

Musician Blackhouse

Spotlight:



by
Eric
Bayli
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I recently spoke with Kevin Grant, lead singer of the New Bedford based band Blackhouse about rocking the low end. You can follow them on their Facebook page.

Eric: Who is in the band and how did it start?

Kevin: My prior bands (Iron Oak and Judo Heirs) had imploded, and I had the idea of an all-bass band for awhile. I've always been interested in doing something different than your typical rock band lineup. I also was tired of being in bands that formed organically between friends. I wanted to make some calls and basically say, "You, you, you and you. We are the band and we'll practice this Sunday." Lucky for me most of the people I'd initially asked said yes. I really didn't cast a wide net. I have Ed Macomber (Satellite Elvis) on drums, Mike Means (Blue Hollow) on bass, Tim Catz (Roadsaw) on bass, Mario Costa (Gaskill) on bass, and I sing and write words. I had us all meet at my house for a birthday party that I was having because none of the other guys knew Tim.

Where did the name come from?

Kevin: Well, technically we work for Blackhouse Technologies, which is a privately owned company with only government contracts. We are essentially a community outreach program for them. Our practice space and expenses get covered and I was able to get "government employee" car insurance this year,

which is pretty awesome.

What's up with all the basses?

Kevin: I think the guitar/drums/bass/vocals format of rock bands is pretty worn out. It's really only in place because of the limits of 1950s audio equipment, and has become this sort of sacred thing. Meanwhile, every band in the world is either downtuning or droptuning their guitars, so I thought to myself that this is the obvious next step. I grew up playing a lot of classical music on piano, and we didn't have any rock and roll in my house, just jazz and classical, and in neither of those genres is there a standard grouping of instruments. There is music written for four cellos, or a group of violins, etc, all the time. Another reason is that I have a kind of deep voice for rock music. Your average band has a bassist covering the low end, a guitarist playing mid-range tones and a singer covering all of the high end, the treble. So if you have deep voice, you have a couple of options. You either lower everything else, like we've done, or you give the voice the low-end frequencies—like the Doors, who, not coincidentally, had no bassist but were keyboard-heavy. I think the all-bass lineup definitely helped get us noticed by Blackhouse Technologies, given their work with gravity and sound manipulation it was a perfect match, and that has certainly helped us financially. I also wanted to get back at Peter Hook, who turned down my request to audition to sing for his all bass band, Freebass, and then made a really lousy record.



How are the songs written, what are they about? Is there a running theme between songs or a concept?

Kevin: We typically just jam and record it. When something starts jelling I take the recordings home. I look at writing

songs more like a forensic or archeological job than a creative one. I'm trying to solve the case of the missing vocals. I do try to keep on track with the subjects that Blackhouse Technologies work with, so there are songs about solitude, paranoia, xenophobia, loss of identity, etc. I don't write songs about free will or empowerment, not in this band. We play fatalist music. But I'm given alot of leeway. I haven't been asked to redact anything or steer in any certain direction, but I know what they expect from us and I'm here to do the best job I can with it.

What are some of the influences on the band as a whole and individually?

Kevin: Every song is quite different from its siblings. I think people might imagine that a band with three basses might be interesting for about 30 seconds, and that it would all sound the same, but stylistically we are pretty diverse. When you have given a bunch of guys who are always been sort of in the background as bassists a level playing field and center stage, they really cut loose. We are pretty psychedelic at times. It would be hard for me to accurately describe what we sound like. We are both stranger and more listenable than people might assume.

What's planned? Long term or take it as it comes? Touring, recording?

Kevin: I don't have interest in touring. The lifestyle doesn't appeal to me and never has. I like my bed. We just recorded a seven song album and it's about 35 minutes. Our songs are pretty long. I'd love to have it come out on vinyl. We'll probably leak some copies and see what happens. We'll be playing live, but I think very sporadically. We have our first show on Friday the 13th of April at The Pour Farm. We'll have a Boston gig after that at some point. I wouldn't mind playing just a few shows a year and recording an EP a year.

Thanks Kevin. Check out Blackhouse on April 13th at the Pour Farm Tavern in New Bedford.

