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Mel Brown Honoured with Park Bench Statue in Kitchener



Top: Rob Barkshire, Shawn Kellerman, Kevin Doyle
 Bottom: Steve Strongman, Miss Angel
 Photo by Marion Grousopoulos

It's hard to imagine a Guitarist who could win the admiration of such a diverse group of Artists as T-Bone Walker, B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, Stevie, and Jimmie Vaughan, Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Etta James, Bobby Blue Bland, John Lee Hooker, and Buddy Guy, to name a few. MEL BROWN was that Guitarist!

In an interview with Derek Trucks of the Tedeschi Trucks Band when asked whom he is listening to these days he is quoted “I’m listening to everything I can find by a guy named “Mel Brown”

In late October at the site of the iconic blues club named Pop the Gator located at 44 Queen Street south (beside the Walper Hotel in Kitchener), a sizable crowd was in attendance witness the unveiling of Mel Brown’s statue. From 1989 to 1995 Mel Brown played at Pop the Gator over a hundred times. TheMuseum of Kitchener raised the money during the presentation of the Unzipped exhibit of memorabilia and artifacts of The Rolling Stones and a

fundraising raising concert held after that presentation also held at TheMuseum.

Continued on next page . . .

Mel Brown Statue . . . continued

The creation of the statue was completed by Brampton's Abiola Idowu who has stated it was a great and rare privilege to make a statue of Brown and have a part in the beloved musician's story. Idowu's sculpture has Brown sitting on a bench, wearing a hat, and playing a guitar.

Mel came to Kitchener in 1989 to lead the house band at the blues club Pop the Gator on Queen Street South. Glenn Smith hired Mel for the gig during a visit to Austin TX, where Mel was playing in the house band. for the legendary blues club Antone's. When Pop the Gator closed, Mel stayed in Kitchener until his passing in 2009. Mel released several CDs on Electro-Fi Records out of Toronto Ontario and mentor many young local musicians including Shawn



Abiola Idowu

Photo by Marion Grousopoulos



Kevin Doyle, Miss Angel

Photo by Marion Grousopoulos

Kellerman (sideman Bobby Rush & Lucky Peterson Steve Strongman Juno Award Winner), and Julian Fauth Juno Award Winner,

Mel was a great inspiration for the creation of The Grand River Blues Society (2003) and The TD Kitchener Blues Festival which started in 2000. Mel Brown performed at every Kitchener Blues Festival until his death in 2009.

Continued on next page . . .

Mel Brown Statue . . . continued

The TD Kitchener Blues Festival honors Mel by awarding a Mel Brown Award every year to a person who has contributed a great to blues and the success of the Kitchener Blues Festival. Past recipients include Bobby Bland, Jimmy Vaughn, Bruce Iglauer, and Holger Petersen. The legacy of Mel Brown in Kitchener is a great one. To this day, his direct influence on the Canadian music scene continues in the region and across the country.

TheMuseum and The Grand River Blues Society are working together to bring the project of the statue and the Mel Brown Mississippi Blues Trail Marker come to fruition in the hopes that both could be positioned side by side in Kitchener. Mel Brown unfortunately has no historical Blues Marker in Mississippi which is an oversight. The first Blues Marker in Canada could be in Kitchener honouring him. A Blues Marker can fit up to 500 words and photos to tell his story and Mel's legacy to Canada.



Scott Urquhart, Miss Angel
Photo by Marion Grousopoulos



Behind the Lens

Jim Ziegler of Bellville

Equipment: Canon 70D

Canon Lenses: RP 24-70 & 70 - 200



I started getting into photography back in Jr high. It was something that

I always enjoyed back in my youth but around the mid 2000's I started getting back into photography and at that time I just had a point and shoot. Always had a passion for music going to concerts as a kid so I would bring my camera to some of the festivals and concerts.

Back in 2012 I took some photos at a benefit concert for Jeff Healey. I had a couple musicians from that show reach out to me and said they loved the photos that I took! They said that I should take a chance and go pro. The opportunity arose that one of the musicians invited me to his next show at the Horseshoe in Toronto (Lamont James). So, for that show I decided I would go and get myself a real camera. From there I would go to any venue that

would let me in with my camera. I started going to the Boathouse (Kitchener) and that's when I met the Romeo Sex Fighter and they introduced me to other local musicians.

