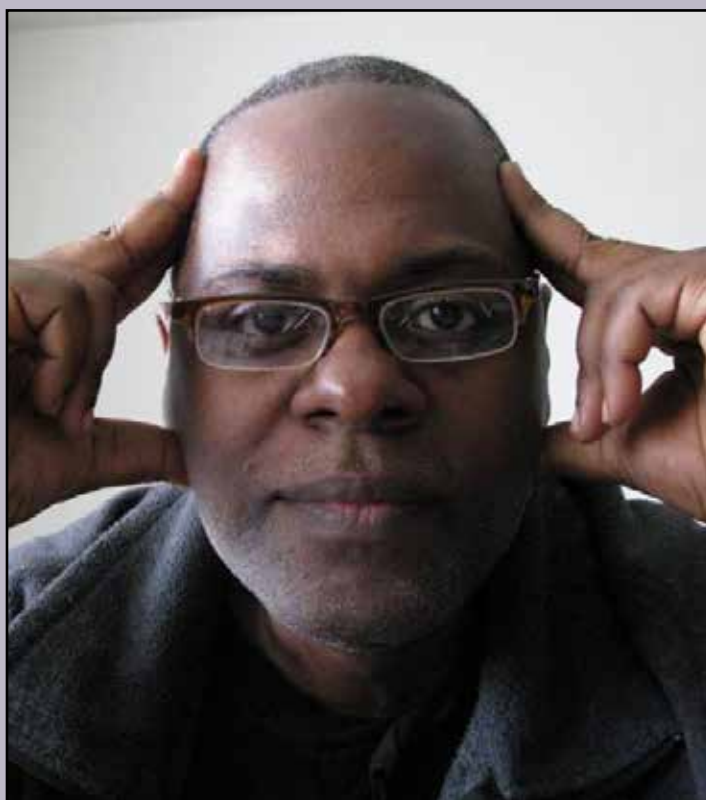


# BLUESLETTER

## *In Remembrance*



**Stephen Martin 1959 – 2019**



**Daniel Butler 1964 – 2019**

Also Inside! Reed Radcliffe's photos from the Road to Memphis,  
Bob Baugh's Blues Beat, The Baby Blues Showcase



# PRESERVING AND PERPETUATING BLUES MUSIC IN AND FROM ST. LOUIS SINCE 1984

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Welcome to the final BluesLetter of the decade. It has been a really good year for the St. Louis Blues Society, St. Louis Blues music and the city as a whole. We are very proud of the work we've been doing and are excited for the future projects and evolution of the organization.

## E-mail Jeremy

I'd love to hear from you!

Please write me at [jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org](mailto:jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org) and let me know if you have been to the Dark Room on a Tuesday yet.

We would like to congratulate the 2019 Road to Memphis winners who will be representing St. Louis at next year's International Blues Challenge: The Jake Curtis Band and Brother Jefferson with Rich McDonough. We had a great event showcasing some of St. Louis' strongest talent. Thanks to everyone who attended. If you have a chance, please go see these groups and tip extra generously to help with their trip to Memphis. We'll be hosting a benefit show for the groups on December 8 at BB's Jazz Blues & Soups. Hope you can make it!

The annual election for Board Members of the St. Louis Blues Society is also right around the corner. All members should be looking for ballots in their mailboxes mid-December. It looks like we'll be including some new faces on the ballot to bring new energy to the organization. Please make sure you vote and return your ballots. Election night will be the 4th Tuesday of January. We will have more details to come about that event soon. 2020 has all the makings of becoming a banner year for the STLBS and for St. Louis Blues music. We are working hard to create more programming, better outreach, additional funding, opportunities for musicians and capacity for telling the story of St. Louis Blues music by the people who create it. If you are someone who has ideas, wants to get involved or has questions about why and how we do what we do...please reach out! I am always available by phone or email to talk about any aspect of the organization. I am a firm believer that change comes from those who participate—and we want your participation.

Thanks to everyone who has made 2019 a great year of music and community. We are all looking forward to what 2020 will bring and hope you will be a part of the future.

Jeremy Segel-Moss, Chairperson, Board of Directors

*BluesLetter* is published six times a year by the St. Louis Blues Society.

