



# BLUES NOTES!

A bi-monthly publication of the SACRAMENTO BLUES SOCIETY

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2021  
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## President's Column

By Sally Katen



The SBS Board is still hard at work trying to get what music we can to you, whether it be online or in person. Yes, there are some live dates coming up, including Mick Martin's annual birthday party which is scheduled for May 1st, 2021 at Swab-bies, with limited seating.

Last Sunday 4/11/21 we co-sponsored an event with member band Red's Blues live streaming from Harlow's. What a great event that was! I hope you were able to watch and enjoy some great music.

Our new website is up and ready for you to view at <https://sacblues.org>. We have a full inventory of SBS merchandise available with some new items for you to view, including embroidered baseball hats, scarfs, totes, SBS & BITS pins, face masks, T-shirts, tanks and sweatshirts.

We are also working on (exclusively for our HOF & SBS member bands) a new compilation CD that will be available for everyone to purchase in a few months. Deadline for CD submission is May 15th, 2021. We have 12 of our HOF and member bands already signed up and submitting songs. Member bands, here's a link: <https://www.sacblues.org/cd-project.html>.

And, speaking of Hall of Fame members, Bob Cosman has updated our "Gone But Not Forgotten" video this year and it looks awesome! The Big Day Of Giving (Big DOG) is coming up May 6th, 2021 along with our annual SBS' Blues In The Schools (BITS) Showcase. We're working on creating a "hybrid" Showcase that will have a small in-person audience attending and will also be live streaming. Look for an announcement soon on our social media and website with details.

For Big DOG, we're encouraging each of our Board members to

create their own donation page linked to the main Big DOG page. This will allow us to personally ask our friends for all donations to go to a specific SBS program.

We are also entering into a partnership with the John Lee Hooker Foundation to help raise funds for BITS. Look for details on a June 5 event on our social media platforms.

## 2020 SBS Hall of Fame Update

by Sally Katen, HOF Committee Chairwoman

As things start to open up more and more, I am so looking forward to planning the upcoming SBS Hall of Fame event at Harlow's from 1pm – 4:30pm and our Showcase at the Torch Club from 5pm – 8pm.

### 2021 Committee Chairs

**Blues in the Schools** - Rick Snyder

**Hall of Fame** - Sally Katen

**Events** - Mindy Giles

**Membership** - Linda McShane

**Sponsorships/Fundraising** - Doug Pringle

**Public Relations & Social Media** - Mindy Giles

**Volunteer Coordinator** - Open

**Big Day of Giving** - Rick Snyder

**Donor Gifts** - Sally Katen

**Blue Notes Newsletter** - Cari Chenkin & Jan Kelley

**IBC Competition** - Open

**Webmaster** - Mindy Giles, Doug Pringle

**Board of Directors Development** - Doug Pringle

*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, 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.

For more details, including meeting location, check: [www.sacblues.org](http://www.sacblues.org)

### 2021 Board of Directors

Sally Katen, President

Barbara Katen, Vice President

Doug Pringle, Secretary

Rich Gormley, Treasurer

Rex Smith, Parliamentarian

Renee Erickson Sullivan

Cari Chenkin

Rick Snyder

Chris Clark

Dana Moret

### Sacramento Blues Society Publications

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**Facebook**: [www.facebook.com/sacblues/](https://www.facebook.com/sacblues/)

**Twitter**: @SacBluesSociety

I have scheduled meetings for the HOF committee for choosing and discussing information on the new Hall of Fame Inductees. I am also accepting nominations at our new website [sacblues.org](http://sacblues.org).

Everyone is so glad to be coming back and wants to make up for missing last year.

Our returning Committee Members are:

- 1) Sally Katen (HOF Chair)
- 2) Barbara Katen
- 3) Jan Kelley (HOF Member 2014)
- 4) Joe Lev (HOF Member 2014)
- 5) Kelcey Ham
- 6) Liz Peel (HOF Member 2015)
- 7) Marcel Smith (HOF Member 2016)
- 8) Marshal Wilkerson (HOF Member 2014)
- 9) Mick Martin (HOF Member 2010)
- 10) Pat Balcom (HOF Member 2013) (phone meeting)
- 11) Ray Copeland (HOF Member 2012)

See you September 26th, 2021!

## Blues In The Schools (BITS) Update

by Rick Snyder, BITS Chairman

Well, just when it seemed that it could get no weirder, it did. Kids who had been isolated and utilizing distance learning tools for months are now in the process of going back to school. Good, right? Maybe yes and maybe no. Some kids are anxious about returning to the classroom. Some parents are worried about having their kids return to school.

That means that while kids are in the classroom and some of their peers are at home, teachers will be teaching live and on Zoom concurrently. If that's not weird enough, some kids will come to school for a portion of the day during a part of the week. This means that although kids will be attending school, they will only be in class for about eighteen hours for the remainder of the semester.

