

The ATJS Jazz Messenger is circulated mostly by email and is published as we have an important message or gather enough material to assemble a new issue. We are finishing our 2022–23 season, as good an occasion as any to crank out a new issue.

President's Message

by Dave Stoddard

It is time for some plain talk about the Society as it moves forward. Ben Hur represents a considerable monthly expense compared to Cap City Comedy Club. The 2022 season saw a \$3247 loss. The 2022–23 season is not yet complete, but we project a \$5400 loss for the season. We have some retained equity, and the 2023–24 season will be presented. It is obvious, however, that the current situation cannot continue indefinitely. It is vital that the Society re-sign as many previous members as possible and stay on the lookout for new members. In 2020 the Society had 125 members. In 2022 that number was 85 and at present the membership census is 65.

It is important to attract as many paying guests as possible, and we are heavily indebted to our contributors for helping to close the gap. Please be assured that donations to the Society are meaningful. For whatever reason, donations went from \$2285 in 2022 to \$808 this season. Society membership prices have not changed for many years. Your Board is reluctant to raise rates, but somehow we have to balance the budget to ensure that the Society carries forward for years to come. A survey will be sent to our mailing list in the near future. Please help to

shape the future of the Austin Traditional Jazz Society.

There is also the matter of Society leadership. At one point we had eleven Directors. Now we have only six. Nominations for Director will open at the June 11 concert and will remain open until the September concert. If you have ever thought about being on the Board, this is a good chance to find out what it is like. You can self-nominate or have someone nominate you either by e-mail at info@atjs.org or orally at the June or September concerts.

Qualifications for Director are simple—you must be a current member and be willing to work for the betterment of the Society. We will try to find suitable assignments for any new Director, but business, marketing or computer skills would be helpful. We have lost our Treasurer, so an accountant or bookkeeper would be a welcome addition to the Board.

In closing, I urge everyone to contribute to our Austin traditional jazz scene. The Austin Traditional Jazz Society is the only traditional jazz society of its kind in Texas. Other jazz societies offer a mix of musical styles or concentrate on a yearly festival. The Society helps to support local musicians (and we have some fine jazz artists), but they also need your support at the club gigs. Please follow our Local Events broadcasts and website postings and support traditional jazz wherever you find it.



"It is time for some plain talk as the Society moves forward."

Dave Stoddard

Remaining 2022–23 Schedule

June 11 Ron Fink & the Rowdies

Ron Fink and the Rowdies come to us from the Dallas area. They are a collection of veteran music educators and professional jazz musicians with an impressive array of credentials. They have earned a Central Texas following since they began playing for ATJS in 2017.

ATJS concerts are from 2:00 to 4:45 p.m. at Ben Hur Shrine Temple, 7811 Rockwood Lane, Austin, TX (near West Anderson Lane and the MoPac).

The 2023–2024 Season

The ATJS Board of Directors is working on details of the 2023–2024 season. At this point a tentative schedule outline has events in September, October and November, 2023, and February, March, April and June, 2024.

COVID–19 Statistics

by Dave Stoddard

The COVID–19 pandemic is the event which turned the Austin Traditional Jazz Society on its head. The pandemic has now officially ended. Prior to that announcement it was rarely mentioned in the news. Your Austin Traditional Jazz Society has kept track of COVID cases and fatalities in Texas. It has complete figures from the beginning of the pandemic through May 10, 2023 on file, as reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The pandemic was certainly real enough. Nationally, COVID has accounted for 103 million cases and 1.12 million deaths. As of May 10, 2023 total Texas confirmed new cases numbered 6,677,164 with 92,378 fatalities. As different strains of the virus swept through the state, cases rose and fell. Several times the pandemic seem to be petering out, only to come back to life as a new strain came through. The worst month for confirmed new cases was January, 2022 with a total of 1,278,405 new cases. Cases have fallen off since then. The last month with cases in six figures was August, 2022 with 191,583 new cases.

Since then cases have continued to decline. The case total for April, 2023 was 22,099. In an estimated Texas population of 31 million this amounts to background noise. One can contrast this with the worst single day with new cases. This was January 12, 2022 with 61,113 new cases. The April, 2023 new cases are the lowest recorded statewide new cases for a month since March, 2020 when COVID testing was just getting started. It appears that COVID-19 will be with us on a long-term basis, but is becoming endemic (a chronic but stable presence) rather than a pandemic. At some point life goes on.