PO Box 78894  
St. Louis MO 63178  
[stlouisbluessociety.org](http://stlouisbluessociety.org)  
[facebook.com/stlbluessociety](https://facebook.com/stlbluessociety)

Mary Kaye Tönnies  
Editor  
[mktonnies@stlouisbluessociety.org](mailto:mktonnies@stlouisbluessociety.org)  
Jeremy Segel-Moss  
Co-Editor  
[jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org](mailto:jsegelmoss@stlouisbluessociety.org)

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



*Good Luck*



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**DECEMBER 8, 2019**



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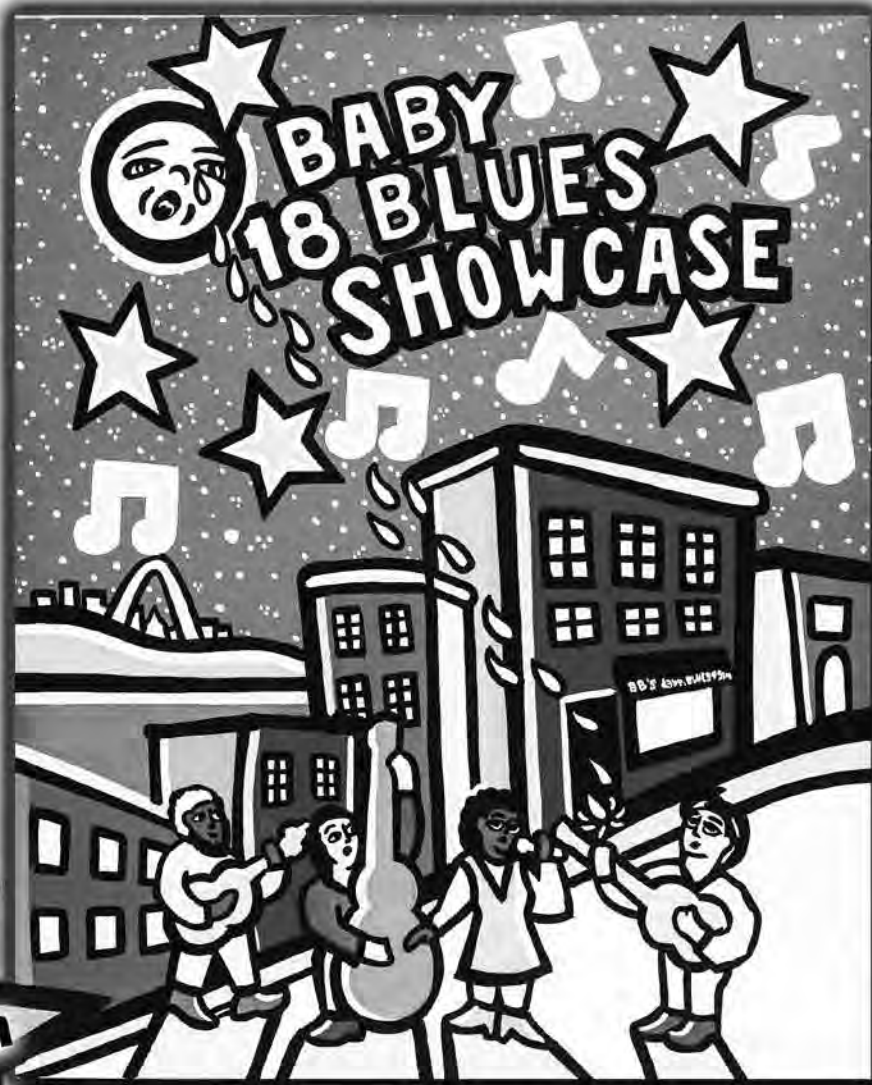
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# The Blues Beat ★★

**Bob Baugh**  
**November 2019**

## **Big City Rhythm and Blues Showcases STL**

Watch for the December issue of *Big City Rhythm and Blues* magazine. The theme will be *Meet Me in St. Louis*. The publisher, Robert “Junior” Whitall, had observed the increasing notoriety of the St. Louis Blues scene: the opening of the National Blues Museum, the profile of artists like Marquise Knox, Jeremiah Johnson, Mike Zito, and Hy-C & Fresh Start’s win at the IBC. He and his wife Shirley Mae Owens came for the museum’s exhibit of his own art *Happy to Have the Blues*, this summer. They left impressed by the local history, the live blues scene and the quality of the music they heard. Whitall became a believer and said, “We need to let the rest of the world know what is going on here.”

