



Issue No. 7:

# THE WEDDING ISSUE

PLANNING THE ULTIMATE DANCE HALL WEDDING

TEXAS HONORS GARY P. NUNN

TDHP NEWS AND EVENTS

... AND MUCH MORE!

## New for 2019: Themed Issues for TDHP Newsletters!



*Deb Fleming*  
TDHP Executive Director  
Board President, 2015–2016

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*On the cover: The newlywed Mr. and Mrs.  
Navarro celebrate their wedding at Schneider  
Hall (photo by Diane Mueller Photography:  
<https://www.dianemuellerphoto.com/>)*

Texas Dance Hall Preservation's growth over the past few years is both gratifying and exciting for me as a TDHP "ol' timer." In 2005, even before TDHP existed as a non-profit organization, I was running the back roads of Texas with Steve Dean (RIP), one of TDHP's founders, searching for dance halls down obscure country roads and in places that this fifth-generation Texan and road-trip warrior had never heard of. A large-format Texas map book, colored markers, Post-It notes, several magnifying glasses, and a camera and cell phone were the tools of our trade. Those early wanderings brought me to where I am today — a person passionate about small town and rural Texas communities, historic dance halls of all shapes and sizes, and the people that maintain, manage, frequent them and hold their stories firmly in their heads and hearts.

As a TDHP volunteer, I worked on 2008's "Dance Across Texas" events, held in six dance halls across central and south Texas; a 2012 fundraiser with the Quebe Sisters in Austin's Rattle Inn; and the big dances with Asleep at the Wheel at the Anhalt Germania Farmer Verein Hall in 2013 and 2014. And I was proud to be involved with the very first Festival of Texas Fiddling at Twin Sisters Dance Hall in 2014, continuing to play a small part in supporting the steady growth of TDHP. Helping to increase awareness by educating, exciting, and encouraging support for our historic halls was a natural for this Texas girl. And I have to admit, it was a whole lotta fun too.

Becoming a board member was another step in my journey and an opportunity to contribute in a more structured way, especially during my two-year term as board president. We added programs and projects, developed active supporters and a growing membership, re-booted a diverse and solid board and advisory board, and established a collaboration with Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel that grew into the successful Texas Dance Hall Tours. Along the way, my role continued to evolve, and in June 2017, I was honored to become the first paid staff member of TDHP.

Today, as I look back over my Texas Dance Hall Preservation experience, the element I still enjoy the most is the grassroots engagement with halls, their managers and caretakers, hall attendees, bands, and the community that surrounds and supports them in numerous ways. I think those early road-tripping days made an indelible mark on me. As TDHP continues to grow and evolve, gaining momentum at every turn, new opportunities continue to present themselves and the workload grows exponentially.

After TDHP hires a new Executive Director to lead us through our next chapter, I'll be able to shift my focus to my first love: Community Outreach. I'll have more field time and face-to-face interaction with dance halls, which is so extremely valuable. It's a big state to cover and we have yet to make direct contact with many halls, due to limited staff resources thus far.

I see some good road trips in my future, more country back roads to explore, and new dance halls to document and learn about in order to further TDHP's mission as we Save Texas Dance Halls, One Two-Step at a Time!

Hope to see y'all down the road!

*Deb Fleming*

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# TDHP NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## Wes Peoples 2019 Benefit Home

TDHP executive director Deb Fleming attended the March 29 ribbon cutting for [Wes Peoples Homes](#)' 2019 Benefit Home, at Town Creek in New Braunfels. TDHP is honored to be included as one of the nonprofit organizations that will receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of this gorgeous new home, along with Texas Lutheran University, New Braunfels Food Bank, Crisis Center of Comal County, and Headwaters at the Comal. The home is listed with Amy Knight of Kuper Sotheby's International Realty. Deb says, "It was a real pleasure to meet Wes and learn more about his love for Texas music. Assisting others has been an integral part of his long and successful building and property development career." TDHP applauds Wes Peoples for his commitment to the communities in which he builds homes and for his contribution to TDHP. [For the listing, click here.](#)



*Top: The 2019 Benefit House in New Braunfels.  
Bottom: Wes Peoples and Deb Fleming at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.  
Left: The ribbon cutting ceremony for the Wes Peoples Homes 2019 Benefit House.  
All photos courtesy of Wes Peoples Homes.*

## Oral History Workshops

At least two more Oral History Workshops will be scheduled in 2019. These will be announced when the dates and locations are finalized. If interested, please contact [admin@texasdancehall.org](mailto:admin@texasdancehall.org) or 512-921-1250, and we'll notify you when future workshops are scheduled.

