



Capital Blues Messenger

March 2009

Volume 3 Issue 3

CW Harrington & Band at Surf Club Live

Saturday, March 14

8:30 pm—12:30 am



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THE DC BLUES SOCIETY

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The DC Blues Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to keeping the Blues alive through outreach and education.

The DCBS' newsletter, The Capital Blues Messenger, is published monthly (unless otherwise noted).

Send changes in name, address or membership status to membership@dcblues.org or mail to DCBS Attn: Membership at the address listed above.

The Capital Blues Messenger is your publication and members are encouraged to submit articles and ideas for articles, reviews, cartoons and photography.

Blues listings for bands should be sent to calendar@dcblues.org or mail to Steve Levine, 5910 Bryn Mawr Rd. College Park, MD 20740.

Note: The deadline for all submissions is the 15th of the month. DCBS reserves the right to edit or refuse any content, including advertising, that it deems inappropriate.

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Members are invited to attend the monthly DCBS Board meetings. For information, send an e-mail to president@dcblues.org.

Membership Application/Renewal

Form fields for membership application including Date, Name, Address, City/State/Zip Code, Telephone, E-mail, and Dues per year options.

Become a member, get a FREE CD and more...

New members signing up at DCBS events or at the DCBS exhibit booth will receive a special, limited edition CD featuring 17 tunes by some of the best bands in the DC area.

Becoming a member is simple, quick and easy:

- Use the mail-in application (left)
Apply on-line at www.dcblues.org or
Sign up at DCBS events or
DCBS-sponsored events and venues where the DCBS booth is exhibiting.

Dues play an important part in helping DCBS fulfill its mission to promote the Blues and the musicians who keep the music alive, exciting and accessible.

ADVERTISE IN THE DCBS CAPITAL BLUES MESSENGER

AD RATES

Table with 2 columns: Ad Type and Rate. Includes Business card (\$20), 1/8 page (\$25), 1/4 page (\$40), 1/3 page (\$55), 1/2 page (\$75), 2/3 page (\$110), Full page (\$140).

Ads should be at least 200 dpi; optimum 300 dpi. PDF or JPG preferred. Print edition is in black & white. For on-line rates, go to www.dcblues.org. Questions? Email: ads@dcblues.org

From the Editors:

WOW — What a night! Lil' Dave Thompson brought his Mississippi Delta blues back to the Surf Club Live with a special show to kick off the Valentine's Day weekend. It was great! Great for those who just wanted to sit and listen to some down home blues. Great for those who wanted to dance all night to some hot, rockin' music. Thompson on vocals and guitar, Spencer Burns on bass and drummer, Robert Stomper Milan, gave us a fantastic show - a wonderful opening to a special weekend.



Top: Lil' Dave Thompson (photo © Ron Weinstock); Stacy Brooks.
Middle (l-r): Robert Stomper, Ida Campbell, Lil' Dave, Emma Ward, Spencer Burns.
Bottom: Happy couple (John & Linda) enjoying the pre-Valentine's Day festivities.



Stacy Brooks was persuaded to add her unique vocals to a few tunes and Ida Campbell joined Lil' Dave to put the crowd into an appropriately (or inappropriately?) amorous mood with her version of "Meet Me With Your Black Drawers On."

Bob Margolin, Hubert Sumlin and Tinsley Ellis

The DCBS booth was the scene of lots of activity on Saturday, February 21 when Bob Margolin, Hubert Sumlin and Tinsley Ellis appeared at The State Theatre, Falls

Church, VA. Several Blues fans became DCBS members during the event and took advantage of the free CD offer. Because the performers' CD signing table was next to the DCBS booth, members had ample opportunity to have their photos taken and t-shirts signed during the intermission.

Thank you State Theatre for providing tickets to those lucky Blues fans who went on the DCBS website and entered in the drawing! Be sure to check the website for more opportunities to win free tickets to upcoming events at the State Theatre www.thestatetheatre.com.

Did you miss ObamaRama with CW Harrington?

Well, you're gonna get another chance to catch this musical legacy! We had a rockin' good time and guarantee this one will be just as much fun. Get tickets now for this special show on Saturday March 14 at the Surf Club Live. You know the drill. Advance tickets are \$10 for members, \$12 for non-members and \$15 at the door. Show time 8:30 pm—12:30 am. You can purchase on the website www.dcb blues.org or call 301-322-4808.



