



# GOLDEN GATE GROOVES

## SPOTLIGHT ON BLUESMAN RON HACKER

*by Steve Cagle, photos by Bob Hakins (except as noted)*



The expression that somebody "has the right" or "was born" to play the blues has been applied to musicians in such overabundance that further use would be tantamount to dead-horse beating. And living a hard life, whether inherited or self-inflicted, has no direct correlation to musical talent. But occasionally an artist comes along whose downtrodden existence is turned around by some sort of epiphany that sparks a dormant inner muse, and a bluesman is born.

Such an artist is San Francisco's slide guitar journeyman, Ron Hacker, who has been plying his trade in the Bay area for the past forty years and who could argue his case well about having a blues birthright. In 2007, Hacker published his memoir, *White Trash Bluesman*, wherein he describes the circumstances of his procreation in the first passage: "My dad was on a weekend pass from the Indiana State Mental Hospital when my mom got pregnant with me." The remainder of the first-person account of his life from earliest memories to his encounter with blues legend Yank Rachell is absorbing reading, virtually impossible to put down once started, and filled with plenty of life experiences that made Ron a viable candidate for the title of Blues Poster Child. *(continued on page 3)*

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## FROM THE EDITOR

*Deb Lubin*



♪ It's hard to believe it's almost August! Where did the first half of the year go? Some of the articles and photographs in this quarterly newsletter will answer that question. The Golden Gate Blues Society (TGGBS) President **Dorothy L. Hill** and I attended The Blues Music Awards in Memphis this past May, as we do every year. I strongly encourage all Blues fans to attend that event at least once. It's a wonderful celebration of the Blues! Soon after we got back home, TGGBS held a membership social at The Union Room above Biscuits & Blues. Our Events Chair **Jenifer Santer** summarizes the highlights of that event, with photos by TGGBS official photographer for the day, **Rachel Kumar**.

As you can tell from page 1, we're shining a spotlight on Bluesman **Ron Hacker**, a fixture on the San Francisco Blues scene for as long as I can remember. Sacramento area DJ and writer extraordinaire **Steve Cagle** follows up his article on Kid Andersen in the last issue of *Golden Gate Grooves* with an equally interesting article on Ron. ♪ We also spotlight the work of talented local photographer **Bob Hakins** at San Francisco's blues nightclub, and one of my favorite hangouts, **Biscuits & Blues**. Bob sees things in a way most of us do not!

♪ The Golden Gate Blues Society just began our International Blues Challenge campaign for 2012 with the first event held at **The Poor House Bistro** on July 17. (Of course, the real work began behind the scenes several months ago. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to TGGBS IBC Coordinator **Susan Preece** for her tireless efforts!) We have a few photos of the bands from that event, including the winner, **Pinkie Rideau and Blind Resistance**. Congratulations to Pinkie and her band, who faced tough competition from **Nancy Wenstrom and Blues Kitchen** and **Kickin' the Mule**. The next event will be held at **Bluz By-you** on August 7. Look for the flyer for that event later in the newsletter. Two other preliminary events will follow (scheduled for August 21 and September 18) and, this year for the first time, we're also holding a solo/duo event scheduled for October 1. Stay tuned for more info from our IBC Coordinator and President on those events and the finals, at which one band and one solo/duo act will be selected to represent TGGBS in Memphis in February 2012! Please come out to as many of these events as you can and support your favorite local bands! ♪

For the first time, we present reviews of two live shows by writer/reviewer **Mark Hedin**. Mark went to Biscuits & Blues to hear Blues legend **John Hammond** and to The Fillmore to hear the equally legendary **Jorma Kaukonen** and **David Bromberg**. While the latter are not "strictly" blues, the genre is broad enough to include these musical inspirations. If any of our members or other readers (i.e., future members) are interested in reviewing live shows, please let me know. ♪

**Joseph Jordan** continues his "On the Air" series with an interview of local Blues DJ **Bobbie Webb**. Radio play is so important to the future of the Blues, and this series focuses on the DJs who bring it to us in the San Francisco Bay Area--and on the Internet!

Finally, we have reviews of five CDs by three different reviewers. Local musicians have been busy recoding, and that's a good thang! CDs by TGGBS members reviewed in this issue include Ron Hacker's *Filthy Animal*, Terry Hanck's *Look Out!*, and Sam-One's *You Ain't Right*. Other CDs reviewed are by local favorites Tommy Castro, with *Tommy Castro presents The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue*, and Ray Manzarek (of The Doors fame) and Roy Rogers (local slide master) with *Translucent Blues*. ♪

Hope you enjoy reading! I'm off next week to the East Coast to visit family and to soak up more Blues at the first annual Pennsylvania Blues Festival, celebrating 20 years of Blues in the Poconos. Keep the clubs busy while I'm gone and, as always:

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

OH, I forgot to mention: We finally have TGGBS t-shirts! We will be selling them for the first time at The Redwood City Blues Festival this coming weekend (July 23)! Look for a photo or two of the shirts in this newsletter. A BIG shout out to **Julie Bitnoff** for (wo)manning up and getting it done!

(continued from page 1)



Ron's autobiography is, at times, painful reading, but not because it's overlong, full of big words or excruciatingly detailed. The 256-page book consists of chapters averaging 2 to 4 pages in length with reasonably large type and is written in Ron's own words without editorial tinkering. The pain comes in narrative form as

Ron recalls difficult and sometimes disturbing incidents from his past in a very matter-of-fact manner that is unflinching and never begs for sympathy or pity. This is how it was, and, fortunately, life for Ron Hacker began to improve significantly once he picked up a guitar.

Today he's got a steady, if infrequent, gig at his longtime stomping grounds, The Saloon in North Beach; a new self-released album (his ninth) called *Filthy Animal* that's getting airplay and drawing media attention just over a month after its release; enthusiastic audience response to his live performances; and another book continuing his life story in the works. Considering some of the trials and tribulations endured in part one of his tale, it's inspiring that Ron survived with his soul intact to accomplish these and other noteworthy achievements while he forges ahead in his music career.

It's hard to imagine Ron Hacker circa 2011 as the neglected trouble-child in Indianapolis and wannabe gangster of his young adulthood in California. He is



articulate, mild-mannered, and good-natured, serious about his music, yet amused as he reviews his life and ponders what drives him to continue in the business 40 years later with only modest success, at best, to show for his efforts. He lives in a classic San Francisco-style multi-flat apartment on a

steep hill with a beautiful view of the city from the living room window. He appears to be easygoing and content, harboring no demons from the past.

Stability was not an ingredient in Ron's formative years. He and his older brother lived predominantly outside of their mother's existence, passed among relatives and family acquaintances, but spending a great deal of their youth on the streets. Ron was once quoted referring to himself as a "mean ass kid." However, he wants to clear

up any misconceptions now by adding, "I was a fuckin' animal, but I wasn't mean in a violent sense. I just would not do right."

When he was 11 years old, Ron and a friend decided to loot parking meters by opening them with a screwdriver and rock, then emptying the booty of pennies and nickels into their pockets. After successfully pillaging one side of the block, they crossed the street and began working their way back down the other side. "The police arrested us, but we were so little that, instead of handcuffs, the officer just wrapped his hands around our wrists and took us in."

