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*Photograph by
Wendy Schutt*

Our Membership is Growing—and so are our Perks!



Deb Fleming
TDHP Executive Director

Happy Summer, Dance Hall Lovers! I hope everyone is staying cool and enjoying the carefree days spent with family and friends, gathering for BBQs and pool parties, vacations with the kids, or just chilling in the back yard with a cold one.

I love a good Texas road trip — especially one that involves visiting dance halls and meeting their owners and staff, community historians, and passionate dance hall lovers. In recent months I have enjoyed learning about some new halls such as Boerne Shooting Club Hall and Hye Hall. I was also able to meet some hall owners in person that I have only spoken with by phone previously (Cherry Spring Dance Hall, Gillespie County).

These encounters are always rich exchanges of information, stories and history; as well as discussions about their challenges and hopes for the future. I carry these encounters with me as the sustenance for the work we strive to do at TDHP. These road trips to visit halls are like mini-vacations — they always re-energize me!

TDHP membership renewals have been a key effort over the past few months, and are now much easier to manage with our new online donor management system, allowing us to reach out in a more efficient way than ever before. If you received a renewal notice, we encourage you to take action to stay or become current. Our two annual member levels are \$25 individual and \$100 business, organization, hall or band — it's also quick and easy to [set your renewal up](#) so it automatically renews for you. And all members get one of our new, cool bumper stickers (check them out in this newsletter!)

All TDHP members are important to us, supporting our efforts throughout the year with their membership. TDHP Lifetime Members are extra special, forming an elite group of passionate and enthusiastic supporters of historic Texas dance halls. We are thrilled to see the Lifetime Member club growth, with numbers increasing from new TDHP contacts and from the Texas Dance Hall Tour attendees.

In our May newsletter we shared a film project, *The Dancehall Tapes, A Texas Music Preservation Project*, showcasing iconic Texas artists and historic dance halls, sharing their stories and their songs. Several short teasers have recently been shared with us, making us anxious to see and hear more as these film segments are completed over the next few months. This project and the public service announcements created and contributed to TDHP by Pilot Moon Films will be a great way to continue to spread the word about Texas Dance Hall Preservation, our mission and the importance of saving our historic halls, One Two-Step at a Time!

TDHP NEWS & HAPPENINGS

PRESERVATION GRANTS NOW AVAILABLE

Texas Dance Hall Preservation is pleased to announce that we are now accepting applications for our new Preservation Fund matching grant program. The application deadline is September 15, 2018. We have \$12,000 to give away this fall. Grant recipients will be selected in late October and notified in early November.

Grants are available for repairs or building condition assessments and require a \$1-to-\$1 match. IRS rules require that halls must have current **tax-exempt (501c) status** in order to receive a grant. For more details about eligibility and how to apply, you can [download the application packet](#) at our website. You may also contact Deb Fleming at admin@texasdancehall.org or 512-921-1250 if you have questions.

NEW LIFETIME MEMBER BENEFITS

TDHP has exciting news for current and new Lifetime Members who [sign up](#) over the next three months! We just kicked off a very special member campaign, offering Lifetime Members two great offers for the Texas Dance Hall Tour in November:

1. Special discounts on all Tour Packages; or
2. Special reduced rate for individual tickets to the Tour's four nightly dances at four different dance halls. These individual tickets are not available to the general public, and only a very few full-price individual tickets will be open to the public for purchase for Friday and Saturday nights only.

These perks are available to current Lifetime Members, as well as newly enrolled Lifetime Members. Once you join, we will connect you to the special offers. If you are already a Lifetime Member, email admin@texasdancehall.org and we will connect you to these special offers just for our special group of members. The Lifetime Membership is totally tax deductible, too. [Join today at our website!](#)

GET YOUR TEXAS DANCE HALL PRESERVATION STICKERS

Join Texas Dance Hall Preservation as a new member, and get one of our awesome bumper stickers. You can proudly let everyone know that "I Brake for Dance Halls" when you [become a TDHP member today!](#)



“Two-Step Your Way Through Time” Photography Exhibit of Historic Texas Dance Halls

The Texas Dance Hall Preservation exhibit of dance hall photography at the Patrick Heath Library Gallery in Boerne was featured as part of the Boerne Library system’s music-themed Summer Reading Program.

