

BLUESLETTER

THE 1990 ST. LOUIS BLUES FESTIVAL

BY FRANK ABSHER

ou've been hearing rumors for several months and now we can make it official. The St. Louis Blues Society is proud to announce the St. Louis Blues Festival, scheduled for September of this year.

A small group of dedicated volunteers has been working quietly over the past eighteen months to make the festival a reality. As things now stand, the event, actually a series of many events, will span a nine day period beginning September 14th. There will be something for everyone, including free concerts, outdoor venues, pub crawls, concerts at some of your favorite blues watering holes and even a surprise or two.

The committee set out to cover as many bases as possible, knowing that a festival of this magnitude had to be commercial enough to attract donors and contributors but they also sought to retain a true blues flavor in everything they present. Local groups will play a large part in the event and well known national acts will also be featured. Many of those bars which support the blues throughout the year will be involved as sites for festival events.

The City of St. Louis, in the form of the Mayor's Office, the Economic Development Commission and the Convention and Visitor's Bureau, is supporting the effort. The Marriott Pavillion Hotel is on line as the official hotel, and inquiries have already been received from Japan and England

In the months ahead, you'll be hearing and reading alot about the blues in St. Louis as our public relations campaign kicks in. We can guarantee that the media in this region will have plenty of information to report. By September, this town will know all about the St. Louis Blues Festival and the St. Louis Blues Society. So mark your calenders now for the biggest blues event St. Louis has ever seen.

Continued on Page 6

SILVERCLOUD

BY RON EDWARDS

grew up listening to the blues. My mother, Lula Talley, and my uncles, Oscar and Leslie all sang and played guitar. She was my first inspiration, I remember her singing "Romance In The Dark" by Lil Green. Our house always had music in it. My mother had many 78s, she would buy one a week and we would listen to Big Maceo, Tampa Red, Sonny Boy Williamson, and Big Bill Broonzy. It was on Broonzy's records that I first heard Memphis Slim.



SILVERCLOUD

Many piano players worked with Big Bill, but none of them impressed me like Slim did. That style of piano really caught my attention. He's always been the main influence in my playing.

I didn't have a chance to see him until 1947 when he came to play the Club Riviera on Delmar. I was born in St. Louis County in March 1933 and being underage I had to sneak in to hear him. His band featured Ellis Atkins and Ernest Cotton on sax and Willie Dixon on bass. He didn't use a drummer then. In the late forties and early fifties he was more popular here than Louis Jordan. He had so many great tunes, Motherless Child, Rockin' The House, Lend Me Your Love and Darlin' I

Continued on Page 4

NATIONAL NEWS:

Early word on the Chicago Blues Festival has a T-Bone Walker tribute with Lowell Fulsom and Duke Robillard. With low air fares and some people who want to drive we're not going to do a charter bus, but we've got a block of rooms at the Essex, the official Festival hotel, right across the street from the Festival and anyone interested should contact Joel at 647-2447. New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival dates are April 27 to May 6.

LOCAL NEWS

There is now local blues on cable thanks to Andre and Marilyn Courtois. Their show, called Andre's Pit runs on TCI in the city only, on Channel 15 Friday night from 11 til 12, and Saturday night from 8 til 9. There's a new blues night on Mondays from 5:30 to 8:30 at AJ's in the Adams Mark. A salute to West End Music for bringing in Buddy Guy, The Kinsey Report, Terrence Simeon, Lonnie Mack, Charlie Musselwhite, and as we go to press, Pinetop Perkins, Hubert Sumlin, and Daddy Kinsey with Little Mike and the Tornados at Furst Rock on the Landing. Sure got the year off to a good start! If you haven't checked out the Ragtime to Rock 'n Roll: St. Louis African American Music exhibit at the History Museum in the Jefferson Memorial Building in Forest Park be sure to get by, it's a killer. And finally, on a sad note, Elaine Crump passed away. A member of the Rhythmettes with Robbie Montgomery in the fifties, Elaine was one of the backup singers on the classic "A Fool In Love" session. We regret the omission of credit to Robert Pruter and Bill Greensmith for discographical information used in the Benny Sharp article in Issue 7.

