

It's A Dog's Life

Okee dokee folks..." A dog's age," that phrase defines a length of time, actually quite a length of time. It's not commonly used anymore. I titled my last CD A Dog's Age because it had been a long time since I made a CD and because I love (my) dogs. Now I sit at my computer devastated and writing this bit because "a dog's age" wasn't long enough for me.



I had to put my dog to sleep last week. My dog, Zoey, was almost 15 years old and I'd had her all but the first two months of her life. She was a gift from a friend who sprung her from a shelter in the Bronx. During the next 14-and-a-half years, that dog was truly my best friend. She did just about everything with me and when my other dog, Abby, came along, they both were my constant companions. They were at my feet when I wrote at the computer for just about every article I composed for this paper. If you are a dog lover, you understand the heartache and sadness that I am dealing with. If you are not a dog lover, think of it this way: I adopted a child at 2 months old, raised her, taught her, disciplined her, took care of her, and loved her and just before she reached the age of 15 she got very sick and passed away. How many parents could deal with that kind of pain? Probably none. And, I have already dealt with it five times in my life. It doesn't get any easier. It actually gets harder. When you live with a dog you grow together. Man and dogs have been doing for 100,000 years. You learn to communicate on a level that goes beyond commands. You both learn to read body language, gain trust, acceptance and unconditional love. Dogs are the best at unconditional love - giving and teaching. They also tell you when it's time to go. For years, Zoey, Abby and I hiked in the woods 4-5 times a week. It was good for us all but Zoey needed to do it. She was getting old, slow and creaky and the exercise was good for her. Hiking with Zo and Ab was my favorite thing to do. A few weeks prior to Zo's passing, we were hiking and we decided to try a new trail. We got lost. Then Abby got separated from us. I was panicked. There was nearly 450 acres of woods to get lost in and I had no idea where she was or where we were. It was very cold and this went on for hours. We walked many, many miles. My old dog Zo never complained once, she kept right up. I called my father to come help me to find Abby because the sun was getting ready to set. Fortunately, within a half an hour we were able to track her down. That temporary taste of loss freaked me out. It freaked Abby out too. With this incident fresh in my mind, we had an already scheduled vet appointment to add to the stress. Both of the dogs had tests that came back that they both had health issues and needed more tests and Zoey probably needed surgery for a tumor. I began the process of preparing to submit Zoey to surgery, something I was afraid to do because of her age but after consultation and research it was determined necessary. We didn't make it to the surgery. One day we went for a hike as we normally did, we came home and later had dinner. Zoey didn't eat. In her WHOLE life she never turned up food. She was never sick a day in her life either. The next day she

didn't eat, started getting weak, started choking and though she was losing weight her body was swelling. I was in denial but decided I was taking her to the vet the next day to see what was what. That night was one of the worst nights of my life. I stayed awake with Zo all night trying to keep her comfortable waiting for the morning. By the time the morning came, Zo gave me that look. It was time to go. I took her to the vet but she didn't come home. Now I have a HUGE hole in my life and Abby and I are trying to adjust to life without Zo. It's hard, very, very hard. The sadness lingers and will for a very long time. I'm not writing this for sympathy. I am hoping that this may help the healing. Also, in my almost 8 years of writing for this paper I have always had a column in every issue and I feel that I let a lot of folks down by not providing a column for the last issue. I apologize for that and hope that you all understand now why it was missing.

Someone wrote this to me, "We who share ourselves with those whose lives are shorter than our own, are so very brave... letting go is not for the faint of heart." How true. Now I MUST move forward.

Chocolate Drops

into the Narrows

I have often said that the Narrows in Fall River should open a Bed & Breakfast because of the amount of absolutely awesome shows they regularly present. Well, the month of March definitely has it going on! On Saturday, March 3, Jeffrey Gaines with only his voice and a guitar for accompaniment will simply astound you with his passionate performance. Gaines came to notoriety in the '90s with his unplugged version of Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" that gave the original a run for its money.

