

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

MAY 2006

Blasters shows

(Phil, John, Jerry, Keith)

6/15 Tuolumne, CA at Black Oak Casino
6/16 San Francisco, CA at Cafe Du Nord
6/17 Santa Cruz, CA at Moe's Alley
6/18 Mill Valley, CA at Sweetwater
6/23 San Juan Capistrano, CA Coach House
6/24 Malibu, CA at Malibu Inn
6/29 K. C., MO at Knuckleheads Saloon
7/1-2 Berwyn IL at American Music Fest w/
Special guest Gene Taylor
7/3 St. Louis, MO at Beale On Broadway
7/6 Philadelphia, PA at Tin Angel
7/7 Virginia Beach, VA at Jewish Mother
7/8 Washington, DC at Spanish Ballroom
7/9 Annapolis, MD at Rams Head
7/12 Oneida, NY at Armory
7/14 Ellsworth, ME at Grand Auditorium

Dave Alvin / Guilty Men shows

6/23 Grover Beach, CA at Mongo's
6/24 Hollywood, CA at Safari Sam's
6/25 Phoenix, AZ at Rhythm Room
6/28 Columbia, MO at 9th Street fest
6/29 Omaha, NE at Murphy's
7/1 St. Paul, MN at Turf Club
7/3 Berwyn, IL at American Music Fest
7/4 Benton Harbor, MI at The Livery
7/6 Annapolis, MD at Rams Head
7/7 Alexandria, VA at The Birchmere
7/8 Philadelphia, PA at World Café
7/9 Amagansett, NY at Stephen Talkhouse
7/12 Quebec City at Intl. Summer festival
7/13 Cambridge MA at Regattabar
7/14 New York City at South St. Seaport
7/15 Woodstock, NY at Playhouse
7/16 Ottawa, Ontario at Cisco Systems fest
7/19 St. Louis, MO at Off Broadway
7/21 Lincoln, NE at Jule Jamm
7/22 Denver, CO at Bluebird Theatre
7/29-30 Calgary, Al at Folk fest (Dave solo)
8/11 Portland, OR at Bite of Portland
8/15 Winters, CA at Palms
8/16-17 Santa Cruz, CA at Moe's Alley
8/18 San Francisco, CA at GAMH
8/19 Reno, NV at Hawkins Amphitheatre
8/24 Bakersfield, CA at Fishlips
8/25 San Juan Capistrano at Coach House
8/26 Solana Beach, CA at Belly Up Tavern
8/27 Los Angeles, CA at Sunset Junction
9/1 Tucson, AZ at Rialto Theatre
9/3 Santa Fe, NM at Thirsty Ear Festival
9/15 Chattanooga, TN at Nightfall Concert
9/16 Atlanta, GA at Smith's Olde Bar

Dave Alvin's 'West of The West' CD preview issue

Latest News: Dave Alvin's new studio album West Of The West will be released by Yep Roc Records on May 30, 2006 -- Dave Alvin recorded a show for XM Radio called 9-Volt With Dave Alvin. Dave plays records spanning the wide range of American Music. Almost a done deal, the show should air monthly starting in June 2006. -- On May 9, it was officially announced that 'Original Blaster' Bill Bateman had signed on as the new drummer in Dave Alvin's Guilty Men replacing Bobby Lloyd Hicks. Bobby has backed Dave Alvin for 15 years and has decided to take some time off to be with his family. One week later it was announced that Bateman would not be touring with Dave Alvin due to tour obligations with the Cramps. Steve Mugallian will become the full time Guilty Men drummer. -- The American Music festival in Chicago is an annual Fourth of July weekend event put on by the Berwyn, IL club Fitzgerald's. This year, the Blasters will perform two nights with special guest Gene Taylor on piano. Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men will cap it off the fest on the third night. It should be a great American Music weekend! -- The Blasters have a new version of SO LONG BABY GOODBYE recorded with Micke Finelle of The Refreshments in Sweden. The CD is called US Rock Back On Track and is available by mail order from Enviken Records (www.envikenrecords.com). -- Dave Alvin on his DVD: "Well, I was hoping to have the DVD released earlier this year, but it now looks like it'll be released either this fall or after the first of the year. The project simply ran into some unforeseen delays due to business and legal jazz. Joe Murray, a great director and friend, put a million dollars worth of his time and effort into this project for absolutely no money. The film he made looks amazing and will be worth the wait, I promise. He persuaded a lot of very talented technical people to work on this for little or no money and I can never thank him and them enough." -- Guitarist Skip Heller has recorded an instrumental song called DAVE ALVIN for his Liberal Dose CD. ((continued page 2))

