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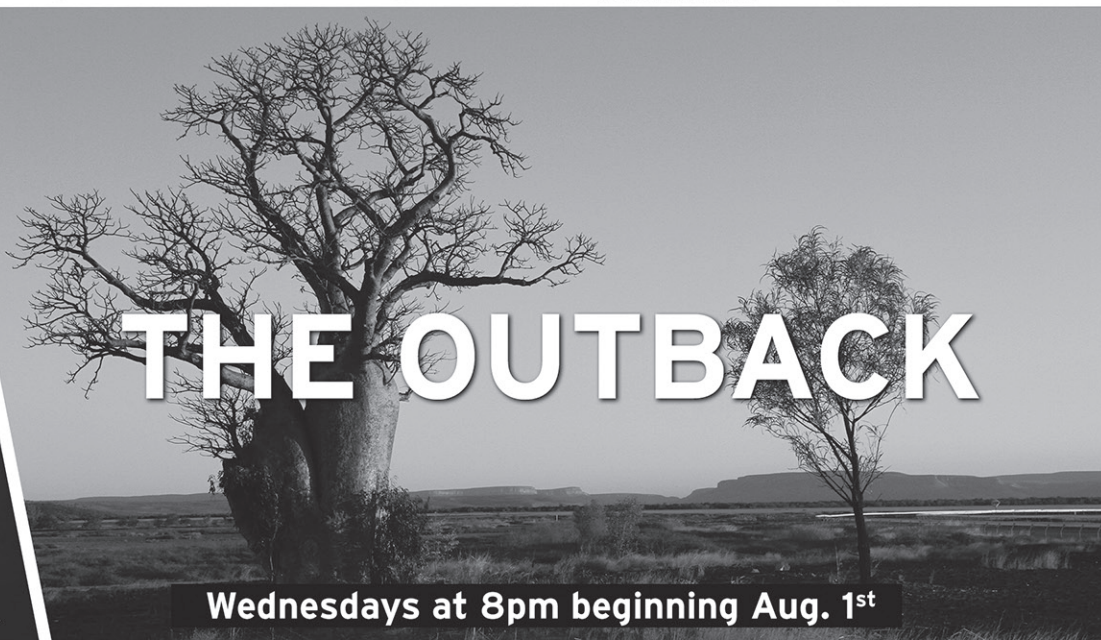
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- Discovering Watertown - 8/4, 8/11 & 8/18 at 6:30pm
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- Brewed in New York - 8/13, 8/20 & 8/27 at 7:30pm
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POETRY

OUR FRIENDS

BY LUCIA JOHNSON

We have so many friends today
 That we hold so very dear,
 Our hearts are filled with love for them
 Some, miles away, others quite near.

We enjoy having them around,
 And want them to stay.

Some are newer friends,
 Others made in years past,
 But nevertheless we're so glad
 Our friendships really last.

When one gets sick or down and out,
 It pains us so to see,
 It's like the sorrow that we feel
 For our own family.

Friends are so great to have,
 In good times and the bad,
 No one can have too many,
 We feel this and are glad.

Each one is a blessing,
 We know this from the start,
 They fill out lives with happiness,
 We hope we'll never part.

So I say be kind to them
 And you won't be sorry,
 They'll love you for yourself,
 And rejoice in the glory.

For they are all like flowers
 Blooming day by day,

"A RISING TIME"