# On the Road with the Texas Dance Hall Photo Exhibit

Our dance hall photo exhibit has been busy zig-zagging across the state, we've lined up a couple of coveted display spots on the horizon, too.

On March 24, 2019, TDHP was invited to take part in a pop-up event at the [Lonesome Rose](#), a newish two-stepping honky-tonk at 2114 St. Mary's Street in San Antonio that, established in November 2018, nonetheless qualifies as "the oldest honky-tonk on the St. Mary's Strip." It might not be historic, but here at TDHP, we don't comment on claims of which hall is "the oldest"! Welcome to the family, Lonesome Rose.

During the event, a selection of dance hall photos from the traveling exhibit received plenty of interest from the San Antonians in attendance, who were largely unfamiliar with many of the dance halls on display. Deb Fleming attended and participated in a panel discussion about Texas dance halls alongside bandleader/musician Geronimo Trevino (author of the 2002 book, *Dance Halls and Last Calls*) and Susana Mendez Segura, who was instrumental in the multi-year efforts to save Lerma's Club in San Antonio and remains a key player in its restoration project.



Dance Hall photos at the Lonesome Rose on March 24, 2019 (photo by Deb Fleming).

The Tex Pop Originals & Lonesome Rose Present:  
**Texas Music Dance Halls:  
Exhibit, Concert & Panel**

**Geronimo  
Trevino Band**  
\*Panel with  
Deb Fleming  
\*Susana Segura

Sunday March 24  
from 2-6pm

**Toman  
Brothers**

Free Admission - 2114 N St. Marys San Antonio Texas

The airport terminal at Dallas Love Field will welcome the photo exhibit beginning May 31, coinciding with the June 13–16 Texas Dance Hall Tour, and the exhibit will remain on display through August 11, 2019.

In other airport news, Austin Bergstrom International Airport (ABIA) in Austin will display the exhibit from September 2019–February 2020. You can find it in one of the gallery spaces in the recently completed expansion of the Barbara Jordan Terminal, which was designed with an open, airy main concourse that's said to take its inspiration from Texas dance halls in general and Gruene Hall specifically.

Elsewhere, the Texas Folklife gallery at 1708 Houston Street, Austin, will incorporate six of TDHP's photos into an exhibit called "Visions of Traditional Country Dance Music." The exhibit will be on display from June 13 through August 30, with an opening event on June 27. The Texas Folklife gallery is open Monday–Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information, call 512-441-9255 or [visit the Texas Folklife website](#).

# TDHP NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS



## JOIN US FOR THE 2019 TEXAS DANCE HALL TOUR!

June 13-16, 2019 • Dallas-Fort Worth

We're counting down to the start of the next Texas Dance Hall Tour, June 13–16! This time, Asleep at the Wheel and TDHP are heading to the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to visit some urban dance halls — a change from the rural Hill Country and Central Texas halls featured on past tours.

We are thrilled to welcome four new halls to the tour, which kicks off at the Sons of Hermann Hall in Dallas. We'll visit National Hall (SPJST 92) and the Stagecoach Ballroom in Fort Worth before wrapping it up at the newly restored Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas. All four halls are all rich with history, and you'll stay busy perusing all the musical greats that hang on their walls.

The Tour's Presenting Sponsor, Central Market, is based in Dallas and they are excited to have the Tour in their own backyard this year. Texas Monthly is our exclusive Media Sponsor, and our exclusive Radio Sponsors are Fort Worth stations KFWR 95.9 The Ranch and KTFW 92.1 Hank FM. Bands announced so far include Asleep at the Wheel, Hot Club of Cowtown, Jason Roberts Band, Summer Dean, and Big Cedar Fever.

