'* harp and guitar duet between Brenton and Freund. It's about a drive on Highway 101 with Sunnyland Slim.

*Let Me Down Easy* is the King Curtis blues ballad. Freund and Brenton team up on guitar with the rhythm section of June Core on drums and Randy Bermudes on bass giving the standard a good workout. Freund's vocal is simple, straightforward, and effective.

*Keep on Drinking* is a tune by Johnny Young, virtually the only blues mandolinist of the post-WWII era. It's not the same song as the Big Bill Broonzy tune with a similar title. Where Broonzy's is a novelty tune with a black heart, this one is more direct. It's one of the oldest themes in blues and hasn't lost steam yet.

*Jesse James* is the changeling in the family. It's the traditional ballad about the outlaw in an instrumental version. This reminds me of the Earl Hooker and Ike Turner recording of *Steel Guitar Rag*. Freund explores Merle Travis territory here very effectively. The song has a sweet sound. Freund eschews riffing and embroiders the melody.



I enjoyed this CD. I'm biased toward this sort of music, so it's possible you won't like it as well as I do. If you've never heard Steve Freund live, this CD will give you a very good idea of what to expect. If you have heard Freund live and liked what you've heard, this CD will allow you to take the experience home with you.

**9 Below Records, 2010**

Check out: [www.stevfreund.com](http://www.stevfreund.com). and [www.9belowproductions.com](http://www.9belowproductions.com).

## Brothercat, *One Life Left*



I ought to like this CD a lot more than I do. It features some sterling musicianship, particularly the keyboard work of Ron Lacey, although guitarist Levi Lloyd, bassist JB Davis, and drummer Scott "Charterman" Charter are

very good players in their own right. Lacey, Lloyd, and Davis all sing. Lacey is definitely the pick of the litter. His snappy phrasing and good taste illuminate the tracks he sings on. The production quality is excellent. The CD sounds good in the car, on home systems with and without sub woofers, and through headphones. My only quibble is that the liner notes don't identify who sang on which tune, although it's possible to infer who did what. Forgive me if I'm wrong.

The problem for me is subtle. I can't see the center in the eclectic mix of tunes. There's nothing that says to me "this is Brothercat playing." I'm probably not the ideal audience for this CD. If I heard this music in a club, I'd enjoy it. I'd be saying to myself, "These guys are very tight and have a very high skill level."

The tunes on this CD come from a variety of sources. It opens and closes with Jimmy Reed tunes, *Big Boss Man*, and *Baby, What You Want Me to Do*, here called *Got Me Runnin*. *Big Boss Man* has a Chuck Berry beat reminiscent of *Memphis*. Lloyd's vocal has a cool relaxed quality that's appealing. On *Got Me Runnin*, Lloyd again handles the vocal chores. The song is a conflation of Reed's original with some free range blues verses. It features a full-toned harp solo by Bill Noteman.

*Hit the Ground Running* is a Jackie Payne tune with vocal and guitar solo by Lloyd. Lloyd's vocals and guitar playing are very self contained. They have an easy going, relaxed quality that's very ingratiating.

*Bad Boy* is one of two songs on the CD by James Hunter, the other being *Watch and Chain*. I've never been a fan of Hunter's work and, for me, these two songs are the weakest part of the CD.

*Tulsa Time* is the country/Americana favorite by Danny Flowers, probably most associated with Don Williams. This song would go over very well in a club. Like the two Hunter songs, it's a thematic problem for me on the CD. The arrangement is straight ahead country and seems to say, "Look folks, we can play country music too." It's true, they can and they do a pretty good job.

*Drink Muddy Water* is my favorite song on the CD. It's the ancient pop tune by Bob Crosby sideman Eddie Miller that's been a jazz blues standard forever. Ron Lacey's vocal is in the jazz blues tradition that you don't hear much these days. He swings. His keyboard comping behind the vocal is worth the price of admission.

*Walkin by Myself* is the Jimmy Rogers tune that many remember by Freddie King. Lloyd's vocal has some minor pitch problems, but hits all the rhythmic right spots. I think the vocal key was a bit low. His guitar solo conjures up the Rogers spirit with a completely modern approach.

*Sixty Six* is the Bobby Troup pop tune from the '40s. Lacey's keyboard work is the highlight for me.