BY JAMES OLIVER RYAN

Citizens of the world,

The music drifts to meet ones ears

We do so long to hear the tunes that put us in a
 higher place

A versification for the body and mind

Humming are the many measures for a rising
 time

Music is to raise the message up,

Keys---notes---numbers---letters---and verses,

August is a summer month for a rising time,

A penchant for music is ours

Music is in motion everywhere

We are picking up, building up, and making
 songs up

A key to sharing perceptions,

Keeping busy with music---adapting it to our
 lives,

To be a free thinker---for vibrations in the air,

Musical expressive tunes---permeate this
 August's venue

In this ever advancing present

A melodic scheme for a rising time

Music is a natural connection---to life---all
 parts

Inwardly audible---the sounds of music bring
 energy renewed

A profusion of feeling---that bites us with
 pleasure so kind

And touches one with spirited nuances that it
 imparts

For a rising time

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Songs Of Love

Stephen A. Love - Always Within Kissin' Range

---Keith Gorgas

CMG WORLDWIDE artist Stephen A. Love may not be a household name among rock music fans, but his long and varied musical journey reads like a Rolling Stone "Who's Who" of the 1970's and 80's California music scene. It was none other than Randy Meisner, pre- Eagles, who led Love to California to pursue a career as a professional musician, and when Meisner left Rick Nelson's Stone Canyon Band to join Don Hendley and Glenn Frey backing Linda Ronstadt, it was a 20-year-old Stephen A. Love, playing bass and singing harmony in Nelson's band. Love was in the band for the infamous "Garden Party" incident and can be seen playing bass on the video of the chart-topping song that resulted from it. At Glen Campbell's suggestion, Love's song Let It Bring You Along was the opening cut on the album.

Love went on to join former Byrd Roger McQuinn's backing band and contributed his song Somebody Loves You to the 1975 album Roger McQuinn and Band. Again, it was chosen as the opening cut.

In 1976, Stephen A. Love moved on to join Country Rock pioneers, the New Riders of the Purple Sage during the height of their

popularity in the later 1970's. Love sang lead and harmony while contributing a rocking bass guitar, playing to large audiences around the country, including the legendary Englishtown, NJ show when the New Riders joined the Grateful Dead and Marshall Tucker Band before 125,000 fans. Two New Riders' albums, Who Are These Guys and Marin County Line, feature Love's compositions and lead vocals.

Moving on to John Cipollina's San Francisco All-Stars, eventually Mr. Love became a senior project manager and his musical career took a back seat, but occasional tours of Europe and releases on the International charts kept him involved and pursuing his passion. Upon retirement from the construction field, music has once again moved to the forefront of his life, and Stephen has been active, not only performing and recording, but in management and mentoring upcoming musicians. He draws on his vast wealth of experience and talent to help others climbing the ladder. In 2011 and 2012, Stephen released 3 "Number One" singles in 13 European countries, revitalizing his musical career, and in May of 2018 Stephen A. Love presented us with a full-length CD, Always Within Kissing Range

of You. Four of the ten songs on the CD have charted "Number One" on entertainment industries Radio Submit, sister to the Roots Charts.

Don't look for the Country Rock/ Rockabilly sound that characterized Love's career as performing band member. Always Within Kissing Range is primarily a blues album, with Jazz and Pop influences. It features Love on piano and various guitars, playing lead, slide, rhythm, and bass. He throws in some harmonica work to boot. The harp is primitive, yet sufficient, while the rest of his playing is top shelf. Always blessed with excellent range and exquisite command of his vocals, the years have not robbed those qualities from Love's voice. His singing is spot on through the album.

A growling, self-penned number, Number One Son of a Gun, gets things started, and Love airs the song out. The title track, Always Within Kissing Range of You, with its Jazz feelings, comes next. It's warm and gentle. Timing and textures are everything, and Love

has a deep well to draw from. The soulful Can't Love Someone Who Doesn't Love Me follows and has a familiar feeling to it. Again, Love gives his vocals a serious workout.

Walkin' After Midnight was Patsy Cline's first big hit, back in 1957. Stephen A. Love gives it a fresh and enjoyable rendering, before getting down smooth and dirty on That's Why They Call Me Mr. Love. Straight ahead blues comes down at us in So Long Ban-nytyne. A delightful cover of Leon Russell's Lady Blue is easy to listen to, and is followed by a heart-felt performance of Rod Stewart's People Get Ready. A wild accusing Wasting My Time concludes the recording.

