# BLUESIFIER

THE BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE SAINT LOUIS BLUES SOCIETY Nov/Dec 2015 Number 77



The Maness Brothers

Congratulations
to the winners
of the 2015
ROAD TO MEMPHIS
BLUES
CHALLENGE



BLUES CHALLENGE



Eugene Johnson & Co.

**PLUS:** 

**MADCO** and the Blues

**Play it Forward** 

**Our Very Busy Summer in Pictures** 

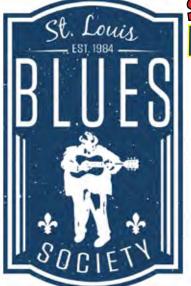
Second St. Louis Blues Society Compilation CD is Near Completion

**National Blues Museum News** 

14th Annual Baby Blues Showcase

**Commentary by Brian Curran** 

**CD Review: Barbara Carr** 



# SUPPORTING BLUES MUSIC IN ST LOUIS FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS

**Cover** photo of Eugene Johnson & Co. by Dana Chapman - Maness Brothers by Nate Burrell

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- VIP Volunteer Party at the Road to Memphis Winner's Showcase
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There is no doubt that 2015 has been one of the most productive years for the St. Louis Blues Society in recent memory. Being that this is the last BluesLetter of the year, I think it is important to take a moment and look at what the organization and community has accomplished this year.

Our team of volunteers and board members have worked with, and supported, over 30 shows this year, including many community concert series and benefits in conjunction with other not-for-profit organizations. We have begun work with several groups to support Blues Education including recent programs at the School of Rock in Ballwin. The STLBS hosted the first Atomic Blues Festival at the Atomic Cowboy that featured an all-day celebration of St. Louis Blues to help raise funds for our new Education Fund. The BluesLetter got out consistently with more and more writers getting involved. We also released the first compilation CD that featured 14 groups from St. Louis performing original music.

Most recently, the STLBS hosted The Road to Memphis, our regional competition to prepare for the International Blues Challenge. Seven bands and two solo/duo acts competed to represent St. Louis at the 32nd annual IBC in Memphis, TN January 26 to 30, 2016. Congratulations to band winner Eugene Johnson & Company, and solo/duo winner, The Maness Brothers.

There are two upcoming benefit shows to help support our Memphis-bound artists at BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups. On November 15 from 3-6pm, The Kingdom Brothers, last year's St. Louis band representatives in Memphis, will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary and are graciously donating a portion of their proceeds to the St. Louis Road to Memphis. In addition, on December 13 from 3-6pm the Maness Brothers and Eugene Johnson & Company will be performing at the Road to Memphis Winner's Showcase to help raise awareness and necessary funds for their trip to the IBC. We really hope you can join us at either or both of these events

While this year has been fruitful and a lot of fun for the community, there is much to look forward to in the upcoming months. Specifically, the new compilation CD is almost done and should be out in January. Recording and mixing is wrapping up and we are just putting the final touches on mastering and design this month. There will be 15 groups (none were on the last cd) performing original material, recorded at Paul Niehaus' studio. What's most exciting to me about this project is that when it comes out there will be two CDs available from the STLBS featuring 29 St. Louis artists performing 29 original songs. These types of CDs don't currently exist in St. Louis and by creating and funding them, we have a unique way to showcase the world-class talent in St. Louis. Remember, paid members will receive the CD in the mail in January. If you are not a member, now is the time to sign up so you too get to enjoy the music before it is made available for sale to the public.

I would also take a moment to thank all of our new volunteers this year. Our volunteer coordinator, Rebecca Ryan, has done a great job organizing people who want to be involved. Those who have donated time and energy at shows and/or behind the scenes have been nothing but wonderful. Thank you all so much for getting involved. We really could not have accomplished so much this year without you.

Finally, while 2015 was a great year for the blues in St. Louis, we are working to make 2016 even better. If you are interested in getting involved or have some suggestions for new programming, education, BluesLetter contents or anything else, please reach out to the STLBS. The more people who get involved, the stronger the community will be in the future.

