



## Inclusive - a newsletter for the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society

June 2016 Edition

### Prairie Crossroads Blues



### Society Champaign-Urbana IL

#### Views by Dennis Wismer

Golden State - Lone Star Review is fast approaching. This event being held June 18<sup>th</sup> at the Accord in downtown Champaign, Illinois (formerly The Highdive). This Blues super group - led by past bandleaders Anson Funderburg, Mark Hummel and Charlie Baty promises to be one of the best Blues shows not only in CU area but one of the best tours on the road. (See additional article by Bob Paleczny in this newsletter). This event is a great opportunity to support Blues music and make a statement that world class talent can be supported in our area. The Highdive was known for bringing such big name acts historically including Guitar Shorty, Lonnie Brooks multiple times and Coco Montoya. It is important to get out and support such shows to give promoters and venues a reason to schedule high quality blues acts.

The area's premiere event Blues Brews and Barbecues kicks off Friday June 24<sup>th</sup> with another incredible lineup. Of note are Slam Allen an amazing Blues performer. From Clarksdale MS. Comes the Dave Dunavent Band, who also is hosting PCBS Blues Jam earlier in the week, William Marsala Band and headliners Reverend Horton Heat and The Fabulous Thunderbirds. PCBS will once again have a tent set up where you can join or renew and get various information about PCBS events and Blues information.

The Blues Jam that has been held since last May on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at Bentley's is currently under negotiation for a new site. Bentley's management is heading in a new direction and have decided against hosting this event. This event has been wonderfully attended and the music has flat out been amazing. The lineup of host bands and musicians coming to jam is an incredible list and the supporters of this show have started a tradition that needs to continue. More information will be released as soon as available so please consider supporting or continuing to support this event.

Angela Jordan - Moubry the current manager of Bentley's Pub and a longtime supporter of Blues music and Prairie Crossroads Blues Society is moving on and will be missed by PCBS in that capacity. Angela and her staff always provided a great environment and helped bring in David Dunavent and Evol Love, Bill and Shy Perry and R, J Mischo with Kilborn Alley. Thank you and continued success Angela.

Alligator Records is celebrating a milestone as a leader in producing quality Blues CD's and memorabilia market. Alligator solo releases and compilations are must haves for any blues fan as the label founded by Bruce Iglauer to release Hound Dog Taylor's album Hound Dog Taylor and the Houserockers immediately gained a foothold in Chicago Blues and worldwide.

Here is an excerpt from Alligator's website which sums up Alligator's history and vision.

The blues and roots music Alligator Records has been releasing since 1971 -- created by iconic giants of the genre like Hound Dog Taylor, Koko Taylor, Albert Collins, Luther Allison, James Cotton, Elvin Bishop and Mavis Staples, and label-nurtured legends including Son Seals, Lil' Ed & The Blues Imperials, Saffire—The

Uppity Blues Women and Michael "Iron Man" Burks -- has more than stood the test of time. With the *Alligator Records 45th Anniversary Collection*, label founder and president Bruce Iglauer, along with his 15-person staff (many of whom have been on board for well over 20 years) celebrate Alligator's extraordinary past, history-in-the-making present, and a future filled with more "Genuine Houserockin' Music."

The *Alligator Records 45th Anniversary Collection* clearly lays out Alligator's wide-ranging, forward-looking vision with tracks from newer voices – Selwyn Birchwood, Toronzo Cannon, Shemekia Copeland, Moreland & Arbuckle and Jarekus Singleton – seamlessly programmed next to legendary artists including Curtis Salgado, Rick Estrin & The Nightcats, Joe Louis Walker, Delbert McClinton, Anders Osborne, The Holmes Brothers, Guitar Shorty, JJ Grey & Mofro, Ann Rabson and Roomful Of Blues. Together, the *Alligator Records 45th Anniversary Collection* presents a comprehensive portrait of this singular, rooted, soul-stirring American music.

Alligator Records 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary collection is set for release June 10<sup>th</sup>.

**Renew, Recruit, Recharge.** In closing I ask you to renew your membership and consider recruiting friends as well. With a steady flow of new members, it allows us to bring in more shows and support more promoters and Blues acts. It also provides a recharging effect for our longtime supporters as well as a forum for your voice to be heard and your efforts rewarded with wonderful music and friendship that lasts a lifetime. Be Well my friends and in the sage advice of a great friend. Blues the Joint!!!

