



Issue No. 5:

NOVEMBER 2018

Honoring the Legacy of the Vrazels' Polka Band
The Rebirth of Coupland Dance Hall
A Conversation about Bellville's "Remember When" Dances
... and much more!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

TDHP is rolling out new programs and resources!



Steph McDougal
TDHP Board President, 2017–2018

As Texas Dance Hall Preservation closes out our 11th year, we're looking forward to 2019. As you know, Deb Fleming became our first part-time Executive Director just over a year ago, and this spring we added a part-time administrative assistant to our staff. Having office help has allowed Deb to spend more time working directly with dance halls. Our board of directors and advisory board also have been busy working on an ambitious slate of new programs and resources. Some of this year's activities included:

- Technical assistance to dance halls that need to make repairs
- A new logo, fun stickers, and bumper stickers for TDHP members
- Making "Preservation Fund" grants – now twice a year!
- Publishing the Mothballing Toolkit for Vacant Dance Halls and paying toward repairs at halls that helped us develop that reference manual
- The Texas dance hall photo exhibit (touring Texas now)
- Fundraising and grantwriting advice for hall owners, as well as help navigating the Texas State Historic Tax Credit Program
- Working with SPJST to start documenting their community halls for the National Register of Historic Places
- Assisting dance hall owners with historical/archival research

We've also developed exciting new programs that will roll out in 2019, and we'll have more information about those in our February newsletter.

Of course, this work is made possible by financial support from members and donors. If you haven't already become a member of TDHP, please consider joining — and setting up a recurring monthly donation. Even \$10 a month can help TDHP serve dance hall owners, enthusiasts, and the communities where they're located.

We especially want to welcome all of the folks who joined us on the Texas Dance Hall Tour this month to the Texas Dance Hall Preservation family, and we send out our gratitude and special appreciation to all of our Lifetime Members.

My term as Board president is coming to an end, and Kelley Russell will take over on January 1. I'll continue to work closely with Kelley and Deb as TDHP adds more programs and support for Texas dance halls. It's been a privilege to serve! THANK YOU for your support.

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On the cover: Lifetime members John and Mary Lynn Faulk at the first Texas Dance Hall Tour, Twin Sisters Dance Hall, March 2017 (photo courtesy of Deb Fleming)

Steph McDougal

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TDHP NEWS & HAPPENINGS

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

November 27, 2018

Texas dance halls — built of wood, often located in rural areas — are at risk from fires and floods. Club 21 in Umland, Turner Hall in Fredericksburg, and Gruenau Hall in Yorktown all burned down within the last 10 years. Insurance for both Gruenau Hall and Turner Hall covered less than 50% of the cost to rebuild; Club 21 had no insurance. Mixville Sunrise Hall (near Sealy) and the La Grange KC Hall were flooded during Hurricane Harvey.

Because dance halls are a unique type of building, insurance agents often have trouble figuring out how to establish an accurate property value or adequate replacement costs. As a result, halls may be underinsured or have trouble getting property insurance at all.



Photos of Club 21, before and after the 2010 fire that destroyed the 117-year-old hall

To address this problem, TDHP will bring in [Historic Appraisals LLC](#), which appraises historic buildings for the National Trust Insurance Services, to visit between 4–10 typical halls and provide this critical information. All funds raised during Giving Tuesday 2018 will go toward Historic Appraisals' \$5,500 fee, which includes travel.

Please [donate today](#) to help make sure Texas dance halls have sound information for decision-making and can obtain sufficient insurance.

TDHP Preservation Fund Grants Awarded to Four Historic Halls

TDHP has now formalized its Preservation Fund grant program with a twice-a-year schedule to review applications and award grants. Funding for these grants in 2019–2020 is provided in part by Lone Star Beer’s annual “Tabs and Caps for Texas” campaign, as well as by contributions by TDHP’s board of directors and the general public.

In August/September 2018, TDHP issued grant application packages to qualifying tax-exempt halls, and in October, we selected four halls to receive Preservation Fund grants. All TDHP grants will be matched on a \$1-to-\$1 basis by the halls.

