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## Delta Blues Newsletter

August 2010

### Note: From the Museum Director

The Museum has been jumping as we host our many summer visitors-it's *the* busiest season for us. Since it's been so blazed hot everywhere around the country and the world this year, our summer Delta heat is *not* keeping the blues fans away!

*Before I catch you up with what's been happening at the Museum, here are some notes about upcoming events:*

This weekend, August 6-7-8, we welcome visitors to Clarksdale for the 23rd Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival. This edition of the Festival is dedicated to "Rocket 88," the "first rock 'n' roll song," and Ike Turner, who organized the recording session (he plays piano on the tune). As a tribute to this music culture milestone, the Museum has put together a special exhibit on "Rocket 88"-be sure to drop by and see it (see more about our exhibit below, under "New Exhibits").



The Museum will be open special hours, 1-5 pm on Sunday. If you can't tear yourself away from Festival events, come and see us Sunday afternoon.

The Festival will be kicked off on Friday, August 6 at 4 pm by the Arts and Education students, who will perform on the Museum stage.



**Clarksdale's Own:  
Ike Turner and John Lee Hooker  
Photo: Dick Waterman**

In conjunction with the Festival's theme, the Museum is offering a limited edition photograph of Clarksdale native sons Turner and John Lee Hooker. See [Gift Shop](#) for purchase details.

Ike Turner will be honored in front of the Museum this Friday, August 5, at 2 PM, with a City of Clarksdale "Walk of Fame" plaque. The plaque is the 9th such marker and is sponsored by the Coahoma County Board of Supervisors. Honorees must be individuals who are or have been residents of the county (Turner was born in Clarksdale), who have made a significant,

long-lasting contribution, and who have national or international acclaim. The Walk of Fame is an effort of the Clarksdale/Coahoma County Chamber of Commerce.

On Friday, at 10 AM, just a short walk from the Museum, Turner will also be honored with a Mississippi Blues Trail Marker at the Alcazar Hotel.



**Members of Clarksdale's Board of Mayor and Commissioners join Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival officers in proclaiming Aug. 6-8 "Ike Turner and Rocket 88 Weekend" in Clarksdale. Displaying posters at the Board meeting on 7/26 are from right: commissioner Grady Palmer; Sunflower officer Laura Mayfield; commissioner Buster Moton; Mayor Henry Espy; Sunflower officer Maie Smith; commissioner Bo Plunk; Delta Blues Museum director and festival board member Shelley Ritter; commissioner Ed Seals; and Sunflower officer Melville Tillis.**

**Photo: Panny Mayfield**

Jim Herring is a new addition to the Museum board. Jim came to Clarksdale from Jackson, 12 ½ years ago, to work for SaftCart. A graduate of Millsaps College, he worked for UPS for 16 years before moving to Clarksdale. He is married to the former Melinda Walker, and they have three children: Jim III, Paige, and Connor. He divides his time between Clarksdale and Nashville, TN.

Many thanks to Wayne Orr, who served on the Museum board and worked diligently as our Treasurer.

The Museum was a center of activity last month. The Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi in conjunction with the Box Project used our facilities July 2. We hosted a writing workshop for Clarksdale and Coahoma County students July 5-16. Thanks to Representative John Mayo and the Mississippi State University's Mississippi Writing/Thinking institute for this wonderful opportunity. And Cheryl Taylor hosted a private reception and Museum tour on July 17.

**Vote for the Museum at Tourism Cares!** Tourism Cares, the premier charity dedicated to preserving the travel experience for future generations, has chosen the Museum as one of four charities competing for grant funding in its [Save Our Sites](#) program-the winner gets a money jackpot! Visit the site and vote for your favorite blues museum-now! Voting continues through August 18.

**Our podcast was down for a couple of weeks but is now back up and running.** So tune back in to our "bluescast" at the Museum [Web site](#). Thanks to Mike Rugel for managing this valuable service. We apologize for the inconvenience.

**The Mississippi Arts Commission (MAC) has awarded the Museum a \$21,750 grant.** This grant is a portion of the \$1.64 million in grants the Commission will award in 2010-2011, and will be used for operational support of the museum and its programs. The grants are made possible by continued funding from the Mississippi State Legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts. I hope to see you in the gallery soon!

**Shelley Ritter, Director**

*This newsletter is supported in part by funding from the Mississippi Arts Commission, a state agency, and, in part, from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.*

## NEW EXHIBITS & RECENT ACQUISITIONS

**Rocket 88, "the first rock 'n' roll record,"** is the focus of a new Museum exhibit, as well as of the 23rd Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival. Our display features an original Chess 45 of "Rocket 88"; a photo of the original Memphis Recording Service acetate (recorded by Sam Phillips); and period photographs, posters, and promotional materials. Now on view in our gallery beginning 8/6.

Special Museum opening hours this Sunday, 1-5 pm.

