

## BAND OF THE WEEK

## FRIAR'S POINT

■ **Music:** Blues and blues rock

■ **Members:** Matt Koch, keyboard; Pat Powers, harmonica; Chris London, lead guitar and vocals; Mary Dunbar, lead singer, percussion; Brian Berland, drums; and Jim Baldwin, bass

■ **Performing:** IBC Fundraising Event, at 9 p.m. today, Salisbury Fire Company Social Hall, 1226 Marlow St., Allentown. Event runs 3-10:30 p.m. and also features the Guitar-dogs, the Sarah Ayers Band, Jack Murray and Friends, Johnny T's Rough Mix, Bev Conklin and the Blues Crew and the Blues Factor. Tickets: \$10. [www.lvbn.org](http://www.lvbn.org).

■ **On the Net:** [www.friarspoint-band.com](http://www.friarspoint-band.com)

There's a new member of the close-knit family of Valley blues bands. Friar's Point, which has only been together for a year, won last summer's contest to represent the Lehigh Valley Blues Network at the 2009 International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

"We have a good time and don't try to be mellow," says Mary Dunbar, who does most of the lead vocals. "We do more contemporary blues than classic, giving a rock spin. We jam out."

Lead guitarist Chris London can fly effortlessly through Freddie King and Stevie Ray Vaughan riffs. Pat Powers plays blues harp or switches to rhythm guitar for a jam vibe. The band also adds a blues twist to standards like

"Hound Dog" and "The Weight."

Offstage, the petite, 28-year-old Dunbar does not look like a blues shouter. "I'm a quiet person, but I've always liked to sing," she says. "I was originally attracted to classic rock, but I developed an admiration for the blues." She uses her powerhouse voice for tunes by Janis Joplin, Aretha Franklin, Bonnie Raitt and Susan Tedeschi.

Named after a composition by Tedeschi, which in turn celebrates a town where Muddy Waters saw Robert Johnson playing guitar, Friar's Point was originally called the Long Rider Blues Band. It went through several personnel changes before settling on its present lineup.

Now, however, the band is a

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Photo by Katie Strzeszewski

tightly integrated unit. "There's not any kind of drama," Dunbar says. "Instead, we feed off each other's excitement."

The group plans to put out a

CD, and wants to write originals for the 25th annual International Blues Challenge contest in February.

Dave Howell

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

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