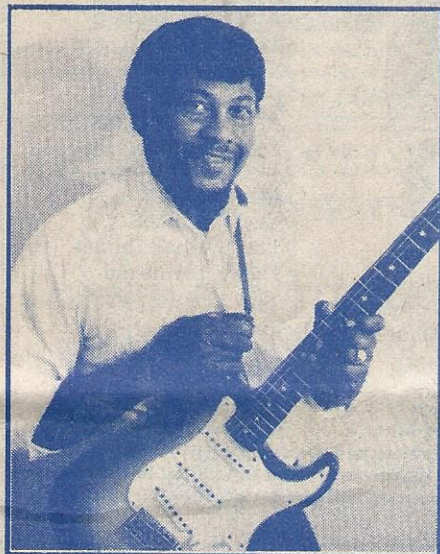


The BLUESLETTER

EUGENE NEAL & THE ROCKING KINGS

By JOEL SŁOTNIKOFF AND MICHAEL TEEPE

One of St. Louis' most popular bands in the sixties was Eugene Neal and the Rocking Kings. Bandleader Eugene Neal was born in 1938 in Sledge, Mississippi, in the Delta about half an hour south of Memphis. He was one of seventeen children of David Neal, a sharecropper, and his wife Beulah. By the time Gene was nine the family had moved south to Rolling Fork, and it was there that Gene first played, on baling wire strung up on the side of the house. Mother, father and older brothers all played guitar, and soon there was a hand-me-down acoustic model. Two years later, in 1949, the family returned to Sledge. Gene would pick and chop cotton and "plow the mules. You're liable to hear some



EUGENE NEAL

lonely blues then. Get late in the afternoon you could hear anybody singin' way 'cross the field, the sounds carry, (sings) ... "Oh Lordy Lord, Oh Lordy Lord, hurt me so bad..." The main source of blues then was the radio and Gene would listen to Ford Nelson and Rufus Thomas on WDIA playing Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters and Elmore James.

By age sixteen he had an electric, a small amp, and a microphone

and would play picnics by himself from three in the afternoon until three in the morning. Others would sit in. It was at this time that he first met his idol, Ike Turner, who was playing at Lena's Place just down Route 3 in Falcon with the Kings of Rhythm.

In 1956 the family came to St. Louis and Gene started playing in a band led by his older brother, Curtis. Curtis and the Houserockers would play the Cotton Club south on Route 3 past the Red Top. A year later he joined Walter Westbrook and his Phantom Five with whom he appears on *Midnight Jump* (Bobbin 106). In 1958 disaffected members of Westbrook's group asked Gene to lead a new band. This was the start of Eugene Neal and the Rocking

Continued on Page 6

BENNIE SMITH

By JOEL SŁOTNIKOFF

Perhaps the dean of St. Louis electric guitarists is Bennie Smith. His shy manner belies an awesome talent. Born in St. Louis on October 5, 1933, the seventh son in a family of fourteen, Bennie began playing on a ukelele brought back from the Pacific by a cousin called Hayfall, who played a song Bennie still recalls called *Slewfoot Floozie With Your Flaws Off*. Soon his



BENNIE SMITH

brother Ivory bought him a battered acoustic with two or three strings. Near 8th and Park he traced strains of blues to an old fellow from Mississippi named Butch McCray, who taught him some techniques. He heard more music emanating from the building at Jefferson and Chouteau and two fellows came walking out, the brothers George and Doc Perry. Benny investigated and encountered Ace Wallace (see *Bluesletter* 5), who taught him "how to hold the guitar, squeeze it, caress it."

He began to play out with George and Doc Perry over on Franklin. Like Ace Wallace, he played with Gabriel's band. Bennie's amp was a converted cathedral radio. Gabriel's trumpet was covered with scotch tape. "Anyplace that wasn't taped up wasn't his horn." There was a trip to Ft. Leonard Wood in Gabriel's battered '50 Chevy Carryall that needed oil every ten miles. Jack Woogie was the piano player, and Nick Nicodemous, called "Chops," played sax.