Always Within Kissing Range provides good company for driving around on backroads. It's doing well on Independent charts, and well worth the effort of finding for the roots rock fan. It can be downloaded or purchased through the artist's web site, www.stephenalovel.com. Songs can be heard at http://www.radiosubmit.com/rs/STEPHEN_A_LOVE/



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- August -

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CD Review

Garry Cogdell & Chaz DePaolo: Acoustic Blues Live at St. Georges Country Store 2018 Smoke Tone Records

---Keith Gorgas

One a gentle summer evening in 2017, a group of musical friends assembled at the St. Georges Country Store along the banks of the Delaware and Chesapeake Canal. Joining local blues legend Garry Cogdell, after flying in from Colorado, were Blues Hall of Fame (NY Chapter) member Chaz DePaolo, and harmonica ace David Biondo. Johnny Christopher manned the bass, and John Di-giovanni (Steal Your Peach, Stackabones) handled percussion.

The beer was cold, the gumbo hot and spicy, and the music flowed sweetly. The result is this just released CD from Smoke Tone Records, *Live at St.GEORGES COUNTRY STORE*, a collection of mostly originals, with a couple of Elmore James' covers tossed in for good measure.

Garry Cogdell is known as a master of the Delta and Hill Country Blues vernaculars, while Chaz DePaolo has made his mark primarily on electric guitar with his innovative

rock oriented fusion blues. Both are prolific song writers and recording artists, with numerous CDs to their respective credits.

David Biondo's extensive career on harmonica goes back many years and includes playing with many local, regional, and national acts in both the blues and country rock genres. A comprehensive list of musicians he's recorded or shared the stage with would be as long as your arm.

The synergistic result of their "one night stand" is a delicious down home feast of acoustic blues, worth listening to over and over again. The timing is tight, and the spontaneous arrangements textured without over-embellishment. It's three craftsmen sharing their talents gracefully, to make each other's songs sound their best.

I won't pick apart the individual songs in this review; you can do that just fine yourself. There's a variety of styles and tempos to keep the listener attentive and entertained. Both artists write in similar yet

diverse modes. A couple of the highlights are DePaolo's *Angel On My Shoulder* and the final number, Cogdell's take on Elmore James' *It Hurts Me Too*. If I could offer one complaint, it's that the recording didn't take full advantage of DePaolo's distinctive biting acoustic leads; it seems as if he was holding back, perhaps not wanting to dominate the ensemble.

Live from ST. GEORGES COUNTRY STORE is available from all the usual digital download resources, as well as from SmokeTone Records, www.SmokeToneRecords.Com

- 1) Stuck in the Mud (Garry Cogdell) 3:38
- 2) Angel On My Shoulder (Chaz DePaolo) 3:39
- 3) Jimmy Reed (Garry Cogdell) 3:04
- 4) Fantasy (Garry Cogdell) 4:08

