

FREE TAKE ONE

1ST ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

JUNE 1996

the BLUES NEWS

LEE OSKAR

This Month:

Willie Dixon

Tommy Castro

Prison Blues

Enter to win an autographed

Lee Oskar Harmonica!

CALIFORNIA'S BEST BLUES AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

the BLUES NEWS

JUNE 1996

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

STAFF:

Editor

ERIC HARNDEN

General Counsel

FRANCIE HART

Contributing Writers

MIKE BERGEVIN
WILLIE COALTRAIN
CINDY DUMAS
LEIF HOEGBERG
WILLARD MANUS
JON PEPPER
MUDDY REDDOG
GREG SERRATO

Sales

FRED RIVERA

Distribution

ROB DONOFRIO
GREG SERRATO
RON CALL
CINDY DUMAS
DAVID HARNDEN

Computer Consultants

MALCOLM MARCY
DOC RYAN

the BLUES NEWS is published every month by the BLUES NEWS, P.O. Box 1263, Riverside, CA 92502-1263. Copyright 1996 by the BLUES NEWS. All rights reserved. Not responsible for unsolicited material. Although any and all submissions will be gladly accepted and will become the sole property of the BLUES NEWS. Subscription prices are \$15 per year US, \$25 outside the US, payable in US funds. Ad rates and guidelines available upon request.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, publishers nor the contributors or advertisers to/of *the BLUES NEWS* or their affiliates.

Page 2

CONTENTS:

FROM THE

EDITOR.....3

LETTERS.....4

HISTORY OF THE BLUES:

WILLIE DIXON.....5

LIVE REVIEW:

TOMMY CASTRO.....8

COVER STORY

LEE OSKAR.....9

PRISON BLUES

THE INSIDE STORY.....10

EUROPEAN CD REVIEWS.....11

ELECTRIC BLUES COMPANY
PAUL LAMB & the KING SNAKES
BLUE WEATHER

DISTRIBUTION POINTS.....13

BOOK REVIEW.....15

COVER PHOTO: LEE OSKAR



(TOMMY CASTRO page 8)
the BLUES NEWS

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome blues fans! It's been one year folks and *the BLUES NEWS* is offering a contest for all our loyal readers in honor of this fact. Provide us with a photo of your favorite way to read or enjoy or transport or pickup *the BLUES NEWS* magazine and you could win an autographed Lee Oskar Harmonica. Entries must be received by our office by September 2nd, 1996. *the BLUES NEWS* must be easily seen in photograph.

As many of you have noticed throughout our last year there have been a "few" misspelled words and other typographical errors. We apologize for these errors and omissions. Here are last months corrections: Stevie Lynn & Border Crossing will be coming out with a new CD, not "Stelie" and Arturo "The Rooster" Perez worked with Steppen Wolf, not "Stephen Wolf" and sorry the Long Beach Blues Festival put on by KLON 88.1 is on Labor Day weekend! Again, sorry! Sometimes when we're working to all hours of the morning you forget to hit the spell check button! We are making every effort to remedy the situation and appreciate your patience and willingness to keep getting *the BLUES NEWS* regardless.

"Bud" Rickert of 'Bud' Rickert's Art Center Inc. has informed me that he's got a 1953 Telefunken #3788 U47 microphone in its original box with its power pak and cords and he's looking to trade it! Anyone who knows the value of this and has an original 1961 Fender Strat, sunburst with case give 'Bud' a call, (909) 885-7202.

The Fourth Street Blues Band will be performing at the West Area Blues Fest on Sat. June 23rd. Also there will be Blue By Nature, Blues Underground, Rhythm Lords and more. Call Greg (909) 986-3153 for ticket info.

"The Shades of Blue" have split up. Dino George has informed *the BLUES NEWS* that they are looking for a new bass player and possibly a rhythm guitar player. "We're going for a more rocking blues sound."

"Put your two hands together" Hear the Blue with Russell returns! Russell Luzio has two new blues radio shows, Monday noon - 2pm on KSPC 88.7 fm Claremont and Friday 6 - 8 am on KUCI 88.9 fm Irvine.

LOCAL NOTES

By Leif Hoegberg

It is a well-known fact among Inland Empire blues lovers that you can get your Saturday night blues fix at the British Bulldog Pub in Upland. Groups such as the Fourth Street Blues Band, Tobacco Road and Go Cart Rides regularly provide excellent musical entertainment in a nice, friendly environment.

Now there is another reason to visit the little pub at the corner of Baseline and Mountain. On Friday nights the Bulldog goes acoustic! The man behind the new program is Rob Donofrio, known to blues fans as the bass player and vocalist of Blue Highway. Rob handles the booking at the British Bulldog and, over the past two months has put together a string of Friday night shows featuring open-mike sets and artists with a variety of styles.

The McClellan Brothers brought an assortment of musical instruments and provided a multi-faceted evening of musical entertainment. Evans & Oberbeck performed folk songs, new and old, from both sides of the Atlantic. Keep an eye out for their new CD, due to be released in July. The "Troubadour from Tinseltown", Ross Altman, mixed his original songs full of sharp-tongued social commentary with numbers by song writers as diverse as Stephen Foster and Sam Cooke.

Donny V., Don Gasiewizz and Dave Millard have also performed. Jack Hausen and the Go Cart Rides' Larry Jackson and Candace Arrigo were scheduled for the last two Fridays in May.

A special treat, in addition to the performers listed above, has been the acoustic sets by blues guitarist John Harrelson. John's own songs and well-chosen covers always blend together into an eclectic, well thought-out set. On the eve of the Claremont Folk Festival he shared the spotlight with Ross Altman during a couple of songs. Their contrasting styles made for very enjoyable versions of "Cotton Fields" and "Summertime". Here's some good advice; catch John, alone or with Blue Highway, at the next available opportunity!

It's great to have a new venue for this type of music, and the Blues News wishes Rob Donofrio and the folks at the British Bulldog the best of luck in the future. Now it's up to all of us to go out and support our local musicians and the establishments where they perform.

