



GOLDEN GATE GROOVES

FROM THE EDITOR

I'm very excited about this issue of *Golden Gate Grooves* contributors--a couple of well-known guys on the whose articles, interviews, and CD reviews are regularly CD liner notes for several bands, including Magic Slim CD with Barry Levenson). Tom recently interviewed about the early and current San Francisco Blues scene. here. (Happy Birthday, Rick!!) We'll read more from second well-known new contributor is SF's own *Johnny Ace*, who has a regular column in *Big City Rhythm & Blues* magazine and regular gigs here at home with his partner Cathy Lemons and their band. He's also a first-call bassman by several touring musicians, with a deep blues history of his own (and he gives lessons). Johnny writes about his old friend and fellow musician *Stu Blank*, who was a fixture on the SF scene with His Nasty Habits for many years before passing too soon at age 46 in 2001. Check out the article and some of Johnny's last photos of Stu. Johnny's keeping Stu's memory alive by telling the story. In addition, GGBS Supporter and Blues Journalist/Photographer *Dorothy L. Hill* recaps the *Redwood City Blues Festival*, which was just about to happen as the last issue of *Golden Gate Grooves* went to print. Along with Dorothy's write-up and festival photographs, we've provided links to several of *Bobbi Goodman*'s YouTube videos from the festival. If you enjoy the videos, make sure to check out bgood11 on YouTube. Bobbi's been chronicling the local Blues scene for posterity. *Joel Fritz* reviews the new CD by local band *Tip of the Top*, with Jon Lawton on guitar, Aki Kumar on harmonica, Frank DeRose on bass, and Carlos Velasco on drums--and all on vocals. Check out the band when you get the chance. As a service to the community, GGBS Treasurer *Brad Robertson* has written an article on **tax tips for musicians** and others who are self-employed. Timely and informative--a must read for all of us who are self-employed. Also as a service to the community, the remainder of the information from Human Resources professional Claudia Lindquist on places the uninsured/underinsured can go to get low-cost **dental care** in the SF Bay Area is presented, along with suggestions for possible medical care outside the country. Thanks for reading! Stay tuned for the next issue when the first GGBS presentation of Blues in the Schools/Libraries to about 50 4-year olds and their parents is described by Education Chair Joseph Jordan and Presenter Extraordinaire, bassist Henry Oden.



for several reasons, but mainly because we have two new national Blues scene. *Tom Hyslop* is a Blues Journalist published in *Blues Revue* magazine. Tom has also written and the Teardrops and local guitarist Jake Sampson (for a harmonica ace *Rick Estrin*, during which Rick reminisced It's an honor to be able to present those reminiscences Tom in a future issue (more than one, hopefully). The

Go out and support live Blues! See you on the Blues trail. -Deb Lubin

Rick Estrin Reminiscences

by Tom Hyslop

After more than 30 years fronting the Nightcats, and 40 years as a blues performer, *Rick Estrin* qualifies as an elder statesman. A question about songwriting during a recent conversation sparked a flood of memories about the Bay Area and Chicago blues scenes past, and observations about the changes he has seen over the years.



TH: You've got an impressive catalog of songs. Not many contemporaries can match - or seem interested in matching - some of the legendary writers (like Rice Miller, for example) in inventiveness, humor, and genuine insight.

RE: *Rodger Collins* was an R&B singer and entertainer in the SF Bay Area. He had hits that were regional here. Wilson Pickett covered one of his tunes and made a hit of it, it was called "She's Lookin' Good," do you remember that song? John Nemeth actually recorded it recently. But Wilson Pickett had a big hit of it, and Rodger actually had a big hit of it, but only in certain areas, cause the record company didn't have that real distribution. He took me under his wing when I was a teenager and kinda coached me on writing songs, and a lot of other stuff in show business, you know? But he instilled in me that thing of editing, of makin'



a thing flow so it sounds conversational and natural even though you had to tweak it for however long it took to get it to flow like that, and make it *interesting*.

TH: Sometimes you build a song from overheard conversation or a familiar phrase, but if one doesn't exist that fits your scenario, you have the knack for inventing something catchy that has the ring of familiarity.

RE: Rodger would hear somebody say something, or he would think of something, and he'd always be goin', 'OK, that's a song,' and write it down. I'm not nearly as diligent about that as he was, but he always had his ears, you know, up like antennas for what might be a tune. I always liked listening to good lyrics delivered in a convincing way. I'm a real fan of songwriting, all different kinds of songwriting, any kinda down to earth songwriting. I'm a fan of music, period, certain types of music – what I like. There's plenty of good music that I'm not that crazy about. But I think I'm primarily a fan, that's what got me into this to begin with.

TH: Apart from Rodger Collins, would you want to talk about other early influences, mentors, or folks you hung out with?

RE: I played with some great people too back then that were big influences on me. I hung out with a lot of people. Some of 'em were maybe bad influences [laughs], but I was a wild kid, man, and when I was 17, 18 years old, [Rodger Collins] was the most positive person I was around. I don't know if you remember the song we used to do with Little Charlie, called "Eyes Like a Cat"? Well, a guy named Travis Phillips wrote that song and made the original record of that. He was a guitar player out of Houston, Texas. And I played with him – shoot, man, we had one gig for about a year, five nights a week, when I was 18. So he was a big influence on me musically. And my father died when I was pretty young, so some of these guys were like father figures to me.

Fillmore Slim, he was another guy that was in the band. He was the one that hired me for that gig with Travis, it was actually Fillmore's gig to begin with, and then he had to leave town abruptly. But it's great man, he's doin' alright now. Well, that was like my mentor. We'd be playin' this gig five nights a week at the Playpen with Travis, who was a great musician. He died at about 31 years old, but if he would've lived... I can remember later, after Travis died, askin' Freddie King if he knew him, and Freddie said 'Yeah,' he goes, 'Man, that guy was somethin' else.' Freddie King said when he first went to Houston, Travis Phillips had the best band in town. And Johnny Copeland said they were all friends and stuff. Drugs took Travis down, but he was a great pal, and man, he could sing his ass off and play his ass off. But those guys were my role models almost, Travis and Fillmore. I can



remember goin' around with Fillmore and checkin' on his girls and stuff. He had a Fleetwood Brougham and I'd go ridin' around with him after the gig. And I was such a weird kid, I thought, 'Man, this is the coolest shit in the world.' But that was my education! [laughs]. And like I said, Rodger Collins, he was the only guy that was like a more positive influence; he wasn't a criminal.

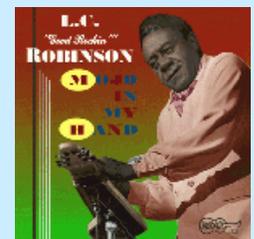
TH: You spent some time in Chicago, too.

