

The Barn Dance Opera Country Music Journal

Vol. 17 1998

Spring Edition

Price \$1.95

New Board of Directors

Sunday, April 5 was the date of our annual meeting at the Wingham Legion. Four new members are voted in each year to replace four whose term is up. A director may serve no more than two terms.

Directors chosen were Ron Coulthard (2nd term), Shirley Russwurm (who finished out Larry Mercey's term), and two newcomers to the board, Kim Souch and Al Widmeyer. Also, Grant Heywood was appointed to fulfill Betty Dale's term, who tendered her resignation due to lack of time.

Offices filled from within the ranks are President: Wayne Otterbein; 1st Vice President: June Therrien; 2nd Vice President: Lynn Russwurm; Secretary: Shirley Russwurm; Treasurer: Lois Schistad.

Welcome Aboard!!



Pictured - left to right: Earl Heywood, Gerry Boppre, Hugh Elder, Len Love (past president), June Therrien, Wayne Otterbein, Lynn Russwurm, Al Widmeyer, Lois Schistad, Kim Souch, Shirley Russwurm, Ron Coulthard. Absent from photo was Grant Heywood.

How Well Do You Know Your Barn Dance?

The results of our first contest were a bit disappointing. We only received two letters and both were wrong, so maybe we made it too hard. Two former members of the Barn Dance identified them verbally, but we have to have letters to make them valid. Now for the answer: - Jean and Les Dowell, who were known as The Colorado Kids. You'll be hearing a lot more of them in the near future. A short biography on them is included in this issue of the newsletter. We have included them on our Vol. 2 of "It's The Saturday Night Barn Dance", which will be out shortly, with a song they recorded in 1947 when they were with the Barn Dance, also a brand new recording from 1998, 51 years apart, and they're still singing, isn't that amazing. They have also been booked for an appearance with this

year's Barn Dance at St. Clements, be sure you come out and hear them. Just Super!!

This month's contest should be a bit easier, we're not going quite as far back. This young man made a number of guest appearances with his band from 1948 on, and in 1951 he came aboard the Barn Dance as a regular and stayed for several seasons. First letter to send us his name will receive a Barn Dance, Vol. 2 CD and a 1997 souvenir calendar, second letter with the correct answer will receive a cassette and calendar, but be sure to submit your answer by **letter** to:

CONTEST

**c/o Lynn Russwurm,
Box 63**

Elmira, Ontario N3B 2Z5



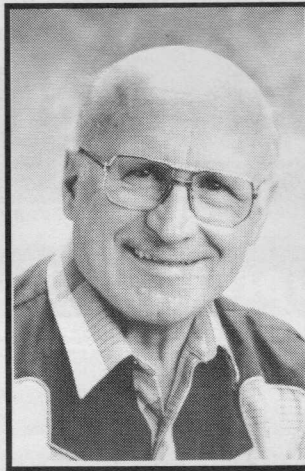
The Editor Speaks

So we're still a little behind with the newsletter, which should be rectified in the near future. Actually we held it up to get the results of the annual meeting and a report on the new Board of Directors. I predict an exciting year ahead for our society as we move toward the end of a century, there are many exciting things in store for us and the coming season of Barn Dances is just an example.

We will have another album release on the Barn Dance, "It's The Saturday Night Barn Dance, Vol. 2", with once again 28 songs for a total of seventy minutes of Barn Dance Music. We've located recordings and tapes that we didn't even know existed: people like Roy Thompson, Jean and Les Dowell, The Colorado Kids, and The Seiler Twins, with a song that they don't even remember singing. As we were getting ready to go in and master the tape at Rodeo Records, we uncovered two more tapes with performances from Western Roundup, Circle 8 Ranch and the Barn Dance itself, enough material for another volume next year if required. Hearing these things sent a shiver up my back to realize the great music that went out on the airwaves from CKNX, that wasn't taped and was lost to us forever, I'll be eternally grateful for what we do have, and once again I would ask any of our readers, if you do have anything from the past, we would dearly love to hear from you.