## **Cigar Box Guitars: 21st Century**

A fun new exhibit now on display at the National Blues Museum features over 50 fully-functional, homemade instruments made within the last year. The show is a testament to the ingenuity of musicians who lacked the resources to

buy luxuries like guitars, so they made their own. What grew out of necessity has become an artform in modern music. If you have ever seen Samantha Fish in concert, there’s a good chance you will have seen her play her oil can guitar. Which also goes to show you that cigar box guitars aren’t just about cigars. People made instruments out of anything that worked for stringing from cigar boxes to toilet seats.

Visitors can even try one out from the group available on the floor display and see what Lightnin’ Hopkins was talking about, “So I went ahead and made me a guitar. I got me a cigar box, I cut me a round hole in the middle of it, take me a little piece of plank, nailed it onto that cigar box, and I got me some screen wire and I made me a bridge back there and raised it up high enough that it would sound inside that little box, and got me a tune out of it. I kept my tune and I played from then on.”

## **Musicians at Work**

Lots more churnin’ and burnin’ in the studio at Paul Niehaus’ Blue Lotus Recordings. He is hard at work with musicians layin’ down tracks in his south side basement studio for the St. Louis Blues Society 19 in 19 CD. Niehaus also has a full recording calendar with lots of other bands producing new albums. Jake Curtis has a new one, *Tales for the South Side*, in time for the Memphis IBC where he will represent the St. Louis region.

Roland Johnson has just released his second all original album, *Set Your Mind Free*. Other artists at work there includes Jon Bonham, Miss Molly Simms, Gene Jackson, Walt Greiner, Daniel Hamm, Brother Jefferson, Sweetie and the Toothaches. Niehaus is even working on his own solo album.

Another much-anticipated release is the Big Mike Aguirre and his Blu City All Stars album. Two singles, “Deal with the Devil” and “It Won’t be Long” have been released and received airplay on KDHX. The album should be released in January.

Marquise Knox and his band are back from touring with ZZ Top for several midwest dates during their 50th Anniversary Tour and reported, “It has been an honor and a pleasure to help ZZ Top celebrate their 50th Anniversary! This tour has been fruitful, educational and very generous towards the band and myself!”

Al Holliday and the East Side Rhythm band headed out in late October for a month-long tour through Germany and the Netherlands. Big Mike Aguirre and Neil C Luke will join them for the last week. They will all be back in time for the release of Holliday’s new Christmas album, *Christmas in America*. It includes a bonus track, Woodie Guthrie’s “Deportee.” Al hopes to raise some money for RAICES, The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services. Don’t miss the 7 pm release party November 22 at Off Broadway. 🎵



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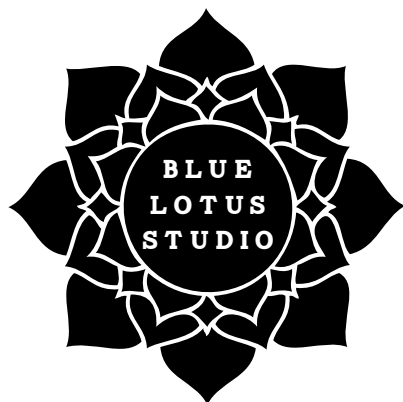
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Stephen Martin 1959 – 2019

# A Gentle Soul and an Astounding Musician

*A Celebration of Life was held for Steve at BB's on August 25.*

*This obituary from the celebration was written by Steve's sister, Susan Martin, and reprinted with permission.*



Beloved...Son of Benjamin and Patricia Martin, Brother of Logan and Susan Martin, Brother-in-law of Mary Knight-Martin and Ken Shadlen, Uncle of Ben Martin, Kate Martin and Louisa Shadlen, Companion of Judy Boring and Friend to many.

Musician, with various artists and bands, including Dark Victory (his first band!), BOB, Billy Gayles, the Mighty Big Band, Marsville, Kim Massie, Roland Johnson and Soul Endeavour, and many, many other great musicians.

