

SACRAMENTO

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BLUE NOTES!

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VOL. 2



President's Column

By Sally Katen



We are already into the March/April issue of the Blue Notes and the year keeps rolling along! While we chose to print and mail hard copies of the last two issues of Blue Notes, from this point on, we'll be distributing it as an e-edition only. And, speaking of Blue Notes, if you've noticed, we haven't let the lack of live music events keep us from sharing blues news with our members. We have been featuring special articles on various blues artists, producers of events and CD reviews.

In other big news, we are just about to go live with our new website, www.sacblues.org. Our website folks have been working on the new site for a few months now and we are set to launch in early March! We will keep the original URL sacblues.com to help direct those to the new website. I have viewed the new website and I am excited about it!

Member bands, take notice! Our Events Committee is putting together a CD compilation of SBS member bands. This project is in the beginning stages and we are hoping that all of our member bands will want to participate. (See details in the article about it page 5!) Also, The Big Day of Giving is coming up May 6th, so please remember SBS when giving.

The Sacramento Blues Society Board of Directors (Board) is working hard to bring you the blues and artists of the blues just as soon as it is possible. I hope everyone is in the process of getting their COVID vaccines. This will help our area to open up for future events.

Please look for the updates on the Hall of Fame and new merchandise further in this issue. And, as always, thanks so much for your support!

Sacramento Blues Society Board of Directors Elects 2021 Officers

We are pleased to welcome aboard the newly elected slate of officers for 2021.

At our January meeting, the SBS Board elected its new officers. They are as follows: Sally Katen, President; Barbara Katen, Vice President; Doug Pringle, Secretary; Rich Gormley, Treasurer and Rex Smith, Parliamentarian.

Our new officers are excited to get to work on making 2021 a great year for the SBS!

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 - TBD

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

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

Jeff Herzog

Dana Moret

Sacramento Blues Society Publications

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2020 SBS Hall of Fame Update

by Sally Katen, HOF Committee Chairwoman

Wow! We are already into 2021 by three months and I am starting to prepare for the upcoming Hall of Fame event scheduled for September 26th. We will be returning to Harlow's (2708 J Street, Sacramento,). Yes, I reserved the room for our usual afternoon induction ceremony, which will be followed by our traditional afterparty at the Torch Club (904 15th Street, Sacramento).

This should be an exciting year! After what we went through last year, this will be an event that we can all enjoy! Please share your suggestions for this year's class of inductees. Make your nominations at the new website www.sacblues.org, which is set to launch in early March.

We're also looking for suggestions for a headliner for this year's HOF showcase, so suggestions are welcome. Just go to our website and look under "About Us – Contact Us" to leave a message with your choice.

A Casual Conversation with June Core

By Barbara Katen

Photos courtesy of James Milne

For this issue I was particularly delighted that June agreed to be interviewed. As you know, he is an extraordinary, internationally known drummer and on top of all that, an extremely nice guy! So with that said, please read on fellow blues peeps:

Blue Notes (BN): What was your inspiration to take up drums and how did you get your start in music?

June: My inspiration came from a few things that I wanted to do as a kid. I was really into motorcycle racing, although I didn't know how to ride a motorcycle. But I wanted to either do that or be a race car driver. A friend of mine had a drum set at his house and I went over. He gave me some sticks and when I hit the drum, and it made this tone that just washed all through me. I just couldn't get that out of my mind, so I got myself a drum set and started playing.

BN: Who are your biggest musical influences?

June: That's an easy one. Robert Jr. Lockwood. Johnny Shines. They took me under their wing as a young man and taught me the business of drumming.

BN: What do you think you'd be doing if you were not a musician?

June:

Well, that's also an easy one. My other passion was to be a prize fighter - although I wouldn't be one at this point in life. So I would have done that instead of becoming a musician.

BN: What is your greatest fear?

June: That I'm not able to give my all to this thing that I love the

most - playing drums, listening, playing - everything about music

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

June: At times not giving it my all. Sometimes I don't feel good or just kinda "meh" about an evening or a session.

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

June: Musically, I don't deplore any trait in any musician because no matter what level you play on, it's good that you play. Playing is good for the soul. But you could say I don't appreciate it when someone doesn't give it their all. Especially when they have a talent or a wish to play music. I hate it when they really don't give it what they've got.