Anhalt Hall, Spring Branch

Anhalt was built between 1875 and 1908. It was recently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The \$2,500 TDHP grant will help this hall repair and repaint deteriorated doors, windows, and trim.

Bellville Turnverein Pavilion, Bellville

The Bellville Turnverein Pavilion was built in 1897 and was the first “round” hall designed and constructed by Joachim Hintz, Austin County’s master builder. It was recognized as a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark in 1996. The \$2,500 TDHP grant will be used toward an upgraded electrical system for the hall, part of an upcoming major restoration effort.

Twin Sisters Dance Hall, Blanco

Twin Sisters has held a public dance once a month since 1879. Recently, Twin Sisters’ historic stage curtain was inspected by the Vermont-based nonprofit organization Curtains Without Borders, which is training Texas volunteers to repair and conserve these historic curtains. The \$2,500 TDHP grant will help pay for the conservation of Twin Sisters’ stage curtain as a pilot project for this larger effort.

Sons of Hermann Lodge No. 301, Deansville

This eight-sided hall was built in 1931, and the lodge has been renovating it for the past few years. This TDHP grant will help them complete repairs to the dance floor, which was damaged as a result of earlier roof leaks (which have since been repaired).

Preservation Fund grant applications may be submitted at any time. In 2019, applications submitted by March 1 will be reviewed in April; those submitted by September 1 will be reviewed in October. More information and application materials can be found on the [TDHP website](#) and can be also be requested by calling 512-921-1250 or send an email to admin@texasdancehall.org.



Photos top to bottom: Anhalt Hall, Bellville Turnverein Pavilion, and Twin Sisters Dance Hall (photos by Deb Fleming); Sons of Hermann Lodge No. 301 (photo by Steph McDougal)

TDHP Holds its First Oral History Workshop

TDHP's first oral history workshop, held on September 29, was a great success! Oral histories are a great way to start gathering information or enrich your research into a dance hall's history.

This workshop was part of TDHP's new initiative to help dance halls become eligible for the [State of Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit](#) program, which can reimburse up to 25% of renovation costs to halls that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

For this workshop, TDHP partnered with the SPJST Home Office to host 11 members from four different lodges (Lodge 20, Granger; Lodge 88, Houston; Lodge 24, Cyclone; and Lodge 15, Buckholts). [SPJST](#) is the largest fraternal organization in Texas.

Workshop presenter Dan Utley (pictured right and below, standing) has collected more than 4,000 oral histories over the past 40 years. Utley led the group through the basics of how to conduct oral history interviews, and participants had the opportunity to practice their newfound skills and knowledge with each other.

Everyone in attendance reported that they would recommend the workshop to others, and said that Utley's stories and examples made the topic interesting and easy to understand.

TDHP tentatively plans to repeat the event four times in 2019, in different locations across the state. For more information or to learn about the 2019 workshop schedule once it's finalized, please contact Steph McDougal at 281-755-2144 or steph.mcdougal@mcdoux.com.



Oral historian Dan Utley



Dan Utley leads an exercise during the SPJST oral history workshop (photo by Steph McDougal).

Our Photography Exhibit is on the Move!



The photography exhibit as it was displayed at Coupland Dance Hall (photo by Deb Fleming)

The “Two-Step Your Way Through Time” photography exhibit is making its way across Texas! The 36 striking images continue to be exhibited in cultural centers, art spaces, and dance halls around the state.

During the month of October, the exhibit was hosted at its third location, the German Texan Heritage Society in downtown Austin, as a feature of the center’s Oktoberfest activities. TDHP executive director Deb Fleming gave a lecture to a diverse audience as part of the Society’s Speakers Series on Sunday, October 7. TDHP estimates that Germans built nearly half of all the historic halls in Texas, many of which are still active and vibrant community centers.

The exhibit’s next stop will be at the Texas Czech Heritage and Cultural Center in La Grange, from November 12, 2018, through February 9, 2019. A reception and lecture may be added to the

Center’s January 2019 schedule — stay tuned on [our website](#) for further details.

