

FACES

A LOOK AT LIFE IN PARKER COUNTY

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A *Blaze* OF GLORY

By Danie Huffman



Blaze has fun with fellow performers during shows.



Blaze loves to relax and "kick it" with friends in his off time.

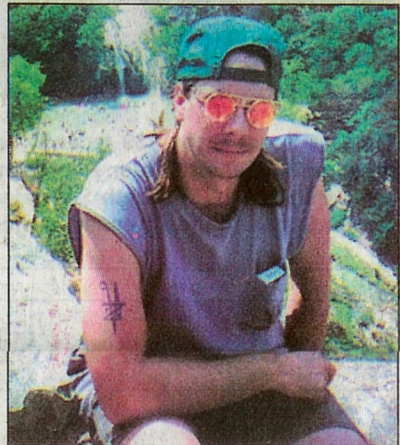


Blaze loves to perform his own songs as well as cover songs from various artists.



COURTESY PHOTOS

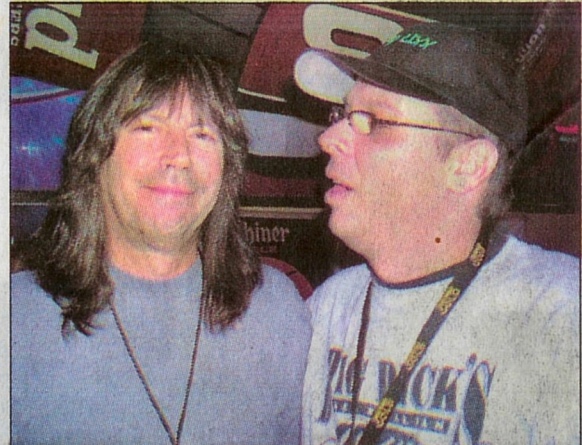
Billy Blaze, of Weatherford, has been playing gigs all over Texas for nine years. His songs are a blending of folk, rock, blues and country.



Blaze is a nature lover.



Blaze has faithful fans who follow him to different cities when he performs.



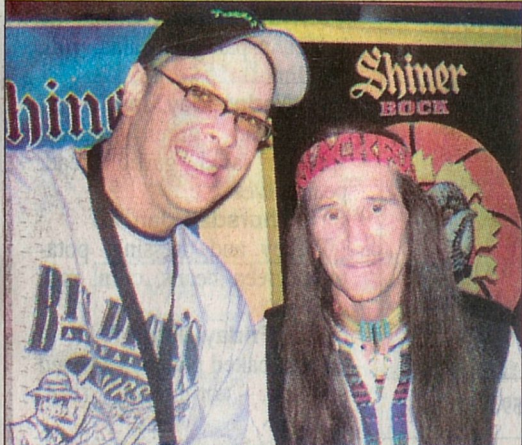
Blaze with artist Pat Travers.



Blaze was a featured artist at the Lake Weatherford Fourth of July Bash last summer.



Blaze performing at the Mushroom Fest.



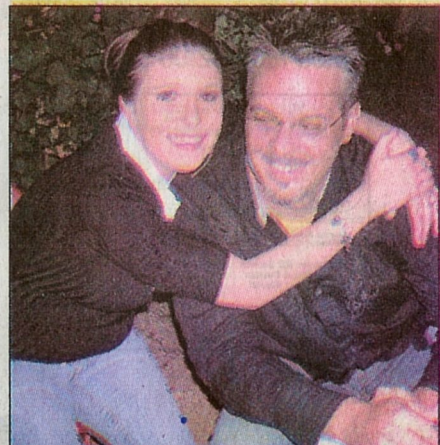
Blaze poses with Greg T. Walker, the bass player of Blackfoot.



Blaze with Simon Wright from the band AC/DC.



Blaze with friend Allisa Scheps.



Blaze has fun with fan and niece, Nicki Smith.

Billy Blaze, a singer and songwriter from Weatherford, is trying to break into the music scene.

So far, he's doing a pretty good job at it, too.

For the past nine years, since he began to take his music to a professional level, he's been traveling all over the state.

He's played gigs at festivals, restaurants, nightclubs and events from Midland to Tahoka and even last year at the Lake Weatherford Fourth of July celebration bash. He particularly enjoyed performing at the Greenwood Saloon in Bluff Dale, Texas.

Blaze started writing songs about three years ago.

"My songs are mainly acoustic, blending folk, rock, blues and country," Blaze said. "It really doesn't fit into a specific genre."

His favorite type of music is blues.

"I just like the emotion and feeling of blues," he said. "It's about life and what everybody is going through. It's something I can identify with."

His music was chosen as top prize in a Dallas competition last summer. Blaze's talents earned him the Acoustic Heroes Competition People's Choice Award, taking home a Takamine \$2,200 guitar. He said he enjoys writing mostly ballads.

"I'll wake up and have something in my head and I'll build my songs out of an idea and I just start writing," he said.

His heroes and mentors include Stevie Ray Vaughan and old rock and roll artists such as Paul Rogers, the lead singer of Bad Company.

He also likes Amos Lee, a newcomer to the song writing circuit.

"He's phenomenal," Blaze said. "He writes folk with a blues edge."

Blaze is supported by his mother, Margie Ramicone, who lives locally.

"She was the lead vocalist in a band called Sweet Magnolia," he said. "She played in my childhood days."

His number one fans are Debbie

Williams and "Cowboy Bob" Peterson and their families.

"They travel to come see me play," he said. "They're my biggest fans, bar none."

Blaze finds it tough being a solo performer.

"It takes a lot of work to make something pour of it," he said. "The more I tried, the more doors opened for me. I met Roy Orbison's son, Wesley Orbison, last summer at the Fourth of July event. He likes my music so much that he's trying to promote it by sending my demo disc to some contacts he has in the industry."

Blaze taught himself how to play the guitar.

"I took one guitar lesson at age 11 and the teacher tried to teach me an F chord," he said. "I couldn't grasp it and put my guitar away until I was 18. Then one day I picked it up and taught myself how to play."

He said he never dreamt of being a song writer.

"I never thought I'd be able to learn how to make chord changes with my left hand fast enough," he said. "Then I thought I'd never be able to play and sing. But I did it all. If you just keep pushing at it, you'll overcome it."

Blaze's next gig is Jan. 19, at The Point After North in Flower Mound, Texas.

A schedule is posted on his Web site at www.billyblaze.net.

He is currently working on wrapping up the finishing touches of his first CD titled, "Under the Covers."

He previously played for a cover band, singing songs made popular by famous artists.

"This is just what's under the covers," he said.

The CD is expected to be released by May.

Blaze is contemplating a prerelease of the album including four or five of his favorite tunes.