Taking visitors on a “visual tour” of historic halls, TDHP executive director Deb Fleming closed the Boerne exhibit on July 18 with a presentation on historic dance halls and their importance to the communities in which they are located, as well as TDHP’s current and ongoing programs that strive to preserve these halls for generations to come. Library staff remarked that the dance hall program was one of the most well-attended exhibits and lectures held at the library. A steady stream of guests visited the gallery over the six weeks that the exhibit was on display.

The exhibit will travel to additional destinations in the coming months, including Coupland Dance Hall (Coupland, Texas) from August 10 through September 30; German Texans Heritage Society in downtown Austin, Texas, during the month of October for Oktoberfest and the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center (LaGrange, Texas) from November 12 through the end of January. Programs associated with each exhibit will be announced on our website and Facebook page, as well as future destinations for the exhibit.



Photography: Background, Wendy Schutt; above, Dave Norris
Photography; top and bottom right, Deb Fleming.



President Lyndon B. Johnson in Hye, Texas in 1965.

Historic Hye, Texas, and the Deike Family Dance Hall

BY SHELLEY SEALE

Hye, Texas, may be a small town, but it has a rich history. Lyndon B. Johnson, at the age of four, mailed his first letter from the Hye General Store and Post Office, located near his childhood home at what is now the LBJ Ranch. The store and post office, which is still in use today, opened in 1886 and has been owned by the Deike family since 1923. The post office, and town of Hye, gained national attention in 1965, when President Johnson announced the appointment of Lawrence F. O'Brien as U.S. Postmaster General from its front porch.

Hye is also home to the first legal bourbon distillery in Texas, Garrison Brothers Distillery, which opened in 2008. The distillery, along with William Chris Vineyards that opened two years later and the Hye Market Restaurant and Tasting Room that opened inside the General Store and Post Office in 2012, has ushered in a renaissance of sorts for the humble town of Hye.

The town was first settled in 1860, when farming and ranching families began moving into the area. In 1880, a settler named Hiram Brown built a mercantile to serve the folks who were making their homes here. The budding outpost took on Brown's nickname: Hye.

Continued on next page

Around 1906 Brown built a dance hall for the thriving town, recalls 92-year-old Hye resident Porter Watson, who is Brown's grandson and has lived in Hye all his life. Fritz Deike purchased the establishment in 1920, widening it and adding a stage, and called it Deike's Dance Hall — but everyone still said they were going to Hye's.

Fritz Deike's grandson, Oliver Deike, remembers hanging out at the dance hall as a small child.

"I remember how much fun I had at the band's intermission to run and slide on the dance floor," says Oliver Deike, 73, though he adds that he was too young to remember specific bands. But Watson and other local residents recall acts such as Pehl's Old Time Band playing the dance hall.

"The dance hall served as a community center," Deike says. "Families brought quilts and made pallets in the perimeter around the dance floor for small children and babies, who slept as festive events went on around them."

One of the most beloved community activities was the Deike all-brothers baseball team. Fritz and Lena Deike had 11 surviving children — nine boys and two girls. It was enough to form their own baseball team, and on weekends after their games the town would gather at the dance hall.

"It served as a place to get together after the all-brother team played baseball on Sunday afternoon," says Oliver, whose father, Levi, was the family team shortstop. "When one of the brothers could not make it back to Hye for the game, Lyndon Johnson substituted."

The Deike all-brothers baseball team were unusual enough as it was, but they gained national fame due to one legendary game played in 1935.

A traveling salesman heard about the brothers, and knew about another all-brothers baseball team in Waukeegan, Illinois — the Stanzek brothers. The salesman organized an exhibition game between the two family teams during the National Semi-Pro Baseball Tournament in Wichita, Kansas.

Unfortunately, the Deike brothers lost that game, but it didn't seem to faze them too much. They were in it for the fun, after all, and the match brought them a certain amount of fame. Two of the brothers, Victor and Marvin, even went on to play professional baseball. Their photographs still hang in the general store in Hye today.