After his stint with Gabriel, Bennie joined Roosevelt Marks' band. Roosevelt got all the work Ike Turner couldn't handle, and was the first black band to play on local television. The band included Roosevelt on bass, Bennie on guitar, St. Louis Jimmy (James Walls) on piano (and later, Clayton Love), Eugene Washington on sax, Houston Walls, Jimmy's brother, on sax, and L.C. Davis on vocals. L.C. Davis is Larry Davis, who went on the play with Z.Z. Hill,

SPECIAL GUITAR ISSUE
INSIDE FEATURE
IKE TURNER

Continued on Page 7

LOCAL NEWS

• St. Louis blues legend Henry Townsend has been in the studio in recent weeks. • New vinyl is expected soon from David Dec, Billy Peek and Oliver Johnson. • Patti's Blues Bash raised \$4,000 for the injured Doc Terry and The Pirates vocalist. She has started physical therapy but faces further surgery. We wish her the best. • Singer Marcel Strong has opened a new club/steakhouse on South Broadway.

NATIONAL NEWS:

• The Kansas City Blues Society presented their 9th Annual Kansas City Blues Festival Oct. 26, 27 and 28, featuring Johnny Winter, Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin, Lazy Lester, Tyrone Davis, Lonnie Brooks and Zuzu Bolen and the Juke Jumpers. Zuzu has a terrific new album out produced by the Dallas Blues Society and featuring a big horn section like his classic work from the fifties. • New Orleans piano player, Cousin Joe died October 2 at the age of 81.

ST. LOUIS BLUES SOCIETY NEWS

• The Annual Meeting at Blueberry Hill was a smash. The slate of Directors nominated were all elected and Big Bad Smitty and Benny Smith and the Sportsmen put on a terrific show. • In a special telephone meeting in October Mark O'Shaughnessy was unanimously elected to the Board of Directors. Mark has been an integral part of the St. Louis blues community for many years and his skills and experience will add strength to the board. Congratulations, Mark! • The St. Louis Blues Society will begin regular monthly members meetings beginning Monday Jan. 8, 1990 at 8:00 PM at Cicero's.

NEW & RENEWAL MEMBERS

Mike Adorjan	Sandra J. Mathias
Brian Baumgartner	Tina Mayfield
Geraldine Bell	Bill Mendelsohn
Joni & Denise Beusen	Randy Mindak
Jim Bolton	Bernadette V. Mooney
Gary Bradshaw	Joel Myerson
Concert Support Services	Eddie O'Neill
Richard A. Domzalski	Teena Orling
Ronnie Earl	Vicki Palmier
Dana Eliason	Thurmon Peete
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Duane Goldman &	Tony Siorek
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Michael Izsak	Howie Toole
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Klaus Piano Service	Dorothy Valakos
Gerald Kretmar Law Offices	Louis R. Washington
Mark Kruger	Michael Waxman
Larry J. Loveless	Aileen Weinstein
Gene P. Martin	Felix Wohrstein
Maureen Marugan	

SOAPBOX

I'd like to use this month's Soapbox to thank the St. Louis Blues Society members for nominating me to serve on their Board of Directors. I have had the pleasure of working with many of the members on various Blues projects throughout St. Louis and very much respect everyone's dedication, hard work and level of professionalism within the Society.

Having had the opportunity to work at many festivals throughout the U.S. and Europe with several of our own St. Louis artists, I am particularly excited about the possibility of producing a yearly St. Louis Blues Festival. It seems like we have all the potential right here under our noses (musicians, producers, technicians and an abundance of fans) with the knowledge, experience and willingness to get things done.

The key element that is needed to pull it all together though, is cooperation, and it is good to see so many of the diverse facets of the music scene here in town consolidating their efforts to focus on an overall positive outlook for everyone's benefit. So with that key element in mind, and working within the democratic process of the Blues Society where I believe every member's input is important in the direction of this organization, I accept the nomination to serve on the board of directors and look forward to further progress in preserving and furthering our St. Louis Blues tradition and our common cultural heritage.

Mark O'Shaughnessy



DIRECTORS

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Frank Babcock
Barrett Braun
George Edick
John May
Mark O'Shaughnessy
Gene Norman
Lindsay Pickens
Oliver Sain
Joel Slotnikoff
Lou "Fatha" Thimes
Henry Townsend

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Joel Slotnikoff, President
Lindsay Pickens, Vice President
Orlando Perazza, Treasurer
Barrett Braun, Secretary

The St. Louis Blues Society is a Missouri non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving Blues music, to fostering the growth and appreciation of Blues music, and to providing Blues artists the opportunity for public performance and individual improvement in their field, all for the educational and artistic benefit of the general public.

