

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival - 2018



I can't believe that Larry Joe Taylor just celebrated his 30th annual Texas Music Festival, and it was a really good celebration! [Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival](#) started in 1988 in the small Texas town of Mingus (population 235) with around 50 of Larry's friends, family, and fans and a handful of bands. Over the next 30 years as the festival grew it was forced to move to Thurber, Possum Kingdom, Glen Rose, Meridian and finally to the beautiful Melody Mountain Ranch which Larry Joe purchased - 380 acres about 5 miles north of Stephenville.

The festival has evolved from 1 day to 6 days of music, over 3000 campsites, 50 bands playing on two stages (one with VIP sky boxes), 20 or so food vendors, a mini store, a bar and stage area known as T-Bird's Pub, and over 50,000 music fans from across the US and Europe. The Festival has gained international recognition for showcasing the most talented singer/songwriters in Texas and it's well known for it's party atmosphere, lively activity in the campground, music until the sun rises, and general Texas friendliness.

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival is always a showcase for new talent, several of which attended the festival and were picking and singing around the campfire late into the night until they were discovered. Larry Joe helped them achieve their dream by allowing them to play on the main stage in front of thousands of new fans - some of those this happened to included Stoney LaRue, Jason Boland, Tejas Brothers, Six Market Boulevard, Cross Canadian Ragweed, and William Clark Green. The first time Randy Rogers performed at the Festival, he slept in the bed of Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival's dump truck due to a lack of money. For the past several years Larry Joe has sponsored a singer songwriter competition with the winner getting to play on one of the stages at the next Festival and each year a new songwriter/singer is discovered for us to enjoy and start to follow!

This year's Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival program included some excerpts from articles written over the years and here are a few quotes from those articles:

- there is no other event in Texas where you can experience such a variety of music and have an up-close campfire experience swapping songs and stories with the artists themselves
- this festival has become what every festival wishes it could be, but rarely is and the spirit, soul, and brotherhood that has helped make this event so special is still present in this new millennium version of Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival
- in April Melody Mountain Ranch changes into a thriving, bustling center of commerce, mirth, and music and a city of kindred spirits when just the week before it was quiet and peaceful and full of grazing cattle - Richard Leigh labeled this gathering "Taylorville" and the festival's 50,000 fans make the festival larger than about 50% of our small Texas towns.
- the Texas Music Festival has grown to include around-the-clock ambulance availability, a full staff of EMTs, firefighting equipment, a security force of more than 75, hundreds of volunteers and staff, free shuttle service back to Stephenville, services for RVs (water, sewer pump-out, and repairs), roaming trucks selling ice and keeping some water on the roads to keep the dust down, and a huge staff working hard to keep the porta potties clean, the trash cans empty, and doing what it takes to meet the needs of all the fans



- Larry Joe's Festival is like a bag of potato chips - nobody goes just once and several of the artists have performed at Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival for over 20 years (Texas Outside lost track, but I think we've been to at least 18 of Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festivals)
- it's a festival made for musicians by a musician and the artists love coming to Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival as much as the fans - it's the "Holy Grail" of music festivals
- according to Ray Wylie Hubbard he played the Festival in 1989 for \$50 to cover gas to drive out and do a set in the evening, he didn't think that they were charging people to attend, the small crowd of 100 or so was wonderful, enthusiastic, respectful, warm, and caring and there was no separation between the audience and the entertainer - most of the artists walked off the concrete stage at the end of their set and sat down in the dirt with the audience to watch the next guy do his songs

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival 30th Annual Festival Line-up

Like all of the Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival festivals we've attended, this year included an excellent line-up and we caught them all except two! On Monday the music started at 5:00 with Stoney LaRue playing on the stage at T-Bird's Pub - unfortunately we had other obligations and missed one of our favorites. Some friends said he was excellent as usual.

Tuesday and each of the following mornings, starting at 10 in T-Bird's Pub bar, Randy Brown and friends entertained us at what is known as Bloody Mary Mornings. I can't think of a better way to start the day - a spicy Zing Zang Bloody Mary and music from some good singer/songwriters.



