



# Inclusive - a newsletter for the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society

**September 2012**

## **Blues Night at the Sweetcorn Festival By Sandy Hannum**

Friday August 24 was Blues Night at the Urbana Sweetcorn Festival – a concept that we hope becomes an annual tradition! The entertainment included two of our own PCBS member bands: Timmy D & Blind Justice and the Kilborn Alley Blues Band. The third band was Dr. Duke Tomatoe & The Power Trio, which also has local connections.

It was a warmish evening, but was cooling off pleasantly as the music was kicked off by Timmy D & Blind Justice. They started off rocking, and didn't slow down much. Their high-energy set included a cool rendition of Cream's "In the Sunshine of Your Love," which really took me back. Ben, the drummer, sang on a song with a sexy bump and grind rhythm called "I Don't Need No Doctor" which included some nice sax work by David. Their last song, "Through With You" was one of their own compositions, and had a particularly pleasing rhythm and lyrics. The crowd, which was munching on corn and other good stuff, was drawn to the music throughout the hour. By the end of the set, the parking lot around the stage was fully packed.



**Timmy D & Blind Justice at the Sweetcorn Festival**  
Photo courtesy of Jim Hannum

Tim Donaldson is an awesome guitarist, and he has surrounded himself with other musicians who are on a par with him on their own instruments. Roger Lee (aka Roger Prillaman) on keyboards is well-known in town for his work with Captain Rat

& the Bind Rivets. David "Rock Head" Cohen on bass and sax is a formally trained musician who also plays jazz on occasion. "Big Ben" Donaldson, Tim's son, is known for his incredible clock-work precision on the drums, thus the nickname. Together this fairly new band is tight and talented, and put on a great performance. Tim pointed out that today was his 32<sup>nd</sup> wedding anniversary. Fortunately, much of the evening would remain following his set so he could celebrate properly!

Next up was the always popular Kilborn Alley Blues Band. Seen in the audience back where we were: Candy Foster, Kathy Harden and Chris Breen. What? Oh no! It turns out that his hand is still healing up from his injury. He is playing a little bit at home, but is not yet ready for prime time. Taking his place on stage, and doing a fine job on the bass, was Billy Galt of the Blues Deacons. In addition, Dave Fauble played sax throughout and sounded fantastic.



**Kilborn Alley Blues Band at the Sweetcorn Festival**  
Photo courtesy of Jim Hannum

Right from the start, Andy's buttery rich voice knocked everyone out on "Don't Leave Me Baby," with Dave's sax adding just the right touch. The band sounded a heck of a lot like The Allman Brothers on "I'll Change My Ways." I saw a bunch of people dancing when they played the 50s-sounding "Whole Lotta Trouble." Then Andy sang "Better Off Now," which always gives me chills. Mmm. That song is a destined to be a classic! Deak Harp joined the band on a lively "Watch It." They ended their set with the ever-popular "Your Next Baby's (Continued on next page)

## Look Who's 2! You! PCBS!

By Dennis Wismer

Daddy." The crowd was exceptionally pleased – full of good blues music and corn and beer. Life is good.

The final act on Blues Night was Dr. Duke Tumatote & The Power Trio. Duke, sporting blue sneakers with white polka dots, was in character. They started out playing several funky instrumentals. These musicians are seasoned and seamless! The first song that included a vocal was "Barefootin'." Quite a few people in the back end of the parking lot were dancing at this point.

We heard Duke doing some great slide guitar work on "Enough Trouble of My Own," one of the best Blues songs they performed in their set.



**Dr. Duke Tumatote & The Power Trio**

Photo courtesy of Jim Hannum

Duke frequently asked, "How do you like it so far?" It seems that he was used to a louder, more responsive audience. Of course, performing at a sweetcorn festival is different from performing at a concert where people have come specifically to see and hear the musician.

Duke is an extremely accomplished guitarist. He introduced his fellow musicians, more than once. The band includes A.J. Jones on bass, Joe Maddox on drums, and James Mitchell Hill on keyboards. He added that Mr. Hill is from Urbana. James Mitchell Hill also happens to have a wonderfully rich singing voice. We heard him on "Walk Right Up to Me Baby." I found myself wishing that he had performed more vocals.

One interesting thing I noticed about the crowd was the age range. The Sweetcorn Festival is typically a family event, and even at night there were still lots of children there. There were also lots of college-age people – perhaps some who were new to town. I was thinking that we were making a good impression on them! Then there were the oldsters like me-- lots of us. And everyone was equally into the music. Ahh, the universal appeal of Blues music. Keep it coming.

PCBS has taken some baby steps and accomplished some grand things in a little over two years of existence. Like most things growth occurs with some faulty steps. However lessons learned in youth can lead to later success as part of the maturation process.

Those closest to an infant can miss some little changes that one with a slightly distanced view can easily see. Year one of PCBS resulted in committees formed and members recruited. Plans for Blues Education in the community and schools, International Blues Competition participation, support of community events of a musical bent, particularly the blues, and formation of an entertainment committee were some of the early tasks accomplished.

The Blues community locally and regionally embraced the young PCBS. Donations big and small helped draw members and attention. Volunteers' energy helped nurse the growth along. Musicians such as Wayne Baker Brooks, The Painkillers, The Sugar Prophets and Kilborn Alley gave their time to support the new kid in town. All the while the members and volunteers were laying the foundation, sacrificing time and forging friendships to cement future growth.

The seeds having been planted the fruit is growing skyward, up, up, up!

With the conclusion of a second year new volunteers and officers have arrived. Music performed and musicians paid. Education has been brought to the youth of the community and growth to our members as age brings wisdom and experience brings knowledge.

Once again the local musicians and our members rose to the task and contributed to noting the PCBS 2<sup>nd</sup> year.

