

KERRVILLE KRONIKLE

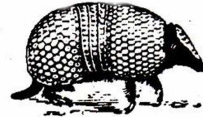


**A transatlantic tribute to the
Kerrville Folk Festival**

NO.1

£ 1.25

tall tales from the quiet valley.....



I originally intended this part of the magazine to be, the "Cartoon Section". The main objective being, to highlight the humour that passes between the performers and the audience and vice versa, during the Festival concerts.

Later, I concluded that the Kerrville Folk Festival encapsulates the spectrum of life - for the period of the Festival, the Quiet Valley Ranch becomes a community, a town in its own right - therefore, this section should now reflect that.

Here therefore, we have the serious and the frivolous - all the flavours of the Kerrville Folk Festival.

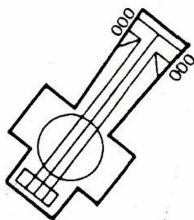
The alter on Chapel Hill was consecrated on Sunday 25th May, 1975. On each Sunday during the Kerrville Folk Festival, Holy Communion is celebrated there at 11am.

"This song is real special to me, I think, off the new album this is my favourite song, that's on the new album. Two very special people inspired this song. It was written at the Vancouver Festival in Vancouver, B.C., Canada, which is my festival home, away from home, when I go to festivals. If you ever want to go to a festival that reminds you of Kerrville, but it's in the North, and it's on the ocean and it's beautiful, and the music is incredible, try taking a little trip in August up to Vancouver, to the Vancouver Folk Festival. This song is a tune that was inspired by two people, Katia and Salvador Cardenal Barquero, who play with a group called Duo Guardabarranco from Managua, Nicaragua. They played all these Canadian Festivals with me last summer, and the last festival we played was the Vancouver Festival, and it just seemed to be the magical moment for them. There was this little fingernail moon that hung over the Vancouver Festival the whole time, and the air just seemed to be rented by the music of Duo Guardabarranco. They have an album out that is on Redwood Records, that was produced by Jackson Browne. They're also on Jackson Browne's new album. This song goes out to them down in Nicaragua, in the hopes that they are safe, and it's a good tune called, "The wing and the wheel". - For all the dreamers in the world". With only Pat Alger backing her on acoustic guitar, Nanci Griffith commenced the encore to her May 26th, Sunday night performance with the aforementioned song. I still believe that in the ensuing three minutes, my spirit hovered over the Quiet Valley Ranch. A magical song and a truly memorable moment.

Answering a heckler in the audience, Tom Rush was heard to comment, "Well, I can't do that one for you, but this one has many of the same notes in it".

Butch Hancock has always spotted a good phrase, when one occurs to him. His song notebook would definately attest to that. Overheard at the Ballad Tree on Sunday 1st June, discussing the gadgetry on his guitar with Denise Franke, he told her to "use the Equal Graphic Paralyser", when she borrowed his axe. That inscrutable son of Lubbock, is undoubtedly a master of quick repartee.

**KERRVILLE
MUSIC
FESTIVALS**



Following my first visit to the Kerrville Folk Festival, I can only express my reactions and feelings, by paraphrasing and partially rewriting the words of a noble Roman, who visited the shores of my homeland, many many years ago. "Vini, Vidi, Credo", which roughly translates to "I came, I saw, I believe". And I do. In 1982, Richard Wootton wrote in his "Country Music World" series, "All across the USA", that the Kerrville Folk Festival was the best of its kind in the world. Richard, you underestimated its quality greatly.

On the Monday following the end of each Kerrville Folk Festival, most of the volunteer staff and a number of the performers retire to the "town" of Luchenbach, some thirty miles from the Quiet Valley Ranch, for a "celebratory party".

Following the 1986 Kerrville Folk Festival, Rod Kennedy took a party of regular performers on the "Celebrate Texas" tour of the States. Contemplating the prospect of rooming with Ray Wylie Hubbard, Steven Fromholz was heard to comment, "I love Rod Kennedy. He thinks by putting myself and Ray Hubbard together, he's got us where he wants us. You put me and Hubbard together and we got most everybody where we want them. Ray and I are alcohol brothers. Years ago in Dallas, back in nineteen (mumble, mumble, mumble), we pierced our pinkies and pressed them together one night, in a drunken stupor".

To be continued.

ROD KENNEDY



The interview with Rod Kennedy was conducted at one of the picnic tables in the frontstage area of the Kerrville Theatre on the afternoon of Thursday 29th May 1986. Thanks to Bob Gibson for the introduction.

Where do we start then,

My early childhood was spent in Buffalo, which is in upstate New York. I was born in 1930. My education was completed in both public and private schools. I started singing with a dance band in Buffalo in 1946, when I was 16. That was with the Bob Creighton Orchestra. I also came to Texas in 1946, and went to High School here for a year. I went to High School in Albany, New York as well. Then I went to College in Boston and later I joined the Marine Corps., for a few years.

Was there a musical background in your family,

My dad was a barbershop harmony singer. He was one of the founders of the Buffalo Chapter of the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A.. The barbershop quartet, the Buffalo Bills who were in the "Music Man" - the Broadway musical - came from our Chapter. Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America Inc. is what the initials stand for. My mother was musical. She played the ukelele and sang, and almost married Al Jolson. My older brother was musical and he played piano. I was in choirs when I was a kid, Episcopal Church choirs and High School chorales and College chorales and Glee clubs. I also sang with the dance band, for money. By the time I was 18, and I was in Albany, I had a radio show on a local station WABY.



Photo: Merri Lu Park, Isla Mujeres, Mexico,

Rod Kennedy, Kerrville 1986.

Were you the featured singer,

There was me and a girl, hosting what was called the "Backyard Follies". It was a childrens show, broadcast live from a downtown theatre, where all the kids would come down. I think it was a babysitting service, but I'm not sure. The parents could go shopping, while the children were "out of their hair". It was a good show. We did a lot of music. I was also in the Glee Club there. Then I moved to Boston, for my freshman year of College. I was president of the Jazz Club of Boston and produced concerts there, at Symphony Hall and Tufts College and other halls. That was where I met George Wein, who eventually produced the Newport Folk Festivals. George was in College at B.U. - Boston University, and I was at Emerson. He was a jazz pianist by hobby, and we were associated with Frankie Newton, the trumpet player who recorded with Billie Holliday. We opened a Frankie Newton Room at the Fencgate Hotel with George playing piano and Frankie playing trumpet. We were involved with all those people - Edmund Hall, Wild Bill Davidson - a lot of people who were two beat musicians, Dixieland artists of the time. Like Kenny Ball, the English trumpet player. That style of music.

What sparked your interest to start producing concerts. Did you feel there was a gap there,

I was an enthusiast for traditional jazz. I found a real good band that had Bobby Wilbur on clarinet and soprano sax. He was a young protege of Sidney Bechet. That band also included, Dick Welstead the ragtime piano player, and some of the Red Hot Peppers, and the late Pops Foster on bass. We just formed a Jazz Club and got interested in

greeting the band, when they got back from playing in Nice, France and places like that. Then we began producing other concerts. I guess that's where I really started producing, when I was 18. I went into the Marine Corps, when I was 21. In 1954, I came back to the University of Texas, as a 24 year old freshman. I studied Radio and Television, which teaches you everything - regulations, how to cue a record, broadcast ethics and all of that. In 1957, I bought my radio station KHFI-FM, and that's where I did the folk music radio show. That's how, I got into doing what I'm doing now. The station is still on the air, with a different format and a different owner. It was independently ours till 1968. Then, we bought an AM station and a TV station. Put those on the air, and then I found out I didn't like television, I left those stations in about 1972, and that's when I started the Kerrville Folk Festival.

Tell us a little about the programming on KHFI-FM.

Apart from the folk music show, it was classical music, mostly - generally recordings. We did some live performances, as well. The first stereo recordings that were done in Austin, were done by us in 1956-57. On the folk music show, I played the recordings that were available at that time - like the Lomax's Library of Congress recordings, The Limeliters and Ed McCurdy. There was not much foreign folk music available then - mostly American, and some of it commercial American folk music. Later we did specials on people like Harry Belafonte and Judy Collins. In about 1962, I got a call from Ruth Hester, Carolyn Hester's mother and she asked if I would present her daughter in a concert. She'd been in New York and was having some success. Carolyn wanted to come home to Austin and do a concert. Her new album was about to come out on Columbia Records and featured a then unknown harmonica player, Bob Dylan. I presented Carolyn and her brother and a duo called Tommy and Sandy, at the Austin Civic Theatre which had a capacity of about 175 people. I think we played two nights. That was really the beginning, and why we're here today. After that, I began to do the Summer Music Festival in Austin for KHFI-FM. We did that for four of five years. It was a six night format. We did folk music on Monday, traditional jazz on Tuesday, choral music on Wednesday, modern jazz on Thursday, chamber music on Friday and a little Festival Orchestra playing Mozart and what not, on the Saturday. The Monday night concerts outdrew all the concerts for the rest of the week. On these concerts we had people like Tom Paxton, Mark Spoelstra and Segal Fry and some of the people that are here.

The Zilker Park Summer Concerts which you presented, tell us a little about the first one.

That was with Tom Paxton, Roger Abrahams and the Dallas County Jug Band. That band included Michael Martin Murphy, Steven Fromholz, Marty Javors and Segal Fry. A bunch of interesting people who were to surface repeatedly during my life.

Had you by this stage, noticed the divergent fields in folk music - the traditionalists and the new singer/songwriters who wrote their own material.

I didn't really know much about traditional folk, except what I had heard on the records that I played on the show. Some of the young artists were singing things like Huddie Ledbetter songs and Pete Seeger songs and I didn't know where they came from. I just knew they were alive and vibrant. I didn't always agree with the political position they took, but I thought they said it real well. I have always been a conservative, and I'm amongst a hotbed of liberals here, but I find liberals far more exiting than conservatives.

In 1967 you opened "The Chequered Flag" club in Austin, and next door was the Texas Speed Museum.

Yes, I'd heard Allen Damron at the "Eleventh Door" on San Jacinto in Austin and thought he should be playing in a better place, so we built him one. He ran it, and we had a lot of performers come through there. Steven Fromholz and Dan McCrimmon who were performing as Frummox, Kenneth Threadgill, Gordon Lightfoot and Ramblin' Jack Elliot. Bill and Bonnie Hearne met there, and got married later. Jerry Jeff, - - Carolyn Hester, came back into my life again. Jimmy Driftwood and a whole bunch of other people played there. The Texas Speed Museum was my collection of racing cars. I sold all of those. I have tractor now. We had MG TA's, TD's, MGB's and a Lister MG. Three Ferrarri's and two Maserati's. We also had a birdcage Maserati and a 1935 Grand Prix Maserati. A RSK Porsche which was driven by Ken Miles, one of your countrymen. He developed the Cobra and Mustang cars that ran at Le Mans.

You seem to have a deep affection for motor racing.

Absolutely, My father was an attorney for Bernie Oldfield, who was an early racing car driver. My older brother raced stock cars, I raced sports cars very effectively. We won 42 races in our first year on tracks in Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana and Arkansas. These were on road racing courses. I won the 12 hour duration race at Sebring in 1971 in a Lancia, which was, an under 2 litre touring car. The previous year, I had been a guest driver on the Lancia team, which included Innis Ireland. Lancia dropped out the following year, and we were an independent effort when we won the 12 hour duration race. I also raced in Mexico. I eventually got out of racing because it frightened my wife, and it was expensive. I also lost a lot of friends who were drivers. Joe Siffert, Pedro Rodriguez and Jimmy Clark - just a whole bunch of good friends. Jim Hall flipped his Chapparral at Las Vegas and was badly burned. I just decided it wasn't fair to Nancy Lee to continue to indulge myself, because I like to go at 160mph. I quit in the early seventies.

Why did you stop doing the Zilker Park Summer Music Festival.

We couldn't get the police to adopt the correct attitude. They were too permissive. They were allowing kids to throw fireworks in the aisles and stuff, and I just quit. It really is what started me looking for some other place. The "some other place", was suggested to me by telephone in December of 1971. Murray Coates, executive director of the Texas Commission for the Arts and Humanities called and said, "There's going to be an Arts and Crafts Fair at Kerrville with no music. Don't you think the private sector should do something about that". I said, "Yes, I'll call and see if they have a little Concert Hall. Where's the Fair being held?". He said, "It's going to be at Schreiner College". I said, "When does it begin and end?". He said, "It begins at ten in the morning and ends at six o'clock". "Good", I said, "We'll do some evening concerts on the weekend". I came down here, and looked at the little 1200 seat hall. We hired it for three nights - June 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 1972.

This is the Municipal Auditorium on Main Street in Kerrville.

Yes. We had a total seating capacity of 3600 for the three nights, and we sold 2700 tickets. We had a real good turn out. In fact on the Saturday night, the second day - the 2nd of June, the hall was really full. We were very worried, that we would have a problem with people trying to get in, without tickets. The second year, we had the same three concerts, but on the Saturday and Sunday nights, we added a second concert at midnight. Midnight to three am, and they sold out. We had 5600 people altogether, and again we were frightened, because people were rushing through the doors and pushing each other.

Supposedly in 1973 you had to turn people away.

Well, we didn't actually turn people away. We put them in the aisles and everything. You know, George Wein had had trouble at Newport with the kids not being able to get in. The police turned the horses on them, and then the kids started throwing rocks at the cars. It frightened us, to see this "stampeding cattle" attitude on the part of people trying to get into our concerts. I either had to quit doing the Folk Festival, or I had to buy some place where we could go outdoors. Some place where there would be room for everybody. That's when I bought this ranch. We bought it in '73, and started working on it during December. In '74 we had our first outdoor Festival. Seems to me, that we went to four days that year. I don't think we went to five days till our fifth anniversary. We added the camping in '75, as we only had the Theatre ready in 1974. In 1981, we went to two weekends and the next year we're going to three weeks.

Do you see any potential end to this spiraling progression of adding an extra week every five years.

Well, that's my conservative background I suppose. Some people would jump in and do it all at once. My feeling was to let the fans, and the space, and the business pressures determine our growth. I think that we're getting to the place where a lot of the original people already think it's too big. When we had 5 to 6000 people, they thought that was way too many. I felt that if we went to three weekends, then we'd syphon off some of the numbers that we now get. People would be going to other weekends and it would start growing again. Maybe we'll have to add a fourth weekend someday. I'm 56 years old. This is our 15th anniversary this year. I feel like I can continue doing this, if I stay current and alert, and in tune with the young people, for ten more years. By then we could be running for four or five weeks. Who knows, I'm sure that the Festivals will survive without me.

You seem to be totally in control of what is going on around here, particularly during the concerts, backstage and onstage. It reminds me of a pyramid. There is one guy there at the top, and he calls all the shots and everybody else follows.

That's right. Consensus was tried at Newport, and it failed miserably. The Board of Directors tried to do something like this, by Committee. There was too much give and take. Too many compromises. Too many deals. I'm absolutely, totally open, and up front, I pick the artists that I feel are appropriate. I reject the ones that are not appropriate, or the ones who do not behave appropriately. Our attitude is, that this is an inclusive community for everybody, until they screw up. At that point, they may be asked to either revise their attitude, or leave. That's an afterthought though. It's not the premise of how we do it, it's just the way it is. We have appointed a dozen to fourteen Directors at Kerrville, and these are musicians who know that I trust them implicitly. They can call me at any hour of the day or night. They can make any suggestions or any criticism, at any time. That's what that job means. They have no duties, except to keep me, the way they like me. I require a disciplined situation for them to perform in, because I think they play best when everything is known. The quality of the sound system, the quality of the lighting, the length of their set, the amount of their pay, the amount of advertising and publicity, their accomodation and their treatment. Everybody is treated with respect, as an individual, and for the most part, that works. I'd say it works 98% of the time. When it doesn't work, it's usually that either, I am fatigued and I'm shortsighted, or I am rude, without meaning to be. Alternatively the other person may be tired, or using drugs, or some other problem, that I am not aware of.