RE: Jerry Portnoy and I kinda learned how to play together. I first met him when I was playing with Travis Phillips and Fillmore Slim. He was living in San Francisco, and he was just learning to play and I was just learning to play, and we've been friends ever since. He was from Chicago and he went back home and then sent me these postcards tellin' me about all the great shit he was goin' out to see – he was sittin' in with the Aces and all this stuff – and that's when I said, 'Man, I gotta go!' From the time I was about 19 or 20, for about 6 years, I just kept goin' back and forth: spend a year in Chicago and then come back to California and go back to Chicago. Then it'd start to get cold, an' I'd ostensibly go home for Christmas and just get hung up and not come back, or come back once the snow melted. So yeah, I just kept bouncin' around for all that time, until I got with Little Charlie.

Chicago, man, that was a great experience. I got to work with John Littlejohn, Sam Lay, Eddie Taylor, just, you know, a lot of great guys. And Johnny Twist was one of 'em; he was a guy I later wrote a song about. He's a real guy, man, he's still there. He's got a record store on the South Side. He was a trip to me because at the time, having been around Fillmore Slim and guys like that – I don't know how to say this – I just remember goin' out to Chicago the first time, and seeing how the scene there is a lot more *country*.

TH: That's an interesting observation about Chicago being country. I know there are West Side clubs where there's a community table of free soul food - you don't see that much in uptown places.

RE: I mean, there's down home stuff here too, but it's just slightly different. When I first started tryin' to play, I used to go out to a place called The Moonlight Club in Double Rock, which is a little ghetto within a ghetto in Hunter's Point, San Francisco. On Sunday afternoons after church, people would go there and L.C. "Good Rockin'" Robinson was the band, and they would have food in there, and people just parked anywhere, the sidewalk, any kinda angles an' all that stuff. I can remember sittin' out there with this singer named Charles Huff an' drinkin' out in his car. I tipped up this half pint and the police drove by and looked, an' I went 'Oh, shit.' And he said, 'Aw, man,



don't even worry about it. They ain't gettin' out of the car around here.' That was a pretty country scene. But in general, the [Chicago] pimps are more countrified, and the musicians are more countrified. There's a charm to that. But it was different, and I was lookin' at these guys goin' 'Man, these guys'd starve to death in California!' [laughs]. I didn't really take Johnny Twist seriously that much at the time, 'cause I had been around Fillmore, who was like the legend everywhere. I see Johnny Twist, he's like some kind of pimp, but not [like Fillmore Slim]. Probably had one or two girls, and he had a Toronado with a Rolls-Royce grille – really! But he had this supreme confidence in himself.



At the time, I was young, like 20, 21; I didn't see that the confidence he had came from a real strength of character,

man, it came from a genuine belief in himself. A lot of these other guys [who] got into that were drunks or were pretty abusive to themselves, and, ah, I was too. And that's a tradition in blues. It's a tragic deal, man. But Twist was always real strong and always took care of himself. One time when we were playin' Legends with Little Charlie, I flew into Chicago early, and another guy that knew him took me over to Twist's record store. I hadn't seen the guy in like 25, 30 years, and he had this little record store, and he was still the same. He had that real erect posture, an' he was still strong. He was a genuine survivor, a strong person, and I had to take another look at him. I always dug him, I mean he was funny, he could talk a ton of shit, man. If you ever get to Chicago, you should check him out, man. On *Nine Lives*, there's a reprint of a little flyer from his store in the tray where the CD goes. That's where he is.

TH: We've talked about the way things were. How does it feel when you look at the blues scene today?

RE: It's not like it was. It's a weird deal, this whole scene is just so bizarre. You know, it was an organic deal when it was actually in the ghetto. There's been a couple a different waves of it bein' marginally popular among white people. Like when I first got into it, in the '60s, it was the, probably some kind of, cool thing for beatniks and hippies, and when Bill Graham started, he'd have a show with the Jefferson Airplane and Howlin' Wolf or somethin'. At 15, 16, I could see that stuff, y'know? And then Paul Butterfield and Charlie Musselwhite came out to California, and it generated some interest in that kinda music, and some people were moved by it and wanted to learn it. And then in, I guess, the late '80s and the '90s, some of the people that were inspired back then had become great at it, and gotten their own thing goin' an' so they had a little popularity: Robert Cray and Stevie Ray [Vaughan] and the [Fabulous] Thunderbirds, stuff like that, that spawned a whole other wave of people

tryin' to play this stuff. And that's kind of passed. And it's weird too, because it's just changed so much. You can tell Stevie Ray loved blues and was an extremely gifted player, and you can tell he did his homework. You can hear a lot of Albert King, you can hear little snatches of Otis Rush and Buddy Guy and you can hear quite a bit of Lightnin' Hopkins in his playing, as well as more over the top, I guess, Hendrix type of stuff. But you can hear that foundation in the blues in his playing, and what happened is that guys after that, they just went to the flashy stuff. I remember Jimi Hendrix, when he was alive and popular, he was King of Acid Rock Guitar. And now, they got this revisionist view of things where now he's, he was a great bluesman. [laughs] It's just bizarre to me. I don't own any Stevie Ray records, but when I listen, I can hear the kind of shit that I understand down in there. I can hear that he does that stuff in the same way I do, an' I'm not comparin' myself or my talent to his or anything like that, but I know that he was really into the shit. And [in] a lot of the Stevie Ray Vaughan-abees, I don't hear that foundation. Surface players.

But all those things, even *The Blues Brothers* movie and stuff like that, enabled me to make a livin' all these years. I took Sonny Boy's advice and I own my own house. I don't even owe the bank for it anymore. It's just a little house, but I can't be put out. So, it's a weird, it's a strange thing. Maybe I'm just an old guy bein' nostalgic or somethin', but I really miss the way it was. And to me, most of what they call blues today is nothin' I really care to listen to. Because I don't get the same kinda feelin' from it. There are some guys that are really great, they can really play, but a lot of what is called blues today is just really rock to me. I never liked it in the '60s or the '70s, or the '80s or whenever it was called rock, and now that it's called blues, I still don't like it. Maybe it's great, but it don't move me.



TH: I think many contemporary players take the "sexy" - the obvious and instantly appealing parts of Vaughan's approach - and don't listen farther back to learn the subtleties. And so few of us in the blues audience started out listening to real blues; it's a happy accident that we found it at all. The younger players' tastes were formed when the popular music of the day was that much farther removed from real blues. If you grew up in the '50s, '60s, even to some extent in the '70s, you could recognize roots rock, R&B, soul, and their immediate descendants on the radio. Something happened after that. The feel is completely different.

RE: [The feel] is an important aspect of it, man. That relaxed intensity, man. And there's always gonna be somebody that

digs it, and there'll always be probably somebody playin' something with some remnants of it in there, but I know guys that are pretty great that are just barely scrapin' by. Like I said earlier: I'm a fan. Primarily I'm a fan. And the thing that moved me, made me wanna start performing and stuff and really got me hooked on this stuff was seeing people. I can remember seeing how somebody could just captivate an audience and take 'em on a trip, man, in a club, in an intimate setting, you know? And Rodger Collins really showed me that, too, an' then I saw a lot of great people when I was young like that. And that's an experience that people don't ever have the opportunity to see anymore. Young people, cause they'll go to a concert and see, and be a part of a, just some huge mob of thousands of people, and see something just over the top, production and special effects, so they don't get that intimate thing, you know – that's becoming a vanishing deal. And no offense to hobby guys or local guys – everybody's local somewhere, and some of those guys are great – but the vast majority of the people that ah, you know, just are a bar band working, they don't provide that same kind of spellcasting deal where they just take an' [are] takin' you somewhere; it's just some back-ground shit to get drunk to. And, I don't know, it's just too bad. I think that's a great, vanishing experience.

