

BIG CITY BLUES SUGAR MAE

All photos by Shirley Mae Owens unless otherwise credited.



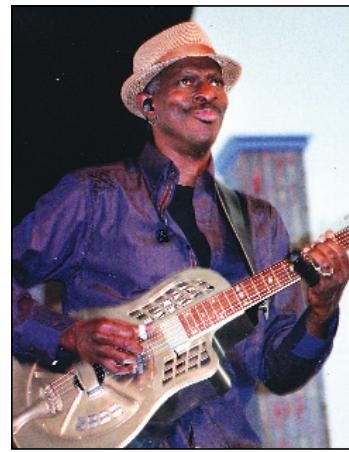
Robert Jr's birthday party at the historic Catharine Hotel in Avalon, on Catalina Island, Junior sez, "...the people of the island really make me feel I belong here."

And I Ain't Lyin'!

Sugar brought Junior coast to coast, first to the Pocono Mountains, New Jersey, New York City, Brooklyn & Old Yankee Stadium to kick off his April birthday month long celebration #60 when life begins. **Mother Owens & "The Good Doctor"** Eric fixed them a feast after they checked out **Dave Fields'** new blues jam on Thursdays at Elmwood, NJ's **The Escape**—beautiful room and happy people. For their early spring weekend it was Central Park, Canal St., Brooklyn Bridge, Eagle Warehouse, Prospect Park, & **Kenny Neal is back, and looking good at the 2008 New Orleans Jazz & Heritage festival.**

those Glen Lake newlyweds—**Shawna & Steven**. Then they were off to the West Coast—Avalon, Catalina Island, Encinitas & LA for Junior's next birthday adventure. They sailed to sunny & stunning Santa Catalina Island where at the Catherine Hotel **Roger Connelly** hosted a big jam wsg **Laurie Morvan & Paul Oscher**. Thanks to all the musicians and especially to **Kathy Connelly** too – let them eat cake! Back to the mainland in **Solana Beach** (Hi Lucky!) at the **Belly Up Tavern** they caught **Charlie Musselwhite** wsg Los Fabulosos opening and **Candy Kane** sang too.

Jr. & Paul Oscher on bikes at Muscle Beach on Venice Beach, one of Junior's 60 wishes.



Keb Mo back at JazzFest in the Blues tent playing a beautiful "steel" to a very appreciative audience.

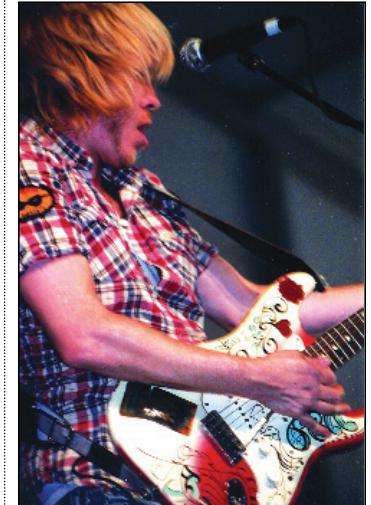
On Junior's official day he was swimming on Moonlight Beach before just they drove up the coast to LA to visit recently engaged **Rand & Kelli** and stopped by their **Delta Groove Music** offices and a bike ride along Venice Beach with **Paul Oscher**. Junior's birthday finale—the best for last where he will always be every year- **New Orleans Jazzfest!** They arrived in time to set up camp with **Capt. Dirk** and dash off to Old Algiers to The Old Point with **JD Hill**. They rode the ferry across to The French Quarter and met new old friend **Ray Brooks** at the Balcony Club. The first day of Jazzfest Sugar & Junior found a new way of doing things—no inside parking after 20 plus years? After circling the fairgrounds twice wondering where to park Sugar missed hearing **Rufus "Rip" Wimberly & The Dreamers**

