



1994

## **1994**

- ***Backstage Café, Cherokee Blues Club and Air Devils Inn start booking national blues acts***
- ***Keith Clements is elected KBS president***
- ***Funds raised for a base for Bill Gaither's headstone***
- ***Mike Pollard and Fred Wooten open Stevie Ray's Blues Bar***
- ***Perry Aberli wins Sylvester Weaver Award***



1994



*KBS funds a  
base for the  
headstone of  
Kentucky  
Blues Legend  
Bill Gaither*



1994

**THE BACKSTAGE BLUES CAFE  
133 W. LIBERTY  
AND THE KYANA BLUES SOCIETY  
PRESENT  
FLYING FISH RECORDING ARTIST  
GARY PRIMICH**



**THURSDAY -- APRIL 28TH  
AT 8:00 P.M.**

**ALSO APPEARING  
THE MUDCAT BLUES BAND**

**\$7.00 AT THE DOOR  
\$6.00 FOR KBS MEMBERS**

*Gary  
Primich at  
Backstage  
Blues Café  
w/ The  
Mudcats*

*April 28,  
1994*



1994

*Foree Wells*

*Garvin Gate  
Blues Festival*

*October 1994*



1994

*Junior  
Kimbrough  
Garvin Gate  
Blues  
Festival  
1994*



# Stevie Ray's Blues Bar opens on Main Street October 1994



Fred Wooten, co-owner of the new Stevie Ray's Blues Bar on East Main Street, hangs a poster as interior decorator Bob Smith looks on.

Business First photo by Ron Bath

## Singing the blues

### Stevie Ray's Blues Bar to open downtown

By JOHN BOWMAN

Business First Staff Writer

A new blues club is opening at 230 E. Main St. in downtown Louisville.

Stevie Ray's Blues Bar is scheduled to open Oct. 21 in a 2,800-square-foot building purchased earlier this year by partners Michael Pollard and Fred Wooten of Louisville.

With live acts booked for both early-evening and late-night sessions, the club will be unabashedly tailored to a middle-aged audience, said Pollard, 45.

He said many couples in that age range find they have no place to go after enjoying a dinner out on a Friday or Saturday night.

"We've been neglected to a degree," he said. "Why should we have to stop enjoying ourselves and start getting ready for work on Monday morning" so early in the evening?

Pollard noted that the handful of existing blues clubs here generally offer only late night hours. For instance, the nearby Backstage Cafe, part of the O'Malley's corner complex of nightclubs, doesn't offer live entertainment until 11 p.m.

Not that Pollard and Wooten are knocking the O'Malley's complex. On the contrary, they cited its presence within a few blocks as an advantage for Stevie Ray's location.

The East Main Street site also is within a few yards of the planned new Louisville Ballet headquarters; the former Louisville Public Warehouse Co. building, with its distinctive clock tower, now being renovated by Humana; and a large parking garage, also being built by Humana, to serve the waterfront redevelopment project.

"We count our blessings" every time a new waterfront project is announced or started in the area, Pollard said.

Such investments made it much easier for Pollard and Wooten to buy the one-story brick building, from former owner Tom Mattingly, for \$65,000, Pollard said.

Including the purchase and a complete renovation, the partners will spend more than \$200,000 opening the new business. The venture was financed with a loan from PNC Bank, Kentucky Inc.

The building was constructed in 1906, but the interior has undergone so much work to make way for the blues club that "the only thing that's not new is the brick," Pollard said.

At the same time, the availability of the brick structure was one thing that attracted the partners to a downtown location. Wooten said the idea was to recreate the feel of an old-time blues club, and "that's where all the old buildings are."

Wooten said the club's name is meant to convey the idea of blues music to the targeted audience by evoking the image of Stevie Ray Vaughan, the late blues performer.

The club has booked Lamont Gillespie and the Homewreckers for Oct. 21 and 22. Future acts are now being booked, Wooten said.

The club will offer live blues Tuesday through Saturday nights.

A \$3 cover charge will be used to pay for live entertainment, though special charges will be needed when well-known regional performers appear, Pollard said.

The two partners both have backgrounds in the office equipment business.

Pollard is a partner in Copiers Plus, a Louisville dealer of copy machines and fax machines.

Wooten, 58, owns Mailtronix, an area supplier of postage-meter mailing machines and small-package shipping systems.



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*Stevie Ray's Blues Bar*



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*1994 KBS IBC Contest winners  
Rude Mood*