



Capital Blues Messenger



HOLIDAY PARTY - DEC. 20, 2008 - WHOP FRAZIER & TOM NEWMAN
NEW YEAR'S EVE CELEBRATION - DECEMBER 31, 2008
FEATURING CLARENCE "THE BLUESMAN" TURNER
MIKE WESTCOTT & WAVE MILOR
OBAMARAMA PRE-INGAGURAL PARTY - JAN.17, 2009
WITH C W HARRINGTON



THE DC BLUES SOCIETY

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The DC Blues Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to keeping the Blues alive through outreach and education.

The DCBS' newsletter, The Capital Blues Messenger, is published monthly (unless otherwise noted).

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Send changes in name, address or membership status to membership@dcblues.org or mail to DCBSB Attn: Membership at the address listed above.

The Capital Blues Messenger is your publication and members are encouraged to submit articles, cartoons and photography.

Blues listings for bands should be sent to calendar@dcblues.org or mail to Steve Levine, 5910 Bryn Mawr Rd. College Park, MD 20740.

Note: The deadline for submissions is the 15th of the month. DCBS reserves the right to edit or refuse any content, including advertising, that it deems inappropriate.

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Table with AD RATES: Business card (\$20), 1/8 page (\$25), 1/4 page (\$40), 1/3 page (\$55), 1/2 page (\$75), 2/3 page (\$110), Full page (\$140)

Ads should be at least 200 dpi; optimum 300 dpi. Print edition is in black & white. For on-line rates, go to www.dcblues.org. Questions? Email ads@dcblues.org

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Annual membership: Student \$15 (send copy of photo ID), Individual \$25, Family \$35, Canada \$35 (US), other countries \$50 (US). You can join on-line or send your check to DC Blues Society, P.O. Box 77315, Washington, DC 20013-7315.

Become a member of DCBS and get a FREE limited edition CD featuring 17 of the DC area's best bands. It's simple, quick and easy. Here's how:

- Use the mail-in application on Page 11,
Apply on-line at www.dcblues.org or
Sign up at DCBS sponsored events and other venues where the DCBS booth is exhibiting.

Because of the extra handling and shipping costs, this offer expires on 12/31/2008. After that, the CD will be given only to new members signing up at DCBS events or at the DCBS exhibit booths.

Members are invited to attend the monthly DCBS Board meetings. For information, contact president@dcblues.org.

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Norman Bowlding shows how easy it is to join!

and get involved . . .

Volunteers are the lifeblood of DCBS. Visit www.dcblues.org to learn more about all its volunteer opportunities and to apply. Here's a few examples of positions in need of your talents and time:

- DCBS Street Team Representatives: Contact: ads@dcblues.org
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Bookkeeper, Development Assistants, Grants Writers, Newsletter Assistant: Contact: president@dcblues.org
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Table with 2 columns: Section Name and Page Number. Includes: President's Drum (3), Year in Review (3-4), Announcements & Interviews (5-6), Reviews (7), Chick Hall, Sr. Tribute (8), Calendar (10), Order Form/Application (11), and Cover details.



President's Drum

Hope on A Tightrope

[Reflections on the nation's election of its first Black President]

The election of Barack Hussein Obama as the 44th President of the United States is a watershed moment in American history and deserves mention in the context of the Blues. The title of this portion of the *Drum* is borrowed from Cornell West's new book of the same name. [Dr. West is a leading public intellectual and Princeton University professor of religion and African American studies.]

In the midst of historic economic decline, wars of false pretense, unparalleled corporate greed and cynicism, the nation is certainly feeling the Blues. In his book, West says "America finds itself looking to its blues people [President-elect Obama] again to provide vision to a nation with the blues. That is a source of hope. Yet hope is no guarantee."

This means that the struggle for justice and peace must continue. Blues music often expresses the pain and redemptive vision of that struggle. The Blues, in its inherent paradox, is hope. It is incumbent upon the makers of this uniquely American music to continue to carry on the struggle through its poignancy, insight, and truth telling. The Blues belongs to the people. Perhaps that's why it has resisted commoditization (or been ignored). The soul of a people cannot be treated as a mere commodity.

We learned that President-elect Obama listens to Stevie Wonder, Jay-Z and Howlin' Wolf. Obama's attraction to Howlin' Wolf [born Chester Arthur Burnett] is reason for more hope. Howlin' Wolf was a commanding physical presence with a booming voice. He was the equivalent of a presidential big stick. In addition to being a preeminent performer of electric Blues, one music critic said, "No one could match [Howlin' Wolf] for the singular ability to rock the house down to the foundation while simultaneously scaring its patrons out of its wits."

While there are probably many Americans frightened by our first Black president [plots and threats to kill him are sprouting like kudzu], that's not likely a widespread, neither desirable effect of Obama's presidency. However, many of us would like to see Obama rock the nation's house down to the foundation. We'll have to wait and see. But keep in mind, that for this to happen, the collective will and action of

Blues folk all over the nation must energize and push the agendas that will help cure some of the nation's many ills exacerbated by eight years of bankruptcy, fear-mongering, Bill of Rights trashing, encouragement of torture, corruption and ecological disaster, and squandering the goodwill of the rest of the world.

No doubt President Barack Obama will be faced with monumental challenges. It might help if he pays attention to some of Howlin' Wolf's songs, although most of them seem conspicuously apolitical (except for the politics of relationships). But Obama can help keep his perspective on the least of us by remembering a few lines from "I've Been Abused."

*All my life, I've caught it hard.
All of my life, I have caught it hard.
I've been abused, and I've been scorned.
I feel so bad, it ain't gonna last.
I feel so bad, this ain't gonna last.*

The expectations for Obama are great. We all want at least a spoonful of whatever we need and we often catch the Blues trying to get it. (And there are political implications for that pursuit.) As Howlin' Wolf's refrain in the Willie Dixon penned "Spoonful" declares:

*Men lies about that.
Some of them dies about that.
Some of them cries about that.
But everything fight about that spoonful.*

We can only hope President-elect Obama keeps his delicate balance as he walks the Blues tightrope and serves up a good spoonful to all those in need.

Come celebrate President-elect Obama's inauguration with the DCBS on Saturday, January 17, 8:30 pm -12:30 am featuring the funky, foot-stomping Blues of C.W. Harrington & his 6-piece band at the Surf Club Live. Get your tickets at www.dcb Blues.org or call 301-322-4808.