The British Bulldog Pub is located at 1667 N. Mountain Avenue in Upland. Call 909-946-6614 for information and directions.

the BLUES NEWS

Page 3

LETTERS

"Some bits and pieces of Blues"

'Some bits and pieces of Blues' here in Sacramento Ca. May 17 and 18 was the start of our summer fun here, the Sacramento Blues Society had a Blues in the park show booked for Saturday, but the rain (a very rare thing for us this time of year) had the park soaked and was unable to have the show in the park, however the show must go on, it was moved inside to one of the sports bars and every one still had a great time, but who wouldn't when you get a chance to hear JOHNNY NOCTURNE BAND FEATURING BRENDA BOYKIN.... here I want to say WOW! But that don't seem to be enough to say, but if you have ever had a chance to hear her sing the blues, you know what I mean, this is wailing, get down on top of it, let your hair down dance music of the highest order.

Sunday evening was another great. Chicago Blues Legend JIMMY ROGERS made a rare Sacramento performance, it indeed was a thrill and a treat to see him and met him and his drummer, hall of fame Ted Harvey. What a pair. Ted Harvey was the drummer for **Hound Dog Taylor** for 17 years. He is a master. There was a fairly small group there to see them, as it was a last minute show so there was only a week or so to get the word out but it was one of the best shows. 'Some bits and pieces of Blues' Guitar Mac has another great CD on the way, due to be released before June 1, 1996. One called SIZZLE. I hope everyone keeps an eye out for this one. It's Hot. Also if you are in the area during the first 2 weekends of the California State Fair Aug. 16, 17, 18 or Aug. 23, 24, 25, you can see Guitar Mac and His Blues Express live from 2 to 6:30 pm. (and maybe pick up a CD to take home with you) This is the forth year in a row, back by popular demand at the fair for Guitar Mac and His Blues Express. Best of the Blues. Again thanks for the Blues News.

LADY MAC

"Philippine Blues"

Hi! I'm BOB MAGOO of radio station DWLA-FM, production director and host of "The Blues Sessions" which airs early Saturday morning at 1:00am to 2:00am. We want everyone to know that as far back as the mid-70's I created the first blues radio program in the Philippines. Now the blues has been making a revival and everyone seems to embrace it. Filipinos do get the blues too. Our e-mail address is

[bluesphi@mailstation.net] mail address is: The Blues Club, 200 M. Paterno St., San Juan, Manila or c/o DWLA-FM 15th floor, Philcomsen bldg. Ortigas Ave., Pasig city, metro Manila. We would appreciate fresh blues news for the show. By the way, who can I contact who can get voice endorsements from the Blues Artists and some living legends? That would be great for The BLUES SESSIONS.

More power to you and peace,
BOB MAGOO

"Federal Prison Blues"

I want to share the following communication I received from bluesman Danny Mack who has been incarcerated for years at the Federal Correctional Facility in Sheridan, Oregon. He has asked me to forward it to you:

J.V.

Editor's note: see this month's "The Inside Story".

History of The Blues: Willie Dixon

Willie Dixon has been one of the blues' most respected catalysts in bridging the gap between blues and rock & roll. During his career he enveloped a remarkable span as composer, producer, arranger, bass player, recording artist, session musician, talent scout, and bandleader for Chess Records in the 1950s and 60s.

As a dominant force in shaping postwar Chicago blues, Willie Dixon helped further the career of Muddy Waters, penning such songs as "Hootchie Coochie Man" and "I Just Want To Make Love to You." He also wrote the Howlin' Wolf Classics "Evil," "Spoonful," "I Ain't Superstitious," "Little Red Rooster," and "Back Door Man". He also laid claim to the Little Walter's "My Babe" and Sonny Boy Williamson's hit, "Bring It on Home." In the 1950s and 1960s Dixon played on sides by Chuck Berry, and many of his best songs were reinterpreted by English and American blues rock bands. Cream recorded "Spoonful," Led Zeppelin "I Can't Quit You Baby," and "You Shook Me," while the Doors recorded "Back Door Man."

Born on July 1, 1915 in Vicksburg, Mississippi, Willie Dixon obtained earlier success than many of his counterparts. His mother's own love of religious poetry was inspirational in shaping young Dixon's world. She wrote and recited religious poetry which helped him learn rhyming and meter at an early age. He sang with the Union Jubilee Singers, a gospel quartet that had its own radio program on WQBC in Vicksburg. Before Dixon pursued music full-time though, he took up professional boxing which was the complete opposite of what lay ahead of him. In 1936 he left Vicksburg for Chicago and in a matter of a year was pronounced the Illinois State Golden Gloves heavyweight champion in the novice category. It is interesting to note that he once sparred with Joe Louis. So then, with such a promising career waiting in the wings, what led to Willie Dixon's demise as a professional boxer. One day while in the boxing commissioner's office he had a heavy-duty quarrel over money with his manager and that ended whatever dreams

he might have had in the boxing arena.

Not long afterwards, Willie Dixon began his career as a full-time musician. In 1939 he started playing the bass and formed the Five Breezes with Leonard "Baby Doo" Caston. Dixon and Caston with their newly formed band played numerous Chicago clubs and did some recording. In 1941, Dixon declared himself a conscientious objector and was arrested for refusing to serve in the U.S. armed forces. During his time in prison, Caston formed the Rhythm Rascals, a trio that played USO clubs in the Pacific, North Africa, and Europe.

Once his sentence was completed, Dixon formed a new group called the Four Jumps of Jive, which performed in Chicago clubs. Within a year Caston returned to Chicago located Dixon and their partnership resumed when they formed Big Three Trio along with Bernardo Dennis (later replaced by Ollie Crawford). Dixon once commented on their selection of material, "we pretty much were playin' what the peoples wanted to hear, you know. If it was blues, well, we played it, or standards, what they called novelty tunes, you know. Oh yeah, we was playin' it all." Supporting a line-up of soft blues, boogie woogie, some pop and novelty, Big Three's potential success was spotted by Bullet Records who signed them to a record contract. Big Three Trio performed together until 1952 when Baby Doo left the group due to personal and financial problems. However short their time together was, the music they created later took on electrifying form.