*Baby Work Out* is the Jackie Wilson hit by Alonzo Tucker. This song has an identity crisis. It's torn between swinging and the more straight ahead rhythm of the Wilson version and never quite makes up its mind.

*Well Runs Dry* is the William Bell hit from the '60s. The singer-songwriter style arrangement is daring. It doesn't work for me. Because the original was a nearly perfect example of the soul-gospel genre, it's hard to cover. I hear the original in my head while listening to this one and the original wins.

**Random Records, 2010**

Check out: [www.brothercatmusic.com](http://www.brothercatmusic.com).



## Cathy Lemons and Johnny Ace, *Lemonace*



This is time travel. It's 1965 at the Avalon Ballroom. Incense and patchouli don't quite mask another scent. Johnny Ace wears a gold paisley jacket over a black shirt with ruffled cuffs and a beret. His curly hair is just short of shoulder length.

Cathy Lemons is wearing a black sequined Morticia Addams dress with a fringed skirt. Both have enigmatic expressions. The music is like the music I heard back then, when people were first fusing folk, blues, country, and soul music. Lemons and Ace have a personal take on music that comes out honestly.

Since I'm reviewing this for a blues publication, I think I should mention that I don't regard this music as blues. It's not rock or country or soul or any other convenient label I can think of. Calling it roots or Americana would be insulting. It sounds like people playing music that they like. It doesn't sound dated. It just sounds like music.

The CD features Lemons on vocals, Ace on bass and vocals, with Pierre Le Corre on guitar and Artie Chavez on drums. Guests Kid Andersen, Tommy Castro, and Ron Thompson appear on guitar, David Maxwell on piano, and Paul Oscher on harp. Andersen also appears on organ on one track. Ten of the 12 songs are originals.

Kid Andersen produced the CD, handling the recording, engineering, mixing, and mastering. He was probably playing some kind of foot-operated organ in the control room in order to keep his brain fully engaged. The sound is good. It's well balanced and the voices and instruments all sound distinct without sounding like they're in different rooms.

*Brand New Day* is the first song on the disc, a stripped down soul groove reminiscent of Dyke and the Blazers or Archie Bell and the Drells overlaid by a vocal duet that combines call and response with well-rehearsed harmony.

*Love Like a Fire* is a duet that features Kid Andersen's psychedelic lead guitar.

*Used to These Blues* is a minor keyed bluesy number with a vocal by Lemons and restrained, tasteful lead guitar by Tommy Castro.

*Sink or Swim* is a precise vocal duet about survival. Le Corre takes a short, meaty guitar solo midway through. This is one of several songs that features Ace doing a mini sermon in the soul gospel tradition of performers like Solomon Burke and Joe Tex.

*Shoot to Kill* showcases Ron Thompson's slide guitar behind Lemons' vocal. Thompson's accompaniment echoes Fred McDowell's melodic approach. Lemons manages to convey the emotional content of the lyric without indulging in the kind of dynamic excess a lot of singers feel the need to employ on this type of material.

*When Bad Luck Looks Good* is a take on the eternally popular "How bad was that luck?" theme. It's a good tune and shows the well hasn't run dry. David Maxwell takes a nice piano solo and complements Le Corre's guitar behind the vocal.

*Gimme a Penny* is a blues that's reminiscent of the Robert Johnson story about one of his trips to Texas to record. Producer Don Law said he got a call from Johnson in the evening after the first day of the recording session. Johnson said "I'm lonesome." Law replied that he didn't quite understand where the conversation was going. Johnson explained, "I'm lonesome. I got a lady in the room here. She wants 35 cents and I lacks a nickel." In this case, the singer is short a penny for a dime to make a phone call. Lemons acquits herself ably. Paul Oscher takes a full-throated chromatic harp solo on this one.

*I Got It* is a Lemons vocal over another soul groove led by Le Corre's guitar and anchored by Ace and Chavez on bass and drums.

*I'm Not the Woman I Used to Be* is a blues vocal by Lemons. The song is a bluesy look at personal growth. Not much New Age here. Le Corre takes an enjoyable two-chorus guitar solo backed by Andersen on organ.

*Stay* is a love song set to a John Lee Hooker-esque boogie beat.