Part 2 of the *Drum* continues below and on Page 4 with a review of DCBS events in 2008.

DCBS 2008 In Review

The Society started off 2008 with the unexpected and the new. Sandwiched between very successful benefits for Memphis Gold and Bobby Parker was our new annual festival



L-R: Memphis Gold; Bobby Parker Photos © Ron Weinstock

auditions. Memphis suffered a serious injury when he fell from a tree while on his day job as a tree surgeon. Bobby Parker had a health emergency requiring hospitalization. Memphis is far along the road to recovery, playing all

over town and the world. For schedule and information: www.memphisgoldprod.net.

Bobby has recovered and is kicking it in a number of venues far and wide and appearing regularly at Madam's Organ. On January 10, he'll be at the Surf Club Live. Check his website: www.myspace.com/bobbyparkerthebluesnightband.

This year's festival auditions (free admission and free food) drew hundreds to shout their encouragement and vote for their favorite band. From a tough and varied field of competitors, The Country Bunker Funky Blues Band (www.thecountrybunkerfunkybluesband.com) beat out nine bands and won the opportunity to perform at the 20th Annual DC Blues Festival at the Carter Barron. That's TCBFBB's Carl Cimino on keyboard and Art McKinney on drums at the Carter Barron in the photo in column 3. Catch them at The Old Bowie Town Grille (www.oldbowietowngrille.com).

We tried out a new venue, Mirrors Nightclub, in Washington, DC where we moved our

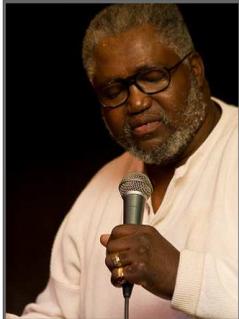


Photo by Barry Wheeler

1st Sunday jams after leaving the Old Bowie Town Grille and coming back full circle to the Surf Club. We also had our first scheduled show at Mirrors starring Dr. S.O. Feelgood with his Band & Show. Though the crowd was light, Dr. Feelgood gave an exceptionally soul-rousing performance to everyone's delight.

The monthly Blues jams continue to be outstanding. Never know who'll show up but with the talent in our region plus out-of-town artists stopping by and eager to show their stuff, it's a good time all 'round for musicians and Blues fans. The next jam is Sunday, December 7 from 4-7 pm at the Surf Club Live.

Although our planned June festival fundraiser, with Guy Davis, wilted on the vine with very few advance ticket sales, our 4th Annual



Biker at Fish n' Fry & Blues (top left); Janine Gilbert-Carter (top right) at 20th Annual Blues Festival at the Carter Barron. Dr. S.O. Feelgood (center left) Photos © Ron Weinstock. Ryan Perry, Homemade Jamz Blues Band (bottom left), Photo courtesy of Jim Bryum, Surf Club Live!; Steve Remy/ Acme Blues Co. (below)



Fish 'n Blues & Bike Contest on July 19 attracted over 300 attendees throughout the day at the Greenbelt American Legion. This was the biggest fish fry yet, with seven bands, vendors with a slew of interesting products and services and horseshoes. Around 65 bikers rolled

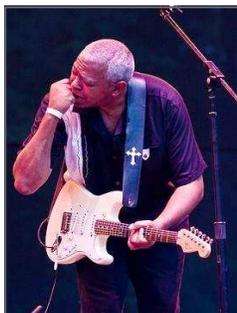
up on the event with Bob Wolff winning the 1st place trophy and \$200. If you miss it in '09, kick yourself.

More slamming fun was on tap in August when Homemade Jamz Blues Band made its debut at the Surf Club Live. The three youthful siblings, Taya (9) on drums, Kyle (14) on bass and Ryan (16), guitarist/vocalist, brought down the house at our successful August Festival Fundraiser. Ryan strolled the floor with lights blinking on his muffler-converted guitar mixing it up with and wowing the crowd. The band's popularity was reflected in the hordes of new fans that crowded the tables seeking CDs and autographs and offering well wishes.



Then there was the 20th Annual DC Blues Festival, which featured many acts from around the region and ran flawlessly. From the exuberant and talented youth band, 3 Chords & the Truth to the divas Sandra Y. Johnson & Janine Carter performing as the Jazzy Blues Women, these regionally-based artists

Three Chords and The Truth (top); WPFW's Steve Hoffman with Charles "Big Daddy" Stallings and The Big Daddy Bluez Band (center); Lil' Dave Thompson (bottom right). Photos courtesy Barry Wheeler. Zac Harmon (bottom left) Photo © Ron Weinstock



proved the depth of talent right in our backyard. Others included Charles "Big Daddy" Stallings & the Big Daddy Bluez Band, Acme Blues Company, and The Country Bunker Funky Blues Band. Topping off the schedule were two strong doses of Mississippi Blues laid down by Lil' Dave Thompson and Zac Harmon.

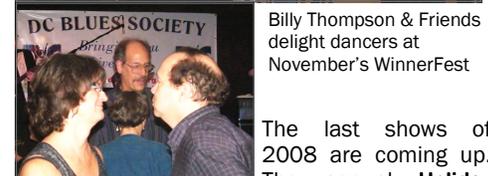
The festival After-Party brought another dose of Mississippi Blues to the Surf Club Live. Zac Harmon and guitarist Rodney "B.R." Millon sat in with Lil' Dave for several tunes that rhythmically riled up the house and sent the dancers to the floor. The fun didn't stop when Lil' Dave and band quit the stage. Folks came to party. An ad hoc ensemble of local heavyweights amply accommodated the party-plus people with some rockin' music.

Lil' Dave and band retook the stage in new positions for a final raucous set. Lil' Dave took over drums. Spencer Burns (bassist) adroitly handled guitar. And, Albert Walker (merchandise artist in his own right) threw off his buttoned-down cool, to play bass and share the mike for a few songs with Stacy Brooks. Albert closed out the night and brought the party diehards to their feet with a very fast,

lively and hilarious original tune.

Winding up the year were the Battle of the Bands and Winnerfest. The Battle started out with 10 competitors that, by show time, had whittled themselves down to only five. But those five played to a capacity crowd (who danced their butts off) at the Surf Club for the honor of representing the DC area at the 25th Annual International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN February 4-7, 2009.

