



NEWS

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2000

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Reporters: Call now for media kits or to arrange day-of-event interviews.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Bluebird Blues Festival This Weekend!

*Free Admission, Great Music and Food, Plenty of
Activities for the Kids, Plus an Interactive Blues Workshop*

WHAT:

The Eighth Annual Bluebird Blues Festival will be held at Prince George's Community College this Sunday, September 17, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. This event has become one of the largest blues festivals in the Washington area, attracting more than 14,000 visitors last year. Performers include Jimmy Johnson, Bill Kirchen, Shemekia Copeland, Cephas and Wiggins, Big Jesse Yawn, Hardway Connection, Blueshounds, Memphis Gold, Diamond Jim Green, and Dr. S.O. Feel Good. WPFW radio personalities Nap Turner, "The Gator," and Miss Monica will host the event. NBC4's Jim Handly will participate in the opening ceremonies, helping the college honor Turner for his nearly six decades of involvement with blues music.

In addition to music, there will be plenty of food and drink, plus all-day activities for the kids. Children who attend this year's festival will be mesmerized by roving magicians Tony Ware and Pat Nutter, unicyclist Lisa Polinari, the Thomas G. Pullen African Drumming and Dancing Troupe, and the *Blues for Kids* show from Barb Martin and Max Walter. Youngsters who feel especially creative can dive into great hands-on activities. They can make rag dolls with Sherri Lumpkin, create nature art with Gary Irby and Toni Walter, or let their imaginations run wild in the "Chalk Walk Blues Zoos."

- More -

Blues Festival — add one

Renowned blues musician and folklorist Barry Lee Pearson will host an educational Blues Workshop at 2 p.m. in the Rennie Forum. Blues fans will have a chance to interact with many of the Festival's musicians, asking questions and listening as the artists play and describe the many different styles of blues music in a relaxed setting.

WHO: All ages are invited. **Admission is FREE.**

WHEN/WHERE: Sunday, September 17, starting at 1 p.m.
Rain or shine
Prince George's Community College
301 Largo Road, Largo, Maryland

The festival is brought to you by Prince George's Community College, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Office of the County Executive. The presenting sponsor is The Washington Post. Other sponsors include Southern Management Corporation, Grayhound Trash Removal, Inc., The Pepsi Bottling Group, the Maryland State Lottery, Allfirst Bank, Target Stores, the Maryland State Arts Council, Prince George's Arts Council, NBC 4 Washington, Legg Mason, Prince George's Workforce Services Corporation, Days Inn Capital Beltway, washingtonpost.com, and Thompson Hospitality Services, L.L.C.

Prince George's Community College is a comprehensive, public, post-secondary institution that provides high-quality academic and continuing education to the citizens of Prince George's County. The college awards associate's degrees in credit programs, and letters of recognition and certificates in both credit and noncredit programs.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 11, 2000

Contact: Rochelle R. Daniel
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MEDIA ADVISORY

Workshop Takes Fans to the Roots of Blues Music *Public Invited to Join Blues Authority Barry Lee Pearson and DC Blues Legend Nap Turner at Eighth Annual Festival*

WHAT: The Blues Workshop has become one of the major attractions at the Bluebird Blues Festival. Fans can gather with fellow blues lovers in a quiet “unplugged” setting to learn the stories behind the people and music, and hear world-class blues musicians demonstrate and explain their craft.

WHO: Nap Turner, Cephas and Wiggins, Bill Kirchen, and Diamond Jim Greene will talk about their influences, share tales from the road, and demonstrate the diverse styles and variations that make the blues America’s music no matter where you hear it. Musician, folklorist, and renowned blues authority Barry Lee Pearson will serve as moderator for the workshop.

All ages are invited to attend the workshop. Admission is free, though seating may be limited.

WHEN/WHERE: Sunday, September 17, 2-3 p.m.
Rennie Forum
Prince George’s Community College
301 Largo Road, Largo, Maryland

The Bluebird Blues Festival at Prince George’s Community College has become one of the largest blues festivals in the Washington area, attracting more than 14,000 visitors last year.

- More -

Blues Workshop — add one

Performers this year include Jimmy Johnson, Bill Kirchen, Shemekia Copeland, Cephas and Wiggins, Big Jesse Yawn , Hardway Connection, Blueshounds, Memphis Gold, Diamond Jim Greene and Dr. S.O. Feel Good. WPFW radio personalities Nap Turner, “The Gator” and Monica will be the hosts. In addition to music, there will be food and plenty of activities for children.