When President Johnson visited Hye in 1965, he pointed out the Deike brothers and told stories of playing baseball with them as kids. The President of the United States said that they were the best all-brothers baseball team in the history of Texas.



The Deike family outside their home in Hye, Texas in the late 1920s. Front row from left: Ida, Emil, Lena, Fritz, Victor, Edna and Clarence. Back row from left: Edwin, Herman, Marvin, Frederick, Levi and Ernest. Photo is from a story in the West Kerr Current on February 5, 2015.



The Deike brothers baseball team after their championship game against the Stanzak brothers of Illinois in 1935. From left: Victor, Clarence, Herman, Emil, Levi, Edwin, Ernest, Frederick and Marvin. Photo is from a story in the West Kerr Current on February 5, 2015.



The stage and dance floor inside Hye Hall are being prepared for additional renovations, as shown in this recent photo from owner Oliver Deike.

The Deike siblings also helped out at the hall whenever a weekend dance or other event took place. Oliver recalls that his grandfather Fritz played numerous instruments including the fiddle, accordion, piano, guitar, and some brass.

Levi Deike became postmaster and ran the General Store and Post Office with his wife, Ruby, for 62 years — one of the longest tenures in U.S. Postal Service history.

Levi also eventually purchased the dance hall from his father Fritz, and it eventually passed on to Oliver. Although Hye Hall is no longer operational, Oliver and his wife Mary Alice still own the property. Painted advertisements are still on the front of the building, with the faint lettering barely visible: “Dance Next Saturday Night.”

Hye Hall is part of the TDHP Mothballing Toolkit project, which seeks to help dance hall owners weatherize, stabilize, and secure vacant, unused, or little-used dance halls. The Deikes’ participation with the hall has been extremely valuable in getting the Mothball program running. It is our hope, and that of the Deikes and other citizens of Hye, that this will bring another facet of living history into the town that’s enjoying a revival. See page 14 of this newsletter for more information about our exciting new Mothball Toolkit project.

You can also visit Hye on our Fall Dance Hall Tour — check it out on page 10!



Oliver and Levi Deike, Jr. stand in front of the Hye General Store and Post Office, where their father served as postmaster for 62 years. The brothers still live in Hye. Photo is from a story in the West Kerr Current on February 5, 2015.



Hye resident Porter Watson at the town post office and general store, which has been in business since 1886. Some of the post office boxes here have been in the same family for more than a century. Photo by Destry James for Texas Co-op Power.

FEATURED

AN INTERVIEW WITH FREDDIE MARTINEZ, SR.

BY SHELLEY SEALE



Freddie Martinez, Sr.
Photo courtesy of Freddie Records

Freddie Martinez, Sr. has been in the music business his entire life, hailing from a family with a long history and tradition of music. He is a Tejano music legend, with six Latin Grammy Awards and two Grammy Awards under his belt. In addition to being a singer and songwriter, Martinez also has owned the recording studio Freddie Records for five decades, helping launch the careers of many major musicians. Martinez shared some of his fondest memories with TDHP.

How has your family impacted your life and music?

I was born into a family that was all music. On my mother's side, she and all my uncles and aunts were into music. My older brother Lee played the trumpet, so I would try to learn to play the trumpet even before I started taking music lessons. At the age of nine, I started my music training with the same professor that had taught my uncles years before. I was in band during junior high and high school.

How and when did you launch your musical career?

At the age of 15, I started my own band. It was a little difficult at first. My grandfather, Rafael Galvan, owned the Galvan Ballroom so he made things a little easy for me. He used to rent the ballroom for different events as a package deal — the hall and the band — and I was the band. I was *blessed* with my grandfather. I recorded with several recording companies, with nothing happening. After I married my wife JoAnn, we saved up \$400 and started Freddie Records in 1969. I needed to promote my band, and recording was the only way. Within six months, the phone would not stop ringing. My first record was a big hit, and then the next. It just continued, one hit after another. Everybody wanted to book me and my band.

You're from Corpus Christi; what does that city and area mean to you?

