

On The Road
For Feb. 2010
From Kathleen Hudson

First, a tribute to Rusty Cox, a musician known and loved in the Texas Hill Country. He played his music for my dad's birthday one spring, as dad visited my house on the high plain west of Kerrville. Rusty has helped the THMF pay tribute to the cowboy and to Jimmie Rodgers in many, many programs. I could always count on him to entertain and educate. Some thought of Hondo Crouch when they met Rusty, others thought of Gabby Hayes. In any situation, Rusty was an authentic cowboy whose ashes now flow through the soil on a ranch he loved owned by a family he loved, the Schreiners on the YO Ranch in Mountain Home. I rounded up longhorn cattle on that ranch with Rusty, listening to him sing the cowboy songs around a campfire or around Bill Waldings Chuckwagon. I knew of his romantic way of approaching life, I saw his huge collection of western paraphernalia housed in a warehouse in Harper, I wore a hat fashioned by Rusty for my Belle Starr presentation. The more I remember, the more I see the ongoing thread of the Rusty Cox influence in my life in the Hill Country. Hard to believe those twinkling eyes won't be sharing a cowboy song with us next September. His painting of Jimmie Rodgers will still adorn the stage, even though he wanted to redo it, "to fix that hairline," he always said. Becky Patterson once told me that Rusty incarnate her own father. Hondo Crouch, in many ways. I suspect they shared that "imagineer" description. Here's happy trails to Rusty Cox!

And now another column written from the road...the long one between Kerrville, Texas, and San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato. I have found the route I like. First, find a place to park the car in Laredo. Then walk across the bridge and buy a ticket from the stand on ETN or Omnibus Plus. Take the Taxi, about \$4 to the central autobus station and wait a while. The bus leaves heading south about six p.m. and arrives in Queretero at about six a.m. Walk up the station to the far end, catching a daily bus over to San Miguel de Allende and arrive in about 1 ½ hours. It is only about 40 miles away, but the morning bus is stopping for many people to head to work and school along the way. Since either first class bus allows me to sleep, I arrive ready to rock and roll!

I departed on December 26 and enjoyed a light-filled holiday season south of the border. And there were no threatening moments just like the last 22 years I have traveled south. Never threatening moments. Don't let the press confuse you. This route is safe, and the town itself, an art and culture colony, is still offering tourists a great deal for the money. And with the peso at 13 to 1, I ate some very good meals along the way!

New Year's Day I attended a social gathering of the philosophy club in town, seeing Jon Sievert, a photographer I first met at a Jazz Festival there. We met as I noticed his book on photography, Concert Photography, and saw the great photo of Stevie Ray Vaughan. Yep, he knew a bit about Texas music. At this party Jon encouraged me to start inviting Texas musicians to San Miguel, and he would create a house concert for them to generate some income on a nice Mexican vacation. His living area holds about 100 people, so this would work well.

I remember back to some crazy days when I chartered a bus, sold tickets, and took thirty people down on November for the Jazz Festival. Was I crazy? When we were stopped at the border upon returning and told that our driver could NOT drive on into Texas, I could see myself at the wheel! After about 15 minutes of horror, I got hold of the company that chartered the bus, and they had the appropriate conversation. Whew....I then realized what a responsibility I had taken on. Oh well, the trip was smooth and a good time was had by all. Ridge Floyd sang Amazing Grace at a pre-festival party; Kirpal Gordon and Tomas Ramirez performed a jazz poetry piece one evening, and I interviewed the musicians. And the trip put about \$1500 in the THMF fund, a much needed financial boost for this little non-profit.

I am interested in taking groups, small ones, back to San Miguel. I see opportunities for travel with focus, and my years of experience have created a network within the community. If you and about six friends want a trip there and a good guide, just let me know. We can create a focus.....music, jazz, chamber music, art and culture, literary, library, environment, archeology, and the list goes on! Contact me at kat@maverickbbs.com with your ideas. Have ideas, will travel.

I had several wonderful musical experiences on this holiday trip. First, a night of Art and Song at the Pergola Gallery at the Instituto de Allende. David Garza, from San Marcos, Texas, was performing during a showcase of a photo series. The evening began with an empty chair surrounded by candles in a gallery full of photography, sculpture and paintings. I walked outside to view the skyline of San Miguel lit up for the holiday season. I had recently watched a film on Ansel Adams with my dad before Christmas, and my perspective, shaped by the film, began to see the light and darkness in new ways. I started photographing shadows.

David told us about his life, his dual citizenship, and his writing. Each original song was accompanied by a story, then he gave us a wonderful original rendition of a Steve Fromholz song that Willie made famous, "I'd Have To Be Crazy." Art and song can be symbiotic partners.

I also visited with Tim Hazell, returning to Schreiner as artist-in-residence from March 22-25. Tim is a musician of many instruments, a songwriter and composer, a painter and batik artist, and a writer in all genres. A first-class artist of life, Tim articulates the liberal arts experience in a way that changes lives. Watch the Schreiner calendar for a chance to attend a lecture. He will also participate in the THMF Bard project and share himself with local schools and classes during that week.

His first residency resulted in the publishing of one of his collections of poetry for the residency, and we have them available at each coffeehouse the first Wednesday of each month. On January 5, Tim joined with Turkkan Osman Macias, a young man from San Miguel who is now studying music at the Manhattan School of Music, thanks to the generous support locals who donated to the San Miguel Community Foundation. Tim and Turkkan have created a performance called "A Walk in Wild Herbs" that marks the beginning of a New Horizons Series bringing together the fresh talents of emerging musicians and composers with established artists to provide a true continuum of innovation, creativity and new repertoire. Tim is radiating new ideas like is at all times, and as a painter has had over fifty exhibitions worldwide. He also has taken the time to lecture and perform for Schreiner students and board members each time we travel to San Miguel de Allende. See www.tim-hazell.com for a preview of his art.

