

On The Road  
For September 2010  
By Dr. Kathleen Hudson

Each month I promise myself I will keep track of my adventures as I go. Each month I start this column realizing that my life is documented in many notebooks, and I have to get them all together before writing. If you see me out and about, you might ask me if I have finally kept it all down in ONE notebook? Just a gentle reminder from the readers. An interactive column without the web.

I named this column years ago because of my love for Jack Kerouac and all he stood for in life and writing. It now aptly describes my own life, as I drive up and down the road each week, many trips to San Antonio to visit the granddaughters and see my Turkish friend, Seref. Both visits inspire me.

My first memory of the last month is an afternoon out at Roddy Tree Ranch on Highway 39 heading to Hunt. The Cantina there hosts Jr. Pruneda and friends on Sunday afternoons from 2-6. I walked up to a Cindy Walker tune, "Sugar Moon," then requested my favorite Walker tune, "You Don't Know Me." Jr., holding his maroon (purple?) bass up high, sits front and center, flanked by Johnny Way on fiddle and David Spangler on guitar. Sticks brings up the rear on drums. Bob Talley is emcee, giving short talks on the history of country music during intermission. I invited them all to the Sept. 24 Texas Heritage Music Day, and asked Bob to be our emcee. After Bob told us some stories about Cindy Walker, Bob Wills, Lightcrust Doughboys, W. Lee O'Daniel, "Faded Love," and "Dusty Skies," he asked some questions and prizes were given out for answers. What fun and what a good idea. I won for knowing that Cindy Walker wrote "Dusty Skies" at age 16. Yep, I listened.

As Jr. reminded me, "Western Swing is pure original Texas music." Bobbie Pruneda, a Texas songbird, gave us a couple of songs; Johnny Way added his music; Joe Vorhes joined in on keyboard. I had fun introducing a friend of mine to the Sunday afternoon Texas gathering sharing food and music.

I also took a bus trip to San Miguel de Allende with daughter Lisa. We went during the Rio Grande flooding so the trip down there from San Antonio had a few detours. We returned on an ETN bus to Nuevo Laredo and walked back across the bridge. Looking down at the swollen Rio Grande, I was reminded that Kerouac, too, wandered down to Mexico City one time, driving through San Antonio. We had a smooth, safe, trip and plan on returning next summer with granddaughters.

This is the bi-centennial year for San Miguel, the cradle for Mexican independence from Spain. September will be a crazy month there, with more fireworks than usual. And Diez y Seis is a huge celebration. Hidalgo gave El Grito from the church in Deloros Hidalgo, about 25 miles away. Allende was one of the conspirators, and San Miguel de Allende was his home. And there are several connections to Texas music including the interview I had with Steve Earle when he told me he had written his Copperhead Road album there. Delbert McClinton has bought a home there, and I have seen Marcia Ball and Gordon Fowler there. David Garcia performs regularly around town with his band.

This beautiful city, now a world heritage designated treasure, is a treasure for me. I love sharing what I know after 20 years of visiting, so feel free to ask me. More interaction!

On August 4 I went back to the Backyard in Austin, memories of the Willie Nelson Picnic still fresh. I went early enough to stand about 4 people back from the big stage, waiting and listening. On the PA we heard a voice talking about a road trip. I felt recognition and realized we were hearing Kerouac. I was waiting for Bob Dylan to come out, and the connection for me was perfect. The band walked out, dressed in light suits with dark hats. Then Dylan came out in his dark suit and light hat, yellow stripe down the leg of his black pants. And a smile on his face! Introduced over the PA as the “poet laureate of a generation” and heralded for his ongoing transformation, Dylan walked up to his keyboard, smiled at Charlie Sexton (an Austin-based guitarist who’s history started with a major record deal at about age 16), and rocked out with Leopard Skin Pill-Box Hat. Yes, he changed the tune and rhythm on many songs, and the gravel in his voice was more apparent than usual on some songs. I love all he does, all he writes, and how he performs so this is not an unbiased perception. Ivan Neville joined the band on keyboard for two songs, and Dylan stood at the microphone for several songs, harmonica in hand, as he delivered the words TO us, not at us. I loved seeing him throw his arms open wide as he asked, “Do you Mr. Jones?” in Ballad of a Thin Man. The Eye of Horus (also on my arm) was projected in lights on the backdrop during his rocking version (always rocking) of Highway 61 Revisited. New rhythms, some funk, and a transformed persona. Yep, that’s Dylan.