## **God Don't Never Change The Songs of Blind Willie Johnson – 2016 Alligator Records**

**Written by Tony Odendahl**

I am not familiar with Blind Willie Johnson or most of his music, but I did know of several artists that contributed their talents on this CD. Tom Waits, Derek Trucks & Susan Tedeschi, Luther Dickinson, Sinead O'Conner and Rickie Lee Jones are people I have heard and own music by and I have heard others doing "John the Revelator." I don't usually offer to review CD's due to the many other tasks I am behind on and I am a blues fan and may not be objective enough for most people that depend on a positive review before they decide to buy a particular CD. This is a blues CD with a lot of gospel which was Blind Willie Johnson. It has all these great people performing on it. Derek Trucks and Susan Tedeschi perform on it which is reason enough to buy it! They always refer to blues musicians as going to hell for playing the blues, but with these songs they may find redemption. I liked this CD and agree with the other reviews I have seen that praise it. So please God don't never change the songs of Blind Willie Johnson.

## **For upcoming events, visit [Prairie Crossroads Blues Society](http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org) at**

**[www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org](http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org)**

## **Mac Arnold and Plate Full O' Blues**

***Give It Away***

**Written by Lorri Coey**

Mac Arnold has had a long relationship with the blues, going back to when Mac was only ten years old and "he and his brother built a guitar out of a gas can, a couple strips of wood, a handful of nails, and some screen wire," according to allmusic.com. From there the South Carolina native played with J. Floyd & the Shamrocks in his high school years. Not a household name but the sometimes piano player with the group was none other than James Brown.

After Mac's 1965 move to Chicago he added many more names to the list of those he played with: A.C. Reed, Muddy Waters, Otis Spann, John Lee Hooker and B.B. King. Not too many years later he relocated to Los Angeles and was in the band for the television show Soul Train, recorded the theme song for Sanford and Son and backed up Bill Withers.

In the 1980s Mac moved back to South Carolina, took a job driving a truck and walked away from the road and playing the blues.

That could have been the end of Mac's music career except for the persistence of the harp player Max Hightower and other local musicians. In 2006 Mac began fronting Mac Arnold and Plate Full O' Blues. Since then the group has put out five albums filled with newly written songs.

*Give It Away* is the latest offering from the group made up of Mac Arnold on bass guitar, vocals and the gas can guitar; Austin Brashier on guitar and vocals; Max Hightower on harmonica, keyboard, vocals and bass guitar and Scotty Hawkins on drums and percussion.

*Give It Away* is more than just the title of the album and a song, the band is offering a free download of the CD for a limited time. The band's web site, macarnold.com, says that they feel this is their best album yet. It "shows what they are capable of, what they believe in, what inspires them, and who they are. They all have an individual say on

the album—writing, singing, and playing.”

The liner notes were written by Jeremy Jones and are full of gems, like the description of how the title song came into being, the backstory behind “Uncle Dewitt’s Cafe” and memories stirred up in “Train Smoke.”

The album shows off the group’s diversity quite nicely, running from straight up blues through heartfelt ballads to some soul, hillbilly, R&B and reggae licks.

“Don’t Burn My Cornbread” is one of my personal favorites on this album. Is it really about not burning the cornbread or scorching the peas or does it have more to say about love in general? Either way, the tune features a nice groove that leaves me smiling.

“Damned If I Do” features the vocals of Max Hightower, along with his harp, and some great guitar playing by Austin Brashier. Fans of Buddy Guy will love this story about how hard is it to get it right sometimes.

“Give It Away” was written by Mac in response to Jack Robinette’s death, Mac’s long-time friend and musical mentor. Mac encourages us to think about how we might make the world a better place, by being there for someone who needs even just a little help and focusing on those who have made sacrifices for others. The song ends with a soulful harmonica sound backed by a quiet drum beat. Very moving.