Sunday, March 4, returns Grammy Award winners and recent stars of the Newport Folk Festival, The Carolina Chocolate Drops to the Narrows for "dirt-floor-dance electricity." Banjos and black string musicians first got here on slave ships, but now this is everyone's music and it'll be playing at the narrows - last time sold out! www.CarolinaChocolateDrops.com. On Thursday, March 15, Steve Earle, one of the most influential and revered songwriters on the planet graces the stage at the Narrows. Need I say more? It's Steve Earle!!! www.SteveEarle.com. On Friday, March 16th, They're having a party and Southside Johnny and the Poor Fools will embark on a stripped down journey through Johnny Lyon's eclectic version of the Great American Songbook. The Poor Fools will also dive into some of the legendary Asbury Jukes material. www.SouthsideJohnny.com. Saturday, March 17, yes it's St. Paddy's day, but this show trumps that! Jon Anderson: The Voice of Yes - There are few vocalists in the history of rock music that are as immediately recognizable by their sound as Jon Anderson, former lead singer of progressive rock icons Yes. In this personal and engaging solo performance, Anderson will perform songs from all across the Yes songbook and his own eclectic solo work. www.JonAnderson.com There is just soooooooooooooo much going on at the Narrows you'll want to check for yourself. www.ncfta.org

The Knick

Gets Black Irish

The New York City Irish rock band, BLACK 47 hitting the road for its 22nd St. Patrick's Day season on March 1st and makes the Knickerbocker Café its second stop on Friday, March 2. Black 47, long-time

leaders in Celtic rock, the genre they helped create, formed in 1989, earning their chops playing the pub scene in Manhattan and self-producing their first indie record, *Black 47*, before converting The Cars' Ric Ocasek to the cause and gaining mainstream attention with their second album, *Fire Of Freedom*. Years of relentless touring and thirteen albums later, the band has become a cornerstone of modern Celtic rock, since bursting out of MTV screens with their 1992 hit, "Funky Ceili." Their signature eclectic sound, socially conscious lyrics, and off-the-wall live shows paved the way for other Irish influenced bands such as Flogging Molly and Dropkick Murphys. They cover topics ranging from the Northern Ireland conflict to civil rights and urban unrest in contemporary New York. Led by Larry Kirwan who provides lead vocals and Stratocaster duties, the band's music, though often based on traditional melodies, is laced with rock, reggae, hip-hop, New Orleans and modern jazz, while songwriter Kirwan uses influences as varied as Yeats, Joyce and Dylan to fashion his dramatic cutting edge lyrics.

The show starts at 9pm and special guest, Mark Bernier opens. www.theknickerbockercafe.com.

Sugar Ray @ BRT

On Saturday, March 3, 8pm, Blackstone River Theatre is thrilled to present the BRT debut of Sugar Ray and the Bluetones, hot off FIVE Blues Music Awards nominations! Their latest CD, *Evening*, has garnered nominations as Album of the Year and Traditional Blues Album. The band is up for Band of the Year, and Sugar Ray Norcia for Instrumentalist - Harmonica and Michael "Mudcat" Ward as Instrumentalist - Bass. Norcia's career kicked into high gear in 1979 when he formed the original Sugar Ray and the Bluetones line-up with guitar giant Ronnie Earl, and it's stayed there ever since. The elegant singer has appeared on more than 50 albums including discs with the Bluetones, Ronnie Earl, Roomful of Blues, Otis Grand, Michelle Willson, Duke Robillard, Pinetop Perkins, and his 1999 Best Traditional Blues Grammy-nominated collaboration with fellow harmonica virtuosos James Cotton, Charlie Musselwhite and Billy Branch called *Superharps*. In the '90s Norcia spent seven high-profile years with the legendary Roomful of Blues cutting five albums with the group including 1996's *Turn It On, Turn It Up*, which also received a Best Traditional Blues Grammy nod. Now, Sugar Ray has led the Bluetones - guitarist "Monster" Mike Welch, drummer Neil Gouvin, bassist Ward and pianist Anthony Geraci - back on the road to support their hot new CD... don't miss it! www.riverfolk.org

