A bi-monthly publication of the Sacramento Blues Society

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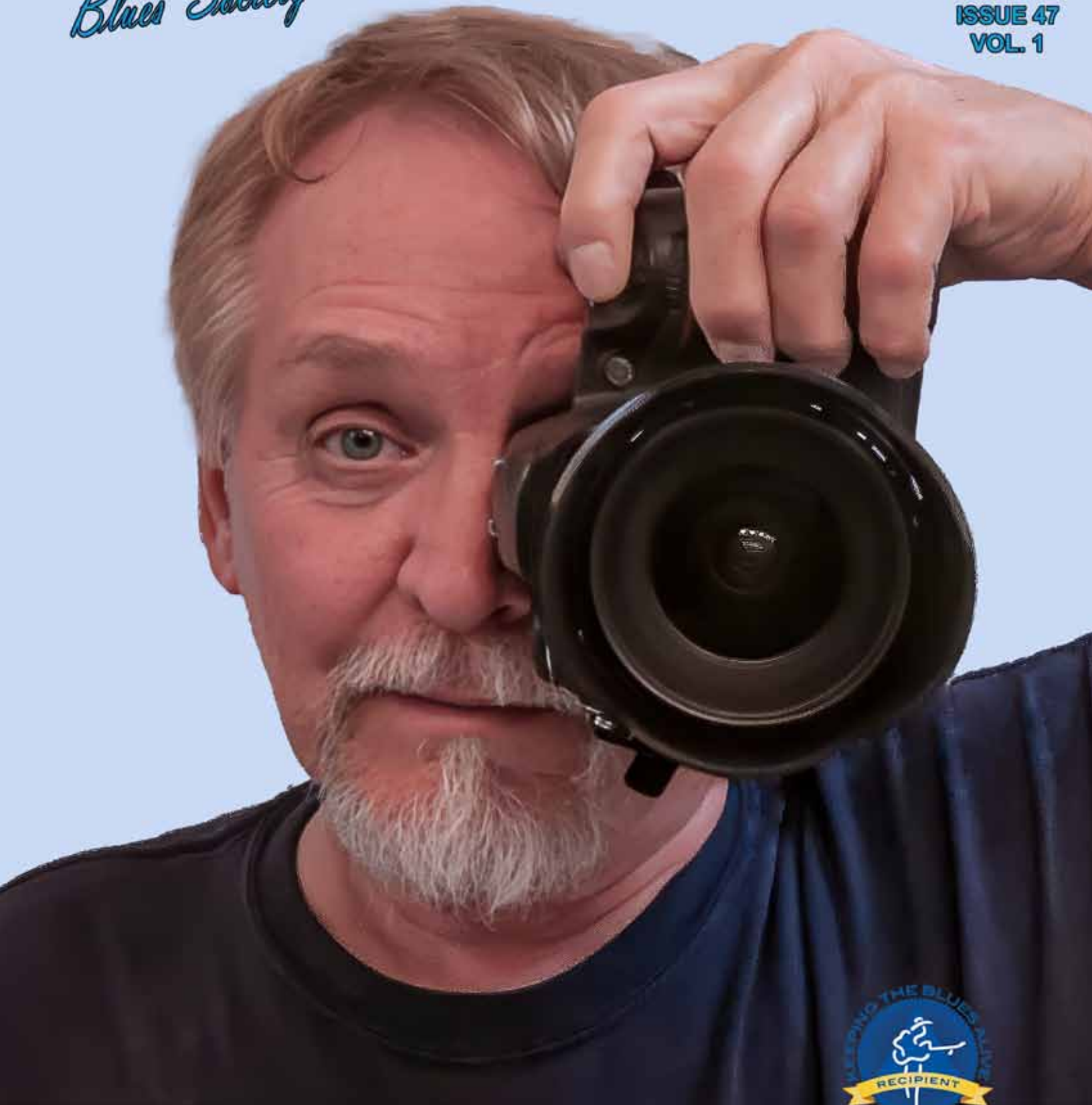
Blues Society

BLUE NOTES!

JAN-FEB
2026
ISSUE 47
VOL. 1



RECIPIENT

President's Column

By Marcel Smith

Greetings and Happy New Year!

I hope you and your loved ones enjoyed a wonderful holiday season—time to celebrate, reflect, rest, and recharge. As we embark on another exciting chapter of our Sacramento Blues Society journey, I'm filled with warmth, gratitude, and renewed energy to move forward together.

As we begin 2026, I want to pause for a moment of reflection on the losses we've experienced within our blues community and our SBS family in 2025. May the cherished memories of our friends guide and inspire us as we continue the work we love.

Our mission remains clear: preserve and promote the blues. This year presents a meaningful opportunity to invite new voices into the SBS family. We are welcoming non-members and cultivating the next generation of blues enthusiasts and potential SBS leaders, that will help strengthen SBS for the future. I encourage everyone to mentor, engage, and invite youth to explore the Sacramento Blues Society.

A brief update on our current website vendor: Flipcause is under investigation by California Attorney General Rob Bonta and has been issued a Cease-and-Desist order. Our website is still active, except for financial transactions, and the SBS is still financially solvent, despite the issues with Flipcause.

We are actively monitoring the situation and evaluating our legal options. We have chosen a new CRM vendor and will provide updates as they become available. Please continue to check your e-blast notifications for the latest information.

I also want to invite all members to consider contributing to our General Fund. This fund sustains SBS's daily operations—events, concerts, publications, promotions, and much more. If you're already contributing, thank you deeply for your generosity. If you haven't had a chance recently, I ask you to consider a contribution to support our ongoing work.

Last, but certainly not least. Let's rally behind the two SBS artists who will represent us at the 2026 International Blues Challenge (IBC) in Memphis, Tennessee this month. Your encouragement and support will mean the world to them and to SBS.

Thank you for your commitment, kindness, and shared passion for the blues. Here's to a vibrant 2026—together, we'll keep the blues alive and thriving. With warmest regards, Marcel

2025 Committee Chairs

Hall of Fame - Sally Katen

Events - Mindy Giles

Membership - Linda McShane

Sponsorships/Fundraising - Open

Finance Committee - Marcel Smith

Public Relations & Social Media - Mindy Giles

Volunteer Coordinator - Lynette Shumway

Blues in the Schools, Big Day of Giving - Rick Snyder

Merchandise & Member Care - Lynette Shumway

Blue Sunday - Cari Chenkin

Blue Notes Newsletter - Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley

IBC Competition - Shirley McCoy

Webmaster - Mindy Giles

Board of Directors Development - Open

Help keep the blues alive - Contact a Chair or Board Member to volunteer for the Board or a Committee!

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) *is one of the oldest blues societies in California, founded in 1979. SBS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization formed to preserve and promote blues music as an art form. SBS has kept the blues tradition alive in the Sacramento area by promoting the local blues music scene, bringing internationally renowned artists to the region, educating students with "Blues in the Schools", acknowledging our local blues artists, providing a Musicians' Crisis Fund and publishing the* ***Blue Notes*** *six times a year. SBS is an affiliate member of The Blues Foundation (which honored us with a 2015 Keeping the Blues Alive Award) which provides educational opportunities for young people with The Blues Foundation's "Blues in The Schools" Program.*

Board of Directors Meetings - 2nd Tuesday of each Month, 7:00 p.m.

All SBS Members in good standing are invited to attend.

Meetings are held via Zoom; to request an invitation, email: president@sacblues.org

2026 Board of Directors

Marcel Smith
Barbara Katen
Shirley McCoy
Laurel Coppess
Rick Snyder
Cari Chenkin
Lynette Shumway
Sally Katen
Julio Covington
Bobbie Felt Armstrong

Sacramento Blues Society Publications

Blue Notes, Bi-Monthly Newsletter **-** ***Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley, Co-Editors***

Layout - ***Cari Chenkin***

Cover Design: ***Dale Roberts***

Cover Photo - ***Bob Cosman***

Printing & Mailing by: ***Premier Print & Mail***

Blues Notes Ad Rates: *www.sacblues.org/advertising-rates*

Jan's Jams Weekly e-newsletter: ***- Jan Kelley***

Website: www.sacblues.org

Facebook: facebook.com/sacblues/
Instagram: instagram.com/sacbluessociety/
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Blues In The Schools Update

Building the Future of the Blues, One Classroom at a Time

By Rick Snyder (aka Rico)
Blues in the Schools Committee Chair

The Sacramento Blues Society's Blues in the Schools (BITS) program continues to move forward with strong momentum as we work to expand both our reach and our impact throughout the region.