Why am I going through all these details? Our music teachers have told us that it has been challenging to get students motivated to participate in Blues in the Schools via Zoom. I get it. You have to be on Zoom for your academic classes. You have been trapped inside for months. It's tough to get motivated.

The upside to all of this is that students who have recently graduated have a different perspective, thus enabling us to form a BITS Alumni Program. At this time, we have about a dozen recent graduates who are very excited about the possibilities this program presents. Fortunately for the program, one of the students has already stepped up and taken on a leadership role. Amaya Levels, a talented multi-instrumentalist, singer, and songwriter, has assumed the BITS Alumni Program's Presidency.

To really get this new program started with a bang, longtime BITS supporter and extremely talented keyboardist, John Noxon, has donated a Hammond X-77 Organ, an X-77L Leslie speaker, Hammond bench, and bass pedals to the program.



It looks like we may even have an exciting announcement regarding the BITS BDOG Showcase on the horizon. Stay tuned for information as it becomes available! (Check our website and social media pages for updates as they occur.)

## BACK TO BUSINESS! Sacramento Blues Society 2021 Compilation CD DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MAY 15!

By Mindy Giles, Events & CD Project Chairwoman



Good news for member bands. If you have not yet submitted your original track(s) for consideration in BACK TO BUSINESS! (that's the perfect title of our 2021 Compilation CD), you now have until May 15th!

We plan to release this compilation in the late summer on both CD and digital download. There is no charge to submit, and songwriters will need to agree to donate the use of one track. The CD and CD/songs download will be for sale on our new SBS website, [www.sacblues.org](http://www.sacblues.org).

This is a project initiative to fund various SBS programs [e.g., The Gene Chambers Musicians Crisis Fund, The Mick Martin Student Fund, others] AND to actively promote our members in the local musical community by providing a platform for your music to be heard.

A great deal of work goes into the making of your music. The goal of this SBS release is to present the artists in a professional and creative manner, reflective of your efforts. To be as inclusive and comprehensive as possible, we have set out criteria and have created a form to guide you through the submission process. Please read all criteria here: <https://www.sacblues.org/cd-project.html>

Gather all information and media required, then fill out the Submission Form, making sure to check (click) the boxes for all included content. The submission form is a fillable PDF, which can be completed online. Save a copy for your records. Send any questions to [sacramentoblues1979@gmail.com](mailto:sacramentoblues1979@gmail.com).

All completed submissions will be reviewed by the SBS CD committee. Songs chosen for BACK TO BUSINESS! plus artist info (bio, photo song details, band link) will appear on our new website [www.sacblues.org](http://www.sacblues.org) and be promoted in both social media and through regular public relations. Decisions will be based on musical and sonic quality, diversity, and originality. WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW. FEEL WHAT YOU FEEL!

2020 was a hard year and the Blues, as we all know, tells the truth. So, sing out your sorrows. But the Blues is a healer too and can take us to hope and joy. So, if you've got that too, bring it! Cover songs will not be accepted, we are just looking for your original music.

**Submission Deadline is MAY 15, 2021. No submissions will be accepted after midnight on the deadline date. Best of luck and thanks for participating!**



## A Casual Conversation with Laura Chavez

By Barbara Katen

Photos by Bob Cosman



When it was suggested that I interview a female for this issue, my thoughts immediately went to the amazing guitarist, Laura Chavez. I was excited when she agreed to be interviewed for the Blue Notes. I can honestly say, judging by her answers to the questions put to her, I really like her a lot. Ok, 'nuff said. Here we go...

**Blue Notes (BN):** What was your inspiration to take up the guitar, how old were you and how did you get your start in music?

**Laura:** I was always drawn to music. Most of my earliest memories are associated with music or a song that was playing in the background and I always paid attention to it as a young kid, even when it was just whatever was on in the car or in the background. I took piano lessons in first and second grade and I first started taking guitar lessons after school when I was eight but unfortunately it didn't last too long. I ended up picking it up again when I was about twelve and it stuck.

**BN:** Who are your biggest musical influences?

**Laura:** Some of my favorite guitar players are Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Freddie King, BB King and Hollywood Fats. I like guitar players who manage to be equally fiery and understated at the same time.

But I also love listening to horn players and vocalists just as much—everyone from Dexter Gordon to Sarah Vaughan and more contemporary soul singers like Charles Bradley.

**BN:** What do you think you would be doing if you weren't a musician?

**Laura:** I never planned that I would have ended up a full-time musician. I had always had a plan to go to medical school and become a doctor. So, I'd like to think that's what would have happened.

**BN:** I must ask this question, have you had to deal with many roadblocks being a woman in what many consider a man's profession? If so, can you share an example?

