

The Barn Dance Opera Country Music Journal

Vol. 11 1996

Autumn Edition

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A NEW BARN DANCE ERA began June 29, 1996 at HOWICK'S 140 th. ANNIVERSARY

The lights came on, the audience of about a thousand people at the Howick Community Centre went quiet, and Johnny Brent gave that familiar opening "From coast to coast, people like old time music most, and here from the Howick Community Centre, it's time for the CKNX Saturday Night Barn Dance!" The Barn Dance Band started into the Ranch Boys old theme song "Down Yonder", and once more the Barn Dance was under way, again carried on CKNX-AM radio, just like the old days!

The show brought back many of the Barn Dance veterans - Earl and Martha Heywood, Ernie King, Larry Mercey, Bill Mankiss, Lloyd Bank, Hank Bedard, Mary

Elliott, and Bruce Robertson, some Circle 8 Ranch alumni - Hugh Elder and Ronald Coulthard - as well as old standbys like Vic Pasowisty on violin, Lynn Russwurm on bass and Grant Heywood on drums, as part of the Barn Dance Band. President Len Love, another former Circle Eight musician, acted as stage manager for the show, getting the performers on and off quickly at the proper times.

Also featured were the McMichael Sisters (dancers) and a local act - Town and Country Sound.

Many of the original stars of the Barn Dance are no longer with us of course - Don Robertson, Ross Mann, Jack

Kingston, Reg Bitton, Ward Allen, Mel Lavigne and others, and as time goes on there will inevitably be more losses, so we have to have some new performers coming on. The Howick show introduced some very talented younger acts - spectacular fiddler Melissa Diebold, and "New Country" band DETOUR from Tara, Roger Williamson, Paul Williamson, Pete Myles and Brian Mole. These performers demonstrated that (1) country music is still very much alive, and (2) country music is changing! Most of us old timers kind of preferred it the way it was, but the new sounds have a great appeal to the younger folks, and if the Barn Dance is to survive, it has to move with the times!

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**The Barn Dance
Historical Foundation**

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Phone (519) 357-3021

Founder, Honorary President, Advisor
Earl Heywood

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A New Barn Dance Era - continued.....

We plan to introduce more new performers in future Barn Dance Shows.

If you were at the Howick show, we hope you enjoyed it, and we'd like your comments, pro or con. We'll have some more Barn Dances coming up - we'll keep you posted - and if any organization in your area might be interested in hosting one, just call us at (519) 357-3021, and we'll take it from there.

THE EDITOR'S REPORT

Ron Coulthard

BARN DANCE LIVE! - The Blyth Festival's play about the Barn Dance, developed rather than written by Paul Thompson, (I don't believe there was ever a written script), which was to end its run on August 23rd, was extended to September 6th. Many of us really couldn't understand how Mr. Thompson was going to make a stage play on this subject work, but he did, with the help of talented actors who presented very believable portrayals. Even to those of us who knew the real people, of original Barn Dance performers like Earl Heywood, Ernie King, John Brent, Cactus Mac, Don Robertson, and others. Remember these folks are actors, not musicians, but they did their own music - the only professional musician involved was musical director Anne Lederman (violin) - and it all worked very

well! All the actors played multiple roles, but Carolyn Hay, who did all the female parts - Cora Robertson, Mary Elliott, John Brent's secretary, plus some other wives and girl friends - was exceptional. She's also a very good singer!

I was involved, along with Doug and John McNall, Wayne Riehl and Grant Heywood, in doing three parties after the Barn Dance Live shows, across the road in the Blyth Inn. We did a lot of old numbers from the Barn Dance era, as authentically as we could (I've rarely played steel guitar standing up since pedal steels came in, but that's the way we did it in the old days. When you are more or less standing on one foot, with your other one on the volume pedal, you feel a bit like a flamingo. My legs must have been stronger way back then! We were joined by the Barn Dance Live! cast members, and a few other guests - Hugh Elder, Larry Mercey and Sharon Strong. I really enjoyed these little trips down memory lane. (Linda Murray and Trevor Riehl from Stratford also played some of these parties, which were sponsored by Formosa Springs (Algonquin) Brewing.)

I've been told on good authority the Blyth Festival will be remounting this show next year, so if you didn't see it this season, (and even if you did), make sure you do in 1997!

Above all don't miss an exciting success story from the Folks at the Blyth Festival on BARN DANCE LIVE in our next edition of the Barn Dance Journal.

THE FIDDLER'S CONVENTION - September 29th. at the Wingham Legion, will have taken place by the time you read this. This concept, based on a similar show at Renfro Valley in Kentucky, sounds like a great idea to me - a welcome change from fiddle contests. If you were there, hope you enjoyed it, and again, we'd like your comments.

We will have a complete story on our First Canadian Ole Time Fiddlers Convention and Ole Time Fiddle concert in our next issue of the quarterly Barn Dance Opera Journal. (Winter edition.)

*Here is a good pun
People who know the least
are the ones who argue the most.*

CHRISTMAS IS COMING

- sooner than you might wish.

When you are planning your
GIFT BUYING

don't forget our Barn Dance Mugs (\$5.)
and souvenir Calendars (\$10.)

I'm sure that these would make great
presents for someone on your list.

They are available from any of the
Directors, or from Ernie King Music in
Wingham.

The Calendars are also available from
Lynn Russwurm,
by mail -

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Just send Lynn a cheque for \$12.00
(the extra \$2. is to cover postage),
he will send your calendar by return
mail.