We are currently awaiting approval of our contract with the Sacramento County Office of Education (SCOE). Once finalized, this partnership will allow us to enhance an additional facet of our elementary school assembly program, while further strengthening our Artist-in-Residence (AIR) offerings for middle and high school students. These programs remain a cornerstone of BITS, providing students with meaningful, hands-on exposure to blues music, its cultural roots, and its relevance in today's world.

In the meantime, the BITS Committee continues active outreach to elementary schools across the greater Sacramento area—and beyond. Our mission remains unchanged: to bring this award-winning educational program to as many campuses as possible, introducing students to live blues music while supporting arts education where it is needed most.

We are pleased to announce that our next BITS assembly is scheduled for January 22 at Gold Ridge Elementary School in Folsom, featuring Pinkie Rideau and her band as our guest facilitators and performers. This event promises to be both engaging and inspiring for students and staff, highlighting the power of live blues music in an educational setting.

Looking ahead, our Artist-in-Residence program is scheduled to begin in early March 2026. We are hopeful to once again serve three high schools and one middle school, with plans to expand the program to several additional campuses.

If you are interested in having Blues in the Schools brought to your child's school—or would like more information about the program—please don't hesitate to reach out.

Contact:
Rick Snyder, BITS Committee Chair
sacbits@gmail.com

Together, we can continue nurturing the next generation of blues fans, musicians, and supporters—one school at a time.

What's On Your Playlist?

By Barbara Katen

As most of you know by now, we lost a very integral member of our Blues Society and *Blue Notes* staff, Bob Cosman, on November 3. We are all still reeling from his passing and we want to honor him by reprinting his response to "What's on Your Playlist" from the July/August 2023 *Blue Notes* issue.

Bob Cosman

"The Blue Keep Falling" – James Cotton
"Broken Promises" – Michael Burks
"What Kind of Woman is This" – Buddy Guy
"Saint Gabriel" – Marcia Ball
"The Jug and I" – Otis Rush

Bob's playlist isn't just a collection of songs—it's a reflection of his heart and the deep connection he shared with the blues. Each track carries its own story, a reminder of Bob's enduring love for this music and the joy he brought to our lives.

We love and miss you, Bob. We'll see you on the other side.

International Blues Challenge (IBC) Update

They're Headed to Memphis!

By Shirley McCoy, IBC Chairperson

We are happy to report that both of our entrants to the IBC are officially registered to compete in Memphis. Dirty Laundry (Marcus) and Mike Hammar and the Nails are all very eager to go show Memphis what we (SBS) have!

The Blues Challenge is being held on historic Beale Street from January 13-17, 2026. We will be following Marcus' and Mike's advancement and wish the best of luck to both. No matter how far either of them end up going, I think it is safe to say that the Sacramento Blues Society will always claim them both very pridefully as our own. We hope to have even more positive news to share in the next issue of *Blue Notes* when the dust has settled and they have all returned from Memphis. Sacramento will definitely be making a mark on Memphis at the very least.

You can still donate to both Mike Hammar and the Nails' and Dirty Laundry's travel funds through their GoFundMe pages… every little dollar helps them along on their journey. You can also support these musicians by keeping up with their tour schedules and going to see them live when you can… while you still can!

Let's wish safe travels and the best of luck to Mike Hammar and the Nails and to Dirty Laundry on their journeys to Memphis!

SBS Hall of Fame Update

Save the Date: Johnny "Guitar" Knox Memorial Pro Jam 2026

By Sally Katen, HOF Chair

I have reserved dates for the Johnny "Guitar" Knox Blues Jam (our main Hall of Fame fundraiser) at the Torch Club on Sunday, June 7, 2026. More details will be available in future *Blue Notes* issues. Hope to see you there!

Torch Club — JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2026

JAN 1ST	BIG SANDY	3-6 PM
JAN 2ND	MYLAR & FRIENDS	6-8 PM
JAN 3RD	TOO MANY SQUIRRELS	6-8 PM
JAN 4TH	BLUES JAM	4-7 PM
JAN 7TH	NACHO & THE DOLLAR MENU	8:30-11 PM
JAN 11TH	BLUES JAM	4-7 PM
JAN 15TH	CUNHA BIG BAND	9PM - 12AM
JAN 17TH	HAYEZ	9PM-12AM
JAN 22ND	SWEDLOW GIT DOWN	9PM-12AM
JAN 24TH	THE COUNT (6-8PM), JINX JONES	9PM-12AM
JAN 25TH	SBS BLUES W/ ALMOST BLUE	4-7 PM
JAN 30TH	LEAPING BLENNIES (6-8PM), CASEY HENSLEY	9PM-12AM
FEB 1ST	BLUES JAM	4-7 PM
FEB 5TH	ROBERT GASTELUM JAZZ BAND	9PM-12AM
FEB 6TH	MYLAR & FRIENDS	6-8PM
FEB 8TH	BLUES JAM	4-7PM
FEB 12TH	SWEDLOW GIT DOWN	9PM -12AM
FEB 14TH	JAKE NIELSEN & SGT SPLENDOR	9PM-12AM
FEB 15TH	BLUES JAM	4-7 PM
FEB 20TH	JOHNNY & THE MONGRELS	9PM-12AM
FEB 21ST	TREME FUNKTET	9PM-12AM
FEB 22ND	SBS BLUES W/ JEN & THE TONICS	4-7PM
FEB 27TH	LEAPING BLENNIES (6-8PM), KATIE KNIPP	9PM -12AM
FEB 28TH	CAMPBELL'S FOLLY (6-8PM), PETER PETTY	9PM-12AM

SBS Fall Concert with Joel Astley

October 30, 2025, The Press Club, Sacramento

By Cari Chenkin *Photos by Cari Chenkin and Barbara Katen*

'Twas the night before Halloween, and all through the house…the music was hot and the crowd it did rouse! The Sacramento Blues Society presented its fall concert featuring Seattle's Joel Astley and his band. A number of SBS Board members and attendees added to the Halloween spirit by wearing costumes, which made for a fun atmosphere.

The quartet, featuring Joel Astley on harmonica and vocals, Tracy Wilkinson on bass, Joseph Barton on guitar and backing vocals and Don Montana on drums and backing vocals, is described as "an Americana, Blues, Funk, Jazz, Other / Not classifiable, R&B/Soul, Rock, Rockabilly group from Seattle". And their show aptly illustrated why they are so described.

Their sets contained a good mixture of covers and original songs. The show started off with an original instrumental tune, and cruised through, among others, their version of Slim Harpo's "Scratch My Back", then a Rick Estrin/Little Charlie cover. They played the original "Hot as Hell" and also covered Otis Redding's "Hard to Handle".

They started off the second set with a medley of blues classics, including the Meters' instrumental "Sissy Strut", then broke out some more original tunes including "Karma Wheel". They brought SBS's own Laurel Coppess up onstage to sit in on bass with them for a couple of tunes, and kept things lively enough for the swing dancers to enjoy themselves. Other highlights included a cover of Cannonball Adderley's "The Work Song" and originals "Second Hand Kid" and "Home Cooking".

It was great to hear an up-and-coming band from the Pacific Northwest. Incidentally, they will be heading to Memphis to represent The Washington Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge – so any SBS fans that plan to travel to Memphis for the event to cheer on our own contestants will have the opportunity to hear Joel. Learn more at: https://joelastley.com/home.

LATE BREAKING NEWS: Joel and band are in the studio in Seattle right now, making their second album, produced by Lee Oskar!

In Memoriam

Robert "Bob" Wayne Cosman, October 25, 1946 - November 3, 2025

Robert Wayne "Bob" Cosman, 79, passed away on November 3, 2025, in Sacramento, California.

Born on October 25, 1946, in Salem, Massachusetts, Bob, joined the U.S. Navy at 17 and served for three years during the Vietnam era as an electrician. He moved to California in the seventies, and was employed by Lehr Automotive 45 years.

Known for his intelligence, humility, and grounded nature, Bob was a thoughtful conversationalist who valued understanding over judgment. He built his own computer and enjoyed exploring technology with curiosity and skill.

Bob is lovingly remembered by his wife Jan Kelley and her family, his son Brian Cosman; his sister Shirley and Bob Smith, and their children Robyn and Jonathan.

