He's no Hank Williams imitator

...but the legend lives on with James Hand

Article on page 3
NOVEMBER BANDS
Sat. 1st - MTO
Darlene's B'day.
Fri. 7th - Iron 60
Sat. 8th - Fuze
Fri. 14th - Mad Wagon
Sat. 15th - Texas Radio
Linda & Greg's Birthday Party
Fri. 21st - Prototype
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Wave farewell to McCain and the moose lady

It will soon be time to say goodbye to John and Sarah. It is really going to happen, folks. Barack Obama will soon be elected president of the United States. Republican presidential candidate John McCain and running mate Sarah Palin will soon be political history. You can love it, hate it, accept it, or lump it, but Obama is about to become the first U.S. president of African heritage. At age 44, Obama will also become the youngest president ever elected, and the former senator from Chicago will be the first Democrat ever to defeat a woman for his party’s nomination.

Obama’s destiny was taking shape when George W. Bush rushed us to war in Iraq, an ego-driven mistake which has cost thousands of young American lives. We never had any business invading Iraq, and history will bear it out as George Bush proves to be the worst president ever elected in this country. “Mission accomplished!”

The Bush lie is still eating at the hearts of men and women who have lost kids in a sand-blasted land where life means nothing. Under the Republican administration of George W. Bush, gasoline prices have soared to record highs, and the economy in general has deteriorated to a state of financial confusion. So what the hell went wrong?

Most Democrats lay it to the Bush administration and the poor choices which have followed. If this country was ever in need of real change, it is now. And most Republicans capable of sane thought must know that they can’t win this one. When asked the price of a loaf of bread, President Bush had not a clue. The same could probably said for McCain, a mega-millionaire who can’t even tell you how many houses he owns. It is true that McCain served his country in Vietnam, and that he was a prisoner of war who conducted himself with dignity and valor. But Vietnam was a war, like Iraq, that we had no business participating in, and the senator from Arizona has done little to distance himself from Bush’s hawkish persona. And former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin as McCain vice presidential running mate?

Straight-thinking Republicans must realize that Sarah’s selection as a vice presidential candidate was tantamount to conceding the election. We have referred to it as the pussy factor, and to call it anything else would be a journalistic lie on our part. There are some top physical specimens in their 70s and even some in their 80s, but John McCain ain’t among this number. His hair is too white, and his skin color is too gray to suggest anything but health question marks. The Democrats could have selected a stronger vice presidential candidate than Joe Biden.

But the prospect of John McCain dropping dead in his tracks, leaving the “Moose Lady of Alaska” as the leader of the greatest nation in the world, is a possible scenario which freezes the blood and boggles the minds of many. With a strong vice presidential running mate, McCain would have little chance of overcoming the Bush administration taint. With Sarah (Winky) Palin, he has no chance. We just hope the Obama administration can beat hell out of what George Bush has left us with.
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NOVEMBER BANDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fridays</th>
<th>Saturdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>Rob (Elvis) Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14th</td>
<td>Texas Tide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>Mike Kropp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28th</td>
<td>Don Reeves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*4* Action Magazine, November 2008
If you have your underdrawers in a bundle over the big economic scare, I feel sorry for you. If you think you understand all of the financial gobbledygook pouring out of Washington and New York, I really feel sorry for you.

Since I received my first credit card only a few short years ago, I have trouble soaking up trillion-dollar bank bailouts and reports of the Dow Jones Industrials plunging "a breathtaking 679 points."

The Express-News made the "breathtaking 679 points" statement. The Dow Jones could fall all the way into China and my breathing would remain quite normal.

I got American Express and Visa cards only because I was tired of standing in line at the counter in gas stations. I have never used a credit card for anything that would require me paying one cent of interest.

It's pure horseshit

My humble opinion of the global financial crisis can be summed up in one barnyard expression—designated to keep the poor, ignorant taxpayer thinking as the system with money that nobody has is less substantial than a ringtail fart.