THE BLUESLETTER

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Articles & Photos to:
St. Louis Blues Society Newsletter
P.O. Box 21652
St. Louis, Mo. 63109

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Nov 3 Bobby Rush & Bobby Bland at Club 54
Nov 6 The Nighthawks at Off Broadway*
Nov 10 **Son Seals at Off Broadway**
Nov 19 Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets
with Sam Myers at Cicero's
Nov 22 Leon Redbone at Westport Playhouse
Dec 1 Bugs Henderson at Off Broadway
Dec 8 Dave Van Ronk at Focal Point
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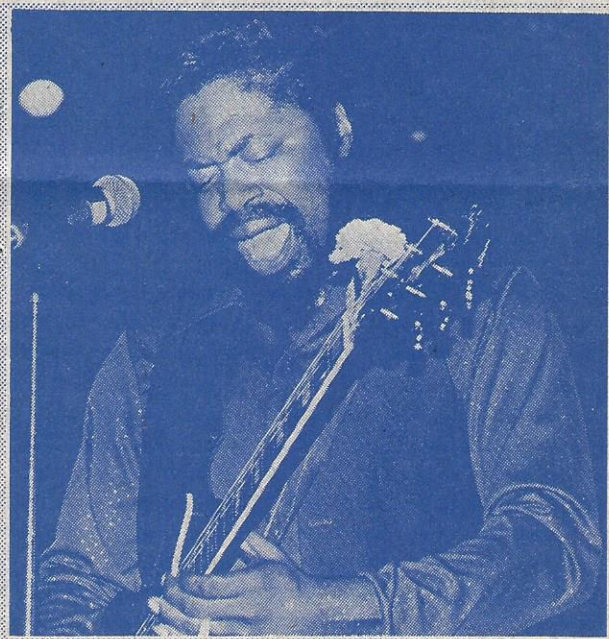
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IKE TURNER

BY JOEL SLOTNIKOFF

One of the most important blues artists associated with St. Louis is Ike Turner. When he arrived in East St. Louis in 1956 he had already chalked up achievements that would assure him an important place in blues history. But it was in St. Louis that his best known achievements were created, and his name is indelibly linked to this city. His influence is still felt on the musical styles prevalent here today.

Ike was born Izear Luster Turner in Clarksdale, Mississippi, November 5, 1931, son of a stern Baptist preacher. As a boy he would hang out in the pool hall, despite repeated whippings from his mother, and it was there that he heard pianist Pinetop Joe Willie Perkins on the *King Biscuit Flour Hour* radio show. He soon became proficient on the piano himself and played with Robert Nighthawk and Sonny Boy Williamson on WROX in Clarksdale, where he hosted a radio show. He soon formed his own band, The Tophatters, with schoolmates Willie Kizart, Raymond Hill, Eugene Fox, Willie Sims, and Jackie Brenston.

By 1950 the group, by then known as the Kings of Rhythm or The Delta Cats, traveled to Memphis, where they recorded "Rocket 88" for Sam Phillips of *Sun Records*. Phillips leased it to *Chess* in Chicago, for whom it became a number one R&B hit in 1951. With its rocking beat, automobile theme, and early date, some advance it as the first Rock and Roll record.

Jackie Brenston, who did the vocal and whose name appeared on the record, split Ike for Chicago, though he later rejoined. Ike remained in Memphis, continuing to work with Phillips and then with the Bihari brothers of Hollywood, California, who operated a string of labels including *Flair*, *Modern*, *RPM*, and *Meteor*. Ike served as talent scout, producer and musician, and did many field recordings, traveling as far as Florida, where he discovered Billy "The Kid" Emerson. He began to play guitar and often played guitar and piano on the same tune, eventually developing one of the meanest guitar sounds in the business, making wicked use of the twang bar. During this period he participated in recording artists such as B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Rosco Gordon, Boyd Gilmour, and Johnny Ace.

In 1954 Ike returned to Clarksdale and set up his own studio, issuing his recordings through the Biharis. He recorded Billy Gayles, Clayton Love, Elmore James, Jesse Knight and himself (as The Sly Fox) as well as many others, using the Kings of Rhythm as his studio band. The period in Clarksdale ended tragically when the police burned down his studio for alleged fraternization with whites.

