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SAN DIEGO
ROUBADOOR

Alternative country, Americana, roots, folk,
blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass music news



January 2005

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Nickel Creek: Living the Dream



P ickles the horse chews contentedly in the small backyard pasture as the three youngsters on the back porch play their instruments. It's peaceful and

bucolic in rural Vista during the mid 1980s for these three home-schooled youngsters who already show prodigious talents on their musical instruments. For Sara Watkins, born in June 1981, it is the fiddle, almost too big to fit under her chin, that lights up the magnetic smile on her face. For older brother Sean, born in February 1977, it is the mandolin and guitar. And for their pal and musical playmate Chris Thile, born in

February 1981, also a home grown prodigy raised in the Idylwild mountains a couple of hours from Vista, it is the mandolin. The three friends are already creating quite a stir at bluegrass festivals and contests.

Life is good in those early days. School at home, church and church activities, surfing, skiing, camping with the family, snowboarding, baseball, and music fill the days. Some call them "hothouse kids" because of the way their parents home school them and insulate them from the vagaries of the outside world, but it is undeniable — these are not just great musicians, they are great kids. Normal, happy kids doing normal kid stuff. Body boarding at Tamarack is a must for

Sean and Sara when the surf is good, and one can feel the excitement in the house as they prepare for one of their regular surf safaris to Carlsbad. Mom Karen happily shows the latest photos of the body board exploits, and Sean and Sara both expound on the great rides, and "getting pounded" on the bigger days. Chris is way into baseball and is a star kid pitcher.

Continued on page 8.



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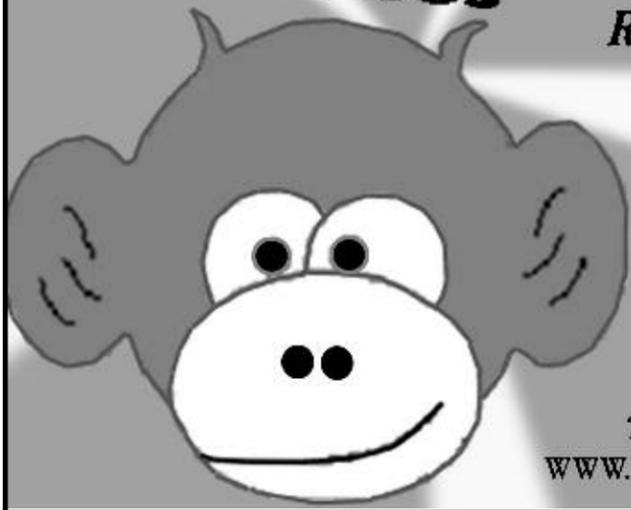
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- Sun • 9 Greg Laswell, Andrew Foshee
- Wed • 12 Alex Esther, grandpadrew, Radio Free Earth
- Thurs • 13 Amy Shamansky, May's River, Jackie Daum
- Fri • 14 Angela Correa CD Release
- Sat • 15 Eve Sells
- Sun • 16 Steph Johnson, Aaron Bowen, Flathead
- Wed • 19 Steve Poltz
- Thurs • 20 Acoustic Underground
- Fri • 21 Robin Henkel
- Sat • 22 Jenn Grinels CD Release, Trevor Davis
- Sun • 23 Saba, Dave Doobinin, Ashley Matte
- Wed • 26 Steve White & Louise
- Thurs • 27 Billy Shaddox
- Fri • 28 The Shambles, The Sugarplastics, Marc Decerbo, Dave Humphreys
- Sat • 29 Anya Marina CD Release
- Sun • 30 Gregory Page, Tristan Prettyman



Alternative country, Americana, roots, folk,
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MISSION

To promote, encourage, and provide an alternative voice for the great local music that is generally overlooked by the mass media; namely the genres of alternative country, Americana, roots, folk, blues, gospel, jazz, and bluegrass. To entertain, educate, and bring together players, writers, and lovers of these forms; to explore their foundations; and to expand the audience for these types of music.

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Special tribute to San Diego Troubadour founders Ellen and Lyle Duplessie.

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Do you have a story to share about Ellen, Lyle, or both? Please contact Liz Abbott at sdtroubadour@yahoo.com to submit your story in written form. Articles can be funny, serious, short, or long. We intend to include as many different stories as space will allow. Submission deadline: January 15.

welcome mat



by Chuck Schiele

It's funny where life takes you. They say when one door closes, another door opens. This is always true with precise timing. I live by it. After a crazy year, one of my doors closed and it was suggested that I "hit the trail," so to speak. And in the next instant, my new door opened.

I was recently hired for an art gig on the East Coast, specifically upstate New York, an opportunity with too many blessings to forego, so I went. And with little fussing, and great unforeseen irony, I furthered my purpose by making it a music trip as well. Early last November I began my drive across America, choosing my route to include as many music cities and landmarks along the way as I could. By the time my journey is over, I will have visited Las Cruces, El Paso, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Austin, Little Rock, Memphis, Nashville, Louisville, Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland, Buffalo, Syracuse, New York City, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Highlights of my trek are dinner at a quaint Southwestern restaurant in Los Cruces called La Poste. I tried a sopapilla and, of course, a real-deal chile relleno, which was worthy of driving a full day through the Mars-like terrain of Arizona and New Mexico. On the next day, after driving through the flatness of Texas, I saw my folks on my Dallas-Ft. Worth stop. Then, after spending a pretty Tuesday morning cruising through Arkansas, I hit Memphis.

November 9/Memphis, TN

My favorite stop so far has been Memphis. I had the opportunity to visit the Memphis Recording Service, which was founded by Sam Phillips and eventually became world-famous Sun Studio. It still holds most of the antiquated equipment that was once



state of the art. From this studio Sam Phillips not only

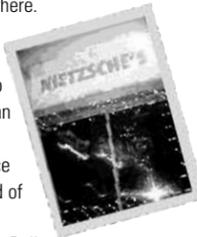
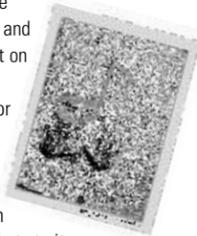
brought a new league of musicians to the world, including B.B. King, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, T. Bone Walker, and a whole bunch more, he also ushered in a modern music revolution, a new "sound," a new "thing." Several years ago U2 recorded "When Love Comes to Town" here with B.B. King. I got to talking with the engineer and managed to book a recording session in January as part of an eventual solo release.

On Beale Street I ate bodacious ribs for lunch then took a cruise through B.B. King's bar and Isaac Hayes' restaurant on Peabody Place. Hollywood is famous for its Walk of Fame featuring sidewalks with stars commemorating the heroes of American film. Memphis pays tribute to its wealth of musicians in the same way, only with eighth notes. The Gibson guitar factory is only two blocks from Beale St., so I had to go there too, which was half thrill and half frustration because I am never able to avoid coveting more sexy guitars to add to my collection.

November 15/Buffalo, N.Y.

NIETZSCHE'S

Gotta start somewhere. Picked up a local *ArtVoice* magazine, which caters to Buffalo culture. I jumped into an open mic at this cool, seedy Bohemian place in the art district, kind of a cross between the Rhythm Lounge and the Belly Up, only trippier. Upon entry I noted that the weathered Nietzsche sign was flanked on



each side by an angel playing a harp and the devil playing the fiddle, sort of a gargoyle scone thing. There was an old-school Molson export beer sign flickering in the window. I liked it already. It was surreal inside, mysterious, unpretentious, and yet unbelievably cool. Inside a dark and cavernous room loaded with locals, there was a unique vibe to this room, unlike any I've felt thus far at any gig. New Yorkers stand at the bar differently somehow.

Since closing time isn't until 4 a.m. in New York, gigs start late. And the later it gets, the more crowded it gets. I was up third and hit it at around midnight. After the first song, a friendly drunkard approached me, insisting that I play a song I never heard of so he could sing along. "Nope. Sorry, bro..." So he suggested the Beatles. Oddly, while this was going on, his buddies at the bar were all looking me straight in the eye shaking their heads as if to say, "No, don't let him." I got out of it by dedicating a Beatle selection to him, whereby he returned to his seat with his arms triumphantly in the air. I thought to myself how life is like a cartoon at times. It was an entirely odd evening. But I made a music buddy or two, wrote down the names of some places to play, and enjoyed my Molson.

November 21/Buffalo, N.Y.

HIGHER GROUND

Higher Ground is a pretty cool place to play. The strip mall venue serves as a church

in a coffeehouse setting. (Imagine going to church at Claire de Lune and then playing a gig there that night). The sound system was great, the stage was huge, and a giant tree, which was part of the architecture, served as a stage prop. Way cool. Bands play for free and for \$3 they record your set. The staff includes congregation volunteers who also work for free. Proceeds go to charity and help keep the church running. Probably one of the most wholesome settings I've ever played in.

AL-EE-OOP

I had a great time here. Although I was supposed to play 15 minutes during an open mic, which was basically an audition for a better slot on a better night, they made me stay up there for over an hour. And everyone sang with me when I played familiar stuff. (I discovered the most effective way to win a bar over is to play "Folsom Prison Blues," hands down. Bingo!)

About five songs in, three guys from the audience stood up at the same time and kinda single-filed onto the stage — first a bass player, then a conga guy, and another guitarist who knew the backing vocals. By verse two they were "in," and we had a band. There we were, playing stuff we didn't know. I had a great time and wound up in the Saturday groove.



November 24/Syracuse, N.Y.

RECORDING SESSION AT DUTCH BEETZ WITH M80 TYLER WALTON

This was a different kinda gig for me altogether. It wasn't really about guitars as much as it was beats, grooves, raps. Nevertheless, Tyler asked me to lay a few guitar tracks on some of the ones he was working on. At 19 years old he's brilliant, raw, and spends all day, everyday, working on beat music. His instincts and concerns about composition, sound, and mixing are so different from mine that I found it irresistible. With a few connections from my old Syracuse neighborhood, I was set up with several guitars and some gear goodies, along with a few things of my own.

"So, whaddya want?" I asked.

"I dunno, Dawg. Just do your 'do,'" he replied.

"Okay, blow," as I saddled the guitar into my body right where I like it.

"Mlles," he said (his way of saying "...and do it good!").

We played for a while and he filed the takes for a later mix. I have no idea



what he's gonna do with it, but I was happy and he was happy, so, well... okay. Then he turns around and said, "Do you know this?" as he dialed up "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." The next thing I knew, I was copping the lead lick. But what I was playing over was a com-

plete departure from the famous take we know so well. Way out there — HeavyHeavyHeavy Hip-hop. I thought it was so cool that we're so dissimilar yet were still able to collect our differences into art. And how the Beatles reached a kid two generations away from the day they mixed it.

FIRESIDE SESSIONS AT SPINDRIFT

For me, spending the winter in a New York apartment is almost equal to being on the moon. One of the things I do to cope with being away from home is to write music articles. Most of the time I'm overtime busy. The other thing I do is play music. I brought my portable studio with me and as many little goodies I could stuff into my suitcase. I've been working on a few songs since I've been here. One is a tune I heard, while driving, blowing across Lake Ontario from Toronto, a thing called "Crabucket." Oh man, I flipped. I like a lot of tunes. But every now and then a song truly reaches me on an entirely different level and it has to do with "soul." I learned that it was a local Toronto artist called K-OS. I found a copy, learned it, and will bring this thing home. Two other songs have affected me in the same way. "Snapshot," by Dave Howard, has always had my attention but I recently took another spin through it and fell completely in love with it. If anyone were to write the song that I am trying to write myself, this is the song. I took it and raised the key to G to accommodate my vocal range and recorded it one snowy Sunday morning as the fireplace was blazing and I was overdosing on coffee. "I Need Love" by a lady named Sam Phillips (great serendipity!) is another song I flipped over when I heard it and another lyric that not only speaks to me but also represents the ground on which I stand as a soul. And that is something, I just might record at Sun Studio, when I head back home.

December 16/San Diego, CA

HUMPHREY'S

The middle of my trip was marked by a few days home to play the annual Christmas Benefit Concert at Humphrey's with 21 Grams, which was a grand evening. We raised a lot of money for homeless teens, and I got to have a toddy with my friends. Ironically, 21 Grams will be visiting Buffalo for the holidays and we will, once again, party and maybe get a little work done on our forthcoming CD (interrupted a third of the way through by this trip). I thawed a little, let the sun hit me good, handled some business, and had breakfast, lunch and dinner with friends on the beach. Another delight of my trip home was to discover that the Gandhi Method (of which I am one third), released its new CD.

This tour has reached the halfway point, and I have logged over 4,000 miles, more than a dozen cities where I played gigs in each, recording sessions in some, four recording projects, and I'm still incurring momentum.

My next journal installment will cover further episodes from the road, from this moment to my return to San Diego.



Why did the chicken cross the road?