It all reminds me of a story that old singer-songwriter Tom T. Hall tells on himself. The veracity of this story is known only to Tom T., but everyone in Nashville knows that Hall is a storyteller supreme. And no good listener ever wants the facts to stand in the way of a great yarn.

As the story goes, Tom T. was preparing to leave his single father and their West Virginia cabin when the old man extracted three promises from the son.

"Promise me these things, boy, and you will likely do well in life," the elder Hall said. "Promise me that you will try to save every dime you possibly can. Promise me that you will always keep away from guns. And promise me that you will never fool around with a married woman."

The three promises

Hall recalls making all three promises to his old hillbilly father before making his way out into the world where he started out as a disc jockey, then worked his way into national stardom as a songwriter and recording artist.

After releasing a string of hit records, and gaining worldwide recognition as a country music star, Hall says he headed back into the hills of West Virginia to pay his old pap a visit.

The old wagon-rutted road was the same as Hall's car jolted and jumped over the terrain, and Tom T. said he will never forget the scene which unfolded as he pulled up in front of the old family cabin.

Wearing nothing but his underpants, and brandishing a double-barreled shotgun, old man Hall bounded out onto the porch and pointed the duck gun straight at his stunned son.

"It's me, pap," Hall recalls yelling. "It's me, Tom. Your boy."

Finally recognizing his son, Mr. Hall was angry in his scolding of the boy who had promised so much.

"Dang, boy, you should have holliered out before driving right up to the house like that," the father said. "I've got a married woman laid up in the bed in there, and I damn well might have killed you before realizing who you were."

Tom T. said he was perplexed and confused by the old man's behavior, and he felt led to remind the old scoundrel of those three promises that he had successfully coaxed out of the son.

"You made me promise to save my money," Tom T. reminded. "I have done as much. You had me promise to never mess with guns, and I have never owned a firearm. And you made me promise never to fool around with a married woman, another promise I have kept."

Hall recalled telling his father: "I kept all of these promises, and now I come home to find you bedded down with a married woman and waving a shotgun at me. I find all of this very hard to understand."

To which the old man looked his son straight in the eye before revealing one other truism which had somehow escaped his mind.

'Things do change.'

"There was just one thing I forgot to tell you," pap Hall told Tom T. "Things change!"

That's Tom T.'s story and he's sticking with it. I believe the same theory can be accurately applied to all of the financial gloom and doom the Wall Street tycoons out of their own bacon.

"Right now, the market is just panicked," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard and Poors in New York. Nobody wants to take on any risk. Everybody just wants to get their money and put it under the mattress."

I bought the Bulverde property which I have roosted on for some 20 years with a roll of moulty hundred-dollar bills I had buried in a World War II ammunition box. And the business of squirreling away cash under a mattress or in buried Folgers coffee cans still makes a lot of sense to me.

While I have never made what most would define as "money" with Action Magazine, I have managed to grind out a living for more than 33 years without owing anybody a red cent. Or without having some dail newspaper hack editor putting a red pen to anything I have written.

My business strategy has always been simple and the only one I could really understand. I believe the secret is to have a little more money coming in than you have going out. And that's it.

Forget this Washington death song about the failing economy. It's all bullshit, designed to fish a bunch of Wall Street tycoons out of their own bacon grease, and none of it will have much if any effect on us poor working slobs.

Now, if I could stare into the TV cameras like one of our weasel politicians caught chasing the taxpayer chickens in the middle of the night, I would say with unblinking sincerity:

My name is Sam Kindrick, and I approve this message!

Action Magazine, November 2008 •5•
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11/21 Loose Change
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SongsSmith Eaglessmith is a wonderful weirdo

Most great comedians, it seems, are funny looking before opening their mouths.

Redd Foxx, Sam Kennison, Phyllis Diller. These characters could elicit guffaws from an audience before opening their mouths.

Foxx could just walk out onto a stage and people would start laughing.

That’s how it is with Fred Eaglesmith, the singer-songwriter, freehand painter, standup comedian, and one-man traveling road circus from the upper reaches of Ontario.