While in juvenile detention, Ron became aware of blues music for the first time. "There was a radio station in Indianapolis that played blues from 4 to 8 p.m., and the counselors would always listen to it. At age 11, we were not allowed to smoke. There was a chair for the guard, who would be listening to the blues program, and kids would be lined up next to him. The guard would be smoking and he'd blow down some second hand smoke to the first kid in the line who then moved on for the next kid's turn. I listened to the music while waiting my turn. That's how I got turned on to blues music – waiting for my second-hand smoke."

"My favorite artist was Elmore James. I didn't know what he was doing until I was 24 or 25. But I loved that sound and the slide guitar. It was just magic."

While Ron had been introduced to the blues as a pre-teenager, he would be well into his 20s before picking up a guitar and beginning what would become a lifelong love affair with the six-stringed instrument. In the meantime, he married his childhood sweetheart while she was still a child (to be fair, they were both teenagers) and had a tempestuous on-and-off relationship with her for the better part of a decade. Around the time they were married, Ron had hit bottom as a teenage alcoholic and had burned all bridges with his family, so he enlisted in the Army, 17 years old and 120 pounds light. "I swear the Army guy put his finger on the scale to get me enlisted. I looked like a refugee."

While he didn't complete his full term of service in the Army for health reasons, Ron learned a valuable life lesson. "It was '62, and all qualified instructors were sent to Vietnam to train soldiers in active combat. They were taking kids like me and turning us into instructors with stripes on our arms, training guys to drive tanks and basic training to keep your ass alive. And we were treated like kings. When grown men saw you coming down the hall, they would back up to the wall and yell, "Make way!" It taught me that you *can* get respect."

When he returned home, Ron's wife was pregnant with someone else's kid, so he left for California for the first of many journeys between Indiana and the Golden State. He began laying carpet and hanging out with hippies in San Francisco, but he wasn't interested in that scene, going full-tilt at the time. "I thought I was a tough guy. I wanted to be a gangster." So Ron proceeded to engage in various illicit activities, often using an alias, and would head back to Indiana when things got too hot for him on the West Coast.

When he was 27, Ron decided he wanted to play the guitar, so he bought a small, cheap acoustic model for \$5 from a roommate's sister who was leaving town. He taught himself to play, and went back to Indianapolis to work at his cousin's night club, where he tended bar and often got to sit in with the bands that had a blues song or two in their repertoires. One night a D.J. from the local soul music radio station asked Ron if he'd like to meet Yank Rachell, who lived in town. Ron answered "yes" even though he did not know at the time who Rachell was. Quickly enough, he realized that he had been listening to the legendary blues mandolin man on records by Sleepy John Estes, and that Rachell had written the blues classic "Going to Brownsville."

Ron called Yank and arranged to meet him at a friend's house. They hit it off and played guitar for each other. It was the start of a long and influential friendship that set



Hacker's blues music career in motion and lasted until the elder bluesman's death in April 1997. After 2 years of hanging out

with Rachell, Ron returned to SF and started playing solo gigs. He formed his first band in the late '70s and called them the Hacksaws, a name that stuck from that time forward even though various band members would come and go.

"A guy asked me once, 'Is Hacker your real name?' He figured I took the name because it went well with Hacksaws. 'It's the other way around, dude.'"

Hacker recorded his first album, *No Pretty Songs*, in 1988. Recorded in San Francisco, the Hacksaws at the time consisted of Eric Mosbarger on drums, Dave Wellhausen on harmonica, Michael "Fly" Brooks on bass, and Gary James on drums. Guest artists included singer Jo Baker,

fellow Saloon regular Johnny Nitro, Ron Thompson, and the San Francisco Men's Blues Chorus with 30 unidentified but well-known area blues musicians who chime in at the closing of one song. The album has since been re-released with additional tracks.

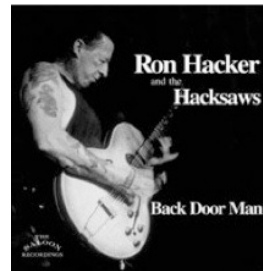
Ron's second album was 1990's *Barstool Blues*, recorded



live at the Saloon with Steve Hazlewood assuming bass chores and with the addition of Nancy Wright, a mainstay at the Saloon and a guest on his previous album, playing saxophone. He followed with another live recording in 1995, the acoustic *I Got Tattooed*, with veteran

San Francisco guitarist and album producer Johnny V (Elvin Bishop, Norton Buffalo) joining Ron, along with Eugene Huggins on harp and Slim Snake on guitar.

The Hacksaws, in their current "power trio" configuration, were first heard on record with Ron's fourth album, *Back Door Man*. Released in 2000, the album received



critical and public acclaim for its raw, no-frills, pure electric Delta blues approach, a breath of fresh air to many listeners who were tiring of the slick studio productions crowding the market. With Artis Joyce on bass and Shad Harris on drums, the album was recorded on Saloon Records at

the venerable San Francisco music room with and without audience presence. The live track "Diddley Widdley" mesmerized the crowd with its improvised jamming that includes a jaw-dropping bass solo from Joyce, and conveys the power and feeling of a typical live Hacksaws show to those hearing it on CD.



Ron's next album, *Burnin'*, was released in 2003 and featured Ronnie Smith on drums, taking the place of Harris, who had suffered health problems that sadly ended his run with the Hacksaws. Harris had worked with a who's who of Bay Area blues and jazz artists, including the original Tommy Castro Band, and he had settled in with Ron and the Hacksaws when his health issue stopped him in his tracks. He is a music scholar and teacher, and his absence threw the band into a tailspin in the drumming department. Ronnie Smith, who has

played with the Gospel Hummingbirds, as well as the Tommy Castro Band, among others, brought a wide musical range with him to the band.

*Burnin'* was a worthy follow-up to *Back Door Man*, with the power trio performing at its peak. Re-released last year by Blue Skunk Music, the album includes three Hacker originals that sound even better than the album's other tunes, all reworked blues classics given the Hacksaw treatment. In particular, the excellent autobiographical "Prison Mind" has become a staple at Hacker's shows.

Ron had some ups and downs over the next few years. In 2005, he appeared in the romantic comedy, *Just Like Heaven*, which starred Reese Witherspoon and Mark Ruffalo. Filmed in San Francisco, the movie includes a scene with Ron performing live at The Saloon. But instead of Ron and the band just being part of the scenery, the director zeroed in on Ron while he was playing, and even included a close-up of Ron 's guitar while he was tearing through a solo. The slapstick scene also played out in synch with the music, making it a "costar" of sorts. His presence was significant enough to entitle Ron to royalties from ticket and DVD sales.

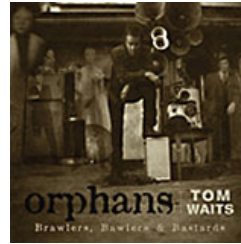
The following June, Ron suffered a heart attack. The culprit wasn't alcohol or drugs, which he had long given up. It was his diet of fast fried food on the road for decades, and while the health scare didn't slow him down in a big way, he began to take better physical care of himself.

That same month, Ron's luck took a turn. He was preparing to relocate to Minneapolis, where a new agent promised unlimited Midwest gigs, and was performing one of his final shows at The Saloon as a regular gig. That night spawned a musical collaboration with Tom Waits.



"Tom Waits' doctor is a big fan of mine. He convinced Tom that he should come down and see me play. I was up there playing, and the doctor and his wife came in with Tom and his wife, and planted themselves in a corner. While I'm playing, I'm thinking, 'That guy looks like Tom Waits.' I kept playing, then when I went outside during the break, the doorman, Greg, asked me, 'Did you see Tom Waits?' I said, 'I saw a guy who looked like Tom Waits.' Greg responded, 'No, that's Tom Waits. I checked his ID.'"

