

The Barn Dance Opera Country Music Journal

Vol. 21 1999

Spring Edition

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14 Year Old Singing Sensation

- Janet Turner

by Grant Heywood

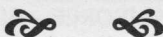
Janet Turner from London, Ont. hopes to kick start her career with her first CD before she turns 16. Tall order? Maybe?? but in three short years this talented young singer has chalked up first place in most singing competitions across southwestern Ontario. Janet won first place at the Canadian Open Singing Contest in Simcoe, Ontario out of 228 competitors in the twelve and under class in 1998.

Prior to that she had won the Junior Search for Talent at the Western Fair in London, Ont. in 1997. Her performances were truly

deserving of the prize money she has won. Her first appearance on Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance last year in St. Jacobs, on August 1, 1998, brought tremendous applause from the crowd when she sang the hit song "Blue", which had also won for her in the Simcoe singing contest.

Most recently she was asked to sing the National Anthem for the opening of the London Knights hockey game at the Ice House in London.

What's next for Janet Turner? She is booked for a live performance on Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance during the Jamboree Campout weekend in Blyth, Ont. Congratulations to Janet Turner, keep up the good work, maintain your style and good luck will come your way.



The Editor Speaks

by Lynn Russwurm

In this issue will be two articles that I felt needed to see the light of day. The first one is about Fred Roden who did so much for country music in the early days of the fifties and sixties, and it seems he is now forgotten by most people in the country music business, who probably know nothing or next to nothing, about the true pioneers of this truly great art form. Ask anybody at the radio station today, and they won't be able to tell you anything about anybody before 1980, they think that's when country music started in this country, to them an oldie is five years old.

The other article is about The West-ernaires, a band out of Kitchener in the forties and fifties, through which many of our Barn Dance musicians passed, such as Roy Thompson, Lloyd Bank, Mike Slauenwhite, and others including your truly, theirs is a story that I feel needs to be told within the context of our Barn Dance.

It is with regret that I must say this will be my last issue as editor of the newsletter. I feel quite proud of what I have done with the newsletter, which is now closer to becoming a magazine than a newsletter, plans are in the works of making it bi-monthly to keep in closer contact with the membership at large, now it's up to the incoming editor to carry out these plans or not.

The reasons for my resignation as editor are probably better left unsaid. I would like to say, I wish nothing but success for the Barn Dance Historical Society, it's a project that's very close to my heart, as I was brought up in a home where the Barn Dance was listened to faithfully every Saturday Night and I hope that the Barn Dance stays true to itself. If that is done, it will stay a vital, living testimonial to the people that made the Barn Dance great in it's pioneering days, when they blazed new trails where there were no trails to follow.

Good luck and best wishes.

Lynn Russwurm

CORRECTION

It's been pointed out to us that we inadvertently listed JOHN FARRISH as John Parrish in the Bill Oja "Just Fiddling Around" column in the Fall issue. Sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused.



The President's Report

by Wayne Otterbein

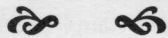
As you receive this newsletter in the mail, it is only four or five days away from the Annual Meeting of the Barn Dance Historical Society. The date is Sunday, April 11, 1999, on the bottom floor of the Wingham Legion on Victoria St. West. I hope we'll meet at the meeting.

The Barn Dance Historical Society is only as strong as our members. The backbone of this organization is the 12 directors who meet the first Monday of each month and the committee members who help the directors.

A director's term is three years. The longest a person can hold a directorship is two terms (six years). Four directors are elected each year at our annual meeting. If you believe in our aims and objectives, I hope you will find time to volunteer.

I am very proud to have been your president for the past term. The directors gave the society their time and more energy than you could imagine. 1999, I hope is going to be the year to highlight our museum, bringing attention to a valuable part of our society. We will have a display at the Heritage Theatre in Wingham. We hope to have another display at the Huron County Museum in Goderich.