The City of Irving and the Irving Arts Center will host the exhibit during that city’s Lone Star Christmas event, coming up from December 1, 2018, through January 6, 2019. Deb Fleming will appear at a special Holiday Open House on December 7, starting at 5:30 p.m., to answer questions and discuss the halls with interested attendees. This event will be held at the Focus Gallery at the Irving Arts Center, 3333 N. MacArthur Boulevard in Irving, Texas.

Other 2019 exhibit locations will be announced as soon as they are confirmed, on the [TDHP website](#) and our [Facebook page](#), and in future newsletters. If you know of a location that might like to host the exhibit, let us know! Please contact us at admin@texasdancehall.org.

Coupland Dance Hall



BY SHELLEY SEALE

In 1904, a building went up in the town of Coupland, Texas, which had been founded 17 years before by the Civil War veteran and former Travis County sheriff Theodore Van Buren Coupland. One of the building's first occupants was the Coupland Tavern, established in 1910. Various pharmacies, doctors' offices, stores, and even a newspaper were housed there through the years. In 1989, the Tavern refashioned itself as Coupland Hall, converting 7,000 square feet of the former Speckles Grocery into a Texas-sized dance hall.

"It has been everything imaginable," says current owner Abbey Road, who bought the place in June 2017. At that time, she was the talent and marketing manager for Threadgills, and she knew that business would soon be closing: "I had been trying to figure out my next move." Inspiration struck during a call with TDHP executive director Deb Fleming in early 2017.

"She had heard that Coupland Hall was for sale," Abbey recalls of their conversation. "When we hung up, for some reason or another, something driving me said, 'you need to call these people.' I had never even been to Coupland before."

Abbey listened to her instincts and gave the owners a call. They made a deal on the spot, and by the next day, the hall was under contract for sale.

"Suddenly, I had a dance hall, and a very large 200-seat restaurant," Abbey remembers. Fortunately, she had plenty of experience as the talent buyer and event manager at Luckenbach for nearly 10 years. The restaurant side, however, proved far more challenging.

"I had worked in restaurants before, but I had never run one. I had to learn how to cook barbecue, smoke meat, and be a grillmaster. I ended up loving those things so much that I still do them today and probably always will."

Of course, with such a large business, she couldn't do everything herself, and delegating responsibility was something else Abbey had to learn. "I've never really had to depend on other people for my success in the past. Here, I have to rely on 18 other people to help me pull off this dream. It can be a very difficult thing. I'm having to learn how to manage a staff, and that's been a challenge."

At the beginning, the staff went through a lot of turnover, but slowly, Abbey began to assemble a great team. "I was told that the restaurant business was a revolving door, and that people come and go — but I knew I couldn't have that. I managed to find a handful of people who have stayed, and I have some great bartenders now. We've let each other breathe, so to speak, and are finding our way together."

Abbey has also found a new family in the customers that flock to Coupland Dance Hall, particularly the regulars. "One of my best customers, Dudley, is 95 years old. He comes in every weekend and brings his dog, and he dances with every young girl in the dance hall," she laughs. "I love this man! He's amazing and sharp as a tack, and he gets around as good as I do. We have a really big mix of people who come in here — young, old, and in the middle — and I'm really proud of that."

The musical artists that she brings in draw a large and diverse audience, many of whom stay the night or for the weekend in the seven-room bed-and-breakfast on the second floor, above the dance hall.

"It's a beautiful space and I really love it," Abbey says of the inn. "It's fun to share it with people because they don't expect it."

When asked about the most rewarding aspect of owning and running Coupland Dance Hall, Abbey says that she honestly hasn't even had time to consider that question. "It's been such a whirlwind year and a half, I haven't had a chance for that yet. Everything that can have gone wrong with the building has gone wrong. I knew the building would have some issues, but I didn't anticipate the scope of it; I didn't anticipate the dance floor falling in or the flooding. I didn't anticipate all of the minutiae: for example, there are over 500 light bulbs and they're always going out. That's not a glamorous thing, but it's a reality."