“Nitty Gritty” makes the case for the influence of the blues on American and European music. The lyrics ask us to show some respect for the blues: “I’m not trying to put other music down, but if wasn’t for the blues, it would not be around. You may think I’m talking silly, but the blues is the real nitty gritty.” And Mac’s full belly laugh at the end makes me smile every time.

*Give It Away* includes two covers: “I’ll Take Care of You” and “Amos Moses.” According to the liner notes, Bobby Blue Bland encouraged Mac to record the first one. Mac’s voice has the haunting quality of the lyrics dialed in. The Jerry Reed tune, “Amos Moses,” about poor Amos Moses whose dad tied a rope around his waist and threw him in a swamp to use as gator bait. In Plate Full O’ Blues hands this song is a foot-stompin’ good time.

*Give It Away* is a great offering from Mac Arnold and Plate Full O’ Blues, think about taking advantage of the free download and finding out for yourself.



Photo Credit: macarnold.com



### Blues, Brews and Barbecues 2016

This festival is designed to bring families and the community together in a fun and entertaining environment. With nearly 40,000 attendees last year, The Blues, Brews, and BBQ Festival has continued to grow and is sure to be a fun filled family atmosphere that all ages can enjoy. This two-day free event is filled with a variety of educational music sessions, restaurateurs, food vendors, national and local bands. So bring your friends and family and come enjoy yourself at the 2016 Blues, Brews, and BBQ Festival!

#### FOOD AND BARBEQUE

Our event features some of the area’s top BBQ with over 13 award winning BBQ vendors such as Bud’s BBQ, Hickory River Smokehouse, Holy Smoke and more. Don’t care for Q? We have that covered, too. Enjoy anything from popcorn to ice cream and even specialty pizza! It will be hard to go home hungry this weekend! [Learn More](#)

FE MORAN & FOX CHAMPAIGN KIDS AND FAMILY AREA  
(FEATURING LOUIE'S PLAYGROUND)

From FREE inflated rides, carnival games and live music; the Blues Festival is not just for Mom and Dad. The Kids and Family area is located by the Orpheum Children's Museum—a location made for the kids! With the abundance of inflated rides, Great blues music on the stage from artists 21 years & under and frequent visits from our wonderful mascot Louie, our family area is sure to please. [Visit Louie on Facebook.](#)

THE MAIN STAGE PRESENTED BY COORS LIGHT, U.S. 105.9  
& CIB BANK- FRIDAY JUNE 24TH

5:00-6:30 - THE SMOKERS BLUES BAND  
6:50-8:20 - EDWARD DAVID ANDERSON  
8:40-10:10 - KRIS LAGER BAND  
10:30-MIDNIGHT - REVEREND HORTON HEAT

SATURDAY JUNE 25TH

2:25-3:55 - DAVID DUNAVENT  
4:15-4:45 - MOTORCYCLE AWARDS SHOW  
5:00-6:30 - THE WILLIAM MARSALA BAND  
6:50-8:20 - SLAM ALLEN  
8:40-10:10 - HOWARD AND THE WHITE BOYS  
10:30-MIDNIGHT - THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS

DINOSORES BIKE SHOW

Fluid Events is teaming up with Dinosores Motorcycle Club once again. With cash prizes awarded in several categories you're sure to see show bikes roll in from around the country. [Learn More](#)

**The Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue**

**7:30 pm Saturday June 18**

**The Accord, 51 E. Main St., Champaign**

Written by: Bob Paleczny



What do you call a band that combines legendary blues artists from California and Texas into one cohesive unit that plays some of the smoothest blues you'll ever hear? They call themselves The Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue. The band brings together the talents of Texas guitar master, Anson Funderburgh, with fellow guitarist Little Charlie Baty and the extraordinary talents of harmonica player Mark Hummel, both of who hail from California. Formed in 2012 they have toured throughout the US and now they're bringing their talents to our area.

Champaign-Urbana blues fans have a chance to see this all-star super group and their swingin' blues style at The Accord, 7:30 pm on Saturday June 18 for a show that promises to be one of the best of the year. Each of the three featured performers have led their own bands for years and now they mesh their talents into one amazing unit, backed by the solid rhythm section of R.W. Grigsby on bass and Wes Star on drums.