For you Dylan fans, the website [expectingrain.com](http://expectingrain.com) not only gives the set list of each performance on tour, but also contains ongoing daily information about all phases in his life. My Dylanista friend, David, passed this on to me along with the fact that his paper on Transnational Bob is included in an anthology to be published soon. A reminder that this stuff we call Pop Culture is such an integral part of our history, and we get to experience it in the making. I’ll be teaching an interdisciplinary course on Texas music this fall at Schreiner University, and you can bet Bob Dylan will be part of the research into influences. Glad I heard him in about 1963 as I headed into college at TCU in Ft. Worth, Texas. Heard him on the radio as I was diving into my folk music phase with Buffy St. Marie, Peter, Paul and Mary, Judy Collins, Leonard Cohen and Bob. Oh yes, I also heard Willie Nelson in 1963 at Panther Hall. My own roots are in Ft. Worth.

The Ft. Worth sequey leads me to a new discovery, now living in Ft. Worth, Jason Eady. I was at the Texas Songwriters Festival in Concan, hosted and produced by Owen Temple and Adam Carroll. They helped me create the Texas Song Series which includes the September 1 coffeehouse at Schreiner and the September 24 Texas Heritage Music Day. Sister Carolyn and I headed out to Concan on Thursday, August 5, for the evening song circle, paying tribute to Jimmie Rodgers. We then pulled up our chairs at the outdoor house concert at a cabin there for an evening with 8 songwriters. I knew the music of Owen, Adam, Susan Gibson, Kevin Higgins, Michael O’Conner, Mark Jungers and discovered the music of Jason. His voice and delivery bring an intense interpretation to the songs. His Pentecostal background in the south added a place of passion and expression. Carolyn and I both just listened, mesmerized.

I found out Walt Wilkins produced his first album and Kevin Welch his second. Kevin will be closing down the Kerrville Wine and Music Festival Labor Day Weekend. I first heard him at a Kerrville festival years ago. Expect some great music from him! Tom Kimmell from Nashville will be opening on Friday night September 3. Don’t miss this warm gathering of songwriters and performers, a tradition in Kerrville for Labor Day.

The festival brings many people to this town, and we often overlook the treasures in our own back yard. Don't overlook this one. I am always shocked when I invite someone and hear, "I have lived here for ten years and never gone." I can't imagine that! Like living in Austin and saying you never went out to hear music.

Back to Concan. The House Pasture Company hosts music all summer with a lineup that reads like who's who in Texas music. Surrounded by wooden beams and furniture, the outdoor venue was home to the Saturday night concert that also featured Walt Wilkins and the Mystiqueros. I had to leave, but Sister Carolyn says the place was packed and the crowd was happy. I always enjoy hearing Owen sing "Mountain Home," the title cut from his new album. I do live in Mountain Home, and I moved to Kerrville amidst talk of a slave ranch out in this area.

Owen donated some of the proceeds of the sold-out house concert to the THMF for our event in September. In 23 years this is a first for us! When Adam and Owen came to my office this summer with an idea of collaborating, I was thrilled. They saw that their passion for writing and performing matched my passion for showcasing the music to new audiences. A great partnership was formed!