Z Stage Door

This March, The Zeiterion Performing Arts Center welcomes you to step through the red door on Spring Street to experience the Stage Door Live Series with Natalia Zukerman on March 8 and Dane Vannatter on March 22. This is not the traditional Zeiterion show. Your seat is on-stage. The artists are on-stage. Couches, chairs and tables create an intimate setting where you can view great artist up close. Visit www.zeiterion.org

Chan's Got Blues

He's back, back to where he started! Anthony Gomes, #1 Billboard Blues Artist, will be rolling into Chan's Friday, March 9, at 8pm. This local hotspot is where Gomes will be debuting music from his new release Up 2 Zero. The new CD represents a full-circle return to his love of high energy, guitar-driven blues rock. "This album is the most honest representation of who I am. The title represents getting back to the blues - back to ground zero," Gomes says. www.anthonygomes.com or call Chan's at 401-765-1900.

Four Corners of The Music Universe

On Saturday, March 3rd, An Evening of Singers, Songwriters and Stringed Instruments, will be presented by Four Corners Arts Center in Tiverton. The show features Allysen Callery, Kim Lamothe, and Red Eye Flight — separately and together. Jeff Johnstone will be sitting in on keys. For more info, go to www.tivertonfourcorners.com/calendar/category/events/concerts/. You can also find advance tickets at Coastal Roasters (1791 Main Road in Tiverton) The concert will be held at the Four Corners Meeting House, located at 3850 Main Road in Tiverton. Doors open at 7 pm; show starts at 7:30.

That's it for now. Thanks to all the folk who already sent condolences. Your kind words have helped a lot. And as always; thanks for reading.

John Fuzek www.johnfuzek.com

Tower of Love and Narrow 'Hellfire'

Okee dokee folks...Some of you may remember that my formal education is in fine art. When I was in college, I was making art and playing music. I actually started college as a music major but dropped out because I didn't want to play jazz or classical, nor teach music.

Back then, those were pretty much the only options. They didn't have Rock Star 101. So, after a couple of years, I went back to school to get my artistic license instead. I still played music but learned it in other ways and eventually music won out over art. These days, I still do some art, mostly graphic design (CD covers, posters - the fun stuff) and I am still interested in it. I was fortunate to get up to see the Degas exhibit before it closed.



The last time I saw a large Degas exhibit was 25 years ago in NYC and I had to buy a ticket from a scalper. Degas was the biggest influence on my visual art so I was compelled to go back then and again this time. I'm filing away all this inspiration for when I get really old and start painting again. While I was at the MFA, I ducked into the musical instruments room to check out some of the antique music makers. It's a small room in comparison to everything else in the museum but what is inside is amazing. The craftsmanship of these instruments is almost beyond belief. While I am not sure how these particular instruments sound they truly are beautiful. Guitars, violins, keyboards, horns and many instruments I have never seen nor heard of. The guard on duty gave me a flyer that noted certain occasions they have players demonstrate the instruments. Next time I get up to the museum I'll have to coordinate it with one of these demonstrations. Viewing the Degas exhibit transported me back both to art school and to the 19th Century world through Degas' eyes. I can only imagine what it will be like hearing music from an instrument that has aged a couple of hundred years. Stay tuned.

Tower of Love

Feeling romantic? Then head down to Narragansett to the Towers for "Love is in the Air II: A Valentine Concert of Love Songs." The Towers is a great place to find that lovin' feeling. It's the South County Mecca for wedding receptions and summer dancing. Can you imagine how many folks have "hooked up" at the Towers over the past 100 years? Raise your hand if you have. I'm sure there are a lot of raised hands. All those bridesmaids, groomsmen and sweaty swing dancers? C'mon it's like shooting fish in a barrel! Anyway, this show for lovers features Michael DiMucci and Phoebe Madden and they'll be accompanied by Diane Gualtieri and Karen Mellor (Avenue A). There will be special appearances by composer Dr. Enrico Garzilli, Audrey Gauman Lucas, Molly Gregory, and Kelsey Vivian. You have two big chances to feel the love: Friday, Feb 10, at 7:30pm and Saturday, Feb 11, at 3pm. For more info beat over to www.thetowersri.com or ring up 401-782-2597. Remember what Stephen Stills say, "If you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with!"