Some full four-day packages are still available for singles and couples, whether you want the VIP treatment or prefer a bit more independence. Single dance tickets can be purchased for Friday and Saturday nights. We are once again offering special package deals to all TDHP Lifetime members and new Lifetime Members, and Lifetime Members can purchase single tickets for any of the four dances.

Time's a-wastin', so [click here to get your tickets!](#) Hope to see you on the Tour!

# SIGN UP TO WIN A TEXAS COUNTRY MUSIC CRUISE FOR 2!



**WIN A TRIP FOR 2 ON THE**

**TEXAS COUNTRY MUSIC**  
—Cruise—  
2019  
ROATAN COSTA MAYA COZUMEL

**PAT GREEN**

**BART CROW**

**BRI BAGWELL**

**FLATLAND CAVALRY**

**JASON CASSIDY**

**GLEN TEMPLETON**

**ZACH NYTOMT**

**RANDALL KING**

**TANNER SPARKS**

**DARRIN MORRIS**

**ISAAC JACOB**

**\$50 PER RAFFLE TICKET  
ALL PROCEEDS TO GO**

**TEXAS DANCE HALL  
★ HALL ★  
PRESERVATION  
ESTD 2007**



Recently, our friends at Lone Star Beer introduced TDHP to a new Texas music experience, the Texas Country Music Cruise! Texas country music fans will sail out of Galveston on September 29, 2019, on [Royal Caribbean's Liberty of the Seas](#), returning October 6, 2019. Ports of call include Roatan, Honduras; Costa Maya, Mexico, and Cozumel, Mexico.

The cruise's Texas-centric musical lineup includes Pat Green, Bart Crow, Bri Bagwell, Randall King, Glen Templeton, Flatland Cavalry, Jason Cassidy, Tanner Sparks, Zach Nytomt, and Isaac Jacob.

We're told that the Cruise will be raffling off a special guitar autographed by all of these artists later this year, so stay tuned.

Sounds great, right? Well, it gets even better! The Cruise is now sponsoring a raffle with all proceeds to be donated to Texas Dance Hall Preservation. Tickets are just \$50 each, and the winner will receive an inside cabin for two, with two wristbands for the full week of music and fun! The winner will be drawn on June 16, the last night of TDHP's Texas Dance Hall Tour, at the Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas, Texas. You need not be present to win. [Click here to learn more!](#)

*Please note: Nonprofit organizations generally are not allowed to hold raffles, but they can receive a donation of the proceeds of a raffle held by someone else. This raffle is not being held by Texas Dance Hall Preservation, and we are not involved in its implementation. For any questions about this raffle, please [contact the Texas Country Music Cruise](#).*

# TDHP NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## Preservation Fund Grants: Fall 2019 Deadline

Only two applications were submitted during the Spring 2019 grant round, and we are currently awaiting additional information from both applicants before the grant committee makes a final decision. TDHP's Preservation Fund Grant application is fairly simple, and we encourage all qualifying tax-exempt halls to consider applying. TDHP staff is available to assist and answer questions, but we encourage you to start as soon as possible. The next application deadline is September 1, 2019. Applications can be found on the [TDHP website](#) or contact us at [Admin@texasdancehall.org](mailto:Admin@texasdancehall.org) or 512-921-1250.

## Five Dance Halls Are Lifetime Members

Nonprofit organizations rely on members and donors for operating funds, and TDHP is no exception. Our growing roster of members and their membership dues help us directly serve dance halls and provide programming to hall owners and enthusiasts alike. We encourage anyone who loves Texas halls and the culture and music found there, like we do, to [consider becoming a TDHP member](#). There are four membership levels and something to fit everyone's budget: Individual (\$25), Couple/Family (\$40), or Organization (\$100). You can even set your annual membership to renew automatically each year!

TDHP is honored to have a number of halls participating at the Organization Member level, and we hope more halls will consider joining. Membership is a way to stay informed as TDHP rolls out programs and shares opportunities from other sources that may benefit halls.

We especially want to applaud and recognize five historic dance halls that are participating at the special Lifetime Member level: Anhalt Germania Farmer Verein in Spring Branch, Bellville Turnverein Pavilion Restoration Project in Bellville, Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall in Cat Spring, Sengelmann Hall in Schulenburg and Sisterdale Dance Hall in Sisterdale. Thank you!