BN: Who is the one person you would like to meet the most that you haven't already met?

June: That's easy. My creator.

BN: What words or phrases do you most overuse?

June: I .. umm ... guess ... I say "I'm" a lot ... and ummm .. I guess ... umm I say .. "umm" a lot ...

BN: When and where were you the happiest?

June: I'm the happiest when I'm behind my drums with everything working and firing on all cylinders.

BN: If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

June: Mostly, I'd learn how to read music but without losing my ability to still feel the music.

BN: What do you consider your greatest achievement?

June: Being able to be here today to do what I do. Being able to travel, meet people and bring some type of joy wherever I go.

BN: What is your most treasured possession?

June: That would be my wit.

BN: Who are your heroes in real life?

June: Well, there's so many to mention. My mother, for sure. My brothers and sisters. And my first wife!

BN: What is your biggest regret?

June: My biggest regret is that I can only do as much as I can. Also, not telling my first wife Sheila how much she meant to me and that, without her, I wouldn't be what I am today.

BN: If you have a life motto, what would it be?

June: Do as much as you can with what you got!

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

June: Music, Music and more Music. Listening. Playing. Learning. Studying.

AND just for fun, to help us get to know a little more about June, we asked him some Rapid-fire trivia questions:

BN: Favorite ice cream?

June: I don't eat ice cream

BN: Favorite album?

June: Too many to name

BN: Favorite TV show?

June: Soul Train

BN: Favorite movie?



June: Being There

BN: Favorite food?

June: Anything vegetarian

BN: Favorite book?

June: *Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin

BN: Favorite drink?

June: Tequila

BN: Favorite guilty pleasure?

June: Tequila

BN: Favorite sport?

June: Boxing

BN: Favorite leisure activity?

June: Listening to and playing music

BN: Favorite city?

June: Too many to name

BN: Biggest pet peeve?

June: Not giving it my all

BN: Cat or dog?

June: Both

BN: Weirdest place that you've ever been to?

June: Istanbul and Mumbai

BN: One thing you can't live without?

June: Music

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

June: Mohammed Ali

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

June: The lack of love and care

For more information about June Core, please visit his website drummule.com



Big Day of Giving

By Rick Snyder, BDOG Team Leader

The Big Dog is currently resting but restless. Bootcamps, Happy Hours, and Networking Events are taking place on an almost daily basis. Some we may find very intriguing and some not so much. I check every day to see if the My Fundraiser app is available on the BDOG website, but so far, it is not. When it does become available, I will let all of you know. It's an effortless setup to request donations from friends and family through social media or email to help us to Keep the Blues Alive and every donation is appreciated!.

Mark your calendars! This year's **Big Day of Giving** is Thursday, May 6, 2021! *GivingEdge* powers Big Day of Giving and both are brought to the capital area by the Sacramento Region Community Foundation as part of their initiative to expand charitable giving in



our community and to strengthen our local nonprofit sector.

Preserving and Promoting the Blues

By Doug Pringle

In all levels of education, music has immense worth. Students learn many important and necessary values for life as music enhances their mind, their expressive ability, and a whole host of other qualities.



Learning to read music is learning a different language with abstract sonic meaning. One not only has to comprehend and decipher unique symbols on a page, but also has to know how to execute them and execute them well. Those learning music also learn how to develop a critical ear. With a critical ear, one will know how to practice, rehearse, analyze, and critique music performance. Also, performing music encompasses playing with others, as well as alone, both of which require certain skills.

A student of music also learns tremendously from studying and analyzing music, composing, reading about music, understanding the history of music and its association with historical and current trends, and knowing what to listen for in music. Students of music – whether it be at the elementary, middle school, high school, collegiate level, or through self-study – learn self-discipline, expression through sound, as well as enhance technical motor skills, further develop problem solving skills, learn how to cooperate and collaborate with others, and learn how to ignite the creative and critical mind. Most importantly, the student can come away understanding that music offers all those qualities in addition to the enjoyment found in listening casually or with great attention.

A recent research project published in the *Journal of Research in Music Education* found that there is a link between music education and increased performance in other disciplines like math and reading.