I encourage our members to write to anyone on the board of directors or the editor of our newsletter and state your views. These are very important to the board. I apologize for not answering all the mail I have received, but sometimes there are not enough hours in the day.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS -

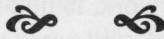
APRIL 11, 1999 - Barn Dance Historical Society Annual Meeting at the Royal Canadian Legion in Wingham in the lower level. Meeting is scheduled for 1:30 p.m., at which time four new directors of the Society will be elected. We have a nomination committee who will contact prospective directors and will make recommendations, however if any of our members would like to stand, make sure you are present, with a member who will nominate you. We would like to see many more members attend this meeting and bring along your input.

How Well Do You Know Your Barn Dance?

Again we have two winners for our Barn Dance Mystery Artist. Joyce Steurnol of Wingham, Ont. is first place winner for the second time, and Elroy Cox of Griffith, Ont. came in as the second prize winner. Congratulations!! Both correctly named the artist as TERRY PARKER, who was a regular on the Barn Dance in the 1956 - 57 era. Born in the North Bay area in 1933, Terry was a superb yodeller, as can be heard in our "Saturday Night Barn Dance, Vol. 1".

She made many appearances on CBC's "Holiday Ranch", as well as many other shows of the day. She recorded two albums for Banff/Rodeo Records, which are now highly sought after collector's items, worth in the \$50.00 range. Just another of our great Canadian artists who graced the CKNX Barn Dance stage in the past.

This column will be temporarily on hold, until a new editor takes over and then it will be up to him if he wants to pursue it further. I've enjoyed bringing these artists to you and if you would like it continued, you should write and ask that it be re-instated.



MAY 28 - 29 - 30, 1999 - 2nd ANNUAL CAMPOUT JAMBOREE - Blyth Recreation Complex in Blyth, Ontario. Lots of camping available, an open Jamboree, a full scale Barn Dance on Saturday night, a Sunday morning Gospel Sing and many more activities, with discount rates for our members.

SUNDAY, OCT. 3, 1999 - Annual Barn Dance Rally and Old Time Fiddlers Convention at the Royal Canadian Legion in Wingham. Begins at 10:00 a.m. with a seminar and workshops under the supervision of Ernie King. At 1:00 p.m. there will be an Old Time Fiddlers Concert, with various fiddlers giving samples of their specialties, don't miss this popular event. This will be followed by the Hayloft Hoedown and Dance Party. Admission to this full day of entertainment is a \$5.00 donation, with free admission for musicians and entertainers who register for the Hayloft Hoedown.

The Barn Dance Historical Society

P.O. Box 68

Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 357-3021

Earl Heywood

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FROM THE STAGE

WAYNE OTTERBEIN,

Show Manager

The show schedule for the Barn Dance this year is not quite as busy as last year.

On the eve of the millenium, Huron will shine in 1999 at Dashwood, Ontario with the 99th International Plowing Match from Sept. 21 to 29, 1999. The Barn Dance will be appearing at center stage on Wed., Sept. 22, with two shows at 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. All the Barn Dance favourites will be there such as Larry Mercey, Sharon Strong, Bruce Robertson and many others.

The big buzz however, is the May 28, 29 and 30th Jamboree weekend in Blyth, at the arena complex, rain or shine. On Saturday, May 29th, The Barn Dance presents star of Hee Haw, Gordie Tapp. You've seen him on TV, and now you'll see him in person.

Be sure to mark these dates on your calendar and check out the newsletter for more particulars.

We hope to see you all there.

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FRED RODEN

Unsung & Forgotten Pioneer of Early Country Music in Canada

by Lynn Russwurm

FRED RODEN - to many an older country musician in Canada, the name means something. If you were around in the 50's and were trying to break into country music in Canada, chances are, at one point or another you ended up at Fred Roden's Record Corral on Queen Street East, in Toronto, or later on at his Bathurst Street location, just north of the 401. Fred was a transplanted Englishman, who took to country music like a duck takes to water. He wasn't a musician, or even a songwriter, but his hand touched every facet of country music you could think of at the time, or if it hadn't been thought of, Fred came up with the idea. He helped many a would-be young songwriter get his songs to an artist or publisher who would regularly stop in at Fred's store to see what his latest find was.