Since 1972 there has been one guy who has done all the recordings for the Kerrville Folk Festival albums.

Pedro Gutierrez. He's a Cuban refugee who put together and built his own recording equipment, back when I was in the radio business. We would get commercials recorded, and he would do them. When we started Kerrville, he came up here too. He's never been paid for what he does. We pay his hotel room and his gasoline and some expenses. He has never been paid for an hour of studio time, or an hour of editing or anything. He has just done it all for the love of the music. We've done, I suppose, fourteen or fifteen albums over the years.

Can we look at some facets of what goes on at the Festival. Who appeared at the first Festival.

There were twelve performers, who were all friends of mine. Mance Lipscomb, John Lomax Jr., Michael Martin Murphey, Ray Wylie Hubbard's little trio Three Faces West, Allen Damron, Carolyn Hester, Bill and Bonnie Hearne, Bill Moss who is a black disc jockey who plays a 12 string and sings a lot of blues. Segal Fry, who was a fellow, who was a friend of Roger Abrahams and sang a lot of Woody Guthrie tunes. (ED, NOTE, It's funny how time plays tricks on the memory. The liner notes to the 1972 Folk Festival album quotes "thirteen standing ovations" over the three nights of concerts. Of the artists quoted by Rod, Bill Moss appears on Vol. 2 of the 1973 album, while Three Faces West are included on the 1974 album. The following artists not mentioned by Rod, were included on the 1972 album liner notes - Texas Fever, Dick Barrett, Robert Shaw, Steven Fromholz, Peter Yarrow and Kenneth Threadgill. Threadgill's recordings proved unusable and Murphey couldn't get recording clearance - neither appeared on the final vinyl).

Segal Fry had some associations with the "Chequered Flag" didn't he.

I brought Segal in there, to help me run it. Eventually he bought the club. Anyway, there were twelve performers scheduled. (ED, NOTE, Things should now become clear about the famous first thirteen). When Peter, Paul and Mary broke up in 1970 in Austin, it took them about a year to get out single albums of their own. They were all released by Warner Bros. simultaneously. I was called by George Wein from the Newport office, and asked if I would go out on the road with Peter Yarrow. He'd never been out on the road by himself before. He'd always had his management and his booking people and that stuff. I took Peter out, and this was probably in February of 1972. He said, "I hear you're having a Folk Festival. Can I come", and I said, "Sure, We're only paying everybody \$100.00". He said, "I don't care, I'll come anyway". He envisioned the New Folk Concerts for emerging songwriters, which he had conceived at Newport. Buffy St. Marie was discovered at Newport. Peter wasn't even listed on the first poster, because he wasn't part of the Festival. He joined us anyway. His spirit, became the spirit of Kerrville. That was the loving inclusive idea and the non-competative idea. The sharing idea. I think that was as healthy a start as we could have had. You've got to realise that I was a middle class, right wing Republican conservative and a broadcaster. I was into broadcast ethics. Belonged to the Rotary Club and all that business. I wasn't really into protesting and that sort of thing. I wasn't aware of that sort of thing.

This year, you had 210 entries for the New Folk Contest. How many entrants did you have in 1972. Have you ever exceeded the figure of 210.

In 1972, we had twenty three songwriters but it varies from year to year. Generally it's around 165 to 200. Since its inception, New Folk winners like Kurt Van Sickle, Nanci Griffith, Lindsay Haisley, Chuck Pyle, John Ias, Bobby

Bridger and Rick Beresford have all moved on to become recording artists. On this years Festival main bill, out of the sixty odd performers, nineteen are former New Folk winners. (ED, NOTE, Rod forgot to include Lyle Lovett whose first self titled album, for MCA, enjoyed phenomenal success. His second album "Pontiac", despite a number of false starts, was finally released Stateside in the second week of January 1988. Lyle's old schoolfriend, Robert Earl Keen has also won the Contest and has an album available on the Philo label. Of the 1986 New Folk award winners, I would suggest that Suzanne Sherwin, who has already recorded an album in Nashville, is a name to look out for in the future).

During one of the early years at Kerrville, the Flatlanders turned up,

They tell me that they appeared in 1972. I think they came in 1973. It seems to me, we were walking through the Arts and Crafts Fair and these kids were sitting under a tent playing this funky music. Jerry Jeff said, "Why don't you put them on the Festival with us tonight". I said, "Yes, I guess we could do that. They sound pretty good and it might be fun". I asked them which ones had bought their tickets, and which ones hadn't and so forth. I can't remember if we refunded their tickets or not. I don't believe we did. They came and played, and it was six or eight years later, that I found out that it was Joe Ely, Butch Hancock, Jimmie Gilmore, Steve Weeson and Tony Pearson. They've been real good friends of ours ever since. We've had a couple of Flatlanders Reunions in the last few years.

Over at the other end of the ranch on Chapel Hill, there's a cross, an alter and some wind chimes, Which year were they erected,

The cross and the alter were put on Chapel Hill in 1975, when they were consecrated for religious purposes by the Rev. Charlie Sumners. The idea for this was mine. The organised church really bothers me. The institution called "the church", that spends most of its money and energy on maintaining buildings, alter guilds, air conditioning committees, robes and frocks and ceremonial things like that - they're not saving many souls or feeding the hungry. They're not solving the problems of the day. I came very close to God in the trenches of Korea as a Marine. I had a hard time finding a church, or a place where I could worship. Chapel Hill fills that space for me. The Folk Mass is about as real and as genuine as it could be. I feel real close up there.

Also on Chapel Hill, is the Ballad Tree. Around that tree every afternoon, there is an informal concert - The Ballad Tree Sessions, Whose idea was that,

That was Bobby Bridger. Bobby had been a New Folk artist in 1972, and it was fun then. It was a sharing experience. A lot of fun. By 1975/76, the record companies started sending their singers into the New Folk Contest. Some of the young professionals also began getting into it. No matter how hard we told them to relax, it became a very competitive situation. Bobby said, "Why can't we have another space and another time, for songwriters who don't have a competitive spirit. Those who don't want to enter a song, but who want to reach an audience". I said, "That sounds great". So we started the Ballad Tree.

Over towards Chapel Hill, there's a small stage where the childrens concerts take place, Who thought up that aspect of the Festival,

That really was mine, and I don't like children. I've had a few crawl into my lap, that I love, but I've been married 29 years and I don't have any children. I don't want children. I have met a child that I like, but they are few and far between. I think most parents are irresponsible, and that kids are brats, and that I don't want to be around them. Nevertheless, I realise that they are the future of everything. I make jokes about it onstage. I don't know whether you've heard them or not. Every five years, I do something for the children whether they need it or not. I have young people who love children, who are around me constantly, and they keep mentioning how wonderful they are. They send their beautiful little daughters to sit on my lap and hug me, hoping that I will soften. I had heard Peter Alsop in Canada, and he'd been sending me records for years. I had met Kim Wallach from Boston. She just kind of won me with her warmth. I've been in love with Gayle Ross, the Cherokee girl, for years and years and years. I knew her even before the Festival started. When she looks at you and says, "I would like to do this", it always seems like a pretty good idea. Those three were there as a beginning, and with Bob Gibson's recent interest in childrens music, through "Uncle Bob's" in Chicago, then things have really developed. Steve Gillette and a lot of other wonderful people around here, seem to tolerate to a greater extent than me, children of all ages. I thought, well this is a need, and that we should be doing something about it. The stage has been there for two years. This is the first year that we've had the money, and the time, and the organisation to get the children's thing really going. We did a major effort a number of years ago, and it was a fiasco. I just decided, that the

people I had to do it, were not competent. They were dreamers, and they spent too much money. There were only 50 kids showed up, and it just seemed to me, not to be a practicable effort.

The Fish Fry and Concert was held last night. I was under the impression prior to the event, that it was the first one. That isn't the case, is it.

We started that in 1981. We were so surprised to still be in business after ten years, because we had lost hundreds and thousands of dollars in the rain, during the seventies. In 1975, '76 and '77 we had three Festivals a year. We had, out of those nine Festivals, six where we had two to ten inches of rain, and we lost money. We had been kept in business by patient creditors of all kinds. Musicians, insurance people, banks - everybody. As we began to get to the place where it looked like we were going to make a little money, and be able to pay our debts back, we wanted to have some event that would express the gratitude that we felt, for those who had supported us. Something where sponsors, advertisers and press people could come along, and where the performers could get together in a social situation. Now, the Ball which was held at the YO Ranch Hilton Hotel last night, is a new thing this year. When we go to 17 days next year, we haven't decided whether to have the Fish Fry one week and the Ball the next, or to have two Fish Frys and two Balls. The Ball last night was like a High School dance. We were just having a great time. When you get two hundred friends in one room, with that wonderful music from Beto and the Fairlanes - it was incredible.

How many years has the Staff Concert been running.

Steve Fromholz suggested that. It must have been four years ago, because Steve hosted the first one, Lindsay Haisley and Uncle Walt hosted the second one, Jerry Jeff hosted the third one, Steve Gillette is hosting the fourth one on Saturday. Most of the people who volunteer to work music festivals in the United States are people who not only love music, but people who play music. Maybe they're not of a professional stature yet. We wind up sometimes, out of a staff of 120 people, with 60 musicians. They all play around the Campfires, and everybody knows who plays what. We designed it, that the staff would elect ten people to play the Staff Concert. In order to get more staff involved, we allow those ten people to each pick three back-up musicians from the staff. When that concert is on, nobody is watching the gates. Nobody is cleaning up. Nobody is selling T-shirts. They're all right down there, watching the show.

You said earlier that the campgrounds opened in 1975. When did the campfires become a regular occurrence.

They actually started in 1974, before the campgrounds opened. Allen Damron invited Peter Yarrow and some other people, over to his land at the other end of the ranch. I think that was '74. Maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was '76. My idea of opening the campgrounds was, that I wanted people to be able to get together around the campfires. Like the bluegrass people do, under the shade trees. I knew once they began to do that, that it would be something that would bring them closer together, and that there would be a lot of music. It was a chance to hang out, and have a party. For a lot of people, it's the only chance that they get to sing. While my schedule doesn't allow me to make the campfires as much as I'd like to, it's my understanding that the music is just as good out there, as it is on stage.

You also hold a Bluegrass Festival. This years being the thirteenth. There's also the Goodtime Music Festival. Is it constantly in your mind to keep changing and evolving new things.

I think like a songwriter, a producer is a creative person. You do develop different ideas. I mean, it's inevitable. The Bluegrass Festival started in 1974. We found that after having the first Folk Festival, even with 6000 people, we were not going to be able to pay back the investment in the facilities that we'd developed. I looked for something else to do. At that time, it seemed me that Bluegrass was an American style of music which was valid, which was real and which was not getting any support in Texas. There was only one other Bluegrass Festival in Texas in 1974, and that was at Glen Rose. Now in 1986, there are twelve to fourteen Bluegrass Festivals in the state. They're all smaller than ours, but they exist. There's one at Nacogdoches, Texas which could develop into something pretty good. The Goodtime Festival was an attempt to serve the Celtic and traditional music fan. The Celtic movement has grown in Texas over the last seven or eight years, led by Linkers Dam in Dallas. There has also been a lot of support from bands in Austin, San Antonio and Fort Worth and other places. They've actually formed a Celtic Music Society statewide now.

Have you ever brought any of the British Celtic bands over to Texas.

Yes, We've had the Battlefield Band, We've had Boys of the Lough, The idea was to have a meeting place, a gathering place once a year, where all kinds of traditional music could be heard, We have square dancing and we have clogging, We have contemporary songs written in a traditional style, We have blues, and we have hillbilly music, We have bluegrass, Mexican conjunto music and mariachis and old time swing, People like - Roy Bookbinder who plays old metal guitars, That Festival is in its fourth year this year, but it's not developing fast enough to suit me, I'm not sure that it will continue,

At one time, you held a Classical Music Festival,

We had a Classical Music Festival out here for three years, It was magnificent, but I found that the people of Kerrville were more interested in sipping tea, than in raising money, It was a social thing for them, For me, it was musical experience, For them, it was a social experience,

A place to be seen, rather than coming to hear the music,

In a way, that's a fairly good appraisal, They would not get out and raise money, and they were supposed to, I turned it over to them, and they now have the Kerrville Performing Arts Society, which handles all that, They're doing an average to mediocre job of it, I can take profits, and do Classical Music for the fun of it, when I want to,

In November this year, you're having an Anti-Litter Day,

I guess the thing that probably turned me off, about the trash and the litter on the Texas Highways, is Highway 16, (ED, NOTE, This Highway runs north from San Antonio, through Kerrville and peters out, just south of Wichita Falls on the Northern border of the State), This is beautiful, beautiful country and it used to be beautiful all the time, Now it is full of trash, I began to notice that the Highway to Austin was full of trash, Then I noticed the Highway to Dallas was full of trash, I began to get information from the Highways Dept, that it cost \$20,000,000 a year to pick the trash up, Now it's \$24,000,000, Six years ago it cost \$16,000,000, The cost is escalating, The event is to study the history of the litter problem in Texas, We'll have speakers from Alco Aluminium and from Coca Cola and from the breweries, The "Beautify America" and the "Keep America Beautiful" people, will also talk about the problem, We'll discuss past attempts to solve the problem, and what we're going to do about it in the future, Currently, they're spending \$2,000,000 on the "Don't mess with Texas" anti-litter campaign, Stevie Ray Vaughan and a lot of other musicians are helping with that, They've put up "Don't mess with Texas" signs, and what do you find right under those signs, but a bunch of trash strewn along the Highway, I have become an activist on behalf of cleaning up the State, I'm not going to force the issue now, but my view at this point and until November, is that we need a mandatory container deposit law in Texas, Everybody pays for every can and every bottle and every six pack and every plastic ring, If they pitch it out the window, then anybody can pick it up and get paid a nickel for it, If we appeal to their greed, then there will not be this trash, In other States where this law has been passed, they have decreased the cost of cleaning up litter by 40% to 60%, In Texas that would save us \$10 - 12,000,000 at present levels, We need that money for our farmers, and a lot of other things, I think it's a bad example to have children out cleaning up trash, Boy Scouts and other people, This year, we're going out touring nationally, and we're going to invite people to Texas, To have our front yard filled with our garbage is disgusting to me and unacceptable,

You've just mentioned the "Celebrate Texas" national concert tour, which you are undertaking in a few weeks time, Is it something that you've wanted to do for years,

We've played 27 Texas cities over the years, We toured with a similar group, as the Kerrville Folk Festival "On The Road", We'd play groups of three concerts, over three days, in three cities, in the Spring, Then we'd play in the Fall, and the next year we'd do the same, We got to thinking in 1982, that we were going to have a big birthday party in Texas in 1986, Music pretty well reflects the culture, and helps to break down walls and what not, We thought it would be a great idea to take our music across the country, It has worked out very well, We're going to be playing a lot of good places, We start out in Austin, then go to Houston, We play Little Rock, Nashville, Washington DC - The Kennedy Centre, The Bottom Line in New York and the Summerville Theatre in Boston, At Penns Landing in Philadelphia we'll be outside for a free concert, Grant Park in Chicago will also be a free concert, and Peony Park in Omaha is also an outdoor show, Then we go to the Paramount Theatre in Denver, Colorado and finally back home to Dallas,

You didn't mention any West Coast dates,

There has been some interest there, Not just there, but also in Wyoming and in North and South Dakota. We also want to go to Europe and Scotland and England. I'm an Anglophile. I've driven Jaguars and MG's and Austins and Lotus racing cars. That was my first connection with the English, and with their spirit in World War II. I'm part English anyway, and Irish and Scots and French. I want to go to England very much. I want to be there. I want to run up to the first Englishman I see, and hug him, and see what he does. I have a great respect for the English, even though I think they've screwed up their Government. Ours is screwed up too, so it's OK. The people are great though.