Ken Bichell also performed on January 5, accompanying Turkkan on “Spring” Sonata #5 for violin and piano by Beethoven. Ken is an Emmy award-winning composer, with credits including music for EXPN, CNN, CBS, and ABC television. His performance and recording credits include Aretha Franklin, Luciano Pavarotti, Billy Joel, Peggy Lee, Placido Domingo, Stevie Wonder, James Taylor, Judy Collins, Paul Simon as well as numerous Hollywood feature films. He has two gold records to his credit. And he might be willing to travel to Kerrville one day!

The quality of music in San Miguel runs the gamut, including wildly provocative performance by local “gypsy” performer, Javier Estrada. He showcased the gypsy style at the Biblioteca from time to time and can be found in restaurants around the city. He always said yes to my invitation to play for students, once accompanying me as I read a poem by Lorca. He told me later that Lorca was a great love for him as well! And Lorca did love the gypsies. Javier is willing to come to Kerrville for a THMF house concert. Check www.texasheritagemusic.org for updates.

This column was due before the return of Asleep at the Wheel with “Ride With Bob” to Kerrville January 15-17, but I know that the show will be stirring and the event exciting. More on that story in the March column. Ray Benson is a musical giant (and I am not talking about his height or the size of his boots!) in the history of Texas music. And he chose Texas as his home, with Asleep the Wheel taking history on the road. He played guitar with Willie at the Willie Nelson/Bob Dylan/John Cougar Mellancamp tour of baseball fields this summer. The energy between Willie and Ray is magical.

Now for the announcements: Spring coffeehouse series begins the first Wednesday in February featuring Black Heritage Month. Clifton Fifer, accompanied by Jay Munson and Jerome Thompson, will take us on a short journey through the blues. March Shelley King will be featured during Women’s History Month performing songs from her latest cd, “Home,” a strong collection of original music with gospel overtones. And April we bring Thom The World Poet back to host the spoken word coffeehouse, slam poetry contest and his own performance from the streets of the world!

--April 22 is the annual Texas Writers Conference in Schreiner, and I am proud to showcase my dear friend and mentor, Gabriele Rico. We will have afternoon workshops, book displays, and open mike and an evening performance. Watch the Schreiner website for details. Gabriele, a stunning poet, performer and teacher, will light up your life so don’t miss this debut performance in Kerrville. I use her books *Recreations*, and *Writing The Natural Way* in all my writing and education classes.

--February 20 at 6:30 is the annual fundraiser for the Kerrville Public School Foundation, an organization that supports funding new and innovative ways of learning, a perfect partnership for the THMF Bard project! Jay Eric and Blieders Creek will perform at this dance and auction to be held at the Inn of the Hills, “Reach for the Stars.” The \$85 ticket gets you dinner and a good dance! Get your tickets now.

--Just received a new Cd by Maggie Montgomery, the Luckenbach Songbird, with special guest appearances by her son, Monte Montgomery. Yes, that sweet mother/son duo has been part of the musical history of the Texas Hill Country. First, Monte performed with his mom, as a guitar prodigy too young to be in bars. Then as his career took off, he always invited mom up to join him on a song. Now this Cd is his mom’s contribution to the world of recording. Maggie has dedicated her life to music, just as her son has. He might be known for his guitar wizardry, his performance, and his

songwriting. I know him through the stories that drifted around Kerrville when I arrived here 24 years ago, and I know him by listening to his many performances and watching him go deeply into the kind of songwriting I love, the serious kind!

--Art and Lisa from Bandera has a new Cd, produced by Lloyd Maines, and showcasing their strong writing, harmonious blending of voices, and Lisa's strong contribution to the world of female singers. Get on their mailing list. They will actually text you reminders of their local shows, a new marketing tool! I'm sure we will get Lisa to come sing during the March tribute to women.

--I head back to San Miguel de Allende to participate in the Writers Conference Feb. 19-23 featuring Barbara Kingsolver and her latest work, Lacuna. I have the chance to do some private consulting with writers during the conference. Susan Page is a driving force in the San Miguel literary scene, and the conference featured Tom Robbins, my favorite, last year!

--LOCAL MUSICANS: an invitation! Send your promo information to the THMF office. We want to invite you to participate in the Living History Day on September 24, bringing another way of learning to over 2,000 students and teachers. And we have opening in the Bard Project that sends musicians into the schools. PO Box 291945, Kerrville, Texas and through the web at kat@maverickbbs.com

Here's to the house concerts of Paula and Marty Reynolds and Jack and Barbara Fields! Hill Country House Concerts and Kerrville House Concerts. Check them out on the web! THMF needs volunteers for database management, event publicity, filing and research, and event participation. Contact us!

--Just arrived in the mail, "Harry & The Hightones: Hepcats From Smallville." This stunning work of art and music is available at Hastings in Kerrville and at Hill Country Music in Kerrville and Fredericksburg. Featuring eight original songs, five by David "Snuffy" Jackson, two by Gary Hatch and one by Porter. Gary and Tim have been regulars at the September tribute to Jimmie Rodgers. Perhaps in 2010 we will see the Hightones at this tribute. The graphics are by Snuffy, the gorgeous models are from Kerrville, and it was recorded at Gazelle Studio in Kerrville. Turk, the owner, added his fine guitar work to the cd as well. More details on the music next month after you buy your own copy! Call Barbara Gaither to book this hot local band. 830-459-1544

--And on a personal note, I will have a small studio apartment for rent for short-term visits. Great for writers, artists, and musicians.

Ils sont partis....and down the road. KH