In his first appearance at Casbeers at the Church, the Canadian song merchant who has been compared with Woodie Guthrie and John Prine, spent more time bullshitting than he did delivering his unique and provocative lyrics, but the audience loved every minute of it.

Noting his Canadian origin, Eaglesmith told the Casbeers crowd to look up on the weather map and take note of the point where the “weather stops.”

Eaglesmith said, “That’s where I’m from.” Harping on a recent and unpleasant concert date in College Station, Eaglesmith told the Casbeers crowd, “I’m not against freedom of speech. I’m against freedom of stupidity. And that’s what I encountered in College Station.”

Eaglesmith didn’t elaborate on his experience in Aggieland, but he called College Station “the Taliban of Texas.”

The Canadian who has been playing Texas a lot of late, is a legit award-winner whose songs have been recorded by the likes of Toby Keith, The Cowboy Junkies, Kasey Chambers, Todd Snider and Dar Williams. Martin Scorses has used his songs and James Caan included an Eaglesmith number in his movie Viva Los Nowhere.

The title of Eaglesmith’s record label is a reflection of the mind behind the product.

Eaglesmith calls it 4 Major Label. The Canadian is a gravel-throated, power singer who picks his own lead guitar while delivering lyrics which are outstanding in their depiction of the common man.

His Casbeers performance included songs from his most recent CDs, Milly’s Cafe and Lipstick, Lies & Gasoline.

Kindly allowing as how he has nothing against Christians, Eaglesmith said the Casbeers church sanctuary which is now the club’s main concert room “felt a little bit weird.” But he quickly added, “Not too weird. Just a little. And not nearly so weird as some places I have played.”

On the other side of the coin, there are some Christians who might find our eclectic Canadian troubadour a little bit left of plumb in the department of weird and unusual.

For the Casbeers show, Eaglesmith was resplendent in his signature 10-gallon flat-brim straw hat with the Montana bullrider crease (he sells replicas of the hat at his performances), a mid-length purple pin-stripe sport coat, jeans big and baggy enough for two Freds, some sort of hiking boots with treads that might have been lifted from Goodyear 18-wheelers tires, and a Cheech Morin-style wallet chain that hung below his knees.

He knows his business, though, and he can identify the problems with songs like Alcohol and Pills, a lament for such fallen music greats as Hank and Janis.

One critic said, “Eaglesmith writes songs that "rattle around in your head like empty beer bottles in the back of a pick-up." He has won a Juno Award, the Canadian Grammy, for best roots and traditional album, and a Canadian Independent Music Award for Folk/Roots Album of the Year. The New Brunswick Daily Gleaner said, “It is not an overstatement to say that Eaglesmith is one of the finest songwriters in this country. His canon of well over 1,000 songs is stunning.”

His latest album, and 16th release, Milly’s Cafe hit the top 10 on the Americana chart, and he is also the only Canadian to have ever written a number-one song on the bluegrass charts. He is the subject of three tribute albums, and a revered figure by a coterie of rabid fans who follow him all over the U.S., Australia, Canada, and Europe.

They call themselves “Fredheads.” Along with singing and songwriting and regaling audiences with his twisted brand of wit, Eaglesmith has acted in several movies, and also cont’d on page 14
James Hand carries Hank & Lefty legend with style of his own

By Sam Kindrick

Of 57-year-old singer and songwriter James Hand, Darrell Royal said:

"The first time I saw James Hand I was shocked. He looked and sounded so much like Hank that I was frozen in my chair as I listened. His songwriting and performance style are real throwbacks to the sounds and times I truly love. He's a perfect gentleman and true Texas troubadour."

Like Royal, I was rocked back on my heels last month when I first took the time to really listen to this old horse trainer and honky-tonk hero who Willie Nelson calls "the real deal."

Hand was working Big John Oaks' Hangin Tree Saloon in Bracken. While I had passed through a couple of Hand's performances in the past, this was the first time I really stopped to listen.