When I was 18, on my first real gig that I thought of as a professional gig, I was opening for Z.Z. Hill at this place called the Club Long Island. They had soul food, but it was a nice nightclub in a way, it wasn't like a tavern type of place. They had a house band that played for dancers, they played after dinner and stuff, and then they would have different acts, they had an M.C. They had all kinds of great stuff. When I was there, I was the first act. I was a novelty, here's a white guy that's gonna play blues. The first time I went there, I went to see Lowell Fulson, and the opening act was this guy Iron Jaw Wilson, who would do this balancing act. He'd hook all these tables and chairs and stuff together and



would have this giant constellation of furniture gripped in his teeth, and the drummer would be doin' a drum roll. An' later on, I saw him when Redd Foxx was on strike from *Sanford and Son*, he got a summer replacement variety show on some other network, and Iron Jaw Wilson was on

there every week as part of the cast. Anyway, there was stuff like that. There was another guy, Geronimo, who would roller skate on tabletops and jump from table to table on roller skates, or they'd have a comedian, and then they'd

have another singer, and then there'd be star time, and they'd bring up whoever it was. I've seen Bobby Bland in there, I saw Vernon Garrett in there, I saw Lowell and, when I was there for that week, it was Z.Z. Hill. It was a fairly small club, it was an intimate setting, and to see somebody perform close up like that, man, you can't beat it. I saw George Jones and Tammy Wynette together, and I was right there, you know? It just couldn't be the same, man, goin' to an arena an' seein' a bunch of smoke and lights and big cranes bringin' shit up and down an' all that kinda stuff – people with the telephone operator microphones an' stuff on.

TH: Every performer plays to the back row, but there's a huge difference when the back row is several football fields away, as opposed to 30 yards.

RE: It looks like to me that the opportunities for people to see that type of entertainment are just really dwindling. There's so many contributing factors, but what can you do? Something that's important, too, that's a lost deal in a way, I think that's goin' away: When I'm listening to somethin', I wanna hear a good delivery with some personality in it. I'm lookin' for some honesty. It's like, you listen to Howlin' Wolf, you know that's Howlin' Wolf. An' it sounds like Howlin' Wolf talkin' to you. Right? Muddy's the same deal. Rice Miller, same thing, man. John Lee Williamson, same thing. It's like a guide that's tellin' you something, that is a distinct personality. Percy Mayfield, you listen to Percy Mayfield, he's talkin' to ya. That feeling and that honesty and that individual thing, seems to me, I don't hear it that often. Paul deLay, he was a real original. For a guy like that to have not been really successful... Cause when you listen, he sounds great and he's a guy just opening himself up for you. And that kind of stuff moves me. You listen to Bobby Bland, man, he's not just one of the greatest singers ever in the history of the world, but he's one of the greatest communicators. He had a pretty legendary career, but I think he wasn't never as big as Billy Ray Cyrus. I understand that shit ain't fair an' it ain't supposed to be, but if I was in charge, James Harman would have Conan O'Brian's job. Yeah, a lot of shit would be different! I'd do some house cleanin'. But you can't worry about that kinda stuff too much, cause if you do, you drive yourself crazy. And another thing, and this is somethin' James Harman said a long time ago, an' I'm paraphrasing him, but: When somethin's really cool, inherent in that is that it ain't for everyone. Just naturally. What's for everybody is Disneyland, McDonald's.



TH: You alluded earlier to several blues booms or resurgences. I think we're overdue for another - I don't know if that's merely wishful thinking on my part.

RE: I think there'll always be real stuff. 'Cause people always have real emotions, and some people are gonna feel things real deeply, and they're gonna have the need to express it. Robert Cray was a guy that got to see Albert Collins and know him and back him up when he was a high school kid. And Robert Cray was a guy that saw Muddy, played with Muddy, you know and stuff like that. And those kinds of opportunities aren't there any more, you know, so it's almost like before they had digital stuff where if you make a Xerox of a Xerox of a Xerox of a Xerox, it'll lose something. And it's just kinda gone, you know? I feel like I got to see and even participate in some small way in the tail end of some of the greatest shit in the history of the world, you know? And for the most part, it was just for that time. And it's burnin' out. But then, too, factor in that I'm naturally negative, so maybe there's hope. There's still people who love this stuff, but they're really the exception, and people are being trained to not really think that much, or they just want to be overwhelmed or something. They don't have the attention span to go on the ride and follow

something in a linear way, you know. And I think that's what it takes to really have any appreciation for subtlety and timing and all that kind of stuff.

Photo credits:

Pages 1 and 3, Rick Estrin by Dorothy L. Hill

Page 1, Rodger Collins from www.rodgercollins.com

Page 2, Fillmore Slim from Oakland Art & Soul

Page 3, Johnny Twist, screen shot from You Tube video at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3qp6b5eX3Zc>

Page 4: Iron Jaw Wilson from Cafe St. Michel (1944) posted by J.D. at <http://coolopolis.blogspot.com>; Paul deLay from www.pauldelay.com



Dental Insurance for the Uninsured and Medical Tourism

by Claudia Lindquist

Dental insurance is overpriced and few people need annual dental care that costs more than the premiums. There are lots of options.

Valpak. Yup...those annoying coupon people. They insert coupons for both dentists and doctors for introductory visits as low as \$49, including x-rays. This is great if you don't need the same dentist every time. Most people do not need x-rays every 6 months, so if you find a dentist this way, tell him/her that you only want annual x-rays.

Most local schools with dental hygiene programs offer very-low-cost clinics. Essentially, you would be a student's final exam under the supervision of an experienced dentist.

Foothill College - \$30 teeth cleaning, x-rays are additional. <http://www.foothill.edu/bio/programs/dentalt/clinic.php>

Cal State University – East Bay 510-723-6900
New semester starts October 2009. Cleaning is \$25-\$65 (severe); x-rays are additional.

Santa Rosa Junior College Dental programs offer services to all community members for minimal cost. Cleaning and x-rays are currently being offered, and hours of availability are variable each semester. Visit their website at: <http://online.santarosa.edu/presentation/page/?2889> or call 707-522-2844.

San Jose Healthy Neighborhood Venture Fund
www.toothmobile.org dental clinic for kids under 19 – sliding scale.

Sacramento City College Dental Clinic
3835 Freeport Boulevard, Sacramento, 916-558-2303

University of California, San Francisco, Dental Clinic
Graduating students work on your teeth and you pay only for materials. It's a low-cost, high-quality option. http://dentistry.ucsf.edu/patients/patients_main.html or call 415-476-1891.