As if past performances weren't enough, we decided to go into the studio and record some brand new songs by artists that had never recorded before, or had never recorded our kind of material. I'm elated by the results which you can hear when the album is released, sometime before our first Barn Dance in May. We have Hughie and Linda Elder, Mike Slauenwhite, a bluegrass instrumental number by Al Widmeyer, which you've gotta hear, Jean and Les, The Colorado Kids, Grant Heywood, coming back home to traditional country music, Bruce Robertson, and a great steel guitar number by Ron Coulthard, you ain't heard nothin' yet. These tunes were recorded at Uncle Gerry's Place, a 16-track facility in Kitchener with super

by Lynn Russwurm



reasonable rates. Anybody interested in recording, call Gary Hintz at (519) 744-1955.

On a sadder note we have to report the deaths of two beloved CKNX performers of the past. Syd Yates of Sudbury, Ont., passed away on Jan. 7, 1998. Sid appeared on the Barn Dance in the '40's with a partner as Ed and Syd, The Cedar Boys. Syd always claimed they were the first to play bluegrass music in Canada on the air.

And even closer to home, Bill Mankiss passed away on March 18. Bill was with the Barn Dance Band until the first Barn Dance in 1997, after which he felt he had to give up the music, due to the travails of Parkinson's Disease. We hope to have both these obituaries for the next issue.

Our Barn Dance is well covered in this month's issue (April) of Country Music News, out of Ottawa. As part of their 18th anniversary issue, The Barn Dance was chosen as the cover and feature story of the month, just a super presentation with pictures of Doc Cruikshank, Earl Heywood, The Barn Dance Gang and The Ranch Boys. This paper covers the country music scene from coast to coast and it's a great honour to be featured. Our hat is off to Larry Delaney, editor of Country Music News for his straight forward, no holds barred approach to the country music scene in Canada. He tells it like it is and will not be intimidated by people who try to influence his approach. Thanks Larry.

If any of you would like to

The Barn Dance Historical Society

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

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Founder, Honourary President, Advisor
Earl Heywood

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Grant Heywood, Gerry Boppre,
Al Widmeyer, Earl Heywood,
Kim Souch.

subscribe to Country Music News, write to: Box 7323, Vanier Terminal, Ottawa, Ontario K1L 8E4. Subscription for 12 issues is \$26,75, and let me tell you, it's well worth the price. Did you know that the first magazine cover for Shania Twain was the May 1993 issue of Country Music News, now if the Barn Dance could follow in those footsteps ...

Come on, folks we need more letters to the editor, so far we've only gotten one, is it that you're satisfied, or is it that you just don't care. We care.

For input into the newsletter, write directly to me:

Lynn Russwurm,
P. O. Box 63,
Elmira, Ontario
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FROM THE STAGE

by Wayne Otterbein,
Barn Dance Manager

First is to tell all you folks, there is a date change in our line-up of Barn Dances. The Monkton Lions have changed their Barn Dance date to June 27, 1998. This date change is from June 20, 1998.

The show committee is busy lining up the talent for the 1998 show season. Many of the same faces will be back as well as new faces added with exciting new talents.

I would like to thank all the people who have submitted tapes to the show committee for our consideration. Please be patient, we will get back to you. Anyone interested in appearing on Barn Dance shows, please submit a tape.

I hope every member has marked their calendar for May 22, 23 and 24, 1998. This date is our Jamboree Camp-out Weekend, rain or shine. It's being held at the Blyth Arena Complex. We're sure you'll enjoy this Barn Dance. This one is especially for you, our members and friends, so come on out and have a good time.