Hand sounds so much like the late Hank Williams that there is something almost eerie about his delivery. It's that same mournful cry which Hank Williams imitators have tried and failed to capture since the legend's death at age 29.

James Hand pulls it off because he is no Hank Williams imitator. He is an original artist who creates his own original music, and when he sings the traditional covers of those music icons who number among his early influences, he is simply carrying the spirits of Hank and Lefty to new generations of country music fans.

Hand not only looks like Lefty Frizzell. He sounds more like Lefty than David Alan Coe in his hit song "You Never Even Called Me By My Name."

While I was stunned by Hand's raw talent and uncanny ability to sound almost exactly like Hank Williams, it wasn't any lyric or musical rift that was to strike me all but speechless.

It was something that James Hand said.

"If you are going to write anything about me, I would like for you to write something about Pam Young," Hand said. "Pam is a high school basketball coach in Tokio, Texas. That's a little town just a few miles down the road from the town of West, Texas where I grew up. When I was with Pam, I was driving a truck for a living. And those days were the happiest days of my entire life. Pam Young is the finest person I ever knew and she will always be the love of my life."

There was a catch in Hand's voice when he noted the failure of his romantic relationship with the basketball coach.

So what happened with Pam?

"I guess I just wasn't good enough for her," James Hand said.

Then a genuine tear rolled down his cheek.

You've just got to love this character. He's as real as rain and as country as pig tracks, and he has no compunctions when it comes to exposing his soul for all the world to see. It comes through in his music.

Hand has been working Texas roadhouses and smoke-filled dives for more than 30 years, but it wasn't until he hooked up with Asleep At The Wheel's Ray Benson and noted Austin producer Lloyd Maines that he started to get the notice he should have had many years ago.

"I have had some personal problems in my time," Hand said, obviously referring to some of the demons which have dogged a bunch of us. "But, man, have I been lucky when it comes to musician friends and people who believe in me. Ray Benson, Lloyd Maines, Willie and Ray Price, Dale Watson, coach Royal, and James White (owner of Austin's famed Broken Spoke). They and so many more. And the people at Rounder Records, my recording label. I guess everyone has believed in me before I could start really believing in myself. I don't have no way of really thanking them all."

James Hand has four albums and one in the works, the last one being a Lloyd Maines-Ray Benson produced collection of original songs titled The Truth Will Set You Free. Hand's star started to rise with this release, and the future looks even brighter.

In 1996, Hand cut his first CD, a record titled Shadows Where the Magic Was. It was released on a tiny label, but some good reviews began to pop up here and there.

The next one, in 2000, was called Evil Things, and it fared even better than the first.

Then there was a live recording titled James Hand Live At the Saxon Pub.

When Hand attracted the attention of Rounder Records, Asleep At The Wheel's Benson and producer Lloyd Maines stepped into the picture. They produced Hand's highly-acclaimed The Truth Will Set You Free, and the same big-name duo will produce Hand's next record, another collection of original tunes which should be released in January.

"I'm really proud of this one," Hand said. "All of the material is mine, except for one rockabilly tune called Mona Lisa. I don't really know what to think about all this commotion that's been following me around. I sure ain't done nothin' to deserve it, but I'll take what comes my way without a complaint."

With Benson and Maines producing Hand's upcoming release, it's worth noting that he will be accompanied with some of the music industry's best. Guitar ace Will Indian will be on the record, along with bassist Speedy Sparks, fiddle whiz Jason Roberts, and Cindy Cashdollar on steel.

This record might be the one to burst Hand loose nationally, and when a fan voiced such a possibility, the old picker and horse trainer mused, "Do

James Hand

James Hand clowns with Hangin' Tree owner John Oaks. Hand says the Bracken saloon is his favorite venue to play in the San Antonio area.