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PUBLIC RELATIONS, PUBLICATIONS AND MARKETING
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 21, 2000

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Editors: Please include in calendars and bulletin boards.

MEDIA ADVISORY

Bluebird Blues Festival to Feature Top Performers in the Washington Area *Free Admission and Plenty of Activities for the Kids!*

WHAT: The eighth annual Bluebird Blues Festival is coming to Prince George's Community College. This event has become one of the largest blues festivals in the Washington area, attracting more than 10,000 visitors each year. Performers include Jimmy Johnson, Bill Kirchen, Shemekia Copeland, Cephas and Wiggins, Big Jesse Yawn, Hardway Connection, Blueshounds, Memphis Gold, Diamond Jim Green and Dr. S.O. Feel Good. Blues historian and WPFW radio personality Nap Turner will be the master of ceremonies. In addition to music, there will be food and plenty of activities for children.

WHO: All ages are invited. Admission is free.

WHEN/WHERE: Sunday, September 17, starting at 1 p.m.
Prince George's Community College
301 Largo Road, Largo, Maryland

The festival is brought to you by Prince George's Community College, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and the Office of the County Executive. The presenting sponsor is The Washington Post. Other sponsors include Southern Management Corporation, Grayhound Trash Removal, Inc., The Pepsi Bottling Group, the Maryland State Lottery, Allfirst Bank, Target Stores, the Maryland State Arts Council, Prince George's Arts Council, NBC 4 Washington, Legg Mason, Prince George's Workforce Services Corporation, Days Inn Capital Beltway, washingtonpost.com, and Thompson Hospitality Services, L.L.C.

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Meet Blues Encyclopedia Nap Turner (inside front cover)

The Eighth Annual Bluebird Blues Festival is dedicated to Washington's own Nap Turner, a living blues legend and endless source of blues knowledge.

Turner has been involved with blues and jazz for some six decades now. He began music life as a jazz bass player in the 1940s, performing with such great DC acts as The Griffin Brothers with Margie Day, Roy Milton, Ivory Joe Hunter, Leo Parker, Sonny Stitt, Wardell Gray, Webster Young, Benny Bailey and David "Fathead" Newman.

Of course, most Washingtonians and suburban Maryland and Virginia residents appreciate Turner for his encyclopedic blues knowledge and tireless promotion of the music and history on radio station WPFW, 89.3 on the FM dial.

Thanks, Nap, for sharing your knowledge and passion, and for keeping the Washington area plugged into the blues year 'round!

MAIN STAGE

Hosted by WPFW's Gator and Miss Monica

The Gator and Miss Monica, hosts

Rick "The Gator" Bolling was born in New Orleans and grew up in Jacksonville, Florida. He earned his nickname earlier than most DJs, thanks to a grandmother who said he was "like an alligator" since he would eat almost anything. The Gator's fond memories of the blues go way back -- as a curious three year old he was fascinated with the sound in his neighborhood of three men playing music on a guitar, washboard and soda bottle. He has hosted an urban contemporary blues show on WPFW for seven years.

"Miss Monica" Lewis and The Gator met at a concert when he mistook her for an acquaintance. The chance encounter has paid dividends for both, as the duo have an excellent rapport and on-air presence. Lewis began at WPFW doing public service announcements and weather reports. She has been with the station for five years, and has hosted several events, including performances by Gene Chandler and Barbara Carr.

Big Jesse Yawn

Often called the Washington-Baltimore area's greatest undiscovered talent, Big Jesse Yawn may change that title with the release of his first full CD, *Forever More*. The Florida-born vocalist has a smooth sound that ranges several octaves, from bass baritone to falsetto. Yawn has truly earned his stripes as a bluesman, serving in the Army where his booming voice landed him a spot in the 77th Army Band in the early 1960s. Like so many great performers, Yawn got started by singing in a church choir. He and his brothers formed the Harmony Kings, and became so good they received regular invitations to appear on Sunday morning radio in the Tampa Bay area. Big Jesse's club career really took off when he visited a brother in upstate New York in the 1950s.

Though the days were filled with the toils of a construction job, his nights were often spent at local clubs where he was always invited on stage. Yawn performed with such jazz greats as Jack McDuff, Jimmy Smith, and the incomparable guitar wizard George Benson.