Most noted for his composing talent, Dixon's career blossomed in 1954 when Muddy Water's recorded Dixon's "Hoochie Coochie Man," and Howlin Wolf recorded "Evil." He continued his songwriting which brought forth blues standards such as, "The Seventh Son," "Wang Dang Doodle," and "You Can't Judge a Book by Its Cover." Working as a session musician he also recorded with many artists including Waters, Berry, Bo Diddley, Little Walter, and Jimmy Witherspoon. In what spare time there was, Dixon in addition arranged and produced sessions for Chess Records.

(Continued on page 6)

Win an autographed Lee Oskar Harmonica!

the BLUES NEWS would like you to be a part of our first contest. Just send us a picture of you or "someone" with a copy of *the BLUES NEWS* prominently displayed in the photograph.

Anyway you'd like to show how you read, carry or use *the BLUES NEWS*.

Enteries must be in our office by September 2, 1996.

Send photographs to: the BLUES NEWS, P.O. Box 1263, Riverside, CA 92502-1263.

Remember that a copy of *the BLUES NEWS* must be easily seen in the photo.

The entry with the winning picture will win an autographed Lee Oskar Harmonica!



Junior Wells



Willie Dixon
(Cont. from page 5)



Charlie Musselwhite

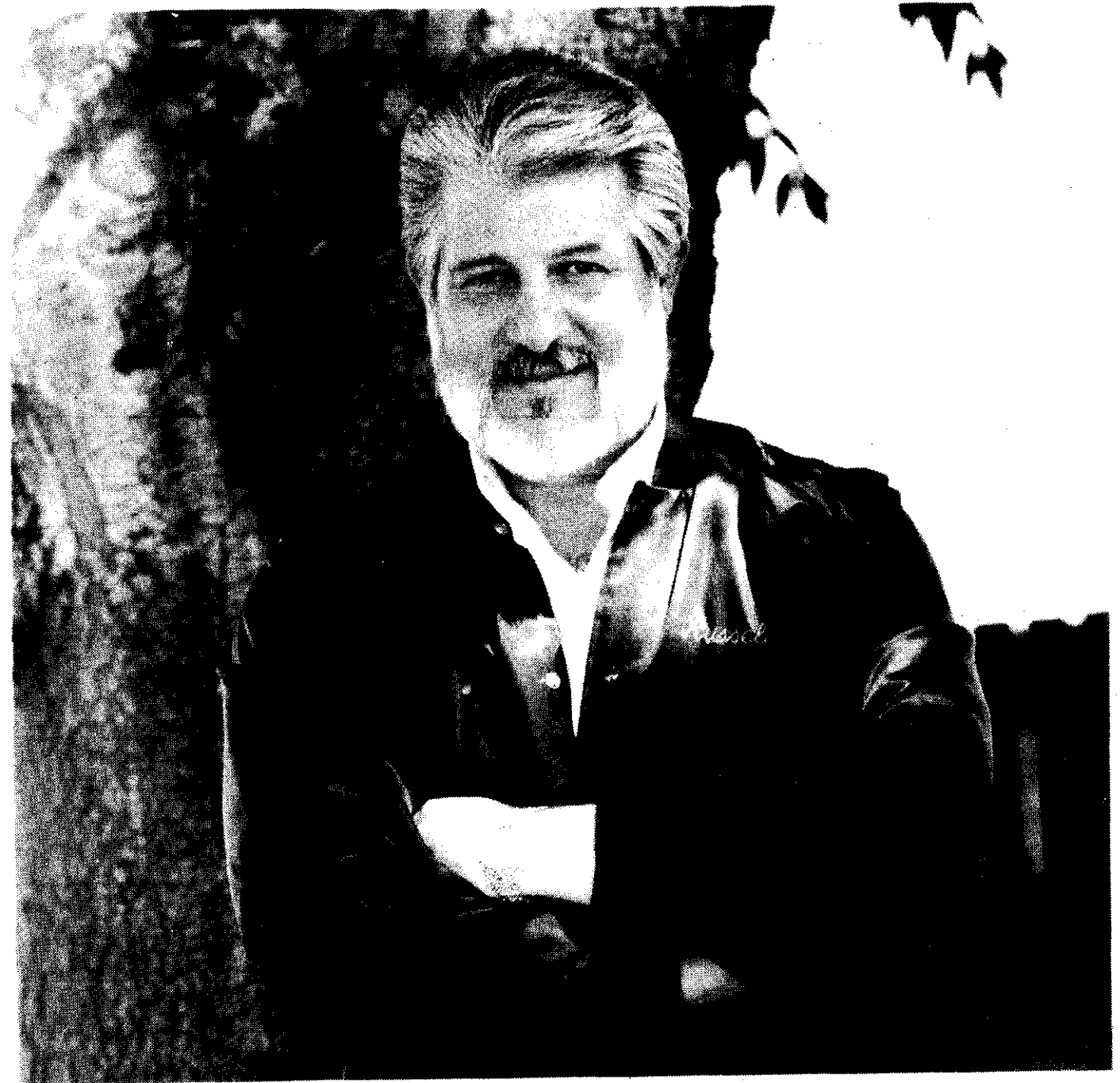
In 1957 he worked with Cobra Records which gave him the opportunity to work with Magic Sam, Otis Rush, and Buddy Guy. In the late 50s and 60s he performed with the American Folk Blues Festival in Europe and formed the Chicago Blues All-Stars.

When the 70s and 80s rolled around Dixon toured regularly and recorded for several labels, but didn't attract much attention outside of the blues circle. He also scored music for the movies, *The Color of Money* and produced Bo Diddley's version of "Who Do You Love" in *La Bamba*.

In 1980 Willie Dixon was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Hall of Fame. He continued to play clubs and festivals. With royalty money from his song catalog he formed the Blues Heaven Foundation in 1982. This nonprofit organization is still in existence offering programs as blues-in-the-schools and scholarship funds, and also gives aid to down and out blues artists. In 1988 he released the album *Hidden Charms* which received much praise. He also completed an autobiography, *I Am the Blues* (co-written with Don Snowden). By 1990 he had to slow his pace down considerably due to ill health. Despite this set-back he worked on a part-time basis for the next two years until he died of a heart ailment in his Burbank, Ca. home on January 29, 1992.

Willie Dixon was a man of great accomplishment. Not only was he a genuine "blues craftsman" who set the blues on fire with magical compositions, but he lived long enough to see the birth of two twin great grandchildren.