Ocean Explorium Hosts Author, Activist John Perkins

John Perkins will present "Geo-Politics, the Future, and You: A Call to Action" on Tuesday, April 17, in the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Woodland Commons from 12:30 to 2:00 pm and again at the Ocean Explorium, with a reception from 6:30 pm until the talk begins at 7:30 pm.



Perkins will discuss his experiences in the corporate world, the epiphany that initiated personal change, and his optimism for the future. A sustainability advocate, an expert on global economic strategies, and New York Times bestselling author of *Confessions of an Economic Hit Man* and *Hoodwinked*, his message underscores the need for each individual to appreciate the roles they play in creating a sustainable or unsustainable world, a just or unjust society.

According to Susan Jennings, Director of UMass Dartmouth Office of Campus and Community Sustainability, "UMass Dartmouth's Sustainability Initiative encourages all of us to appreciate the freedoms of speech we enjoy in this country, to take responsibility for acting against threats to our civil liberties, and to develop a voice in politics and activism that supports a just, sustainable, and peaceful future."

John Perkins's appearances on the SouthCoast are part of the

UMass Dartmouth Sustainability Initiative's "Finding Our Voices" series and are co-sponsored by Bristol Community College's Center for Sustainability and Post-Carbon Education.

The Ocean Explorium is located at 174 Union Street in downtown New Bedford and is handicap accessible via the rear entrance. Call 508.994.5400 for after-hours access.

For further information, contact the Office of Campus and Community Sustainability at 508.910.6484 or sustainability@umassd.edu; or Abbey Spargo at 508.994.5400 or aspargo@oceanexplorium.org.

Seven Enjoyable AHA! Events for April 12th



by
Michael
Silvia

One of my favorite days each month is the second Thursday of the month in downtown New Bedford. Why? Because that's when downtown New Bedford comes to life with AHA! (Arts, History and Architecture). It's really the only monthly event that brings people from outside and inside New Bedford in large numbers to the center of New Bedford to experience our city's rich history, art and architecture. Now that spring is here, AHA! really brings in a crowd. This month's AHA! theme is Sustainable Southcoast. Here are my suggested events to attend

tonight, April 12, 2012. A full schedule can be found online. Printed copies can be found at most businesses in downtown New Bedford.

1. Eco-Friendly Procession/Eco-Floats

Time: 5 pm, parade starts at 5:30 pm

Location: Custom House Square (across the street from Freestone's and Carter's)

Details: This is a "people powered" parade with tunes provided by the New Bedford All-City Middle School Marching Band and the New Bedford High School Whalers Marching Band. Some of the float participants include Ocean Explorium, UMD Net Impact Club, Buttonwood Park Zoo, Humane Society Southcoast, Kiddie Kampus, New Bedford Regional Refuse Management District, YMCA Southcoast and Boys & Girls Club of NB.

2. Youth Ambassador Program (YAP) Performance and Open Mic

Time: 5 pm

Location: New Bedford Commons, formerly Ginger Grille (778 Purchase Street)

Details: One of my favorite programs in New Bedford is the Youth Ambassador Program (YAP). These are the same folks that produced the "Walk with Me" music video that provides a fun tour of New Bedford from our youth's perspective. catch some fun music and participate if you have some musical talent.

3. J Kelley Acoustic Solo Show

Time: 6-8 pm

Location: Celtic Coffee House (42 North Water Street)

Details: Catch the singer/song writer Jason Kelley from the J.Kelley Band. Enjoy a coffee and acoustic show with some friends before enjoying some of the events later in the evening. Check out the J.Kelley Band's music mix [here](#).

J.Kelley Band Music Video – New Bedford MA

4. SEEAL's 5th Annual "Shrink Your Footprint" Fair

Time: 6:30-8 pm

Location: Ocean Explorium (174 Union Street)

Details: The Southeastern Environmental Education Alliance, or SEEAL's goal is to provide environmental awareness and stewardship in Southeastern Massachusetts. There will be vendors, youth exhibits, demonstrations, and non-profit tables with a raffle of great prizes to participants.

5. Free Wine Tasting

Time: 5-9 pm

Location: Travessia Urban Winery (760 Purchase Street)

Details: Travessia offers FREE wine tasting with the purchase of any bottle of wine. Last month, I sampled six delicious wines before making a purchase. This is a great place to kick-off your AHA!