Most other Festivals are, drive there, park your vehicle, see the show and then drive home. It's different here.

There is a community here. What we have here is rare, relative to other Festivals in the States. There are Bluegrass Festivals and there is the Philadelphia Folk Festival, and other Festivals where this kind of thing exists, yet they don't have the same spirit. The physical facilities, and the camping out and the campfires exist, but they're different. The performers and the fans don't mix the way it is here. It's just mostly the fans having a campfire and picking their guitars. We would not expect to impose our system on anybody. We just want to share our music with them, and hear them play and be with them. For instance to go to England and Ireland and Scotland and maybe Switzerland and Germany and a few other places. As the Edinburgh Festival invitation developed, then somebody said, "You've got to come to London first". Then somebody said, "I'd like to have you in Frankfurt if you're going to be in London". It just got out of hand and I had to say, "Well this will have to happen another year, not this year".

So 1987 may be the year for "Kerrville over Europe".

Yes, I really think it is a strong possibility. I have a Festival in Midland Odessa, Texas in July. I may have another one in Santa Fe, and I have one in October in Mexico. The months that we are available are very limited. If we can find an invitation, and a proper financial guarantee that we can get back home, then we'd like very much to come over. Maybe not with as large of people as we're touring nationally with. Somebody wants us to go to Australia. Because of the interest between Australia and Texas over the sesqui-centennial. There are possibilities there. We'll certainly pursue them. I would love to go to England. I'd rather go to England I think than anywhere else, except maybe Ireland. I have some Irish blood and I'd love to see Ireland. I grew up celebrating St. Patrick's Day and I have a feeling of kinship for the Irish.

Can we talk about a gentleman who appeared on stage the other night - David Amram.

David is a Jewish, middle class, Philadelphian who is a brilliant musician. He is a bottomless source of energy. He is a classical music composer, a french horn player, a jazz pianist and a flute player. He's a renaissance man. He was a french horn player for the National Symphony Orchestra. He was Leonard Bernstein's first composer in residence for the New York Philharmonic. He has composed works that have been premiered by a dozen Symphony Orchestras in two or three countries. He has conducted the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony and the Cairo Symphony. He loves his classical music and makes the greater part of his living conducting major orchestras. He is also involved in producing his works of chamber music, operas, symphonies and shorter works. He is one of the Top 20 American composers who belong to BMI - Broadcast Music Incorporated. In America he is one of the Top 20 played classical composers. He has a broad musical spectrum. He also has a broad viewpoint of what is valid. He feels that the music in Texas, is in many ways, much more valid than Bach or Beethoven. Much less contrived and much more natural, and much more communicative. He likes to be a part of it. He came down here 7 or 8 years ago, as a guest of Bobby Bridger. Three or four years ago, he became a Director of our Festival. He's as good a street musician as I've met. He has conducted my Orchestra as well, on my Classical Music Festivals. He has conducted for me in other cities, Port Arthur and so forth. I knew of him before Bobby Bridger brought him to Kerrville. I'd seen him in concert with the Austin Symphony. I knew about him, but everybody knows about David Amram, who is connected with classical music.

He seemed to me to be rather outrageous, because here was this guy with a classical music background, dressed in a rather dishevelled manner, and yet musically putting it all together.

Well, I think that one of the things that is wrong with society these days, and wrong with the world, is that we have preconceived notions about everything. It makes it difficult for us to get along, as human beings, and as members of different countries. Notions about clothing, about accents, about hair, about music and about fashion. All of the trappings of man are undoing him. Music is the one trapping which can pull mankind together. That is,

unless you formalise it, and put it on a pedestal. Call it "his Grace" or "her Grace". It's got to cost so much, and you have to wear this to go hear it. You have to sit in box seats and you have to look through opera glasses. Those kind of trappings hinder reaching out to each other, Touching each other, Communicating with each other. Practising humanity. Mankind is blessed with a lot of things. The ability to communicate specifically to his friends and enemies, about how he feels and what he needs, and what he doesn't need or like. Yet he builds up these barriers. Coats and ties, and silk stockings and high heels, and all of the phony things that go with this society that we've created. It serves no real purpose, except to spend money and build walls between people. David Amram says, "Music takes down the walls".

You planned to have a book about the first fifteen years of the Kerrville Festivals available for this year's Festival, and written by Larry Willoughby. Is this the same person who is a musician, and is also Rodney Crowell's cousin.

I don't think Larry is a musician. Larry wrote a book titled "Texas Rhythm, Texas Rhyme", and he is a teacher of History at Austin Community College. He has a tremendous interest in music, and the music scene in Austin as it evolved, which has gotten him involved. His book will be out in time for Thanksgiving, this year.

What about the 1982 Folk Festival album, which is the next one in the series.

The 1982 "Festival Highlights", will only be available as a cassette. They're working on the labels currently. The tapes are finished and it should be out this weekend. In future, we're going to do cassettes the middle four years and do a double album on each fifth anniversary. We've got too far behind, and we'll never catch up if we continue to do albums. We can't afford it. Financially or physically. The time and the effort is just too great. The cassettes have more songs, pro-rata for less money. The annotation, the notes and stuff are not there, as of right now. We can do them, but it would take me 25 or 30 more hours to get the notes. Who is playing with who, and that sort of thing. (Yawns).

It's day eight of the Festival now. Are things beginning to catch up on you.

Well, people put out publications or publicity stating that they can do something when they can't. They make promises and they make it look real good. Then you do business with them, and they don't do what they say. That's why we try so hard here, to do what we say. To give people more for their money and more for their time, than they get anywhere else. We try to keep the prices low. The food prices, the beverage prices and everything. It has escalated over the years. It has gotten higher and higher, because that's the way the economy is, but we try to keep it reasonable.

POSTSCRIPT

On the evening of Friday 22nd May 1987, the small Texas town of Saragosa, which lies about 400 miles due west of Kerrville was virtually wiped out by a tornado. The weather in that area remained unsettled for quite a number of weeks afterwards, including the period during which the extended seventeen day, 16th annual Kerrville Folk Festival was held. As a result of the almost continuous rain, the paying customers didn't come through the turnstiles in sufficient numbers, and the Festival suffered a financial loss of somewhere in the region of \$50 - 60,000. In an attempt to recoup some of the losses, a number of fundraising events were held during the Fall of the year. We can only pray that they were a success, and that the Festival manages to weather this particular storm.

Regarding the Larry Willoughby book, to the best of my knowledge, it has never been published. The release of the "Live Highlights" cassettes moved on apace, with the appearance of the 1983 and 1984 tapes during last year.

Elsewhere in this issue, you will read about Butch Hancock's involvement in the videotaping of the Kerrville Folk Festival. To date, one 60 min. long tape is on general release, and is available through the Kerrville Festivals Office. It includes highlights from the 1985 and 1986 Festivals, featuring in the process Riders in the Sky, Nanci Griffith, Shake Russell, Marcia Ball and Jerry Jeff Walker. Sad to say, it is only available on the American NTSC VHS system, and therefore cannot be shown on standard British or European equipment. There are a number of UK companies who specialise in the conversion of NTSC tapes to our PAL VHS system. The cost however, is in the region of £40.00 per hour. It really depends therefore, how desperate you are to see your Kerrville heroes.

chris vallillo



The interview with Chris Vallillo was conducted in the front seat of a Ford Crown Victoria car, Reg. No. MGX 283, in the Kerrville Campgrounds on the morning of Saturday 31st May 1986. Thanks to Ed Becker for the introduction. Thanks to Chris, for his friendship and for the songs, while I was at the Kerrville Folk Festival. One day hopefully, the rest of the world might know a lot more about a couple of songwriters from Illinois, - Michael Smith and you, Chris also introduced me to a once in a lifetime experiences - Fajitas, That however, is another story. See you somewhere down in the "dip", good buddy.

Where do we start, Was it Illinois,

Well, I was actually born in Hammond, Indiana in 1954, August 3rd. My dad was a Civil Engineer and we moved every two or three years, all through the Mid-West. As well as Hammond, we lived in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, - Flint, Michigan, - Cincinnati, Ohio, - Newcastle, Pennsylvania, - Buffalo, New York and Rochester, New York. Early musical influences - I guess the earliest ones, must have been the singing cowboys. I remember always wanting to get a guitar and sing around the campfire. That kind of thing.

This was off the radio,

Probably off the television, I don't remember for sure, but it probably would have to have been. I don't remember a time when I didn't want a guitar. I had a series of cardboard guitars that really didn't play. Then I finally got a beat up old Kay guitar with an action about that high (ED, NOTE, Chris indicated about an inch), from one of my uncles one Christmas. I had guitar lessons for about a year.

What was your age, at this point,

About ten years old. I was in sixth grade I guess, something like that. Of course, all the early Beatles and rock'n'roll - I was, at that point living near Detroit, so I heard a lot of the Motown stuff. Then I pretty much let it go. I didn't do too much with it, other than just learn a few chords and play around a little bit. In late High School, I started to get a little more into fingerpicking and folk music. Then I went to College, in Arizona, at a place called Prescott College. They had a real strong folk music type of underground going on there. That was when I first started playing with other people. Me and a guy named Steve Elliott and someone whose name I don't remember. We all got together and formed a bluegrass band, and we called ourselves The Granite Mountain Sluice Box Boys. The College was right next to Granite Mountain. We all had embroidered shirts with the mountains and gold mining going on. Whatever your instrument was, was also embroidered on the back of your shirt. Real classic 70's stuff.

Where did you play, coffee houses,

Pretty much around the College, and parties and things. I don't think we ever actually made any money doing it.

What material did you play,

Pretty much straight bluegrass. About that time, the one fellow whose name I don't remember, who was from Los Angeles - he was seriously into folk and bluegrass music, and had a real strong background in it. The Nitty Gritty's triple album, "Will the circle be unbroken" came out halfway through our time together, so we learned a bunch of the songs off of that. He also taught me a lot of older bluegrass things like, "Little Sadie and Little Maggie", "Soldiers Joy" and "Old Joe Clark". There was just a lot of music going on at that place. At that time, I was also very much into the country rock sound that was going on. The Eagles and things like that. Poco later on, and Gram Parsons later on. From there, I ended up going to Wisconsin to finish School, because Prescott ran out of money and closed in the middle of my third year. I didn't really do much music in Wisconsin, except play some electric guitar with some folks. Graduated, and started doing Archaeology. Did that for a couple of years, and ended up in McComb, Illinois working for the University there.

Was this research work,

I was involved in Survey Archaeology for a highway project that was going through. What we'd do, is go out and make sure they weren't going to bulldoze any Indian sites. At that time, I started to take guitar lessons again and started to meet and hang out with some of the local musicians. McComb had a relatively good music scene going. By then I was 21 or 22. This band that I started hanging out with, was called Poker Flatts. They played country rock. A mixture of the Flying Burrito Bros. and the Ozark Mountain Daredevils. They had a combination type of feel to them. They put out one album. I started out just doing roadwork, and then eventually ran sound for them. They pretty much toured just in the Mid-West. Just Illinois and Iowa. I didn't play for them really. There were a couple of times when I almost got onstage. There were plans to do something like that, but it never happened. After about a year and a half with them, I went and joined a band called Bear Creek, who were a local band in Western Illinois, based out of Carthage. By that point, I'd given up Archaeology and was going full time into music. This band was real straight country almost, but more like Commander Cody type of country. A lot of old stuff. It had a boogie swing type of feel, to a lot of it. We played for about six months around Illinois, sometimes into Iowa. A guy named Bill Nolin was the lead singer in that band. He was a pretty good singer. Unfortunately, he was also a serious drinker. That band broke up after a while, and Bill and I worked as a duo for six months. About that time, I started to write a few things. We reached a point where the duo wasn't really going anywhere, so we split up. I went back to do some Archaeology for about three or four months, because I needed to get some money. Just about that time, I was going to go out to California, as there was some talk about some work in Archaeology out there. I was getting ready to send out the letters saying that I was coming, when I got a phone call that a guy from the McComb area was looking for a guitar player. It appeared that he was trying to get in touch with me. That was Ken Carlisle, and his band was called the Cadillac Cowboys. I played with them for the next five years. The band was primarily country, with a little bit of sixties acid rock thrown in. That sort of feel, and that sort of penchant for jamming and going into long involved musical things with it. We were doing real serious country music, just a year before that big country boom took off. When that boom finally caught on, we were in a real good position. We did Illinois and Iowa initially - eventually it reached a point where we'd go as far as Kansas City and Oklahoma City. We'd play down in Key West, Florida in the winters. A couple of times, we went up to New York City and played at the "Lone Star Cafe". Primarily, it was playing on our own. We opened for a lot of bands coming through the Mid-West. When we played in New York City, we opened for whoever was at the "Lone Star". We cut two albums with that band. The first one was, "Live at the Black Stallion" which was a local club, up in the Quad cities. We cut that album in 1979-80. It contained primarily cover material. I don't think we did any original songs. It was a good album and had a real good feel to it. We also released quite a few singles. We were just trying to crack it with a single, more than anything else. We could afford to do that, we thought. The first one that we put out, was a song that a fellow named Ron Kimbrow wrote called "Truckin' to the promised land". I don't think we got much action off of that. We just sort of released it, and let it go. We only had local distribution on that single. Later on, when we started releasing more 45's, there were four of us that were writing together. Ron Kimbrow, myself, Ken Carlisle and Lonnie Ratliff. Lonnie had spent some time in Nashville working for Curtis Wood Enterprises as a songpusher. He'd do the mailings, get on the phone, call the radio stations and try to get them to play it. He had the contacts and the experience. Later, we did our own distribution to the radio stations. We'd only mail to the ones that were listed with the Billboard Charts. When we released some subsequent things, we did pretty good with them on a national level, although they were never actually distributed nationally. We got some pretty good airplay off of them. "Smokin' Guns" was the second 45.

Was that one of your songs,

It was a song that I wrote with Ron Kimbrow. That did pretty good. If I recall correctly, we had a patch of airplay around Tulsa that was real strong. After that, the next one was called "Atlanta's looking". Lonnie had this idea to write this song about the Atlanta Murders, that were going on at the time. It turned out to be a real trashy thing, and a real wrong move. Then came "Micky Mantle" - "When you were Micky Mantle, and I was Stan the Man...", which is another song I wrote with Ronnie. That was the one that we got really serious about and did some promo work on. We got a mention in Billboard for it, which was kind of exiting. It wasn't picked up by enough stations, however. I think they said we were one station shy of being in the Top 100. It got enough airplay and things, that I actually did get some royalty cheques off of it. I don't think there were any 45's after that. There was one in between there somewhere, called "Whisky gets me by", that was recorded live in one of the bars we used to play. It was by an Iowa songwriter, whose name I can't remember. In about 1982, Ken wanted to put out a second live album. When we eventually did it, it was just recorded live on a four track machine. It was not very good quality work. On one side it was live, and on the other, was all the 45's put together - A and B sides. I think they were just looking for any material, at that point. They called that one the, "Black Album". It just had a black cover. They didn't even tell us when they were recording it. They just came in and rolled the tapes. We never knew from one night to the next, whether or not it was actually going to be going on, or not. Country music peaked for a while and then started to go down. The band started to get stale. Let's see - it's '86 now - I guess it was in the fall of '83, that Ken decided to go real small. He fired half the band and the road crew. The band was reduced to a four piece

and they hired a new drummer. The band had been six musicians and two road crew. Ken played guitar and fiddle. We had Roger Ward on bass and fiddle, and Marty Muse played pedal steel. He's a real fine pedal steel player and he's in Austin now. I played guitar and bass. At various points, we had a lot of different people in and out of the band. We had Duke Laine on drums for a while, then we had Harold Sawyer. For the last couple of years, it was steel, guitar and fiddle. Earlier versions didn't have the steel, but they had more fiddles. The band played for about another year or so. That was when Bongo Bob joined the band. After I left, he was the drummer they hired.