- Cindy Dumas -



"Hear The Blues With Russell"
at B. B. King's blues club
Mondays 8pm - midnight

(909) 465 - 8567

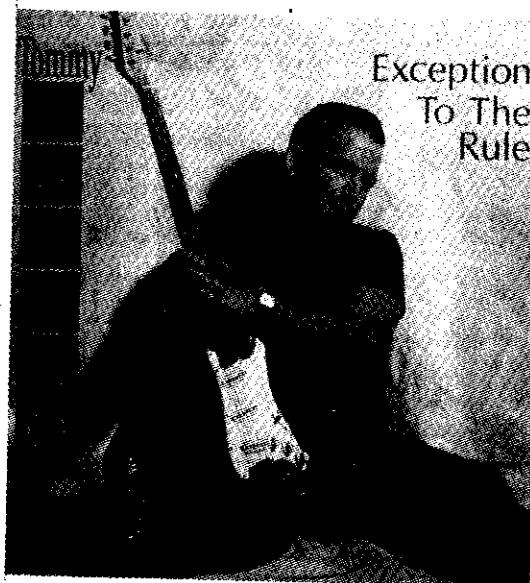
"Exception to the Rule" LIVE REVIEW: Tommy Castro

By Cindy Dumas

I've been told there's always a crowd of music lovers Saturday nights at downtown Riverside's Lake Alice Trading Co. I just happened to be a part of the crowd one Saturday in late April and can attest to the fact that they packed em' in en masse. The "Exception to the Rule" that particular night (which incidentally happens to be their debut studio recording) was Blind Pig Recording Artist, Tommy Castro and his band.

Castro, making his Southern California debut at Lake Alice is currently West Coast Blues Scene's newest sensation. During his opening set he propelled the audience to new heights and had them begging for more.

With a sound reminiscent to that of Jimmy Page and the power of Albert Collins, it is clear that Tommy Castro is not only deeply rooted and masterful in his music, but in addition has a good time on stage while he's at it. He tends to favor



the BLUES NEWS

danceable blues rather than ballads, but his voice can handle both. The Tommy Castro Band hail from the Bay Area where they came together quickly in 1991. Each band member started canceling other gigs to play with each other, because music, but in addition has a good time on stage while he's at it. He tends to favor danceable blues rather than ballads, but his voice can handle both. Together they produced the right sound and everything just seemed to click. In the few years that followed they became a widely heralded and talked about group. In 1993 they were named the "Club Band of the Year" at the Bay Area Music Awards. This distinguished award is regarded as an indicator of a group's future success, and as predicted the band won the award again in 1994. Chris Isaak, Huey Lewis and The News and 4 Non Blondes were all previous winners. From there the band went on to play "The San Francisco Blues Festival" where they gave a powerful performance and attracted even more attention. Tommy Castro isn't from Mississippi or Memphis, he was born and raised in downtown San Jose. He grew up in a working-class family, deeming working-class as stretching it. "We were poor," he says. His father was a roofer and his mother worked in the housekeeping department of a hospital. Tommy's parents divorced when he was 3. "I took an interest in the guitar around the age of ten and was taught to play by my older brother, then a musician himself," he says. "My brother taught me how to play songs by The Beatles and The Doors. I also listened to The Rolling Stones and others which helped me discover the real roots of blues music." This early introduction focused young Castro and helped him aspire to his present status of lead guitarist, vocalist and dynamic band leader. Joined by Keith Crossnan on tenor and baritone sax; Randy McDonald on bass guitar and Shad Harris on drums, the band can be heard playing any number of concert halls, festivals and nightclubs.

The Tommy Castro band is about to explode on the blues scene, so if you weren't among the lucky ones to catch their recent performance, it's a sure guarantee you'll be hearing more about them in the near future.

COVER STORY HARMONICA GREAT: LEE OSKAR

As I talked with harmonica great Lee Oskar, one thing stood clear in my mind as to why I am doing this whole magazine business, to meet with and get the views of such fantastic artists. Lee, a friendly fellow with much knowledge of music and business, gave me his ideas on the subject of blues, from where it started to where it is (or should be) leading.

"If the music doesn't come from the heart, with feeling, it isn't 'the blues'." We both agreed that blues is a feeling which comes through in music, not just a style to be copied and because it has a one, four, five progression or "twelve bar blues" pattern makes it the blues. "That melancholy emotion which we all feel as humans, is the blues." "Before the blues as we know it today there were other forms of music each of which contained the 'blues' feeling."

Lee is concerned that many musicians who today play blues are just memorizing or mimicking other people's phrasings and calling it the blues. "This is definitely not playing the blues in my opinion - blues is something we really personally experience and express from the heart (saying it like it is) blues is definitely not playing (painting) by numbers - like so many so called blues players do today!" Lee says, "They're all wanna be's," and, "Why don't they just get a life!"

"Like 'The Blues Brothers' with their sunglasses - they're making fun of the blues - it's become bourgeoisie, middle class America."

"Little Walter didn't copy anyone. He played his own style and anyone today could become their own 'Little Walter', not by copying him but by putting their own feelings into their own music and creating their own style. That may be the blues."

I've heard Lee Oskar do some amazing things on a harmonica he can make that thing sound like a trombone or even a synthesizer but this is not what drives me to buy his work, it's the pure feeling he relays, the pure passion which comes through. He told me another interesting thing about feeling; "Twenty people could play a song and you'd have twenty different versions, but real feeling comes from the soul. If you can hear a person sing and then hear them play their instrument the phrasing

should be the same. You can hear them 'sing' through there instrument." He played for me cuts off of a few of his own CDs, which cover a broad horizon of music, from Brazilian to European to Caribbean to African. Within each I was able to 'see' what he meant. That Melancholy feeling was deeply entrenched in the bodies of each work. One cut in particular "Georgia", the classic Ray Charles jazz song, brought tears to my eyes. I could definitely hear him "sing". "That's the blues!" Lee re-enforced.

Lee began playing harmonica at the age of 6. He is probably most famous for his work with "WAR". By the way Lee has informed me that he will be remaking the hit "Low Rider". Lee Oskar began making his world famous harmonicas out of frustration with the limited range and scales time and the poor quality available from other brands. Lee Oskar harmonicas have a system with replaceable parts. Oskar's harps are available in 43 major and minor keys which allows players more performance options. Great harp player's from Jimmy Z, Junior Wells, Charlie Musselwhite, Mick Jagger to our own Earl Seratte use Lee Oskar Harmonicas.

