

# Come Saturday Night It's Time for the Blues

By Doug Imberi, DDJC Public Affairs

During the week, these guys are just like the rest of us at Defense Distribution Depot San Joaquin, California (DDJC) doing our special job to support the nation's warfighters. But, come Saturday night, they hit the stage and pour out the blues at their regular gig in Stockton.

Dave McLeod drives truck, transporter, taxi or anything thing else he gets assigned to out of the Bulk Branch 5 Equipment Pool. Russell Hann, a blocker and bracer in the same branch as McLeod, usually has a pneumatic nailer in hand blocking and bracing seavans prior to shipment. Mike Foley, can be found in the HAZMAT Pharmacy, processing oil, paint, anti-freeze and all sorts of other items.

On Saturday night McLeod straps on his bass, Hann picks up one of harmonicas and Foley pounds out the rhythm on his drum kit as they form the nucleus of the Cane Willow Blues Band. For the most part, all three are self-taught musicians with no formal training.

If you were at the last Employee Appreciation Day you saw Hann and McLeod perform a blues set at the softball field. Foley was away on vacation.

McLeod started out on the trumpet as a youngster then switched to bass in 1966. "I just picked it up and learned it on my own," recalled McLeod. "I practiced everyday for a long time." He started playing in country bands and figures he must have been in 25 or so bands.

"I played country, rock, fusion—which is a mix of two or three styles—and a variety of stuff," said McLeod. "I may look like a hick, wearing my cowboy hat but man, I can play the blues. You know, you can't judge a book by the cover."

Foley started on the drums at age 14. Although, he will tell you he really started on his mom's boxed 78 rpm records. "They had great bounce," he points out. "And I could work on my technique."

In high school he played drums in the concert band, marching band, jazz band and any other band he could get into. After taking a break for about 15 years he started playing again and figures he's been in a half-dozen bands.

Hann is a newcomer to the stage. He picked up the harp only about two years ago and has been amazing audiences ever since. Many find it hard to believe he has played only a short time.

"I just got brave one night sitting at the bar and played along with a Stevie Ray Vaughn tune on the juke box and a guy came up to me and invited me to a jam session at Mossdale Marina," said Hann. "I couldn't sleep the night before. When it came my turn I froze up, until I closed my eyes and then I started blowing. The next song I played like there was nothing to it."

One of Hann's early performances at a benefit party was captured on a CD with some Bay Area musicians. "I played on two of the songs they recorded and I burned about 80 copies of the CDs to sell and pass out to my friends."

"We come from completely different backgrounds," said Foley.

"It's like a family, you have your gripes, but, we are all friends," said Hann.

The band formed in April 2002. You can hear the band on Saturday nights at Donald's Place in Stockton, located alongside I-99 across from the Post Office near Arch Road.

"We play a set at 9," said Foley. "And then we have a jam session until 1. Last Saturday Neil Williford from the CCP brought out his sax and we tore it up on 'Shotgun,' the old Junior Walker tune."

One night is enough for Foley, but Hann and McLeod like to hit the jam sessions they have on Sunday at Mossdale and the Fireside in Lathrop. If he is up to it, Hann will hit several more jam sessions during the week.

"I'm off on Mondays, so I like to go out until about 2 or 3 and have fun," said McLeod.



From left, *drummer Mike Foley, bassist Dave McLeod, and harmonica player Russell Hann form the core of the Cane Willow Blues Band.*