Just in case you haven't seen one, these
calendars cover 18 months - till December
1997, and have 36 pictures of former Barn
Dance stars - Cactus Mac, Ross Mann,
Ernie King, Ward Allen, etc. They are real
collector's items you'll cherish for years to
come. Don't miss out!

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**MORE GOOD THINGS
COMING UP**

Don't forget Larry Mercey's tour to Wheeling, Renfro Valley and Cincinnati, November 29th to December 2nd, and as always we're working on plans for future events.



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Howdy Folks:-

Here we are once again amid the falling leaves of Gold, Amber, Red and Brown" and the worldwags on. This is Autumn - the fall Edition of the quarterly Barn Dance Opera Journal and to tell the truth we have more news than we can cope with after a busy, busy, summer. With the Blyth Festival of the Arts running the stage show BARN DANCE LIVE, to record crowds all summer long. TV and radio have been spreading the message about the Barn Dance Historical Foundation and it's projects, and there is still more to come. To top it off the new year 1997 is the 60th. ANNIVERSARY of "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance" and plans are now underway to celebrate all next year.

Those of you who bought tickets on the big annual Barn Dance Draw for the Western Star Queen size quilt, by Bluevale, Ont. ladies, the draw was made on Oct.2 at 11:45am on CKNX Radio 920, staff announcer Bonnie Holiday conducted the draw with Murray Gaunt assisting. The winner was Terry Serson, of RR1 Gananoque, Ont. Proceeds this year for the sale of these tickets netted the Foundation approx. \$1,200. *Our thanks to all who supported it.*

Anyone who has a problem with their membership, failed to get their ID card or a possible error please contact June Therian, Membership chairman at Box 68 Wingham, Ont. NOG2W0

Buy a membership for a friend or relative for Christmas, it's only \$20., they will appreciate it and you will be helping the Foundation. Always keep in mind - no matter what -

THE SHOW MUST GO ON.

Earl Heywood,

Founder and
Honourary President, Director and Advisor.



EVENTS Notes 'N News



Anne Dirvin School of Dancing in Hanover Celebrated a 10th. Anniversary this year and seen on local Cable TV stations.

Quarry Press in Kingston, Ont. released the first edition of the Encyclopedia of Canadian Country Music, compiled by Rick Jackson. The book contains record listings and biographies of almost 200 Canadian performers from the Wilf Carter era to Shania Twain. More than 20 artists in this book got their start on "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance". A fine master piece it is, now available in book stores across Canada.

Ronnie Prophet reports from Nashville he has been touring the USA and places in British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick this summer.

Glory Anne did some acting in the Sam Jones story and both attended the Ottawa Valley Hall of Fame TV Special the last week in September.

Watch the CBC TV Network coming up soon it's their production of a TV Special on "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance". If and when it will be on your TV screen it would be a Sunday at 12 noon. Sorry we don't have the final word on it.

Grant Heywood's Desert Dolphins on Quality Records are riding the charts on over 80 radio stations across Canada. Grant Heywoods vocal on "Hang of the Heartache" is close to NO.10 as we go to print..

Michael T.Wall the singing Newfoundlander has a hot tune out on a single "Red Cadillac" from his brand new release on CD Rock-a Billy Days.

Stevedor Steve of St. Johns, New Brunswick, has a new CD "New Brunswick Spirit" and **Hal Willis** the New Brunswick Lumberjack has a new release of his best songs on CD.

Mel Phillips of St. Thomas makes headlines again. Winner in 1994 for the King Eagle Award for special airplay, also a Canadian Songwriters Award. He is now nominated by the Entertainer Network Magazine in Nashville Tennessee USA for best Canadian Male artist of the year.

Drop us a line.



MEMBERSHIP

We Invite You

To Become a member of the
Barn Dance Historical Foundation

by sending your
Name and Address

with the \$20. fee to:-

Box 68, Wingham, Ontario
NOG 2W0



On behalf of the Board of Directors
and over 400 supporting members of our
Foundation - may our deepest sympathy
go out to the Jamieson Family.

In Memory of

Sandra Jamieson

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She got out her tennis racket that she called her air guitar strummed and sang a song for Connors. Of course Stompin' Tom autographed her tennis racket and presented her with a huge poster of himself that she mounted on the wall of the restaurant along with several Barn Dance Stars.

Before her untimely death, Sandra was President of the Woman's Business Association, President of the Optimist Club and Financial Treasurer of the Barn Dance Historical Foundation. Her husband John, and she were the joint Membership Chairpersons.

As a member of the 1st and 2nd Board of directors, Sandra Jamieson is to be highly credited for dedicating many hours to fund raising goals. One special interest was her sincere contribution to establishing a financial policy that the first \$10,000.00 raised., to be permanently reserved in GIC's in a Building and Development Fund.. to serve as the starter of a Corporate Fund Raising drive. Sandra always believed if funds in the Bank account reached a low level it was the duty of the Board of Directors to get busy with a fund raiser, not defeat our purpose on a project we have already established.

In the Spring of 1994 Sandra was diagnosed with cancer but remained on the Board until the end. Before passing she had often said "Sometimes we have dreams that die, but this dream never will die because the seeds have already been planted". Sandra firmly believed the Barn Dance Historical Foundation was well established financially, that the Board of Directors and membership would continue to support it until it becomes the reality it was meant to be.