



# BLUES

THE BI-MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF

# NEWS

THE BLUES SOCIETY OF TULSA

*Blues Society of Tulsa Celebrating 15 Years!* 2002 - 2017

Volume 14, Number 4

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

March/April 2017

## 33<sup>rd</sup> International Blues Challenge

*There's Nothing Like 265 Acts from Around the Globe "Bluzzin" on Beale Street*



**Dustin Pittsley Band: David Teegarden Jr., Chris Kyle, Dustin Pittsley and Donnie Wood.**

Story and Photo by Bill Martin

The big sign on Beale Street read, "Put a Little South in Your Mouth." Boy did we during the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Blues Challenge held January 31 – February 4 in the blues mecca of Memphis.

We got our fill of blues and food. (Pig on Beale- BBQ; King's Palace, steak; Blues City, everything is great; Flying Fish restaurant; Huey's, hamburgers). Took in a bunch of blues too!

Kudos to The Blues Foundation whose rather small staff spends the better part of every year putting this whole event together. This year there were 121 bands and 104 solo/duo acts competing to win the whole shebang. Add to that 40 acts in the youth showcase, plus available seminars, workshops, networking sessions, master classes and it becomes a matter of picking, choosing and pacing one's self to survive.

Between 3,000 and 4,000 fans were attending the IBC per day, according to the Blues Foundation, which says the event continues to grow.

With so many acts to choose from, many are performing simultaneously in the 21 venues, so there are tough decisions. So, a little priority was given to acts from sister blues acts in our area: Oklahoma City, Kansas City, and Ozark Blues Society of NW Arkansas and Wichita.

Our priority of course, was supporting Tulsa's IBC entry, the **Dustin Pittsley Band**, playing at the Rum Boogie Cafe. (Continued on page 5)

### Bixby BBQ n' Blues Festival:

#### *7 Local Bands Slated for Fundraiser*

Blues Divas of Tulsa, featuring three of the city's leading vocalists will headline the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Bixby BBQ n' Blues Festival one evening and Tulsa's most decorated blues/rock band will close the show on the following night.

The Rotary Club of Bixby holds its biggest fundraising event of the year on Friday and Saturday, May 5-6 at Washington Irving Park, 137<sup>th</sup> and S. Memorial.

The **Blues Divas of Tulsa** have been voted a combined eight best vocalist of the year in the Blues Society's Blues Choice Awards and all front their own bands. Both **Wanda Watson** and **Jennifer Marriott** have capture three Best Vocalists awards, while **Heather Buckley** has two.

The **Dustin Pittsley Band**, which is touring in support of its sixth album release, will be the closing act on Saturday evening. The blues/rock group has 11 Blues Choice Awards for Band of the Year.

Friday, May 5th:

5:30 - Darell Christopher & the Ingredients

7:15 - The Norman Jackson Band

9:00 - Blues Divas of Tulsa

Saturday, May 6th:

1:30 - James Groves Blues Machine

4:30 - The Dylan Whitney Band

6:15 - The FuZed Band

8:00 - The Dustin Pittsley Band

(Continue on Page 2)

## INSIDE:

Birthday Party/Blues Choice Awards Set, IBC Pictorial, Blues Society Officer Election results, Mike Zito, Levi Parham, Katy Guillen & the Girls, Jeremiah Johnson Band, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, Mark May Band, Gaetano Letizia and more!

## Welcome Our New Members!

Larry Riley, Vinita; Richard R. Rogers, Martin Mayberry and Mark Rooney, all of Tulsa; David L. Howell, Chilhowie, VA.

**Website:** [www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com](http://www.bluessocietyoftulsa.com)

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### BST OFFICERS:

**President:** Bill Martin  
**Vice President:** Amber Pittsley  
**Secretary:** Tammy Hodges  
**Treasurer:** Christina Rybacki

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Blues Society of Tulsa, P.O. Box 2836, Tulsa, OK 74101, is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization with the purpose of preserving and promoting the blues in Tulsa and Northeastern Oklahoma. Blues News is published bi-monthly and encourages your support through personalized membership card and the Blues News newsletter. BST members are encouraged to submit articles, photos and other materials for publication. Deadline for both editorial items and advertising is the 1st of the month (30 days) prior to publication.