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Tuesday Line-up On The Bud Light Stage

Larry Joe Taylor and Friends



Deryl Dodd



Reckless Kelly



Aaron Watson



The weather was great on Tuesday, the music was fantastic, and the beer was cold - what a fantastic day of music!

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Wednesday Line-up on the Allsup's Stage

Songwriter Competition Winner



Richard Leigh



Kaitlin Butts



Radney Foster



Following the music on the Allsup's Stage on Wednesday, one of our favorites, Tommy Alverson put on a entertaining show on the stage in T-Bird's Pub.



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Wednesday Line-up on the Bud Light Stage

Randall King



Flatland Cavalry



Mike Ryan



Casey Donahew Band



Fans Of Larry Joe Taylor's Festival



Cody Johnson



Another day of some excellent Texas singer/songwriters. Hated to see the day end! It was a tad cold and the fans were bundled up in heavy jackets, blankets, sleeping bags, and more to keep warm - but very few of them left!



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Thursday Line-up on the Allsup's Stage

Keith Sykes



Grant Gilbert



Mike & the Moonpies



**Walt Wilkins & the
Mystiqueros**



Mike McClure & Cody Canada



Ray Wylie Hubbard



At 5 on the stage in T-Bird's Pub another one of our favorites, the Coalition comprised of Larry Joe Taylor, Deryl Dodd, and Dave Perez of the Tejas Brother, entertained us (as we sipped Bloody Mary's and margaritas in the air conditioning) for an hour or so. And then we moved out to the Bud Light Stage area.



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Thursday Line-up on the Bud Light Stage

Prophets & Outlaws



Shane Smith & the Saints



Cory Morrow



Wade Bowen



**Fans of Larry Joe Taylor's
Festival**



Randy Rogers Band



We started another day of music and fun Friday at around 10 with some music with Randy Brown and his friends and more Bloody Mary's.



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Friday Line-up on the Allsup's Stage

Michael Hearne



Chris Colston



Davin James



Bri Bagwell



Max & Heather Stalling



Gary P. Nunn



At 5:00 on the T-Bird's Pub stage Eleven Hundred Springs put on a entertaining and fun show for an hour.



And the music started on the Bud Light stage around the same time that Eleven Hundred Springs started playing and the lineup included:

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Friday Line-up the Bud Light Stage

Read Southall Band



Kevin Fowler



Koe Wetzel



Fans of Larry Joe Taylor's Festival



Josh Abbott Band



Fans of Larry Joe Taylor's Festival



After four full days of music, socializing, lots of drinking, some good food, and more fun than I deserve, I was starting to get pretty tired and looked forward to sleeping in until at least 11 when I needed to kick start the day with a couple Bloody Mary's. I woke up on Saturday a little disappointed that this was our last day for Bloody Mary Morning with Randy Brown and a full day of music. I'll probably have withdrawal symptoms on Sunday afternoon and make myself a Bloody Mary and turn the radio up loud on a country western station, and sit down in my lawn chair in the living room and relax.

Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Saturday Line-up on the Allsup's Stage

Terri Hendrix and Lloyd Maines



Tribute to Artists



Tejas Brothers



The "Tribute to Artists" was outstanding and a very nice touch by LJT and friends. Several artists would sing one song of each of the eight artists that have passed on to a music venue in heaven. The final song, a tribute to Rusty Wier who was a long-time performer at the Festival, filled the stage with 12 of the artists all

singing Rusty Wier's "Don't It Make You Wanna Dance." What a fantastic tribute to some of the best in the business.



Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Saturday Line-up on the Bud Light Stage

Mark McKinney



Josh Weathers



Parker McCullum



Roger Creager



Larry Joe Taylor



William Clark Green



When the music ended on the Bud Light, anybody that was over 21, still awake, sober enough to find T-Bird's Pub stage, and still had some energy gathered around the stage for a late-night set with Kody West - I was in bed snoring!

Wow, what a fantastic 6 days of music from some Texas Music Festival veterans and several very good first timers. Every set was great! Thank you Taylors for a perfect line-up of some of the best Texas singer/songwriters.

