

Top honors for members of local house band

Comal Country Music Show Band members named Entertainers of the Year



Submitted photo

Tara and Paul Schlesinger of Taylor are presented Entertainers of the Year awards by Roger Viersé, director of the Country Music Hall of Fame of Gatesville. The ceremony was held at the Comal Country Music Show in New Braunfels on December 20, 2016. Photo by Donna Schlesinger.

Paul and Tara Schlesinger of Taylor were recently named Entertainers of the Year by the Country Music Hall of Fame of Gatesville, Texas.

The announcement took place at the December Comal Country Music Show in New Braunfels, where the Schlesingers perform as members of the house band on a monthly basis.

Roger Viersé, director of the Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame, presented the Schlesingers with certificates and a trophy in recognition of their outstanding accomplishments and musical abilities.

Paul had previously been inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2012 and named its Country & Swing Artist of the Year in 2014.

"Tara and Paul mean an awful lot to the members of the Hall of Fame, and to a lot of people around the country, as they sing and play everywhere," says Viersé. "It was our distinct honor to induct Paul into the Hall of Fame. I felt he had everything going for him in the right direction. Then he went and got married ... and things only improved!"

The Gatesville Country Music Hall of Fame holds a show every month in their city auditorium, and the Schlesingers were featured performers in September.

Of all the entertainers who

performed throughout the year, the Hall of Fame's directors felt the Schlesingers deserved their highest annual recognition.

Due to the Schlesingers' travel schedule, they opted for the presentation to be made on stage at the Comal Country Music Show, rather than the Gatesville Hall of Fame.

Paul is a fiddle player and vocalist, and his wife Tara is a pianist and vocalist.

Paul began performing as a guest at the Comal Country Music Show in 2008, and joined its house band in 2011. Tara joined the house band in the fall of 2016, when keyboardist and show producer Johnnie Pfiel opted to retire from the stage.

Paul and Tara perform regularly at the Lee and Milam County Cowboy Churches, and once a month for the South Austin Senior Dance Club as members of the Stardusters band.

The Comal Country Music Show is held the third Tuesday of every month at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 111 Landa St, in New Braunfels at 7:30 p.m.

The show, going strong into its 18th year, is produced by local music legend Johnnie Pfiel. Guitarist Chuck Woods serves as musical director.

Rounding out the house band are Fruit Balderas, drums; Sally Carlson, rhythm

guitar; Vernon Doege, steel guitar; Lynn Poe, bass; Tara Schlesinger, keyboard; and Paul Schlesinger, fiddle. Joyce Poe serves as emcee, and no show is complete without the assistance of Johnnie's wife, Jewell.

Each show features three professional guest stars, backed by the house band. There is a \$5 per-person door donation which goes to Knights of Columbus charitable programs. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and refreshments are always available. The show is family friendly and smoke-free, and no alcohol is sold.

Paul is a 22-year employee of the Texas Dental Association in Austin. His band, the Knights of Texas Swing, performs at many Central Texas venues, including Patsy's Café in Austin.

His latest CD, "Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing," was released earlier this year, and unites Paul with many renowned western swing performers whose recording histories date back to the 1940s.

The CD has been nominated for an Academy of Western Artists Award in Western Swing, and earned a 5-star review in the July issue of Country Music People, an internationally distributed magazine from the UK.

Their November issue

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features a 4-page interview and pictorial focusing on Paul's music background.

As of December, the CD has held the number one position for the most requested album on the nationally distributed "Swingin' West" western swing radio show for the past 4 months.

The track "This Song Is Just For You," held the number two position for 3 months on the same chart. The CD can be purchased from Paul's website, www.paulschlesinger.com, or at the Comal Country Music Show.

Tara is an assistant activities coordinator at the SP-JST Skilled Nursing facility in Taylor. She has a love for classic country, southern gospel, swing, and oldies rock-style music. She played

in local bands around the Bastrop area, including the country-gospel group Gettin' on Track, as well as the Hwy 304 Band, playing everything from the Eagles, Georges Strait and Jones, Patsy Cline, Fats Domino, Floyd Cramer, and Jerry Lee Lewis.

Paul also performs with Glen Collins and the Alibis, a classic-country show and dance hall band who have been featured on the syndicated television program "Songwriters Across Texas," and play all over Central Texas, including regular dances in area venues such as the Geronimo VFW, and the Silver Center in Seguin.

For more information, be sure to visit www.facebook.com/schlesinger.paul

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