FREE JULY 2015

The Texas entertainment magazine since 1975

KATHLEEN SULLIVAN

How a blind artist has beaten the odds

COWGIRLS Love to Horse Around

Article page 4
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SAT 4 TBA
FRI 10 PROTOTYPE
SAT 11 SPITFIRE
FRI 17 BOWTIES
SAT 18 FLIPSIDE
FRI 24 CHERRY STREET
SAT 25 24TH STREET BAND
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New player in S. Texas music and radio game

David Martin Phillip is the Eagle Ford Shale oil explorer who has jumped into the South Texas radio station business with both feet.

Phillip now owns four stations with a listener range that stretches from south of San Antonio to Corpus Christi, and his No Bull Radio.com is a network that features classic country music on both AM and FM frequencies.

To promote his stations and country music in general, Phillip is planning a Brush Stock Music Fest for September 19 in a Frio County location soon to be announced.

"I'm waiting to get final approval from the necessary agencies," Phillip said. "We are getting a lineup for a really good show, and I hope to do more shows like this in the future."

Musicians already signed up for the September show include Augie Meyers, Flaco Jimenez, Freddy Weller, Gabe Garcia, Roy Head, Archie Bell, Dickey Lee, Buz Carson, Shane Greenville, Jarrod Johnson, Breeelan Angel, Geoprge Chambers, Geronimo Trevino, Conjunto Borrego Band, Sundance Head, Jim Chesnutt, and others.

David Martin Phillip is the most significant player to land on the radio and live music stage in many a moon. He is officially identified as managing member of Enduring Oil Exploration LLC with a business card that lists income sources such as land, cattle, oil and gas, uranium, and radio.

He is soft-spoken, laid-back, and as country as pig tracks. It doesn't take a rocket scientist mind to recognize that Phillip is a self-made millionaire, and someone the music industry dearly needs.

Phillip attended Holmes High School in San Antonio, and graduated with a degree in wildlife science from Texas A&M with Geronimo Trevino and former Governor Rick Perry. He has drilled numerous wells in the Eagle Ford Shale, and he now owns radio stations that include KCAF FM in Kenedy, KIBL AM in Beeville, KMFR AM in Pearsall, and KVVG FM in Dilley.

"I have always loved real country music," Phillip said. "I grew up with a bunch of the musicians. I've known Jerry Trevino and Roy Head for ages. I'm finding the radio business to be really fun."

Since becoming involved in the Eagle Ford Shale oil boom scene, Phillip says he has noted an identify slippage with some of the smaller towns south of San Antonio.

"One of the towns had a potato festival that no longer exists, and some of the others seem to have kinda dropped off the entertainment radar in recent years," Phillip said. "I think some real live country music festivals would be good for the whole area. And I think they will be good to promote our radio stations. We play 75 percent classic country music and 25 percent of the better new country that is coming out."

Live music, Phillip said, is needed in deep South Texas.

"Our people now have to drive to San Antonio to hear good live country," he said. "That's good for the San Antonio music scene, but there is room for more in some of the smaller towns."

Gate proceeds from the Brush Stock Music Fest will go to benefit the Frio County Rotary Club and the Knights of Columbus Chapter in Pearsall.

Phillip said there will be a $1,500 barbecue cookoff and a $500 washer tournament to benefit the VFW, and the Knights of Columbus in Pearsall.

Check the Brush Stock Music Fest ad in this issue of Action. More details will be forthcoming in the August issue.

Concert promoter and oil man
David Phillip
Legally blind artist creates her own light

By Sam Kindrick
Kathleen Sullivan faced impending blindness with gut-wrenching terror. The Comfort artist had lost most of the vision in her right eye in 1993. Then, in 2006, her left eye began to go. Macular degeneration was again the diagnosis, an ocular disorder that destroys the eye’s ability to capture a central field of vision. “It scared the shit out of me,” says the 56-year-old Sullivan. “It was my greatest fear. I was going blind.” Sullivan did go legally blind from that period on, but her eventual victory over sight loss and the smothering fear that came with it is a recovery story for the ages.

Most residents of the Comfort/Boerne area know Kathleen Sullivan by the married name Kridler which she will soon drop. Almost all of her neighbors and most of her friends identify her with the Gypsy Bluebird Art Studios she maintains on the banks of the Guadalupe River near Comfort, and also for the cowgirl boots she paints and sells with wild and vivid tattoo art which includes images ranging from skeletons to naked ladies.