As always, thanks for supporting the Blues in St. Louis! Jeremy Segel-Moss, Chairperson of the St. Louis Blues Society

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The St. Louis Blues Society is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating blues music in and from St. Louis, while fostering its growth and appreciation. The St. Louis Blues Society provides blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public.

**E-mail**Jeremy

I'd love to hear from you!

Please write me at jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org

and tell me what you think of our current projects.

The St. Louis Blues Society is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Missouri corporation. Memberships to the Blues Society are tax deductib to the extent allowed by law.

# FIFTEEN IN FIFTEEN

The St. Louis Blues Society will be releasing its second compilation CD in January. This year we will feature 15 bands (different from the groups on the first CD 14 in 14) from St. Louis performing original music and recorded just for this release. The CD will be sent to all paid members in January and will then be available for purchase.

Become a member today to be sure you get the benefit of great St. Louis music mailed to your home.

Performances by:

Marquise Knox

Roland Johnson and Soul Endeavor

Ron Edwards and Ethan Leinwand Country Bill Edwards

Rum Drum Ramblers

Laura Green

Miss Jubilee and the Humdingers

Kasimu Taylor

Renee Smith **Aaron Griffin** Kingdom Brothers The Bottlesnakes Letter to Memphis Big Mike Aguirre St. Louis Social Club



St. Louis Blues Society Volunteer Party

Road to Memphis Winner's Showcase

STLBS Volunteers: come party upstairs at BB's Jazz, Blues and Soups during the Road to Memphis Winners Showcase Sunday, December 13 from 3 to 6 pm

to thank you for all you do

for reservations, email Rebecca Ryan, voluneer coordinator

voluneer4@stlouisbluessociety.org includes admission to the show and exclusive access upstairs



10th Anniversary Concert Sunday, November 15 3 - 6 pm

BB's Jazz, Blues and Soups 700 South Broadway

Proceeds to benefit the musicians representing the St. Louis Blues Society at the 2016 **International Blues Challenge in Memphis TN** 







The National Blues Museum announced that it, finally, will officially open its doors to the public on Saturday, April 2, 2016. Details regarding National Blues Museum's opening events leading up to the public opening of the facility will be revealed in the coming months.

The opening announcement included statements from Rob Endicott and Dion Brown.

"The National Blues Museum will celebrate this great, national treasure of the Blues, attract visitors to St. Louis from all across the country, as well as provide quality educational programs for students and guests of all ages," said Dion Brown, the museum's Executive Director.

"We are thrilled to bring this project to completion after

many years of planning and fundraising. We could not have completed this without the amazing support of private and public supporters in the St. Louis region and beyond," said Rob Endicott, Chairman of the Board of Directors, and partner at the international law firm, Bryan Cave LLP.

Endicott and Brown are convinced that The National Blues Museum will be a major tourist attraction in "the hub of St. Louis's convention and tourism district, in walking distance of the iconic Gateway Arch, each of the city's major league sports stadiums, the Convention Center and Citygarden."

The 23,000-square-foot National Blues Museum will include more than 16,000 square feet of highly interactive technology and artifact-driven exhibits, an exclusive 150-seat performance area, special event space and classrooms.

The museum's website, <a href="www.nationalbluesmuseum.org">www.nationalbluesmuseum.org</a>, has been expanded and now includes more destination-type information like hours of operation, pricing and rental information and their mission statement: "...will explore and preserve the historic significance of the Blues as the foundation of American music and celebrate the musicians who both created and advance the art form. Beyond the galleries and exhibits, the National Blues Museum will host public programs, educational events and other community-based activities." <a href="https://doi.org/10.1001/journal.org/10.1001/jour



## CALLING ALL MUSIC LOVERS

Play It Forward of St. Louis donates new and gently used instruments to local schools music classes.

Founded with grass roots efforts, we aim to provide your pre-owned instruments back into the schools' music programs.