From that point is where I met Bruce Hall (President of the GRBS) and he asked if I would be interested in photographing the Kitchener Bluesfest. Later I became the House Photographer for Maxwell's Concerts and Events. So now I find myself in Belleville covering a lot of events out there.

Photos on next few pages

Photos by Jim Ziegler



Photo By Jim Ziegler 2014 ©

Rick Derringer



Copyright Jim Ziegler 2013 (c)

Romeo Sex Fighter

Photos by Jim Ziegler



Photo By Jim Ziegler 2019 ©

Colin James



Photo By Jim Ziegler 2012 (c)

Danny Marks

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Destroyer

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JJ Wilde



Headstones

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Paul James



Lamont James

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The Trainwrecks to be Showcased in Memphis @ IBC



The Trainwrecks are a Blues focused band that are made up of local high school students from Kitchener - Waterloo. These talented teens found each other through the Grand River Blues Camp and are excited to be able to share their love of the blues.

Together they won the Kitchener Blues Festivals 'Youth Legacy" contest and also recorded their first single, a cover of "Somethings Got A Hold of Me." The Trainwrecks give a fresh take on Blues classics,

and you can see them perform live at the Kitchener Blues Festival, Belmont Bestival and are also excited to represent the Grand River Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis as Youth participants!

You can find them on Instagram here: <https://www.instagram.com/the.trainwrecks>



27th Annual Maple Blues Awards



MONDAY FEBRUARY 12TH, 2024, 7PM
THE PHOENIX CONCERT THEATRE
410 SHERBOURNE ST. TORONTO

GET TICKETS HERE <https://torontobluessociety.com/>

Feature Performers To Be Announced

TORONTO BLUES SOCIETY ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE INAUGURAL INDIGENOUS ARTIST/GROUP OF THE YEAR AND THE BLUES BOOSTER OF THE YEAR AWARD

(Toronto, ON) – The Toronto Blues Society has announced the winners of two very special Maple Blues Awards, one being the inaugural Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year and the coveted Blues Booster of the Year award, to be presented at the upcoming 27th annual Maple Blues Awards on February 12, 2024 at Phoenix Concert Theatre.

The Toronto Blues Society has been encouraging the emergence of Indigenous blues talent throughout the years since 1993, when they produced the first all-Indigenous blues show, titled, ‘Rez Bluez’. Since then, the talent in this genre by Indigenous musicians has grown substantially. During the pandemic the TBS Board proposed the idea of having a Maple Blues Award for an Indigenous Artist or Group. With the assistance of Elaine Bomberry as chair of the committee, six additional Indigenous people, including Diane Kohoko, Amos Key Jr., Mell Kirkland, Ted Whitecalf, Lance Delisle, and Dennis Joseph, who are knowledgeable in the blues genre participated as volunteers. Together they compiled an overall list and voted for the Indigenous Blues Artist/Group.

Continued on next page ...

Maple Blues Awards . . . continued

The recipient of the Indigenous Artist/Group of the Year is Nashville-based Crystal Shawanda, Anishinaabe from Wikwemikong Unceded Territory, Manitoulin Island. A JUNO Award winner and multiple Maple Blues Award winner, Shawanda is a force to be reckoned with on stages across North America. "Having crossed over from the country music genre, she made her soulful blues voice known right away from coast-to-coast-to-coast", says Bomberry. "Not only does she perform at large festivals and concert halls, she also performs extensively at Indigenous events and speaks to and inspires Indigenous Youth throughout her travels."

On receiving word of the award, Shawanda exclaimed "I'm so thankful to everyone for this great honor, and excited and hopeful that this new category will serve as a steppingstone for all the amazing Indigenous artists on the blues music scene today. Thank you to the Toronto Blues society for creating this space. Miigwetch!"

Kamloops BC's Brant Zwicker, who is the winner of the Blues Booster of the Year award, is a long-time advocate for blues music through his syndicated radio program "At The Crossroads, where he acts as the host, writer and producer of since February 2003. "At The Crossroads" is heard on 112 FM transmitters or streaming platforms in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Belgium. The Blues Booster of the Year award is a very special recognition given to individuals and festivals for their dedication to supporting blues in Canada. "To receive an award of the stature of Blues Booster of the Year from the Toronto Blues Society truly is a significant honour for me. I do what I do in the blues community purely out of love and appreciation for the music and for those who make and support it", says Zwicker. "That has always been the goal and the reward, so to be recognized for something that comes naturally to me is, indeed, most humbling."