Abbey also didn't quite expect the amount of work it would take to run a business that's only open for 12 hours a week, on Friday and Saturday nights. "The amount of business that we have to do in those two days is quite large, because it's very expensive to run this dance hall. I didn't think I realized it would require 24/7 work to be open 12 hours a week."

(continued on page 8)



*Regular patron Dudley dancing with his sister
(all photographs courtesy of Coupland Dance Hall)*

Even with all the issues, long hours, and the grind of building maintenance, Abbey clearly finds the magic in running Coupland Dance Hall every day. “I love when people come out and hear a band for the very first time, and they fall in love with the band and connect with the music,” she says. “That’s always been the driving force for me. The music is what makes it — the artists and the music are always my prize.”

She’s also proud of the building and its history. “It’s one of the most beautiful dance halls; the sound is incredible in the space. The food is also really spectacular! We worked very hard to take the food up a notch,” she says of the menu, which includes handcut steaks grilled on an open fire, barbecue, and chicken-fried steak.

She has also put her business savvy to good use, hiring a public relations professional and garnering a lot of positive press for the establishment. The shows are generally sold out, and the restaurant is also doing very well.

“It’s an evolving thing; it’s been very tumultuous, but seems to be calming down,” she says. “I have been really blessed in my life, in that whatever I’ve wanted to do, I’ve just gone out and done it. When I walk through these doors, I smile and feel really warm. I walked through the fire and I’m still standing — and that’s when you start really connecting with a place and loving it.”



Photos, top to bottom: The sign welcoming visitors to Coupland Dance Hall; the barbeque platter, one of the restaurant’s signature dishes; and a room in the inn above Coupland Dance Hall.

Schroeder Hall Celebrates One-Year Anniversary of Re-Opening



Schroeder Hall has been one of country music's favorite Texas venues for many years. Located in the Schroeder community, just west of Victoria, the original combination dance hall and general store was constructed in 1890. The current 14,000-square-foot dance hall was built in 1935 and was owned and managed by Byron and Helen Hoff for more than 50 years. After a few ownership changes in the 2000s, the hall was purchased by Linda Krause in April 2017.

Krause's winning bid on the hall, which was auctioned on eBay, was a dream come true. She and her late husband, Bill, had often talked about trying to buy Schroeder Hall if it ever came up for sale. Bill passed away in 2006, and Linda decided to purchase and renovate the hall as a tribute to him. The couple had spent many happy date nights at the hall during the 1980s and 1990s.

One of the most important changes that Krause made was to bring the building into compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Now it's accessible for everyone, with ramps to the door and restrooms that have been said to rival those at Buc-ees. New siding, a new roof, and updated air conditioning are visible outside, but all of the its authentic Texas dance hall charm is still on display once you're in the door.

On October 27, 2018, Schroeder Hall celebrated the one-year anniversary of its re-opening with a dinner and dance. During the evening, dancers young and old twirled and two-stepped to the Schroeder Dance Hall Band. Between songs, kids slid across the floor and folks bellied up to the bar. Toward the end of the evening, a cake in the shape of the hall was cut and enjoyed by everyone.

Congratulations to Linda Krause and the entire staff at Schroeder Hall!



The roadside sign (courtesy of Schroeder Hall)



The Saloon, pictured above, provides a second bar to serve the Hall's outdoor seating area and stage (photo by Steph McDougal).

Left: Dancers at Schroeder Dance Hall (photo by Danny Vivian, courtesy of Schroeder Hall)



Some of the legendary acts that have played at Schroeder Hall through the years include:

- Merle Haggard
- Willie Nelson
- Mel Tillis
- Conway Twitty
- Ray Price
- George Jones
- Tammy Wynette
- Charley Pride
- ... and many more!



BY SHELLEY SEALE

Very few musical acts can lay claim to having played together as a band for six straight decades — but the Vrazels' Polka Band of Texas is one of them. Playing Czech polka music since 1953, the family band included brothers Alfred, Anton, and Lawrence Vrazel, along with their cousins Leo, Louis, and Ladis Vrazel.

