

On The Road  
April 2006

Finally a little rain on this Hill County dust bowl. I do live 25 miles west of Kerrville, and the west, the dry west, starts at my place. Now I understand John Steinbeck and Woody Guthrie in new ways, watching my 11 acres of pasture dry up as two horses wander around searching for "green." I am writing this early on a rare wet morning, hoping there is more to come!

Ahead in April is the first annual Blue Bonnet Blues Festival in Marble Falls. Running from March 31-April 2, this event showcases the best in blues, from Johnny Nicholas to Pinetop Perkins on piano, from Will Owen Gage (at 18 years old) to Debbie Walton to W.C. Clark and more. The Uptown Marble Arts Alliance presents "Clifford Antone's History of Blues and Rock 'n' Roll in a four-part series that starts March 31 and runs Thursday, April 13, Thursday, April 27, and May 11. This is the weekend to be in Marble Falls.

Will Owen Gage will also be playing the March 31<sup>st</sup> Texas Music Coffeehouse at Schreiner University. The evening also features an open mike and the music of "someone like you." The coffeehouse is free and runs from 7-10. April 5 is the Spoken Word Coffeehouse, featuring Bryce Milligan and Wings Press. See [www.wingspress.com](http://www.wingspress.com) for information on this talented, Renaissance man. Again, we start with an open mike at 7, a slam poetry contest and a performance by Bryce. His latest book of poetry says it all: LOST AND CERTAIN OF IT. I know just what he means!

April 12 bring Andy Wilkinson to the Schreiner campus for a free Texas Writers Conference. He will conduct a workshop on creativity from 3:30-5 p.m. and give us a reading/performance after the open mike at 7 p.m. All events are in the Cailloux Student Center. Andy is a poet, producer, performer, writer and director. He might be known for his interpretation and creation of Western music, but he is also the Artist in Residence at Texas Tech, teaching a course on songwriting. An evening with Andy is always entertaining and creative. Call or e-mail me with any questions. [khudson@schreiner.edu](mailto:khudson@schreiner.edu) or 830-792-7409.

My March adventure occurred in Austin, between events at the banquet of music, film, food and late nights called South by Southwest. I started at the Austin Chronicle Music Awards on Wednesday, March 15 and ended up at 2:30 a.m. at Antone's Americana Showcase on Friday, March 17 watching Hank III (that's Williams, you know) do his punk/thrash metal show. We did get to hear some of the plaintiff country Hank at the beginning of his set. I just like being in the room with this guy, this voice that takes you down the road. Thanks to Rick Star at KFAN radio, I got to sit in on the radio interview at El Sol y La Luna then ask Hank about Jimmie Rodgers. He said he'd love to come play Kerrville, home of Blue Yodeler's Paradise, and he'd love to bring Wayne "The Rain" Hancock. "He can yodel, and that's what you need to do singing Jimmie." Hank was clear that he's on his own path with no one telling him what to do. I love his spirit, his music, his voice. And I'm thrilled he introduced me to my first punk/metal show where a lead singer jumped into the audience and was returned to the stage, head bleeding, by that same audience. Interesting music moment. Well, Kerrville has not had many punk concerts.....yet.

South by Southwest reminds me of Alvin Toffler's book, *Future Shock*. Years ago, he mentioned that response to over-choice would be apathy. That's how I felt, briefly, as I looked at the schedule for South by Southwest. Where do I start? What do I leave out? The path became clear as I moved into the forest of possibilities. And the event is so well-oiled that it moves smoothly from registration to panels to trade show and to late nights.

After hearing Neil Young give a key note interview (and conversation with filmmaker, Jonathan Demme), I knew I had to see the movie premier that evening at the Paramount of "Heart of Gold." I was not disappointed and came away, newly encouraged to forge my own creative path. He said, "When the muse calls to me, I put down everything I'm doing and honor that call." I heard his talk as a call to all of us. A Joseph Campbell call to "follow your bliss." And the movie, which is a movie of a concert (not a documentary) is filled with close-ups that allow the viewer to see nuances of subtle meaning that would, otherwise, event be noticed. Brilliant camera work. Neil and his wife, Peggy, could not plan the soft looks that passed between them. Neil could not plan or practice the shift that occurred in his eyes as he talked of his daddy. And the last credits rolled, as Neil packed up his guitar on the Ryman Stage in Nashville said, "for daddy."