The Maple Blues Awards is Canada's national blues awards program. Its goal is to promote blues music across Canada, and to recognize outstanding achievement in the field. The not-to-be-missed awards gala and performances will take place on Monday, February 12th, at The Phoenix Concert Theatre (410 Sherbourne Street).

Tickets are \$37.40 - \$84.75 and can be purchased on TicketWeb.

Continued on next page ...

THE 27TH ANNUAL MAPLE BLUES AWARD NOMINEES

Entertainer of the Year

- Angelique Francis
- Blackburn Brothers
- Blue Moon Marquee
- Bywater Call
- Matt Andersen

Electric Act of the Year

- Blackburn Brothers
- Bywater Call
- Colin James
- Matt Andersen
- Sue Foley

Acoustic Act of the Year

- Brandon Isaak
- Garrett Mason
- Harrison Kennedy
- Michel Jerome Browne
- Suzie Vinnick

Male Vocalist of the Year

- Brandon Isaak
- Brooke Blackburn
- Harrison Kennedy
- Matt Andersen
- Steve Marriner

Female Vocalist of the Year

- Crystal Shawanda
- Dawn Tyler Watson
- Meghan Parnell
- Miss Emily
- Shakura S'Aida

New Artist or Group of the Year

- Angelina Hunter Trio
- Garnetta Cromwell & DaGroovmasters
- Little Magic Sam Band
- Sandra Bouza
- The Sugar Darlings

Recording/Producer of the Year

- The Big Bottle of Joy
ARTIST: Matt Andersen
PRODUCER: Matt Andersen
- Midnight Blues
ARTIST: Crystal Shawanda
PRODUCER: Dewayne Strobel
- One Step Closer
ARTIST: Brandon Isaak
PRODUCER: Brandon Isaak/
Conrad Hillis
- Remain
ARTIST: Bywater Call
PRODUCER: Renan Yildizdogan
- SoulFunkn'Blues
ARTIST: Blackburn Brothers
PRODUCER: Howard Ayece

B.B. King International Artist of the Year

- Christone "Kingfish" Ingram
- Rick Estrin & The Nightcats
- Tedeschi Trucks Band
- Thorbjorn Risager and The Black Tornado
- Warren Haynes (Gov't Mule)

Guitarist of the Year

- Brooke Blackburn
- Garrett Mason
- Jack Semple
- Sue Foley
- Tony D (Diteodoro)

Harmonica Player of the Year

- Guy Belanger
- Jerome Godbois
- Joe Murphy
- Steve Marriner
- Roly Platt

Piano/Keyboard Player of the Year

- David Vest
- Debra Power
- Duane Blackburn
- Jesse O' Brien
- Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne

Horn Player of the Year

- Alison Young
- Chris Whiteley
- Dan Jancar
- Kaven Jalbert
- Loretta Hale

Drummer of the Year

- Chris Nordquist
- Cory Blackburn
- Gary Craig
- Jim Casson
- Matt Sobb

Bassist of the Year

- Angelique Francis
- Gary Kendall
- Jasmine Colette
- Nathan Blackburn
- Russell Jackson

Songwriter of the Year

- Andre Bisson
- Blackburn Brothers
- Brandon Isaak
- Crystal Shawanda
- Matt Andersen

Blues With A Feeling/ Lifetime Achievement Award

- Alec Fraser
- Bobby Dean Blackburn
- Brent Parkin
- Cheryl Lescom
- Dalannah Gail Bowen
- Danny Brooks
- Mike McKenna
- Murray Porter
- Sue Foley
- Tom Lavin

Voting is now Closed



Chuck Jackson: Blues Legend

For over 50 years of live musical performance and serving as a founder and director of the Tim Horton's Southside Shuffle for 25 years, Chuck Jackson meets the strict mandate to receive this distinction.