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Music Lover Stays Young at Heart

Eugene Vacher's Story Continues . . .

by Lois Bach

PART TWO

When Eugene Vacher retired from his teaching career in 1972, he and his beloved wife, Mary, returned to the same property in El Cajon where he grew up. But Vacher needed another career, and he wanted to make certain that music was a major part of it. Mary was the one who led him there.

As a teenager Mary was an accomplished pianist. When the couple lived in Europe, Mary bought a couple of mandolins in Germany. In 1974, while attending a social event, the couple heard a mandolin orchestra performing. One of the players invited them to sit in during a practice, and while Mary joined in with one of her mandolins, Vacher decided that sitting on the sidelines wasn't for him. It wasn't long before he joined his wife. Having purchased an octave mandolin in Belgium years before for about \$10, he tuned it up and began playing mandola parts with the orchestra.

Victor DeGuide, conductor and founder of the mandolin orchestra, was originally from Chicago where he studied violin and viola as a child and later performed with the Chicago Symphony. After moving to San Diego in 1949, he began playing viola with the San Diego Symphony and taught music in the city schools. In 1968, as an extension of a fretted-string instrument class for adults at Patrick Henry High School, DeGuide founded the mandolin orchestra, calling it The Singing Strings. The orchestra performed regularly at the Organ Pavilion in Balboa Park and at Squibob Square in Old Town, "until the square got eaten by termites," Vacher laughs. Seaport Village was also a regular concert site on Saturdays.

Soon after joining the mandolin orchestra, Vacher began writing new arrangements for its library. In 1977 the band acquired a new member by the name of Jim Trepasso, who had recently been hired to teach music in the Coronado school system. When Imel Willis, the principal who interviewed Trepasso, told him he had the job, he jokingly added that he'd also have to play bass mandolin in the

group, which was managed, coincidentally, by Willis.

Living in a house filled with musical instruments acquired over the years, Trepasso admits that collecting them is his passion.

"I was four or five years old when I bought my first piano, which I still have," he laughs. What's his most prized instrument? "I have a bass trumpet that my great grandfather played in the Italian Army band."

Originally from Crystal Falls, Michigan, Trepasso performed in the Northwood Symphony Orchestra while in high school as well as in a combo called the Swinging Gentlemen, whose leader sang with Glenn Miller. In 1966 he entered Northern Michigan University, majoring in music education. Although he was set to begin his first teaching position right after graduating in 1970, Trepasso was drafted into the Army. Things were looking good when he auditioned for and was accepted into the Army band. However, after his orders came, and before he was shipped off to Vietnam, the band he was to join hit a mine field on their way to a job; all were killed. Trepasso was sent to Hawaii instead.



Jim Trepasso

"Fort Shafter, Pacific Command," Trepasso remembers. "Our performance uniforms were Army-issue Hawaiian shirts, white shorts, and white shoes."

During the three years he spent teaching beginning band in the Coronado elementary schools after serving in the Army, he met his wife, Carolyn, a speech and language specialist. At the time Trepasso joined the mandolin orchestra he played a Gibson mando-bass. That June he took over as

the summer conductor while Vacher and DeGuide handled regular conducting positions. The next few years saw several transitions for the mandolin orchestra, including being split into two separate orchestras. But eventually, following DeGuide's death, Trepasso and Vacher took over as conductors and arrangers for the San Diego Mandolin Orchestra.



San Diego Mandolin Orchestra

Today, the mandolin orchestra's play list varies from traditional ethnic music and show tunes to classical pieces. Although most of the folks who join the mandolin orchestra have experience playing another instrument (many are former violinists), some newcomers join so they can learn. For example, concertmaster Ted Scaffidi, who had been playing the mandolin by ear since he was 13 years old, was not able to read music when he joined in 1990.

Bill Lee, who plays informally with Irish musicians, says that getting involved with the orchestra helped improve his sight reading.

Theresa Cooper joined in 1982 after hearing a concert in Seaport Village. She remembers, "From the gazebo came this wonderful Italian music from my childhood. So each week I'd come to the practice, just playing one note in each measure at first. I just love it. We're like a family here."

Although the average age of the orchestra's members is in the mid-sixties, their ages range from 41 to 95.

"Playing music keeps you young," says orchestra member Dolores Miller. And, apparently, so does listening. Some of the group's favorite performances are those held at retirement homes where the audience enthusiasm is unmistakable.

In 2003 the orchestra hosted the Classical Mandolin Society of America convention in San Diego, the largest gathering of mandolin players in North America. Participants travel from throughout the world to attend.

The San Diego Mandolin Orchestra is open to new members who play mandolin, mandola, mandocello, and guitar. Practices are at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday at the Nazareth House, 6333 Rancho Mission Rd., San Diego. For information, call 619/435-0837.

THE CITY GUARD BAND

Back in the 1880s San Diego was a booming little city that loved its brass bands. One of the city's most popular was the City Guard Band, established in 1880. The band practiced in an area next to the City Guard headquarters, which was the state militia, and got its name when asked by one of the soldiers to play in their parade. In addition to Saturday night concerts in

Horton Plaza, the band performed at the city's important and official functions, including opening day for the San Diego Cable Railway in 1890 and the Cabrillo Celebration in 1892. The band also led a procession through downtown ten days before the declaration of the Spanish American War. In 1915 the City Guard Band became the official band for the Panama-California Exposition. When the United States entered WWI in 1917, the band lost most of its members to the Army and the City Guard Band dissolved. Most of the union musicians left in the area were absorbed by Coronado's Tent City Band.

"When I first started playing with the symphony in 1927, quite a few of the union members had begun in the City Guard Band," Vacher remembers.

Don Harrington is a former member of the Bonham Boys Band, a group he joined while still in school and that Vacher had been in charge of while in college. Anxious to reorganize the City Guard Band after such a long hiatus, Harrington teamed up with Ed Ortiz, who had once been part of the National Guard Band, and George Wheeler, a retired Navy officer and donor of the Bonham Boys Band's entire music library, in 1981. Together the three men resurrected the new City Guard Band. Vacher was asked to join soon afterward. Bringing his alto horn to the first practice he attended, he was asked to conduct one of the numbers. By the second practice Vacher was considered for the conductor's position which he ultimately accepted.



Vacher conducting the City Guard Band at the Organ Pavilion, Balboa Park

Richard Warnock, who plays clarinet when he's not fulfilling his duties as the band's associate conductor, became a member in the early 1980s. He fondly remembers going to Balboa Park as a child to attend concerts in the Organ Pavilion.

"I never imagined that I'd actually be playing there one day," he laughs.

With an emphasis on turn-of-the-century band music, the band generally sticks to orchestral transcriptions



Eugene Vacher

and old time band music.

"We play a lot of marches by Sousa, Pryor, and Key," Vacher says.

"Our library contains music that was cast off from schools; music from the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. There are 2,000 marches in our collection and about 2000 concert pieces," Warnock adds.

Andrea Anderson, another member, started playing clarinet with the band in 1982 after she left the military. Before she settled in San Diego, Anderson performed in symphony orchestras in Hawaii and Michigan.

"Some of the music I've played in this band has been more challenging than symphony music I played," she contends.

One of their more interesting gigs was playing at the Parade of Lights on the Star of India, which they did for several years. When the fog came in, the mist would get their music so wet that they could barely turn the pages. The band currently performs in the center of Old Town at 2 p.m. on the fourth Saturday of each month beginning in April.

These days the band, which fluctuates between 20 to 40 members, is all volunteer and that includes the director, which Anderson claims is highly unusual for most groups in town. New members of all ages, including wind instrument and percussion players, are welcome. They practice every Tuesday evening 7-9 p.m. at the Rehearsal Hall in Balboa Park.

"Our youngest is still in high school and our oldest is probably Mr. Vacher. He played the horn until just a little bit ago," says Anderson.

Mary Vacher played with the mandolin orchestra for nearly 25 years and routinely attended City Guard Band concerts until her health began to fail. Sadly, she passed away in 2002.



Eugene Vacher playing in the mandolin orchestra

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Recordially, Lou Curtiss



Lou Curtiss

Dear George Varga, Rolling Stone, and Other List Makers:

I've been reading various "best song" lists that have been sent in recently. I don't think I'd want to make a list of my favorite songs because the list would change every day I'm on this earth. What bothers me is that the song lists are usually all rock and pop oriented with nothing much older than 1960 with a few top 40 excursions into the 1950s.

As the owner of a collector's record

shop, I know there are music collectors with a much wider range of musical tastes. May I recommend a few artists that people ought to include in their lists and some of the songs they wrote or recorded. My recommendations, in no special order, are listed on the right.

There are 102 songs (lists of an even 100 bother me). If you find all of these and listen to them, I'll give you another list next year that won't contain anything you'll read about in *Rolling Stone* or any of the mainstream media. This is roots music, much of which can be found on 78 rpm recordings, but a lot of it is available on vinyl LPs or even reissue CDs. At any rate, it takes some looking to find these, which is part of the whole song catching experience. Catch some or all of these and mix them in with your other top 100 lists. You'll find it's a good mix and if you don't, well, try again next year. The search for good songs is an endless one but you should always try to include some kind of music that you've never heard before. You might find that you like it.

Recordially,

Lou Curtiss

NATHAN ABSHIRE
Pine Grove Blues

FRANK CRUMIT
There's No One with Endurance Like the Man Who Sells Insurance

THE SONS OF THE PIONEERS
Blue Prairie

ROY HOGSED
Let's Go Dancin'

JOE TURNER
T.V. Mama

RUTH ETING
Ten Cents a Dance

JACK TEAGARDEN
One Hundred Years from Today

VALAIDA SNOW
I Wish that I Were Twins

BILL MONROE
Footprints in the Snow

THE CARTER FAMILY
Give Me Roses While I Live

HARRY MCCLINTOCK
The Trusty Lariat

BESSIE SMITH
My Kitchen Man

GENE KRUPA WITH ANITA O'DAY
Let Me Off Uptown

WOODY GUTHRIE
(If You Ain't Got the) Do Re Mi

CLIFF EDWARDS
Paper Moon

BING CROSBY
I Found a Million Dollar Baby (in a 5&10 Cent Store)

HANK WILLIAMS
Lost Highway

BILLY MURRAY
When the Grown-Up Ladies Act Like Babies

FRED ASTAIRE
I'm Puttin' All My Eggs in One Basket

HARRY CHOATES
Jole Blon

TEX WILLIAMS
Who? Me?

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front porch



by Anita York

It is no small secret that the radio business has evolved into nothing more than that – a business – with no regard for the quality or diversity of what is sent over the airwaves. You can channel surf and be pretty much guaranteed to hear the same thing on each station. What's the listening audience to do? We have no choice but to take our ears elsewhere, be it the emerging satellite radio or that bastion of free speech and independence: college radio.

We're fortunate to have KKSM Palomar College Radio, where music director Joan Rubin believes that their job, other than playing CMJ artists, is to give exposure to the usually overlooked local music scene through her weekly show, *Locals Live*.

Rubin doesn't purport to be a music expert. What she is, however, is an unabashed fan of all music and an ardent supporter of those who dedicate their lives to making it. In 2003 she was hosting a show called *The Eclectic Mix*, when a friend suggested she give a listen to up-and-coming singer-songwriter Curtis Peoples. Rubin had him on the show a few times and the rest, as they say, is history.

Peoples explains, "*Locals Live* happened because Joan has the type of trust in her artists and the instinct to allow people to be creative. I threw the idea at her not knowing if she'd really go for it at all, or maybe she'd let me play a few songs I wanted. Instead, she told me to fill the whole two hours. She let me do what all musicians dream of doing, control the radio! I felt it was a great way to get a stronger insight into who an artist is... Not just hear their own songs and the stories behind them, but hear the artists and songs that inspired them, that they love listening to." He then smiles and says, "It was really just an excuse for me to hear myself, Michael Jackson, and Counting Crows all in the same hour on the radio."

The premise is simple. Each week Rubin invites a different artist from the Southern California region to be her guest and play dee-jay for two hours as

KKSM: The Little Station That Could Palomar College Radio Showcases Independent Artists with *Locals Live*

well as perform some of their own music. The guests bring a playlist of music to share, usually songs you won't hear on commercial radio. She doesn't see the playlists beforehand and is just as surprised as her listening audience while the show unfolds. No holds barred (but within FCC guidelines), you'll hear everything from songs from Macedonia and speculation on the Freudian meaning behind Ella Fitzgerald's "A Tisket, A Tasket," to Tiny Tim's version of a Beatles tune. Says former guest Sue Palmer, "Joan's show is a blast and allows one to go in any and all directions with the concept of musical taste. *I loved it!*"

Rubin continues to be amazed at the wealth of talent here in San Diego and affectionately refers to her new-found music friends as "her peeps." One of her early guests, Peter Bolland, immediately became one of *Locals Live's* biggest promoters and began to spread the word about this new show spotlighting local musicians. So far the guest list includes such notables as Tim Flannery, Chris Klich, fellow deejay and singer-songwriter Anya Marina, Tyler Hilton, Berkley Hart, Eve Selis, Lowen and Navarro, Earl Thomas, and Candy Kane among others. Shows feature live performances from solo acoustic artists such as Mary Dolan to the full blown band sound of Danielle LoPresti and the Masses, who raised more than just the consciousness of professors in nearby classrooms.