What many may not realize is that Sullivan was a student at one of New York’s most prestigious art illustration schools, and that her background includes appearances at age 15 on both Barbara Walters and Mike Douglas TV shows with her mother Judith, an internationally-known feminist, activist, and author.

Kathleen is a hippie, a free spirit, a true rebel, a recovered alcoholic and cocaine addict, and a deeply spiritual woman with an infectious sense of humor.

Before her eyes started to fail, she was a waitress at Manhattan’s famous Lone Star Cafe in the 1970s, hanging out with John Belushi and Kinky Friedman when she was 21 years of age. And it was during this early period of her life that Kathleen began to drink alcoholically and snort what she described as prodigious amounts of cocaine. She says she was lost during this period, completely out of touch with who she really was.

“I had to go blind in order to get everything I wanted to do,” Sullivan says. “Sometimes the biggest disasters can become the greatest blessings. I was able to go back to school and get a fine arts degree on scholarship. I am pursuing my passion for art as a profession, and I’m living in Texas with my own art studio. It just doesn’t get any better than this.”

Although Kathleen Sullivan is legally blind, there are just enough light rays filtering into her world for the amazing accomplishments she manages to pull off.

“I use the little scope to read labels in the grocery store,” Sullivan said. “And when I read out of a book or paper, I take off all assists and use my bare eye.”

The Sullivan accomplishment which is flabbergasting to most is Kathleen’s ability to legally drive an automobile.

“I had to undergo extensive testing in order to pass a driver test,” Sullivan said. “And I had to have a form from a doctor certifying me as vision corrected.

Kathleen Sullivan welcomes visitors to her Gypsy Bluebird Studio

Continued on pg. 7
COMING SEPTEMBER 19

BRUSH STOCK MUSIC FEST
(Frio County location to be announced soon)

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Happy Independence Day
Come join us for BBQ and free billiards on the 4th of July
Live music has returned with Blues Musician Catherine Denise on July 11th

Daily Specials:

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<td>Coors Banquet - $2.50</td>
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<td>Washington Apple - $4.75</td>
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<td>Irish Car Bomb - $5.00</td>
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<td>Cherry Bomb - $4.75</td>
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2617 WAGON WHEEL, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78217
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Proprietors: DOUGLAS DONOVAN & ZEN. KELLEY
The big Waco shoot-em-up which left nine bikers dead and 18 wounded makes us wonder if the Baptist town is cursed and damned to ruin and destruction. Violence plagued Waco long before the recent biker blood bath and the Branch Davidian inferno which saw 76 people perish in 1993 during an FBI raid.

It was in April of 1898 that firebrand writer and publisher W.C. Brann and Baylor University booster Tom Davis shot each other to death on the streets of downtown Waco. Brann was the brash and talented publisher of a widely-read newspaper called The Iconoclast. He hated Baylor University, and the Baptist college was a frequent target of the Iconoclast publisher's barbed pen.

In response to Brann's assertion that Baylor University was a "factory for the manufacture of ministers and Magdalene's (meaning whores in this context)," Baylor supporter Tom Davis, whose daughter attended Baylor, shot Brann in the back on a downtown Waco street.

An early-day shootout

William Cowper Brann died the next day from the bullet wound, but not before pulling his own single action Colt revolver and blasting Mr. Davis into eternity with a barrage of shots.

So the blood-stained streets of Waco have never been allowed to completely dry out and escape what has become a legacy of violence and death.

The authorities botched and blundered in what became the Branch Davidian funeral pyre, and the Colt revolver was the only recognizable authority visible as Brann and Davis sent each other to the happy hunting grounds.

Now we have nine dead bikers with all preliminary indications being that they were either head shot or gut shot or both by police bullets. And we have the arrest by Waco police of some 170 persons who wore biker gang colors (known as the patch), or other insignias indicating motorcycle club affiliation, and subsequent charges alleging organized criminal activity with million-dollar bonds being set for many.

It is my understanding that eight of the dead are members of a North Texas Cossacks motorcycle chapter, while one other was a Bandido. Retired San Antonio Bandidos founder Royce Showalter was a cover feature in the March issue of Action Magazine. He and I have become friends. And I counted two other Bandidos among my friends, Pervert Bob Stevens and Pat Hicks, both now deceased.

