GRAND RIVER BLUES SOCIETY 23 Years EST. 2003

BLUES NEWS
A Bi-monthly Newsletter by GRBS.
Blues Lives Here

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The Fourth Annual Grand River Blues Award!

The Grand River Blues Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals who have contributed to blues music and the growth of blues in the region.

2026 Award Recipient – Cheryl Lescom

For over 15 years now Cheryl was there on day one to mentor the youth campers with her musical expertise and MC our most popular live performances of our region's teens. Each August THE GRAND RIVER BLUES CAMP offers a four-day Youth Blues Camp, providing an intensive Blues educational experience to improve musical skills, to learn from and play with professional musicians. On the last day of the Camp students perform with peers at the Kitchener Blues Festival - kitchenerbluesfestival.com. Blues Music is the foundation for modern popular music including such as Jazz, Pop, Rock, Hip-Hop, R&B etc.

Also, for many years now Cheryl Lescom has masterfully MCed the main stage at City Hall during the Kitchener Blues Festival.

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The Grand River Blues Award continued . . .

Cheryl Lescom has been part of the Canadian music scene for over 45 years. Starting off in 1975 with several of her own bands before becoming a back up singer for Ronnie Hawkins and touring with Long John Baldry. Cheryl also sang on many national jingles in the 1980's. She has toured and performed with the likes of Jeff Healey, Matt Minglewood, Dutch Mason, and the Downchild Blues Band to name a few. To date, Cheryl has released 6 CD's and has earned awards such as The Kitchener Blues Festival - Mel Brown Award 2006 and the Kitchener Waterloo Arts Award for Music 2009.

The Grand River Blues Award will be presented to Cheryl Lescom at the Grand River Blues Camp performance on Friday afternoon of August 7th, 2026, at The Kitchener Blues Festival. Come celebrate Cheryl's lifetime outstanding musical achievements with us this summer.

Cheryl Lescom & Quisha Wint

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Teresa Manning 2026 Mel Brown Award

The Kitchener Blues Festival Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the 2026 Recipient of the Mel Brown Blues Award (Builder's Category is Teresa Manning. Teresa was instrumental of really getting things started in Kitchener when she opened her venue. Boomers was opened in Feb 1995 in Kitchener.

In 2000 Teresa brought the blues music back to Kitchener. She offered Friday night live bands, a jam night on Thursdays with Shawn Kellerman and Douglas Watson, Saturday nights were the Blues Devils who were nice guys who enjoyed playing.

Teresa says one of the best experiences was the day Mo Kauffey walked in with she thinks Rob and said to her "hey we play music do you want to hear us?" And of course, she agreed and the Boomers Brewhaha started Fridays with the after work crowd. Sometimes there were 11 people up there on stage. Many young's guy got their start there like Jesse Webber and Dan Beacock.

Pete Temple played every week and that's how she got to meet our dearly departed Liz Temple.

Friday nights were busy and seldom did Boomers have a cover charge. The entertainers included Jack deKeyzer, Downchild Blues Band, David Rotundo, Mark Stafford, Fathead, David Gogo, Cheryl Lescom and the list goes on and on!

Teresa received so much help from Philip Bast, Jason from The Record, Claude Cloutier, Bruce Hall and a few others and of course Teresa's other boy, Kevin Doyle.

Then in early 2001, this great guy named Grant Rawcliffe came to her and said" in New Zealand, we do Blues Brews & Barbecue and asked Teresa "Are you interested?" Of course, she said yes! Don Chapman from the city of Kitchener sent him. And that was the beginning of the Kitchener Blues Festival! It was renamed after a few years, so it was easy for people to find it. The first year it was put together in just a few months and 3000 people attended. It was amazing with all local bands like Daddy Long Legs, Mel Brown and Waterstreet Blues Band.

Teresa called all the right people who she knew would be a great team, Rob Deyman, Marty Schreiter, Don Chapman, Grant Rawcliffe, James Anthony and of course herself. Over the years she pulled in Kevin Doyle, Rob Barkshire, Liz temple, Claude Cloutier, and many others.

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Mel Brown Award continued . . .

From the Boomers blues bar, The Grand River Blues Society was formed which celebrated it's 23rd year in 2026… and then more great things happened.

Teresa Manning was on the board of directors of KBF for 12 years before she moved up north.

Teresa still attends as a volunteer overseeing city hall and King Street locations during the annual TD KBF held in August.