Through the excitement and exuberance of the bands, a distinguished panel of judges selected Billy Thompson & Friends. Thompson, a relative newcomer to the area along with bassist, Gene Monroe, and drummer Gary Rosenweig, played intensely and soulfully to win over the crowd and judges. In November, the band returned to put on a great show at Winnerfest to raise funds for their trip to Memphis.



Billy Thompson & Friends delight dancers at November's WinnerFest

The last shows of 2008 are coming up. The annual **Holiday**

Party takes place on Saturday, December 20, 8:30 pm to 12:30 am at the Surf Club Live and features Whop Frazier (bass/vocals) and Tom Newman (guitar). Advance tickets are \$10 for members, \$12. for non-members and \$15 at the door.

DCSB will close out the year with a **New Year's Eve Party** on Wednesday, December 31 at the Surf Club, with Clarence "The Bluesman" Turner, Mike Westcott, and Wave Milor, all Battle of the Bands winners and 2009 IBC entrants. For advance tickets and guaranteed seating, go on-line to www.dcb Blues.org or call 301-322-4808. The Surf Club Live is at 4711 Kenilworth Ave. Hyattsville, MD 20874.

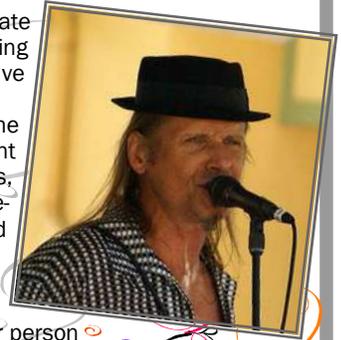
2008 has been a fruitful year for DCBS and the Blues. Help us to keep bringing you the best in Blues in 2009 and onward. Encourage a friend to join DCBS. Make a tax-deductible donation! **Volunteer!** Only a few dedicated souls work tirelessly to keep the Blues coming. **Pitch in!** And please support our events.

I hope to see you at the **Holiday Party, New Year's Eve Party** and other events like the 2009 kickoff **OBAMARAMA Pre-Inaugural Party** on Saturday, January 17 featuring C.W. Harrington. — Felix

JOIN THE FUN—ORDER TICKETS TODAY



New Year's Party—Bring in the New Year with Clarence "The Bluesman" Turner, Mike Westcott & Wave Milor



Top: Clarence Turner;
Bottom: Mike Westcott;
Far right Waverly Milor;
Photos courtesy of Glenn Thompson

What a way to bring in the New Year! Come celebrate with the DC Blues Society at the Surf Club Live. Featuring Clarence "The Bluesman" Turner, Mike Westcott & Wave Milor, this will be a night to remember!

In case you didn't know, Turner is the winner of the Baltimore Blues Society Blues Battle and will represent BBS at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN. Westcott and Milor will also compete at IBC representing the Blue Ridge Blues Society, Roanoke, VA. And on December 31, you can get a taste of it all.

For guaranteed seating, buy tickets in advance. Dinner and champagne are included in the ticket price. Advance tickets are \$20 per person (members), \$25 per person (non-members) and \$25 at the door.

Surf Club Live, 4711 Kenilworth Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20781
December 31, 2008 8:30 pm—1:00 am.

Order Form Page 11 On-line at www.dcb Blues.org Or call 301-322-4808

CW Harrington and a Rockin' Good Time



Hidden up a flight of stairs, above The Players Lounge and Georgine's Restaurant at 2737 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave, SE, in DC, is a little "hole-in-the-wall" of a club. A recent Saturday night spent there reminded me of the old rent and house parties we used to have where musicians gathered to play, vocalists came for a chance to sing and friends and neighbors showed up just to have a rockin' good time - and that's exactly what we had!

A little after 10 pm, C.W. Harrington (left) and band started it off with a little bluesy jazz, like Miles Davis' *All Blues*, moved into some R & B and soul and then turned to the blues in their second set, and ended up rockin' the room with their authentic down-home sound. When the band took a break to chow down on the free food provided by the restaurant downstairs, a few local musicians, including Howard Bernstein and The First Thing Smokin' and Ida Campbell (DCBS Media Coordinator) took the stage to keep the party going. Then came "Doc." He'd been sitting quietly at the bar all night and when he got on stage, treated us to some oldies that took the party right into high gear.

Our primary reason for visiting this little club was to check out C. W. and we weren't disappointed. This Arlington, VA native proved to be

quite talented and versatile. As many, many other musicians have done, he started out playing in church. Then, following in the footsteps of his brother, Leo, who recorded *Tell Me What's On Your Mind*, and influenced by his favorite guitarist, Albert King, C.W. turned professional at 19. He credits his versatility with different types of music to many years of working around Georgetown, as well as performing, from Basin Street in New Orleans to Montreal, Canada with King Curtis and Tommy Hunt; playing big band swing music with the Swingmasters; and working with Lou Rawls and Wilson Pickett. C.W. also performed at The University of Maryland in "Spunk," a play by George C. Wolfe based on three short stories by Zora Neal Hurston and played the part of B.B. King in *7th & T*, a documentary about the Howard Theater (which also featured WPFW's Cap'n Fly).



You'll have a chance to catch C. W. Harrington and the band, John Bryan (trombone), Mike Powell (trumpet), Butch Jordan (guitar), Sam Wynn (bass) and "Bigfootz" (drums), at **OBAMARAMA**—DCBS's pre-inaugural party at Surf Club Live on January 17, 2009. Doors will open at 8 pm and the music goes from 8:30 pm - 12:30 am. Advance tickets are available on-line at www.dcb Blues.org by calling 301-322-4808.

That's John, Mike and Ida doing some 3-part harmonizing in the photo above. Come join them and CW Harrington on January 17 for a rockin' good time! — Donna Shoulders

CBM interviews Whop Frazier and Tom Newman

Whop Frazier is a fulltime musician who has gigged all over the United States and Europe. He has played with some of the greats of Blues and R&B lore. Frazier, a fixture on the regional music scene throughout the '90s, is known for his band's rollicking takes on Chicago-style shuffles and soulful, down-home covers as well as fun-filled originals. Driving that Blues style is Frazier's whopping bass sound and his vigorous, soulful singing. He is very active playing at private affairs, nightclubs, and other venues in the DC region and internationally. **Whop will perform at the DCBS Holiday Party on December 20 at the Surf Club Live.**

He is a walking repository of Washington, DC regional music history. The

following is a conversation with Whop and his guitarist, Tom Newman that strolls through the days and life lessons that collectively has come to be known as "old school." (FMc)

CBM: You're a Washington, DC native. What was it like growing up in 1960's DC?