*8* Action Magazine, November 2008

cont'd on page 14
Scatter Shots

Bunny Eckert rumor

There is a rampant rumor on the streets that the remains of murdered police character Bunny Eckert have been found. This has not been printed in the daily newspaper, and there has been no official announcement by law enforcement, but we have received more than one anonymous phone call from men saying that skeletal remains may have been found. Most everyone knew that Eckert had reached the end of the line when he disappeared on March 1, 1986, after what authorities believe was a kidnaping from his home here or from some point in or near Bexar County. On that same day, Bunny's mother was murdered on the family property, her throat slashed from ear to ear.

Homicide got anonymous calls after Eckert's disappearance from a man who claimed responsibility for Bunny's death. But no individual has ever been charged with the 22-year-old murder, and no trace of either Bunny or the truck he was driving at the time has been found. And that anonymous voice who called San Antonio homicide gave no motive for either of the murders.

Anonymous calls last month to Action gave no details of a finding, but one of the three men who called said lawmen had skeletal remains and some sort of identification that would link Eckert to the bones. There have been all sorts of speculation and theories as to the motive for what must have been Eckert's killing.

To many, it sounds like Bunny may have been taken down in some sort of revenge action with a lot of hatred involved. Bunny loved his mother above and beyone all else, and one theory is that the killer (or killers) forced Eckert to watch while his mother was butchered at the family home. And that the former San Antonio bad boy was hauled off and murdered by someone with an ingenious plan for keeping a body hidden for decades.

The recent rumors may be just that. Unfounded rumors. But we have a hunch there may be some element of truth to the reports. And we won't be surprised if the U.S. Marshall's office doesn't eventually release a report to the daily media confirming some sort of body discovery.

Guich Koock is back

Remember Guich Koock, one time co-owner of Luckenbach with the late Hondo Crouch and a major actor on the old TV series Cater Country? He called Action the other day after learning that editor-publisher Sam Kindrick had hauled off to Luckenbach, where the heck is Luckenbach, according to the new co-owner of Rusty Martin's office, Guich

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NOVEMBER BAND SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Band</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 21</td>
<td>Geronimo</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>$7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 01</td>
<td>Rhythm Mavericks</td>
<td>9-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 07</td>
<td>Larry Hernandez</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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<td>Nov. 08</td>
<td>The Whoosits</td>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>$4</td>
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<td>Sean Castillo &amp; Hugcaps</td>
<td>9-1</td>
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<td>Brent Allen</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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<td>Nov. 15</td>
<td>T. Kaye &amp; The Sweetfire Band</td>
<td>9-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 21</td>
<td>James Hand</td>
<td>6-12</td>
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<td>Nov. 22</td>
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<td>9-1</td>
<td>$5</td>
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<td>Nov. 28</td>
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Now that you've found Luckenbach, where the heck is Bracken!
and got himself married to the former Sharon Cherry in a church garden overlooking Lake LBJ.

"I could hardly believe my ears," said Guich. "I know now that you got hitched on 7/7/7, but I didn't find out until I heard it the other day from Bad McFad Daredevil (aka John Raven)."

Koock said he is back residing in Bandera after a mining venture in the Dominican Republic.

"I've got several irons in the fire right now," he said. "Doing a lot of running between Bandera and Austin. We will get together soon, and I will tell you all about it."

Koock and Kindrick broke onto the silver screen in the old Steve Spielberg flick Sugarland Express, a movie of the 1960s starring Goldie Hawn and Ben Johnson.

Spielberg was 21, and the wacky comedy was his first outing as a director.

Koock portrayed a Texas highway patrolman with a penchant for singing over his squad car radio.

With his Ipana smile, 10-gallon Texas-style hat, and striking good looks, Koock went on to star in the TV series Carter Country, playing the part of Harley Puckett, a loveable dumbo who was always a step or two behind his fellows.

Moe's Homecoming

After whooping it up with friends at his high school reunion, Moe Bandy worked a big crowd at Texas Pride Barbeque last month.

Bandy is a former sheet metal worker from the Bexar County hamlet of Adkins, and he has a big following in the Adkins-Texas Pride area.