It would be easy to say that Steve was all about the music because in many ways, he was. He knew from early on that music was his passion. He received his first guitar when he was six and he spent his life doing what he wanted to do—making music. Playing it. Recording it. Writing it. His formal music training was limited—he had soon learned all he could from his first guitar teacher, and he wanted to learn by doing. He met up with Billy Gayles from Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm as a kid and started playing East St. Louis nightclubs and learning the ropes of the music business. Steve went on to do a stint at the Berklee School of Music in Boston and then toured with the U.S. soul singer Marcus Kelly's band.

In the 1980s, Martin formed a rock and roll band called BOB that terrorized St. Louis clubs for a few years. He eventually re-teamed with Gayles to form Billy & the Preachers, who played locally to a large following. Steve and Billy then formed The Mighty Big Band in 1986; it continued after Billy's death, featuring various singers including Larry Thurston, Stacy Johnson, Roland Johnson and Margaret Bianchetta. At the time of his death, Steve was performing with Kim Massie (since 2004) and with Roland Johnson and Soul Endeavour (formed in 2011).

Recently when discussing an article on Buddy Guy, he wrote that it, "reminds me not to take for granted that I got to share time with a few who were part of the period in America when the whole blues thing happened. As a white guy, I've always struggled with calling myself or trying to be a 'blues musician,' whatever that means, but the 'real' side of it is that I did get an inside look and was able to absorb some of the energy of that special time in history."

So, a lot of Steve's life was music. But he wasn't just about the music. He was also all about his many friends and family. Steve didn't have a lot of faith in the official systems of society. Speaking at his father's memorial service, he explained that he had doubts about his parents' efforts to change society from within its existing structures. But he also admitted that secretly, within himself, "there's been a part

of me that hopes they've been right all along." And Steve did have faith in people. Especially after his rebellious teenage years (!).

Steve spent his life caring for others. He took people at face value. He was always willing to share a joke, to discuss a theory on alien existence or economics, or to listen to a problem and offer words of support. He was always there for those who needed him, including his parents as they got older, his friends and family, and other musicians.

Steve was a "gentle soul," a bit of a goof, and an astounding musician. He is loved, and he will be greatly missed.

If you would like to do something in Steve's name, please go out and support your local music scene and/or use your vote to help ensure healthcare for all. 🎵



The original Mighty Big Band at Molly's in Soulard, 1992. From left: Billy Gales (1931-1993); Rich Cotton (-2010); Margaret Bianchetta (with young Kaleb Kirby); Mike Prokopf (-2014); Steve Martin (1959-2019); and Tom Hall. photo courtesy of Margaret Bianchetta



Daniel Butler 1964 – 2019

# Soul Heaven Has a Production Technician

by Bob Baugh

Every band has a member you never see onstage. These are the artist/technicians who use the stage as their tapestry to create settings and paint performances with mood enhancing light and sound. Daniel Butler was one of those artists. The National Blues Museum and the Sheldon Concert Hall were his home away from home. His sudden passing at the age of fifty-five stunned the blues community.

Butler, the youngest of nine children, grew up in a mid-city four-family flat on Etzel Street with a love of art. His life partner Juliette Yancey said, “He really had an artist’s soul. His mom was a homemaker and his dad a workingman so she didn’t get many flowers, but Dan would draw her flowers and frame them.” She and a high school art teacher encouraged his talent. Butler would walk from his home to the St. Louis Art Museum to study the artwork and draw. It led to a high school internship at the museum. After graduating from Southwestern High in 1982 he applied for the museum’s auditorium coordinator position.

Even though he had no experience, Butler had impressed them with his love of art, skills and his “I can do it,” attitude. During his years there (1983-2001) and on other stages in town he learned stagecraft, the stagehand work that covers everything from building sets to lights and sound. Eventually his resume would list stagecraft union affiliations (IATSE) with Stagehands Local 6, Projectionist Local 143, Studio Mechanics Local 493 and IBEW Local 4.