It's very simple! Visit our website to discover ways you can donate your unused trumpets, saxophones, guitars, amps, violins, keyboards and more!!

You will receive a Tax Deductible receipt and a child will receive the gift of music.

www.playitforwardstl.org





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## MADCO and the Blues

by David Lancaster

When the Modern American Dance Company(MADCO) teamed up with choreographer Gina Patterson for a world premiere piece called Second Line for Dance St. Louis' New Dance Horizons in 2012, the idea was to dance to live music by an ensemble that had been in existence exactly as long as MADCO, the Soulard Blues Band. But weeks before the performance, SBB front man Art Dwyer reported a scheduling conflict to MADCO Artistic Director Stacy West, and set about rounding up a substitute band composed of great musicians who were also former members of the SBB. Brian Casserly, famous for his vocals and one-handed style of trumpet playing, originally turned down the gig, but eventually signed on, insisting on keyboardist Matt Murdick, drummer Joe Pastor and guitarist Tony Esterly. Esterly eventually left town for Nashville and was replaced by Eric Slaughter. They all got much more than they ever bargained for.

The initial challenge was to recreate the music on a Soulard Blues Band CD that the dancers had been rehearsing to, which didn't allow for the usual improvisations associated with the blues. The challenge was magnified by the fact that the first time the band played those songs together was during the tech rehearsal on opening night, about four hours before curtain. It is no exaggeration to say the performance, by dancers and musicians alike, was a smashing success, and it is testament to the skill of the musicians that they made the music sound fresh, immediate and even to a degree, improvised, which it most assuredly was not.

West talked Patterson into expanding the piece, which was originally about life and loss as exemplified by New Orleans' "Second Line" tradition. The expanded production, Liquid Roads, would celebrate the music that came up the Mississippi through the lives of six couples as they endured floods, love, life and death and would evoke the era of riverboats and railroads. It would be designed as a full-length touring piece with live music, and it would also require the musicians to write original tunes.

Casserly, who signed on as music director, knew he had the right ensemble for the task, because they were they were not only top-flight musicians but accomplished composers as well. He wanted to create a changing soundscape, a challenge with just four musicians, and he wanted to evoke and celebrate St. Louis' rich musical heritage, which he insists has never gotten its proper due. St. Louis, according to Casserly, was a hotbed of music after the 1927 flood that uprooted thousands in the South



and sent them to St. Louis and other cities, bringing their music with them. Simultaneously, recording technology changed, and musicians from St. Louis recorded lots of music that was labeled as Chicago or Memphis or New York by the record distributors, but was actually pure St. Louis blues. In that sense, the city has never gotten the credit it deserves for its central place in the history of the blues.

Choreographer Gina Patterson describes the process of writing original music for Liquid Roads:

> "I made a trip to St. Louis prior to the premiere. Before the end of the week, a storyboard started to emerge, and that started the process of creating the musical arc for the entire evening. I would say 'this scene sounds, feels, looks something like this with colors like this or that...' 'This scene or song may or may not fit into one of the four sections...' 'We need a song here that has the feeling of ' or the reverse, Brian would throw out a song that he thought fit the show and then I would create a scene based off of that. Once we decided on the existing songs that were relevant to the story we wanted to tell, we filled in the holes with original music. I particularly loved working back and forth with lyrics for a few of the key songs so that they fit our story. The musicians were so inspiring and it was a true collaboration."

Usually, dancers dance to and interpret the music that has been chosen for the dance. Here, the music often had to accommodate what the dancers were trying to express, and had to be shaped to allow them to express it. According to keyboardist Murdick, "A lot of trying emotion is attached every one of these songs."

The result, Liquid Roads, will be performed on November 13-14 at 8pm at the Touhill Performing Arts Center (www. touhill.org). Tickets \$30. The performance represents a rarity in modern dance: live music, which choreographer Patterson says, "brings an energy and vitality that can never be met by recorded music. The musicians in Liquid Roads help give a power to the already visceral art form that is dance. It just seals the impact of the work emotionally."