A gifted photographer and artist who worked in various media, he brought creativity and thoughtfulness to everything he did. He had a deep love for music, and was dedicated to the Sacramento Blues Society.

Bob is the artist responsible for creating all the *Blue Notes* covers for the past dozen years, if not longer. He also was responsible for the production of the "Gone but Not Forgotten" videos that are an important, emotionally moving part of our annual Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony. Over the years, Bob and his camera were a welcome sight at Blues Society and blues-centered events around our area and on the Blues Cruises, including the one during which he and Jan were married. He left a legacy of fantastic portraits of blues musicians, some of which were on display at the Memorial Service held for him on November 19, 2025. May you rest in peace, Bob, you are surely missed.

Fifth Annual Little Charlie Baty Celebration Concert Announced for Thursday, March 12, 2026

By Mindy Giles

This is the fifth annual concert fundraiser for The Sacramento Blues Society Little Charlie Baty Memorial Music Scholarship.* Rick Estrin and the Nightcats, along with special guest, the great Texas guitar player Anson Funderburgh, will once again honor their friend. Special guests at the time of this deadline include three great singers/entertainers: Alabama Mike, SBS President Marcel Smith and Kyle Rowland. MORE GUESTS MAY BE ANNOUNCED.

Thursday, March 12, 2026
Harlow's, 2708 J Street, Sacramento, CA
$45 seated show ($80 VIP tickets are SOLD OUT!)
Tickets are available online and at the Harlow's box office M-F, 10am-5pm

TIX: https://www.harlows.com/event/5th-annual-little-charlie-celebration-concert-w-rick-estrin-the-nightcats-anson-funderburgh/harlows/sacramento-california/

Sacramento's own legendary Rick Estrin and the Nightcats travel the world, spreading the joy and power of their music. So in 2026, you only will get to see them maybe two times in Sacramento if you are lucky.

Larger-than-life blues star Rick Estrin has piloted the wildly fun and musically fearless Rick Estrin & The Nightcats for the last eighteen years, touring the world and proving night after night why they have a shelf full of awards. The limitless combined talents of blues harmonica virtuoso and sly, soulful singer Estrin, guitar mastermind Kid Andersen, keyboard wizard Lorenzo Farrell and endlessly creative drummer Derrick "D'Mar" Martin take Estrin's inventive, original songs to new and unexpected places. On stage, the band's ability to deliver an unpredictable, no-holds-barred show is unmatched.

"This band is the best in the land…superior songwriting infused with wit, humor, and streetwise insights, traditional and adventurous grooves, impeccable musicianship, creative arrangements, harmonica tutorials and savvy production…funky and original…always fresh and vital." - Blues Music Magazine

"Rick Estrin & The Nightcats are a formidable force. They sound better than ever [playing] stellar rockabilly, jazz, blues and rock, often in the same song, creating a unique, time-tested sound rooted in the past, bolstered by harpist/vocalist Estrin's time-warping original compositions." - No Depression

"Estrin defines his own brand of hip. Original blues and vintage rock-style tunes also harbor his superb harmonica work. Estrin emotes with just the right mix of kitsch and sincerity. The current litter of 'Cats, including guitarist Kid Andersen, reigns as the best band anywhere." - DownBeat

*A portion of the net proceeds will be donated to SBS' Little Charlie Baty Memorial Music Scholarship. The endowment at Sacramento State was created in honor of Charles "Little Charlie" Baty, master guitarist, and fearless blues musician.

*This scholarship honors Charlie Baty's commitment to the Blues in Schools program, and supports the Sacramento Blues Society's commitment to continuing the education and preservation of Blues music. The Scholarship winner will be announced in late February, 2026. (Details for application were in the November/December 2025 issue of the *Blue Notes*. Page 7: https://www.sacblues.org/blue-notes.html)

The partial scholarship is for student applicants in the School of Music within the College of Arts and Letters, California State University, Sacramento, California. https://www.sacblues.org/the-sacramento-blues-society-little-charlie-baty-memorial-music-scholarship.html

An Evening with Tinsley Ellis

A Night of Blues and Stories at Sacramento's Sofia Center

by Frank Farmer

Photos by Frank Farmer and Barbara Katen

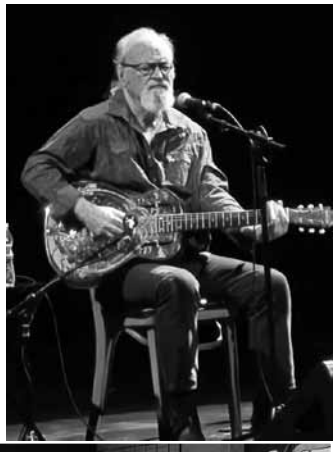
On September 19, Tinsley Ellis delivered a vibrant and joyful evening of blues to an enthusiastic crowd at Sacramento's Sofia Center. Accompanied only by his two remarkable acoustic guitars, Ellis captivated the audience with his masterful musicianship and engaging storytelling.

One of his guitars was a cherished six-string instrument gifted to him by his father years ago, its warm tones resonating throughout the hall. The other, a striking National String Hawaiian model, served as the perfect vehicle for his expressive slide work. Switching between the two, Tinsley's fluid style and rich vocals filled the intimate auditorium, drawing the audience close to the heart of each song.

Between performances, Ellis shared memorable stories from his career, including a delightful recollection of meeting B.B. King at the age of fifteen—before the blues legend's rise to international fame. Tinsley reflected on his rewarding journey, performing alongside many blues greats, both renowned and unsung.

His latest album, *Naked Truth*, on Alligator Records, stands as a testament to his enduring artistry, adding to a catalog that spans nearly 40 years. It's a fabulous listen—one you should definitely check out.

Perhaps the best part: Tinsley Ellis continues to tour, bringing his music and stories to audiences everywhere. If he comes to your town, don't miss the chance to see him perform. I know I won't.



"Volunteer Spotlight": Ernie & Esther Vasquez

by Barbara Katen

In every thriving music community, there are unsung heroes whose passion and dedication keep the rhythm alive. This issue, the Sacramento Blues Society shines the "Volunteer Spotlight" on Ernie and Esther Vasquez, a dynamic duo whose commitment has enriched our blues family for years.

Ernie and Esther's journey with the SBS began around 2008, thanks to a nudge from past president Willie Brown. "Willie suggested the idea to me, and we've been involved ever since," Ernie recalls. Their story is rooted in a shared love for community service, which only grew stronger after Ernie retired from his nursing career and Esther retired from social services. Looking for new ways to give back, volunteering became a natural next step for them. Their volunteer spirit was already well established—they had contributed their time at the YMCA Woodland Senior Center, the Sacramento Music Festival, and the Hot August Jazz Jubilee. So, when SBS stalwart Sally Katen called for volunteer help, Ernie and Esther were ready.

Music has always been a vital part of Ernie and Esther's lives. Their favorite blues artists? "James Brown, Butterfield Blues Band, and Tower of Power," they say without hesitation. And their connection is deeply personal: "On our first date, we went to Winterland to see Tower of Power. Esther fell in love with the band—and with me," Ernie fondly remembers.

For Ernie and Esther, the blues isn't just music; it's a powerful expression of the human experience. "Blues music is truly an original American sound, rooted in the turmoil and strife of society's underdogs," they reflect. This deep appreciation fuels their ongoing commitment to the SBS.

Volunteering with the SBS means wearing many hats. "We set up and staff the SBS table, help renew memberships, and introduce new members to our mission," Ernie explains. While the tasks may seem routine, the impact is profound. "I especially enjoy when musicians express appreciation for our volunteer services—it keeps us coming back."

For Ernie, the greatest inspiration is close to home. "My inspiration is my fellow volunteer, Esther," he shares. Their partnership not only strengthens their bond but also uplifts the entire SBS community. To those considering volunteering, Ernie and Esther offer heartfelt advice: embrace the opportunity to connect, serve, and grow within the blues community. The rewards—new friendships, unforgettable music, and the knowledge that you're making a difference—are immeasurable.

The Sacramento Blues Society is grateful for the tireless efforts of volunteers like Ernie and Esther. Their story is a testament to the power of music, community, and shared purpose. Here's to many more years of keeping the blues alive—together.

Sacramento Blues Society Elects Board Members at Annual Meeting

The Sacramento Blues Society (SBS) held its Annual Membership Meeting and Holiday Gala on Sunday, December 14, bringing together blues enthusiasts for a festive evening and an important milestone in our organization's governance. At the heart of the evening's activities was the election of Board members, shaping the leadership that will guide SBS into the future.