Locals Live can be heard in North County on 1320 AM, county wide at Cox Digital Music Channel 958, as well as streaming over palomar.edu/kksm. Extending its reach worldwide via the Internet, KKSM receives emails from all across the U.S. as well as from Moscow, Peru, and Germany. One of the most rewarding messages came from a San

Diego-based soldier stationed in Iraq who said she loved the mix of music and that it made her feel connected to home.

KKSM could be just another Internet radio station, but its outreach to the local community through the regular airwaves is too important. Local high school football games are broadcast, as are announcements of events important to the region such as benefit concerts and fundraisers that might go unnoticed by the mainstream media. No event is too big or too small for KKSM.

This mighty little independent 500 Watt AM station survives because of passionate supporters like general manager Meg Banta, program director Zeb Navarro, and, most important, Palomar College's dean, Pat Schwerdtfeger. Despite funding cuts that continually threaten the \$20,000 AM transmitter budget, Schwerdtfeger and Banta believe it is critical to maintain the necessary revenue for the radio station and the campus newspaper, *The Telescope*, to continue. Most of the revenue is generated from advertising, but unlike commercial radio, there is no "pay to play" here. The deejays, who are mostly students, choose what is heard, much like in the early days of popular radio.

Banta feels there remains a need for what can be best described as "old school radio," that is radio of days gone by when AM was the only game in town and disk jockeys scouted the music scenes, introducing previously unheard of artists to their audience. She says, "*Locals Live* is everything radio should be — the sharing of ideas and influences from the people who know music. Musicians love the show as it gives a voice to the artist, and listeners love the show because the experience provides a rare glimpse into the inspirations behind the music."

Rubin echoes that sentiment and is



Curtis Peoples with Joan Rubin at the KKSM radio station

determined to see KKSM and *Locals Live* succeed by serving as both music director and sales manager. As she tells it, she was taking a photography class at Palomar College and happened by the KKSM studio one day when she was immediately bitten by the radio bug for which there is no known cure. Her program director says, "Joan is just amazing... In order to put on such a monumental show, she needs to be part booker, part engineer, and part interviewer. She pulls it off successfully every week without breaking a sweat."

Rubin also credits sound engineer Mike McCabe who volunteers at the station. He donates untold hours helping out and upgrading the equipment. McCabe's goal is to create a studio performance space for KKSM guests.

Navarro best sums up the KKSM experience with this thought: "As probably San Diego's only true independent radio station, I think our support for local music gives us a more unique offering than other radio stations in the area; where else are you going to find deejays working for free and for the love of music and radio?"

Indeed.

2005 brings changes to *Locals Live*. Starting January 18, it will air an hour later from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Pacific Time, every Tuesday. The time change will allow Rubin to host a brand new show during the preceding hour called *The Screening Room*. She'll be playing new music submitted to the station as well as playlists from the listening audience. If you're a loyal *Locals Live* listener or music lover, send a CD of your 10-12 song playlist to the following address. Please include the song title, artist, album, and year.

If you're an artist who'd like to be a guest on *Locals Live*, send your press kit and CD to:

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LIVE MUSIC WEEKENDS



Peers Pay Tribute to Local Master

by Tim Woods

Tom Boyer gets tremendous enjoyment from playing guitar in church; however, his view of heaven may differ somewhat from the church's. You see, Tom is absolutely certain that at God's left hand sits Chet Atkins. One of his most prized possessions is a guitar that the man himself (Chet, not God) signed for him. It has been one of Tom's life missions to spread the word according to Atkins, although over the past few years he has been penning his own compositions and defining his own sound. His growing friendship with international recording artist Tommy Emmanuel has also had an influence on his playing, but don't expect to see him using the top of his Taylor guitar as a snare drum anytime soon.

Tom credits D.R. (Don) Auten with giving him his first Chet licks and providing guidance over the years. As a young man he had taken the usual guitarist's route — playing in rock bands — before Don took him under his wing and introduced him to the style that became his touchstone.

Tom has a gift. His fingers dance across the strings with an unbelievable lightness that redefines the word finesse. His tremendous dedication to

honing his skills has served him well. Each year Tom performs at the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society gathering in Nashville and also participates in the Taylor Guitar demonstration at the annual NAMM Show, which features top notch players.

I met him at a party about ten years ago. Someone said, "Oh, Tom plays the guitar." When I actually heard him play, it was like, "uh yeah, no kidding!" I've had the privilege of playing alongside him at church for several years; his musicianship is so amazing that it's always a shock to realize that each year he just keeps getting better. He is always raising the bar for himself, striving to improve his seemingly flawless skills.

He may be serious about his music, but don't let that mislead you. As Carol Paton, music director at Foothills United Methodist Church can confirm, Tom is mischievous at heart. Growing up is not high on his priority list. It's a sure bet his teachers had to keep him at a front desk so they could keep him out of mischief. Even during life's dark times, his sense of humor is always present.

Tom often performs just for the love of it. One of my great joys is to hear him play at Just Java's open mic night. People come in not knowing what to

expect and, when he takes the stage and starts to play, the looks on their faces are best described as ones of awe. Guitar players especially appreciate his repertoire, which can run from Atkins and the Beatles to Ray Charles. It's not unusual to see a young man bring several friends with him the next week to witness "this great guitarist I discovered." Tom is always glad to take time with an aspiring young musician, answering questions and giving advice.

What makes it all so special is that Tom Boyer is such a nice, down-to-earth, approachable guy. If someone else is singing or playing and he thinks he might have something to add, he'll politely ask whether he can join them and play along. It's pretty cool to have someone of Tom's caliber playing on your set.

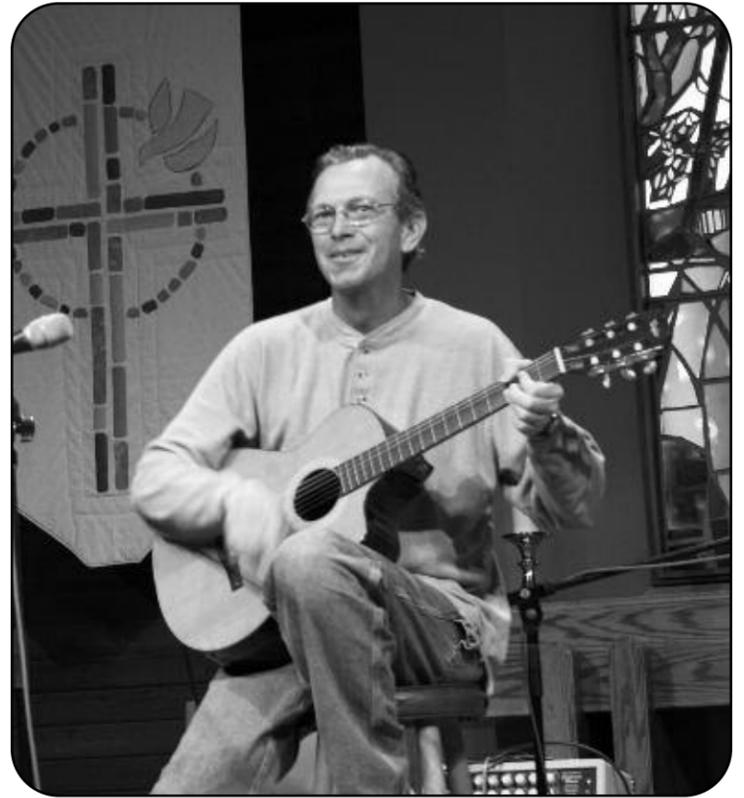
Local singer-songwriter and author Patty Hall is one who benefited from meeting Tom at the Just Java open mic. He subsequently played with her at the Adams Avenue Roots Festival and contributed to the CD she is currently working on. Although a veteran folk singer, Patty hadn't heard anything quite like Tom's fingerstyle technique. When she asked him how he learned to play with such skill, he credited several hours of practice every day. Tanya Rose, publisher of the Folk Song Society newsletter recalled that the first time she heard Tom was with Patty at the Roots Festival where he also played some solo numbers. She said the depth of feeling his playing evoked, clearly from his soul, touched her that day. Upon meeting him, his open demeanor made her feel an immediate affinity for him.

Celtic fingerstyle guitarist Christopher Dean admits that, while he and Tom play different genres of music, Tom's dedication and constant quest for growth has been an inspiration to him. As Johnny Cash and Ricky Skaggs alumni Jim Soldi commented, "Tom Boyer just plays his music unapologetically and with homage to Chet Atkins."

Reflecting on Tom's contribution to the local music scene, the general consensus is that the man, in addition to his devotion, commitment to learning, and humility, has served as an inspiration to anyone who has met him. While his music is world class and his skills enormous, he is the type of person who would touch you even if he weren't a performer.

Several months ago Tom was diagnosed with cancer of the neck and had to undergo a brutal regimen of therapy. One of the first to hear of Tom's illness was Christopher Dean, who immediately recalled a benefit concert the two of them had played for a young man who was at an emotional low point in his fight with cancer.

Remembering how the concert had transformed the boy's spirits, Chris determined that this would be a good thing to do for Tom, who gave his consent to go ahead with the project. Since Tom had adequate insurance, he asked that the proceeds go to the Oncology Department at San Diego Children's Hospital.



Tom Boyer playing at his benefit in November

Chris wanted to involve as many of Tom's close friends from the local music community as he could. So, together with mutual friend Suzy Reed, they contacted more people than necessary, knowing that not everyone would be available. They received an overwhelming response; those asked to play went to great lengths to juggle their itineraries to make it happen. As a measure of his tremendous popularity, so many players wanted to be included that each performance had to be limited to 10 minutes. It didn't matter to them how long they played, they just wanted to be there for Tom. One of the first artists to respond was Brian Baynes who owns a recording studio. He suggested compiling a CD for Tom that included a track from each performer who was taking part and selling it at the concert. Though it was a monumental task to accomplish in the short time available, he and Christopher made it happen.

The CD project was kept secret from Tom, although other artist friends of his heard about it and asked to play on the CD, including prominent recording artists Doyle Dykes, Edgar Cruz, and Pat Kirtley each of whom provided cuts. The resulting CD offers a great and varied listening experience. See the December issue of the *San Diego Troubadour* for a review.

The benefit concert took place on November 20 at Foothills United Methodist Church in La Mesa (Tom's church) and was well attended by several hundred people who gathered to lend their support. Those who attended were treated to an impressive display of San Diego's musical talent. The stellar list of performers included fellow fingerstyle guitarists D.R. Auten, Brian Baynes, Christopher Dean, Jim Earp, Richard Glick, Mike Nelson, and KEV — who put on an amazing display of fretboard finesse as well as an occasional vocal foray. Sprinkled throughout the afternoon were performances by pianist and songstress Marion Law and singer/guitarists Suzy Reed, Patty Hall, and Greg Campbell. A good portion of the Eve Selis band — Jim Soldi and his wife Sharon Whyte, who plays piano and wields a mean accordion — was also on hand. Former San Diegan Bob Boerner did a masterful job of

emceeding the event, adding his own inimitable performance to the show.

Although Tom wanted to perform with all of his friends that day, he was so sick from the therapy that there were doubts he could attend, let alone play. At about 10 a.m. that morning, he called, instructing, "Set up my equipment, I'm trying to get there." When he arrived during sound checks a collective cheer went through the group. After greetings from everyone, Christopher Dean came up to him, sat him down, and presented him with a copy of the CD. It took a moment to grasp what he was looking at but when it hit him, the enormity of it all overwhelmed him. There wasn't a dry eye in the house.

The whole event went off like clock work and was highlighted by Tom's performance; he played masterfully.

If you weren't there, you should have been. If you were there, I'm sure you will cherish the memory as I do. Sometimes great things come together for deserving people. This was one of those times. Great music was played, money was raised for a good cause, and everyone went home feeling great. It's wonderful to see how the San Diego music community comes together to support one of their own.

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parlor showcase



by Dwight Worden

(continued from front cover)

But, it's not all play; there is always the overriding dedication to music. As a young teen Sara, on more than one occasion, came home in tears from her violin lessons with Dennis Caplinger; but she always went back. To this day Sara remembers her lessons with Dennis with great fondness and nostalgia. An accomplished player in his own right and also a Vista local, Dennis gets the bulk of credit for teaching Sara the violin and instilling in her good work and practice habits that she maintains to the present.