5) Alone But Not Lonely (Chaz DePaolo) 3:51

6) Rollin' & Tumblin' (Elmore James) 5:25

7) Tepid Blues (Chaz DePaolo) 4:31

8) Nickel on the Floor (Garry Cogdell) 3:54

9) Fishing (Garry Cogdell) 4:12

10) Everyday (Chaz DePaolo) 3:36

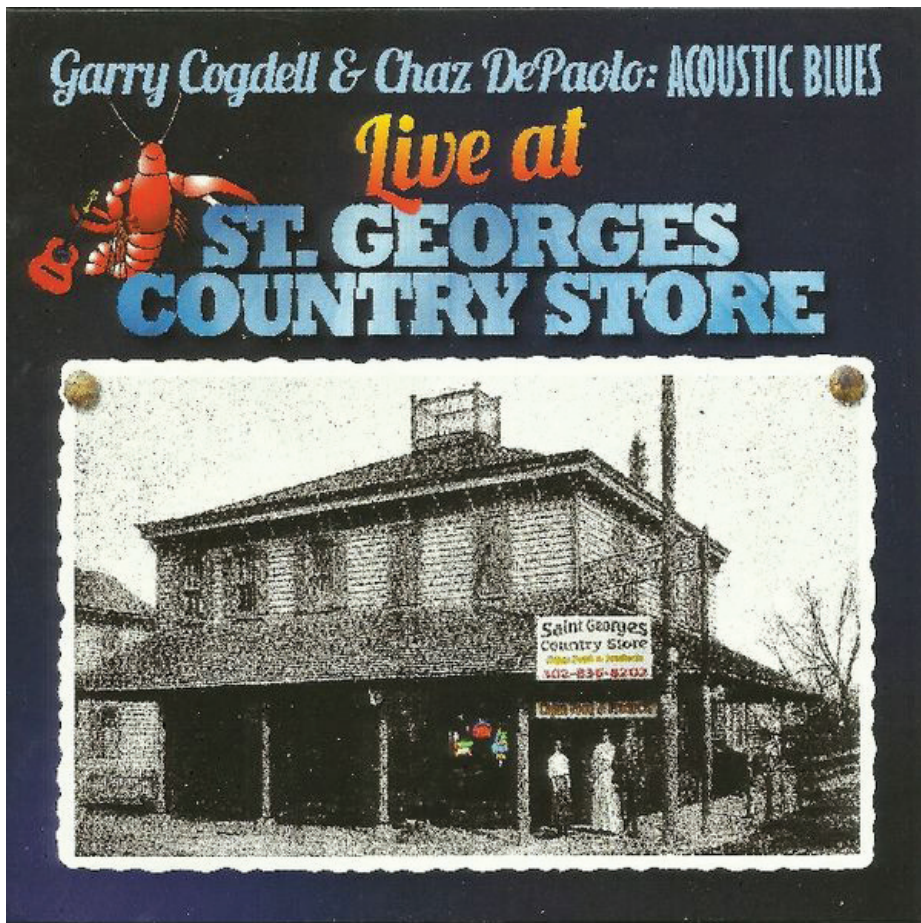
11) Two Tones Calling (Garry Cogdell) 5:32

12) Woman's Touch (Garry Cogdell) 4:56

13) It's What I'm Thankful For (Chaz DePaolo) 7:47

14) It Hurts Me Too (Elmore James) 4:17

all songs by Garry Cogdell and Chaz DePaolo/Cap'n Prozac ASCAP, except Rollin' & Tumblin' and It Hurts Me Too, both by Elmore James.



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Dungeons and Dragons 5th Edition: A Critical Hit

---Dr. Anthony Betrus
The Game Connoisseur

In 2017, Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) had its best sales year since Wizards of the Coast took it over from TSR in 1997. Interactive storytelling is still at the core of the game, with the books, lore, rules, accessories, and of course the players, all contributing to that end. For those of you less familiar with role playing games (RPGs), the idea is to participate in adventures, gain experience, find treasure, and level-up. The games are generally more open-ended than typical board games, with a lot of improvisation and spontaneity involved. Like any good improv, the key is in the preparation, knowing your character especially, and getting inside their head. Also reacting to players and events is important, with the “yes-and” improv philosophy holding true.

The core level-up system was put into the first edition of D&D in 1974 by its creator, Gary Gygax (true followers harken back to the earlier Chainmail, and older still, basic wargaming). A version of this level-up progression system is now at the core of virtually every video game with a leveling up scheme (Call of Duty, Overwatch, World of Warcraft, and Fortnite, to name just a few). While video games have reached mass audiences, the D&D tabletop system has, up to the 5th edition, been considered by many to be for wonky rule nerds, making it less accessible to the masses. There was even a brief period in the 1980s where D&D was falsely connected to the occult. After opening with a well received 3rd edition shortly following their acquisition of TSR, Wizards of the Coast missed the boat with their 4th edition (badly by most accounts). So bad was this effort that another company, Paizo, came out with an evolution of the D&D 3.5 edition called Pathfinder to carry the torch. In fact, these two systems are still both very popular and available today. Fortunately, after the disaster that was the 4th edition, Wizards listened to the fans, and came out with a very elegant and well designed 5th edition, following in the spirit of the first three editions. Often referred to simply as “5e,” the current iteration is very user friendly, and offers the same expanded D&D universe in a relatively easy to use package. It is much more friendly for new players, and you don’t need a PhD in D&D to play.