## TDHP Awarded Texas Hill Country Trail Region Grant

TDHP was awarded a \$1,500 grant from the Texas Historical Commission's Hill Country Trail Region (THCTR) to help promote dance lessons. The grant will help pay to advertise TDHP's upcoming Traveling Dance Lesson program throughout the Region's 19-country area. THCTR offers small grants for special projects, events, and programs that promote heritage tourism and public awareness of the history of the Texas Hill Country Trail Region, encourage community involvement and participation, and enhance the visitor experience. Deb Fleming met THCTR executive director Joanne Crawford in Dripping Springs on a sunny day in April to accept the check.



*Joanne Crawford (left) and Deb Fleming*

# The Dancehall Tapes: A Texas Music Preservation Project Update

Over the past two years, TDHP has connected dance halls and musicians with the team behind The Dancehall Tapes. We went on the road in April to check out this exciting project, which places iconic Texas artists in a historic dance hall, capturing their stories and original music in a stripped-down acoustic setting that allows the hall to act as the amplifying instrument. Each hall's story is shared visually, in intricate detail, as part of the experience.

We found the video/audio crew visiting four halls. First up was Luckenbach, which played host to Pat Green and his trio. On that April day, the trio included Brendon Anthony, director of the Texas Music Office and TDHP advisory board member, who plays a mean fiddle! Kit Patterson, Hondo Crouch's grandson and the current owner and manager of Luckenbach, shared stories and joined in the dialogue in the hall where Everybody is Somebody!

Next up was Bob Schneider, who traveled out to Old Coupland Dance Hall. Proprietor Abbey Road, also a TDHP advisory board member, welcomed the crew and Bob for a day while he shared some brand new, unreleased songs. Abbey knows more about Texas music than most, having been the glue and oil behind Luckenbach for years, and she was kind enough to act as interviewer.

Lubbock-area songbird Kimmie Rhodes and her son Gabriel serenaded the two neighboring halls of Albert and Hye later in the week. After recording that segment at Albert on a breezy cool day, we all ventured over to Hye Market and Hye Hall to interview lifelong Hye residents Levi and Oliver Deike, Oliver being the owner of Hye Hall. Their neighbor and childhood friend, Miss Phelps, joined us — and the stories told that afternoon were ribsplitting and entertaining for sure. Before it was over, Kimmie had her guitar out of its case, and Hye Hall was filled with singing and dancing for the first time since about 1960.

The stories these segments will produce will be wonderful visual histories of halls and Texas artists. We can't wait to see them all! The Dancehall Tapes are already winning awards — congratulations to everyone at Pilot Moon Films for their [Silver Telly award](#) in 2019! Check out The Dancehall Tapes' [Facebook page](#) and [website](#) to follow along.



Bob Schneider at Coupland Dance Hall (photo by Scott Slusher)



Left to right: Levi Deike Jr., Kimmie Rhodes, Miss Phelps, and Oliver Deike at Hye Hall (photo by Deb Fleming)

# Texas Honors Gary P. Nunn



Texas Dance Hall Preservation was honored to attend this special day at the Texas Capitol to join in the celebration to honor one of our Texas music icons.

Wednesday, April 10, 2019, was a day that Gary P. Nunn will never forget. Gary, his wife Ruth, and son Julian spent the day at the State Capitol in Austin, Texas, where Gary was honored with a proclamation by Governor Greg Abbott (shown above) and resolutions both in the Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate. The resolutions were authored by Representative Kyle Kacal (R-District 12) and Senator Dawn Buckingham (R-District 24) and presented on the House and Senate floors.

"I was so humbled to be recognized by the Governor, the Senate, and the House of Representatives of the great State of Texas, a state that I love dearly," said Gary P. Nunn. "I've traveled over two million miles in Texas since I started touring in 1980, and I've met the most incredible people along the way, made lifelong friendships, and had experiences I'll treasure forever. I've had the pleasure to play Texas' historic dance halls and seen the really true grace of country music. And I take seriously my role to preserve and perpetuate the tradition of country music and Texas history and culture – which is why being recognized by all three branches of our Texas government was such an incredible honor."