**Laura:** For the most part I just keep my head down and try my best not to think about it because it isn't productive. The most frustrating thing is knowing that regardless of how good I could be or what I might accomplish, the very first thing people will see or think about is the fact that I'm female and that will always color one's perception. If it crosses your mind to say, "you're about the best female guitar player I've ever heard," just don't.

**BN:** What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?

**Laura:** Deplore is such a strong word! I guess my tendency to pro-

crastinate in every endeavor would be something I could change.

**BN:** What is the trait you most deplore in others?

**Laura:** Again, such a strong word. But, I'll say entitlement. The world owes us nothing regardless of who we are.

**BN:** What is your greatest extravagance?

**Laura:** Ha-ha...I own A LOT of guitars...probably too many.

**BN:** What words or phrases do you most overuse?

**Laura:** Good question...people around me could probably better answer this question.

**BN:** When and where were you happiest?

**Laura:** I'm always happy moving around, traveling, and playing music with my friends. I hope I'm able to get back to that again.

**BN:** What is your most treasured possession?

**Laura:** I don't know if it's my most treasured, but I'd probably sell off everything else I own before selling my Fender Strat.

**BN:** If you have a life motto, what is it?

**Laura:** It's a cliché and overused but I've come to believe that the most important thing we can do is live and be in the moment. We spend so much time thinking about what is or should be next or dwelling on any incident in the past that we don't experience now and miss out on the spontaneous that could be beautiful or at the very least, fun.

**BN:** How are you keeping sane and using this time during the pandemic?

**Laura:** Hasn't been easy...trying to stay busy with various projects and not dwelling too much on all the things I could have been doing.

NOW, JUST FOR FUN, PLEASE ANSWER THESE RAPID-FIRE TRIVIA QUESTIONS

**BN:** Favorite Ice Cream?

**Laura:** Coffee

**BN:** Favorite Album of all time?

**Laura:** Ahh...umm...*Aftermath* by the Rolling Stones

**BN:** Favorite quote?

**Laura:** "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the wisest man." – Roald Dahl

**BN:** Favorite Movie?

**Laura:** *Pee Wee's Big Adventure*

**BN:** Favorite Food?

**Laura:** Sushi

**BN:** Favorite Book?

**Laura:** *Confederacy of Dunces*

**BN:** Favorite drink?

**Laura:** Coffee

**BN:** Favorite leisure activity?

**Laura:** Walking

**BN:** Favorite City?

**Laura:** Madrid

**BN:** Biggest pet peeve?



Laura Chavez Interview, con't. from p. 4

**Laura:** People who are always late

**BN:** Cat or Dog?

**Laura:** Dog

**BN:** Weirdest place you've ever been?

**Laura:** Transylvania - Romania

**BN:** One thing you can't live without?

**Laura:** Coffee

**BN:** What poster, if any, did you have on your wall growing up?

**Laura:** Kurt Cobain

**BN:** If you could snap your fingers and change anything in the world, what would it be?

**Laura:** Make the world a lot less divided.

Big thanks to the amazing Laura Chavez for taking the time to be interviewed.



## Big Day of Giving - May 6!

By Rick Snyder, Chief Visionary,  
BDOG Team Leader

People, people, people! The time has come. It's **THURSDAY, MAY 6!** If we had a bell, we would be ringing it now. Watch the skies, no, just kidding. Watch your social media and your email. We will be posting and mailing information on how to assist your Sacramento Blues Society for this phenomenal event.

One of the coolest aspects of BDOG is that you can pick and choose where you would like your contribution to go. If you are interested in assisting the future generation of blues players, then BITS is for you. Perhaps you have a need to help others in need, particularly blues musicians. The Gene Chambers Fund is where you want your dough to go. Maybe you would like to ensure our musically inclined younger generation can follow their dream. To get them the gear they need, go with the Mick Martin Student Fund. You might be diggin' the Hall of Fame portion of the Sacramento Blues Society. Want to see the SBS put on more shows? You can always contribute to our general fund for the Sacramento Blues Society. Your Board of Directors will make sure the money goes where it is most needed.

Hey, we know these are challenging times, we know things are tight, but if the Blues is a condition, Blues Music is the cure. We want to be Cure Central. Any amount will help. Thanks in advance.

## NEW SBS Merchandise Is In!

SBS has been getting in a lot of new merchandise and here are a few more items just received. We have an SBS embroidered baseball cap, along with a really nice SBS gray scarf, and our new tote bag! See the photo on the next to last page of this issue.

Please check our new website at [sacblues.org](http://sacblues.org). Show your support



by wearing one of our T-Shirts, masks, baseball hats or pins.

