

ALLYCE'S ATTIC

by MARY ALLYCE



The two preeminent amenities of living in Bandera – live music and the eclectic assortment of people you meet here – are often overlooked in a taking-it-for-granted way by those of us who call Bandera home. In the past twelve years, I've met people from virtually every state and all over the world. I've sold books to tourists from Great Britain to France to Russia, a total of 14 countries which is a stronger testament to the international tourist trade flowing through the county than to me as a writer. I've shepherded, interacted and worked with writers, TV and film producers from China, South Africa and Canada, among others, who are equally fascinated with the look and sound of the area. (We'll get back to the music shortly, I promise.)

You just never know who might be at the next table, on the next barstool or chair. I've sat beside captains of industry, local eccentrics and a charming burlesque queen from Las Vegas. The first few years I lived here, my life was in thrall to my business, the Cabaret. There were a few hours a day snatched for sleeping and the occasional trip to Kerrville, but when you own a music venue, it rules your life. (See, I told you we'd get back to music.) The bonus was meeting and hearing, live, the amazing Country Music Hall of Famers and Texas music stars like Larry Nolen, Hank Thompson, Dicky Overbey, Al Dean, Johnny Bush and younger talents like Charlie and Bruce Robison and Jack Ingram.

The other day I met Homer Bade. Name doesn't ring a bell? Homer and his lovely wife, Lila, were visiting old memories in Bandera from their home in Cuero, and found their way to the Frontier Times Museum. The Museum is another amenity of this county too often neglected by those of us who live here. Homer Bade and his wife walked into the Museum, took a stroll around the exhibits, then stopped to chat at the front desk.

It seems Homer, 81, is a steel guitar player who still plays at some of the old dance halls. He recollects playing Bandera with a band called "Southern Air" [Southernaire/Southern Air] at venues like the Silver Spur Dance Hall and a place he remembers as "Bill's Cowboy Bar." That

definitely didn't ring a bell, but his description of it did. "You had to go downstairs into the place," Homer said. "It was right there on Main Street." The Silver Dollar? Formerly known as The Fox Hole, the Legendary Silver Dollar must have been known briefly, at least to musicians, as "Bill's Cowboy Bar". Bade can also claim artist credits on the historic Sarg Records label. (Sarg recorded people like Larry Nolen, The Pearl Wranglers, Floyd Tillman, Adolph Hofner and young fellow by the name of Willie Nelson.)

Homer Bade is walking Bandera music history. He and Lila gave us their contact information and you better believe I'm going to call him and interview him about every bit of Bandera music history he embodies. That information will find its way into The Bandera Music History Project Hall of Fame (BMHoF), which has awarded Arkey Blue, The Silver Dollar, The Silver Spur, Larry Nolen and many others, in its primary mission as a History Project. Music is an integral part of Bandera history and that music draws people from all over the world. It even draws musicians who played here decades ago, musicians who helped create the history of this unique place.

You just never know who you're going to meet in Bandera.

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