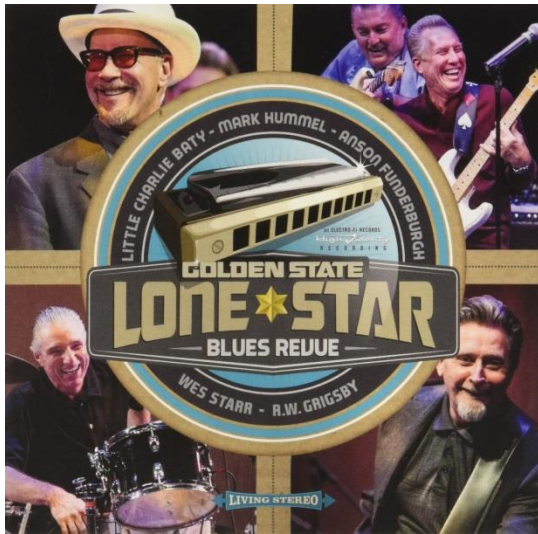
*"Harmonica monster Mark Hummel, of the Blues Survivors, and Little Charlie Baty, monster guitar man from the Nightcats, have teamed up with some other monsters, Anson Funderburgh of the legendary Texas band, the Rockets, and an all-star Austin rhythm section. The result is a California Texas super band. Tasty yet nasty, smooth yet rough, suave boogie-woogie for every kind of bootie."*  
(BluesMobile)

By this writer's recollection it's been years since any of these three have played in the area. Anson Funderburgh and the Rockets used to come through every couple years with Sweet Sam Myers on vocals and harmonica. They used to play at Mabels, that cool little club that was upstairs on Green Street. Ward Gollings recalls booking Anson and The Rockets as well as Little Charlie and the Nightcats at the old Blind Pig and in the early days of The Highdive since renamed The Accord, 51 E. Main Street Champaign.

Anson Funderburgh besides leading The Rockets is also known for his producing talents. He's produced disks for John Nemeth and the Andy T - Nick Nixon Band. Anson talks about his guitar style and says he wants to "give the notes a place to breath, give them some air". Mark Hummel, besides leading the Blues Survivors, has taken part in CD projects honoring legendary harp men,



“Remembering Little Walter” and “Blues For Big Walter”. Although Charlie Baty took a soft retirement in 2008, he’s back on the road playing with his friends. These all-stars have been nominated for numerous W.C. Handy and Blues Music Awards and have won their share. They also have several Grammy nominations to their credit.



The Golden State-Lone Star Blues Revue has just released their first self-titled CD on Electro-Fi Records. Recorded at Kid Anderson’s Greaseland Studios in San Jose, CA, the disk features 14 tracks and was recorded after a year of coast to coast touring. It was produced by Anson Funderburgh and Mark Hummel.

Little Charlie sums up the collective mojo of the band best: *‘This is all about 5 guys who have been playing music all their lives, but each night play with the energy and excitement of their first gig’.*

We’re really looking forward to this show. Opening for Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue at 7:30 is King T’z, a great new band with some veteran local performers. They’re a rockin’ 4-piece combo featuring fine vocalists, harmonica, guitar, bass and drums; and specializing in fun music and good times!

Here’s a link to The Accord’s Facebook event;

<https://www.facebook.com/events/550648741782932/>

Mark Hummel’s Golden State Lone Star Blues Revue website;

[http://www.markhummel.com/golden\\_state.html](http://www.markhummel.com/golden_state.html)

## THE CHICAGO WAY by Toronzo Cannon

### CD Review: by Kandra (Kandy) Miller

I attended the May Prairie Crossroads Blues meeting as a guest. I came home with an assignment...to review a CD: THE CHICAGO WAY by Toronzo Cannon I like music, especially rhythm and blues music. This is my only credential to do this review!

I liked every song on the CD, The Chicago Way.

### THE CHICAGO WAY by Toronzo Cannon

Toronzo Cannon? I never heard of him, but I was hooked after the first few bars of the first song! He has a raspy, soulful voice and he plays a “supercharged” lead guitar. His special talents are his lyrics. Per the CD’s cover notes, “His Alligator debut [The Chicago Way] is 100% Toronzo originals, songs inspired by his Chicago upbringing, his years observing the public while working as a city bus driver on the West Side, and his own battles and triumphs.”