Big Jesse Yawn's big vocals and smooth stage presence led him to open for powerhouse 1960s acts such as Wilson Pickett and Mary Wells. In the early 1970s, Yawn's day job provided him an opportunity to move to Maryland. The planned community of Columbia was under construction, and work was plentiful in the area. Yawn settled into the Free State and, although most of his time was spent in the construction business, he still managed to hit the occasional club or do a few promotions. In the 1980s he began to re-emerge as a regular club vocalist, mostly in the Washington area. The exposure and commercial airtime that had been missing from his career for so many years finally came to Yawn in the 1990s when some of the world's finest musicians – well aware of Big Jesse's talent – helped him record his first album, *Forever More*. Yawn and his band, the Music Men, have performed for President Clinton and the Queen of England.

Hardway Connection

When you think of the blues, an eight-piece band probably doesn't come to mind. With so many stories of bluesmen and women eeking out a living with their music, one might find it incredulous that eight musicians could hang together long enough to get established. But it's been 18 years, and Hardway Connection is still going strong. Of course, it helps to be really, really good. The band has taken top honors in the National Blues Talent Competition in Memphis – no small feat considering the top-name competition. Hardway Connection has performed at the prestigious W.C. Handy Blues Awards show, as well as the BB King Club in Memphis and the Bayou in Washington, DC. They've opened for such blues notables as Johnny Taylor, Harvey Scales, Toni Terry and Chuck Brown. Band members, all from the Washington area, are Robert Owens, Gary L. AuKard, Floyd F. Haywood, Jerome A. Mackall, Raymond L. Blake, Andre T. Leach, Herbert A. Spears and Toni Matthews.

Jimmy Johnson

Jimmy Johnson had been playing guitar and singing professionally for two decades before the world came to appreciate his blues talent. Not that the world was to blame – Johnson was making a good living for a musician by playing the popular R&B sounds of the 1950s and 60s on the south and west sides of Chicago. Though Mississippi-born, Johnson made his way to Chicago where he worked as a welder and pursued music as a hobby. But younger brothers Syl and Mac dove into the music world full time, and it wasn't long before Jimmy followed. In 1959 Johnson began playing with Magic Sam and Freddie King. Fortunately, his love for the blues didn't jade his perspective. Music was a business; to make a living you had to play what would sell. And R&B music was topping the charts. Johnson plied his craft in this genre for nearly 20 years, and was highly successful as a guitarist and bandleader in the windy city.

Alas, when the blues are in you, they come out sooner or later. Johnson began a back-to-the-blues campaign in 1974, joining Jimmy Dawkins as a rhythm guitarist. Johnson, Dawkins, and Otis Rush toured Europe and Japan. Johnson's acclaimed guitar work can be heard on Rush's live recording from Japan as well as two Dawkins' studio albums. Johnson received a grammy nomination for his contributions to the compilation *Living Chicago Blues Vol. 1*. He has recorded several solo albums, winning a Handy Award for his *I'm a Jockey* release on the Verve label.

By the way, fans of the 80s alternative/cult group Talking Heads will be interested to know that Johnson's brother Syl originally recorded "Take Me to the River," long before David Byrne and the Heads made it their first hit and career springboard.

Shemekia Copeland

It's hard to imagine an 18-year old who could sell the blues with any degree of sincerity. So you may want to close your eyes when Shemekia Copeland comes on stage. Sure, she's matured a little since her first album – recorded when she was 18 – met with tremendous critical acclaim. But the daughter of Texas blues guitar great Johnny Clyde Copeland has been in the groove since her first note. Now that she's all grown up (age 21!), Copeland is the talk of the music world. Comparisons to Koko Taylor, Aretha Franklin, Etta James and Ruth Brown are common. Copeland's incredible voice carries the worldliness of a well-traveled musician for good reason. Her upbringing included a Texas blues education from dad, and a daily dose of reality on the tough streets of Harlem. "I never knew I wanted to sing until I got older," says Copeland. "But my dad knew ever since I was a baby. He just knew..."