*Get This Thing off'a My Back* is a Lemons tune that could be about a lot of things. It's certainly about 22 years of obsessive self-destructive behavior. The reverb-heavy guitar sound reminds me of Pop Staples. Lemons again demonstrates that you don't have to scream and yell or make your voice jump an octave in an appoggiatura to convey deep feeling.

*Move On* is a cover tune that is transformed by Johnny Ace's spoken tale of a car trip home from "the gig from Hell" somewhere "between San Francisco and Bakersfield" and a near encounter with the police. Ace does a nice siren imitation. The vocal harmonies are precise. Artie Chavez takes a drum solo that complements the song nicely.

In short, this is a good listen. Lemons is a talented singer who figured out somewhere along the line that singing is about the lyrics. She has the vocal equipment to beat the crap out of anything she sings. Instead, she uses it to



make sense out of the words. She understands dynamics and phrasing. The vocal harmonies are precise and well rehearsed. Le Corre on guitar and Chavez on drums are considerably more than competent. Ace and Chavez work together well on a solid rhythmic foundation. Ace adds a dimension of lunacy of a good sort with his spoken word storytelling and wisdom.

Vizztone Label Group, 2010

Check out: [www.lemonace.com](http://www.lemonace.com).

## John Németh, *Name the Day*



It's a late spring evening in 1965. It's just after 11 p.m. and the night crew at the McDonald's is starting to clean up. The arches are dark and the doors are locked. Instead of KDIA or KSOL, they're going to listen to a record. The night

manager has brought in his portable record player. He puts on a disc called *Name the Day*. It's by some guy from Idaho named John Németh. Everyone is a little skeptical. They've heard the Righteous Brothers and Charlie Rich, but know that they don't compare to Otis Redding, James Brown, Joe Tex, Solomon Burke, and their other favorites. By the second song, they're hooked.

Back in the present, when I put this CD on, I was surprised. It took me back to working on the night crew at McDonald's and listening to soul music while we cleaned up. I'd last heard John Németh 2 years ago and had never heard a recording by him. What I remember from hearing him live numerous times was a guy with a strong voice and better than average harmonica chops who was looking for a style. His forte seemed to be the sort of vibrato-laced sweet tenor of singers like Clyde McPhatter. He could phrase decently and, from time to time, tap into a vein of sincere emotion. This CD is different. It's, with the exception of a Freddie King like blues, all soul music in the mid '60s style with horn fills and a strong bass line. Németh's voice has the rough-edged gospel sound of the soul singers I loved. It's much more self assured and emotionally transparent than the Németh I remember.

I have to admit having a strong bias toward this style of music. It fills the same spot for me that big band music filled for my parents. Others in my generation were listening to the Beatles, Rolling Stones, and Jimi Hendrix. I listened to that to maintain hippie cred, but I spent most of my radio time listening to soul music. It had a primal emotional appeal that I didn't find in other popular

music. When I hear this sort of music done well, I still get excited.

This CD features Németh on vocal and occasional harp, Bobby Welsh on guitar and piano, Smokey Davis on bass, Nick Fishman on drums, with piano and organ by Austin deLone, and organ by Jake Smolowe. The horn section is Jeff Teczon on tenor sax, Frank Bailey on trumpet, and Mike Rinta on trombone. Rinta is the author of the period-perfect horn charts. The notes don't mention which keyboard players played on which tracks. Németh wrote all the songs with the exception of *Home in Your Heart*, which was written by the monstrously prolific Otis Blackwell with Winfield Scott.

*Breakin' Free* is the first track. It's in the tradition of James Brown's *Don't Be a Dropout* and others that followed. It features a short harp solo by Németh.

Next up is the title tune, *Name the Day*. As you might guess, it's a "just let me know when you want to get married" song. Welsh plays a Steve Cropper sliding arpeggio guitar solo. The song features a traditional fade out ending with call and response preaching.

*Do You Really Want that Woman* is about the temptation to philander and overcoming it. The organ adds a nice jazzy touch.

*Heartbreak with a Hammer* is not the old John Lee Williamson tune based on the line from *Stars Fell on Alabama*. It's a Freddie King like blues with a shuffle beat. Németh takes a two-chorus harp solo. Welsh takes two stinging choruses on guitar.

