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city of Kitchener in its Victoria Park with a line-up of fabulous vocalists and Canada's top musicians also produced by Lance Anderson with all donations giving back to the local food shelf, St John's Kitchen.

Unlike other festivals where you stand uncomfortably in a crowd, at Kitchener the outdoor stages have seating, some under the largest tents in Eastern Canada. There are vendors and food trucks as well as restaurants that offer choices from around the globe. There are also interactive workshops and informative lectures. After the main shows, the live music spills out into many restaurants and clubs as the regional bands play late into the night and the town comes alive with music and dance.

Come to Ontario and enjoy Canadian hospitality, Canada's love for the blues and their civilized and friendly approach to festivals. The Kitchener Blues Festival is truly a top-notch festival that the entire city as well as country takes part in. I can't wait to see what next year has in store! Make plans for next year and visit www.kitchenerblues-festival.com

Atlanta

Atlanta Blues Society Blues Challenge and Other Events as we Roll into the Fall

BY CARLIN "C-NOTE" SMITH

Despite all the worldly distractions happening this year, it is so good to see the blues scene in and around the Atlanta area thriving like pre-pandemic days. It's just amazing to see and hear the quality of talent we have performing in every event, club, bar, and other venues in this area.

The city of Austell, GA had their first annual BBQ Blues and Brews Festival sponsored by the City of Austell and a host of other sponsors including the oft-mentioned Throttle Roadhouse. It was an overcast day but the smell of good BBQ and blues music filled the air. Kickin' it off was one of my favorite Atlanta area bands, Chequered. This band continues to blow me away with their style of solid classic rock, R & B, and funky blues. They are just a great party band and a great band to kick things off. Next up was Atlanta Blues Society's (ABS) best band entry to the International Blues Challenge, Garrett Collins Project. This band is so tight with funk and soul in their package. We were honored to have them start their set with a brand new tune they had never before played and folks, if this is any indication of what this band is working on