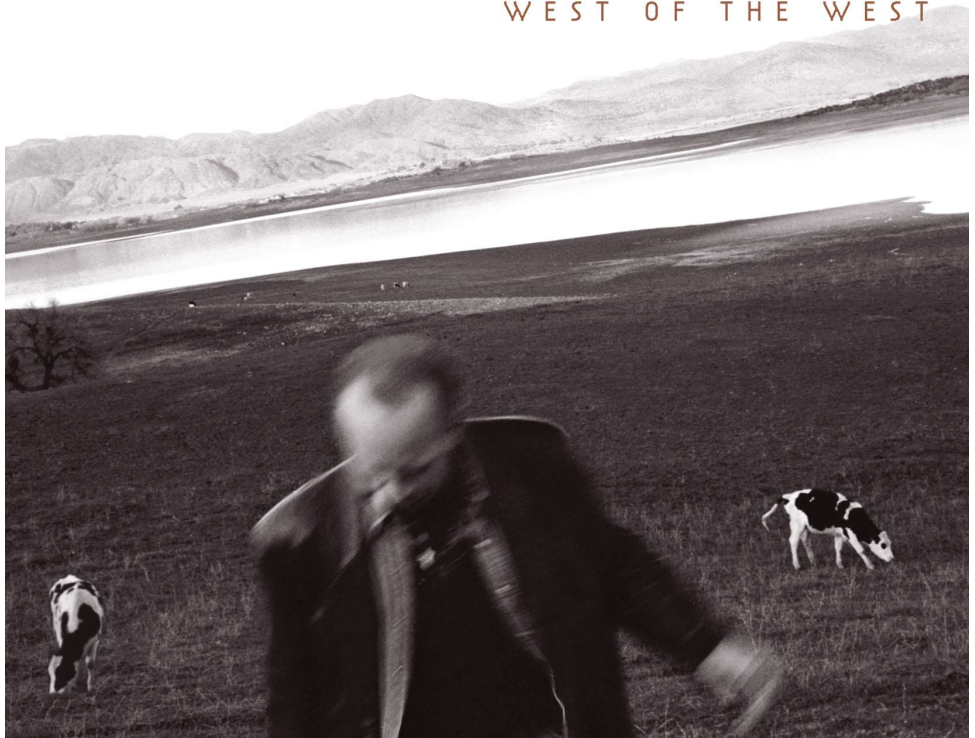
In This Issue: Dave Alvin goes song by song thru West Of The West. Frank Furillo, the man who formed the Blasters, is interviewed. Also the Gene Taylor photo Gallery.

Latest News Continued — Dave: “I was really touched. Skip’s a much better musician than I’ll ever be, so it was a beautiful thing.” -- Dave Alvin was interviewed for The Women There Don't Treat You Mean: Abilene in Song, (State House Press) a new book by Joe W. Specht. Dave discussed his song ABILENE. The book comes with a CD featuring five Abilene-related songs. -- Former Blasters saxophonist Lee Allen was interviewed and is quoted in Blue Monday: Fats Domino and the Lost Dawn of Rock 'N' Roll (Da Capo Press) by Rick Coleman. Lee who performed in the studio and on the road with Fats, is featured in 6 photos. – Dave Alvin’s 4th OF JULY was recently featured on HBO’s The Sopranos. – Dave Alvin will be taping an episode of Howard Larman’s radio show Folkscene in late May, and will air in July. Dave and Greg Leisz will be interviewed on NPR’s California Connected radio show and Dave will do the World Café radio show on 7/10/06
~ *AM*

West Of The West

DAVE ALVIN
WEST OF THE WEST

Dave Alvin can always be counted upon to come up with an interesting and different concept for a new CD. The new CD (scheduled for release on May 30, 2006 on Yep Roc records) is a collection of songs by other California Songwriters. The album was produced by Greg Leisz and Dave Alvin’s extensive liner notes explain the concept perfectly. He recalls watching TV with his mom in 1969 and seeing a singer-songwriter named John Stewart sing CALIFORNIA BLOODLINES. Dave’s mom told him he also had those same California Bloodlines. Dave now reflects: “Maybe that was when the idea for this CD first entered my mind.” More recently Dave recalls: “It goes back to the recording of King of California



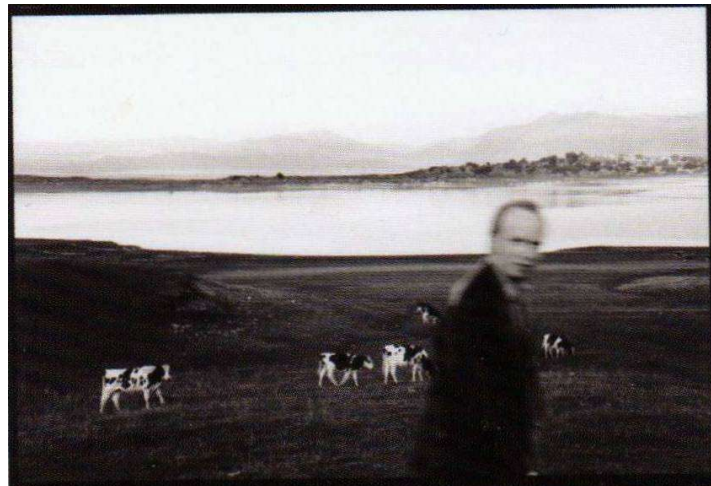
(1994). Tom Russell came by the studio and started talking about the Tulare Dust (1995) project. Texas songwriters are recognized, but no one thinks about the California songwriters. We have everything from Brian Wilson to Merle Haggard and Tom Waits. That’s a big stretch, but I thought: ‘Yeah! Maybe someday I’ll do a record in tribute to those people.’ It felt like the right time now.”