*Tuff Girl* is a love song where the singer tries to be sensitive to the woman's unhappy past. It has a key change after the guitar solo to emphasize the urgency the singer feels.

*I Said Too Much* is a ballad where the singer expresses regret tenderly.

*Home in Your Heart* is the Blackwell/Scott tune. It has a New Orleans flavor and a guitar solo by Welsh that starts out like Albert King and moves off to other territory by the beginning of the second chorus.

*Save a Little Love* reminds me a bit of Joe Tex. It's the time-honored theme "I think you might be cheating, but maybe not. Regardless, I've been really good to you and you should show some gratitude."

*You Know* has a Sam and Dave like vocal with Németh doing a tasteful turn on chromatic harp.

*Why Not Me* is an Otis Redding like ballad. The arrangement starts simply and complements the intensity of the vocal. It resists the strong temptation for dynamic



overkill that this sort of song always presents. The organ part is excellent.

*Funky Feelin'* is a demonstration of how Németh has solved the problem of the lower part of his vocal range. It always seemed to me when I saw him live that he was very strong at the top of his range and bland in the low to middle area. He's developed a timbre like Lightnin' Hopkins or Lowell Fulson that's very effective at low volume. He plays some nice chromatic harp too.

Overall, I recommend this CD. Németh is in fine voice and the accompaniment is good. It's true to the style, in that instrumental breaks are short and provide a kind of entre acte context for the vocal. I like the horn charts. In some of the up tempo songs, the horns are a bit more

legato than I think is right for the material, but the rhythmic pulse is strong and accurate. Just for sentimental reasons, I would have enjoyed hearing the mid-bass exaggerated for juke box play, as a lot of the mid '60s singles were, but I think the CD was well produced and engineered. I don't think any of the songs have standout lyrics, but there's an element of craftsmanship to every song. One touch I appreciated was the word "Stereophonic" in the upper right hand corner of the cover. In 1965, there would have been a mono version too.

**Blind Pig, 2010**

Check out: [www.johnnemethblues.com](http://www.johnnemethblues.com)

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## Message regarding IBC from TGGBS President Dorothy L. Hill

The Golden Gate Blues Society will be holding a number of regional events to select a member band to compete in The Blues Foundation's 27th International Blues Challenge (IBC) to be held in Memphis February 2-5, 2011.

The IBC is world's largest gathering of blues acts and represents an international search by The Blues Foundation and its affiliated organizations for the Blues Band ready to perform on a national stage, but needing that extra break. Some of the blues artists whose careers were launched at the IBC over the years include: Susan Tedeschi, Michelle Wilson, Michael Burks, Albert Cummings, Larry Garner, Richard Johnston, Matthew Skoller and Sean Carney. As 2004 IBC winner Zac Harmon said, "winning the International Blues Challenge is better than having a \$100,000 publicity budget."

We are finalizing dates and details for the events. The first event will be held at Angelica's Bistro in Redwood City on July, 18, 2010. (Please see the flyer for the event on the following page.) Band members must be up-to-date with membership dues and nonmember bands can enter by submitting their membership dues with their application. Please visit our IBC page on the website ([www.tggbs.org](http://www.tggbs.org)) to download the rules and application. If you email [ibc@tggbs.org](mailto:ibc@tggbs.org), you will be sent a pdf version.

This is a unique opportunity for bands to gain recognition on the local level, not to mention the career boost afforded to the winner. The movers and shakers in the blues attend this event every year to hear "new" bands--a journey to Memphis will yield many benefits.

If you can imagine playing on Beale Street at the most prestigious blues challenge in the world, this is your chance!







The winning San Francisco Bay Area band at each event will go on to compete in the final where one band will be chosen to send to Memphis for The Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge February 2-5, 2011.

TGGBS Members – free  
Non-Members \$10 door charge  
*Non-Members may join TGGBS at the door and be admitted free*  
Everyone gets to vote for their favorite band!