At the Queen Street location, the back half of the store was a big room where he would hold Sunday night Jamborees for all the up and coming young entertainers. During the week, there was an almost continuous jam session going on and the list of young hopefuls who could be found there included people like the French Trio, 3 young boys in the 10 or 12 year age range, and out of this trio came Al Bruneau, who followed Glen Campbell into Los Angeles as the most sought after session guitarist of the day. Jean and Les Dowell, The Colorado Kids, did a lot of work through Fred, Stompin' Tom Connors tells of hanging out there, Clint Curtiss got his early training at Fred's Jamborees, he brought Earl Heywood and the Barn Dance Gang into Toronto for a number of dates, and

the list goes on and on.

Fred took Wilf Carter out on annual tours in those days, when nobody else would take a chance on him. He brought the leading country artists in from Nashville for shows at the Mutual Street Arena, including the great Hank Williams for his only Canadian tour, scant months before his untimely death. Others included Hank Snow, Carl Smith, Ernest Tubb and others too numerous to mention. Fred was married to Lorette Desormeau on stage at the Ernest Tubb Show, with Ernest as his best man. He took Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper on a tour around Ontario, he brought Lefty Frizzell in for several dates around Toronto at the time when Lefty was the hottest item in country music. And Fred always featured a number of young Canadian hopefuls on his shows. The people who knew Fred used to say that he'd make money at the store all week long, just so he could blow it on a Jamboree on the weekend. Along with records, he also handled instruments, and many times they would be borrowed, and I'll lay odds that sometimes, they wouldn't be returned.

His store was a booming business as Fred carried records that no one had in those days of 78's. On a Saturday, you could hardly get inside the doors. He'd make occasional trips to the States, where he would buy out the stock of some of the smaller record labels like Continental, Savoy, and therefore he would have records by Yodeling Slim Clark, Red River Dave, etc., that you could get nowhere else ... Fred always wore western clothes and later at his Bathurst Street location he carried a full line of western wear. At one time he even had his own record label, Fred Roden Records, he



Fred Roden, Minnie Pearl and Ernest Tubb.

was a disc jockey, and of course he played much more Canadian content than the 30% that is required today.

The country music awards that are given out today are suspect to this writer, because Fred is never even nominated for a builders or an industry award, and yet who ever did more for country music, and received so little in return? He was a giving individual who mapped uncharted waters and never was he given even a fraction of the honour he so richly deserved.

Sometime in the seventies, he phased out the record portion of his store, because his eyesight was failing and he could no longer read the record labels. Within a few years he quietly sold out the western wear store and disappeared. Every once in awhile you'd hear a rumour that he had gone to Northern Ontario where he died in obscurity. If anyone out there knows what became of Fred Roden, I would be very interested in hearing from you.

Fred Roden - - - one of the greatest country music people of all times.



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The Saga of "The Westernaires"

by Lynn Russwurm

The year was 1946, the place Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario, the scene was the car barns just across the street from the PUC terminal. Strikes were prevalent in this industrial city throughout the late 40's and this time it was the PUC bus drivers that were fighting for better benefits. Picket lines were set up, along with all the goodies that go along with strikes. One of the strikers was a popular accordion player by the name of Johnny Siska, who had done time in the armed forces during the recent war and was now back home to carve out a place for himself. Somebody invited Johnny to bring out his accordion to entertain the boys on the picket line. Just by chance, Roy Thompson, another local musician happened to be driving by and stopped when he heard the music, then pulled out his guitar and joined in. Somebody got word to Vince Dietrich, a classically trained violinist to come on over, also to Jack Gottfried, a bass player.

After this impromptu jam session ended, somebody said, "Boy, they sure seemed to like what we did, why don't we start a band?" A practice was scheduled, and Roy said, "I know a steel guitar

player we could probably get", so Lloyd Bank was called and persuaded to give it a try. Now the complete nucleus of the band was in place and some bookings were secured.

