

# River Cities Reader

Arts, Business, Culture and Politics from the Quad Cities

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in all kinds of music. He could play anything on any instrument."

Throughout the 30-plus years of his musical career, the influence of both Rachell and Armstrong - and that of Johnny Young - has been felt in DelGrosso's club and festival appearances. But DelGrosso has honored their influence not only through his music, but through his words - in addition to his stage performances, DelGrosso has been able to write about his mentors (and many, many others) for such publications as *Living Blues*, *Mandolin World News*, *Mandolin Magazine*, *Footsteps*, and *Blues Revue*, for which he writes a weekly guitar column and has served as an associate editor since 1996.

Clearly, DelGrosso relishes the opportunity to share his love of the blues, and the musician found the perfect outlet for his passion when he spent 10 years coordinating the Augusta Heritage Arts Workshop in Elkins, West Virginia, which involves between 120 and 200 students annually. "It's a week-long program," he says, "designed to be all blues, taught on guitar, mandolin, fiddle, piano, bass, vocals ... the whole gamut. It was, and still is, a tremendous program, not only for the students, but for the faculty.

"There we are for a week, jamming all night ... ." He laughs. "The only downside is the recovery period after it's over." So it takes another week to recover? "As we all got older, it sure took a whole lot longer than that. I used to go to the Maryland shore when that was over and just sit on the beach and stare at the water for three days. I couldn't move."

Though the long nights in Elkins took their toll, DelGrosso is certainly no stranger to the world of education. "I've been teaching school for thirty-two, -three years," he says, and is currently educating middle-schoolers at a private school in Los Angeles. But don't expect your L.A.-based nieces and nephews to sign up for DelGrosso's middle-school mandolin course.

"I'm teaching science," he says. "When I was in college, back in Detroit, I was a bio major, and my parents - good Italian-American parents - wanted me to be a doctor. And I just said, 'You know, Mom, I just cannot do that kind of stuff. I don't want to be cuttin' people and sewin' 'em up and that kind of stuff.' But I was certainly interested - and still am - in science. I'm, I guess, what people call a Renaissance man."

Indeed. DelGrosso reveals that he's also interested in drawing, and the arts, and in between his concert appearances, writing duties, and teaching duties, he even found time to record his first CD last year - *Get Your Nose Outta My Bizness*, which DelGrosso says "covers just about all the bases of things that I do." If that's possible.

"It's a varied life," he deadpans. "I never get bored, let me tell ya. Hopefully, I can retire soon and, you know, I'll be even busier then."