Andrew Duncanson, Josh Stimmel, Chris Breen (in spirit, get well soon friend), Ed O'Hara, Abraham Johnson and Dave Fauble, The Kilborn Alley Blues Band, performed several sets of music at D.R. Digger's. This August Birthday show was exceptionally notable in that Michael Ledbetter and Patrick Seals of Nick Moss and the Flip Tops fame appeared to once again put the World Famous in D.R. Digger's Juke show. Mike and Patrick fresh off the star studded Blues, Brews and BBQ's headlining Saturday night set mingled with the crowd and performed in support and lead roles with KABB. What an outstanding night of Blues Music, friendship and food.

Speaking of food, PCBS members once again helped liven things up by providing brats, cake, beans, etc. courtesy of Greg Altstetter and Lorri Coey primarily, and others too numerous to mention (or I plain forgot all the accomplices). This follows a tradition of food with friends which was sparked in part when it (Continued on next page)

was suggested to meet at the D.R. Digger's show in August and celebrate a bit with goodies, music and friendship, juke joint style and in part by the band's desire to recreate a juke joint event. That led to a recurring potluck of free food provided by band members, fans and family members. Notable contributor is Joe Fauble, local tennis pro and son of sax player Dave Fauble, who regularly provides killer pasta dishes, chili or whatever behooves or happens to be available.

Much like my infant grandson in his attempt to traverse the landscape, PCBS has weebled, stumbled and sometimes landed with a thud but the overwhelming resounding noise coming from the inception of PCBS is music to my ears. And the friendships gained will not easily be lost. And the bands play on.

Thanks to the many musicians, bands and fans that make this possible.

Happy Birthday PCBS. Keep Doing What You Are Doing!

### **Learning From One of the Best**

**By Rich Cibelli**

When I heard that delta slide guitarist Donna Herula was coming back to town to perform, I put the date in my calendar. However, days later when I learned she'd also be doing a slide guitar workshop I decided this was one opportunity no guitar player could miss.

So with my trusty Yamaha 342 in case in hand I made my way to Corson's Music Guitar Shop in Urbana as any good student would do. Little did I know this would be no ordinary lesson. From start to finish Herula took time to cover what can best be described as the essentials needed for playing slide guitar. This included a little history lesson as well as a careful examination of all the various types of slides available these days like glass, brass and even a small piece of PVC from Home Depot.

Then it was on to which type of strings to use and what Herula described as setting the action on one's guitar I was amazed at all the things I didn't know about technique and what goes into making a good slide guitar sound. There is much more for me to learn.

But what made this lesson so enjoyable was the personal attention that this lesson allowed. After Herula would explain and then show us something new she would have each one of our little group try to do the same. Talk about being put on the spot. Practice makes perfect I kept saying to myself as I struggled along.



**Donna Herula Workshop at Corson's**

Photo courtesy of Rich Cibelli

However, some time later and by some stroke of magic I was actually playing slide. This is cool, I thought. If I can learn to do this, then you can too. So to celebrate our accomplishment my new fraternity of beginner slide players and I joined with Herula to play a verse or two of Robert Johnson's "Walkin' Blues."

Our time at the workshop had come to an end, but the opportunity to hear the 2012 International Blues Challenge Finalist Herula again would not. You see, she still had a show to perform. That would happen later in the evening at the Iron Post.

As show time approached my wife Sherry and I made our way in the front door just in time to hear some of the evening's sound check. Opening for Herula would be Gloria Roubal a local singer and guitarist with a voice reminiscent of a young Sheryl Crow.

Shortly before 7 p.m. Herula took the stage along with husband Tony who also sings and plays guitar. I was given the honor of introducing them to the nice assembled crowd who like me had come to see a master slide guitarist perform.

And then just like clockwork, the Chicago-born Herula showed why she's one of the best delta slide players around anywhere.

From her opening number of "Kansas City," by Jim Jackson and then for almost two hours more, Herula played a variety of delta blues classics. Included in her opening set were "Big Road Blues," penned by Tommy Johnson, as well as "Can't Be Satisfied," of Muddy Waters fame and Robert Nighthawk's "Bricks in my Pillow," just to name a few.

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Taking time to retune between numbers, Herula made special mention of the time she got to perform at a celebration making Nighthawk's legacy. For Herula, it was one of the shows that will always have a special place in her heart. In fact the singer/guitarist was so moved she wound up recording "The Moon Is Rising: Songs of Robert Nighthawk," her second CD and a tribute to the late blues great.

I really enjoyed the duet that Donna and husband Tony did on "She Put My Clothes Outdoors," made famous by Memphis Minnie and Kansas Joe McCoy as well as the couples take on Blind Blake's "I Was Afraid of That."

Herula is an amazing performer. Whether playing an incredible slide riff or just finger picking away, she is a classic case of precision. She demonstrated that many times during her Iron Post show by playing notes from one end of her classic resonator guitar to the other and everything in between.



**Donna and Tony at The Iron Post**

Photo courtesy of Rich Cibelli

Case in point is when Herula referred to as a Robert Johnson slide extravaganza. She then proceeded to wail away on Johnson's "Traveling Riverside Blues," with Tony once again providing yet another fine example of his vocal ability.

Not withstanding, Herula comes prepared to her shows with tremendous performing skills and much time devoted to her love of many of the performers who have made delta blues what it is today. However, delta blues is just one of the genres of music the performer enjoys.

For example, this night Herula would add a few more titles to her show like "Can't Let Go," by Lucinda Williams and also Randy Newman's "Louisiana." Both stood out as crowd favorites.

Herula has an extensive resume that includes playing at many of the biggest blues festivals like her hometown Chicago Blues Festival and around the country including The King Biscuit Blues Festival down in Helena, Arkansas. She has already received several more accolades in her young career. To learn more check out her web site at

[http://www.donnaherula.com/Donna\\_Herula/Home\\_Page.htm](http://www.donnaherula.com/Donna_Herula/Home_Page.htm)  
!

During her second set Herula spoke again about her musical career and the chance to meet another of her influences. His name: Johnny Winter. This was something Herula had wanted to do for a long time.