Waco fiasco stinks

I have never been a big fan of Bandidos and motorcycle gangs in general, but this Waco fiasco stinks worse than chicken guts trap bait rotting in a hot mason jar.

"I believe that civil rights have been violated all over the place in this Waco incident," said San Antonio criminal attorney Alan Brown. "And I see nothing to support charges of organized criminal activity."

At this writing, Brown had been retained to represent five of the jailed bikers, and he may be lined up behind even more of them when court dates are set.

Bandidos from San Antonio, Bandidos supporters, and many other motorcycle riders were in Waco at the Twin Peaks Restaurant for a meeting to ostensibly discuss motorcycle safety and other such benign issues. Along with the rival Cossacks and several other gangs, they had been invited to the confab by the restaurant management, all flying their "colors" or "patches."

It was a powder keg ready to explode when a fight broke out in a restroom, according to Alan Brown, who noted that the cops were apparently "coocked and ready."

Many of the fatal shots were fired by assault rifles, with the fatal hits being to the head or abdomen. And it is beginning to look like many of those killed were innocent bikers with no motorcycle gang affiliation.

Tony Talanco, owner of Texas Pride Barbeque and himself a Harley Davidson rider and motorcycle enthusiast, said: "Supposedly they have footage of a Bandido firing at another biker, but no one has seen it. A husband and wife were arrested on $25,000 bond each. They said one of the so-called 300 weapons police took from bikers were 3-inch vest chains."

Waco police Sgt. Patrick Swanton was talking out of his ass when he speculated that the biker gangs were likely to retaliate against law enforcement over the shootout.

This is pure bullshit. The Bandidos avoid police heat when ever possible, and most of them abhor any sort of publicity. The Bandido hierarchy stripped Royce Showalter of his colors after the magazine article appeared. In Bandido speak, to have one's "patch pulled" is akin to gonad removal with rusty scissors, but the old bandit seems to be holding up remarkably well with his new friends in polite society.

Of the Waco killings, Showalter said, "I don't know much, but everything I am hearing points to the police.

Tony Talanco said, "Lawyers are saying now that the charges against most of the bikers will never hold up. The organized crime charge has to be linked to lots of evidence--wire taps and video footage. They have none of that."

Tony and his wife went to a fundraiser for the biker from New Braunfels.

A sniper in Gruene

"The law had a sniper on the roof across from the Gruene Harley Davidson franchise where the fundraiser was being held," Talanco said. "Kind of scary that something like this is going on in Texas. And it seems that the media is avoiding this as much as possible. I can't believe no one from the media is trying to get to the bottom of this. Sad times for Texas bikers. I know there are a few really bad bikers, but most of the ones locked up in Waco are not."

The vast majority of motorcycle enthusiasts are no doubt solid citizens as Talanco suggests, but the Bandidos are another breed with a different creed. They proudly wear 1% strips on their vests, separating themselves from the 99 percent of law-abiding bikers referred to by a president of the American Motorcycle Association.

While the vast majority of Bandidos eschew police heat and publicity, they paradoxically foster fear and revulsion with their thundering "hogs" and propensity for bullying other organized motorcycle riders on the road.

Most of them might as well wear signs around their necks which say Bust Me. And that's why there were likely a few cops in Waco who were waiting and ready to bag an outlaw biker.
Kathleen Sullivan continued from page 7

enough to safely drive. I drive legally with bioptic glasses which I can adjust as I am in the process of driving.*

The only daughter of college professors, Kathleen Sullivan is a graduate of San Antonio's Churchill High School. Her late father, John B. Sullivan Jr., was a vice principal at Eisenhower Middle School and a professor at Our Lady Of The Lake University in San Antonio.

Before the Sullivans first moved to San Antonio, they were dorm parents at North Texas State where Kathleen was born, and they were teaching at Kansas State Teachers College when the family broke up.

In 1970, when Kathleen was 11, her mother left the family for New York where she was to join the budding women's liberation movement and eventually publish a book titled Mama Doesn't Live Here Anymore.

Kathleen visited her mom during summers after that, and it was the book that landed both mother and daughter on the Mike Douglas Show and the Today Show with Barbara Walters.

To this day, Kathleen defends her mother's decision to leave the family, explaining that the book was about being female in America in the 1950s and 1960s and rejecting the limitations imposed on women during that time.

In later years, however, Kathleen's mother said she regretted her decision to leave the daughter behind.

Sullivan says she and her mother now share a “wonderful relationship,” noting that both are recovering from alcohol and substance abuse.

