

numbers. Junior Walker & the All Stars were the perfect party band for a mainly-student crowd of 700 celebrating the end of V.C.U. exams at New Horizons on May 9, and 330 of us had a chance to say "goodbye" to the Nighthawks at Cellar Door on June 8.

Best Central Virginia blues news items of the summer: Matt Murphy's August 1 return to New Horizons and WRFK-FM's commitment to Joe Sokol and a regularly scheduled blues show.

—Arthur F. Shue

OHIO

- Gilly's
- Canal Street Tavern
- Fifth Avenue
- Reaganomic followup
- Oxford ripe for blues
- Snapper Mitchum
- Columbus Jets
- WYSO

The U.S. economy strengthened throughout 1985 and into 1986, and the local blues scene went right along with it. More clubs and bands continue to flourish locally and more touring acts are finding work in southwest Ohio.

The first half of 1986 saw a lot of club action for national acts. Most of the bookings continue to take place in Dayton at either Gilly's or the Canal Street Tavern, and many of the acts are able to swing through the area with additional bookings in nearby Columbus at Stache's and in nearby Cincinnati at Bogart's. The Buckwheat Zydeco Band came to the Canal in January, followed by February appearances of Sugar Blue, Queen Ida, and Matt "Guitar" Murphy. March had an exciting Lonnie Brooks show at the same place, followed by Buddy Guy later in the month. The place was packed for the intense Guy, whose band recently has included Jerry Porter, drums; Ike Anderson, bass; and Vince Agwada and George Baze on guitars behind Guy. Part of his act was his on-the-money interpretations and imitations of T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Reed, John Lee Hooker and Lightnin' Hopkins.

B.B. King was in a new supper club, The Fifth Avenue, in downtown Dayton on March 25 and 26. This intimate setting was very appealing to all of King's fans, who filled the place. This was their first month of booking name acts. They've also had Betty Carter and other jazz and pop performers, as well as comedy acts.

Cincinnati's Leslie Isaiah Gaines reports he is working on a followup LP to his acclaimed *Reaganomic Blues* single. This lawyer/blues singer says the album should be out later in the year. Also in the Queen City, H-Bomb Ferguson continues to be very active. Ferguson was scheduled to be the featured act at the Second Annual Miami Valley Blues Festival in August in Dayton.

Through much of the first half of 1986, veteran pianist Pigmeat Jarrett has had a regular gig at Coco's in Covington, Kentucky, across the Ohio River from Cincinnati.

April got off to a bang at Gilly's with a double-billing of Koko Taylor and Albert Collins on the 4th and 5th, with Delbert McClinton coming in to Gilly's the following week. Cincinnati piano man Big Joe Duskin and his band opened for McClinton. Big Twist continued to be popular locally with a return to Dayton at the Canal in April. He's also played Gilly's.

May had Lonnie Mack at Gilly's and the Hurricane Blues Band from San Diego, California, into the Oregon Express in Dayton. Matt "Guitar" Murphy returned to the Canal at the end of May.

In June we saw shows by Buddy Guy and the Buckwheat Zydeco Band at the Canal and James Cotton came into Cincinnati with a hot show at Bogart's on the heels of his recent live Alligator recording. Roy Buchanan was at Gilly's, who also had a double-billing of Albert King and Little Milton on the 6th and 7th of the month.

Bands, fans and blues promoters are happy to report a lot of area clubs are booking local and regional talent, if not national acts. In addition to Gilly's and the Canal Street Tavern in Dayton, DG's Tavern in nearby Yellow Springs books area bands every Saturday night. The Trolley Stop and the Oregon Express in downtown Dayton continue to be outlets for area bands, with blues several nights each week at those clubs. McNasty's on the North Side has occasional bookings. Dayton acts have also been playing the Roosevelt Tavern on Cincinnati's North Side. They have blues several nights weekly, too. Other area clubs include Mike's Place in Middletown, DJ Prophet's and Stache's in Columbus and some activity is reported from Oxford, Ohio, the home of Miami University, with Mark's Hobo Holler and Jackson's. The college town of Oxford is ripe and ready for blues acts, all band should note.

As for local acts, many good things have happened. Snapper Mitchum and his band The Blues Invaders have become a strong force since Mitchum came down from Chicago. He's guested several times for interviews on WYSO-FM and is responsible for opening up the Miami University area to blues acts. His gutbucket band includes several area veterans of local blues bands of the past, with Tony "Hatman" Houston and Big Johnny on guitars, Bob Thompson on drums and Nick Moore on organ.

