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**Will
Owen
Gage**

**The galloping
guitar has
come of age**

**ARTICLE
PAGE 4**

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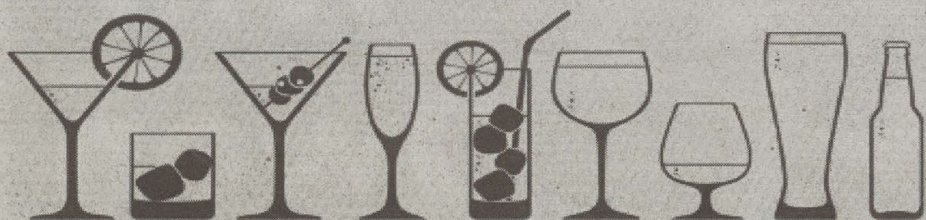
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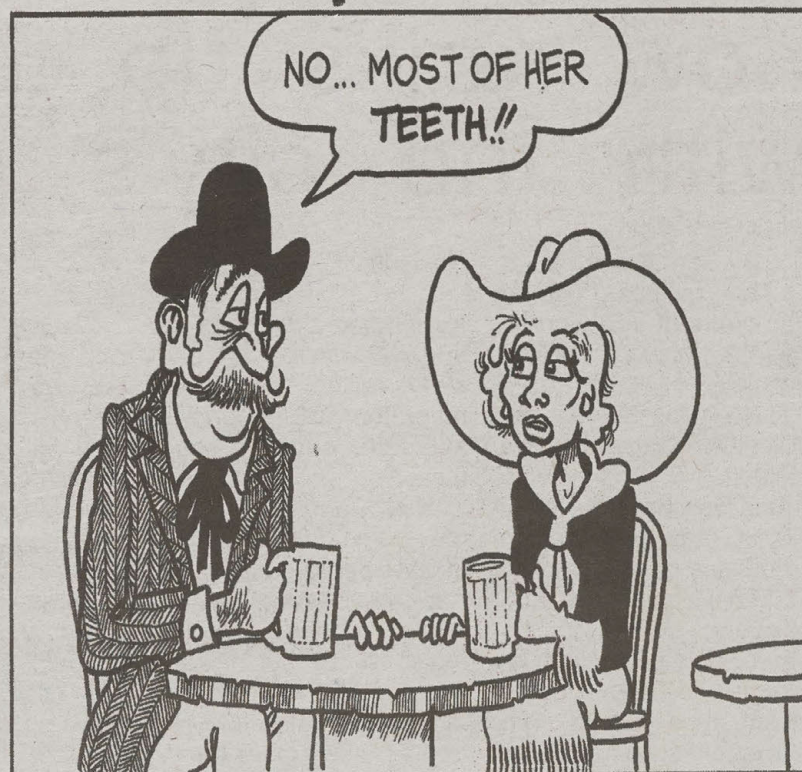
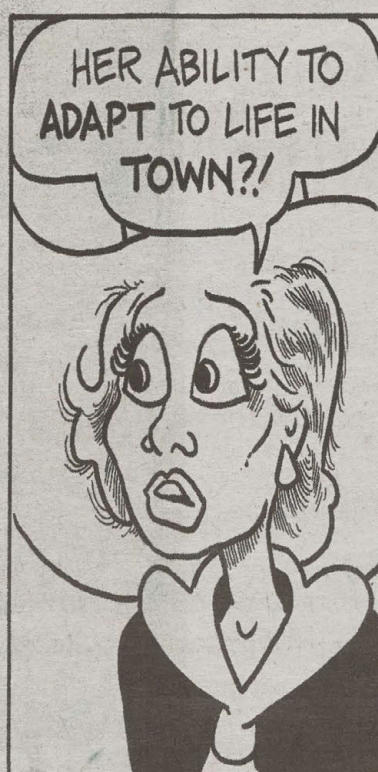


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• DEPARTMENTS •

Sam Kindrick	6
Scatter Shots	11
Music Matters	13

• FEATURE •

Will Owen Gage	4
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Guitar wizard Gage now ranks up there with the city's elite

By Sam Kindrick

The galloping guitar has come of age, and so has the kid who makes it gallop.

Listen for 30-year-old Will Owen Gage, onetime child guitar prodigy who wears his long pants today like a man who knows what he is doing.

"I have a lot of stuff churning around in my brain today," says Will. "Different styles of music, different type bands. I've played old style traditional blues, jump blues, screeching psychedelic rock, Hendrix, B.B. King, Howlin' Wolf, Albert King, Doug Sahm, and I even got me a little Stevie Ray straw hat when I was trying to copy the Vaughan brothers."

Will Owen Gage is a superb guitar slinger who doesn't want to be known as a guitar slinger. And while his still young face tends to belie the maturity of an accomplished pro on the move, Gage has a handle on it.

He says he now wants to be a musician more than anything else.

"I know I still launch out there with that old guitar slinger tendency to show off some," Gage said, "but as I grow older, I am starting to tune it down a lot. I am starting to realize that I am not Stevie Ray Vaughan, that Stevie and Hendrix were probably the greatest who ever lived, that I don't want to be Stevie Ray, that Tony Cuellar of San Antonio is the finest and classiest guitar player I have ever known, and that I still love the Bob Wills music I first heard when I was five years old."