CALIFORNIA BLOODLINES – (John Stewart) It’s a sentimental song for me. John Stewart is a very respected songwriter who wrote DAY DREAM BELIEVER. His version of BLOODLINES is kind of country folk. I tried to make it R & B Folk. I changed the chord progression to give it more of an R & B feel. The electric guitar is Greg Leisz and Chris Miller playing.

The Guilty Men did three days of recording for this song and a few others. Later, we added Don Heffington’s percussion and it changed the groove. Now the original bass line wasn’t working with the groove so Greg Leisz had Bob Glaub do a different bass part on it.

REDNECK FRIEND – (Jackson Browne) You can't get around Jackson when doing a project on California songwriters. The problem is that I don't have the vocal chops to sing a lot of his songs. Greg and Jackson grew up together, so Jackson recommended a song that he thought I could do well, but I always liked REDNECK FRIEND from back when I was a sophomore in high school. I always heard it as a seductive blues song and his version is an up-tempo rock n roll thing. People think of Jackson as a new-age kind of guy, but this song is an earthy, carnal kind of song. Maybe it will change the perception of Jackson Brown for some people.

KERN RIVER – (Merle Haggard) I re-recorded it because it's my favorite Merle Haggard song, and I think it's his best California song. I really like the version I did on Tulare Dust (HighTone Records 1995) but it was recorded in an hour; we recorded all the tracks we were involved in, in one day. We did tracks by Tom Russell, Katy Moffatt, Rosie Flores, Steve Young, and then I was the last. It was a one-take vocal, so I thought I could sing it better now, I think the vocal is much better.



BLIND LOVE – (Tom Waits) I talked to Tom a few times and he sent some songs down. I chose BLIND LOVE. I always heard it as a Jimmy Reed or Lazy Lester blues song, so I took it that way. I added the wah-wah sound to give it a different vibe. I won't play it live with a wah-wah pedal because I'll wind up playing it on every song. Wah-wahs are addicting. I could see me: "Oh yeah, MARIE MARIE? That needs a wah-wah. How about KING OF CA? That could use a wah-wah, too (laughs)."

HERE IN CALIFORNIA – (Kate Wolf) I didn't want to make the album entirely full of songs about California because I wanted people in other places to like the record, but this Kate Wolf song is just great. The big dilemma was that it wasn't written from a male's perspective. Christy McWilson volunteered to come to LA and sing on it as a duet. (Dave Alvin produced Christy McWilson's 2000 and 2002 HighTone Records albums.)

I'M BEWILDERED – (Richard Berry) Berry was a mainstay on the LA R&B scene. I got that record on the Crown label in a thrift store when I was a kid for a quarter. In '55 or '56 it was a regional hit in California. I always dug the song. At the same time as I got that record, I got a Johnny Guitar Watson record for a quarter. Richard Berry's I'M BEWILDERED doesn't have any lead guitar on it. My three favorite L.A. R&B guys are Richard, Johnny Guitar Watson, and Jesse Belvin. I can't sing like Belvin, but I can play a little bit like Johnny Watson. So we made it like Johnny Guitar Watson was playing on a Richard Berry record. It's a tribute to the two. Berry is known for writing LOUIE LOUIE and HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL.

The Calvanes did the backing vocals on this and SURFER GIRL. As they were walking out the door, I stopped Freddie Willis and asked if he had three minutes to play on an old, beat-up piano. He played the much needed eighth-notes-piano part which really gave the song drive. He did it and then said: "I could do it better if I had a second chance." I said: "No, that's okay (laughs)." It was great. We just used the room mics, which gave it an old-time sound.

The guy who mixed this record is named Jim Scott. He did Johnny Cash, The Chili Peppers, The Dixie Chicks and John Fogerty's last record. He was listening to the Calvanes and asked: "Where did you find these guys and can I have their number?" He was impressed.

SONORA'S DEATH ROW – (Blackie Farrell) Blackie was one of the original members of Asleep At The Wheel. They started out in the bay area and other than Ray Benson, the personnel was entirely different. A number of people recorded it, like Michael Mark Murphy, Robert Earl Keen, and even Tom Russell did it on one of his cowboy records. Those versions are in the Mexican-border, Spanish-flavor style. I wanted to make mine sound different. I thought of it as an Appalachian ballad that got lost on the hottest day of the year. You can say it was written about Sonora, CA, or Sonora, NM, or Sonora, TX., There was once something said about Sonora, TX: when you were going into town, it was so bad it was like being on Death Row.

