

VARIETY



100+ artists fill Bayfront Festival Park with juried works of art including jewelry, photography, glass, ceramics, metalwork, painting and more!

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SAT. AUG 17 10 AM - 5 PM
SUN. AUG 18 10 AM - 4 PM

TWO SPECIALTY MARKETS!



RED-HOT BLUES

What to see at this year's Bayfront Blues Festival

By Christa Lawler
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This year's Bayfront Blues Festival has some sassy AM radio vibes, a big-voiced newbie and a couple of Grammy Award-winning headliners.

The 31st annual three-day fest starts at 11:30 a.m. today with Mel Sando, in his 10th appearance, and Kim Ellerman in the acoustic tent. It runs through The Kentucky Headhunters' set, which starts at 6:45 p.m. Sunday at Bayfront Festival Park.

In between: gravely old voices and big, bold new ones. Thirty acts, plenty of Minnesota ties, will play during the festival.

Reverend Raven & The Chain Smokin' Altar Boys play Friday's afterparty from 9:45-11:15 p.m., and Lamont Cranston plays at the same time on Saturday. For a full schedule, go to bayfrontblues.com.

Here are some must-see acts.

Ally Venerable Band

There's something retro about Venerable, the Texas-raised blues-rock guitar hero who has won contest after contest after contest for her mad skillz. It's hard to decide if it would be better to see her play a guitar solo in an arena with full-on pyrotechnics, or while standing on a cliff, a silhouette, in the dessert. "Texas Honey," her third album, debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard blues charts earlier this year.

2 p.m. Friday, main stage

Bobby Rush

This Mississippi bluesman, with one of those voices that sounds like it was ridden over rocks, earned his first Grammy Award after 66 years in the music biz. Bobby Rush took home the title for Best Traditional Blues Album in 2017 for the "Porcupine Meat." There's a touch of whimsy in the 12-tune mix, especially the title track — where a can't-leave relationship is described as "porcupine meat, too fat to eat, too lean to throw away." His latest, "Sitting on the Top of the Blues" is scheduled for release in mid-August.

8 p.m. Friday, main stage



FROM TOP: Ally Venerable plays the Bayfront Blues Festival 2 p.m. Friday on the main stage. Photo from allyvenerableband.com. Bobby Rush, who won his first Grammy Award more than 60 years into his career, headlines Bayfront Blues Festival. Photo by Bill Steber. Crow plays midday Saturday at Bayfront Festival Park. Photo by Chuck Ryan Photography. Sugaray Rayford plays Friday at Bayfront Blues Festival. Submitted photo. Joyann Parker plays the Bayfront Blues Festival 11:30 a.m. Sunday in the acoustic tent. Photo from joyannparker.com.

When scammers come calling

"Hello. This is a call from Officer Mitchell of Social Security to let you know that you may lose your Social Security benefits if you do not call this number within 24 hours to update your personal information."



DOUG LEWANDOWSKI

Sound familiar? These calls usually come when I'm trying to take a nap, watching Lester on NBC at 5:30 on the evening news, or in the middle of a discussion with my better half about why I don't put the butter back in the "right" place in the fridge. Unfortunately, mildly intimidating calls about my Social Security data are not the only calls I get. Equally worrisome is the one claiming to be from the IRS. Scammers are everywhere, and a sucker is born every minute. It's just that they can reach out and touch us any time with the phones we carry.

So what are some strategies for handling these Bozos? One way is to not answer the phone in the first place. Or, if you are unfamiliar with the number and get duped into a conversation with Karen, hang up when it's a robocall voice, or heaven forbid, an actual human being trying to take advantage of your good nature.

There are of course a variety of ways to defeat the invasions. How about this?

"Hi Doug. You're a hard person to reach. (Insert chuckle here) I'd like to talk to you about your health insurance plan."

"What about my plan?"

There are several approaches to take as Bert or Janelle give the pitch. One I use is to put the phone down and start the coffee grinder for a midday latte. Or I start the table saw in the shop to finally make the picture frame my wife has been patiently requesting for the past six months. Another one is when I fake intense interest by asking a multitude of enthusiastic questions about whatever the product is and then hang up. This last strategy works well when I'm bored watching paint dry.

When I've googled ways of eliminating unwanted phone calls, there are a variety of apps suggested by the experts to stop the annoyance. Unfortunately, for