

Blues are rolling with Slim in Ocean City this weekend

By Josh Davis
For Go! Magazine

IF YOU GO

SLIM DENUNN AND THE HIGH ROLLERS

When: 7 p.m. Saturday
Where: Pit-n-Pub, 28th St.,
Ocean City
Cost: Free
Call: 410-289-2020
Web: www.slimdenunn.com

resurrecting somewhat obscure rhythm and blues, rockabilly, jump and rock 'n' roll music from the 1950s and early '60s.

"I have had three Nick Curran CDs in my van for the last six months: 'Fixin' Your Head,' 'Dr. Velvet' and 'Nightlife Boogie,' and Jimmy Vaughan's last two CDs. These guys are doing exactly what I love to do, and they do it so well; they breathe new life and

energy into this music. I get goosebumps — literally — and we take the same approach. Sean Costello, who passed away in April 2008 at 29, was the first musician we came across that was doing what we want to do. His work has inspired us tremendously and we do a few of his songs as well."

The group, rounded out by guitarists "Dr." Jay Carlander and Brian "Lips" Veditz, drummer Chuck "Mr. Martini" DeMartin and newcomer Karen "Angel" Hendrix on lead and backing vocals, will appear this weekend at the Pit-n-Pub in Ocean City.

"I have written a bunch of music in the last year — inspired by the musicians I mentioned — and you'll hear some of those at the Pit-n-Pub," Smith said. "We have done a bit of

recording — not ready for prime-time yet."

On Feb. 21, the group will play Salisbury University's Mardi Gras dinner with Brian Perez on saxophone, followed by the Snow Hill Blues Jam on April 20.

"I hope people come out and say, 'this band kicks it' even if they didn't know any of the songs we played," Smith said with a laugh.



GOODCLEANFUNLIFE IMAGE

Slim Denunn and the High Rollers will perform Saturday evening in Ocean City.

OCEAN CITY — Before iPads, computers, processors, samplers, keyboards and amplifiers, people had to play actual acoustic instruments.

Todd Smith, aka "Slim Denunn," still totes around one of the heaviest, most difficult to play and richest-sounding of those old-school instruments: the upright bass.

"Electric bass is for teenagers," Smith said.

Smith began playing the upright as a seventh-grader in junior high school, fumbling around with a bow until he was able to save up for an electric bass, thanks to his regular paper route.

It wasn't until four or five years ago that Smith finally reteamed with his original instrument.

"I was rebalancing my retirement savings and started thinking about life after work," he explained. "I wanted to play music, but the thought of playing electric bass as a senior citizen didn't appeal to me, so I started playing only upright bass and learning jazz bass lines. Once I felt like it might be all right, I bought a 1969 Kay bass for about \$1,500 a few years ago that I play now."

Eventually Smith formed Slim Denunn and the High Rollers, a rootsy blues group hell-bent on authenticity.

"I describe the band as blues, jumping rhythm and rock 'n' roll," Smith said. "While we still play hard-core blues from Muddy Waters, Junior Wells, Little Walter, Elmore James, Willie Dixon, Freddie King, etc., we have been inspired in the last year by Sean Costello, Jimmie Vaughan and Nick Curran, who are

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