In 1956 he moved north to East St. Louis, where he roomed with Roosevelt Marks at 17th and Central. He was soon joined by the Kings of Rhythm and they took the city by storm, double and even triple gigging on both sides of the river, particularly at the Manhattan Club and the K-Bar. He recorded for a number of small local labels including *Stevens* in Granite City and Gabriel's *Tune Town*, *Joyce*, *Planet*, and *Royal American*. He cut sides for *Cobra/Artistic* in Chicago, and for *King/Federal* in Cincinnati, where he charted his next hit, "I'm Tore Up," with drummer Billy Gayles fronting on vocals. Ike moved the entire band into his house on Virginia Pl. in East St. Louis so he could rehearse them whenever he chose. He was known as a stern taskmaster, a shrewd hustler, a ladies man, and a dandy, and the Virginia Place house saw many wild times.

Though an interesting vocalist in his own right, Ike preferred to let others do the singing, and he assembled a revue which at various times included Bobby Foster, Tommy Hodge, Jimmy Thomas, Vernon Guy, and Stacy Johnson, but when young Annie Mae Bullock



IKE TURNER

Photo courtesy of Bill Greensmith.

sat in with the Kings on vocals Ike hit paydirt. He married her and christened her Tina Turner, and in 1960 they recorded "A Fool In Love" issued on Juggy Murray's *Sue* label and it rocketed to number two on the R&B charts. It was followed in quick succession by "You Shoulda Treated Me Right," "It's Gonna Work Out Fine," "I Idolize You," and "Sleepless," all included on the "Dynamite" album. Their local success was phenomenal and they regularly packed George Edick's Club Imperial, and they began touring nationally as well.

With his profits from these hits Ike moved his base of operations to the West Coast, where he continued recording on his own *Prann*, *Innis*, *Sonja*, and *Teena* labels, and continued to tour the country. He then re-established a tie with the Biharis, issuing material on the *Kent* label.

With the British Invasion and the psychedelic revolution the duo's fortunes waned, though they rose to one last peak with the Phil Spector produced "River Deep, Mountain High." After that Tina left Ike, and has gone on to fame and fortune of the highest order. Ike cut several bluesy albums for *United* (*Blues Roots*, and *Bad Dreams*) and opened Bolic Studios in Inglewood, which later burned.

Besides the fine string of albums with Tina on *Sue*, and the superb instrumental *Rocks The Blues* on *Crown*, many of Ike's more obscure recordings may be heard on *Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm Vol. 1 Ace CH 22* (Memphis, Greenville and Clarksdale material), *Vol. 2 Ace CHD 146* (Clarksdale material), *The Legendary Ike Turner and The Kings of Rhythm, Red Lightnin' 0047* (a double album of the *Stevens* material), and *Down On Broadway and Main, Red Lightnin' 0064* (more early St. Louis material). The *Federal* material has been issued by *Red Lightnin'* on *I'm Tore Up*, the *Cobra/Artistic Sessions* is on *Flyright*, and the recently issued *Talent Scout Blues* features more Clarksdale material.

Two years ago Ike walked into the offices of Starforce Entertainment in Beverly Hills trying to sell mastertapes. He struck a deal with owners Stan Hermann and Hy Mizrahi that includes a book (being written by Jim O'Neal) and TV movie, both to be titled "I, Ike: The Flipside." They enrolled him in Schick Shadel hospital in Santa Barbara to combat the cocaine addiction that has plagued him since 1970, and arranged a tour which fizzled. The treatment proved unsuccessful and Ike is currently incarcerated in the California prison system.

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EUGENE NEAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kings. Members at the time included Eugene Larkins bass, John Wayne drums, Dave Johnson and Fred Robinette saxes, and Gene on guitar. The revue featured different vocalists over the years. An early stand at the Dynaflo at Cass and Glasgow featured Fontella Bass on piano and vocals. Next there was a five year stand at Slick's Lakeside in Eagle Park, just south of Madison, Illinois. In those early years Ike served as a mentor to Gene, advising him to focus on the musicians who did want to work and not those who caused problems. Albert King got Gene his first out-of-town job at a college in Monmouth, Ill.

