

# The Barn Dance Opera Country Music Journal

Vol. 13 1997

Spring Edition

Price \$3.95

## Introducing ..... THE BARN DANCE PIONEER AWARD

The dictionary defines a pioneer as one who takes a direction to prepare a path for others to follow. The CKNX Saturday Night Travelling Barn Dance became the longest running radio program of its kind in Canada because a group of people worked together to prepare the way. Many of those pioneers are no longer with us but their contributions are felt today through the memories in the hearts and minds of the thousands of people who had so much fun at the Barn Dances over the years.



They are also a large part of the spirit of our organization and as a result it will be our privilege to make a formal recognition of their contributions in the form of a Pioneer Award to be presented to the recipient or surviving spouse or family members at our live Barn Dances.

Our committee has chosen the first recipients for the awards and will be presenting the certificates as part of a tribute to be shown on video during the Barn Dance stage program. In addition, a live musical tribute will be presented by a guest or a member of the Barn Dance Band.

1997 promises to be an exciting year for our organization and its members. We will be bringing the Barn Dance to six communities around mid-western Ontario. Entertainers will include

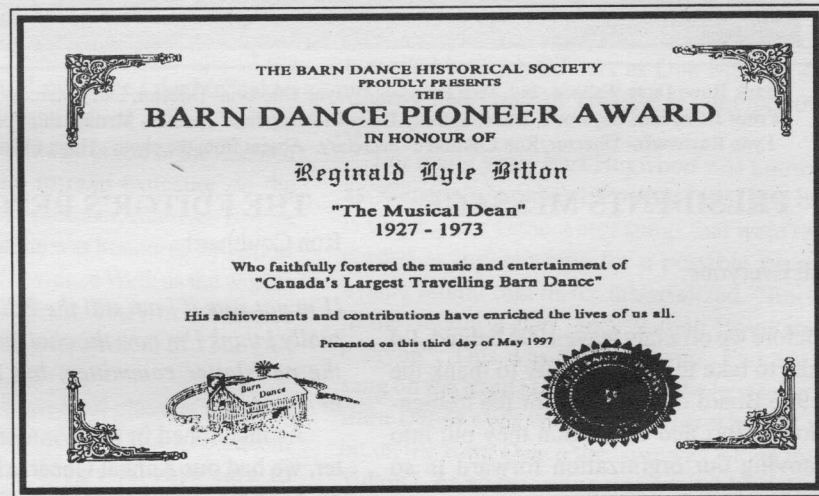
Earl and Martha Heywood, Ernie King, Hank Bedard and many others. Musicians will include old favourites like Lynn Russwurm, Lloyd Bank, Bill Mankiss, Len Love, Wayne Riehl and many others.

As has always been the Barn Dance tradition we will be featuring local talent and introducing you to some exciting new talent.

Keep watching our journal for more information on the performers and places.

Up coming Barn Dances in 1997:

May 3, Listowel  
June 7, Lucknow  
July 26, St. Clements  
Aug. 2, Brussels  
Aug. 31, Blyth - BBQ, Show & Dance  
Sept. 13, Stratford



### Musical Terms commonly misunderstood by Country - Western Musicians:-

Diminished Fifth -- An empty bottle of Jack Daniels  
Perfect Fifth -- A full bottle of Jack Daniels  
Ritard -- There's one in every family  
Relative Major -- An Uncle in the Marine Corps  
Big Band -- When the bar pays enough to bring two banjo players  
Pianissimo -- "Refill this beer bottle"

Courtesy of Jim Stewart

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**Back Row;** Dave Wallace- 2nd. Vice President, Wayne Otterbein- Director, Larry Mercey- 1st. Vice President,  
**Front Row;** Earl Heywood- Director, Betty Dale- Director, June Therrien- Membership, Lois Schistad- Treasurer,  
 Lynn Russwurm- Director, Ron Coulthard- Secretary. Absent from the photo - Hugh Elder- Legal Advisor.

## The Barn Dance Historical Society

P.O. Box 68  
Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0  
Phone (519) 357-3021

**Founder,**  
Honourary President, Advisor  
Earl Heywood

### Board of Directors 1997

President: Len Love  
1st Vice-President: Larry Mercey  
2nd. Vice-President: Dave Wallace

**Directors:**  
Ron Coulthard, Betty Dale,  
Hugh Elder, Earl Heywood, Carl Kuhn,  
Wayne Otterbein, Lynn Russwurm,  
Lois Schistad, June Therrien.