## Preserving and Promoting the Blues

By Doug Pringle

Information Courtesy of Wikipedia



The origins of the blues are poorly documented. What we do know is that blues developed in the southern United States after the American Civil War (1861-65). It was influenced by work songs and field hollers, minstrel show music, ragtime, church music, and the folk and popular music of the white population. Blues derived from and was largely played by southern Black men, most of who came from the milieu of agricultural workers. The earliest references to blues date back to the 1890s and early 1900s. In 1912 Black bandleader W.C. Handy's composition "Memphis Blues" was published. It became very popular, and thereafter many other Tin Pan Alley songs with Blues in the titles began to appear.

The rural blues developed in three principal regions: Georgia and the Carolinas, Texas, and Mississippi. The blues of Georgia and the Carolinas is noted for its clarity of enunciation and regularity of rhythm. Influenced by ragtime and white folk music, its style is richly melodic. Blind Willie McTell and Blind Boy Fuller were representatives of this style. The Texas Blues is characterized by high, clear singing, accompanied by supple guitar lines that consist typically of single-string picked arpeggios rather than strummed chords. Blind Lemon Jefferson was by far the most influential Texas Bluesman. Mississippi Delta Blues is the most intense of the three styles and has been the most influential. Vocally, it is the most speech-like, and the guitar accompaniment is rhythmic and percussive; a slide or bottleneck is often used. The Mississippi style is represented by Charley Patton, Eddie "Son" House, and Robert Johnson, among others.

The Great Depression and the World Wars caused the geographic dispersal of the blues as millions of Blacks left the South for the cities of the North. The blues became adapted to the more sophisticated urban environment. Lyrics took up urban themes, and the blues ensemble developed as the solo bluesman was joined by a pianist or harmonica player, and then by a rhythm section consisting of bass and drums. The electric guitar and the amplified harmonica created a driving sound of great rhythmic and emotional intensity.

Among the cities in which the blues initially took root were Atlanta, Memphis, and St. Louis. John Lee Hooker settled in Detroit, and on the West Coast, T-Bone Walker developed a style later adopted by B.B. King. It was Chicago, however, that played the greatest role in the development of urban blues. In the 1920s and 30s, Memphis Minnie, Tampa Red, Big Bill Broonzy, and Sonny Boy Williamson were popular Chicago performers. After World War II they were supplanted by a new generation of blues artists that included Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Elmore James, Little Walter Jacobs, Buddy Guy, and Koko Taylor.

The blues have influenced many other musical styles; blues and jazz are closely related. Such seminal jazzmen as Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong employed blues elements in their music. Soul music and Rhythm and Blues also show obvious blues tonalities and forms. The blues have had their greatest influence on Rock music. Early rock singers such as Elvis Presley often used blues material and British rock musicians in the 1960s, especially the Rolling Stones, Eric Clapton, and John Mayall, were strongly influenced by the blues, as were such American rock musicians as Mike

Bloomfield, Paul Butterfield and the Allman Brothers Band.

Our mission is to preserve this important original American art form and to promote the blues because the arts have always been outlets to express the plight of the oppressed, and to sound the call for change. We believe that the African American experience is the very foundation of the blues, a uniquely American art form, and one which we celebrate and love. Music, especially the blues, can break down racial barriers and open dialogue about cultural diversity.

### CD Review

## Raisin' Cain - Chris Cain

(Alligator Records) By Rex Smith

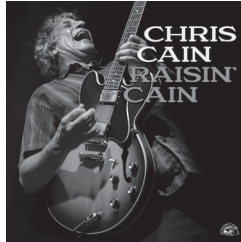
This is Chris Cain's 15th release and his first on the esteemed Alligator Records label. It was released on April 9, 2021.

It has been written that Cain's musical influences range from B.B. King, Albert Collins, Mike Bloomfield, and some jazz musicians too. I certainly heard all those influences in this release, but all the music is pure Chris Cain; he is not imitating anyone. On this release Chris plays guitar, piano, Wurlitzer electric piano and on the final cut, "Space Force", he plays clavinet and does an ARP\* solo. On five of the 12 cuts there are some amazing blues horns with a tenor saxophone, baritone sax, trumpet, and trombone.

Chris' powerful vocals are deep, clear, and earthy. His inspiring guitar solos are some of the best I have heard in a long while. The arrangements are modern classic blues with some jazz guitar chops here and there with interesting chord changes. All songs are Chris Cain originals. His lyrics are sometimes autobiographic but always relatable to everyone and he throws in a good sense of humor to keep it all fun. The upbeat tempo kept my attention and left me wanting more, wanting to be there dancing to Chris Cain's big blues band sound.

The quality of the recording is excellent. I listened to **Raisin' Cain** three times on a high-powered sound system with speakers that take all the power they can get. This recording did not disappoint. Even the third time listening I was still hearing something new, whether it was the notes between the notes, the soaring guitar solos, the background vocals or the Wurlitzer electric piano, there is some real depth here. This reviewer wholeheartedly recommends adding **Raisin' Cain** to your Blues collection.

\*Address Resolution Protocol provides IP to MAC address messaging services. It works by using two messages, the request and reply.