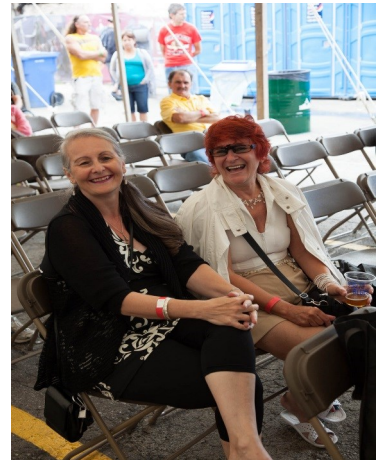
In being recognized as a “Blues Legend”, Jackson has utilized his automatic entitlement to recognize Richard “Hock” Walsh and Jane Vasey for the “Blues Legacy” distinction.

All artists who have been recognized with this distinction will receive written recognition that will be accessible to everyone worldwide via the Blues and Roots Radio website in the upcoming weeks. This initiative strives to educate others about the musicians who have made an impact in the Canadian Blues Collective, and the musicians themselves are the best way to do it.

In addition to being recognized as a “Blues Legend” and choosing other artists to be recognized for the “Blues Legacy” distinction, Chuck Jackson will be presented with a physical award in person on August 17th at the Beggars Blues Banquet in Port Credit, Ontario. Thanks to Chuck Jackson for his significant contributions to the Canadian Blues music Collective - a Blues Legend indeed!



We Can't Say Enough About our Volunteers!



How can we possibly thank our volunteers enough? They're the driving force behind The Grand River Blues Society – as Board of Directors, running events, behind the scenes, and so much more.

Behind the Mic



Willy A

The Old Chicago Blues Show, 98.5 CKWR
Your host: Willy A
Saturday afternoons from 12:00 – 2:00 PM
E-mail: willyablues@gmail.com

Just who is Willy A and what is The Old Chicago Blues Show?

Born in Toronto, I took an interest in music from a very early age. Having had parents who loved Big Band swing music and Jazz, was just the beginning of my musical journey. From the top 40 pop music of the mid 1950's, I soon discovered that my music of preference came from artists that sang with heart felt emotion. As such, RnB and Soul music of the 50's, 60's and 70's, soon became my passion. While in high school, I discovered my ability to emulate that same music vocally, and it lead me to becoming the lead singer for three different bands; **The Ambassadors, The Delphi Review and The Spirit.**

With the Blues being the granddaddy of most popular music, it was a natural progression to develop an appreciation for Blues music and its historical significance. A little over **twenty six years ago**, a chance meeting with a CKWR Board member, at a Fathead concert at the old Kitchener Station Hotel, lead to an apprenticing opportunity and eventually becoming the deejay host of the Old Chicago Blues Show in **January 1997**. This was such a natural fit for me, as I understood and appreciated that Blues music was the basis for so many present day music genres, including the RnB and Soul Music I grew up with.

Continued on next page . . .

Willy A . . . continued

In 2003, when I became a founding member of the **Grand River Blues Society**, it proved to be the perfect vehicle to help extend the outreach of Blues music into our community and beyond. Watching the Society continue to thrive 20 years later instills in me a great sense of satisfaction and pride. Over the years, I've proudly showcased not only Chicago Blues, but rather all styles of Blues music from artists worldwide. At the same time, I've managed to maintain a lifelong passion for the classic RnB music of the 50's, 60's, and 70's, by presenting weekly tracks from those decades, on my "**RnB Corner**", which draws from my treasured collection of records, vinyl and CD's.

Another exclusive weekly show feature is what I call a trip back in time, on the "**Time Travel Train**", where the train will magically take you back to a recording studio, where you sit in on a classic Blues recording session, by a legendary Blues artist. Artist background details are always provided before your journey. Plus the Old Chicago Blues Show also keeps you well informed of the goings on of all things Blues, in the Region and beyond.

So, now you have a snapshot of me personally and how the Old Chicago Blues Show has evolved under my watch. But there's so much more to getting a radio program to air. Let me explain.

How Programs Are Recorded and Submitted

In simple terms, shows are generated from the radio station by means of a computer program, specially designed for radio stations. Programmers have the option of recording shows direct to air in the station, or recording remotely and sending a show to the station engineer. He is responsible for ensuring live to air shows (including predetermined music, commercials and public service announcements) are input into the computer, utilizing time slots. Remotely submitted shows, e.g., **The Old Chicago Blues Show**, often use the programmers own hand-picked music, station IDs and ads. These shows are forwarded to the engineer via an MP3 and also slotted into the station system on the day and time the show goes to air.