University of the Pacific (Stockton) has 14 clinics in northern California. http://dental.pacific.edu/Dental_Services.html

Alameda County health department gets federal money to provide care on a sliding fee scale; call 510-532-1930.

Medical tourism: I'm not talking about going to Libya for a root canal, but by planning ahead for non-emergency care, you can save a fortune. Doctors in Mexico, Canada, Costa Rica, and other countries average about 60% less than in the United States and the quality is fine. With declining airfares, get out the calculator and decide if you want to pay \$800 to remove that plantar wart in California, or \$120 in Canada plus \$300 airfare and a hotel room. My experience in South America was that U.S. and Canadian trained doctors were abundant, and the most expensive doctor's appointment I had there was \$60. Doesn't that make you feel like singing the Ramones "I Want to Be Sedated"?

I hope these suggestions lead you to do some research on your own for low-cost health alternatives close to home. Please email me at OffToRio@yahoo.com with any questions.

CD REVIEW

Tip of the Top, *Depot Street Blues*

by Joel Fritz

The notes claim that the band is looking for a sound “that is a throwback to the 1950s.” The band features Aki Kumar on



harp and vocals, Jon Lawton on guitar and vocals, Frank DeRose on bass, and Carlos Velasco on drums. I think they achieved their aim. In particular, Velasco's minimalist percussion echoes the sound of an era when amplifiers were small and a loud drummer could drown out everyone

else. He and Frank DeRose anchor the groove-driven arrangements. The lead instruments blend in to create a unified sound. These guys sound like a band, not a bunch of musicians who just happen to be playing at the same time.

Jon Lawton has been a fixture on the Bay Area blues scene for a long time. He's worked extensively as a band leader and as a sideman to some of the best. He's not a flashy player in the sense of firing off fusillades of 30 second notes. He's the kind of guitarist that musicians notice. He knows how to build a solo and how to play rhythm, two skills that aren't nearly as common as one might think.

Aki Kumar is an up and coming headliner. His strong vocals and skillful harp playing have been a best-kept secret commodity around the South Bay in recent years. I believe that this band and CD will help him get the recognition he deserves.

There's only one question for me, how many Little Walter songs can you include on one CD that's not a tribute? Six of the songs were recorded by Little Walter. Two of them, *Mellow Down Easy* and *Juke* are warhorses. The other four are less well known. The long shadow of M. W. Jacobs didn't bother me. The songs don't have the stylistic sameness that six Elmore James songs would have. The melodies and arrangements are all different and, while the performances reflect the originals, they aren't copies.

The CD begins with *One of These Mornings*, a Little Walter tune with a groove similar to the original. Kumar's vocal is very strong. He has a clear powerful voice with a very light vibrato that's reminiscent of Freddie King in tone. Kumar sounds like himself. His phrasing is clearly his own. As on the other Little Walter covers, his harp solo is his own creation. Lawton adds an intelligently constructed guitar solo.

The second song is *Wait Baby*, attributed to “Unknown.” Lawton sings and provides a stinging guitar groove that

echoes pre-WWII standards *Rolling and Tumbling* and *Catfish Blues*. Lawton's semi-spoken vocal is effective here. He evokes a mood like the ultra-coolness of Willie Mabon.

Third on the list is the pre-WWII favorite, “*Stranger Blues*,” which has been recorded by many. The arrangement is interesting because it features Lawton's excellent slide in standard tuning with Kumar's minor (third position if you care about harp technical details) harp accompaniment.

The fourth song is *Juke*, perhaps Little Walter's most famous song. It's similar to the original, but, even in the well-known first chorus, deviates enough to show that there was no intention to play the song as though it were on sheet music.

Fifth up is *Love Her with a Feeling*, the Tampa Red romp. The original was a Bluebird Sound number with a snappy rhythm. Here it's done as a slow drag. It's surprisingly effective. Kumar's vocal and harp shine.

The sixth song, *Go Ahead*, is a Lawton original. It's a relationship song with the theme “you can do what you want, but don't expect me to pick up the pieces for you.” The song has a strong groove. The lyrics have wry humor that's well suited to Lawton's dry vocal.

Depot Street Shuffle, song number 7, is an Elmore James inspired instrumental. Lawton gets a chance to show his mastery of slide in standard tuning. Kumar sits this one out.

Number 8, *I Got to Go*, is another Little Walter song with Kumar on vocal and harp.

I Got to Move On, song 9, was the surprise of the CD for me. It's a Lawton original, a hokum tune with Lawton providing sparkling ragtime finger-picking guitar and Kumar playing very tasteful acoustic harmonica.

Mellow Down Easy, in 10th position, is a Willie Dixon tune that Little Walter recorded. Many people are more familiar with the Paul Butterfield version. This one is closer to the original. Kumar's harp and vocal work well and Lawton takes a swing-flavored guitar solo.

The 11th song is Little Walter's *Temperature*, with vocal and harp by Kumar. It's different from the three takes Little Walter did.

Rounding out the CD is *Evans Shuffle*, one of the first songs Little Walter recorded with Muddy Waters. It's an instrumental similar to Dr. Ross's *Cat's Squirrel* with plenty of bounce and snap.

Check out the band: <http://www.myspace.com/tipofthetop>

Stu Blank: A Friend and Musician

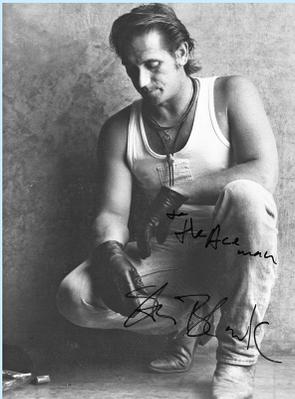
Article and Photos by Johnny Ace

A very warm hello to all you readers of *Golden Gate Grooves* and to all blues lovers from shore to shore who may come across this publication and read it. I hope that you are all in good health and are supporting this vast well of blues talent in this very shallow pond of blues clubs.

Compared to some of America's major cities, the blues club scene here in the San Francisco area is like Chicago in the 1950s! So I won't complain about it. But please do your best to support the artists who do this for a living. Blues is not a hobby like some of these horrible wedding Bar Mitzvah piles of shit groups that call themselves "blues bands." They should stick to their day jobs! MERCY!

This is my first column for *Golden Gate Grooves*, and I'm not too sure of the age bracket of people who read this, but as I get older, hopefully I'm getting a bit wiser. Hopefully. Ha, ha! Anyway, many of us have lost friends or family to drugs, violence at home, wars like Viet Nam, or to incurable diseases. We have all dealt with it in different ways. Some of us are a bit numb—our hearts have turned to stone. But still we all have hearts ... right?

When keyboardist, singer, entertainer Stu Blank passed away in July 2001, I was able to accept it. But it wasn't easy.