Now for some reason that I haven't been able to determine, the first bass player in the band was Ross Dubrick instead of Jack Gottfried. However, Ross only stayed a little while, he and his wife operated a restaurant and he found the work load too heavy, and then Jack joined the band. It was a co-operative band, with no designated leader and it worked quite well for some time. 1948 came and they were invited to make a number of guest shots on the CKNX Barn Dance, in addition to their own show over CKCR in Kitchener. At one point they recorded some transcriptions to cover their radio show while they were playing a gig in Tobermory. However, this was during a recording ban that had been imposed by the powerful musicians' union. They faced the prospect of being kicked out of the union, however, they were let off with a stiff fine. This was at a time when the union was at it's strongest and you didn't dare go against union policies.

They worked many dates at Barclay

Square in Stratford, also at the Bridgeport Casino, for a steady Wednesday night spot, as well as many Saturday nights. Then an offer came to be the Saturday night house band at the Rubber Hall in downtown Kitchener, which of course they accepted. Now at that time there was a dance venue in Kitchener, called the Summer Gardens, which was highly successful by bringing in big bands like Glenn Miller, and Les Brown, with his young vocalist Doris Day. But disaster came and the Summer Gardens burned down. Now the Westernaires were a pretty versatile group and they played quite a bit of the big band swing numbers. A lot of the regulars from the Summer Gardens started coming over to the Rubber Hall on a Saturday night and on many nights it was SRO. However, eventually they moved over to the Bridgeport Casino for steady Saturday night and Wednesday night gigs.

Then in mid 1949, Lloyd Bank received an offer from CKNX to come to Wingham and the prestigious Barn Dance, an offer too good to refuse; of course later, Lloyd moved to Hamilton to become a member of The Mainstreeters.

I arrived in Kitchener in the fall of 1949 and one of the first dances I attended was to hear the Westernaires at the Bridgeport Casino (the first of many). By that time Ken Goebel was playing steel guitar, and it was quite a band. But within a year it all seemed to fall apart. Vince Dietrich moved away from Kitchener, and Jack Gottfried came up with a replacement for him in young Mike Slauenwhite. Jack had happened to hear Mike on a radio broadcast with the Waterloo County Boys and arrangements were made to

Continued on Page 5

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LYNN RUSSWURM

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THE WESTERNAIRES - (from left to right) Lloyd Bank, steel guitar; Jack Gottfried, bass; Vince Dietrich, fiddle; Roy Thompson, rhythm guitar and singer; Johnny Siska, accordion; performing on stage at the Rubber Hall in Kitchener.

The Saga of "The Westernaires"

Continued from Page 4

bring young 15 year old Mike into the fold. His mother didn't much like it, she would have liked him to carry on with his classical violin studies, but Mike wanted to spread his wings.

Next to leave was Roy Thompson with his solid rhythm guitar and golden voice. Roy had entered the restaurant business and had gotten too busy with "The Wagonwheel". Shortly thereafter he joined the Barn Dance as a regular to play the Barn Dance, then go back to his restaurant. Also Ken Goebel had left, and there were a succession of musicians filling his spot until they settled on Lorne Witschonke, on steel guitar. When Roy left they were left without a vocalist. Johnny said from now on each member has to contribute on vocals, he started singing himself, Mike was quite credible on a song and Lorne Witschonke also did his share.

When Roy left, Walter Boettger stepped into the rhythm guitar slot, and when Jack Gottfried left, Walter switched to stand-up bass and Stan Taylor took over guitar. This was in the fall of 1951, you may remember Stan as lead guitarist with Vic Mullen and the Hickories on CBC-TV's "Countrytime". Joining Stan in the Westernaires were June and Marie, The Karges Sisters, who went on to a stint as regulars on the Barn Dance the following year, until marriage broke up the sister act. Stan and the girls left the band in early 1952, and Stan was replaced by Bob Nuhn on rhythm guitar, but by spring of 1953 Bob decided he wanted more of a home life and hung up his guitar for good and at this time yours truly came into the band as guitarist and vocalist. Brian Dugan was hired as a steady piano player and by mid-1954 my wife Laura came in to help with vocals. Then in mid-1954 Brian was replaced by Gord Affeldt on steel guitar to get closer to the country and western sound that the band had started with. Laura and I left in October of 1954 to start our own band, "The Pine River Troubadours", and to work on the Main Street Jamboree as guests, which was also followed by many guest spots on CKNX Barn Dance. My

replacement on guitar was young Earl Fries from Bridgeport.