Nunn has been a proud ambassador for the state of Texas, and his songs have made a lasting mark on Texas and beyond for almost half a century. He is a Texas music institution, singing about his love of everything Texas in dance halls across the state and concert stages around the world, and his extraordinary gifts as a prolific songwriter and performer have earned him the respect of his peers and the admiration of countless fans across Texas and beyond.

"It's impossible to think of Gary P. Nunn without visions of Luckenbach, live music and honky-tonk fun," said Senator Dawn Buckingham. "The music he has shared for nearly half a century will forever be part of Texas history."

Nunn is preparing to retire, but you can still catch shows throughout 2019, a number of them in Texas dance halls. [Visit his website for dates and tickets!](#)

# Dance Hall Weddings featured on NPR Marketplace

Houston Public Media's Travis Bubenik joined Deb Fleming in April 2019 to visit La Bahia Turn Verein and Round Top Dance Hall. Travis met Roy Schmidt (La Bahia) and Jon Perez (Round Top) to learn more about how both for-profit and nonprofit halls benefit from weddings and other event rentals, especially in a changing economy.



Some dance halls no longer host public dances in the old tradition, but instead put the hall into service for events that create memories for a lifetime. Dance halls that host weddings take different approaches: some charge a simple rental fee for do-it-yourself couples, while others provide full-service wedding planning that manages every little detail. It can be a big business and provide an economic advantage for halls that have decided to participate in this growing industry in rural Texas. Travis' story was broadcast on [NPR's Marketplace with Kai Ryssdal](#).



A few days later, our friends at Houston Public Media devoted one segment of Houston Matters, show to dance halls. They chatted about dance halls, took calls from listeners, and played a few clips from an earlier Houston Matters show with TDHP board member Steph McDougal. [You can listen to that latest segment here](#), starting at about the 11:10 mark, and [listen to the full segment with Steph from back in 2016](#) here.

Thanks to the folks at Houston Public Media for helping to keep historic Texas dance halls in the news!



Historic signs at La Bahia dance hall



Round Top Dance Hall (Antique Archaeology)



Both of these halls were previously profiled on the Antique Archaeology ("American Pickers") blog; you can [check that out here](#).

# Let's get married at a Dance Hall

BY STEPH MCDUGAL

My friend Kierstan was married at Fischer Hall in 2001. It was an autumn wedding in November, that time in Texas when the seasons have changed from "Hot" to "Not as Hot," the threat of hurricanes can be put behind us for another year, and everyone has a chance to relax before the winter holidays. In the picture taken on her wedding day, family and friends spill out of the thrown-open double doors and fill the window openings, just as dusk settles on the hall. Having the wedding and reception at Fischer Hall was an easy choice: Kierstan's husband's parents met there in 1954 and spent fifty years attending dances and bowling at the nine-pin alley next door. Built in 1895 by the Fischer Agricultural Society, the hall is a favorite for couples beginning their lives together.



Wedding reception at Fischer Hall (photo courtesy of Kierstan Schwab)

*"The nicest people on earth are at dance halls."*

If you search online for "texas dance hall weddings," you'll find dozens of beautiful pictures, capturing the magic moments as couple after couple stand on the stage or dance floor or in the grass next to the hall, and commit to a life together. What is it that draws us to wed in a dance hall? Tradition, maybe. Heritage. Perhaps it's the knowledge that your people have been marrying in that same hall for a long time, and you want to honor that. Maybe you hope that some of their longevity rubs off on your marriage, too.

We like to think that dance halls are "the most Texas thing there is." And it's safe to say that dance hall weddings are pretty darn gorgeous, whether they're rustic, with all that weathered wood and no glass in the windows, or all fixed up fancy and air-conditioned. No matter what you've envisioned for your big day, there's probably a dance hall that fits the bill.

[Photographer Diane Mueller, whose photo of Schneider Hall is featured on this issue's cover](#), explains: "I just love photographing weddings in an old dance hall like Schneider Hall because I'm kind of a romantic and all the charm of the hall really adds to the romanticism of the wedding day."