Top (l-r): Bob Margolin, new DCBS member Tim Hull (nice shirt) Hubert Sumlin (nice tie); Tinsley Ellis; bottom: Margolin; Sumlin

Band Auditions for DCBS Blues Festival Slot

Festival auditions will take place at the Surf Club Live on Saturday, April 11, 7:30 pm—12:30 am. Bands who have never performed at the DCBS Annual Blues Festival can enter but need to register at least two weeks in advance of the April show. This is your this opportunity to win a PAID slot at this year festival, Saturday, September 5. There is no fee to audition but at least one band member (preferably all) must be a DCBS member. For more information, go to the DCBS website www.dcb blues.org. To register, e-mail jams@dcb blues.org.

There is no admission for Blues fans so bring your family, friends and fans to cheer you on to victory. DCBS is also providing free food.

Here are a few words of wisdom from Bobby Joe Owens (below), lead singer of The Country Bunker Funky Blues Band and winner of the 2008 Festival Auditions: "It's that time again and I strongly encourage all new and established Blues Bands to register for the 2009 DC Blues Festival Auditions that will take place at the Surf Club Live on Saturday, April 11. Your band will get to take the stage at this historic club and gain precious experience and exposure playing in front of a large, enthusiastic audience. Whether you win or not, this is an opportunity you won't want to pass up. Help keep the Blues alive by supporting the DC Blues Society and participating in the 2009 DC Blues Festival Auditions."



Photo courtesy Barry Wheeler

Congratulations to Ida Campbell

On February 27, DCBS board member Ida Campbell become one of the newest programmers on WPFW (89.3 FM), replacing Lady Myrrh on the Friday "Don't Forget the Blues" program, noon—1 pm. Editor Donna Shoulders caught up with the busy Ms. Campbell to ask her about her new job and here's what she had to say:

Q: How did you get this position?

A: I interviewed for the program that airs on Tuesdays from noon to 1 pm when I heard that they were looking for a replacement for Chester Chichester. Three people tried out and they choose Warren 'Scooter' Magruder, general manager of Roadhouse Oldies, who has an extensive background as an oldies radio DJ. Although I wasn't picked to replace Chester, they told me something else might be coming up and to just hold on. Then they offered me the Friday program and here we are.

The interview with Ida continues on Page 4.

Blues Shows & Festivals

In the weeks and months to come, the DCBS Booth will be at many festivals and events. Stop by to meet DCBS staff, sign your friends up as new members, get your DCBS gear and show your support for the Blues.



Check the DCBS newsletter and go on-line to www.dcbles.org for information about upcoming Blues events and find out where the DCBS booth will be. Spread the word about DCBS, the many events it sponsors and, of course, the FREE 22nd Annual DC Blues Festival on Saturday, September 5, 2009.

- Tues. March 3: Memphis Gold CD Release Party and Award Ceremony at Blues Alley, Washington, DC. Two shows. DCBS members get a discount at the 10 pm show.
- Sat. March 7: Capital Blues Ensemble at the Surf Club Live and DCBS members get a discount!

- Sat., March 14: CW Harrington is back at Surf Club Live. It's not quite St. Patrick's Day but a party is a party. CW is a guaranteed good time so meet him at the Surf Club *with your green drawers on!*
- Sat., April 4: head over to the State Theatre, Falls Church, VA for the Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Tour. *Watch the DCBS website to win tickets to this event.*
- Sat. April 11: 7:30 pm–12:30 am. Sign up and/or support your favorite bands at the DCBS Festival Auditions at the Surf Club Live
- Sat. May 9: FREE Silver Spring Blues Festival in Silver Spring, MD.
- Sat. & Sun. May 16-17: Chesapeake Bay Blues Festival.
- Sat. & Sun. May 30-June 1: 14th Annual Western Maryland Blues Festival, Hagerstown, MD.
- Sat., June 13: DCBS Festival Fundraiser (Tentative).
- Sun. June 14: 20th Annual Billtown Blues Festival in Hughesville, PA
- Sat. June 20: Blues House Street Festival, Winchester, VA
- Sat. & Sun. June 27-28: 17th Annual BBQ Battle, Washington, DC.