Camping at Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival



Each night after the music ended on the main stage and in T-Bird's Pub lots of fans moved back to the campground for partying and singing and picking around the campfires - some until the sun came up. And they did that each night! How do they do that????

The Melody Mountain Campground is always alive with laughter, music, games (washers, ladder golf, frisbee, bean bag toss, cards, dominos, and more), and the smell of everything from bacon to BBQ. All of the campsites are assigned and everybody that pays for a site gets first choice on that same site for the following year. Which means you'll see several tents and campers forming a roundup with their friends and family from previous years and it's always fun to reacquaint with the neighbors you met the year before as well as meet some new fellow music and party lovers. There are over 100 sites with water and electricity and most of them are reserved each year. The rest of sites have no water and electricity (generators are allowed) but water and porta potties are strategically placed through the campground. Hot showers are available for a small fee.

It's fun to wonder through the campground to catch up with old friends and meet new people and stop in for a beer, a song, or a game. And you'll be amazed at what people will bring to get a few hours of sleep at Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival. You'll find tents and hammocks next to \$300,000 motor homes, mattresses on the ground or in a truck bed, converted school buses, very old VW campers, couches, and one year we found a very tall stranger sleeping in the front seat of our Jeep - he and I both had no idea how he got in there! When we finally got him awake and out of the Jeep, he staggered down the road in search of his campsite!



The Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Fans

Good music, a lively campground, BYOB, and some fun and friendly music fans all contribute to making Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival one of the best music festivals in Texas. And the people watching is fantastic with a variety of interesting outfits, lots of lively singing to every song, some dancing, plenty of ways to inbide from beer bongs, wine bladders, jello shots, huge coolers loaded to the brim with booze and beer, and a couple kegs as well as a home bar with 5 taps for liquor.



Click on this link to see more [Larry Joe Taylor Texas Music Festival Fans](#)

The vast majority of the fans are younger (19 to 28) and there are tons of college students from Texas A&M, Rice, UT Dallas and Austin, and what seems like the entire student body from Stephenville's Tarleton State. The rest of the fans range from 3 to 93 and all seem to love Texas music and having a good time. It can get rowdy but everyone is friendly and outgoing and the security staff keeps things under control. The vast majority of the younger set try to get as close as they can to the front of the stage and they are packed in shoulder to shoulder and cooler to cooler which are used for beer as well as stands to see over the crowds. Us older folks and families set up our lawn chairs and canopies much farther back from the stage to listen to the music and watch all the action - the acoustics are outstanding and the two huge jumbo trons give us a good view of the bands playing on stage.



The Food & Merch Vendors at LJT's Texas Music Festival

Around the perimeter of the field in front of the main stage are lots of vendors selling a variety of tasty food to keep us fat and happy and somewhat sober! There's everything from BBQ to gyros to Asian noodles, chicken and sausage on a stick, burgers and hot dogs, pizza, funnel cakes, fried alligator, fries, and lots more! The merch booth for selling the artists t-shirts, CDs, and koozies is huge and does a thriving business.



For next year you should look into the variety of sponsor and VIP packages which can include some or all of the above: back stage reserved seating or sky boxes above the stage (the view is unbelievable); mention in the program and on the jumbo tron; free very good dinners ranging from pork and gravy, fajitas, chicken enchiladas, beans, potatoes, mac & cheese, and more; a backstage full bar; a VIP campground with water and electricity; and clean VIP facilities -very important potties which are air conditioned and have hot and cold running water. And you'll have lots of opportunities to meet some of the artists hanging around back stage.,



The Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival Staff & Volunteers

The Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival staff and volunteers are in the hundreds and they do an excellent job of making the festival fun, safe, and painless for all of us. The stage managers do an excellent job of getting one band off the stage and the next one playing in a short period of time and all-in-all Larry Joe Taylor's Texas Music Festival is a very well run festival. Our thanks go out to all of you and congrats to the Taylors (Larry Joe, Sherry, Martha, and Zack) on their 30 year anniversary and for another outstanding festival. See you next year.