Whop: I lived and grew up around 14th & U Streets. I hung out a lot and spent time around the Howard Theater just a few blocks from where I lived. There were a lot of clubs in that area. I ran errands, like picking up and delivering sandwiches, for the musicians who played there.

CBM: What were you doing when the riots broke out following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.? And how did it affect DC's music scene?

Whop: I was on 14th and T Streets, right next to the Spa Club, shooting pool. I looked outside and saw people being pulled off the buses and then the

... continued Page 6



armed soldiers came in. But some of them didn't do anything to stop the looting. I got outta there! The riots badly affected my playing at clubs like the Spa, Birdland on 14th & Park Roads, and the Rio at 14th and Girard Streets. Some of those clubs eventually closed 'cause of the riots and never opened. [The riots marked the decline of the famed Howard and Lincoln Theaters, two of DC's premier venues for Blues, R&B, and Jazz.]

CBM: How did you get started playing guitar?

Whop: I became interested in music 'cause I was hanging around musicians all the time. I was a young teenager when I started trying to play guitar and got tips from "Skip" Pitts. He was the guitarist who did the wah-wah thing for Isaac Hayes. He said my fingers were too long for the guitar and suggested I take up electric bass. [Charles "Skip" Pitts' wah-wah guitar drove the 1972 Grammy (two of them) and Oscar-winning "Theme from Shaft" composed by the late Isaac Hayes.] I started playing bass around 1969. K.C. Jones (Marvin Gaye's bass player) helped teach me how to play bass.

CBM: How would you describe your bass style?

Whop: I play with feeling. Just enough to make it work. Albert Collins is one of my favorite musicians.

CBM: When did you start getting paid to play?

Whop: I was gigging by the time I was about 14. I played at the Spa Club on 14th and T Streets. I also played the Coach Lounge where Billy Stewart [DC native and chart-topping R&B great] sometime played. In fact, I dated Billy's cousin for a while. I also played with Bill Harris at clubs on U Street.

CBM: Did you do any touring around this time?

Whop: I was about 17 years old when I went on the road with Dee Clark ["Hey Little Girl (in the High School Sweater)", "Raindrops"].

CBM: Who did you play with locally?

Whop: I played with Jesse Yawn, Eddie Daye & the 4 Bars. When I was in my early twenties I gigged with Little Royal ["Jealous (Kind of Fellow)", Wilson Pickett, and Pookie Hudson [lead singer and songwriter for the doo wop group, The Spaniels]. In the 70s, I was playing in joints around Cross Creek, VA where they were using wood stoves in the middle of the room. During that time we also gigged at places like Proctor's Inn [Waldorf, MD].

CBM: Did you start out playing the Blues?

Whop: I started playing Top 40, jukebox tunes. I got into the Blues mostly when I got with Bobby Parker. Bobby was in his twenties and playing with a lot of [local and national] big names, like B.B. King. Later on I also did shows with Blues musicians like Junior Wells, James Cotton, and Bobby Blue Bland.

CBM: What was your experience like with Bobby Parker?

Whop: Man, I was about 16 when I started working with Bobby. We traveled the chitlin circuit all over. We played in joints from Asbury Park, NJ and Buffalo, NY, to Philly, Pensacola, FL to Montgomery, AL. I played with Bobby for over 10 years in the late 1960's and early 70's.

CBM: What led you to singing?

Whop: I needed a gimmick. Bobby suggested that I become a singing bass player. You haven't heard of many who do both, have you? This also checked my tendency to overplay. I play what I know and what I can sing.

CBM: When did you start your own band?

Whop: Around 1993-94. I was tired of playing behind singers. I was arrogant. I said to myself, "You're the one making them sound good!" I thought I could compensate by being multi-talented [playing bass and singing].

CBM: Was your first record with your new band?

Whop: Actually, my first album was in 1993 with Bad Influence. I did all the vocals and played bass. [*Live at the Bad Habits Café* featuring Whop Frazier Mapleshade #03152]

CBM: Your discography also includes "Bathtub Blues" [Barnyard Blues, 1998] and the more recently released "Here I Go Again" [Barnyard Blues 002]. Do you have a favorite album or cut?

Whop: I favor "Doing It..." 'cause all but three of the 14 cuts are originals.

CBM: Cuts like "Fat Roberta" and "Ring Around the Bathtub" are lively and humorous. Do you try to live up to your reputation as a "goodtime guitar bluesman?"

Whop: I like to have fun. I try to keep my music contemporary.

CBM: What are some of your favorite venues to play?

Whop: I really enjoyed playing Michael Jordan's restaurant in the Ronald Reagan Building [DC]. You dress up like the old school musicians. Ready for all occasions. And you come ready to put on a show. Not just stand up there and play dressed any kinda way.

CBM: Who will be playing with you at the Holiday Party?

Whop: I got Earl Ivey on drums. Dave Robbins on keyboards and my guitarist is Tom Newman.

CBM: Tom Newman has quite a reputation in the area himself. How long has he been playing with you?

Whop: Uhhmmm. Ask Tom. [Newman has been sitting by during the interview and adding comments and dates recollections.]

Tom: I've known Whop for a long time. We've been playing together off and on for about five years.

CBM: Tell us a little about yourself.

Tom: I've been playing since I was 15 years old, traveling from NW, DC (where I was born and raised) to Northern Virginia to play with veterans. I've played with some of the same guys as Whop, including Wilson Pickett and Lloyd Price [as part of The Four Kings of Rhythm and Blues including Gene Chandler, Ben E. King and Jerry Butler]. I've also been a music teacher in DC Public Schools for twenty years and taught at Bowie State and privately.

CBM: Where have you played?

Tom: I've played all over the DC area. Venues include Blues Alley, Zanzibar on the Waterfront and Bohemian Caverns to name a few.