## SBS Presidents Past & Present

### Would they do it again? By Barbara Katen

As a relative newbie to the oldest Blues Society west of the Mississippi, the Sacramento Blues Society, I became a member in 2013 and have served on the Board of Directors since 2014. While on the Board I have observed the responsibilities of the SBS President (our current Pres. is my cousin Sal) and have realized that technically, holding this office could be considered a full-time job! With this realization, my curiosity was piqued by wondering who has held the position of President since the inception of our organization in 1979. I reached out to every email I could find for past Presidents, some successfully, some didn't respond, and some had their email returned as the email address was no longer valid. With that said, here are the questions I posed to those who responded. Please note, I have entered the year of their Presidency next to their name under the first question.

**Blue Notes (BN):** What did you find was most rewarding about serving as President?

**Brandon Bentz (2018):** One of the things that I found extremely rewarding was the efforts to bring the Blues to a new, younger population of fans. It worries me that we may be losing the ears of the younger audience. I enjoyed innovative ways to present the Blues so that it maintains its interest and vibrancy not only to our more dedicated fan base, but also to attracting new, younger fans.



**Kelcey Ham (1989-1990):** The people that I was fortunate to work with during my time as President/Grand Poobah (I have a plaque with that title.) They were dedicated/hard-working toward promoting the art form that we all loved. In particular, my VP Tim Sells, Francis Bona, Editor of **Blue Notes**, Ed Loomis, Program Chair and Jeannie watch-

ing our funds. We stopped making guarantees to performers (they received the door), a contract that included a decibel level cap (we actually unplugged a band that wouldn't comply! Johnny Nitro & The Door Slammers - we should've known!) We filmed and broadcast performances on the local community channel & started the first "Blues in the Schools" program. We also provided volunteers for The Blues Festival. I ran the first aid station (also for The Heritage Fest when it started.) We created a series of outdoor performances in local parks over the summers. Ed also oversaw the recordings of local bands that eventually became the 1st volume of **Sacramento Blues** when Mike Balma was President.

**Cari Chenkin (2015-2016, 2019):** There were many aspects that I found rewarding. First, I delighted in serving the organization that was so dear to my heart and that had provided me with such good times and wonderful friends. That was rewarding. Second, it was great to be a part of directing the organization and taking responsibility for helping it succeed and grow.



During my three stints as President, we faced all kinds of challenges, from trying to "right the ship" financially from a place of very low funds, to recruiting new and qualified Board members, to putting on events that would enrich both the community and the SBS itself,

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Thank you for your support!

to handling personnel conflicts among Board members and committees and to raising the "professionalism" and quality of our Board and communications. Contributing and being part of all the above has been extremely rewarding.

**Sheila Hembury (1980-1981):** I fell in love with blues as a VISTA Volunteer in Washington DC in 1967, but started to learn more about blues, jazz, and R & B after I moved to California in 1971. I was involved with a cornet player who played in a traditional jazz band and began to hear lots of old jazz and blues. Finally, I discovered Phil Givant, producer of the Sacramento Blues Festival, and became a devoted volunteer. In around the late 70s, a number of us began to talk about forming a Blues Society. We started informally, but soon became a little more organized. I don't think I was the first President, but being a devotee, I soon started doing more and more around 1980. What I loved the most was that we were soon doing one or two shows in local bars weekly. It was challenging – booking artists, making sure things were cool with the venue, creating some quite dorky flyers, and making sure to have volunteers to make it work. At times, I'm not really sure how we always paid the artists... but I was in blues heaven!



**Willie Brown (2007-2008, 2010-2011):** Well, first of all it was great working with some fun people! Second was being a part of the "Blues In The Schools" program, the SBS "Hall of Fame", the Northern California Blues Festival and the festival in Old Sacramento.

**Jan Kelley (2002)**  
**(2013):** Leading volunteers who helped

membership grow, restore financial stability, begin new programs, help SBS be a viable organization once again plus meeting new artists and other cool people and having fun! I began writing articles for the **Blue Notes** in 1994 and genuinely enjoyed that and being editor/co-editor.



**Liz Walker (2012):** I most enjoyed interacting with SBS members, hearing about their ideas and concerns for the Society. I also enjoyed the PR aspect of the position. I was able to leverage my contacts in the local arts community as BITS co-chair to encompass the Society as a whole, which brought greater visibility to SBS in the community.

There were multiple upgrades during my term as well, i.e., a new website (and now there's another new look!), changing the **Blue Notes** cover to full color and most importantly - moving all the accounting into Quick Books.

**Dennis Moffet (2009):** The best part was all the friends I made in our area as well as the "blues family" I have been a part of ever since I served on the Board.



**Sally Katen (2020-2021):** The people. Not only do I have a great SBS Board but the SBS members that support us are an awesome group of people.