Chris and Sean

Likewise it is John Moore, then a local and an outstanding guitar and mandolin player, who cultivated the budding talents of Sean and Chris through regular lessons on guitar and mandolin. John made sure that Chris' mandolin technique was learned early and correctly, as he did with Sean. If you've ever heard Bluegrass Etc. play, you've experienced the fireworks that Caplinger and Moore can generate, and these two fine players and teachers played major roles in shaping what we know today as Nickel Creek. Sean, who started on piano at age six, played mandolin in the very early days of Nickel Creek, complemented by Chris on guitar and Sara on fiddle. Sean and Chris are still known to rip off an occasional mandolin duet.

For Chris, his commitment to excellence in all activities as well as his musical talent was apparent so early that it was almost spooky — one of those once-in-a-generation combinations of raw talent, dedication,



Sara in 1990

and hard work that produces spectacular results. If he played golf, his name would be Tiger; if it were classical music it would have been Wolfgang. At age four Chris offered to trade his entire collection of quarters (10) for a mandolin and started lessons with Moore. Soon the Thile family bought a camper, spending time on the road and making the bluegrass festival scene. Young Chris was thriving musically — jamming like a pro and winning contests at age seven.

For Nickel Creek, it all started in the early to mid-'80s when the Thile and Watkins families began visiting That Pizza Place in Carlsbad to listen to the bluegrass

music of John Moore, Dennis Caplinger, Byron Berline, and others. John and Dennis took the youngsters under their wings and soon had them on the stage; Sara sang her first song on stage at age four. At the pizza parlor, besides drinking in the music, the three kids formed a friendship that has lasted almost two decades. Nickel Creek, the band, has been together almost 15 years, even though its members are all still only in their twenties. How many bands can say that?

Nickel Creek cut a western music tape called *A Nickel's Worth* as well as their first CD, *Little Cowpoke*, in the late '80s when the threesome were still pre-teens. The singing sounds like chipmunks doing country and western, but you can already hear their hot instrumentation. During that time they began performing, including an appearance at the Gene Autry Museum in Los Angeles, which led to the early recording sessions.

The two sets of parents, Chuck and Karen Watkins and Kathy and Scott Thile, were, and still are, very supportive of their kids' musical undertakings, share the same values and lifestyle, and are close friends. The parents are taxis when necessary, counselors when needed, good for a new set of strings in a pinch, and always fans and supporters who encourage their talented kids to chase their musical dreams. Scott played bass with the group during its early years and acted as chaperone at gigs. They were talented kids, no doubt, but without the early nurturing and support from their families they well might not be the Grammy Award winners they are today.

Serious recording began with Chris' first solo album, *Leading Off*, which was released in 1994 when he was 13. In it he introduced a baseball theme that would stay with him into his second album, titled *Stealing Second*, released in 1997. Chris, a star pitcher as a kid, maintained an impressive baseball card collection and, in typical fashion, was 100 percent into the sport. Both his early solo CDs showcase his impressive skills, including the original tune "Shipwrecked," which he wrote at age eight, as well as "Trail's End" and "Chris Cross," penned when he was 12. The songs' intricate melodies and changing time signatures are a challenge for even the most accomplished player. It was already apparent that Chris was one great mandolin player though barely in his teens.

As a band Nickel Creek produced its own first CD *Here to There* in 1997. Recorded in Murray, Kentucky, in the Thile's bathroom for its good acoustics, the music is solidly in the bluegrass category, true to the roots of this young band, but one can already hear the interest in musical adventure and innovation that would broaden as the band



matured. Many of the tunes were penned or co-penned by Sean or Chris. As with their lives, a Christian thread is apparent throughout this first CD, i.e., "Found Soul" by Caleb Reinhart and Chris Thile and "He Will Listen to You" by Mark Heard. At that time band members included Chris, Sean and Sara, with Chris' dad, Scott Thile, on bass.

As Nickel Creek gained recognition and respect, there were gigs at Encinitas' La Paloma Theater and at other local and regional venues, including performances for the San Diego Bluegrass Society. There was an eye opening trip to Japan in the mid-'90s.

Nickel Creek: Living the Dream

And there were jam sessions with Mark O'Connor, Luke and Jenny Bula, Bluegrass Etc., and Byron Berline, and experiments with Celtic music, jazz, rock, and other musical forms. The three teenagers were veritable sponges, unafraid to try and absorb anything and everything musical.

There were classical violin lessons, a trophy or two, an Arizona state fiddle championship at age 16, and music theory classes at Mira Costa Community College for Sara. There was success at San Diego State in guitar competitions and music classes for Sean, who, at the tender age of 18, was a finalist in the 1993 national flatpicking championships on both guitar and mandolin. I still have a copy of a beautiful little classical piece that Sean wrote for a class project. He recently wrote a classical sonata, which will be recorded in the near future. For the band there was victory in the Southwest Regional Division of the Pizza Hut International Bluegrass Band Championships as early as 1994.

There seemed no limit to where Chris could, and did, go with his mandolin, including an appearance with the San Diego Symphony in which he wowed the orchestra and a packed house with both classical and Nickel Creek pieces. In addition to music classes at Murray State University, including classical violin, he also garnered several nominations while still a teen for Mandolin Player of the Year from the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA), the bluegrass world's highest award, and won the award in 2001 at age 20. It is no exaggeration to say that Chris' mandolin playing at that age redefined the limits of the instrument.

In short, during this late teen period all three immersed themselves in all varieties of things musical, all taken in with bright eyed enthusiasm. Their musical progress was indeed something to witness during this period, but they also remained very down-to-earth, unpretentious normal folks. Everyone who knew them then agree that their talents swelled but not their heads.

With his family's guidance, Chris signed with Sugar Hill Records in 1993-1994, and the family moved to Kentucky, not far from Nashville, where his father took a job at Murray State University. This expanded the opportunities for Chris considerably although, for the first time, it split the three bandmates geographically. Nickel Creek remained intact, though, and the friendships flourished over distance, and so did the parents' phone bills, as they traded tapes and musical ideas by mail, computer, and phone. Soon Sean and Sara signed with Sugar Hill too, and the band was ready to kick into high gear.

There were appearances on Garrison Keillor's *Prairie Home Companion* radio show and on San Diego television, including KUSI's

morning show among other, ever higher profile, appearances. To the extent there was one fateful event in the rapid rise of Nickel Creek, it might well have been their appearance at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium in

The proof is in that first Alison Krauss-produced Sugar Hill CD, released in 2000, which was by far their best musical product up to that time. The production is excellent, the instrumentation stunning, and the vocals at a much higher level than their previous recordings, thanks to Krauss' tutoring, arranging, and coaching. The new CD also showcased the songwriting talents of Chris and Sean, which contained several of their original pieces.

Titled simply *Nickel Creek*, this CD all but broke the mold for this kind of music. It has Chris' original instrumental "Ode to a Butterfly," a dazzling, melodic, and complex tune that well earned the Grammy nomination and recognition it culled. There was also Chris' original and popular love ballad "The Lighthouse Tale" about a lighthouse keeper who watches from his tower as his true love is dashed to death on the rocks and then jumps to his death to join her. "The Lighthouse Tale" would later be featured in one of Nickel Creek's music videos. There was also Sean Watkins' compelling and original "Reasons Why," co-written with David Puckett (who was the Watkins' meter reader), featuring hauntingly beautiful melody and poetic lyrics, more subtle and metaphorical than anything yet recorded by the group.

"Reasons" was the song around which Nickel Creek produced its first of six music videos, shot mostly locally in San Diego's North County, with lots of shots inside the La Paloma Theatre, on the local beach, and in the oak trees inland. The band's "cute kids" image is nowhere to be seen, replaced by a sultry and sexy Sara and Sean and Chris looking very hip. The video did well on the Country Music Television charts. This first video even appeared on airlines as part of in-flight entertainment!



Photo: Peter Feldman

Sara, Chris, and Sean in 1991, with Scott Thile on bass

1998. The Ryman is a storied old performance hall that for years was home to the Grand Ole Opry and still presents some of the top bluegrass and country concerts. It so happened that one Alison Krauss was in the audience that night to hear her bandmate, Dan Tyminski, who was appearing after Nickel Creek. She was "blown away" by how good Nickel Creek was. After the show, Krauss went backstage, talk was had, and the next thing you know she's agreed to bring her formidable talents to the table as producer of Nickel Creek's next record, its first for Sugar Hill.

First, however, Krauss "put them through school." Krauss knows a thing or two about child prodigies, because she was one herself. And she knows more than a thing or two about success in the acoustic music business. Trivia question: Which female vocalist has won the most Grammy awards ever? Hint: She just passed 2004 with Grammys Aretha Franklin for the lead. Answer: You guessed it, Alison Krauss with 17 awards.



Alison Krauss in 2004 with Grammys Aretha Franklin for the lead. Answer: You guessed it, Alison Krauss with 17 awards.

Krauss loved the Nickel Creek band and its three talented members, whom she had known for some time, but she was not so impressed as she was in awe. This super talented kid band had, up to this point, experienced nothing but well deserved success and acclaim for their talents. Recognizing this talent, notwithstanding, Krauss ordered them all to her place for several weeks of intensive vocal training before she would take them to the studio to record the new CD. This was hard work, but with typical enthusiasm Chris, Sean, and Sara dove in, worked hard, learned from a true master, and absorbed it all.



Nickel Creek's first CD for Sugar Hill

One can hear and see in the "Reasons" music video and in much of the other music on the *Nickel Creek* CD, the band's stretch beyond traditional bluegrass and the projection of a hip, popular image that appeals to the youth music market, all a foreshadowing of their music to come. Backed by lots of touring and a second and third strong video, Nickel Creek has gone gold, selling more than 800,000 copies to date, netting the



parlor showcase



Photos courtesy of the Watkins family



Nickel Creek: Sara Watkins, Chris Thile, and Sean Watkins

went out and bought Dulcinea. I used to mow the lawn at my parents house, and I would listen to these records and sing harmony. If there wasn't a harmony vocal, I'd make it up. I imagined singing with Glen, and it totally made lawn mowing bearable."



Glen Phillips, Sara and Sean Watkins, and Chris Thile are the Mutual Admiration Society

Sara reports that the band had a great time traveling with Jones and Thomas, whom she describes as sweet, nice people but with some serious stories to tell. For example, when Nickel Creek and these English gentlemen were guests at a Seattle radio station the deejay asked Jones if he was staying at the Edgewater Hotel. Jones laughed and said, "not this time." Well, the much younger Nickel Creekers later learned about Led Zeppelin's legendary stay at the hotel back in the day when Jones and the others fished out the hotel window with raw steak, hauled in mud sharks, and put them in

Showered with success so rapidly, the bandmates still remained approachable, down to earth, and genuinely nice people.

the bathtub. One thing led to another, and soon groupies were everywhere and refrigerators were floating in the bay. The next time Led Zeppelin came to Seattle, they were required to post a deposit before entering the town!

The next band project was the second with Alison Krauss: a CD for Sugar Hill titled



This Side, which went gold in sales as of late 2003. The lead-off track is their award winning and hugely popular "The Smoothie Song" written by Chris. That and the CD's other tunes reflect a major step in the evolution of Nickel Creek's music. The instruments are still the traditional acoustic bluegrass stalwarts: mandolin, fiddle, acoustic guitar, and bass (no banjo, never has been). However, stirred into the mix are bouzouki and strings, along with electric bass. The production is stunningly warm and beautiful, the vocals as clear and strong as can be. This is one great listening record. Once again the band had successfully broken the mold.

A note about Nickel Creek's bass players. Who are they, you may ask, since they are not pictured in the band photos? Ever since Chris' dad Scott Thile left the band as bass player, Nickel Creek, the band, has been marketed as the three wunderkinds, Chris, Sean, and Sara. To be sure, the bass players are credited on recordings and represent an important part of the music in live performances, but you won't see the bass players' photos and bios on the Nickel Creek web page or in the photos of the band, in their posters, videos, or other marketing devices. No doubt, the William Morris agency, one of the top PR companies in the country helped the band realize that the band's major "marketability" is defined by its three young stars. Although still in their 20s, one must remember that Nickel Creek has been together for almost 15 years, and they have worked out a creative process together that

doesn't need another partner. So one needs to do a little looking to see who plays bass in the various Nickel Creek projects.

On *This Side* the bass players are among the best in the business. Byron House is there, who frequently plays with Nickel Creek and who the band finds especially compatible not only musically but in his Christian outlook as well. As with all of the band's bass players, he contributes a great deal to the Nickel Creek sound without taking any of the spotlight off the three stars. Edgar Meyer, who also plays on *This Side*, is a top classical bass player; a musical genius, and an innovator in his own right, having partnered with Yo-Yo Ma and Mark O'Connor on the genre bending *Appalachian Waltz* and *Appalachian Journey* CDs, among other endeavors. This month Chris Thile and Edgar Meyer will go on a 12-city tour together; melding acoustic mandolin and classical bass into something truly their own. Derrick Jones has also played bass for Nickel Creek, as has well respected Mark Schatz who has handled bass duties for the past few years

and who now plays bass on their current studio project. These fine bass players appear as guests of Nickel Creek. When you have a threesome that has worked together successfully for almost two decades there is no need to bring in another partner.