If the galloping guitar man has shed much of his teenage cockiness, he still waxes eloquent with opinions which cover a wide range of subjects.

One of the favorites is his take on the so-called "pop country" garbage now coming out of

Nashville.

"It is definitely not country," Gage said. "It is rock and roll with banjos and steel guitars added to mask the awful sound. It all comes out as a sorry mess."

Will Gage can wring the crying delta blues out of an electric guitar neck like a sad-faced washer woman hand twisting moisture out of a hickory work shirt, but there is more to him than this. He fronts his own blues band, he fronts his own rock band, and he plays lead guitar in Two Tons of Steel, the hottest rockabilly outfit this side of Memphis.

"If I died tomorrow, right here in San Antonio, I believe I would go out happy and contented," Will Owen said. "Just look who all I have to be grateful for and all that I have learned from them--great pros like Frank Rodarte, Jimmy Spacek, Ruben V, Henry Rivas, Urban Urbano, Al Gomez, Jack Barber, Tony Cuellar and Denny Mathis. Denny is 77 years old and still playing his hot steel guitar with Two Tons. I tell him: 'Denny, I have been watching and learning from you for years and you have been one of my great influences,' and you know what he says? He says hardly anything. Just grins and says he hasn't done much to influence anybody. That kind of humility can't be taught. You have to be there to soak it up."

I last interviewed and photographed Will Owen Gage 14 years ago. He was 16 then, raw as an egg yolk, and making big noise on an outdoor stage at the Don Strange Ranch near Comfort. You could hear, see, and feel the innate talent, an almost palpable sensation which reminded me of what the late and great guitar wizard Chris Holzhaus said when he was mentoring super guitar stud Ruben V. Holzhaus told Ruben he

was playing too many notes.

"Hell yes," Will said. "I can identify with that. I play too many notes at every single gig, but I'm working on it."

All great guitarists must harness this bane, whether it be Chet Atkins, Andres Segovia, and Tommy Emmanuel--or Ruben V, Jimmy Spacek, and Will Owen Gage. It's hard not to burn a guitar to smoking ruin if you have the soul and flying fingers equipped for the job.

Will Gage has been playing lead guitar in Kevin Geil's popular rockabilly honky-tonk swing band Two Tons of Steel for the past two years.

Two Tons plays all over the state with regular gigs at the Broken Spoke in Austin.

If you want to really see and hear Will Owen Gage up close and personal, the place to do it is at Joe Blues on South Alamo Street where Gage performs solo every Monday night starting at 8 p.m.

Joe Blues is part of the Joey Villarreal framework of businesses which include the Blue Star Brewing Company and Blue Star Arts Complex featuring cooking and brewing and big band jazz every Tuesday night. See the Blue Star ad on our back cover for more information on Villarreal holdings, including Joey's neighborhood bar on St. Mary's Street.

At his Joe Blues solo gig, Gage usually performs without a break for two hours and sometimes even longer.

The two bands Gage fronts are his own Will Gage Trio rock group, and a blues outfit he calls Hip Willy and the Alamo Tones.

Hip Willy and the Alamo Tones have been playing Thursday nights for the past six years at Barriba Cantina on Crock-



Will Owen Gage is now 30 years of age.

ett Street at the River Walk. The cast of characters in this popular outfit include Gage, Urban Urbano, Mike Zeal, Tom Dyer, and Little Roger Gonzales.

Gage's second and upcoming album of blues music will include the Hip Willys musicians. He said it should be pressed and on the market by late June or early July.

"This album will include traditional old school blues with covers like Sunny Ozuna's *Talk to Me* and Little Roger singing *Linda Lou*. We recorded in Billy Horton's studios where he has vintage microphones and a 1953 tape machine. It sounds like something recorded in the 1950s or 1960s," Gage said.

Gage's first album was a one-man recording called *Traveling Man*, but his focus now is on the

new recording and another one he has on the back burner. Completely separate and totally different from the blues group is Gage's rocker outfit he calls the Will Gage Trio.

"We will do a rock album with me and Ken Robinson and Neal Walker next after we get the blues album out. This one will be all original material. We do original material in the vein of ZZ Top and Hendrix. Neal has an impressive background. He grew up with Shawn Sahm, and he played some bass with Doug Sahm at one point in time," said Gage.

Will has been around music constantly for his entire life, starting at age 4 when he received his first electric guitar.

"I was heavily influenced from the start by my father John, mother Susan, and brothers Eric

and Geoff," Gage said. "I first heard Hendrix at age 2, and by age 6 I had discovered the Vaughan brothers. My father is a professional guitar player who still works in Kentucky, and I was reaching for his guitar when I was a toddler. My parents divorced early."

By age 11, Gage said, "I became heavily influenced by Howlin' Wolf, Little Walter, T-Bone Walker, and Albert, Freddie, and B.B. King, and Robert Johnson. From this point I discovered classic rock, hard rock, and traditional country, but it was back when I was in 5th grade that my career really started."

Will Owen Gage credits Neesie Beal, a retired school teacher and wife of retired Express and News music writer Jim Beal, with helping launch his career.

Continued on pg. 10

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Sam Kindrick



Action Magazine and Sam Kindrick have been accepted into the Wittliff Collections at Texas State University, a huge honor which left me stunned, humbled, and with tears of gratitude in my eyes.

This simply means that concrete evidence of my life's work will be enshrined permanently in the Texas State University's burgeoning museum which features Texan writers, photographers, and musicians.