Bongo is the guy who has done the artwork for the initial cassette versions of Richard Dobson's, "True West" album.

Yes. He played with Ken's band for about a year. Then they shifted gears, and went almost new wave country, and lost a lot of the following that they had built up. They were still doing the same material, but changing the feel of it. The audiences they had built up, were old farmers and people who were pretty much into the two step and dancing and stuff. They had a hard time, with the changes. The music scene was changing there. About this time, all the factories were closing down and lots of people were out of work. The money wasn't happening as it had been, and all the big rooms were closing down. Bands were breaking up all over the Mid-West, as a result. When I left Ken's band, I looked around for a while. I almost got a band together myself, but it was turning out to be more trouble than it was worth, so I just decided to start playing solo. Started playing around the McComb area primarily, and then moved out from there.

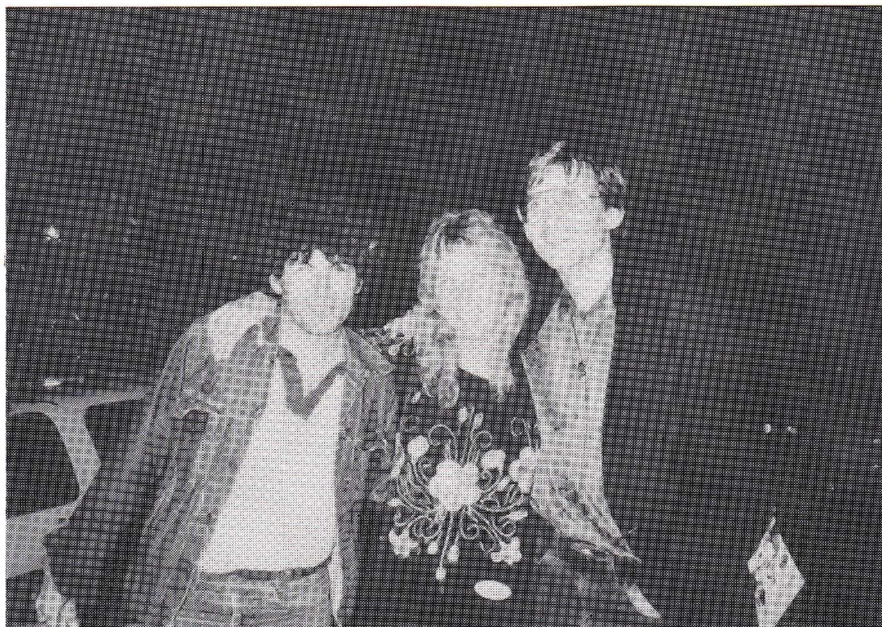


Photo: Chris Vallillo/ Gin Ridge Archives.



*L to R: Chris Vallillo, Linda Shaw and Jimmie Gilmore, Kerrville 1986.
Linda plays electric bass in Jimmie's band.*

Which year was this, Late '84.

Yes. I'd actually done a few solo jobs. I'm not sure that it wasn't '83, because it's been three years - yes, I think it might have been like August 1983, when the news came, and the last big gig was in November 1983. Then I used some of my contacts with the Cowboys and got into the Illinois State Fair, Burlington Steamboat Days and some of the bigger Festivals around home. Originally I started doing singer/songwriter stuff - like Guy Clark, Townes Van Zandt and some Jerry Jeff Walker. A lot of this sort of, Texas feel music, plus a few other things from the sixties and seventies in the country rock vein.

Did you continue to write songs yourself.

Yes. At that point I started to concentrate a lot more on writing original material. In the beginning, I didn't perform much of it in public. Gradually I increased it, as the jobs got less commercial, and I could get more into the folk clubs and places where you could get away with that sort of thing.

Do you only play in Illinois.

I play Illinois and Iowa, Eastern Iowa primarily. I was doing parties, bars, things like that. Then, like I say, the big Festivals kind of help out in the summer time. Started moving out of the bars and into some College things. In the last year or so, I've been getting a lot more out of that situation. Much more into folk music things and Arts Council things, where I'm going in and doing my own material. Doing a lot of fingerpicking and bottleneck slide. Doing a lot of the Chicago type songwriters like, Steve Goodman and Michael Smith. Having been down here at Kerrville, I've been leaning a lot more towards the kind of material that's being played down here. This is the second year that I've been at Kerrville. Last year, I came down as a New Folk contestant and I did a couple of my own songs, one of which was "Goodbye Independent Trucker", which is about some of the changes going on in Illinois. That song had been picked up by a local Arts Council, and included in a video documentary that they had done, about a small town in Illinois called Bushnell. That, and an instrumental piece called "The Western Illinois Rag", were used. I had recordings of them, and another older song titled, "Southern Torn". I sent the tape down, and got in as a New Folk contestant.

Do you plan to do any more recordings of your own material.

Yes, I've been doing more and more work with the Arts Council in Illinois, and was given a grant to come to Kerrville this year, to attend the Songwriters School. I was given a second grant to record original music this summer, probably on a tape. Hopefully, it's going to be called "The Western Illinois Rag", after the instrumental piece. It should primarily be songs that I've written about Western Illinois. I imagine that it will be a cassette, because I can afford to do that, with the size of the grant that I've got right now. In fact, I should be going to Champaign next week, to start some ground work on that.

Do you still have a binding song publishing deal.

Actually, I have my own publishing. In the Cowboys, there were four guys who wrote under a joint deal. Anytime one of us wrote a song, the four names would go down on it. I'm not sure that it is binding any more. The last single that Ken Carlisle put out, he wrote and recorded, and put his own name on it. The other guys are all down in Nashville now, Ron Kimbrow and Lonnie Ratliff, that is, Ken is still in Rushville, Illinois. Lonnie and I have a publishing company called Skyrush Music. Ron and Ken had a publishing deal as Carlisle/Kimbrow Music. They were all associated with Curtis Wood Enterprises in Nashville. We sort of did some business things through them, but we were not really ever bound to any deals with them.

How did you find out about Kerrville.

Ed Becker was the one who first turned me on to it, through Tom Russell. He is a big fan of Tom Russell's. Ed had sent up these tapes to Ken's band, with all these crazy songs on them. I picked out a couple of them that I really liked, and was asking him about them. It turned out, that they were Tom Russell songs. He started telling me more about Tom Russell. Whenever we would play down at Mount Olive, which is where Ed is from, we would always stay at his house. We'd listen to all these records and drink beer all night long. They'd take real good care of us, and feed us and everything. In the process, I began to hear about this Kerrville place, where all the songwriters met up. About a year and a half ago, Ed and I were talking about Kerrville and he was saying how he always wanted to go. I said, "Well, let's go". We got to talking about it more and more and decided we maybe better ought to go. I just sent in the tapes to the New Folk Contest, and I was lucky enough to place that year, which was quite a thrill.

POSTSCRIPT

Well, as Chris intimated, he set about recording his songs during the late summer of 1986. Originally the plan was to use a four track machine which he had at home, but via some contacts which he made at the University of Illinois at Champaign, Chris was able to use their recording studio. In Chris's own words, "It improved the quality 300%". Following an 11 day stint at the Illinois State Fair, a rather tired Chris Vallillo set about recording, "The Western Illinois Rag". Supported by a bass player and 15 year old fiddle player, Allison Krauss who now has an album available on the Rounder label, Chris supplied all the other instrumentation and vocals. During the whole of the time that he spent in the studios, including a final 26 hour long session, Chris was suffering from a cold. As far as the final product is concerned, I'd defy you to tell.

The following tape/album review, was offered to "Folk Roots" magazine early in 1987, but was rejected on the basis of being overlong and because the tape didn't at that time, have an index number. I apologise in advance, for any information contained in the review, which is repeated from the foregoing interview, but I felt that the review should stand, as I originally envisaged it. In their zealous search for the ever more obscure "roots" of music,

"Folk Roots" tend to miss a lot anyway. If they reckon that Michelle Shocked is what happens at Kerrville, then they ought to take of the blinkers.

"The Western Illinois Rag", from a cassette copy of the proposed album.

During the Fall of 1986, Chris was esconced for longer than he planned, in the recording studios at the University of Illinois at Champaign. In the objective of recording his first solo album, Chris was assisted on some tracks by a bass player and 15 year old fiddle player, Allison Krauss. Chris played all the other instruments and also composed and produced the ten tracks on, *"The Western Illinois Rag"*. Meantime it is only available in cassette form,

Seven of the songs have a tenuous link, and are sandwiched between two instrumentals - the uptempo title track which opens the album, and the penultimate "Rollin' Rock Reel". Chris must have had his tongue firmly in his cheek, when he came up with the latter title. Contained within the main body of songs, are some truly fine melodies and neat lyrics, which, at first appear to be about life in Western Illinois. Nations may be divided by tongues, borders and ideologies, but people everywhere share the same hopes, fears and insecurities wherever they live. For "Western Illinois" and the observations contained therein, substitute *"The World"*.

Employing mainly an acoustic fingerpicking folk guitar style, Chris also manages to slip in a few bottleneck licks and an ample helping of bluegrass. A yearning for an age long past, when life was simple, slower and more enriched by people sharing things with each other, pervades the lyrics, without creating an aura of melancholy.

For many Americans, their land now seems to be one endless new shopping mall, firmly gripped by the religion of corporate management madness. Chris pursues that theme in "Goodbye Independent Trucker", setting the scene with the lines,

*"So long to the family farmer, now the company is planting the crops,
Farewell to Joe's Little Diner, the one with the home made pies",*

and concludes,

*"They say that we're all moving forward, but I'm not so sure we're ahead".
Surely, here we have a caring plea for sanity,*

In baseball mythology, Mickie Mantle ranks alongside Joe DiMaggio and Babe Ruth. "When you were Mickie Mantle", introduces us to a group of kids who, in play, adopt the identity of their sporting heroes. When the next generation comes along, they do exactly the same. Time passes, but human nature remains pretty constant.

"Silhouette against the stars" gives thanks for another year, and another successful harvest. Following that, the "fields lie in state, through the weary months of winter, cold and deep". If the melody is the canvas of a song, then Chris is a lyrical landscape artist of much skill. And this is only his first solo recording.

On most of the tracks, Chris sets the mood for the song by way of a spoken introduction, before the opening chords. "Treasures of the heart", is no exception. "Treasures of the heart", is a love song. "Treasures of the heart", with its unpretentious simplicity ranks in my opinion, alongside songs like Michael Smith's "The Dutchman". Need I say more.

In "Runnin' the river", Chris explores the world of riverboats. Ploughing its way upstream, the boat passes, "Sleeping towns on the river serene, cut from the cloth of the American dream". As I said earlier, Chris has struck a rich vein of song lyrics, and I've only quoted a few examples.

This tape is crying out for general release on one of the established independent labels. It contains many highs and very few lows, apart from the rather ordinary "Goodbye Christine". In the meantime Chris Vallillo, its creator, remains its sole promoter. If you're interested in obtaining a copy of one of the strongest debut sets by a singer/songwriter that I've heard in many a year, then you can't go far wrong with this one, and you can write to Chris at Gin Ridge Records, PO Box 144, Rushville, Illinois 62681, USA, enclosing an IMO for \$11.00. You won't regret it, I guarantee.

Additional and future issues of the "Kerrville Kronikle" cost, including postage: UK - £1.50 each, 4 issues - £6.00; Rest of Europe and elsewhere by surface mail - £1.80 each, 4 issues - £7.00; Outside Europe by airmail - £2.20 each, 4 issues - £8.50. Please make all cheques/PO's (UK mainland) payable to ARTHUR WOOD. Payments from outside the UK mainland will have to be drawn on a British bank, in £ sterling funds. For mailing address, see back page.

Rod Kennedy Presents KERRVILLE FOLK FESTIVAL

HIGHLIGHTS RECORDED "LIVE" AT KERRVILLE, TEXAS

1972

Peter Yarrow may have been providing a musical introduction for Allen Damron, Rod Kennedy's partner from the days at the "The Chequered Flag" in Austin. On the other hand, Peter's vision may have been something more - double edged - possibly infinite. Considering, that it is the opening track of the first Kerrville "Live Highlights" album, nothing could or would have been, more appropriate. It went something like this;

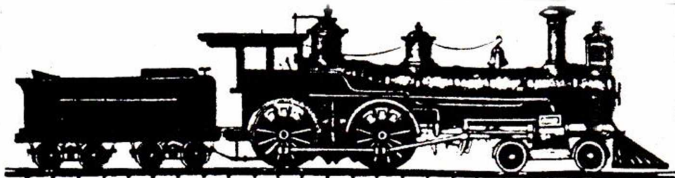
*This will be, a musical introduction,
This will be, in the spirit of it all,
This will be, a night of sharing,
Oh this will be, my friends,
In the call to be one,*

*This will be, recovery from the blazing Kerrville sun all the day,
This will be, a memory of the young folks that sang their songs,
and said what they had to say,
This will be, what a Festival should be,
Just a gathering of people knowing how to be with one another,
you and me,
And thee, if you like, to be and thee,*

*And it has been just the kind of thing I knew it would be,
With understanding, happy faces, young faces, old faces,
country faces, urban faces, childrens faces, smiling faces,*

Faces, faces, Perhaps next to Rod Kennedy, the organisational spirit of the Festival has resided in a fellow who knows all about, sharing in this way. Whose warmth and whose voice and whose sense of compassion and togetherness, has been a delight to observe, is now going to share in his own very special way. This will be, what will be, you will see - - -

IT WAS THE START OF THE "KERRVILLE EXPERIENCE".



SIDE 1

1. PETER YARROW—This Will Be (Yarrow)
ALLEN DAMRON—A Little Bit Late (Wickham) (6:08)
2. CAROLYN HESTER—Summertime—(Gershwin) (3:48)
with Dick Goodwin, bass
3. JOHN A. LOMAX JR.—Long John (traditional) (2:52)
4. TEXAS FEVER—Drunken Lady of the Morning—
(Murphey) (4:51)
5. MANCE LIPSCOMB—Texas Blues—(Lipscomb) (3:26)
6. DICK BARRETT—Orange Blossom Special (2:53)

SIDE 2

1. SEGLE FRY—Candy Creek Reunion and Picnic—
(Murphey) (4:57)
2. ROBERT SHAW—Put Me in the Alley (B. Smith) (3:49)
3. STEVE FROMHOLTZ—Birds and Wolverines—
(Fromholtz) (5:52)
with Travis Holland, guitar
4. BILL & BONNIE HEARNE—Tennessee Green—
(Murphey) (5:02)
with John Nelson, bass
5. PETER YARROW—When Day Is Done—(Yarrow) (5:18)
with Dick Goodwin, bass

The 1972 Kerrville Folk Festival was held June 1-3, at the Kerrville Municipal Auditorium, Kerrville, Texas.



