

# ARTS & CULTURE

## Riffs, Roams and Raves: *A Weekly Column*

*Riffs, Roams and Raves uncovers the creative, noteworthy and accomplished in the Wimberley Valley and beyond with tips on who to hear, where to go and what to see from staff reporter Teresa Kendrick.*

Teresa Kendrick  
Staff Reporter

### Riff: Sean Slater

Last weekend I saw San Antonio bluesman Sean Slater perform. On the thin side, goateed and sporting a porkpie hat, he certainly looked the part. At first glance he radiated a benign, if somewhat terse, stage presence. A few bars into his opening number, I began to appreciate his focus and within seconds heard a musician with solid electric guitar chops, precise rhythm, and pitch perfect vocals.

Several more songs into his set and he warmed from a stock-still stance to a cool, understated shuffle. He covered “Black Water” by the Doobie Brothers and “In the Air Tonight” by Phil Collins, nailing the vocals and Collins’ drum solos by knocking on the body of his acoustic guitar as he played. He went on to deliver “Blackhole Sun” by

Sound Garden and Seger’s “Here I am On the Road Again.” While he didn’t give us much of his original blues during his short set, I listened to his brawny number, “The Blues Kidd” from his electronic press kit. I liked it and played it through twice and then again. His traditional blues cut, “Getting’ My Revenge” that he performs with his band The Authentics, delivered sound effects that only added to the lyrics and meaty bass. His superb instrumental “Spoonful of Funk” made me want to fly straight to the pearly gates of funky town. It’s the best thing I’ve heard in years. Listen to that one on headphones.

The guy is a staple in the San Antonio area as well as the Hill Country west, although I’m not sure he’s made it to the Wimberley circuit. He has special dispensation to perform at the San Antonio airport and

gets kudos for his solid work ethic. Besides his original compositions, he covers classic rock from Dylan, Marley, Creedence, Clapton, Steppenwolf, Neil Young, Tom Petty and other artists we love. But I want to hear a lot more of his original stuff.

Offstage Sean was warm and easy to approach. I lobbied his manager to bring him to Wimberley soon. Once heard, you’ll want to put Sean Slater on the top of your playlist. For more, visit [seanslatermusic.com](http://seanslatermusic.com).

### Roam: Boerne and a Twit of the Week

My roam this week took me 55 miles SW of Wimberley to the German town of Boerne. I saddled up to witness a gathering I’d eagerly anticipated for weeks — the “Grown Up Cup,” a Parks and Recreation event. Advertised as a Field Day for adults, challenges included shaking ping pong balls out

of a plastic thing strapped to the waist, moving a hula hoop down a line of team members without using hands and “Flip cup and giant beer pong.” Later I learned I’d misread that pursuit as the “Flip cup and giant beer BONG.”

Other challenges that smacked of kiddie birthday parties were promoted: a human wheelbarrow race, giant Jenga, leapfrog and the stunningly lackluster “Unraveling a decorative streamer with one hand.” Teams of four to six were to compete. I hoped there wouldn’t be bouncy houses.

While I drove, I anticipated a Hillco version of Monty Python’s “Upper Crust Twit of the Year” tourney. Instead of contestants in lumpy tweed suits and Trilbies, I pictured the Texas team in shiny mesh shorts and tank tops. While the Twits approached each challenge by leading with their

teeth, I knew our guys could belly up to the initial heats with confidence. And while the Twits proved maladroit at jumping over a line on the ground, I felt the Boerne boys could shake their balls, hoop a hula, and do something with a bong with well-rehearsed aplomb.

As I closed in on Northrup Park on Boerne’s west side, YouTube “Epic Fail” videos came to mind. So did the “You Had One Job [to do]” meme of workers who screw up royally on the job. I was ready for wild blunders, some accidentally inappropriate touching and plenty of outrageous fun. I was primed.

The place was full of cars. The lady next to me in the parking lot said, yes, she’d heard of the Grown Up Cup event, but the game I mentioned was, “Flip cup and giant beer pong,” she said. That was the first thing that went wrong.

Next, I hiked 25 minutes in full sun to a field on the other side of the 100-acre park. Halfway there, I steeled my resolve with affirmations like, “I love the burn,” “Blisters build character” and “I get off on pain.”

I arrived panting like a bulldog and hit the bleachers with relief. While unenthusiastically toasting my buns on the aluminum planks, I focused on the field. Participants in royal blue uniforms were warming up, tossing balls to each other and stretching.

After what looked like an inning, it began to dawn on me that this was not the “Grown up Cup” contest I’d sought out with gusto.

After several inquiries, I learned that the event had not materialized. Despite due diligence in the form of phone calls to the Parks and Rec crew earlier in the week,