**Donna Herula at The Iron Post**

Photo courtesy of Rich Cibelli

Now accomplished, she proudly displays the legend's signature and several others on the back and neck of her National Steel TriCone. Then without missing a beat Donna and Tony performed an outstanding arrangement of Winter's classic "Evil on My Mind."

Keeping with the theme of more modern blues, Herula followed up with her take on Stevie Ray Vaughan's "Pride And Joy," and also "Blues Before Sunrise," penned by Eric Clapton. Then she joined playing partner Tony on another Lucinda Williams tune called "Jackson."

Finishing out her show, Herula once again took time to showcase her amazing slide work with the instrumental "Vestapol," credited to Henry Worrall. She followed with "Crying Won't Help You," and "Every Day and Night," both Robert Nighthawk compositions.

Herula is an outstanding performer and this night at the Iron Post was no exception. I hope she makes another trip to our area again soon so I and others will get to see one of the best delta slide guitarists around.



# Prairie Crossroads Blues Society 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual IBC Challenge Saturday, October 20, 2012

## Open to Illinois-Based Blues Bands

**The winning band receives \$1000 prize package to assist them on their trip to Memphis, TN where they will represent the PCBS in the Blues Foundation's 2013 International Blues Challenge**

Each band plays a 25 minute set

Winning band selected by a panel of 5 judges

Bands use their own amps

Drum set provided by  
Skins-N-Tins Drum Shop



Bands are judged in these categories, Blues Content, Vocal Abilities, Instrumental Abilities, Originality and Stage Presence  
Refer to scoring at: [http://blues.org/#ref=ibc\\_scoring](http://blues.org/#ref=ibc_scoring)

**All Entries must be submitted by Sept. 25, 2012**

**Information and Registration on our website:**  
[www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org](http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org)

## Looking Forward By Bob Paleczny

These are exciting times for Prairie Crossroads Blues Society as we continue to plan for future educational and entertainment events. We also hear great comments about our monthly newsletter *Inclusive*, our webpage: <http://prairiecrossroadsblues.org/>, our Facebook page, and especially about our online calendar of blues events throughout the Central Illinois area: <http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org/pcbscal.html>. Thanks to the core of dedicated hard-working volunteers who bring these things to our members on a regular basis. We intend to continue our efforts in these areas where we do well and improve in other areas.

One change you may have noticed is that we have changed our regular PCBS monthly meetings to make them more of a fun event and social gathering. In August we had our meeting at Smoke Que & Brew. It was a productive meeting and fun evening as great ideas were exchanged among all our members. In September our meeting will be Thursday evening September 13 at 6:30 and once again we'll meet at Smoke Que & Brew, 2411 Village Green Place, Champaign. All members are encouraged to come out and share their ideas and skills and help PCBS continue its rapid growth. You can get some good food and a beverage or two and meet some fellow blues lovers.

PCBS is currently recruiting bands to compete in our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual IBC local challenge, to pick a band to represent us in the Blues Foundation's 2013 IBC event. Last year's IBC competition was a fun evening for the competing bands, our members and blues fans. This year's competition will take place at Memphis on Main on Saturday Oct. 20 and it promises to be an exciting event again. Bands have until September 25 to sign up for the contest.

We have a large number of member bands who are strong supporters of PCBS, and some are beginning to do shows on a regional basis and national basis. Here are a couple of upcoming shows we'd like to point out. On Saturday September 15, two of our member bands, Matthew Curry & The Fury and The Sugar Prophets are playing at The Castle Theatre in Bloomington, IL. The following week, on Sunday the 23<sup>rd</sup> The Painkillers are playing at WEFT Fest in Mike & Molly's Beer Garden. We encourage our members to get out and see some great blues music and support our great local bands. We also like to see our friends at WWHP bringing great touring blues acts to town. On Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>, The 44's, a great west coast band will play a show at The Rose Bowl in Urbana.

As always we encourage your feedback. Check out our Facebook page and post your comments, ideas or suggestions. Send us an email at [prairiecrossroadsblues@gmail.com](mailto:prairiecrossroadsblues@gmail.com) with your ideas. We intend to be a reflection of our members and will do our best to do the things our members find interesting. We encourage all of you members to get involved with your ideas, enthusiasm and volunteer time if you have it.

## Does Your Band Have What It Takes to Make It on Beale Street?

By Bob Paleczny



Prairie Crossroads Blues Society is proud to announce our 2nd Annual International Blues Challenge local competition. We will select a band to represent us in the Blues Foundation's 2013 IBC. Each year the Blues Foundation conducts a competition on historic Beale Street in Memphis, TN to determine the best up and coming blues band. As an affiliate of the Blues Foundation PCBS has the opportunity to sponsor an act.

The competition is scheduled for Saturday Oct. 20 at Memphis on Main, 55 E. Main St. in Champaign. The start time will be based on the number of bands entered, but our last band will wrap up at about 8:30 pm and the winner will be announced at 9:00 pm.

Our local competition is open to all Illinois-based blues bands (at least one member of the band must be a resident of Illinois.) The Blues Foundation has two additional rules. The first is that the artist must not have been nominated for a Blues Music Award (the BMA's were previously called the W.C. Handy Awards.) The second rule is that an artist cannot compete in the IBC three consecutive years.

We plan to have a panel of five independent judges gathered from throughout other local Blues Societies, the media and music industries. Each act will have 25 minutes to wow the judges with their skills. Acts are judged in five categories: Blues Content, Vocal Skills, Instrumental Skills, Originality and Stage Presence. Blues Content is the most heavily weighted category multiplied by a factor of 4, with both Vocal and Instrumental Skills multiplied by a factor of 3. Originality is encouraged, cover tunes are allowed but playing a rendition lick for lick will be frowned upon by the judges. Both the Originality and Stage Presence categories are multiplied by a factor of 2.

