

On The Road

October 2006

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As we move into the very month that I was born, I notice that I don't really notice birthdays anymore. Not after that huge party thrown for me by sister Carolyn and friends. Jimmy LaFave and his band played the dance, after Stephanie Urbina Jones sang for me and gave me a "Chica" shirt. What more could a woman want at sixty?

On August 5 I did get that question answered. Jessica Marie Lott, my 14-year-old granddaughter came to live with me. Now that's more to want! She is introducing me to hip-hop and rap in ways I didn't even imagine. Driving into school at 6:30 a.m. to the "beat" on the radio reminds me of all the stories "adults" have about the music of teenagers. I can even remember my parents talking of the path of destruction being carved out by rock and roll and that pelvis of Elvis. Well, not my parents (they were way too cool), but I did hear those stories. Guess some things never change. Ear drums get damaged with loud music, either from speakers or I-Pod headphones! I try not to arrive at my university singing "Meet you at the clu...u...u....b" and bouncing when I walk.

My music adventures in September included a great coffeehouse with Stephanie Urbina Jones and Florin Sanchez. The Cailloux student center was packed, and the largest freshman class at Schreiner produced the largest group of freshmen at a coffeehouse! Imagine that. I dedicated the evening to them. **October 4 we'll showcase Sustain Records** (Kerrville), Drew Kennedy (writer and recording artist), at our Texas music coffeehouse. Chris Collins, former student of mine, will come with Drew Kennedy to talk with my technical communication class on Wednesday afternoon. Yep, it's all about learning.

September 23 at the YO Ranch Hotel **Sustain** brought us a great song swap filled with the songs of Drew Kennedy, Charlie Robison, Keith Gattis, Jarrod Birmingham (a discovery for me!), Josh Grider, and D'Jango Walker. The event was part of a benefit for the **Kerrville Fire Fighters**. Jimmy Perkins has a great ear, and he started Sustain Records. Another of his artists, Ray Wylie Hubbard, played in Louise Hayes Park in Kerrville on Saturday night, September 30. His writing is literary; his performance is soul stirring. .

I also attended yet another Thursday night open mike in Kerrville. This one at the **Back Porch Bar** next to Riverstone Café on the Ingram Highway. I heard one of my current students, Wes Creech, make his debut with new songs, guitar, and some great covers. In fact, he covered a Drew song, and he will meet Drew in class October 4. That should make learning fun and significant!

Our Living History Weekend brought the month to a close. Over 50 performers, a tribute to Jimmie Rodgers, a series of gospel performances in the Union Church, square dancers, cloggers, Danza Azteca with Ray Rios. He had about 300 students dancing at one time around a huge drum. Texas songwriters, Texas jazz with Slim Ritchie and much more!

Susie Nelson came and talked to students about writing and following a dream. Barbara K shared her songs and stories of Texamericana Records, a way she is promoting music and promoting good causes in the world! She said, "Thank you for being here and giving

us a reason to live.” My students got her passion for sharing. Karen Abrahams rocked on guitar; Doc Mason shared songs. Lawrence Clarke, always a contribution to the event, is also a Ph.D. teaching at a university.

The Saturday night showcase of local music brought Midway, Tito’s Trip, and Sol Patch to the stage for an evening of great songs and performances. Tito has just the kind of voice I love! Sol Patch....well, there are way too many stories to write up here. Let’s say I heard Melissa on a demo tape years ago when a friend said, “Here, Melissa wants you to have this.” I played it, saying, “Wow.....listen to that voice.” The duo has transformed into several bands with Bryan and Melissa at the heart. Midway is a group of music lovers par excellence. Dan and Sandy also keep AC Print up and running, doing great business for many of us! The THMF appreciates them.

Some interesting news has come my way: **Sugar Hill Records** (with many Texas artists on the roster) has a box set that re-visits the first 25 years of rich history. Founded in 1978 as a home for the best in roots-based contemporary music, the label is, indeed, a national treasure and an American music icon. The set includes an introductory essay by Jay Orr of the Country Music Hall of Fame and places the collection in an historical context. A DVD features artist interviews, videos, and a photo gallery. Some of the artists are Ricy Skaggs, Peter Rowan, Tony Rice, New Grass Revival (yes, you do hear some bluegrass), Doc Watson, Buck White, Uncle Walt’s Band, Robert Earl Keen (“Mariana”), Townes Van Zandt (“At My Window”), James McMurtry (“For All I Know”), Nickel Creek, Sonny Landreth, The Gourds and many more. Keen, McMurtry, and Van Zandt are interview in my book on Texas songwriters, Telling Stories, Writing Songs: An Album of Texas Songwriters. Yep, I’m partial to great music. Barry Poss, founder, is a great guy and true to the independent spirit treasure in Texas.

Sustain Records has a new release: “Why The Hell Not: The Songs of Kinky Friedman,” our next governor. This collection is a tribute to the songwriting of Kinky and the performances of Charlie Robison, Todd Snider, Kevin Fowler, Reckless Kelly working with Ray Benson and more. Deemed “Pearls in the snow” by The Kinkster when he talks about some of his more poignant songs, songs that might just fall through the cracks of the more “in your face” tunes that he’s penned, the collection does wax poignant at time. I love it! Check out the label at www.sustainrecords.com. Other artists include Ray Wylie Hubbard, Bruce Robison, and Wade Bowen.

Freddy Powers, songwriter and guitarist most loved by Willie and Merle and an important chapter in my book on songwriters, has been diagnosed with Parkinson’s Disease. His 75th birthday party, October 16 at Barton Creek Art Center/One World Theatre in Austin, will cost you \$200 for a ticket and \$75 for the reception and a live feed of the show. Willie Nelson, Janet Reno, and Big and Rich will be part of the event! All for a good cause! They have started a foundation to raise money for research and awareness.

Catherine, his devoted wife, wrote the invitation, reminding us that the live auction will consist of a dinner catered in your home with entertainment by Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel, a hotdog roast on the Booth Ranch with Sonny Throckmorton, and a replica of the original Ovation guitar made especially for Freddy. Being around Freddy and Catherine is just like being in love...again. They ARE love personified. I’ve been to several picking parties at their infamous house in Spicewood, across from Bobbie Nelson’s home. Honored to be invited, I was!

Last let me remind you to get ready for the 4th annual **“Rockin’ the Ranch” Concert** and Campout to benefit children’s Treehouse Project at Candlelight Ranch. Saturday, October 28, from 4-10 p.m. you can hear Mike Blakely, Walt and Tina Wilkins, John Arthur Martinz, John Greenbert, and the Dust Devils. A Cowboy Church will be held on Sunday, October 29 at 9:00 a.m. Providing a place of recreation for kids with special needs, the centerpiece of this event is Candlelight Ranch’s 500 square-foot, universally-accessible treehouse, which is unlike anything else in Texas. Be there or be square.

Vance Gilbert plays a Kerrville House Concert on October 20. He’s not only a songwriter and performer, but a stand-up comic as well! Contact sunbeam@hctc.net for details and information. Remember, the money your bring goes to the artist at a house concert; and the food you brings becomes a community dinner. Sharing the wealth!

Time to sign off.....ils sont partis. Down the road. KH (be sure and check out www.texasheritagemusic.org)