Song #1 “The Pain Around Me” starts out with a few guitar riffs and then blasts into an upbeat lead guitar and instrumental melody. Even though the tune sounds happy, the song has a very serious message. It is about an honest man, trying to do right, working to provide for and feed his family, but he is surrounded by pain.

The chorus repeats: “Don’t get me wrong. I don’t want to sing this song. Bout the Pain Around Me, Lord. But this is what I see. What I see”

“6 kids on the corner, up to no damn good,

That’s 6 broken homes further in, in my neighborhood.

You got liquor stores everywhere, on my side of town.

I don’t want my kids to go outside, cause the thugs are hanging around.”

(chorus)

“You got the preacher man in the church a giving folks false hope

You never see a politician around, unless they want your vote.”

Women walking around, with skirts on so tight

Looking in cars as they go by saying, "You want some fun tonight?"

(chorus) Really good guitar solo and upbeat accompaniment

"The shooting and the killing, I'm living in a war zone.

See, the police, they never come around so I'm out here on my own.

I'm just an honest man, trying to do right and feed my family

When I go to work I gotta carry a piece for extra security."

(chorus) Another great guitar solo

The song ended with a police siren that was so realistic, I looked out my front door!

Song #2 "Bad Contract" is another upbeat song with a serious message. Through T's clever play on words, you get the message that he is in the process of getting a divorce and things are not going well for him.

He repeats the chorus: "I signed on the line, you only get 'bout ½ back, I signed a Bad Contract, Y'all"

The song starts:

"Read about it. Heard about it. Now it's me.

Should have seen it coming and would've stayed free

Big fancy wedding

The house was mine and now she has the key."

Take what you came with, that's what I say.

But the judge didn't see it that way."

They say every dog has his day

But this dog got ½ my pay.

(chorus) Great guitar solo

"Not about cheating, tired of this strife,

With the woman you love who'll ruin your life,

The woman used to be my wife,

Now she's stabbing me in the back with the lawyer's knife."

(chorus)

I looked at my lawyer and he said settle with her quickness

(chorus) Great guitar solo

Song #3 "Walk It Off" has great soulful guitar riffs and piano accompaniment along with lyrics telling the story about dealing with infidelity and dealing with anger.

"She didn't mean it.

That's what she said.

He was an old friend

And she lost her head.

Now I know my woman is nice and kind,

But now we don't know if the baby is his or mine!"

(chorus) "I Gotta Walk It Off..."

"My wife's in the club

My girlfriend on her way

I'm standing here nervous

While I'm on the stage

She came right in and sat right down.

Wearing the same dress, I bought them both when I was out of town."

(chorus) "I Gotta Walk It Off..." Great guitar solo

"She called me up, to get her kicks.

Her husband get home at 7, I'm gone by 6.

I get to MY house and open My door.

There he is with MY woman on my living room floor!"

(chorus) "I Gotta Walk It Off..."

"I pulled a knife, He pulled a gun.

And looked at me like I should run.

I pulled my hand grenade, shook it in his face

And pulled the pin. Cause that's the Chicago way.

(chorus) "He better Walk It Off!"

The chorus, "I Feel so strong, I might do something wrong. So I gotta Walk It Off."

The CD notes says, "In the hard-edged City of Big Shoulders, nothing comes easy. You have to fight to succeed, whether it's a battle to get out of poverty, a battle to find and hold a job, a battle to build a new business, a battle to expose political corruption or a battle to become a musical icon." I'm not sure these battles are indigenous to Chicago, but Toronzo Cannon's CD is song after song describing his personal battles. The sleeve notes also says that last year, after over 20 years of paying his dues--playing for free or as a sideman in his band, The Cannonball Express, Toronzo Cannon lit up the largest stage at the Chicago Blues Festival. I will go see him if I have the chance!

(**Note:** Due to space constraints we couldn't put Kandy's review of all 11 songs; let us know if you are interested in the full review and we will get it to you.)