PCBS uses the scoring criteria suggested by the Blues Foundation, we encourage all participating bands to look at their scoring criteria as explained on their website; [http://blues.org/#ref=ibc\\_scoring](http://blues.org/#ref=ibc_scoring).

Once again our friends at Skins-N-Tins Drum Shop are providing a drum kit for all bands to use throughout the day. Our host (Continued on next page)

Memphis on Main is kind enough to provide the PA system and ace sound man. Bands simply need to bring their instruments and amps. Each band has up to 25 minutes to show their stuff. Professionalism is important since there are only 20 minutes between acts, moving equipment on and off stage efficiently is expected.

The winning band receives a minimum of \$1000 prize package to assist them on their trip to Memphis to represent PCBS in the 2013 IBC which runs from Tuesday January 29 through Saturday February 2. Each act that goes to Memphis is guaranteed to perform in the quarterfinals round on both Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Judges in Memphis will select the acts that move onto the semifinals on Friday night and hopefully on to Saturday's finals.

Last year PCBS had an exciting competition and fun-filled evening. Our winning band Hurricane Ruth won on the judges' scorecards and was clearly a crowd favorite as well. Ruth and the band did a great job representing us in Memphis. We're so proud of the fact that they advanced the King of Beale Street Competition hosted by the Beale Street Merchants Association.

Interested bands can find out more information on our website;  
[http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org/ibc\\_challenge13.html](http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org/ibc_challenge13.html)  
and can download and fill out and return the entry form;  
[http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org/ibc\\_challenge2013.pdf](http://www.prairiecrossroadsblues.org/ibc_challenge2013.pdf).  
We are accepting entries through September 25, 2012. This is a great opportunity for you or your friend's band to take the next step towards becoming one of the country's top blues bands.

## **Out & About!**

**By Rich Cibelli**

Last month Sherry and I traveled north to the 2012 Kalamazoo Blues festival. This month we switched directions and headed south for some good ol' southern hospitality. Our final destination was Macon, Georgia. However, before arriving we visited B.B. King's night club in Nashville and also spent an evening enjoying the sweet sounds of The Allman Brothers.

You see, way back in May my wife asked if I'd be interested in going to see my favorite band down in Atlanta. She didn't have to ask twice. So we loaded the car and set out for what would be a wonderful experience. It is one that I'll remember for many months to come.

Located some 600 hundred plus miles to the southeast, Atlanta is a thriving metropolis with more roads than one could imagine and traffic at every corner. I warn you now if you don't like traffic, don't go to Atlanta. Period.

Putting aside those concerns Atlanta boasts some wonderful sights, like its massive downtown aquarium and the Carter Presidential Center, just to name a few. An outlying neighborhood called Sandy Springs serves as the home of Chastain Park Amphitheater where we would witness one

amazing night of music. Hidden among several winding roads and many massive homes sits Chastain Park Amphitheater. To find out more about this wonderful facility and some upcoming events visit <http://www.classicchastain.com/>

Our evening of music began with a wonder full 90-minute set by moe. This band has compiled a total of 10 studio albums and adds an amazing 23 years of history to their musical resume. To be honest I had heard of this band before, but believe this was the first time that I'd actually seen them in person. They are an outstanding group of talented musicians who I'd like to see again sometime soon.

However, this night would belong to Greg Allman and the rest of The Allman Brothers Band who without missing a beat played a wonderful two-hour set full of great classics including "Hot 'Lanta, Whipping Post, Dreams," and other classic hits. The Allman Brothers are celebrating an incredible 40th year of creating great music, and ended this show with an amazing 20 plus-minute version of "In Memory of Elizabeth Reed."



**The Allman Brothers at Chastain Park**

Photo courtesy of Rusty Edwards Hymnstar

But our visit to Georgia, "The Peach State," would not end there, as we still had one more music-related destination to visit. And so with directions firmly planted in our hands and the car packed once again we headed for Macon and The Allman Brothers Museum at The Big House. Located at 2321 Vineville Avenue, The Big House is an amazing place to visit and enjoy. From the time you enter the main gates you will begin to understand why the band wound up at this location back in 1970 to live and create some of the greatest music ever to be composed.

Finally opened after an extensive renovation in 2010, the museum is filled to the roof tops with anything and everything about The Allman Brothers. In short, there is a lot to see, but don't worry that you'll be overwhelmed. Lisa C. McLendon, the Executive Director and her staff of amazing volunteers are more than happy to help with any questions you might have, so ask away.

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I enjoyed seeing all the guitars, photos and the vast array of gold records and other memorabilia on almost each wall of the Tudor-style house and especially Greg and Duane's rooms, and the much talked about 7-head shower upstairs. It's really hard to imagine these days, but rent for the house back when Berry Oakley and his wife Linda first moved in came to \$225.00 a month. Story goes that once the owner found out how many folks were sharing the house he raised the rent \$10 more. I could go on and on, but I'd rather you take some time and visit for yourself. My guess is that if you're a fan like me, you'll come away with the same incredible feeling I experienced and a great big smile on your face.

Many thanks to Rusty Edwards Hymnstar for the use of his awesome concert pictures, suggestions of other places to visit in Macon and to everybody we got to meet at The Big House. You have a special place in my heart for what you do everyday. To find out more about this awesome landmark, please visit [www.thebighousemuseum.org](http://www.thebighousemuseum.org)

Before leaving Macon to start our journey back home we still had a few other important landmarks we needed to see. The first of these special places was Rose Hill Cemetery to pay our respects to Duane Allman and fellow band mate Berry Oakley. Located on a small road from the entrance to Rose Hill at 1901 Riverside Drive you will find the final resting places of Duane Allman and Berry Oakley. Now built upon a massive brick structure with steps leading up to and surrounded by a large fence, Duane and Berry lie side by side protected by shade trees and facing a valley below that you must see for yourself to truly appreciate. I must admit this was an emotional site to see.