For more information, visit www.madcodance.com or email info@madcodance.com

Play It Forward musical foundation is a 501(c)(3) notfor-profit organization whose mission is to provide musical instruments to lower income schools whose funding cannot support music programs in St. Louis and the metro area. Play It Forward believes that every child has the right to explore their musical passions.

When Play It Forward STL launched in 2006, like most people, I knew music education in our schools was struggling. I also knew there had to be a way to assist the children in our community that had a desire to play music. I believe that children who come from certain levels of poverty and who are placed into lower income school districts have been told countless times, "We just don't have the money to buy you a guitar or rent you a trumpet so that you can play in the school band." In addition, that same child goes to school and is being told by the school we just don't have the budgeted funds to provide the instruments that are needed to play music. It's no wonder their selfesteem struggles and their desires are left unattended.

When Play It Forward launched we had no idea if our work would make a difference or not. However, it didn't take long to discover that our efforts were making a difference. We asked the schools to send us their "wish lists" of desired instruments. The first time we provided a school with 22 instruments out of a 26-item wish list we knew our mission was going to be beneficial to students and to the educators whose hands were tied because of school budgets and finances. Doing our initial research and startup we spoke with several music teachers and we understood their frustrations with not having enough instruments for students and not having the funds they needed to provide the musical tools they needed to teach.

Play It Forward soon discovered that there were more instruments in our homes then there were in our schools. We quickly realized many people had trumpets clarinets, drums, guitars, cellos, instrument accessories, oils, music stands, drumsticks, guitar strings and more! All these items were in their spare rooms, their basements, their closests; these items were available!!

Play it Forward's mission grew into "Let's get the instruments out of our homes and place them back into our schools music programs." We discovered for most of the instruments that were donated, the donor had the instrument sitting unused for 10 to 15 years. Play It Forward's mission soon became to gather those instruments out of our homes and place them back into our schools' music program.



Eric McSpadden teaching harmonica to an eager young learner on Cherokee Street. photo courtesy Samantha St. Raymond

With a grassroots-effort and local community support we soon were able to do just that. Most importantly, it did not take thousands of dollars to be able to provide the necessary instruments. We simply asked people to give us their previously played instruments that they were no longer using and we would place them into a child's hands. We understand the multiple benefits of performing music for a child who has a passion to play music. The program is working! Our outreach has expanded into social service agencies and hospitals for children with long-term hospital stays. We have donated over 700 instruments in our community and have opened a second chapter in Springfield, MO.

Our efforts continue by creating new programs and opportunities to be involved. Our "Players' Club" programs allow supporters and venues to rent an instrument for a student by paying the monthly rental fees. It's a great way to support Play It Forward with minimal cost to you. More information on the Players' Club, success stories and documentaries go to our website playitforwardstl.org.  $\Pi$ 

PIF will be hosting a raffle to raise money for instruments at the 14th Annual Baby Blues Showcase on November 29, 6pm to 12am at BB's Jazz, Blues & Soups, 700 South Broadway



### **OUR VERY BUSY SUMMER IN PICTURES**

The Big Muddy Blues Festival, Saturday and Sunday, September 5 and 6 photos by Reed Radcliffe
The Atomic Blues Festival, Sunday September 27, photos by Pat Tovo
The Road to Memphis, Sunday, October 18, photos by Joe Phillips









# Sunday, October 18 The Road to Memphis







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### Barbara Carr Think About It Baby

Jam Jar Records 2015

by Michael Higgins



St. Louis' queen chanteuse of blues, soul and sex is back. And I do mean, "this baby really *does* got back." In fact, Barbara Carr's latest CD release is so phat and rare, it might be the best soul-blues release of 2015.