Narrows 'Hellfire'

The Narrows Center for the Arts hosts blues legend Joe Louis Walker, who will releasing Hellfire on with Alligator Records. Walker is an award-winning guitar slinger, passionate vocalist and gifted songwriter celebrating the release of records at the Narrows on Saturday, Feb 11. Walker has been releasing groundbreaking music since 1986 and has toured — and continues to tour — worldwide. He has won four Blues Music Awards (BMA) and has been nominated for 44 more, including a nomination for a 2012 BMA for Contemporary Blues Male Artist Of The Year. Walker has also recorded as a guest with some of the blues world's best-known artists, including appearances on Grammy-winning records

by B.B. King and James Cotton. The New York Times raves, "Walker is a singer with a Cadillac of a voice. He delivers no-nonsense, gutsy blues. His guitar solos are fast, wiry and incisive, moaning with bluesy despair." Rolling Stone simply calls him "ferocious." Concert information is as follows: Honker over to www.ncfta.org

Jones-in in Newport

If you are fan of Dylan, Warren Zevon or Leonard Cohen then you should certainly be a fan of Newport's own JP Jones. On Friday, Feb 10, at 8pm the Newport Congregational Church (corner of Spring and Pelham streets) will be spotlighting JP Jones and a reunion of his 7-piece folk-rock band, RiteTite. Jones who is a Newport based singer-songwriter has independently released a dozen CDs and has written more than 350 original songs. He made his self-titled major label debut 38 years ago on Columbia/Windfall and did an arena tour at that time. These days, he stays closer to home. Still, his work has gotten him national attention. The band RiteTite was featured on JP's 2003 Life and Death CD release and toured New England in the early part of what is now the last decade. This will be the first time in more than 7 years that JP, who plays mostly solo shows these days, has shared the stage with the full line-up: Louise Muller (violin), Mike Barrette (electric guitar), Donn Watson (keyboards), Kurt Meyer (bass) and drummers Dave Lang and Matt Niebles. JP promises a show featuring lots of new material as well as many songs that will be familiar to his band-mates and fans. For more information about JP Jones, get rite over to www.jpjones.net or dial up 401-258-5367.

Songwriters in the Round

Over at AS220 on Friday, Feb 10, at 8:30pm, The Rhode Island Songwriters Association (RISA) will be celebrating the eighth anniversary of their Songwriters in the Round (SITR) show. Over the past eight years, 384 performers have been subjected to the pressure of writing songs based on a theme chosen by the audience. Of these 384 folks, there were RISA members, non-RISA members and traveling songwriters in the line-up. Each show is a different experience. Different song themes, different approaches to the resulting songs, spontaneous jamming to the new songs and lots of witty banter make them all something to remember. The series was initially begun and run by Ryan Fitzsimmons for RISA. Ryan was the host for very show until a couple of years ago. Now he hosts two shows a year and the monthly hosting duties have been split up between Jim Tata, Joanne Lurgio, Jan Luby, and Jake Haller. For this anniversary celebration, each host has invited two folks to play in their round. They will all be performing songs that were written for the Songwriters In The Round Shows. The SITR shows usually happen on the second Sunday of the month but for the February anniversary RISA will be showcasing the songs and songwriters all night on a Friday Night. Along with Jim, Jake, Joanne, Jan and Ryan (I think Ryan should change his name to Jon to stick with the "J" theme) the line-up for the celebratory evening includes: Billy Mitchell, Johnny Botelho, Paul Pasch, Marilynn Manfra, Andrew Lewis, Charlie Cover, Pete Vendettuoli, Tracie Potochnik, Patti DeRosa, and Jon McAullife. Whalebone Jackson will play out the show until it's time to go home. If you want to hear some really great, really original songs, AS220 is the place to do it. This show is an annual fundraiser for RISA and tix are just \$10. Many of these folks will be back on March 18th playing their SITR songs when RISA takes over AS220 again and records Volumes 3 & 4 of the newest Songwriters in the Round CD. For more info revel over to www.as220.org or www.risongwriters.com