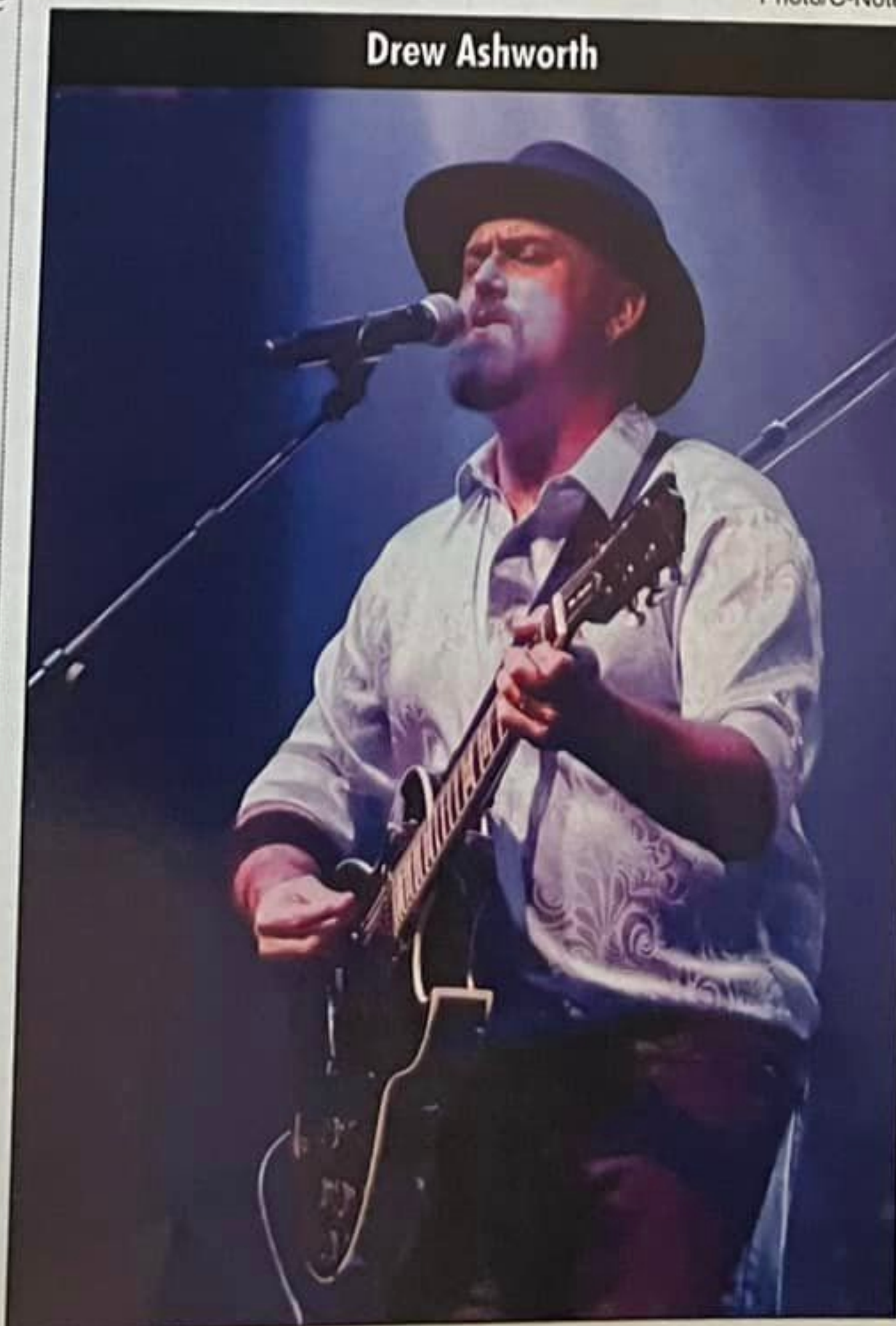
Drew Ashworth

Photo/C-Note

all I can say is look out Blues World the Garrett Collins Blues Band is here to stay! Capping off this first annual event were my friends out of Macon, GA., Big Mike and the Booty Pappas. This band is the definition of "Blues with a little Funk" to quote Michael 'Big Mike' Ventimiglia. They provided the crowd with something to get up and dance. Thank you, city of Austell, for providing this great event to the people - we're already looking forward to next year.

WRFG's 37th Annual Labor Day Blues & BBQ was held at Park Tavern in downtown Atlanta. This event is an annual fundraiser for this community radio station. This year's lineup included Chester Lethers kickin' it off. Following Chester Lethers was one of the best dance bands in Atlanta, Ray and the Royal Peacocks. Next up was The Cazanovas, one of the ATL's best all-around blues bands - they get you on your feet. This year's Honoree band was Frank Robinson & Frankie's Blues Mission. Frankie and his band have gotten so very good over

Photo/C-Note



Drew Ashworth

the years especially with the addition of the horns and piano players. This year's headliner was Lil' Ed and the Blues Imperials who closed the show. What can you say about this band? A Chicago favorite, their performance was nothing short of amazing. Lil' Ed and band provide such high energy blues that gets you up and on your feet. I can't wait until next year's announcement about one of the hottest blues shows around and for a good cause - keeping this "Radio Free Georgia" station alive.

This year's Atlanta Blues Challenge, sponsored by the Atlanta Blues Society and Entertainers Speaking Out for a Smoke-free Work Place, was held at MadLife Stage and Studio up in Woodstock, Georgia. This is the annual event to see who represents the Atlanta Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis, TN in January of next year. MadLife Stage and Studio is a perfect venue for this type of event, having the latest sound and stage equipment as well as some of the best sound and producing engineers in the business. This setting was host to 9 competitors consisting of a Youth Band, Solo artist, and 7 bands. Representing our Youth entry is Mongo Pretty, consisting of 11th grader Lincoln Dole on vocals, 9th grader Jackson Doyle on drums, 10th grader Hazel Patty on bass, and rounding out the group is freshman Ben Sears on guitar. Playing some deep funky hard rockin' blues. These young folks have a great future ahead of them and I'm sure they will get the folks up and on their feet in Memphis at the Youth Showcase. The Solo representative in Memphis will be Andrew Ashworth. This man is pure talent. His smooth guitar and soulful vocals make you want to ask for more. His songs resonate with a feeling that at times just mesmerized the crowd. The band competition was one of Atlanta's favorites, Wasted Potential Brass Band. This band is a party, New Orleans-style. Playing that New Orleans beat with solid brass horns, a Sousaphone as bass, funky guitar, and heavy drum beat and bluesy vocals from Mandi, this band is a must for