The Columbus Jets are a fresh young band with some members having been with the Dave Workman/Willie Pooch Blues Band from the capital city. Pooch now works with the Demarco Band, usually in Columbus and monthly gigs at DG's in Yellow Springs. Pooch and the Jets, along with the aforementioned H-Bomb Ferguson, were three acts scheduled for the August blues festival in Dayton. Other acts included Urban Shocker from Louisville and, from Dayton, Juke Joint, the Low Rent Blues Band and Cincinnati Slim & the Headhunters. A complete report on the festival will appear in a future *LB*.

Those three Dayton bands continue to deliver fine blues and have been the most consistent working bands locally, getting booked into most of the area clubs mentioned above. Malkum Gibson & Stronghold are a new harp-oriented tough band that's come on strong the last couple of months, often opening for some of the Canal Street Tavern national acts.

Additional gigs for local acts included Juke Joint at a big downtown Affair on the Square, a city-sponsored Friday after-work party with thousands in attendance in June. The Columbus Jets were in a fundraiser for the

Yellow Springs Community Children's Center in March. April saw two mini-blues festivals, with many local bands on stage at the Trolley Stop on the 14th and the Canal Street Tavern on the 25th. These seasonal events have been a huge success and club owners say they will continue.

Other locals just coming on to the scene include Gary "Guitar" Williams and his band. Richard Lovett & the Love It Band have been gigging at some small clubs on Dayton's West Side, including Napoleon's, and are ready to break out.

Area radio is strong, with WYSO-FM the long-time blues leader for 28 years. They have numerous blues shows throughout the week and work hard to promote touring national acts with record giveaways, interviews, and so forth. During the school year the Dayton Public School radio station, although low-powered, has introduced a weekly blues show by high school students. It's also carried on the cable TV system, as is WYSC In Cincinnati, WVXU began a blues program on Thursday evenings, another good sign for blues fans.

-Art Snyder

ATLANTA

- Blues Harbor
- Moonshadow Saloon
- Little Five Points
- Blind Willie's
- Blues Festival on PBS

The blues has continued to thrive at Jim McDaris' Blues Harbor, as Big Daddy Kinsey & the Kinsey Report, Phillip Walker, Buckwheat Zydeco, Matt "Guitar" Murphy, the Sam Lay Blues Revival Show, and Johnny Littlejohn appeared during July and August, continuing the 150-seat club's policy of booking groups of six-night engagements. Blues Harbor's schedule has represented a who's who on the contemporary blues scene since the club opened in April of '85. McDaris deserves a big hand from the Atlanta blues community.

While it has been a sensational year for Blues Harbor, it seemed the Moonshadow Saloon lost ground in trying to attract blues fans. Long the "showcase" club in Atlanta, the Moonshadow went through a series of booking agents in '85 which resulted in some poorly promoted and attended shows. Shows with John Lee Hooker, John Hammond and Roomful of Blues did well but a two-night stand with Willie Dixon and local artists, "Chicago" Bob Nelson opening one night and the Heartfixers the next, should have been the blues event of the year but, had only mediocre attendance. Shows in the winter with Magic Slim & the Teardrops and a Monday night booking of Robert Cray were disasters.

The Little Five Points Pub continued to support local blues artists with regular bookings of the Roulettes, Heartfixers, Dr. Dixon & the Operators, the Fins, Frank Edwards, and Sammy Blue.

A new club, Blind Willie's 828 N. Highland Ave., opened in February '86 featuring both electric and acoustic blues with weekly appearances by "Chicago" Bob Nelson, Roy Dunn & the Barbecue Boys, and Luther "Houserocker" Johnson. Touring performers who have performed there include Rory Block, Paul Geremia, and Josh White, Jr.

August bookings also included Sparky Rucker, H-Bomb Ferguson, and Grady "Fats" Jackson with special guest Billy Wright. Jackson, an incredible sax player, and his drummer, Bobby Tuggle, are veterans of Piano Red's hot R&B bands of the '50s and '60s. Blind Willie's also booked Drink Small for Sept. 26-27 and Jessie Mae Hemphill for Nov. 21-22.



Blind Willie's in Atlanta has become a leading venue for local blues acts, including Luther "Houserocker" Johnson (shown with Jimmy Boleman on second guitar) and Chicago Bob Nelson (right). (Photos by C. Broadway, from Blind Willie's, March 1986)