CBM: We heard you play at the DCBS November 1 Sunday jam. You and Whop really rocked the house. What can folks expect at the Holiday Party? [Tom defers to Whop.]

Whop: I like to have fun. Tom or no one else can play with me if they're not having fun. Folks can expect a goodtime. We'll keep you on the dance floor 'til you pass out!

CBM: Just one more question. How did you get the name "Whop?"

Whop: Well, it came about for a couple reasons. I started out using a pick on the bass that made a whopping sound. But as a teenager I also was known for exaggerating. The guys laughed and talked about me telling whoppers of tales. One of 'em suggested they call me Whop. The name stuck.

More information on Whop at www.whopfrazier.com and Tom at www.tomnewmanmusic.com.

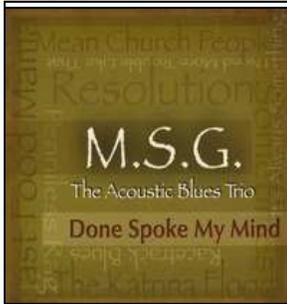
See Whop and Tom at DCBS's Holiday Party December 20, 8:30 pm-12:30 am at the Surf Club Live, 4711 Kenilworth Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20781. Advance tickets \$10 members; \$12 nonmembers. \$15 at door. Buy on-line at www.dcblues.org or call 301-322-4808.

Founder of Rosetta Records – Rosetta Reitz

Rosetta Reitz wasn't a musician; she wasn't a composer. However, to anyone interested in early Blues, and in particular, early Blues women, Rosetta Reitz was a legend. She ensured that the music of the founding Blues women was not lost.

Using a \$10,000 loan from friends, she founded Rosetta Records in New York City in 1979. She recovered recordings by the very early women Blues singers and reissued them in compilations, both in a series of four albums, *Independent Women's Blues, Volumes 1-4*, and individual releases, *Wild Women Don't Have the Blues*, *Blues Piano Singers* and several others. These albums preserved the legacies of Blues women, from the 1920s, 30s, 40s, and 50s, who were often better known at the time than their male counterparts. While their sidemen often went on to become more successful – men like Count Basie, who played piano for Ethel Johnson in 1929; Coleman Hawkins who, with his quartet, backed up Ivy Cox at her final recording in 1961; and a band that included Benny Goodman (clarinet), Hawkins (tenor sax) and Gene Krupa (drums) worked with Mildred Bailey in 1934 – the women faded from the scene. Reitz's preservation of these recordings ensured that future Blues lovers would know the women who brought it about.

Reitz died on November 1 at the age of 84. Although Rosetta Records has not released any new albums in over ten years, its catalog is available through various on-line retailers. — Chris DeProperty



Done Spoke My Mind - M.S.G. The Acoustic Blues Trio

I preface these comments on M.S.G. - The Acoustic Blues Trio's new CD by noting that the trio are personal acquaintances and I have had the pleasure of seeing them perform many times. Jackie Merritt and Resa Gibbs hail from Virginia's Tidewater region and Miles Spicer (right) is from the DC area. I have known the multi-talented Spicer from various DCBS events and jams where he would play the trap drums, if

needed. After the late Piedmont blues legend, Archie Edwards, passed, Spicer was one of those who helped launch the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Foundation and it was through the jams and other activities at the Barber Shop in Northeast Washington that the trio took shape. Several years ago during a program conducted by Barber Shop regulars at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, I heard a spell-binding rendition of John Prine's *Angel From Montgomery* by Gibbs with accompaniment by Spicer. Later, I had the pleasure of hearing the trio at the Barber Shop and delighted in its initial recording *Meet Me In The Middle*.

This CD displays their maturation as performers and songwriters. There are numerous pleasures to be experienced here including the marvelous vocals by all three and their very solid musicianship. Despite being rooted in the blues, especially the Piedmont tradition, this album might be better termed as urban acoustic music insofar as there are healthy elements of the church, folk and other musical genres. The church background is evident on the opening traditional *God Don't Like It*, followed by Merritt and Gibbs' *Mean Church People*, a jab at some close-minded church folk. *Resolution*, an original ballad by Spicer and

David Bird, has a lovely, soulful vocal by Gibbs with some marvelous harmonica from Merritt. Joel Bailes' *The Katrina Flood* is in the tradition of similar tunes about other tragic events and even if the lyrics have some holes, the rousing chorus of "wasn't that a mighty storm" does come across powerfully. Merritt's *Racetrack Blues* sports some lively guitar from Spicer with Gibbs enlivening the performance on rub board. *Penniless Rag* is playful with Spicer evoking Blind Blake with Merritt on the bones and Gibbs adds to the fun on rub board and bicycle horn.

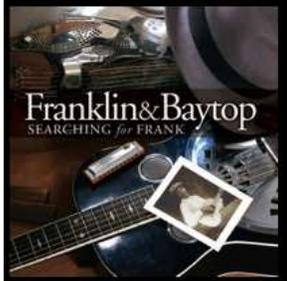
It's Always Something is a nice slow blues from Spicer and Bird with a mesmerizing slide guitar riff, crying harp from Merritt and Gibbs singing compellingly. *Ain't No Grave* is a field holler type performance by Gibbs with simple percussion backing, while *Come Back Baby* credited as traditional, is the Henry Townsend blues originally recorded by Walter Davis, again with a wonderful vocal from Gibbs. *Fast Food Mama* is another entertaining, raggy blues from Merritt, with Gibbs on rub board, followed by the brisk, skittle band blues *I Need More Trouble Like That*



with Spicer taking the vocal and Gibbs on kazoo. The ballad *Sometimes* has some of an old-timey feel with Gibbs on strum stick as well as singing Merritt's thoughtful lyrics. Back to the church for the closing two numbers, Gibbs's a cappella rendition of *Go Down Hannah* followed by Reverend Gary Davis' *I Heard the Angels Singing*.

There is a lot of heart and feeling throughout these performances that is always entertaining and usually quite moving. The CD packaging by Merritt is stunning.