During my time with the Westernaires we were booked steadily at the Bridgeport Casino, and also as the Friday night band at The Silver Centre, in Prince-ton, owned by George Matheson.

Things continued much the same for awhile, then around 1957 changes started to take place. George Matheson became manager of the band, a name change turned the Westernaires into the Silver Bar Ranch Boys and since this is the story of the Westernaires, I'll briefly cap off the Silver Bar Ranch Boys part of the story.

Under George Matheson's leadership they were signed to CKCO-TV for a TV series. They auditioned for and were accepted for an appearance on "Pick The Stars" on CBC-TV where they won on their first appearance, but were beaten out by someone else on their second appearance.

Then problems set in. Johnny Siska and George Matheson didn't agree on the direction of the band and a split was imminent. However, George had registered the Silver Bar name and the band chose to stay with George and this effectively forced Johnny out of his own band. The band continued working under George for a few more years, they did two more TV series on CKCO-TV under George Matheson and sometime in the sixties they folded.

The Westernaires are an important chapter in our Canadian country music as a training ground for young up and comers, and were highly visible in the Kitch-

ener area for many years. They were a stepping stone for many young musicians as outlined above.

Kind of a neat foot-note to this story was the appearance of Jack Gottfried, now in his 70's at our last Barn Dance in Howick last fall, where I invited him to step on the stage and play the dance portion with the Barn Dance Band. This was the first time Jack had picked up a stand-up bass in many years, and he enjoyed it immensely, sore fingers and all, and also in the audience that night was Johnny Siska, what reminiscing.



Canadian Fiddlers in the North American Fiddlers Hall of Fame in Oceola, N.Y.

Compiled by Bill Oja
DON MESSER (1977)

JOHNNY MOORING (1978)

RUDY MEEKS (1979)

GRAHAM TOWNSEND (1980)

ED GYURKI (1981)

ANDY DEJARLIS (1983)

ROMA McMILLAN (1984)

ELEANOR TOWNSEND (1986)

NED LANDRY (1988)

IVAN HICKS (1990)

AL CHERNY (1992)

MATILDA MURDOCK (1993)

WARD ALLEN (1994)

BILL GUEST (1995)

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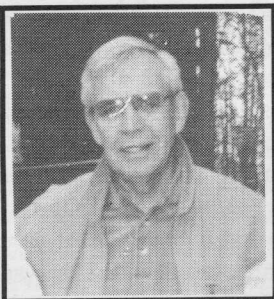
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Just Fiddling Around ...

with Bill Oja



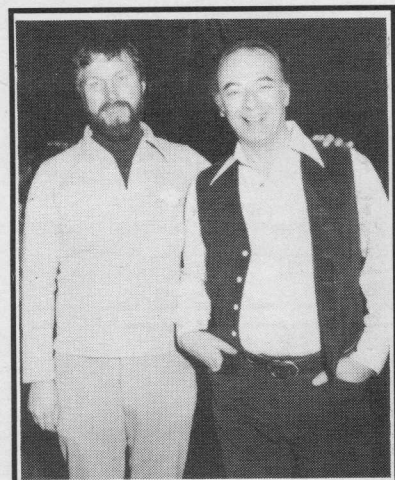
SLIM GAYNOR, of Pefferlaw, Ont., veteran country entertainer sharpening up his talents for the 1999 fiddle contest circuit. Slim is known for his novelty fiddle act.