Teresa Manning was given the title of honorary board member and she states "not sure if it means anything but hard to get rid of the founding board member." She also says she owes a lot to many people who helped including Grant Rawcliffe who brought the idea to Teresa.

Boomers sold in 2005. It was a great venue! Many great friendships were formed, and the blues came back to Kitchener. Teresa sincerely wants to thank Glenn Smith for always keeping the blues present and supporting Boomers and Teresa on those Friday amazing Friday nights at Boomer's Basement Bar.

Watermelon Slim with Teresa Manning

YOUTH BLUES Jam

GRAND RIVER BLUES SOCIETY PRESENTS

AUGUST 5

6:30-10

$5 @ DOOR

The UNION
124 SYDNEY ST. S
KITCHENER

@grandriverbluescamp

BLUES ♫ ROCK ♫ SOUL ♫ R&B

Liner Notes

By Mike Elliott

John Nemeth is one of few remaining hard-boiled blues musicians still burning up the road and delivering his dynamic show in cities across North America and Europe.

Nemeth is one of those blues artists who embody the tradition, - the history, grit and humanity. He combines his soulful vocals and powerhouse harmonica playing with an endearing stage presence to carve out a place as one of the top modern blues artists.

And you don't have to take my word for it. Nemeth garnered a 2026 Blues Award nomination in
Memphis, following a 2024 win.

Ahead of his appearance at this year's Kitchener Blues Festival, he agreed to a sit down for a chat about the blues, mentorship, the changing music industry, and the ancient tones that bind us all.

When asked about what the Blues Awards recognition means to him at this stage of his career, he didn't hesitate.

"It's always nice to be recognized as one of the best doing it… it feels good that people recognize the effort I put into it."

But, for him, the awards are more than accolades—they're a rare chance to gather with peers who are usually scattered across the touring circuit.

"I'm a blues fan number one. I don't get to see a lot of the great harmonica players or vocalists because we're never booked on the same festivals. So it's great to see the show."

Nemeth, often mentioned alongside legendary harmonica-playing front men—Sam Myers, Kim Wilson, Rick Estrin, James Harman, Rod Piazza, doesn't dwell on his place in that lineage.

"I never think about it until somebody brings it up. All those cats are heroes of mine… Some of them talked me up and stuck their neck out for me. That's the cool thing about blues—we all see this as a collective."

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Liner Notes … continued

So, where does he see himself?

“I see myself as another cousin in the blues, man.”

Over the years, Nemeth’s bands have often featured younger musicians. But, when asked if he saw himself as a mentor? He laughs.

“I don’t know if I qualify as a good mentor. But I recognize a cat that’s a player—not some Facebook-famous BS artist.”

For him, mentorship is about opportunity.

“Hiring them and paying them good money to play the blues—that’s probably a feather in their cap. It was always a feather in mine when I got a call from Junior Watson or Elvin Bishop.”

When our conversation turned toward the state of the blues, and his place in it, Nemeth spoke with reverence, describing the blues as something more important than a genre

“These are ancient tones… human tones. Before we could speak, every one of these tones was a whole word, a whole feeling.”

He continued,

“These were people. These were the tonalities of their language. You might be part of some ancient tribe that could feel that music. You got it somewhere in your imprint.”

To Nemeth, the blues is not nostalgia. It's an inheritance.

When asked about the Music Industry, streaming and social media ‘content’, Nemeth was candid about his concern for authenticity surviving in the fast paced digital world. But he’s not without hope, stating.

“At some point, people will want to touch something real.”

And he promises to bring that reality to Kitchener.

“I’m coming to town. We’re going to tear it up like it’s 1990!”

Kitchener is in for something special. John Nemeth is bringing the ancient tones, the groove, the grit, and the truth—straight from the source.

THE BRANT JUKE JOINT

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Shuffle

Saturday September 19th 2026

POLISH HALL 154 Pearl St, Brantford ON

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With **PETE SCHMIDT**

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DWAYNE LAFORME

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JULIAN FAUTH

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GRAND RIVER BLUES SOCIETY 23 EST. 2003

100.3 CKRZ FM

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Chris Arsenault

Behind The Lens

Donald Gadziola is a Canadian photographer renowned for his dynamic live music photography. His work captures the energy and emotion of performances, particularly within the rock and blues genres. Gadziola's portfolio includes iconic images of legendary artists such as Randy Rhoads, the late guitarist of Ozzy Osbourne, and members of Rush, including bassist Geddy Lee and drummer Neil Peart. These photographs have been featured on fan sites and social media platforms, highlighting his contribution to music photography.