- Sat. July 18: (Venue TBA): DCBS Festival Fundraiser with Bryan Lee
- Sat. & Sun. July 10-11: 12th Annual Briggs Farm Blues Festival, Nescopeck, PA
- Sat. August 1: 4 pm–10 pm (Venue TBA): DCBS 5th Annual Fish Fry 'n' Blues & Bike Contest.
- Sat. September 5: 12:00 noon–7:30pm: 21st Annual DC Blues Festival - Free!
- Festival After-Party - 8:30 pm–12:30 am. Venue TBA
- Sat. October 10: (Venue TBA) DCBS Battle of the Bands
- Sat. October 31: Blues in the Schools (BITS) Fundraiser featuring Eric Bibb
- November (date & venue TBA): WinnerFest, featuring Battle of the Bands Winner
- Sat., December 19: (act & venue TBA): Holiday Party
- Thurs. December 31: (act & venue TBA): New Years Eve Dinner & Show

DCBS needs volunteers to help staff the booth. Contact fest-volunteer@dcbles.org

Contact Jazs at ads@dcbles.org to suggest other area Blues festivals and events.

Get Well Wishes to Mike Baytop

CBM editors received a message from Donna Fletcher, with the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation (AEBHF) regarding Michel "Mike" Baytop, the founder and president of the AEBHF. Mike suffered a stroke that has affected his speech and right side. While he is already making some progress, he will require long-term therapy. He is at the National Rehabilitation Hospital at the Washington Hospital Center. Mike and his family appreciate all of your positive thoughts and prayers and, for now, are requesting no visitors. Cards and letters can be sent to Mike's home: 4217 Payne Dr., Fort Washington, MD 20744.

The Barbershop Has a New Home

Steve Levine sent word that AEBHF is renting jam space in the old Riverdale Bookstore at 4701 Queensbury Rd., three blocks from the intersection of East West Highway and Route 1 (Baltimore Ave), in Riverdale, MD. The jam space is not yet ready for prime time. However, it has heat, electricity, plumbing and a roof, so it is good enough for this year. AEBHF will be moving in shortly and resuming Saturday jams. A few folks are going to meet there on Saturdays at 10 am to do clean up and repairs. Contact Jim Lande at 703-521-0006 if you're interested.

Watch the AEBHF website www.acousticblues.com for details about moving in, Saturday jams and other events planned for the new space.

Ida Campbell interview continued...

Q: Do you have any radio experience?

A: No, but I have done a lot of volunteering at WPFW during the membership drives and, as a member of the DC Blues Society, I was on the radio last year announcing our holiday party. After that, people started encouraging me to get on the radio. So when Chester Chichester's time slot became available, I just decided to go for it. It couldn't hurt to try.

Q: But you do have a musical background, right?

A: As a teenager I had a band with my brother and sister when we were growing up in South East, DC. We competed in battles of the bands and talent shows around the area. I continued to do that during high school. And, of course I was in the choir at church.

Q: Didn't you also have a brief career singing in a band with your husband?

A: Yeah, fifteen years brief. His family had a gospel group, "The Campbellaires," of Silver Spring, MD. Then he and I had our own band. We sang R&B and Blues.

Q: How is your program going to be different from the others?

A: I'm going to bring in more history- of the Blues and Blues artists. I'm going to try to put a spotlight on our local artists because everybody recognizes the well-known names, but when we announce a show by a local artist I want the audience to be able to say, "Oh yeah, I know who that is. I've heard of him, or her, or them, on Ida Campbell's show." I also want to keep the Blues alive in our young children all the way through high school. College students get it, but the younger kids need to know where the music comes from and they need to know the reason why the blues ever came about.

Good luck, Ida!

And, in case you're wondering what happened to the President's Drum — Felix will be back at it in April.

See you at the upcoming shows! Donna & Mary



Photo courtesy of Stephanie Hallie Lax

2009 International Blues Challenge An Unforgettable Experience

Imagine sixteen blues venues within three city blocks, each staging eight bands performing in succession for 20 minutes, then repeating that same schedule the very next day! It happened on historic Beale Street in Memphis, TN, during the semifinals of the 25th International Blues Challenge (IBC).