Music education should be seen as a vital part of a larger view of education where lots of different experiences are important. It's about the education of the whole child. And music should be part of that. These are some of the reasons we continue our signature Blues in the Schools program with your support.

Member Bands – Your Memberships Have Been Extended!

By Cari Chenkin

The Sacramento Blues Society's Board of Directors have decided, in the face of the privations imposed by the COVID pandemic and venue closures, to extend the band memberships of every band that was a member in good standing in 2020, and whose memberships expire in 2021, until December 31, 2021!

So, even if your membership expired in 2020 or is due to expire in 2021, you need not pay for renewal at this time, to continue the benefits of your membership!

When we see how "return to normal" goes later in the year, we'll have a better idea of how to proceed for 2022. If, as we fervently hope, venues open up for indoor music performances in fall or winter, our member bands will once again be gigging and earning money, and we will consider running a "band membership campaign" to ask our member bands to once again support the SBS by renewing their memberships in 2022.

If, however, things don't open up by late 2021, we may consider continuing to extend the Member Bands memberships. This applies to bands that were registered as Member Bands in good standing in

Member Band Memberships, con't. from p. 4
2020 and 2021.

Want to know why this is such good news? It means MORE Member Bands can qualify to participate in the SBS Member Bands CD Compilation project! Please see the article about that exciting new project below. And we hope you'll want to be part of it!

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Thank you for your support!

Sacramento Blues Society 2021 Compilation CD Announced! *By Mindy Giles*

It's a new year with many challenges ahead. We are all in this together and need to lift each other up. The Sacramento Blues Society thinks that it is a perfect time to produce a 2021 compilation of songs featuring our member artists/bands.

We plan to release this compilation in the 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 download will be for sale on our new SBS website.

This will be a project initiative to fund various SBS programs (e.g., The Gene Chambers Musicians Crisis Fund, The Mick Martin Student Fund and 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: www.sacblues.org.

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.

All completed submissions will be reviewed by the SBS CD committee, who will choose the songs for the yet-to-be titled compilation CD. Artist info (bio, photo, song details, band link) will appear on our new website, to be promoted in both social media and through regular public relations. Decisions will be based on musical and sonic quality, diversity, and originality. **Cover songs will not be accepted**; we are just looking for your original music.

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!

Submission Deadline is APRIL 15, 2021. No submissions will be accepted after midnight on the deadline date.

Production Timeline:

- February 15, 2021-April 15, 2021- Song Submissions
- April 25, 2021- Chosen songs announced by the Sacramento Blues Society.
- June 19, 2021- Release Date and Event Celebration (Virtual and/or Actual).

Best of luck, and thank you for participating!

James Harman Battling Cancer

By Cari Chenkin

We are sad to report that multi-Blues Music Award winning harmonica player, songwriter and singer James Harman is battling Stage 4 esophageal cancer, to the dismay of his many fans throughout the blues community and the world. He was diagnosed at the end of 2020 and is currently undergoing treatment for the disease,

As you may know, being a blues musician doesn't come with benefits like medical insurance, and there was great concern that James would need financial support during his treatment. James' friend Tony Holiday, himself a harmonica player out of Memphis, TN, set up a Gofundme account to raise money for him back at the end of December 2020. With the help and promotion of various musician friends, notably Rick Estrin and ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons among others, the campaign raised \$53,000.00 which went directly to James.

Although the Gofundme campaign has ended, anyone who would still like to contribute to help James can do so, and all donations will be welcome. The best way to donate is to contact James via Facebook to get his mailing address and send cashier's checks.

According to recent reports from friends, James is keeping up with his treatments, and feeling about as one would expect. We all wish him a complete recovery and hope he'll be back to making music soon.

Blues in the Schools Update

By Rick Snyder, Chairman, BITS Committee

Whew, for a month that was still fundamentally under lockdown, it has been a virtual whirlwind. Here's the 411: Steve Boettner, the music teacher at Rosemont High School, requested the Mick Martin Student Fund (MMSF), through Blues in the Schools and the Sacramento Blues Society, to fund the acquisition of three Focusrite Scarlett 212 interfaces

The interfaces are to be used by three of the After School Program students in conjunction with the Soundtrap Capture App. The SBS



Blues in the Schools, con't. from p. 5

Board of Directors granted the request, the interfaces were purchased, and the gear was delivered to Steve.

