



Karen Lawrence (center) of **Blue By Nature** has been singing and playing guitar since she was a child.

## California bandmates were born to sing blues

By MELISSA PRICE  
 THE BATTALION

Some 13-year-old girls spend a week's allowance on "best friend" charms, avoid moms' kisses after being dropped off for school, and gossip with friends about their latest crushes while caking on makeup in the school bathroom.

But Karen Lawrence, lead singer and songwriter for the blues/R&B band Blue By Nature, whiled away her preteen years doing what she loves most — performing in front of an audience.

### Blue By Nature

PLAYING AT THE 3RD FLOOR CANTINA  
 TONIGHT AT 9:30

"I was born like this," Lawrence said. "I popped out pretending to be an entertainer. As a child, I would always do little shows around the neighborhood and it gave me such a rush."

Blue By Nature, originally from Los Angeles, will perform at 9:30 tonight at 3rd Floor Cantina. The upbeat blues band is known for hard-driving, energetic live performances.

Along with Lawrence, band members include guitar player Rick Dufay and rhythm guitarist/songwriter Fred Hostetler.

Willie Bennett, talent buyer at 3rd Floor Cantina, said he recognized extreme talent in Blue By Nature, after listening to their release *Blue to The Bone*. He said although the band members are experienced musicians, their performances maintain the vitality and exhilaration of a rookie band.

"It has some seasoned players in the group, and they've got an excellent vocalist in Karen," Bennett said. "They are butt-rockin' — they'll make you get out there and shake a tail feather."

The performances illustrate the band members' talent, Bennett said. Lawrence, who has performed in bands for 30 years, learned to play guitar at age 10, while Dufay's career includes performances on four Aerosmith recordings.

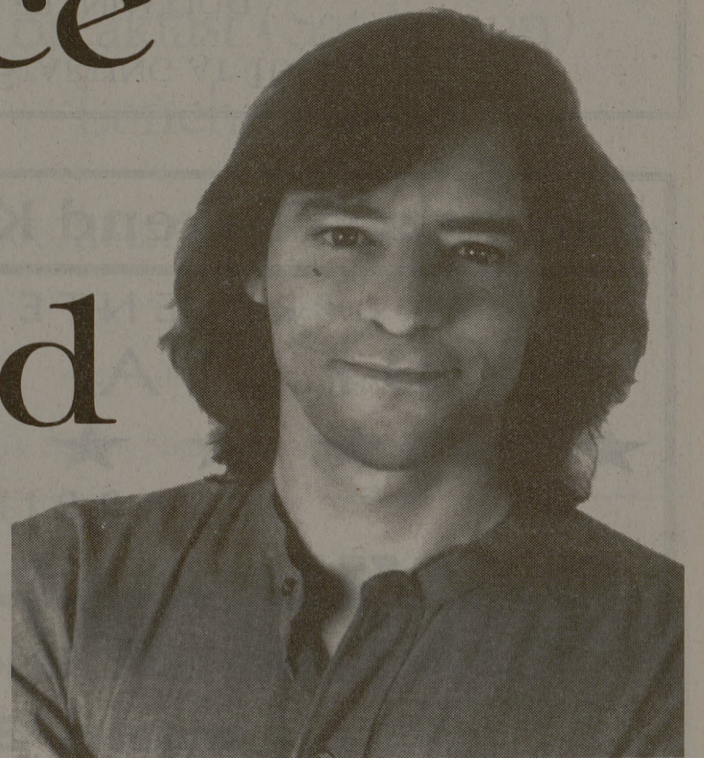
Liese Rugo, press agent for Blue By Nature, has seen the band perform live more than 50 times. She said each show is awe-inspiring for both the audience and the performers.

"A lot of their talent lies in the intense excitement they have for this kind of music," Rugo said. "They are always on the same page when it comes to their music — they are blues with a power that matches the energy of rock 'n' roll."

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# Romance on the road

*Folk singers find balance between solo careers, dating*



Folk singer and musician **Buddy Mondlock**

By AARON MEIER  
 THE BATTALION

Folk musician Buddy Mondlock has an opportunity few acts have had. In the grand tradition of John Lennon and Yoko Ono, and Sonny and Cher, Mondlock shares the stage with his girlfriend, Carol Elliott. The two have toured together for the past one-and-a-half months and will play Saturday at Crooked Path at 9 p.m.

Mondlock, a Chicago native, said his musical skills developed early. "I started playing the guitar early on, at age 10," he said. "Even then, I was performing for friends and family. I guess I have always had the 'ham' gene."

According to the Western Xpress, Mondlock's big break came at the



Folk singer and musician **Carol Elliott**

### Carol Elliott Buddy Mondlock

PLAYING AT THE CROOKED PATH PUB  
 TONIGHT AT 9

Kerrville Folk Festival in 1988. Mondlock performed at the festival as an amateur, and he performed in his bathing suit.

His swimsuit gave him the opportunity to meet Guy Clark, a well-known performer.

Clark was so impressed with Mondlock's performance that he took his demo tape back to Nashville. Mondlock's tape caught the interest of several people, and soon he abandoned the Windy City for the streets of Music City.

Soon after, Mondlock had a contract to write songs for acts such as Garth Brooks, Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary.

Currently, Mondlock is exploring his own path as a performer with two already-released albums and one that is currently under production.

"Being a songwriter and a performer is kind of all rolled up together," he said. "Writing and singing all comes from the same place that just wants me to express myself."

Mondlock said the hardest part of performing on the road is that it leaves no time for songwriting.

"I'm finding, as we are touring more, I have less time to write," he said. "I have to make a space in my schedule to just sit down and do it. I like to have my

mind float around and just get sideways. That is where you can make those connections that are unusual and interesting."

Touring offers a unique romantic experience for Mondlock. His girlfriend, Elliott, a solo folk performer, was recently named one of Nashville's best kept secrets by *The Performing Songwriter Magazine*.

"One of the biggest complaints of being on the road is people never get to see their girlfriends," Mondlock said. "This is the perfect way to see a lot of each other."

He said the tour showcases both their individual talents and their chemistry as a couple.

**"One of the biggest complaints of being on the road is that people never get to see their girlfriends. This is the perfect way to see a lot of each other."**


Buddy Mondlock  
 Folk singer and musician

Typically, each will do a set of their own music as solo acts. At the end of the evening, they take the stage together for another set.


"It is a lot of fun to do the sets together," Mondlock said. "During my set, I do all my own stuff, but when we get together, I'll do some of her stuff, she'll do some of my stuff. Sometimes we will do stuff friends have written."

Mondlock said he and Elliott are not immune to the stresses of life on the road.

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