After the show, Waits invited Ron to play on the album he was working on at the time. Ron said "sure," and forgot about it, his mind on leaving for Minnesota in 4 days. Then the call came, and Hacker delayed his departure for 2 days to record with Waits. Recorded in

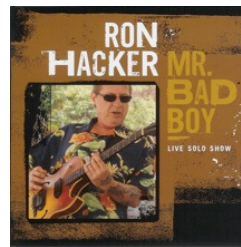


Richmond, the song was "Low Down" and appears on the first disc of the three-disc, Grammy-nominated album *Orphans: Brawlers, Bawlers and Bastards*, released in November 2006.

"It's a real raw, raunchy-ass song. His son played drums on it. He's a real straight-forward guy, not weird at all. The money it made me was the money I used for gas to get back east."

"My tuning was in open A and his song was in B-flat, I think. And we couldn't get it together. I couldn't capo my thing because my shit won't play right if I capo it. So the engineer ended up slowing down the song so it's right in the key of A, and I played to that. Then they speeded it back up and it was ok. The engineer really knew his shit. I didn't know if I had anything at all when I left, then when they sent me the album a few months later, I said, 'Goddamn, that sounds good!'"

Once again, bad health reared its ugly head and caused the agent who enticed Ron to Minneapolis to become incapacitated. A few months after his arrival, Hacker departed from Minnesota and returned to San Francisco, but not before recording a New Years Eve gig that culminated in the live album, *Mr. Bad Boy*.



The most enduring presence in the Hacksaws has been bassist extraordinaire Artis Joyce, referred to as AJ, a veteran Bay Area musician known for his work with Charlie Musselwhite and Sista Monica Parker, and who has played with the Hacksaws for over a dozen years.

They first met when AJ was playing with Ron Thompson, circa 1986/'87. Thompson had a weekly Tuesday gig at Peri's in Fairfax, and AJ would drive from his home in Stockton to perform on those nights. One night when Thompson was unable to make the show, he invited Ron Hacker to sit in. "Hack did the gig," AJ recalls, "and that was our first time playing together."

The next time they met was in Berkeley during the big fire in the Oakland hills in October 1991. AJ was at the house of a friend who was out of town at the time trying

to move his truck out of harm's way. According to AJ, "Ashes and small pieces of burning wood were floating through the air, and people were panicking. I couldn't get the truck started or move it out of the driveway. Then along comes Hack walking down the street. We pushed the truck together and got it started."

AJ began playing with Hacker in the late '90s and they haven't stopped yet. "I know Hack. We have a conversation with our music. I'm a musician, not a blues musician, and I can play a lot of styles. With Ron, there's basically four types of blues that encompass his music, four grooves that he writes around. You have the Louisiana blues; the Texas, or double, shuffle; the country blues; or the blues with the train song beat. When he brings in a new musician, he tells them to 'play ignorant' to get his approach. I tell them, 'Don't play ignorant, play primitive.' That's what his style is. Primitive."

While the Hacksaws have never had a steady drummer, AJ notes that they all have been "high quality, some of the best in the Bay Area." They have included Andy Doerschuk, T Moran (who did a European tour with the band), and Bryant Mills, who plays drums on the latest Ron Hacker and the Hacksaws release, *Filthy Animal*, just out on Hacker's own label and available on his website [www.ronhacker.com](http://www.ronhacker.com). (Pick up a copy of *White Trash Bluesman* while you're at it. It's Kerouac's "On the Road" for the new millennium.)

*Filthy Animal* is named after a bumper sticker [you can see it on the guitar in the photo to the right] given to Ron

by a Hell's Angel, not based on his animal behavior as a young boy living on the streets and in detention. It features guest turns by Debbie Davies, Leah Tysse, and Nancy Wright, and contains more of that raw and raunchy blues energy as only Ron Hacker and the Hacksaws can deliver. Ron's two original compositions



again demonstrate that he can write a good blues song like the masters he interprets. We hope to see his self-penned songs outnumber the covers on future recordings.

*White Trash Bluesman* is self-published and can be ordered from the author via telephone (510-734-4652), e-mail ([ron@ronhacker.com](mailto:ron@ronhacker.com)) or his website ([www.ronhacker.com](http://www.ronhacker.com)).

*Photo credits:*

*All photos by Bob Hakins except:*

*Page 4, column 1, photo of Yank Rachell and Ron Hacker (1976) from Ron's website.*

*Page 5, column 1, photo of Ron Hacker and Tom Waits from Ron's website.*



Ron Hacker's guitars, taken at The Saloon by Joe Sheeran

## OUR MOST AMAZING NIGHT OF BOOGIE WOOGIE

by Jenifer Santer, photos by Rachel Kumar

On May 22, 2011, overlooking downtown San Francisco, The Golden Gate Blues Society membership social provided a night of great music, dance, and even a look back at boogie woogie history. Held at the Union Room above Biscuits & Blues, almost 40 people gathered around the vintage oak bar and cozy bistro tables to share a fun-packed evening.

### THE MUSIC

The Queen of Boogie Woogie, Wendy DeWitt [shown here with bassist Mike Phillips], delighted the audience



with an exploding splash of voice against galloping boogie scales. Her key-board work and boogie woogie vocals stoked blues era songs such as "Chicago Breakdown,"

"Southside Boogie," and "Take a Little Walk with Me." Her exuberance and love of the boogie beat were accompanied by smiles and nods of her head that said "yup, I love this stuff!" Drummer Kirk Harwood provided a balancing accent to Wendy's racing boogie, the overall effect of bringing the musical style of each musician together into a blended boogie, head-nodding experience.

And there was more to enjoy!



Many surprise guests came by during the evening, providing a broad range of talent, instrumentation, and vocal variety. Wendy paused her performance while Kathy Tejcka [shown here] took command of the keyboard with strong and energetic vocals. Paula Harris also provided her own blues/funk twist to musical storytelling.

A truly touching performance was provided by Macy



Blackman on cornet, accompanying Wendy and the band. His authenticity and sincere dedication to his music was endearing, providing a

cherished moment to be long remembered. Bringing the evening to a fresh and unexpected close was Stan Erhart avec saxophone and Grant Walters on harmonica. Stan's



sensitive sax numbers and vulnerable vocals provided musical dessert to a five-course evening with Grant Walters capturing the stage for a full-bodied

harmonica solo.

### THE HISTORY OF BOOGIE WOOGIE – AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE EVENING

The evening included a wonderful pre-show experience as Wendy DeWitt offered up a personal interview [shown



here with Jenifer], sharing tidbits of boogie woogie history and trivia from the mid-late 1800s through the swing era. She also shared more

intimate information about her draw to boogie woogie music and the source of the energy that she commits to every song she performs. In between songs, and in keeping with the evening's Blues History focus, Wendy threw in quick one-liners of boogie history or quick blues riffs, attributing them to amazing performers whose pictures appeared on the screen behind the band.

In addition to Wendy's interview was an interview with Ted Maddry, the owner of Beyond Blues, a blues dance



group from San Francisco. Ted talked to the audience about the history of blues dance and how the dance form has evolved from the late 1800s into a

current style where couples dancing merges rapid twirls of the waltz, swinging Charleston footwork of the 1920s, and grooving moves of the boogie woogie era.