*Send your favorite band to Memphis!*

*The Golden Gate Blues Society  
Presents  
"From Golden Gate to Memphis ..."*

*the  
International Blues Challenge*

**July 18th**  
2pm-6pm  
**Angelica's  
Bistro**  
863 Main Street  
Redwood City, CA  
(650) 365-3226

[www.angelicasbistro.com](http://www.angelicasbistro.com)



[www.tggbs.org](http://www.tggbs.org)

**TGGBS IBC Coordinators: Susan and Marty Preece**



5th Annual  
Redwood City P.A.L.  
Blues and Art Festival

REDWOOD CITY  
POLICE ACTIVITIES LEAGUE P.A.L.

# BLUES FESTIVAL

July 23rd & 24th  
Downtown  
Courthouse Plaza

**FREE**  
ADMISSION

**FRIDAY NIGHT**  
6-8PM

Food, Vendors  
& Children's Fun Zone!



Johnny Talbot

Cafe R&B

After party at  
The Little Fox  
Madison Blues Band



Freddie Hughes  
and  
Kickin' the Mule

**SATURDAY**  
11AM-8PM

Johnny Talbot  
Freddie Hughes and Kickin' the Mule

Frankie Lee

Dave Hyde

BrotherCat

Amy Lou Blues

Dave Crimmen

United by Music with

Candy Kane/Janiva Magness



Candy Kane



Frankie Lee

~SAN MATEO~  
CREDIT UNION

After party at  
Deseo Tequila Lounge  
Friday Night Kenny "Blue" Ray, Saturday Night Ron Hacker

FOR MORE INFO: (650) 556-1650 [www.palbluesfestival.com](http://www.palbluesfestival.com)



SRDC Recycling, Sequoia Healthcare District, Krefeld's Awards, First National Bank, Redwood City Cultural Commission, Peninsula Sunrise Rotary, Kholweiss, Deseo Tequila Lounge and Restaurant, Saltworks, City Pub, Lyngso Garden Materials, Sees Candies, Sequoia Hospital



## The Golden Gate Blues Society Partners with United by Music

### United by Music at the Redwood City Blues Festival featuring Candye Kane and Friends, with special guest appearance by Janiva Magness

United by Music is an international organization that offers music opportunities for adults with disabilities. Check out: [www.candyekane.com/ubm.html](http://www.candyekane.com/ubm.html) and [www.unitedbymusic.org](http://www.unitedbymusic.org).

The Golden Gate Blues Society is proud to collaborate with the *United by Music Program*, a plan of action that gives mentally and physically challenged individuals an opportunity to learn and perform music. For more information, go to the program website: [www.UnitedByMusic.org](http://www.UnitedByMusic.org). Originating in The Netherlands, the *United by Music Program* is already successful in Europe and South Africa. The organization's introductory North American tour will begin in the Bay Area. Candye Kane serves as the musical leader, mentor, and coach for the United by Music Company.

The Golden Gate Blues Society will support the Northern California leg of the tour at these venues:

Thursday, July 22nd  
Verve Lounge  
7941 Soquel Dr.  
Aptos (Santa Cruz), CA  
831-662-2247

Meet representatives from the *United by Music Program*, and enjoy a performance by the Candye Kane Band. For show time and ticket price visit: <http://www.verveloungeaptos.com>.

Friday, July 23rd  
Biscuits and Blues  
401 Mason at Geary  
San Francisco, CA  
415-292-2583

Join the *United by Music Program* showcase presentation and reception. This free invitational event will take place from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. A performance by the Candye Kane Band will follow the reception. Visit [www.UnitedByMusic.org](http://www.UnitedByMusic.org) to request your invitation to this event. Visit [www.biscuitsandblues.com](http://www.biscuitsandblues.com) for Candye Kane Band show time and tickets.

Saturday, July 24th  
PAL Redwood City Blues Festival  
Courthouse Square  
Redwood City, CA  
11 a.m.



## Remembering René Solis

In April 2010, the Bay Area lost a champion of the blues. René Solis played his guitar, sang, and led his bands, NiteCry and Lucky 13, at the San Francisco Blues Festival, the Monterey Bay Blues Festival, the Sacramento Jazz Jubilee, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, Memphis in May, and countless other concerts and events. Over the years, he played alongside BB King, Albert King, John Lee Hooker, Kenny Neal, and former NiteCry member Tommy Castro. As creator/producer of the Blues Guitar Extravaganza, René brought together the biggest and best blues guitarists in the SF Bay Area for a showcase of amazing proportions. These events thrilled audiences and received accolades from blues fans by featuring such guitarists as Chris Cain, Ron Thompson, Daniel Castro, Mighty Mike Schermer, among many others. Some of those "others" remember René here: Laura Chavez, J.C. Smith, and Garth Webber. Also, Bobbi Goodman has provided links to several videos she took of René at various venues around the Bay Area since 2008. These videos are priceless, and allow you to see René in action. Enjoy and remember, always!

