

BSWPA NEWSLETTER

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COME LOOK US OVER!!!

We as a Society are starting over in Western Pennsylvania

WE HAVE NEW OFFICERS AND A NEW OUTLOOK FOR PRESERVING THE BLUES. WE WELCOME YOUR IDEAS, AND YOUR SUGGESTIONS. WE DEFINITELY ENCOURAGE AND NEED YOUR INPUT TO ADVANCE OUR BLUES SOCIETY. WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT IN A NEWSLETTER.

WE ARE THINKING OF PROVIDING YOU WITH INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL ARTISTS, NEWS OF NATIONAL ARTISTS, LOCAL CLUBS, AND REVIEWS OF NEW CDS.

CONTACT THE NEWS BLUES HOUNDS
AT 724-378-8926 OR
2golfers2@comcast.net

KEEP THE BLUES ALIVE,
BECOME A MEMBER!!

NEW OFFICERS ... NEW START

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COMMITTEES ARE FORMING!
GIVE YOUR TIME AND HELP WITH WHAT YOU
MAY DO BEST!!!!



The 3rd Annual Western Pennsylvania International Blues Challenge

Bands should contact Jim Franciscus at sonicbluesrocks@hotmail.com or by phone at (412) 784- 9130. Applications are now being taken - Don't miss this opportunity. The winner will be the Pittsburgh's Blues Society representative at the 2008 International Blues competition in Memphis. Our society has sent winners the last few years, and we are looking forward to sending another. Come out to support your favorite bands. Where else could a blues fan get the best 20 minutes of great music from each band with minimal turnover time? A great time will be had by all.

A Note of Thanks . . .

The BSWPA has recently undergone a change in leadership. While we have no permanent new leaders, we are in the process of forming a new board. Jeff Kearns has resigned as president. Tracy Giancano has resigned as treasurer. Their passion and energy will be missed and hopefully they will continue to work with us to help build both the society and the coverage of the blues music in our Pittsburgh area.

Like To Share Your Blues Experiences as a Fan or a Musician?

For those who would like to share their perspective involving a local or national blues festival or event we would love to hear from you. Please submit your thoughts to share with other members. We would like to entertain an informative and positive informational format that we can all enjoy. Contact us at 2golfers2@comcast.net or call Jim at (724) 378-8926.

Who Would Figure...? Interesting Facts to Ponder

None of these people have sold more than 10 million units (Albums, CDs, etc.) in their entire career: Allman Brothers, B.B. King, Buddy Guy, and Johnny Winter. Yet all of these people have sold more than 10 Million units: Jennifer Lopez, Billy Ray Cyrus, Will Smith, and George Michael. Is this a JOKE or what?

CD Review Corner ...

An attempt to review CD's that Most People do not own but may want to try

DAVID GOGO - "Dine Under the Stars"

British Columbia native, David Gogo, got his first guitar at the young age of five. He has released eight CDs, each well worth the cost. Having missed his opening for Johnny Winter at the Rex, I saw him for the first time at Moondog's. Before the show was over, I knew that someone was going to leave my own personal top ten guitarists' list to make room for this guy. Already having four Gogo's CDs, I had spent most of my listening time with "Dine under the Stars." It is a live recording with eight selections that closely depicts what he does on stage. His guitar work is a scorching attack from beginning to end. All selections are well developed (None are under five minutes) leaving plenty of time to highlight his guitar work. The ten minute play time of "Hoochie Coochie Man" still left me asking for more.

I will close with a quote from my friend, Bob Filler. As we stood side by side at the 2006 Pittsburgh Blues Festival with our mouths gaping open, in awe. Bob turned to me and said, "He sure does PLAY ANGRY!" I don't know what that means but I liked it.

**"CURE YOUR IRS BLUES"
FUNDRAISER FOR BSWPA
SUNDAY - APRIL 15th, 2007, MOONDOGS
DOORS OPEN AT 1:00 PM
MUSIC STARTS AT 2:00 PM**

The real lost souls don't wear their hair long and play guitars. They have crew cuts, trained minds, sign on for research in biological warfare and don't give their parents a moment's worry.

- J.B. Priestley

Rock is Dead - Long Live Paper and Scissors.

- P.J. Markgraf

TIP OF THE DAY

Never squat when you are wearing spurs!

There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence and find out for themselves.

- Will Rogers

Check out our new website at:

<http://www.bswpa.org>

A CHAT WITH JOHN PERGAL

By Jim Weber

John is the owner of The Thunderbird Café, located at 4023 Butler St, Lawrenceville in Pittsburgh, Pa. The Thunderbird is one of Pittsburgh's finest Blues and Roots music venues. John is responsible for the daily operation of the bar, booking acts, and is the lead singer for the blues band, Pawnbrokers, that plays most Fridays at The Thunderbird. His roots are deep in the Pittsburgh area, being raised here and attending Shaler High School.

I first saw John at the James Street Tavern. I was there for the jambalaya with the beautiful blonde that has been hanging out with me for the last thirty-five years. Mon Gumbo was there adding some Cajun music spices to the recipe. Toward the end of the first set, Tim from Mon Gumbo asked John to join them for a couple of numbers. One of those all too rare occasions occurred when John started to sing....the place went dead silent. The proverbial "dropping pin" would have sound like Mt. Vesuvius erupting. We all recognized at once.... 'Hey, this guy can sing!' John is one of those rare vocal talents that I will never tire listening to.