Realizing we had to move on we left Rose Hill and headed down Riverside Drive toward MLK Jr. Blvd to find yet another memorial to one of Macon's other honored sons. Located in the middle of Okmulgee Heritage Trail sits a life size bronze statue of Otis Redding with guitar in his hand reminiscent of his hit "Sitting on the Dock of The Bay." The song written with the help of fellow musician Steve Cropper was released only days after the performer was tragically killed in a plane crash. more than happy to help with any questions you might have, so ask away.



**Statue of Otis Redding in Macon**

Photo courtesy of Rich Cibelli

Our last stop in Macon was one that was recommended to us over and over again. So just in time for lunch we pulled into the parking lot of The H&H Restaurant. Located on Forsyth Street in the heart of downtown Macon, H&H and its principal owner Mama Louise and her staff serve up some of the best fried chicken and mac n' cheese I've ever had. Moreover, you had better save room for a piece of peach cobbler. It's to die for!

H&H is covered from head to toe with pictures of The Allman Brothers and other Capricorn recording artists. While not a very big place, it is full of friendly faces who welcome everybody who enters through the front door like family.

However, the best part of our visit was the opportunity to meet Mama Louise. Sitting on a chair in the kitchen with a desk adorned with her name, Mama Louise loves to talk to all who visit her now famous restaurant in Macon.

She's not shy about the relationship she enjoys now with The Allman Brothers and the day she first met them more than forty years ago. And make no mistake, she's not the only one in Macon that feels this way about the band and all the other musicians who have helped develop this community as a must see for music fans all over the world.



**Mama Louise at H&H Restaurant in Macon**

Photo courtesy of Rich Cibelli

In the days ahead, Sherry and I will put on our traveling shoes again with the objective of visiting and learning all about another wonderful city in our great land. It's our hope you will also find the time to do the same and experience some great music and food and share your adventure with others.

**Li'L Ronnie And The Grand Dukes**  
**'Gotta Strange Feeling'**  
Reviewed by Rich Cibelli



There's nothing strange about Li'L Ronnie and The Grand Dukes debut release on Eller Soul Records, "Gotta Strange Feeling." In fact it's just great blues music that's fit for a king!

Full of satisfying sound from start to finish, this 14 title release features twelve originals plus the outstanding harp playing of "Li'L Ronnie," aka Ronnie Owens and a very tight blues band. More information about the band is available at <http://www.lilronnie.com/home.html>

Included is Ivan Appelrouth on guitar, John Sheppard on standup and electric bass and Mark Young on drums. Finally John Fralin joins in on piano and North Side Slim contributes his part with maracas and bass drum.

On "Can't Buy My Love," the first title on the release, Owens shines on harp and vocals while band mate Appelrouth adds a nice guitar solo and Fralin keeps the steady beat going on keys. This is a great start to the project.

Sounding a lot like "Dixie Chicken" of Little Feat fame, "Cold Hard Cash," is the second title. The best part of the song is when it gets really swinging midway through with a nice blend of background vocals and added percussion. Additionally, the piano solo really adds some flavor to this piece.

Similar to a hit right out of the 50's, "Love Never Dies," follows up next also written by Owens and features just a sampling of the sound this performer and his band or road tested players are capable of producing.

Born in Richmond, Virginia back in 1950, Owens took up playing drums at the early age of eight. Moreover it was only a few years later at 13 that he would start to make a name for himself and start to play locally. And while he honed his early skills playing jazz it was the sound of the blues and the 60's that really got his attention and changed his musical direction.

Another interesting thing happened to Owens once he hit the tender age of 30. After years of performing he made a decision that would change his life forever. Owens decided to quit playing drums and instead turn his musical ability and talent towards playing harp. As they say, the rest is history.

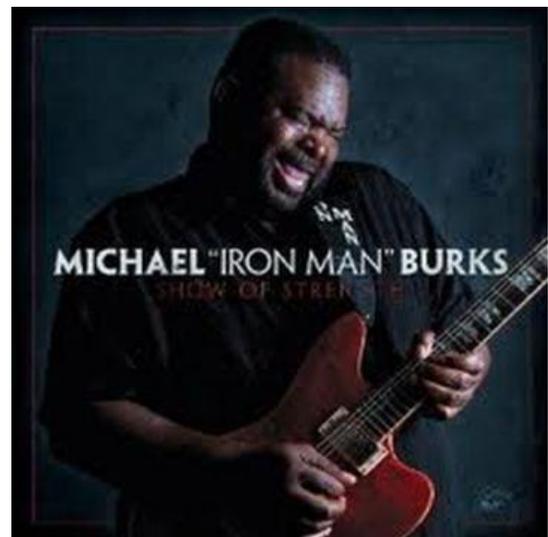
On "Gotta Strange Feeling," this CD's title track, all those years of performing in the smallest clubs to the bright lights of New York and beyond shine brightly. For example, on "Buzz Me," the Louis Jordan penned standard, Owens displays his vocal abilities which are perfectly matched with guitarist Appelrouth's and piano player Fralin.

Following up next is the hip shakin' song "I Won't Take It Anymore." Another Owens penned title, it features a nice blend of guitar and harp tempo with just a twang of vocals. Drummer Mark Young really does a great job of holding down this fast-paced beat. Special mention also goes to Janet Martin for her delightful background vocals

Changing directions completely, "Late Nite Blues," features this well-versed band in instrumental mode with another quality assortment of guitar and harp interplay. I find this tune fits as another great example of why this band has endured and is very successful at what it does.

Finishing up the project, Li'L Ronnie and band give listeners to this CD their take on the Chuck Berry penned "C'est la vie." Piano player John Fralin goes to town on the keys on this one and helps it swing right along and complete what I believe is an outstanding release.

**Michael "Iron Man" Burks**  
**"Show of Strength"**  
Reviewed by Rich Cibelli



So much has already been said about the late and great Michael "Iron Man" Burks that I have to remind myself how talented this performer really was. On "Show of Strength," you'll get to hear for yourself a blues singer and guitarist and (Continued on next page)

what may be his best project of all.