In the mid 80’s Butler honed his sound skills with Reggae at Will as their soundman. When he met Charles “Babatu” Murphy, a member of St Louis’s first reggae band the Infrared Rockers, he found a sound brother. Murphy laughs at the memory: “It was a friendly competition between the bands. Dan and I shared a passion for sound. We were always comparing notes. We liked to look things up and

learn whatever was needed for the best possible sound for an audience.” They would lose touch, but the bond was always there.

Through the 90s Butler became a craftsman working his way through the arts community. He was a carpenter with The St. Louis Black Repertory Company and Stages St. Louis; and a Stagehand, Lighting and Technical Director with the St. Louis Ballet, the Opera Theater of St. Louis and Ballet Midwest. He even shared in a 2006 Mid-America Emmy as a photographer for *Conversation with Paul Rusesabagina*.

Butler moved to the Missouri History Museum (2001-2007) as their AV coordinator. It was the Emerson expansion era with a new auditorium and new productions including *Twilight Tuesdays*. The museum was also the place he would meet two important folks in his life, Jackie Dace the African American History curator and a writer who would become his partner, Juliette Yancey.

Dan and Juliette first met in 2000 but didn’t begin dating until 2005. Later they settled down together and started a family, Brandon (2011) and Arabella (2014). Juliette recalled those times, “Dan was older and never thought he would have a family. When we did, he was thrilled. He was an awesome devoted dad. He would turn down big money jobs for family. Our last conversation was about back to school, what hopes we had for the year and about his talking to Brandon about being a good big brother for Bella as she started school.”

Yancey also spoke about how Butler looked at his own work. “He used to say, ‘I’m a jack of all trades and a master of none,’ but later he began to say he didn’t like that because he did work hard to master each of his areas of expertise. He would tell me, ‘When I die, I going to be a legend in this town.’” She spoke to the artistry and his love of



Dan Butler at the NBM with friends: from left, Dan, Dylan Triplett, Charles “Babatu” Murphy, Donald Kinsey, Jesse Lopez

photography and drawing, “The artistic ethic never left him; he just transferred it to the technical side of things ... the stagecraft, the sound, the lighting. He was such a sensitive soul it was why he connected with musicians. He saw things through an artist’s eyes or a musician’s ears.”

Settling down coincided with Butler’s becoming a regular at The Sheldon Concert Hall where he became fast friends with his boss, Tim Albert (Uncle Albert). “We worked together for more than ten years. He was my friend and right-hand man. I never had to worry. He was one of the best lighting guys in St. Louis and the only guy I trusted to slide into my chair at the soundboard. Dan always had my back. He was in demand because of his many skills. What was unusual was we would get calls from national touring acts that would request Dan. They had worked with him before. Very unusual. No one does that. He was a proud black man who was willing to try and change his small part of the world.”

The National Blues Museum (NBM) opening brought all the pieces together. Jackie Dace, the museum’s Internal Affairs Director, knew Butler from the History Museum. She recruited him to the Legends Stage to work with another tech, Charles “Babatu” Murphy. It was a joyous reunion. “One day Jackie brought in Danny to introduce us to each other,” Murphy said, “Man, we just cried and hugged each other. It had been 30 years. As we worked together, we realized how much we shared. We learned from each other to take things to a new level. It was all about sharing and learning.”

They tuned the room and found a new friend in Terry Hardin, the Operations Manager for the museum. Together they made the stage and sound shine. “Dan and I had been on parallel paths,” Murphy said, “It was destiny. I taught all kinds of career and technical ed in production technician skills.

continued on page 12

# REED RADCLIFFE AT LARGE



Performances at the 2019 Road to Memphis from top left: Walter Greiner; Mz. ShA; The Ka'ShA Band; Giuseppe & Rodrigo; Brother Jeff & Big Rich; Jake Curtis; The Jake Curtis Band; Bernie Hayes, emcee; Little Dylan; Little Dylan Band; Jerry Minchey, STLBS Road to Memphis Committee Chair; Marty D. Spikener; Marty D. Spikener's On Call Band. Awarding the winners: Brother Jeff and Big Rich, winners of the solo/duo contest; Jake Curtis Band, winners of the band contest.