In addition to his live performance work, Gadziola has also ventured into street and urban photography, showcasing scenes from cities like New York. His images often focus on architectural details and the interplay of light and shadow, reflecting a keen eye for composition and storytelling. Gadziola's work continues to resonate with music enthusiasts and photography aficionados alike, offering a glimpse into the vibrant world of live music through his lens.

Toney Springer

Jack Bruce

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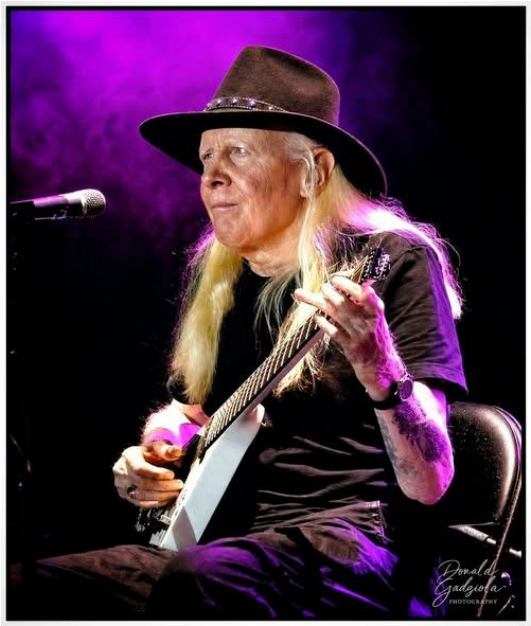
Bill Wyman



Johnny Winter

Dion Taylor & David Clayton Thomas

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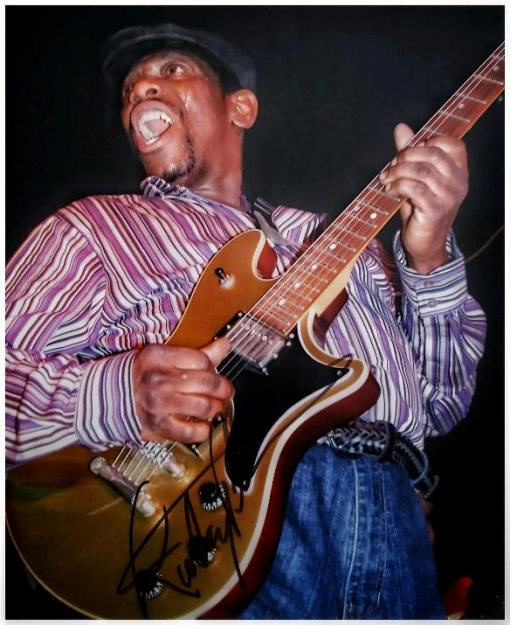
Dr. John



Lucky Peterson

Edgar Winter

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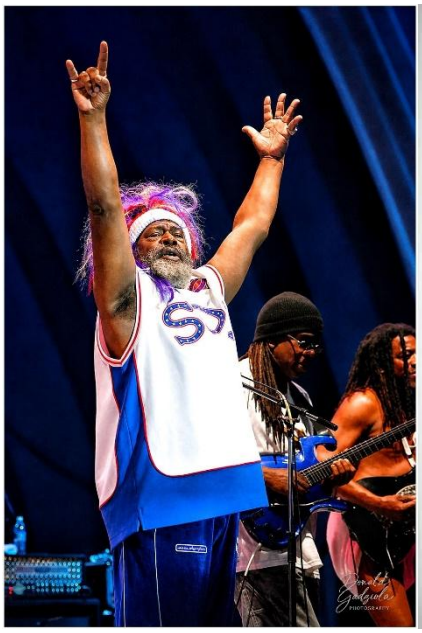

George Clinton

Mick Jagger

Paul James

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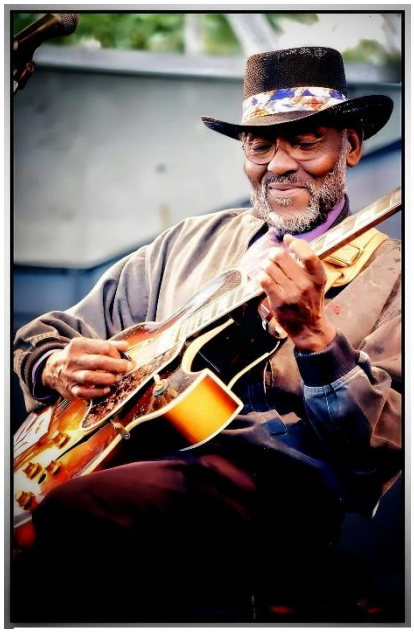