“Show of Strength,” and its twelve song titles are in my opinion the true meaning of Michael Burks. For example on “Count on You,” which begins with a Jimi Hendrix sounding riff, you’ll get the feeling that Burks was at his best recording what would be his last treasured work. His vocals and guitar both soar on this number as does the bass work of Terrence Grayson.

Not missing a beat, the release continues on with “Take a Chance on Me, Baby,” and once again it is the polished guitar playing of Burks that stands out. Roosevelt Purifoy contributes some nice keyboards on the ending measures of this number.

Again on “Storm Warning,” Burks lets his guitar and its take-no-prisoners sound take center stage. This is what listeners at performances everywhere were used to. Like them, I was amazed at the sound that Burks and his band mates could produce.

For example and reminiscent of older days we hear Michael and the band as they present “Little Juke Joint.” Special mention goes to Scott Dirks who provides some nice background harmonica on the song. Nevertheless it is Burks and his fiery guitar licks that shine brightly throughout.

“24 Hours Blues,” follows up next with Roosevelt Purifoy adding just enough keyboards to match Burks’ great voice in this minor blues title. But just like several other tracks on this release it’s Burks, who comes through again with his trademark high-powered and precise sound.

Picking up the pace “Valley Of Tears,” is helped along by Chuck “Popcorn” Louden’s powerful and crushing drum beats as are the thumping bass lines of Terrence Grayson. It is another fine example of this band’s ability as well as creativity.

Winding out this stellar release is “I Want To Get You Back,” “What Does It Take To Please You?” and “Feel Like Going Home.” Each one of these tunes are again fine examples of the tremendous talent of Burks and his band.

However, “Feel Like Going Home” in particular is one that I really enjoyed. Moreover, it is a song that will forever remind me of the kindness of the gentleman that we remember as Michael “Iron Man” Burks.

A native of Milwaukee and a proven performer with five releases already under his belt, “Show of Strength,” became his fourth release on the Chicago-based Alligator Records Label. Burks’ introduction and exposure to the world of blues music came early in life. Michael’s father just happened to be a bass player who would often spend late hours honing his craft around Milwaukee’s club scene. The elder Burks was known to sometimes take the stage with the late great Sonny Boy Williamson II or other artists who might be passing through the area.

Furthermore, it also turns out that Michael’s grandfather who lived in Arkansas was also a musician. In this case, it was acoustic Delta blues that he played. With such musical influences around, it’s no wonder blues music would be in Michael Burks’ future. Even at the young age of five the quick learning Burks was holding his own when it came to playing guitar. In fact, it was only nine years later when he began playing on the road. The rest, they say is history.

Burks eventually formed a band and released his debut CD “From the Inside Out” on the Vent Record Label in 1997. The release was voted as one of the best of the time and further cemented Burks as a top of the line performer. This notoriety gave him the opportunity to play at some of the bigger named festivals.

Then in 2000 and with the performer now headlining and attracting bigger crowds he decided to turn another page in his life and career by signing with Alligator Records. The new-found relationship lasted for over 12 years, and included recording or appearing on at least six releases including “Make It Rain,” his first with the Chicago-based blues label.

Unfortunately Michael “Iron Man” Burks’ incredible life was cut short while returning home from an overseas tour this past February. On “Show of Strength,” his legacy continues with the same passion and sound that made each and every one of his shows something special.

**It may be time to renew your membership in the PCBS! Check the date on your membership card. You can renew online using PayPal.**

## Corporate Sponsorships

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 this 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.

**Skins-N-Tins Drum Shop** provided a drum set for use in The Prairie Crossroads Blues Society IBC challenge.

## 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**  
**Samuel Music**  
**Slumberland Furniture**  
**SuperValu**

## Band Memberships

**Alex Jenkins & The Bombers** will be playing this month at Julie's Shooting Star in Westville on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, and at the Knights of Columbus in Danville on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Black Magic Johnson** will be playing this month at Swinger's Grill in Bloomington on the 1<sup>st</sup>, at the Koo Koo's Nest in Springfield on the 8<sup>th</sup>, at Fat Jack's in Bloomington on the 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, at the Trading Post in Springfield on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and at Lock, Stock & Barrel in Decatur on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**The Diva and The Dude** are well-known throughout the area. You can keep up with them through Facebook. Kathy Harden will be playing with Keith at the Clark Bar in Champaign on October 10.

**Full Throttle Band** is one of our newer member bands. Check them out on Facebook.

**Hurricane Ruth** will be playing this month at the Illinois Blues Festival in Peoria on the 1<sup>st</sup>, at Crows Mill Pub in Springfield on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and at the Curve Inn in Springfield on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Jr. & The Blues Rockers** is of our newer member bands. They plan to have a website soon.

**The Kilborn Alley Blues Band** has been tapping into their huge network of musician friends to find substitutes for bassist Chris Breen while he is out of commission with a hand injury. Their schedule continues unabated. They will be playing this month at O'Banion's Tavern in Georgetown on the afternoon of the 1<sup>st</sup>, at The Phoenix in Champaign on the evening of the 1<sup>st</sup>, at the Willow Ridge Winery in Shelbyville on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, at Prairie Park in Urbana on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, at D.R. Digger's in Champaign on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and at the Paramount Blues Festival in Grafton, WI on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**King's Highway** is a long-term member band. Check out their web pages and their CD.

**Matthew Curry & The Fury** will be playing this month at the Piatt County Museum Benefit in Monticello on the 8<sup>th</sup>, at the Castle Theatre in Bloomington on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and at Cowboy Monkey in Champaign on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**The Painkillers** will be playing at Alto Vineyards in Champaign on the 1st, and at The Iron Post in Urbana on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

**The Sugar Prophets** will be playing this month at the Illinois Blues Festival in Peoria on the 1<sup>st</sup>, at the Roadrunner Lounge in Monticello on the 14<sup>th</sup>, at Savoy Orchard Days on the afternoon of the 15<sup>th</sup>, at the Castle Theatre in Bloomington on the evening of the 15<sup>th</sup>, and at the Alamo in Springfield on the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Susan Williams Band** will be playing this month at the American Legion in Danville on the 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>, at Huber's in Champaign on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, and at Jim & Jo's Bar and Grill in Danville on the 28<sup>th</sup>.