Election Results: Welcoming Old Friends and a New Face

We are pleased to announce that three Board members were elected at the meeting. Incumbents Rick Snyder and Shirley McCoy were re-elected for another two-year term, continuing their dedicated service to SBS. Joining them is a new recruit to the Board, Bobbie Armstrong.

Spotlight on Bobbie Felt Armstrong

Bobbie Felt Armstrong is no stranger to SBS and its members. She is a previous recipient of the Valerie Jean Anderson Volunteer of the Year Award, a testament to her commitment and passion for the blues community. Many of you may know Bobbie as the "Raffle Queen" at our annual SBS Hall of Fame Events, where her energy and enthusiasm have made her a beloved figure. We are excited to welcome Bobbie to the Board and look forward to her fresh perspective and continued contributions in shaping the future of the Sacramento Blues Society.

Looking Ahead

The SBS Board is eager to work together, fostering the growth of the blues in Sacramento and beyond. The Board will elect its 2026 slate of officers at the January meeting. Congratulations to Rick Snyder, Shirley McCoy, and Bobbie Armstrong, and thank you to all our members for your ongoing support!

Kyle Rowland is *Not Holding Back!* New Record (and January 16 Record Release Party!); The Legacy of "The Blues Party" Continues on Sacramento's K-ZAP

By Mindy Giles

January 2026 is launching in big way for Kyle Rowland, Sacramento's not-so-secret-now powerful young blues star.

His Little Village label debut album, *Not Holding Back!*, was digitally released late last year, with the CD and vinyl available now in January. Produced at Greaseland Studios by Rick Estrin and Kid Andersen, eight confident originals bolster his meaningful choices in these fifteen songs. With contributions from some of the heaviest of modern blues stars whom Kyle has learned from and worked with since he was a teen, this is a perfect rite of passage. As Rick Estrin writes "*I first met Kyle Rowland, when he was 10 years old and his father brought him to my house for a harmonica lesson. Even way back then, his enormous sound and the utter ferocity of his attack were startling. Twenty plus years and countless gigs later, the raw abandon remains while his skills, instrumentally, vocally, and as a songwriter, now match his huge natural talent.*"

Northern California fans will be celebrating in person at Kyle's record release event on **Friday, January 16** at Harlow's in Sacramento. His tough band, Rowland and Tumblin', will bring the joy and emotion they are all feeling together now. Justin MacCarthy on fierce guitar, Mike Phillips on soulful bass, and young dynamic drummer Myles Silveira understand how meaningfully the deep roots of the Chicago and Texas blues tradition center their versatility. Watching audience heads turn as an exuberant Kyle leads his band, snaking in funk, soul, country blues and rhythm and blues is world class! Expect some proud musical mentors in audience and on stage this night. Tix: www.harlows.com

The album has already grabbed raves from blues writers worldwide, from Paris to Alabama:

"Listening to it, we are won over by the precision, freshness and sincerity of this young musician. A vibrant and flawless first record, which already imposes the name of Kyle Rowland as one of the new faces of contemporary blues to be reckoned with. Jim Pugh's label has no equal in making us discover young and excellent musicians. A great success this session! It should satisfy the most demanding!" – Jean-Luc Vabres, Chroniques

"A kick-the-doors-down production out of Greaseland puts Kyle Rowland on good footing for what should be an uptick in national regard for his large-toned California harp work and fine tenor voice on ***Not Holding Back****."* -Talkin' the Blues with Microwave Dave (WLRH FM / WJAB FM, Huntsville AL)

"Mick Martin's Blues Party with Kyle Rowland" Debuts on Sacramento's K-ZAP Saturday, January 3!!

The other exciting full circle legacy also coming to pass is on Saturday, January 3 at 10am PST when Kyle takes the blues torch from his "Uncle Mick", his mentor and friend, whom we lost last July. Here's how Sacramento's K-ZAP, who just celebrated their ten-year anniversary return to the airwaves in 2025, announced it in mid-

Kyle Rowland CD Release & K-ZAP, Con't. from P. 7

December:

"Blues fans, get ready for a soul-stirring continuation of the legacy that defined Sacramento's airwaves! We're thrilled to announce the premiere of 'Mick Martin's Blues Party with Kyle Rowland', stepping into the Saturday morning spotlight on Sacramento's K-ZAP. Join us January 3rd, 2026, from 10am to Noon Pacific for a fresh groove that honors the past while pushing the blues forward.

Kyle Rowland isn't just any harmonica virtuoso—he's a Sacramento Blues Society Hall of Fame inductee, a 2024 International Blues Challenge semi-finalist, and a force who's been bending notes and breaking hearts since he was a kid. At just ten years old, Kyle caught the ear of the legendary Mick Martin (whom Kyle affectionately called "Uncle Mick") during the 2004 Sacramento Jazz Jubilee, leading to an invitation onstage that sparked a lifelong mentorship. Under Mick's wing, the young prodigy absorbed the genre's deep roots, from Delta origins to modern riffs. Mick produced Kyle's first CD at 16, collaborated on albums like *Come On If You're Comin'* (2021) with the Dixie Drifters, and championed him through Blues in the Schools and countless gigs. As Mick once said, Kyle was the bridge between the old masters and the new blood.

In the spirit of that unbreakable bond, passing the blues torch to Kyle feels like destiny. Mick built "Mick Martin's Blues Party" as a celebration of the genre's raw power and community—now, Kyle carries it forward, blending timeless tracks with emerging talents, all infused with the irreverent wit and encyclopedic passion Mick instilled in him. It's not an end; it's evolution, keeping the party alive for generations."

Let's raise a harmonica to Mick and welcome Kyle— the blues ain't done with us yet! #TheBluesParty #KyleRowland #KZAP #MickMartinLegacy

Like I've said for years, "Northern California is the new Chicago."

"Blue Sunday" Update

By Cari Chenkin

Photos by Cari Chenkin, Barbara Katen, Dale Roberts & Mindy Giles

Now about to launch its fifth full year, our "Blue Sunday" program has become a beloved feature of the Sacramento Blues Society experience. We started the series in August of 2021 as a way to benefit our member bands and it's grown in popularity with both bands and audiences.

Member bands, especially those new to the SBS or who haven't played a "Blue Sunday" yet, or who played one back in 2021, 2022 or 2023, please contact me if you want to book our 2026 dates. Reach me at: cariedawaycc@gmail.com.

In this issue, we review shows from October and November. December's show, which featured Tony and the Tuff Times, will have occurred too late for publication in this issue. But we'll catch up with them next issue.

Coming up January 25 is the return of Almost Blue. February brings in Jen & Tonics, followed in March by returning band Gloria T & the Master Groovers. And more great Sunday blues yet to come!

Sunday, October 26 - Todd Morgan & the Emblems

Close to Halloween, a few attendees sported costumes and Halloween gear as the SBS welcomed back Todd Morgan & The Emblems as the October Blue Sunday entertainment. Todd and company last played a Blue Sunday way back in November, 2021 – one of the first few bands to participate in our then-newly-launched program.

A trio that manages to put out enough sound to rival a bigger ensemble, the band includes Todd Morgan on lead vocals and guitar (although we know he's multi-talented and also plays keyboards and drums!), Chris Bell on bass and Andrew Philip on drums.

They play an eclectic mix of rockabilly, OG rock'n'roll and original tunes – and those originals are so good, I can't wait for their next album release! "In My Life or on My Mind" was one of them, and I really liked it.

They played three sets that had the dancers flocking to the dance floor. Some of the covers included Buddy Holly's "That'll Be the Day", the Rolling Stones' "The Last Time", "Hanky Panky" (Tommy James), "Memphis", "That's All Right Mama", T-Bone Walker's "Bobby Socks Baby", "Heartbreak Hotel", "Slow Down" and "You Send Me", among a host of other great tunes. The third set also featured another Todd original "She's Got the Good Stuff".

The band is tight, smooth and focused, with excellent musicianship on the part of each member. If you haven't seen them, it should be on your musical "bucket list", especially if you like to dance! Catch up with their shows at: https://toddmorganmusic.com/.

October Blue Sunday, Con't. from P. 8

November 30 - HipNosis

Late November brought cloudy skies and damp fog to Sacramento, but inside the Torch Club, it was hot, hot, hot as we presented a new member band, the nine-piece band HipNosis. Fueled by a four-piece horn section, this big band ensemble brought a great crowd that packed the house.

