

On The Road

From Kathleen Hudson

October 2007

Big State Music Festival, **October 12-14**, is an extravaganza of music, featuring the best of Texas. Willie, Lyle, Robert Earl and more. Happening at the Texas World Speedway in Bryan-College Station, the festival is produced by Texas Parks and Wildlife. Check out this list of who's who: Lynyrd Skynyrd, Trace Adkins, Jack Ingram, Los Lonely Boys, The Flatlanders, Miranda Lambert, Kevin Fowler, Leon Russell, Charlie Louvin, Willis Allen Ramsey, Kelly Willis, Rodney Hayden (after his appearance at the Texas Heritage Music Festival on September 28), Drew Kennedy (a Sustain Record Album artist who has also visited my classroom at Schreiner), Tim McGraw and more! What a speedway that will be! I was hoping to interview Lyle Lovett, a fellow who once played many a campfire in Kerrville and participated in my first oral history. He had no time. Willie does not schedule interviews anymore. Imagine that. This will be a show worth seeing and hearing. I'm sure Lynyrd will do justice to that classic Jimmie Rodgers song, "T For Texas."

I'll be at a book signing for my second book: *Women in Texas Music: Stories and Songs*, at Patsy's Cowgirl Café on Ben White in Austin on **October 13 from 4-6 p.m.** Featured artists, also in the book, are the Texana Dames. These women are puro Texas music, Americana and roots. All in one package. When mother and daughters sing and play together, with dad joining in to dance from time to time, the magic is created. I am thrilled when I get to "be" a dame! One year I followed this group for ten days around Europe, watching these fans devour the beauty and talent of this family. John Reed accompanied on guitar, and Paul was on drums. What a great memory for me, watching the impact of our own women from Lubbock, Texas, taking the world by storm. With music, of course.

October 3...Carolyn Wonderland is our featured artist at the Texas Music Coffeehouse and book signing for my second book with UT Press. Held at Schreiner University in the student center (Lion's Den), we begin at 6 followed by the coffeehouse from 7-9. Carolyn is a chapter in my book, *Women and Texas Music: Stories and Songs*.

My road trip through musicland in Texas has taken me back to Luckenbach for Mike Blakeley's Fandango 2007. Friday night ended with a rocking set by Walt Wilkins y Los Mystiqueros. A large stick of incense burning on one of Baby Ray's drums set the tone. Mystic? Well, yes. Passionate? Or course. And they all rock! Lead guitars wailing, Walt singing his heart out, with four levels of harmony surrounding him. I loved sitting on a front row bench capturing images with my camera. Luckenbach was a soft collage of color and sound all night, with music lovers gathered beneath the spreading oak and next to the wooden bar.

I also ventured to Austin in a driving rainstorm to hear Sam Baker (produced by Walt) at the "Mean-eyed Cat," a chapel and bar devoted to Johnny Cash. Sam was accompanied by Mystiqueros Johnny "Gringo" Greenburg and Bill Small. A group of devout fans gathered on this Monday night for Sam's stories and songs on the back porch, after the rain quit falling. I love being part of a group of fans who know and love the music already. Makes the experience communal.

Brennen Leigh visited my American literature class before playing at the September 5 coffeehouse. The Lion's Den at Schreiner was packed. We heard Chris Fontanes, an English/theatre major, do some standup comedy. I happen to also have a book of his poetry, recently compiled. Great stuff. Two for Texas took the stage. Jacob Ames and Chandler Kuhn began with a musical tribute to our Latin heritage and ended with a Father/son duo at Big G (Gordon Ames) joined his son, Dobro on his lap, for one last song. Then Brennen and her haunting hillbilly voice.

In class she shared her own story. Raised on the border of Minnesota and North Dakota, she began listening to Jimmie Rodgers (oddly enough) as a teenager. She's only twenty-four now. She can yodel, yes. And her voices carries her influences (Jimmie and Gillian Welch) even as it IS her own sound. The crowd of over 200 people seemed to love discovering Brennen Leigh. Accompanied by a stand-up bass player, the duo was also a visual delight. Check out www.brennenleigh.com and join her fan base.

I attended an afternoon at the Kerrville Wine and Music Festival, called out for the drive by a lineup called "Dad's Who Rock," featuring Matt the Electrician, Nathan Hamilton, Beaver Nelson, and Michael Fracasso. The harmony, the single shots, the music all filled me up. We heard funky rhythms, rock riffs, folk stories and even a few songs with Matt on horn! Beaver said, "If you name a thing, it lives." I want to declare that this collection of musicians, often with children in tow, rock out!