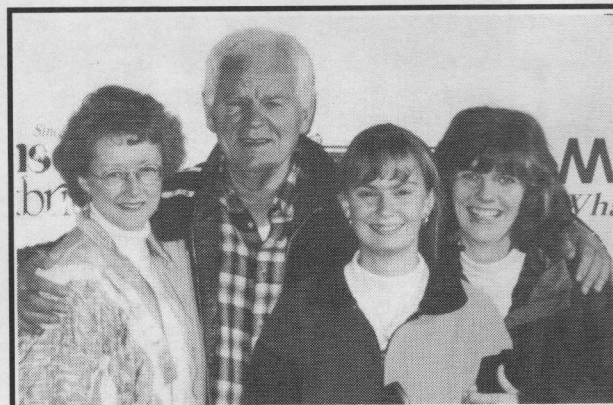
Seventeen year old **BRIAN BUCHOWSKI** of Loretto plays a tune on the fiddle with which **MEL LAVIGNE** won the very first Shelburne contest in 1951. Widow **MAY LAVIGNE** looks on. The 49th annual Shelburne contest is on August 6 and 7 this year.



St. Catharines musicians **WALTER OSTENEK & EDDIE LEGERE** visit Nashville, and the museum of **JOHNNY WRIGHT & KITTY WELLS**. The Kitty Wells 80th Birthday Tour visits Ontario this spring.



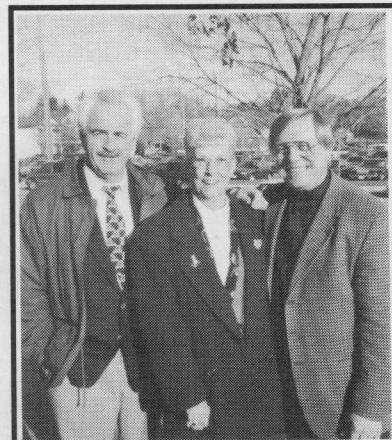
AL CHERNY, one of many fiddle stars of the CKNX Barn Dance is seen here at Toronto's famous Horseshoe Tavern in 1970 with Canadian country music historian, **BOB GARDINER**.



The Markham Fair Fiddle Contest was another success this past fall. Left to right: - contest organizer, **LAURA HEIGHWAY**, Judge **VIC PASOWISTY**, Open Winner **DEANNA DOLSTRA** of Oshawa, and judge **MICHELLE CHARLTON (LUBINIEKI)**



ELEANOR TOWNSEND passed away 28 days after Graham, on Dec. 31 while trying to save her 5 year old grand daughter Izabella in a fire that demolished the family home in Barrie. Eleanor was the first female winner of the 1979 Shelburne Open Fiddle Contest. (the only lady to do so to date.)



PHYLLIS McDOWELL, long-time Shelburne contest accompanist and musicians **WINSTON JAMES** and **WALTER OSTENEK** at the **GRAHAM TOWNSEND** funeral in Barrie.

COUNTRY CALENDAR

*(Toronto and surrounding area)*by **Doreen Brown**

* **April 3 / May 1** - Recording artist BARBARA ALLEN appears at Big Pete's, Kingston Rd. and Markham Rd., Scarborough with the NOVA SCOTIA CAPERS. Barbara's new CD will be available, "20 Most Requested Songs from Tapes."

* **April 11** - ELLE PRINGLE & CHEF ADAMS present the "Slim Pringle Memorial Jamboree and Classic Country Reunion", sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Br. 426, 707 Srigley St., Newmarket, 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. Emceed by BUCKY YADE, with special guests. Admission: donations at the door, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to the Canadian Cancer Society.

* **May 14** - Benefit for Diabetes Association presents the East Coast May Queen Dance by JOHN GAVIN, music by BLAKE STRANGERS from 8:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., at the Canadian Legion, Br. 210, 3328 Bloor St., at Islington, buffet at 8:00 p.m. included in the \$12.50 tab. Special guests: LLOYD NOSEWORTHY and DOREEN BROWN.

* **June 18 - 20** - Newfoundland and Labrador Community Festival is celebrating 50 years as a province of Canada at Brampton Sports Park, 7575 Kennedy Rd. Long lineup of entertainers, to name a few: IRISH DESCENDENTS, ROY PAYNE, RON HYNES and MICHAEL T. WALL.