In 1960 he cut *Shook Up Over You* with Jimmy "Soul" Clark and Bennie Smith for *Teek*. The female backup singers on the recording were Dot and the Velvelettes, who cut their own record, *Searching For My Man* (*Teek* 4828), with Gene and the Rocking Kings backing them.

By the early sixties musical tastes had changed, and though the show always included blues, R&B was hot, and the band covered James Brown, Little Richard, Joe Simon, Wilson Pickett, and Bobby Womack. Gene chose the songs. Horns were in but there was always room for Gene's bluesy guitar, which made strong use of the twang bar. "I like to twang. Ike and me have a little different twang. You do what you feel. I didn't try to do what he was doin'. I used the bar strictly for my own creation." Gene took no day work. "I didn't think about nothin' else but music. I focused on sound, I didn't focus on money. That pays me when the band sounds good."

Gene's breakthrough came with a gig at The Sunset Pool, a club in



EUGENE NEAL

Sunset Hills. From there he branched out everywhere, the Misty at Sarah and Dr. King, the Interlude at Vandeventer and Enright, Wayne Kennedy's Idlewild above a bowling alley on Virginia, the Club Imperial, schools, private parties, and the Pussycat on Gaslight Square. At the height of it they would start at the Club Imperial on Tuesday and "might not let up 'til Sunday night," ending at the Lakeside or the

Manhattan. By then personnel included Otha Thomas bass, Eddie Bradford piano, and Bobby McNutt vocals. Other vocalists included Jamie Cross, Marcel Strong and Charles Drain.

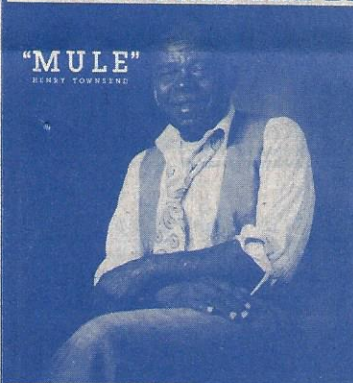
Gene tells a story on himself about playing outdoors at an apartment complex on a Sunday "for the hat." The hat ended up paying better than most jobs, circling the crowd time after time and returning full of money. "It was some kind of big hole there and I was playing, I thought I was away from it, so I'm clownin' on my guitar, hit my vibrato and everything, I took my feet up and when I come back down I was in that hole. They had to pull me out of that hole by my guitar."

In 1964 the group was booked to Tuscon, Arizona, where they played places with names like the La Jolla and the Hoof and Horn. From there they spent a week in L.A., where they wrote the song *If I Didn't Love You*. When they returned they went to Chicago and cut

continued on page 14

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BENNIE SMITH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Albert King, and B.B. King and is now a star in his own right. He appeared at Off Broadway October 14 presented by KDHX and the Blues Society. Washington was a dead ringer for Louis Jordan in looks and style, and there was an occasion when the two played together in East St. Louis. "You couldn't tell 'em apart!"

In the late fifties he led his own combo at the Dot Club at Union and Easton that included Chuck Berry and Chuck Bernard. He also



Above: BENNIE SMITH

Below: BILLY, ERSKINE, SAM & BENNIE

played with Sportin' Ford at a joint at 13th and Cole that served watermelon and barbecue.

During the fifties Bennie cut his first of many sessions, backing Jimmy "Soul" Clark on *Shook Up over You*, with Eugene Neal on second guitar, Otha Thomas on bass, and Dot and the Velvelettes singing backup, for Freeman Bosley's *Teek* label. Clark had come to town with Ty Hunter, who authored the song.

Another very rare session, cut at Ike Turner's house on Virginia Pl. for Gabriel's *Tune Town* label, was *Boxtop*, featuring Bennie and Ike and a then unknown vocalist referred to on the label as Little Ann: Tina's first record!

Bennie taught Ike some guitar, including Gatemouth Brown's *Okey-Dokey Stomp*. "Ike learned it his way 'cause he couldn't get all the things right, and he broke it into a thing called *Prancin*."