**BN:** What were some of the most challenging things you found yourself up against as President?

**Brandon:** Innovation isn't always openly welcomed, and change can be difficult. I found that, at times, change was not always met with an optimistic and innovative heart.

**Kelcey:** Convincing bands to play for the door instead of a guarantee, although Ed mostly did that. Also placating members complaints about the lights & cameras when recording performances for broadcast. They came around when they understood how much benefit it provided for the artists & the community.

**Cari:** Probably the most challenging were the personnel conflicts and managing a diverse group of personalities and agendas. When you lead a group, it's important to ensure that everyone feels heard and understood, and that all ideas presented are considered. Sometimes, this was despite my own personal feelings and ideas! Once everyone's ideas are heard, it's important to lead the group toward a decision, often a compromise between competing views. Sometimes it required me to make an "executive decision" and impose my will on the group, if we became bogged down in discussion or arguments.

**Sheila:** It was truly a lot of work, and people frequently had ideas but little or no follow through. Money was always a concern. Even though we sometimes had quite a few members, figuring out just how to build membership and commitment was always a challenge. The worst day I think was when we were changing Presidents. After a few years, I was ready for a rest, and people just weren't stepping up. At a meeting, a new person spoke up, with enthusiasm and ideas but no history with the Blues Society. He was pretty much the only person who seemed to want it and was elected. I was downhearted (just like Bessie Smith) when I felt like none of the people more involved were willing to take it on. I'm older now and can't say I remember exactly how it all turned out, but somehow you still exist, so I know it did!

**Willie:** I guess the most challenging was finding people with the time and commitment that wanted to contribute. Anyone that's been on a board of 11 volunteer people knows that most of the actual work gets done by a small number of folks.

**Jan:** Getting everyone on the same page, finding good venues and building a reliable volunteer base.

**Liz:** The most challenging for me was I found myself wearing way too many hats for a year: President, Treasurer, Event Chair and of course, "Blues in the Schools" co-chair. All full time positions.

**Dennis:** The hardest part was the politics of pleasing everyone and filing the shoes of Willie Brown, a great president for many years.

**Sally:** A couple months after I was elected President we went into quarantine which shut all events and venues down. Subsequently, the SBS Board began meeting via Zoom in order to continue the required monthly SBS Board meetings. While challenging, it's been doable.

**BN:** How have you found SBS changed since your term as President?

**Brandon:** Since I had to leave the state for work, I have not been able to be as involved with the SBS as I would have loved to be. I am sure that the leadership after me has continued to move the SBS forward, meeting the challenges of today and the future.

**Kelcey:** "Blues in the Schools" has expanded & turned into an excellent program and outreach to the community. We no longer have a "home." When I first became involved we had Wednesday and Thursday nights at Tootsies in Old Sacramento, and then regular shows at Malarkey's. SBS needs a home. I think The "Hall of Fame" is a grand idea and a great reminder of the wonderful people who have made SBS possible. It isn't SBS, but I've noticed quite a bit of what I call Zeppelin Creep in the recent bands. More rock stylings. I'm more of a T-Bone Walker kinda fella.

**Cari:** I'm proud to say I think the SBS has changed for the better, in terms of stepping up our fundraising, organizing our policies and procedures and generally upping our game as a professional nonprofit organization. In 2021, for the first time in a long time, we started out with a FULL complement of Directors on our Board, we're financially in the black, with our key programs well-funded and ready to serve the community and we've updated our newsletter and website. Not all these accomplishments are my doing; we've been fortunate to have great people as Presidents, and each leader has built on the successes of the one before him or her.

**Sheila:** I was lots busier as I had taken on more responsibilities in my job, so I was only peripherally involved, and moved to San Francisco in 1985. I have been at a few events, but not in a long time, so I'm not familiar with the changes.

**Willie:** Well, it's been ten years since my last term, and it appears the SBS folks continue to really care. I'm pleased to see the SBS is still worthy of support. The "Blues In The Schools" is something for the SBS members to be really proud. I see sponsors, donors and band membership continues to grow to keep the blues alive in our region.

**Jan:** Overall, it has become more business-like, i.e., forms to present for Board approval on events, better accounting system, etc. The BITS program has grown beautifully, thanks to a few dedicated volunteers and the HOF has become a celebratory ceremony to the Sacramento Blues community, mostly due to Sally Katen. Plus, everyone is old now. <smile>

**Liz:** The Society is always changing, as it should.

**Dennis:** As a business owner, I liked to see profit when I was President, and I was able to increase our bank account. Since the time I was on the board, many faces have come and gone. The few people who work on our projects seem to be the same few people. We could use more volunteer participation because it builds the family feeling in the group. That is why if we could do more events as a group, the better it could be.

**Sally:** That's a hard question since I've been with the board since 2006. And yes, a lot of things have changed. Yet, at the same time nothing has changed. We find ourselves dealing with the same problems.