Mark Jungers said, "I write songs to remember the people I love and the places I've been." Susan Gibson dedicated her song "Cactus Woman," to me, and I was honored! She agreed to come play the March coffeehouse at Schreiner. Jason sang, "God don't make me go back to Jackson." He also sang about "AM Country heaven and FM country hell," his comment on the state of radio and country music. I also heard and discovered Travis Linville from Oklahoma, a new voice for me. Kevin Higgins of Cosmic Dust Devils, gave us a solo set with a wonderful song that contained a story in each of the 13 verses! Dylanesque perhaps? Adam closed the evening with a song new to me that I now love: "A Highway Prayer,"

I was invited to a house concert by Jimmie Perkins, a man who loves the music, the musicians and the business. He was showcasing a writer named Keith Gattis, an "unholy union between Keith Richards, Nina Simone, and George Jones." That might tell you something about the evening. I loved his jazz voice, his country soul and his rock and roll guitar. I am a new Gattis fan! He gave us a sad version of Roger Miller's "Dang Me," and another music aficionado in the group leaned up and said to me, "His entire body is wracked with pain on that song!" Yep, Keith is full metal jacket when he sings. His "stone cold" country songs moved my soul and body.

My last month also included a trip to The Grotto in Bandera to hear my New York poet buddy, Kirpal Gordon, His reading always thrills me and give my own imagination a jolt. I am reminded that I really do want to deliver words I love to new audiences. His work is also documented on a cd called "Speak, Spake, Spoke," which includes the jazz music so important to him. We met Claire Daly once in San Miguel de Allende when Kirpal was reading at the jazz festival. Years later he hooked up with her in New York, and they now perform together. There's a road story for you. And Kirpal is a Kerouac kind of guy as well!

Art and Lisa, hosting the Bandera Tree at the Music Day on September 24, came to the reading and added a few beautiful songs. I love the words, "You can't run from who you are or who you're always gonna be." Gary Wright and Kathy Bauer will also be playing under that tree!

Be sure and take the day off September 24 to enjoy this wonderful gathering of talent and passion. The pavilion stage will have music on it from 9 a.m. (gospel with Dale and The Jesus Train) to 1:30 with the Schreiner choir. The Union Church will have a songwriters circle, Ray Rios will come with some pre-Hispanic dancing. Also featured during the day is Hispanic Music (Terri Sharp, Max Baca and David Farias of Los Texmaniacs, Sol Patch), Texas Songwriters (Adam Carroll, Owen Temple, John Christopher Way), and a noon tribute to Jimmie Rodgers. Native American education will include dancing, demonstrations, and teepees. See [www.texasheritagemusic.org](http://www.texasheritagemusic.org) for details. We have a grant to support transportation for any schools or teachers who want to attend. Just call us at 830-792-1945. Spread the word on this gift, please.

I heard one THMF scholarship winner, Casey Hubble, at Pampell's last month. Check out the open mike and weekend music at this classic venue on the corner! Jimmie Rodgers even practiced his music upstairs there when he lived in Kerrville from 1929-1931. Turk has done a great job of providing us with a good listening room and eating room! Casey has a new cd that goes on the road with me. I have already quoted him saying, "You make me better," in one of his songs. That is still a favorite with me. He performed at Pampell's with his brother, Joey, and drummer Daniel Hinojosa. Nothing like a Texas trio! Just ask ZZ Top or Stevie Ray Vaughan.

One last adventure: I attended the Macondo Foundation summer reading with Leslie Silko, Elena Poniatowska, and Sandra Cisneros. I was in literary heaven and invite you to check out [www.macondofoundation.org](http://www.macondofoundation.org), an organization started by the woman who wrote *House on Mango Street*, and the woman who gave me my dog, Max! I first heard Leslie Silko while I was in /graduate school in Ft. Worth. Larry McMurtry was speaking, and Leslie was there. We got off in a corner and talked about horses. Great to see Texas songwriter, James McMurtry, at the Silko reading. Everything comes full circle in my life! *Ils sont partis...*kh

A ps: The deadline for this column was also the day I went out to the Hunt Store to hear Exit 505, a family local band that plays songs from Prine to Dylan to country. Bill Booker on bass was singing a Billy Joe Shaver song when I walked in, "Freedom's child." A bit of synchronicity there. His wife, Chris, discovered her singing voice in the shower, and she joins with two other women, Tammy and Missy, to give us a front line of voices to harmonize as well as takes turns singing verses. Missy played mandolin while Chris played fiddle. Mama Sandy Stisser got up and added harmonica on a few songs. Everyone had fun!