In the late fifties Bennie joined Tommy Brown and the Teardrops, who were booked to Atlanta to play on one of the large R&B extravaganzas at the Club Peacock. Bennie and the band, including Raymond Hill and Billy Duncan on saxes, Lloyd Wallace organ, Sam

Bennie Smith continued on page 10

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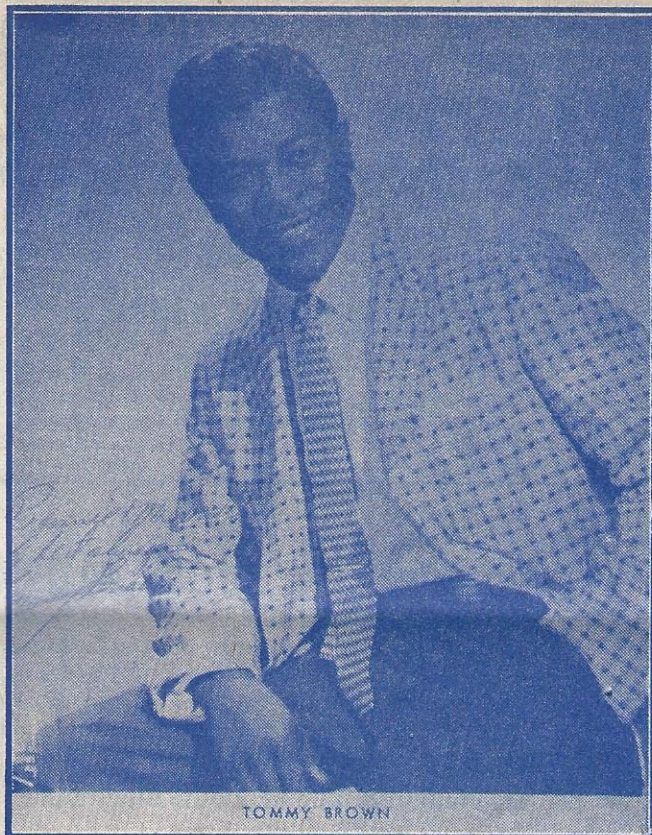
Jesse Knight



Freeman Bosley



Sportin' Ford



TOMMY BROWN

Tommy Brown



Billy Duncan, Sam Rose and Friend



Front: Roosevelt Marks, Larry Davis, Bennie Smith
Rear: Jimmy Walls, Jackson, Gene Johnson, Lax

BENNIE SMITH CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Rose bass, and Stumpy on drums backed The Drifters, The Spaniels, Amos Milburn, and Charles Brown. From the Atlanta base they played regionally in Georgia and down into Florida.

When he returned to St. Louis he played with Screamin' Joe Neal for the first few months of his long stand at the Peppermint Club at Skinker and Delmar.



Left: RICHARD MANSFIELD. Right: OTHA THOMAS.

Bennie next played with Billy Davis, who went on to the Fifth Dimension, at Edward's Club in Kinloch, which was owned by Billy's uncle. The band included Ira Gates drums, Erskine Oglesby sax, Terry Williams organ, and Wilford Valmore bass. This band was the first black group to play the Admiral. The show at Edwards also included Billy's sister Fedora doing a fan dance, and a performer called Lockjaw whose act included holding chairs and even tables in his mouth.

During much of the sixties and on into the seventies Bennie played the American Legion Hall in Madison, Illinois, with a band led by sax player Richard Mansfield that included Martell Oates drums, Jimmy Johnson bass, and Chuck Bernard vocal and piano. At one point in the sixties Bennie's girl's sister was dating Bennie's idol, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, and Bennie and Matt spent a night sharing a room. Bennie recalls Murphy would wake up every hour or two and "torture his guitar" and then fall asleep again.

Bennie taught many students through the years. He is proudest of Anthony Chinott, who went on to play with Isaac Hayes, and Ira Gates, who went into Little Milton's band. He also coached Benny Sharpe during an early incarnation of The Sharpees called The Turbans which included Stacy Johnson, Vernon Guy, Morris Henderson and Little Herbert. Bennie cut *Condition Your Heart* with Little Herbert for *Teek*, and it is now the title cut for *Red Lightnin's Condition Your Heart* album, reviewed in Bluesletter 5, which contains several other Bennie Smith cuts. Particularly fine is Clayton Love's *Mistreated*.