For most of us, this is the worst pandemic we will ever experience and is comparable to the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic. It caused 675,000 American deaths in a far smaller population. Like COVID-19, the Spanish Flu virus persisted into 1920 before withering away. I lost my paternal grandfather, Edwin Freeman Stoddard, to the Spanish Flu in 1918.

Here in Central Texas, we know of one traditional jazz musician who died of COVID, Band Aids clarinetist Neill Walsdorf. Numbers of traditional jazz musicians and others close to ATJS have had COVID. It is all to the good that this dark cloud which has hung over the Austin area is finally moving away.

Thanks to our Poster Hosts!

Before each ATJS event, the Society puts up posters for its concerts. Here are our current poster venues.

Capital Music Center
6101 Burnett Rd.
Round Rock, TX

Westbank String Shop
6301 Manchaca Rd
Austin, TX

Strait Music Company North
13945 Research Blvd.

Austin, TX

Atri at the Arboretum
9306 Great Hills Trail
Austin, TX

Better Than New Band Repair
1402-C Chisholm Trail
Austin, TX

Fresh Plus Grocery
2917 West Anderson Lane
Austin, TX

Phil's Ice House
13265 North US 183
Austin, TX

Upper Crust Bakery
4508 Burnet Rd.
Austin, TX

Current ATJS Board of Directors

Dave Stoddard	President
Don Denzin	Recording Sec.
Nancy-Jane Griffith	Director
Becky Maddox	Director
Bill Troiano	Director
Dave Bedrich	Director

Nasty Traffic Accident

On the evening of May 5, while returning from a gig, four longtime ATJS members were in a traffic accident in Burnet. Dan Augustine, Dave Stoddard, and Larmon and Becky Maddox were in the same vehicle. While there were injuries, especially to Larmon and Becky, none were life-threatening. Dan and Dave have largely recovered, and Larmon and

Becky continue to recover at home. All ATJS members and friends wish everyone a full recuperation.

International Jazz Day Concert at Long Center on April 30, 2024

Four Austin-area jazz societies presented an International Jazz Day Concert at Long Center on Sunday, April 30. The Austin Traditional Jazz Society was represented by Silver Creek Jazz Band. Other groups which performed were the Austin Women in Jazz Quartet featuring Pamela Hart, the Austin Youth Jazz Orchestra and the Butch Miles Big Band. For the second year in a row the concert was a sellout.

Halfway to "Tia Juana": Texas Connections to the Wolverines

by Colin Hancock

When Bix Beiderbecke and the Wolverine Orchestra's first records came out in 1924, jazz musicians everywhere were listening, including those in Texas. It seems far-fetched to us now that 1920s Texas, still in many ways the frontier of the American West, had connections to the most "modern" band in the country. But a close look reveals a lot of connections between the Lone Star State and that band.

Like so many things in Texas Jazz history, one of the most important connections is the Austin-based band of Jimmie Joy (real name James Maloney). During the Joy band's 1925 recording session in Kansas City, the band recorded a fine version of "Riverboat Shuffle" in the spirit of the "Wolves" including several quotes from the original recording. Once the trip was done, the Bix-fanatical band members took things a step further, traveling a little farther north up to Chicago where they found Beiderbecke playing with the Charley Straight band (see Max Eastman's Article "The Influence of Bix: Vol. 1").

Bix was based in Chicago at the time, being in between his first time with Jean Goldkette and his joining Frank Trumbauer's band in St. Louis. He even agreed to do a private recording with the Joys (likely for the Marsh Labs "Autograph" label), but failed at the last second from partying too hard the evening before (a scenario which he repeated a

few years later with the Princeton Triangle Jazz Band in New York). The Joys then returned to Texas.

The next Texas connection to the Wolverines comes through the band's leader, pianist Dick Voynow. After his time leading the Wolverines, Voynow became (among other things) a major A&R man for the Brunswick/Vocalion record label, often conducting the label's sessions for "remote" recordings. In 1928 and 1929, Voynow came to Texas with the label, recording some of the state's finest talent including the Harris Brothers Texans, Herman Waldman's Orchestra, trumpeter Don Albert with several blues vocalists, Duward Cline's Collegians, and a private recording of the SMU Mustang Band jazzing their fight song "Peruna" (I have the only known copy of the latter disc in my collection.) Shortly after the 1929 trip, Voynow and the gang travelled up to Kansas City where they recorded the legendary first sessions of the Andy Kirk band with Mary Lou Williams, George E. Lee's band, and the fantastic Chic Scoggin Pla-Mor Ballroom Orchestra.