## LOCAL BIRTHDAYS

**March 1** – Rob McLerran; 5 – Pat Cook; 10 – Polly Ess; 11 – Calvin Youngblood, Josef Glaude; 13 – Jordan Hanson ; 16 – Junior Markham; 18 – Wanda Watson; 18 – Flash Terry (2004); 22 – Rusti Love (2009); 23 – Mat Donaldson; 25 Virgil Broyles; 27 – Steve Elmore; 28 – Mark Bruner; 31 – Lowell Fulsom (1995); **April 1** – Randy Crouch; 2 – Leon Russell, 4 – David Russell, Rockin' John Henry (2004); 6 – Larry Bell (2015) and Steve Fields; 7 – Bill Pitcock IV (2011); 9 – Gus Hardin (1996), Tiny Davis (2010); 15 – Roy Clark; 18 – Walt Richmond; 22 – Bob Childers (2008); 25 – Earl Bostic; 27 – Jim Keltner; 29 – Debbie Campbell (2004).

## BST MONTHLY MEETINGS

are held the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. The March 13th meeting will be held at Blackbird on Pearl, 1336 E. 6th and the April 10th meeting will be at the Cimarron Bar, 26th Street and South Memorial. Nonmembers are always welcome! It's a fun and informative gathering of music lovers!

## Bixby Festival ....(Continued from Page 1)

Playing for the first time at the Bixby event is **The Norman Jackson Band** from Springfield, MO. This blues and soul act placed third in the finals of the 2016 International Blues Challenge.

Another first timer at Bixby is **The FuZed Band** from Tulsa. This high energy cover band focuses more on funk, soul and rap influences.

**The James Groves Blues Machine** has represented Tulsa at the IBC as a band and its namesake has been to the IBC on Tulsa's behalf as a solo act. **Darell Christopher & the Ingredients** won the Tulsa Blues Challenge in 2015, which qualified it for the IBC.

Last but not least in the **Dylan Whitney Band** that represented Tulsa in the IBC Youth Showcase in 2016 and is one of the most highly regarded younger blues/rock bands around.

**Jim Robinson**, entertainment chair for the Bixby event recently wrote in an e-mail about a few changes this year. For example, only the main stage at the park will be used, with each band playing 75 minutes. Each act will be followed by a 30 minute intermission with music provided by Radio IDL. Headlining bands each evening will play 90 minutes.

"This event is our club's one big fundraiser so that we may continue to give back to the community," wrote Robinson.

While there is no entry fee, there is a \$10 per vehicle parking cost. There will be a live cooking show for attendees as well as food vendors.

There also will be numerous inflatable jumpers available at \$10 per child for an all-day pass. Plans include a petting zoo and a trackless train ride and pony rides.

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# Scenes from the 33<sup>rd</sup> International Blues Challenge



**Members of Tulsa's own Joyride Blues Band who came to just enjoy the spectacle: Steve Antry, Aaron Campbell, Greg Douglass and Nathan Alessi.**



**Mary Ann Barton with Ozark Blues Society of NW Arkansas board member Bruce Barton.**



**Guitarist/Vocalist Jamin' Jamie of the Sister Lucille Band from Springfield, MO.**



**Mary and Marty Thomas of Tulsa.**



**Barbara McGregor and Vice President Amber Pittsley.**



**A very hairy Robert Ashe of Bartlesville, OK!**



**Vivian Martin with Little Milton at the Blues Hall of Fame.**



**Caleb McGee of Caleb McGee & the Underdogs were sponsored by the Oklahoma Blues Society and made it to the semi-finals!**

*Photos by Bill Martin  
(For more 2017 IBC  
photos check out the  
Blues Society of Tulsa  
face book page)*



**Dustin Pittsley at the Rum Boogie Café.**



## Blues Choice Awards Coming As Society Celebrates 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The best Tulsa blues artists for 2016 will be honored and celebrated at an awards ceremony on Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at Blackbird on Pearl, 1336 E. 6<sup>th</sup> in Tulsa. Simultaneously, there will be celebration by the Blues Society recognizing its 15<sup>th</sup> year as a 501 c non-profit whose primary mission is recognizing, supporting and promoting local blues artists and their music.

