

KEITHLEY’S KORNER

Southwest journey at 12 made Suzy Bogguss fall in love with New Mexico

Tim Keithley
Ruidoso News

Suzy Bogguss still remembers a childhood trip across the Southwest that set her on the road to country music stardom and sparked a lifelong love of New Mexico.

“I was twelve years-old and my family was taking this long train trip from the Illinois cornfields where I was raised out to California to visit my grandparents,” Bogguss said. “My grandparents lived in the same neighborhood and were friends with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.”

It was that encounter with the acting-singing duo Roy and Dale that encouraged Suzy to follow her dreams, take chances, and later become an entertainer. After meeting the most famous couple in the annals of Western entertainment, Bogguss said, she went back to Illinois and immediately began learning how to play guitar and yodel.

“That trip is what got me started,” she recalled. “I remember vividly when we stopped in Albuquerque and I saw this beautiful state for the first time. I continue to be enchanted by it, and I’m always complaining to our tour manager that we don’t come out here enough.”

It’s been a few years since she has performed in New Mexico, but Bogguss will make an appearance Saturday, June 27, at the Spencer Theater in Alto. The 8 p.m. show will feature Charlie



PHOTO FROM SPENCER THEATER
Suzy Bogguss sits with a guitar.

Chadwick and Jimma Matejek on instruments and vocals.

“We’ll play some of my songs, plus the American song book, some Merle Haggard, and some other tunes in three-part harmony,” she said. “It’s for the entire family. The sound isn’t too loud for grandmas and grandpas. We make sure that it’s just right for everyone to enjoy the show.”

Bogguss, 69, emerged on

the country music scene in 1989 with her debut album *Somewhere Between*. The album produced the hit single *Cross My Broken Heart* and paved the way for Suzy’s selection by the Academy of Country Music as the year’s Top New Female Vocalist.

In 1991, Bogguss released the hit album *Aces*, which unleashed an explosion of hit singles:

Aces, *Someday Soon*, *Outbound Plane* and *Letting Go*. The next year brought the album *Voices in the Wind*, the smash single *Drive South*, and the Country Music Association’s prestigious Horizon Award.

Suzy’s fame endured into the 2000s. She won a Grammy for Best Traditional Folk Album in 2005 – and just this year, on Jan. 16, Bogguss was awarded the honor every country music artist dreams of, membership in the Grand Ole Opry.

“My career has been a lot of work, but well-worth it,” said Bogguss, who lives in Franklin, Tennessee, not far from Nashville. “These days when we’re not on the road, I enjoy hosting some jam sessions with some of my best musical friends at my house. I’ve enjoyed this journey every step of the way, and it started with a train trip across New Mexico.”

Tickets for the Bogguss show, which is sponsored by Boots & Jeans and Justin Boots, are available at the Spencer Theater box office, by telephone at 575-336-4800, and at www.spencertheater.com. Customers of Boots & Jeans, 134 Sudderth Drive, can receive two complimentary tickets to the show with the purchase of a pair of Justin Boots while supplies last.

Ruidoso News columnist Tim Keithley writes about the people and events in the community. If you have a story idea, contact Tim at tkeithley@elritomedia.com.



GUITAR & PEN ‘Opportunities in the Basin’

J. Cameron Stewart

This Saturday the White Sands Mall will be all abuzz with jigsaw puzzlers galore as they are having a couple of contests, who can finish a puzzle the fastest. There is the adult team that will tackle a 1,000 piece puzzle versus the family team will try to solve a 500 piece puzzle. Both the puzzles and light refreshments will be provided to all and there is a \$100 prize to the top team. The action goes from 1-3 p.m. and it has been ages since I even tried to do a puzzle of any number of pieces. I think only the “pros” can come in under that time frame, but you never know. Each team consists of 4 puzzlers and it is my understanding that they have not the foggiest idea what picture is on the puzzle. I wish all of the puzzlers the best of luck.

The very next day from 3-5 p.m. over at Otero Arts, they will be having an “Ice Cream Social” with a silent auction. Items to be auctioned off range from jewelry to Santa Fe Opera Tickets. There will be a table set up that will have baked goods and collectibles that can be purchased for prices ranging 2 to 10 dollars. With the heatwave that we are having this will be the place to be. The ice cream is being donated by Albertsons Market and the toppings are donated from Caliches frozen custard.