Currently Lee and his customer service department are preparing for a move to Seattle where he hopes to enjoy cleaner skies and friendlier attitudes. But don't worry, Oskar is FAR from retiring. May 25th Lee is playing the Playboy Jazz Festival at The Old Pasadena Summer Fest and is working on numerous musical arrangements which will be available on CD soon. Most of his recent work has been released in Asia and Europe, unfortunately for us in the States. But what can you say, they know good music and provide better arrangements to such great artists. My tip for the month would be to hound those local import record stores for his work, they are well worth it.

Lee Oskar gave me a new understanding of the blues, one that can not be copied in licks or chops but one that must come from the heart, one that forces you to reach for something inside and give it to your audience.

-ERIC HARNDEN-

THE INSIDE STORY

by
Danny Mack

By attempting to outlaw things that don't exist Representative Dick Zimmer, a New Jersey Republican, hopes to make people believe that they do. Zimmer's amendment to the 1996 Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Appropriations act states that no appropriated funds shall be used by the federal prison system to provide specific amenities including in-cell coffee pots, in-cell televisions, X-rated movies, pornographic materials, personally owned computers or modems, martial arts lessons or electrical musical instruments. Of all the above items listed to be cut off from appropriated or tax supported funds only two exist at all in federal prisons, pornography (if you consider *Playboy* pornographic) and musical instruments. Only the latter has ever been purchased with appropriated funds on a very limited basis. So let's examine one prison program that would be affected by the Zimmer Amendment, the music program.

I have fronted a prison Blues band for over six years. I founded "Danny Mack and the Sneak Attack" in 1990. Over the years I have taken in certain individuals who have shown a burning desire to express themselves through music. Talent and ability have never been a requirement only the desire. Several of these men who have had no previous life skills beyond the criminal, have in time developed marketable skills and much self esteem. This is admittedly only a starter only a scratch in the grimy surface of the crime problem, but it is helping, not hurting. Mr. Zimmer wants it to stop.

Imprisoned people have always made music. The American art form known as The Blues evolved from slave work songs and has always had a prison connection. That, of course, is only a recent development in light of the fact that the oppressed and enslaved peoples of the world have been raising their voices in song for perhaps hundreds of thousands of years. Why do we sing? Because that's what humans do. We sing and we make music and dance to reaffirm our humanity, to prove that we are alive. No matter how ugly we may be in other contexts, all humans are beautiful when they make music and dance. Mr. Zimmer considers feeling human an "amenity". Music is not an amenity in prison or anywhere else. It is a human condition... a requirement of life.

Why would Representative Zimmer call for a ban on things that don't exist? That's an easy one. The reason Mr. Zimmer has included fictitious amenities in his bill, the reason he wants you to believe that they DO exist, is to create public outrage and stir up support. Who, after all, would support a bill that merely stopped people from playing music? Especially if such a program could in some small way help a few offenders to pull their lives together. Alas, in order to get re-elected in today's political climate one must appear tough on crime. One easy way to appear tough is to direct hatred at prisoners.

Page 10

Mr. Zimmer wants the public to believe that Federal prisoners live the good life. He has said "Some criminals have come to view jail as an almost acceptable lifestyle because amenities are better for them on the inside than on the outside." I believe that what he actually meant to say was that amenities were more numerous or more available on the inside, because even if such "amenities" were available, nothing is "better" on the inside and it's foolish to think otherwise. I mean really... where would you rather eat your steak and lobster dinner... in a prison cell or your own dining room? Regardless of the intent of Zimmer's statement nothing could be further from the truth. THERE ARE NO IN-CELL TVs or CABLE. THERE ARE NO PERSONAL COMPUTERS. THERE ARE NO IN-CELL COFFEE POTS. THERE ARE NO X-RATED MOVIES and THERE ARE NO KARATE LESSONS!

There is, however a music program that offers people a chance to discover who they are. This is NOT a luxury. It is often a very painful process that takes hard work and commitment. Not everyone who tries it sticks it out but the ones that do will at least have a go at life, a chance to re-enter the world and not victimize.

The appropriations bill that included 'Zimmer' was recently vetoed by President Clinton. Mr. Zimmer is currently working on a "targeted appropriations bill", meaning that the bill will be resubmitted in a smaller package considered more likely to pass. Since most of the bill's "targets" are nonexistent, the music program will bear the brunt off the bills malice.

The trend of dehumanizing prisoners to the point of hopelessness almost insures their failure once dumped back into society but there is still time to make a difference. Contact your representatives and President Clinton to express your opinion on the Zimmer amendment in whatever form it next appears. Help turn the tide of hatred and oppression that is the true cause of crime and don't worry about prison amenities. They don't exist.

Graphic Supplies
Artists Supplies

Picture Framing
Artists Materials



4010 Merrill Ave.
Riverside, CA
Phone 784-3420

1277 No. "E" Street
San Bernardino, CA
Phone 885-7202

the BLUES NEWS

CD REVIEWS

FROM EUROPE

By Leif Hoegberg

For decades Europe has been a haven for American blues musicians. Appreciative audiences on the east side of the Atlantic have provided them the opportunity to practice their art and make a decent living. Artists as diverse in age and style as Champion Jack Dupree, the W.C. Handy Award winning Luther Allison and Orange County guitar player Walter Trout have enjoyed success in Europe and have also been a source of inspiration for local musicians.

Groups like the Rolling Stones and the Yardbirds were successful early interpreters of American r&b, today there is whole new generation of British, Scandinavian and Continental European players that want to carry on the tradition. Many of the blues rock musicians from the 60's and 70's have also benefited from the renewed interest in the genre and enjoy revitalized careers.