This interview took place at the Thunderbird at 7:00pm Thursday, March 22, 2007. We talked just before Mark Hummel and the Blues Survivors with special guest, Rusty Zinn, took the stage. If you missed that show.....SHAME ON YOU!!!

Q. How did the Pawnbrokers get together?

A. I met Rick, (Pawnbrokers' guitarist), in a bar. I was in a classic rock band at the time. He said if you ever want to do some blues, give me a call. We hooked up about 15-years ago and we have been together ever since.

Q. Does Rick do a lot of the song writing for the band?

A. Yeah! He does everything, all seventeen songs on our CD...lyrics and music.

Q. Personally, what has influenced your music?

A. I grew up listening to Blues, R&B, Soul, and Doo Wop around the house. My Dad had old records including B.B. King, Sam Cooke, Marvin Gaye, Hank Ballard, and The Midnighters. I am a singer. I loved all the old Doo Wop things like The Cadillacs and the Del Vikings.

Q. I hate to classify groups because every band jumps around, but how would you describe your music?

A. Rick is pretty much a purist. We play a combination of jump blues, the classic blues stuff, the Texas shuffle and a mix of those. Rick plays all of the acoustics...the Piedmont, the Delta, all the Robert Johnson, Son House, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Lemon Jefferson. He plays all of that and the Reverent Gary Davis.

Q. I love the two slow numbers on you CD, Guilty Conscience and You Better Slow Down.

A. "Guilty Conscience" is in the style of T-Bone Walker. "You Better Slow Down" is old style Buddy Guy.

Q. The Thunderbird Café is one of the greatest decorated clubs that I have ever seen. Was it your idea to fix it like this?

A. Yeah, all my influence. A friend of mine is an architect. He helped me come up with the design. All of the pictures and posters I bought from E-Bay. The two paintings were painted by my mom. The stage backdrop was my idea. I found a graffiti artist and he did it all with spray paint. (It is such a great mural one of the best in Pittsburgh - if you have never been to the Thunderbird you have to stop by to check out what a can of spray paint can do - WOW.)

Q. What criteria is used in choosing acts for your club?

A. I try to stick to Roots music. The Blues in this town is not going to pack them in every night. I do try to put good music in this place. I lean toward the Blues especially with the national Acts. I have also booked bands like the Derailers which is Western Swing-anything in the Roots genre. Anyone who wants to play here usually drops off a CD. If I like them, I book them. My band plays here most every Friday night. We are trying to mix in more local Blues. The band, 706 Union, just spent a night here. Jill West and the Blues Attack is booked on a Friday in August.

Q. How do you book national acts?

A. I book all of them on the internet. I listen to all of their stuff. James Harman, Rusty Zinn, Mark Hummel, Gary Primich, Rod Piazza, and anyone who emulates Sonny Boy Williams, George Harmonica Smith, T Bone Walker, and Buddy Guy are in my collection. I lean more toward traditional Blues instead of Rocking Blues. I love Stevie Ray Vaughn but most people who listen to him today do not realize that he got his stuff from Lightning Hopkins and Albert King.

Q. If you could have any artist alive today play at The Thunderbird who would it be?

A. Oh, WOW! I guess, B.B. King. I have got Joe Lewis Walker and Duke Robillard coming here but B.B. King would really be something!

Q. There are quite a few local blues bands with great CDs out. That includes "Guilty Conscience" by the Pawnbrokers. What is it going to take for a local band to get National attention?

A. "It's tough, you need money behind you. Look at George Thorogood. A lot of guys play slide as good but he was at the right place at the right time and he had money backing. You have got to play blues music because you love it, not to make money."

Q. Lately what CD is spending the most time on your player?

A. "What I am listening to a lot now is a singer/songwriter out of Austin, Texas, Chris Knight. He is a lot like a modern day Meryl Haggard or Waylon Jennings. Some of the blues guys are: Jason Ricci and Hollywood Fats. Hollywood Fats only put out one CD and if you don't have it you need to get it. It is absolutely one of the best blues CDs you will ever hear. One of my all time favorites is Anson Funderburg and the Rockets with Sam Myers. We (The Pawnbrokers) got to open for them."

Q. Is there any comment that you would like to make at this time?

A. I have the greatest employees here at The Thunderbird. I am going to continue to try and bring great bands and roots music as long as I can afford to do it. I like to support new people coming up. I'm bringing in people that not too many have heard of. The people I am bringing in are all students of the Greats. Whether it be a guitar player, harmonica player, or vocalist. Mark Hummel was starting to warm up for his performance and I needed to finish my interview. Remembering the first song on Guilty Conscience where John sings, "I want a woman with a money back guarantee" I asked him if he ever found her. After a few seconds John breaks out in a broad grin, "No.....I love my wife but I don't think she came with a guarantee."

If you and/or your band would like to be interviewed for the BSWPA Newsletter, please contact Jim Weber at 2golfers2@comcast.net.



**PAIN, SUFFERING, DESPAIR AND YOU CAN DANCE TO IT.
- THE BLUES -**