Random Life

Finally, here are some random music happenings to wander to. WS Monroe hosts another night of his

monthly series Folk Music Night at the Brown Bookstore. The show is free and besides WS Monroe you can enjoy Ross Robinson and Gary Fish as they serenade you from the stacks. The show is from 6-8pm in the College Hill Café at The Brown Bookstore. The store is at the corner of Thayer and Angell Streets in Providence. Katryna and Narissa Nield will be performing at Stone Soup Coffeehouse on Feb 4. This concert will begin with a Stone Soup "Hoot" or Open Mic. Midnight Honey performs at Indigo Pizza in Coventry Feb 4. Visit www.indigopizza.com

Brooklyn, Hall of Fame Music Series



Okee dokee folks...Sometimes I write that opening phrase and then I stare at the screen for a while waiting for my brain to engage. Sometimes it takes a while... a long while. A lot of times the things I want to write, I can't. It would rile folks up way too much. Sometimes I write it anyway. Sometimes you may have to read between the lines. I know this is a music column but music goes far beyond the notes and the words. Society, politics, the environment, love, lust, beauty, hate, and much, much more all influence and inspire music.

We are in an election year. We need musicians to take the stage and sing out like they did in the '60s and '70s. As I watch the Republican side-show events like the debates and primaries, I note that many want to take us back in time and undo any progress that has been made. I am constantly seeing and reading about historical events that parallel the path they want us to take. We've been there before. We don't need to go there again. It's 2012 not 1950.

Steve Earle put out a Grammy Award winning CD a few years back entitled, *The Revolution Starts Now*. These are some of the lyrics to the title cut and they speak volumes: "The revolution starts here; Where you work and where you play; Where you lay your money down; What you do and what you say; The revolution starts now; Yeah the revolution starts now; In your own backyard; In your own hometown; So

what you doin' standin' around?; Just follow your heart; The revolution starts now."

But remember, we all have to live in this state, country, and world together, a peaceful revolution works much better. Music can be the peaceful weapon in a revolution. Music can transcend boundaries, change minds and change the world. Start writing, I am.

Squirrel On Over To The Brooklyn

We're not having much of a real winter so far this year. Should I say that? I do like winter though. In light of the lack of seasonal weather, there should be no excuse to get out and hear music! According to singer-songwriter, Steve Allain (and the internet. I checked) Saturday, Jan 21, is officially squirrel appreciation day. This means you should put the seeds from your bird feeder within easy reach of your neighborhood squirrels and you should also get to the Brooklyn Coffee Tea House for the Saturday Songwriter Sessions. Steve Allain hosts and has put together a fantastic lineup for your listening pleasure — Ray Cooke, Timothy Alexander, and Sarah Blacker. Music starts at 8:30pm sharp. \$5 suggested donation at the door. If you're thinking of taking a squirrel with you, this may not be the place, though they would like the music. For more info, scamper over to www.brooklyncoffeeteahouse.com.

Hall of Fame Series

In Newport, the International Tennis Hall of Fame folks are doing more than bouncing bright green balls. Director of Special Events, Colleen Hopkins, has started up a small series with some big names. Unbeknownst to most folks, the Hall of Fame has a 295-seat theatre that has recently gone through a \$5 million renovation. The Casino Theater has been restored to the original specs from its 1880 construction. The 24k gold gilding has been reapplied and all of the original seats were redone by the company that made them back then — they are still in business. I peeked in a few times during the renovation. Now that it is completed the theatre will primarily be used for Salve Regina Theatre but the Hall of Fame still has dibs on select dates throughout the year. This is a project that Colleen is very passionate about. She loves music. Years ago she was a volunteer stage manager at my Hear In Rhode Island Festivals and she works with the Newport Folk and Jazz festivals every year. Hopkins has plans to do four shows per year at the Casino Theatre. Currently she has two shows planned for the Winter/Spring and plans two more for the Fall. The Casino Theatre Concert Series kicks off with the New England singer-songwriter, best known for her blend of charming melodies and quirky comedy, Cheryl Wheeler. This inaugural concert takes place on Sunday, Feb 19. You can go out, the next day is a holiday. The next scheduled show is the perpetual crowd pleaser, Livingston Taylor on Saturday, April 7. They will have a full bar available at both shows for those who care to imbibe. Tickets are already on sale for the Cheryl Wheeler show. You won't want to miss the chance to experience Wheeler in this historical venue. For more info about The Casino Theatre Concert Series, bounce over to www.tennisfame.com.