The DC Blues Society was represented by Billy Thompson and Friends with Billy on guitar and vocals, Gene Monroe on bass and Tim Biery on drums. Fourteen year-old Ellicott City resident, Matt Wigler competed in the solo-duo category and also participated in the Youth Showcase (twenty-four acts for performers under the age of 21). Wigler, who sang for the first time in front of an audience, was accompanied on drums by Mike Aubin, who has been Deanna Bogart's drummer for thirteen years. Neither Billy Thompson's highly charged contemporary blues act, nor Matt's pristine performance made it to the finals, but each of the 180 bands (including the solo-duo acts) were already winners since they had

been selected by their respective blues organization. Other DC-area performers included Clarence "The Bluesman" Turner who represented the Baltimore Blues Society, and Mike Westcott's "Blues on Board" who carried the torch for the Blue Ridge Blues Society. Former DC-area harp player, Waverly Milor was the only "non-Westcott" in the family five-piece band.

In addition to the US, bands came from Australia, Croatia, Poland, Italy, France and Canada to compete. Under the rules of the Blues Foundation, each performed for 20 minutes in the same venue, two days in a row, before a rotating set of judges and a full-house. The Blues Foundation has added a vocal talent category to next year's competition.

It was impossible to see all the acts. You stop and enter one of the blues clubs when you like what you hear like a great voice or some enticing licks spilling out into the crowded street. Everyone had his or her own personal favorite, who may or may not necessarily be a semifinalist! There was the mesmerizing, soulful voice of Davina of Davina & the Vagabonds from Minnesota, who modulated her voice to perfectly replicate the heavenly combination of tremolo notes played by her trombonist. And, the amazement in seeing two young men playing boogie in sync on the same piano while facing each other. Enter the Boogie Boys from Poland who made it to the finals which were held at the Orpheum Theatre, one of the most beautiful opera houses east of the Mississippi.

Thank you, Memphis, and thank you, Blues Foundation, for this memorable 25th IBC...Gerard de Valroger



Above, left to right: Mike Aubin, Matt Wigler, Billy Thompson

2009 Winners International Blues Challenge	
Band Category	
1st Place - JP Sours & The Red Hots, South Florida Blues Society	
2nd Place - Ty Curtis Band, Cascade Blues Association	
3rd Place - Monkey Junk, Ottawa Blues Society	
Solo Duet	
1st Place - Little Joe McLerran, Blues Society Of Tulsa	
2nd Place - Alphonso & Richard, Crossroads Blues Society	
Best Self-Produced CD Award	
Nathan James & Ben Hernandez <i>Hollerin'!</i>	



Photo © 2008 Eric Bibb

Eric Bibb to be featured artist at BITS Fundraiser

The 2009 Blues in the Schools (BITS) Fundraiser featuring Blues troubadour and country Blues revivalist Eric Bibb is scheduled for Saturday, October 31.

You'll often hear Bibb's name mentioned along with Keb Mo', Alvin Youngblood Hart and Corey Harris (BITS featured artist in 2007). Check out Bibb's YouTube videos at www.nme.com/artists/eric-bibb or his website www.ericbibb.com.

The fundraiser starts at 7 pm with a reception preceding the 8 pm show. Seating is limited so be sure to get you tickets in advance. \$40 VIP seating with photo-op during reception and intermission. \$30 General Admission (Advance) and \$35 at door [no seating guarantee]. Venue TBA. Order on-line at www.dcb Blues.org or call 301-322-4808.

Memphis Gold to be honored by Gibson and Blues Alley

On Tuesday, March 3, Memphis Gold will be honored by Gibson Guitar and Blues Alley. The award, a classic Gibson Custom ES-335, will be presented by Bill Wax, host of Sirius XM Radio's B.B. King's Bluesville. (See February 2009 *Capital Blues Messenger* for full article).

Gibson is recognizing Memphis Gold for his contribution to the Blues and for his perseverance in getting back on his feet and guitar after his tragic accident in January, 2008. This is also a CD Release Party and celebration of his birthday.

Two performances (8 pm and 10 pm) will following the award ceremony. DCBS members with a valid membership card receive a \$5 discount on the admission for the 10 pm show. Blues Alley is located at 1073 Wisconsin Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20007, Tel: (202) 337-4141 www.bluesalley.com. Reservations are recommended.