Defying categorization, *This Side* contains music that is definitely not bluegrass, even for a moment. Yes, it is acoustic, with some electronics stirred in as well as orchestral string contributions, producing an overall effect that is, in the best uncliché sense, new and exciting. Even if you listen to a lot of acoustic music, trust me, you have not heard this stuff before.

Some of the tunes are achingly beautiful and melodic. Others are fiery and heavy on smokin' instrumentation; others are offbeat and quirky, but all are done well. The material shows real range, from "House Carpenter," a traditional tune done simply and beautifully by Chris and Sara's wispy, sultry vocals on "Sabra Girl" to the band's cover of alternative rock band Pavement's "Spit on a Stranger." Most of the tunes are originals by Chris Thile and Sean Watkins. This is the CD that really grabbed the youth market and left the rigid bluegrass world behind.

Was the direction taken in this CD a deliberate marketing attempt by the band and its team of advisors? Who knows for sure? I am convinced that, by and large, it reflects where the musical "heads" of Chris, Sean, and Sara were at the time. They play what interests and excites them, which happens to market well. And that it did, garnering a Grammy in 2003 for best contemporary folk album, besting efforts by Johnny Cash, the Chieftains, Steve Earle, and Patty Griffin.

Chris Thile and Sean Watkins recently released new solo CDs. For Chris, there is his mandolin tour de force album with mandolin giant Mike Marshall, who among other accolades was a member of the original David Grisman Quartet. Titled *Into the Cauldron*, it does all things mandolin, from traditional fiddle tunes to classical pieces, played stunningly well. Chris also released



his *Deceiver* album in October of 2004, which dives head on into rock territory, featuring, as the CD puts it, two mandolin



American Fiddle Ensemble in addition to several tracks on Ray LaMontagne's new release *Trouble*.

The band has appeared at the Kennedy Center, the Hollywood Bowl, and other big time venues. The band though the Hollywood Bowl experience tremendously exciting but also humbling to be playing where the Beatles and other greats had performed. The first half of the program featured the L.A. Philharmonic followed by Nickel Creek in the second half; their final four songs were backed by the entire orchestra, down to the marimbas! This was an experience they will never forget.

In November and December Nickel Creek went back to the recording studio once again. Sara reports they recorded every day from noon until midnight or later, and they are very excited about their new CD. The three are now in Los Angeles, living together in the "band house" near the studio. Sara says that Sean and Chris stay up until all hours yammering on about all sorts of topics, and she falls asleep eavesdropping from her bedroom.



Nickel Creek Noir

The CD is being produced by top line rockers Eric Valentine and Tony Berg, who produced Smash Mouth among other leading acts. The Nickel Creek project is being done all analogue on two-inch tape, focusing on live recording whenever possible rather than overdubs. Word has it that the band finds this process very inspiring and exciting, and that the music is rich and warm. I am told we'll likely see a cover of a Bob Dylan song and a Gillian Welch tune, although no final decisions have been made; the remaining 18 tunes on the CD are originals.

Before entering the studio the threesome spent time together as a group writing, discussing, and working on their new material, preceded by a week or so of pre-production when they made demos and worked with their new producers before starting the "real" recording project. Thus, they came prepared with good material already in hand and developed a comfortable relationship with the producers before beginning the serious studio work, all of which make a significant contribution to the collaborative, upbeat tenor of this newest Nickel Creek undertaking. Although we don't know what the finished product will sound like, you can bet it will be different and first rate.

continued on page 12.

band two Grammy nominations, an IBMA award for Emerging Artist of the Year in 2000, not to mention *Time* magazine's recognition of the band as one of five music innovators for the new millennium. Not bad for those who are still in their teens and early twenties!

This time period also saw the band's first appearance on the nationally televised Grand Ole Opry and on Jay Leno's *Tonight Show*. Thanks to their music videos, appearances at the Opry and on *Prairie Home Companion*, and their performances at some of the top music festivals, the band took on national name recognition as it continued its climb in popularity.

Many young musicians would have just ridden the wave and produced their next CD as a clone of the *Nickel Creek* CD, choosing what appeared to be a safe and prudent route to further success. Showing surprising acumen, no doubt aided by good management and advice, the band had the courage to move on and do something new. Perhaps accurately recognizing that the core of what is appealing about this threesome is their innovation and the excitement of their youth, talent, uncommon vision, and fearlessness to tackle the new, the band took the leap into new musical waters. While the band seemed to recognize that this leap might alienate some of their audience, it was nevertheless a musical imperative.

Showered with success so rapidly, the bandmates still remained approachable, down to earth, and genuinely nice people. For example, you see, among the many thanks on the back of their *Nickel Creek* CD, thanks from Sean to Manta whose body boards he likes. He was like a kid at Christmas when they sent him a free one. Likewise, while the three were performing in the ASCAP Café at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival, it was their experience pounding through the snow banks on snowmobiles that reminded us that, aside from playing music when they are anything but normal, these are typical fun loving kids. And at the Wintergrass Festival Chris Thile could be found at a vendor's booth jamming and smiling with a talented young kid who he later brought up on stage.

Forward was where they went. For Sean and Chris, solo albums were soon released to considerable acclaim. For Sean there was *Let It Fall*, released in 2001, and for Chris *Not All Who Wander Are Lost* was released the same year. Meanwhile the band earned

awards from the Country Music Association in 2002 in the vocal group and horizon categories. Some of their early, hard-core bluegrass fans may have been disappointed that the kids they had watched so fondly at bluegrass festivals and contests were playing music that was definitely not bluegrass. It's not that the threesome lost interest in blue-



grass; they just saw so much more in music to pursue. Rather than play the traditional stuff over again, they took the roots of that music, the magnificent sound of acoustic instruments and technical pyrotechnics and applied them within new contexts.

For years the band had been fans of Glen Phillips and Toad the Wet Sprocket. The three Nickel Creekers soon met Phillips at Café Largo in L.A. when Sean invited him to sing on Sean's solo CD. Learning that he was a Nickel Creek fan, a friendship and musical collaboration was born. One can hear Phillips' beautiful singing on Sean's wonderfully melodic piece "Let It Fall" on Sean's first solo CD of the same name. The group soon took to the studio and recorded what would later be released as *Mutual Admiration Society*, a CD that was rehearsed, recorded, and mixed in just six days! *MAS* went on tour in 2004 with Led Zeppelin's multi-instrumentalist John Paul Jones and drummer Pete Thomas (from Elvis Costello and the Attractions). Glen Phillips had this to say about Nickel Creek:

"When I heard their first album, I was most impressed with their willingness to be beautiful. Not pretty, which is easier to achieve, but beauty, which requires a depth of soul and a willingness to open up. The way their vocals sounded together amazed me, and their musicianship speaks for itself. They had such a huge technical vocabulary, but they also understood that music is all about emotionally connecting. Both of those talents have only deepened with time."

Returning the compliment, Chris had this to say about Phillips and Toad:

"I got into Toad the Wet Sprocket right after Coil. I listened to it, fell in love with it, and



ramblin'

Bluegrass CORNER

by Dwight Worden



The Virtual Strangers

The new year looks to be a great one for bluegrass music in San Diego. On January 8 **Virtual Strangers**, one of San Diego's top bluegrass bands, will appear in concert at the old Templar's Hall in Poway. Fresh out of the studio from working on their first CD, it should be a great show. The show starts at 7 p.m., so come on by. Opening for the Strangers will be Poway's **Baja Blues Boys**, playing some fine blues.

January 14-16 brings the annual Blythe Bluegrass Festival in Blythe, California, to which many San Diegans



John Reischman and the Jaybirds

make an annual pilgrimage. This year's line up looks great and includes the **U.S. Navy Bluegrass Band**, **Country Currents**, the **Kenny and Amanda Smith Band**, **John Reischman and the Jaybirds**, and more.

On January 31 **Ralph Stanley**, the one and only, will appear at the La Paloma Theatre in Encinitas in what is sure to be a great show. Regular readers of this column will recall that last month's column was devoted to the life and times of Ralph and Carter Stanley, the famous **Stanley Brothers**. For more info and tickets go to www.lapalomatheatre.com

Great bluegrass music will continue into February with a SDBS-sponsored concert by **Lost and Found**, one of the great traveling bands, at the First Baptist Church of Pacific Beach. Go to the San Diego Bluegrass society web site in the near future for details: <http://members.aol.com/intunene/news/main.html>. February 20 brings **Perfect Strangers**, an Arizona band, for a performance at the Normal Heights United Methodist church, hosted by Acoustic Music San Diego and SDBS. For details and tickets, go to www.acousticmusicandsd.com. And so, 2005 will continue to be chock full of great bluegrass music and events and this column will keep you in the know.

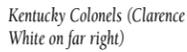
CLARENCE WHITE

Last month we reviewed Ralph and Carter Stanley and their influence on bluegrass music. This month we take a look at Clarence White, who was undoubtedly, one of the most influential flatpick guitar players of all time. For sure, he was the most innovative and creative and today is still greatly revered by all who take the study of flatpicking the guitar seriously. Sadly, in the early 1970s Clarence was killed while still a young man by a drunk driver who hit him while he was loading instruments into his car following a gig in the desert outside of Victorville. His brother, famous mandolin player Roland White, was also seriously injured but survived and is still performing today.

Originally from Maine, Clarence and his brothers Eric and Roland and his sister Joanne all played music with their French Canadian dad. The family moved to Burbank in 1954. Fame came early when the brothers' band won a talent contest in 1956 at a Pasadena radio station. Their first prize was an appearance on a TV show called **Ralph T. Hicks' Country Barn Dance Jubilee**, a show on which they also made several later appearances. Over the ensuing years

there were several bands comprised of the brothers and various other notable players while Clarence developed and expanded his guitar style as the groups progressed.

In 1962 the brothers formed the **Kentucky Colonels**, one of the seminal bands in early to mid bluegrass history. The Colonels recorded **Appalachian Swing** in 1964 (re-released in 1993), which showcases some of Clarence's exceptional guitar playing. A couple of years earlier, Clarence had heard Doc Watson for the first time in a live performance at L.A.'s Ash Grove and, in his own words, was "blown away." Following this experience, Clarence decided that even in bluegrass music the guitar could be a lead instrument, and he pioneered with incredible skill and adventure playing the type of dazzling flat pick leads that are now an accepted part of bluegrass music.



Kentucky Colonels (Clarence White on far right)

Clarence's playing can also be heard on **Dobro Country** released by Tut Taylor in 1964. Following this recording session the Colonels went on an extended East Coast tour with **Jerry Garcia** in tow, who was an unabashed Clarence White and Kentucky Colonels fan. Clarence and Doc Watson put on a guitar workshop together at the famous 1964 Newport Folk Festival, which astonished those who heard Clarence's playing. Clarence's performance with the Kentucky Colonels at that festival was later released as **The Long Journey Home** (Vanguard 1991). After returning to L.A., Clarence appeared regularly at the Ash Grove; some of these sessions can be heard on **The Kentucky Colonels with Scotty Stoneman: Live in L.A.** (Sierra, 1978).

From 1968 until his death, Clarence's flatpicking style continued to evolve, and he began to explore electric music as well, playing with the **Byrds**, **Gene Parsons**, and many other top guitar players. Along the way he and Parsons invented the B-Bender for electric guitars, still very popular today, which allows the player to bend the guitar neck of an electric guitar and change the pitch of the B string.

While Clarence's name was not as well known by the general public as other great guitar players, he was highly respected by his peers in the guitar world. For example, once when Clarence was playing at the Whiskey on Sunset Blvd., a large African-American in a big hat pushed his way up to Clarence after the show and said, "Hey man, I think your guitar playing is the greatest." Afterward Clarence asked his bandmates who the guy was. The reply: Jimi Hendrix!

If you like guitar music, and if you haven't heard Clarence's playing, do yourself a favor and go get some of his music right now.

Clarence White

Clarence White



The B-Bender



The Zen of Recording

by Sven-Erik Seaholm

WHO IS LANG SYNE, AND WHAT MAKES HIM SO OLD?

Well, I sure will remember 2004.

I made records with **Manuok**, **Via Satellite**, **Flathead**, **The Shrines**, **Dave Howard**, **butterFace**, **The Coyote Problem**, **Michael Tiernan**, **Carol Ames**, and **Hudson/Rider**.

Somehow I also managed to play all over the place with **The Gandhi Method**, who (as chronicled in this column) also made a cool album, made vocal contributions to **Christopher Dale's** record, and received a San Diego Music Award nomination for Best Acoustic Artist.