1973 VOLUME 1

SIDE 1

1. BOBBY BRIDGER—The Call (Bridger) (3:17)
with John Inmond, guitar; Layton Depenning, bass; Leonard Arnold, steel guitar; Donny Dolan, drums.
2. BLUEGRASS RAMBLERS—Washington County (Baker) (5:09)
3. CAROLYN HESTER—Can't Help But Wonder Where I'm Bound (2:55)
4. B. W. STEVENSON—Shambala (Moore) (3:00)
with Herb Steiner, steel guitar; Rodney Garrison, bass; Donny Dolan, drums.
5. ROYAL LIGHT SINGERS—Jesus, My Rock (6:15)

SIDE 2

1. WILLIE NELSON—The Party's Over (Nelson) (2:16)
with Mickey Raphael, harmonica; Bobbie Nelson, piano; Jackie Deaton, bass; Paul English, drums.
2. TIMBERLINE ROSE—Camille's Blues (Dean) (5:30)
3. THE THREADGILLS—I'm A Drifter (Threadgill) (2:23)
4. STEVE FROMHOLZ—Dear Darcy (Fromholz) (4:48)
with Leonard Arnold, electric and steel guitars; Mickey Raphael, harmonica; Travis Holland, bass; Mike Christian, drums.
5. REV. CHARLIE SUMNERS—Peter's Song (Sumners) (3:56)
6. PETER YARROW—River of Jordan (Yarrow) (4:18)

1973 VOLUME 2

SIDE 1

1. KENNETH THREADGILL—Waitin' for a Train (Rodgers) (2:40)
with Charlie Davis, bass; Buzz Dolim, guitar; Don Wallace, drums.
2. BILL & BONNIE HEARNE—Muddy Boggy Banjo Man (Hubbard) (3:18)
with Michael Descdeau, bass.
3. DICK BARRETT—Kansas City Kitty (2:46)
with Christie Barrett, guitar; Chris Hazelwood, guitar; Brett Barrett, bass.
4. ROBERT SHAW—Here I Come with My Dirty Duckins On (Shaw) (3:41)
5. EWING STREET TIMES—Deep in the West (Russell) (6:15)
6. BILL MOSS—Amen!! (5:25)

SIDE 2

1. JERRY JEFF WALKER—Charlie Dunn (Walker) (3:09)
with Bob Livingston, bass; Craig Hillis, guitar; Gary Nunn, piano; Herb Steiner, pedal steel; Michael McGarry, drums.
2. ALLEN DAMRON—Nancy Whiskey (traditional) (7:25)
3. SUNNY SCHULMAN—Take Away (Schulman) (4:39)
with Jim Schulman, guitar; Bob Schulman, bass; Ed Page, congas.
4. TOWNES VAN ZANDT—Tecomseh Valley (Van Zandt) (4:48)
5. PETER YARROW, ALLEN DAMRON—This Land Is Your Land (Guthrie) (4:03) with a cast of thousands including The Threadgills

The 1973 Kerrville Folk Festival was held May 24-27, at the Kerrville Municipal Auditorium, Kerrville, Texas.

1974

SIDE 1

1. RAY WILEY HUBBARD—West Texas Country Western Dance Band (Hubbard) (4:12) with The Cowboy Twinkies—Terry Joe Ware, guitar; Clovis Roblane, mellotron; Jim Herbst, drums.
2. JIMMY JOHNSON—Just Like Me (Johnson) (2:48)
3. FLACO JIMENEZ—La Paloma (P.D.) (3:01)—with Manuel Pacheco, bajo sexto; Cookie Martinez, drums; Carlos Garza, bass; Fred Ojeda, vocal & guitar.
4. RILEY OSBOURNE—Laredo Lady (Osbourne) (2:57) with Fletcher Clark, bass.
5. CHUBBY WISE & TERRY MORRIS—Liberty (P.D.) (2:57) with the Bluegrass Ramblers of LaPorte, Texas.
6. SOUTHERN STRANGERS—Ruby (4:08)—Rual Yarbrough, banjo; Harold Weeks, lead singer and rhythm guitar; Buddy Whitten, dobro; James Whitten, bass.

SIDE 2

1. KENNETH THREADGILL—Mississippi Delta Blues (Neville-Rodgers) (3:20) with the Velvet CowPasture—Charlie Davis, bass; Buzz Dolim, guitar; Randy Melcancon, drums.
2. BILL PRIEST—Silent Souls (Priest) (5:48)
3. ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL—Why Don't You Love Me Like You Used to Do? (Williams) (2:46) with Leroy Preston and Chris O'Connell, vocal; Ray Benson, lead guitar; Richard Casanova, fiddle; Floyd Domino, piano; Tony Garnier, bass; Lucky Oceans, pedal steel guitar; Leroy Preston, drums.
4. BILL & BONNIE HEARNE—Last Thing I Needed (Nunn-Sissell) (4:42) Bill Hearne, guitar; Bonnie Hearne, vocal & piano; Jess Yaryan, bass; John Hill, drums.
5. THREE FACES WEST—Tin Can Jamboree (Fowler) (2:40) with Wayne Kidd, vocal and guitar; Rick Fowler and Steve Howell.
6. PLUM NELLY—Will The Circle Be Unbroken (Wiseman) (3:51) Terry Jo Jones, vocal; Bill Stoner, guitar; Benny Thurman, fiddle; Ernie Gammage, bass; harmony vocals, all.

The 1974 Kerrville Folk Festival was held May 23-27, at the Outdoor Theatre, Quiet Valley Ranch, Kerrville, Texas.

1975 VOLUMES 1 & 2

SIDE 1 (26:42)

1. JOHNNY VANDIVER - Gypsy Songman (J. J. Walker) (3:22)
2. T&M EXPRESS - Convict Hill (Hawthorne) (4:08) Tim York, electric guitar; Mike Hawthorne, acoustic guitar
3. DAVE HOUSTON - Snively, The One Armed Snake (Fromholz) (2:22)
4. HICKORY - Arkansas (Damon Black) (3:13) Marcia Breaz, vocal; Chris Breaz, banjo; Peter Breaz, bass; Huie Wyrick, guitar; Rick Powell, piano, Russ Berger, drums
5. RED RIVER DAVE - Somewhere I Hear An Angel Singing The San Antonio Rose (Red River Dave) (1:57)
6. DEE MOELLER - Slow Movin' Outlaw (Moeller) (5:02) Dee Moeller, piano and vocal; Michael Stults, guitar; John Keller, bass; J. D. Kindrick, drums.
7. JUKE BOY BONNER - I've Had The Blues (Bonner) (3:32)
8. WHEATFIELD - Seven Bridges Road (S. Young-Wheatfield) (3:04) Connie Mims, vocal and tambourine; Craig Calvert, vocal and guitar; Cris Idlet, vocal and banjo; Bob Russell, vocal and bass; Damion Hevia, percussion.

SIDE 3 (26:53)

1. BOBBY BRIDGER - Starmaker (Bridger) (3:43) with John Inman, guitar.
2. PLUM NELLY - There's Nothin' I Can Do (Gammage) (2:52) Jerry Jo Jones, vocal; Bill Stoner, guitar; Johnny Richardson, electric guitar; Benny Thurman, fiddle; Ernie Gammage, bass.
3. STEVE FROMHOLZ - Wolverillo Rap (Fromholz) (6:49) with Travis Holland, guitar.
4. DENIM - Let Your Colors Fly (Browder) (3:23) Bill Browder, vocal and guitar; David Moerbe, vocal and drums; Richard Mullen, vocal and guitar; Paul Clagette, vocal and guitar; Jerry Crow, bass.
5. CAROLYN HESTER - Don't Touch Me (H. Cochran) (3:02) with Dave Blume, bass.
6. ROBERT SHAW - Shorty Grogue (Peg Leg Will) (4:40)
7. BLUEGRASS ReVUE - Great Balls of Fire (J.L. Lewis) (2:24) Bob Clark, vocal and mandolin; Bill Perry Jr., vocal harmony and banjo; Vince Gill, guitar; Mike Perry, bass.

SIDE 2 (24:39)

1. GUY CLARK - Anyhow, I Love You (Clark) (3:34) Guy Clark, vocal and guitar; Mickey White, lead guitar; Mickey Raphael, harmonica; Steve Earle, back-up vocal and bass.
2. CAROL CISNEROS - Easy Feeling (Cisneros) (4:52) Carol Cisneros, vocal and guitar; Mike Hawthorne, guitar; Joe Mike Taylor, congas; Dick Goodwin, bass.
3. T. GOSNEY THORNTON - True Love and Ladies (Thornton) (2:51)
4. RICK STEIN - Another Lonely Night in Austin (Stein) (4:15) Rick Stein, vocal and guitar with the Alley Cat Band; Mike Jackson, lead guitar; Bill Towle, pedal steel guitar; Doug Sederholm, bass; Tom Howard, drums.
5. ALLEN DAMRON - Irish Cobbler's Song (traditional) (1:50)
6. LOU-RAY - Marihoochie High (Christy Lou) (3:20) Christy Lou, vocal and piano; Jimmy Harrell, guitar; Dick Goodwin, bass.
7. TOWNES VAN ZANDT - Poncho and Lefty (Van Zandt) (4:00) Townes Van Zandt, vocal and guitar; Mickey White, lead guitar; Rex Bell, bass.

SIDE 4 (26:41)

1. SEGIE FRY - My Creole Bell (Mississippi John Hurt) (4:40) Segie Fry, vocal and guitar; Craig Hillis, guitar; Mike Seeger, bass.
2. MIKE SEEGER - New Freedom March (Seeger) (1:27)
3. BILL & BONNIE HEARNE - Dear Darcy (Fromholz) (4:33) Bill Hearne, vocal and guitar; Bonnie Hearne, piano and harmony vocal; Mickey Raphael, harmonica; Larry Nye, bass.
4. DON SANDERS - Heavy Word User (Sanders) (4:09)
5. KENNETH THREADGILL - Mississippi Moon (Rodgers-McWilliams) (3:04) Kenneth Threadgill, vocal; Rene Best, guitar; Charlie Davis, bass; David Atke, drums.
6. TERRY WALDO - Red Riding Hood (unknown) (2:20)
7. RAY WILEY HUBBARD - Jazz Bo Dancer (Hubbard) (3:18) with The Cowboy Twinkies
8. AUGIE MEYER - Down to Mexico (Meyer) (3:01) and the Western Head Band

The 1975 Kerrville Folk Festival was held May 22-25, at the Outdoor Theatre, Quiet Valley Ranch, Kerrville, Texas.

To be continued.

GUY CLARK



Few songwriters are careless enough to reveal to the listener their whole persona. Many writers do however draw song portraits of the people, places and of the happenings that occur around them. Guy Clark as we shall see, is undoubtedly one of those. His technique is cinematic in the presentation of landscapes and characters, while retaining a humanitarian approach to everything that happens in the storyline.

On occasions, Guy's rich sense of humour even seeps through, as with the culinary paeon, "Homegrown Tomatoes" and the as yet unreleased songs, "Heavy metal ain't rock n' roll to me" and "Watermelon dream". For the start of our story, we must however go back some 46 years.

Guy Clark was born November 6, 1941 in Monahans, West Texas. He was raised by his grandmother, who ran a hotel there. His father was already overseas, and America would soon be plunged into World War II when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour. During the War his mother had a number of different jobs, including doing secretarial work for a while. According to Guy, Jack Prigg an old oil well driller, who was a resident at his grandmothers hotel and her sometime boyfriend, was the main adult male influence in his early life.

Upon his return from the War, Guy's father trained as an attorney under the GI Bill. The family then moved to Houston in 1951, where his father joined a law practice. A few years later, the Clark family moved farther south along the Texas coast to Rockport, near Corpus Christi, where Guy eventually graduated from High School. In 1958, Guy began to learn to play guitar, influenced in the main by his fathers law partner, who was proficient on the instrument. Initially Guy attempted to play Classical and Mexican music. The strutures of playing the former style proved too much for him. He soon found that playing traditional folk music was easier and far more satisfying. As he developed a repetoire of folk songs, Guy began performing in public at local coffee houses and clubs.

In the early sixties, Guy attended College on an irregular basis over a number of years but never completed the courses. He also spent some time in San Francisco in the mid sixties, and at one stage undertook the training programme for the U. S. Peace Corps., but then decided not to persue that option. Throughout this period, he continued to play folk music in public wherever and whenever anyone was willing to offer him a gig. At this stage, he also began to write his own material. Following a gig in Oklahoma City in the late sixties, Guy met his wife to be, Susanna.

There were occasions however, when the economics of life dictated that Guy hold down a day job. In 1969, while working as an art director at a Houston TV station, Guy became involved with a group of musicians who had just completed recording an album for the UNI label. Guy was asked to do the photography for the album liner. However, before Guy could complete the photography, one of the band members decided to quit. As a result, Guy stood in for the departed member on the cover photographs. The title of the album was, "*The unwritten works of Geoffrey, etc*" (UNI 73034) by Whistler, Chaucer, Detroit and Greenhill. According to Guy, there was even a plan for him to join the group, but nothing came of it. Another of the equally interesting musical aspects about this album is, that a number of the songs were composed by Joseph Burnett, and he also produced the disc. Nowadays, he is better known as Joseph Henry 'T-Bone' Burnett of Alpha Band and solo album fame (and potentially a million other disguises along the way).

Throughout the sixties, Guy gathered an ever widening circle of acquaintances among the folk/country music fraternity, resident in Texas. Guy recalls meeting Jerry Jeff Walker in Houston in 1964, three years prior to the latter's first studio recordings with the band, Circus Maximus. Another performer whom Guy formed an enduring friendship with, and affection for, was Townes Van Zandt. During the early sixties, when he was resident in Houston, Guy shared a flat on Fannin Street with another songwriter, Gary White. White is probably best remembered for the song "Long, long time", which was a chart success for Linda Ronstadt in the fall of 1970. This quartet of writers used to frequent and regularly perform at the Rex Bell/Dale Saffar club, *The Old Quarter*. Through Townes, Guy was introduced to the Houston born Texan, Mickey Newbury. When they met, Newbury had just enjoyed his first hit

song, with the First Editions rendition of "Just dropped in (to see what condition my condition was in)". The date, February 1968.

As the sixties drew to a close, Guy decided that if he was ever to achieve any success with his own material, a songwriting deal with an established publishing house was the only possible solution. To this end, Guy and Susanna moved to Los Angeles. By day, Guy worked in the Dopyera Brothers dobro factory. Guy claims that the only tune he was ever able to play on the dobros he made, was the opening verse of the Rolling Stones song, "No expectations". His sojourn in Los Angeles only lasted eight months, but at the end of it Guy had signed a writing deal with Sunbury Music. While resident in California, Guy joined a Long Beach based bluegrass trio. Guy supplied the rhythm guitar licks and sang, while Skinny Dennis Sanchez was on stand up bass and the third member played banjo. The band broke up in 1971, when Guy and Susanna decided to move back East to settle in Nashville.

They have remained there to this day, currently residing in Mount Juliet on the Eastern outskirts of Nashville. Shortly after settling in Nashville in 1971, Guy and Susanna were married. At their wedding in Galvin, Townes was best man and Mickey Newbury and his wife Susan were also in attendance.

Once Guy and Susanna were settled in Nashville, their home became a gathering point for many aspiring new songwriters who had decided to try their luck on 16th Avenue. Writers like Richard Dobson, David Olney and Rodney Crowell became regular visitors. On the performing front, Guy at this stage, was limited to "pass the hat" sessions at the *Exit/In Club* on a Monday and Tuesday night.