Listed below is the list you've been waiting for, these are the shows and dances for 1998:

May 23rd - Jamboree Campout, Blyth Arena Complex;

June 6th - Palmerston Hand Car Races, Arena;

June 27th - Monkton Lions Club, Monkton Arena;

July 25th - Paradise and District Lions Club, St. Clements Arena;

August 1st - (private) Firefighters Convention, St. Jacob's Arena;

August 22nd - Durham Huskies, Durham Arena;

August 29th - Perth County Cattlemen, Stratford Coliseum;

September 19th - Howick Fair Board, Howick Arena Complex.

We hope all you members come out and enjoy the country music we enjoy playing for you.

Talk to you next newsletter.

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Barn Dance Collectibles

by Lynn Russwurm

First I would like to give a bit of background on my experience as historian and collector. I have probably the best collection of country music albums in Canada, with a collection of approximately 35,000 albums in my house, including about 2,000 Canadian country music albums, of which about 150 are artists with ties to the CKNX Barn Dance. I've been serving collectors for almost twenty years by making many of these treasures available to them. I've served in an advisory capacity to record price guide publishers in the U.S. and have been asked for information by the Country Music Foundation in Nashville.

Okay, enough about me. In the collage of albums pictured, are some real treasures, if you can find them, for example the Earl Heywood Souvenirs album and the Terry Parker album have both been known to sell to collectors in the \$60 to \$70 range, and are much sought after by collectors all over the world, in Australia, Sweden, Japan, England. Collectors in these far off countries probably know more about these artists than Canadians do, overseas people are hungry to know about the roots of the music, rather than the superficial music being pumped out of Nashville these days. All the others could probably be worth anywhere from \$20 to \$30, or more if a collector has been searching for the album and unable to find it, most of them are very rare. Of course, a collector demands that they be in top condition, in near mint condition in fact, if the cover's all beat up and the record is scratched, then it's worthless.

The album *Travelin' The Country Way* is especially interesting to Barn Dance fans in that two members of Pete Brady's Playboys were regulars on the Barn Dance, Lucky Ambo and Hank Bedard. This is the only album Hank was ever on (except our Saturday Night Barn Dance release of last year). Lucky had only one album to his name (also pictured), but appeared on at least 3 other albums as a member of the band. Jack Kingston had 3 albums to his credit, including this one, his first. Ward Allen had 3 volumes of *Maple Leaf Hoedown*, plus a "Best Of" double album.

In record collecting supply and demand means everything. It could be the oldest album and if it sold in the millions, it's so common that it's worth nothing, and yet an album from ten years ago could be extremely valuable if sales were low when it was released. And to be worth something **somebody has to want it**.

In future issues of the newsletter I hope to delve into more Barn Dance collectibles, let me know how you've enjoyed this.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This is where you voice YOUR opinion, let us know what you would like to see in the newsletter, or what you would like changed. This is your soapbox.

To The Editor: -

I believe it would be beneficial to reintroduce the concept of a "family membership" to Barn Dance Historical Society members. It can be difficult for a young family to come up with the funds to purchase two full adult memberships. I imagine the same would hold true for older couples on fixed incomes.

The alternative of a "family membership", perhaps priced slightly higher than a single membership, would make Barn Dance membership more affordable and accessible to young families.

A family membership would make sense as well from the standpoint of saving on newsletter distribution. When a husband and wife are both card carrying Barn Dance members, two newsletters must be sent to one address. This is needless duplication of postage and printed matter, which squanders the society's resources as well as taxes our environment.

One of the PTA moms at my son's elementary school was very excited by the idea that I might be able to arrange the donation of a Barn Dance CD for the school silent auction. She explained that

Letter to the Editor - Cont'd on Pg. 5

The Victor Pasowisty Story

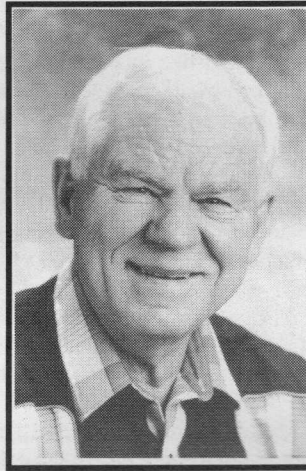
by Lynn Russwurm

Picture a 10 year old boy, walking home from a dance at 3:00 a.m. in the dead of a Manitoba winter, carrying his fiddle in a burlap bag. This is a scene that was repeated numerous times in the life of young Victor Pasowisty, and it aptly points out the love of music that was inherent in Victor and has stayed with him throughout his life. To Victor, music is music, to be enjoyed, be it a square dance or a gig with the symphony orchestra.