Like many others my age, I was a D&D 2nd edition guy, and have a fairly substantial collection of books and modules. I also played other RPGs (Star Frontiers, Gamma World, Star Wars, and Indiana Jones to name a few). For a time as a teenager I played a lot, both as Dungeon Master (or DM for short), and as a player. After a long hiatus (some 20 years), last summer one of my English Education students developed a series of les-



My home-brew gaming table with a LED TV under a plexiglass grid

sons for teachers on how to integrate D&D into an English writing curriculum. His task was to make D&D easy to understand, and when he delivered his workshop, it was one of the most highly attended workshops any of my students has ever delivered. That same student took me and some other students through a short home-brew adventure as part of another class, and after that I purchased the Player’s Handbook, a Dungeon Master’s Screen, and the 5e Starter Set.

After dabbling a bit more on my own, one of my work colleagues caught wind that I played, and invited me into a group. Basically, when you are invited to one of these groups, it is like a job interview. There is a compatibility check that happens among the players (no D20 roll necessary), to see if people are enjoying themselves and have good chemistry. Fortunately things worked out, and we now have a flexible group of 5-8 players at any given time, playing once every 1-2 weeks. The typical session is 3 hours, although from time to time we will run longer. Like many groups, we have multiple campaigns going at any given time. And while gameplay tends to happen in slow motion, that allows for a whole lot of embellishment of what happens while you play. The DM writes a summary of the session, so there is an ongoing record of what happened. This allows players who don’t play every week to catch up and jump right in when they can play.

We currently have one high level adventure running, and another low level adventure

running in parallel. The work of the Dungeon Master in preparing for the sessions is significant, so we share that responsibility (I run one campaign, and another person runs the other). We equate it to a TV show, where there is the core cast, and some regular guest star appearances. In terms of mechanics, we use the website D&D Beyond for our characters and materials (the website is superior to the app for now), although there is some pen and paper action as well. Others use roll20.net, or the STEAM game Tabletop (and there are plenty of other helper apps). We even built a gaming table that has a LED TV underneath it to project dynamic maps. We then added in some 3D prints and miniatures to help round out the physical objects

to interact with, and altogether it makes for quite a fun gaming experience.

And D&D has crept into general pop culture as well (not just in The Big Bang Theory). Perhaps the most widely known is Stranger Things, where the entire show is basically one big D&D adventure. Other notables include Critical Role, which is super popular on Twitch, and involves a group of professional voice actors acting out their games, most notably the fantastic DM, Matt Mercer. Finally, I can’t end without mentioning Vin Diesel and his over-the-top witch hunter character, perhaps the most well known celebrity D&D Player. Overall, this Dungeon Master gives D&D 5th Edition a 20 out of 20, a critical hit in my book



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Movie Review



Won't You Be My Neighbor



---BY CRAIG THORNTON

In the slough of summer blockbuster superhero movies, sequels, franchises, and animated films, what a refreshing treat "Won't You Be My Neighbor" is. It would be refreshing, even if it wasn't the needle in the haystack of big, bombastic, boisterous-well you get the picture. Its power is in its simplicity and this simplicity comes from its subject matter, Fred Rogers.

Often parodied, spoofed and derided, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was a staple of children's programming for decades. Who could imagine that a show with such basic production values- the sets and puppets look like they were made five minutes before going to air,-would reach anyone? It

was a clear case of substance over style. The Substance being self-acceptance, tolerance, recognizing real feelings, and most importantly love and connection.

