



## Musician Stories

[National Attention to Musician's Health](#)

[Mem Shannon's Story](#)

[Felice Guimont, RN](#)

Stories from Musicians

August 2011



Mem's Back At It!



Mem Shannon now calls himself "Regular Check Up Charlie" and is back to playing.

Here are more photos Mem took of himself while in the hospital.

## Well it finally happened to me...

I just made 50 back in December and am very thankful to still be around. 50 years old and working in my second career -- as a musician. Previous to that I was a cab driver for 15 years.



50 years old and never missing a day of work or a gig due to illness. 50 years old and I have never even seen a dentist much less a doctor.

(I know dentists are doctors too-you get my point). I have had a fear of doctors my whole life. They [doctors] used to represent death to me. Maybe I watch too much television.

My band and I had a 3-day road trip back in April, the first weekend of JazzFest. We left early Thursday morning, drove up to do a show in St. Louis on Thursday night (April 22) and then two nights in Chicago. While on this trip I was called in to do a studio dubbing/voice-over session. We got back home Monday morning. It was just enough time to catch a nap and make the session. On Tuesday, while walking out of the house my brother asked "is that lipstick on your lips?" You're lips are red. Turns out, it was my own blood on my lips!



Since I hardly ever drink alcohol I immediately blamed it on the few drinks I had the night before. I was bleeding from the mouth and during the course of the day these bloody blisters began to grow/ hemorrhage inside my mouth and on my tongue. I also noticed bruises beginning to crop up on different parts of my body. I had a gig at Le Bon Temp Roule Tuesday night that I was determined to do and then rehearsal on Wednesday for our JazzFest gig the second weekend! I played my Tuesday night show (sneaking around spitting and rinsing out blood) but, the rehearsal I had planned for the Wednesday turned into my first trip to the hospital as an adult.

My condition was getting worse and I couldn't wait any longer. It was my turn!!! I realized that this was the "something" I had been waiting for to scare me into seeing a doctor. Wednesday afternoon I found myself in University Hospital's emergency room. Little did I know that my first visit to the "DOCTOR" since my mother took me as kid, would last 20 days!

They put me in a bed in intensive care right away and said "Mr. Shannon. Don't Move." It turns out that I came down with a condition called "I-T-P" ([Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura](#)). It attacks your blood platelets, which clot the blood. If I were to make a wrong move and hurt or cut myself--I could have bled to death! The treatment involved several platelet replacements (intravenously of course), special antibiotics and steroids. It felt as if I had close to a hundred blood "draws" during my stay at the hospital! Thank God for seeing me through it all.

**All that aside and as serious as my illness was, that is not the reason I have offered up my story here. My main reason for writing this is to use what notoriety I have here in New Orleans to encourage men, particularly African-American men to start taking better care of themselves and get medical care. "Man go see the doctor". Don't wait for "something" to happen.**

Don't be like me thinking that the doctor represents death or that they are only there to tell people that they're going to die I now know that doctors can represent "life". They can tell you how to live! And to all my fellow musicians out there who don't have insurance and can't afford medical care, please take advantage of the "New Orleans Musicians Clinic". After all, it was established for us. I really want to thank all the nurses, aids, and doctors on the seventh floor oncology unit at University Hospital. You all really treated me with kid gloves.

Thank you to all my friends for looking in on me and for your prayers and well wishes. That was my first stay in the hospital and it really meant a lot. You are very special people. Thank You. -- Mem Shannon

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National Attention to  
Musician's Health  
Issues



Cello virtuoso Alisa Weilerstein is always at the head of her class At 28, she is in demand by famous conductors.

[Read her story here.](#)

**Keep Music Alive!**

**And Here's Another Musician Who is Paying it Forward**

Join Our Mailing List!

## Meet the newest member of the NOMC Team: Felice Guimont, RN - NOMC Patient Advocate



Felice Guimont is a native New Orleansian, a performing artist, nurse, and patient of the Musicians' Clinic. Her efforts include advocating on behalf of other musicians who have had difficulty obtaining appropriate health care, as well as providing wellness education. She is passionate about eradicating the devastating toll, which preventable

illnesses have had on New Orleans' musicians.

[Click here to see the "News with a Twist" story about the NOMC featuring Felice Guimont!](#)



Start Your French Quarter Fest 1 Day Earlier in 2012!

The Board of Directors of the New Orleans Musicians Clinic (NOMC) and Assistance Foundation (NOMAF) Cordially invite you

# A CREOLE JAZZ TEA

FEATURING LIVE LOCAL JAZZ

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO MISS NEW ORLEANS?

## SAVE THE DATE

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 11, 2012

4PM

at the Historic  
**FRERET-BULTMAN PLANTATION HOUSE**  
1525 Louisiana Avenue in the Garden District  
1/2 block from the St. Charles Avenue Street Car



We know some of you are already starting to make plans for 2012 French Quarter Fest. Make sure to start 1 day earlier and join the NOMC/AF for this great annual event!