Also capable of drawing as well and perhaps even better than Bandy at Texas Pride is Johnny Rodriguez, the Sabinol goat rustler whose body has seemingly survived just about every self-inflicted indignity Johnny has managed to come up with.

Bright-eyed and as straight as a string, Rodriguez fooled almost everyone with his last performance at Texas Pride. He put on one whal of a performance, and to the astonishment of Texas Pride owner Tony Talanco, Rodriguez signed autographs for a solid hour or more after the show.

"I don't know what's going on with Johnny," Talanco said. "But I hear he has been showing up both clean and sober at some other shows around the country."

Acknowledging his intentions of bringing Rodriguez back to Texas Pride, Talanco said, "He sounds as well as he did when he was 20, and nobody appeals to a crowd like Johnny Rodriguez. I'm just hoping he keeps up whatever he has been doing."

Laura Bell's 'Aces'

After almost losing her home amid escalating medical bills, Laura Bell is back on the music scene with her band Laura Bell and the Blue Aces.

cont'd on page 14
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And Ask for Barbara
Allen Torans has fronted top country.

With the Texas Pride Barbeque staff turning from music to Thanksgiving and Christmas turkeys during the holiday months, now is a good time to honk the horn for Allen Torans and his Misty Blue Band.

Torans and Misty Blue have been the opening act for just about every name act booked at Texas Pride over recent years—from Moe Bandy to Johnny Rodriguez—and the popular country dance band may be found at other watering holes in the Bexar County area and across South Texas on most any given weekend.

“Texas Pride is a great place to work,” Torans said. “And we will be back on the big stage as soon as the music season resumes. My band is a traditional dance band, and that’s what the customers at Texas Pride are all about. They love to dance to good country music.”

Torans founded his popular country dance band in 1974, and since that time Misty Blue has performed at such noted dance halls as Texas Pride in Adkins, the old Randy’s Rodeo, Floore’s Country Store in Helotes, the old Cowtown in Lytle, China Grove General Store, Cabaret in Bandera, Quihi Dance Hall in Quihi, Martinez Social Club in Martinez, Texas Dance Hall in San Antonio, and numerous others.

Torans is proud of his band, and he is equally proud of the opportunity to front such legendary acts as Johnny Bush, Darrell McCall, the late Stoney Edwards, Vern Gosdin, and Randy Travis, as far back as the 1980s.

More recently, from 2004 through 2008, Allen and Misty Blue have been out front of such stars as Tony Booth, Johnny Rodriguez, Fiddlin’ Frenchie Burke, Curtis Potter, David Frizzel, Moe Bandy, John Conlee, Aaron Tippin and “The Urban Cowboy” himself, Johnny Lee.

On many of his more recent shows—especially those at Texas Pride—Torans has opened for the headline act, and then climbed back on the stage to work while the star signs autographs and mingles with the crowd.

“I am a friend of many a big name artist,” Torans said. “And it really makes me feel good when I can hold a dance crowd right on up to closing time.”

Torans said: “The Misty Blue Band brings the best of both worlds for those who love music and want to get on the dance floor. We offer tunes from the old and the new country, plus some classic rock hits, polkas, and the great new waltz tunes.”

Torans is definitely a people performer. He strolls through his crowds, singing up close and personal with a cordless microphone.

“If you don’t like to dance,” Torans says, “it would be best for you not to come to one of our shows. Dance music is what we are all about, and we have tunes for people of all ages.”

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Action Magazine, November 2008 •13•
A highly successful benefit at Raffles helped save the house, and a steady gig at the popular North Side tavern has got the blues-belted lady back in her old musical groove. Laura Bell had planned to hook up with Sauce Gonzales's West Side Horns, but Sauce has undergone some medical problems of his own which put these plans on hold.

"Sauce had a recent heart attack," Laura said. "And for now, his doctor doesn't want him playing in smoky bars. So I have the Blue Aces back and going with Urban Urbano on drums. He was with me in the original Blue Aces band.