St. Louis Blues Society News

Scott Simpson who has served as the Society accountant for the past two years was elected to the Board of Directors at their February 15th meeting. His financial expertise will be a great asset to the Board. Congratulations Scott! The Society will be presenting Yank Rachel at the Missouri Historical Society Building, Lionberger Auditorium May 12 in partnership with the Missouri Historical Society. Watch for details in the next issue. Starting with the next issue we will be establishing a new policy on business card and other size ads from local blues bands. Special offer for Blues Bands-Purchase Blues Society Memberships for everyone in your band and receive \$20 Discount on 6 Business Card Ads in the BluesLetter.

New & Renewal Members

Gerard J. Homan,	Robert B. Morton
Ltd.	Carla Munday
Brian Houser	Mark Nauman
Hullabaloo	Dennis Nelson
Pat Jordan	Ellen Nore
Barbara F. Kellner	Dr. Harriet
Luke Knese	Ottenheimer
Tim Lapping	Clyde J. Pointer
David Lyle	Jim Rittenbaum
Doug McLeod	Rothschild's Antique
Rose A. Maguire	Donald F. Sloane
Mike Mathes	Gary Spires
Brian & Jody	David Suhre
Matthews	Lillie Taylor-Crockett
Bill McAbee	Randy Thompson
Byron D. McElroy	Mark Tomlinson
Mark Moore	Richard Tomlinson
Zambo K. Moore	Dan Williams
	Ltd. Brian Houser Hullabaloo Pat Jordan Barbara F. Kellner Luke Knese Tim Lapping David Lyle Doug McLeod Rose A. Maguire Mike Mathes Brian & Jody Matthews Bill McAbee Byron D. McElroy Mark Moore

SOAPBOX

What do you think of when you see the names Chuck Berry, Albert King, Henry Townsend and Ike & Tina Turner? How about the names Peetie Wheatstraw, Lonnie Johnson, Roosevelt Sykes, Sonny Boy Williamson and Robert Nighthawk? One more nudge. How about the names Silvercloud and the St. Louis Blues Band, Big Bad Smitty, The Rockin' Luckys, The Soulard Blues Band, Blue City Band or Rondo's Blues Deluxe? They all either play in St. Louis or have played in St. Louis on a regular basis. When you get to the last group of names, however, you notice a difference. They have not yet received national acclaim as the others have. The message is clear. St. Louis has always had outstanding blues musicians. Some have achieved national recognition while others have not yet. The other directors and I strongly believe now is the time to act. St. Louis musicians are worthy of national exposure. It is our desire and intent to bring such attention to St. Louis with the St. Louis Blues Festival. Over the following months and years, we will present the St. Louis Blues Festival and related events and activities falling within the scope of our organization's purposes. Your participation is not only welcome but necessary. If you have thoughts on what the organization should do, how it should be done or want to offer your assistance, let one of the directors know. After all, this is one of the few volunteer organizations around in which the work to be done is actually fun. Hope to see you at upcoming events.

Barrett Braun



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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

Editor	Design	Advertising
Joel Slotnikoff	J.M./R.T./M.OS.	Luana Hays

AD DEADLINE - NEXT ISSUE: April 30 ADVERTISING RATES (For Ads call: 726-4913)

Size	1 Time	6 Times
Business Card	\$20.00	\$15.00
1/8 Page	\$40.00	\$35.00
1/4 Page	\$75.00	\$60.00
1/2 Page	\$140.00	\$125.00
Full Page	\$250.00	\$200.00

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Hubert Sumlin, Pinetop Perkins, Big Daddy Kinsey at Furst Rock

Marvin Sease & Bobby Rush @ Club 54 March 2 March 7 Uptown Rhythm Kings at Off Broadway Cephas & Wiggins with Jackie Torrence March 9

at The Sheldon

March 12 Charlie Musselwhite at Furst Rock

March 15 Night of the Blues at Preservation Hall March 30 Sherman Robertson at Off Broadway April 4 Guitar Masters 1990 at Miss. Nights

April 13 Spider John Koerner at Focal Point April 16 Joe Louis Walker at Furst Rock