Other highlights for me included the moment I first heard Roky Erickson of the 13<sup>th</sup> Floor Elevators. He was featured at the Austin Chronicle Music Awards on Wednesday, and the music he played with his group The Explosives made me want to dance! This band, part of the origin and history of psychedelic music has some Kerrville connections. I know John Ike Walton (drummer) and Ronnie Leatherman (bass) and Terry Penney (guitar) have played with various incarnations of the Elevators. I know John Ike was there with Roky in the beginning. Margret Moser wrote an insightful story on Roky for The Austin Chronicle. Go to their website, [www.austinchronicle.com](http://www.austinchronicle.com) and read her archived story. I met a young writer from England who is working on a book, one that keeps on growing page by page. He's spent time in Kerrville, interviewing Ronnie and John Ike. The Ice Cream Social at Threadgill's gave many interesting characters a place to gather, reminisce and hear lots of good music.

Another highlight was the James McMurtry set at Antones'. We've been listening to him here in Kerrville since he won the Kerrville New Folk Award in the early 90's. I sat by Larry McMurtry that rainy afternoon, watching James play the Threadgill Theatre. Now James has a 15 year old who plays in several bands, and his dad, Larry, acknowledged both James and Curtis as he won an Academy Award for best screenplay for the movie Brokeback Mountain. Ah, time does fly. James is on a label, now, dedicated to roots music. Compadre, based in Houston and owned by Brad Turcotte (a young man) is putting out music we all love here in the Hill Country. Check them out at [www.compadre.com](http://www.compadre.com) Brad is young, enthusiastic, and passionate about the same music I love!

Speaking of labels, Sustain, right here in our own hometown, is releasing "Eleven Stories," a collection of songs by Bruce Robison (Tim McGraw, The Dixie Chicks, Garth Brooks and more have recorded his songs.) that will give us more good stories in the Hill Country. April 4 is the targeted date. Bruce and brother Charlie played the Kerrville Folk Festival (coming up in May) a couple of years ago. Ray Wylie Hubbard's next album, "Snake Farm" is also coming out on Sustain April 18. Kudos to Jimmy Perkins and crew

at Sustain. They will Sustain with this stable of artists. And check out [www.sustainrecords.com](http://www.sustainrecords.com) for some samples of the good music.

Other adventures of mine include a rocking evening with Charlie Robison and band at Luckenbach. Don't even miss a chance to hear this band at Luckenbach. They are made for each other, and he told stories of being a small child and dreaming of playing the stage there. Monte Montgomery played Hondo's last month, and his mother, Maggie, introduced him and sang a duet on "Angel from Montgomery" with him. Two Hondo Crouch moments for me, the Imagineer who bought the town of Luckenbach. The Auslander had an amazing music festival during spring break, and I could only hear the music as I drove through town. A bit too much road for me, perhaps.

Heads up for the Kerrville Folk Festival. The schedule is out, and it's looking good. Glad to see Carolyn Hester returning. And more, much more. Yes, I've run out of time and room, not out of stories and suggestions! Check out the newest complete calendar in town at [www.thehillcountrycalendar.com](http://www.thehillcountrycalendar.com). We have Jim Leavell and team to thank for this updated news. One of the team players, Velanne, is the former mayor of Luckenbach. Now that woman knows her Hill Country and knows her music. Down the road, Kat as Belle (I will be listed on the speaker's bureau for the Texas Humanities Council. I give a Chatauqua talk as Belle Starr and others on Texas music, women in Texas music, power of stories, Native American learning and more. Yes, I'd love to just be on the road to your town!)