He was just too special a human being. I first met Stu in 1978 at the Rio Theater in a little town near Crockett. Stu was the opening act. I'm not sure if it was his group "the Nasty Habits" or what—it's tough to remember due to all the heavy living I was doing back then. Anyway, I was singing lead at this place with my band called "the West Coast Sheiks," which was really excellent with

Terry Hanck, Michael "Fly" Brooks, Rick McCracken, and a host of different sidemen who varied from gig to gig. And for an extra secret weapon, we would bring in photographer Randy Bachman, the pervert dwarf, to be part of the act. That group should have gone places, but that's a whole other and different story. This is about Stu.

When I heard Stu and his group for the first time that night in 1978, I wasn't that impressed. He reminded me of an Elton John-type clown, still uncertain and searching for his own musical voice and personality. I guess I was more of a blues purist back then. Backstage I met Stu and I remember he was very nice. He actually seemed a bit shy. And that

was it. "The Sheiks" broke up a year later and I went back to New York City and didn't see Stu Blank again until 1987 when I came back to San Francisco. When I returned to the Bay Area, my family was falling apart, and I had four kids that I loved very much! MERCY!

In 1987, Stu had a new LP out (*Under the Big Top* on King Spot) and he was voted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as the newcomer most likely to make the big time in a harsh, ugly, national music scene. That night, Stu was playing at the Lost and Found (LAF), formerly known as The Coffee Gallery, on Grant Avenue in North Beach. I remember I was really pissed off that the great old Coffee Gallery had been sold. I was really upset as I had so many good times in the old dump. Plus, it was so musically and historically rich in its past: the great Billie Holiday sang there, Janis Joplin too before she hit the big time, and all the beat poets read in there in the '50s and early '60s. Yea, those old walls had the mojo!

It was after midnight, Stu and the band were on a break. I went up to him and introduced myself. He remembered me from the Rio and was very happy to see me. There were two large rooms in the LAF. As you walked in, directly to the left you could see a large round table and then a large bar about 50 feet long. To your right was a juke box and cigarette machine. There was a TV at the end of the bar hung up on a shelf if you wanted to watch it, but I don't ever remember seeing it on at night. Directly behind the TV were the restrooms and the small office. Then there was this really great stage in the back of the club, which was elevated about 2 to 3 feet and was about 35 to 40 feet long and about 20 feet deep—unusually private. There was even a long wooden church pew on one side of the stage and a very large, ornate looking chair where you could sit during the breaks and look out at the 10 to 12 little round tables in front of the stage. And for an extra touch, there was another bar to the right of the stage that looked like the bottom of an old ship.

Stu and all his band mates were passing out joints and doing blow in the cozy safety of that upper bandstand. Stu offered me some of each and asked if I'd like to sing a song with the band. As I was enjoying the hospitality, I said, "Sure, I'd love to sing one!" I don't remember what song I sang, but on the next break, Stu and I started talking. He was really interested in how I did the splits and he asked me if I warmed up before I did them. I remember laughing at his question. I didn't even know what "warming up" was! Plus, no one had ever asked me that type of question before. I was a bit taken aback. I then began to realize that Stu was quite intelligent.

A couple of weeks or so after jamming with Stu at the LAF, Johnny Nitro hired me in his group "the Door Slammers." Back then, I was living in a hotel in North Beach called the Saint Paul, which was on Kearny Street. I had the suite on the 2nd floor. After gigs, I'd have great parties up there. That's when Stu and I became really good friends. Back then on Grant Avenue, there were three bars with blues almost every night: the Saloon, the LAF, and Grant 'n Green. Those three clubs not only created a really nice scene on the street, but it also brought all the blues bands close together. There was a really warm camaraderie—steady work tends to do that. Stu would also invite me and my kids up to his place in Petaluma. We had fine times indeed. Stu was so generous and giving. Plus he had a really great sense of humor! We'd have the greatest conversations. He was a pretty complex person to say the least.

Stu was never a stone bluesman. To me he was at heart a rock 'n roller. Of course, he could play and sing blues. But his strength was his great personality—it could really light up a room—and his uncanny ability to make up songs on the spot. I never, to this day, have met any musician who could spontaneously make up really great songs like Stu—with amazing lyrics—just ad-libbed from his head. I don't think any of that special talent was ever quite captured on tape or video.



The gigs at Lou's Pier 47 with Stu, Kevin Russell, Nitro, Tommy Castro, and John Condon or Sammy Piazza on drums, and yours truly on bass were the best times I ever had at Lou's. I wish some of THAT was on video—well,



maybe not! Laura Gillespie, the original owner of Lou's, also known as "the Queen of the Wharf," put her own piano in the restaurant just for Stu; he had an open invitation any day, any

hour to come and play. She loved Stu like a son. One time way back when my dear friend David Maxwell, the deluxe of blues piano, was in town, Stu and all of us were playing at Lou's. David sat in with us and, well, there's only one Maxwell. He wailed! Just this year, when Marcia Ball won the "Best Blues Keyboard Player" award [at the Blues Music Awards] in Memphis, she said to David backstage with the utmost respect, "This award should be yours!"

Anyway, that night after the gig at Lou's, David and me were going into the Grant 'n Green to see Stu. Stu was outside hanging out on a break and when he saw us approaching, he ran up to David and in a very comical way started choking his neck and yelling "You cut me! You cut me!" David wasn't too sure what was happening. I told him real fast that Stu was just kidding.

I'd say in about 1990 or so, Stu got in Johnny Nitro's Door Slammers, along with my old pal Perry "Barrelhouse" Welsh on harp and vocals, and a very young Scott Rabino on drums. We had too much FUN!! MERCY 'n RIDE! And we also made some really good music.

Stu stayed with the band on and off for 3 to 6 months. And we remained great friends. Then I left Nitro in 1991 and Stu and me did some gigs of our own. Then we got some good money gigs with 8-year-old guitarist Nathan Cavaleri from Australia in 1991 until about 1994 (when Nathan was 12). This really helped pay the bills, but Stu and me were both getting very sloppy in our night time habits. MERCY!

Then, in about 1995, Stu and me along with guitarist Victor Voce, who had just quit the Dynatones, put together a band called "Blackie Jones." Blues singer Lisa Kindred, who, at the time, was my roommate, thought up the name. It was a really good group. I wanted Vic to really become/dress up like the character we created: "Blackie Jones." You know, wear a black pinstriped suit, hair greased back, a thin pencil mustache—the works. Vic just couldn't do that. Stu and I understood and respected his choice. But damn, to get the big shekles you gotta have a gimmick!

I remember sometimes after gigs when we were in towns that I never heard of, he would take me on rides into the night to admire the redwood trees or the ocean. At four or so in the morning, Stu would take me to these amazing places just to show me another side to life. How beautiful and serene it was. It was a whole different world. I think he was trying to heal us up a bit from the high life. It helped.