I love Corpus Christi, so I wanted to keep my record company here. My community has supported me very much. I have gotten many awards given by different organizations and civic leaders in the area.



"The Galvan Ballroom was unique because it was owned and operated by Mexican Americans, yet show-cased African American musicians and music to mixed Anglo and Mexican American audiences." ~ Galvan Ballroom historian David Louzon.

Along with Freddie Martinez, Sr., musicians who have played the Galvan include Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington and Count Basie.

Photo courtesy of Galvan Ballroom.



Freddie Martinez, Sr. performing on stage at Madison Square Garden, circa 1974.



On May 2, 2018, Martinez was the honoree at the 2nd Annual Legends of the Tejano Community Awards at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Photo courtesy of Texas A&M University.

What were some of the fun highlights from your long career?

I have performed in all of the big cities: all over Texas, New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, most of the United States and Mexico. Besides the Galvan Ballroom, I played the Pan-America Ballroom in Houston, Madison Square Garden, The Hollywood Palladium, Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles and the Blanquita Theater in Mexico City. I also was invited to take a part in a Mexican movie, *La Muerte de Pancho Villa* (1974). That was exciting!

Has Freddie Records continued to be a family business?

Yes; our three sons Freddie Junior, John and Marc are now running the company. Most of the top groups in the business have recorded with us (six-time Grammy winners Jimmy Gonzalez Y Grupo Mazz , The Legends, Solido, Elida Reyna Y Avante and more). Next year Freddie Records will have been in business for 50 years — I don't know of any other independent company that has done that. I've been at it a long time, and I still perform once in a while.

Check out Freddie Records at its website, freddiestore.com, where you can purchase music from Freddie Martinez, Sr. and other Freddie Records artists.



TEXAS DANCE HALL TOUR

Join the fun on the next TEXAS DANCE HALL TOUR!

Ray Benson and Asleep at the Wheel are excited to host the third [Texas Dance Hall Tour](#), November 1–4, 2018. Filled with history, romance and a way of life, these halls have been the breeding grounds of Texas music for over a century — and now you have a chance to be a part of that. Everyone had so much fun the last two times we did this, we had to plan another so we could see all our tour friends return from near and far!

Think of the tour as a “land cruise” with our port-of-calls being several of the state’s historical dance halls, featuring a range of notable Western Swing, Ameripolitan and Texas artists. Performers will include Dale Watson, Asleep At The Wheel, Johnny Bush, Brennen Leigh, Sophia Johnson, and Heybale. This will be another four-day tour, making it easy for everyone to join us for a great long weekend on the back roads of Texas, experiencing Lone Star culture, history, food, and music at its finest. Each night, we will visit a different hall in the Texas Hill Country and west of San Antonio: Gruene Hall, Quihi Schuetzen Verein, Twin Sisters Dance Hall, and Albert Hall & Ice House. Our lodging base will be in San Antonio, which is celebrating its 300th anniversary and the 50th anniversary of Hemisfair.

We always plan some interesting daytime activities and this tour is no different. Several different tour packages are offered to meet singles’ or couples’ needs, with options for lodging, shuttle rides, VIP seating at the dances, and much more. Everyone will have the option to join in on the dance lessons planned and a day of fun in Fredericksburg and Luckenbach (non-VIP guests must pay extra). We have some extra-special things planned for our VIP package buyers. A ‘Day in Hye’ will show off this new thriving destination spot in the Hill Country, with more to see than you can imagine for population of only 16 citizens! See page 5 of this newsletter for more about Hye.



“There wouldn’t be Texas music without our Texas dance halls...They’re like the Carnegie Hall of Western Swing and Texas Music!”
– Ray Benson



This page, from top to bottom: Gruene Hall in New Braunfels; Quihi Schuetzen Verein in Hondo; Twin Sisters Dance Hall in Blanco; and Albert Ice House in Stonewall.

