

Porquis Junction baptized with the blues

By John Emms
PORQUIS JUNCTION / The Daily Press

Okay I have my medication, pain relief pills, and my pillow.

Hey what gives. I'm not checking into another hospital again.

Been there enough thanks. That is unless it's a hospital for the blues.

The reason I wanted to use that analogy was because for some reason no matter how bad we feel we want a singer or band to belt out the blues to make us feel better.

And, for reasons unknown after a 100 years of blues it seems to work

For the 800 or so people at the The Porquis Blues Fest on

Saturday they came to relax and forget their troubles and dig some of the best blues around.

First band up was The Hurtin Blues Band from Iroquois Falls.

Let's face it these guys are going to make a lot of people happy locally. Singer Lee Holmes has got a nasty bite to his vocals, and the band's covers of *Not Fade Away* and *Just Wanna Make Love to You* were on the money and they got a solid response.

As the sound system got louder SAB took to the stage, cranked up his axe

with some help on horns from Monty Kirkpatrick and Ivan Clouthier as well as his regular backing band and proceeded to get the crowd jumping with searing covers of *Under My Thumb*, *Mustang Sally* and *Wang Dang Doodle*.

Although not at this festival it should be noted SAB has went to the country market under his real name Peter Sabourin and I will review his new disc later this month.

Next up was The Jack DeKeyzer Band and for my money he had the cleanest and most uncluttered set of the night.

Stevie Ray Vaughan could not have put more soul into his axe on this night. DeKeyzer simply astounded the

audience with cool staccatto bursts from his Fender Telecaster and Stratocaster guitars, while former Blue Rodeo drum man Mark French and bassist Corey Shevitz grooved.

Dekyzer went through his entire catalogue of original hits like *That's The Way*, *When Love Walks Out*, and the gorgeous *Nothing At All* and returned for a double encore with a drop down version of the Rolling Stones *Gimme Shelter*, and the 60's raveup twanger *Slow Down*.

If anyone doubted Paul James as the biggest entertainment value dollar for

they didn't after his long set.

James whipped up Chuck Berry better than ol Chuck himself.

He blasted out songs like *Route 66*, *Bye Bye Johnny*, and his own *Lazy Crazy Blues*, *Joint Out Back* and for my money his best original *Broken Hearted Lovers*.

He pranced and danced with guitar behind his back, on the chairs, and everywhere else.

In a sentence this guy rocked!

By the time The Downchild Blues Band hit the stage around 10:30 p.m. everyone was a bit tired, but jammed the dance floor.

Hey, it's hard not to get excited when Mr. Downchild is hopping around the stage blowing some wicked harmonica, and ripping you with galvanizing lead guitar.

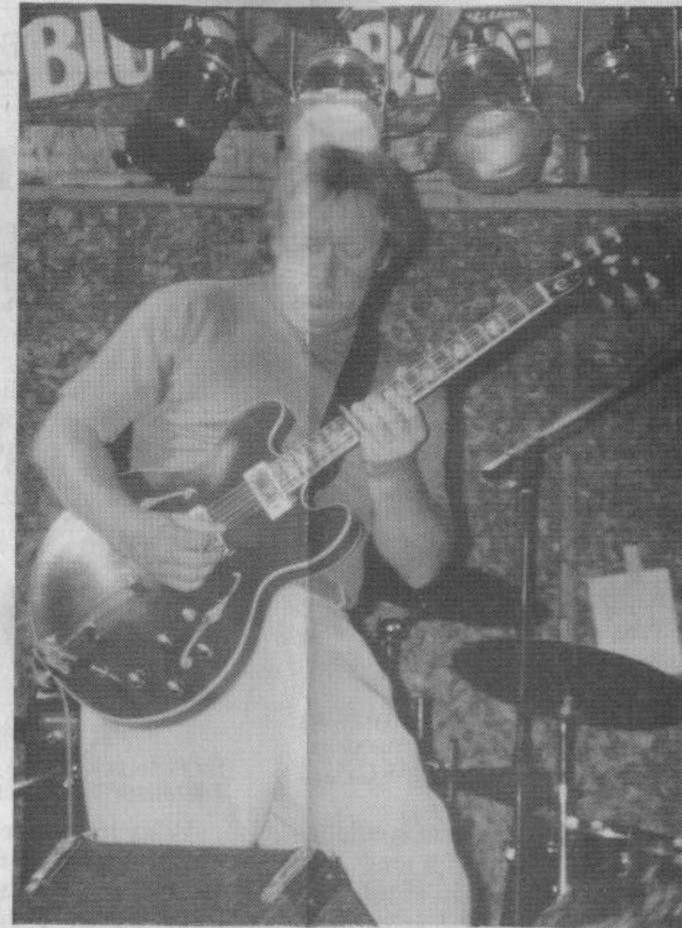
Not to mention some of the best keyboard work by none other than ex Lou Reed, Foreigner member and mega producer Micheal Fonfara.

The big hits like *Almost*, *Caledonia*, *Flip Flop* and *Fly* were there but the bands' new material like *Dew Drop Inn* and the jamming sections hit some good dynamics.

In the end, it's amazing nobody thought of the idea of a blues festival before 1998.

Hats off to all the sponsors and organizers, you did a good job.

This thing can only get bigger and better.



John Emms / The Daily Press

DONNIE WALSH of the legendary Downchild Blues Band plays some slide guitar during the Porquis Blues Fest this weekend.