The seventies saw stints with Billy Gayles and with Charles Drain, after which Bennie retired, suffering from back and eye problems. Only last year Bennie re-formed The Sportsmen, named after a lounge at Sarah and Finney where the group originated many years before. Today's Sportsmen include Anthony Boon sax, Cubie on bass, Bell Boy on drums, Vernon Guy on vocals with occasional help from Bennie's daughter Robertino Robinson on vocals. He has also sat in on several recent gigs with Big Bad Smitty with superb results.

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REVIEWS

Recordings

Good Woman Go Bad Bar Car 1001 St. Louis's Barbara Carr has reached a major milestone in her long career with her first album. Despite several singles for *Chess* and several more on smaller labels, such as *Teek*, Barbara has not, until now, been given the due measure of her considerable talents. This masterfully crafted album should change all that. Barbara belts her way through solid blues burners on the title cut, *What's Wrong*, and *When You Love Somebody*, and delivers R&B ballads such as *See Saw*, *Not A Word*, and *Oh What A Price* in her rich, gospel-tinged alto. She is already commanding broader attention, and this album should further that trend considerably.

The Cherry LP SDE 4008 St. Louisan Bobby McClure, now living in California, is best known for his duet with Fontella Bass, *Don't Mess Up A Good Thing*, on *Checker*. When Fontella left the Oliver Sain Revue, her replacement was Barbara Carr, who then sang with McClure. Like Barbara Carr, McClure's superb vocal talents have up to now only been represented on singles. While McClure demonstrated his ability to sing low-down blues at a recent sit-in at Po' Bob's in Eagle Park, and a commanding way with sixties soul material at Oliver's Soul Reunion last May, on this premiere album he works in a contemporary R&B vein. His ballads are effective, and the up-tempo numbers have a strong dance beat, propelled by Tony Matthews' stringing guitar, producer Swamp Dogg's keyboard work, and a full horn section.

Honey Take Me Pulsar 004 Former Oliver Sain bass player Ronnie Guyton's premiere single features a fine, up-tempo blues on the title cut, with a rich, contemporary mix, and a tight version of *Hide Away* on the flip, with solid guitar work from Tom Maloney. Look for good things from this talented entertainer.

Theatre

The Scottsboro Boys The Holy Roman Repertory Company Oct 13 & 14 at COCA. The striking tale of nine blacks falsely convicted of raping two white women in Scottsboro, Alabama in 1931 featured musical segments by legendary blues singer/mandolin player Yank Rachel backed by Henry Townsend and Leroy Pierson. The show will be broadcast of KWMU January 8, 1990 at 9 PM

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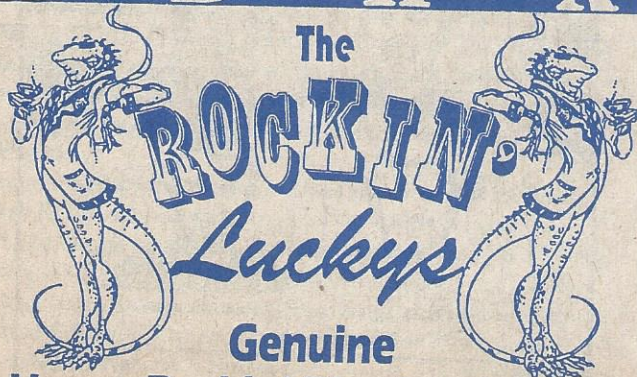


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To the dozens of volunteers actively participating in the Blues Society we extend our thanks. The Society could not function without your support. But more help is needed.

Volunteers are needed in the following capacities:

1. **Volunteer Coordinator.** This entails calling members when essential tasks arise: some predictable, such as Bluesletter distribution, and some spur-of-the-moment.
2. **Promotion Director.** The Promotion Director must maintain relations with key members of the print and broadcast media in order to disseminate timely information about Society activities. He or she must also assemble information and photographs about upcoming artists for the media, and for posters, flyers and mailings.
3. **Circulation Director.** The Circulation Director must coordinate the timely distribution of the Bluesletter.
4. **Transcription.** Transcription of interviews for Bluesletter stories requires good typing skills and exact attention to verbal nuances.
5. **Grant Writing.** During November and December grant applications must be prepared for future Society activities.

We always need help folding, stamping, stapling and labeling mailings. We also need volunteers to work the door at Society events. Writers for The Bluesletter are invited, as are letters to the editor. Anyone may submit an article for the Soapbox column. You can also help by actively recruiting new members and being sure to attend Society events. Any one wishing to volunteer should call Joel at 647-2447 after ten in the morning.