As the months were passing by, I was getting really, really sloppy and uncontrollable. It was time for me to clean up and I did. I decided to leave "Blackie Jones" and I started a group with singer Cathy Lemons. Stu and Vic were really saddened, and I was very much too, but without Vic playing the part of "Blackie," plus Stu and me both going crazy, I didn't see a future. I did do some gigs with "Blackie" straight and that was pretty tough. I think it made Stu take a look at his problems because a year or so later, Stu quit music to get straight. And he did it! Stu and me were both

very proud of ourselves. We even did some work together with Boz Scaggs around that time.

I remember in 1996, Stu had a really nice barbeque out at his new place "the Magic Lamp" in Santa Rosa, where he was living with his wife, Kathy, and their four kids. He invited a lot of his blues friends out to record a CD: Charlie Musselwhite, Tommy Castro, Lisa Kindred, Fly Brooks, Sammy Piazza, Johnny Nitro, Terry Hanck, Gary Silva, and me. It was such a nice, heartfelt time with a ton of good food, music, and old friends all grooving together. Ah, life was good!

From 1996 until 2000, I was busy trying to make a living playing blues with different blues bands, and living and playing in my own band with Cathy Lemons. Stu would occasionally call me up and say "When are you and Lemonhead gonna break up? Let's put a group together!" Stu was happy that I was happy, though.

Then, in 2001, he called me up and he told me he had cancer – lymphoma! He was living all alone in a trailer in Santa Rosa and he asked me to come by, so the next day I was there. I went to see him as much as I could on the bus. I don't drive. We had some really great talks. He told me that he was getting his spirituality together and that he had made up pretty much with everyone from the past and he now wanted to make amends with his ex wife, which he did. He was very proud of that.

When I went to see him in his trailer home, Stu would cook for me and we would go for rides in his car just like we used to when we were doing the high life—only now we were straight. I remember one time late in March, we rode out to this big park with a huge lake that had cement all around it. There were these very beautiful bushes that were blooming all around. Stu knew the names of all the foliage and flowers.

At this time, musicians were doing benefits to raise money for Stu's family. There was a trust fund set up too. I met Stu's sister, who was so sweet and big hearted, just like Stu.

The last song Stu recorded was in 2001 on Tommy Castro's "Guilty of Love" CD. The song is titled "Dirt Road Blues" and it pretty much says it all about Stu's life. Stu was now doing all he could to get the most out of each day. He was very, very brave. The chemotherapy sucked! He endured session after session of it until he just could not take anymore.

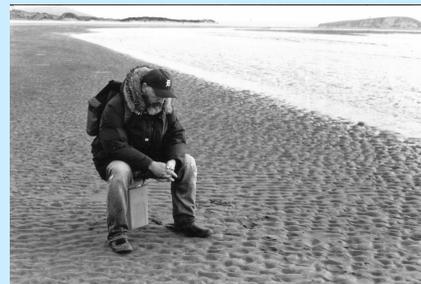
My best memory of this period was when Stu took a party of friends and family to Tomales Bay at Point Reyes National Forest, where he used to hang out in his teenage days. He made it a very special and spiritual day. He invited all his kids, Vic (Blackie Jones), me, Cathy, and his first wife. At that time, Cathy's nephew from Texas was visiting and I didn't think Stu would want a stranger. I called up Stu to

see what he thought. He didn't blink and invited the little lad along. That was Stu, always sharing.

For this occasion, we had to meet at Stu's trailer at 5 a.m.! The drive from Santa Rosa to the beach was more than 2 hours. It was very sad, but also so heartwarming and beautiful.

It was a gorgeous warm summer morning. The air out there was so clean and sweet. The dark orange sunlight was just peeking out above the horizon as we slowly made our way through these amazing hills with all these giant trees surrounding us. Huge rays of sunlight just poured through the branches like golden bolts. Stu, who was riding shotgun, now very, very weak from the cancer, stuck his right hand out the car window as we drove. As each branch and leaf passed by, he'd let his hand gently feel it, actually caressing each one. I think he was realizing that this would be the last time he'd do this very simple thing. Cathy and me had to hide our tears.

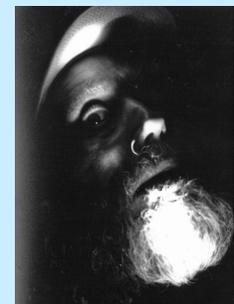
This day was one of the saddest and greatest days of my life. Once we arrived at the bay, Stu did some fishing with Vic and his son Louie, and then he spent a lot of time talking with his kids, and his first wife. We stayed there pretty late. I actually don't remember the ride back. Stu wanted me to



take photos and show and tell everyone about our trip. It hurt me so much in my heart that I couldn't show them to hardly anyone until now. I couldn't

even go visit, or call his family. It was just too painful for me. I missed him too much. I guess I was being selfish and weak. But that's how I really felt. Then just 2 weeks ago as of this writing, Stu came to me in a dream. He was really pissed off at me. Literally! In the dream he actually pissed on a wall in my pad! That's why I'm telling all this now. Stu liked to share.

I last saw Stu 2 weeks after the Tomales Bay trip; it was at John Lee Hooker's funeral in June 2001. Stu was with his dear friend and drummer Gary Silva, who was helping Stu out as much as he could, and Stu's family. When I saw Stu standing with Gary, I noticed to my shock that he had lost a lot of weight and all his hair. I slowly walked over to him and shook his hand and tried to hide the fact that I was blown away with the now



apparent fact that Stu was gonna die. It just wasn't fair! God was MEAN! Stu got straight and that alone was one of the biggest miracles. Stu was trying, really, really trying hard to turn around his life. There was so much in him to give, so many new songs to write and sing. And then the cancer....

On July 9, 2001, Stu Blank passed on at his home with all his family and his best friend Gary by his side. He went in peace. He was a true friend and such a special person.

Stu's funeral had more people than John Lee Hooker's. He was loved by so many people.

At the end of the funeral, there was a film clip on a huge screen of Stu playing. Stu was singing "With A Little Help from My Friends." Suddenly and inexplicably the film just

stopped. The movie camera just broke down. Everyone started laughing. We all knew Stu was there and this was his little joke.

The Bay Area blues scene has a huge void in it for me because Stu Blank is no longer a part of it. Stu, you're really, really missed.

To read more about and listen to some Stu Blank tunes, check out these links:

<http://www.myspace.com/stubblank> Stu Blank Tribute Page

<http://www.songpeddler.com/StuBlank/index.asp> The Stu Blank Song Catalog

Redwood City PAL Blues Festival 2009

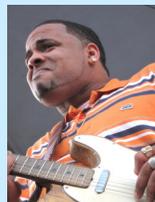
Article and Photos by Dorothy L. Hill

It was not just about blues on July 24th and 25th in Redwood City's Courthouse Square, although that was the main attraction. With several streets closed off to traffic, the family-oriented attractions included vendor booths, arts and crafts displays, and a children's entertainment area. The 4th Annual Redwood City Police Activities League (PAL) Blues Festival featured a galaxy of blues talent—although the focus was on "local" artists, many are also nationally recognized in the blues world.