As if there were any more time left in the day, I also reformed **The Wild Truth** with my good friends **Charlie Loach**, **David Ybarra**, and **Bill Ray**, spending much of the year writing and rehearsing in preparation for a new album and a busy gigging year.

I also played several solo/acoustic shows like **BruceFest**, **NeilFest**, and the **Acoustic Alliance** showcases, and was subsequently introduced to the wonderful work of **Simeon Flick**, **Matt Silvia**, **Christian Knudsen**, **Steph Johnson**, **Annie Bethancourt**, **Matthew Stewart**, **Deadline Friday**, **Marcia Claire**, and **The Troubadours of Divine Bliss**, to name just a few.

My heart fell into sadness many times as I bid farewell to several friends: **Jessica Treat**, a champion of local music who sang like a sparrow, organized multitudes of music events, and remained both politically and socially active until succumbing to cancer in July.

Ellen Duplessie, founder of this magazine and another hero to the scene whose profound love for music and God guided her formidable contributions to heightening the exposure of local and national artists alike. She also fell to cancer after a very long battle.

To the shock of everyone who knew him, **Ellen's** husband **Lyle Duplessie** died a few months later. An

active musician and roots music aficionado, he was referred to by his friends and *SD Troubadour* compatriots **Liz Abbott** and **Kent Johnson** as Keeper of the Vision. It is to their credit that his musical legacy continues, via this publication.

I was awarded the sad honor of eulogizing one of the truly great musical artist of the modern era, **Ray Charles**. How I found the words then, I'll never know. They certainly fail me now.

Other notable music-related passages included original MTV veejay **J.J. Jackson**, **Zombies'** guitarist and music producer **Paul Atkinson**, former Crickets guitarist **Niki Sullivan**, **John Peel** (The Peel Sessions), **Syreeta Wright**, film composer **Jerry Goldsmith**, **Jan Berry** (Jan and Dean), **Rick James**, **Laura Branigan**, cinematographer **David Myers** (*Woodstock*, *The Last Waltz*, *Rust Never Sleeps*), **Johnny Ramone**, **Elliott Smith**, **Buffalo Springfield** bassist **Bruce Palmer**, and producer **Terry Melcher**.

Amid all this sadness, a couple of my closest friends (and damn fine guitarists as well) **Wayne Preis** and **Jim Wyndham** had beautiful baby girls (well, okay, their lovely wives did). My son **Drew Andrews** lived with my wife and me when he wasn't touring the world with **The Album Leaf** and his own band, **Via Satellite**.

I watched my country choose its leader in direct contradiction of my heart and conscience.

I wrote songs with my friends in San Clemente, while gazing out over the Pacific Ocean.

I wrote songs alone in my kitchen.

I was whiffled by Canadian Llamas.

I fell in love several times with the same woman, my beautiful photo-snapping wife, **Gaily**.

I reached higher than I thought I was able to.

I worked, played, practiced, fought, and tried as hard as I could.

I recorded in the studio 308 days.

I turned in this column four to five days late, on average.

I lost a total of \$160 playing poker with my friends and never regretted a



Sven-Erik Seaholm

cent of it (I did mind the scent of it though.)

I have no idea how much time I am to be here on this earth, but each of these things I've mentioned has served to remind me of what I consider to be my singular purpose: **To make a better world through better music.**

That is what truly drives me onward.

Sure, *ego* always plays a part in any endeavor that strives for recognition of both creator and creation, and I'd be lying if I said I didn't like compliments... or awards... or applause... or even that little light bulb picture of me that accompanies this column.

What gets me out of bed in the morning (other than a really hard shove and a hot cup of coffee) is the opportunity to help myself, my clients and my readers make the best possible recordings of the best possible music.

This is not an advertisement for me, my business, or how bitchin' I am. It is a call for all of us out there to be active in whatever our chosen pursuits. To further our craft through a never-ending quest for excellence and the unquenchable thirst to learn more, so that we may improve the human condition by enriching the human spirit. I hope to lead by example, and it is my deep desire that you will join me in this journey. Peace on Earth, and a happy and prosperous 2005 to you and yours.

Love,
Sven



PHIL HARMONIC SEZ:

To leave the old with a burst of song,
To recall the right and forgive the wrong;
To forget the thing that binds you fast
To the vain regrets of the year that's past.

— Robert Brewster Beattie



Hosing Down

by José Sinatra

Don't count your blessings before they're hatched. Just a warning.

The optimist sees the glass half full, the pessimist says it's half empty. The realist doesn't care (since it's all poison anyway), and the President of the United States decrees that the glass doesn't even exist.

As for myself, I use the glass to check out my own reflection, if only to once more verify the existence of glowing beauty in a world gone berserk. And as a new year begins, I poignantly vow anew to share that beauty with all of those in need.

Face it, it's what I do. Sue me. But get the facts straight or risk annoying me seriously. Like that "quote" when I was on the cover of *Time*. "Yep, I'm God" in big red letters, which led to all that controversy and several of my records being burned in Santee. I needn't set the record straight, since what I had really stated was (remarkably) accurately reported in the cover story itself: "I'm a bit tired of always being referred to as 'that God-like singer,' Sinatra casually groans, while his concupiscent, raven-haired attendant continued with his bikini wax. 'I'd much prefer being thought of as a singer who just happens to be God-like.'" Now that was indeed accurate. But with that exploitative cover blurb, the damage had already been done. Thank God people in Santee have short memories.

I studied extensively the meaning of the word "reality," discovering that it evolved from the word "real," which is concerned with truth, or something like that. Then I had a drink and went on a bike ride.

A couple of weeks later, I saw a fabulous movie, after which I ran into an old friend, who invited me to a party she was going to have in January on the *very day* you're reading this. Then I

went to bed.

The above actually happened. It's thrilling only because I happen to be a celebrity. Now everyone wants to know what the movie was. Admit it. Go on, admit it.

See? It's true. I told you so. I remember when I used to consider *Rolling Stone* to be pretty authoritative, nearly unassailable. I miss those times. Someone (it doesn't matter) showed me the recent "500 greatest songs" issue and I got angry enough to *really* miss those times. No, not because there were no entries featuring José Sinatra and the Troy Danté Inferno. (Actually, I had emailed Jan Wenner last April demanding that he keep us out of contention in order to give so many worthy others their own chance to shine.)

Entries in the "poll," which concerned the Beatles (the only ones I thoroughly read) contained a stunning number of factual inaccuracies. And this is *Rolling Stone*, dude. I wondered how many other artists were having historic misinformation disseminated about them in the same issue. Truth is being raped (or at least dry humped), history is being rewritten, and the idiots at the magazine don't even realize it or care.

It is because of that that I am compelled now to offer publicly the following statement:

I, José Sinatra, refuse henceforth to be interviewed, reviewed, or written about in *Rolling Stone*.

Okay? Sorry, but you won't likely ever see my name mentioned in that once-great journal. And that's the truth. (Just watch their sales start sliding now, folks. They'll wonder what hit 'em.)

I'm sorry. I know how you feel. What consolation can I offer you?

Perhaps it's time for some enterprising publisher who possesses a bit of integrity to create a new, trail-blazing bible about the music/entertainment/



The scintillating Mr. Sinatra

hedonism scene.

That would be fabulous. Better still if the magazine had a really great, evocative title like *Singing Hoses* or something and the publisher happened to be female, with long legs smooth as a warmed speculum and a face to drool on. I could really get into that, if you dig my departure site.

Both will likely be similar to several others. Like 1645, or possibly 1996.

I see supreme entertainment value in two items scheduled for January's final two days: the elections in Iraq and the start of Michael Jackson's . . . outing. Come to think of it, that second one will just end up being the beginning of jury selection; the actual start of the pillory may still be eons away. Still, the thrill of witnessing such an unprecedented wealth of incredible obfuscations and diversions by the defense is almost within reach, and it smells heavenly.

But just as in elections, we shouldn't expect justice in our courts anymore. We live in times in which truth is often more fragile than glass. And if it hurts us, let's be sure not to clean our wounds with poison.

Cheers.



RADIO DAZE

by Jim McInnes

I GOT DEM BLUES, BABY!

It's Saturday night, a week before Christmas and I just watched a documentary about the great blues singer Howlin' Wolf. Now, I have on a DVD of the recording sessions of Eric Clapton's *Me and Mr. Johnson*, his tribute to country blues legend Robert Johnson (I had dismissed E.C. as a schlockmeister many years ago, but this is awesome!)

Listening to this stuff made me remember just how much I love the blues.

I grew up in Chicagoland, aka the suburbs, when AM radio was king, and the legendary Top 40 stations, WLS and WCFL, were locked in a head-to-head battle for the ears of the kids. That's where I was exposed to the Beatles, Stones, and Beach Boys. But I'd occasionally tune away from those two 50,000 watt giants and try to hear the lower powered inner city stations at the upper end of the dial where they played the weird stuff, the "jungle" music. Man, that was something else!

It wasn't until I was in college that I found out that the jungle music I'd been listening to was called the blues.

Dick Schroeder, who later became the banjo player for the Monroe Doctrine bluegrass band, lived across the hall from me in the dormitory. One day he pulled me into his room and said, "Jim, you gotta listen to this!" He played the intro to "So Many Roads," from the album of the same name by John Hammond. "Listen to this guitar



Jim McInnes

player!" Robby Robertson's brief lead-in to that song changed my life.

I started learning how to play the guitar. I thought, "Well, I'll play the blues. How hard can it be? Hell, it's just variations on 'Louie Louie.'" Thirty years later



Howlin' Wolf

I play with more enthusiasm than anything else. Sure, the blues structure is dirt simple, but coaxing licks from my guitar that fit with the chord structure while simultaneously emoting is like brain surgery for me! I wanna be David Gilmour! I wanna be Peter Green before he went crazy! I wanna play

like San Diego's Joey Harris or Steve Wilcox or Don Story or Buddy Blue. And those are just the white guys I admire. I've given up on being Buddy Guy, Robert Cray, Jimi Hendrix, and B.B. King.

B.B. King says more with three notes than I'll ever accomplish but I'll never stop trying, no matter how ham-fisted I am...because I love the blues.

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the highway's song

AL KOOPER: A LEGEND BY ANY STANDARD

by David Lang

If you've listened to any radio over the past 45 years, you've heard a lot more of Al Kooper than you realize. Sit back and follow the amazing career of a man who will perform solo in concert on January 14, his first San Diego appearance in more than 30 years.

To pique your interest, here are but a few of the highlights:

- The organ — arguably the signature sound on Dylan's "Like A Rolling Stone."
- Founder, primary song writer, and lead vocalist of Blood, Sweat & Tears' first album
- Discovered and produced Lynyrd Skynyrd

Okay, now for some of the details.

A professional musician since his early teens, Al Kooper joined the Royal Teens, who had a Top Five hit with the novelty tune "Short Shorts" ("Who Wears Short Shorts?") in 1958. From that point on, he played guitar on an untold number of recording sessions in New York City, which inspired him to learn how to read and write music. In addition to session work, he apprenticed as an audio engineer.

Kooper made his first foray into songwriting as the co-writer of "This Diamond Ring." Written as a soul ballad and intended for the Drifters, it instead became the vehicle that launched the musical career of one of "Jerry's Kids," that is one of his biological kids — Gary Lewis — and his band, the Playboys.

Not long afterward, Kooper was invited to watch a Bob Dylan recording session. By the end of the afternoon, Kooper had found his way to the studio's organ and played the signature riff on the song that, arguably, took Dylan from folk icon to Rock God status.

In addition to numerous sessions with Dylan, Simon and Garfunkel, and many others, the mid-60s saw Kooper join the Blues Project after which he founded Blood, Sweat & Tears. The album *Super Session*, featuring Steve Stills and Mike Bloomfield, soon followed, as did sessions with Hendrix (*Electric Ladyland*), the Rolling Stones (*You Can't Always Get What You Want*), the Who (*Who Sell Out*) and others, as well as solo albums.

In the early '70s, Kooper discovered Lynyrd Skynyrd. He formed his own label to put out their records, the first three of which he produced. His career continued in ways suggesting that Mr. Kooper had more angels on his shoulder than any pin head could ever hold! His autobiography, *Backstage Passes*, was revised 20 years later and retitled *Backstage Passes and Backstabbing Bastards*. In the interim, he continued producing, playing, and arranging, including projects with George Harrison, Paul McCartney, and Ringo Starr.

In 1980 he produced a record with country rocker Joe Ely, and in 1981 he toured with Dylan and the reunited Blues Project in addition to releasing a new solo album.

As the West Coast Director of A&R for PolyGram Records, he was instrumental in signing Richard Thompson. He also met producer/director Michael Mann (*Miami Vice*), who used Kooper to score his television series *Crime Story*. Kooper's original music and the source music for each episode, which was culled from his vast record collection, gave the show its '60s

"noir" feel. He also composed music for the Emmy Award-winning miniseries, *The Drug Wars*, as well as produced some of the soundtrack for the John Waters film *Cry Baby*.

