

Special from Kathleen Hudson
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The spirit of Buck Ramsey came back to the Hill Country Thursday, April 21, and appeared on stage at the Campfire Concerts, hosted by Dennis Gaines. Jill Jones (of Hays County Gals) brought him back as she sang "Texas Rivers." I always remember Buck singing that from his wheelchair in Kerrville....at the then Cowboy Artists of America Museum, Schreiner University, and at the annual tribute to Jimmie Rodgers and the Cowboy. He won many hearts here in the Hill Country before he went on to punch cattle in the bigger corral. Andy Hedges kicked off the series, and Buck was present then. I found out that Andy was influenced by Buck in many ways.

Dennis Gaines, a cowboy singer and poet himself, has created a Campfire Series to run from 7-9 p.m. on the first and third Thursday of each month from April to October. Now we'll find out whether Kerrville has the audience to support such a venue, such a great idea! The small group that came out for number one tripled by number two. Don Cadden will be featured on May 5, and Dennis is still working on the 19th. I'm sure we can expect to see folks like Jean Prescott, Andy Wilkinson, Buck Reams and even some of the locals. Kerrville is growing venues like the tree in my front yard grows new trees...through the root system. Figure that one out!

I was thrilled to share the audience spot with Joe and Susan Heffington. Joe was part of the original impulse I had to start the Texas Heritage Music Foundation, a music lover with an ear for authentic. I met a young lady, age eleven, Savannah, who sings in her school choir and seems to love music. We sat, with her 5 year-old brother, Joshua, by the campfire for a while. I love it when children decide to talk with me! Her dad won runner-up in the bake-off, an event that is part of this series. Ross and Clarabelle Snodgrass sat on the front row. I met them my first week in Kerrville about twenty years ago. Ross is about to have his 102nd birthday and admitted to having ridden in the 1924 trail ride that left Kerr Country. He also shared that his father had been on the trail to Kansas City several times before him. Jill said, "I can't even think about this. I might forget some of my songs." Yep, she was moved to be playing for them. I did hear that Ross still dances several times a week. Now that's the cowboy way.

Jill shared information from her research as she moved through a litany of classics and some original music. I particularly enjoyed her stories of women of the west, and I was glad to tell her that my manuscript on women and Texas music is now with UT Press, and her chapter is still intact. One of forty chapters.

I finish up school at Schreiner on May 7 and head to San Miguel de Allende to teach from May 10-25. So don't think I've quit going out to hear music when you don't see me around! Actually hard to sit here tonight and write this column when I love being at the Downtowner on Thursday, enjoying all the wonderful local talent. Oftentimes, Mike Kasberg is playing next door at Francisco's with Denny Hardy and Vance Cook. They have a light jazz trio that entertains with the best of them.

Ahead in May is the event that put Kerrville on the world-wide music map, The Kerrville Folk Festival. Some favorites appearing early in the run (May 26-June 12)

include Jimmy LaFave, Tom Russell, Eliza Gilkyson, Butch Hancock and Lowen and Navarra on Friday, May 27. That stable of excellent writing is mostly managed by Val Denn and her agency in Wimberley. This is the night for the writers. Peter Yarrow and Josh White will remind us of the definition of folk music on Sunday, May 29. Other events include seminars, workshops, guitar clinics, harmonica workshops, songwriting workshops, chapel hill services, New Folk Winners concerts, Children's concerts, a house concert seminar, staff concert and more! Yes, you can even attend a yoga session and a shabat service. Call 830-257-3600 for tickets and details. Check out www.kerrvillefolkfestival.com for up to date announcements and information on all things!

As many of you loyal readers know, I've been attending this festival since it's second year! I worked with Rod Kennedy a year on his foundation and caught that music bug bigtime. This publication would not begin to hold all my stories of this monumental event where everyone speaks love and peace, with the reminder to bring it all back next year. Dalis Allen had continued to grow the event as new producer for several years.

House concerts abound in Kerrville. Shake Russell played at Jack and Barbara Field's house on April 23, Mike Blakely also played a new house concert in Kerrville during April. The Family Sports Center has most of the current posters up on a bulletin board. Don't miss out just because you couldn't find this magazine.

My CD stack includes the new Jimmy LaFave, a great one on Red House Records. "Blue Nightfall" captures Jimmy at his best, showcasing his distinct voice and wonderful writing. Listen to the titles: revival, sweet sweet love, river road, music from the motor court, blue nightfall, shining on through, rain falling down, bohemian cowboy blues, it's gone, I wish for you, when you were mine, gotta ramble. Ah, that loving rambling man howling a the moon still.

Since Arlo Guthrie (and his daughter) is playing the Kerrville Folk Festival on June 10th (the same night the Gypsy Kings play the Majestic in San Antonio....waaaaaaa....don't like that choice), I have his latest version of "Alice's Restaurant" on my cd player. You don't want to miss this.

Debbie Walton has played the Hill Country Opry several times lately, and her new CD, "Still Your Fool," showcases that voice and delivery of hers. I do like it best when she kicks off her shoes and brings in a little Janis! Debbie can do that. See www.debbiewalton.com for more information. Buy that CD!

The Andy Hedges CD is called "City Boys" and is a simple collection of beautiful songs. I love it that he chooses to sing a little Dylan in his set, "Girl From The North Country." Now that's a true cowboy song. Produced in 2004 by Andy Wilkinson, the CD is available at www.andyhedges.com

We had a great April coffeehouse at Schreiner, featuring about eight local musicians, including a solo set by Louis Real. ONE of his regular gigs in this town is Thursday lunch at the Downtowner. I know because sister Carolyn, her buddy Pam, and many more local women seem to gather there to support Louis on Thursdays.

If we can find some business sponsors, we can create a summer coffeehouse at Schreiner. Call me if interested in being on that team. Local musicians are invited to join the Texas Heritage Music Foundation in return for a listing on the THMF website of contact information. Brian and Melissa head up the team of local musicians. Join up

soon! See www.texasheritagemusic.org for details. Read that newsletter written by Bob Gray.

Now for school business. I've had a run of great guests in the classroom, including Richard Dobson, a Texas songwriter who lives in Switzerland now. Sam Skeist came back and shared his poetry. Conan joined my classes with his poetry one day. And I asked the students to look for the class outside of those four walls!

Happy Trails and ils sont partis. Kathleen (available to present any kind of program on creativity, writing, communication, Texas music and more; available to do the presentation as Belle Starr!)

Check out www.hill-country-visitor.com for complete info on the Hill Country. And another look at this column.

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