

March 15, 2020
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BLANCO COUNTY'S NIGHT SKIES CELEBRATED IN SONG

Some of the Hill Country's most talented songwriters and performers gathered on Thursday, March 12 in the Back 40 of the Old 300 BBQ on Blanco's Town Square to celebrate the night sky in song. The cause for celebration was the CD Release Party for "Deep in the Dark of Texas™ Vol 1," an effort sponsored by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky (BCFNS) to support night sky preservation in the Hill Country.

Last fall, the organization challenged local songwriters (most of whom are regulars at the Friday night Pickers' Circle at Liz's on the Square in Blanco), to write songs about the night sky. The song could be a love song inspired by the night sky, a song of marvelment at the wonders of the night sky, a song of protest objecting to city people who move to the Hill Country and ruin the night sky with their outdoor lights, or anything else in the creative minds of the songwriters.

The songwriters gathered at Liz's on the Square in November to compete in the "Deep in the Dark of Texas™ Songwriting Contest. A standing room only crowd gathered to enjoy the original music and cheer for their favorite song. Melanie Van Aken won the competition with her song, "Welcome in the Night," a lively little ukulele ditty, about the night from the perspective of the small creatures of the darkness.

Inspired by the quality of the songs, the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky, in cooperation with the Los Senderos Recording Studio, produced a CD with thirteen of the songs. Each songwriter donated his or her work to raise funds to preserve the night sky.

"We had some really terrific songs," said Larry Seiler, owner of the Los Senderos Studio and BCFNS Board member, "and the songwriters were a joy to work with."

The CD's title, "Deep in the Dark of Texas" was donated by Carol Seminara of Fredericksburg and then trademarked by the BCFNS. The cover art was donated by local artist Peter Mangan. Liz Waller and Nelson Broyal donated Liz's basement for the contest and Mike and Sue Betzer donated use of the Back 40 for the CD Release Party. Larry and Teri Seiler, owners of Los Senderos Studio, donated the hours and hours of studio time required to produce this exceptional CD.

The CD can be purchased at Liz's on the Square in Blanco or online at www.blancocountynightsky.org/merchandise.

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Melania Van Aken plays her ukulele while singing her contest-winning song, “Welcome in the Night,” at the March 12 “Deep in the Dark of Texas™” CD Release party hosted by the Blanco County Friends of the Night Sky in the Back 40 of the Old 300 BBQ in Blanco. Friends provide choral back-up including several of the other performers on the CD. Some 50 people attended the event and enjoyed the original songs celebrating the Hill Country’s night sky. (Photo by Wayne Gosnell)