It's hard for me to see myself and little Action Magazine in such illustrious company as Pulitzer winning authors Larry McMurtry and Cormac McCarthy, the legendary J. Frank Dobie, and Texas musician giants like Willie Nelson, Jerry Jeff Walker, and Asleep At The Wheel's Ray Benson. But it has happened, justified or not.

The deed of gift was officially done on the afternoon of May 15, 2018, when I signed the paperwork officially donating to the Wittliff Collections 43 years worth of Action Magazine copies, thousands of Action Magazine photographs, personal and family photos, and other evidence of the virtually one-man entertainment tabloid which followed a tumultuous and ill-fated stint as a daily newspaper columnist.

While I still hold copyright to my material, Texas State University may use it in any way it sees fit, including historical presentations, research, student learning programs, etc.

Fittingly, I choose to believe, is the fact that I graduated from the school in 1957 with a degree in journalism when the university was still known as Southwest Texas State Teachers College. Joe Vogel was the main professor in the minuscule journalism department at that time.

Founded by Austin screenwriter and photographer Bill Wittliff (who is still around today) and his wife Sally, it all started in 1986 with the Southwestern Writers Collection at Texas State. In 1990, the writers collection moved into permanent quarters on the seventh floor of the Albert B. Alkek Library. In 1996, the Southwestern and Mexican Photography Collection was added.

Bill Wittliff is a screenwriter who produced the Lonesome Dove TV series. He is a photographer, novelist, film producer, book publisher, and major collector and benefactor.

The Lonesome Dove Collection permanent exhibition gallery opened in 2007 and was dedicated in a special ceremony attended by several members of the miniseries cast and crew.

In 2016 the reading room was dedicated as the Laura Walser Reading Room in honor of Bill Wittliff's mother, and in 2017 the Texas Music Collection was established with Jerry Jeff Walker being one of the first to donate his entire life's collection to the Wittliff.

I have to credit Hector Saldana for presenting my case to university officials. Saldana is the relatively new curator of the Wittliff Collections at Texas State. He is also a former senior music columnist for the San Antonio Express and News. Hector has long been leader of the Krayolas, a Tex-Mex band of rockers who have recorded with Augie Meyers and other major hitters on the Texas music scene.

I wrote the first article on The Krayolas when Hector and his drummer brother David made their official San Antonio debut at the old Warehouse Club.

"I have wanted for years to go back through your photos and articles," Saldana said when he told me about the Wittliff Collections opportunity. "I think the time has finally come."

And so it came to pass. Saldana drove out to my Bulverde home, and the two of us unloaded seven filing cabinets packed with photos chronicling the lives of Texas musicians ranging from Willie Nelson to Ray Wylie Hubbard to Townes Van Zandt, Rusty Weir, Wild Man Ray Liberto, Leon Russell, ad infinitum.

Hector also hauled away almost 600 copies of Action Magazine, each representing a monthly issue over the past 43 years. We never missed a month.

"Everything will be archived," Hector said. "Every issue of the magazine and every photo in the files will be digitized. It will be done by professional archivists, and I am guessing it will take them about a year to complete the Sam Kindrick/Action Magazine exhibit. We will send out press releases when it is completed."

The stated mission of the Wittliff is to collect, preserve, and share the legacies of artists who define Southwestern culture, according to Wittliff literature, which goes on to say: "The visions and the voices of our region's best writers, photographers, film makers, mu-

sicians, and other artists make up our holdings and are available for research and discovery to anyone."

I feel sure that I have done little to deserve this Wittliff Collections honor. I got into the writing racket by accident, and it took a loving God to keep me alive and out of the state penitentiary as I have rattled and banged my way through this experience we call life.

After graduating from Junction High School, I attended Sul Ross State in Alpine, majoring in nothing but fighting, gambling, and beer drinking when the English teacher called me into his office and presented me with the grim facts.

His name was Miles. He said he was wise to me writing and selling theme papers to other students for \$25 apiece. Since I was applying myself in little else, and because Professor Miles said he thought I might have a sliver of writing talent, he suggested I transfer from Sul Ross to some school that had a journalism department.

The rest is history. I landed in San Marcos and now we are back there in a university museum with the intriguing proposition of having a small historical place in the overall scheme of what we call life.

I have Hector Saldana to thank. And there is another benefactor who is no longer with us on this earth. I'm talking about the late Harry Jersig, onetime president of San Antonio's Lone Star Brewery, and an angel who was there for me during one of my darkest hours.

I had just been fired without severance pay from my column-writing job at the Express/News when I approached Jersig with my plan for starting my own paper.

I told him I wanted to sell him advertising on the back cover of a publication that did not exist at that time. I told Jersig I would promote Texas outlaw music and other events with a publication that would kiss nobody's ass in the process. Jersig smiled.

He handed me a \$1,000 check for the back cover Lone Star ad in that first issue of Action Magazine.

So thanks again, Harry. You belong in the Wittliff Collections with us. You believed in me when I felt nobody else did.

Mysterious Lady in Blue baffled historians

Editor's note:

This is the second and final installment of an article on the mysterious origins of San Antonio.

As we observe the city's tricentennial, history tells us, no single individual epitomizes the times more than a nun known as The Mysterious Lady in Blue.