**"Follow Son House"** has been posted to our Web site. The second in our Explore and Learn series (after "Follow Muddy Waters"), "Follow Son House" tells the story of one of the most influential figures in American music of the 20th century. Born in 1902 in Riverton, then just outside Clarksdale, the longtime Delta resident bluesman taught slide guitar to Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters, wrote classic songs, played a key role in the '60s blues revival, and is a living presence to today's young musicians and music fans. [Click here for](#)



[a look](#). Thanks to the Rock River Foundation for funding this new feature. (We are planning to add music to this new section-stay tuned for a "Follow Son House" soundtrack!)

***Blues, Booze, and BBQ***, photographs by Michael Loyd Young, taken from the book of the same name, and ***Give My Poor Heart Ease***, photographs by Bill Ferris from his book of the same title, remain on view in our gallery. Each photographer has been generous in donating prints to the museum's collection-thank you, Michael and Bill. Both books are available from our [Gift Shop](#).

## RECENT & UPCOMING EVENTS

**This Wednesday, August 4, we are hosting a reception for the Pinetop Perkins Foundation, 5-7 PM.** Students and their families from the Pinetop Perkins Master class workshop, their instructors (Eden Brent and Ann Rabson), and, of course, Pinetop Perkins himself, will be on hand. This reception is open to the public.

**On Thursday, August 5, Pinetop Perkins Master Class students and instructors perform at [Ground Zero Blues Club](#)** along with Pinetop Perkins, Lee Williams, Cassie Taylor, and Bob Margolin.

For all Sunflower River Festival details, [click here](#).

**Noted author Peter Guralnick** discussed his writing on blues (his first interview was with Howlin' Wolf) and on Sam Cooke, the Clarksdale-born pop music legend, in the Museum classroom on July 8, as part of the Oxford American's "The Most Southern Weekend on Earth" celebration held July 9-10 in Clarksdale. A full house heard Guralnick's stories about and comments on Cooke, the blues, and, of course, Elvis. Guralnick has been writing for 45 years on music, musicians, and music culture. Signed copies of his books are available through the Museum [Gift Shop](#).



*Director Ritter introduces Peter Guralnick*

**The museum was featured in several media outlets-TV: CNN, [blog](#) and [video](#); Web: [The Huffington Post](#); and in print: [1000 Places to See Before You Die](#).**

**[FaceBook](#)** started hosting our Museum page at "Delta Blues Museum - Clarksdale" in July. After only one month, we have over 3,000 fans! Thanks to Joe Sunseri for pioneering our social media outreach.

**I conducted a "History of the Blues" presentation at Delta State University in Cleveland, Mississippi on June 10 for new teachers at the Teach for America Training Institute. Teach for America is the national corps of top recent college graduates who commit to teach for at least two years in urban and rural public schools. The DSU Institute was the first in a rural area; its participants taught in summer school programs in**

14 area school districts while attending courses. My presentation included a PowerPoint and our traveling trunk. Thanks to Travis Calvin for his assistance with the creation of the PowerPoint.

### **23rd Annual Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival - Clarksdale, August 6-8**

#### Friday, August 6

10 am Mississippi Blues Trail Marker for Ike Turner at Alcazar Hotel

2 pm Clarksdale Walk of Fame Marker for Ike Turner at Delta Blues Museum

4 pm DBM band kicks off 23rd Annual Sunflower River Blues & Gospel Festival

#### Saturday

9 am - evening 23rd Annual Sunflower River Blues & Gospel Festival

#### Sunday

1-5 p.m. Delta Blues Museum special hours

10 am Cathead Mini-Festival

4 p.m. Sunflower River Gospel Festival (City Auditorium)

### **Arkansas Blues & Heritage Festival - Helena, AR, October 7-9**

### **18th Annual Tennessee Williams Festival - Clarksdale, October 15-16**

## **ARTS & EDUCATION PROGRAM NEWS**

**Bill Abel conducted a guitar-building workshop** with the Arts & Education students on June 12. The students built their own guitars out of cigar boxes, learning lessons in pitch, tone, and the mechanics of stringed instruments. Upon completion of the construction activity, Abel and the students played their instruments. The students sat in a circle, listening to one another and taking turns playing rhythm and/or lead. The forthcoming Museum Arts and Education CD, made possible through a grant from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, will feature a track of Abel and the students playing the instruments they created at this workshop.

Recording sessions for the upcoming Museum Arts and Education CD were held at Vincent Studios in Clarksdale in July. Among the tracks recorded were the classic "Kansas City" and "The Blues is Not Exclusive", one of many hits penned by one of our music instructors, Bill "Howl-N-Madd" Perry. Thank you, Bill.



*Bill Abel and guitar workshop students.  
Photo: Christopher Coleman*

Miracle Williams, a Museum Arts and Education student, received a full scholarship from the Pinetop Perkins Foundation to the Youth Workshop Series, Piano Master Class. Miracle will be one of the performers at the reception at the museum on August 4. On Thursday evening, August 5, at Ground Zero Blues Club, Miracle and the other students from the Master Classes will perform along with Pinetop Perkins, Bob Margolin, Lee Williams (a graduate of the Arts & Education Program) Cassie Taylor, Eden Brent, and Ann Rabson.