Though her mind didn't become set on music until she was 15, Copeland accompanied her dad on stage at Harlem's legendary Cotton Club when she was only eight years old. Shemekia's style can be categorized as a melting pot of funk, blues, soul and gospel, wrapped up in a world of experience and delivered with the boundless energy of a teenager. In her brief career, Copeland has already appeared on Good Morning America and has shared stages with Clarence Gatemouth Brown, James Cotton, Bobby Rush and Johnnie Johnson. She has played the Chicago Blues Festival, the North Atlantic Blues Festival and the New York State Blues Festival. Copeland has appeared at Chicago Blues in New York, the House of Blues in Boston and Blind Willie's in Atlanta. Her debut album, *Turn the Heat Up*, is on Alligator records.

RENNIE FORUM

Hosted by Nap Turner

Nap Turner, Host

Many would argue that Nap Turner *is* WPFW radio. Turner's "Don't Forget the Blues" show airs on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. He still performs on occasion, mostly as a vocalist but also as an actor. Turner has appeared in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill*, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and *Fathers and Sons*. Driven largely by requests from WPFW listeners, Turner recently issued a spoken word recording of journalist Langston

Hughes' *Simple Stories*. Called "Hughes Views of the Blues," the classic readings are backed by music from the Charlie Hampton Quartet, with Nap himself on the contrabass. In all his endeavors, Nap Turner continues to serve as a fountain of knowledge on the blues and the history of the blues in the Washington area. See the inside front cover for more on Nap.

Diamond Jim Greene

Diamond Jim Greene was born and raised on the blues-rich south side of Chicago. His initial exposure to blues music was through Arvella Gray, a blind street singer and guitarist who performed on Ellis Avenue in the late 1950s. Gray's street-smart, from-the-heart acoustic blues hit Jim Greene way down. Greene has performed in numerous blues bands, including the original Blues Ambassadors, an all-acoustic group based in southern California. For the last 15 years, he has performed solo or with a harmonica player and/or upright bass. Greene has played with such greats as Cephas and Wiggins, John Jackson, Archie Edwards, Paul Geremia, and Roy Bookbinder. He has opened for such top name blues acts as James Cotton, Buddy Guy, Ike Turner, Otis Clay, Koko Taylor, John Hammond, Duke Robillard, Saffire, Sherman Robertson, Joe Louis Walker, Mississippi Heat and Lonnie Brooks.

Greene has toured extensively throughout America and Europe, spreading the rich delta-piedmont style blues to festival goers everywhere. He has performed at the Chicago Blues Festival, Long Beach Blues Festival, and the International Blues Festival at Lucerne, Switzerland. His most recent CD, *Coach House Blues* (1999, Cooling Board Records), unites the rural acoustic blues sound with modern lyrics in several original compositions.

Greene's instruments of choice are 12-string guitars, and vintage National Steel guitars much like the one he saw Arvella Gray play.

Bill Kirchen

There are not enough adjectives to describe Bill Kirchen's guitar playing. Which is fine because there isn't enough space here to keep up with his accomplishments. Kirchen twanged his way to early success with Commander Cody and His Lost Planet Airmen in the 1970s. Their version of Hot Rod Lincoln, with Kirchen on guitar, is simply unforgettable. For those not familiar with Commander Cody, Kirchen's studio and stage work have graced performers across the musical spectrum. Gene Vincent, Link Wray, Danny Gatton, Emmylou Harris, Hoyt Axton, Nick Lowe, Elvis Costello, Tito Puente – the list goes on and on. Why such varied artists? Kirchen plays an extraordinary blend of country-folk-blues-bluegrass that few performers can match. It's true Americana, and his sound is unmistakable for good reason -- while the rock world has glorified the Fender Stratocaster guitar, Kirchen is among a select few to master and remain loyal to Fender's softer sounding Telecaster. His knowledge of guitars is so thorough that Kirchen is in demand as much for his lecture skills as his playing. When the Smithsonian Institution assembled their history of the electric guitar exhibit in 1996, Kirchen was asked to share his expertise.

The group Bill Kirchen and Too Much Fun has performed thousands of shows and won numerous music awards, including Roots Rock Album and Instrumentalist of the Year at the 1999 Washington Area Music Awards (Wammies). They took home five Wammies in 1998, including Musician of the Year and Artist of the Year. Kirchen stays extremely busy; he and the band perform more than 250 shows each year.