This moment after I heard KRVL advertising the opening of Lone Star Music.com at the store on Sidney Baker. I stopped in because I heard non other than the voice of Sam Baker. I had to meet him. After his radio set, I introduced myself and started rattling on about being a new fan, after hearing about him from Rob Booth, THMF board member, forever! I carried off his first album, "Mercy," also a photo surrounded by a stark white border, looking just like the second album. This cover says a lot about the space allowed in each of the songs. And this store has the music of many performers I love and appreciate. Many who have shown up in one of my two books that document Texas music with oral history. Stop in and check out this eclectic selection of true Texas music. Hopefully you can find my book there as well! Soon.

Friday September 28 was a full day of celebration of the 20th anniversary of the THMF. From 9- 3 p.m. on the Schreiner campus we heard Texas songwriters, experienced Danze Azteca, listened to storytellers, enjoyed Gospel music in the old Union Church, looked at artifacts representing all aspects of Texas heritage. At noon under the Robbins Lewis Pavilion we paid tribute, once again, to Jimmie Rodgers, the Father of Country Music. Hosted by Tony Navarra appearing as Jimmie, Jimmie's great grandchildren, Dixie, Austin and Cody Court sang a little backup behind Herb Arbuckle as he performed the only gospel song written by Jimmie.

Tim Summerlin (Schreiner president) sang a song of Jimmie's, as will Rodney Hayden, Stan Morris, Brennen Leigh, joined by EC Willman, Tim Porter and a host of friends! We had a panel with the Texas Folklore Society. We heard Herb's paper on "The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez," and stories from Lee Haile and Acayla. Jean Schnitz moderated, and Lori Noonan read a section for her novel on women in west Texas. Our evening performance was a brilliant musical tribute to Western music, featuring Duke Davis and his band, Buckshot. I heard all my favorite songs, great harmony and even shed a tear of nostalgia. Duke will be a guest artist in the THMF Bard project, visiting Peterson Middle

School as writer-in-residence in a program co-sponsored with KSTAR. Yes, life on goes after the Living history Day. .

Nov. 7 is the last coffeehouse of the Fall series. Walt Wilkins and Los Mystiqueros have been invited. Stay tuned to www.texasheritagemusic.org.

Ideas looking for a home (volunteers, sponsorship, funding): Jimmie Rodgers Songwriting School; Music for Nursing Homes; House Concert with Javier Estrada from San Miguel de Allende, CD showcasing local Hill Country songwriters and performers.

Herb Arbuckle has been named the Research Assistant for the THMF. His lifetime collection of the works of J. Frank Dobie were donated to Schreiner University. He has now turned his interest and talent to conducting research on the life and music of Jimmie Rodgers. He tracked down Austin and Cody Court to give them a special invitation to the Living History Day on September 28 at Schreiner University. Seems they had lived in his neighborhood in Corpus for years! Karen Court Kennedy also attended the September event. I remember the years of proudly showcasing Jimmie Dale Court, the grandson of Jimmie Rodgers, right here in Kerrville, Texas! His untimely death at the age of 45 left a vacancy in the tradition. Perhaps Austin and Cody will fill it in!

We welcome the volunteer work of Paula Reynolds, coordinator of The Bard Project, a project funded by a grant from The Peterson Foundation, that sends musicians and songwriters into the schools. If you have a classroom or school group interested, call 830-792-1945 or e-mail Paula at Paula.Reynolds@KerrvilleISD.net

Many businesses and individuals make this educational event possible each year! Schreiner University comes on as a major co-sponsor. The Sunrise Lions not only help fund the educational package that we give to each teacher, but they also supervise the massive parking project. Chi Phi Fraternity helped set up and tear down the event. Delta Phi Epsilon managed the Dr. Pepper drink booth where proceeds benefit the Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund for THMF. Many Schreiner students volunteered and helped make this event work. Tim Wilton, former producer and site manager, takes charge of the day, once again. And it goes smoothly. Music magazines like MYTH and Hill Country Happenings have donated space and helped get the word out, along with KRVL Radio, a major media sponsor. So many to thank. A true community event. Samantha and Prari have been preparing the office and distributing information in the community. Jeremiah Parson, now part-time at the THMF office, has become an assistant producer for this event. Stephanie Gaines produced the educational package, true to her excellent abilities as an English major at Schreiner. Sandra Langley keeps writing our news releases for us. Yep, teamwork is the name of the game. Ils sont partis. KH