April 26 Little Charlie & Nightcats at Off Broadway

April 27 Son Seals at Off Broadway

May 6 Mayfest at Wash. Univ. with Rockin Dupsie May 12 Yank Rachel at The History Museum

in Forest Park

Events in BOLD TYPE produced by St. Louis Blues Society

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With the support of The Missouri Arts Council & The Regional Arts Commission



March 1 (Thursday) Hubert Sumlin, Pinetop Perkins

& Big Daddy Kinsey

March 5 (Monday) March 12 (Monday) **Big Bad Smitty** Charlie Musselwhite

March 17 (Saturday)

Rondo's Blues Deluxe (St. Pat's Day)

March 19 (Monday)

Rondo's Blues Deluxe **Big Bad Smitty**

March 26 (Monday) April 2 (Monday)

Rondo's Blues Deluxe

April 16 (Monday)

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231-1216

FOCAL POINT

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SILVERCLOUD CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Miss You were just a few. I would catch him at the Glass Bar, The Chesterfield Bar or the Harlem Night Club over in Brooklyn, Illinois, where he alternated each month with T-Bone Walker.

The crowds would always be large and I would edge my way as close to the piano as possible so I could watch his hands. Between 1952 and '54 he moved here and played on a regular basis. His guitar player was Matt Murphy, who instructed a number of musicians locally, including Bennie Smith. They worked a circuit that included Casey's Blue Room in Kinlock, The Hanley Hills Country Club, and Ned Love's in East St. Louis.

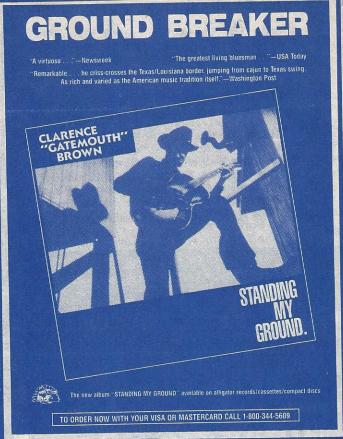


Kenny Rice (Dr), Sims, Melvin Hughes, Nelson Norris, Silvercloud, Cecil Travis (Gtr). 1957. Redtop (Wonderbar), East St. Louis.

I began playing the piano earlier, but my real education started when I enrolled in the Downbeat Music School at Grand and Enright in 1950. I was in high school then, and once a week for two and one half years I would take lessons. Buddy Pace was my teacher and from him I gained a solid foundation in a variety of musical styles. He taught me to read music, to play the blues changes, boogie woogie bass lines, and ballads. He knew what I wanted to learn. I was more developed vocally then, but I practiced hard on my piano. It wasn't long after that I started my first band. Using my real name, we were called Rudy Coleman and the Rhythm Rockers. The group featured two tenor saxs, guitar, piano, drums, and periodically a bass. Music wasn't quite as loud then as it is now. Our early engagements were at the Round House in Edwardsville, The XGI Club in Alton and the Yukon Bar.

The last place was over on Newstead and St. Louis Ave., and in 1954 the owner put a big banner out front advertising me as the "Little Boy With the Memphis Slim Voice". In those years I can remember Chuck Berry coming by to sit in and play that song, Ida Red. Bob Kuban also dropped in and played the drums. Around that time Don Mercuman from the St. Ann's School of Music heard me and asked if he could be my booking