For Alfred, this musical dynasty was simply a part of his family's heritage.

"There's an old Czech saying that when you meet a Czech, he's probably a musician. It sounds a lot better in Czech, though, because it rhymes," Alfred laughs.

Alfred and his brothers grew up on a farm near Cameron, Texas, in Milam County, in the 1940s and early 1950s. On the weekends, the family usually went to a local dance, so the children were raised on polka music and dancing. "We didn't have television," Alfred recounts. "We didn't even get electricity until 1948, when I was eight years old. Dances and music were our entertainment — something the family did together."

When Alfred was 10, he was looking through a Sears Roebuck catalog and saw an ad for a Hohner accordion.

"I saw that accordion and told my daddy I'd like to have it, and he bought it for me," Alfred says. "That's the way it got started. I was self-taught, listening to polka records and teaching myself how to play it." Soon after, brother

Anton began playing the piano accordion, and Alfred also picked up the saxophone and guitar. When they were still teenagers, the two got together with their cousins Leo, Louis, and Ladis, and formed a band they called the "Vrazels' Playboys."

"A lot of the Czech polka bands were family members back then," Alfred says, adding that many family bands are still around today. "It's happy music for happy people. We just started playing together in small places and then kept playing more and more."

Soon, their third brother, Lawrence, joined the band playing drums, and they changed the band name to the "Vrazels' Polka Band." When a local radio station called KMIL began broadcasting in Cameron, in 1955, the station asked to play the Vrazels' music. The band didn't have any recorded albums, so they started playing live at the station every Sunday afternoon. Little did they know that the gig would last for 63 years.

"A lot of live music was played on the radio back then," Alfred says. "We played there every Sunday, which gave us exposure." By 1960, the Vrazels' Polka Band was recording their music, which was then played on the show on Sunday nights, with Alfred as the host — as it still is today. It's believed to be the [longest-running polka music radio show](#) with the same host in the United States.

*Above: The Vrazels' Polka Band playing at Wursthfest in 2006
(all photos courtesy of Vrazels' Polka Band)*

After 55 years, the Vrazels' Polka Band announced the band's retirement with a statement that read, in part, "Over the years, we have met many wonderful people who have touched our hearts, and we sincerely hope that in some small way we may have touched their hearts as well. You have given us wonderful memories to last a lifetime; thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

The Vrazels' Polka Band's final performance took place on Saturday, January 24, 2009, at the Mayborn Civic and Convention Center in Temple, Texas, with more than 1,500 fans in attendance. On October 20, 2018, the Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center honored the band with a special event: The Legacy of the Vrazels' Polka Band at the *Muziky, Muziky* — which was the finale to the Heritage Fest & *Muziky* ("music," in the Czech language). After the festival, TDHP talked to Alfred Vrazel about the band and its legacy.

TDHP: What was it like playing with your brothers and cousins for all those years?

Alfred Vrazel: It was always a lot of fun; all the members had the same upbringing, and we always enjoyed playing together. We clicked good together. If you don't have fun doing it, it becomes a job. It stayed fun for all those years.

TDHP: What were some of the highlights of your long career?

AV: One was in 1976, when we were invited by the Smithsonian Institute to represent Czech polka music from Texas for the U.S. Bicentennial celebration. We played in Washington, D.C., for a week. In 1991, we were invited to take part in the Texas Festival at the Kennedy Center, also in D.C. But the best thing we enjoyed was playing in the old dance halls, especially in the country. That's where we grew up, so it touched our hearts to play there. They had the best wood dance floors.

TDHP: Do you have any favorite dance halls?

AV: The SPJST Lodge No. 15 in Buckholts, Texas. My family managed it from 1957 to 1971, and we all had lots of good times there. It holds a very special place in my heart, but we enjoyed playing them all.

TDHP: How did it feel to be paid such tribute at the Texas Czech Heritage & Cultural Center Heritage Fest?