The interfaces are now in the hands of the After School Program students. They are familiarizing themselves with these critters' care and feeding. I'm sure several years ago when Soundtrap offered Steve numerous licenses to use the app free of charge, he must have thought, "thanks, but when will we need to use these? We can always meet in person to record and collaborate". Then, lo and behold, the Zombie Apocalypse hit, and Soundtrap became an indispensable part of the music curriculum.

In conjunction with musician Kyle Rowland, a long-time supporter of Blues in the Schools and the Sacramento Blues Society, Steve is putting together a background track with SBS member musician Todd Morgan on the skins. The students will use the track as a basis for learning blues riffs, and will then write a Blues song and perform it via Live Stream for the Big Day of Giving coming up on May 6, 2021. Stay tuned for breaking news as it develops!

We are still in the process of putting together another After School Program at either Woodcreek High School or River City High School. Master musicians Joe Lev, Ryder Green, and John Harmon are in the on-deck circle to assist. We will post the news on our social media as it develops, <https://www.facebook.com/sacbits>. Please like us on Facebook for updates as they happen.

OK, as if that's not enough to keep us busy, there's more! Kyle Rowland reached out to the John Lee Hooker Foundation to assist them in any way that he could and suggested they partner with Sacramento Blues in the Schools and the Sacramento Blues Society. We had our first virtual meeting the second week of February and meetings are continuing. This is fascinating stuff, and we are anxiously looking forward to working with them.

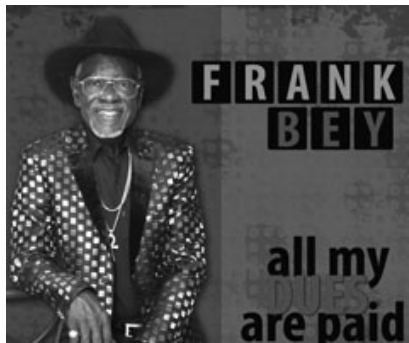
And there's still more! We have been in contact with several venues that provide safe, outdoor facilities to produce some...wait for it... LIVE SHOWS! Again, check our Facebook page for breaking news. With that, I am going to sign off for now. Long Live the Blues!

CD Review

All My Dues Are Paid - Frank Bey

By Doug Pringle

All My Dues Are Paid, with its abundance of deep grooves and welcome, but unique song selections, puts all of Bey's immense vocal talents on display. Although we sadly lost Frank in June of 2020, it's a fitting tribute that his last recording will get some well-deserved attention, as it has been nominated for a 2021 Grammy award for Best Traditional Blues Album.



Frank Bey is a throw-back soul vocalist, but as contemporary as breaking news. He handles everything coming his way with an exceptional ability to showcase his remarkable vocal gift by melding soul, blues, and gospel.

Though in his 70's when this album was recorded, Frank's voice still sounds very warm, powerful, and soulful. The kind of voice that you immediately embrace. When you listen to this recording, look

for influences of Otis Redding, James Brown, Solomon Burke, Ray Charles, Percy Mayfield, and many others with whom Frank sang, learned from, or observed and admired; artists that somehow continue to live and breathe in Frank's gorgeous baritone vocals.

Two of my favorite tracks are Frank's versions of "It's A Pleasure To Call You My Friend" and "One Thing Everyday". I feel that Frank is not merely singing well-written lyrics with a wonderful band, but expressing his beliefs about the importance of caring for one another in this sometimes tumultuous world. And when Frank makes John Lennon's "Imagine" his very own anthem and declares that he is not the only dreamer, the listener feels the strength of the truth that Frank is squeezing from his heart and his soul.

Frank was nominated in 2014 for Soul Blues Artist of the Year and for Soul Blues Album of the year for his album with the Bey Paule Band, "**Soul For Your Blues**". He was again nominated in 2016 for Soul Blues Artist of the Year and for Soul Blues Album, "**Not Going Away**", also with the Bey Paule Band.

Frank received multiple awards and nominations in 2019. His album, "**Back In Business**", won a Gold Medal in the Global Music Awards. He was nominated in the Blues Blast Music Awards, the Independent Music Awards, and the Independent Blues Awards. He was further honored to receive two Blues Music Award nominations for Soul Blues Male Artist and Soul Blues Album for "**Back in Business**".