* **July 30 - Aug. 2** - A weekend to remember at the eighth annual Classic Country Music Reunion at Centennial Park, Trenton. Canadian country music, bluegrass music, picnic areas, watering corral, rough camping, vendors, also a gospel show on Sunday. Emceed by ELAINE JARVIS & co-host LOUISE WRIGHT with special guests. For more information, call (905) 986-4140.

* **August 13 - 16** - Join the fun at the 10th annual HAVELOCK COUNTRY JAMBOREE, near Peterborough with a great line-up of entertainers, music free with your camping pass, rain or shine. (editor's note: Doreen, I understand headliner will be STOMPIN' TOM.)

* **August 15** - LINCOLN LARIVIERE STRAIGHT ARROW BAND present a boat trip on the Wayward Princess (Toronto) with JUNE PASHER, ROY PAYNE, JENNY & JOSIE and special guests. For tickets call: Lincoln at (905) 683-1498, tickets include a buffet. The 1997 boat trip was a great success.

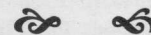
* **August 8** - 12th Annual Musicians Corn Roast (rain or shine) in memory of LARRY DEE from noon to 8:00 p.m. Join the fun with a great line-up of featured country entertainers, something for everyone, horseshoe tournament, crown and anchor, 50/50, kids games, a great family outing. Donations and proceeds to Heart and Stroke Foundation. For information call TOM MARK (905) 985-9900. Location 4790 McKee Rd., off Highway 57, Blackstock.

* **MULTI DATE** - Upcoming dates for Georgie Grey's classic Country Music Jubilees: April 9 - Moose Lodge, Lindsay with special guest MARNIE SLADE at 8:00 p.m.; April 24 - Coboconk Legion at 8:00 p.m.; April 25 at the Port Perry Legion, 2 to 6:00 p.m.; June 11 - Moose Lodge in Lindsay.

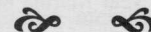
* **ONGOING** - Bring your musical instrument, entertain, dance or be a spectator at the Erin Legion, the 4th Sunday of every month at 1:00 p.m. Lots of good old country music with down home friendly atmosphere, buffet available.

NEWS, NOTES 'N
EVENTS

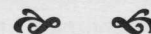
Joseph Tiffin and his family Orchestra took the month of January off while Joe entered the hospital to have hip surgery. The good news is that Joe is coming along fine and will soon be back on the dance circuit, playing for dances. His daughters, Joan on keyboard, Shirley on banjo and Joey Junior accompany their dad on his fiddle. Shirley and Joey are the singers in this group. They have a large following and are busy every weekend, the year 'round.



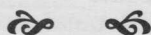
Remember back in 1953 when folk singing was all the rage. Five young Toronto singers founded a group they called The Travellers. By 1957, they recorded their first album and criss-crossed Canada on a tour. The Travellers appeared many times on CKNX-TV. Slim Boucher, The Golden Prairie Cowboys and Earl Heywood were to appear in a movie with the Travellers, but the deal fell through. However, the Travellers are still in business and they plan to continue performing into the millenium year 2000 to complete six decades in the entertainment business. They have just released a CD, "The Best of the Travellers."



Since January 1st, Rick Jones and his Gone Country act (an Alan Jackson tribute act) have some special guests working in the group, such as hot guitar pickers Steve Pittico and Darren Shott. Also steel guitar legends Al Brisco and Steve Smith. Singer-songwriter Grant Heywood of Quality records appeared with Rick and the boys when they played the Lucky 7 Club in Embrun, Ontario, near the Quebec border in February. This was the first time the group performed their opening night at the club, and the place was jammed to the doors. They've been invited back.



Canadian recording artist Mary Rowan is rated as one of the finest singers of country music in the business. On Feb. 19, 1999, Mary thrilled a host of fans when she appeared at The Moose Lodge, home of the Orillia Oprey on Rose Ave. in Orillia, Ontario. There is no doubt Mary Rowan always brings class and prestige to country music, wherever she performs.