DOWN ON THE RIVER BED – (David Hidalgo and Louie Perez) That's from a Los Lobos album called The Neighborhood. Their version is a big electric funky thing. It's good but very different. The song is really just a blues, and felt real natural. You'll hear a little tribute to I'M SHAKIN at the end of the song. That was planned. David Hidalgo said he always loved the Blasters I'M SHAKIN'. Years ago when David Hidalgo made The Neighborhood he told me that RIVER BED was his attempt to do that kind of song. I don't think he even remembers telling me that. So I said, "OK, here we go. This is where we meet. I'm gonna throw I'M SHAKIN' in there."

BETWEEN THE CRACKS – (Tom Russell and Dave Alvin) Of all the songs that Tom and I wrote together, this is the only one I thought I never got a good version of. It's like a Doug Sahm-meets-Creedence-meets-a-Norteno-band kind of song. I wanted a flash accordion player. Gaffney is more of a soulful player. So I used the Blazers Jesus Cuevas. Gaffney highly recommended him. Gaffney came in later and recorded his backing vocal.

DON'T LOOK NOW – (John Fogerty) Fogerty is problematic because unless you drastically rearrange the song, you have to do it like Fogerty. They don't work any other way. I always liked the lyrics and the way Creedence did it as a Chicago blues. I thought it sounded like Willie Dixon's lyric style.

TRAMPS AND HAWKERS -- (Jim Ringer) My version is sort of like Jim Ringer's. His was piano and violin. The main idea on this CD was that the vocals had to be good - Not to compete with the original artists but to do them justice.

LOSER – (Jerry Garcia and Robert Hunter) My version is different from Garcia's – It's darker and bluesier. The original appeared on Jerry's first solo record. I always liked the lyrics and thought they were Dave Alvin-style.

I put in a psychedelic section in there that is a tribute to the San Francisco sound. Jerry has an iconic voice - very recognizable - so it sounds wrong to hear someone else singing it. I had to worry about Deadheads liking my version. Joe Gastwirt did the mastering. His house is a mini-shrine to Jerry; Gold records on the wall, posters, pictures, and he was friends with Jerry. So the test for me was: "Will Joe approve?" Joe said: "Jerry would like this."

SURFER GIRL — (Brian Wilson) It's a good song that can be done in a variety of ways. Structurally it's a doo-wop song and when the Calvanes sang on it, it was obvious. Freddie from the Calvanes was there and guided me through the recording of the vocals. He was very patient and encouraging.

Freddie does the harmony arranging for the Calvanes. I sent him the Best of the Beach Boys CD in advance, and he did a very jazzy demo. I told him: "It's a tribute to the Beach Boys as much as to LA R & B."

The Beach Boys grew up in Hawthorne, which is about three miles from where the Calvanes came from. They are from two different worlds. So this song is a way of mixing those two worlds. They all meet in music.

The Calvanes made records in the early 50's for the Doo-Tone label. That was the big west coast doo-wop label who put out EARTH ANGEL by The Penguins and HEAVEN IN PARADISE by Don Julian and the Meadowlarks. The original Calvanes never broke up; they have always done gigs over the years, so they are the real deal.

They did an album backing Big Sandy, sang on a Deke Dickerson CD, and had their own HighTone album. I wish I knew them at the time they recorded their HighTone album (In Harmony, 2001. I would have loved to have produced them.

(Bonus song) BOSS — (The Rumlbers) I wanted to do the instrumental BOSS all along because it was from Downey. I expected to put it on as a hidden track where, after 20 seconds of blank space, BOSS would come on - then cooler heads prevailed. So it's available as a bonus disc with Yep Roc pre-orders of the album. I kinda wish I would have put the bonus songs on the record. Bill Bateman and Gregory Boaz played on them. The Rumlbers released a ton of 45s in the early 60's. BOSS was a regional hit in '61 on the Downey label, like PIPELINE from the Chantays. They got muffed in with Surf Music, but they considered themselves like Link Wray, an instrumental R & B band.

At some point I'd like to put out a CD and maybe make it available at gigs with stuff like that. I have a Part 2 to the song HIGHWAY 61 that I did last year. It's just me and Greg (Leisz) going to town for 7 minutes. (Part 1 came out on the UNCUT magazine sampler.) I'd like to include other tracks from tributes and compilations.

(Bonus song) Mr Moto — (The Bel Airs) That was a hit in California. It's been a favorite of mine to play at Blasters sound checks. Paul Johnson from the Bel Airs still performs. He contacted me recently to correct me that the Bel Airs were actually from Redondo Beach and not San Diego. I did the Freddie King version - just cutting loose. ~ *AM*

The Blasters' First Year: 1979

The second in a series of interviews

Frank Furillo Interview May 8, 2006 by Billy Davis

Frank Furillo is a harmonica player, singer, and songwriter who fronts a roots rock band in Madison, Wisconsin, call the Rousers. Frank is also active in theatre acting and production and just celebrated his 21th Anniversary performing with the Rousers. He has known the Alvins since grade school, and in 1979 he assembled the Blasters for their first gig.