Born June 10, 1930 at Elk Ranch, Manitoba to Ukrainian / Polish parents, a crossroad with 3 houses and a post office. At the age of 3, his parents moved down the road to Mountain Road, which boasted of 4 stores and the Pasowisty house, nearby was St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, a large and beautiful cathedral that was built entirely by local people, which attracted visitors from many foreign countries. Eventually this magnificent edifice would succumb to the ravages of fire. Victor was exposed to music at an early age, as his father was a violinist and a choir master who had studied music for two years. He learned the basics of the fiddle and the importance of the bowing at about 9 years of age and could be found playing for local weddings and school house dances at the age of 10. Along with Johnny Pasowisty, his uncle who was slightly older than Victor, he was involved in many musical and other activities. And along the way he also became quite proficient on guitar.

In high school, he became part of St. Joseph's College Orchestra, as well as in sports, however the sports soon gave way to the music. The orchestra was performing weekly on radio station CKGX in Yorkton. Then, in 1947 he met up with the legendary Smilin' Johnnie, who was then a young up and coming entertainer and along with three other young musicians, they formed the Sunset Five. Because Johnnie owned the car and the P.A. system, he was designated as the leader of the group.

Shortly thereafter, they were threatened with a lawsuit by somebody who claimed the rights to the name and so it was changed to The Prairie Pals, which was the name Smilin' Johnnie worked under throughout most of his career. This group barnstormed around the prairie provinces for about three years. It was a heady time for the young musicians as they performed regularly over CKGX in Yorkton and drew large crowds wherever they appeared, but it



must be remembered these were the post-war years and dancing was immensely popular until the onslaught of the new medium of television.

Victor left Manitoba to visit his parents who had moved to the Toronto area, and although it was intended as a visit, Victor decided to stay. He secured employment in various lines and decided to study guitar seriously and so became a student of Tony Braden for about 4 years and during this time his fiddle took a back seat. One day in 1954, while attending a Christmas party at the home of his supervisor at the dry cleaning plant where he worked, his host brought out his fiddle and sometime during the evening, Victor picked up the fiddle and played. His host, Harry Mallard, didn't know that Victor played and couldn't believe what he heard. In astonishment, he stated that no one at the Shelburne Fiddle Contest could touch him and that he was going to enter Victor in the contest next year. Victor started to brush up on his fiddle and by contest time, he was ready. At the contest, he was the dark horse, he seemed to come out of nowhere and proceeded to blow everybody away when it came to his time at the microphone. When it was all over and the smoke had cleared, Victor was named North American Fiddle Champion of 1955. An interesting bynote is the fact that first runner-up was Jean Carignan from Montreal.

Meanwhile, on the personal side, Victor met and married Frances Samchuk of Kirkland Lake in 1953, and this union produced a family of six, three girls and three boys.

After Shelburne, Victor started to study the violin in earnest and signed up with Brodus Farmer for instruction which continued for about seven years. Meanwhile, he

made numerous guest appearances, including the first two Country Hoedown shows with King Ganam on CBC-TV, while all the time working at a day job, including a stint as manager of a liquor store. He played with various bands in the Toronto area, including the bands of Bob Scott, Harold Harton, Jim Fisher and an Irish group under Paddy Butler. 1962 saw Victor signed to his first recording contract with Arc Records, and the first album released was a Ukrainian album, the first ever in Canada, and Arc was amazed at the sales figures that came in, in the neighbourhood of 140,000 units sold. Victor also doubled behind the scenes at Arc sessions and was a backup musician on many of them. He went on to record 3 more albums for Arc.