AV: It was very touching. A lot musicians we've played with before showed up, and we had a good time. My grandson, Matthew Strmiska, is a tremendous drummer, and he played in the tribute band that night. It feels very rewarding and touching to have a grandson who's musically inclined and carrying on (the tradition). I want to give credit to my family. I couldn't have done what I've done and gotten where I've gotten without the support of my wife, Bernice, and that of my family.



Vrazels' Polka Band: (left to right) Albert Heselmeyer, Anton Vrazel, Thomas Strmiska and David Trojacek (both kneeling), Alfred Vrazel, Patrick Strmiska



Alfred Vrazel in the KMIL radio station recording studio



Alfred Vrazel accepting the award inducting the Vrazels' Polka Band into the Polka Hall of Fame

Remember When

BELLVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HOSTS COMMUNITY DANCES TO KEEP THE DANCE HALL SPIRIT ALIVE



BY SHELLEY SEALE

For many people, dance halls and community music events bring back fond memories that connect us across generations. In Bellville, Texas, the Chamber of Commerce is working to keep those memories alive.

Denise Jones, office manager at the Bellville Chamber of Commerce, says that community dances have almost become a forgotten piece of history. “These halls were built for the purpose of bringing communities together for meetings, social gatherings, and fun. They were places for family and friends to reconnect with each other and to hand down the tradition of good old-fashioned dancing.”

Denise says that, when she was a little girl, dancing was a favorite weekend activity. “Grandparents would teach their grandchildren how to dance. I think there’s a yearning for that type of thing again.”

That’s why she and her daughter, Britney, came up with the idea for the “Remember When” community dances. “We were trying to come up with new fundraising ideas for the Chamber of Commerce and to bring some tourism to the area for small businesses,” Denise says. “Britney and I thought, we have all the beautiful, old dance halls in Austin County— why don’t we utilize them? We thought it would be a good way to help bring life back to some of these halls.” Their family already threw a lot of parties and get-togethers, so the mother and daughter thought that organizing community dances at these local dance halls would be the perfect solution.

It’s an idea that had good reason to succeed: in the 1960s and 1970s, a regular schedule of community dances rotated through Austin county’s dance halls, so that the halls weren’t competing with each other on Saturday nights.

Denise took the idea to the Chamber board, who embraced the initiative. The first “Remember When” dance was held on August 5, 2017, at Coshatte Agricultural Society Hall. Crossroads Band was the musical act, and a crowd of about 250 people showed up.

“We filled the hall,” Denise recalls. “I wasn’t expecting that big of a crowd, but it was a great springboard for future dances. Coshatte is one of the halls that really needs some TLC, some updates and paint. We hope that our going there will help them be able to do some of that.”

The Bellville Chamber of Commerce has since organized five more dances:

- Millheim Harmonie Verein Hall with the Lost Cause band
- Bellville Turnverein Pavilion with the David Lewis Band
- Millheim Harmonie Verein Hall with Charles and the Fabulous Four
- Coshatte Agricultural Society Hall with Crossroads Band encore
- Kenney Agricultural Society Hall with the Red Bulls band

Each hall receives a rental fee for the dance, as well as revenue from food and drink sales. Each dance has been attended by between 180–250 people, which Denise says is pretty good for such a rural county. In fact, they’ve started seeing people from outside the area come in with their RVs to attend the dances and spend the weekend.

“That tells me that somehow the word is spreading,” she says. The Chamber of Commerce has set up a [Facebook page](#) for the “Remember When Community Dance” and expanded its advertising for the dances to surrounding communities.

“I haven’t heard one negative comment,” Denise tells us. “People tell us how much fun they had and how they can’t wait for the next dance. It warms my heart every time to see all of the smiles and happy conversations going on at these events. I think everyone has a really good time, and I believe they are all excited to see the dance halls coming back to life.”

For Denise, it has brought home the fact that many other people have the same love for these old dance halls that she does — and for all the memories that they hold.