A short demonstration of his dance moves left many wanting to try a few steps, which he and his dancers gladly demonstrated during the course of the evening. The dancers were graceful to watch and made the steps easy for those who ventured out to the dance floor at the break for a short blues dance lesson. Our own talented Rachel Kumar very capably danced with Ted Maddry and the Beyond Blues dancers and also took photographs for TGGBS.



Underscoring our evening's focus on boogie woogie history, there was a video background, hosted on three

LCD televisions behind the musicians, which transported blues lovers back to the era of Lux 'Meade' Lewis, and many others, and even played vintage cartoons dating back to Betty Boop as well as early Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd knocking out boogie woogie tunes on the silver screen while apparently keeping time with the band.

**A NIGHT TO REMEMBER**

This energizing and fun boogie woogie evening, produced by The Golden Gate Blues Society, was unique to the Bay Area Blues scene. The talented and artistic performances, dancing, personal historical perspectives, and video art all came together to give the audience a memorable experience of boogie woogie. Our thanks to those who worked so hard to put this evening together, those who performed, and especially those who came and shared the fun.

The winning SF Bay Area band at each event will go on to compete in the finals, at which one band will be chosen to represent TGGBS in The Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge in Memphis February 1-4, 2012



TGGBS Members: \$5  
 Nonmembers: \$15  
 Nonmembers may join TGGBS at the door and enter for \$5.  
 Vote for your favorite band!

*The Golden Gate Blues Society*

*presents*

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*David Landon Band*

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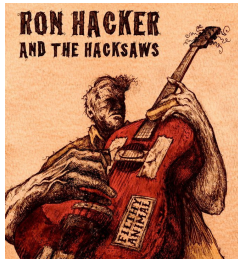




## CD REVIEWS

### Ron Hacker, *Filthy Animal*

by Mark Hedin



Veteran San Francisco bluesman Ron Hacker's out with his first new CD in 7 years, *Filthy Animal*. Its 13 tracks highlight his searing slide work and include 3 originals plus familiar cuts from Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon, Muddy Waters, and Son House, and lesser-known songs by Jimmy

Rogers, Mississippi Fred McDowell, Slim Harpo, and Sleepy John Estes.

This is raw, ballsy music—made to drive out demons—by a man who's faced a few and never been one to pull his punches. Check this out from his "Watch What You Say" of a few years back: "I lied to start a dirty war. I lied and lied some more. Now a lot of mothers' kids won't be home no more. I'm the president of the U.S.A. You better be real careful babe, what you're 'bout to say. ... You know those kids are gone... "

That one you can find on the [sfblues.net](http://sfblues.net) website or his 2009 CD "My Songs." But Greg Reiersen, who's mastered everything Hacker ever recorded, calls *Filthy Animal* Hacker's best work yet. "I'll go with that," he says.

Every song on the album, he says, was recorded in a single take. It opens with "You Gotta Move, Part 1," in which Hacker and Leah Tysse trade verses as Hacker vows to leave and she implores him to stay, albeit with some suggestions that he "get a job." I might have liked to hear her put up more of a fight, but then again, a guy who can play like that ... and of course, it's not like these guys wrote this one—it's a Memphis Minnie tune.

Hacker's own "Bad Boy" is up next. Lyrically, he affirms his chosen path over "trying to be Mr. Right" and trades guitar solos with Debbie Davies, alternating some raunchy slide play with her single-string breaks.

Hacker drops the slide for Jimmie Rogers' "I'm Going Away Baby" and follows that with Howlin' Wolf's "Meet Me in the Bottom," then picks up his National steel for a solo acoustic reading of Mississippi Fred McDowell's "Goin' Down to the River." The band returns for another Howlin' Wolf song, an appropriately growling, slide-heavy take on Willie Dixon's "Evil," followed by Son House's "Death Letter Blues," the song that improbably put pop stars Jack White and his White Stripes on the

map back in the '90s. A highlight of the album, for me, is the following cut, a Hacker-arranged instrumental take on Slim Harpo's "I'm Gonna Miss You (Like the Devil)" (the flip side of the Excello label "Scratch My Back" 45!). On a half-dozen or so languid choruses, Hacker delivers heaping servings of filthy and, yes, animalistic slide work, just as advertised.

"Shotgun" and Estes's "Someday Baby" are more upbeat, though the former mixes lust and gunplay; the latter, lyrically, is reminiscent of "Trouble In Mind." Hacker plays them both standard-style.

"Why," another Hacker original, is more laid back, a lament for a lost love, with guest Nancy Wright on some tasty, honking saxophone breaks and Hacker back to playing slide on his 1930 Regal acoustic guitar. That guitar, outfitted with a DeArmond pickup crudely duct-taped to the body, is plain to see in the album artwork—both in Jonny Thomas's drawing on the cover and in the photo on the back. The Regal, Hacker likes to say, is "like a '57 Chevy" with cool pipes sound—"It's a ragged looking old guitar and sounds really good. People like that."

McKinley "Muddy Waters" Morganfield's "Champagne and Reefer" is next, again with slide. The album's title track—the name is taken from a sticker a biker at the Grant Avenue Saloon "suggested" Hacker slap on the Regal; the tune is based on a Herbie Hancock riff—is also the disc's longest track. It's a funky number Hacker says he resisted recording. As he explained it, it's a groove bassist Artis Joyce and drummer Bryant Mills typically throw down onstage while he's changing from one guitar to another. He was jealously guarding his studio time, but AJ wouldn't drop it, and as it happened, it just clicked too well to be refused. Its popping bass makes it the most contemporary-sounding song on the disc.

Hacker says his introduction to the blues came from acquaintances made in juvenile hall in the Midwest. A return to Indiana in the early '70s led to an apprenticeship with the late Yank Rachell, but Hacker returned home to the Bay Area a few years later and can still be found a couple of times a month with his band, the Hacksaws, playing at the Saloon.

While he says that, these days, he's trying to concentrate on playing the blues more than living them, his story, as detailed in his book, *White Trash Bluesman*, apparently very vividly details the former—I'm looking forward to reading it.

He's on the bill at the Redwood City Blues Festival on July 23 and also has a gig in Denmark in August. "I've been trying to stay around town," he says, but "you have to get out." There's simply not enough work to be had locally. Although *Filthy Animal* is Hacker's ninth CD, he says the single song he placed in the movie "Just Like Heaven" has paid him more than all his recordings so far.

We're lucky to have Ron Hacker in our midst. *Filthy Animal* is just the latest example of why.

**Recorded at Red Rooster Studios by Garth Webber  
WTB Publishing, 2010**

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

## **Terry Hanck, *Look Out!***

*by Joseph Jordan*



Oh my goodness! Just a little past half way through 2011 and we have the lead contender for album of the year. Terry Hanck has put his very best on this recording, and that's saying a lot.

From Hanck's love for vintage blues and R&B, evident on almost every track, to his superb and serious saxophone chops, to his crack band and his song selection, there's not a track of filler on the album. But there is something intrinsically fresh to his sound as well. For a 66-year old cat, he sure plays like an unbridled and fearless youth.

Hanck's tenor, as usual gets a whole lot of airtime on this one, just listen to "Keep A Drivin'" or "Ain't That Just Like a Woman," or pretty much any track on the CD. His fiery reed work, beautiful tone, and effortless, inventive melodies make for a thoroughly enjoyable 62-minutes of listening. (He's Elvin Bishop's favorite sax player too!)