Mr. Rogers' empathy is eerily powerful and it takes on a truly magical quality when it inhabits a sock puppet named Daniel the Tiger. Some of the most moving clips involve Daniel the Tiger chatting with a wide-eyed open faced child whose expression truly embodies the adage: a picture is worth a thousand words.

Personally, I don't remember watching Mr. Rogers as a child. Perhaps growing up in a rural area, my television channel selection was limited. I vaguely remember seeing it as an older child, and not really getting it. Mr. Rogers' audience typically skews seven years old or younger. Given this, I was amazed at some of the topics that were

tackled, uniquely with puppet skits and interactions of characters on the show. The fear that media coverage of the Vietnam War brought to children was addressed, as well as the general upheaval of American society in the late 1960's and early 1970's. The skit involving the king building a wall is especially prophetic today.

The documentary film market has opened up with the world of streaming, especially Netflix. This is ultimately a good thing; however, a problem with more documentaries getting made and often quickly is lack of factual research and also lack of focus. Often documentaries feel like a presentation of facts and scenes and emotional moments,

but without a general thesis. Luckily, Won't You be My Neighbor is directed by Oscar winning director Morgan Neville who is deft at both emotional involvement and thematic cohesion. It's this combination of "I didn't know that" and "I suddenly feel like crying" is what makes the film both illuminating and powerful. Yet there are no special tricks used to pull this off. The story telling is traditional; on screen interviews with family members, co-workers and media specialists intercut with clips of the show and other archival footage. Perhaps this could be part of Neville's plan, that sometimes the simplest things are the most profound, especially if they are truthful.

26th Chenango Blues Fest

Elvin Bishop is a rock-n-roll Hall of Famer, and Samantha Fish just won the Blues Music Award as Female Artist of the Year. It's a one two punch of a legend and the best up and coming artist around at the top of the bill at this year's 26th Chenango Blues Fest. It's going to be a knock out lineup from start to finish as the Festival enters its second twenty five years swinging.

The unofficial kickoff will come at the NBT Bank Free Thursday show in East Side Park on August 16th with a special show featuring Jersey Shore legends Southside Johnny and the Asbury Jukes. Over a forty year career performing and recording with the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Jon Bon Jovi and Steve Van Zandt, Southside Johnny has earned a reputation as a consummate showman and band leader.

Friday's free admission show at the County Fairgrounds is sponsored by New York Central Mutual and will be headlined by Chicago bluesman Toronzo Cannon, a hard rocking sometime bus driver who has gained world-wide fame with his charismatic live shows. Opening the evening will be Angel Forrest, winner of Maple Blues Award as Vocalist of the Year four times. She was a finalist at this year's International Blues Challenge and her distinctive voice and fiery personality have drawn comparisons to Janis Joplin. Sandwiched between is New Orleans keyboard player John Gros whose gumbo of Louisiana music includes elements of blues, Americana, funk and Mardi Gras Indian.