It's great to see a lesser-known, but supremely talented singer get his props from the mainstream music world!

A Closer Look at the Owners/Operators of our Local Music Venues

by Barbara Katen

The Torch Club, Powerhouse Pub, Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo and Harlow's/The Starlet Room... (heavy sigh). I miss live music so much. I know you do too. We have heard so much great music at each of these venues - local, national, and international favorites. My inquiring mind had me wondering how these venues are faring during these trying times, so I reached out to **Marina Texeira** of the **Torch Club**, **Murray Weaver** and **Nazaria Nguyen** of the **Powerhouse Pub**, **Kevin Lutz** of **Stoney's Rockin' Rodeo** and **James (Jim) Cornett** of **Harlow's/The Starlet Room**.

We all know Marina and the long history the Texeira family has promoting the Blues locally and it was interesting to learn of Jim's background working for *Bill Graham Presents* before becoming the owner and manager of Harlow's/Starlet Room. Murray and Nazaria have long promoted the Blues with their Sunday Blues shows and Kevin has hosted the SBS' Big Day of Giving (BigDOG) Blues in the Schools showcase for many years. I learned a lot about all four venues in conducting this interview. So, if you also have an inquiring mind, please read on.

Blue Notes (BN): For the many who do not understand the risky business and very thin profit margin venues work on, can you explain normal times for your club? And now in pandemic time?

Marina: During "normal" times we were open six days a week with two shows daily. We have yet to see how & when we can open safely, so for now it's a guessing game. I think regarding profit margins, they will be much thinner, as we will have to equate for proper social



distancing which will limit our capacity in an already small venue.

Murray & Naz: This location has been a source of national and local live entertainment for over 45 years. Many renditions of different music have been provided and the current ownership has evolved this venue's core concept into "Something for Everyone". The formula requires effort, but we have expanded our customer base by offering a scheduled mix of literally most all entertainment types including Blues, Country, Pop, Party, Karaoke, and some Rap. The Powerhouse provides music on three separate stages at once on some weekdays and all weekends. DJ and acoustic sets are provided on the patio and Scarlet's and the main stage are for larger bands. The Powerhouse concept is that music is just part of the attraction to an entertainment venue which is often overlooked. That is why we provide a "sensory overloaded" environment with unforgettable visual and artistic effects. Our five bars all provide something a little different as you work your way around the premises among the patios, upstairs overlook, Scarlet's, and the main Powerhouse bar. We are lucky to be able to weather the COVID storm until we can re-open but are currently closed. We can't wait to show our great customers all the fun stuff we have added for them!!



Kevin: Well, normal times, Sacramento has been a very lively live music city and it is growing. We have been open for 13 years, so we



have a good following. We are a "big but small" venue. Stoney's also serves amazing food. We have just started live music on Saturdays on our outdoor patio. We have been fortunate enough to get City grants and the PPP which has helped a bunch, as well as donations from guests who can afford it. Without that

help, we would be so far in debt! But we have too much invested to give it up.

Jim: Good question. People see these long lines and it leads to this misconception that we must be rolling in the money. Live music venues are large and operate in high rent districts. Almost half our income is generated from ticket sales. That income pays for the artist, marketing, and production expenses; our primary source of income is derived from food and beverage. And now in pandemic time, our last live performance in our building was on March 14th, 2020. We were the first to shut down and will be the last to reopen. Our venues will not be profitable at a reduced capacity because our expenses will remain high.



BN: What is the (your) origin story behind your venue?

Marina: The Torch Club originated in 1934 and my family purchased it in 1969. It has had four different locations throughout downtown Sacramento. We have evolved during those years to remain rel-

evant in the live music scene.

Murray & Naz: This location was known for many years as the Sutter Street Saloon, a Blues venue, from the 1970s until it was reopened by Murray Weaver in 1999. In 2016 it became the Powerhouse Pub. During that time, the venue was thoroughly remodeled and enlarged and featured the large mix of entertainment present today. Weaver retired in 2016 and the location was re-opened under different ownership by Sudsbusters LLC as Powerhouse Entertainment Company, continuing as such to this day.