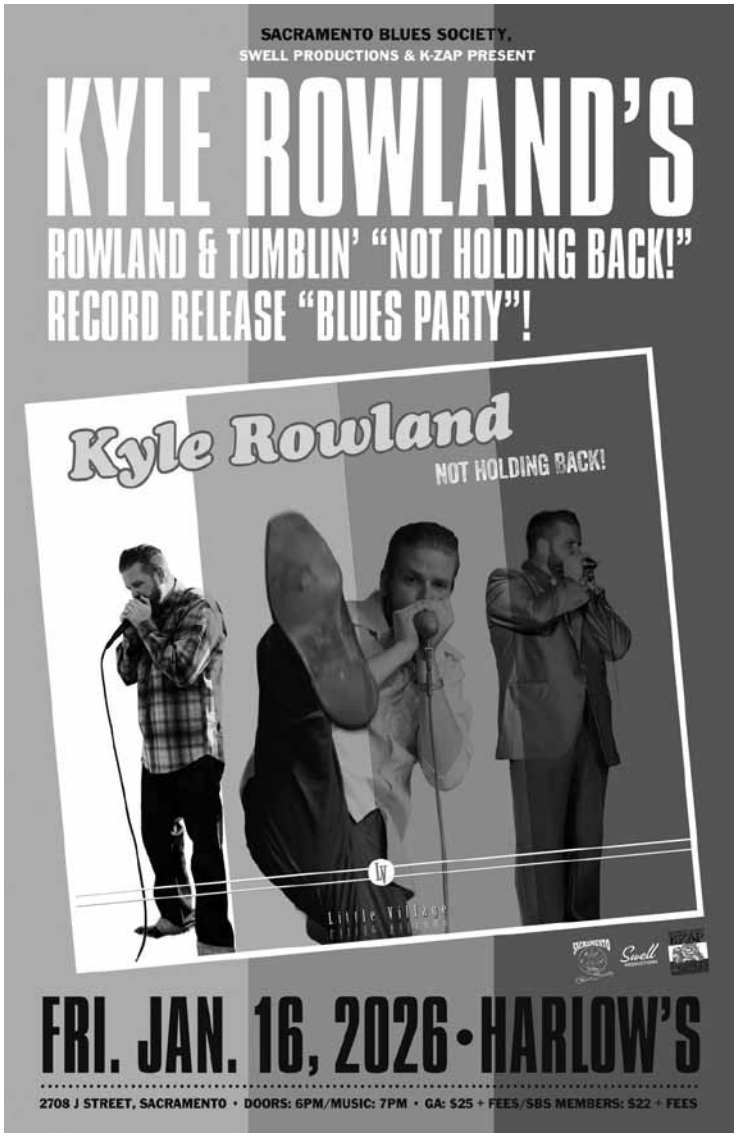
The musicians include: Aaron Grayden on keys, lead & backing vocals and composer; Brooke Ringger on lead and backing vocals; Bob Hansen, musical director and composer on tenor & baritone saxophone; Mark Wheeler, alto and tenor saxophone, composer; Paul Simmons on trumpet and flugelhorn, also a composer; Don Willems on trombone; Bill Vallaire on guitar and backing vocals, Rob Ringger on drums, vocals and composer; and Peter Mancina on bass. With all those composers in the group, you can bet they had some tasty original tunes to share!

They started off the show with Aaron covering Van Morrison's "Moondance", then brought on Brooke to cover Bonnie Raitt's "Love Letter". Other covers included Al Green's "Take Me to the River", the Beatles' "Got to Get You into My Life", Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer" and James Brown's "Cold Sweat". These were interspersed with a couple of their original songs as well. They promised more originals to come in the second set.

The second set started out with Average White Band's "Pick Up the Pieces", which featured a tasty bass solo, then as promised, a slew of original tunes including one called "The Airplane Song".
Set three featured a mix of original and cover tunes. There was a great arrangement of Bill Withers' "Lean on Me", another Bonnie Raitt cover, the R&B classic "What You Won't Do for Love" and a truly tasty version of the Doobie Brothers' "Long Train Running" which featured a ripping guitar solo and a drum solo. They closed the show with a cover of Otis Redding/ Aretha Franklin's "Respect". And darn, gotta give them their props!

November Blue Sunday, Con't. from P. 9

The dancers loved it, the listeners loved it, and I have no doubt we'll hear more from HipNosis in the future. Follow them at: https://www.hipnosis.band/.



"The Backstage Break with Shirley"

Interview with Sean "Mack" McDonald

By Shirley McCoy *Photo Courtesy of Sean McDonald*

Introducing "The Backstage Break with Shirley" column. These are interviews that have been partially transcribed from my interviews with musicians on my radio show "Studio 416" on KZFR 90.1FM in Chico. These full interviews are available for two weeks on the KZFR website at https://kzfr.org/archives, if you wish to hear them.

This "Backstage Break with Shirley" features Sean "Mack" McDonald. The 24-year-old released his debut record *Have Mercy!* on The Little Village Foundation label in October. I chatted with him about this album and getting to work with Kid Andersen at Greaseland and also about playing the blues as a young person.

SM: You grew up in Augusta, Georgia. You recently graduated from Middle Tennessee University - was it a major in audio production?

SMac: Yes, it was. I'm class of 2022. I wanted to go ahead and get

Backstage Break, Sean McDonald, Con't. from P. 10

my education out of the way. My family puts a really big emphasis on education and making sure that we have all of that squared away. I wanted to make sure that I took care of that.

SM: How did you end up making it all the way out to California, coming out to Greaseland?

SMac: I'm a big fan of Kid Andersen's and the work that he does and the work that they do at Little Village. I've been wanting to work with him for years. Also, Kid gave me some guitars some years back, so he said the only caveat was that I had to come over there and work with him at some point. When you get a call from Jim Pugh, you have to answer. He was the one who made the phone call for me to go out there and do the record. We got together in August and we cut it in three days and then it came out in October.

SM: Greaseland has a stellar reputation. Since you studied audio production, is this something you aspire to do more of? What was it like working with Kid as a producer?

SMac: It was really great working with Kid. I'd worked with him before as a musician, but not as a recording artist. It was a similar process as working with him as a musician and being in a band. There were a few things I learned, one of which was that he had certain ideas and I was like "I don't think that's going to work" and then he'd say "Well, let's try it" and then it would work out. He won "Producer of the Year" last year, so I told him "This is why you're 'Producer of the Year', this is why they picked you." It worked out perfectly and it translates well over the record, I believe.

SM: You came from a little of a musical background. Was the guitar your first instrument? Was music always the plan for what you wanted to do?

SMac: I started out playing drums. My dad's a drummer and his dad's a drummer and so that's what I started out on. When I was three, I started playing piano. When I was five, I picked up the harmonica. I didn't pick up guitar until I was seven. I picked up other instruments along the way. As far as education is concerned, and a career plan, I knew I always wanted to have a hand in music but with the way the economy and the world are set up now, sometimes music isn't the best idea, so I would have folks telling me "Well, you can do music on the side" and things like that. So, at one point I wanted to be a neurosurgeon, honestly and truthfully. And then I figured out, well I'm not really passionate about picking around in somebody's brain. I'd rather be fine and stick with music, and it's been working- I absolutely love it.

SM: You're only 24 years old. The blues has always been changing and evolving- how would you best describe your style of blues and what do you think it takes to hook a younger audience into this kind of music?

SMac: My style is based on a lot of the stuff that encompasses the era between the late 40s and the early 60s. I used to do a lot of covers, and I still do a lot of covers from that time. And then a lot of the music that I write is also based on that era of music.

It's actually hard trying to be a new, young, Black musician that plays that kind of music and is trying to get out to a younger audience. A lot of today's young people don't have an interest in the blues because the the main people who are playing the music are old white guys - they think it's their grandparents' music. They're not seeing young Black people play the music and they're not really interested in it. That makes it harder for people around my age to reach that audience. So, we're doing what we can to let them know that it's not lame to listen to, and to be interested in, this kind of music, because it's the basis of all American music. If it wasn't for Son House and Robert Johnson and Charlie Patton and all those guys, we wouldn't have the music that you listen to on the radio today. I think if more young people took an interest in that, it would be not only a lot easier for us to get gigs, but I think it'd be a way to connect them to their ancestors and things like that, and that's what I think a lot of people are missing.

SM: What kind of things do inspire your writing? Do you have any kind of process for your writing?