**Harp CD delayed**

Benny Harp's first and much-anticipated CD has been delayed.

**Personal problems may be blamed. For one thing, the harmonica ace is temporarily homeless last month after a disagreement with a family member landlord, and then there was the shortage of cash which usually follows.**

But the Harp blues CD will be completed and released. So stay tuned and we will let you know when.

**The 'Real' Deal**

Jerry Deal, onetime general assignments reporter for the Express-News, and now a retired editor of the Valley Morning Star in Harlingen, is back in San Antonio doing some PR work and writing as a freelance journalist. Deal was sighted last month having lunch at Audrey's Mexican Restaurant on McCullough with retired Express-News artist Bob Dale and Action editor Susan Kindrick, also an Express-News writer back in the 1960s and early 1970s. Both Deal and Kindrick bear the distinction of being fired from the daily rag, while Dale retired and headed for Alaska where he worked for a couple of years with the Anchorage newspaper.

A founding father of the Alamo Gunslingers, Dale still participates in these mock shoot-'em-ups. And the talented master of western drawings will always do his artwork in one form or another.

After leaving the Rio Grande Valley newspaper, Deal moved to Florida where he ran an online newspaper for a spell before returning to Texas. And he also did some work with a professional baseball league.

"San Antonio has always been my home," Deal said. "I guess I'm back to stay this time."

Noting that Action Magazine is in its 33rd year, Kindrick said, "It beats robbing trains and selling dope, and like old San Antonio Light reporter Pat Bomar was fond of saying, the newspaper game beats working for a living."

Tony Cantu, a longtime friend and owner of Audrey's Mexican Restaurant, snapped a cd of the gruesome threesome as they sat bullshitting and scarfing enchiladas.

We will not release reproductions of this photograph for publication anywhere. It's a Fifth Amendment reservation.

Bob Dale, incidentally, is one of those ageless wonder who doesn't look much different than he did 30 years ago.

**Frog Eaglesmith can't**

paints landscapes and other objects, replicas of which may be viewed on his website at www.fred eaglesmith.com. Although paintings are shown in recognized art galleries, it might be hard for some traditional art fans to distinguish them from crayon drawings displayed in movie second-grade classrooms.

Like Fred, they may be a bit hard for some to understand.

Fellow songwriters like superstar Toby Keith are drawn to the Canadian. Keith included Fred's recording of Thinkin' Bout You in his movie Broken Bridges and on the soundtrack album. Keith also recorded Eaglesmith's song White Rose on his recently released Big Dog Daddy-CD.

"I hate the White Rose on my list of songs to record for years," Keith says. "The song is such a great story and the beauty of it is that there are no White Rose filling stations in the U.S. only Canada. But it doesn't change the meaning one bit."

Rusty Martin opened for Eaglesmith at Casbeers at St. Ed's church sanctuary. Although the crowd was modest at a non-weekend show, Eaglesmith exuded sincerity when he told the audience, "It was not the big shows that a musician really remembers. It's the little, held somewhere on a Tuesday night in a church which really has very few songs and left that really hangs in your mind."

As the audience whistled and stomped, Eaglesmith added, "I'll always remember this one."

**James Hand cont'd**

"you really think so?"

After release of The Truth Will Set You Free, Hand toured both the U.S. and Europe with Dale Watson, the contemporary country musician who James Hand calls his greatest musical influence.

"There is none finer than Dale," Hand said. "He had a big hand in helping me get this far."

But James Hand was feeling the influences of country music's greatest back when, at age 6 months, he was photographed in Lefty Frizzell's lap.

"I got that photo," he said. "It is one of my greatest treasures."

Born in the small town of West just outside of Waco, Hand received his first guitar at age 10. By age 14, he was working the provocative tunes which define him to this day.