Anyone familiar with Mrs. Carr knows what's coming. Blossoming in the late 80's and early 90's, the chitlin' circuit-soulstress has perked ears (and other body parts) with classics like: "Bone Me Like You Own Me," "Footprints On The Ceiling," and maybe the longest song title never heard in the movie *Borat*, "If The Lord Keeps The Thought Of You Out Of My Mind, (I'll Keep Your Booty Out Of My Bed)."

So what makes this release so much more special?

This Jam Jar Records debut takes you straight to the core roots of St. Louis soul-blues and R&B. Adroitly compiled by Barbara and legendary St. Louis blues historian Bill Greensmith, *Think About It Baby (Rare and Unreleased 1964-1971)* is the *very first* comprehensive CD release of Barbara Carr's early 45s. Put bluntly, this is a blues collector's wet dream. One that blues and soul connoisseurs worldwide have salivated for.

Barbara Crosby was born in St. Louis in 1941. She started singing as a youngster at First Baptist Church in Elmwood Park. Performing with her sisters, they assumed the name The Crosby Sisters and sang throughout Missouri. By 1963, she became Barbara Carr via marriage. Joining a popular local group called The Petites, not only did they open for Smokey Robinson & The Miracles, but they recorded six songs in 1964 for St.



Louis based Teek Records. Those six tracks produced by Charles Drain (aka Billy James) are the final songs on the CD. It was through those cuts (and her new brother-in-law) that she met Oliver Sain. Auditioning for Sain's band, she not only triumphed, but Oliver helped her secure a 1966 solo contract with the mighty Chess Records. The opening 12 songs on this CD are the blissful, soul-stinging results.

One wonders why Barbara Carr never brandished more hits with Chess. "Don't Knock Love," "'I Can't Stop Now," and "Think About It Baby" all received substantial radio play. But like fellow Sain and St. Louis cohort, Fontella Bass, Carr grew irritated by a lack of promotion. For Fontella, it had to be understandably hard to watch Aretha Franklin sky further upward singing her hit song, "Rescue Me." And as for Barbara, watching both Etta James and Irma Thomas treated like royalty while recording soul classics at Muscle Shoals, probably wasn't easy to swallow either. Another major factor was founder Leonard Chess' failing health and the deteriorating state of his label. Both Leonard's death and the label's sale to GRT would take place in 1969. The imagination can only ponder what might have befallen Barbara Carr had she arrived at Chess in 1960 like Etta James.

That aside, these 18 songs are stunning. There are nine songs recorded for Chess with three extras as duplicates (minus overdubs). The final six are The Petites recorded in St. Louis in 1964. Three of my personal favorites are the unissued "Rolling Stone," "I'm Gonna Make A Man Out Of You" (minus overdub), and Barbara singing lead on The Petites "I Believe The Man Loves Me." To pigeonhole those three though has more to do with rarity, not quality. This release is really that good.

The only further thing one can hope is that this limited edition release is marketed more openly. Preferably worldwide. The magic is wrapped in a recyclable CD case for the time being at Vintage Vinyl. Get it while you can. Beyond being a fantastic stocking stuffer for the blues lover in your realm, it is the release of 2015. Enjoy!  $\Pi$ 

# ♣ BLUES CITY DELI ♣

#### **Nov/Dec Live Music**

Thursday 5 Soulard Blues Band Saturday 7 Brian Curran  Thursday 12 The Boudin Brothers Saturday 14 Sarah Jane and The Blue Notes Thursday 19 Nathan James Band Saturday 21 Nathan James solo Thursday 26 Closed - Happy Thanksgiving Saturday 28 The Sidney Street Shakers Thursday 3 Nick Moss Band Saturday 5 Mat Wilson and friends Thursday 10 Chris Ruest Band with special guest Gene Taylor Saturday 12 Kyle Yardley Blues Band Thursday 17 Miss Jubilee Saturday 19 Roland Johnson and Soul Endevor Thursday 26 Kilborn Allen Thursday 26 Kilborn Allen Thursday 31 Closed - Happy Holiday Saturday 26 Kilborn Allen Thursday 31 Closed - Happy Holiday The deli has live music just about every Thursday and Saturday. Lookin' for a taste of the blues? Check out our website for upcoming shows and events! WWW.bluescitydeli.com  2438 McNair, St. Louis MO 63104 (314) 773-8225			
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# KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN! by Brian Curran