Photo © Ron Weinstock

March Calendar

1	DCBS Jam @ Surf Club Live; Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues; Steve Kramer & Bluesicians, Patty Reese & Dave Chappell @ Cat's Eye
2	Robert Cray Band @ Birchmere; Bobby Parker @ Westminster Church
3	Memphis Gold CD Release Party and Award Ceremony @ Blues Alley; Idle Americans @ Cat's Eye
4	Idle Americans @ Bangkok Blues; Automatic Slim @ Cat's Eye
5	Buckwheat Zydeco @ Rams Head; Big Boy Little Blues Jam @ Zoo Bar; Pete Kanares Blues Band @ Cat's Eye
6	Saffire @ Birchmere; Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Country Store; Daryl Davis Band @ Strathmore; Sherwood Blues Band @ Dad's Neighborhood Pub; Eric Culberson @ Madam's Organ
7	Capital Blues Ensemble @ Surf Club Live; J Street Jumpers @ Glen Echo; Rob Hughes & Heaters, Roger Girke Band @ Cat's Eye; Big Boy Little @ Zoo Bar; Eric Culberson @ Madam's Organ
8	Barbershop Jam, Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues; Pookie & Zydeco Sensations @ Glen Echo; Steve Kraemer & Bluesicians, Linwood Taylor & Rude Dog @ Cat's Eye; BT Richardson Band @ Madam's Organ
9	Smokin' Polecats @ Westminster Church; Johnny Artis @ Blues Alley
11	Muleman @ Cat's Eye
12	Big Boy Little Blues Jam @ Zoo Bar; Nate Myers & Aces @ Cat's Eye
13	Nighthawks @ Old Bowie Towne Grill; Idle Americans @ Murphy's Pub; Robert Lighthouse @ Madam's Organ
14	DCBS presents CW Harrington @ Surf Club Live; Nighthawks @ Baltimore UAW Hall, Bull & Oyster Roast; Idle Americans @ Scott's II; Lil Pookie & Zydeco Sensations @ Remington's Laurel; Nadine Rae @ Bare Bones; Bill Wharton @ Madam's Organ
15	Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues; Hugh Feeley @ Madam's Organ
16	Ruby Hayes Blues Band @ Westminster Church
17	Tab Benoit @ Rams Head
18	Lower Case Blues @ Cat's Eye
19	Big Boy Little Blues Jam @ Zoo Bar; Rude Dog's Rhythm Revue @ Cat's Eye
20	Nighthawks @ Fish Head Cantina; Idle Americans @ JVs; Nothin' But Trouble @ Cat's Eye; Johnny Artis Band @ Madam's Organ
21	Nighthawks @ Clyde's, Chevy Chase; Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Country Store; Cathy Ponton King @ Flanagan's Harp & Fiddle; Sherwood Blues Band @ Potomac Grill; Deb Callahan Band @ Madam's Organ
22	Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues; Warner Williams and Rick Kanton @ JVs; BT Richardson Band @ Madam's Organ
23	Mac McDonald & Bluz U Can Uze @ Westminster Church
26	Big Boy Little Blues Jam @ Zoo Bar; Skyla Burrell Blues Band @ Cat's Eye; Johnny Artis Band @ Madam's Organ
28	Nighthawks @ Surf Club Live; Sherwood Blues Band @ Dish Bistro & Lounge; Bobby Parker @ Madam's Organ; Idle Americans Blues & Paulverizers @ Bangkok Blues;
29	Big Boy Little @ Glen Echo
30	Kim Wilson Blues Revue @ Rams Head; Joe Bonamassa @ Birchmere; Tina's Bluz @ Westminster Church
31	Joe Bonamassa @ Birchmere; Kim Wilson Blues Revue @ Blues Alley; Muleman @ Cat's Eye

Bolded items are picks by calendar editor, Steve Levine, and include DCBS and BBS events. Send listings to calendar@dcblues.org or mail to Steve Levine, 5910 Bryn Mawr Rd., College Park, MD 20740. Deadline is the 15th of the month. Events listed are based on the best information possible. DCBS cannot be held liable for errors in schedules, places or performances listed. It is recommended that you contact the venues to verify the event will occur. The DCBS homepage has additional music links and information: www.dcblues.org.