"Girl, Girl, Girl" features a reggae groove (with great drumming by Dennis Dove) and the oft-recorded "Train Kept a Rollin'" provides a swingin' alternative to the rock and roll versions that may be familiar to you.

Hanck's voice is a marvel. He can make it growl, ache, croon, moan, and tease, and then some. It is a superb instrument in its own right. Listen to "I Keep on Holding on" and tell me I'm wrong.

I also can't say enough about the emergence of Johnny "Cat" Soubrand as a lead guitarist of originality, fire, and consummate grace. He proves here he is among the emerging great ones. With phrasing, tone, and string-

bending to burn, his contributions alone are well worth hearing. Check out, "You Coulda Let Me Go" or his take on the Freddie King/Sonny Thompson instrumental, "Side Tracked."

The genius of Chris "Kid" Andersen, who coproduced the sessions (along with Hanck) is astounding. He recorded, engineered, and mastered the album beautifully. As a former member of Terry's band, he has an instinctive feel for what works and how not to push the band into anything less than their utmost. He even contributes a wonderful (and playful) guitar solo on Hanck's original "Appreciate What You Got." Add to that his all-over-the-place contributions on rhythm guitar, keys, bass, and vocals and you've got a consummate musician.

Hanck wrote or cowrote 5 of the 13 cuts on the CD, and they show his musicianship isn't limited to stage presence and playing alone. His crack rhythm section of drummer Butch Cousins and bassist Tim Wagar hold down the rhythm with finesse and provide a free-and-easy background bottom for the stars to shine. The ever-great Bob Welsh on keyboards just smokes, and Lorenzo Farrel on bass and organ is a fine addition to the mix.

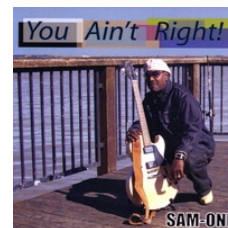
This is a multiple-listening CD; a turn-it-up in your car CD; a have-a-party CD; and just about anything else you can think of. If you've not hipped yourself to Terry Hanck and his band, this is a superb place to start.

**Delta Groove Music, 2011**

**Check out: [www.terryhanck.net](http://www.terryhanck.net)**

## **Sam-One, *You Ain't Right***

*by Dorothy L. Hill*



Sam Wesley, Jr. (aka Sam-One) threw his hat in the ring on this CD as the executive producer, writer, arranger, lead guitarist, and vocalist. It was recorded in 2007 at Skyline Studio in Oakland, California, under the auspices of the independent label Sam-One

Music. Wesley is accompanied by a fine aggregation of Oakland musicians: Niklas Nordstrom on guitar, William Hudson on bass, Anthony Atherton on horns and wind module, and Travis Simon on drums.

Wesley took up guitar at the age of 8 under the tutelage of his father, who was a professional musician. It is obvious on this CD's combination of blues and jazz with a little R&B flavor that his influence was heavily weighted



toward the jazz idiom. Out of the 10 cuts, this CD offers more for the jazz-blues aficionado.

The title cut starts out with sultry bluesy rhythm with a dreamy saxophone in the background and Wesley's soul infused vocals convey the time-worn theme..."you ain't right, all you want to do is fuss and fight..." "What's Wrong with You?" is a kicking number with the saxophone honking and Wesley's fervent vocals; a real treat, this one. "Don't Leave" changes the mood with a slow urban blues that features a good guitar expression and mournful saxophone solo that enhances the despair amply embraced by Wesley's vocals. Another good one is "Samone," which features a beautiful wind module that has a flute-like sound with lush notes as it lightly glides along to the melody.

Two instrumentals, "Secret's Blues" and "Swing with the Blues," are satiny jazzy arrangements with alluring saxophone and notable guitar expression. The final cut, "Why You Want to Hate on Me," features Wesley's unique understated vocal style with a tastefully clever melody.

This CD is one to put in your player, relax with a good glass of wine, and enjoy the comfortable mood of the bluesy jazz put forth by some talented musicians.

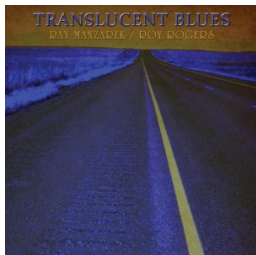
Sam-One Music, 2007

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

## Ray Manzarek/Roy Rogers, *Translucent Blues*

by Joseph Jordan

What an unusually cool, blues-not-blues recording. On paper (or CD cover if you will), it looks like it wouldn't work, but putting two master musicians together, slide-guitarist/vocalist Roy Rogers and Rock and Roll Hall-of-Famer keyboardist/ vocalist Ray Manzarek, works beyond well.



Coproduced by the two, and engineered by Joel Jaffe of Sausalito's Studio D Recordings, the CD features 12 tracks and comes in at just under an hour of listening. Two cuts are instrumentals, the lovely Rogers' original "As You Leave" and Manzarek's rollicking 12-bar blues, "An Organ, a Guitar, and a Chicken Wing."

Manzarek, of course, is a cofounder of seminal '60s band, The Doors. His keyboard sound is so distinctive and recognizable that some of these songs sound suspiciously

familiar, as if from long ago, but all tunes were recorded between May and September 2010.

Rogers has had a rebirth on this disc. Working off of Manzarek, he sounds particularly energized and inspired. Manzarek's baritone vocals might be an acquired taste for some, but it gels somehow and he sings unabashedly. Rogers' vocals are, as usual, just right for his music. All in all, there's no doubt the guys had a blast playing with each other.

The fine, fine band consists of Bay Area bassist of choice Steve Evans (Elvin Bishop Band) and the always-just-right Kevin Hayes (Robert Cray Band) holds down the drummer chair. Reedman-for-hire George Brooks adds vital tenor sax to several cuts.

Lyrics are included, which is always a pleasure. Song-writing collaborators include Jim Carroll, Warren Zevon, Bay Area Beat poet Michael McClure, and seven listed others. Some of the song lyrics are poetic ("Hurricane") and others slightly ominous ("Kick" and "River of Madness"), but all are chock full of shattering imagery and, at times, desolation. But it's a hell-a-fun album as well.

Blind Pig Records, 2011

Check out: [www.manzarek-rogersband.com](http://www.manzarek-rogersband.com)

## Tommy Castro presents The Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue

by Joseph Jordan



Featuring a wealth of contemporary singers/musicians, several of whom reside in the Bay Area, this CD features the fairly unique format of an old-time revue, wherein several artists share a spotlight to create one joyous listen.

Coming in at a generous 72 minutes, the live-recording format gives ample time for the band, soloists, and singers to stretch their ample chops.

Bay Area great Tommy Castro and/or his band hold down most of the backing band duties as they're featured on 11 of the album's 12 tracks. Special mention to those guys—Tony Stead on keyboards, Keith Crossan on tenor sax, Tom Poole on trumpet, Scot Sutherland on bass, and the terrific Ronnie Smith on drums. All do a more-than-fine job setting a blistering table for the stars of the revue to shine above.

There's only one band that is self-contained, the Kansas City power blues-rock family trio, Trampled Under Foot, who absolutely burn through their composition "Fog." Taking turns in front of the microphone are guitarist/vocalist Michael Burks, guitarist/vocalist Joe Louis Walker, vocalist Sista Monica Parker, vocalist/harmonicat Rick Estrin alongside guitarist Chris "Kid" Andersen, vocalist Janiva Magness, vocalist/guitarist Theodis Ealey, and the marvelous Debbie Davies on vocals and guitar.