**music** (art) of the Muses - art of  
making harmonious combinations of  
tones; harmony or melody -

## PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hi Everyone:

Before we officially leave 1996 behind, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the 1996 Board of Directors for the tremendous effort and dedication they put into moving our organization forward in so many ways!

Among other accomplishments in 1996, we opened our museum, played our first "new" Barn Dance, had a very successful Fiddle Convention, became a corporation (which required a name change from "Foundation" to "Society"), and made a lot of plans for the future. Six Barn Dances are booked for 1997, and we're holding several dates in 1998 for more shows.

I'd also like to welcome our two new Board members, Carl Kuhn and Wayne Otterbein, both musicians with many years experience. I'm sure they'll help us do even greater things in the future.

Best regards to everyone; come and enjoy at least one Barn Dance this summer, and we'll keep you posted on other events coming up!

Sincerely, Len Love, President

### The Barn Dance Show

Is available to anyone wishing to stage a Live Musical Production

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## THE EDITOR'S REPORT

Ron Coulthard

*(I'm not sure if I am still the Editor - actually I think I'm now the chairperson on the newsletter committee, but anyway, here goes!)*

As mentioned in the Winter newsletter, we had our Annual General Meeting on April 6th., with reports from the Committee Chairpersons, and election of the 1997 Board of Directors. Our constitution requires that the terms of four Directors end each year, so four new Directors must be elected at the Annual Meeting.

Two members of the 1996 Board whose terms were ending - Earl Heywood and Hugh Elder, and two new people, Carl Kuhn and Wayne Otterbein, were elected, bringing our Board back up to twelve Directors. Is this a bit confusing? Don't worry. it's OK, we have a new Board, (good looking bunch aren't we?) and we're ready to move onward and upward in 1997!

As President Len mentioned in his message, we have six Barn Dances booked for this season, *see page one for the dates and places* - Blyth Aug.31, that's a Sunday. We hope to see YOU at some of these shows! We're also planning another Fiddle Convention on Sunday, October 5th. Last year's Convention was a big hit, so mark this date down in your calendar -

*Continued at right*

*The Editor's Report - Continued -*

- more details in the next newsletter. Larry Mercey and Hanover Tours are putting together another bus trip -this time to Nashville, August 21st. to 25th. Again, more details later.

Whatever you do - have a great summer!

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## BARN DANCE SOUVENIARS

Coffee Mugs - \$5.00 each.

Calendars - \$10.00 each.

Barn Dance Casette \$10.00 each.

Barn Dance CD's \$19.00 each

*(Available at all Barn Dance Concerts)*



# NEW BARN DANCE ALBUM UNVEILED IN CD & CASSETTE



Rodeo Records in Newmarket, Ont., is about to release an album of past and present Barn Dance Personalities to coincide with this year's series of Barn Dances. Over the years Rodeo has released many of our great Canadian artists and feel this addition will uncover much more of our Canadian Country Music History. Many of these artists have never been recorded, while others hold a high profile on some of the top record labels in Canada.

The Album coordinated by Lynn Russwurm probably contains the greatest collection of Canadian Country Music in Canada. Many cuts were chosen from Lynn's collection for this album, others were received from some of the artists, from the 45's and professional recordings, including jam sessions. You'll find a great cross section of so many artists who are a part of "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance" in this edition.

The title of this CD and Casette is simply:-

**"IT'S THE SATURDAY NIGHT BARN DANCE"** Featured on the front cover are photos of Boss Man Johnny Brent and The Barn Dance cast, the night of June 29, 1996, when it was again broadcast over CKNX Radio, first time since 1963.

Unable to find a good copy tape of Rossie Mann and the Ranch Boys playing the theme tune "DOWN YONDER" it was necessary to use a recording of this tune by Lloyd Bank, Bill Mankiss and Victore Pasowisty.

Listen to Hank Bedard sing "The Texas Troubadour" which he wrote in honour of Ernest Tubb. Then the Ranch Boys Quartet, comprised of Ernie King, Reg Bitton, Ross Mann and Don Robertson with the "Happy Roving Cowboy" ... (this cut is a gem and real Barn Dance History.)

Then comes the first of a number of Fiddlers who graced the Barn Dance - Wayne Riehl of the Country Versatiles, doing Kiley's Reel with the Country Cousins.

Probably the most famous of Barn Dance personalities would be The Mercey Brothers, with a song that was never released until now. This is Larry and Ray before Lloyd joined them singing "The Prisoners Dream". This got them on the

Talent Caravan Show on the CBC early in their career.