Cephas and Wiggins

Individually, they are stellar performers who can jam with the best in the world. But put John Cephas and Phil Wiggins together and you create a whole new world of music. John Cephas was born in Washington, DC in 1930, and learned early on the unique alternating thumb and finger picking style that defines Piedmont blues guitar. After working as a carpenter and fisherman, Cephas decided to try his hand at music as a way of life. In the 1960s he joined pianist Wilber Ellis' band, working with the group until Ellis' death in 1977. Cephas' masterful fingerpicking is a perfect accompaniment to his rich, baritone voice. The sound would be unrivaled if only it included an impassioned, soulful harmonica...

Enter Phil Wiggins. Born nearly a quarter-century after John Cephas, Wiggins began his musical career with some of the best names in Washington-area blues: Archie Edwards, John Jackson and Flora Molton. His harmonica sound is an infusion of these influences and the stylings he picked up by listening to countless piano and horn melodies. Wiggins and Cephas met at the Smithsonian National Folk Life Festival in 1976. Cephas, Wiggins and Ellis were joined by bassist James Bellamy and the Barrellhouse Rockers were born. A year after Ellis' death, Cephas and Wiggins set out on their own. And the world of country-styled blues hasn't been the same since.

JAMANI'S

Dr. S.O. Feelgood

Dr. S.O. Feelgood hails from Mississippi, though Washington, D.C. blues fans claim him as their own. He emcees the D.C. Blues Society monthly jams between October and May, runs the Society's educational performances, and is involved in many other Blues Society events. Dr. Feelgood is a singer, songwriter, story teller, drummer and all around crowd pleasing showman. "When I sing the blues, I blend the sounds of Chicago and the Mississippi Delta," explains Feelgood, adding, "When I am singing R&B of the 50s, 60s and 70s I do it with a gospel root that sets fire to my soul and my audience. And when I crank up some good old rock and roll music I am a 260 pound out of control fatman who slows down the pace only long enough to sing a tender love ballad." The Feelgood Band provides the musical foundation for the energy of Dr. Feelgood. They often warm up the audience with such grooves as *Soulman* and *I Shot the Sheriff*. Dr. S.O. Feelgood is a regular at blues venues throughout the Washington area. He is also popular on the

festival circuit and has performed at the Washington Folklife Festival, Virginia Beach Music Festival and the Southern Maine Blues Festival.

Blueshounds

This summer saw the Blueshounds strut their stuff for an international audience at Washington's annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The national mall crowds were treated to the 'Hounds trademark funky-rockin' sound with its strong gospel, jazz and R&B influences. Founded in 1995 by guitarist Tony Rakusin and bassist Chris Dean, the Blueshounds have become a local favorite with regular appearances at City Blues, Madams Organ and Whitlows. They took top honors at the 1998 DC Blues Society Talent Contest and earned a spot in the lineup for the 1998 International Blues Talent Contest in Memphis. Band members find the festival circuit as entertaining and enjoyable as the club scene, and they have heated up many summer venues over the last few years, including the 1999 DC Blues Fest, the 1999 BBQ Battle, Gator Appreciation Day at Lamonts, and the Easy Rider Blues Fest. Rounding out the Blueshounds lineup are lead vocalist Barbara Jackson, drummer Barry "B-funk" Turner and veteran keyboardist Nick Martin, who played with several popular 50s groups including The Orioles and The Clovers. Martin has also toured Europe with 60s legend Wilson Pickett.

Memphis Gold

Lead singer and guitarist Chester Chandler and harmonica player Charlie Sayles team up to bring the energy of the street to Memphis Gold. Chandler, the 13th of 14 children, was earning coins from the crowds along Memphis' Beale Street when he was eight years old. By age 14 he was playing the Memphis club scene, and well on his way to a career as both a lead act and supporting musician. Chandler is a 10-year Navy veteran, and has performed with such notables as BB King, Albert King, Carla and Rufus Thomas, Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, and the Temptations. He has worked the east coast circuit extensively, occasionally using the name Lil' KD King.

Charlie Sayles is known for his appearances in blues festivals all over the world. He has played his harmonica in the streets and taught harmonica in prison classes. He is reportedly the man passersby see at Washington's Metro Center train station (13th & G Streets), serenading lunchtime strollers and diners with his smooth electrified harmonica and improvised lyrics. Sayles has recorded extensively in England. On stage he is commanding, demonstrative, and convincing. While much of his work has been solo, Sayles often appears with Chandler under the name Memphis Gold. In addition to their local appearances at Whitlows, Afterwords Café, and Music City Roadhouse, the band has performed in Japan, Korea and Guam.