The mother, Judith Vance, now teaches seminars in fine arts appraisal at the Rhode Island School of Design in Providence, R.I.

Allowing as how she never wanted to be anything but an artist, Kathleen said she worked during high school for a big T-shirt factory, doing beer ad artwork and illustrations for San Antonio nightclubs. She was then a big fan of Armadillo World Headquarters artists Danny Garrett, Jim Franklin, and Michael Priest. As soon as she graduated from Churchill, she headed for New York to enroll in Manhattan's School of Visual Arts, one of the country’s top illustration schools.

“I made it through my junior year in college, then dropped out when school started getting in the way of my partying,” Kathleen said. “I started waiting tables at the Lone Star Cafe in Manhattan. I was the first Texan to work there, and at age 21 I just wasn’t ready for it all. I was borrowing John Belushi’s limousine. He had his own private bar down the street. And the Lone Star Cafe house band was Kinky Friedman and the Texas Jewboys.

“ I was doing coke, really a lot of it. The celebrities would leave lines of coke on the tables for tips. Urban Cowboy had just come out, and we had urban cowboys all over the place. Andy Warhol knew me by name. I was working the door and I was the unofficial band babysitter, making sure the celebrities didn’t get too high before they went on the Tonight Show. I was doing artwork ads for every country music club in Manhattan at that time."

Sullivan said, “This was the pre-Giuliana era, a really scary time. I was robbed three times before I finally came fleeing back to Texas and my dad. The last time I was robbed I was with Kinky Friedman and some others in a China Town Restaurant. There was a guy with a pistol pointed at us while he collected money and jewelry. I can distinctly recall Kinky saying: ‘Okay, folks, let’s don’t have any fuckin’ heroes here.’ It was really a crazy, scary time."

She arrived back in San Antonio in 1982.

“I got a job retouching photographs at Zintgraff Photography,” Kathleen recalls. “I detoxed myself off of coke, but I continued drinking heavily along with some methamphetamine use."

This continued and was still going on in 1984 when she met and married Jim Kridler, a native of Hawaii. Continued on pg. 14
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Our main advertising salesmen are unpaid musicians who readily tell any new live music venue operator where the print advertising dollar will do the most good.

The musicians will tell you that Action Magazine ads will attract more music fans than any other publication. If you don't believe this, just ask them.

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FRI July 24 Mario Moreno and the Smoking Guns
FRI July 31 Bimbo & Borderline
All bands play from 8-12
**Sax for Spot**

Fans and friends of legendary tenor saxophone great Spot Barnett have teamed up to buy him a new horn.

Barnett has been without a sax for the past couple of years since his instrument was stolen.

**Spot Barnett**

Saxophonist Rich Oppenheim, along with help from Musician’s Union Local 23 and Zach Marr of Alamo Music Center, have arranged to purchase the new instrument for Barnett.

Remaining funds needed for the horn will be raised through the All-STAR Blues Benefit for Spot Barnett, a July 26 show at Sam’s Burger Joint sponsored by the San Antonio Blues Society.

Doors open at 2 p.m. with music from 3 p.m. through 7:30 p.m. There will be a silent auction and a raffle, with a $10 door donation suggested.

More than 25 local musicians have volunteered to play the show, including other major saxophonists Albert Garcia, Gabe Pintor, David Villanueva, Henry Rivas, and George Briscoe.

The Westside Horns, the S.A. Blue Cats, and individual heavyweights ranging from Jimmy Spacek, Dub Robinson, Ruben V and Bett Butler to Catherine Denise, Jack Barber, and R.B. Blackstone are all scheduled to play along with numerous others.

Needless to say, Spot Barnett is one of the most popular musicians on the San Antonio scene.

**Mayor Ivy**

Ivy Taylor’s big win over Leticia Van de Putte in the recent runoff election for mayor of San Antonio was a refreshing victory for those who are tired of sellout career politicians and a police union that would take over the city if it could.

Van de Putte represents everyone the voters are sick and tired of, and her defeat at the hands of then-interim Mayor Ivy Taylor was more than a surprise.

**Ivy Taylor**

Leticia believed she had a lock on the race, and her defeat at the hands of non-political little ole Ivy came as a stunning shock to a career politician who thought she would ride into the mayor’s chambers as the first Latina ever to take the top municipal office.

