

Skateboard acrobat

staff photo by John Ryan

Larry Tharp, a junior petroleum engineering major from Houston, demonstrates his skills with a skateboard. Tharp was enjoying the cool breeze during a session on the ramp in the Grove.

Record collectors tour U.S.

Couple keeps rare discs

United Press International
DALLAS — Wendy and Jim Berlowitz will go to most any lengths — and whatever transportation can be thumbed up from the edge of a highway — to get to a rare recording.

The self-termed "vinyl junkies" have devoted five years to criss-crossing the country, mining thrift stores, flea markets and record conventions for the black gold that accounts for a motherlode of musical treasures they value at \$50,000.

"This is where we keep the treasure," the 35-year-old Berlowitz said, placing a key into the lock of a rented storage room at a Dallas warehouse. "You're one of the few people we've ever let see where we actually keep our records."

Mixed with the musty smell of suitcases and cardboard boxes lining the walls is a virtual who-was-who revue of early Fifties and Sixties recording artists — posing, picking and grinning from near mint-condition record covers.

The collection spans a vein running through rhythm-and-blues to country, rockabilly, Top

40 and a few Broadway show numbers.

"That's one of the things most people don't understand," said Mrs. Berlowitz, a former English instructor at the University

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of Oklahoma in Norman, Okla. She flips through a stack of records that included Marilyn Monroe's mid-Fifties movie-recording version of "The River of No Return."

"We like all kinds of music and we only collect the songs we like. Most collectors specialize in

a single field — like old rhythm-and-blues is popular in the Northeast or rockabilly in the Southwest — and they have a difficult time understanding two people who are serious about collecting a variety of records."

The couple has no car because Berlowitz, a former high school teacher, "got tired of spending money on gas and repairs, and we always seem to get a ride to where we're going."

They spent last weekend hitchhiking through Texas and Colorado, wheeling, dealing and successfully bidding on rare recordings by Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly.

"We will never, never ever sell these records no matter what," said Berlowitz lifting the recordings from his backpack. "These we keep. We don't even play them. We might scratch them."

They paid \$500 and \$150 in record trades for "Buddy Holly Country Wise," a limited edition album released in Holland six years after the Lubbock, Texas, singer died in a 1959 airplane crash.

Mrs. Berlowitz, 33, said the

record was the only 10-inch version known to exist and was one of the rarest Holly recordings in the world.

Last Friday, at a used record store auction, they acquired a 45 RPM Presley record that was issued only to radio stations in 1957 — by outlasting bidders from Arizona and Florida and paying \$930.

"There's a high value on the covers," her husband said. "The paper is the first thing to go. People throw them (covers) away, they get torn up, they're lost. Sometimes they can be worth more than the record."

Berlowitz, a former high school teacher, said the couple began their collection five years ago when they discovered they could earn income by obtaining old records from vending companies and radio stations, acquiring them at a discount or no charge and reselling them.

They say they travel daily and friends handle the couple's mail while income gathered from trading and sales generate enough cash to pay for motel and restaurant costs of about \$1,000 a month.

Write-in votes re-elect mayor

United Press International
POTH — Al Kollodziej has been trying to find out who organized the write-in campaign to return him for an unwanted 13th year as mayor, but the only response he has gotten is "gins."

Kollodziej, 44, was re-elected by write-in vote last weekend with more than a two-to-one

margin over two announced candidates even though he had refused to enter this year's race because he thought the town needed a change in leadership.

The mayor, a native of the small Wilson County town located about 30 miles southeast of San Antonio, said Tuesday he did not even hear about the write-in campaign until two days

before the election. "I haven't found out yet who organized it (the write-in effort)," Kollodziej said. "Everybody I ask just grins. Nobody will admit it."

Kollodziej, a Pearl beer distributor, garnered 193 votes against retiree Walter Voges' 85 votes and fertilizer dealer Paul Lee Casares' 83.

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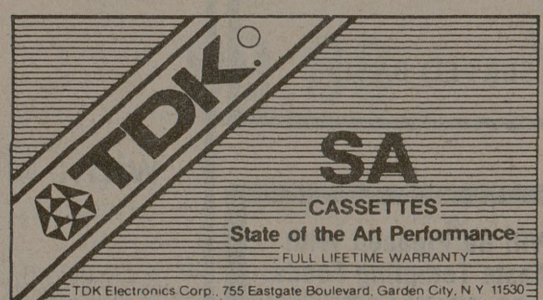
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