Benna and Bob got married during the 2018 Texas Dance Hall Tour (photo courtesy of Deb Fleming)

Dance halls also make great destination weddings ... even when you decide to elope, like Benna and Bob Hughes did. Benna says, "My husband and I had tickets last year to the Texas Dance Hall Tour, and before we went, we decided to elope while we were there. We just wanted a small, quiet service, and coming from Tennessee to go to Texas dance halls is our favorite thing to do. Asleep at the Wheel is one of our favorite bands, and we've traveled to Texas just to see them at Gruene Hall. We got our marriage license in New Braunfels, because that's the county Gruene Hall is in, and then we had to wait four days to get married, which landed us on the last day of the Tour, so we got married in Luckenbach after Cowboy Church, which is held in the dance hall. We went down with the preacher and some of the congregation to a big tree by the river and got married. That night was the last night of the Tour at Albert Hall, and we spent time with our new Tour friends dancing the night away. While it wasn't a reception, everyone made us feel so special. The kind people there asked Asleep at the Wheel to sing us a wedding song for a dance, and they sang us 'Texas Me and You' (which is our song). We still can't believe Ray Benson sang to us on our wedding night! We will never forget it. We are heading back to Gruene Hall in May for our six-month anniversary just to hear Asleep at the Wheel again. There's no nicer people on earth than those you find at the dance halls! What was designed as a quiet little secret elopement turned into something so special we could have never imagined, all because of the sweet, kind people we met at the dance halls."

# Hometown Wedding

Jennifer Wenzel shared these photos of her wedding at the Quihi Gun Club in her hometown near Hondo, Texas.



Left: The happy couple at their reception at Quihi Gun Club; above: the Wenzel wedding party (photos courtesy of Jennifer Wenzel)



Alan and Susan Fisher dance at their wedding reception at Albert Dance Hall (photo courtesy of Susan Armstrong Fisher)

## “One of Our First Dates”

Susan Armstrong Fisher and her husband Alan were married at Albert Dancehall on September 6, 2014. “The wedding was down by the creek in the field, with the reception in the dancehall. Albert Dancehall was one of our first dates — we realized early on that we both had been there before we met, and we loved its history, fun, and lesser-known status. We had toured a few places looking for our wedding venue, but not finding what we were looking for, when Alan suggested maybe we should get married at Albert Dancehall. It was an instant mutual decision. We try to visit there at least once a year, ideally around our wedding date.”

## Cherished Memories

Bobby Chitwood and his lovely wife, Sue, were married on December 3, 1994 in a meeting room at the 1911 Sons of Hermann Hall in Dallas. Bobby says, “The Hash Brown Band played at our reception, and Ray Wylie Hubbard was on the bill that night, so it was a great event for all concerned. We still go to the Sons of Hermann Hall for shows and concerts and will always cherish our memories of that evening.”



Bobby and Sue Chitwood and their families on their wedding day at the Sons of Hermann Hall in Dallas (photo courtesy of Bobby Chitwood)

# A Family Affair

Alvin Vasek Jr. and Barbara Brocker held their July 9, 1977 wedding reception at Appelt's Hill Gun Club Hall. Barbara says, "We chose the hall because we loved the location, close to where we each lived, and the price fit our budget — \$25, or \$35 if they cleaned the hall!"

Their daughter, Vanessa Vasek, and her husband Keven Smith held their reception, dinner and dance at Appelt's Hill on November 15, 2014. Vanessa says "We wanted a family environment to celebrate our special day, and we looked at many places, but nothing seemed to fit what we wanted or the theme of our wedding. Appelt's Hill had the country atmosphere that we wanted, and I wanted to re-live the special moments that my parents had there."



Alvin and Barbara Vasek on their wedding day in 1977  
(all photos courtesy of Barbara Vasek)



Vanessa Vasek Smith at Appelt's Hill in 2014



Alvin tosses the garter, 1977



Vanessa Vasek and Keven Smith returned to Appelt's Hill for their wedding in 2014.



Vanessa tosses her bouquet, 2014



# Planning the Ultimate Dance Hall Wedding

BY STEPH MCDOUGAL

So ... you've decided to include a dance hall in your wedding plans! Here are some quick tips to help you plan a fabulous event that your guests will be talking about for years to come.