In 1963 he received the invitation to travel to Halifax for a guest spot on the Don Messer TV show, which was the first of three appearances, during this time he also performed as guitarist with Ken Stanley's 18 piece dance band at Casa Loma in Toronto.

1964 and Victor parted company with Arc Records and signed with RCA, where he recorded three more Ukrainian albums. He went into teaching violin full time in 1966, and today estimates he's had over 500 students, some who studied under him for many years and others who came to him just to solve some technical difficulty they were having. At one point he had 65 students, many who came for miles for weekly sessions with Victor. The list of fiddlers who were under Victor's wing include Dwight and Michelle Lubiniecki, Aaron Solomon, Ricky Cormier, The Weilers and Mathew Johnson and many others, the honours his students have won is impressive and attests to Victor's skill at imparting his knowledge to others. He guided and helped in the production of albums for Aaron Solomon, Michelle Lubiniecki, The Weilers and Mathew Johnson, over and above his regular teaching. The years 1966 to 1974 also saw Victor playing at the world renowned Mayfair Restaurant on a nightly basis, from 1975 to 1980 he was a member of the Oshawa Symphony.

Then, in 1976 came the start of a number of personal tragedies which left their mark on Victor, he had a stroke and was told he'd never play again, but hard work and determination won out and six months later he was back, working on the fiddle. Then in 1977, he lost his wife to cancer, after a long struggle with the illness. However, after the dark days came light again

... Continued on Page 5

Victory Pasowisty Story - Cont'd from Pg. 4

and Victor married Lorraine Miski of Hamilton. In recent years other health problems have plagued him, including a triple heart by-pass, and a bout with prostate cancer, which was detected in its very early stages and therefore cured.

In 1972, he made several trips back to Manitoba where he recorded three albums for Galaxy Records. Though these were best sellers in the western provinces, there wasn't much distribution in Ontario and to the east, therefore they are hard to find east of Manitoba. In 1985, Victor moved to the Kitchener area and joined The Jamboree Reunion Band, with which he is still associated today. With this group he appeared in six Jamboree Reunions, with such artists as Earl and Martha Heywood, Donn Reynolds, Tommy Hunter, Gordie Tapp, Paul Menard, Myrna Lorrie, Stompin' Tom Connors, Stu Clayton, Hank MacDonald, Kidd Baker, Walter Ostanek, Gary Buck and many more. Also appeared for 2 years at the Palmer Rapids Twin Festival, 2 years at River Valley, 3 years at the Durham Wood Show and now with the CKNX Barn Dance as a member of the Barn Dance Band.

In 1988, Victor recorded the first of two albums for Rodeo Records, and assisted in the production of fourteen albums as co-producer and back-up musician. So, there you have the Victor Pasowisty Story, up to now, and I'm sure it's far from over. If you should happen to run into Victor at a fiddle contest he's judging, or at a gig, be sure to tell him how much you've enjoyed his music that he chose to share with the world, and I know you'll be meeting one of the true gentlemen and pioneers of the fiddle in Canada.

Reprinted from "Fiddling Stepdancing Canada" magazine.

Letter to the Editor - Cont'd from Pg. 3

her family is wild for any and all kinds of country music. Yet I am hesitant about recruiting her since a \$40.00 investment in the Barn Dance would go a ways toward feeding her kids.

With the increasing mainstream interest in Celtic and "New Country" music there is an enormous potential audience available for the new incarnation of the Barn Dance to tap into. A sizable part of Ontario's rich country music history is based in the Barn Dance, and it would be unfortunate for this past and future to be priced out of the range of present and future generations.