6. Talk with Ruth and Abby, the 1850s Ladies

Time: 6:30-8 pm

Location: New Bedford National Historic Park Visitors Center (33 William St)

Details: Step back in time and chat with Ruth and Abby as they create traditional crocheted fish using modern day recycled materials.



7. Enjoy Some Art!

New Bedford is a Mecca for art in New England. Several galleries and the New Bedford Art Museum are having special exhibits for AHA.

- **New Bedford Art Museum** (608 Pleasant Street) – The New Bedford Art Museum has gone through a make over. Tonight, there is an exhibit about of what the future of art will be at the museum, showcasing various forms of artistic expression within our newly renovated gallery space.
- **Judith Klein Art Gallery** (98 William Street) – “2012

UMASS Dartmouth CVPA Student Exhibit" – 20 students show featuring paintings, sculptures, fiber work, printmaking, drawings and photography. The artists will be at the gallery to talk about their work.


- **Gallery 65** (65 William Street) – The Bug Show: Works by gallery members and guest artists including Lasse Antonsen, Chuck Hauck, Elaine McBride and Charles Talley.
- **UMass Dartmouth CVPA at the Star Store** (715 Purchase Street) – 2012 MFA Thesis Exhibition: View the graduate exhibition in the University Gallery.
- **Artworks!** (384 Acushent Avenue) – Senior thesis show featuring students from the UMass Dartmouth CVPA program.
- **UGLY gallery** (246 Union St.) – New York and New Bedford based artists!

These are just my suggestions for this evening. I recommend you visit AHA!'s page to see the full schedule to find out the best entertainment for you. Call, text or Facebook your friends and invite them to downtown New Bedford. I promise you will have a great, unique time!

Lt. Governor Timothy Murray Visiting New Bedford Today

Thursday, April 12, 2012 at 10:00 am Gifford Street Boat Ramp
Parking Lot, New Bedford, MA.

Last Nantucket Fishing Family Film (20 Apr)

Bill Blount, Nantucket's last commercial fisherman, is the  subject of the April Dock-u-mentaries film series which continues Friday, April 20th at 7 pm with Ruthie B., Ruthie B. Dock-U-Mentaries is a co-production of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and the Working Waterfront Festival. Films about the working waterfront are screened on the third Friday of each month beginning at 7 pm in the theater of the Corson Maritime Learning Center, located at 33 William Street in downtown New Bedford. All programs are open to the public and presented free of charge.

This month's film, Ruthie B., Ruthie B, is a 45-minute presents an intimate portrait of Bill and Ruthie Blount, the last fishing family on Nantucket. It paints a vivid portrait of their struggles to stay afloat financially, Bill's determination to pursue a career that gives him satisfaction if not monetary rewards, Ruth's worries over being in debt, and her efforts to contribute to the family's income.

New Bedford's 44th Annual Whaling City Festival



by Joe
Silvia

The 44th Whaling City Festival is coming to the Veteran's Memorial Buttonwood Park in New Bedford's west end from July 13-15th, bringing the ever familiar musical acts, festival foods, local vendors, merchant booths, amusement rides and more that people have come to love. The new Whaling City Festival president Allen Richard plans on shaking things up by adding many new elements to the usual ones people love and come to expect. If you thought it was the same old festival, think again.

Mr. Richard, who took the reins as president this year, is focusing on sending a signal that the Whaling City Festival has changed and is continuing to change for the better. His eye is on improving every facet of the festival with each coming year. Festival hours are still from 9 am to 8 pm Friday through Sunday. Mr. Richard is hoping to extend those hours in the future to allow the estimated 125,000 people that pass through the festival each year to continue to enjoy themselves after 8 pm.

Richard who has been involved with the festival since 1988, has grown through the ranks because of his love and passion for the city's historic festival. "I started getting involved in 1988 picking up trash as a volunteer and now as President...I'm still picking up trash," he told us over coffee at Cafe Arpeggio.



Richard is ambitious, creative, and has a blue collar work ethic when it comes to managing and organizing the festival. However, he is struggling to overcome some negativity that has cropped up in the past. An incident in 2006 in which a brawl

broke out and 23 arrests were made, and a problem with a small minority of vendors hawking counterfeit items has presented a few problems for the festival organizers. "Identifying counterfeits is hard. If you have some experience and expertise with them it's easier to spot. But I'm learning." Richard stated. "I have no tolerance for it. I'm keeping a sharp eye out and doing everything in my power to crack down on it."

