



KEY EVENTS 'N YOUR AREA

Central Arkansas & Beyond!

Potluck & Poison Welcomes Prolific Storyteller, Jimmy Cunningham, Jr.



by Today's Communique staff

"Louisiana folk think they have a lock on bayous!" ~Jimmy Cunningham, Jr.

Potluck and Poison Ivy, a "...live dinner and storytelling event in Argenta, Arkansas that invites you to bring your story to the table by sharing a meal and some good ole Southern storytelling", welcomed Jimmy Cunningham, Jr. to its May 25 event at The Joint in the Argenta neighborhood of North Little Rock. Cunningham, Jr. is the Executive Director of the Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance, a non-profit organization dedicated to building a national travel corridor between Pine Bluff, AR, and Greenville, MS. He is also the Director of Tourism Development for the Pine Bluff Advertising and Promotion Commission.

A set by The Salty Dogs and an introduction by Potluck & Poison Ivy co-founder, John Gaudin preceded Cunningham taking the stage. Proudly reppin' his alma matter by sporting a black and gold UAPB jersey, Cunningham began by talking about chitlins only after he shared the history of Arkansas's bayous. Did you know that Bayou Bartholomew which starts in Pine Bluff is the longest bayou in the world? It spans 364 miles? He shared a story about how as a junior in high school, his mother helped him deal with the 'challenge' of a girl who was pursuing him for whom the feelings were not mutual. Let's just say it involved the strongly-scented task of cleaning chitlins. Perhaps other attendees wondered like me, how chitlins would be connected to the story. Before long, we found out.

Cunningham and his team are working to connect and grow 2 cities in 2 states – Pine Bluff, AR & Greenville, MS. The region is enveloped in what is historically known as the Chitlin circuit, a group of cities where black performers were relegated to perform during segregation. Plans are in the works, thanks to funding from sources like Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, to create place-making spaces along the proposed national corridor in Gould, McGehee, Dumas, and Dermott. The spaces will contain murals, sculptures, statues, & public art as well as an art & wellness space in downtown Pine Bluff.



John Gaudin listens as Jimmy Cunningham explains the mission of Delta Rhythm & Bayous Alliance

Learn more about Cunningham's work by visiting explorepinebluff.org. Learn more about Potluck & Poison Ivy by visiting potluckandpoisonivy.com

Did You Know:

- Bobby Rush was once paid 25 cents, a hamburger, and a plate of chitlins for his performances.
- Sam Cooke's career began in Pine Bluff.
- Pine Bluff native, George Washington Thomas invented boogie-woogie
- Miles Davis' parents were from Moscow, AR. Davis spent summers there and recalled his time there inspired his early work.
- Jefferson county once had one of the highest lynching rates in the country. 1