I grew up in Downey, CA. Phil and I were in the same grade in grammar school called 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help.' Dave was a grade lower in the same school. Phil and I sang in the choir. I remember going up for the lead for AVE MARIA against Todd Leone in 4th grade. We had a special Saturday audition where we had to sing it over and over again. They gave it to him and I swore I would never sing again so, I quit the choir. I never sang again 'til I moved to Wisconsin.

Frank Furillo ----- Phil and I had gone to the Ashgrove one night to see Muddy Waters, and in between sets, we went out to smoke, and there were all these blues greats – Willie Dixon, Slim Harpo, Muddy, and Big Walter Horton." Everyone was in a circle, but Phil had squeezed me out. Willie Dixon took the bottle of whiskey being passed around, shoved Phil aside, and said to me, "Don't be shy, young man! Step up and have a drink with Willie Dixon!" That was a great moment I will never forget.

My musical influence came pretty much from my Mom and Dad. He (Bud Furillo) was buddies with Dean Martin and Sinatra; he was sports editor of the Los Angeles Herald Examiner. He went on to a very successful sports talk radio show and was one of the first in that radio show format.

I heard jazz as a kid. My Mom was into Be Bop jazz and was a huge Billie Holiday fan. When my Mom was 16 years old, Dizzie Gillespie told her that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever met. She used to sneak in to see them with a fake I.D.

Out of 8th grade into 9th, Phil went to Pious, the Catholic high school, and I went to public school, so I didn't see Phil for a couple of years.

In that interim, my sister had taken me to see blues bands like the Paul Butterfield Blues band and Junior Wells, so I really got into blues. Larry Spalding on Gainford St. in Downey gave me my first harmonica. He and his brother Dale were blues harmonica players. So I started playing harmonica.

A few years later during my last year of high school, I was hitchhiking on the street in Downey and this International Harvester pulls over to pick me up. It was Phil. This jeep had the most bitchin' 45 RPM record player between the two seats. Phil had a stack of old blues 45's. So we started pal-ing around together. It was interesting meeting up with him after a few years away and finding out we both had picked up the harmonica.

At that time Phil was working with Gene Taylor and some different guitar players like Gary Masi and Dave Carroll – different renditions. My favorite was Phil Alvin and the Night Shift. It included Mike Kennedy on bass, Johnny Bazz on drums, Phil on guitar and then the lead guitar player would always be different – sometimes Gary Masi or sometimes just Phil. One of the places that band used to play in Downey was 'The Outhouse.' Others were 'Romeo's,' and my Dad's bar: 'The Lancer Lounge.' A number of famous sports personalities would hang out there - One of the first sports bars! I remember one night when Chuck Knox and Marv Goux of USC fame came into the Lancer and made us kick everyone out except the hot chicks down the bar.

A friend of mine has a tape of a jam session after an Outhouse gig with Gene Taylor on piano. He used to put on shows in Downey under the name Bill Kearney Productions.

Everybody always encouraged Phil to do something with his talent. He didn't really go for it. He would get gigs here and there but never followed up. Basically at that time in the early 70's, I was just a harmonica player. I didn't sing or write songs. Once in awhile, Phil and I would do an acoustic duo thing. Phil and I drove to Phoenix to my friend Tom Hale's house and we recorded a demo that we were gonna shop around. After many hours of drinking, we finally got down to recording. It's kind of a classic. We did Tommy Johnson and Muddy Waters songs.

Growing up, I was playing in bands with guitarist Casey Simpson, Dave Schaffner on bass and Dave Alvin would play flute occasionally. We would change names with each gig. Our first name was 'Cruisin' For Burgers.' Another was the 'Sock Hop Dance Band' and of course, "Wet Dream and the Dry Heaves."

In the 70's, Johnny Bazz was always my favorite drummer. (John Bazz was a drummer before taking up the bass guitar.) Very solid, but no frills. When I got bands together, John was the first person I'd call. He didn't always say yes but I thought he was solid.

My influences at that point were



Dave Alvin on the photo: "Me (Dave) at 15 and Phil around 18 (although looking twice as old - in the good sense), along with John Bazz at nineteen (dig the hair!), and me at 15 or 16 (speaking of hair!), along with our eternal hero Big Joe Turner and his cousin, Hoppy Hopkins (who was also Lightnin' Hopkin's cousin). It was taken in the street after Phil Alvin and The Night-shift backed up Big Joe at Rick's Blues Bar in Venice California circa 1973. Several of our old pals are in the shot, Tom Hale (far right), Danny Riley (with the wild hair), and the late Mike Kennedy (holding the bass guitar), who was the first bass player for The Blasters. He quit because he thought we wouldn't get anywhere playing the type of music we played. He still may be right."
 --Photo and description courtesy of Dave Alvin and Dave Alvin.com.

| THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF LYNWOOD LYNWOOD, CALIFORNIA | | DETACH AND RETAIN THIS STATEMENT THE ATTACHED CHECK IS IN PAYMENT OF TERMS DESCRIBED BELOW. IF NOT CORRECT PLEASE NOTIFY US PROMPTLY. NO RECEIPT DESIRED. | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|---------|
| DATE | DESCRIPTION | | AMOUNT |
| 2/9/73 | P.O.#3190 - Sock Hop dance band | #590.12 | \$75.00 |

