

For June 2010  
From Kathleen Hudson

As a new friend gently encourages me to start writing this column, I enter my House of David (the writing cabin) with both head and heart full of stories. Yes, I have been on the road. Yes, I am reading great books. Yes, I just finished a semester of teaching. The threads of all the stories I am living come together each month in this brief monthly chronicle where I attempt to articulate what I am seeing. I say “attempt,” because the finished product is complete in the meaning of the word “essay,” an attempt to explain.

I will be teaching two essay courses this fall on the topic of Texas music. Freshmen at Schreiner get ready! And I have one interdisciplinary course on Texas music each Wednesday night at 6 p.m. Community invited!

As you can read, my attempt to follow the road of my own heart leads us down some winding roads. Now, coming back to the subject at hand. What is that? The column is called *On The Road* in honor of Jack Kerouac, the spirit of travel, and the journey on the road we call life. St. Catherine once said, “All the way to heaven is heaven.” I like that description of this journey. An 11<sup>th</sup> century poet said, “I always knew one day I would take this road. I did not know yesterday that it would be today.” I agree wholeheartedly with both comments. I say them to myself each day! And I am reading a book called *WHY KEROUAC MATTERS* by John Leland. New insights into my own life abound.

My road trip in May headed north with Aunt Barbara from Marble Falls, dad’s sister and 93 years old. We told stories, watched flowers, and remembered my days at her dairy farm in Navasota as we traveled up 281 to Ft. Worth. She also told me stories of David, her brother, my dad. Gabriele Rico led an engaging conference at Schreiner in April on using writing to access the voice inside us. I was already listening to many new voices, thanks to my hero Gabriele! This road trip opened up a few more floodgates of memory. And isn’t that what happens to us when we hear a good song as well?

Jumping ahead, I am in Arkey Blue’s in Bandera on a Tuesday night. Alone talking with Karyn, my friend the bartender and Schreiner graduate. Gary Wright was in the bar, Karyn handed him a guitar, and he sang Delbert’s song, “I got them North Texas blues,” and I remembered again. I am always moved by the sound of Gary’s voice, a voice that takes you down a road. His original songs contain the heart of a gypsy (and I identify with that), and his rendition of “Nightrider’s Lament,” carried me back to summer camp on the Brazos River when I discovered the thrill of riding a horse down a river.

I was with a man who hails from England, has lived in Switzerland and New York, has traveled around the world, including one of my dream places, India, and now lives near Medina Lake building a house. He listened intently to Gary’s song then burst forth with, “Why that is poetry! You are singing from your heart.” He got it! The heart of Texas music is singing from the heart.

Arkey came in later, picked up the guitar, and sang some Arkey, some Hank, some Jimmie Rodgers (for me). I invited both to our Living History Day on September 24 at Schreiner University. A THMF production.

I realized something sitting in that empty bar with lights glowing, the empty dance floor waiting, covered with sawdust, the memorabilia sparking my own memory. I was back at the beginning for me. The time I heard a song that moved me in a place that inspired

stories. And I set out on my own journey of collecting these songs and stories! The THMF was born from such a moment.

Another friend calls my life “rich” with moments such as these. Whether I was singing camp songs around a fire on the Brazos River at Camp El Tesoro or listening to a Terri Hendrix Concert or attending a house concert with Walt Wilkins and Los Mystiqueros, I was and am always present to my own urge to save and savor those moments, to share them with others, to talk about them to strangers.

Ahead is more of the Kerrville Folk Festival, an event that has put Kerrville, Texas, on a global map. Tuesday night, June 1 (maybe you have this magazine in hand now?), a group gathers to pay tribute to Woody Guthrie in the Threadgill Theatre at Quiet Valley Ranch on Highway 16. Jimmy LaFave, Ronnie Cox and the Burns Sisters give us the music, and the film “Bound for Glory” gives us the story. Saturday, June 5, Peter and Paul (with great sadness for me in remembering Mary) will honor winners of the Music To Life Contest. Shake Russell, “Traveling Texas,” will close down the evening Sunday night, June 6. Thursday, June 10, is the Poor David’s BW Stevenson Memorial Singer Songwriter Winners, and that includes a local writer I want to talk more about, Owen Temple. Friday, June 11, is a rousing evening of Susan Gibson, Walt Wilkins and the Mystiqueros, and Band of Heathens. NOT to be missed. The festival ends Sunday, June 13. If you have tried this event out, you are already a fan. IF you have not had the experience, this is the year, as planning begins for 2011 and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