**BN:** Would you do it again? Why and why not?

**Brandon:** I absolutely would do it again. I would continue to try to innovate the music, the presentation, and the methods to try to continue to make it new, vibrant, and interesting for old and new audiences.

**Kelcey:** Naw! At age 71 I wouldn't have the patience for the personalities. Also, I have too many other interests beckoning for my attention. Right now, The Magician of Lublin is whispering my name.

**Cari:** If the organization needed me, I might be persuaded to do it again, sometime in the future, but NOT soon! Right now, I'm happy to be a "Board member at large" and the newsletter editor. Being president requires a lot of dedication, work and preparation, and you need all the leadership skills, tact and interpersonal skills you can muster. It can be tiring, and I've done it enough for now. But I'd definitely serve again, if the alternative were to see the SBS go down in flames!

**Sheila:** That's a great question to end with. In hearing from Jan Kelley and starting to explore your website and newsletters, I see that you all have built a resilient organization that still thrills blues lovers, so in that case, I am thankful for any early work I did in the past. Thanks for asking! Keep on keeping on...the blues is always all right!

**Willie:** Sure, if I were a younger man. I did four terms as president and I think I left the SBS in good hands. The current president (Sally Katen) was the SBS secretary in 2011! With this last year and being retired, I've grown to enjoy my down time at home. I've discovered so much with YouTube and Netflix to fill the days along with watching the SF Giants. I'm really looking forward to hanging at the Torch Club, the Starlet Room for the Blues & Bourbon series and the other fine venues with my friends and live music again!

**Jan:** I would if I thought I was needed to keep it continuing its mission in keeping the Blues alive and I wouldn't now because of the many years I've spent in various capacities for the SBS and my love of the Blues, but I don't have the energy. Word!

**Liz:** When the time is right, I'll be back!

**Dennis:** I would run for president again if I had a different lifestyle. I tried to get more people of color in our blues Society but feel like I failed. I think we now need to start doing a every two-month concert. It creates a venue for our bands.

**Sally:** Yes, for the simple fact I get a lot of satisfaction working with people and doing events. Plus, I wouldn't mind being President when we aren't shut down by quarantine. The only reason I would not do it again would be on account of family issues.

Former SBS President **Mike Balma (1992)** responded to our questions by issuing the following statement:

"1992 was a memorable year for the SBS. We were able to present both local, regional, and national blues artists at our events. Favorite amongst attendees were the Blues In The Park concerts, where four free public events, in Sacramento parks, helped to almost double membership to over 800 members. Another milestone was the production of the Sacramento Blues CD, the first compilation CD ever produced by a blues Society. The 1000 CDs were gone within just two weeks. Finally, in December of that year, my campaign promise was fulfilled, when Lil' Ed & the Blues Imperials were brought to town and performed an amazing show along with Arbess Williams at Malarkey's. It was an unforgettable firestorm of a show. At one-point Arbess was carrying Lil' Ed around the room while he was playing guitar. It capped off a truly incredible year of blues in Sacramento!"





## SBS Co-Sponsors Live Stream Event!

As the music world has adapted to the conditions imposed by the COVID pandemic, musicians quickly accepted the challenge to find ways to get their music out to their fans. Live streamed shows have become a welcome addition to YouTube videos and other channels. Recently, the Sacramento Blues Society had the opportunity to participate as a co-sponsor of a local live stream show featuring member band Red's Blues. Although this was not a public event, we were fortunate to have both Jan Kelley and Dana Moret at the show, and they both kindly agreed to write about their experience.

Photos by Bob Cosman

### Red's Blues Live Streamed! By Jan Kelley

I was excited to have the opportunity to see a live stream show produced on April 11th at Harlow's! This was not a public event, rather a live performance by Red's Blues band streamed to online users.

Produced by the Green Room Social Club (<https://www.clubgreenroom.com>), Swell Productions and the Sacramento Blues Society, it showcased the talents of Beth Reid-Grigsby (Red), RW (Richard) Grigsby, Tim Wilbur, Doug Crumpacker and guest Sid Morris on keyboard.

Faced with a 4:00 start time, it was discovered at 3:00 that the keyboard was malfunctioning. With a hurried run, we secured a replacement keyboard just in time, thanks to Doug!



Dana Moret, SBS Board member and performer in her own right, exceeded the beginning of the program and featured SBS merchandise. The production was on

its way!

It was interesting to see the producers hard at work videoing with various cameras for different angles and the detail they determined was needed at a particular time. The sound was constantly monitored with careful attention to each individual performer.

This was a well-coordinated production with impressive teamwork. Seeing RW happily performing once again after a recent health issue, made this writer's heart smile.