For the last year or more, there has been a string of thefts aimed at musicians' vehicles, with regional touring acts most often the targets. The Riverfront Times has written a number of articles and posted them online. The last two that I read have been about thefts in broad daylight. *Folks, this has got to stop!* 

There are many St. Louis area venues where thefts have occurred, such as Off Broadway, Old Rock House, Atomic Cowboy and more that rely on touring groups to bring in business. Many of these places have been bringing us live music for several years. Off Broadway, for example, is an institution in this town! I played on stage for the first time there when I was 14 years old. I am 39 now!

Here is the problem, the bands that are getting ripped off are not going to come back! They will also tell every other band they know "Don't go to St. Louis to play a show 'cause you'll get ripped off!" And who can blame them?

#### This is serious folks!

No bands coming to St. Louis equals your favorite concert venue losing business and potentially closing down! Think about that the next time you read about another band theft. It surely affects the group getting ripped off, but the trickle-down effect of these break-ins will have a very negative and lasting impact on our music scene. A scene that, in my opinion, has been on the rise over the past few years; with the National Blues Museum opening soon and the St. Louis Blues Society growing bigger and better each year. And many groups who cut their teeth here in town are now successful touring acts themselves.

If these thefts keep occurring and nothing is done to stop

them, what does the future hold for St. Louis? It pains me to say, it might not look too bright if these thieves are not caught. Which brings me to this. What do we do about it?

First, let me talk to the musicians, myself included. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN! Never load in or out alone. Never leave your car or van open when you are loading in or out. Keep it locked when you're not there. Always look around you before you take gear in or load it out. If someone looks suspicious, wait to load in or go back in the venue. Keep a lookout on your way home or to your next stop for the night. If you see a car that has followed you all the way from the gig to your destination, pass it by, keep driving, and call the police.

Now to the fans. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN!

Somebody's had to have seen something during one of these thefts! Here is something you might not have thought of...musicians do not load gear OUT of their car at 1am. They load gear IN their car at 1am. If you see music gear moving from one car to another car at 1am and they're doing it quickly, chances are they are stealing it. Please do not intervene but please do call the police. Report any detail you might see: physical description, car model/make, license plate number. The non-emergency number in St. Louis City is 314-231-1212. You can also call Crime Stoppers at 1-866-371-TIPS.

Awareness and vigilance is a good first step but we are always open to suggestions! Feel free to email me at <a href="mailto:briantcurran@hotmail.com">briantcurran@hotmail.com</a> with your ideas. Together we can stop these break-ins and secure a great reputation for our city as a 'must stop' destination for touring bands.  $\mathcal{I}$ 







The Blues Workshop at the School of Rock Oct. 6 Eric McSpadden - Harmonica

The St. Louis Blues Society Education Fund results are positive.
The next workshop is scheduled for Nov. 17 with
Rich McDonough on guitar.

for more information contact: jheimburger@schoolofrock.com

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#### BISTRO & MUSIC HOUSE

512 N Euclid Ave • St. Louis, MO 63108

#### NOVEMBER

Nov 2	7 PM	Open Mic Music Night	
Nov 5	7 PM	Greg Silsby (Belleville, IL)	
Nov 6	7 PM	The Sidemen	
	10:30 PM	Sundae & Mr. Goessl (Seattle, WA)	
Nov 7	7 PM	Kip Loui & Brian Henneman (The Bottle Rockets)	
Nov 8	11 AM	Miss Jubilee Swing Jazz Brunch	
Nov 11	7 PM	Heather Maloney (Northampton, MA)	
Nov 12	10:30 PM	Amy Speace (Baltimore, Maryland)	
Nov 15	11 AM	Miss Jubilee Hot Jazz Brunch	
Nov 16	7 PM	Singer/Songwriter Night hosted by Ed Belling	
Nov 19	7 PM	Rewind Band	
Nov 20	7 PM	Bottoms Up Blues Gang	
Nov 21	7 PM	Sarah Jane & the Blue Notes	
Nov 22	7 PM	Miss Jubilee & the Humdingers Sunday Jazz Brunch	
Nov 24	7 PM	Sissy Brown (Kansas City, MO)	
Nov 27	8 PM	Jay Hutson & Da Wolves	
Nov 29	11 AM	Miss Jubilee Swing Jazz Brunch	