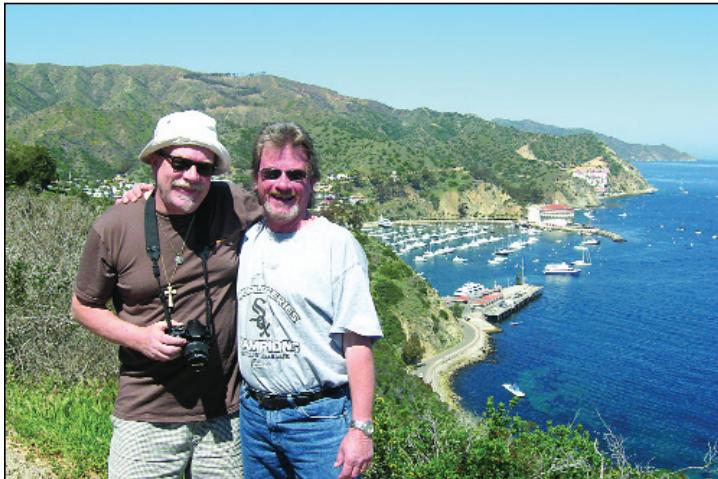


Texas Guitar slinger **Barbara Lynn** was impressive on the guitar and as the leader of her big band at JazzFest.

(11:15 am) kicking off Jazzfest at the Blues Tent but she did see **J. Monque' D Blues Band**, **Barbara Lynn**, **Doyle Bramhall** with **CC Adcock & Lafayett Marquies**, **Tab Benoit & Buckwheat Zydeco** and at other stages **Creole Wild West & Terrance Simien** along with headliners **Robert Plant & Allison Krauss & T-Bone Burnett** and **Sheryl Crow**. Later that evening oh what a night with **Walter Wolfman Washington** at Banks St. Saturday Sugar & Junior attended **Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu's** intimate Forum behind Congo Square with **Irma Thomas** leading the discussion joined by **Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius** who reflected on being at the last 26 Jazzfests but shortened her stay last year due to Greensburg's devastating tornado. Sugar welcomed the Gov for coming and reported on **Big City Rhythm & Blues Magazine's** efforts to keep New Orleans in the spotlight. When the rain began, they stayed dry under the Blues Tent where **James Cotton** reigned. Next up was **The Ponderosa Stomp Revue** featuring Dennis Binder, Tammy Lynn,

Kenny Wayne Shephard was HOT, HOT, HOT! in JazzFest's Blues tent, which was always high & dry!

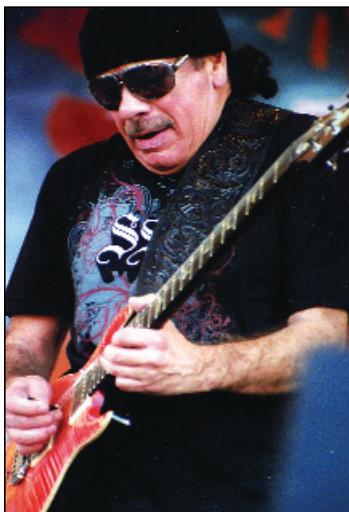




Jr. & Roger Connelly above Avalon Bay, Catalina Island, "What a wonderful, magical place for music! Come on Delta Groove! It's A No Brainer!"

Archie Bell and **Roy Head** who did wild stage antics beginning with the alligator and slinging his microphone like a yo yo aiming at photographers' lenses. Sunday was muddy and rainy for the **Voice of the Wetlands**—Tab Benoit, Dr. John, Big Chief Monk Broudeaux, George Porter Jr., Cyril Neville, Anders Osborne, Johnny Sansone, Johnny Vidocovich who welcomed Junior backstage. Wednesday night at the HOB Ponderosa Stomp Sugar saw **Henry Gray**, **Lazy Lester**, **Little Freddie King**, **Syl Johnson**, **Sugar Boy Crawford** and his grandson Davelle, and **Ronnie Spector**. The first day of May Sugar & Junior drove by tent city on the way to Canal Street Guest House to pick up virgin Jazzfest goers **Holly & Barry (Legendary Rhythm & Blue Cruiser partners)** and what a ball they had! Sugar's Jazzfest highlights at the Blues Tent: **Mem Shannon**, **The Music Maker Revue** featuring **Boo Harris**, **Macavine Hayes** and **Eddie Kirkland** followed by the charming **Carolina Chocolate Drops** and the award winning **Bettye Lavette**. **Gene "Duke of Earl" Chandler** was at Congo Square, **CJ Chenier** at Fais

Carlos Santana was back in New Orleans, and he joined the "other" returnees, **The Nevilles**, for a very moving festival-ending set!



