



Director's Corner

Creating the Mississippi Blues Trail is one of the Blues Commission's primary projects. The Mississippi Blues Trail will be composed of more than 100 historical markers and interpretive sites located throughout the state.

Governor Haley Barbour unveiled the first marker on December 11, 2006. In his remarks he said, "This marker is the first of a long line to come. The blues are a powerful part of Mississippi's heritage and America's musical history; the creation of the Mississippi Blues Trail is an appropriate way to capture this distinct part of our history and culture and also will undoubtedly serve as an economic development tool. People from around the country—indeed from around the world—will come to Mississippi to learn about and experience not only authentic Mississippi blues music but also the blues culture for years to come."

The Trail will be developed in phases as funding becomes available. Phase 1 of the Trail consists of nine markers that were funded in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The second and third phases will be funded by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Mississippi Department of Transportation. Additional support for each marker has been provided by the Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division, Delta State University, and local convention and visitors bureaus.

A distinguished panel of historians and blues scholars have developed an inventory of the most notable sites. Each will be identified with a distinctive cast marker, featuring high resolution maps, photographs and text on the obverse side. Some of these sites will eventually employ the latest technology to allow visitors to hear the sounds associated with the location. A detailed Blues Trail map will also be available that will provide driving directions, GPS coordinates and basic information for each site.

Featured Artist – Homemade Jamz

New on the Mississippi Blues scene is the talented band Homemade Jamz. This family trio consists of two brothers and

Blues Trail Markers (installation to date)

Blue Front Cafe – *Benton*
Bo Diddley – *McComb*
Broadcasting the Blues – *Gulfport*
Charley Patton gravesite – *Holly Ridge*
Columbus (Catfish Alley) – *Columbus*
Hickory Street – *Canton*
Highways 10 & 61 – *Leland*
Honeyboy Edwards – *Shaw*
Howlin' Wolf – *West Point*
Jimmie Rodgers – *Meridian*
Magic Sam – *Grenada*
Memphis Minnie – *Walls*
Muddy Waters's cabin site – *Clarksdale*
Nelson Street – *Greenville*
Otis Rush – *Philadelphia*
Peavine Branch – *Boyle*
Rabbit Foot Minstrels – *Port Gibson*
Riverside Hotel – *Clarksdale*
Robert Johnson gravesite – *Greenwood*
Rosedale – *Rosedale*
Son House – *Tunica*
Subway Lounge – *Jackson*
Tommy Johnson – *Crystal Springs*
Trumpet Records – *Jackson*



a sister. Ryan, the oldest of the three started out at age 8 when he found his father's electric guitar. In 3 days Ryan was able to play along with TV commercials. A week later he made up a short instrumental tune that earned him the right to participate in the school talent show. He took lessons for two years and kept changing instructors because he was learning faster than the lessons he was given. He is now 15 years old and turning heads when he opens his mouth. Several years ago Ryan was



accompanied by his 12 year-old brother, Kyle. After watching his brother receiving all the attention, Kyle decided he was not going to be left out. He started out learning piano, became bored and quit, then took



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guitar lessons and was frustrated because he was not learning fast enough to play like his brother. One day after watching a music DVD with his father and brother, he asked to try one more time at the bass guitar. When his father gave him his first bass guitar for his 9th birthday, Kyle played his heart out & never looked back. As for the youngest member of the band, Taya started out playing tambourine at age 6. At age 7 she began drum lessons. Two months later, her older brothers were in desperate need of a drummer, and Taya stepped up to the plate, held a good beat and a steady pace. Since then Taya has been making loud noises everywhere they go and doesn't think twice about it. She is now 8 years old and plays the drums her own way. Since December 2005, the young band has been performing at local charity and community events, restaurants/bars, private parties/weddings, festivals, local TV morning shows, radio talk shows, and took 1st place at the 3rd Annual MS Delta Blues Society of Indianola's Blues Challenge. The recognition led them to winning 2nd Place at the 23rd annual International Blues Challenge in Memphis for the band category in January 2007. The trio has performed at many festivals this year around the state and in June 2007, they traveled with the state to the Chicago Blues Festival to take presence on the Mississippi Juke Joint stage. Their most recent accomplishment was a feature story on CBS Morning News, which told the story behind Homemade Jamz. For more information or to book the band, visit www.myspace.com/homemadejamzbluesband.