**Laurie Jonkman,
Brampton, Ontario**

The Music Years of Jean and Les Dowell, "The Colorado Kids" - 1947 - 97

Both Jean and Les Dowell were born and raised in Toronto, and started singing together at jams, parties and paying gigs in the '40s. Wedding bells rang for them in 1945. They met and worked with George Faith and together answered an ad for a Carnival, which they joined in Owen Sound in early 1947, working in a western tent, but they decided this life wasn't for them with the cheating and stealing that went on. After their Saturday night show, they decided to pull up stakes and go elsewhere.

They had heard of Wingham and CKNX with the popular Barn Dance, so with \$20.00 in their pockets they hitched a ride, with a hearse that was heading to London. When the driver saw their instruments, he promised to take them to Wingham if they would sing and play for him. True to his word he dropped them off in Wingham, warm and dry on a cold snowy winter night.

They set about to find a place to stay and work in the area. Jean got a job in the kitchen of the Brunswick Hotel, Les and George went to work for Lloyd's Doors. They found a place to stay on Jenkin's farm near Teeswater. They auditioned for CKNX and were hired for the Saturday Night Barn Dances. This was in March of 1947 and here they met Maurice Beaulieu (Bolyer) and the Golden Prairie Cowboys. Maurice and his wife became lifelong friends of the Dowells and helped them in any way they could. Meanwhile George had gone back to Toronto.

They had an interesting and fun year working with the Barn Dance, but at year's end, CKNX was cutting back and Jean and Les were let go, so it was back to Toronto for them where they gigged around, with many different groups and a lot of things came their way through the fondly remembered Fred Roden, who did so much for young country entertainers in those days.

1951 found them in Edmunston, N.B., with Maurice Beaulieu (his hometown) running dances and shows as well as doing some radio work. They lived in St. Hilaire, and worked with Maurice's brother, Bob, who was big in radio at that time. Then in 1952, they relocated to Montreal for a series of club dates, again with Maurice, until New Year's 1953 they headed for Hamilton, where the Main Street Jamboree had just begun. Here they worked with Gordie Tapp



Left to Right: Les & Jean Dowell, Maurice Bolyer

on CHML and CHCH-TV, doing shows and meeting many performers, old and new. But they also performed separately with various groups. Jean played stand-up bass with Billy West, off and on from 1953 to 1956, Les worked with various groups around Hamilton.

They felt at home in Hamilton and decided to lay down solid roots, and meanwhile Maurice was establishing himself as a major name in the music business. In 1956 he made his first appearance on the Arthur Godfrey Show, and for this Jean acted as his talent scout, and although Maurice didn't win, the displeased Godfrey kept Maurice on the show for a further number of appearances, calling him the greatest banjo player in the world.

The "Kids" worked out of Hamilton in shows and clubs, together and separately in places such as Brantford, London, Sarnia, Sudbury, Toronto, Fort Erie, Oshawa, Belleville, etc., until about 1972 when Jean decided to stay at home. Les continued with different groups around the area.

Now in their 70s, they enjoy family and friends, doing singalongs as well as entertaining in seniors homes. Les had a series of heart attacks and no longer plays guitar, but their singing is as strong as ever. Our hats are off to a couple of great troupers in country music's greatest tradition. Watch for them on the Barn Dance in the summer of '98.

1st Annual Jamboree Camp Out Weekend

May 22, 23, and 24, 1998

at the Blyth Fair Grounds and Arena

Activities start May 23, 1998

Camp Sites open May 22, 1998

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- Free Continental Breakfast and social gathering from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.
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- Barn Dance Historical Society Show from 8:00 to 9:30 p.m.
- Dance 10:00 p.m. until 1:00 a.m.

MAY 24, 1998

- Free Gospel Sing from 10:00 a.m. until 12:00 noon.

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and tickets, please call:

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Wayne Otterbein (519) 235-0559,
or June Therrien (519) 699-4667.

*Special Note from Membership
Director, June Therrien - -*

Our Jamboree Campout Weekend on May 22, 23 and 24, 1998 will be a great opportunity to meet with friends and get to know some of our members. So please join us at the Blyth Fair Grounds and Arena. Members will get a great discount for camping and for the show and dance.