Frank - I want my 310 bucks - Dave Alvin

Original Check stub from the 'Sock Hop Dance Band'



the **BLASTERS**



Early Blasters promo shot from the Frank Furillo collection

Randy called me and wanted my swing band to play at his wedding reception in L.A. on March 17, 1979. I said: "You don't want a swing jazz band playing your wedding reception; we're kind of a listening-acapella vocal group. It just wouldn't work." I said: "I'll call Phil and maybe we can put some of the old people together and get a good rockin' bluesy shuffle band that people can dance to." I called Phil and said: "Let's get the usual players together." The first question was who was gonna be the guitar player. He was mentioning a few names and then said "David's been playing guitar lately." I said: "Yeah! Yeah! Let's have David play!!" David was one of my buddies. So I pushed David real hard. I didn't know he had taken up guitar, cause he always played flute.

I was performing regularly in the swing band, so I flew down to LA. Bill Bateman played drums. I know Mike Kennedy was on bass. He knew Phil and Dave very well and was a good blues bassist.

Dave Alvin on the first ever Blasters gig: *Dave I remember picking up Frank Furillo at LAX airport went to a bar and had two pitchers of beer and then drove to Bill's house for rehearsal. Bill and Phil had a band just before the Blasters which included James Harman and a bass player named Willie J Campbell. The format was: Phil would sing one song then James would sing one. They parted ways because Harman wanted to play straight blues stuff and Phil wanted to add stuff like Jackie Wilson or Hank Williams. They broke up and Phil and Bill started with the Blasters. James and Willie J went on to put together the James Harman band.*

We had about three rehearsals at Bateman's house before the wedding. We played pretty basic stuff. Phil played all blues and Dave was the rockabilly influence. Dave had never played with Phil before. This is actually the only time I heard of them playing together even when Dave played flute.

I got paid the flight cost and the other guys got something. Maybe \$50 each or something. Randy Coleman had money, so I know the other guys got paid. I couldn't have gotten them to rehearse and do the gig for free. I was just looking for a free ride to

Charlie Musslewhite and Butterfield. Phil helped introduce me to the original black blues players. He played me the old 78's of the real blues guys - Big Bill, Charley Patton, Tommy Johnson, and many others. Phil had all these bitchin' 78's.

In 1974 I moved away to audition as an actor in New York. That didn't go anywhere. So I moved to Wisconsin and got into some swing jazz bands. I was in a few bands, 'Hold Tight' and 'The Mango Bros.' (Immortalized in Mel Bay's Anthology of Fiddle Styles. mb92637). The disco era put us out of a job, so we relocated to San Francisco in '77 or '78. That band morphed into another band called 'Riff and Ready.'

In 1978 I was living with a friend of mine named Danny Coleman. His brother

Frank Furillo ----- When I got out of high school, I moved into Gene Taylor's house in 1971. He lived in a row of houses that had been condemned because the highway was going to go through. Everybody's houses were boarded up and they were gone, but Gene still lived there. He was gonna sit it out 'til they came and dragged him out.

I could only take it for a few months because it was none stop drinking, partying, and playing. I would wake up in the morning, come out in my underwear and another song would be going on. It was something. Gene was one of my dearest friends. We're still really good friends. He is just so tremendously talented.

southern California so I could also see my relatives who all lived there.

Mike George was at Randy Coleman's Wedding, so he asked me if the band would play his wedding (April 21, 1979). I said all you have to do is fly me down and pay the other guys.

I didn't really put many bands together. I was more of a hanger-on, "Hey-let-me-play-harp-with-you" kind of guy. David had found a niche as a guitar player. He wasn't great at it first, but he sure got good at it. But the songwriting is what the Blasters are, in my opinion, and the style of Phil's performance. That is the sound.

Phil had talent but would never keep stuff together. I remember when I came back for Mike George's wedding gig (the second gig), Dave was all over me, asking how I promote my swing band. We talked about what to do in order to further a band. I told him to put together a package with photos, a demo tape, come up with a band name and start shopping it around. David did exactly as I suggested. The next week after Mike George's wedding, they had photos taken and recorded a demo tape. (Songs: 20 Flight Rock, Breathless, These Arms of Mine, Buzz Buzz Buzz, I Wish You Would and Cut Across Shorty). When they did the demo, they started calling the band 'The Blasters.'

Dave asked me to move to L.A. and join the band. I said: "I'm not gonna work with Phil (laughs)." Actually my Swing band had just recorded a commercial, we were doing great, and people loved us. I came back right after the Mike George wedding and the female singer says, "I'm leaving the band. I'm pregnant." So after a while, I moved back to L.A. to live with my dad, but never thought to join the Blasters. They were pretty well established by then.