BCA recipients were chosen in voting by members of the Blues Society. All 11 winners have been invited to attend and perform during the evening.

Voted the Best Group of 2016 is **The Dustin Pittsley Band** featuring **Dustin Pittsley**, guitar/vocals, **Donnie Wood**, bass; **David Teegarden Jr.**, drums and **Chris Kyle**, keyboards. Also receiving awards will be **Dustin Pittsley** (Best Vocals); **Pete Marriott** and **Dustin Pittsley** (Best Lead) as well as **Byron Crenshaw**, **Kat Irons**, **Chris Kyle**, and **Matt Martin** (Best Rhythm).

The Dustin Pittsley Band will be the host band and the other winners have been invited to perform. BCA winners are voted upon by members of the Blues Society.

## Blues Society Officers are Re-elected

All four officers of the Blues Society of Tulsa were unanimously re-elected in the annual voting by members present at the February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting held at the Cimarron Bar.



**Bill Martin**



**Amber Pittsley**



**Christina Rybacki**



**Tammy Hodges**

President **Bill Martin** was re-elected for his 14<sup>th</sup> one year term. Vice President **Amber Pittsley** and Treasurer **Christina Rybacki** begins their third year in their respective posts.

Secretary **Tammy Hodges**, a founding member of the Blues Society, is the only person to have served as secretary for the Blues Society's 15-year history.

"Tammy had been involved with other blues organizations prior to the formation of the BST. In our formative years she provided invaluable experience and advice. She continues to do that today," said Martin. "As for Amber and Christina, they have become very involved, and despite awesome responsibilities in their private lives, continue to step up and provide immeasurable help."

Continuing Martin said, "I am humbled and honored the membership continues to place their trust in me to lead this organization, which is due in large part to their support. Our Blues Society continues to be recognized as one of the finest affiliates of the Blues Foundation."

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### 33<sup>rd</sup> IBC...(Continued from page 1)

We were exceptionally proud of their performances and there was a lot of stiff competition in that venue. No semi-finals this time for DPB.

Overall, about 15 acts were seen over three evenings. We'd like to especially congratulate **Brady Buster's One Man Band** from KC, who placed second overall in the solo/duo competition, plus received a Best Instrument award for harmonica.

Unless our sponsored act(s) reach the semi-finals or finals, the first evening (Wednesday) is always the favorite – because you don't have to fight the crowds so much, get decent venue seating, etc. Thursday is worse, and Friday – forget it.

We also made an enjoyable visit to the new and beautiful Blues Hall of Fame, where we admired the Blues Society's name engraved in stone on a wall for donating to the Raise the Roof fund building campaign. There's also a lot of cool displays and interactive touch screen displays – and of course two favorite sons of Tulsa and hall of famers, **Elvin Bishop** and **Lowell Fulson**.

But there was a stroke of luck on Thursday since there was a desire to see this amazing talent from KC, **Amanda Fish**. Wet Willie's was packed for her show and your president was peering through the glass of a locked door looking like a penniless kid outside a candy store. Suddenly a man wearing Wet Willie's shirt told an employee that I was to be the last one let in this door. It resulted in a place right to the side of the stage witnessing what might be the next **Janis Joplin**, with an amazing band.

Tired of wall-to-wall humans, it was time for a change. Close by across the street was The Handy Bar, with an excellent house band, **The Amazing Rhythmics**. Even better, the place had seating!! It's one of the neat attributes of the IBC – some things not even a part of the big event are pretty darned good.