VIPs also will get to experience a special tour of San Antonio, exploring a wide range of things all day long! Check out the [Texas Dance Hall Tour packages](#): VIP Packages for couples and singles include accommodations, transportation to concerts, reserved VIP seating and daytime activities such as a meet-and-greet with Ray Benson. Standard and Independent Traveller packages include admission to all nighttime dances, perks such as transportation to concerts, VIP seating or hotel accommodations, and the option to purchase admission to two of the daytime activities.

We encourage you to check out the packages that are on sale and [make your reservations](#) as soon as possible. Capacity is limited so don't delay! Texas Dance Hall Preservation is adding a few perks to sweeten things up if you are on the fence still. Become a [Lifetime Member](#) of TDHP, and you'll receive discounted package rates and the first chance to purchase individual dance tickets.

We hope that you will join us for this magical Texas experience!

LIFETIME MEMBER PROFILE:

Jay & Connie Jennings



Jay and Connie Jennings at LaGrange Pavilion. (photo courtesy of Jay & Connie Jennings)



The Jennings with the band at Garfield Hall. (photo courtesy of Jay & Connie Jennings)

Austin residents Jay and Connie Jennings started two-stepping in 2005, and haven't stopped since. Since becoming TDHP members in 2016, and Lifetime Members this year, the Jennings have found the organization to be a great way to check more dance halls off their "must-visit" list.

Jay and Connie Jennings began dancing on a regular basis mainly at Dallas Night Club in Austin, and honed their skills with lessons at various venues around the capital city.

"As our love of two-stepping increased and we became empty-nesters, someone suggested that we visit an old dance hall called Kendalia in 2014," Jay says, referring to Kendalia Halle in Kendalia, Texas, about 20 miles due north of San Antonio. "As the band played good old Texas Swing, we fell in love with the entire historic atmosphere and we were hooked. Since then we have embarked on a journey to DANCE ACROSS TEXAS at as many historic Texas dance halls as we can!"

For Jay and Connie, a visit doesn't count unless they actually dance. They have now danced in 36 historic halls, and plan to add many more in the years to come — largely looking to TDHP and our Texas Dance Hall Tour, with its third annual tour this fall.

"It's always exciting to learn about another historic hall and add it to our travel list. We also have a dream to create a documentary of our journey that includes photos of us at each venue, along with brief histories of the dance halls. We are grateful to be able to support the preservation of these incredible halls that are filled with memories and allow us to 'two-step back in time' all across our great state of Texas!"

Calling All TDHP Members!

Would you like to be featured in a future TDHP newsletter? We'd love to hear from you and find out why you love Texas dance halls. Tell us about your favorite hall or musician, share a memory, and don't forget to include a photo.

Send your email to deb@texasdancehall.org

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

Debbie Erwin

Debbie Erwin has been a TDHP volunteer since 2015, working at events such as the 2015 Fiddle Festival and the 2016 Pavilion Hall dance with Asleep at the Wheel. She has helped with set up and break down at these events, as well as staffing the door and collecting money and tickets. “She has been an all around help with whatever was needed when she volunteered for TDHP,” says Deb Fleming.

In her 30-plus years in the Austin area, Debbie considers herself lucky to have many friends involved in the music scene, crossing all genres of music. “Most of them played in legendary places like Split Rail, Armadillo Headquarters and, of course, the Broken Spoke,” Debbie says. In fact, she worked at Broken Spoke for years —an experience that she calls “epic.”

“I met some of the greatest performers of all time. At the Spoke we hosted many special events including a Nashville cable show taping of Willie Nelson, the annual Asleep at the Wheel and Jerry Jeff Walker parties, and the wrap party for the film *Secondhand Lions*.” She was even invited to the movie’s after-party with Robert Duvall and Michael Caine.

Debbie’s interest in such legendary Texas dance halls came about with the gentrification of Austin and the surrounding areas. In her job as a property tax researcher, she sees the land surrounding Austin being developed at a rapid rate.

“The development of the rural areas will eventually put dance halls in jeopardy,” she says. “The demise of historical places really saddens me. So spreading the history of these places will only help, and hopefully they will be embraced and not destroyed.”



Debbie Erwin and James White
at The Broken Spoke.
Photo courtesy of Debbie Erwin

“The preservation of Texas dance halls is absolutely necessary to maintain the history and the heritage of the communities and the state.” Debbie Erwin

TEXAS DANCE HALLS NEED YOU!