Instead, Ivy Taylor becomes the first African American mayor in San Antonio history, and Leticia Van de Putte, a professional politician who thought she had it all in the bag, is left holding the bag and wondering why she ever jumped on the Wendy Davis bandwagon in the first place.

Ah, yes, the Wendy Davis bandwagon.

When Davis, the Fort Worth Democrat filibuster queen squared off against Republican Greg Abbott, in Leticia Van de Putte was quick to accept running mate status with Davis.

As Davis lost her bid for governor to Abbott, Van de Putte was in turn trounced in her lieutenant governor bid by Dan Patrick. But this was all part of Leticia’s plan.

The longtime state senator from San Antonio never thought she stood a chance of defeating Patrick. Her big plan was to garner statewide publicity and name recognition in a race for lieutenant governor she had no chance of winning, then come back to San Antonio and run as a sho-in candidate for mayor.

So confident she was of becoming mayor, she resigned her seat in the Texas Senate, secured the ringing endorsement of the local police union and other special interest groups, and then settled confidentially back to count the chickens which were never to hatch.

Big mistake number one was the police union affiliation. The public has grown tired of the union bullying the city manager and other city officials through negative TV advertising which painted City Manager Sheryl Sculley as some sort of municipal monster.

Big mistake number two was Van de Putte’s low-class television attacks against Ivy Taylor’s husband Rodney, an innocent bystander and non-politician himself who had declined to push charges against a drive-by shooting suspect who had damaged his bail bond business property.

Through no fault of Rodney Taylor’s, one of the criminal mischief suspects in the drive-by shooting later wound up as a murder suspect in another and totally unrelated incident. And it could be noted that Rodney Taylor’s decision to press no charges was his business.

Leticia really ripped her sizeable drawers when she jumped both Rodney and Ivy together as people who would not stand up to defend against those who would threaten their family.

When Ivy Taylor refused to shake Van de Putte’s hand following one of their mayoral debates, a growing contingent of voters could identify.

Only a phony, flabby, gas bag politician would accuse someone of family dereliction, then walk up in public and try to shake their hand.

Van de Putte is political history, the victim of her own grandiose aspirations to a throne room which never needed her presence and still doesn’t need it.

**Sleeping Giants**

The Tejano Musicians Network Breakfast Gathering has a new name.

Now the organization is known as The Sleeping Giant Breakfast Club.

A news release from Gloria Almaraz says the original organization was the brainchild of William (Wild Bill) Lowry, a musician and retired San Antonio police officer.

**Henry Pena**

Ms. Almaraz says the organization lives up to its original mission of having an informal structure with no leaders, but having six members who keep the meetings running smoothly.

Lowry, she says, envisioned an organization to rekindle old friendships and keep current on happenings in the music world.

**Sauce Gonzalez**

Continued on pg. 14
Remaining photos from Action’s 40th anniversary

Beaver Creek’s Johnny Santos on harmonica  Kinky Friedman makes closing remarks

(left-right) Clay Meyers, Patsy Brown, Bubba Brown, Jerry King, Roy Holley, and Harvey Kagan
Augie and Dub sound off with pens in hand

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sam:

I read your article on the death of Bulverde. It's real sad but true.

When me and my family moved to Bulverde in 1965 it was a paradise. I called it one step above happy. And it truly was.

I had been busted with the Specht's Store in Bulverde. You could buy fresh eggs and milk there all day 50 cents a quart. Weeks 2 to 10 years in the pen.

I remember going to Specht's Store in Bulverde. Old Bulverde Road from San Antonio to Bulverde. I drove home on that old road almost every night after playing in town.

Mama rabbits were out on that road. Racoons and deer. They were waking the road in those days.

Now you drive out Blanco Road to Bulverde and you see dead animals. Yes, Sam, Bulverde is dead.

At one time, I wanted to be buried in the Bulverde Cemetery. But that one step above happy is no longer there.

Augie Meyers

Dear Editor:

After reading a couple of articles concerning my band, the Drugstore Cowboys, I feel compelled to set the record straight about a part of its history.