It was a bitchin' time cause Al Davis of the Raiders was going on trial, trying to bring the Raiders to L.A. and my dad was at the fore front of sports talk radio in LA. Every morning, Al Davis would call our house and tell us what was gonna go on in court.

Thanks to Dave, I joined Top Jimmy and the Rhythm Pigs for 8 or 9 gigs. That was wild. We played the Starwood with punk skin heads dancing in the front row. It was neat time. Jimmy fired me because I went on a wilderness canoe trip. He said "I don't think you have dedication to the band. You're out."

Were the Blasters my band? I don't think so. Was it Phil's band? Was it Dave's band? How about this? It was Big Joe Turner's band. I know, I took a photo circa 1973 (on page 4). I have no regrets I left. I was just a harmonica player who got them a gig which forced them to do what they should have been doing all along anyway.

John Bazz on Mike George's Wedding (2nd Blasters gig) –

"I was just learning how to play bass in those days and had to rent a bass in order to play at Mike's wedding reception - it was my first gig with what later became the Blasters."

Frank Furillo ----- In Mike George's interview he notes the volume of Phil's voice. There was a night Phil and I were playing acoustically at a party in Norwalk, 1972, when the cops showed up at the front door. A neighbor had called complaining about the amplified music. We did a couple songs for the cops, and they left with smiles on their faces.

Dave Alvin on Frank Furillo ----- "There are a lot of people that I say I wouldn't be where I am with out them – Phil being one and Lee – even John Doe in a way because if X hadn't taken the Blasters under their wing we wouldn't have gotten all the gigs and blah blah blah – but it's really all Frank (laughs).

Frank Furillo convinced Phil to let me play guitar. When Randy Coleman got married, Frank called Phil to put together the band. Phil couldn't get either Mike Roach or Gary Masi for guitar. People say the Blasters were formed by Phil and Dave Alvin. The Blasters were formed by Frank Furillo. He is really the guy who did it. I'd still be a fry cook in Long Beach."

So, after the Top Jimmy gigs, I got hired to record on a folk album in Wisconsin. My wife at the time, Tyrannosaurus Ex, and I decided to move there and raise kids. It was 1981 and my biggest influences were Cab Calloway, Joe Turner, Bessie Smith - all the shout singers. That's when I became a singer. I played in a variety of projects.

I met a guitar player at a party named Dan 'Ernie' Conner. We went off and wrote a song called ROSALIE and said: "Oh, that was easy." That was the beginning of the Rousers. We wanted to start a band with what's now called a 'roots-rock feel. It's kind of shuffle-blues, meets jazz, meets funky, meets rockabilly. But basically, it's balls out as fast and as loud as we could possibly play (laughs). We used to do a few Blasters songs like RED

ROSE and NO OTHER GIRL. We got a piano player named Don Irwin and then soon after Don, got the rhythm section together. We have a great following.

Our first record was an EP called In Without Knocking (1986, Boat Records) Later, we put out Full Moon Bad Weather (1991, Boat Records) and in 1995, Rainbow's End. Full Moon was engineered by Butch Vig, just before he mixed Nevermind for Nirvana.

In 1998 I got cancer and we had to stop playing for a while. Now it's completely gone. Recently, they banned smoking in the bars in Madison, so I said: "Let's go for it again!" Smoky bars were a problem for me.

We still have all the original members after 20 years, except the bass player, who changed 10 years ago. We're still writing songs, and we just debuted a new one last show at the Harmony Bar. We play 4 times a year, and our next gig is July 11, 2006, at the Waterfront festival in Madison, WI. Our next CD will be a compilation of unreleased songs from over the years.

Throughout the years, The Blasters, Dave Alvin and I have crossed paths often. I remember the Blasters played at the Blue Moon Saloon with Ray Campi in '81. I was their roadie. But Bateman got me drunk – he made me slam Guinnesses. I didn't work out as a roadie at all then. Funny, but I went on to work as a union stagehand for the next 25 years, here in Madison. You never would have thought so that night!

I did another stint as roadie for the Blasters in 1995 when James Intveld was in the band. As it turned out, James's mother lives in Madison and was a Rousers fan. The Rousers opened for them at Milwaukee's Shank Hall on that tour. Dave Alvin did a tour opening for Richard Thompson in 1998 and played Shank Hall. I played harmonica at that gig (September, 29). I was only supposed play a few songs, but Dave kept me on stage.

There was a Blasters / Rousers jam in our rehearsal basement on Halloween 1984. Gene Taylor played an old piano which he signed. Their gig here got cancelled because of the weather. It was a huge party -- doing Blasters song after Rouser song. It was a ball.

Since 13, I still haven't figured out if I'm a musician or an actor. I've worked in theater in Madison, as a union stagehand for many years. Sound engineering was my forte, though I was a rigger, carpenter, electrician, wardrobe mister, flyman, propsmaster, and the all around schlep. As an actor/director, I've been active in Madison theater for 30 years and counting.