Ellis Island

Continuing along on the same island, on the Gold Lamé Stage, on Saturday, Jan 21, Common Fence

Music presents singer-songwriter Ellis Paul. Paul was a principle leader in the wave of singer/songwriters that emerged from the Boston folk scene, with an urban, literate, folk/pop style that helped renew interest in the genre in the 1990s. Ellis' charismatic performance style has influenced a generation of artists drawing from the appeal of pop blending with the authenticity of folk. Ellis is one of the most pop-friendly of today's singer-songwriters. The Day After Everything Changed is Paul's most recent album. Recorded on his label, Black Wolf Records, it was made possible by significant contributions from fans. This is Ellis' first studio album without a record label in 10 years and is a testament to the relationship Ellis has built with his fans. The performance will take place at the Common Fence Point Community Hall, 933 Anthony Road in Portsmouth. Doors open at 7 pm for the "folk-tailgate party." Don't forget your picnic basket. For more, Yogi Bear over to: www.commonfencemusic.org. Oh, yeah, you'll want to mark your calendars for the Sweetback Sisters on February 4th!

Chanteuse Lives

On Saturday, Feb 11, at 7pm, The Jes Powers Project presents the one-year anniversary show of "Chanteuse," a music series that celebrates talented vocalists and musicians, original music, and unique collaborations. In its first year, Chanteuse brought together 25 vocalists in addition to nearly as many additional musicians over the course of six shows in 2011: Michelle Cruz, Tai Awolaju (Boo City), Michaelle Saintil, Amelia Emmet, Abbie Barrett, Caroline Hecht/ Lily McCall Costner (Tig & Bean), Miss Wensday, Kristen Minsky, Tracy Garrity (VulGarrity), Natlaie Markward/Reed Ferenbaugh/Eva Kendrick (Anne's Cordial), Allysen Callery, Katherine Quinn, Danielle Riley, Anna Shea, Kate Jones/Laila Aukee/Ana Mallozzi/Emily Shaw (The Sugar Honey Iced Tea), Melanie Kramer (SIRSY), Ember Swift, Rachel Sage, and Jess Powers. Chanteuse strives to serve as a catalyst to build relationships between musicians and bands, broaden collective fan bases, as well as inspire both performers and audience members.

This anniversary show will be held at Fête on Dike Street in the Olneyville section of Providence. Hosted by Flapper, tapper and gal about town, Kristen Minsky, this installation of Chanteuse will feature a diverse range of vocalists, each performing their own set as well as a few songs together. Performers for this show include Michelle Cruz, Tig & Bean, Miss Wensday, The Sugar Honey Iced Tea, VulGarrity, and Jess Powers. For more about this show, satchet over to: www.fetemusic.com

Notes of Note

Finally here are some random shows for you to contemplate. On Friday, Jan 20, 6:30-8:30pm singer-songwriter Jan Luby hosts a brandy-new monthly songwriter series. This one takes place between the books at the Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library, 100 Tinkham Lane in Harrisville. This first show will feature Luby as well as RI favs, Joanne Lurgio and Paul Pasch. For more info ring up 401-710-7800. The next Empire Revue show at AS220 will be held on Sunday, Feb 5, at 8pm. The February installation's theme is "Love and Traffic" in honor of Valentine's Day, and the imminent two-way-ifying of Empire Street. As usual, the Sparkling Beatniks will be cooking up the comedy, and guests will be comic Langston Kiernan, theatre artist Leigh Hendrix. At only 8 dollars for ticket, this show is definitely going to give you the best bang for your entertainment bucks! For more, laugh track your way to: www.AS220.org. Music at Lily Pads brings in RI's own blues legend, Paul Geremia on Saturday, Jan 28. John Campbell opens. Music at Lily Pads is located at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church, 27

North Road in Peacedale. For more, slide over to www.musicatlilypads.org. The Acoustic Open Mic at The Coffee Depot, 501 Main Street in Warren features Joanne Doherty on Jan 20 and Ed Fagan on January 27th. Open Mic starts about 7 pm and follows the featured artist's 8:00-8:40 pm performance until 9:50 pm.