Early April Calendar

2	Big Boy Little Blues Jam @ Zoo Bar
3	Legendary Rhythm & Blues Revue @ Rams Head; Idle Americans @ Frisco Grille
4	Legendary Rhythm and Blues Cruise Tour @ State Theatre; Chris Polk Band @ Madam's Organ
5	DCBS Jam @ Surf Club Live; Barbershop Jam, Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues; Ursula Ricks @ Madam's Organ
7	Idle Americans @ Cat's Eye

Attention dancers: See DCBS homepage for link to dance-friendly venues. To subscribe to a weekly e-mail newsletter "So Many Choices" with dance-specific information, often with a blues twist, send an e-mail to DCBS member and Blues fan Robin: hc1829@aol.com

Happy Birthday Robin! Celebrate with her and her friends on Sat. March 14 at the CW Harrington Show at the Surf Club Live!



BLUZAPALOOZA is heading to Egypt

The celebrity concert tours, BLUZAPALOOZA, created by Blues producers Steve Simon and John Hahn to entertain US troops, is heading to Egypt on March 24 for an historic command performance at the U.S. Embassy in Cairo and a sold-out concert at the Cairo Opera House.

Headliner includes "The Prince of Beale Street" Billy Gibson, the incredible Memphis based Blues band Delta Highway and four time Blues Music Award nominee, Eden Brent. "First we took the Blues to Iraq and now we are going to present the Blues just steps from the Pyramids.....how cool is that?" stated Simon.

Armed Forces Entertainment (AFE) is the lead Department of Defense agency for providing entertainment to U.S. military personnel serving overseas. Founded in 1951, AFE brings a touch of home to more than 500,000 troops each year. BLUZAPALOOZA is proud to be working with AFE. For information www.myspace.com/bluzapalooza.

Harmonica Players Seminar

Two exceptional harmonica seminars have been announced by the Harmonica Players Organization's Bryan Lyburn who said "These are great opportunities to meet and learn from two fantastic professional players."

Scheduled are Annie Raines on Thursday, March 12, 7:00 pm-9:00pm (www.paulandannie.com) and Deak Harp, Thursday, April 9, 7:00 pm-9:00 pm www.deakharpblues.com. For information, contact Bryan at blyburn@comcast.net or call 301-514-5845.

SATURDAY MARCH 7 9PM SURF CLUB LIVE!

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Membership means discounts! Show 'em your card

The following companies offer discounts to DCBS members. You must present your current membership card to receive them. Discount offers may be withdrawn at any time.

<p>Blues Alley \$5 discount 10 pm show Tues. March 3 Featuring Memphis Gold 1073 Wisconsin Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20007 202-337-4141 www.bluesalley.com</p>	<p>20% discount Neil Senning Enterprises Quality Painting and Handyman Services: Plastering/Drywall Deck Cleaning/Power Washing/Staining/ Carpentry/Interior & Exterior Work and much more. Call 301-717-1773</p>
<p>JV's Restaurant Drink Special Buy one & get 2nd. drink free 6666 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church, VA 22042 703-241-9504 www.jvsrestaurant.com</p>	<p>15% discount Industrial Sound Studios Call soon to get your first set of ADAT tapes free P.O. Box 1162 Riverdale, MD 20738 www.industrialstudio@hotmail.com</p>
<p>10% discount at Capitol Hill Books Across from Eastern Market 657 C Street, S.E., Washington, DC 20003 202-544-1621 www.capitolhillbooks-dc.com</p>	<p>15% discount at BOK Custom Framing 5649 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22207 703-534-1866 Hours: M-F 10 -6, Sat. 10-5</p>
<p>10% discount at J & J Automotive 9160 Euclid Court Manassas, VA 20110 703-368-3600 www.jjautoservices.com</p>	<p>10% off at Famous Dave's Barbecue (Gaithersburg Location only) 917 Quince Orchard Rd. Gaithersburg, MD 20878 (240) 683-0435</p>

NEW OFFER

20% Discount

Three Brothers Italian Restaurant

4521 Kenilworth Avenue
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Tel: (301) 864-1570 Fax: (301) 699-8233

Discount valid at Bladensburg location only. Not valid holidays or with other discounts. Other restrictions may apply. Good until 9pm daily.