Michael D. King

Part 2

By Michael D. King

In order to truly understand both why Texas was missionized, after wealth was obviously not to be found here and even after encroachments from the French in the East were not a serious threat, in order to understand why the Indians of Texas were almost "pre-disposed" to Christianity, you have to study about the life of a simple yet mysterious nun, who lived in a little, unimportant village in Spain. She was born in 1602 and died in 1665. She was a pious nun from a deeply religious family. She lived her entire life in her convent as it was previously her families home and was given to her for her religious order. She

took her formal vows in 1620 and was the abess of her convent for the majority of her life. Her convent is still active in Agreda, Spain.

She was highly respected in her lifetime and was noted for her prudence, wisdom and sanctity. So much so that she was frequently consulted by King Phillip IV of Spain on affairs of State. The King sought her advice for over 22 years and there still survive over 600 letters between them. She wrote 14 books including a masterpiece, The Mystical City of God, still in print 360 years after it was written. In fact Maria Agreda is one of two mystics whose works were very instrumental to Mel Gibson in the making of the Passion of the Christ. Suffice it to say Maria Agreda was credible in her life and has remained so for hundreds of years.

It was amazing then that Between 1620 and 1631, Maria Agreda reported that she was often "transported by the aid of the angels" to settlements of a people called Jumanos. Perhaps more than 500 times this happened. Each time she dutifully reported the episodes to her priest/confessor, Fr. Andrés de la Torre, who dutifully reported her assertions to his superior.

In 1627, Fr. Sebastian Marcilla, the Provincial

Superior in Agreda, sent a report about her work among the American Indians to the Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco de Manso. He told the Archbishop that the young Abbess - age 25 - said that she was visiting Indian villages in New Mexico in some supernatural manner and was teaching the natives the Catholic Faith. Even though she spoke Spanish, the Indians understood her, and she understood them when they replied in their native dialect. The confessor had a favorable impression of the Conceptionist nun and was inclined to believe her words.

The Archbishop ordered Fr. Alonso Benavides, who was the first Superior of the Franciscan Missions of New Mexico and the first commissioner of the Inquisition for the Colony. Benavides was instructed by the Archbishop of Mexico City to make a careful inquiry to be carried out "with the exactness, faithfulness and devotion that such a grave matter requires." It is noteworthy that Fr. Benavides had been invested with two offices in New Mexico - that of Superior and that of Inquisitor - and had all the resources available to make a serious inquiry.

The Archbishop asked that he should find out whether new tribes - the Tejas [Texans], Chillescas,

Jumanos and Caburcos - already had "some knowledge of the Faith" and "in what manner and by what means Our Lord has manifested it."

In the summer of 1629, a delegation of 50 Jumanos arrived at Isleta, a Pueblo mission near present day Albuquerque, requesting priests to return with them and baptize their people. The Jumanos were an as yet uncatechized tribe who hunted and traded over a wide area in the Plains east of New Mexico - today the Panhandle or South Plains region of Texas.

For the previous six years, smaller delegations of Jumanos had come at about the same time to Isleta to speak to Fr. Juan de Salas, a much respected missionary who had established the church in Isleta in 1613. Each year, the Indians

made the same plea and spoke about a woman who had sent them. They were the first to report the visits of the "Lady in Blue." But the story was disregarded as impossible.

To travel from Isleta to the eastern Plains was a long and dangerous trek - over 300 miles through the hostile lands of the Apache. At that time, the missionaries lacked both the priests and the necessary soldiers to make the trip and establish a new outpost, so the mission to the Jumanos was delayed.

This year (1629) Fr. Benavides, who had received specific instructions from the Archbishop of Mexico City regarding this very topic, was very interested to know more. He decided to return with Fr. De Salas to Isleta in order to question the Indian party and ask

how they had come to have knowledge of the Faith.

Fr. Benevides wrote: "We called the Jumanos to the monastery and asked them their reason for coming every year to ask for baptism with such insistence. Seeing a portrait of Mother Luisa [another Spanish Franciscan sister in Spain with a reputation for holiness] in the monastery, they said, 'A woman in similar garb wanders among us there, always preaching, but her face is not old like this, but young and beautiful.'"

"Asked why they had not told us this before, they answered, 'Because you did not ask, and we thought she was here also.'"

The Indians called the woman the "Lady in Blue" because of the blue mantle she wore. She would appear among them, the

Continued on pg. 13

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EVERYBODY'S SOMEBODY IN ACTION MAGAZINE



Will Owen Gage continued from pg 4

"I was playing at a pool party at the end of my fifth year in elementary school when Mrs. Beal heard me and invited me to sit in with her band at the old Cibolo Creek Country Club at Bracken," Gage said. "I played with Miss Neesie and the Ear Food Orchestra which included her bassist husband Jim. Miss Neesie encouraged me and I then formed my first band, a group called the Krybabys. I had Devin Campbell on drums and Tyler Phillips on bass."

From the Krybabys, Gage said, he went on to sit in with a group of pros called the Phat Cats. This is when he started rubbing shoulder with the big boys, pros like saxophone great Frank Rodarte, bassist Emmet Pastran, and multi-talented guitar player Kevin Lewis.

"Frank Rodarte got me my first paying gig with the Krybabys," Gage said, going on to explain: "Now I began to branch out. I started to learn from the older musicians, and they started to accept me. Guys like Benny Harp, drummer Big Daddy Gilbert Gonzales, and Henry Perez of the Rhythm Kings."