The recording was produced by Castro and Alligator Records' bossman Bruce Iglauer, while long-time Tommy

Castro band sound producer and engineer Steve Spirn held down the live recording/concert sound chair. All of the tracks were recorded in 2010 and 2011, making it a very contemporary album.

If you like it live and real, check this one out. It's a keeper.

**Alligator Records, 2011**  
**Check out: [www.alligator.com](http://www.alligator.com)**

**TGGBS INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE PHOTOS**  
*from The Poor House Bistro, July 17, 2011 (the first of four preliminary events)*



Guido Fazio, Nancy Wenstrom, Dennis Dove, and Jan Martinelli of Blues Kitchen by *Deb Lubin*



Nancy Wright, John Graham, Kelvin Dixon, and Patty Hammond of Kickin' the Mule by *Dorothy L. Hill*



Pinkie Rideau of Pinkie Rideau and Blind Resistance by *Dee Wallace*



Nancy Wenstrom, Jan Martinelli, and Sarah Baker of Blues Kitchen by *Dorothy L. Hill*



Patty Hammond and William Beatty of Kickin' the Mule by *Dee Wallace*



Nick Benjamin, Jay Cavileer, Kimball Hooker, and Channing Heath of Pinkie Rideau and Blind Resistance by *Dee Wallace*



Brad Catania of Blues Kitchen by *Dee Wallace*



The Winners! by *Bruce Fram*

## JOHN HAMMOND AT BISCUITS & BLUES, SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL 2011

by Mark Hedin, photo by Bob Hakins



John Hammond brought his 1935 National steel guitar, his custom-made acoustic, his collection of Marine Band harmonicas, and the long Sears socket wrench that, for 40 years, he's used as a slide to San Francisco's Biscuits & Blues nightclub on Easter Sunday evening for two mesmerizing sets of classic blues, with some of his own songs sprinkled into the mix.

Hammond was on his way to a presumably lucrative gig the next day at a private party. His manager wouldn't disclose the location, but said it was for an exclusive crowd, probably numbering no more than 30.

Well, if it's exclusive you want, you should have been there for the late show; there were no more than two dozen on hand for the second set. The room was almost full for the early set, though, and the crowd was enthusiastic throughout.

Early highlights included Robert Johnson's "Come on in My Kitchen," Sonny Boy Williamson's "Fattening Frogs for Snakes," Blind Willie McTell's "Love Changin' Blues," and "to show you that blues is never dated," a spooky rendering of Skip James' "Hard Time Killing Floor."

"Skip James," Hammond said, "is from another planet – I'd like to visit there one day."

Hammond has a very odd background for a blues performer. He's not just white, he's descended from one of the wealthiest "old money" East Coast families, the Vanderbilts. But his father, who separated from his mother when Hammond was young, and whom Hammond rarely saw while growing up, transcended his

elite background to champion civil rights early in the last century and, as a music industry executive, he famously fostered the careers of Benny Goodman, Billie Holiday, Charlie Christian, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and many others.

His son went him one better, living the life of an itinerant bluesman since he was a teenager—the Scorpio's 68 now—and he's got the stories to show for it, a smattering of which are a highlight of his performances. The man could—and should—write a book, but that's another story.

Hammond speaks sardonically of his early career as something of a novelty act, sharing stages with rediscovered bluesmen, such as John Hurt, Son House, and Skip James. "Let's put this young white boy up there and see what happens," he recalled one promoter saying.

While the set included standards of the country blues repertoire and also cuts made famous by the likes of Bo Diddley ("Who Do You Love," which Hammond recorded years ago with the late Duane Allman at his side), Howlin' Wolf ("How Many More Years"), Little Walter ("Tell Me Mama"), Muddy Waters ("Sail On"), and Jimmy Rogers ("Who's Loving You Tonight"), Hammond also treated the crowd to more obscure numbers, such as Hambone Willie Newbern's "Dreamy-Eyed Woman," the flip side of Newbern's 1927 classic "Rolling and Tumbling."

Recently, Hammond has taken to writing some songs of his own, and he played two midway through the first set, "Sure Is Cold" and "Come to Find Out." The latter, he said, was inspired by drummer Charles Otis, who enlivened their touring together with seemingly endless and often hilarious stories, many of which turned on that phrase.

Before the break, following Jimmy Reed's "Honest I Do," he told of opening for "the perfect musician" at a 1964 Chris Strachwitz-produced show, only to find that his friends thought he was making that story up. Vindication finally came, he said, just a few years ago at Radio City Music Hall in New York, where he was rehearsing for a Martin Scorsese "Year of the Blues" program and El Cerrito native John Fogerty approached, saying he'd been in the audience at that show.

In between sets, Argentinian-born local guitarist David M'ore was among those lining up to chat with Hammond and, in this case, exchange discs. He said hearing

Hammond's soundtrack recording for "Little Big Man" was an early inspiration.

The second set kicked off with a flashy "Pony Blues," a song first recorded by Charlie Patton, a godfather of the blues and, as Hammond pointed out, a full-blooded Cherokee, although Hammond cited a debt to John Lee Hooker for this rendition.

Seemingly well warmed up now, he told of a 1985 gig at the Sacramento Blues Festival, with Lowell Fulson, Jimmy McCracklin, Johnny Heartsman, and others, where Bob Geddings interrupted him onstage to correct his introduction of "My Time after a While" as a Buddy Guy song. "I wrote that!" he said Geddings shouted to him. Hammond just smiled and shrugged, then tore the tune up.

A shout-out to a mentor from his brief college career, Ian Buchanan, led to name checks of North Carolinian Piedmont-style pickers Rev. Gary Davis and Blind Boy Fuller and a hot "Step It Up and Go."

Hammond's long career has inevitably led to many Bay Area connections. He spoke of visiting his art-school friend David Getz, future Big Brother and the Holding Company drummer, when he played a gig at San Francisco State in the early '60s. He arrived in town from

L.A. at the wheel of a 1955 Ford Crown Vic in which, he said, he was soon to visit Michael Bloomfield in Chicago, which led directly to chauffeuring Big Joe Williams around and thus being allowed to sit in with him on harmonica.

Of all the albums he's made, Hammond says his most successful has been "Wicked Grin," recorded at a heavy-metal rehearsal room in the Santa Rosa vicinity with Tom Waits, who wrote all of its songs. From that record, he played "Get Behind the Mule."

Over the course of the evening, we heard stories of attending Alan Freed shows in Brooklyn in the '50s; of Waits showing up at that very same club a few years back with Sam Shepherd, Nick Nolte, and Sean Penn in tow; of Florida sets in which Bo Diddley, in one case, and Dion DiMucci in another, sat staring intently at him from the front row for the whole show before ultimately giving their approval; and many more tales from Hammond's absolutely remarkable career.

After Tampa Red's "It Hurts Me Too," he closed, by request, with Chuck Berry's "Maybelline" and encored with Dion's "If You Wanna Rock and Roll," the only original from "Bronx in Blue," the "Runaround Sue" singer's own surprising 2006 set of classic blues material.

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## JORMA KAUKONEN & DAVID BROMBERG AT THE FILLMORE, SF, JUNE 2011

*Article and Photo by Mark Hedin*



Jorma Kaukonen and David Bromberg [shown in reverse order above] put on a spellbinding show before a near-capacity crowd at The Fillmore in San Francisco in late June.

Kaukonen opened the show with a 90-minute set that included more than a half-dozen songs recorded by the late Reverend Gary Davis, the blind street musician he—and Bromberg, among others—studied with in the early 1960s.