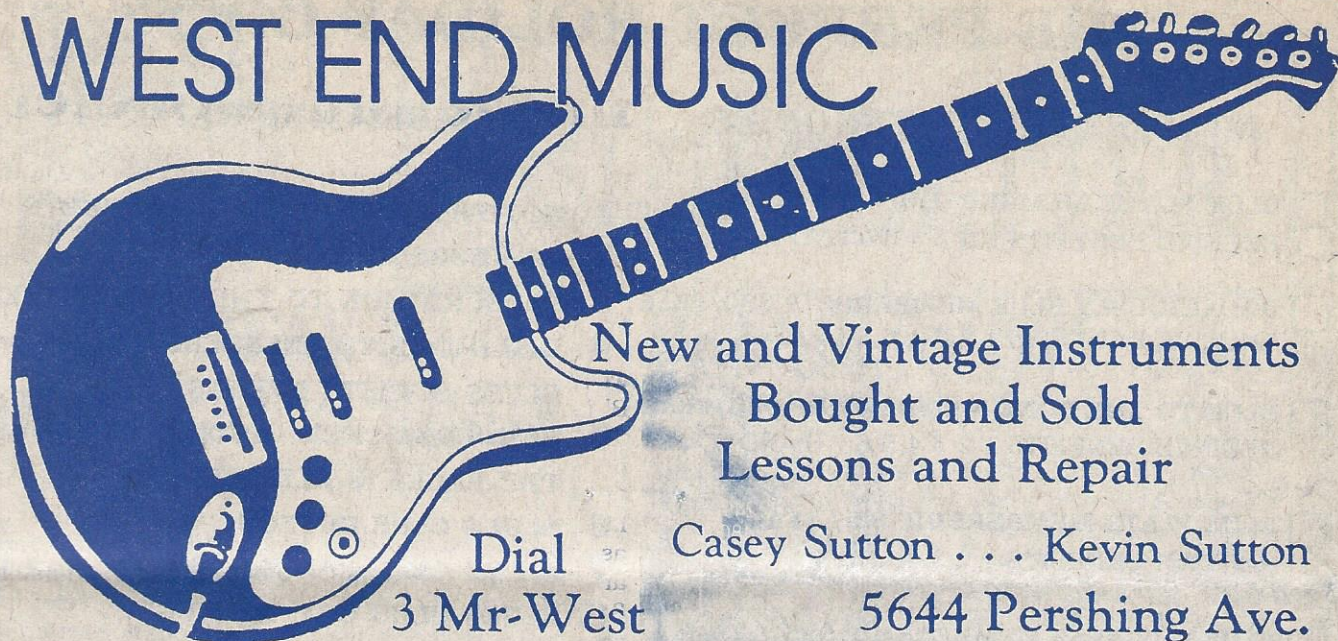
EUGENE NEAL CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the song for CBS with a St. Louis vocal group called the Profiles that included James Cross, Jamie Ross, and Eddie "Shot" Scott. That same year they were regulars on the Rampage television show on Channel 11 at noon on Sundays, along with Bob Kuban, Chuck Berry and others. Gigs at the Misty and the Interlude in '65 were broadcast live on KATZ by D.J. Jerome Dixon.

In '67 Gene spent a year without the band in La Puente, California where he finally got to play with his old friend Ike, touring regionally. When he returned to St. Louis he resumed the gig at the Lakeside using McNutt on vocals, Sammy Mitchell on horn and Chuck Clay on drums. He married Slick's daughter and became the manager of the Lakeside as well as the house bandleader. The Lakeside was big, it held 350. Often "half of Gaslight Square" would follow him over after the Pussycat gig. "They loved it, out in the country, let your hair down, do what you want to do, listen to the music. We was havin' a ball." He would take the band to Kansas and up into Illinois on dates considered a vacation from the Lakeside.

In 1973 Gene had had it with managing a club and a band and gave up music for a secure job at Anheuser-Busch, which he still holds. He gave the band over to his second guitarist, Howard Robinson, and sax player Joe Whitfield. He remembers his years on the musical scene here with clear pleasure, as I am sure do many who saw him perform.

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