At this point, Gage recalls, he met Tony Cuellar, "the biggest guitar influence of my entire career."

Gage says Cuellar

doesn't play much anymore, but says "Tony Cuellar is the best and biggest guitar influence to touch my life and career. He played with a band called Blues Land. He still sits in here and there, and the respect he commands is phenomenal."

Will Owen Gage reads music. He is a student of the guitar, and he is not one to put himself or other instrumentalists like him in a pigeon hole.

"I love many genres of music, and I play a variety of styles myself," Gage said. "I love Stevie Ray Vaughan stuff, and I grew up on Hendrix. But let's get something straight. Neither of these guys were blues players. They were both rock guitarists plain and simple with a lot of blues influences."

Gage said there are too many calling themselves blues guitar players who never bothered to pick up the old stuff from the older musicians who heavily influenced Stevie Ray in the beginning.

"These new guys are playing a mixture of Vaughan and Hendrix without taking the time to learn the licks that Stevie Ray and Jimi Hendrix got from the old greats. Stevie Ray was heavily influenced by the Kings, Freddie and Albert, and the jump blues licks, many of them, came from legends like T. Bone Walker," Gage said. "I tried to copy Stevie Ray very early in my ca-

reer, but I went back and learned some stuff from the very musicians Stevie Ray and Hendrix got it from. I could hear the Freddie King licks in some of Stevie's stuff, and I could hear the jump blues swing licks of T. Bone Walker, or the blues licks of Albert King."

Will Gage says he still plays some Stevie Ray Vaughn with the firm conviction that there will never be another guitar player like him or Hendrix. Especially Stevie Ray.

"There will never be another guitar player like Vaughan," Gage said. "Everyone wants to sound like Stevie Ray, but he had a fire burning inside of him that nobody will ever match. Now I have a different something burning that makes me want even more to be the best overall musician I can be. I want to play like Tony Cuellar, with taste and class and never overstating with the guitar. I want to continue improving my vocals and my songwriting. I want to keep getting better."

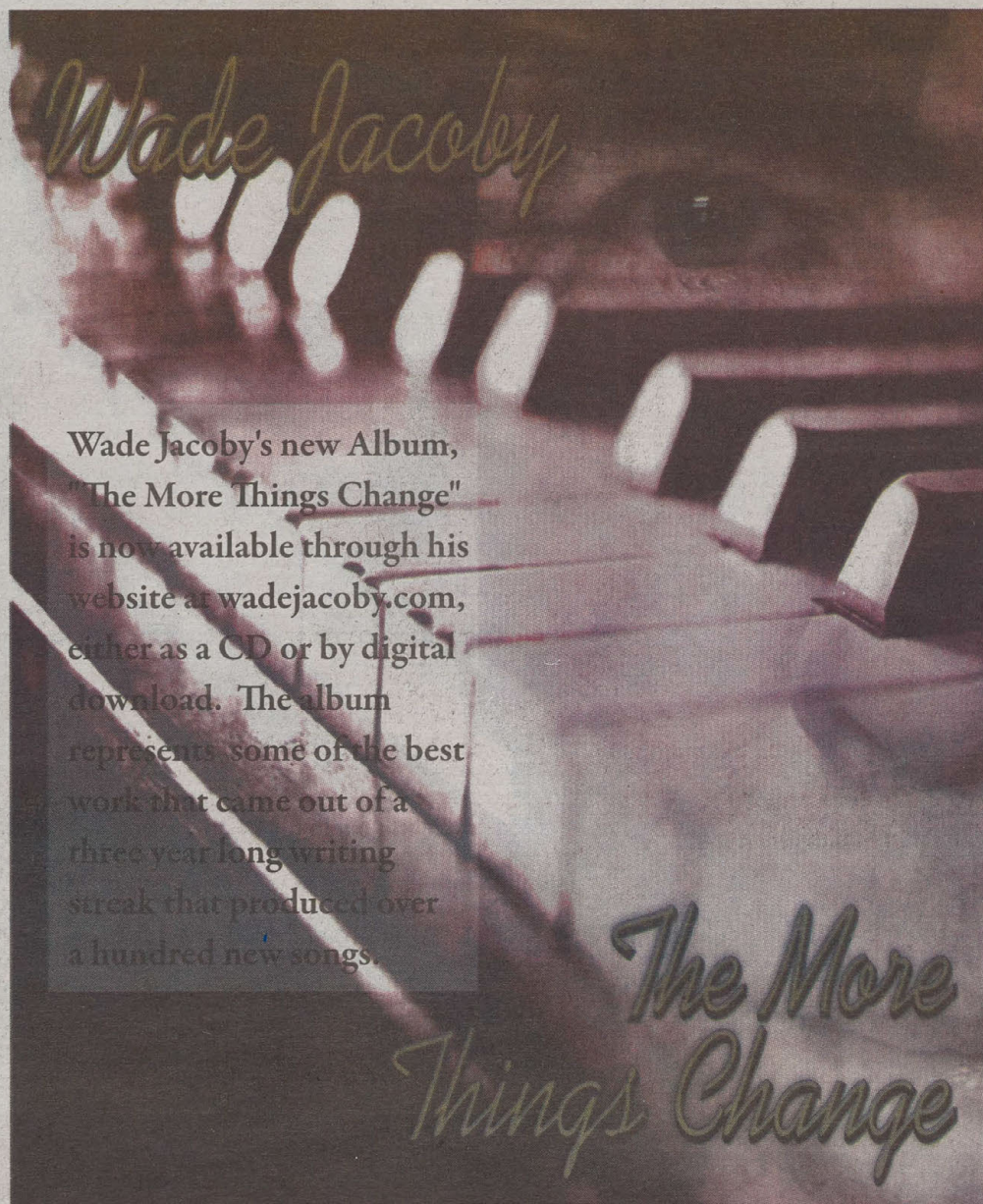
So expect Will Owen Gage to tone it down a bit with class and sophistication. But don't expect that guitar slinger inside to remain dormant forever.