Instrumental time: here is Lloyd Bank and his steel guitar with "Carries Waltz" which he composed in honour of his mother. Then the great Ernie King with the song "In our Dreamboat Let's Pretend", written by Lynn Russwurm, Reg Bitton and Ernie King, recorded in the eighties by Ernie King and Hank MacDonald.

Who can ever forget "Luck Ambo" on the Barn Dance? A great comedian and musician fiddling the "Nervous Breakdown", a re-works of the "Joys of Quebec". Lance Russwurm sings one of his fathers songs, "Lonesome Like Me" taken from the "Hummingbird Album" of the mid-seventies. Lance is one of the talented young people to reap exposure on the Barn Dance. Remember, Maurice Boyler and his banjo, he was honoured by Arthur Godfrey and Lawrence Welk as the worlds greatest Banjo artist. You'll hear Maurice play a fantastic arrangement of "The Dill Pickle Rag".

One of the greatest classics that was never before on record is Clark Johnston, singing "Something's Always sure to Tickle Me". The singing Irishman had to sing this every Saturday night on the Barn Dance, the audience demanded it. No matter how often you heard Clark sing it, you could'nt help but laugh and laugh after he finished the song. One of our youngest sensations loaded with talent is Melissa Diebold who plays "Buck Fever Rag" on her fiddle. Another sweetheart of the Barn Dance was, Sharon Strong who sings "Fool Number One" from her Arc album of the sixties. Instrumentally you'll hear Bill Mankiss a wizard on the accordin playing "Red Wing" and "Crooked Stovepipe", accompanied by Victor Pasowisty on the fiddle.

Through the years, the Barn Dance had it's share of Yodelers and one of the best was Jack Kingston, yodelling his own - "Yodelling Cowboy" song. Slim Boucher and the Golden Prairie Cowboys were on the Barn Dance in several reincarnations. In this collection is the "Prairie Stomp" and the only record they ever made, featuring Al Cherny, Lucky

Ambo and Hap Swatridge, what a sweet group that was. Next up was Gerald Davidson of the Country Versatiles doing his recorded version of "How can I Forget" The first fiddle champion in Shelburne in 1951 and 1952 was Mel Lavigne here from his album in the late eighties doing "The Great Eastern Reel"

Hank MacDonald replaced Jack Kingston on the Barn Dance when Jack was commissioned to the Main Street Jamboree. Hank was always popular with Barn Dance audiences singing his Hank Snow songs such as "Fillipino Rose" from his Rodeo Album. Then here we have Victor Pasowisty doing his number "Jason's Tune", Victor's fiddle tunes have been recorded by such fiddlers as Don Messer, Al Cherny and Graham Townsend, among others.

For many years Earl Heywood was known as "Canada's Number 1 Cowboy" and here he is singing two Gene Autry songs that were recorded as a demo tape for a possible Autry tribute album that never materialized. "Back in the Saddle Again" and "Riding Down the Canyon". This was the first song Earl ever sang on the Barn Dance. One of the best loved Barn Dance stars was Cactus Mac who had a hit on the Barn Dance the "Squwas Along the Yukon". As no recording was available of this song, we opted for "Little Brown Jug", this was taped by Cactus Mac and the Ranch Boys at a Saturday night Barn Dance from the Radio Station on Wingham's main Street in the early 40's. Another great yodeller that once graced the Barn Dance stage had to be Terry Parker, from one of her Rodeo albums you'll hear her sing "Wide Rolling Plains". Fiddlers come and fiddlers go, but one that has remained constant is Gerry Smith of Exeter, Ontario. You'll be on your toes the minute you hear him play "The Happy Acres Twostep" One of the newer talents with Country Versatiles is Al Widmeyer, formely a member of the Golden Fiddle Music Company, just hear him singing "Honky Tonk Saturday Night". One of the best loved fiddlers who went on to fame with 25 years on the Tommy Hunter Show, on CBC-TV was Al Cherny. Within this edition Al plays the "Black Velvet Waltz" which was written by our own Rossie Mann. The Five Maids of song better known as the Howard Sisters were always a hit on every Barn Dance and you are bound to like their harmony on "Tired of Your Lies" a song they also wrote. *Continued page 4*



Howdy Folks:-

I'm sorry we are a bit late with this Edition of the Journal.

A lot of our time went into organizing six productions of the Barn Dance, with each show somewhat different to the other.

We are indeed delighted to have supporters joining us like the folks at Radio Station CKNX 920 in Wingham, the great Knechtel Food Markets throughout Southwestern Ontario, Doug Johnston's (Harvey Krotz) Ford Lincoln Mercury dealer of Listowel, and Hanover Tours with branch offices in Hanover, Kincardine and Owen Sound.