In a nutshell, that's how the shows get to air. It sounds pretty simple but putting the show itself together requires a lot of time and preparation. I estimate that each show I prepare remotely, takes roughly 6 hours each week. It would be so easy to just randomly choose music and record the show. But my sense of commitment to Blues music, the artists and my audience, has me following a regimented routine each week as I explain on the next page.

Continued on next page . . .

Willy A . . . continued

Program Preparation by the Show Host

- Listen to new music that is continually being sent to me from usually three sources: Publicity and Public Relations Companies (thank you Sarah French, Eric Alper, and others), artists, and music labels. It's a constant flow of music, sent both digitally and occasionally via CD's, showcasing a variety of artists and various styles of Blues.
- Pick and choose numerous tracks that could be used not just once, but in future weeks as well. I hand pick recordings that would be the most interesting for a weekly three song "Feature. Variety being the spice of life.
- Ensure that the program's song selections will meet the CRTC guidelines of the minimum amount of Canadian content that is acceptable, based on specific Categories of music. For example, the majority of tracks played on my show fall under Category 2, which requires a minimum of 35% Canadian content.
- Try to pick an interesting variety of artists, styles and flow of music. To do so, I categorize the songs as slow, medium and fast; incorporating a nice mix of tempo to pique the listeners' interest.
- Do extensive artist research for special Features and for the "Time Travel Train" and "RnB Corner" segments of the program.
- Complete a Log Sheet of your selections, showing artist name, song title, category of music, indicating Canadian content, showing when you spoke/played Station ID's and Ads and the amount of talk time during the show.
- Record the actual show using special software; ensuring that my voice and song levels have uniformity of sound range, for enjoyable listening. This requires checking the levels after each song (because music is often recorded at different volumes). Ensure that songs flow nicely into each other, thus removing any dead air between songs. (Dead air is an absolute no-no on radio)
- Forward the completed show recording to the station and then keep track of which songs were played by each artist. This avoids duplication of songs being played and hopefully keeps the music selection fresh for the listeners.

Continued on next page . . .

So Blues lovers, in closing, I want to thank you for supporting the Old Chicago Blues show for the past 26 years (and counting) and I would be delighted if you could join me, every **Saturday afternoon from 12:30 – 2:00 PM**, on 98.5 CKWR, and discover the incredible history and diversity of the music that's proudly known as "The Blues".

Christmas is fast approaching and each year I do **3 shows dedicated to Blues and RnB Christmas music**. The first will be aired on **December 9** and I hope you will join me for all three. You just might hear my favourite Christmas tracks listed below:

Willy A's Naughty and Nice Christmas List

- **Co Co Montoya – A Bluesman's Christmas**
- **Jack DeKeyzer – The 12 Blue Days of Christmas**
- **Lightnin' Hopkins – Santa**
- **Luther Vandross – Every Year Every Christmas**
- **Albert King – Santa Claus Wants Some Lovin'**
- **Jim Koepell – Slim Down Santa**
- **Likho Duo – God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen (instr)**
- **Clarence Carter – Back Door Santa**
- **Shakura S'aida – Be My Santa Claus**
- **Shemekia Copeland – Stay a Little Longer Santa**
- **Chris Whiteley – Lonely Shepard**
- **Lonnie Brooks – Christmas on the Bayou**
- **David GoGo – Let's Get a Real Tree**
- **Randy Greer – Wrap Yourself in a Christmas Package**
- **Ray Charles – Rudolph**
- **Little Charlie and the Nightcats – It's Christmas Time Again (Spend Spend Spend)**
- **Charlie Musselwhite – Silent Night (instr)**
- **C J Chenier – Zydeco Christmas (instr)**
- **L'il Ed and Blues Imperials – I'm Your Santa**

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A Happy BLUES Holiday to All!!!



Your Grand River Blues Society

We continue to maintain strong membership numbers in our Grand River Blues Society with over 150 active members. Welcome to all our new members, and thank you to all who renewed!

Please continue to let people know about the Grand River Blues Society and tell them how to join. Better yet, pass on one of our new membership postcards and sign up some more members. If you need postcards, contact any of the Directors or e-mail the address noted below. You might also consider a membership for a friend or family member as a gift.