The former Jefferson Airplane and Hot Tuna guitarist opened with Davis's "True Religion," which also kicked off Hot Tuna's 1974 *Burgers* album.

In an entirely acoustic set, Jorma, looking sharp with his close-cropped silvery beard, played several selections from the new Hot Tuna album, *Steady as She Goes*, including his own "Second Chances" and Davis's "Baby Let Me Lay It on You."

Early in the set, besides introducing the new album, Kaukonen mixed his own "River of Time" and "Sea Child" with "Hesitation Blues"—another song Davis recorded—along with Mose Allison's "Parchman Farm," Lightnin' Hopkins' "Come Back Baby," obscure Piedmont bluesman Julius Daniels' "99 Year Blues," Blind Blake's "That'll



Never Happen No More,” and “Good Shepherd”—now THERE’s a song with interesting origins that far predate the Airplane’s version.

Besides his own “I See the Light” from *Quah*, his album with the late San Francisco master, Tom Hobson, and “Things that Might Have Been,” almost all else was Davis, including “Death Don’t Have No Mercy,” “I Am the Light of This World,” “Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning,” and “There’s a Bright Side Somewhere.”

*Steady As She Goes* is Kaukonen’s first studio work with Jack Casady in many years. He teased that Casady was on his way and might arrive later in the set, but the bassman never did show up.

Instead, for an encore, he brought Bromberg out for Jelly Roll Morton’s “Winin’ Boy Blues.”

Bromberg’s own set, predictably, was wonderfully wide-ranging. With his so-called quartet, which, over the course of the evening, at times numbered almost a dozen musicians, he ranged from a medley of hot bluegrass fiddle breakdowns that opened the show—and for a couple of verses featured three of the four on mandolin—to an encore sung a cappella from the lip of the stage with no amplification at all – first time I’ve seen someone do THAT at The Fillmore!

The quartet, at its core, consists of precocious Nate Grower on fiddle, Mitch Corbin on mandolin, and Butch Amiot on bass. They were joined at times by Richard Crooks on drums and the Bay Area’s own John Firmin (Johnny Nocturne) on sax.

In between came, well, a bit of almost everything, including, for his second selection, a Telecaster teardown of Guitar Slim’s “The Things I Used to Do,” and a powerful Keb’ Mo’ song, “Digging in the Deep Blue Sea,” from Bromberg’s newly released (July 12) album, *Use*

*Me*—a collection of collaborations that also includes Levon Helm, Linda Ronstadt, Dr. John, and many more.

From “Digging in the Deep Blue Sea”: “The whole world is a junkie...strung out on gasoline.”

Bromberg can conjure a deep, soulful blues emotion as well as any musician I’ve witnessed, and did so on “New Lee Highway Blues” and another *Use Me* track, “Blues Is Fallen,” written by bluegrass star Tim O’Brien. Bromberg, who at the height of his career stepped off the merry-go-round to study fiddle making, could do just fine for himself in the narrower confines of mountain music, which he plainly also loves, and features prominently throughout his sets. He followed the Guitar Slim selection with “Dark Hollow,” a bluegrass standard, and introduced “Lookout Mountain Girl,” his collaboration with Vince Gill and Guy Clark, after the Keb’ Mo’ song.

“Bring It with You when You Come,” which he recently recorded with Helm, featured some biting slide work on the battered Tele. After a few choruses of “Wooly Bully” came a more somber, biting slow blues from the new album, “Tongue.”

A trio of singers, dubbed the Angel Band, did the Ronstadt *Use Me* contribution, “Someday, Some Way” and two songs of their own before Bromberg returned, slide in hand, to do “Lost My Driving Wheel,” interspersing some hot licks with the slightly rumpled-looking Bromberg at times standing, arms at his sides, declaiming like a gospel shouter.

To round things out, Bromberg brought Kaukonen out to join him on “Questionnaire Blues,” “Got a Long, Tall Mama,” “How Long,” and “Count the Days I’m Gone.”

For an encore, the aforementioned a cappella “Roll on John.” All in all, a deeply satisfying showcase of the roots of American music by two of its masters.

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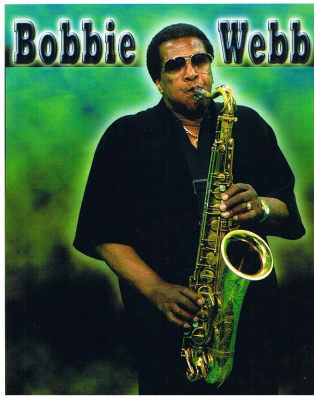
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## "ON THE AIR" WITH BOBBIE WEBB

*Interview by Joseph Jordan*



In our continuing series of interviews with Bay Area DJs, those men and women who work so hard and selflessly to bring us the Blues, we highlight a man who is a formidable on-air presence, as well as a Bay Area musical treasure, Mr. Smooth Blues, Bobbie "Spider" Webb.

**TGGBS:** *Bobbie, what is your station, call letters, frequency, broadcast time, and the name of your show?*

**BW:** The name of my show is The Bobbie "Spider" Webb Tuesday Morning Blues Show and we're on 89.5 FM, KPOO and KPOO.com around the world on the Internet. My show is on every Tuesday morning from 9:00 a.m. until 12 noon.

**TGGBS:** *Bobbie, how long have you been DJ'ing?*

**BW:** I've been DJ'ing now for 11 years and I've only missed one Tuesday in that whole time.

**TGGBS:** *How does being a musician help or hinder your time behind the microphone?*

**BW:** Well you know, it doesn't hinder, it helps. I'm in a position to help our local musicians and musicians from around the world when they come into the Bay Area. I can announce their gigs, I can interview them, and it has no barrier on my music at all. It helps me to keep the word out there as to where I'm playing, where I can be found, so it's a very, very good tool to have.

**TGGBS:** *You're well known to anybody with a glimmer of Blues knowledge in the Bay Area, and especially in San Francisco's Fillmore District. What do you feel you've given back to the community?*

**BW:** I've given back so much. First of all, I'll say I was raised here in the Fillmore since I was 5 years old. Second of all, I still live in the Fillmore. I am the President of the Blues and R&B Music Foundation Incorporated and we are a nonprofit organization. When they (the City of San Francisco) started to redevelop the Fillmore Area and they wanted to change it to the Fillmore Jazz Preservation, I had to let the people know

that we had more Rhythm and Blues in the Fillmore than jazz ever existed. A lot of people don't know this, 'cause the average person, people that are here, just got here. They don't know what was here years ago in the '50s and '60s and '70s. The Foundation put a mural up at Post and Steiner Streets on the Hamilton Playground Gym. If you go by Post and Steiner you'll see this beautiful mural that the Foundation went tooth-and-nail with the City to get permission to put that mural on that wall. It's a beautiful mural and it covers the whole side (of the gym.) That's one of the things I've contributed to the Bay Area and to my community. I especially wanted people to know that we (the Fillmore) had an active Rhythm and Blues scene. I love jazz. I'm not down on jazz. I play some myself on some occasions. But we had Rhythm and Blues here back in the day when the Fillmore was the Fillmore.

**TGGBS:** *I hear you're kind of busy at the end of May too?*

**BW:** Oh, yeah, the California Blues Festival. The last Monday in May, we (The Foundation) produce the California Blues Festival, which was at Golden Gate Park's band shell for 15 years. We missed one year because of expenses. But I came back this year and we're now at (the Fillmore's) Hamilton Playground on the Post Street side. It was very successful being the first festival held there and we had a heck of a turnout, and I was very pleased. Everything worked out fine. I think that's now where we'll settle.