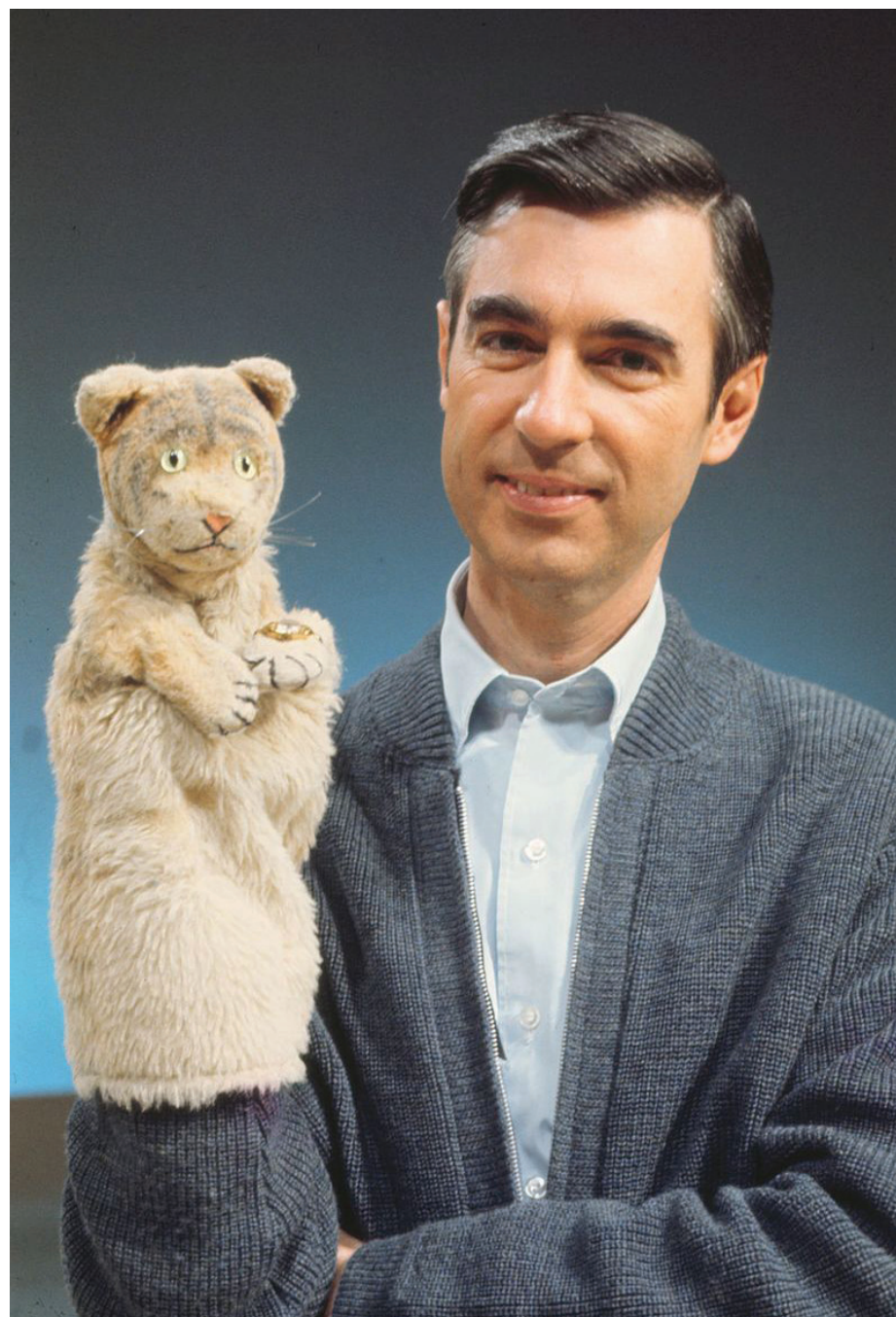
Saturday's music kicks off in the Nelson and Flanagan Tent with local favorite Nate Gross at 11:30 A.M. Following in the tent are Hubby Jenkins, a founding member of the Carolina Chocolate Drops, and the Prestage Brothers. Ben put on a great show as a solo act a few years ago and will return with his brother for an encore. Next up is A. J. Ghent - a very talented slide guitarist whose roots lie in the sacred steel tradition. Samantha

Fish will close down the tent, and the festival, with what is sure to be an event highlight. Her award as Female Artist of the Year is well deserved as she has become the next star in the blues world.