Also remember that as a member you are always welcome to attend the monthly meetings of the Board. Contact President Bruce Hall, via e-mail, at grandriverblues@gmail.com and let him know that you would like to attend. Another reminder: If you change your address, phone number or e-mail address, please let us know and be sure to subscribe to the Blues Buzz!

Grand River Blues Society

www.grandriverblues.org

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Contact Information

Grand River Blues Society, P.O. Box 40109
Waterloo Town Square Post Office Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1
grandriverblues@gmail.com

Promote Your Event

If you are a blues artist, band or blues friendly venue with an event coming up, send your info to grandriverblues@gmail.com and we will get it into the weekly Blues Buzz. Be sure to provide all of the details and get the info to us early.



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Visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/Grand-River-Blues-Society-408160155868047/>

Membership Has Its Benefits

We are pleased to announce to our members that our friends at **Encore Records** (*Queen Street, Kitchener*) have offered their support to the Grand River Blues Society by giving active members 10% off on all blues CD's. All members have to do to receive discount is show their membership card. This is a great way to spread the blues around and we thank **Encore Records** for their support.

Membership does have it perks, so be sure to keep your membership active!

Become a Member or Renew Your Membership
Grand River Blues Society

Name: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 City: _____ Prov: _____
 Country: _____ Postal Code: _____
 Telephone: [____] - [____] - [_____]
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Membership Fees in Cdn Funds (Select one):

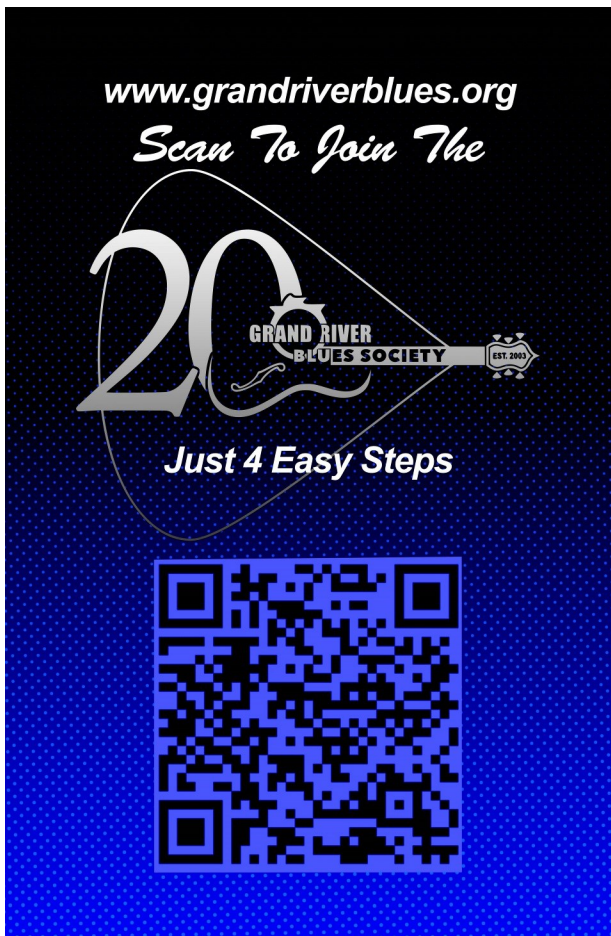
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Is this a renewal? Yes No
 Membership #: _____

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Monthly Raffle Winner!

We have another winner of our bi-monthly draw. Each month one of our members is picked in a raffle for a blues related prize. Mary Jane Oates of Kitchener wins tickets to the Road to Memphis Fundraiser @ Edelweiss Kitchener Sar, Mar 9th . Next draw will be held in January 2024. Keep your membership active to be eligible!

Central Ontario Musicians Association

Representing Local Musicians and Promoting Live Music

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**GRAND RIVER
BLUES SOCIETY**

**INTERNATIONAL
BLUES
CHALLENGE**

EST. 2003

Road to Memphis 2025
Band Category

COMPETITION

Saturday Afternoon March 9th 2024

Sign Up Now!

**Deadline for receiving
the limited number of entries is
Monday, January 22, 2024.**

Send your info to:
grandriverblues@gmail.com

Edelweiss Tavern
600 Doon Village Road, Kitchener ON.



www.grandriverblues.org

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