Not a better example of this was the next evening. After catching a few IBC acts, it was time to head to the Little Daisy Theatre where one of my all-time favorites, **Eric Gales**, was making a triumphant return to his home town following rehab. The icing on the cake was two surprise guests, **Kenny Neal** and **Walter Trout**!

By Saturday, our group of seven were pretty much toast and were ready to head home. In fact, the only year we have stayed for the finals was back in 2009 when our own **Little Joe McLerran** won the solo/duo competition at the beautiful, ornate Orpheum Theatre. That IBC was special for our Blues Society when you see such positive results from all the hard work. But this year was the most fun of all the IBCs attended. In February it seems you're fighting a cold, or allergies, and too often the bone chilling Memphis winter weather. This year none of those factors came into play.

By the way, we congratulate the 2017 band winner, **Dawn Tyler Watson** (Montreal Blues Society) and solo/duo winner **Al Hill** (Nashville Blues Society).

Catching our breath for a bit, but we're already starting the initial plans for our Tulsa Blues Challenge coming in August. If you've never experienced our Blues Challenge, or an IBC, put it on your bucket list. There's nothing quite like it.



## CD REVIEWS



### **Mike Zito:** **MAKE BLUES NOT WAR**

(RUF Records)

I've been a **Mike Zito** fan and have purchased and play along to all of his guitar driven blues albums since I was asked to review Mike's first big hit album *Pearl River*, back in 2010.

This album is just as good as any Zito fan would expect; great original songs, blistering guitar work, and excellent session work from an outstanding studio band. Standout tracks are the lead off *Highway Mama*, which features **Walter Trout**, a pedal lover's dream *Red Bird*, and two biographical originals; *Chip off the Block* with Mike's son trading riffs with his old man, and every working musician's story *Road Dog*.

**Mike Zito** is my go-to artist when I wanna hear some inspiring blues guitar done right. Mike's a true triple threat with amazing songwriting, great vocals that keep getting better and better, and some of the most incredible guitar playing out there! Superb! - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



### **The Fabulous Thunderbirds:** **STRONG LIKE THAT**

(Severn Records)

The Fabulous Thunderbirds wouldn't and couldn't be the same band without **Kim Wilson's** amazing vocal style which made *Tuff Enough* and *Wrap It Up* two of the most memorable soulful blues songs of the mid 80's. Kim's vocals and excellent harmonica playing are back on this 15th album of great covers and originals. Standouts include *(I Know) I'm Losing You*, featuring **Roosevelt Collier** and **Wes Watkins**; *You're Gonna Miss Me*, *Drowning on Dry Land*, and *Smooth*. The Thunderbirds have created yet another very tasty blues album! - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**



### **Gaetano Letizia:** **RESURRECTION**

(Gaetano Letizia Music)

Here's a new jazzy blues album sure to please many guitar players out there that like to explore the different elements of today's blues music. This album features 14 tracks that boast an array of different beats, sounds, and techniques reinforced by an above average session band including a great horn section and Gaetano's impressive guitar performances. Other than technical merit however, I'm not sure this album will likely produce a hit, but it might definitely inspire one to take parts of these songs and turn them into something completely different. (Consider the **Steely Dan** songs that didn't make it.) - **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**





# CD REVIEWS



## **Levi Parham:** **THESE AMERICAN BLUES** (Music Road Records)

**Levi Parham** is another one of these relative young Okies making waves with their exceptional talent that continues the lineage of **Woody Guthrie** and more recently similar roads of **Wink Burcham** and **John Fullbright**. From McAlester, Levi combines blues, rock, folk and country. He has it all creating excellent songwriting, vocals and guitar. On *Steal Me* you can just image **Van Morrison** covering this song. *Gonna Be a Long Day* has a real country feel. This is his third album and first for Music Road Records and he has been touring in support of the release. A European tour is planned this year. *These American Blues* has excellent musicians including Tulsa's **Seth Lee Jones**. All but one of the 13 songs are originals, with Levi turning to Wink's great song, *Chemical Train*. Pick up this album because it's a gem. – **Bill Martin**