For more information check their website, www.acousticbluesmsg.com - Ron Weinstock (Photo © Ron Weinstock)



Searching For Frank - Franklin & Baytop (Patuxent Records 2007)

Rick Franklin and Mike Baytop are two of the most accomplished acoustic blues artists in the DC area. Franklin has been a staple of the acoustic scene for over two decades including a lengthy partnership with Neil Harpe. Baytop, mentored by the late Archie Edwards, is the president of the Archie Edwards Blues Heritage Barbershop Foundation. He has recorded with DC native,

Mike Roach, and on projects associated with the AEBHF. He has grown as a guitarist and, in addition to harp, plays bones and mandolin.

Franklin and Baytop have partnered for a new CD, *Searching For Frank*, which takes its name from legendary Memphis Bluesman Frank Stokes. His 1920s and 30s recordings, for Victor and other labels, in the company of Dan Sane and others, were among the finest of the pre-World War II era, with intricate interplay between the two and Stokes' strongly delivered vocals.

The album contains fourteen performances, several directly taken from recordings of Stokes and his associates but transformed so they are more than just simple covers. The intent is to evoke those classic duo recordings, not simply replicate the originals. Furthermore, several tracks have Baytop on harp and/or bones, so while all tracks are duos, not all are guitar duos. Franklin and Baytop make the music their own.

Nobody's Business transforms the Memphis references of Stokes' *Tain't Nobody's Business If I Do* to Washington, DC, as well as updates Stokes' *You Shall as You Shall Be Free*, a tune that likely came out of the minstrel tradition. Other material includes Blind Blake's *Champagne Charlie*, Pink Anderson's *I Got Mine*, an adaptation of Furry Lewis' *Judge Harsh Blues (Jail House Blues)* and the Mississippi Sheiks' *Stop and Listen Blues*.

The two play wonderfully and it is delightful to hear Memphis in the



1920s evoked. They deliver their vocals in unforced, husky, good-natured styles. One can hear how much they enjoy playing this material and do not sound too studied or reverent, with respect to the material, which increases the pleasure of this disc. Also, they avoid the over-recorded early blues recordings so we are spared second rate Robert Johnson covers. CD available from Patuxent Records www.pxrec.com and www.myspace.com/frankricklin.

- Ron Weinstock (Photo © Ron Weinstock)

Editor's note: Every third Saturday of the month, Franklin and The Delta Blues Boys along with a host of friends take over Cassatt's Kiwi Café in Arlington for two solid hours of acoustic fun. True seekers of the blues know to arrive early. If you're lucky, you might get a table by the stage. This is acoustic blues so "loud" is not a problem but the urge to reach over and pluck the strings on the bass is a definite no-no. Familiar faces abound and a few bring instruments to help fill in the sound or add texture. Missing a drummer? Problem solved if Florette Orleans and her laptop snare are around. She plays washboard too. The night I was there, Roger Hart (harp), who plays there on the first Saturday of the month, stopped by and sat in with Franklin and Tom Cox (bass, ukulele, vocalist). Eleanor Ellis (vocalist) and Pearl Bailes (harp) also performed.

Cassatt's Kiwi Café is located at 4536 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA. Website: www.cassattscafe.com. Try the pavlova.

Because the music ends early, heading up the street to the Cowboy Café is a reasonable option. The Deacons play there frequently and some well-known musicians have been known to stop by on their way home or because it's in the neighborhood or just because. Cowboy Café is located at 4792 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA. - Mary Knieser



The legacy of Chick Hall, Sr.

When Rachel Hall smiles, it's obvious she inherited it from her father, Chick, Jr. and her uncle, Chris. When she takes to the stage, it's obvious she has also inherited their gift and love of music – the ones they inherited from their father, Chick, Sr. considered by many as one of the best guitarists of his day.

And, by the time most, if not all of us, started coming to The Surf Club, the only connection we could make to this legend was a photo that hung on the wall and the devotion to music as evidenced in his sons' performances. But there was – there is – so much more to know about this man and his history.

Milford "Chick" Hall, Sr. was born in Snowden, NC in 1923 and grew up in Norfolk, VA. In his mid-teens, this self-taught guitarist was playing with well-known bands in Virginia. And in his early 20s, he was recording with Eddy Arnold for the Armed Forces Radio and playing in the Air Force band led by Glenn

Miller. After his military service, he formed his own band, The Chick Hall Trio. They came along at a time when many clubs and bars had dance floors and bandstands. The music of the day was mostly swing and country jazz and bands were in high demand. The trio played in the DC area and eventually became regulars at The Surf Club, then located on Bladensburg Road in Colmar Manor, MD. In 1955, Hall purchased the club and the band played most nights. Hall's reputation attracted many of country music's best musicians to the club. He was a friend of Patsy Cline and played behind her at Turner's Arena (DC). There were others who, in time, became legends like Jimmy Dean, Charlie Daniels, Lefty Frizzell, Roy Clark, Jim Reeves and Charlie Byrd. They sat in with the band or came after their gigs to jam into the early hours of the morning.

In 1975, after selling the property on Bladensburg Road, Hall and his wife, Martha, built a new club on Kenilworth Avenue in Hyattsville. He still played but now there were new musicians to accompany him, his sons, Chick Jr. (guitar) and Chris (bass/vocals) as well as those famous and not so famous who dropped by. In time, the operation of the club fell to his sons and when his health began to fail, Hall stopped performing.

Two weeks ago, at his wake, one of Hall's old recordings played in the background as a slide show flashed across a laptop screen. Near the coffin, a full-size guitar made from white and red roses. Around the room, photos from the past and in the air, stories from the past. The grandkids know almost as many as their fathers but thanks to some old friends who came to pay their respect, a few more emerged. So did the smiles.

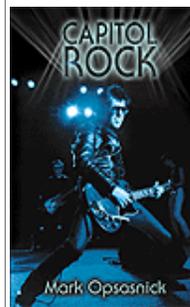
Hall died on November 18 at the age of 85. He is survived by Martha, his wife and their sons, Chick, Jr. and Chris, seven grandchildren

and eight great-grandchildren, numerous relatives and friends.

And, his legacy – that survives too. In the stories like the one that has him entering an annual guitar contest in Warrenton, VA. He won the top (cash) prize two years in a row. However, when he entered the third year, the judges told him in advance that he wasn't going to win and instead, awarded first place to another guitarist from the area, Roy Clark. Another version says the promoters met him in the parking lot and to keep him from entering their contests, and scaring away lesser musicians, they paid him to not perform.