Mel Brown

Pete Townsend

Tal Wilkenfeld

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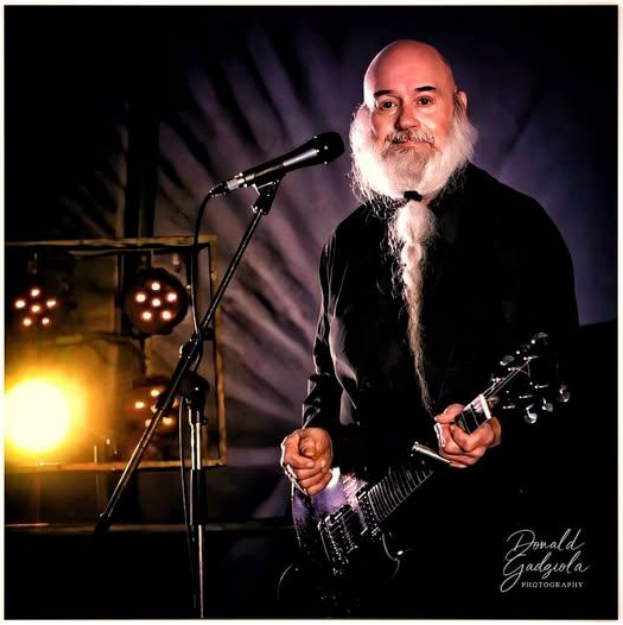
Jeff Beck

Levon Helm



Bill Durst

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Behind the Lens … continued

Keith Richards

Roger Daltrey

Your Grand River Blues Society

We continue to maintain strong membership numbers in our Grand River Blues Society with over 150 active members. Welcome to all our new members, and thank you to all who renewed!

Please continue to let people know about the Grand River Blues Society and tell them how to join. Better yet, pass on one of our new membership postcards and sign up some more members. If you need postcards, contact any of the Directors or e-mail the address noted below. You might also consider a membership for a friend or family member as a gift.

Also remember that as a member you are always welcome to attend the monthly meetings of the Board. Contact President Bruce Hall, via e-mail, at grandriverblues@gmail.com and let him know that you would like to attend. Another reminder: If you change your address, phone number or e-mail address, please let us know.

Grand River Blues Society

www.grandriverblues.org

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Sorin Mitrana—Treasurer Chris Arsenault—Webmaster

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Danielle Reynolds—Merchandise Assistant

Robert Fuller, Southcoast Director Dee Blue—Southwest Director

Contact Information

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Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1
grandriverblues@gmail.com

Promote Your Event

If you are a blues artist, band or blues friendly venue with an event coming up, send your info to grandriverblues@gmail.com and we will get it into the weekly Blues Buzz. Be sure to provide all of the details and get the info to us early.

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Bi-Monthly Raffle Winner!

We have a winner of our bi-monthly draw: Yanick Charbonneau and Jacqui Alec of Waterloo both won two tickets to the Kitchener Blues Festival 2026 Concert at the OLG Stage on Thursday Aug 6th. The next draw for the October/November newsletter will be held in late September. Keep your membership active.

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Fellow Grand River Blues Society Members and Blues Fans

Since 2003, The Grand River Blues Society has endeavoured to promote and support live Blues Music in our region. As you know, we operate on a very tight budget, based almost entirely on membership dues. Membership dues are crucial to sustaining our organization and our programs like…

GRAND RIVER BLUES CAM
BLUES in the SCHOOLS
YOUTH BLUES JAMS
INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE

For over 23 years we have accomplished our mission and hoping to have your continued support in renewing your membership or consider joining the Grand River Blues Society.

MEMBERSHIP FEES
1 Year Individual Membership $30
3 Year Individual Membership $75
1 Year Family Membership $ 60
3 Year Family Membership $150
1 Year Student Membership (under 19 or student ID) $10

For more information on Grand River Blues Society membership please visit
grandriverblues.org
OR email
Paul Huntley Membership Director
members.grbs.org@gmail.com

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