## ★ *Find a hall that matches your style*

Is your dream wedding large or small? Rustic or fancy? Open-air or air-conditioned? Do you want someone to take care of all the details, or are you more of a do-it-yourself couple? No matter what you have in mind, there's almost surely a historic dance hall that will meet your needs. Taking some time to figure out what you want for your big day will help you quickly narrow the list of dance halls to just those that fit the bill. Visiting prospective halls is a good idea, too.

## ★ *Choose a dance-friendly band or DJ*

You can't have a dance hall wedding without dancing, and we hope you'll take advantage of all the great live music available here in Texas when you plan your wedding! Be sure to check out the size of the hall's stage to make sure that your preferred band will fit. Some smaller halls are a better fit for a trio or combo, rather than a large band. Ask lots of questions: Can they take special requests? Can you see their current song list? Can you see them playing live somewhere before you hire them? Can they keep your guests dancing?



Photo courtesy of Sisterdale Dance Hall

## ★ *Make the most of the hall as a backdrop*

Look at a variety of halls' websites to get a sense of how other people have decorated. You'll find many creative ideas online, both in dance halls' photo galleries and on the websites of Texas photographers, florists, and other vendors who include a series of photos from each wedding to showcase their work. Light colors stand out against bare wood, and tall exposed ceilings can be dressed up with lights, fabric, paper lanterns, and other decorations. Some halls keep lights up all year 'round. Check with your hall to find out what you are and aren't allowed to do, though. And please, don't use items in the hall in ways that aren't authorized in advance, and don't drag things across the dance floor, which can damage the wood.

*(continued, next page)*



Photo courtesy of Diane Mueller Photography

★ **Teach and encourage your guests to dance**

If everybody who's coming to your wedding already knows how to dance, terrific! If not, consider inviting them to a pre-wedding dance class where they can learn to two-step, waltz, salsa, cumbia, polka, jitterbug, line dance, or whatever type of dancing is likely to happen at your event. After your first dance as a couple, and dances with parents, it's fun to have a "snowball" dance, starting with your wedding party — who dance with their original partner for a little while and then bring new partners onto the dance floor.



Photo courtesy of Diane Mueller Photography



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Wenzel



Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

★ **Patronize local businesses near the hall**

TDHP encourages our friends to "shop local" whenever possible. Use a local baker and caterer. Consider renting bed-and-breakfast accommodations for some of your guests, instead of a chain hotel. Have wedding-party get-togethers at locally owned restaurants and drinking establishments. Source flowers and other decorations from independent business owners. Every little bit helps our local Texas communities.

*Thank you for having a Texas dance hall wedding!*

Many Texas dance halls make the majority of their income from event rentals. Your business can help dance halls make important repairs and improvements, keep up with regular maintenance, and create jobs in rural communities. And when you bring your friends and family to a dance hall for the first time, you share the magic and help them see why these historic places are so special and deserving of our stewardship and care.

# IN MEMORIAM: GEORGE VOGEL (1925-2019)

*By Deb Fleming, Executive Director (past Board President)*

George Armandus Wilhelm Vogel (1928–2019), the son of Armand and Josephine Klier Vogel of Stonewall, Texas was the quintessential German Texas gentleman. Those who knew George knew that he loved God; Nelda from the Twin Sisters community, his wife of 67 years; his large family, which includes Carolyn Vogel, a TDHP Advisory board member and past president of Twin Sisters Dance Hall board; the Catholic Church; many close friends; dancing, 42, pinochle, farming, everything about tractors, hunting, traveling to visit family and friends, and his German heritage, including speaking the language.

George was a willing and gracious contributor to oral histories collected about the German immigrants who settled in Texas, including his own family; about Twin Sisters Dance Hall and its surrounding community; and the Stonewall/Luckenbach area where he was raised and lived all of his long and rich life. As an avid music lover and dancer with his wife, George and Nelda were frequently seen at many of the Hill Country dance halls either making their way around the big dance floor or sitting at one of the long tables or benches visiting with friends, family, and newcomers alike.

George had a gentle welcoming way about him and was always ready to share a memory, a good long story, or a dance. Many, including this writer, will miss him — but he will be missed especially by his large and loving family that includes Nelda, five children and their spouses, 11 grandchildren and their spouses, and five great-grandchildren, along with many nieces and nephews.

Rest In peace, George. We can bet you are saving a dance for sweet Nelda on the big dance floor up above!