An Englishman who falls into the latter category is Alan Price. He was, along with the other members of the Newcastle band the Animals, responsible for introducing many young Europeans to the music of John Lee Hooker with hits like "Boom Boom" and "Dimples". After leaving the Animals he formed the Alan Price Set and scored a hit with "I put a spell on you". He then hooked up with fellow British keyboard player Georgie Fame and had another minor hit; "Rosetta". By that time he had ventured far from the blues based music of the Animals. During subsequent solo recordings, such as the soundtrack to the Lindsay Anderson movie "O Lucky Man", Price developed a style based on the musical traditions of his own country. He observed what was going on around him and articulated his thoughts in well-crafted songs. Occasionally he returned to the blues idiom. "You're Telling Me" from the 1974 long player "Between Today and Yesterday" is an excellent slow blues featuring Price's trademark organ sound. That album is hard to find today, but it's worth looking for.

The name of Price's current band, the Electric Blues Company, is somewhat deceiving. The music on "A Gigster's Life", released on the Indigo label, is not blues for the

purist. Five original songs are performed in the blues rock vein and mixed with an almost too generous helping of covers. In addition to bona fide classics such as "Boom Boom", "I Put a Spell on You" and "What am I Living For", the listener is treated to fine versions of contemporary songs like Clapton's "Old Love" and the Boz Scaggs composition "Some Change". However, at over 70 minutes the CD suffers a little bit from being too long. The last track, "Say it isn't True", includes some nice guitar work by Bobby Tench, but eleven minutes worth of any Jackson Browne song is considerably more than necessary.

Price is at his best on "Rollin' like a Pebble in the Sand" and the title song, two slow numbers that suit his voice and arranging style very well. Another veteran of the British music scene, keyboard player Zoot Money, sings on three of the CD's best tracks, among them his own "Business with the Blues". Bass and drums are ably handled by Peter Grant and Martin Wild. This is not essential music, but fans of Alan Price, or English blues-rock in general, will enjoy "A Gigster's Life".

Another band from the Newcastle area is Paul Lamb & the King Snakes. Numerous awards have been bestowed upon Lamb and his four-piece band, consisting of John Whitehill, Jim Mercer, Chad Strentz and Martin Deegan. Lamb was voted UK harmonica player of the year, five consecutive years starting in 1990, and the King Snakes has won the British Blues Connection's best blues band award three times.

The CD "Fine Condition" (Indigo) was recorded during a 1994 tour and released in the UK last year. After a brief instrumental number and a take on "Every Day I Have the Blues", the band slows down to a crawl on the title track, but from then on the music is fast-paced and lively. The majority of the tracks were written by the band in a West Coast via Texas style, but covers of Albert Collins and Roy Brown numbers are included in addition to the above mentioned Memphis Slim classic. Lamb, carrying on the great tradition of, among others,

(Continued on page 12)

the BLUES NEWS

Page 11

Europe CDs (Cont. from page 11)

Cyril Davies, is a master harmonica player and lead guitarist John Whitehill is given plenty of room to stretch on this 66-minute CD. "Fine Condition" is recommended to fans of Rod Piazza and the West Coast sound.

Indigo releases can be found in better stocked record stores, or by contacting Indigo Records directly at: Twyman House, 31-39 Camden Road, London NW1 9LF, England.

The Swedish band Blue Weather has been around in various constellations since 1987, but recorded its first CD late last year. "Blues Disease" is a very enjoyable smörgåsbord where the listener can sample Kansas City, Chicago and West Coast styled blues. It hints at inspiration by some of the many American acts that have toured Scandinavia in recent years, such as the Fabulous Thunderbirds and Roomful of Blues. The musicianship is excellent throughout. Lewen's guitar playing is restrained but very tasteful in a way that brings Steve Cropper to mind; and Andersson's harp evokes thoughts of William Clarke. A sense of humor is evident in

everything these young men do, from the cover artwork to the song arrangements. "Certainly much better than most US bands who are working in the swing/trad style, and right up there with Little Charlie and the other West Coast swingers" wrote Alligator Records founder. The song selection reveals an impressive knowledge of the genre and suggests years of



record collecting. Seven of the 13 cuts are covers of songs by greats like B.B. King, Jimmy Rogers and Earl Hooker. Two were made to order by Sven Zetterberg, a man well respected by Scandinavian blues fans. The remaining four are originals composed by harmonica player and vocalist Greger Andersson (a.k.a. Knock-Out Greg) and the group's newest member, Anders Lewen.

Bruce Iglauer in a letter to the band recently, and who can argue with such an authority?

A follow-up is planned to be recorded in October, in the mean time you can catch the "Blues Disease" by contacting Last Buzz Records, Husargatan 15, S-41122 Gothenburg, Sweden (011-46-7119290).

Coals to Newcastle, some may say, but reciprocating the hospitality and appreciation shown our American musicians over the years by checking out some of the many worthy European blues releases during the next visit the record store will be rewarding. There are some good blues news coming out of the Old World!

COUPON

Make Petey's your last stop after the show!
Buy one, get 1/2 off of equal or lesser item
Good anytime
(EXPIRES JUNE 30, 1996)

DOWNTOWN RIVERSIDE
(University Ave. at Brockton)
4080 UNIVERSITY AVE.
(805) 781-1080
Open 24hrs a day

the BLUES NEWS Distribution Points:

LOS ANGELES
BB King's Universal City Walk
House of Blues 8439 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood
(213) 848-2519
Rude Dog Bar & Grill
Stan's Guitar Shop 346 W. Foothill Blvd.,
Glendora, (818) 335-8777
Tower Records 8844 Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood
(310) 657-3910
Warner Records 3300 Warner Blvd., Burbank
ORANGE COUNTY
CD Listening Bar 3995 Alton Ave., Ste. A, Irvine
(714) 955-2323
Disc n' Dat 15062 Goldenwest, Westminster
(714) 892-6670
Hunington Music 6829 Warner Ave.,
Huntington Beach (714) 848-9280
Moby disc 15255 Beach Blvd., Westminster
(714) 897-2799
Musician's Music 16027 Brookhurst St. Unit-H
Fountain Valley (714) 839-0693
Perq's Main Street at the pier,
Huntington Beach (714) 960-9996
Sion World Music Center 14762 Beach Blvd,
Westminster (714) 373-3976
Studio Cafe 100 Main St, Balboa
(714) 675-7760
The Noize 309 Palm St., Ste J, Balboa
(714) 675-7107
Top Ten, 13822 Redhill Ave., Tustin
Tower Records 1726 Superior, Costa Mesa
Virgin Megastore Costa Mesa
Warehouse Records 16929 Beach Blvd.
Huntington Beach (714) 843-0745