your party and they showed us why on this day. Up next was Men Of Simply Awesome Entertainment, a very entertaining band playing the ol' school soul you grew up hearing on the radio. They took me back to "in the day." Let it Rip band is another of Atlanta's premier bands. They played that ol' school, Motown, R&B, and soul tunes that you loved to hear growing up. Keeping it going was William "Bluesman" Reed and the Juke Joint Dukes. These folks played some serious old Chicago and Delta blues, taking us on a trip from the Mississippi Delta to the streets of Chicago and back. Up next was the Trouble Tones. These guys just rocked the house playing some jumpin' foot stoppin' blues. The sax player was on point moving from one end of the stage to the other blowin' to the crowd, so it was easy to see he was having fun. With well-synced guitar, bass, drums, and along with Patrick on vocals, it all blended in nicely. Hughes Taylor Band followed and did they put on a show. They played a great mix of blues, blues-rock, and a little soul. Hughes on guitar not only showed his amazing talent on that instrument, his mellow vocals are the kind that moves the soul. Finishing the night was Cannonball Red and the Headhunters. They might have been the last band to perform, but the sellout crowd didn't leave their seats, unless they got up to dance to this fantastic young band playing hard hittin' funk blues. The songs are representative of his life with his tales of the blues. Cannonball and the Headhunters combine that vintage sound with a modern flare. I can see a bright future for this band. With all this great music being played, I would hate to be one of the judges. Keep in mind the Solo and band acts will receive an offer for free studio time to mix and master a CD of their own production and a feature interview in the "Making a Scene Magazine," compliments of Richard L'Hommedieu. Once the judges' scorecards were in the results were as follows:

- Band: The Trouble Tones
 - Solo: Drew Ashworth
 - Youth: Mongo Pretty
 - People's Choice Winner: Hughes Taylor Band
 - 2nd Place Band: William "Bluesman" Reed & The Juke Joint Dukes
 - 3rd Place Band (tie): Cannonball Red & The Headhunters
 - Hughes Taylor Band
- This was a great day for music and there are a lot of folks to thank for their hard work. Much gratitude goes out to ABS, the ABS Board members, and ABS volunteers. It wouldn't be a contest if not for skilled and knowledgeable judges, Suz Holmes, Marcus Gilley, Michelle Wilson, Mike Seigler. Doing the video was ABS webmaster Michael Davis. On the ABS website the

event and photos in this article were taken by photographer Kahlifa Lee. Last but not least, thanks MadLife Stage and Studio staff for making this year another huge success.

Well, this was a lot to tell and I hope you enjoyed reading this as much as I did bringing it to you. Until next time "Good Blues to You."

Austin, TX

Blues Jam Capital of the World!

BY RICHARD RABBIT

Open blues jams—opportunities for aspiring musicians to play with established bands—are an important part of any city's blues scene, and Austin is a leader with lots of vibrant blues jam opportunities.

Blues aficionado Breck English has been running a successful jam at Giddy Ups in South Austin for many years. The Blues Bank Robbers—the house band led by bassist Rusty Keith—host the jam and Breck makes sure that all musicians are given an equal chance to show what they can do. Ted Hall hosts a Sunday jam called the Blues Church at various locations in both North and South Austin. The Austin Blues Society presents a monthly event headlined by a rotating group of top Austin blues bands.

Lately, the Tuesday night jam at the King Bee organized by Matthew Broadnax has been extremely popular as it attracts a great mix of both pro and aspiring musicians. And guitarist, drummer, bassist and singer

Jamie Krueger just started an instantly popular Thursday night jam at the Railhouse Bar that attracts some of Austin's finest blues players.

For over 10 years, blues musicians of all skill levels have been getting together at Kenny Dorham's Backyard for Blue Monday at a great outdoor venue, and Wednesday events can be found at the venerable Victory Grill Café—a famous East Austin location.

And don't forget the longest running blues jam in Lockhart, TX featuring the Sidetracked Blues Band at Load Off Fanny's on alternate Sundays from 5 - 8 pm.

Austin has been blessed to have Eddie Stout, owner of Dialtone Records, as a long-time resident. Eddie produces the Eastside Kings Festival—a blues festival that celebrates the black blues tradition of East Austin. This year the lineup was amazing with bands like the Rising Stars Fife and Drum Band from Mississippi, Little Jimmie Reed, Eugene "Hideaway" Bridges, Crystal Thomas, Tail Dragger from Chicago, IL, Rip Lee Pryor, Trudy Lynn, Guitar Slim Jr., Hash Brown, Soul Man Sam, Kathy & The Kilowatts, and of course Birdlegg, among many others. This great festival was held at multiple indoor and outdoor spots and the weather was perfect.

Earlier this summer, the iconic Antone's celebrated its 47th anniversary. In the 60s and 70s—primetime for the Austin blues scene—blues royalty like Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Hubert Sumlin, Little Walter, James Cotton, and countless other blues stars returned to Antone's for the annual summer homecoming. The event occurred again this summer, and we thank Antone's for presenting the best contemporary blues available like Lindsay Beaver & Brad Stivers.

Photo courtesy of Richard Rabbit