He can jerk tears with the best, but James Hand will always be known for a story-telling talent which only comes to a few. His subject matter includes a parakeet trapped in a cage with a mirror, a rabid dog owned by an ex all but latching onto is butt, a tender ballad composed just after his heart had been shattered, and a man burning down the place where his memories linger. He's been started since I was 10 or 11," Hand said. "I found some of my songs in a little envelope my grandmother had tucked away in her china closet. And with the life I've lived, there is no shortage of songs. They'll run out of typewriter ribbon before I run out of songs."

Producer Maines said, "James Hand uses no smoke or mirrors. There is definitely no glossing over any aspect of his upcoming CD."

Life, Hand said, has taught him more lessons than any of his fellow musicians. He has worked as a horse trainer, he has logged a few years of prison time which really isn't worth talking about, and he has learned to make close contact with people over years of playing beer joints and honky-tongks.

"You see," he said, "there are a lot of songs, the ones you feel like you've put your heart and soul into, that go unnoticed out on the dance floor. Ninety-nine percent of people want to hear something they can dance to and sing along with. If it's too complicated, they can't do that. Even when listening to some of my records, people don't want to be overwhelmed. They just want to be understood."

Of Big John Oaks and the no-frills country honky-tonks known as Bracken's Hangin' Tree, Hand said, "This is the kind of place where I feel most at home. The Hangin' Tree is my favorite club in the San Antonio area, and I hope to be playing here on a regular basis starting next month."

Hand has rodeoed and worked with animals most of his life. He still trains a few horses on 14 acres he owns just off FM 1838.

"I still live near West, a little town about a hundred miles north of Austin," Hand said. "And, yes, I still work with horses. But I ain't no horse whisperer, and you can put that in your story."

With a crinkly-eyed grin, Hand elaborates; "I'll tell you something about this horse whispering business you hear so much about. Well, you can whisper to 'em, you can get down on your knees and act like 'em, but the horse will always know that you ain't a horse."

As Willie might say, this sounds like the title of a new song.
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Wednesday, November 5th:
The Red Elvises
Friday, November 7th:
The Tejas Brothers
Saturday, November 8th:
Roller Reunion Show
Friday, November 14th:
Emory Quinn
Saturday, November 15th:
Girl In A Coma
Friday, November 21st:
The Jackson Parten
Catastrophe
Friday, November 28th:
Audio Glo Experience
Saturday, November 29th:
SA Blues Society’s
The Robert Johnson
Sessions

Coming In December:
12/12: Mingo Fishtrap
12/13: Bob Schneider (solo show)
12/19: Girl In A Coma Xmas Show
12/21: Del Castillo

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ACTION MAGAZINE, NOVEMBER 2008 - 15
## Practice Shows

### Tuesday
- **Crabby Jacks**
  - Location: 16084 San Pedro, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Swig North**
  - Location: 18322 Sonterra Place, 9:00 - 1:00 AM
- **Fiascos Sports Bar**
  - Location: 2250 Thousand Oaks, 9:30 - 1:30 AM

### Wednesday
- **Los Cucos**
  - Location: 226 W. Bitters, 6:00 - 10:00 PM
- **Martini Ranch**
  - Location: 4904 West Ave, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Espana Bar de Tapas**
  - Location: 5638 Hausman Rd., 9:30 - 1:30 AM

### Thursday
- **Black Diamonds**
  - Location: 9431 Southton Rd, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Aztec Indoor Soccer**
  - Location: 9870 Marbach, 9:30 - 1:30 AM

### Friday
- **The Other Woman**
  - Location: 1123 Fair Ave, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Spurr 122**
  - Location: 5562 Fredricksburg, 9:30 - 1:30 AM

### Saturday
- **The Other Woman**
  - Location: 1123 Fair Ave, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Highlander**
  - Location: 5562 Fredricksburg, 9:30 - 1:30 AM

### Sunday
- **Pat O'briens**
  - Location: 121 Alamo, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Club Rive**
  - Location: 245 E. Commerce St, 9:30 - 1:30 AM
- **Hooligans**
  - Location: 13920 N IH 35, 9:00 - 1:00 AM

### Many Drink Specials Nightly

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