ST. LOUIS BLUES SOCIETY'S REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE



# THE ROAD TO MEMPHIS

photographs

## SEPTEMBER 22, 2019





continued from page 9

Dan was way ahead on all kinds of technical skills because of the work he did.” They helped open the door for African American students like Josh Reynolds who said, “Dan was an awesome funny well-spoken guy. It was an amazing educational experience with them. I got to do everything from the soundboard to camera work to stage set up.”

On August 2, Butler had spent the morning setting up for the STL Philharmonic Orchestra. He went home to take a nap before the show and never woke up. Word quickly spread through the blues community. An August 17 memorial was held at the NBM. Terry Hardin was emcee for the event. Tim Albert and Jeri Peterson spoke from the stage with Adrienne Petty offering a prayer.

Peterson, a longtime friend from STL Black Repertory Theater production of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom Blues*, told how Dan's business card stated, “I'll make your artistic dreams a reality.” “He was the gold standard when it came to sound and lights,” she said. Brittany Perry, the daughter of Butler's best friend, Anthony, told how Uncle Danny inspired her. “He was interested in my art when I was a kid,” she said, “he taught me a hand tracing technique to help my drawing. Today I am a school art teacher because of what he cultivated in me.” It was the same technique he had recently taught his son, Brandon, to help him with his handwriting.

Onstage, Murphy completed the circle with another gathering of old friends. The Infrared Rockers which today includes a couple of former Reggae at Will members provided the reggae. He also produced a moving video tribute that can be viewed at <https://ustream.tv/recorded/123551573>.

Of the many heartfelt tributes for Butler it was Terry Hardin's post, *Soul Heaven Has a Production Technician*, that spoke for many at the memorial. “My heart is heavy, but I'm at peace knowing how it went. Whatever Dan had just finished, I know he did it to the best of his vast knowledge and abilities. He worked with the best in the business and shared that with us and his proteges. He was always the consummate professional. As humble as he was though, he always said ‘Without Tu [Babatu] there wouldn't be a me.’ Dan cared how you sounded, live and on the stream, whether you were talking, playing your genre, or just a visiting high school orchestra. I Love You, and I'm going to miss you, Brother!! You are now at Peace.” 🎵



Terry Hardin speaking at the memorial for Dan Butler at the NBM August 17



jeffchapmanmusic.com  
618.292.7196

## UPCOMING SHOWS

- Fri. Nov. 8 - BB's Jazz, Blues and Soups, St. Louis MO - 10p
- Tue. Nov. 19 - Sheldon Concert Hall, St. Louis MO - 7:30p
- Fri. Nov. 29 Evangeline's Bistro, St. Louis MO - 7pm
- Sat. Nov. 30 - CJ Mugg's, Webster Groves MO - 9p
- Sat. Dec. 14 - 1860 Saloon, St. Louis MO - 9p
- Fri. Dec. 27 - CJ Mugg's, Webster Groves MO - 9p

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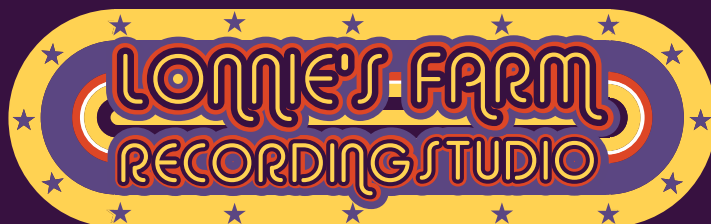
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**Marty D. Spikener's  
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 314.435.7053

**Melissa Neels Band**  
[melissaneels.net](http://melissaneels.net)  
 314.306.8407

**One for the Road (solo act)**  
 Harold Schellenger  
[a1manband@yahoo.com](mailto:a1manband@yahoo.com)  
 618.791.7106

**Paul Bonn  
& The Bluesmen**  
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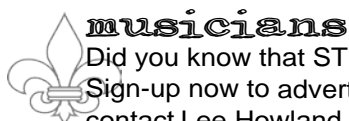
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**Uncle Albert**  
 Tim Albert  
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4-7 PM
- DEC 13** LITTLE DYLAN  
HOWLIN' FRIDAY  
7-10 PM
- DEC 14** HY-C AND FRESH START  
SHOWCASE SATURDAY  
7-10 PM
- DEC 15** STEVE SCORFINA  
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