**The Sweet Wood Band** will be playing this month at Knuckleheads Sports Bar & Grill in Michigan City, IN on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Timmy D & Blind Justice** will be playing at the Iron Post in Urbana on October 5.

**Tombstone Bullet** will be playing this month at The Creek Pub in Chatham on the 8<sup>th</sup>, and at the Walnut St. Winery in Rochester on the 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Prairie Crossroads Board of Directors

Interim President	Bob Paleczny
Interim Vice President	Greg Altstetter
Interim Treasurer	Sherry Cibelli
Interim Secretary	Lorri Coey
At-large Members	Rich Cibelli Sandy Hannum Tony Odendahl

## PCBS Business

The next Prairie Crossroads Blues Society Meeting is scheduled for 6:00 pm on September 13 at Smoke Que & Brew, 2411 Village Green Place, Champaign. Join us for a short meeting, then stick around and enjoy some food and drinks together.

*Inclusive*, a newsletter of the PCBS, is always looking for new contributors and submissions of finished or unfinished content. Deadline for the next newsletter is September 26. Please submit articles, ideas, or comments to [smhannum@gmail.com](mailto:smhannum@gmail.com).

## Inclusive Staff

Editor: Sandy Hannum  
Writers for This Issue: Rich Cibelli  
Sandy Hannum  
Bob Paleczny  
Dennis Wismer  
Tech Consultant: Bob Paleczny and BP Computers  
Mojo Tech: Sherry Cibelli

## Mt. Bluesmore



Hey, Wolf. I like the new meeting style of the Prairie Crossroads Blues Society. I can meet and eat at the same time.

Yeah, Muddy. Anytime you can eat, you're happy.

Heh heh. That's not all. I like the people too!

## EVENTS

**Sep 1** – Illinois Blues Festival – Expo Gardens – Peoria, IL – 1 pm  
Hurricane Ruth – Illinois Blues Festival – Peoria, IL – 1 pm  
Kilborn Alley Blues Band – O'Banion's Tavern – Georgetown, IL – 2 pm  
The Sugar Prophets – Illinois Blues Festival – Peoria, IL – 5 pm  
Hurricane Ruth – Illinois Blues Festival – Peoria, IL – 7 pm  
The Painkillers – Alto Vineyards – Champaign – 7:30 pm  
Black Magic Johnson – Swinger's Grill – Bloomington, IL – 8 pm  
Kilborn Alley Blues Band – The Phoenix – Champaign – 9 pm

**Sep 2** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – Willow Ridge Winery – Shelbyville, IL – 2 pm  
First Sundays at Emerald City – blues dancing with bluesCENTRAL – Emerald City Lounge – Champaign – 6 pm  
**Sep 3** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – Urbana Labor Day Picnic – Prairie Park – Urbana – 12:30 pm  
Alex Jenkins & The Bombers – Julie's Shooting Star – Westville, IL – 2 pm  
**Sep 5** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – D.R. Digger's – Champaign – 9 pm  
**Sep 6** – Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm  
**Sep 7** – Friday Night Live – Downtown Champaign – 6 pm  
Big Creek Guitar Band – The Pink House – Ogden, IL – 5 pm  
**Sep 8** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – Paramount Blues Festival – Grafton, WI – 3 pm  
The Painkillers – The Iron Post – Urbana – 6 pm  
Matthew Curry & The Fury – Piatt County Museum Benefit – Monticello, IL – 7 pm  
Hurricane Ruth – Crows Mill Pub – Springfield, IL – 8:30 pm  
Black Magic Johnson – Koo Koo's Nest – Springfield, IL – 9 pm  
Tombstone Bullet – The Creek Pub – Chatham, IL – 9 pm  
**Sep 13** – Susan Williams – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm  
**Sep 14** – Friday Night Live – Downtown Champaign – 6 pm  
Big Creek Guitar Band – Huber's – Champaign – 8 pm  
Candy Foster & The Shades of Blue – Memphis on Main – Champaign – 8:30 pm  
The Sugar Prophets – Roadrunner Lounge – Monticello, IL – 9 pm  
**Sep 15** – Alex Jenkins & The Bombers – Knights of Columbus – Danville, IL – 11:30 am  
The Sugar Prophets – Savoy Orchard Days – Savoy, IL – 12 noon  
Hurricane Ruth – Curve Inn – Springfield, IL – 6 pm  
Matthew Curry & The Fury w/ The Sugar Prophets – The Castle Theatre – Bloomington, IL – 9 pm  
**Sep 16** – The 44's – The Rose Bowl – Urbana – 8 pm  
**Sep 17** – The Sugar Prophets – Blue Monday at the Alamo – Springfield, IL – 8 pm  
**Sep 19** – Studebaker John – Goodfellas – Pekin, IL – 7 pm  
**Sep 20** – Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm  
**Sep 21** – Friday Night Live – Downtown Champaign – 6 pm  
Black Magic Johnson – Fat Jack's – Bloomington, IL – 7 pm  
bluesCENTRAL – Fall Kickoff Blues Dance – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 8 pm  
Sweet Wood Band – Knuckleheads Sports Bar & Grill – Michigan City, IN – 9 pm  
**Sep 22** – Tombstone Bullet – Walnut St. Winery – Rochester, IL – 7 pm  
Susan Williams Band – Huber's – Champaign – 8 pm  
Black Magic Johnson – The Trading Post – Springfield, IL – 9 pm  
Matthew Curry & The Fury – Cowboy Monkey – Champaign – 10 pm  
**Sep 23** – WEFT Fest – Mike 'n' Molly's – Champaign – 2 pm  
**Sep 27** – Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm  
**Sep 28** – Susan Williams Band – Jim & Jo's Bar and Grill – Danville, IL – 8 pm