As for the brawl in 2006 Richard said, "the police chief at the time said that the brawl is responsible for the 8pm curfew, and that by closing before nightfall the festival will be safer. But the brawl happened between 6 pm and 7 pm. At the Businessmen's Festival a few years ago [2008] a person was shot, and they are open until 10 pm. The Portuguese Feast has a bunch of people placed into protective custody each and every year, and their curfew is 11:45 pm."

"The truth is that the Whaling City Festival is a safe, fun family focused event and we've proven that year after year. Before the brawl in 2006 there were no issues and 6 years later we've had no incidences. We're not asking for special treatment, just for a fair shake."

Being restricted to an 8 pm curfew has harmed revenue and scared away some potential vendors who don't want to lose the extra sales which would make it worth the trip. Out-of-state vendors have stated that with gas prices the way they are, they don't want to make the drive when they are losing 2 hours of potential revenue each night. These 2 extra hours can make the difference in a vendor's profit or loss.

Richard feels that this restriction is partially responsible for vendor participation dropping from 250 tables in 2006, to 140 last year. Sponsorships have dropped as well, resulting in what was an annual \$5,000 donated to citywide scholarships to now nothing at all. The drop in revenue has also restricted the entertainment, amusements, and acts that Richard has been

able to recruit preventing him from putting on the highest quality festival possible. For example, the very popular laser light show, bigger name musical acts, and some children's activities.

In spite of these obstacles Richard is optimistic and plans on proving to the city each and every year by having an incidence free and successful event.

Being able to remain open until 10 pm as other festivals throughout the city are allowed to do will encourage vendors to participate. This in turn will drive up sponsorship and allow Richard to give back to the city with scholarships as well as continue to add new amusements.



"Some of new ideas I'm working on and hoping to recruit are the Soccer Collies-dogs who play soccer against a team of kids, Arm Wrestling, a BMX stunt show, an Illusionist, and the addition of a Foodfest that highlights New Bedford. We're thinking of highlighting the Portuguese community, food, and culture by having a Cacoila Fest and having a challenge attached to it. We would charge around \$5 and donate some or all of the proceeds to the ailing K-9 program for the New Bedford Police. It would be a way of saying thanks for all the work, time and energy the NBPD has given us year after year. But to add these things and keep making the festival better, I need vendors and sponsors. To get them I need a later time slot."

Of course, as always the expected crowd favorites will be present like Finelli Amusements, the Dance Extravaganza, Car and Motorcycle Show, Face Painting, Top Pro Wrestling, Live Music, and vendors selling crafts and goods. Popular food

items like the Blooming Onion, Turkey Legs, Amaral's Linguica, Greek Delight, Gyros, and Shish Kebab will of course whet everyone's appetite.

Each year the Whaling City Festival has a crew of 20-30 volunteers from the ages of 12-90 who help with information, traffic, directions, setting up, breaking down, picking up trash, manning the gates, drink service, and more. It's a ton of fun, and at the end of the festivities Richard treats all of the volunteers to a great meal at his expense.

As with every year FREE shuttle service will run from New Bedford High School to the festival grounds.

In an attempt to help promote the festival, presidency, recruit vendors, sponsors, and volunteers Richard runs a website and an accompanying Facebook Page. The website will be updated in the coming weeks with the schedule, itinerary, and info.

If you are a potential vendor, or sponsor and interested in participating in this year's Whaling City Festival, you can apply here:
<http://www.whalingcityfestival.net/applications.html>

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer or are a musical act looking to participate in this year's festival you can contact Allen Richard at: ARichard@WhalingCityFestival.net.

Amistad Illustrated Lecture at Whaling Museum



Captain Sean S. Bercaw will present an illustrated talk, titled “Full Sail into Cuba on the Amistad” on Thursday, April 12th from 6:30 – 8 pm at the New Bedford Whaling Museum – part of the museum’s 22nd annual Sailors’ Series lecture programs.