The first Guy Clark song to appear on record was "The old mother's locket trick" by Harold Lee, on Cartwheel Records. In the early seventies, Guy's friends helped bring his songs to a wider audience. Jerry Jeff Walker was one of the first to pitch in, with versions of "L.A. Freeway" and "That old time feeling" on his 1972 self titled MCA album. Townes covered "Don't let the sunshine fool ya'" on his Poppy/UA album *"The late great Townes Van Zandt"*, the following year. Subsequently, mainstream country artists like Johnny Cash and David Allan Coe recognised Guy's writing talents, the former cutting "The last gunfighter ballad", while the latter released versions of "Texas - 1947" and "Desperadoes waiting for a train". Jerry Jeff's 1973 album, *"Viva Terlingua"* also included the latter song. On a more obscure level, Spanky and Our Gang recorded "L.A. Freeway" for their 1975 reunion album, *"Changes"*.

Guy's first solo album also appeared in 1975. He had actually been trying to record an album for a number of years, but was never satisfied with the results. Although initial inspection of the liner would appear to indicate that Neil Wilburn had produced the album, four of the ten tracks were the demo recordings which Guy had used, to gain his recording deal. Even the album title was somewhat enigmatic, considering the amount of time it had taken Guy to get the songs on to vinyl. Initially, RCA in Britain imported American copies for sale in the record stores. This version contained an inner sheet with the song lyrics.



Photo: Arthur Wood/ Kerrville Kronikle Katalogue.

Guy Clark, Trysull, England - 24/11/87.

When British pressings eventually became available, the lyric insert was omitted, but not the reference to it, on the album liner. Many people would argue that *"Old No 1"* is Guy's strongest album. He had undoubtedly built up a reservoir of powerful songs to draw from. The album certainly contained classic versions of "L.A. Freeway", "Desperadoes waiting for a train" and "Texas - 1947". Throughout his career, Guy has constantly repeated that the songs he writes, are for himself. The quality of the interpretations on his first album, were therefore only to be expected. "L.A. Freeway" was inspired by the depressing eight months which Guy and Susanna had spent there, before the writing deal with Sunbury Music was secured. "Desperadoes..." was Guy's eulogy to his substitute grandfather Jack Prigg. In "Texas - 1947" he recalls, as a six year old going to the railroad depot in Monahans with his boyhood friend, to watch a streamlined train pass through town. In the lyrics of the latter song, he likens the speed of the train to that of a modern day Moonshot. The liner notes for *"Old No 1"* were penned on American Independence Day 1975, by one Jerry Jeff Waffle. Guy was pictured on the front of the album liner standing by the painting of a shirt. The painter, his wife Susanna.

Subsequent album covers to feature artwork by Susanna Clark, were Willie Nelson's megaselling *"Stardust"* and Emmylou Harris's *"Quarter Moon in a ten cent sky"*. The title of the latter recording came from the lyrics of the song, "Easy from now on", the only song to be written by the partnership of Susanna and Carlene "Carter" Routh. When the latter song was released as a single in the fall of 1978, Emmylou enjoyed a No 16 entry on the American country charts.

Guy also appeared on the *Kerrville Folk Festival* commemorative live recordings for the first time in 1975, singing "Anyhow I love you". It was the first of five occasions that Guy has been featured on those albums. Later, he was appointed to the Festivals Board of Directors. On the 1975 recording, Guy's backing band featured long time Willie Nelson band member, Mickey Raphael on harmonica, Mickey White on guitar and Steve Earle on bass. White is a long time touring companion of Townes Van Zandt, while the latter has leapt to national prominence in the States in the last few years, with his own brand of Springsteen tinged country. Steve Earle's two hit MCA albums are, *"Guitar town"* (1986) and *"Exit O"* (1987), while "cash in" concious Epic, saw fit to release some old recordings under the title of *"Early tracks"*.

The release of Guy's second RCA album, *"Texas Cookin'"* seemed at the time, to come hot on the heels of his first one. Certainly most of the music press dismissed it, as being vastly inferior to *"Old No 1"*. Only *Country Music People* in the UK, deigned to give it a five star review. Something which all of Guy's albums have gathered over the years, in that particular publication. The album featured one of the few songs that Guy and Susanna have written together, "Black haired boy". The identity of the "boy" in the song, is shrouded in mythology. Guy claims that he was writing about Townes, while Susanna's version is that she was writing about her husband. Despite the poor reviews that it gathered, the album included a number of songs that are still firm concert favourites among Guy's fans, including "Virginia's Real", "The last gunfighter ballad" and the title track.

To support his record releases, Guy toured the States with headline acts like Emmylou Harris and Waylon Jennings. During this period, Guy's road band included Danny Rowland (guitar), Chris Laird (drums), Charlie Bundy (bass) and Pete Grant (pedal steel). In the early autumn of 1977, Guy and his band undertook a nine date, three week tour of Japan playing in 500 to 1500 capacity halls.

During the summer of that year, Guy had managed to put down four tracks for his proposed third RCA album, with what he claimed at the time, to be his "dream" band. The players on these sessions included Rodney Crowell and Albert Lee from Emmylou's Hot Band, Mickey Raphael and fellow Willie Nelson band member Bee Spears, plus David Briggs on keyboards. However, as 1977 drew to a close, Guy's relationship with RCA came to an abrupt end. The management at RCA couldn't understand why Guy would not use their Nashville studio musicians on his recording sessions. Guy felt that if he did, his songs would end up sounding like much of the "conveyor belt" music which was produced in that town, at that time. It was a trap, which he wanted to avoid falling into. The fact that he regularly employed his friends and acquaintances in the studio, was justified in his eyes, by the sympathetic interpretations which they were able to give his songs. It was a "stand-off" situation, where there could only be one winner. One of the label vice-presidents was magnanimous enough however, to release Guy from his contract, with no strings attached. Guy was also allowed to buy the master tape of the four songs which he had recorded earlier in the year.

Concurrent with the difficulties which he was experiencing at RCA, Guy took part in the filming of a documentary titled *"New Country"*, which producer Graham Leader and director James Szalapski put together. The film also featured Rodney Crowell, Steve Young, David Allan Coe, Charlie Daniels, Barefoot Jerry, Larry Jon Wilson and Townes Van Zandt. Channel 4 showed the film a few years ago, under the title of *"Heartworn Highways"*. Guy is seen performing "L.A. Freeway" as the film opens, and also included are solo versions of "Texas Cookin'" and "Old time feeling". As the film closes, Steve Young and Guy perform a duet of the carol, "Silent Night". The project was

dedicated to the memory of Skinny Dennis Sanchez (3/9/46 - 20/3/75). When Guy moved to Nashville in 1971, Sanchez soon followed him there, but eventually returned to the West Coast. As the story goes, or is it the myth, Skinny Dennis just keeled over on stage, one night. The archetypal rock n' roll ending.

Within months of leaving RCA, Guy was offered a recording contract with Warner Bros. and a self titled album was released by that label towards the end of 1978. Guy played his first British concerts on Monday 18th, and Tuesday 19th, September of that year, on a bill titled *"Warner Bros. Country"*. The shows took place at the Hammersmith Odeon, London. Topping the bill, was Emmylou Harris and The Hot Band, supported by Rodney Crowell, ex-Hot Band and now a solo act, plus Guy Clark. For his British debut, Guy's band featured Willie Nelson's nephew Freddie Fletcher on drums, Bee Spears on bass, and two guitarists, Dave Perkins and Larry Willoughby. Lea Jane Berinati, well known as a session/backing singer in Nashville, completed the line up, on keyboards. Larry Willoughby, happened to be Rodney's cousin. In 1983, Willoughby released his only solo album to date, on the Atlantic America label, titled *"Building Bridges"*, it was produced by his cousin. By the way, Larry Willoughby the musician, should not be confused with the writer of the same name, who is well known for books on music like *"Texas Rhythm - Texas Rhyme: A pictorial history of Texas music"*.

The *"Guy Clark"* album was the first to contain songs not written by our hero, or his wife. Maybe it was the first sign of Guy's tendency to take a great deal of time and thought, before he eventually committed a song to paper and eventually vinyl. Four of the ten tracks were by other writers. Three of those writers however, were friends and confidants. "Viola, an American dream" was a Rodney Crowell song, while "Don't you take it too bad" was by his best friend, Townes. Walter Martin Cowart, became a regularly employed and well known recording studio engineer, among the contemporary country singers who began to populate Nashville during the seventies. His song "One paper kid" which was included on Guy's album, had also appeared on Emmylou's *"Quarter moon..."* album. This quartet of songs was completed by the fifty year old Jimmie Rodgers anthem, "In the jailhouse now". Even Guy would be the first to admit that his first effort for the Warner Bros. label was far from being an artistic or commercial success. Certainly it was the last occasion on which Neil Wilburn was credited as producer. Personally, I felt that "Comfort and crazy" and "Fools for each other" were the only new Guy Clark songs on the album with any substance to them. When the latter song was released as a single, it only dented the US Top 100 Country Chart at No. 96 in January 1979 and was then consigned to oblivion.

In order to help promote Guy's career, Warner Bros. recorded one of his concerts, and pressed up an album for their promo only Music Show series, for circulation to radio stations. The show was recorded at the Cellar Door Club in Washington D.C. early in 1979. The eleven track album, produced by Ted Cohen featured songs which had appeared on Guy's first three solo albums. Whether it actually helped to boost Guy's career is debatable. One thing is certain, the album is a much sought after rarity these days, and a number of copies have found their way into public circulation.

Three years were to pass, before the second official Guy Clark album on the Warner Bros. label appeared. Even that took two attempts, in the recording studio. Guy had decided to record his fourth solo album in Austin, Texas with Craig Leon. Leon had helped Rodney Crowell co-produce his second Warner Bros. solo album, *"But what will the neighbours think"* during 1980. Warner Bros. gave Guy an \$80,000 budget for the project. The Austin sessions proved to be unsatisfactory and in the process, they swallowed about three quarters of the recording budget. In fact the liner photos had been taken, the cover layouts agreed and 25,000 covers printed up, when Guy decided that he didn't have the album he wanted.

Having scrapped the first recordings, Guy asked his old friend Rodney Crowell if he would help produce the next attempt. Crowell at that time was based in California, and Guy headed there next. With Rodney's assistance, and that of his backing band The Cherry Bombs, together with the small matter of a limited \$20,000 budget, they managed to assemble enough tracks for what was to become the *"South Coast of Texas"* album. The album was released in the summer of 1981.

It contained ten songs. On this occasion Guy had written eight songs himself, and co-written the others with his new producer. The three year sabbatical from the recording studio had been thoroughly justified, by the quality of the new material which Guy brought there. True, "Rita Ballou" had appeared on his first album, but the track on that occasion had been a demo version. I think Guy was justified in thinking that it was time for a reappraisal of that particular song. The album also included two songs which were destined to become his most successful chartwise to date, but, for other artists. "New Cut Road" which traced the story of one of Guy's ancestors Coleman Bonner, was one of the strongest songs on the album, but Guy's version was never released as a single. When Bobby Bare issued his interpretation of the song, it reached No. 18 on the US Country Charts in the Spring of 1982, while Ricky Skaggs topped that chart with the song, "Heartbroke" on 13th November 1982. Although Guy eventually enjoyed

his greatest commercial successes up to that date, as a songwriter, his own single releases from "*South Coast...*" did not fare so well. In fact, he only managed to chart with "The partner nobody chose", reaching the mid part of the chart in the late summer of 1981. The photographs on the outer liner of the "*South Coast of Texas*", and on the inner liner of the import version, were taken around the harbour area in Rockport, Guy's old High School town.

In the Spring of 1982, Guy made his second UK visit, this time to play at the annual *Wembley Country Music Festival*. For the twenty five odd minutes which Guy had on stage, it hardly seemed worth the effort. Susanna accompanied Guy on this trip, and his backing band consisted of Gary Nicholson on guitar, Joe Villegar on bass, while "Fast" Freddie Fletcher held down the back beat. To coincide with his Wembley visit, RCA issued a compilation of his two albums, the original releases sadly, having been deleted. Compiled by Richard Wootton, and with biographical notes about Guy on the liner, it contained all of the tracks from "*Old No 1*" and six songs from "*Texas Cookin'*". Although they were old tracks, RCA had at least produced a value for money package, albeit commercially orientated. Warner Bros. on the other hand, continued to leave the British record buyer with "*South Coast of Texas*" as an import only option.

Guy's third and final Warner Bros. album was also produced by Rodney Crowell, but recorded in Nashville. Optimistically titled "*Better Days*", it was released in the States in the summer of 1983. Guy appears to find something magical about transferring ten songs to vinyl. All his albums have been of that length. For "*Better Days*", he co-wrote one song "Uncertain Texas" with Richard Dobson, included Townes "No deal" and wrote the remainder himself. Rodney's Cherry Bombs again furnished the backing tracks, augmented by former Pure Prairie Leaguer, Vince Gill on guitar and fiddle ace Johnny Gimble. Although the album did not provide Guy or other performers with immediate and major chart success, it undoubtedly contained some of his most intensely personal statements ever. Guy's father had died in 1981, and "The Randall Knife" is a moving epitaph to a man he obviously loved. In his time, Guy has been a craftsman with his hands, evidenced by the period he worked in the Dopyera Bros. factory in California. He is without doubt, a craftsman with words. If there is one song in his repertoire that is Guy Clark, then it is most surely "The Carpenter". "*Better Days*" was an excellent album, in all respects and sadly also his most recently released recording. The single "Homegrown Tomatoes" made it to No. 69 on the Country Charts in July, while the album also charted, reaching No. 48 during September 1983.

On the recording front, other performers continued to use material composed by Guy and Susanna with a deal of success. The legendary Nashville songwriter Harland Howard teamed up with Susanna in 1983, and the result "You're a hard dog (to keep under the porch)" gave Gail Davies a mid twenties entry on the Country Singles Chart at the close of that year. When the quartet of Messrs. Cash, Nelson, Jennings and Kristofferson gathered together in 1985 to record the album "*Highwayman*", they included "Desperadoes waiting for a train". When issued as a single, the song peaked at No. 15 on the US Country Singles Chart towards the end of that year. Guy, Rodney and Vince Gill teamed up to compose the song "Oklahoma Borderline", and it gave the latter a No. 14 Country single success in the Spring of 1986. At the end of that year, "Fools for each other" was a duet hit for the team of Ed Bruce and Lynn Anderson, while John Conlee had a Top 10 entry at the start of 1987 with "The Carpenter". At least Guy's songs were still out there earning a living. His compositions were still capable of putting bread on his table.

On the performing front, Guy found as the mid eighties approached, that he could no longer afford to support a regular touring band, and as a result he began appearing again as a solo act. One of his last recorded appearances with a band was, on show five of the 1982 series of the American PBS television programme, "*Austin City Limits*". The band line-up was the same as at his Wembley appearance earlier that year. Guy first appeared on "*Limits*" in 1977, and in 1983 he acted as host for show four, with a line-up which featured John Prine, Rodney Crowell, Keith Sykes, Billy Joe Shaver and Bill Caswell plus a surprise appearance by Mrs. Crowell, Rosanne Cash, Stateside, Guy appears in concert at such diverse places as the *Lone Star Cafe* in New York, the *Birchmere* in Washington, the *Cactus Cafe* in Austin and *McCabe's* in L.A.. Of course, during the summer in the States, there are always a multitude of Festivals to play. Kerrville probably remains closest to Guy's heart. In 1987, Guy played the *Edmonton Folk Festival* for the second year in a row, but on this occasion, as an acoustic trio with Rodney and Rosanne.