### Red's Blues Livestream Showcase Review

By Dana Moret

Even after over a year of shuttered stages all over California, the energy walking into Harlow's as an honored guest representing the Sacramento Blues Society, was palpable. The familiar bustle of sound check and last minute band banter was just what we needed to remind us that the blues scene in Sacramento was not forgotten. Watching Red and her band exchange familial glances and agree-

ing on those last minute song changes as they prepared for downbeat, we settled into our appropriate, social distanced spots to watch the show.

Red's voice and presence were on point and seemingly unaffected by this last year's darkness as she led her band in that reminiscent sound we've all missed so much. At her side, Sacramento Blues Hall of Fame member RW took the time throughout the show to be every bit as charming and gregarious as we've come to know and



love after all these years. Joining the band on the keys was the incomparable Sid Morris whose effortless tinkling on those ivories only charged the room that much more. Another beloved Hall of Fame member, Doug Crumpacker of the Hucklebucks, gave a thousand percent, not only setting the melodic tones on the guitar, but wowing us with his sizzling harmonica solos. Bringing in years of steady beats and subtle

vocal notes was yet another Hall of Fame member, Tim Wilbur.

All in all, what a glorious reminder of the resilience of our scene. A big, heartfelt Thank You to all of our friends and family that have stayed with us through it all.. Cheers to the next era of the blues!!



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Please join these major donors by making a tax deductible contribution on our new website: [www.sacblues.org](http://www.sacblues.org) or 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!

## Blues Music Awards Coming Up!

The 42nd BMAs will be presented as a virtual event on Sunday, June 6, 2021 starting at 2 p.m. PDT. The world is invited to watch the celebration, which will be live-streamed on the Blues Foundation's Facebook and YouTube channel. Jan Kelley did some research and has provided us with a little history on the BMAs.

## The First Annual W. C. Handy Awards

By Jan Kelley

**\*With permission from Living Blues magazine**

On November 16, 1980 the Blues Foundation presented the first annual Blues Music Awards ceremony at the Orpheum Theatre in Memphis. A performance in front of a small crowd included: vocalists Joyce Cobb, Ma Rainey No. 2, Tommy Ruble and Cindy Farr; guitarist Fred Sanders; saxophonists Evelyn Young, Prince Gabe and Tot Randolph; trumpeters Rudy Williams and Ben Cauley, bassist Terris Tate; pianist Ben Talley; drummer Bernard Clark, and "ironing board" keyboard man Ironing Board Sam.

**Living Blues** magazine, in coordination with the Blues Foundation, had solicited nominations and in spite of the desire of Memphis businesses, civic leaders and education leaders to see Memphis as the "Home of the Blues", a very limited response of support was received. Sadly, the Blues Foundation lost thousands of dollars in the program. The Blues Foundation founder, Joe Savarin, however, was determined to make it bigger and better in 1981.

536 ballots were mailed out to critics, magazine correspondents, editors, record producers, authors, musicians, radio stations, record dealers, folklorists, agents, and blues societies in the United States and overseas. 148 ballots were received and counted, 21 additional ballots were past the deadline.

The majority of votes came from American writers and record companies as well as readers of Living Blues. Very little was received from the Black community in spite of ballots going to Black radio stations, record companies, musicians, and print media. **Ebony** magazine had earlier conducted their own Hall of Fame and it was believed this contributed to the lack of Black response on this poll. Foreign response was limited due to the slow mailing system.

In 2006, the Blues Foundation voted to change the name of the W. C. Handy Awards to the Blues Music Awards. Its current member-

ship numbers approximately 4000 individual members and 200 affiliated local blues societies, all of whom may vote on the Blues Music Awards.

An anonymous committee of blues scholars and experts representing all subsets of blues music convenes each year to review potential Blues Hall of Fame candidates. Candidates selected for induction are determined exclusively on their body of work over their lifetime.

Each year (usually in May), the Blues Foundation holds a gala ceremony in Memphis announcing the winners of the BMAs and the Hall of Fame. Due to the pandemic, the ceremony was held virtually in 2020 and will be again this year.

Whether they are called the W.C. Handy Awards or the Blues Music Awards, it is an honor of great respect and pride to be named a recipient.

Thank you Blues Foundation for keepin' the Blues alive!



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<https://www.facebook.com/blindlemonpeel/>

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[www.chickenanddumpling.net](http://www.chickenanddumpling.net)

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[www.crossing49.com](http://www.crossing49.com)

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<https://www.facebook.com/danamoret>

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[www.soothersblues.com](http://www.soothersblues.com)

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[www.bookthestuff.com](http://www.bookthestuff.com)

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<https://michaelrayblues.com>

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[www.neonmoon.band](http://www.neonmoon.band)

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[www.oldbluesdude.com](http://www.oldbluesdude.com)

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[www.raycatfishcopeland.com](http://www.raycatfishcopeland.com)

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[www.kylerowlandblues.com](http://www.kylerowlandblues.com)

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