**TGGBS:** *What do we have to look forward to from Mr. Bobbie Webb... in the studio and on stage?*

**BW:** I'm working on a brand new CD right now, and I hope it will be out by the end of the year. I've got some good songs, some original songs, and you're going to hear a new Bobbie Webb.

**TGGBS:** *Any other thoughts on the future of Bay Area or California Blues?*

**BW:** Well, you know, we're getting a lot of new groups and we're getting a lot of groups who are changing, and when I say changing, they are kind of changing from the original Blues, and are adding a lot more progression, a lot of changes to the songs. It's not the same as the original old time blues like B.B. King, Albert King. These guys are dying out. The original Blues players are dying out. Of course B.B. is still here. And the new Blues



artists that are coming in are putting their own feeling to it and it's a little different.

**TGGBS:** *Do you feel that the African-American youth have turned their back on the Blues in favor of Rap and/or Hip Hop, or is there still a tremendous interest?*

**BW:** The youngsters nowadays are not carrying on the Blues like they should. The youngsters nowadays are going into Rap, Hip Hop, and that side, and as Blues musicians die out, there's no one taking their place and it's really sad. What can I say? The Blues is something that doesn't interest this generation. The way it looks to me, radio has changed. Back in the day, we had a lot of stations where we could listen to Rhythm and Blues. Now if you don't listen to my station, KPOO, you won't get no Blues. You'll have to go to some other (specialty) station and listen early in the morning or late at night. Times have changed and the youngsters of today are not familiar with the good old Blues. The ones that are picking it up are putting their own taste to it, so it's not really the good old down-home Blues.

**TGGBS:** *What are you then feeling good about in regard to the current state of Blues music?*

**BW:** It's good, it's nice. I get quite a few CDs from some of the Blues labels and they're different, they're changing. They call it Blues, but it's a different style of Blues.

**TGGBS:** *Do you have any other thoughts you'd like to share with our readers?*

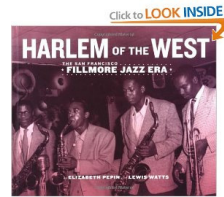
**BW:** I would like to see music return to the schools. That's one of the things that has hurt our youngsters.

You might have a John Coltrane in school that can play, but he don't know he can play because there's no music in the schools... no instruments, no music class. They've taken music out of the schools and this is going to hurt the upcoming generation in the music field, if they can't get it by playing and it's not taught to them in the schools, they're going into another direction. We lose artists in that way and that's what we're doing. And if you notice, we don't have enough saxophone players. Everybody's playing drums, keyboards, and guitar. OK? And I'd love to see more horn men out there.

**TGGBS:** *Final thoughts?*

**BW:** I feel very honored. They put me in the book, *Harlem of the West*, a book on the Fillmore, and I speak about some of the things you've just asked me about. I give my impression as to what the Fillmore was like, 'cause I was here when it was whole, and what was what and where was where. I've seen the whole situation from beginning to end. I am the Fillmore. I'm still here. I've played every club that was here, you name it, and that doesn't include all the concerts and festivals I've played. I want you to know, I had a day job as a business agent for service employees union. I went to work every day and still played more music than the average musician can dream of. OK? Day and night, I've paid my dues.

**Check out:** <http://www.bobbiewebb.com/> and <http://www.kpoo.com/>



## BLUES IN THE SCHOOLS

In response to comments by Bobbie Webb about the lack of Blues in the Schools, we would like our readers and the San Francisco Bay Area Blues community to know that The Golden Gate Blues Society is working hard to do our part to bring the Blues to students. Since the last issue of the newsletter was published, Blues guitarist **Steve Freund** made a presentation on the Blues to a classroom full of music students at The School of the Arts, a high school in San Francisco dedicated to

the arts, including music. These kids had to pass an audition to be admitted and they are serious about their music. Many thanks to Board member **Wendell Hanna** for setting up the hour-long presentation and to Steve for volunteering his time! *Deb Lubin*



## THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF BOB HAKINS AT BISCUITS & BLUES, SAN FRANCISCO



Rick Estrin



Grady Champion



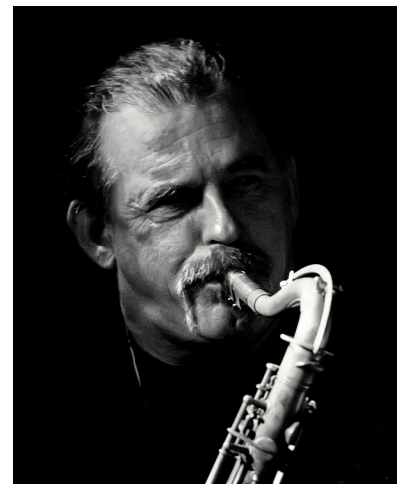
Mitch Woods



Dennis Jones



Joe Louis Walker



Keith Crossan



Nancy Wright



Daniel Castro



Lorenzo Farrel (of Rick Estrin and the Nightcats)



**TGGBS t-shirts! These are the men's cuts. The colors you see will be available in various sizes beginning at the Redwood City Blues Festival, July 23, 2011!**

**You will also be able to order the shirts through our website ([www.tggbs.org](http://www.tggbs.org)) soon! (Photos taken at The Poor House Bistro, July 17, 2011.)**



**The wonderful Julie Bitnoff modeling the women's cut of our new t-shirts! Julie, TGGBS thanks you for being our hero!**

## **THE GOLDEN GATE BLUES SOCIETY**

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

The Board of Directors of TGGBS consists of the 11 Officers and Committee Chairs.

### **COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Wendy DeWitt, Media  
Stan Erhart, Membership  
Wendell Hanna, Education  
Deb Lubin, Publications  
Susan Preece, IBC Coordinator  
Jenifer Santer, Events

### **OFFICERS**

Dorothy L. Hill, President  
Ron Purser, Vice President  
Judy Edmonson, Secretary  
Brad Robertson, Treasurer  
Jan Bilbao, At Large

### **ADVISORY BOARD**

Barbara Hammerman, Donor Development  
Noel Hayes, KPOO Blues DJ  
E.C. Scott, Recording Artist and Producer

### **WEBSITE**

Stan Erhart

### **SOUND**

Marty Preece

The Golden Gate Blues Society is a 501(c)(3) 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;
- Educational 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 Greater Bay Area Blues community.



### THE GOLDEN GATE BLUES SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization – *Blues Foundation Affiliate*  
Dedicated to the preservation and growth of the Blues as an American art form

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

Website (Bands and Sponsors): \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership:

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership \$25/year    \_\_\_\_\_ Band Membership \$40/year\*    \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor \$200/year

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member    \* If Band Membership, Name of Band: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Renewing Member    \_\_\_\_\_

Willing to Volunteer?    Which committee(s) would you be interested in volunteering for?

- |                                    |                           |                     |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| ___ Events                         | ___ Membership            | ___ Media/Publicity |
| ___ Sponsorship/Fundraising/Grants | ___ Publications          | ___ Education       |
| ___ International Blues Challenge  | ___ Other (specify) _____ |                     |

Please cut out this page, make check payable to: **The Golden Gate Blues Society**  
and mail to: The Golden Gate Blues Society  
P.O. Box 2591  
Redwood City, CA 94064