### Laura Chavez

The first time I met René, he was fronting his group the Persuaders at a contest in Monterey. I had heard quite a bit about him and his band Nitecry and their high energy, tight, original performances, but came into the Bay Area Blues scene a bit too late to have seen the band in any of its original incarnations. But, I still remember this particular performance, not because of René's undeniably soulful, guitar playing or great songs, but by the way he was able to take the allotted 15-minute contest set and make the audience feel like they were watching a real show. While most bands made sure their sets gave extra attention to long guitar solos, René's set was full of tight band dynamics, engaging banter with the audience, great songs, and, of course, fiery guitar solos. I understood then, as young and green as I might have been at the time, a big reason why Nitecry was one of the most popular Blues bands to come out of the Bay Area. This guy was a real bandleader, a pro.

It wasn't until a couple of years later that I ran into René again. At that point, I had been playing around the area quite a bit with the Lara Price Band and he had heard about me from the original owner of JJ's Blues [in San Jose]. He said he was starting to put together a series of shows at JJ's that he was calling Guitar Extravaganzas, and wanted me to be a part of one. The concept was to give 3 or 4 guitar players a 20-30 minute set each and then, at the end, all would get onstage for a big finale. I had never fronted a band before and didn't know the first thing about it. I couldn't speak, much less sing, into a microphone, on a stage, in front of people! I begged him to let me bring my own band of musicians onstage or, at the very least, a singer to not only sing, but handle that engaging banter. He said, "No, you are good enough and you are going to have a career doing this. You can't rely on anybody else." We argued back and forth and I

ended up agreeing to do it. I didn't sing, but I did say a few words, although not very engaging ones I'm sure.

Over the next 7 or 8 years, René continued producing this show, which he took from a single night at JJ's to



bigger venues, such as the Little Fox, Villa Montalvo, the San Francisco Blues Festival, and finally, headlining an entire weekend

at the prestigious Yoshi's in Oakland. Each one was as good as the last and always featured some of the best guitar players in the area, who, typically, would never have come together otherwise. Also consistent was René's incredible showmanship. He was the consummate Master of Ceremonies at these events. No matter who was on the bill and how we may have differed in style or personality, René was able to bring us together cohesively in a show that always made all of us, the artists and the audience, feel as though we were a part of something special. René always seemed to remember me for some of the best of these shows, and gave me so many amazing opportunities to play in great venues with great people. Each time, I would beg him to let me bring a singer and he would never budge, always giving the same reason.

When I started traveling with the Candye Kane Band, he always made a point to write and tell me he was thinking of me and all of the places I was getting to visit, making sure we got together for lunch when I was home. The last time we got together, he mentioned how excited he was for me and all of my new adventures and also, how



proud he was of what his guitar shows had become. I mentioned how I hated that he would never let me get on stage with a singer, but how I realized that it was for the best and thanked him for how he and his shows helped with my confidence onstage. He was getting ready for his big weekend at Yoshi's and was so excited.

It was only a couple of weeks later that we received the email that he was having to bow out of those shows due to an unexpected health procedure, but the shows would go on. I knew how it must have killed him to miss those and how serious it must have been and it still hurts me to think of him not getting to be there.

I think we should all remember him as that consummate bandleader and someone who bridged this, sometimes scattered, Blues community together with a great idea and a great show. I know I'll remember him as someone who gave me some of the best opportunities a young guitar player could ask for and forced me to break out of what was comfortable and take over the show (for a few minutes). Recently, the guys in Nitecry and Lucky 13 held a memorial concert where they picked some of René's favorite local guitar players to "fill in" for his guitar duties in those respective bands. This seemed to be the perfect way to honor that part of him and I know that he would have been proud. The only thing missing was that Master of Ceremonies.