RIVERSIDE
Angels sports bar 1650 E. 6th St.,
(909) 371-9738
Back to the GRIND 3575 University Ave.
Riverside (909) 784-0800
Bud Rickert's Art Center 4010 Merrill Ave.
Riverside (909) 784-3420
Cooper's Action Music
Hogans Music, Temecula
Jamin Java 6517 Magnolia Ave
(909) 369-7152
Jim & I's 3587 University Ave
(909) 788-8881
Lake Alice 3616 University Ave
(909) 686-7343
Mad Platter 1011 Hole Ave
(909) 351-6910
Mickey Finn's 3615 Canyon Crest Drive
(909) 683-3466
Palomar Winery, Temecula
Paradise Knolls cc 9330 Limonite Ave
(909) 685-7034
Petey's Diner 4093 University Ave
(909) 781-1060
Premiere Movie Posters 9444 Magnolia Ave
Riverside (909) 352-2323

the BLUES NEWS

Rancho Music 27315 Jefferson, Temecula
(909) 676-1450
Riverside Brewery
Scarcello's Pizza, Temecula
Spin Records, Temecula
Sounds of Music, Temecula
Tips Sports Bar 287 W. La Cadena
(909) 686-2441
Tril Music, Corona
UCR Barn, Riverside
The Vaudeville Coffee House
3630 University Ave (909) 680-1617
The Wherehouse, Corona
The Wherehouse, Riverside Plaza
The Wherehouse, Temecula
6060 Club, 6060 Magnolia Ave (909) 682-9226
SAN BERNARDINO
Alta Loma Music
Boomer's Espresso Cafe
134 N. Second Ave. # H, Upland
(909) 981-8200
British Bulldog, Upland
Bud Rickert's Art Center 1277 N. "E" St.
San Bernardino (909) 885-7202
CD City 33527 Yucaipa Blvd. Ste C-5, Yucaipa
(909) 797-3638
Crossroads 32464 Dunlap Blvd., Yucaipa
(909) 795-0665
Folk Music Center, Claremont
Guitar Center 720 So. 'E' St., San Bernardino
(909) 383-3700
Hi-Line Music, Rancho Cucamonga
Leir's Music 452 North 'E' St., San Bernardino
(909) 884-8815
Nick's Caffè Trevi
Rhino Records 235 Yale Ave., Claremont
(909) 626-7774
SAN DIEGO
Belly Up Tavern, 143 S. Cedros Ave.,
Solana Beach (619) 481-9022
Blind Melon's, 710 Garnet Ave., Pacific Beach
(619) 483-7844
The Buffalo Exchange
The Cannibal Bar 3999 Mission Blvd.,
Mission Beach (619) 488-1081
Crocce's Top Hat Bar and Grill, 818 Fifth Ave.,
Dwntn San Diego (619) 233-4355
The Daily Planet
Etta's Place University Ave. San Diego
Patrick's II, 428 F Street, Dwntn San Diego
(619) 233-3077
Sharkey's Nightclub, 485 First Ave., Encinitas
(619) 436-7397
Surf "N" Saddle
The Tiki House, 1152 Garnet Ave., Pacific Beach
(619) 273-9734
Guitar Center
Winston's, 1921 Bacon St., Ocean Beach
(619) 222-6822 also at the North
County location



Ron Call
619-595-8906

Pager
619-637-4508

Sat. 8th Etta's Place
Sat. 15th Cattamaran
Mon. 17th Patrick's II
Sat. 22nd Etta's Place
Mon. 24th Patrick's II

BLUE HIGHWAY

Sat. June 1st 1pm
Festival '96 (San Dimas Civic Ctr)

Sat. June 8th 9pm
British Bulldog (Upland)

Fri. June 14th 9pm
John Harrelson (Acoustic)
British Bulldog (Upland)

Fri. June 21st 8pm
Coach House (San Juan Capistrano)
w/ Koko Taylor & Her Blues Machine

Sat. June 22nd 9pm
British Bulldog (Upland)

Sun. June 23rd 4pm
Pepper's (Alta Loma)

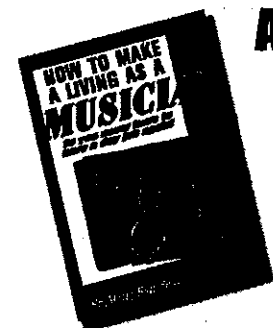
Fri. June 28th 9pm
Lake Alice Trading Co. (Riverside)

Sat. June 29th 9pm
Priar Tuck's (Pomona)

Sun. June 30th 6pm
St. Peter & St. Paul Family Festival (Alta Loma)

CD Fire and Gasoline, &
Nothin' Easy available
on Fax West Mississippi
Recordings

Blue Highway
P. O. Box 2391
R. Cucamonga,
CA 91729
(909) 944-5302



ARE YOU MAKING ENOUGH MONEY PLAYING MUSIC?

Can you really get your career smokin' from information learned in a book? From *this* book—yeah! Moneyback guarantee. *How To Make A Living As A Musician—So You Never Have To Have A Day Job Again!* contains the *knowledge* needed to make a living playing music. Do you need more gigs? Are you still at the same place you were years ago? Can your band pack the house every time you play? Do you know how to create a promotion machine? Are you jamming instead of gigging?

This motivating book is • Designed for immediate use • Covers every aspect of being a musician whether band leader, sideman or beginner • Tells you *exactly* who is responsible for your success or failure.

Being successful is more involved than most people think—sounding good isn't enough. Do you know the key elements of stage presence and communicating to an audience? The three periods in which to promote? How to weed-out flaky musicians and agents? Well, if you don't you had better find out!

This street-smart book costs a few bucks, but unless your career is *exactly* the way you want, you can't afford to not buy it—and use it...