In the latter part of the '80s, Kooper took a vacation from the music business but returned in 1991, playing keyboards and guitar as a member of Joe Walsh's Ordinary Average Guy Tour. That fall, he served as musical director for Ray Charles' 50th Anniversary television special. In 1992, he became music director for the Rock Bottom Reminders, a touring musical assembly of authors, including Dave Barry, Stephen King, Dave Marsh, Amy Tan, Barbara Kingsolver, Matt Groening, and others.



A young Al Kooper in the late '50s.

"It was hilarious and wonderful," he laughs. "They are terrific people. It was great to meet them and I've become close friends with many of them. We ended up putting on a very entertaining show. I think it was a nice change of pace for them, too."

The '90s included Bob Dylan's 30th Anniversary Tribute at Madison Square Garden in addition to joining Dylan in England in the summer of '96 at the Prince's Trust Concert in Hyde Park.



Al Kooper today

Kooper also played organ for the Sunday morning gospel set at Woodstock II. Ironically, he was asked to appear at the original Woodstock, but blew it off.

In early 1994, Kooper gathered musicians together from his various albums of the previous 30 years together for a series of concerts held over three consecutive nights to celebrate his fiftieth birthday. The recordings from these shows resulted in a magnificent double CD titled *Soul of a Man*, a live career retrospective.

Seemingly as tireless as the Energizer bunny, Kooper even answers all his fan e-mail from his website. "It's great to be one-on-one with my supporters and answer any questions they may have on a daily basis," he says. A Kooper hologram also appeared on the Bob Dylan CD-ROM, *Highway 61 Interactive*, explaining how the two met and recorded "Like A Rolling Stone."

In an issue devoted to the 500 greatest recordings of all time, *Rolling Stone* magazine included 12 albums with significant participation by Al Kooper. He scores films and works almost daily in his home studio. He relocated to Boston in the fall of '97 to teach at the Berklee School of Music, which has subsequently bestowed upon him a Doctorate of Music.

Unfortunately, his teaching was prematurely cut short in 2000, when a debilitating condition permanently robbed him of two-thirds of his sight. With concerts and lecture appearances, Kooper is "finally getting to do a whole bunch of things I always wanted to do, but never actually got around to."

What brings him to San Diego after all

these years? Someone simply contacted him and asked if he'd consider, on his next trip to the West Coast, playing a gig here. The timing was impeccable: Kooper comes West once a year, in January, and was actually working on his travel schedule at the time he was contacted by Carey Driscoll, who figured he had nothing to lose by asking Kooper if he'd consider playing for his series, AcousticMusicSanDiego.com



The Blues Project, Al Kooper second from right

They struck a deal, and Kooper's January 14 concert will be the series' first of the year, which, since its late 2003 beginnings, has presented well over 60 concerts, including by such well-known performers as John McEuen (Nitty Gritty Dirt Band), David Wilcox, Eric Andersen, and Billy Joe Shaver — as well as equally talented but lesser known musicians. Among the 2005 bookings for the series is mandolin wizard Mike Marshall with his group Choro Famoso (January 22), guitar masters Beppe Gambetta and Dan Crary (February 13), and return engagements by many of the performers who appeared during the first 18 months.

Nickel Creek, continued from page 9.

Has all the fame and glory changed these three nice San Diego kids? I don't think so, nor do they, at least not in any negative way. Sure, they have changed; they have traveled, they have become more savvy about the business of music, and they have enjoyed many new experiences. But their values, friendships, and loyalties remain pretty much the same. They still get as excited about music as they did when they started, and they are still all grounded in family, home, and strong Christian values. Chris got married last year to Jessie, who is in San Francisco pursuing a degree in fashion and is as dedicated to her profession as Chris is to his. The band reports that they have accepted her into the band family and that the bandmates remain close. Sean and Sara remain single.

Chris, Sean, and Sara know they have achieved a lot, but they also know how much more can be done. As Sara once said, "I still can't play the fiddle the way my heroes can, and I still can't get the music out of my mouth that I hear in my head." And, with uncommon insight for those still quite young, they realize that they are lucky; there are many talented musicians who, with a few breaks, could be bathing in the same light of success illuminating Nickel Creek. Hard work, companionship, and the courage to move forward musically are likely to keep Nickel Creek on the climb.

Quoting from Sara's November 2004 journal, her words tell you that the band's priorities are still well grounded.

When we were really little and spending the night at the Thile house in Idylwild, if I was having trouble sleeping, I'd sometimes go into the hall outside of the boys room so I could hear Sean and Chris talking, and I'd fall asleep with my head resting on the steadily breathing side of Gretel (the Thile's very sweet, three-legged dog). I love thinking back on those scenes and am scared to death of losing them as the years peel back the layers of accessible memory files.

Nickel Creek's new CD, as yet untitled, will probably be out in March or April. Keep your eyes and ears on this exceptional young band, if for no other reason than to see what they cook up next.

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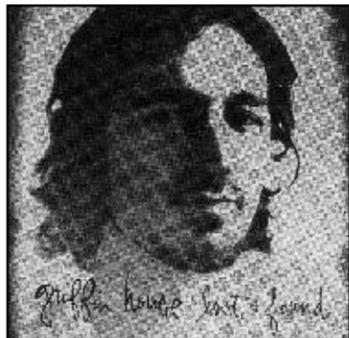
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Griffin House Lost & Found

by Frederick Leonard

Nashville is well-noted for its sound, its "thing." So many have defined its signature sound and here comes yet another mix from Music City. However ...

You wouldn't really guess that this CD is a product of Nashville. There's something more here. I hear regional instincts in a technique or two, a now-and-then slide, but it's somehow too nouveau and languid to call it "a Nashville thing." Maybe I'm way off, but this music is also *curious*, and elegantly *dark*, a little like a Lou-Reed-if-he-weren't-such-a-city-boy record. Its sound arrangements are modern. It takes a refreshingly original approach, yet it's sparse; only the necessary makes the mix.

I spent the first two minutes suspended on the edge of "I like it" and "maybe I don't" only to realize I liked the suspense. It was arpeggiated, delay soaked, and exotic, like a Deep Forest record. Then it kicked in and rocked with a minute to go.

These fellas deliver a pretty intelligent and soulful set of lyrics, mainly centered around the idea of relationships — with lovers, with drugs and alcohol, with the road, and with the author's own self and his band. Through personal accounts, one after another, something universal is communicated. And that's good.

There are moments the surprise slips away, however. "Liberty Love" seems a little obvious, but I think it's maybe just a matter of personal preference, because "The Way I Was Made" is the one that slaps me in the chops so far.

"Why Don't You Believe?" leans nicely on an old Wurlitzer crawling sweetly through melancholy changes, a beautiful tune with an acoustic guitar running around in the dark like a shadow.

Listening to this CD harkens subtle shades of U2, Eno, and a foggy mountain thing, managing to rest comfortably in an unlikely "middle." Overall, this is a collection of smart songs, smartly underdressed. It's not perfect, but that's part of the charm because it's generally well executed. It is naked, truthful, deeply felt, and thoughtfully communicated, making a perfect soundtrack for people with a lot on their minds — like those times when every song reminds you of someone or something in your life.



The Taylor Harvey Band A Place to Call My Own

by Frederick Leonard

If this were a car, we'd be talking about a slightly forward-tilting '72 Pontiac GTO with slicks and flames on the side. And these are the guys leaning on its side, talking to chicks in the parking lot. Steve Langdon's able production got the machine tuned, the boys tight, and the chrome polished. It's a soundtrack to a fun little spin during the summer. Turn it up, rev it up, come on over.

From La Mesa springs a classic rock quartet format in songwriter Taylor Harvey on guitars and vocals, Jason Lyon on drums, Tim Edwards on lead guitar and vocals, and Steve Campana on bass. The sound is no-frills Americana not far from the BoDeans at times, the Georgia Satellites at others. The first song has a "Hootie" thing going for it.

These boys best describe themselves in "Roadhousin'." "...We're just an old-school rock band comin' atcha, t'nite!"

"Tease" bears a Tom Petty meets Angus Young hybrid, and although I hear this likely reference, I dig it anyway. Fun guitars.

And that's what this CD is all about. These guys aren't pontificating about the mystery of life. They just say it like it is. No pretending. Taking rock and roll's true form — the bars, the garage, summer parties, a few brews, volume, and fun — to a new polish.

"One of These Days" is a kick-ass-cracker-jack-little shuffle that kicks itself through four minutes, suiting this band just fine.

Sporting great guitar work, it's the finest representation of the overall vocal mix. Solid performance and exciting capture of the performance. "Victim of the Moment" hints at Gordon Lightfoot yet remains beautifully executed on acoustic and slide guitar. In the thick of a tremolo, Tim Edwards rips a pretty slick tele-lick in "Absolutely Nothing to Complain About Blues." "I Thought I Knew You" comes on strong with a rippin' guitar and gravelly voice like Bob Dylan in his Traveling Willbury days.

If you like good ol' rock and roll, these guys will see to it you get your partying done right.



Itai Now

by Frederick Leonard

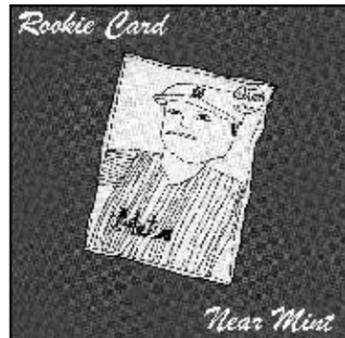
The first thing I notice about this CD is the dedication: This album is for my mother. Thus the tone is set for a soft and dreamy eight-title drowse centered around Itai's guitar and voice. That center is surrounded — no, bathed — in surreal scapes via programming, piano, Rhodes, organ, drums, electric guitar, Ebo, synthesizer, chimes, pedal steel, special effects, legato vocal techniques, and, most interesting, the way Itai selects the next chord. I enjoy this very much, as it lends an exotic quality by offering slight references to a different time and place in a slo-mo, *deja vu* sort of way.

The CD cover is night blue. Rather than his photo on the cover Itai favors an understated one-name ID and a one-name title. You can find him on the inside, but he's looking away, so you really don't see him. This makes sense because, in fact, Itai's singing is handled in the same way, i.e., the opening instrumental track makes me hear a movie soundtrack in my mind. On the second song he takes a whole verse to enter, which is cool because it's so different.

His voice is a velvet whisper, delivered privately and softly. The vocals are unlike anyone else, the closest thing being perhaps Parisian recording artist Vanessa Daou. You never know whether they are whispering in your ear or daydreaming to themselves as the voice seems to slither between the two sensibilities.

Producer, engineer, and guest artist Steve Peavey contributes by stirring things up and creating situations to support Itai's guitar and stories. The music feels nostalgic and retro at times yet incredibly metro-cool. European. Urban. Whimsical, even. With its jazz trio handling, I can imagine it played in a downtown martini bar, slow dancing in a surreal stupor of splendor.

Itai hears his own music and goes for it, unaffected by the popcorn popping away in pop culture. He slows down and takes the time to savor every drop of what's going on in his mind. Every sultry quarter note saunters its way through the music, resulting in an artfully beautiful recording. It has a personal distinction that changes the mood of the moment without being too far out on a limb in listenerland.



Rookie Card Near Mint

by Phil Harmonic

When Igor Stravinsky, the composer who helped revolutionize meter and rhythm in the twentieth century, was asked how he came to write his music, he replied, "I stole everything I've ever written." Of course, we know what he meant was that he was a product of those who influenced him. I wonder if he had as much diverse input as Adam Gimbel and Rookie Card.

Like Stravinsky, Gimbel and Rookie Card have blended and stirred their many influences together to create a sound that is highly distinctive and all their own. Gimbel's songs, once enhanced and embellished upon by Rookie Card, become pretty special. Their latest CD, *Near Mint*, is as good as anything played on the radio today. For me, I can't help but like catchy tunes with clever lyrics. Using tongue in cheek and satire, you'll laugh, you might even cry.

"2/29," using a concept that is pure genius, is about a leap year birthday. In another song, how can you not like lyrics that state, "The sun always shines on Christmas in California. Got a lover, and he's lovin' her. Got a Nazi for a governor." Rookie Card sneaks in a tribute to the Cars in "After the Beep, which may be just what I needed. One of my favorites is "Too Pretty," because it reveals a vulnerability and insecurity that just about all men have felt around women at one time or another. The pedal steel, violin, and mandolin add nice touches as this song flows exceptionally well. Gimbel has established himself as a talented lyricist with his own innovative style. You'll hear shades of the Beatles, the Cars, Talking Heads, Tom Petty, the Byrds, and many more, but nothing is stolen, as Stravinsky says, and you'll appreciate Rookie Card as fresh and utterly genuine.