## J. C. Smith

First of all, I am honored to be asked to submit a few memories of a long-time friend and fellow musician, René Solis. René and I met in about 1983 at a small bar called the Classroom. I had been drumming in a punk band called "Revelation" and was on a journey to learn how to play the blues. Like most cats, I was hanging out at jam sessions and heard about the Jazz jam at the Classroom. Guitarist Jerry Rubulcaba and I staggered into the club where they were playing Jazz standards and signed up to play. While at the bar, we met René; he introduced himself to us and vented his frustration about the gig and we started talking blues. We sat in with him and a strong bond was formed over Jack Daniels. After that, we started jamming about 3 days a week and hitting all the concerts we could. We had gotten so tight that when we would go to jams, most folks thought we were a band. One night we were at Mountain Charlie's in Los Gatos where Dave Holehouse was running the jam; he asked us the name of our band and the Tuff City Band was formed.

The problem was that the band just consisted of Jerry, René, and me. A week later, a friend of ours asked us to

play at a party; she was also inviting some other players to stop by. René invited harp player Tom Smith, Tom invited keyboardist Bob Gomes, I invited bassist Rich Williams, and a sax player we never heard of named Anthony Garcia was also there. It was like we had been working together forever. The night flowed and within a month, we were playing at the Cabaret in San Jose, which was the premier night club in the area. Our first show was a sell out with Elvin Bishop, then Tower of Power, then War. The ride was wild, the music was great, the booze was free, and we were in heaven. Because of my radio gig at KKUP, René and I went out almost every night. Bob Corona (owner of the Keystone) would call and ask who we wanted to see. We would reply "everybody!" and we did. René would drive, I would get us back stage, and we both would get ripped and still be ready for the next show. One of the greatest memories is from the Catalyst in Santa Cruz. Jerry, René, and I had just witnessed two masters prove we were nobodies. It was Junior Wells and Buddy Guy. They destroyed the place along with our egos. On our way home, we pulled into a gas station and a white van pulled up along side of us, the door opened, and a voice asked: "Hey man, how do you get to Oakland?" It was Junior Wells. We all jumped out of the car and went crazy. I have never seen Buddy laugh as hard as he did that night. To us, it was like meeting The Beatles, God, and Mohammad Ali at the same time. Junior gave René and me his home phone number and we stayed in contact with him until his death.

Eventually we all took our separate paths. What I love the most is that after years of searching, René found his right road with the formation of Nitecry. I was able to watch his dreams come true. Playing alongside Albert King, writing great songs, helping young and upcoming guitarists, like Maxx Cabello and Laura Chavez, producing monster shows like the Guitar Extravaganzas, and he was



playing at his best. He found the love of his life and he did all this on borrowed time. Hell, we weren't supposed to make it past

1985. I will miss him heckling me and me giving it right back. If I could sum this cat up, all I can say is he was tenacious, had a lot of heart, and a whole lot of soul. He was my friend and I will miss him. I will think of him every time I use a Fender guitar because he taught me how to put strings on it. When I am in a long line, I will



think of his song "Step to Window B" and when I look at how I got to be who I am, I will remember all the times we shared learning about what we wanted to do forever...just play good music. So René, if you happen to read this, tell Albert "Hi," tell Freddy "We ain't playing cards," tell Jimi "I'm working on it," tell John Lee "the A's swept the Giants," and tell Junior to "Funkitup." When it's your turn to take your solo with them at that big jam session up there, I know you will "ham it up Bay Area style." Take care my friend; I will see you soon.

## Garth Webber

I moved to Northern California in October 1979. I began to acquaint myself with the local music scene and before long I came to know that there was a thriving blues scene in the San Jose area. There were four or five guitarists that stood out as strong soloists and there was a



distinctive style that was being created at the time. One of the very best of these guitarists was René Solis. He had excellent tone, touch and sophisticated phrasing. Over the years, I had occasion to share the stage with René

a number of times and I always felt I was in the company of a musician with whom I had much in common, both musically and personally. René was always, in my experience, warm, friendly, and respectful. He would welcome other guitarists to share the stage with him, never with a hint of competitiveness or ego. I can honestly say that I enjoyed every minute that I spent with him and I really miss him. I am a better person and musician for having known René. Bless his heart.