On this side of the Atlantic, Guy undertook his first nationwide tour of Britain in the Spring of 1986, in the company of Jerry Jeff Walker. Because of the late withdrawal of Tom I. Hall from the *Wembley Country Music Festival* bill, Guy and Jerry became last minute substitutes. Considering that on this occasion, Guy and Jerry Jeff had to share twenty minutes on stage, it was something of a "now you see them, now you don't" affair. It must be admitted however, that they acquitted themselves very well in that short timespan. Guy undertook another British tour, in a solo capacity, in the autumn of that year. His performances on the second tour featured a large number of new songs, which seemed at the time, to bode well for the prospects of a new album, but nothing appeared during 1987. In the autumn of last year, Guy completed another British tour, with even more new songs to offer.

Now signed to a songwriting deal with a subsidiary of CBS Songs, Guy spent much of the latter half of last year in a Nashville recording studio, laying down the tracks for what should become his sixth solo album. As yet, he has no firm commitment to any record label, but by the middle of this year, Guy expects this new album to be available. As for "ten songs, good and true", apart from seven new songs of his own, Guy has recorded Townes "To live is to fly", Joe Ely's "Indian Cowboy" which he has been threatening to put on vinyl for the last ten years, plus the magical Susanna Clark/Richard Leigh collaboration "Come from the heart". Of Guy's new songs, the album should hopefully include "Heavy metal,...", "Old friends" which is both simple and simply a classic song, "Hands", and yet another gem "All through (throwing good love after bad)".

Regarding the *Kerrville Folk Festival "Live Highlights"* albums mentioned in the Discography, then these can be obtained by writing to Kerrville Music Festivals, P.O. Box 1466, Kerrville, Texas 78029. An American based organisation known as the "*Friends of Guy Clark*" issues regular newsletters, with news of his latest activities and those of his friends and fellow songwriters. There is no subscription as such, but Jo Ann Aronson would undoubtedly appreciate some help with her postage costs. Do her a favour and include a couple of International Reply Coupons (available from your local Post Office). You can write to Jo Ann at "*Friends of Guy Clark*", P.O. Box 147, Fall River Mills, California 96028.



FRIENDS of GUY CLARK

P.O. Box 147

Fall River Mills, CA 96028

GUY CLARK DISCOGRAPHY - LP's

RCA Victor APL1-130	"Old No 1"	(1975)
RCA Victor RS 1097	"Texas Cookin' "	(1976)
Warner Bros. K56565	"Guy Clark"	(1978)
Warner Bros. WBMS 105 (po)	"Guy Clark - Live"	(1979)
Warner Bros. BSK 3381 (i)	"The South Coast of Texas"	(1981)
RCA Victor INTS 5196	"The Best of Guy Clark"	(1982)
Warner Bros. 1-23880 (i)	"Better Days"	(1983)

GUY CLARK ASSOCIATED DISCOGRAPHY - LP's

RCA Victor PL 13422	"Honky Tonkin' " Compilation incl. "Rita Ballou"	(1979)
RCA Victor INTS 5027	"Classic Country Rock" Compilation incl. "L.A. Freeway", "Desperadoes..." and "The Last Gunfighter Ballad"	(1980)

GUY CLARK KERRVILLE FOLK FESTIVAL "LIVE HIGHLIGHTS" DISCOGRAPHY - LP's

PSG-68 (i)	"Live Highlights 1975" Compilation incl. "Anyhow, I love you"	(1979)
PSG-78 (i)	"Live Highlights 1978" Compilation incl. "Crawdad Song", duet with Buck White	(1982)
PSG-81a (i)	"Live Highlights 1981" Compilation incl. "Heartbroke"	(1985)
PSG-1983 (i)	"Live Highlights 1983" Compilation incl. "Homegrown Tomatoes", duet with Rodney Crowell	(1987)
PSG-1984 (i)	"Live Highlights 1984" Compilation incl. "New Cut Road"	(1987)
Adelphi Records AD4122/3 (i)	"Texas Folk and Country Music - Kerrville Festivals 1972/6" Compilation incl. PSG-68 track	(1983)
MPPA 9172 (i)	"Roger Allen's Portrait in Sound - Kerrville Folk Festival, the first years 1972/86", Compilation incl. interview and "Texas Cookin' "	(1986)

NOTE

Where (i) has been indicated, US release serial numbers have been used. The Warner Bros. Music Show promotion only (po) live album, was also a US only release.

Butch HANCOCK



The interview with Butch Hancock was conducted in the backstage area of the Kerrville Theatre on the afternoon of Wednesday 28th May 1986.

Starting in 1981, "Spare Odyssey" and "Firewater" had just been released, and then there's a massive gap of four years before the next album. So what happened.

I know what you mean, but you have really stumped me this time. Trying to think. Let's see, I think I was still writing a batch of songs here and there, 1981 - OK - Well actually, the last recording was early '81. The albums came out right at the end of '81 and the first of '82. What year is this - '86?, Let's see - you asked a devilish question there. Where was I?, I was here in Austin, 1982 - It's beginning to come back to me now. The first part of the year, I was working with some crazy folks on an equally crazy project, and then in the middle of the summer - this was like a construction project I was working on - -

So Butch Hancock the architect, and sometime builder had struck again.

Yea, It was more a - I don't know what I was doing with it, and yet I was swinging a lot of hammers. About June, I went out to California and played McCabe's. Somewhere in that summer. It must have been June. Terry Allen and I had a gig out there. I played the one night at McCabe's and then about eight to ten dates, up and down the coast. I had just bought that little pick-up, and was breaking it in.

Did you play all those dates solo.

Yea, So, that was summertime, and then I came back through Santa Fe, New Mexico. There's another whole six or eight months there. That's a whole other novel. I was back and forth between Santa Fe and Austin a lot during that time. Doing a lot of driving all over West Texas and all. Up to Kansas - played a gig there in the August. Something like that. Wasn't writing any songs during that time, just taking things in, I guess. Then along about November - yea, it was November - George Howard whom I'd worked with, on some projects up in Clarendon, Texas when I was living there - he and I decided we were going to get into the video schemes, with music, here in Austin. We kind of looked around, and then found a good space that we could work in, but we couldn't take possession of it until the middle of November. Then one night, I remember it was a Wednesday night, the old tenants were having trouble getting out of there, on time. We went in there and took a couple of axes and tore down a wall. We did that after midnight, and sure enough the next day, they got down there and took all their junk out. That was when we started working on "Dixie's Bar and Bus Stop". We spent the better half of a year working on that show.

Was it always in your mind then, to move into the video field, because in 1980, you taped some of Joe Ely's tour with Linda Ronstadt.

Oh yea, I just did that with a half inch consumer camera. It was kind of a precursor of what we're doing now. On the other hand, I've always been interested in doing photography for, oh gosh, a long time.

As a hobby.

Well, I don't know - I never have - last time I considered anything as a hobby I guess, was when I was a kid. That was just because somebody defined it for me as a hobby. It's just all part of the same work for me.

Someone made a comment one time, that "if Butch Hancock diversifies into anything else, we'll kill him, because he becomes proficient at everything he touches".

(Laughs) Oh no, I've been threatening John T. Davis with taking up journalism. (ED. NOTE. J. T. Davis is a well known Austin music critic, who writes for publications like the *Austin American-Statesman*).

Anyway, you started up this video company. What is it called,

It is now the Texas Music and Entertainment Network. We started out as the Texas Music Network. We've built our studios, so that they would be real comfortable. More like a club. That's where we got the name "*Dixie's Bar and Bus Stop*". Built a bus, down at one end of the room. Everybody would come in - and appear - in effect, to come off the bus and then do a gig. We had good live audiences there, and people would get up and dance right on the same floor with the cameramen. We would use all hand held cameras. Everybody was fighting it out with the cameramen. The cameramen would get right up onstage with the performers a lot of the time. We would get a lot of good intimate close shots from that. It really was a remarkable series of outstanding performances by a lot of different wonderful folks from around Austin.

What size of audience were you getting,

Well, if we got 110 to 115 in there, it was packed you know. I think there might have been a few times we could have got a few more than that in there, but anywhere from 40 to 100 people, and it was real crowded. The way it was set up, with all these angles - it was a funny room - and it was hard to tell how big a room it was, just by watching TV. We taped in there for three years, and I guess we did over 100 performances.

Who performed on the shows,

All kinds of people. Everything from Jerry Jeff Walker to Joe "King" Carrasco, Little Mo and the Howlers and Lonnie Mack. Just all kinds of different performers.

Which stations were taking these shows. Was it just PBS television,

No. At first, we just aired them here in Austin - on Austin Cablevision. Pretty quickly after that, we went statewide - with, I think at that time, 8 or 9 markets - different cities in Texas, that were on the Texas Cable Network. We're still showing on both of those outlets. At one point we were up to 31 hours a week of programming, here in Austin. We have recently cut back down to 16 hours, mainly to avoid complete saturation.

When you expanded statewide, did you do a variety of programmes,

Well the programmes have been almost 100% music - solo performances, bands and so forth. We've done some other productions that are involved with other kinds of projects, but it's mainly been music.

When did you decide to start working on the "Yella' Rose" album,

Well, you know how it goes. You get to looking around - and start thinking, oh my gosh - I don't have any new albums this year, or last year, or the year before. Suddenly you want to knock something out. Plus, I'd just written a bunch of new songs that needed an airing. They were still wriggling around a little bit. They all kind of cohered together into a sound that I kept hearing, and that I knew I was going to have to work on a production with, to get it worked out.

Was it deliberate then to cut a duet album,

Yea, Marce and I had started singing together as a duo, and also with the band. This started a couple of years ago. Actually it was two years from now. Our first gig was here at Kerrville in 1984. That was the first time that she sang with me, in a performance. Since then we've been doing - well, I do everything from solo, to a lot of duos with Marce, and then various sizes of band up to 8 or 9 pieces.

Was the Mexican mariachi feel of the "Yella' Rose" album deliberate,

Well all that stuff has been rubbing off on me for years, you know. Of course with Booka in there - Booka Michael on the congas, and all those crazy rhythms that he has got rattling around in his head - they were just wonderful things. The songs too, had that character to them, I think.

You used Joe Gracey again, to help you produce the album,

Yea, Joe of course, has been doing our live mixing at the "Dixie's Bar and Bus Stop" shows. He's one of the major reasons that people are appreciating what we are doing, because he is such a master of doing live mixes - and all kinds of recording, of course.

Was the song "Yella' Rose" written for any one person in particular.

I think a lot of my songs are kind of like that. They may be written for somebody in particular, but then again, they're not. People ask me who I write my songs for, and I always say that I write them for myself. They may be about some specific things, but more often than not, they are combinations of a lot of things that have happened to me. A lot of times I think I really write them exactly to myself, because it's me needing to hear what I'm trying to tell myself. There's obviously a sharing of it with other people too.

Have you toured with Marce, to promote the album.

Not really officially. We haven't done any tours exactly. We did a mini/maxi tour of Hollywood. That's where I had my Gallagher guitar ripped off. Just in March, we went out there with the band. I did two solo dates, and the band played one at the Club Lingerie in Hollywood. Then Marce and I played a night with Ramblin' Jack Elliott at McCabe's.

I thought that the Club Lingerie tended to concentrate on new wave acts.

Well they have a Texas night there, every once in a while. Bill Bentley has been booking in different Texas acts.

In the past, you've claimed that you dream many of your songs. Are there any of those on "Yella' Rose".

I don't think so. Most of those are from the daylight, so to speak. Some of them probably originated during the night. Sometimes there's a hazy line between dreaming and walking around, especially when you've been up for 36 hours, or something.

One thing that I've always found curious, is that Joe Ely has always used a lot of your songs, but you've never recorded together on a regular basis.

After the Flatlanders album, when we split up, we all kind of took off on separate schemes. We've worked together in different ways, from time to time. He was chief engineer, on the "West Texas waltzes and dust blown tractor tunes". (ED, NOTE, So Earl Epiphone has finally been unmasked. And what of Duck Tape Studios?). We recorded that in his back living room. We get together and crash each others gigs once in a while. He's been so busy with his band, and working on stuff, that we just haven't got together on things. He's supposed to be producing Jimmie Gilmore's new album, and I think they've already got one single produced. I'm sure he'll continue working with various folks from time to time.

What has happened to the screenplays which you have written.

Screenplays. Yea, George Howard who runs the Texas Music Network with me - we wrote a thing called "The last medicine show", - we haven't pursued it since then. It was quite an experience writing it, because we knocked it out in a month. You can kind of tell it, but it's a pretty interesting little piece. We might pursue it sometime. Nothing immediate, but you never can tell. I'll probably write some other ones. I'm going to have to write a "Split and Slide" screenplay here, pretty soon I think, with a cast of thousands.

About a year ago, I'm sure I saw a colour photo of you in a yellow suit. Was this the "Nudie" suit that you once said you were going to buy.

Me, in a yellow suit. No, but wow that sounds good. There may be more to this dreaming than I knew about. I have a goldish yellow cowboy shirt with a fringe on it, but that's about it. Maybe it was an oddly coloured photo.

There was going to be a Butch Hancock album called the "The Blue Red River train".

Where did you hear that. The "Blue Red River train" - yea, I wrote a song about that - called that. I think I maybe played it a couple of times by myself. It's a pretty wierd song. At one time, I was going to do a whole album of train songs. I think I wrote that song about 1980, maybe it was 1979.

You must have a backlog of hundreds of songs now, (ED, NOTE, Butch, at this point, took the opportunity to take the rise out of my Scottish accent).

I've gotta lotta songs, Oh, I don't know. The first couple of hundred of them I don't even count, because I wouldn't even sing them to myself. There are some of them out of that bunch, that are good. A lot of songwriters seem to be writing some - you know, every song that they write is a good one, I don't know, I haven't seen everybody else's notebook. I don't know whether they write a lot of throwaways, or whether they just wait till they get an idea that will really work, and work on that. I think at first, I didn't do that. I'd just write a song, just to get it written. Almost like practising, you know. Kinda like I learned how to draw. You do your first hundred drawings and you save the best three. Then, after maybe another two or three rounds of that, you start to learn how to draw.

So what's the theme for your next album. Will it be with Marce,

I have no earthly idea.

Well, with a Butch Hancock album, one thing that you can always guarantee is that it will be a total swerve musically, from the previous one. You can never predict where you will be next.

(Laughs). Well, none of it is deliberate - it may just be helplessness. I don't know what I'm going to be doing tomorrow morning. It's very ambitious for me to plan very far ahead. I think a lot of my girlfriends will have told you that.

We're not going to have to wait another four years though.

No. No way. Maybe, maybe - no, I don't know. I just don't know. If I had the money, I'd go to work immediately on an album. It's kind of been a matter of finance really. I was broke during those three years. That was one reason I wasn't getting albums done so fast. I remember, the year after I did those Alamo albums, I made a big long list of how many albums I'd like to do. I kind of sketched out the songs I'd like to have on them. All that kind of stuff. There were ten or twelve albums worth of good solid tunes. There still are. Plus, I've got lots of new material now, as well. I don't know. I wouldn't mind having, you know \$120,000 or so, and going in the studio for six months, and just work them out. I figured out four years ago, that I needed to do at least two or three albums a year to start to catch up. Of course, two years went by, three years went by, and no album. So, I wasn't exactly catching up. I could probably do an album with about three songs right now. I've got a long "Split and Slide". I've got about a 26 minute long song that needs to get done sometime. I might wind up doing some of those on tapes, instead of albums. (ED, NOTE. Four days later, I purchased a copy of Butch's sesquicentennial concert tape, "Split and Slide II" from the record booth at Kerrville. He was obviously keeping his cards close to his chest). The music business is as crazy as it has always been.

Have you ever tried to push your songs in Nashville, with for instance, an organisation like Bug Music.