Kevin: I learned to Country dance in 1993. Dancing changed my life and I have learned it can change others in a good way and bring happiness to many people. All local Country venues closed by 2005, so that allowed me an opportunity to open something. I found the Stoney Inn and thought it would be a great place to start and build from. We are now expanding next door to add a dueling piano bar and hopefully do live Blues music once or twice a week.

Jim: The Hob Nail opened in 1952 and operated as a bar for 30 years until Peter Torza bought it in 1982, naming it after American actress Jean Harlow and creating an art deco feel to the building. Our ownership purchased it from the Torzas 30 years later in 2012.

BN: How has the internet altered your audience behavior? How about your marketing strategies?

Marina: Social media & the Internet have been crucial in promoting our business and the many shows that we host. Lately it has become more difficult with the new format and restructuring on Facebook, which limits our reach to potential customers. During the Pandemic we have been fortunate to stay in contact with our fans and offer live streamed and virtual shows.

Murray & Naz: The internet has provided a huge benefit to venues like this. The multi-faceted platforms of the web, whether targeted email blasts, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, or Snapchat, all provide huge bandwidth which makes expensive radio, print and TV buys pretty much obsolete. That saves a lot of cash for constantly changing event calendars.

Kevin: Facebook became our marketing tool after years on the radio which helped build our following. We stick to Facebook, even though we have Twitter and Instagram, which also would be great, but I do not have enough time to use them properly.

Jim: The Internet has revealed artists that many people would not have had a chance to listen to in the past. We have slowly moved away from print advertising and now primarily use social media to market our events.

BN: What is the motto or vision statement on your desk or on the wall in your office?

Marina: Currently on the wall above my desk at home I have a sign that reads, "pray more, worry less". I also have a horseshoe for good luck in my office at the Club that Donnie (beloved bartender) hung after moving to our current location in 2000.

Murray & Naz: "The Place for Fun when Dinner is Done" "A Jubilee of Controlled Chaos" "Ferment thy Friends, Instill Goodwill".

Kevin: I will build Stoney's one guest at a time... Try to make a difference so they will not go anywhere else... To make them talk about Stoney's and want to return and bring friends.

Jim: Do the right things for the right reason... Take care of your artist and staff and value your patrons and leave them with a memorable experience.

BN: Do you listen to music at home? What are some of your favorite artists or albums/songs?

Marina: Absolutely. We love all music so that makes it difficult to say, but some of our current favorites that we play often are Tom Petty, Leon Bridges, JJ Grey & Mofro, Spoon and Black Pumas.

Murray & Naz: Our staff and customers have recently enjoyed a new Powerhouse feature; we have integrated a wireless Bluetooth receiver into our house music system which allows folks to play any music they wish from their cell phone directly through our house system, getting the full professional playback at concert quality and volume... a real "crowd pleaser" before bands start and at non-performance times.

Kevin: I do. Either Country or 80's rock/soft rock. It was fun when we were booking major Country artists in Stoney's. We would hear a great song, look up the artist, follow where they are playing and try to book them. Another club has taken most of our Country artists from us, so we play more dj music now.

Jim: Music was always in my household growing up and still is today. I listen to a wide range of music but if I were to pick just one to see live, it would be Tom Petty. My favorite album would be *Wildflowers* and song would be *American Girl*.

BN: If you could give one heartfelt request to audiences when we are allowed back into your venue, what would it be?

Marina: To be patient and understanding, and respect the new guidelines if you plan to attend a show. No mask, no shoes, no service!

Murray & Naz: Dance, laugh and be merry!

Kevin: Please respect the place as our home, as we will treat you like a guest in our home. Help live music artists by tipping if you can afford it. I try to always pass the bucket around to help :)

Jim: It makes me emotional just to think about having live music in our venue again. "You don't know what you've got until it's gone."

BN: Outside of the current COVID situation, what are your biggest challenges as a venue owner? What do you constantly have to be aware of and/or monitor?

Marina: I think I was always aware of capacity issues and ABC undercover programs.

Murray & Naz: The essence of this business model is like the guy on the TV variety show who keeps a bunch of plates spinning on top of sticks. He must keep them all spinning with constant attention and reinvigorating to prevent them from slowing down and falling off their sticks. Like popcorn, this business happens all at once over a short time frame and with hopefully full capacity. This tests all functions, including enough well-trained staffing for great customer service, on-going clean up, inventory, maintenance, trained security, closing procedures, and awareness of complicated and enforced laws.