For what it's worth. I do believe that the Drugstore Cowboys, a band I had formed in 1972 with Robert Payne and Tommy McKay, RIP, Butch Lynam did a stint on drums also. Tommy came up with the name. We played on a regular basis at the KP and Jim new our repertoire as well as we did. We were nuts about Gary Stewart and new album cuts. Jim had booked Gary at the KP and at the time Gary used Charlie Prides band for his backup. Pretty close to the date of the gig Gary called to cancel his gig because Pride needed them for a gig that turned up for him. Jim proceeded to stick his neck waaaaay out and told Gary he had a band [the DSC], that could do his material, and do it reeeeaaal good. Like I said, he stuck it waaaaay out. He neglected to tell Gary that there were only 3 of us and between us all we could maybe grow one beard. Early 20's. Gary bit and showed up Sat. evening of the gig, looked at us and started to bolt. Jim held him up long enough to talk him into at least doing a sound check/test run and we did that and he decided to go with it. It went well and Jim and we were shickled titless at pulling it off. Thank YOU Jim Schumacher! I went home smiling, thinking how cool was that, thrilled I got to do it not realizing that a couple of weeks later Gary would call me and offer the DSC the road gig with him, which I/we gladly accepted. I stayed on for a few fun/crazy/hard/incredibly exciting years then bailed for my own reasons. I will always be proud of that lineup of the DSC for the things we achieved together and this stands out. That's the way I remember it, it is what it is,[Title cut of our new CD in the works, gotta plug it] PS. For my good friend Sam, please don't consider this a correction of what you printed. Consider an embellishment, a furthering of the story, if you will. I realize we all remember stuff from the fog of barroom wars. That's why I left out dates. It gives me a headache. Don't be pissed! I need you! WE need you! What the F have I done????

Your Compadre,

Dub Robinson

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Kathleen Sullivan continued from page 7

who was soon to join the navy and be assigned to the naval base in Norfolk, Virginia.

"I was still drinking after I married Jim, but I managed to hide it from him to an extent," Sullivan said. "I could maintain pretty well while he was home. It was when he went out on deployment that I really went off the rails." Sullivan said she kicked both alcohol and drugs in 1987 through a recovery program.

Her first son, Austin, was born in 1990. Ryan, the other son, was born in 1998. Kathleen said Austin graduated with a film degree and is now freelancing as a film producer in Virginia. Ryan is a senior at Boerne High School and lives with Kathleen, three cats, and a dog. Kathleen and Jim Krieder divorced in 2011.

"We had a really good marriage for a long time," Kathleen said. "I don't really know what happened. Jim may have had a mid-life crisis or something like that." Kathleen said she was working for the City of Norfolk in the art department when her left eye started to go bad shortly after she had son Austin.

When the right eye started to go she was forced to retire in 2009 in order to receive medical benefits offered by the Virginia Department of the Blind.

"Because of my blindness I was able to finish school at Old Dominion University in Norfolk," Sullivan said. "My dad came up here to see me graduate, and thereafter he contracted pneumonia and died. Jim and I returned to Comfort to clean out dad's place and get it rented out."

At Old Dominion, Kathleen was enrolled as a blind fine arts student under Elizabeth (Bella) Leor, who teaches figure drawing at the university. Kathleen recalls her first meeting with Leor.

"I told her, 'I can't see,'" Sullivan said. "'Let's not worry about what you can't do. Let's see what you can do.'" Sullivan burst into tears.

At that first class, she was relieved to find she could see well enough to draw. To sketch a live model, she had to sit within four feet of the person. But she could do it, and she even excelled at it.

"I've taught the figure for 20 years," Leor said, "and she's in the top 10 of all of my students." Kathleen said treatment for macular degeneration has improved with time. She has received shots in her eyes which seem to have halved the malady's progress, and she says her eyes have adapted since her first vision loss.

"My numbers haven't improved but I have learned to see much better," Sullivan said. "This adversity has improved me in so many ways. It has made me a better artist, a better person, and it has really strengthened this God has in my back."

Sullivan visited a women's retreat when her second eye started failing, finding a pamphlet which contained what appeared to be a Biblical parable.

"I'm not a Bible person, but I was searching for answers," Sullivan said. "The parable was about training a vine to produce better fruit. I thought, okay God has taken this sight away to help me grow in a different direction. I knew it was my job to pay attention and to find out what other work I am supposed to do. After that day I was more at peace and I started looking for open doors rather than concentrating on those that had already closed. I knew I was going to do art if I had to finger paint. I just had to figure some things out." Sullivan describes her art as media work. It consists of collages and a lot of line drawings.