My research on songwriters might have started at the first festival I attended 38 years ago. I have only missed one year! I interviewed songwriters there for my dissertation at TCU, including a long talk with Peter Yarrow that is included in the dissertation. Rod Kennedy helped me make that happen with an ongoing press pass and access to the performers with stories to tell! Here’s to Rod and his passion for music. Dalis Allen is continuing in the tradition of great stories and songs in Kerrville as she produces a moving show each year.

I mentioned Owen Temple earlier. I had the joy in May of receiving an inspiring phone call from Owen Temple and Adam Carroll. “We love your work and want to help out. We have a festival in ConCan in August that honors the songs. We are adding a Jimmie Rodgers song circle and want to collaborate with you on your events.” What a joy to hear after all these years. We now have a series that includes the Frio River Song Festival August 5-7, the September Texas Music Coffeehouse featuring Owen Temple and Adam Living History Day featuring a song circle led by Owen and Adam. Now we need to name that series. Ideas? If you have a good name, send it in to [kat@maverickbbs.com](mailto:kat@maverickbbs.com) A prize is forthcoming. If you want to donate to the THMF, Adam and Owen are donating cd’s on their songs to our new donors. And soon you can do this online at [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org) Thanks Adam and Owen!

We had a great meeting of hearts at the music office in May. I heard Owen articulate his passion for the stories he has heard. In fact, his new cd, “Mountain Home,” is named after an area west of Kerrville and a little east of my cabin on the high plain. The cd has all kind of musicians I know and love on, including Bukka Allen (son of Terry Allen), Gordy Quist (one of the Heathens), Tommy Spurlock on steel guitar, Gabriele Rhodes (son of Kimmie and Joe Gracie) as musician and producer and more. Connections into my world of documenting Texas music abound. Charlie Sexton plays bass and guitar, and

I just watched a Dylan movie that showcased Charlie Sexton. Adam Carroll plays harmonica.

Not sure about favorites yet, but “Prince of Peace” has a strong message, “Jacksboro Highway” takes me back to Ft. Worth and my first musical experience at the Skyliner with Ray Sharpe, and “Medicine Man,” connects to my love of indigenous wisdom.

And as I listen to “True Blue” music by Arkey Blue at this moment of writing, I am also looking over another new cd, “Adam Carroll Live at Flipnotics.” I played that on the road trip north, and my Aunt Barbara exclaimed, “I like that music. It tells a good story, and I can understand it.” Produced by a favorite guitar player of mine, Scrappy Newcomb, the cd captures another true Texas experience, the small club with audience interacting. A cd of stories. Scrappy says it for me on the liner notes, “The journey that takes place between “home Again” and “Highway Prayer” is a fantastic, truthful and inspiring one....he writes with dignity about the people and places he’s seen on his journey, which of course is a never ending quest.”

As the journey of this column comes to an end, I want to celebrate all the stops along the way. All the way across Texas is Texas. Ahead I am excited to be talking about the new Terri Hendrix cd, “Cry Till You Laugh,” where she begins by singing two poems by Dorothy Parker. Need I say more? Original and exciting stuff for this English teacher. “Slow Down” is calling out to me now.

Join me at Momo’s in Austin on June 3 as we raise money for a grave marker for Blind Willie Johnson from Beaumont. This was an idea that was born in a young man’s head and is now a project in the history of Texas music. Shane Ford and a few friends have created this event that starts at 6:15. Seems Ruthie Foster might stop by. And she is also featured at the Monterey Bay Blues Festival at the end of June after she speaks at the Young Rhetorician’s Conference on June 25<sup>th</sup> in California.

Ah, the road leads us west, as I continue to gather these stories. Some opportunities for you other aficionados: Join the volunteer THMF team and help with the September 24 Living History Day, share your stories with us, tell me about musicians and songs you discover along the road, and (to all you musicians)...join us and let’s create a team around the vision that stories and songs make a difference in the world. Ils sont partis.

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