And, it survives as his musical tradition is carried forward by The Hall Brothers (Chick Jr. & Chris), The Damsels, a trio with Rachel on guitar and vocals, and the Hall musicians of the future, somehow, we just know there will be more down the road.

On behalf of the members of the DC Blues Society and Blues fans across the area, our heartfelt sympathies and gratitude go to the Hall family. We are all the richer for Chick Hall's contribution to music and the legacy that his family preserves and shares.



Our thanks to Tim Hall for providing a copy of the October 1990 edition of Musicians Network newsletter which is posted, in its entirety, on the DCBS website. The cover photo is reproduced here.

Thanks to Mark Opsasnick, whose book, *Capitol Rock*, provided background about the music history of DC and Bladensburg. His books on music, history and the legends of the area are available through Xlibris on-line bookstore www.xlibris.com.



Photo courtesy of 20mai.net

"I will sing until the last day of my life"

Miriam Makeba (1932-2008), known to many as *Mama Afrika* and the *Empress of African Song*, did just that. She suffered a heart attack on Nov. 9 moments after finishing her hit song "Pata Pata" at a concert in Italy. She died the following morning. In 1966, Makeba became the first African woman to win a Grammy.

She shared the award for Best Folk

Recording with Harry Belafonte for "*An Evening With Belafonte/Makeba*." She later recorded with other notables including jazz trumpeter Hugh Masekela (her first husband), Dizzy Gillespie, Paul Simon and Papa Kouyate.

It was her association with Belafonte that provided the opportunity for her to bring the music of Africa to American audiences. She awakened our souls with her songs then awakened our minds to the realities and horrors of apartheid.

Makeba was the first South African musician to leave because of the country's policy of repression and her outspoken and very public opposition resulted in revocation of her citizenship and the right to return to her homeland. However, in response to South Africa's actions, she was given honorary citizenship in ten countries.

Makeba's second marriage, to Black Power activist, Kwame Ture (aka Stokely Carmichael), evoked controversy and resulted in the cancellation of concerts in the US and the loss of her RCA recording contract. The couple moved to Guinea and Makeba, eventually appointed its delegate to the United Nations, continued her crusade against apartheid on European stages and at the UN. In 1987, she was asked by Simon join him and Ladysmith Black Mambazo for his *Graceland* world tour.

It was only after the release of Nelson Mandela, that Makeba, in 1990, finally returned home. She continued fighting against injustice by raising awareness through her music and tours with other musician-activists such as Odetta, Nina Simone and Masekela. She also appeared in several films including the South African musical, *Sarafina*.

Across the globe, Makeba's family, friends and fans mourned her passing as they celebrated her legacy as a singer, author, actress and humanitarian.



25th International Blues Challenge

Update: When we went to press, there were still rooms available in the block Emma Ward has reserved in Memphis for the IBC. They are available at a special rate for DCBS members but time is of the essence. Once this block is released, rates will go up. This is for hotel only and travel is not included. For more information, contact Emma via her website www.ibctrip.com or call 202-361-1110

For information about the IBC, schedule, tickets, merchandise, etc., go to The Blues Foundation's website www.blues.org

25th INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE The World's Largest Gathering Of Blues Bands February 4-7, 2009 tickets at blues.org ...better than any festival I have ever attended" Eddie Bogwell, VP, Tubas Blues Society ...continue to be amazed at how well an event this big comes off" Mike Dew, WNCW Radio The Blues Foundation www.blues.org

Thank You

WPFW would like to thank the DC Blues Society for providing volunteers for our Fall Membership Drive (and juice and doughnuts!) Answering phones can be tedious, thankless work, but it is so important to the survival of our station, and to blues on DC's airwaves, and we really appreciate your support. I know our blues programming benefitted from your presence as both the Bama and the Gator did well beyond their goals on Saturday.

Thanks again and it was a pleasure to meet you all. We hope you can join us again this year. Our winter drive will likely be in late January/early February.



Best to all of you, Rachel Pope WPFW Volunteer Coordinator 202-588-0999 ex. 360

SURF CLUB LIVE! PRESENTS TWO CAPITOL NIGHTS OF POST-ELECTION BLUES: The NIGHTHAWKS & The Kelly Bell Band SUNDAY - DECEMBER 28 SHOWTIME 8:00 PM \$15 AT THE DOOR BOBBY PARKER & The Blues Night Band SATURDAY - JANUARY 10 SHOWTIME 9:00 PM \$15 AT THE DOOR surf club live SURF CLUB LIVE - 4711 KENILWORTH AVENUE HYATTSVILLE, MD [301]927-6310 - SURFCLUBLIVE.COM

December Calendar



1	Hot Tuna @ Birchmere; Lady Mary w/Saxman Johnson & Friends @ Westminster Church; BB King in Hagerstown, MD	
2	Idle Americans @ Cat's Eye	
3	Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Beach Cove; Automatic Slim @ Cat's Eye; Scott Ramminger & Friends @ Bangkok Blues;	
4	Pete Kanares Blues Band @ Cat's Eye; Jelly Roll Mortals @ Bangkok Blues	
5	Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Country Store; Automatic Slim & Jack DiPietro @ Frisco Grill; Bad Neighbors @ Cat's Eye	
6	Whop Frazier @ 219; Tom Principato @ Mom's In The Kitchen; Junkyard Saints @ Glen Echo' Automatic Slim @ Bertha's; The Hall Brothers @ Sapphire's	
7	DCBS Jam @ Surf Club Live; Blues Jam @ JV's	
8	Whop Frazier & Vince Evans @ Westminster Church	
10	Idle Americans @ Bangkok Blues; Skyla Burrell Blues Band @ Cat's Eye	
11	Hot Tuna @ Rams Head; Dan Hovey @ JV's; Dr. John @ Blues Alley; Deb Callahan @ Cat's Eye; SANTA JAM @ State Theatre	
12	Dr. John @ Blues Alley; Touché Band @ Golden Dragon	
13	Dr. John @ Blues Alley; Tab Benoit @ State Theatre; Bad Influence @ JV's; Warner Williams w/Ricky Canton @ JV's; Touché Band @ Lamont's; Charles "Big Daddy" Stallings @ Mom's In The Kitchen; Automatic Slim & Rude Dog @ Ryan's Daughter; The Hall Brothers @ Sapphire's	
14		Swinging Daves @ JV's; Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues
15		Dr. S.O. Feelgood @ Westminster Church
16		Idle Americans @ JV's
18		Touché Band @ Peachez Café; Automatic Slim & Rude Dog @ Cat's Eye
19	Touché Band @ Golden Dragon	
20	DCBS Holiday Party featuring Whop Frazier @ Surf Club Live; Hey Norton @ JV's; Idle Americans @ Blue Dog Saloon; Sherwood Blues Band @ Potomac Grill; Touché Band @ Whispers; Skyla Burrell @ Mom's In The Kitchen; Automatic Slim @ Bare Bones	
21	Little Royal & Royal Showmen @ Westminster Church	
25	All Star Christmas Jazz Jam @ Kennedy Center	
26	Idle Americans @ JV's; Jackie Hairston & Friends @ Westminster Church; Janine Wilson @ Iota's	
27	Nighthawks @ Fish Head Cantina; Women of the Blues @ JV's; Touché Band @ Butler's	
28	Nighthawks & Kelly Bell @ Surf Club Live; Goddesses of the Strings @ JV's; Idle Americans Blues Jam @ Bangkok Blues	
29	Memphis Gold @ Westminster Church	
31	DCBS New Years Eve Party featuring Clarence "The Bluesman" Turner, Mike Westcott, Waverly Milor @ Surf Club Live; Deanna Bogart Band @ Rams Head; Wicked Jezebel @ JV's; Idle Americans @ Scott's; Touché Band @ Martin's Crosswinds; Tom Cunningham Orchestra @ Glen Echo	