Kevin: Overall, we have it good. We do have 18 & over nights which can get busy with guests that do not really know Stoney's culture. We also like to patrol outside of Stoney's to keep cars and guests safe.

Jim: Managing the calendar; music venues need to operate at 80% of capacity to be profitable. We are constantly looking for new or emerging artists.

BN: What were the biggest obstacles you overcame when you

decided to become a venue owner and put your plans into action?

Marina: Learning about all the different licenses and regulations; all the different governing bodies that require fees. Not only is it costly, but it is also stressful because you feel like you must operate according to all the different rules. The process has become a bit more user friendly, I believe, since we moved 20 years ago. Also, it was extremely difficult to get a business loan.

Murray & Naz: Keeping all the plates spinning while always innovating new entertainment and other ideas. This business will not succeed if it becomes stagnant and fails to add features and fun besides just music. In our case, that means the addition of Big Rob's Hookah and Cigar Bar, the Bubble Bar, SIT at Bar Karaoke, free shuttle service with our crazy Sutter Street Surfer, Cornhole, tv sports and a variety of special function nights.

Kevin: OMG, getting people in the doors! Also getting people to understand we are not in Del Paso Heights; we are closer to downtown. We like the term "Uptown Sacramento". "One guest at a time".

Jim: For as long as Harlow's had been in business, it was like starting over when it came to gaining relationships with agents and managers. Our first few years were difficult for us; we lost money year after year until we finally found a foothold. We had to prove ourselves time and time again but eventually the word got out to touring artists, which made it much easier to fill the calendar.

BN: What advice would you give someone thinking of going into the business?

Marina: Be prepared to spend a lot of time at the business, especially the first five to ten years. Hire dedicated and trusting employees. If you treat them well, they will respect you and the business.

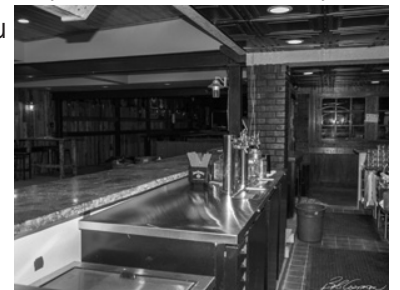
Murray & Naz: Have enough capital, for you will always run into unexpected problems and bad turnouts. Prioritize paying off any debt. Make sure you have a good lease if you don't own the property.

Kevin: Don't do it! Or do it if you have money you do not need and you like music?! Everyone thinks it is easy, but you must manage every facet just to make a small profit. If I waste three hours a day in labor, that is \$15,000 a year; in 10 years that is \$150,000. I would be broke. That is only labor. There is food, cost of bands, sound person, alcohol. A few mistakes and you are broke.

Jim: There is nothing more important than a solid marketing person and booker. Have variety in your bookings, you can't go to the same well each time.

BN: How do you determine who to book for acts?

Marina: Musicians who are talented and have a fresh sound and



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most importantly that they engage the audience. Fortunately for us there is a lot of talent of all genres in our area to choose from.

Murray & Naz: Have a good relationship with as many talent buyers as possible and learn to book some acts in-house.

Kevin: I look for their following through Facebook following, record sales, charted songs, and such. I can tell you the artist is amazing, but I have learned you probably will not come in unless you have heard them before. I made Hunter Hayes a free show with a free dinner! We packed the house and made up for it.

Jim: We do a great deal of research when choosing our artists. We look at their touring history and how well they are doing on social media.

BN: Once we are open, are you considering more early shows for the senior blues audience?

Marina: Yes! That is a plan. No specific details yet but stay tuned.

Murray & Naz: We absolutely LOVE our Sunday Powerhouse of Blues, 3pm every Sunday. We can't wait to reopen them ASAP and will also be doing some Saturday afternoon gigs as well.

Kevin: Yes, once we have next door finished, we will do more live music, some acoustic, maybe a weekly live jam. I love the Blues community and love that many of them like to dance.

Jim: Once it is safe enough, we most definitely will. We will continue with our weekly Blues & Bourbon shows and booking afternoon weekend Blues events. We love our Sacramento Blues community and really miss them.