#### **DECEMBER**

Dec 2	8:30 PM	Rod Picott (Nashville, TN)	
Dec 4	7 PM	Sarah Jane & the Blue Notes	
Dec 5	7 PM	Danbury Street	
Dec 18	7 PM	Backstreet Crusiers	
Dec 19	7 PM	Brian Henneman & Kip Loui	
Dec 24	7 PM	An Evening of Christmas Jazz with Erika Johnson & Tom Byrne	
Dec 31	5 PM	1930's Speakeasy Soiree New Years Ev Dinner and Dance	

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https://www.reverbnation.com/ thealleytones 618.233.6936

#### **Bob Case**

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#### **Bottlesnakes**

Nick Pence www.facebook.com/ thebottlesnakes 314.657.6114

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Jeremy Segel-Moss www.bottomsupblues.com 314.482.0314

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#### **Dave Black**

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www.jimmcclaren.com 314.664.3449

#### **Kingdom Brothers Band**

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Larry Griffin ljgriff43@yahoo.com 314.662.1857

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#### Marty D. Spikener

spikemoves@hotmail.com 314.435.7053

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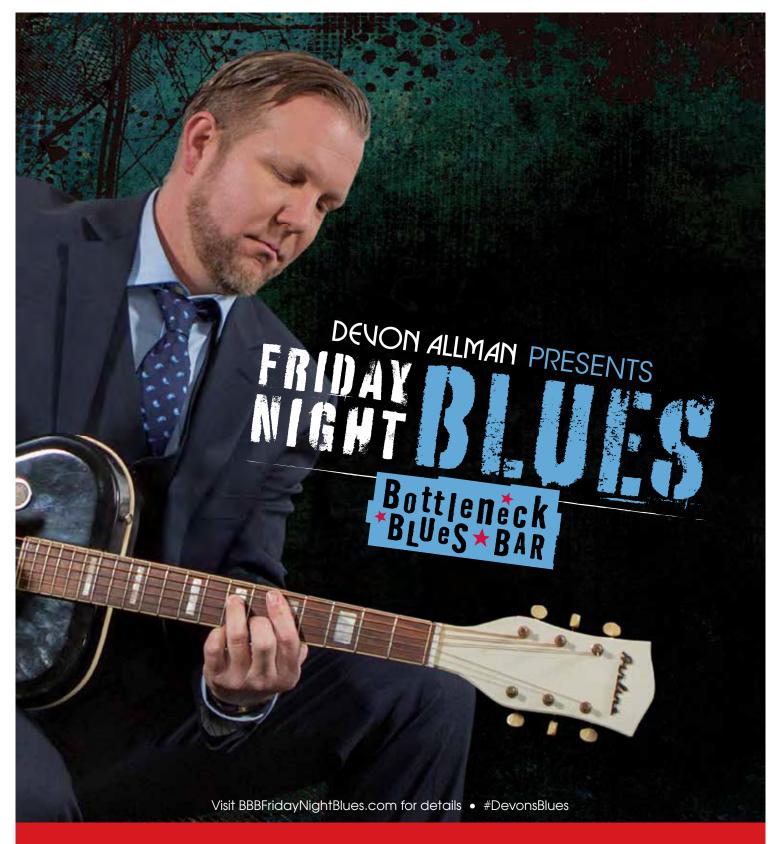
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