I was just hired to direct a show in June and July. I'm also involved with an original musical called Walmartopia (www.walmartopia.com) We're taking it to New York in August at the Fringe Festival. In Walmartopia I play the CEO of Walmart and my big number is called "I'M TIRED OF BEING NIBBLED TO DEATH BY GUPPIES."

Everybody thought that Phil had talent and everybody tried to push him. When Dave started writing for

Frank Furillo ----- Phil and Dave worked at Grauman's Chinese Theatre as ticket takers. I used to stop in on my truck routes in the area, and I'll never forget one day when I showed up, and there were cattle in the lobby. They were filming Mel Brooks's Blazing Saddles; the part of the ticket taker in the movie is played by a friend of our's girlfriend. Another time, Phil and I went to see The Exorcist at Grauman's. The line wrapped around the block, so Phil got his guitar. Another moment.

Frank Furillo ----- Another funny story about Phil, is the time he was over my house, about '71, and we were playing football in the street. Phil was playing with us. I passed to him on an out route, and he slipped in his patent leather shoes and went down. But Phil was wearing a shark skin suit, so rather than ruin the suit, Phil landed on the palms of his hands and skidded on them for a few feet. Needless to say, his hands were a bloody mess, but his suit was immaculate! Shark skin grey. We still laugh about that. Yes, we do.

Frank Furillo ----- In 1982 Phil and I booked a gig in Chicago because growing up we always wanted to play the blues in Chicago. It was some small place. We were white boys growing up in Downey, California, wanting to play the blues in Chicago like all the guys we saw at the Ashgrove.

Dave Alvin: *Yes I remember it was an outdoor gig in Madison and it rained. I remember it well because it was the first time I found out that we still get paid for a cancellation. I said: "Cool." We all got drunk at his house. It might have been fall of 82 or 83. I sort of remember it around the Non Fiction album period—but it could be '84.*

the Blasters - that's when the sound became defined. Great song after great song. Dave makes me really proud – where he's at and what he has done and helping other musicians along the way. After knowing him all those years, it was great to finally see him sing in 1987 when he started his solo career. I'm really surprised the Original Blasters lasted as long as they did.

~ *AM*

Frank Furillo ----- The Rousers have done a number of tours to the west coast. John Fogerty was at one of our shows in L.A. He came backstage and was going on and on about the band, which was really bitchin' because I'm a big Fogerty fan. I said: "I'm Frank Furillo and I'm really glad to meet you." He said: "Furillo? Do you know Bud Furillo?" I said: "Yeah he's my dad." He yelled: "Your Dad is Bud Furillo?? I don't believe it. He plays my song CENTERFIELD everyday before his show!" My Dad always opened his radio show with that Fogerty tune. So Fogerty starts going on about my dad. That was really neat.

For Rousers merchandise write:

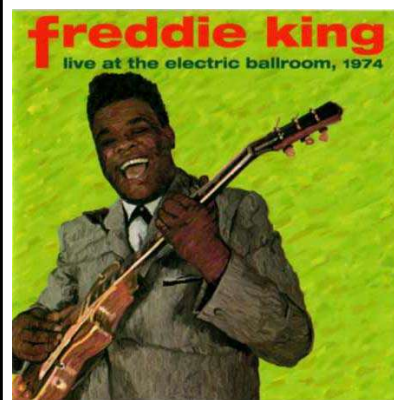
***Frank Furillo, 1344 Spaight St. #1, Madison, WI 53703
or e-mail jazzharp1@netzero.net***

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Gene Taylor Photo Gallery Pt. 1

Photos from the Gene Taylor Collection. Captions by Gene.



Wedding Reception for Doug Allgood's sister. California 1972. L to R: Gene Taylor (piano), John Bazz (guitar), Lee Allen (tenor Sax), Doug Allgood (bass), Kevin Fahey (drums), Phil Alvin (harp). Note Bazz and Alvin footwear.



Blasters at Bill Bateman's Wedding June '85



Belgium, July, 1985 L to R: Robert 'Babo' Tomacewski (soundman), Greg Lewerke (manager), Wally Hanley (stage manager), some bass player? Note: Dave Alvin through bus window being interviewed.



Original Blasters at Bill Bateman's 50th Birthday party L. A., CA, Dec 16, 2001
Photo: Gary Leonard



Phil 1985 Loreli, Germany at the Rockpalast Festival



Dingwall's Tavern (now called Lock 17) Camden Locks, London England 1985



Gene's House Toronto, Ontario 1987. L to R: Bazz, Taylor, Bateman, and Tommy Pacheco (tour manager)



Bateman and Bazz Norway, 1991



Smokey Hormel and "Big Pink," the most infamous touring vehicle in Norwegian History. Somewhere in Scandinavia October 1991



The Desert Inn Hotel, Las Vegas, NV, 1-21-82 The Blasters with Liberace. Backstage during the taping of the Mike Douglas show. Photo: Gary Leonard



New York 1982 Probably 'Mud Club' or the original "Peppermint Lounge." I don't recognize the stage set up. Note the (un-typical) position of the piano and drums. Could be a TV show. Photo by Gary Leonard.