That's it for now. I just want to thank all the folks at The Narrows in Fall River for making the Forever Young gig last week one of the most awesome shows we've ever played! Thanks for reading. John Fuzek www.johnfuzek.com

Mayan Prophecy: The Band Plays On!

Okee dokee folks... "It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine!"



Mark your calendars now. December 21st, 2012 is it! Only about 350 days to go, make them count. How could a thousands-year-old prediction be wrong? Live it up and enjoy life. Music makes life enjoyable (for me anyway) so go hear music—preferably LIVE, LOCAL music.

If you want me to help you make those 350 days count and get folks to your shows, then get me your press releases or don't bitch that I didn't write about your show! What I mean is send me a real press release via email, not Facebook. Facebook doesn't count. (Facebook is constantly "upgrading" and annoying me and there are just too, too many events to go through. Get the info to me 3 weeks prior to the event. This means you have to plan your event properly. If you can't, get out of the business!

Preferably I would like an actual CD to listen to your music, but write to me first and ask me if I want/need it. Here is the e-mail address: risongwriters@yahoo.com Please follow-up to make sure that I got the E or the snail-mail. I know I always say this but the squeaky wheel really DOES get the grease!

Rambling time! These tough economic and changing times are really knocking the wind out of some of the local coffeehouses. They are all feeling the pinch. One in particular is Stone Soup. The Soup has weathered 31 seasons and prevailed. But the past year in particular has been very tough. Over the years, they have hosted some of the best performers around. We need venues like Stone Soup to present folk and acoustic music and to keep the intimate stage alive for our music enjoyment and to carry on the traditions of this type of venue. It's amazing how many people will spend \$100 on a ticket to see some "big name artist" (using that term loosely) at an arena just to sit in bad seats, watch the entire concert on the jumbo screen TV, pay \$20 to park, \$8 for a beer and then \$40 for a T-shirt. These same people wouldn't think of giving the smaller venues a chance and spending a whopping \$20 total

for an entire night out! Maybe the perception of the coffeehouses needs to change. It seems that if the performer isn't a household name that gets talked about on TMZ or an American Idol winner then they aren't worth going to see. Makes me think of an old (very old) Alka-Seltzer commercial, "Try It, You'll Like It!" If folks did give these venues a try, they would be amazed how much they would like it.

Anyway, I am rambling and just spewing out thoughts and ideas. So, what can we do to fix this problem? Look at the ads and listings in Motif. We have most, if not all, of the area shows published. I try to highlight the music that I think you'd enjoy. Go to a few and give them a chance. Get on mailing lists to keep up on particular artists and venues. Open up your mind...and your wallet. In Stone Soup's case, they are doing a fundraising appeal.

You can make a donation by sending a check to: Stone Soup Folks Arts Foundation, Treasurer, PO Box 1664, Pawtucket, RI 02862 or you can just go to the Stone Soup website, www.stonesoupcoffeehouse.com, and use the PayPal link. While you are there, check out the schedule of shows. Adam Ezra on Jan 14th and The Kennedys on Jan 21st are just two of the concerts coming up that you can contemplate attending. As I mentioned some, if not all of the local coffeehouses could use some extra oomph in the \$ department. I forgot to mention that these venues are run by VOLUNTEERS. Not as to single or leave anyone out (I hope I didn't) you can also check out Peeptoad Coffeehouse, Lily Pads, Common Fence Point, Blackstone River Theatre, The Mediator, The Brooklyn Coffee & Tea House, The Narrows, The Coffee Depot Open Mic, and The Church Street Coffeehouse. You can find more info about these in the ads and listings here in Motif or just keep reading here, I get around to all of them eventually!