**6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!** Prairie Crossroads Blues Society held its first formational meeting on May 23, 2010 at Jupiter's At The Crossing. At the first meeting an Executive Board was chosen and we began work on creating PCBS. The second meeting was held on June 22 at the Champaign Library, committee chairs were chosen and we prepared for our 1<sup>st</sup> appearance at the Urbana Blues Brews & BBQ Fest. Those manning the booth were ready to speak on the following bullet points which make our goals perfectly clear:

- Promote and educate about "the Blues"
- Grow our membership
- Bring more Blues events here
- Start a Blues in the Schools educational program
- Become affiliated with the Blues Foundation, so we'll be eligible to sponsor a local band at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis in February

In the past few years we've had great fun meeting some awesome blues fans and supporting the blues in East Central Illinois. We're looking forward to even greater things in our next few years!! Come out to our tent at this year's [Champaign Blues Brews & BBQ Fest](#) and help us celebrate our 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday!



### **Executive Board**

President - Dennis Wismer  
 Vice President - Greg Altstetter  
 Treasurer – Zach Widup  
 Secretary - Lorri Coey

### **At-Large Board Members**

Phil Hult - Tony Odendahl

### **Committee Chairs**

Membership - Phil Hult  
 Merchandise - Greg Altstetter  
 Marketing - by Committee  
 Newsletter Editor - Elaine Hult  
 Entertainment - Bob Paleczny  
 Web Team - Lorri Coey, Bob Paleczny

### **Corporate Sponsors**

We greatly appreciate our Corporate Sponsors for supporting the PCBS with their funds and their missions.

**Memphis on Main** regularly brings impressive Blues talent to Champaign.

**Fluid Events** brings the Champaign Blues, Brews, and BBQs festival to town in the summer, along with other Blues music events throughout the year.

**Krannert Center for the Performing Arts** supports our Blues in the Schools program with both funding and expertise.

**The Pawn Shop in Rantoul** has long been a supporter of live blues shows in central Illinois.

**Rossville Sound Werx** in Rossville, IL manufactures speaker cabinets and hand wired point to point tube amplifiers. They support PCBS with equipment.

**Skins-N-Tins Drum Shop** has provided a drum set for use in The Prairie Crossroads Blues Society IBC challenges and other events.

### Donors

We are grateful to the following individuals and businesses that have provided donations to support the work of the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society.

Cody Sokolski and Marci Dodds

One Main Development

LLC Eastland Suites

Hohner USA

Louie's Dixie Kitchen & BBQ

Orange Krush Foundation

Samuel Music

Slumberland Furniture

Supervalu

### Band Memberships

**Back Pack Jones** Their CD "Betsy's Kitchen" won our Best Self-Produced CD competition.

**Benny Jenkins Bloodline** Their CD "Can't Take the Blues" won our PCBS Best Self-Produced CD competition in 2013.

**Black Magic Johnson** has their new CD, "Walk With You Baby" available from their web site

### **Bluetone Drivers**

**The Diva and The Dude** play regularly throughout the area. Check out their Facebook page for up-to-date information on gigs.

**Groove Avenue** is one of our newest member bands. They are Joni Dreyer/ Vocals, Bob Watson/ Guitar, Dan Henry/ Bass, Brad Hendricks/ Harmonica, Daniel Casey/ Drums.

**Hurricane Ruth** released their second CD "Born on the River" in September.

**Jackie Scott** won a Blues Blast Magazine award in 2010. Check out her website for more on our newest member band [jackiescottandthehousewreckers.com](http://jackiescottandthehousewreckers.com)

**Jerry Lee & The Juju Kings** were the winners of the PCBS 2012 IBC Band Challenge. Their new CD "Southside of Nowhere" was released in September and is available on their web site.

**Kilborn Alley** will be playing Chicago Bluesfest with Michael Ledbetter

**Mary Jo Curry and Tombstone Bullet** Tombstone Bullet made a mark during the 2012 International Blues Challenge, being recognized as the fan favorites at their venue and moving forward to the 2012 Beale Street Blues King fan favorite competition.

**Matthew Curry and the Fury**

<http://www.matthewcurry.com/>

**The Low Wines**

**The Painkillers**

**The Squires**

**The Sugar Prophets**

**Susan Williams**

<http://www.reverbnation.com/susanwilliam>



"The blues ain't nothing but a good man feelin' bad" ---**Leon Redbone**