

My Oh My, What You've Been Missin'...

Well, if you missed Living History Day – I almost hate to tell you because it's going to seem like gloating. Everybody there got to learn to square dance, with real pros doing the teaching. The kids seemed to be transported, within minutes the quick ones instructing the newcomers, and all having a ball. A young man, very dreamy according to the girls (and some of the older women, too), gave a day-long bullwhip demonstration that held his audiences spellbound. Under the Picker's Tree were a half-dozen of the best in the business, picking and telling stories. Under another tree was the tallest white man I ever saw up close, wearing a ten-gallon hat with a second floor and space for rent, keeping whole groups of kids mesmerized with his antics.

Dotted all around Schreiner Campus in Kerrville, Texas, on the last Friday in September, were over three dozen more "campsites". Each with its own theme – quilt making, song writing, tales of the Old West, singers, actors, a carnival for the mind. As an observer, I was mightily impressed: hundreds of well-behaved kids enjoying themselves and learning something new without even realizing it. Ambling around and stopping to listen, I was both surprised and pleased to hear them discussing what they'd seen and heard.

The following day an adoring crowd gathered at the Cailloux Student Center to hear four well-known authors talk about various aspects of Texas music. Ramiro Burr discussed the contributions of Mexican musical luminaries; Jean Boyd talked about a seminal group founded in the 1930's and still going, the Light Crust Doughboys; Nolan Porterfield brought a rare and fascinating film made in the '30's with Jimmie Rodgers; and Gary Hartman of SWT provided introductions, continuity, and offered his own thoughts as Director of the Center for Texas Music History.

Later that afternoon, another grinning, happy crowd gathered to listen to the contestants in the Hill Country Youth Orchestra Fiddle Contest. And WOW! For those that worry about the future of Texas music – "you can't play Texas without a fiddle in the band" – relax. The future is in good hands – excellent, fast, and very good hands.

The next afternoon, Ruthie Foster with Cyd Cassone headlined the concert to raise money for Literacy and Learning. She was electric, as always, and the crowd was enthralled while she poured out her joy and sorrow and love for life.

Now, here's the thing: Kathleen and the Foundation will be doing this again next year - same time, last weekend of September – same place, Schreiner University, Kerrville. If you missed it this year, make the mark on your appointment calendar now for next. You and your kids should see this. It's the most valuable free day you'll ever remember.

Now, while you're here, what are your plans for this Spring? Are you aware of the Coffeehouse Series, which the Foundation co-sponsors at Schreiner University with Drs. Tobin Tilley and Brett Ford of Kerrville, and Hill Country Music of Fredericksburg. The first Wednesday of each month (February, March, April) you'll find the devoted gathered

in the snack bar of the Cailloux Center on the Schreiner University campus, 2100 Memorial Boulevard, in Kerrville, Texas. At 7 pm the stage is opened to all comers – sing, recite, tell a story. Then at 8 pm our headliner comes on (to be announced -but always a great one – keep checking the website) and performs – FREE – for all comers.

Do you know about the scholarship fund? This year's winner, **Jessica Roberts**, will find this Christmas a little easier to bear with the help the Foundation is going to provide in her future educational aspirations.

You may have noticed how much free education and entertainment the Foundation is providing. But you're an adult. You know this stuff isn't really free. The infinitesimally small annual Foundation budget is somehow stretched to fund all this stuff. Which is why we need your help.

Are you aware that the end of the year is upon us – and that the chance for getting that tax deduction for a charitable contribution this year is quickly running into the sands of time? We need your support to continue the events outlined above. You need the Texas Heritage Music Foundation to keep track of, archive, and save for posterity the music being produced by local Texans.

So, here's your chance to do several things at once – all in your own interest. You get a tax deduction by sending a check to the music foundation. The foundation is able to expand operations to preserve even more Texas musical history. Which will, in its turn, provide the incentive to new and upcoming performers to continue creating for the joy and pleasure of us all.

Give us a call – (830) 367-3740, or send a check for your tax-deductible contribution to the Texas Heritage Music Foundation, P.O. Box 291945, Kerrville, Texas 78029-1945. We're waiting to hear from you – the future of Texas music could well depend on it.