No. Last time I was in Nashville - well, it wasn't the last time I was there - but, the last time I was there trying to do something like that. Me and Joe Ely went up there. It was just before he got his contract, I think. We were knockin' on doors trying to get people to listen to our songs. We'd leave tapes with whoever it was headed us off at the door, and you would hear the tapes hit the trash can, immediately we left.

Don't you feel that there's more of a market for your style of music currently.

Yea, there probably is. I can't however, really think of any Nashville artists, I'd like to have record my songs, right off hand. There may be a few. Most of them are pretty well sucked in to either other writers, or - I don't know, it ain't that big a deal for me right now. I might want it to be sometime. I guess my ambitions are probably in different ball parks or something. I wouldn't mind a few people recording my songs, you know, but I'm not of the nature to go out and push them myself. I'm at a point where I've got enough albums now, where it's getting to be a little too much trouble for me to handle them alone. I either need to have an organisation of some sort, or a few people helping me, or start working with a label, or something like that.

What about the video field, are you definately committed to that.

Well you see, that's still all an unfinished project. We've still got some things to do on that, or to find out if we can do them. The present thing being, that we're trying to get stuff up on a satellite, which could open up lots of doors and a lot of other possibilities. That could make some difference on how I go about doing albums and things. It's still kind of a generative time of finding out some things.

Was 1985 the first occasion on which you filmed the Kerrville Folk Festival.

Yea, We've been doing shows since August or September of last year on PBS TV stations in Texas. The shows were thirty minutes long, for about the first six or seven months. Recently we went to one hour long programmes. It was one new show a week, but it would show two times a week.

What about Butch Hancock the builder.

Well, I've still got schemes for architecture. I've got some of the weirdest drawings and schemes that you've ever seen. It would take a whole city full of engineers to try to figure out how to put those things together.

You started studying for an architecture degree, but you never completed the course.

Well, I'd put it this way. I finished Architecture School before it finished me. When you go almost all over the world, it's nothing but square buildings. It's pretty astounding, that. If this planet has a name among the aliens, it's probably the planet of square houses. The planet of rectangular minds. It's amazing that there's not more variety of attempts, you know. In a way - if you consider it, you soon realise that people are pretty well sucked into the inertia. It's how the human race has survived. It's a necessary part of the human make up. Yet it's also what resists both change, favourable or unfavourable, and any kind of explorations too.

What was the name of the song on the J. Ben Isaacson single, that you wrote.

That was your basic everyday, "If you were a bluebird". Didn't you know that. You were just trying to see if I remembered.

Well, I think we've covered '81 to '86 quite adequately. '82 seems to have been a real struggle. I reckon Butch Hancock went to the desert, and looked at the sky in '82.

'82 was a heavy one. Every year since then has been heavier. It's like every one of them has been packed too full. I've got a new song that I'm going to try out on everybody on Sunday night. In fact, several of them. One of them is, "Deep blue eddy". Another one is, "Where can you go, when you're already gone". It involves a guy who bit the dust on the highway - a bike accident, years ago. It also involves Big Mountain - the Arizona land thing, where they're trying to move the Indians out. There's a verse about that. Then there's a verse, kind of tying all of that into the main sight of these days and times, in this country. Pretty strange little song. Hope I finish it up. I wrote the motorcycle verse right before I left for Europe. I got the chorus and stuff, then too. The other night, I guess it was Monday night here at Kerrville, I came back over to the car, and jumped into the front seat. I had my guitar with me, because I'd been at the campfires. I decided that I was going to work on it a little bit. I kinda started to play the first verse again and brush up on it. All of a sudden, it started raining. I thought I'd better hop out and get in the back, and go to sleep. I just stayed in the front seat all night long, and finished up the song. I finally went to sleep all tangled up with my guitar and the gear shift knob and the steering wheel, but I got it pretty well finished. There's only two or three lines I need to work over.

Who have you got lined up to back you on Sunday night.

I'll have Booka (Michael) for sure, and it looks like Pete's gonna make it. Paul Percy is going to sit in with us a little too, and add some more percussion. We'll probably have David Halley play some guitar. Maybe I'll get John Inmon to play some, too. Just wind up with all those people on stage, by the end of the set. We'll start out probably with just Marce and I together. She's going to do two or three songs by herself, and I'll do a few by myself. We'll just kind of start building the pyramid, I guess.

POSTSCRIPT

Regarding Butch's final words, he was right on the button. His Sunday night set with Marce, was a riotous celebration of all that is good in Texas music.

Since then, Butch has undertaken two nationwide British tours. The first, in the early part of May last year, was in a solo capacity. On the second, four months later, he was accompanied by Marce LaCouture. On previous British visits, Butch had ventured as far north as the Radcliffe Arms in Oxford, but mainly concentrated on London venues like The Mean Fiddler, The Cricketers and Sir George Robey. By venturing farther afield last year, I'm sure he built up a loyal following who will be only too glad, to welcome him back on UK the acoustic music circuit, in the years to come,

As far as Kerrville 1987 is concerned, Butch has never been one to stand still. For his Festival appearance last year, he teamed up with Jimmie Gilmore (from the Flatlanders) and David Halley. You can talk about things like, "strength in depth" and "matches made in heaven", but surely here was a case of The Texas Trio. Plans were also afoot, to include the Trio's appearance on Volume II of the Kerrville Folk Festival video series.

Following his second British tour last year, Butch met up with a bunch of other Texas musicians, and after a warm up date in Helsinki, Finland the party moved on to do a tour of major Russian cities. Towards the end of the year, there were plans for Joe Ely, Jimmie Gilmore, Terry Allen and Butch to present a programme of songs at a concert in the nations capital, under the general title of, *"War and Memory: In the Aftermath of Vietnam"*. The four West Texas musicians had been invited by the Washington Project to partake in this celebration.



Photo: Henri Lu Park, Isla Mujeres, Mexico.

Butch Hancock and Marce LaCouture, Kerrville 1986.

As I commented during the interview, Butch released his *"Split and Slide II"* tape, on the day of his 1986 Kerrville appearance - 1st June. The nine tracks were recorded during a solo concert given by Butch, in the Texas Music Network studios, and included versions of two of Townes best known songs, "Poncho and Lefty" and "Mr. Mudd and Mr. Gold". Butch composed all the other songs, Joe Gracey was responsible for the live taping and the whole thing was subtitled *"Apocalypse Now - pay later"*. "Fools fall in love" had previously been recorded by Joe Ely on *"Down on the drag"* & *"Live Shots"*, while "Split and Slide I", "Own and Own" and "Mario y Maria" had appeared on Butch's 1979 double album *"The Wind's Dominion"*. Although many of the songs were already familiar fare, these new interpretations brought fresh insights, into the mind of Butch Hancock. Nothing however, could have prepared the listener for, *"Split and Slide II"* - just another everyday drama, in the life of ordinary American folk - this cataclysmic tale featuring our two old heroes, includes along the way, a cast of thousands and is a sorry tale of life's little vicissitudes. Certainly a tape worth possessing.

On February 27th last year, Butch and Marce played a date at the Cactus Cafe in Austin. Joe Gracey was on hand again with a tape deck, and the result was another cassette only recording, titled in this instance *"Cause of the Cactus"*. As with the *"Split and Slide II"* tape, a number of re-recordings, like Joe Ely's "Because of the wind", are included here. The tape also features a stone classic, in the Kristen Lane song, "Farmer" - sung with total conviction and precisely measured venom, by Marce. My personal favourite remains, "Already Gone", the song mentioned by Butch at the end of the interview. It is undoubtedly, one of the best songs that he has ever written.

Butch is still resident in Austin, but toward the end of 1986, Marce decided to pursue her investigation of her Cajun roots and moved to Lafayette, Louisiana. Their musical relationship remains one of many ongoing projects, in the multi-faceted life of Butch Hancock.

A Kerrverts Festival 50.

There is a reason, There is a rhyme,
There is a season, There is a tyme,
and then, there's the KERRVERTS FESTIVAL 50.

1. The Dutchman MICHAEL SMITH "Michael Smith" Flying Fish FF404, #
2. The dance TOM RUSSELL from a Norwegian demo tape circa 1983,
3. The wing and the wheel Nanci GRIFFITH "Last of the true believers" Philo PH1109, #
4. Yarrington Town NICKIE MERKINS "Texas Summer Nights" Potato Satellite PS2-1000, #
5. Circle of friends DAVID MALLETT "David Mallett" New World NWS042977, #
6. Texas Trilogy STEVEN FROMHOLZ "Jus' playin' along" Lone Star L4601, #
7. So I'll run BUTCH HANCOCK AND MARCE LACOUTURE "Yella' Rose" Rainlight RLT13711, #
8. Give yourself to love KATE WOLF "Give yourself to love" Kaleidoscope K3000, #
9. She knows her daddy sings JERRY JEFF WALKER "Reunion" Southcoast/MCA MCA5199, #
10. Montana Song DAVID ACKLES "American Gothic" Elektra EKS75032,
11. Touch and go CLIVE GREGSON AND CHRISTINE COLLISTER "Home and Away" Eleventh Hour EH001,
12. Take me back to Tulsa ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL "Comin' right at ya' " Sunset SLS50415,
13. Is it really love at all ERIC ANDERSEN "The best songs" Arista AL4128, #
14. Deep in the West SHAKE RUSSELL "Shake Russell/Dana Cooper" Southcoast/MCA MCA5192, #
15. London homesick blues GARY P. NUNN "Home with the Armadillo" Guacamole GLP001, #
16. In it for the long run JIM RODNEY "Ready for the times to get better" Appaloosa AP004, #
17. If I needed you TOWNES VAN ZANDT "The late great Townes Van Zandt" United Artists UAS29442,
18. The women of Buffalo BANDED GECKOS "Banded Geckos" Spanish Onlet 00100, #
19. Other streets and other towns MARY CHAPIN CARPENTER "Hometown Girl" CBS BFC40758, #
20. Treasures of the heart CHRIS VALLILLO "The Western Illinois Rag" Gin Ridge GR001, #
21. Guilty of rock'n'roll BONNIE KOLOC "You're gonna love yourself in the morning" Ovation OVQD/14-38, #
22. Kansas City morning KATY MOFFATT "Kissin' in the California sun" CBS JC34774, #
23. Let the band play dixie BOB GIBSON "Uptown Saturday night" Hogeys HD6005, #
24. Aunt Nora BEACON CITY BAND "Beacon City Band" Potato Satellite (No index no.), #
25. Someday STEVE EARLE "Guitar Town" MCA MCF3335,
26. Me and my friend JOHN HAMBRICK "Windmill in a jet filled sky" Brown Bag BB14201, #
27. Pick it up JANE GILLMAN "Pick it up" Green Linnet GL1068, #
28. Fifty years ago IAN TYSON "Cowboyography" Eastern Slope ESL01, #
29. All the tea in China SUSAN JACKS "Ghosts" Epic JE36417, #
30. Closing time LYLE LOVETT "Lyle Lovett" MCA/Curb MCA5748,
31. Texas is a state of mind RAY WYLIE HUBBARD "Something in the night" Renegade EP002, #
32. In the name of love RICHARD DOBSON "In Texas last December" Buttermilk 00197703, #
33. Slow movin' freight train HUGH MOFFATT "Loving you" Philo PH1111, #
34. See how all the horses come dancing MICHAEL MURPHEY "Flowing free forever" Epic PE34220,
35. Lodestar CRIS WILLIAMSON "Blue Rider" Olivia LF931, #
36. The turning of the wheel CHUCK McDERMOTT "The turning of the wheel" Sunstorm SSAD02,
37. Cardboard Cowboys BOB RUZICKA "Cold hands, warm heart" MCA MCA319, #
38. If you can touch her at all LEE CLAYTON "Border Affair" Capitol ST11751,
39. Monterrey WES McGEe "Zacatecas" TRP TRP286,
40. Swervin' in my lane ROBERT EARL KEEN Jr "No kinda dancer" Philo PH1108, #
41. Truly blue MICKEY NEWBURY "After all these years" Mercury SRM-1-4024, #
42. The lie ALEXANDER HARVEY from a Birchmere, Alexandria concert tape circa 1987,
43. Hobo's mandolin TOM RUSH "Ladies love outlaws" CBS S80282,
44. Give me some CLAUDIA SCHMIDT "Midwestern Heart" Flying Fish FF241, #
45. Only lovers ERIC TAYLOR "Shameless love" Featherbed FB-901, #
46. The partner nobody chose GUY CLARK "The South Coast of Texas" Warner Bros, BSK3381, #
47. Black waters JEAN RITCHIE "None but one" Sire SRK6025,
48. Copperfields MARY McCASLIN AND JIM RINGER "The bramble and the rose" Philo PH1055, #
49. Bus Stop bench DARDEN SMITH "Darden Smith" Redi Mix RM001, #
50. Omaha Rainbow JOHN STEWART "California Bloodlines" Capitol E-ST203,

Albums not released in the UK marked #, otherwise the US release no. is quoted, Rhyme with apologies to Bobby Bridger reference his song "Heal in the wisdom",

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127, Pinewood Drive,
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Editorial.

When I set out on this "voyage to Fanzania", I hardly thought that what had taken me eleven days to put on tape at the Quiet Valley Ranch and other locations in the Kerrville area, would take me hundreds of hours and over eighteen months to get into print. Some things are probably better not known and flying solo can certainly be slow, Peter.

About four months ago, I finished transcribing and typing up all eighteen interviews and planned at that time, to issue the project as a single, one hundred plus page issue. A good friend of mine advised me otherwise, apart from which, the economics of that plan were something akin to suicide (*Roger my friend, I thank you for your many suggestions*). My layouts per se, at that stage, were literally non existant. Hopefully, what you see before you now, is far more acceptable to the eye, and faintly resembles what passes for a magazine. For that, thanks are due to Mr. Amstrad and his computers. Should I have taken the somewhat ludicrous step of trying to market that one off issue, the face price would have been somewhat exorbitant, with little guarantee of selling many copies.

I must admit, that I gave up working on this project a number of times, but the words of Rod Kennedy, "*Well people put out publications or publicity stating that they can do something when they can't*", always spurred me back into action. I went to Kerrville, knowing only that in one concentrated period of eleven consecutive days, I would be able to see many of my musical heroes. As it turned out, I found many more. In fact, I returned to this side of the "great pond" feeling in one way, totally fulfilled, but in another with an ache in my heart. The prospect of ever getting to Kerrville again, was and remains, something close to a vague improbability. Some people hold on to a "dream" for most of their lives, and never manage to fulfil it. In the final analysis, on at least one occasion, I was lucky enough to be able to partake in my "dream". It proved to be a musical adventure, beyond my wildest dreams.

There are places in the heart, which we each hold, as forever precious. My birthplace in Banff, Scotland is one - "*it may not be the greatest little town, but it's home*". Kerrville, Texas and the Quiet Valley Ranch in particular, is now, most certainly another. The Quiet Valley is a place of true magic and is pervaded by the spirit of unremitting joy. Undoubtedly, it is one of "*God's little acres*". I hope with the contents of this and future issues of the Kronikle, that some of that magic seeps through these pages. I hope as a result, that at least one of you decides, that a visit to the Quiet Valley is in order.

Regarding the contents of this issue, and in no particular order, I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to the following people: Rod Kennedy, Merri Lu Park, Chris Vallillo, Ed & Shelley Becker, Guy Clark, Butch Hancock, Roger Peyton, Peter O'Brien, Terje Haugli and W.L. (Rick) Woolley. If I have missed you out, it was unintentional and you should know who you are anyway. This issue is dedicated to Krystyna, my constant rock.