November Recap

Bo Diddley

Many supporters came out while the City of McComb's Department of Community Relations and Tourism, the Mississippi Development Authority/Tourism Division and the Mississippi Blues Commission unveiled a blues marker honoring Bo Diddley on Friday, November 2, at 12:30 p.m. at the Depot Pavilion on 112 North Railroad Boulevard in McComb, MS.



Ellas McDaniel born December 30, 1928, was better known by his stage name "Bo Diddley" and also known as "The Originator" of Rock 'N' Roll. Diddley is an influential American rock and roll singer, songwriter, and guitarist. He is often cited as the key figure in the transition of blues into rock and roll, by introducing more insistent, driving rhythms and a hard edged guitar sound. He is also known for his characteristic rectangular-shaped guitar, in addition to his eccentric show-stopping personality. That same show stopping personality was displayed when Bo grabbed the microphone and being to sing, during a tribute by blues guitarists, Jesse Robinson.

American Blues Network

Rebuilding and redefining the Mississippi Gulf Coast is taking place after Hurricane Katrina, but that's not all that is happening. Many blues artists, friends, family, and local politicians came out on Saturday, November 5, to pay honor to Rip Daniels, and the American Blues Network Staff.

Blues radio took off in the post-World War II era with the arrival of rhythm and blues programming. A new era for blues radio began on October 1, 2000 when Rip Daniels, a Gulfport native, launched here the American Blues Network (ABN). Using satellite and Internet technology, ABN provided a mix of modern and vintage blues to listeners around the world.

The blues marker pays tribute to the American Blues Network, which has taken Mississippi and the rest of the nation by storm. The nationally syndicated radio program delivered via satellite and the web is a 24-hour blues format, "credited for keeping the blues alive."

To date the network covers 95% of Mississippi and 80% of Alabama, and has over 50 affiliates as far as Seattle, Washington to Flint, Michigan. It is the brainchild of Rip Daniels, a 34-year veteran broadcaster and owner of radio station WJZD FM (94.5) in Gulfport. Daniels ultimate goal was to unite younger and senior blues listeners by showcasing the entire blues spectrum.

A smooth blend of old and new, ABN plays those barroom classics from renowned blues artist along with modern blues hits to become classics. ABN can be down linked from Galaxy C-4 from Mexico City to Quebec. Anyone can listen to the network via the worldwide web at www.americanbluesnetwork.com or www.partybluesandoldies.com.



Trail/Blazer



Trumpet Records

Blues Enthusiasts, Musicians, Family and Friends gathered in downtown Jackson on the historic Farish Street to honor Trumpet Records on Saturday, November 17. Wanda Collier-Wilson and her Jackson Convention and Visitors Bureau staff hosted a wonderful dedication ceremony for Vitrice McMurry, daughter of Willard F. and Lillian S. McMurry. Other distinguished guests included, Dr. Woody Sistrunk, Mississippi Blues Foundation Member, and former Trumpet Records recording artists, Jerry "Boogie" McCain and Roscoe Robinson.

Trumpet Records was the first record company in Mississippi to achieve national stature through its distribution, sales, radio airplay and promotion. Willard F. and Lillian S. McMurry launched the label from their retail store, the Record Mart, at 309 North Farish Street, in 1950. The first releases by Mississippi blues legends Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2, Elmore James, and Willie Love appeared on Trumpet. Trumpet also recorded gospel and country music. The label used several different studios for recording sessions, including Diamond Recording Studio, housed in the back room of the store.

Lillian McMurry, the creative force behind the label, was known for her sense of fairness and her meticulous accounting. She continued decades after Trumpet folded, paying artists and songwriters' royalties from reissues and rerecording of the songs they had recorded for Trumpet and fighting in court the many cases pirating of Trumpet Records. (Perhaps the most famous, and most lucrative, reworking of a Trumpet song was the version of Williamson's "Eyesight to the Blind" recorded by the British rock group The Who.) Lillian McMurry was elected to the Blues Hall of Fame in 1998. She died on March 18, 1999. Her husband Willard, who provided the backbone of support for their business ventures, died on June 7, 1996.



Otis Rush-Honored in Philadelphia

A group of over 200, including state officials, local city leaders, fans, friends, and relatives packed the Old Train Depot in downtown Philadelphia, MS to pay homage to blues figure, Otis Rush.