Attention dancers: See DCBS homepage for link to dance-friendly venues. To subscribe to a weekly e-mail newsletter "So Many Choices" with dance-specific information, often with a blues twist, send an e-mail to DCBS member and Blues fan Robin: hc1829@aol.com

Bolded items are picks by calendar editor, Steve Levine, and include DCBS and BBS events. Send listings to calendar@dcblues.org or mail to Steve Levine, 5910 Bryn Mawr Rd., College Park, MD 20740. Deadline is 15th of the month. Events listed are based on the best information possible. DCBS cannot be held liable for errors in schedules, places or performances listed. It is recommended that you contact the venues to verify the event will occur. The DCBS homepage has additional music links and information: www.dcblues.org.

Important Announcement

So that the newsletter staff and contributors can enjoy time with families and friends during the holidays, the January and February issues of the Capital Blues Messenger will be combined and mailed in mid-January. Thanks for understanding.

Send your calendar listings for January and February to Steve Levine by December 15.

Best wishes for Happy Holidays.
See you at the Surf Club Live for the 3 special DCBS events!



**Blues in My Kitchen:
Cooking with the DC Blues Society**

An exciting new edition of the notorious DCBS cookbook. This sturdy, wire-bound book includes delicious recipes straight from the tables of local Blues celebrities. Lively artist bios and Dr. S. O. Feelgood's Household Hints will surely spice up your dinner table. Treat yourself and another Blues fan so order more than one!

COOKBOOK ORDER FORM

Date _____ Member? (Y) (N) (please circle)

Blues in My Kitchen: Cooking with the DC Blues Society
_____ of copies \$15 Member; \$17 Non-Member
Add \$4.00 Shipping & handling for first copy, \$2 each additional copy

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You can also order the cookbook and other DCBS merchandise on-line at www.dcblues.org. Please allow 4 weeks for delivery



DCBS Membership Application & Advance Ticket Orders

Members receive *The Capital Blues Messenger*, the DCBS newsletter featuring information on Blues events in the DC area and other articles of interest; discounts on DCBS events and merchandise; discounts on admission to participating clubs, business services, etc. Dues play an important part in helping DCBS fulfill its mission to promote the Blues and the musicians who keep the music alive, exciting and accessible.

Contributions (not dues) to the DC Blues Society are tax-deductible. Join on-line at www.dcblues.org or mail application with check or money order to:

DC Blues Society
P.O. Box 77315
Washington D.C. 20013-7315

Member Discounts

The following companies offer discounts to DCBS members. You must present your current membership card to receive them. Discount offers may be withdrawn at any time.

½ price discount at Blues Alley
DCBS members get half off the normal admission for Blues shows that do not require advance ticket sales.
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DCBS Membership Application/Renewal

_____ Renewal? (Y) (N)

Date _____

Name (please print clearly) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Dues per year (circle appropriate one):
Student: \$15 Individual: \$25
(Include photocopy of student ID)
Family: \$35 Corporate: \$200
Canada: \$25(US) Other Countries: \$40 (US)
Please allow up to six weeks for processing

Family members (Please list names _____)

I can volunteer doing _____



DCBS TICKET ORDER FORM

_____ Member? (Y) (N)

Date _____

Holiday Party December 20
_____ Tickets: \$10 Member; \$12 Non-Member (\$15 at door)

New Year's Eve Party December 31
(Note: Advance ticket sales get guaranteed seating)
_____ Tickets: \$20 Member; \$25 Non-Member (\$25 at door)

OBAMARAMA Pre-Inaugural Party January 17
_____ Tickets: \$10 Member; \$12 Non-Member (\$15 at door)

\$ _____ Total enclosed

Name (please print clearly) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ E-mail _____

Tickets will be held at Will Call. Order on-line at www.dcblues.org or call 301-322-4808.



HOLIDAY PARTY

Whop Frazier

with

Tom Newman

December 20, 2008

8:30 pm - 12:30 am

Advance Tickets:

\$10 Member \$12 Non-member

\$15 Door

NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

Clarence Turner

Mike Westcott Wave Milor

December 31, 2008

8:00 pm - 1:00 am

Buy Tickets in Advance for
Guaranteed Seating

\$20 Member \$25 Non-member

\$25

Door

Ticket includes dinner & cham-

O B A M A R A M A

Pre-Inaugural Celebration - January 17, 2009 8:30 pm - 12:30 am

Featuring C W Harrington

Advance Tickets: \$10 Member \$12 Non-member \$15 Door

All Events at Surf Club Live!

4711 Kenilworth Ave., Hyattsville, MD 20781

Order Form Page 11 On-line at www.dcblues.org Or call 301-322-4808



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