He will bust free from time to time, and the galloping guitar will do what comes naturally. It will gallop again.

"It's what I love," Gage said. "I can't imagine doing anything else."



Will Gage now plays guitar with three bands.



Wade Jacoby's new Album, "The More Things Change" is now available through his website at wadejacoby.com, either as a CD or by digital download. The album represents some of the best work that came out of a three year long writing streak that produced over a hundred new songs.

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SCATTER



SHOTS

Remember Guich?

The Jerry King retirement party last month at Texas Pride Barbecue attracted a good crowd, and one handsome face among the multitude was familiar to many old dogs in attendance.



Jerry King

We are talking about Guich Kooch, the former part owner with Hondo Crouch of Luckenbach who appeared in numerous films and the TV series *Carter Country*.



Guich Kooch

Guich and Action Magazine editor/publisher Sam Kindrick both had speaking parts in the Steve Spielberg film *Sugarland Express*, starring Goldie Hawn and Ben Johnson.

Guich and Kindrick

were drinking coffee in the Gunter Hotel coffee shop when casting director Shari Rhodes asked them if they wanted to be in a movie. The rest is history.

Shari Rhodes worked in *Jaws* and other Spielberg blockbusters. She died of breast cancer in 2009.

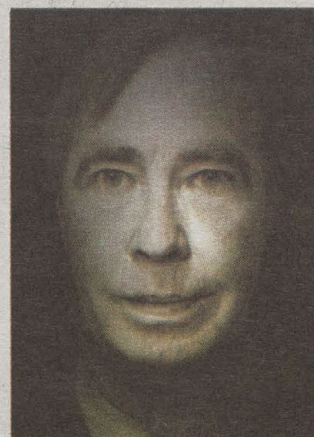
In *Carter Country*, Guich Kooch played the clown character Harley Puckett.

Asked once about the weird spelling of his name, Kooch said, "My father raised coon hounds and the dogs got all the good names."

Watch for a Guich Kooch article in an upcoming issue of Action Magazine.

New Jacoby album

Wade Jacoby, the Bulverde musician with unquestionable writing and playing talent, is back with a new album.



Wade Jacoby

Wade Jacoby's new Album, "The More Things Change" (see ad in this issue of Action) is now available through his website at wadejacoby.com, either as a CD or by digital download. The album represents some of the best work that came out of a three year long writing

streak that produced over a hundred new songs.

Wade first began playing keyboards at age 7, later playing and singing with Katherine Dawn at Cousins Pizza in Boerne Texas. That group later morphed into the River City Pleasure Band with Robert "Robar" Adams on bass, Clay Meyers on drums, Steve Lewis on guitar, Carol Gumm on vocals, Roberts' Brother Leroy on Rhythm Guitar and Vocals.

Around 1980, Wade auditioned for the Darryle Dugosh Band. Managed by Charlie Prides' organization he toured with Dugosh all over the United States, opening for most of the Major Country acts of the day including Charlie Pride, Steve Wariner, Jerry Reed, Jerry Lee Lewis and George Strait, and many other legends.

After the Dugosh gig played out, Wade played with Jay Eric and the Blieders Creek band for about 3 years, again opening for major country acts at Blue Bonnet Palace and Texas Dance Hall, and also with the Chris Story band.

Wade's favorite gig though was a stint as a solo artist with regular jobs at Los Patios and the old Marriot Hotel in downtown San Antonio.

After getting into a bar fight with some jerk who was bugging his very pregnant wife Mary, Wade was fired from the Marriot gig.

The next 20 years were spent building a recording studio and recording local

talent, and raising a family. His marriage ended in a divorce in 2013, but he and Mary are once again happily reunited.

Jacoby says he doesn't have any regrets about anything. He doesn't believe in regrets. "I think this new album is my best so far, although it might be hard to top my tribute Album to the Great Jacoby Brothers, Jacoby said. "That album stayed within the top forty on the Americana Chart for several months. That was a great album with some great players like Bobby Flores, Bert Poutra and Allen Chapman... But this new album is really different from anything I've done, and I hope it does well. Regardless, I'm not done making music yet. I've got a sizeable catalog now, and it's still growing"

Rohan loses wife

Cynthia Rohan, wife of fiddling cartoonist Bob Rohan, died last month.

"She donated body parts to the medical field," Bob Rohan told us in a facebook text. "Now two people can see and she gave hope to 50 bone patients."

She was a flight attendant with Southwest Airlines for more than 20 years.

Bob and Cynthia had been married for more than 30 years.