## **Katy Guillen & The Girls:** **HEAVY DAYS** (KG&G Records)

My first exposure to **Katy Guillen** (vocals, guitar), **Claire Adams** (bass, vocals) and **Stephanie Williams** (drums, percussion) was earlier this year at The Colony. This is an excellent live blues/rock band. As the album title and the title cut indicates, this is an album of weighty lyrics and is sometimes a little depressing. I tend to focus on the Katy's fine vocals and the superb instrumental skills of the whole band. Based in Kansas City, I'm looking forward to their return to Tulsa. A favorite is *Waking Up from You*, with tempo changes. It was a night of passion, and battles where "I boiled over from the pot where we had stewed." *The Load* "will make you older" is another fine tune with a great guitar solo. You might say, Katy, spills her guts in this album. – **Bill Martin**



## **Jeremiah Johnson Band:** **BLUES HEART ATTACK** (Connor Ray Music)

Jeremiah Johnson Band is one of those fasten your seat belt, kick ass blues rock bands and has some credentials to back up their music. JJ has won four blues challenges between competitions in Houston and his hometown of St. Louis. *Blues Heart Attack* is their sixth album and it reached

number 5 on the Billboard blues charts. Jeremiah (guitar, vocals) has those powerful **Pat Travers** type vocal chords and he cites **Alvin Lee** among his guitar influences. JJ has 12 original tunes on this record. While this is a hard driving band, you will find some rockabilly, boogie, Southern rock and slowed down more traditional blues for a change of pace. A very bold album. – **Bill Martin**

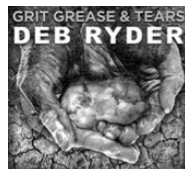


## **Mark May Band & The Soul Satyr** **Horns:**

## **BLUES HEAVEN** (Connor Ray Music)

Reviewing guitar driven blues rock has got to be one of my favorite things, especially when I get to hear new blues bands like this one. I had never heard of this band before this review but now I'm definitely a fan. Veteran artist **Mark May** is an amazing guitar player and vocalist. He's created a very tasty blues album chock full of great original songs, blistering guitar work, and an excellent session band featuring an outstanding horn section; The Soul Satyr Horns. Stand out tracks include *Money*, *Put Down That Poison*, *All I Ever Do*, and *Kind of Girl*. This one is a winner! – **Curt Fillmore (CurtsList.Com)**

(Editor's Note: Back in the day when BST member **Paul Rowlett** hosted the *Smokehouse Blues* on KMOD 97.5, he always opened the show with *You Can Call on the Blues* by **Mark May and the Agitators**. Fond memories and one of the best blues songs ever written!)



## **Deb Ryder:** **GRIT, GREASE & TEARS** (Bejeb Music)

Here's some true blues in the tradition of two of her heroines, **Etta James** and **Koko Taylor**. This is Chicago area native **Deb Ryder's** third release with her powerful, gritty vocals on full display. A favorite is the title cut *Grit, Grease & Tears* with her anguishing, "I can't take it anymore," with ace harmonica by **Bob Corritore** playing responsively. *Lord Knows I Do* is a beautiful ballad as Deb ponders her love for a man. *Panic Mode* features some fine West Coast funk and guitar picking with backing horns. – **Billy Austin**

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In 2013 Levi Parham self-released *Okie Opera* and in 2014 *Avalon Drive*. He has since toured extensively in the U.S. and his most recent release is with Jimmy LaFave's label, Music Road Records. *These American Blues* is reviewed on page 6. Levi grew up listening to many of his dad's blues albums. (Photo by Phil Clarkin)

# Blues Society of Tulsa

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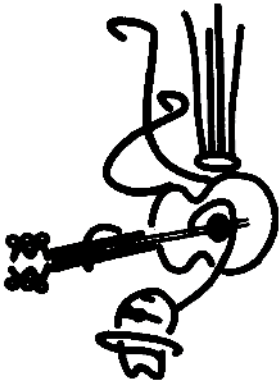
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