Want to learn more about TDHP and have a positive impact on dance halls? Visit texasdancehall.org to get the latest news and info. We hope you’ll consider becoming a member of Texas Dance Hall Preservation and, remember, a \$25 individual membership makes a great gift! Your membership helps us provide assistance directly to dance hall owners and their communities. Thank you for reading and sharing this newsletter with friends!

HELP FOR VACANT DANCE HALLS

From the estimated 1,000-plus dance halls that have stood in the Lone Star State over the past 150 years, it's estimated **fewer than 400 remain today** — and they continue to be lost. Sometimes that loss is due to a disaster such as fire or flooding, while other halls sit empty and vacant, with rain coming in through holes in the roof, decaying gradually until they fall down altogether.

It's not just weather or decay that ruins these pieces of history. Many dance hall owners have had to limit or close their operation due to age or health issues; others purchased or inherited property that contains a dance hall which has been vacant for some time. These are difficult and expensive to bring back to productive use. Although we do not yet have exact numbers, at TDHP we estimate that as many as 100 dance halls across the state — 20–25% of all remaining dance halls — may be in this situation.

What can we do about this? Well, if you're of a certain age, you might remember that mothballs were often placed in closets with wool sweaters, to keep moths from eating the wool during the hot summer months until the weather cooled down and the sweaters were needed again. The word "mothballing" has been used in historic preservation to mean making a building secure, stable, and weathertight so that no additional damage is done while it's waiting to be used again. Properly mothballing vacant historic buildings has been proven to protect them until funding, new uses, or new owners/operators can be found.

TDHP hired a team, led by historic preservation architect Ann Benson McGlone, to study unused and low-use dance halls, creating a reference manual to help building owners address potential damage and issues. Using this and other resources from places such as the National Park Service, TDHP developed a detailed, dance hall-specific "**Mothballing Toolkit**" that will be published soon. The volunteer-tested manual will include text and images to illustrate conditions and solution strategies, with easy-to-understand checklists and technical information.

A group of nine representative dance halls participated in a pilot project to test the condition assessments, receiving a small stipend from TDHP to be used for making repairs. From our work with those halls, we have learned a lot about the challenges that hall owners face when they need to make repairs. We will use those lessons to create additional Toolkit materials to supplement the reference manual.



Volunteers testing the Mothballing Toolkit at Freyburg Hall: Valerie Kanak, Paige Schendler, Nancy Richards, Becky Hoffman, Susan Peterson.



A wedding at Schneider Hall. Photograph by Brittany Cossey. TDHP NEWS

We know that dance halls can be brought back into productive use, providing a positive economic impact for rural communities.

An example of the potential for revitalizing a vacant dance hall is [Schneider Hall](#) (Colorado County), a former cotton shed that was converted into a dance hall in 1931 and closed in 1942, at the start of World War II. Used as a hay barn for more than 60 years, it has re-opened as a venue for weddings and events, and is now the basis of a successful business. The hall continues to be stewarded with care by descendants of the family that built it.

Dance halls are a vital part of the social fabric and economy of the small rural communities where they are most likely to be found. By stabilizing vacant dance halls and preventing further deterioration or loss, we hope to buy the time needed to develop additional resources for people who want to buy, restore or rehabilitate, and re-open dance halls. We are in the process of creating free resources to help people learn about music promotion, booking bands, managing a venue, etc.

In the meantime, TDHP will make the manual and other Toolkit materials [available on its website](#) at no charge as soon as it is complete.

Funding for this project came from the Texas Historical Commission (Texas Preservation Trust Fund), The Summerlee Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Fondren Fund), the Texas Historical Foundation, TDHP board member Steph McDougal, donations from members, and the Lone Star Beer 2018 “Tabs and Caps for Texas” campaign. TDHP is grateful for this support and thanks the pilot program halls for their assistance, too.



A TOOLKIT TO MOTHBALL VACANT DANCE HALLS:
Keeping a dance hall in good condition when it is rarely used



May 01, 2018