Three Tall Pines

This time of year, most of the pines that you see are the carcasses of Christmas trees left by the side of the road waiting to be hauled off to fill already full landfills. If you want to see Three Tall Pines that would never be left by the side of the road, then cross the big ole Braga bridge and head on over to the Narrows Center for the Arts on Thursday, Jan 12. Named 2011 Bluegrass Band of the Year by the Motif Magazine, Three Tall Pines is an award-winning, bluegrass and Americana quartet from the heart of New England. Though their faces are young, the group's timeless originals and interpretations of traditional songs persuade listeners that bygone eras were just a short while ago. Impressive instrumentalists in their own right, they transcend their diverse musical backgrounds to achieve soulful harmonies and sensitive performances that draw audiences in and leave plenty of space for the story to shine through. The members of Three Tall Pines make diverse contributions to the quartet's unique sound. Bourdeau and Lurgio provide the raw material, offering up carefully crafted original songs, each with its own unique content and character. The quartet works as a group to shape each tune, seeking out ways to enhance and embellish its message. Lurgio's classic, brilliant mandolin sound, Smith's colorful, classic and bluegrass inspired fiddle, and Pangaro's powerful rhythm and stylistic versatility all serve to enrich each heartfelt melody.

Recently, the band recently released their second album, *All That's Left*, in October and it was recorded in one room in a "live" setting with production assistance from Avi Salloway (RI native) and Charlie Rose and help from their musical friends in Della Mae (Celia Woodsmith and Jenni Lyn Gardner), Gabe Hirsfeld, and many others in the Weary Traveler Chorus. This record contains all new, original material with most of the songs written as collaborations between Bourdeau and Lurgio. As with their first album, they have focused on presenting finely crafted songs supported by strong harmonies within innovative arrangements. Three Tall Pines opens for Acousticana at the Narrows. Acousticana plays

American roots music on acoustic instruments. They take the best of the American songbook and filter it through varied musical influences to create a sound that's both respectful of tradition and refreshingly new and inventive. This show will surely have a rootsy kind of feel to it. Head straight over to theNarrowson Thursday, Jan 12. Three Tall Pines will also perform at Blackstone River Theatre on Feb 4.

Netflix for the 99%

I recently watched a Netflix DVD that I highly recommend viewing. Phil Ochs: There But For Fortune. If you don't know who Phil Ochs is, well you should and this DVD will take care of that. In this era of the "Occupy" movements, a man like Phil Ochs would be a treasure. He was a singer/songwriter who sang real protest songs back in the '60s and '70s. He performed, protested and hung out with Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger and the usual cast of counter-culture characters. Unfortunately, Ochs took his own life in 1975. He left behind many songs that would still be appropriate today. We could use another man like Phil Ochs singing for the 99%. Maybe this film will inspire someone to take up the cause.

Show Me the Music

Now to fill your calendar a bit more: Garnet Rogers will be at Peeptoad Coffeehouse on Friday, Jan20. Acharismatic performer and singer, Rogers is a powerful physical presence - close to six and a half feet tall - with a voice to match. With his smooth, dark baritone, his incredible range and thoughtful dramatic phasing, he is widely considered to be one of the finest singers anywhere. Peeptoad is located at theNorthScituateBaptistChurch, 619 West Greenville Road in North Scituate. For more info "rabbitt" over to: www.fosteringArts.org. I'll stay with "Amphibians and Their Habitat" for \$1000, Alex. At Lily Pads on Saturday, Jan 7, the two-time Juno Award winner (that's Can-eh-dian for Grammy) and Canadian Folk Musician of the Year, Jayme Stone and his band, (www.jaymestone.com) will play in front of the big guitar tapestry. Opening the show will be Travelin' Light, with guitar maestro Ron Murray and percussionist Robert Malin. For more about this show hop, hop, hop over to www.musicatlilypads.org. There'll be a Gnomeland Security Concert on Saturday, Jan 7. Dance with The Gnomes at The Mediator, 50 Rounds Avenue in Providence from 7:30-10pm. Taking off your shoes, full frontal x-rays and cavity searches not required.