Do-Do Stage and **Deacon John** wsg **Wanda Rouzan** at Gentilly Stage. Throughout the day there was numerous gourmet delicacies from Jama Jama to Crawfish Monica to Oyster Spinach Salads. Friday **Coco Robicheaux** started up the packed Blues Tent and then **Stoney B & Grampa Elliot**, **Jumpin Johnny's Harmonica Revue**, **The Lee Boys**, **John Hammond Quartet** and over at Acura Sugar saw **Stevie Wonder** who asked the huge crowd for a moment of silence for the victims of Katrina. Time for another birthday party for Junior at the **Mother In Law Lounge** with **Little Freddie King**, **Al Carnival Time Johnson**, **Mitch Woods**, **Herman Ernest** and **Paula & The Pontiacs**. The lounge was rockin' & red beans and rice flowing. For Saturday's Jazzfest it was all good with **The Guitar Lightnin' Lee Band**, **Lil' Buck Sinegal** wsg **Rudy Richard**, **Ruthie Foster**, **John Mooney** and **Kenny Wayne Shepherd**. After the fest another Junior birthday feast with 9 friends at **Jacque I Mo's**—what no Carpet Bagger steaks again? For Sunday the last day at Jazzfest the Blues Tent was the place to stay with a line-up that was top notch with **Guitar Slim**, **Jr. Kenny Neal**, **Snooks Eaglin**, **Keb Mo** and **The Derek Trucks Band**. Sugar & Junior closed Jazzfest with the return of the



MR. James Cotton, The KING of the Blues Tent, was in fine form.

Neville Brothers and **Carlos Santana** sitting in. Once again Jazzfest was more than anyone could ever imagine and such a magical one. Thank-you Jazzfest! Big thanks to **Larry & Linda** & all your hospitality aboard your Bluesbird RV.

Sugar Mae finally spent more than four hours at the **Shack Up Inn**—thank-you **Bill & Guy** and Junior who arranged for a 3-night stay. First they attended the **Blues Music Awards** (formerly the Handy's) for its first time ever out of Memphis at the Grand Casino Tunica. Sugar saw blues stars everywhere and it was difficult to leave the lobby. On stage she saw **Mary Flowers**, **Tommy Castro & the Legendary Blues Revue**, **Fruitland Jackson**, **Nappy Brown** who laid on the stage while shouting the blues and then joined the audience never missing a note. After midnight it was time to scoot back to our Cotton Gin room at the Shack Up to prepare for an all day outdoor stage with Delta Groove Music Productions at Ground Zero. What a finale to Junior's birthday! Everyone showed up **Dave Fields**, **David Hughes**, **Dave Keyes**, **Deak Harp**, **Bill "Howlin" Perry**, **Cedric Burnside**, **Lightnin' Malcom**,

Bill Sims, **Super Chikan**, **Walter "Wolfman" Washington**, **Billy Gibson**, **Rich DelGrosso** and so many others to thank for jamming plus **Roger & Peg (WHFR- FM)** for your help. Inside at Ground Zero it was packed to the rafters and non-stop blues until 2 am. Thanks to Rand and all the hard working Delta Groove staff for a successful collaboration and more to come. Sugar & Junior decided to relax for their last day in Clarksdale but had the chance to go over to **Big Jack Johnson's** house and then to **Wesley Jefferson's** home and wound up at

Moon Lake's Uncle Henry's surprising George & Sarah with a visit that was interrupted by a tornado warning. Finally the storm passed and back at the Shack Up Inn they enjoyed one more good night's rest before goin' down that long winding road to Big City Blues fests, clubs and more. Safe journeys.

Love & Happiness,
Sugar Mae

Rhiannon Giddens of the **Carolina Chocolate Drops**, one of the hottest freshest sounds at 2008 JazzFest!

Jr. & Diedra and Keith Ruff outside the Blues Music Awards in Tunica, Mississippi.

