

DUO HOPES GOOD LUCK HOLDS FOR COMPETITION

Originally published in *The Blade* on Thursday, January 25, 2007

By RYAN E. SMITH
BLADE STAFF WRITER

At first glance, the duo that makes up Lucky Brother may seem an unlikely combination to be competing in next week's International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

The guitarist - who also sings and plays the harmonica and foot drum - is Tim Oehlers, a musical jack-of-all-trades who is as comfortable playing old jazz standards as he is ZZ Top.

The bass player, Mark "Lucky" Lemont, has a college degree in biology and once had aspirations of becoming a forest ranger.

Together, though, they've managed to create an acoustic roots-blues sound that won the Black Swamp Blues Society's solo/duo contest and put them on the road to Memphis.

They've also put together a self-titled album featuring their sound, which Oehlers describes as "Muddy Waters meets Johnny Cash." A CD release party will be held from 7 to 11 tonight at the Basin St. Grille, 5201 Monroe St., where Lucky Brother performs every Thursday.

Oehlers wrote all the songs, and teamed up with Lemont for his unique style of play.

"He has the ability to do this really percussive way of playing," he said.

The admiration is mutual.

"He's probably the best guitar player that I've ever worked with," Lemont said. "Every time he picks up a slide [to play guitar], it just makes me smile. You know something good's coming."

AUDIO - Listen to music by Lucky Brother

- [Berry Pie](#)
- [Memphis bound](#)

Oehlers, 49, taught himself to play guitar as a teenager in North Toledo. Tired of listening to the same chords over and over, his father sent him outside to practice, and Oehlers found an audience when he started strumming at Riverside Park.

For years, he worked second shift at a chemical factory while also playing at weddings and night clubs.

"I had a rock-out period in my life for years," he said. "I have permanent hearing loss because of it."

When he and his wife lost their jobs at the factory - talk about the blues - he stuck with music, working hard to drum up gigs and offering guitar lessons. These days, he seems to be everywhere on the Toledo scene.

In addition to playing in Lucky Brother, Oehlers regularly has acoustic guitar jams with buddies in low-volume, living-room style performances as Tim Oehlers and Friends, and he does instrumental gigs at coffee shops and the art museum with the Tim Oehlers Trio.

Lemont, 46, lives in Perrysburg and also plays with the swing/blues band Hepcat Revival.

The two had known each other and played off and on for years, but they formed Lucky Brother specifically for the local blues competition. Their goal wasn't to fulfill dreams of fame and fortune.



Tim Oehlers, left, and Mark Lemont perform as Lucky Brother at the Basin St. Grille. (THE BLADE/JETTA FRASER)

"The main reason we entered was just to get performance opportunities," Oehlers said.

That much worked, as the blues competition led to their regular gig at Basin St.

Local restaurateur Nick Tokles said the duo's brand of blues fits in perfectly with the working people who take a night out together to eat and enjoy themselves at places like Basin St., which he owns.

"They play that style of music which blends right in with that age group," he said. "Tim's just got such a great personality with his audience, the way he communicates with the audience and has fun with them."

The new album by Lucky Brother may be blues music, but it's not meant to get the listener down. From nostalgic ditties like "Berry Pie" to the hopeful "Memphis Bound," the songs are intended to be positive.

"It has to do with the glass being half full instead of half empty," Oehlers said.

Contact Ryan E. Smith at: ryansmith@theblade.com or 419-724-6103.

[< previous](#)

[next >](#)