## Links to YouTube Videos of René

2008

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qALhpTp9J\\_g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qALhpTp9J_g) with Garth Webber and Volker Strifler at the Little Fox  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qt8KYtch2tQ> with Stan Erhart, Mitch Woods, and Segovia at the Sweetwater Benefit

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuxWoSpnNhM> with Tia Carroll, Marla Goody, and Hard Work at the Little Fox

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDkSncXIWFc> with Laura Chavez at the Little Fox

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV\\_KJ\\_e3Xok](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV_KJ_e3Xok) Hosting the Little Fox jam

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiJQ2jCkWQE> with Daniel Castro at the Little Fox

2009

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUn6goL1WLo> with Aki Kumar, Vince Caminiti, and Sid Morris at the Little Fox

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U\\_80SuWEVq0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_80SuWEVq0) with Lucky 13 at Napa festival

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BaAkBQxcZ9s> with Sista Monica and Lucky 13 in Napa

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JUrcxZD3Pk> with Ron Thompson and Lucky 13 in Napa

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQG7cjCO3sw> with Dave Wilson, Jeff Watson, and Lucky 13 opening for Marcia Ball at the Little Fox

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWUQAB0MkOk> with Lucky 13 at the Little Fox

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7uo18X9X04> – This clip is from the Guitar Extravaganza that René put together at Yoshi's in October 2009. Unfortunately, he was unable to be there due to illness, but he was able to view the video and appreciate the great show.

2010

From the Tribute to René at the Avalon, San Jose, June 2010 (put together by band mate and friend Steve Siacotis)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojJvwm8zHTw> – Chris Cain pays tribute

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvnxQYxY40I> – Tommy Castro, who was in René's band Nitecry, pays tribute

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqR54pnF\\_54](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqR54pnF_54) – members of Nitecry and Lucky 13 pay tribute

*Photos courtesy of Laura Chavez and Garth Webber, and René's website. Please go to <http://www.renesolis.com> to learn more about René's life and to see the copious photos of him with all the great musicians with whom he shared the stage. He will never be forgotten.*



## The Golden Gate Blues Society Ad Rates

(No difference in rates for online and printed versions)

### STANDARD ART RATES

Business Card Size \$25.00  
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## Upcoming Events with TGGBS Participation and Others that Caught the Editor's Eye

July 10-11: Hayward/Russell City Blues Festival at  
Hayward City Hall Plaza, 777 B Street  
[www.bayareabluesociety.net](http://www.bayareabluesociety.net)

July 23-24: Redwood City Blues Festival, Courthouse  
Square, Downtown Redwood City

The Golden Gate Blues Society is a sponsor of this  
festival, now in its 5th year. See details elsewhere in this  
newsletter.

August 7: Northern California Blues Festival,  
Auburn Regional Park, Auburn, CA  
<http://www.norcalbluesfest.com/>

The Northern California Blues Festival is offering a  
discount for Golden Gate Blues Society members to get  
\$6 off advance general admission tickets to the festival.  
Enter promo code "goldengateblues" (without quotes)  
on the Tickets page of the website, and click the "Get  
Promo Prices" button. Lineup includes Elvin Bishop, Chris  
Cain, Volker Strifler, Kaye Bohler, and more.

August 13-15: San Jose Jazz Festival  
Downtown San Jose

The Golden Gate Blues Society will have a booth at the  
Blues stage at the San Jose Jazz Festival. Please stop by  
and say hello.

August 27-29: Reno/Tahoe Blues Festival, Reno, Nevada  
(Go to <http://www.velmas.net/> for info.)

September 22-26: EC's Jook Joint Blues Series, West Bay  
Conference Center, Fillmore Street,  
San Francisco; [www.ecsproductions.com](http://www.ecsproductions.com),  
click on Blues Series

Lineup includes Bernard Allison, Elvin Bishop, The  
Manhattans, Johnny Winter, Ronnie Baker Brooks, John  
Nemeth, Mississippi Heat, The Soul of John Black, West  
Coast Legends of Blues Jimmy McCracklin, Sugar Pie De  
Santo, E.C. Scott and more. The Golden Gate Blues  
Society will be supporting this event.

## The Golden Gate Blues Society

[www.tggbs.org](http://www.tggbs.org)

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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.