Kenny Neal, the brightest star on the national stage, kicked off the festival Friday evening with the Neal Family Band, consisting of brothers Frederick on keyboards and Darnell on bass, nephew Tyree on keyboards and guitar/vocals, and Bryan Morris on drums. Kenny's proficiency on laptop steel guitar with spiky percussive fills and

inspired vocals on "Blues, Leave Me Alone" set the mood for an evening of swamp boogie blues. Introducing the band and sharing recent life experiences, Kenny put down the guitar and launched into a smashingly heartfelt vocal turn on his tune "Let Life Flow," for which he won the 2009 Blues Music Award as Best Song of the Year.

The band peeled off one powerful tune after the other with Tyree taking center stage with crisp vocals on "Born under a Bad Sign" punctuated by a dazzling guitar solo. When the band finished it off with Kenny's "Any Fool Will Do," the crowd gave them a thunderous ovation testifying to this great exhibit of real deal blues.



With the sun shining warmly, Saturday's show opened up with Redwood City native **DeBraun Thomas** on vocals and guitar in a mostly rock-oriented set that concluded with a blues expression on "Everyday I Have the Blues."

Things started literally jumping with the **South City Blues Band**, comprised of John Lull on tenor saxophone, John Boutell on guitar/vocals, **Ray Figueroa** on bass (best dressed musician of the day) and Luke Piro on drums/vocals. Moving and grooving on a jump blues opening, they worked their way into a wonderful rendition on an Albert King-styled "Pretty Woman." A little humor was interjected with Piro's vocals on "Nosey Joe." The band is a tight aggregation and Lull's smooth, flowing phrasing on saxophone was noteworthy.



The **Russell Barber Band** from San Jose showcased solid guitar styling by Barber in a set of R&B influenced tunes. It was distinguished by guest harmonica players Aki Kumar and **Jimmy Dewrance**, both of whom showed uncommon skill and technique.

Bluestate is one of those bands that always delivers with great eclectic music and then knocks your socks off when you least expect it! They were in the groove this day with a distinctively bluesy bent. The Jimmy Reed tune "Take Out Some Insurance" featured **Greg Heumann** wringing out a powerful performance on



harmonica and vocals. A swinging tune “Enough of You,” slated to be on their upcoming CD, displayed Heumann’s supple vocal phrasing while Vince Caminiti locked into a bluesy mode on guitar. The highlight of their set was a wonderful rendition of Duke Ellington’s “I Ain’t Got Nothin’ but the Blues” and they gave it the royal treatment with Heumann’s suave vocal delivery. Caminiti was exuberantly skillful on guitar solos and Heumann punctuated the tunes with his harmonica solos and compelling tenor saxophone styling. Pat Tining on bass and Tom Difiglio on drums lent their precision and tenacity to the mix for a groovy set.



Blues DJ Byrd Hale introduced The California Honeydrops, one of the most inventive and exciting new bands with a repertoire combining roots music with blues and soul. Lech Wierzynski handled lead vocals, trumpet, and guitar; Nansamba Ssensalo and Ben Malament traded off on drums and tub bass; while Chris Burns held forth on keyboards.



Wierzynski tackled “Bye Bye Baby, I’m Gone” on guitar and vocals and Burns pumped up the melody with his pulsating keyboard expression. The swinging “Squeezy Breezy” was delightfully captured with Wierzynski’s clever vocals adding spice to this little ditty. They closed out their dynamic set with “Soul Tub,” which solidified how talented a group this is with its funky soulful harmonizing.



Noel Hayes, blues DJ, had the honor of introducing Ms. Taylor P. Collins and her big band. Collins opened it up singing with conviction on an energetic “Bring Me Down Blues.” Her intense rendition of “Cry Me a River” was magnificent. A funky “Bluesified” followed, with Collins getting the audience up on its collective feet. Her crackerjack band kept a lively pace with Jeff Chambers on bass, Pamela Arthur on keyboards, Diana Tucker and Kristen Strom on saxophones, Tami Ellis on trumpet, Kelly Fasman on drums, and Rich Cravalho on guitar. Collins’ elegant phrasing and earthy delivery was just the ticket for a lively, cunning performance from a sensational entertainer.



Sid Morris and the Roadhouse Rockers got the boogie-woogie juices flowing in a rollicking experiment that featured Frank DeRose on bass, Gary Weller on guitar and Frankie Ramos on saxophone. They covered the Ray Charles tunes “Hard



Times (Who Knows Better Than I)” and “Mess Around” with sizzling intensity. Gary Smith added his harp playing prowess to the mix and, let me tell you, this was the ultimate party experience with Morris’s superlative embellishment on keyboards.

Mighty Mike Schermer along with Nancy Wright on saxophone, Steve Ehrmann on bass, and Paul Revelli on drums and the aforementioned Sid Morris on keyboards continued the fun. Schermer has been one of the most talented guitarists around before he very recently relocated to Austin, Texas, to join Marcia Ball’s band. He showed us this day why we are going to miss him on the local scene. Opening up on “See See Baby,” the swinging melody was enhanced by Wright’s dexterous delivery on saxophone. Schermer delivered a vibrant Cali-Mex salute on “Hey Baby, Que Paso?” This set was filled with a medley of rock-oriented tunes, including a James Brown cover that got the dancers energized. Then it was time for the guest headliner, Earl Thomas, to hit the stage with his soulful vocals and charismatic showmanship. Thomas started off on Schermer’s “My Big Sister’s Radio” and followed that with a tune that he and Schermer co-wrote, “One More Day.” The highlight was his masterful take on “Soulshine” with inspirational exuberance. Thomas again demonstrated his astonishing ability to put just the right phrasing and textures into the lyrics. The audience demanded an encore and Thomas and the band accommodated them with an exhilarating rendition of “Dust My Broom.”



Redwood City again proved that it has the blues and a lot more with one of the best festivals in the area. Kudos go out to the festival co-chairs George Schoenstein and Gino Gasparini, stage manager Vince Caminiti, and all the dedicated volunteers who made it all possible!

YouTube Links

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=375eWiRi2jI> Kenny Neal
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAoPPbFb1j0> DeBraun Thomas
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McPqdK0zwVs> South City Blues Band
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWnJTytWqmg> Russell Barber Band
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxL2aJAp3Jc> Bluestate
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTz-4Cn27qo> CA Honeydrops
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lvraqOayPsQ> Earl Thomas with Mighty Mike Schermer Band

Tax Tips for Musicians

by Brad Robertson

Let's assume that you would like to save some money every year while still supporting your craft. For your music appearances and performances, you may pay a lot of money for instruments, gear, accessories (amps, pedals, effects, straps, carrying cases), supplies (drum skins and sticks, guitar strings and picks), rehearsal space, studio time, promotional items (such as CD duplication for demos, photos, bios), office supplies, postage, website hosting costs, trade magazine subscriptions, membership in professional organizations, associations and unions, professional fees (attorney, manager, agent, accountant), and touring and travel costs. You are allowed to deduct these expenses on your tax returns, which saves on taxes that you would otherwise pay to the federal and state governments, IF your music is a business and not just a hobby.