BN: Who are the biggest divas? Bartenders? Bands/Entertainers? The Public?

Marina: Actually, I think it's the public. We are fortunate to have professional acts perform on our stage. If there is any issue, I do not have much tolerance. Seems though many people that may know me or my family feel entitled for free entry or try to skirt around the cover and much of the time, they don't even know how to pronounce my name. It always boggles my mind; you must charge your friends since your enemies don't support.

Murray & Naz: The public - our dear customers are always our biggest divas and that's the way we love it!

Kevin: Most everyone has been great to me, but probably doing a big show with a band manager that is uptight or wants everything perfect. Sometimes I am happy I do not get big shows anymore because they are so tough to please. I do have many great memories and some awesome band managers also along with some amazing shows we have done! Now they are playing Golden One Center (pre COVID). It is awesome to know they hung out in Stony's and had some great food. I might have had some drinks with the guests.

Jim: I would have to say entertainers, but not without merit. The work they put into their art needs to be displayed as they envision it so if they see something that takes away from it then it's our job to work with them to get it to that place.

BN: What is the funniest thing that has ever happened to you as a venue owner (can you share a humorous story)?

Marina: When my daughter Lily was a toddler, I would bring her with me on Mondays while I placed orders while we were closed...I went out the front door to put money in the parking meter, and after the door shut, I realized I didn't grab my keys to get back in. I could see my girl through the glass block next to the door and I am in a panic

and trying to keep her engaged and calm, so she doesn't start crying. It's about lunchtime and there are government workers walking by. I felt like the worst mom ever. Luckily, I was able to contact an employee to come and unlock the door. Glad we can laugh about it now!



Murray & Naz: Many years ago, we were elated to have the iconic Bo Diddley play here when he was probably 78 or so. He was traveling as a solo act, so we arranged a new start-up to back him up on stage. It was this new kid, Jackie Greene. Not only did they bring the house down, but as a finale, Bo performed a hilarious Rap song

for a full five minutes without missing a syllable. As Bo was packing up, I was in total admiration of this guy and asked him if there was anything I could get for him as he was heading to his hotel room. His response? "Ya know, Mr. Murray, If you might have one o' those pretty gals come up and pay me a visit I'd be very appreciative."! can't say how the story ended.... but I liked him even more after that!!

Kevin: Aww, I think some guests were having sex upstairs in this loft above the dance floor. OMG, I decided to put locks on the doors and not let people up there after that. There was a full moon out that night.

Jim: Nothing comes to mind as a venue owner, but I ran comedy clubs for 10 years for Bill Graham Presents, so I have been in numerous humorous situations.

BN: During this horrendous Pandemic, how can we help you to stay alive?

Marina: There are many ways you can help. We have merch on our website www.TorchClub.net. We also have live stream shows monthly. Please friend us on our Facebook page to stay current on our events. Updated positive reviews would also be very welcome.

Murray & Naz: We Love and miss ya. Hurry Back!

Kevin: For Stony's, just come back out, enjoy the food, have fun, and tell friends. Tip the staff a little extra. We have done some donation things and are considering one to have your name on a brick that we will put on a wall for \$100. I am going to plan some Blues on a Sunday night soon, so stay tuned.



Jim: We will survive, but that's not going to be the case for all the independent music venues. One of the hardest things I have had to do was to ask for financial help for our business. I want to thank the City of Sacramento for listening to our challenges and providing support and helping to save our stages.

BN: I know I'm not alone in my anxious anticipation of hearing live music again. It's been a long, lonely year without music. And I, for one, will never again take for granted these four fabulous venues that keep us moving and grooving with live music.

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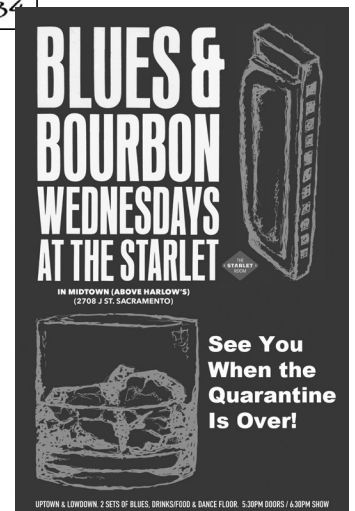
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