Travis Calvin, a graduate of the Arts & Education Program, a current assistant instructor, and Gift Shop employee, presented a concert at Clarksdale's New Covenant Church to a full and enthusiastic house July 17. Travis performed with his band: PJ Walker (also a DBM employee), Trent Calvin (brother), and Jarrett Box. If the concert was as good as the rehearsal I attended (and I heard that it was), it was a killer.

Paula Thompson is attending the Berklee College of Music in Boston, MA this summer, where she is studying singing. Paula is this year's recipient of the scholarship to the Berklee College of Music's Five Week Summer Music Program. She is enjoying Boston and Berklee College.

## DBM GIFT SHOP NEWS

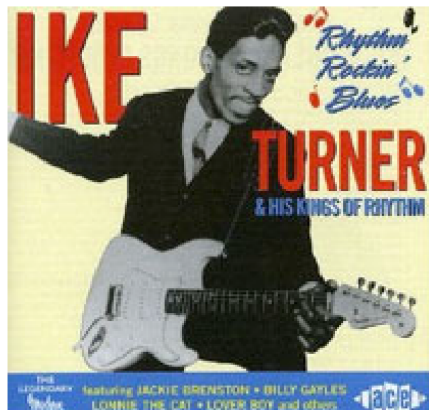
The [Gift Shop](#) is featuring special items in conjunction with the Sunflower River Blues and Gospel Festival's tribute to "Rocket 88" and Ike Turner.

A photograph of Ike Turner and John Lee Hooker, both Clarksdale natives, is available beginning 8/6 through the Museum (for image, see above, "Note from Director"). Printed in a limited edition, size 12" x 16," on archival paper. The price per print is \$75.

### CDs

***Rhythm Rockin' Blues: Ike Turner and His Kings of Rhythm.*** Sessions recorded in the repair shop of the Clarksdale Greyhound Bus Station, where Turner set up a makeshift studio in 1954, the year he refined his classic band lineup. Includes "Rocket

88" and other songs with other singers-Dennis Binder, Little Johnny Burton, Lonnie "The Cat," and "Lover Boy" (Turner under an alias).



***Risin' with the Blues*** Turner's 2006 Grammy-award winning effort, featuring covers (Fats Domino), classic jump blues ("Caldonia"), and several Turner originals, including instrumentals that really *move*.

## DVD

***Ike Turner and the Kings of Rhythm, Live in Concert.*** Recorded in 2002 at a Dutch festival, this concert film shows off Ike's early repertory, piano/guitar skills, and tight band direction. The stellar musicians-including boyhood pal and Clarksdale native Ernest Lane on keyboard-appear to be having a grand old time playing Turner's tunes, and playing with him.

***A rare video clip of Muddy Waters*** performing "You Can't Lose What You Ain't Never Had" at a British train station in 1964 was shown at the Museum in May to Big Bill and Mug Morganfield, two of his sons, as part of a National Train Day reception (see last newsletter). This clip is available as a bonus track on the DVD "The American Folk-Blues Festival: The British Tours 1963-1966," on sale in the [Gift Shop](#). The DVD includes performances by Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Joe Williams, Sister Rosetta Tharpe, and others.



## New Tees:

- The "bottle tree" is a best seller this summer.
- Women's tanks with a fashion fit and Museum logo, in black

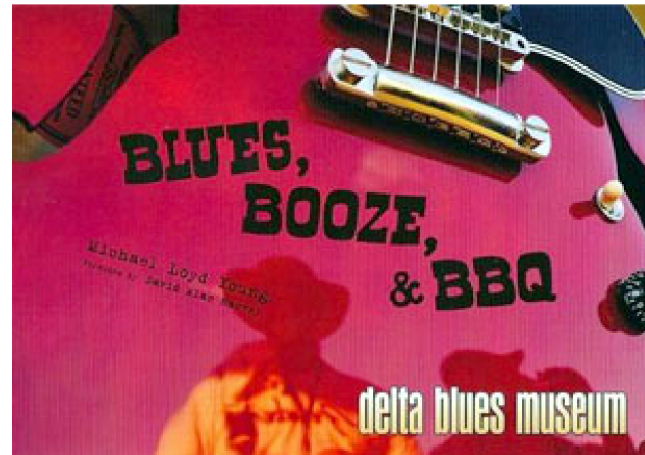
• The "Clack Grocery" sign is the front image on this new tee, (from the Robinsonville store where Alan Lomax recorded Son House-sign is in the Museum collection). Back side is a quote from House: "'I believe I can tell y'all what it's all about."

Order tees [here](#).

Prints from *Blues, Booze and BBQ* are for sale in a signed, limited edition of nine each, printed on inkjet 300-year archival paper. 12" x 18" -- \$600, 16" x 20" - \$500 (unframed). 100% of print sales are donated to the Museum. Copies of the BBBQ book are also for sale, at \$40-all proceeds from sales are donated to the Museum.

[Gift Shop](#)

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