Camping for members is \$14.00 per night, for non-members it's \$15.00 per night. Tickets for the show and dance are \$6.00 for members, and \$12.00 for non-members.

I would suggest that you get your tickets in advance, as they are limited, when they are gone, that's it. They are not reserved for campers.

If you want to take advantage of these deals, get your membership now.

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NEWS, NOTES 'N EVENTS

Recording artist Chef Adams along with other great names in Canadian Country Music have been in the spotlight at the Birchmount Opry, on Birchmount Road and Danforth Road in Scarborough. There's a different headliner every Sunday from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Doc Jenkins of Hamilton, Ont., originally from Pictou County, Nova Scotia, the coal mining community down east, has a new release on cassette and CD, entitled "DOC JENKINS, OLD HEART-BREAKER". a "Musical Prescription for feeling better". The album was recorded in The Touch Of Ivory studio in Mitchell, Ont., under the direction of Bill Irving. Graham Townsend provided a lot of fiddle music on this one. For more information contact: Doc Jenkins, 4-170 Jackson St. W., Hamilton, Ont. L8P 1L9.

Recording artist Mel Phillips of St. Thomas has been hospitalized and has undergone cancer surgery. His son has reported the operation as successful and Mel is on the road to recovery. Drop Mel a card in the mail and send it to Mel Phillips, 64 Regent St., St. Thomas, Ont. H5R 2A2. I'm sure he would appreciate it.

Michael T. Wall, "The Singing Newfoundlander", promoter of Canadian musical talent as well as the province of Newfoundland, is finally getting some recognition for his efforts. In 1997, Michael received a total of six awards: The Stompin' Tom Award (ECMA), Certificate of Appreciation (Memorial University of Newfoundland), Ambassador Of Hospitality Award (Newfoundland and Labrador), The King Eagle (Trailblazer) Award (Nashville), Uncle Buddy's Country Music Golden Boot Award (Toronto), plus an Award Of Appreciation from fellow TV and recording artist, Lincoln Lariviere. Michael was then honoured with a nomination for the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Music Industry of Newfoundland. Friends, fans and family offer sincere congratulations.

Gary Boyle, a native of London, Ont. has been singing at fairs and festivals for 25 years, and now has a brand new record release entitled, "Life's A Crooked Highway". Several of the songs were written by Gary and other Canadian writers. For more details write to Gary Boyle, 273 Berkshire Drive, London, Ont. N6J 3R5

Lincoln Lariviere of Nipissing Village, near North Bay, Ont. has recorded songs written by Hank Snow, Roy Payne, Chef Adams, Michael T. Wall on L & L Records. Background music by Al Briscoe, steel guitar, John Dustan on piano and accordion, with the sweet voice of Sabrina Wall, background singer. Write to L & L Records, Box 14541, Bayly St. W., Ajax, Ont. L1S 7L4, for more details.

NOTE: Artists wanting mention in this column, please forward your information to Earl Heywood, Box 443, Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

FROM THE MUSIC DIRECTOR by Ron Coulthard, Music Director - 1998

I'm looking forward to putting together this season's Barn Dance shows. Last year's director, Larry Mercey, set a very high musical standard, and I'll certainly try to maintain that level for all the shows we're performing in 1998!

I've been keeping the phone wires hot for the past few weeks lining up the talent. We'll have as many of the Barn Dance and CKNX-TV "originals" as possible, as well as quite a bit of new talent, including some young performers who seem likely to be tomorrow's country music stars.

My many years of involvement with the American Federation of Musicians long ago taught me some basic facts about hiring musicians: (1) there's no use calling any musician before noon; (2) you're going to play a lot of answering machine tag, (most musicians had answering machines before other folks had even heard of them); and (3) unless you are prepared to offer really big bucks, most full-time musicians don't want to commit themselves too far in advance for a single night's performance. (They might be doing a world tour!!)