Black Magic Johnson – Lock, Stock & Barrel – Decatur, IL – 9 pm  
**Sep 29** – Highway 61 Blues Festival – Leland, MS – 12 pm  
The Nick Moss Band & Rooster Alley – Bikes, Blues & BBQ – Fayetteville, AR – 1 pm  
Black Magic Johnson – Fat Jack’s – Bloomington, IL – 3 pm  
**Sep 30** – Holly Ridge Jam – Highway 61 Blues Festival – Leland, MS – 12 pm

**Oct 3** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – D.R. Digger’s – Champaign – 9 pm

**Oct 4** – King Biscuit Festival – Helena, AR – 6 pm  
bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm

**Oct 5** – King Biscuit Festival – Helena, AR – 4 pm  
Big Creek Guitar Band – The Pink House – Ogden, IL – 5 pm  
Timmy D & Blind Justice – The Iron Post – Urbana – 9 pm

**Oct 6** – King Biscuit – Helena, AR – 1 pm  
Big Creek Guitar Band – Huber’s – Champaign – 8 pm  
Keith Harden – Lu & Denny’s Tavern – Tolono, IL – 8:30 pm

**Oct 7** – First Sundays at Emerald City – blues dancing with bluesCENTRAL – Emerald City Lounge – Champaign – 6 pm

**Oct 10** – Keith & Kathy Harden – The Clark Bar – Champaign – 6:30 pm

**Oct 11** – bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm  
Keith Harden & Bob Watson – Boomerang’s Bar & Grill – Urbana – 8 pm

**Oct 12** – Big Creek Guitar Band – Kickapoo Landing – Oakwood, IL – 5:30 pm

Keith Harden – Silvercreek Restaurant – Urbana – 5:30 pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> Friday blues dance w/bluesCENTRAL - Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 8 pm

The Sugar Prophets – Memphis on Main – Champaign – 9 pm

**Oct 13** – The Painkillers – The Iron Post – Urbana – 6 pm  
Keith Harden – Huber’s – Champaign – 8 pm

**Oct 18** – bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

Susan Williams Band – American Legion – Danville, IL – 7 pm

**Oct 19** – Black Magic Johnson – Robbie’s – Springfield, IL – 5 pm  
Susan Williams Band – Huber’s – Champaign – 8 pm

**Oct 20** – Prairie Crossroads Blues Society IBC Challenge – Memphis on Main – Champaign – 4:30 pm

Black Magic Johnson – Swinger’s Grille – Bloomington, IL – 8 pm

**Oct 25** – bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

**Oct 26** – Black Magic Johnson – Walnut St. Winery – Rochester, IL – 7 pm

Susan Williams Band – Jim & Jo’s Bar and Grill – Danville, IL – 8 pm

**Nov 2** – C-U Folk & Roots Festival – Downtown Urbana – 4 pm

**Nov 3** – C-U Folk & Roots Festival – Downtown Urbana – 10 am  
Black Magic Johnson – The Trading Post – Springfield, IL – 9 pm

**Nov 4** – First Sundays at Emerald City – blues dancing with bluesCENTRAL – Emerald City Lounge – Champaign – 6 pm

**Nov 7** – Kilborn Alley Blues Band – D.R. Digger’s – Juke Joint Show – Champaign – 9 pm

**Nov 8** – bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

**Nov 9** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday blues dance w/bluesCENTRAL - Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 8 pm

Big Creek Guitar Band – Huber’s – Champaign – 8 pm

**Nov 10** – The Painkillers – The Iron Post – Urbana – 6 pm

Tombstone Bullet – Walnut St. Winery – Rochester, IL – 7 pm

Susan Williams Band – Huber’s – Champaign – 8 pm

Black Magic Johnson – Kuhl Tyme Korner – Jacksonville, IL – 9 pm

The Blues Deacons – The Trading Post – Springfield, IL – 9 pm

**Nov 11** – Black Magic Johnson – Hill Prairie Winery – Oakford, IL – 2 pm

**Nov 15** – bluesCENTRAL – blues dance lessons – Channing-Murray Foundation – Urbana – 6 pm

**Nov 17** – Susan Williams Band – VFW Post 630 – Urbana – 7 pm

Tombstone Bullet – The Corner Pub – Springfield, IL – 7 pm

Black Magic Johnson – Floyd’s Thirst Parlor – Springfield, IL – 9 pm

**Nov 23** – Susan Williams Band – Jim & Jo’s Bar and Grill – Danville, IL – 8 pm

### Fall Blues Festivals in the Midwest

**Aug 31-Sep 1** – Illinois Blues Fest – Peoria, IL  
[illinoisbluesfestival.com](http://illinoisbluesfestival.com)

**Sep 1-2** – Big Muddy Blues Festival – St. Louis, MO  
[bigmuddybluesfestival.com](http://bigmuddybluesfestival.com)

**Sep 7-8** – Paramount Blues Festival – Grafton, WI  
[GraftonBlues.org](http://GraftonBlues.org)

**Sep 26-29** – Bikes, Blues & BBQ – Fayetteville, AR  
[bikesbluesandbbq.org](http://bikesbluesandbbq.org)

**Sep 29-30** – Highway 61 Blues Festival – Leland, MS  
[highway61blues.com](http://highway61blues.com)

**Oct 4-6** – King Biscuit Blues Festival – West Helena, AR  
[bluesandheritagefest.com](http://bluesandheritagefest.com)

**Oct 12-14** – Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival – New Orleans, LA – [CrescentCityBluesFest.com](http://CrescentCityBluesFest.com)

**Nov 2-3** – C-U Folk& Roots Festival – Urbana, IL  
[folkandroots.org](http://folkandroots.org)

Find more at [www.BluesFestivalGuide.com](http://www.BluesFestivalGuide.com)