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**Happy 1st Anniversary Surf Club Live!
To JB and staff, thanks for a
memorable year and best wishes for
many, many more.**

Saffire-The Uppity Blues Women

Ron Weinstock reviews a new CD and the end of an era

It's been twenty-five years since the trio of Gaye Adegbalola, Ann Rabson and Earline Lewis started performing around Fredericksburg, VA and Washington, DC. I remember seeing them for the first time at a DC Blues Society charity concert at Georgetown University and picking up their self-produced cassette, *Middle Age Blues*, mostly compiled from classic blues with a few originals, including "Middle Age Blues Boogie," which became the trio's theme song with its still memorable refrain "I want a young, young man." I was delighted when they signed with Alligator in 1989. Their debut Alligator disc, the eponymously titled *SAFFIRE - The Uppity Blues Women*, was a surprising and well deserved, success.



(L to R) Andra Faye, Gaye Adegbalola, Ann Rabson at the 2005 DCBS Annual Blues Festival. Photos ©Ron Weinstock

A story I did for the DCBS newsletter was the basis for the first major one on them that appeared in an early issue of *Blues Revue*. Along the way, Lewis departed to be replaced by Andra Faye who, in addition to bass, also displayed a multi-instrumental talent on mandolin, guitar, fiddle and more. In the ensuing years, they performed countless times as well as continued to teach at blues workshop programs mentoring a large number of modern acoustic blues acts. From the Washington, DC and Tidewater, VA area such groups as BluesWorks and MSG the Acoustic Trio mine traditional blues along with contemporary originals rooted in traditional sources.

Havin' the Last Word is their eighth album of new recordings for Alligator (this does not include the excellent compilation "Deluxe Edition") and their first since *Ain't Gonna Hush* in 2001. This is their swan song as a trio and the ensuing performances will also be their final regular ones. Each will continue the solo careers begun in the past several years.

Unlike their previous albums, there is only one classic blues revived here, "Kitchen Man," and the rest are fresh tunes composed by the three along with tunes by EG Kight and others. The opening is a Carla Daruda song, "Going Down to the River" in which the three trade verses about going to the river and washing their troubles away. It's followed by Gina DeLuca's "Nothin' in My House" where Adegbalola delivers the sassy lyrics about letting others say what they will "if I want to honky tonk all night... what do I care, I ain't got nothing in their house." Rabson revives "Kitchen Man" with a stately piano and Faye's complimentary mandolin. EG Kight and Tom Horner contributed "Somebody's Gotta Give," a song that Faye belts out (and one can imagine it being translated into a band format by Faye and The Mighty Good Men).

Other highlights include "Bald Headed Blues," an original by Adegbalola addressing the consequences of chemotherapy and dancing with life and not death. Faye adds fiddle to Rabson's not completely reflective "Since You've Been Gone," while her own "Blue Lullaby" has a country flavor. Kight and Horner collaborated with Rabson for "Travelin' at the Speed of Love," a celebratory boogie. Adegbalola's "I Can Do Bad All By Myself" has a nice guitar solo from Rabson while Adegbalola sings about how bad things have gone "so she needs to take a payday loan," but she does not need anyone else's help. Faye playfully celebrates her body on having "Too Much Butt" while Adegbalola's "Bald Eagle" is a lustful celebration of female sexuality. Deanna Bogart's "I'm Growing Older" is a humorous tune about the inevitable and Faye is quite comfortable about aging like fine wine and becoming a wilder woman. The album concludes with another Rabson, Kight and Horner collaboration, "The Bad Times," with echoes of "Drown in My Own Tears" in its melody and noting "bad times make the good times better, bad times make our love strong ... good times will be here before long."

Saffire has provided us with good music for a quarter of a century — good times to get past the bad and sad times. While the musical partnership of Saffire - the Uppity Blues Women may be ending, its musical legacy is firmly established to be enjoyed for years to come just as each of its members will establish her own legacy. Like Jim Brown leaving professional football, *Havin' the Last Word* has Saffire ending its run while still performing at the highest level.

You can see them at The Birchmere on March 6 and for more information go to their website: www.uppityblueswomen.com

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