The third Wolverine with a Texas connection is the band's banjo player Bobby Gillette. Gillette's syncopated style (played on five-string Vega banjo with the fifth string removed) was a significant part of the Wolverines' style as well as the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (NORK) in 1923. Indeed, Gillette's first records were made with the NORK on their famed session with Jelly Roll Morton, Martin Abraham, Don Murray, and Ben Pollack—as well as Bix who was, sadly, not allowed to play on the records by a disgruntled Leon Roppolo and George Brunies who were concerned about misrepresenting the band with the addition of a second cornet.

Gillette's banjo drives that band on their immortal performances of "Milenberg Joys," "Mr. Jelly Lord," "Angry," "Sobbin' Blues," "Clarinet Marmalade," "London Blues," and others. After his time with the Wolverines, Gillette went into Vaudeville and even made a Vitaphone short (though it has not been found). His family eventually settled down in Dallas, and Bob first came there playing an engagement with Red Nichols (see Daytona Beach Morning Journal, 4 Aug. 1961). He eventually passed away in Dallas, in 1972.

As this article's name alludes, the song "Tia Juana," recorded by the

Wolverines in 1924, also connects to Texas through its composers Larry Conley and Gene Rodemich. Conley, a trombonist, spent much of the early 20s with Dallas bandleader Jack Gardner's trio. The group toured across the middle South and Southwest for college dances, proms, town events, conventions, and other private parties. Their advertisement book, featuring a photo of Conley with the band, touts that they played from New Mexico to Mississippi to Arkansas, and of course all over the Lone Star State.

Meanwhile, Gene Rodemich worked directly with Jack Gardner, and the two in addition to Conley and bandleader Willard Robison even met in Dallas sometime in 1923 to discuss forming a "super band." The only thing to come out of the meeting was a photo of the musicians in front of Gardner's Dallas home, though the association did continue to last: Gardner's first record "Too Late Now" (recorded in Dallas by the Okeh label) lists Conley, Gardner, and Rodemich as composers.

Even today the Wolverines' connection to Texas persists. In Austin, the cornetist David "Jelly" Jellema plays in the spirit of Bix and the Wolves, but his connection runs deeper. Jelly is from the Northeast, and in his younger years his mentor Tom Pletcher brought him up from his hometown of Washington DC to Princeton for their famed reunions. Jelly sat in with many musicians who had played with and known Bix including Jack Howe, Bill Priestly, and Squirrel Ashcraft.

These musicians, part of the Princeton Triangle Club Jazz band in the 20s, were Bix fanatics in real time, and owned all of the Wolverines discs – even going so far as to quote "Riverboat Shuffle" on their recording of "Melody Moon." With the passing on of the tradition to Jelly at the Princeton reunions, Jelly's playing keeps the spirit of the Wolverines alive in the Lone Star State to this day. Next time you hear him play at an ATJS event or in one of the city's many music venues, know that the vocabulary coming out of his horn is direct from the source!

The Wolverines' records marked a change in the music—harmonies became "modern," introducing whole tone scales and unusual instrument voicing, and the regular New Orleans and Dance Band "two beat" styles shifted to an emphasis on a Midwestern "sock time" heard

on Wolverines titles like “Tia Juana,” “Susie,” and “Lazy Daddy.” That influence even permeated Texas’ jazz scene, and helped shape it into one of the most distinctive and original in the country.



Jazz historian and author Colin Hancock is a respected musician, bandleader, and member of The Austin Traditional Jazz Society. Hancock is a law student at the University of Texas.



IN MEMORIAM Jeffrey L. Van Horn, 1945-2023
 Jeff Van Horn, a past ATJS president and director, and a longtime member of the Society, died on May 6. Jeff achieved a bachelor’s in psychology in 1969 and a law degree from the University of Texas in 1973. Thereafter, he served as a prosecuting attorney in various capacities. His last posting before his retirement in 2010 was as State Prosecuting Attorney for the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

At Cap City Comedy Club, Jeff could usually be found at the last row of round tables at the back of the club. He was also a frequent festival attendee. He will be missed.

The Austin Traditional Jazz Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please consider making [a tax-deductible donation.](#)