We also want to thank the CBC Television network, BBS-TV, Global TV, TVO Ontario and various other radio stations, Shaw Cable and weekly and daily newspapers, for their continuous coverage of the development of our great project.

May we also thank our volunteers, the many service clubs, the Blyth Festival of the Arts, the supporting members of the Barn Dance Historical Society, the music stores, etc who support the Journal and the entertainers who provide the entertainment and those we may have overlooked in mentioning here.

Remember THE SHOW must go on .

We appreciate your help.

**Thank You'all!**  
*Earl Heywood,*

Founder and Honourary President,  
Director and Advisor.



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NEW BARN DANCE -Continued from page 3

For the grand finale you'll hear the greatest fiddle tune Maple Sugar, written and recorded by Ward Allen, this is probably the best known and best loved fiddle tune of our time. It is doubtful if there's a fiddle player in the world who hasn't played this tune.

And there you have the lineup on what purports to be one of the greatest country statements ever made. We had some of the best and most enduring talent that ever came out of Canada, and we hope to develop more of the same as time goes on. We would like to take this opportunity to ask anyone who may have tapes of our Barn Dance people that could be utilized in another series in the future. If you know of anyone who does, please let us know as we hope to do another edition to contain a number of the Barn Dance Stars we inadvertently missed this time.

### If you write or use music, take note of SOCAN

SOCAN, Canada's performing rights society, collects license fees from music users and distributes royalties to members — songwriters and music publishers — based on performances of their work. Call or write for information about membership or license fees.



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### In Memoriam

**HAYDEN;** Laura, dearly remembered for her piano playing and a member of the original CKNX Barn Dance, passed away in her 78th. year, March 1997 in Kitchener. Survived by her husband Lloyd, two daughters Lois & Alice, one son Ross and their spouses. 13 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. Interment Wingham Cemetery.

**HOWARD,** Marie, Norma (Turner) Webster, one of the Five Maids in song "The Howard Sisters" who starred on the original CKNX Barn Dance & TV passed away in her 78th year Sept. 1996. Predeceased by her husband Bill Webster, survived by the remaining Howard Sisters, Doris, Jean, Laura, Isabelle, Margaret and their families. At rest in the Lakeview Cemetery, Sarnia, Ont.

**HILDEBRAND,** Don - well known Broadcaster who played a big role in organizing the TV format for Kitchener and Wingham TV Stations & Chatham, Wingham & St. Catharines Radio. Passed away March 1997. He is survived by his wife Meeghan and his Father & Mother of Stratford, Ont. Interment in Stratford Cemetery.

Members of the Barn Dance Historical Society extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of these great Canadian performers. REF: A1720P4BrnDanJnl.

## EVENTS Notes 'N News

The 1997 East Coast Music Awards held in Moncton, New Brunswick drew the largest crowd ever since it began in 1984. Michael T. Wall the "Singing Newfoundlander" and Stevedor, Steve was among the recipients of the "Stompin" Tom Connors Award. Our congratulations to Michael and Steve, and thank God we have people around like "Stompin" Tom Connors, for creating this Award system in Canada.

In the March issue of Country Music News, headlines were Members of the barn Dance Historical Society who made it on the country Music charts. The Rankin Family were in the 13th. place with their recording of "Roving Gypsy Boy". Quality records recording of Grant Heywood and the Desert Dolphins has now reached 33rd. place on the charts with a hot single entitled "That's the Way it Goes".

Mathew Johnston, the young Canadian Ole Time Fiddler will be appearing on shows with Judy Waymouth's dancers in Branson, Missouri, then later this year off to Europe to appear in Austria. For Mathew Johnston's tapes and CD's give him a call at Stratford, Ont. (519) 273-1545

The Shaw Cable System out of Listowel covering other towns throughout the area has been promoting the development of Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance, held in Listowel May 3rd. Len Love and Earl Heywood were seen a number of times in an interview with Don MacIntosh, on cable. More information later.

Tommy Hunter who celebrated the longest running Television Show in the History of Canadian Broadcasting, is on tour again. He observed his 50th Anniversary in the Canadian Entertainment industry, and a tribute in his honour took place at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto, to raise money for the Sick Children and the Hospital of Western Ontario. Among those attending were, Gordon Lightfoot, Johnny Paycheck, Carol Baker, Bill Anderson and Dave Broadfoot. Tommy has covered a lot of ground since he first hitched a ride from London, Ont. to Wingham, to be on the Barn Dance.



*Drop us a line.*