The Sheffield Bio Science Infield Stage has a diverse and exciting group performing on it, led by Hall of Fame member, Elvin Bishop and his Big Fun Trio. From his early days with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band through a solo career that has featured chart topping hits like "Fooled Around and Fell in Love", Bishop has a fifty year career at the forefront of American music. Preceding him will be the Cash Box Kings, whose raucous live shows crackle with boundless energy. They play tough, real deal Chicago blues with contemporary authority and old school authenticity. Also on the Infield Stage is the Keeshea Pratt Band, a Houston based seven piece band that was the hands down winner at this year's International Blues Challenge. Check out her divine talents and see why she wowed the judges in Memphis. Opening things up will be returning festival favorite, Brandon Santini.

The Preferred Mutual Chenango Blues Fest is an all-volunteer run non-profit that prides itself on being "by fans, for fans." There are free children's activities on Saturday, and there is weekend long on-site camping for an extra fee. Friday's show is free for all, and those 17 and under can attend Saturday's show free as well if accompanied by an adult. Those 18 and over are \$25 in advance and \$35 the day of the show. There are great food and craft vendors on site. For full details on artists, grounds rules and ticket outlets please visit the website at www.chenangobluesfest.org

You can also find information there on all the NBT Bank Free Thursdays concerts that take place in July and August. These shows feature artists from a wide range of genres from zydeco to bluegrass to reggae.



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Writer's Block

---Vic Clevenger
The Cookin' Comedian

I have something I need to admit to you today. It's not something I'm proud of nor am I eager to let you in on my secret. This is the thing about secrets, they are secrets for a reason. However, a new buzz word going around is transparency. In the spirit of being transparent I'll let you in on this. As much as I like you, I'm not going to tell you all of them, baby steps for right now. So here I go. You might want to be seated. Well, in case you didn't know, I have Writer's Block. Yes, I know it's horrifying but as nervous as I am for opening myself to you like this, I do feel better.

Writer's Block is one of those impediments a lot of people suffer from but not a lot of people take seriously. For someone who considers themselves a creative person, this setback can be cataclysmic. Most of the time this debilitating hindrance is temporary but even temporary is a subjective timeframe and at the moment feels like it will never end. When I was a wrestler in high school we had to work out almost every day. Often during those workouts, we would hit the proverbial wall which seemed impenetrable, I couldn't push any more. My limit met until my coach came yelling for me to push through the pain, which I did and the lessons had been learned.

This can also be said of having a Writer's Block difficulty, you just have to push through it. When I don't feel like writing a blog (vicclevenger.com), article or even a joke I must push myself to get past this wall of interruption. The best way I've found to do this is, well, write. I get my journal out and put my pen to paper, not lifting it until I've completed three hand written pages. This allows me to get my mind off of this wall blocking my creativity until I find the door allowing me to write again.

However, I need to take steps in preventing future relapses of Writer's Block. When I look back on those days I've suffered from Writer's Block, I noticed there has been gaps in my daily journal writing. So, I need to take those extra efforts to write even on the days I don't really feel like it. When I open my journal and put words on paper sometimes it's a little rough but when I'm finished I'll have something I can use in some aspect of my writing

life. Prevention really is the best medicine when it comes to Writer's Block for all who write, create or just try to deliver their best but find themselves hindered from their goal.

I also have noticed I've allowed myself to become distracted from my goals. Do you remember the movie Batman Returns? It's the one with Danny DeVito as the Penguin. He had a goal of seeking revenge on all the kids of rich folk because he felt cheated from his birthright until Max Shrek (Christopher Walken) steps in suggesting he could be Mayor. Go watch the movie and realize distractions do happen but it is up to you to regain your focus when it does.

Do what you can to prevent your own version of the crippling Writer's Block but when you come face to face with it, then I hope you can find what helps you to refocus and get back on track.



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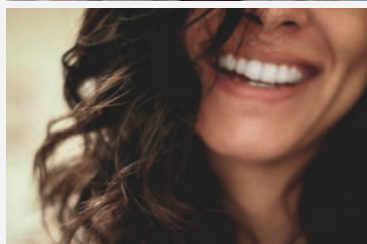
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