SMac: It just depends on what's going on at that point in time. For instance, my song "Faking It" was inspired by the fact that I was in a depression at one point last year. I still had to be around people and had to do shows and had to do school. So, it was a matter of putting on a mask to appear as if "Oh I'm happy" while knowing that I'm unhappy. So, I ended up writing a song about faking trying to be happy. Writing that song really helped me put it all into perspective.

The first line of my song "Killing Me" is "I can't sleep at night". I was out in Switzerland and I couldn't sleep.

So, my writing just depends on what's going on at the time and however I'm feeling. And it can't be forced. I try not to force any songs because if I do that, then they're not going to come out good. It's a divine thing for me. Whenever the time is right, whenever I get the idea, I have to go ahead and capture it because if not, I'm gonna lose it. And I'm sure a lot of artists feel the same way.

SM: You just got back from overseas.

SMac: Yes, I did a two-week tour over there. We did nine shows in seven countries in two weeks!

SM: Sounds like you've been really busy. It must be a lot of fun!

SMac: Absolutely, it is. Just because I get to connect with the people and things like that. But I get homesick quick.

SM: What has been one of your most favorite parts of your career so far with touring and getting to go everywhere that you've gotten to go to?

SMac: Just traveling in general has been my favorite part. Being able to go places that I didn't think I'd be going to until later on in life. Taking my music across seas and around the country. It's been an absolute ball being able to go out and do that. I'm going places that even some of my family members haven't even gone - those who were in the military and otherwise. But being able to have fun and go out and see the world while using my passion to do that has been an absolute joy; I love it.

SM: Who have been your greatest mentors and any of the best advice that you've been given?

SMac: Oh, I call all of my fellow musicians my coworkers. I've had so many great coworkers. But Uncle Marcel, Taj Mahal especially, he's a good friend of mine. Keb Mo'. Jontavius Willis - I can't overstate how important Jontavius has been to my career. He's really the one that helped me get on the map and introduced me to certain people and got me into certain places. He, Marquis Knox and Kingfish, all the young guys, are all good friends of mine. We've been helping each other out.

One of the greatest pieces of advice I've gotten didn't come from a blues musician, it actually came from my dad. I was getting ready to graduate college and he said "When you're blazing trails, the unknown is where you thrive." And so, being someone who is the first in my family to do a lot of the stuff that I'm doing right now, I

Backstage w Sean McDonald, Con't. from P. 11

realize that I'm blazing a lot of trails for folks that are coming after me. So, I have to go into unknown territory to be able to make these trails for those people. I'm always keeping that in mind so that I have that kind of mentality to ensure that what I'm doing is right and I'm making the right decisions. Even when I slip up, I learn from my mistakes.

SM: What's coming next for Sean McDonald?

SMac: Next year, as far as touring is concerned, I'll be over in Europe doing festivals. I'll be in Texas as always. Hopefully I'll be back in Arkansas doing festivals. I'll be at the Redwood Coast Music Festival in Eureka. As far as the next record is concerned, I'm still riding high on this first one. If Jim wants to do another one, I'll be down to do that.

Catch up with Sean at: https://www.facebook.com/MackTheMusician/

Important Notice to All Sacramento Blues Society Members

Your Attention Needed: Recent eBlast and Staying Informed

In the spirit of transparency, we want to call your attention to an important email notice (eBlast) sent to all Sacramento Blues Society members on 11/15/2025. This eBlast addressed a recent issue involving Flipcause, the company that manages our nonprofit's business operations. We encourage every member to review this communication to stay informed about matters affecting our organization.

Our regular weekly Friday e-blasts are our primary way to share critical updates, including issues relevant to the Blues Society, as well as information on upcoming activities and blues events you won't want to miss. To ensure you receive these important notices, make it a habit to check your email and read all eBlasts from the Society. If you missed the November eBlast, here is the message.

November 15, 2025 - eBlast notification

Important Notice to Sacramento Blues Society Members

Effective immediately, please do not submit donations or renewals on our website until further notice. We are reviewing alternative options to mitigate impact and guide SBS's next steps.

Flipcause, our current fundraising and donation platform, has been ordered by California Attorney General Rob Bonta to cease all operations. We are actively monitoring the situation and will determine how SBS may be included in this investigation or related considerations as they develop.

Please note donations, memberships, and membership renewals may be sent via mail to: Sacramento Blues Society, P.O. Box 60580, Sacramento, CA 95860-0580, or processed in person at all upcoming SBS events. We will provide updates as we learn more and as we finalize our path forward. Thank you for your patience and support as we navigate this situation.

Respectfully, Marcel L. Smith, President, Sacramento Blues Society

If you did not receive the recent eBlast, or if you are unsure whether we have your current email address on file, please contact our Membership Chair, Linda McShane, (sbsmembership@gmail.com) to verify and update your contact information. Staying connected helps us keep you informed and engaged with everything happening in our vibrant blues community!

Sacramento Area Blues Jams Abound!

By Mindy Giles

The beating heart of the blues is community. No better way than supporting blues jams and open mics. We all need each other, players and audience. SHOW UP. SHARE. SUPPORT!

Sunday (Weeks 1-2-3): Sunday Blues Jam, 4pm-7pm
The Torch Club, 904 15th St., Sacramento, CA.
Host: Dave Segal

Sunday (Weekly): Sunday Soul Jam, 5:30pm-8:30pm
Daughters of the Camellia Temple, 3706 Stockton Blvd., Sacramento, CA
Host: Bob Jones & The Chosen Few

Sunday (Weekly): Powerhouse Sunday Night Jam, 7pm-11pm
The Powerhouse Pub, 614 Sutter St.,Folsom, CA
Host: Greg King & Friends

Monday (Monthly - 3rd Monday): Blue Monday, 6pm-9pm
Almond Tree Grill & Lounge, 214 Harding Blvd, Roseville, CA
Host: Frank Munz & Chris Fraire

Wednesday (Weekly): Kyle Rowland's Open Mic Night, 7pm-10pm
The Gaslight Co., 718 Sutter Street/ 2nd Floor, Folsom, CA.
Host: Kyle Rowland

Thursdays (Weekly): 9pm-Midnight
San Juan Club, 7420 Sunset Ave, Fair Oaks, CA.
Host: Jimmy Pailer, Greg King, Jimmy Bagshaw

Saturday (Monthly - Last Saturday): Geo's Jam, 3pm-6pm
Louie's Cocktail Lounge, 3030 Mather Field Rd., Rancho Cordova, CA
Host: Geo Lydon, Zane Toberer

We Asked, You Answered!

SBS Member Survey Results

By Rick Snyder

This spring, your SBS Board wanted to get member input. So, we decided to put a member survey on our website (we also have hard copies at all SBS events) to give our members the opportunity to tell us what we're doing right, what we need to improve upon, and what you want your blues society to be.

Thank you to all members who completed our 2025 survey! Your feedback helps guide the future of the Sacramento Blues Society. Here's a snapshot of what we learned:

Key Highlights

Membership Satisfaction

- Most members are Very Satisfied or Satisfied with their SBS membership.
- Members value our mission, community, and support for local musicians.
- A small number requested clearer communication or more event variety.

Member Survey Results, Con't. from P. 12

Membership Fee Increase

- The majority said they would be Very Likely or Likely to renew even with a $5–$10 dues increase.
- This shows strong confidence in the value SBS provides.

Annual Gala

- Many members consider the Gala Important or Very Important, although some newer members are unfamiliar with it.
- Most said they would still attend if a small ticket price were added.
- Suggestions included more seating, varied venues, themed performances, harmonica features, youth musicians, and fewer interruptions.

Events Beyond the Gala

- Most members attend SBS events every few months or monthly.
- Members want:
  - Earlier show times
  - More suburban or outdoor venues
  - More national blues acts
  - Expanded Northern California blues calendar

Programming Ideas

- Members suggested:
  - Women in Blues showcase
  - One-day mini blues festival
  - Master classes with artists
  - More opening acts featuring Blues in the Schools
  - More traditional blues, plus solo/duo features

Communication

- Communication received high satisfaction marks, especially email and Blue Notes.
- Some members asked for earlier announcements and a more complete event calendar.

How Members Found SBS

Word of mouth, local blues shows, radio, and Blues in the Schools continue to be the top ways members discovered SBS. Many have been involved for decades and remain engaged because they love the music and the community.