Near Mint is available at www.11345.com and www.not-lame.com.



Tom McRae Just Like Blood

by Tom Paine

It might be time for a new genre: Ice Pop. And if Ice Pop Town needs a mayor, I nominate Tom McRae. Gavel to gavel, his newest release *Just Like Blood* proves he's the leader of the pack, vying for Tim Buckley's prematurely vacated throne.

Sounding like Radiohead meets David Grey, McRae uses dreamy soundscapes to frame his plaintive voice and lost-love lyrics. In the mix of guitars, bass, and occasional drums are hypnotic, repetitive keyboard figures, cello, and even a smattering of banjo and dobro.

Recorded last summer and released in the fall on Nettwerk Records, *Just Like Blood* is McRae's strongest work yet. Out of Sheffield, England, McCrae is a hard working artist who just completed another year of relentless touring across Europe and the U.S. Like his label mates Barenaked Ladies, Sarah McLachlan, and Dido, McRae makes smart, thoughtful music better suited for grown ups than kiddies (like his other label mates Sum 41 and Avril Lavigne).

The icy sheen of the music is a perfect context for his deft imagery and pleas of aching longing. His effortless falsetto shines through the dark gray clouds like a high northern sun. Nothing says sadness clarified like a cello over muted fingerpicked guitar and single note piano. But underneath all the ice is a warm, powerful, constant beauty, still and strong, like a goddess slumbering beneath the surface of a cold mountain stream in some Anglo-Saxon myth. The promise of her kiss pulls us closer and as we feel the cold surround us we discover the hidden warmth. McRae has done something magical here. This is baptism by ice water. He's made sorrow feel like a gift, the gift of our own transcendence.

McRae doesn't waste a word or a note. His precision and economy are like a tall drink of water for those of us lost in the desert of overwrought singer songwriters who try to beg, cow, or threaten us into feeling something. McRae practices the fine art of attraction. He asks you in. He leaves room for you. And as you draw near the fire he has lit, the cold grows distant and you feel the warmth pouring through you like blood. Available at www.tommcrae.com and at www.nettwerk.com

'round about

JANUARY CALENDAR

WEEKLY

every sunday

7th Day Buskers/Gully on alt. Sundays, Farmers Market, DMV parking lot, Hillcrest, 10am.
Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Traditional Irish Music, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 3pm.
Irish Dance, Dublin Square, 554 Fifth Ave., 3pm.
Celtic Ensemble, Twigg's, 4pm.
Traditional Irish Music, R. O'Sullivan's, Grand Ave., Escondido, 4pm.
Traditional Irish Music & Dance w/ Cobblestone, 5-6:30pm/Boxty Band, 6:30-10pm., The Field, 544 Fifth Ave.
Jazz Roots w/ Lou Curtiss, 8-10pm, KSDS (88.3 FM).
The Bluegrass Special w/ Wayne Rice, 10-midnight, KSON (97.3 FM).

every monday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Tango Dancing, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.
Open Mic Night, Lestat's, 7:30pm.

every tuesday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Zydeco Tuesdays, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.
Traditional Irish Music, The Ould Sod, 7pm; Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm.
Comedy Night, Lestat's, 9pm.

every wednesday

Joe Rathburn, The Galley, 550 Marina Pkwy, Chula Vista, 6:30-9:30pm.
Pride of Erin Ceili Dancers, Rm. 204, Casa del Prado, Balboa Park, 7pm.
High Society Jazz Band, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 7pm.
Sue Palmer Supper Club w/ Deeja Marie & Sharon Shufelt, Caffè Calabria, 3933 30th St., 6-8pm.
Open Mic Night, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Open Mic Night, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Highland Way, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 8:30pm.
Pat Molley, Egyptian Tea Room, 4644 College Ave., 9:30pm.

every thursday

Irish Music Class, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 7-8pm.
Sue Palmer, Martini's, 3940 4th Ave., 7pm.
Open Mic Night, Just Java Cafe, 285 Third Ave., Chula Vista, 7-10pm.
Open Mic Night w/ Timmy Lee, The Packing House, 125 S. Main, Fallbrook, 8pm.
Traditional Irish Music, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 8:15pm, 8:30pm. (also Fri. & Sat.)
Joe Byrne, Blarney Stone, Clairemont, 8:30pm. (also Fri. & Sat.)
Swing Thursdays w/ Hot Rod Lincoln, Tio Leo's, 5302 Napa St., 9pm.
Brehon Law, Tom Giblin's Pub, 640 Grand Ave., Carlsbad, 9pm (also Fri. & Sat.).

every friday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
California Rangers, McCabe's, Oceanside, 4:30-9pm.
Irish Folk Music, The Ould Sod, 9pm.
Open Mic Night, Egyptian Tea Room & Smoking Parlour, 4644 College Ave., 9pm.

every saturday

Connie Allen, Old Town Trolley Stage, Twigg St. & San Diego Ave., noon-5pm.
Talent Showcase w/ Larry Robinson & the Train Wreck Band, The Packing House, 125 S. Main St., Fallbrook, 8pm.
Christian/Gospel Open Mic, El Cajon. Info: J.D., 619/246-7060.

saturday • 1
Mt. Egypt/Itai/Kyle Phelan, Lestat's, 9pm.

sunday • 2
Carl Saunders w/ Joe Marillo/Mikan Zlatkovich/Bob Magnusson/Bob Weller, Dizzy's, 7pm.
Blue 44, Lestat's, 9pm.

tuesday • 4
Patty Hall, NCFBS meeting, Roundtable Pizza, Washington St., Escondido, 7pm.
Jennifer Lee, Twigg's, 8:30pm.

wednesday • 5
Mike Wofford Trio/Holly Hofmann Quartet, SD Museum of Art, Balboa Park. 619/298-5255.
Annie Dru, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 6
Alex Esther/Kim DeVincenzo, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Pete Thurston Night, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 7
Angela Patua, El Sol de Plata, 2604 Adams Ave., 7pm.
Larry Robinson/Dave Sawyer, The Packing House, 125 S. Main, Fallbrook, 8pm.
Ted Ehr/Aaron Bowen/Terra Naomi/Dave's Son, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Bad Habit, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Annie Bethancourt/Tim Mudd/Ron Franklin, Lestat's, 9pm.

saturday • 8
Virtual Strangers/Baja Blues Brothers, Templar's Hall, Old Poway Park, 7pm. 858/566-4040
Jim Earp, Borders Books & Music, 159 Fletcher Pkwy., El Cajon, 7pm.

Rookie Card, North Park Vaudeville/Candy Shoppe, 2031 El Cajon Blvd., 7:30 & 10pm.
Berkley Hart/Coyote Problem, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Martin Storrow/Hugh Gaskins/Will Edwards/Terra Naomi/Just John & the Dude, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
The Blazers, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
José Sinatra & the Troy Danté Inferno/Arman Augusto, Lestat's, 9pm.
Whiskey Tango, Java Joe's Pub, 6344 El Cajon Blvd., 9:30pm.

sunday • 9
Greg Laswell/Andrew Foshee, Lestat's, 9pm.

wednesday • 12
Alex Esther/Grandpadrew/Radio Free Earth, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 13
Teresa Storch, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Jump Jones, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Amy Shamansky/May's River/Jackie Daum, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 14
Al Kooper, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.
Harvey Reid, Carlsbad Village Theatre, 2822 State St., Carlsbad, 8pm. 760/720-2460.
Jim Earp, Bookworks, Flower Hill Mall, Del mar, 8pm.
Mr. Pease, The Packing House, 125 S. Main, Fallbrook, 8pm.
Collin Elliott/Tim Mudd/Teresa Storch/Cheeky Monkey, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Blue Rockit/Michelle Lundeen, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Angela Correa CD Release, Lestat's, 9pm.



saturday • 15
San Diego Record Show, 3909 Centre St., Hillcrest, 9am-2pm.
Sue Palmer w/ April West/Deeja Marie/Pete Harrison/Sharon Shufelt, SD Multicultural Festival, downtown San Diego, 12:10pm.
Cici Porter, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm. 858/566-4040.
Berkley Hart, Burke House Concert, 8pm. Email: Sobrbrat@aol.com.
Peter Sprague Quartet, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Concept: Bravery/Matt Costa/Vavak/Jen Knight/Ashley Matte/Borne, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Eve Selis, Lestat's, 9pm.
Hot Monkey Love 11th Anniversary Party, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.

sunday • 16
Steph Johnson/Aaron Bowen/Flathead, Lestat's, 9pm.

wednesday • 19
Jay Farrar, Belly Up, 7pm.
California Guitar Trio, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Steve Poltz, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 20
Dakota Dave Hull, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.
Gabriella LaLicata, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Billy Watson, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Acoustic Underground, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 21
Steve Morse Band/Dixie Dregs, Sycuan CasinoTheatre, 8pm.
Western Continentals, The Packing House, 125 S. Main, Fallbrook, 8pm.
Ryan Blue CD Release/Regina, Twigg's, 8:30pm.

The Joey Show, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Robin Henkel, Lestat's, 9pm.

saturday • 22
Mike Marshall & Choro Famoso, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.
The Chieftans, California Center for the Arts, Escondido, 8pm.
Andrew Norsworthy/Jennifer Lee, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Gilbert Castellanos Quartet, Dizzy's, 8:30pm.
Uncle Jesus & Guest, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Jenn Grinels CD Release/Trevor Davis, Lestat's, 9pm.

sunday • 23
Mandolin Workshop w/ Mike Marshall, Acoustic Expressions, 2852 University Ave., 10am-1pm. 619/280-9035 for info.
John McCutcheon, San Dieguito United Methodist Church, 170 Calle Magdalena, Encinitas, 7:30pm. 858/566-4040.
Saba/Dave Doobinin/Ashley Matte, Lestat's, 9pm.

tuesday • 25
Matt Hopper, Twigg's, 8:30pm.

wednesday • 26
Steve White & Louise, Lestat's, 9pm.

thursday • 27
Brett Michael Wiesman, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Rip Carson, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Billy Shaddox, Lestat's, 9pm.

friday • 28
The Band in Black (Johnny Cash tribute) Cask & Cleaver Restaurant, 3757 S. Mission Rd., Fallbrook, 8pm.
The Coyote Problem, The Packing House, 125 S. Main, Fallbrook, 8pm.
Berkley Hart, Burke House Concert, 8pm. Email: elyse@familystone.com.
Lauren DeRose, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Big Daddy Orchestra, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
The Shambles/Sugarplastic/Mark Decerbo/Dave Humphreys, Lestat's, 9pm.

saturday • 29
Ronny Cox, Acoustic Music San Diego, 4650 Mansfield St., 7:30pm. 619/303-8176.
Blues Night w/ Nathan James/Ben Hernandez, Dizzy's, 8pm.
Robert Cray Band, Ca. Ctr. for the Arts, Escondido, 8pm.
Kim DiVincenzo, Twigg's, 8:30pm.
Blue Largo, Tio Leo's, 5203 Napa, 9pm.
Anya Marina CD Release, Lestat's, 9pm.
Static Halo, Honey Bee Hive, 1409 C St., 9pm.

sunday • 30
Sounds Like San Diego w/ Berkley Hart/Gregory Page/Lou & Virginia Curtiss/Derek Duplessie/Chuck Schiele/Billy Shaddox/Four Eyes/Shambles/Wild Truth/José Sinatra/Phil Harmonic, Dizzy's, 7pm.
Gregory Page CD Release/Tristan Prettyman, Lestat's, 9pm.

monday • 31
Ralph Stanley & his Clinch Mountain Boys, La Paloma Theatre, Encinitas. Call for info.



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the local seen



Third Annual Troubadour Holiday Open House



Photo: John Baldi

Anna Troy



Photo: Steve Covault

Robin Henkel, Steph Johnson



Photo: Steve Covault

Derek Duplessie



Photo: Steve Covault

Dwight Worden, Jack Johnson, Patty Hall, Kenny Wertz



Photo: John Baldi

Jim Wakefield



Photo: John Baldi

Phil Harmonic & Duplessie grandbaby Vega



Photo: John Baldi

Patty Hall



Photo: Steve Covault

Christian Knudsen



Photo: Steve Covault

Kent Johnson, Liz Abbott, Dwight Worden



Photo: Steve Covault

Jeff Berkley



Photo: John Baldi

Greg Gohde, Anna Troy, Steve Roche



Photo: John Baldi

Neverly Brothers Mark Merrill & Steve Roche



Tom Russell @ Acoustic Music SD

And elsewhere...



Photo: Paul Grupp

Jane Liu at Lestat's



Photo: John Baldi

Jack Johnson, Dave Easton



Burrito Deluxe plays to sold out house at Acoustic Music SD



Photo: Steve Covault

Kent Johnson, Joe Rathburn

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