The Bob Rohan cartoon strip *Buffalo Gals* has been running in Action Magazine for a number of years

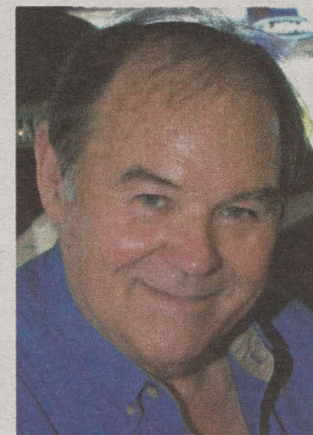
Three of Cynthia's sisters are flight attendants. The Rohans live in Hous-

ton.

When Cynthia passed, Bob messaged: "The angel got her angel wings today..."

Holley on KLUP

We are happy to report that friend Roy Holley has found a new home for his Talk About Texas radio show.



Roy Holley

After being unceremoniously dumped by KKYX AM, Holley has hooked on with KLUP 930 AM for Saturday shows which will run from 4 until 5 p.m.

Roy's 7-year run with KKYX ended May 26. His first KLUP show will be June 2.

Surtees memorial

As they have been doing for years, South Side club people came together last month to remember one of their own, Mary Ann Surtees, a lady who was known for helping others. She passed away in a Florida nursing facility.

Mary Ann's daughter Cheryl helped organize the memorial, which was well attended at Frank Mumme's Spurr 122 Club.



Cheryl Surtees

Making one of his rare public appearances since he retired from the club business and closed the famed Trap Lounge, Frank Mueller was one of several who employed Cheryl as a bartender and day manager over the years.

In addition to working for both Mueller and Mumme, Cheryl has also tended bar for Linda Reese and Rob Brewer at the Brooks Pub.

We go back with the Surtees family more than 40 years, for Action editor/publisher Sam Kindrick once shot pool and played golf with Mary Ann's husband Calvin Surtees.

Cheryl posted some photos of her late father on the Sam Kindrick facebook page. They recalled some good memories.

Dam Red Barn

The Dam Red Barn at Canyon Lake is again open for business with new ownership and management and plenty of live music to go around.

Todd Tupa is the new owner while Brandy Browne is managing the place.

Brandy, known as a former manager of Dale Watson's Big T Roadhouse, is a go-getter who was instrumental in re-designing and refurbishing the once popular Canyon Lake bar.

The place had four bands over the holiday weekend.

Here's a Music Matters rant without the music

This is a rant, but it is related to music in the public sphere.

In May, Bexar County had an election in which less than five percent of the registered voters bothered—I say bothered—to vote. At issue were things like determining the leadership of the Alamo Community College District (ACCD), a major bond issue for North Side Schools and a host of city council and mayoral posts in places like Leon Valley, Balcones Heights and Castle Hills.

There are just over 1.7 million folks in Bexar County. Around 600,000 are registered to vote, which means that in this election less than 1.7 percent of the population is determining the future of our children and our cities.

Ok, so only some of the 1.7 million people are eligible to register when you consider age, criminal past, etc. I'll give you that. But, still, somewhere between 1.7 percent and 4.75 percent of the people are in charge of our democracy because they

...bother to vote.

Know what's even worse? Undervoting.

Undervoting is a measure of how many people don't vote on issues or races with which they are unfamiliar. They just skip the question. For example in one ACCD race, more people did NOT vote than those who DID vote for either of the two candidates.

Why? I don't think they know or perhaps care what the ACCD is or does.

What appears to be missing is something E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (Pioneer Institute) has said is "the sacred fire of liberty." It is the passion for freedom that consumed the founders of our democracy. Where is our passion today?

Let's say you live in a neighborhood with 100 registered voters living close to you. Around five of them just determined who would set your tax rates and community college policies that affect the cost and quality of higher education for almost

60,000 students attending the five campuses each semester.

If you think each of those five voters is sane enough to make decisions on your behalf and that of your family, you're crazier than they might be. Furthermore, if you think voting for some star-struck, power-hungry politician every four years is gonna make America greater you need a session in the woodshed.

BTW: I think America is already great... but could be greater.

Making America greater is OUR job, and the first non-negotiable task of this job is to know the issues and candidates and vote!

Maybe "the sacred fire of liberty" is really the sacred fire of life. I can tell

you that having and surviving cancer have helped me realize just how precious life is in these United States of America. Notwithstanding the many flaws we have, I'd rather live here than anywhere on this planet.

But, if we don't do a better job of living together, gracefully and peacefully, we could lose it all. Nations have come and gone since civilization first came into being.

As a live music performer, I think it is part of my job to stoke the flames of the sacred fire of living so that people might coexist in concert with each other.

And that's how politics and music are related in my pretty-well-informed opinion.

That's what I think.

What about you? Send me an email.

Jim Chesnut is a state-certified public management graduate of Texas State University in San Marcos and a former major label recording artist and staff songwriter with Acuff-Rose Music in Nashville. After 25 years away from the music business, he began performing in and around San Antonio in 2008. Since then, He has self-produced and released five CDs. Since January 2016, he has had five consecutive Top-10 national indie country singles, three of which reached #1 in the Top-40 chart of IndieWorld Country Record Report. He has been a freelance contributor to Action Magazine since the beginning of 2016. Contact Info: jim@chesnutproductions.com

Music Matters
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Lady in Blue

continued from pg 7

Jumanos representatives said, and instruct them about the true God and His holy law. The party, which included 12 chiefs, included representatives of other tribes, allies of the Jumanos. In Fr. Benavides's 1630 Memorial, he notes that they told him "a woman used to preach to each one of them in his own tongue" [emphasis added].