Overall Takeaway

SBS members are deeply committed to the Society and enthusiastic about its future. Your feedback highlights opportunities to expand programming, diversify venues, strengthen communication, and continue celebrating the blues throughout Northern California.

Good Eats & Good Beats

By Barbara Katen

Dish: Black-Eyed Peas & Collard Greens

Drink Pairing: Sweet Tea (or Sparkling Green Tea)

Record Pairing: *Folk Singer* – Muddy Waters (1964)

The Eats

In the south, black-eyed peas & collard greens are a New Year's tradition — said to bring luck, prosperity, and good health for the year ahead. But truth is, they're good eats any time. Savory, satisfying, and soul-nourishing, this dish is also vegetarian-friendly (though you can add ham hock or smoked turkey if you want a meatier version).

Recipe

Ingredients:

2 cups dried black-eyed peas (or 3 cans, drained & rinsed)

1 large bunch collard greens, washed & chopped (remove thick stems)

1 medium onion, diced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 bell pepper, diced

2 Tbsp olive oil

1 tsp smoked paprika

½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional for heat)

1 bay leaf

4 cups vegetable broth (or chicken broth if not vegetarian)

1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar

Salt & black pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. If using dried peas, soak overnight and drain.
2. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium. Add onion, garlic, and bell pepper; sauté until soft.
3. Add smoked paprika, cayenne, and bay leaf. Stir until fragrant.
4. Add peas and broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to simmer until tender (about 45 minutes for soaked peas, 20 minutes for canned).
5. Stir in collard greens and simmer until wilted but still vibrant (10–12 minutes).
6. Finish with apple cider vinegar, salt, and pepper.

Serve with cornbread on the side to soak up the juices.

The Drink

Nothing pairs better than a tall glass of sweet tea — or for a lighter modern twist, sparkling green tea with lemon. Both balance the earthy depth of the greens and the hearty beans.

The Beats

As the pot simmers, put on Muddy Waters' *Folk Singer*. The stripped-down, acoustic setting lets every note breathe — much like the humble, nourishing ingredients of this dish. It's the blues at its most honest: earthy, grounded, and timeless.

Got your own dish you want to share? Maybe a secret family recipe? Send it to me with your favorite blues record — we might feature your Good Eats & Good Beats in a future issue!

SBS Annual Meeting & Holiday Gala - A "Howling" Success!

By Michelle Blaisure, Frank Farmer & Mindy Giles

Photos by Barbara Katen, Bob Hakins, Cari Chenkin, Cynthia Juarez, Dale Roberts, Frank Farmer, Jeff Parkin, Mike Hammar, Mindy Giles & Sally Katen

Editor's Note:

When I first called for volunteers to review our Annual Meeting and Holiday Gala event, I got…crickets. Nobody volunteered! So, I reached out to my friend and *Blue Notes* content creator Michelle Blaisure, who (after my begging and pleading!) kindly agreed to take notes and write a review.

I breathed a sigh of relief that we'd have coverage of our most important yearly event. And then I got lucky – with Frank Farmer writing a brief review on Facebook that he gave me permission to use. And then our fabulous Mindy Giles, who as a long-time music business insider and professional, has a unique perspective on the artists and their music, offered her take on the event as well.

Now we have three wonderful reviews to share with our readers, along with a bumper crop of terrific photos take by our professional (Bob Hakins, Dale Roberts, Jeff Parkin) and amateur photographers. So read on and enjoy!

Well Worth the Wait!

By Michelle Blaisure

While it was another dreary, gray day in Sacramento, I was excited about attending the Sacramento Blues Society gala at Harlow's. This year we got there early so we could get a good seat and though it was a long wait, over an hour, we really enjoyed chatting with all the other members waiting in line.

Well, I wasn't familiar with HowellDevine but the trio quickly gained my attention and delight with their opening number, a strong rhythmic song with a jazzy blues vibe, overlaid by the big bass beat.

The trio's unexpected style is hard to define as they expertly transitioned from a sexy down-home blues in "Say You Love Me" to a rocking blue number with a little Cajun country feel. The combination of the harmonica and bass solo had the crowd clapping and hooting.

The trio is seamless in their tight, easy playing with guitar solos bringing a haunting feeling that you feel in your bones.

Then much to our surprise, Rick Estrin jumped on the stage and joined in on harmonica bringing a "Wow!"-inspiring performance that had the audience on its feet.

"PM Blues" was one of my favorites, bringing traditional blues to their smooth, sexy, foot-tapping beat that makes you want to get up and move.

The familiar "Spoonful" had that deep rhythmic head-bopping blues feel in their unique country blues style.

Howell Devine finished up a with a real bluesy number that Rick jumped into for a rousing two harmonica finish.

What a treat, loved these amazing guys! I hope they come back soon as I am now a big fan.

True Blues

By Frank Farmer

Sacramento Blues Society's 2025 Holiday Gala, featuring Howell-Devine and special guest Rick Estrin was a fine evening at Harlow's in Sacramento CA.

The evening was capped with a stellar performance of blues music, laced with Delta grooves, juju, and who knows what else.

HowellDevine is Josh Howell (guitar, vocals, harmonica), Pete Devine (drums, percussion), and Joe Kyle Jr. (upright bass). These gentlemen are incredible musicians, weaving a great sound as an ensemble, and as individual soloists. If you listened with your eyes closed, you might think that five or six musicians were playing, instead of three.

Making it even more special was a visit from Mr. Rick Estrin. The dueling harmonica interplay between Josh and Rick was fabulous. Big thanks to Harlow's and the Sacramento Blues Society for making this event happen.

SBS Annual Meeting & Holiday Gala, Con't. from P. 14

"That's the Gig for Humanity…HowellDevine is Here to Help"

By Mindy Giles

"Howlin' for the Holidays!" was the prescient theme for the SBS Annual Membership Gala held at Harlow's on Sunday, Dec. 14. Blues folk STILL do know how to mix business and pleasure in a fashionable way, and so emcee Liz Walker, resplendent in faux leopard panache, called on President Marcel Smith to open the festivities and call the annual membership meeting to order.

This is the day each year when ballots are counted and new 2026 Board members are announced midway into the evening, where party goers can celebrate future Board leaders, toast with cocktails, cookies and other edibles. It's also the night our music-loving blues community can share news with each other, hope for the days ahead, and gratitude for days past.

And so, it felt particularly right this year to find the band of brothers who could bring the vibe of an earlier time of blues, the snaky "old weird America" hypnotic Hill Country blues and Delta blues from where it ALL started. The Bay Area's HowellDevine can do that and more.

The renowned roots music writer Bill Bentley penned this vibe with great precision: *"Howell's voice is one that needs no changing. He reaches down where one's emotions are in constant turbulation looking for a semblance of serenity and finds a sound which can express the opposites like they were meant to co-exist. That's called life, and as we all continue to spiral towards what's ahead, the blues is as good a companion as could be imagined. The trio is able to embrace the strange times that have come before, arrived again and will surely be back for another visit sometime in the world's future. That's the gig for humanity, and there is no getting out of it. The good news is that for right now, in these strange times, HowellDevine is here to help. Blues or lose."*

HowellDevine (triple threat lead singer Josh Howell on both slide and finger-picking guitars; Pete Devine on dazzling drums and washboard, and Joe Kyle Jr. on plucked and bowed upright bass) packed songs from some of the deepest blues writers/singers into their two sets. You hear Hambone Willie Newbern's 1929 version of "Rollin' and Tumblin'" merge into Muddy Waters' 1950 version. Then, to Hill Country legend R.L Burnside and the band's propulsive take on his 1968 "Long Haired Doney."

And if their version of Sonny Boy Williamson's "Eyesight to the Blind" didn't make the adults worry about where their granddaughter was, then they weren't hearing right. Then "Long Distance Call" , "Can't Be Satisfied", "Baby Please Don't Go"--- this band loves the early 1950's Chess Records sound (Muddy with Little Walter on harmonica and Ernest "Big" Crawford on bass.)There is no hopped up endlessly screaming guitar solos. This is low down, this is juke joint, dark nightclub stuff. This is, as Mississippi Fred McDowell once famously quipped, "*I do not play no rock and roll, I just play the straight and natural blues."*

That's precisely why there was a huge smile on Rick Estrin's face as he sat in the audience near the stage. I think he was itching to get up there and join in with these three. They picked two Chicago chestnuts - "(Sail On) Honey Bee" and "Got Me Runnin'". What a treat to feel the solid locked-in rhythm section of Pete and Joe (bowing a low tremolo!) back up Josh on piercing slide and languorous vocals, and Rick wail on harp. They made both magic and history as Josh told us that two of them had never played together before!! They closed the first set with "Busy Bootin'", a jumpin' 1934 country blues by Kokomo Arnold, maybe about bootlegging or likely another double entendre…

At set break, VP Barbara Katen announced the results of the votes for the 2026 Board of Directors. Another longtime devoted volunteer, Bobbie Felt Armstrong, will finally join the SBS Board next year, along with returning Board members Rick Snyder and Shirley McCoy.

