



Here come the blues

Waukesha BluesFest enters seventh year this weekend

By Josh Perttunen
Freeman Staff

WAUKESHA – Each of the 14 national, regional and local blues acts performing at Delafield's Naga-Waukee Park as part of the seventh annual Waukesha BluesFest Friday and Saturday share one thing in common. They are all deeply entrenched in this American art form.

Similarities could end there, however, since this is also an expansive and creative music genre.

Waukesha native Todd Stair of the band Serious Trouble said he appreciates the diversity.

"You can play so many different styles of blues," he said, "that each song would sound nothing like the other one. And the improvisation that blues allows means you never have to play something the same way twice. The music lays a solid foundation."

His band, which performs at 3 p.m. Friday, is evidence of how the soulful sound can appeal to generations. Stair plays bass, while his son Kyle, 23, is on guitar. Drummer John Medler and lead singer Drew Turcotte round out the band, ensuring that 30-somethings and 40-somethings are well-represented. The blues provide an outlet for pure musical talent to take center stage, Stair said.



Submitted photo

Kyle Stair is the guitarist for Serious Trouble, a home-grown blues band that will perform at the Waukesha BluesFest for the third time in four years at 3 p.m. Friday.

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BluesFest

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"I love the musicianship in blues; some of the best guitarists of their generations (such as Stevie Ray Vaughan and Buddy Guy) were and are blues musicians," he said. "I've learned more since I started playing the blues than I did in the decades I spent playing rock music."

Being able to share the experience with his son is also a special experience. Kyle is a self-taught guitarist who exhibited his talent early.

"The first guitar he picked up was a three-string instrument," Todd Stair said. "I didn't catch him in the act of playing it, but would find it moving to different locations throughout the house."

Blues performances can range from soothing and serene to blood-pumping, high-energy affairs.

"Serious Trouble is more of a high energy band," Stair said. "We have a rock edge."

The two-day festival this weekend features live performances, an art show and the participation of local restaurants.

Friday's lineup:

- **Matt Tyner**
1 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.
- **Andrew Koenig Band**
2 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.
- **Serious Trouble**
3 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- **The Incorruptibles**
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- **Altered Five**
6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- **Nicki Hill**
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **The James Hunter Six**
9 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Saturday's lineup:

- **Denny Geyer**
1 p.m. – 1:40 p.m.
- **Steve Cohen and Peter Roller**
2 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.
- **Robert Allen Jr. Band**
3 p.m. – 4 p.m.
- **The Steepwater Band**
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- **Harper and Midwest Kind**
6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- **Bryan Lee and the Blues Power Band**
7:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- **Moreland & Arbuckle**
9 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.

Tickets to the festival are \$15 for a day pass.

At the gate, admission increases to \$20 for a single day and \$35 for both days. Children under 8 years old are admitted for free with a paying adult.

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