CONTINUED ON PAGE SEVEN



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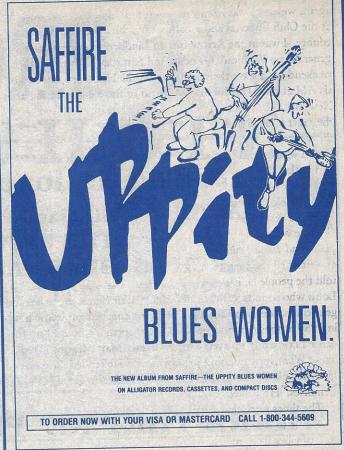
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1860's Saloon	231-1860	The Foxhole		On Broadway	421-0087
1886'er Lounge	618-874-6729	The French Quarter	947-1343	Player's Lounge	271-7291
20th Century		Furst Rock	231-1216	Po' Bobs	876-9408
AAHMES Temple	618-397-9591	Gino's Lounge	385-4546	The President	621-4040
AJ's	241-7400	Great Grizzly Bear	231-0444	The Red Sea	863-0099
Allen Ave.	241-2971	Hacienda Lounge	382-4503	Riddles	725-6985
Baby Doll Lounge		Hillary's	421-3126	S&P Oyster Co.	256-3300
Bailey Brothers	352-8660	Hits	256-4949	Sadie's Personality	389-3366
Blueberry Hill	726-0066	Houlihan's Biergarten	863-9116	Schaffer's	773-4308
Broadway Cafe	383-9742	Just The Two Of Us		Schmiezing's Millbrook Cafe	721-7009
Broadway Oyster Bar	621-9608	Kinloch Cotton Club	524-2460	Shuster's Bar & Grill	421-2688
Caddy Shack	946-5529	Lemp Mansion	664-8024	Sideline	968-6864
Cicero's BasementBar	862-0009	Maggie McDuffs	355-1164	Soulard Preservation Hall	436-1995
Climmie's Western Inn	727-3370	Melanie's	621-5668	Stagger Inn 618	-656-4221
Club 54	533-0202	Mike & Mins	421-1655	Ten Mile House	638-9082
Crehan's Irish Pub	618 397-7930	Millie's Carribean Room	385-3522	Tubby's Red Room 618	-875-6128
Creve Coeur Inn	432-2220	Mississippi Nights	421-3853	Venice Cafe	772-5994
Doc's Place	618-344-8332	Missouri Bar & Grill	231-2234	Webster Bar & Grill	962-0564
Donna's	427-9679	Off Broadway	773-3363	Whitt Lounge	535-3680

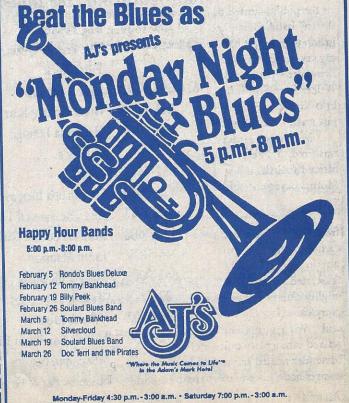
The First Annual St. Louis Blues Festival was produced in 1986 by the St. Louis Blues Club. It featured eighteen St. Louis blues bands/artists on one stage in a day-long extravaganza that was the largest event of it's kind ever to be produced in St. Louis. It took thirty volunteers three months to put together and execute. Since that time the Blues Club/Society has served as co-producer of the Benson and Hedges Blues in 1988 and the Michelob Jazz and Blues Festival at the Forum in 1989.

The St. Louis Blues Festival 1990 will be bigger and better yet. Ron Edwards, Barrett Braun, Frank Babcock, Gary Edwards, Mark O'Shaughnessy, Joel Slotnikoff and I have been working since early last year to create this event. We believe that St. Louis's importance as a blues center merits an event of this caliber. It will take a lot of logistical support to make it happen. If you are interested in participating in the Festival please fill out the form at the end of this article indicating your area of expertise.

If you are from outside the St. Louis area and wish to be kept posted of St. Louis Blues Festival developments please fill out the second form.

St. Louis Blues Festival Volunteer Application Name Address State City___ /Phone home Phone work ___ Male Female Social Security Number____ Areas of Expertise____ Special equipment you have access to. Current Employment_ Times you are available_ Send To: St. Louis Blues Society, Box 21652, St. Louis, Mo. 63109 ST. LOUIS BLUES FESTIVAL MAILING LIST Please keep me advised about the St. Louis Blues Festival Name Address Zip City (Country) Phone Send To: St. Louis Blues Society, Box 21652, St. Louis, Mo. 63109





agent, which he was for a year. Through him, I started working at the Club Imperial and a number of white clubs out in the county. I was at the Arrow Inn on Lindberg for seven years, generally on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights. On the weekend we'd leave there and play on the East side from two to six AM at the 318 Club on the island or the Kingsbury K Bar in Newport. The county clubs payed good money and we played the exact same kind of blues we did across the river. The only difference was the audience's reaction. People in the white clubs would whistle and clap while in the black clubs they would scream and holler.