It was this woman who had insisted they should ask the missionaries to be baptized and told them how to find them. At times, they said, the 'Lady in Blue' was hidden from them, and they did not know where she went or how to find her.

In August of 1630, amazingly, Fr. Benevides was requested to return to Spain, partly because of interest in the amazing activity related to Maria Agreda. In 1631 Fr. Benevides met with the Provincial, Fr. Sebastian Marcilla, and the nun's confessor, Fr. Andrés de la Torre. The three went to the Immaculate Conception Convent in Agreda, to meet with Maria Agreda. The account of their visit is documented by Fr. Benevides. In a letter of May 1631 he wrote to the Father General:

"She told me all we know that has happened to our brothers and fathers, Fray Juan de Salas and Fray Diego Lopez, in their journey to the Jumanos. ... She gave me their full descriptions, adding that she assisted them. She knows Captain Tuerto [a Jumano chief] very well, giving a detailed description of him and of the others." He concluded, "She has preached in person our Holy Catholic Faith in every nation, particularly in our New Mexico."

Fr. Benavides had other talks with Mother Mary of Jesus before he left. He became convinced that she was the "Lady in Blue" who had traveled to America to teach the Indians. It was not just her words, but her way of being that impressed him. He had formed a high opinion of the sanctity and piety of that Conceptionist nun who was favored with many mystical gifts.

Accounts of Mary's mystical apparitions in the American Southwest, as well as inspiring passages in Mystical City of God, so stirred 17th and 18th century missionaries that they credited her in their own life's work, making her an integral part of the colonial history of the United States.

But more importantly these narratives were passed down through the oral traditions of the Indians of Texas, from West Texas, all the way to East Texas, missionaries were often asked about the Lady in Blue. These stories were told to the entradas that founded the missions of San Antonio, between 1718 and 1731, they had been told for a hundred years after the death of Maria Agreda and they are still being told today. San Angelo, Texas credits Maria Agreda as a pioneering force behind the establishment of early Texas missions. The descendants of Jumano Indians today reminisce about her role in their survival, and her possible connection to the legend of Texas's state flower, the bluebonnet.

Less than 10 years after her death Maria Agreda was elevated to a Venerable by the Pope. There was an intense investigation into these circumstances, including two Memorials written to Pope Urban VIII. Maria Agreda herself appeared before the Inquisition twice and was cleared of any wrong. There are volumes of books, testimonies and definitions of the accounts from many, many people associated with the

events. With the authenticated evidence of the investigations and the extensive documentation of Fr. Benevides, The Church has ruled that her visiting the Indians of Texas and New Mexico were actual, mystical bi-locations. All things are possible with God. Maria Agreda died and was buried in 1665. 244 years later, in 1909, her body was exhumed and examined by doctors - detailed reports were made because her body had not decayed, at all.

Her glass coffin was again opened in 1989, in an effort to use modern technology to explain the phenomenon. The attending physician was named Andreas Medina. He reported: "What most surprised me about that case is that when we compared the state of the body, as it was described in the medical report from 1909, with how it appeared in 1989, we realized it had absolutely not deteriorated at all in the last eighty years."

Why we need to understand the story of The Lady in Blue is to understand the mystical beginnings of the Missions of Texas and especially the mystical beginnings of San Antonio. San Antonio would not be here today, if the Indians in Texas were not agreeable to live there, and turn their lives over to Jesus Christ.

After the missions were secularized, they settled into the fabric of San Antonio. Generations of Southside farm children went to a simple little school, partly housed in the corner bastion of the walls of Mission Espada. The room is still used today, as a small visitor center for the National Park Service.

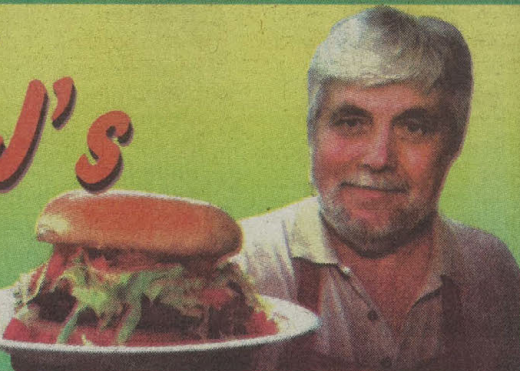
All of the missions found a use, to the extent their condition would allow. Of course after Texas won its independence in 1836, and especially after Statehood and the end of the Mexican War in 1848, "The Alamo" became etched as an icon

in the mind and hearts of all Americans. I'm amazed how many people, even native San Antonians who don't realize the Alamo was a mission at one time, that it survived as a mission for 72 years and then was abandoned for 46 years before the battle.

Because of the distraction of the famous and heroic siege, the venerated history of the Alamo and its plaza in the 181 years since the battle, I tend to shy away from Mission San Antonio de Valero and concentrate on the remaining four. Much of the narrative about the missions was the same. In a way, the Alamo had a bit easier life because it was so close to the Presidio and the Villa that sprang up around it. In a way, its proximity to town and the Presidio made its life harder as well. Like most places and most people, its situation was give and take.

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