MUSIC IS YOUR BUSINESS

For an objective look, we can safely ignore your other sources of income (your day job, other work, or non-music self-employment). Focusing on playing music as a "for-profit" business is key when it comes to income taxes. Reporting all earnings from music and documenting most everything will allow you more write-offs than you might think. But show that you are serious about being successful.

Business Advice

- Conduct your music like a business (put agreements in writing, be organized, etc.)
- Maintain financial records and accurate business information
- Get a business license or separate Federal Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (FEIN, aka TIN)
- Advertise and get business cards
- Open and use a post office box or other business mailing address
- Consider incorporating your band or forming a limited liability company (LLC)
- Join musicians' organizations and/or unions
- Copyright your original music
- Register your songs with a performing rights organization (such as ASCAP or BMI)

IRS Form 1040, Schedule C

Schedule C is used to state your earnings and deduct all of your "ordinary and necessary" business expenses. An ordinary expense is one that is common and accepted in your trade or business. A necessary expense is one that is helpful and appropriate for your trade or business.

Home Office (or Studio) Deduction?

You can deduct expenses for the business use of your home, IF you qualify. You must use part of your home "exclusively and regularly as your principal place of business." Exclusive use means that a room or separate space is dedicated to business and not for any personal purpose. Regular use means simply using this specific area on a regular basis. To qualify for "business use," this space must be used for administrative or management activities of your trade or business. Examples of administrative or management activities include:

- ✓ Keeping books and records
- ✓ Billing or collecting amounts due you, banking, paying bills
- ✓ Ordering supplies
- ✓ Setting up appointments
- ✓ Issuing 1099 forms

If you qualify to take a home office deduction, use IRS Form 8829 to include expenses such as rent, utilities, home insurance, and home repairs and maintenance. The tax deduction is a small percentage of these total expenses, typically from 5% to 15%. The business use percentage is based on the square footage of the business use area of your home compared to the total square footage of your home. You must file Schedule C to take advantage of the home office deduction. (If you own your home, a recapture clause needs consideration before you take any deductions for your home office – discuss this with your accountant.)

Equipment

Currently, purchased business assets that are typically required to be depreciated (written off over a period of years) may be immediately deducted in full under IRS Section 179 up to a maximum of \$250,000. Bonus depreciation may also be available in the first year for acquired assets over the \$250,000 amount.

Self-Employment Tax

This tax can hurt. It is calculated on your net profit on Schedule C. Net profit is total earnings less all business expenses, including home office deduction and depreciation. This tax represents the Social Security (FICA) and Medicare taxes typically deducted from employee paychecks. As you are both the employer and employee when self-employed, you pay 12.4% of your earnings toward FICA (on a maximum of \$73,880 net profit) and 2.9% for Medicare tax (no maximum, it's unlimited). At the combined rate of 15.3%, self-employment tax is in addition



to your income tax (which is calculated differently and different income tax rates apply). The self-employment tax is calculated using Schedule SE and is applied toward your future Social Security retirement account (if any).

NEXT TIME

In the next issue, I will discuss the different business entities you may wish to establish. These include sole proprietorships, partnerships, LLCs, C corporations, and S corporations. Each of these is very different with its own advantages

and disadvantages. Depending on your situation and financial goals, these different forms of doing business will affect your tax reporting and help you save money that would otherwise go the government. Also I will talk about automobile and other vehicle expenses, travel and meal costs, and unique tax deductions for musicians and other performers.

Brad Robertson is a C.P.A. and the Treasurer of the Golden Gate Blues Society.

The Golden Gate Blues Society Jam Is Moving

by Vince Caminiti

It appears that we're coming to the end of a memorable chapter in Bay Area Blues with the impending sale of the Fox Theater complex in Redwood City. It is with great sadness that we have to announce the last few TGGBS blues jams at the Little Fox. Despite the heroic efforts of property owner John Anagnostou, the property will be put up for sale on October 22. The fate of the property is very much up in the air after that, but we anticipate that the jam will continue at the Little Fox into mid-November. Whenever we have to relocate, trust that we'll be sending things off in style with a party befitting the end of this wonderful chapter in Bay Area Blues.

The Show Must Go On

It's been almost 4 years of running a jam that has become a treasure to Bay Area blues fans and musicians alike, and a nationally recognized phenomenon. So the show must, and

will, go on. While the possibility remains that the jam could stay at the venue under new ownership, we are actively looking for alternatives all around the Bay Area. In the meantime, we'll probably be homeless for a while and miss some weeks, but when we land, it will be a place (or places) that provides the ambiance, great sound, professional lighting, and friendliness that you've come to cherish at the Little Fox.

You Can Help

Part of what makes the jam work is the support from TGGBS sponsors. Consider becoming a sponsor of TGGBS, which would help ensure that we can support the musicians wherever we land. Information is provided on the Sponsor page of our website. In the meantime, keep checking the website for updates. <http://www.tggbs.org>

Upcoming SF Bay Area Blues Events that Caught the Editor's Eye

October 10: Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue with Tommy Castro Band, Janiva Magness, John Nemeth, and Joe Louis Walker, Great American Music Hall, San Francisco

October 13: Doug MacLeod, Union Room (above Biscuits & Blues), San Francisco

October 14: Earl Thomas Unplugged, Biscuits & Blues

October 16: Terry Hanck, Mojo Lounge, Fremont

October 16: Gary Smith Band, Poor House Bistro, San Jose

October 21 & 22: Blues Guitar Extravaganza with Rene Solis, Garth Webber, and Joe Louis Walker, Yoshi's, Oakland

October 23: Chris Smither, Freight & Salvage, Berkeley

October 17: EC Scott, Biscuits & Blues

October 30: Ronnie Baker Brooks, Biscuits & Blues

October 30: Anthony Paule Blues Band, Poor House Bistro

October 31: Hubert Sumlin and James Cotton, Herbst Theater, San Francisco

November 4: Jimmy Thackery, Biscuits & Blues

November 6: Mark Hummel, Biscuits & Blues

November 6: Daniel Castro, Mojo Lounge

November 11: Bill Champlin, 142 Throckmorton, Mill Valley

November 14: Jackie Payne/Steve Edmonson Band, Mojo Lounge

November 19: Mitch Woods Boogie Woogie Blowout with Pinetop Perkins, Steve Lucky, and Caroline Dahl, Yoshi's

November 27: Maria Muldaur's Garden of Joy Jug Band, Freight & Salvage

November 28: Sonny Rhodes, Mojo Lounge

December 9: Kim Wilson's Blues Revue, Biscuits & Blues



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www.tggbs.org

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The Golden Gate Blues Society is a nonprofit affiliate of The Blues Foundation, based in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of the Golden Gate Blues Society is to enhance the appreciation and understanding of the Blues in the Greater San Francisco Bay Area through:

- sponsorship and promotion of Blues performances;
- education programs and publications on the performance, interpretation, preservation and growth of the Blues as an American art form; and
- the financial as well as moral support of the San Francisco Bay Area Blues community.