Other SBS official business included honoring our stalwart, worthy volunteer Earl Withycombe with the 2025 Valerie Jean Anderson Volunteer of the Year Award. We were incredibly pleased that VJ's daughter, Celeste DeSouza, was on stage to co-present.

President Marcel Smith did double duty this day, as he and the Mick Martin Big Blues Band played the afternoon 'Powerhouse of Blues" concert in Folsom. Marcel raced to Harlow's and gave a spirited and powerful call to public service for everyone in the crowd, declared the robustness of the SBS, congratulated the Board, volunteers and members for all the happy warrior work done this year on behalf of the music we all love.

The second set opened with "Sadie", Hound Dog Taylor's rollickin' love song, then "Guitar Rag" a dapper 1923 fingerpicker by Sylvester Weaver featuring Pete on his well-used washboard. This song was one of the reasons the great Chris Strachwitz, founder of Arhoolie Records was so impressed that he signed this band. It appears on *Jumps, Boogies and Wobbles*, their 2013 debut album.

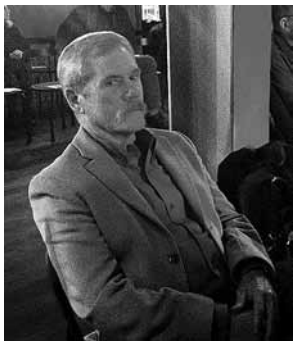
"Going Down South", another R.L. Burnside favorite is raw, stripped down elegance of trancey, drone-heavy North Mississippi hill country blues, followed by "Poor Boy", a traditional that both HowellDevine and later, the Black Keys have ramped up for dancers' frenzy. They followed with a compelling sinewy original, "P.M. Blues" where Josh's talkin' harmonica mirrors his woman's wildness, and

SBS Annual Meeting & Holiday Gala, Con't. from P. 15

they then rolled into the very haunting and rare Blind Willie McTell gem, “East St. Louis”, an eight-minute masterpiece journey of “dark clouds arising…” with propulsive hypnotic fervor trading off between all three extraordinary players.

Josh’s sublime, sensual and so Sonnyboy “It’s Been So Long” sent many wimmens’ heart a flutter and then they followed up it with Willie Dixon’s wisest hit, “Spoonful.”

A room yelling “one more” turned into the dazzling harmonica instrumental encore “Woogie Man” and got Rick back on stage to the roar and applause of the whole house. The encore included a brilliant bass solo from Joe, Pete on syncopated fire and Rick, trading licks and grins with Josh. We all got sooo many “OMG!! BRING THEM BACK!!” from the very appreciative, mesmerized crowd.



2025 Valerie Jean Anderson Award Winner - Earl Withycombe

The Sacramento Blues Society proudly congratulates Earl Withycombe for being named the recipient of the Valerie Jean Anderson Volunteer of the Year Award at the 2025 Annual Membership Meeting/ Gala, held on December 14th. Earl's remarkable dedication and service to the organization were highlighted in the November/December issue of the Sacramento Blues Society *Blue Notes*.

This year's award presentation was made especially meaningful by the presence of 2023 recipient Cari Chenkin and Celeste DeSouza, daughter of Valerie Jean Anderson, who represented her late mother—the award's namesake. Their heartfelt participation underscored the legacy of volunteerism and passion that the award celebrates.

Earl's volunteer spirit continues to inspire the Sacramento Blues Society community, and we extend our deepest gratitude for his tireless commitment and outstanding contributions.

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Thank You Donors!

Our donors and members are the life blood of our organization. Without you we would be unable to accomplish our mission. Please join these major donors by making a tax deductible contribution by sending a check made out to "The Sacramento Blues Society" to SBS, PO Box 60580, Sacramento, CA 95860-0580. We need your continued support. When you renew your membership, why not add an additional contribution? Every little bit helps!

Ann Bailey	Linda Berlin
Cari Chenkin	Rick Clemens
Ross & Nancy Cofer	Rick Estrin & The Nightcats
Victoria Fong	Joel Foy
Beth & R.W. Grigsby	Linda Ham & Ron Noble
Jeff Herzog	Suzanne & Luther Hopp
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Geralyn Sheridan	Mike Shower & Jeanne Rodgers
Rick Snyder	Wayne Smith
Carlton Steger	Daniel Street
Jan Tamayo	Lynette & Earl Withycombe
Andy Zdon	

Sacramento Blues Society Member Bands

Need music for an event or an occasion? Hire an SBS Member Band! And buy their CDs!

Aaron "King" Moreno & the Imperials
https://www.facebook.com/p/Aaron-King-the-Imperials

Almost Blue
https://www.almostbluesacramento.com/

The Angel Reyes Band
https://www.facebook.com/groups/719779323169840/

The Anthony Paule Soul Orchestra
www.anthonypaule.com

Blind Lemon Peel
www.blindlemonpeel.com

Bob Jones & The Chosen Few
https://www.facebook.com/bobjoneschosenfew/

The Bobby Young Project
bobbyyoungproject.com

The California Bluestones
teriwilson.godaddysites.com

The Carmen Ratti Band
www.carmenrattiband.com

Chaz and Jess
www.chazandjess.com

Chicken & Dumpling
www.chickenanddumpling.net

The Christian DeWild Band
www.reverbnation.com/christiandewild

Danny Sandoval & His Amigos
https://dannysandoval.com

Dave Croall & The Soothers
www.soothersblues.com

The Dave Segal Band
www.davesegalband.com

Dirty Laundry
https://www.instagram.com/dirtylaundrytheband/?hl=en

Dr. Rock & The Stuff
www.bookthestuff.com

Gloria T & The Master Groovers
www.mzgloriat.com

The Herald Sessions
https://www.facebook.com/people/The-Herald-Sessions-Trio

HipNosis
https://www.hipnosis.band/

The Hucklebucks
www.thehucklebucks.com

Jen & Tonics
https://www.facebook.com/jenandtonics/

Jeramy Norris & The Blues Cartel
www.dangerousblues.com

Joe Lev
https://www.facebook.com/joe.lev.bassplayer/

Julie & the Jukes
http://julieandthejukes.com

Marcel Smith
https://www.instagram.com/marcelsmithentertainer/

The Melonnee Desiree Band
https://www.melonneedesiree.com/

The Mick Martin Big Blues Band
www.reverbnation.com/mickmartinsbigbluesband

The Midtown Creepers
jmcguire@comcast.net

Mike Hammar & The Nails
www.mikehammarandthenails.com

Nedra & Julio NJR Music
www.njrmusic.com

Papa Day Blues Band
www.oldbluesdude.com

Pinkie Rideau & Blioux Gumbo
https://pinkie-rideau-1.ueniweb.com

The Ray "Catfish" Copeland Band
www.raycatfishcopeland.com

Red's Blues
www.redsbluesband.com

Rick Estrin & The Nightcats
www.rickestrin.com

The Rockin' Souls
www.facebook.com/p/Rockin-Souls-100086431375411

Rooster
https://roosterrockandroll.com

Rowland & Tumblin'
www.kylerowlandblues.com

Rube & The Rhythm Rockers
https://www.facebook.com/steve.rubenstein.39

Rusty Sterling
https://www.rustysterling.com/

The Skyway Blues Band
https://www.facebook.com/people/Skyway-Blues-Band/61571197687183/

The Tim Noxon Rockin' Blues Band
www.facebook.com/TimNoxon-RockinBluesBand

Todd Morgan & The Emblems
toddmorganmusic.com

Tony & The Tuff Times
www.facebook.com/tattblues

The Val Starr Band
https://www.valstarrandthebluesrocket.com/

The William Mylar Band
www.mylarville.com

Zenn Vudu
www.zennvudu.com

Zola Moon
www.zolamoon.com

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Blue Notes is the official bi-monthly newsletter of the Sacramento Blues Society.

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