I guess Memphis Slim first became aware of me in the late fifties. He'd been watching me, because wherever he'd go, I'd be. He was a very nice and easy going man. One night at the Harlem Club he was doing "Rockin' The House" and when he left the piano and walked out into the audience I got on the bandstand and finished the song for him. He acknowledged me there. He told the people he had heard talk about the young man in St. Louis who sounds so much like him. "Well I must say ladies and gentlemen, this is my shadow." His last engagement in town was in 1959 at the Mambo Key Club. Slim spent a whole set on the dance floor while I played with his band. Matt Murphy asked him, "What are you going to play now?" He replied "I'm not sure. He played everything I know." Those were special memories. He moved to Europe soon after.

The times were changing, rock and roll was coming in. I used to be able to feel chills from the blues I'd play. I didn't get that kind of vibes from rock and roll. It wasn't colorful enough for me and I just couldn't feel it. Work in the white clubs started drying up and the black clubs weren't paying any money. Some of the owners didn't care about the quality of the music, thinking all the public wanted to hear was some noise that any "dime a dozen" band could play. I had gone to great lengths to keep this group together, it had been a long established band. I had lost my sax player, Carlson Oliver, and my other one, Heywood Brownlee went into the army. I sent for and brought in Jr. Walker from South Bend, Indiana. He moved his whole family into Kinloch. He was here for eight months and then left. There just wasn't enough gigs.

I had a steady full time job all the years I'd been performing. I was tired. I'd been working night and day, and when the clubs offered so little, it just wasn't worth it. Working for General Motors payed enough to live on. In 1962 I completely quit music.

I didn't come back to it until 1977. I'd been out of work from the plant and had been looking around town for a place to earn something performing again. One day I found myself walking down Euclid in the West End. I was disgusted and so frustrated. In my mind I kept thinking over and over, my life is mighty cloudy, so very cloudy. That old saying came to mind, "In every cloud is a silver lining." I smiled and with a bit of humor said "Well hell, as cloudy as my life is I must be Silvercloud." I walked into a place called Reflections. It was deserted except for a bartender named Jerry. The bar had been up for sale, so the owners hadn't been doing anything with it. I asked Jerry "How

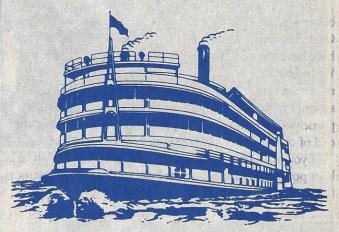
SILVERCLOUD continued on page 10

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Oliver Sain's St. Louis R&B All-Stars '88 (Jazz Live Festival) Rosenheim, W. Germany



Johnnie Johnson, Oliver Sain '88 (Subway Jazz Festival) Cologne W. Germany



Louisiana Red, Oliver Sain '88 (Subway Jazz Festival) Cologne, W. Germany

BLUES PORTRAITS

BY MARK O'SHAUGHNESSY



Piano Slim (at Blues Estafette), Utrecht, Holland



Sunnyland Slim, Doc Terry (at BB's) 1981

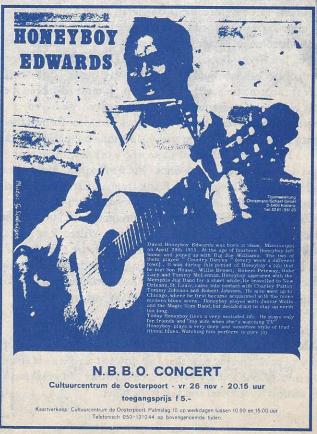




BLUES IN VERA OOSTERSTRAAT 44
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toegang f 5,— (lidmaatschap verplicht) voorverkoop: Hemmes, Steentilstraat; Elpee, Oosterstraat

Big Joe Williams (1977) - Groningen, Holland



Honeyboy Edwards Poster- Groningen, Holland

Silvercloud Continued FromPage Seven

about getting a piano in the place?" He said "Who are you?" I said "I'm Silvercloud," the thought had never left my mind. He replied "There's a blues tune right now in my head, a piano piece. If you can guess it you're in." He put me on the spot and I said "After Hours." He reared back with a laugh and told me "Brother if you can be here tomorrow at two o'clock there'll be a piano here for an audition" The next day when I arrived, it was a Saturday as I recall, sure enough there was a big old piano in the window. They had borrowed it from Balaban's and rolled it right down the sidewalk.