"This book is a hands-on, musician's survival guide!"
Rehearsal Studio Owner

"I'm in two new bands and have more gigs thanks to Marty's book!"
Professional Drummer

"I could have used this book 30 years ago!"
Kenny Gradney—"Little Feat"

"This book should be in every budding musician's library..."
L.A. Jazz Scene

"...Marty...has written a book that is so thorough, it can take you from being a non-musician to being a session player or a member of a successful band..."
Angel City Voice

Give yourself a break — ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Send your check or money order for \$35 (\$29.95 + S&H + tax) to:

Sonata Publishing, P.O. Box 250790 Dept E., Glendale, CA 91225-0790

(For free information call 1-800-924-2200, leave your name and address, and mention the Blues News! To keep this magazine intact, just hand-copy the information and mail it in.)

Book Review:

"Miss Rhythm, The Autobiography of Ruth Brown, Rhythm & Blues Legend"

By Ruth Brown with Andrew Yule
Donald I. Fine Books \$23.95 hdbnd.

Review by Willard Manus

"My life has been a roller-coaster ride through a dazzling kaleidoscope of events, touching and being touched by a host of unforgettable people. All the way from jazz greats Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington, Sarah Vaughan, Billy Eckstine, the Duke, the Count, Lester Young and Charlie Parker to rock legends Jackie Wilson, Little Richard, Clyde McPhatter, Sam Cooke, Brook Benton, from sports heroes Joe Louis, Muhammad Ali and his court jester, "the Great Bundini," to movie directors Robert Altman and John Waters, on to Washington leading lights Jesse Jackson, Mickey Leland, Lee Atwater and John Conyers, full circle to today's musical megastar, Bonnie Raitt. If they're under a hundred, honey, I knows 'em! And I swear to you, for every famous name in there, you'll discover an equally enthralling unsung hero.

"There have been nightmare moments along the way, moments I never thought I'd get through. More often, as I look back, it's been like a dream.

"But oh, what a dream..."

That's how Ruth Brown starts her autobiography and she delivers on every count. "Miss Rhythm" is not only a splendid retelling of her life, one which contains vivid portraits of the famous (and infamous) people she's met along the way, but a detailed and powerful document of what it's like to be an artist in America (and a black one to boot). Brown's book can also be read as a chilling and damning indictment of the pop music business. What separates this book from most others of its ilk is its honesty, its willingness to tell the truth every step of the way, to name names when necessary, even when those names happen to be public icons.

Ruth Brown got her start as a singer during WW II, when she snuck out of her North Carolina farmhouse to take part in black USO shows on nearby army bases. Blessed with an instinctive way with ballads, she soon hooked up with a young trumpeter named Jimmy Earle Brown, first of a long line of handsome, charismatic and abusive men who made her love life an almost perpetual hell. An aborted stint with the Lucky Millinder band led to a chance to sing at New York's famed Apollo Theatre. On the way there, Brown was in an automobile accident that broke both her legs so severely that she was plagued with pain and near-immobility for the rest of her life.

In 1949 Ahmet Ertegun, co-owner (with Herb Abramson) of the newly-formed Atlantic Records, signed her to a contract. Her first sides sold well, but it wasn't until she hooked up with the tenorsax killer-diller Willis "Gator Tail" Jackson and showed the redhot r&b side of her many talents that the "real" Ruth Brown emerged, in songs like "5-10-15 Hours (Of your Love)" and "Have a Good Time."

the BLUES NEWS

Brown's contract with Atlantic was supposed to pay her a five percent royalty on all records sold. She went on to rack up sales in the tens of millions over the next two decades, but outside of an odd thousand or two she never saw any money from the company until, many years later, she won a bitter and protracted lawsuit against it. As Brown explains, "So many of the black groups and singers who catapulted to fame in the fifties name out of the backwoods and were delighted to sign any piece of paper that was shoved in front of them. It was a case of, 'Wow, we're getting records released, if they hit, we're made! Let's go!'"

Brown supported herself by touring the south and doing one-nighters. Jim Crow was still in effect in those days, which meant not being able to use most roadside facilities. Brown and her band often had to eat in a parking lot, change in the car's headlights, wash the makeup off with witch hazel, sing from the back of tobacco trucks. They were hassled by bigots and cops, and often done out of fees by corrupt bookers.

Not everything about those days was horrifying; Brown got to play and sing with the likes of Charles Brown, Billy Eckstine and Count Basie. Her account of the laughs and joys she had with them makes for great reading and balances the bitterness and resentment that comes through when she talks about the white singers like Patti Paige and Georgia Gibbs who covered her hot songs (like "Oh, What A Dream") and were able to plug them on top tv shows like "The Ed Sullivan Show" to which a black singer had no access. It was the copycats who became rich and famous, not the originators.

Things became worse in the 60's when British rockers swept aside singers like Brown and left them out of the mainstream picture. Brown, who had a total of thirteen Top Ten R&B hits in the 50's, including the classics "Mama, He Treats Your Daughter Mean" and "Lucky Lips," ended up not just out of work ill, but penniless and on welfare. Had she not been born a fighter, Brown might have gone the way of Joe Turner, who couldn't take the injustice of a similar fate and just curled up and died.

Brown not only managed to claw her way back into toplevel showbiz, starring in such Broadway and London hits as Black and Blue" and "Staggerlee" but to win her legal battle with Atlantic Records (now owned by media-monster Time/Warner) as a result of which she was able to found the Rhythm & Blues Foundation, aid some other black artists like herself who had been ripped off, and become a recording star again.

Happy ending to a not-so-happy but always rich, colorful and deeply felt life—the life of superb singer and equally superb writer.

Jim 'N' T's June Calendar

Sat. June 1st	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. June 5th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. June 6th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. June 7th	"The Blue Falcons"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. June 8th	"The Blue Falcons"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. June 12th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. June 13th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. June 14th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. June 15th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. June 19nd	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. June 20th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. June 21st	"JAB Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. June 22nd	"JAB Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Wed. June 26th	"Karaoke"	8:00 to 12:00
Thur. June 27th	"Reckoning - The Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Fri. June 28th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30
Sat. June 29th	"The Skillette Band"	9:00 to 1:30

Jim 'N' T's

Tavern 'n' Fine Foods

3587 University Ave.

(corner of University and Orange)

IS

"THE HOME OF THE BLUES"

COME AND JOIN US FOR ONE OF THE
BEST TIMES OF YOUR LIFE
FOR RESERVATIONS OR QUESTIONS CALL

909-788-8881