Captain of the Amistad, former Naval Officer and Master Mariner, Sean S. Bercaw has sailed over 160,000 nautical miles under sail. He shares the fascinating narrative of sailing the Amistad reproduction, in 2010, into the Cuban waters where the 1839 story – which was the subject of the 1997 Steven Spielberg movie, “Amistad” – began. The revolt of the Amistad’s African captives, their takeover of the ship and the ensuing court battle is an inspiring human story that, in a case successfully argued by former President John Quincy Adams, culminated in their freedom being granted by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Admission: \$15 members; \$20 non-members. For tickets, call (508) 997-0046 Ext. 100.

National Park and Whaling Museum School Vacation Activities

When April vacation arrives, the children are thrilled to have time off from school, yet parents find themselves scrambling for activities to give them something new to do. New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park and the New Bedford Whaling Museum have partnered to offer a week of fun, family-friendly children's activities during the week of April vacation.



New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park will feature an afternoon of free activities from 1-4 pm on Wednesday, April 18. All activities will be ongoing from 1-4 pm, and take place at the national park visitor center at 33 William St. in downtown New Bedford. Try your hand at playing croquet on the lawn with Ruth & Abby, the 1850s ladies. Look for interesting landmarks in the park's scavenger hunt and see how many you can find! Celebrate Earth Day by making paper bead jewelry from recycled paper. Play carnival games, such as bean bag toss and Pin the Badge on the Ranger! Watch the Youth Ambassador Program (YAP!) videos, Get Outside and My Backyard series. Pick up a free copy of Burn While You Learn, the park's map to explore history while you get outside and get some exercise.

Park partner, the New Bedford Whaling Museum kicks off the week with Right Whale Day on Monday, April 16 (10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.), with several free kids' activities, a "whale cake," and the film "Ocean Frontiers." Museum activities continue through Friday, and include: Tour Below Lagoda's Decks (Tues., Fri., 10-1); Moby-Dick Highlights Tour (Tues., 11-noon); Free

Maritime Arts & Crafts (Wed., 10-noon); Free Sailors' Valentines (Thurs., 10-noon); and All Aboard The Lagoda Tour (Fri., 9:30-10:30). Museum admission applies to tours. Cape Verdean weaving, beadwork, and shell art demonstrations, Tues.-Fri. 10-2. In celebration of the Town of Fairhaven's Bicentennial, Fairhaven residents receive free admission to the museum, April 15-21 (proof of residency required).

Mayor's Task Force on Neighborhood Quality

On Monday, April 9th at 10 am at "Gifts to Give", 21 Cove Street, New Bedford, Mayor Jon Mitchell will formally launch The Mayor's Task Force on Neighborhood Quality.



Joined by key neighborhood groups, elected officials, multiple law enforcement agencies, and ten city department heads and their staffs, the Mayor will lead a 30-minute roundtable discussion followed by a 20-minute walking tour of the nearby Ruth Street neighborhood.

The purpose of the multi-agency Task Force is to counter the dramatic deterioration several neighborhoods have experienced in recent years. For too long the health, safety, and quality of life of residents have been threatened by uncooperative absentee landlords who have flouted local ordinances and neglected their properties.

The Task Force aims to address the situation through:

- Concentrated code enforcement in the most troubled neighborhoods;
 - Using a range of civil and criminal judicial processes to put an end to “business as usual” and bring repeat violators to justice;
 - Better coordination among city departments;
 - Adopting “best practices” that have proven effective in cities facing similar challenges;
 - Setting up new accountability mechanisms so that city resources are directly appropriately.
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Stand Against Racism with Commons New Bedford

Passionate about ending racism or performing? Commons is seeking local talent to be showcased at Open Mic: Stand Against Racism at the Commons New Bedford, formerly known as Ginger Grill. There is a Facebook Event created so please invite your friends.



Stand Against Racism is a movement that was initiated by the YWCA in 2008 in order to raise awareness that racism still exists in our communities and that it can no longer be ignored or tolerated. Its objective is to bring organizations together who believe that united we can eliminate racism.

Performances must be booked by April 20th at OpenMicNB@gmail.com. Performances should incorporate the topic of racism, diversity, culture, or racial justice. Solos or duets welcome. Song, rap, poetry, slam poetry, covers, and originals may be chosen.

Open Mic: Stand Against Racism will be held Thursday, April 26th at the Commons New Bedford, 778 Purchase Street from 7-9pm. The event is free and BYOB. All walk-ins may be added on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Hosted by YWCA Leading Ladies and the Commons New Bedford.