

# Music of the Island

## Catfish Flats Rocks the Undertow

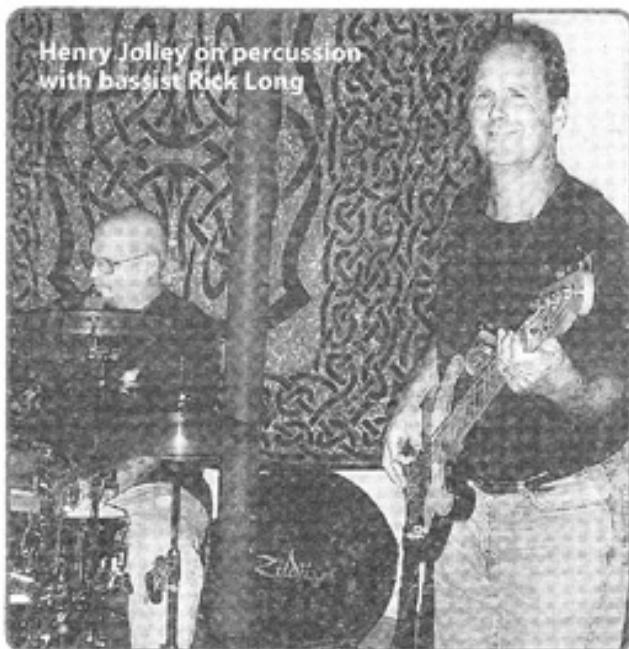
George Eberlein led into the Bruce Springsteen classic "The Fever," and the crowd at the Undertow in Gulf Shores went wild.

Eberlein, who has been playing in the Islands since forever, has been with bands such as Frontrunner, The Andy Smith Band, Alabama Dirt Band, and dueting with the notorious Greg Memphis. Catfish Flats is Eberlein's latest incarnation.

Eberlein, percussionist Henry Jolley and bassist Rick Long have joined together to form a blues band. Jolley has a great drum kit—a clear Ludwig limited-edition set that lets you see each strike of his

drumsticks. Long plays a Fender bass with a style reminiscent of Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers—he runs up and down the

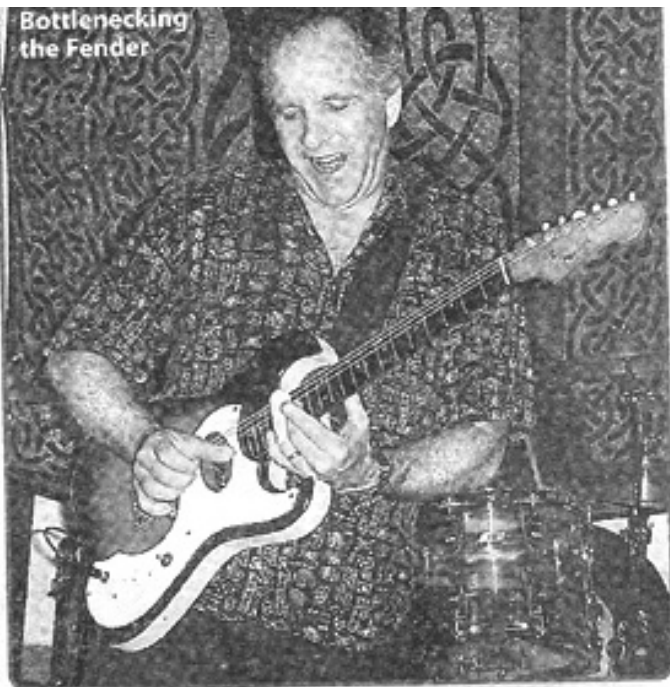
frets like a lead guitarist. Eberlein, well, George is also known as Guitar George—as in the song "Sultans of Swing" by Dire



Henry Jolley on percussion with bassist Rick Long



**Bottlenecking  
the Fender**



Straits. "Check out guitar George/He knows all the chords/When it's strictly rhythm he doesn't want to make it cry or sing."

George does a lot of bottlenecking. Bottlenecking is a technique where you fret the strings with what looks like the neck of a bottle, and it gives a very different sound to the notes. If you ranked bottlenecking according to difficulty, it would rank right up there with Jimmy Page's bowing the strings or finger-picking classical guitar.

"I listen to a lot of David Lindley," Eberlein said. Lindley is known for his lap-steel guitar work, which is par excellence. Lindley also did a falsetto on Jackson Browne's "Run-

ning on Empty." Eberlein, to his credit, does not try to sing like Lindley.

Jolley and Long took "rides"—solos where they show off their talents. Long took riffs on the bass that were kind of astonishing in fingering. Jolley went off on a drum solo that used every bit of his kit—but he didn't bang heck out of them.

Catfish Flats is in the process of producing an album. They are going to Tracks in the Sand, a studio in Fairhope, and hope to have the disc done within six months.

"It's going to be all original," Eberlein said, with songs like "South of Highway 31" and "Airport Blues."

Pelican • July 22 - 28, 2005

Eberlein has produced for other bands, including local favorite Brent Burns.

The Undertow was packed—and this was after an evacuation order. College kids, local businessmen, even hippie freaks were there.

The Undertow serves coffee and other adult libations. You can drink yourself either wide-awake or fast asleep there, and there's a good selection of brewed beverages.

After a few brewed beverages, someone shouted, "Any chance of you guys [the band] playing 'Free Bird' or 'Brown-Eyed Girl'?"

Eberlein responded,

"Actually we have put both of them into a medley which is climaxed by a rousing version of 'Do You Feel Like We Do' and 'Margaretville.' But as I'm sure you already know, the only downside is that this must be a set closer. I mean, where can you go from there? Anything else would be anticlimactic."

You can catch Catfish Flats at the Undertow July 23 and July 30 or visit [www.catfishflats.com](http://www.catfishflats.com). The nice thing about the site is that Eberlein designed it. His day job is director of information technology at RDI, so he uses the left and right side of his brain. ■