Rush was born in a rural area near Neshoba on April 29, 1935, according to family sources. (Biographies often give his birth date as 1934, but no birth certificate exists.) His blues came to fruition in Chicago in the 1950s, but was shaped by the hardships and troubles of his early life in Mississippi. He was raised by his mother, Julia Boyd, in a family that was so poor that Otis had to wear the same clothes to school every day – and when the plantation boss summoned him to work the fields, he had to forgo school many times. As a teenager, Rush got married and moved to Chicago in search of a new life.



He left Philadelphia from the train station where the Mississippi Blues Trail marker was unveiled on Thursday, December 6.

In Chicago, Rush was able not only find a job at a packing plant, but also discovered, much to his surprise, that he could make money playing his guitar. Within a few years he had attracted the attention of legendary blues record producer Willie Dixon, and in 1956 he found himself with a Top 10 national hit on the rhythm and blues charts, "I Can't Quit You Baby," a song later featured by Led Zeppelin.

Rush continued to perform in Chicago and around the world. In later years he shared stages with Eric Clapton, who imitated Rush on some of his early records, and Stevie Ray Vaughan, who named his band Double Trouble in honor of one of Rush's classic Chicago blues records. To many, Rush's music represents blues at its deepest, most emotional level, played and sung with passion and brilliance. He has moved many audiences to tears. It may have been the very intensity of his music that kept it from being commercially successful, although his influence is widely acknowledged in blues and rock 'n' roll circles. Rush suffered a stroke in 2004, but was overjoyed to return home for this wonderful recognition.



Trail/Blazer



Mark Your Calendars!

Robert "Nighthawk" McCollum Marker Ceremony **Thursday, December 13, 2007**

2:00 PM in Friars Point, MS

(Event will take place at the Hirsberg Drug Store located at 649 2nd Street.)

Elvis Presley Marker Ceremony **Tuesday, January 8, 2008**

1:00PM in Tupelo, MS

(Event will take place at the Elvis Presley Birthplace and Museum located at 306 Elvis Presley Drive.)

Festival & Events Coordinators Workshop **Tuesday, January 22, 2008**

Historic Chester Hotel
101 N Jackson Street
Starkville, MS

Thursday, January 24, 2007

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College
Jefferson Davis Campus
2226 Switzer Road
Gulfport, MS
8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Workshops will include sessions on liability, fundraising, promotions, and developing new programming for cultural events. This is also an opportunity for you to meet and network with other festival coordinators from around the state!

Presented by the Mississippi Development Authority/ Tourism Division and The Mississippi Arts Commission, working together to make a difference in Mississippi

For questions, concerns or to register, please contact Leigh Portwood at (601) 359-3061 or email to lportwood@mississippi.org

International Blues Challenge (IBC) Memphis, TN

Blues musicians from around the world will compete for cash, prizes, and industry recognition as The Blues Foundation presents the 24th International Blues Challenge from January 31 through February 2, 2008 in Memphis, TN. More information can be viewed at www.blues.org

More News

Mississippi Blues Trail wins award!

Twenty-one individuals and organizations will be honored with The Blues Foundation's 2008 Keeping the Blues Alive (KBA) Award during a recognition brunch at the Downtown Doubletree Hotel Saturday, February 2, 2008, in Memphis Tennessee. The KBA ceremony will be held in conjunction with the 24th International Blues Challenge (IBC) weekend of events that will feature the semifinals and finals of the world's largest gathering of Blues bands, as well as seminars, presentations, and receptions for blues societies, fans, and professionals.

The Keeping the Blues Alive Awards recognize the significant contributions to Blues music made by the people behind the scenes. Each is selected on the basis of merit by a select panel of Blues professionals. KBA Chairman Art Tipaldi notes with respect to this year's recipients, "The committee is once again impressed with the quality of the selected recipients - the outstanding men, women, and organizations that have evidenced a longstanding commitment to the Blues genre. In recent years, The Blues Foundation has increasingly recognized the global reach of this indigenous Afro-American art form and the 2008 honorees certainly reflect this awareness, with recipients hailing from Canada, France, and Sweden, in addition to the United States. This year the Mississippi Development Authority Tourism Division and the Mississippi Blues Commission will walk away with the award for their "Preservation of the Blues," through the development of the Mississippi Blues Trail.

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