The house filled up within an hour and when the owner dropped by he couldn't believe it. Soon I was working Friday and Saturday nights. Business picked up to the point that they made me entertainment director and I started hiring musicians through the week. Leroy Pierson had been there before and he came in on Monday nights. I booked Piano Slim, Earthquake, Mae Wheeler and many others.

A fine young harmonica man would come by and play as a duet with me. His name was Steve Kaufman, later he played with Tommy Bankhead and James DeShay. I felt a sense of accomplishment. I had worked hard to open the Central West End to blues.

After a couple of years I moved over to Caleco's on Laclede. I started there the first week they were open, doing Sunday nights. The crowds started mushrooming and I had the opportunity to put together a band once more. I wanted to use Earthquake, but he was a bit raggedy for most places. I took him to the Big Men's Shop and dressed him up. I bought him a set of White Rogers drums and he began being recognized as a good musician. Little Amos came in on guitar, Mark Kimes on bass and Doc Terry who I had just met at the Folk Life Festival, played harmonica. Man, we had some wonderful jam sessions there. Jim Burns, Bobby Betts, Erskine Ogilsby, Elijah Shaw and many, many others would come in and play. Keith Doder used to play at the same time with Doc on harp. It must have been the only blues band to feature a harmonica section. We stayed together for two years before Earthquake and Doc formed their own groups. I haven't been without a band or a music job since.

As I look back, I think of those who worked with me and then developed their own sounds. Richard Martin, Ricky Allen and Chee Chee, David Hines, Frank Dunbar, Kenny Rice, Cecil Travis and Chuck Clay all played in the band. I'm especially proud of the fact that I succeeded in bringing back horns to the blues scene in St. Louis. Carlson Oliver, Jr. Walker, Roy Akers, Erskine Ogilsby, Oliver Johnson and Ed Early are but a few of the fine players that worked in my groups. Today the St. Louis Blues Band features Fred Grant and Bob Ritzer on guitar, Albert Hunter on baritone sax, Fred Williams on bass, and Aron Cameron on drums.

My life at times has been very cloudy. I love my wife Jaqueline and my children, they've been so supportive. Its with a sense of pride and joy now that I sit down at the piano in front of a microphone and say, "Good evening ladies and gentlemen, my name is Silvercloud and this is the blues."



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Sunday 6-7 PM, Glass Bottom Boat, Uncle Roy Sunday 7-8 PM, Nothin' But The Blues, Ron Edwards

Sunday 8-10 PM, Night Train, Papa Ray Sunday 10-12, For Night People, Al Becker Monday 3:30-6:30 Gentleman Jim Gates Tuesday 4-6:30 PM Bluesday Afternoon, Dennis Clancey and John McHenry Tuesday 10-12 The Tuesday Night Dance Party, Ed Vigil

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Thursday 4-6:30 PM, Gabriel
Thursday 9-11 PM, Crescent City Classics, Ms Q.
Friday 4:30-6:30 PM, Blues In The Night,
Art Dwyer

Friday 7:30-9:00 PM, The Roots Canal, Orlando

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KWUR 90.3 FM

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if you have any of this material, please write and let us know what you have.

We will buy the records we need, or pay to have studio quality master tapes made from your records. (Rooster Blues purchased the rights to the above labels from East St. Louis DJ "Gabriel" Hearns, but certain master tapes are missing.) Any assistance appreciated.

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To Provide Additional Information call Joel @ 647-2447

TO ALL BLUES BANDS & ARTISTS:

The Blues Society would like to collect the names, addresses, & phone numbers of all blues artists in the St. Louis Metro area. We would also like to know what current & past bands you have played in, and what instrument(s) you play.

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