

Topeka Blues Society newsletter

Love , Peace and Chicken Grease

Chicken and Waffles

I tell you what I am hooked. There is a place on Beale St that I had seen on Food Channel called Ms. Polly's and their specialty is chicken and waffles and fried pies, we ended up there twice and if we had eaten there the first day we would have been there three days. Ha. Sounds like a weird combination, but it's great. And no the chicken is not in the waffle, off to the side.

Ok, now I guess you would like to also hear about some of the bands we heard in Memphis at the IBC, ya think.

What a great event, everyone should go at least once, in my case and my entourage as they called themselves, my Sister Dana and my daughter Katie, we will make it a yearly event not to miss.

Tamara our webmaster for TBS posted our pictures that were taken on our journey, my Kate took the pictures, and I was always hoping she would not get us in the morning with the ponytail and ugly pjs looks, you know the ones, vacation pixs.

We started out on Wed to head to ST Louis, there I wanted to check out two blues joints on Broadway that have some of the same talent as we do. BB Blues, Jazz and Soup and Broadway Oyster Bar, pretty much set next to each other . Oyster Bar has a Cajun menu, tried Alligator, not bad, small bar with writing on the wall, almost like a local hang out.

I could imagine it packed on the weekends and people dancing in the aisles. They had all kinds of Marti-Gra beads hanging on the ceiling behind the bar, stuff everywhere. Tamara on the phone was trying to get us to swallow oysters, it was not going to happen. We had a nice meal there and went on down the street to the BB Blues, Jazz, and Soup. Again, it was not a big place, narrow, stage was set up on the end, it looked well placed with good lighting and presentation.

I always try to imagine the rooms full and the bartenders working, with kitchen continually backed up and the waitress or waiter, pushing through the crowds, trying to make everyone happy and also trying to enjoy the shows themselves, with lots of stories when the bar is closed to share with others. Those are the best.

In the bar business you get to see people at their best and worst. What a great life, what stories. Great places to hit when in ST Louis for an evening.

Of, course as you could see we always have to go to Anheuser-Busch tour to see the Clydesdales and make sure they are brewing things right. ha. As I was watching the conveyer belts with thousands of beer on them, I wondered how many beers I have sold in the last 35 plus years in the bar business. Telling my age. ha.

The International Blues Challenge started Wed with opening acts as our favorite TUF, Sean Carney, Homemade Jam Blues Band, Jonn Richardson, Zac Harmon. Great Line Up.

The Blues Foundation has been putting this on for 25 years so they have gotten the kinks out of it. Of course to our eyes it all went on without a hitch, I am sure to ask them they had their backstage stories, as all good shows do.

Stacy hooked up with us for the tour to the Gibson guitar factory. Gibson guitar has an amazing tour and it really helps to understand the workings of this instrument that gives so many pleasure. As we walked in there were alot of finished guitars in boxes with a sealed sticker on them, of course my thoughts were to where they were headed and who would make them sing.

The big event begins around 5:00 on Beale Street, ten bars, ten bands per bar, and for solo/duo six bars, ten per bar. NO, way to make them all. Incredible talent everywhere you go. The bands get two chances, they perform early one night, late the next, three judges, judged on blues content, talent, originality, stage presence.

We were literally running sometime from bar to bar with our books to help us find who we should see. Running into people from all over, everyone is usually in a good mood, and tell each other who to go see. If you don't make them one night you find the time for the next night .

Now, I try to find good talent from everywhere, I was just sure some I had seen were headed to the finals. NOT ONE! Ha! I thought wow, can't wait to see the finals.

Friday, we were invited to come to some of the showcases for Roots & Blues, Yellow Dog records, and Blind Raccoon and of course we were all ready to see our own group from Topeka, for the Youth Showcase "Just Cuz. The boys were ready willing and able to show their talent. It was great, I got to yell and wave my arms in the air. I was one of those fans, it was fun.

This was the first year for the youth showcase and at the awards some money was given to a rising artist for music education. This is going to get bigger and bigger. Next year I am sure our blues society will be wanting youth groups to come out and show their talent and we will send another to Memphis. Get ready.

Late, late Friday night the winners from each venue were announced and the party went on until wee hours of the night. Most artists there were just happy to be there with so many other incredible artists and they were making it a night to remember. Saturday, we hit Sun Records, where Elvis, Jerry Lee, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, all recorded, still recording artist Bono , Marty Stewart and many more. We got to stand and sing into the mike used by legends over the years. Very Cool.

Then to the Orpheum Theater to see the finals. What a theater, just to be in there is a treat. Eden Brent playing piano in the lobby, our hostess for the show Cassie Otis and Jason Ricci and then what we had been waiting for the finals.

The Aces, Boogie Boys from Poland, Monkey Junk, Ty Curtis Band, J.P Soars & the Red Hots, Delta Generators , Pryor Baird & the Deacons, 6 Hands Down, Mikel Lander & Meridith Moore Band, Roger Girke Band. After seeing all the wonderful talent, some with standing ovations, it was really hard to see who the winner might be, it must have been very close.

Winner of the 2009 IBC, J.P. Soars & The Red Hots, also the winner of the Albert King Award, receiving the great guitar and amp. Solo/Duo Little Joe McLerran

Fun was had by all.

Then before leaving Beale Street and the blues jam at Rum Boogie Café hosted by Bob Margolin...one last time we hit Miss Polly's, chicken and waffles.

Love , Peace and Chicken Grease...what a way to go.

Thanks all for tuning into the Topeka Blues Society,

Later gaters,

Suki

Posted 2/13/09