“These halls were enjoyed by all ages and they still are,” she says. “Smiles and joy don’t lie! That’s the reason it’s so important to keep these halls alive and well.”

The next Remember When Community Dance is being planned for January 2019. Visit their [Facebook page](#) for updates.



*Dancing at the Bellville Turnverein Pavilion
with music by the David Lewis Band
(all photos by Shannon Buck Photography)*

LIFETIME MEMBER PROFILE:

John and Mary Lynn Faulk



The Faulks with Ray Benson during the 2017 Texas Dance Hall Tour (courtesy of John and Mary Lynn Faulk)



The Faulks at Welcome Hall in Industry, Texas (courtesy of John and Mary Lynn Faulk)



The Faulks dancing on the 2017 TDHP Dance Hall Tour (photo by Heather Arnold)

John Faulk grew up with dance halls. A native Texan, John was brought up in the Houston Heights neighborhood of Houston, and some of his childhood memories involve trips to dance halls with his father and grandfather.

"My earliest recollection of a Texas dance hall was the Galveston Garten Verein," he says. John took square dancing lessons in middle school, and by high school, he could often be found at Houston's TJ Sokol Hall with his friends or at the Love Park community center for teen dances.

Fast-forward a few decades, and John had the fun of introducing his wife to dance halls. "When Mary Lynn and I started dancing together about 12 years ago, we ventured out to the Swiss Alp dance hall," he says. "That was probably the first time we were introduced to the Austin-style two-step."

Mary Lynn said that, while she had been to Gruene Hall a few times, she didn't really know much about Texas dance halls until the couple went on their first TDHP-sponsored dance in 2016, at Pavilion Hall in La Grange. "I was not aware that so many of these old dance halls existed before that. The architecture and the history behind them became an instant attraction," she recalls.

The Faulks joined TDHP after that first dance, and went on the first Texas Dance Hall Tour (with Asleep at the Wheel) in 2017. "After dancing at some of the restored dance halls and touring others that needed updating or rehabbing, we felt that TDHP was a perfect organization for us and deserved our support," says John.

Last year, the Faulks became TDHP Lifetime Members, because they wanted to do as much as they could to help preserve these places for future generations. They've made a lot of great friends through TDHP and are proud to be part of the nonprofit's mission.

"These dance halls are monuments to the people, the culture, the history, and the music that is Texas. Towns and lives were built around them. They are slowly disappearing, taking with them places where the Texas heritage can be preserved. It takes organizations like TDHP to raise awareness and to raise the funds necessary to preserve them."

VOLUNTEER PROFILE:

Teri Treme

One of Teri Treme's favorite things about volunteering with TDHP is that she gets to discover and experience Texas dance halls that she otherwise might not have.

"Every dance hall I go into, I see something amazing — the hand-painted details, the hall infrastructure ... each one has its own amazing history," Teri says.

Teri got involved with TDHP after she met Deb Fleming through a mutual friend in 2013. She has helped the organization promote events with posters and through social media, and has also volunteered at events to help set up tables, collect money and hand out wristbands at the door, and sell merchandise. She'll even take out the trash! Teri says she is "the type of volunteer who will do whatever needs to be done."

Her love of dance halls goes back to childhood, when she remembers going on road trips to Louisiana dance halls with her grandparents. As an avid history fan, Teri says, "I love the history of Texas dance halls being the center of the community. For me, walking into a dance hall is like walking back in time."

Two of her favorite halls are Gruene Hall and Luckenbach, and she also loves the Garten Verein in Galveston and La Bahia Turn Verein Hall in Burton — two of the halls that she's discovered through her involvement with TDHP.

"I have made new friends volunteering with TDHP, and I've learned a lot about the people who settled in Texas, by being in these great dance halls," Teri says.



Teri Treme enjoying live music at Courville's listening room in Beaumont, Texas (courtesy of Teri Treme)

“Preserving Texas dance halls is preserving Texas history.”

—Teri Treme

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 — your membership helps us provide assistance directly to dance hall owners and their communities.

Thank you for reading and sharing this newsletter with friends!