The Mighty Demolitious, which has been tearing stages up in the area for years and are auditioning singers for their lead vocalist position. Their old singer had to resign due to a more hectic schedule at his day job. The band does perform some covers in their own style and has a solid catalog of originals. Lead guitarist, John Wayne has been killing it for years as a fret board master and his songwriting chops are second to none. I did reach out to him hoping that I would get more details to share about any specific skills that they are looking for. In true John Wayne fashion, his answer was “power pipes” and if you can play rhythm guitar, all the better.

If you have, a topic that you would like to see covered in a column or something I did not mention, I can always be reached at jcamerontunes@gmail.com. As always, God Bless and keep your feet on the ground, your eyes and ears always open, for you never know where you will see or hear a true gem.

When the Stage comes to life!

Alamogordo
575 Brewing Company
Thursday to Saturday Evenings
White Sands Mall Saturday evenings
Pizza 9 Thursday evenings
Desert Trails Vendor Village Saturdays and Sundays

Ruidoso
Win, Place, and Show Friday & Saturday nights
Quarters Bar & Grill Friday & Saturday nights
Downshift Brewing Co. - Riverside Various days per week.
Downshift Brewing Co. - Hidden Tap Various days per week.
Patina Lounge Thursday to Sunday

Cloudcroft
Cloudcroft Brewing Co. Friday to Sundays

Ruidoso
Backyard Beat Sunday evenings
Tularosa Distillery Some Sunday evenings

Music man: Phil Hamilton reflects on time in Ruidoso as shows approach

Sean Chaffin

Moving to Ruidoso came with some real benefits for Phil Hamilton: new venues to perform and increased exposure among a constantly changing mix of visitors and locals. Sobriety was also high on the list. The 44-year-old singer-songwriter originally from Burleson, Texas, has produced top hits on the Texas country charts, but moving to Lincoln County allowed some time to refocus.

That has paid off with a growing fanbase that sees Hamilton and his band hitting the road continuously playing at bigger and better venues.

“Getting sober when I got here changed a lot for me and my family,” he says. “I was able to use a lot of these local shows here in town to rehone in on my craft. I’ve been on tour on big stages with big artists for over 18 years, but when I came here, finding my sobriety, I had to relearn how to play these shows and enjoy it.

“Ruidoso’s kind of a reset for me in many ways. I’m very grateful for it. Things have really taken off. It’s crazy to see that we were just playing a bunch of acoustic shows around town, and as I got a little following around here and helped out with the summer concert series, my personal journey in music has flourished. I’m so busy I’m not even in town until probably the Downshift show”

That show is set for July 24 (Downshift Riverside location) with another show on July 25 at Rainmakers Resort and Club in Alto. He’s also set to perform at the Xterra World Championships in Ruidoso on Oct. 8

Songwriting Authenticity
That burst of popularity now sees Hamilton touring New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and even into the Midwest. He attributes exposure in Ruidoso as a big part of that, especially appealing to the Texas crowd.

“Texas is our biggest demographic here,” he says. “I’ve been playing Texas for so many years. It’s funny, (in Ruidoso) I met fans that had seen me a long time ago and were just excited to see me again. Then I met a lot of new folks from everywhere.”

Fans might describe



Phil Hamilton and his band play on stage.



Phil Hamilton plays the guitar.

Hamilton’s sound as a mix of country and Americana with some other elements thrown in. He takes pride in producing heartfelt songs that resonate with listeners.

Some of the artists who have inspired Hamilton include Tom Petty, the Eagles, the Allman Brothers, the Marcus King Band, Chris Stapleton, and Robert Earl Keene. Hamilton’s lyrics often focus on nature, relationships and the west, with a throwback sound that takes an audience on a journey.

“What inspires me is being authentic,” he says. “I don’t just sit down and decide to write about something or try to think of something. I have creative ideas

all the time, just different little things and riffs and melodies on the guitar.

“Usually for me, it’s just about having an emotion at the time or something that I thought about or something someone said that triggered an idea in my head. A lot of times I’ll just write these little ideas down on my phone. Being in an inspiring place, I’m able to sit and actually put them down to songs.”

“Brazos Wind” best encapsulates his overall sound and songwriting, Hamilton notes, and that song lifted his career and put him in the spotlight.

“Brazos Wind’ is my biggest song, and I am very fortunate that it has done very well in