"When I became an artist I was still a practicing alcoholic," Kathleen said. "I didn't know who I was and I was afraid of who I was. I became a commercial artist because it didn't require me to expose myself to anyone. I was doing other people's ideas, magazines and stuff. But then the blindness happened and I decided to go into the fine arts. This became my life's passion. I started to put my guts out there on the canvass and there was a lot of fear in this. Not only was I doing it for the first time, but I was doing it blind. I really had to trust the process."

As a graphics artist before losing her vision, Kathleen made small, tightly detailed drawings. After her vision loss, she had to find a new approach. She now works on a larger scale, so she can see the painting or drawing. She comes within an inch or two with her naked left eye for detail work, then she backs up to see the blurry outlines.

"It's actually a different way of seeing," Sullivan says.

When her marriage blew up, Sullivan returned to the Comfort home her father had left her, opening a tiny art studio in Boerne she called Gypsy Bluebird.

"I always loved the gypsies as being free spirits," Sullivan said. "And Polynesian sailors believe the bluebird carries one's soul after the ship sinks. So I named my studio Gypsy Bluebird, and I even have the Gypsy Bluebird logo tattooed on my abdomen."

Sullivan said she first saw a pair of hand painted boots that were priced for $5,000.

"I knew I could do that, so I painted a pair of mine and walked down the street in Boerne," Kathleen said. "People were immediately chasing me down to ask where I got the boots. So I started painting boots for sale. Since nobody ever walked into the Boerne store to buy a pair of boots, I moved the studio out to the Comfort property. My sales come through appointment and on the internet. I sell boots everywhere, even in Japan."

The website is www.gypsybluebird.com.

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Phone is (830) 377-5890. It takes Sullivan about six weeks to paint a pair of boots. She often supplies the boots which are priced between $400 and $800. Designs are wild and colorful with big emphasis on roses, skeletons, flares and even the naked female form.

It would be euphemistic to call them traffic stoppers. They are traffic jam creators.

Sullivan did donate one pair of painted boots to the Animal Defense League fundraiser auction. She said they fetched $2,000.

While she intends to keep painting and selling boots, Sullivan professes an itch to get back painting realistic portraits and other subjects on real canvass.

And two days (or nights) a week, Kathleen Sullivan leaves her studio to work with substance abuse patients at Covenant Hills, a women's treatment center near Boerne.

"This treatment center work is important to me," Kathleen said. "I believe that women in early recovery need to see someone who has overcome some obstacles and who is still sober and happy. I try to make them laugh and have a good time. I want to bring something to the table."

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With attendance that often numbers 80 or above, the meetings are held at 9 a.m. Thursdays at Tink-A-Taco Restaurant, 3555 Fredericksburg Road.

Every two weeks, the club passes out a pair of awards. One is called Gone But Not Forgotten. It is a posthumous award presented to the family of a deceased musician. The other is the Sleeping Giant Award, an honor that goes to a living musician. Honorees are selected by their peers at the weekly meetings.

Six mainstay members who keep the meetings running smoothly include William Lowry, Henry Penà, Emilio Guerrero, Jesse Garcia, Tony Vasquez, and Ruben Pina.

Membership is open to all musicians, regardless of genre, and there are no membership dues.

Young Arises

Songwriter and performer Ron Young has hoed a pretty rough row, first with cancer and then with a stroke.

We are happy to report that he is back at it with the same tenacious spirit which has marked his recovery process from the day he got his first cancer diagnosis. Shortly before we went to press with this issue of Action, Young messaged:

Ron Young

You've been so good to me in the past with your coverage of not only my act but my illness. I hope you can do some more story on me, even a short one.

Last Easter Jesus rose but I didn't. I was having a mini-stroke. Neighbors took care of me and my friend Bekka Kelso (of Bekka & the Felitas, who performed at my second cancer benefit last Feb.) rushed me to the ER at NE Baptist hospital, where I spent 2 weeks recovering from pain. I was on Elvis drugs the entire time and was in a 4-day semi-coma before being ambulated to the Rehabilitation at Oakwell Farms for physical therapy, where I spent another 5 weeks.

I've since been home a month and have started playing in restaurants and clubs once more with my partner Patrick Joseph as well as rotating cast of musicians that include Hank Harrison and D.G. Lara, among others. I also play at various nursing homes or assisted living resorts as I know the other side of that coin.

I'm still not fully recovered but the show must go on. I also am still under weekly home health care.

Young has shows at Barriba Cantina on the River Walk on July 24, and at Mi Casa Tamales in Boerne July 31.

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