In spite of all this, I'm sure that we'll have some great Barn Dances this year, so do come out and enjoy the best entertainment bargain you'll find anywhere - Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance!!

UNSUNG HEROES AWARD

The prestigious Farmers' Almanac has instituted an Unsung Heroes Award, to go to individuals who have been nominated. Guidelines state it has to be an individual who performs significant public service without widespread recognition. This term could include helping seniors, youths or the disadvantaged, working to improve the quality of education or health care, improving the environment, building jobs, or promoting public safety. It can be a professional, a volunteer or a combination of both without any age discrimination. All nominated individuals will receive a proclamation from the Farmers' Almanac. From these a special panel of judges will select 3 who will receive a special award and their stories will be published in the next year's Farmer's Almanac, which is widely read all over North America. 1997 is the first year this award has been given.

Nominated for a 1998 award is our own Earl Heywood, who has been selected out of all the nominations as one of the top three to receive this award and therefore his story will be featured in the 1999 Farmers' Almanac. Earl's award is supported by Murray Gaunt, who was a long-term Member of the Provincial Parliament and is now employed as Farm Editor at CKNX Radio and by Reverend John Vaudry, minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Wingham, the church attended by Mr. and Mrs. Heywood.

We would like to add our congratulations to Earl Heywood for this award. Way to go, Earl!!



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Howdy Folks:

For a long time the legacy of the late W. T. "Doc" Cruikshank may have been overlooked as a great potential on Ontario and Canadian history for the creation of a major tourist attraction. Well, that's not the case anymore.

From time to time, members of our society keep telling us Tourism has to be our ultimate goal, or it won't survive. Others visualize our ultimate goal of a music and entertainment oriented theme park as a major attraction just waiting to happen.

Of course some think the Barn dances will be taken off the road and no longer be

available to service clubs and organizations to work with us, as a means to help them raise money for a local cause. I am sure with a name like "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance" it would not be advisable and no matter what, it will always be available.

Things have been happening and there will be more Barn Dance presentations this year, and more original Barn Dance members will be honoured with the prestigious Pioneer Award.

Getting back to tourism, our society has become affiliated with the Huron Tourist Association. A story of what we are and a photo of our Museum will appear in the 1998 issue of the Huron County Travel Guide.

A special thank you to Cliff Ayers, publisher of the Voice Of America Entertainment News, 159 Village Green Dr., Nashville, TN 37217, for covering a story of the successful 1997 Barn Dance season. What a spread including photos of Cactus Mac, Clarke Johnstone and Al Cherny, The Barn Dance Pioneer Awards and The Tillotson Sisters (Dollie and Lois) and all about their new record release.

Congratulations, Cliff on the celebration of Emerald Record 40th Anniversary. It was interesting to note Cliff Ayers was a big band singer in Sammy Kayes', Art Mooneys' and Tony Pastors' bands. His Voice Of America publication covers all facets of music and is distributed to all the big cities in USA, Canada, Germany, Austria and Hawaii. Keep up the good work and thanks again for your coverage of our Barn Dance Historical Society, we certainly appreciate it.

That's about it for this time, see you next issue, but don't forget, *the show must go on.*

Earl Heywood,
Founder,
Honourary President, Advisor.

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You can HELP by joining

The Barn Dance Historical Society's BARN DANCE FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Membership is only \$20.00 per year (many members have chosen to purchase 2 to 5 year memberships).

As a member you will receive:

- A personalized FRIENDSHIP CLUB CERTIFICATE.
- A one year subscription to our quarterly JOURNAL keeping you informed of and providing some enjoyable reading.
- A special invitation to our Barn Dance get togethers, at least once per year.
- The right to VOTE on items concerning the running and structuring of the Foundation.
- The opportunity to PARTICIPATE by sitting on one of our Committees.
- Advance notice of SPECIAL EVENTS.
- The right to PERFORM during our Hoedowns. Members only - registration on a first come basis.



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