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

IN MEMORIAM

KENNETH LEITCH of Wingham, Ontario, peacefully passed away in his 80th year on Nov. 11, 1998. He was a fine musician who played fiddle and saxophone. He was a member of the Gully Jumpers, one of the most popular groups to play on the Barn Dance in the early days of CKNX. He also played in Harvey McDowell's dance band, out of Belgrave, Ont. Kenneth was a garage mechanic, and was married to the former Jean McKague. Together they raised two sons, John and Doug Leitch. Interment in the Wingham Cemetery.

IRENE (CLARK) FARRIER, of Wingham, Ontario, passed away in the Kincardine Hospital on Jan. 2, 1999 in her 79th year. Her husband Russell Farrier died on May 6, 1993. He had been a member of the Farrier Orchestra under the leadership of Garnet Farrier for many years. Irene left to mourn one daughter,

Marion and her husband Bill MacIntyre of London, Ontario. Burial in the Wingham Cemetery.

NORMAN McINTOSH, of Tiverton passed away at Kincardine Hospital on Thurs., Nov. 5, 1998 in his 87th year. Beloved father of Norman (Janette) McIntosh of Cookstown, Marjorie (Bill) Tennyson of Bruce Township, and Joyce (Ron) Trout of R.R.#2, Tiverton. Also survived by 9 grandchildren. Predeceased by his first wife, Peg, and second wife, Muriel, and two sisters. Norman was a veteran of World War 2. His son and daughters were known as the McIntosh Family and appeared frequently on CKNX Circle Eight Ranch and on numerous CKNX presentations. Norman McIntosh was laid to rest in the Tiverton Cemetery.

On behalf of the members of the Barn Dance Historical Society, may our deepest sympathy go out to the families of those listed above, who were associated with our Foundation.



HOWDY FOLKS:

Welcome to a roundup of information on the subject of the Barn Dance Hall of Fame and The W.T. "Doc" Cruickshank Memorial Museum. First of all, new members of the Barn Dance Historical Society may not be fully aware this Hall of Fame and Memorial Museum was officially christened and established on April 14, 1996. It was the grand opening with an official ribbon cutting ceremony attended by Huron's Member of Parliament, Paul Steckley and Mayor Don Carter of Wingham, delivering the officiating ceremony. Many members of the Barn Dance Historical Society attended this event in the Wingham Armouries where the Barn Dance exhibits have remained until a better location can be found.

Year after year Martha and I, and our

family, traveled throughout the United States and Canada. It always seemed along the way we were visiting museums. One time we visited the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., probably the largest museum in the world. What really caught our eye in a display of circus memorabilia was a poster of the Downie Brothers Circus, that had appeared in Stratford, Ont., way back in the '30's. While researching the Barn Dance history, I discovered that the Downie Brothers Circus originated on a farm in Stephan Township, Huron County, not far from where I was born. Lucky me, I was able to locate plenty of information and a photo of the Downie Brothers, standing beside an old Model T truck with the name of their circus on the side, taken when they first started their circus. This is a special piece of memorabilia, and if properly displayed, is bound to attract the general public to our museum.

February 1, 1973 the Goderich Signal Star, Goderich, Ont. splashed an announcement across the front page, "Wingham Entertainer Says We Must Save The Jail". One of their reporters had phoned to set up an interview with me.

First thing she asked was, how did I feel about demolishing the local jail in Goderich. As I recollect, I said I was deeply concerned, that it was foolish to destroy something that our forefathers put there. With so much

history connected with the jail, a historical treasure and landmark that no longer serves its purpose, it could become a remarkable tourist attraction.

When I told the reporter I had written a song entitled "The Huron County Jail", she immediately wanted me to attend their Save The Jail Campaign meeting and sing the song. That I did. The CBC Radio Network got wind of it and invited me to drive to Toronto, Ont. after the ten o'clock meeting that night. They would have a room booked for me at the Four Seasons Hotel. I was invited to appear on the CBC network early morning radio show the next morning at 8 o'clock. I would be interviewed on the Save The Jail campaign. The irony of it all, the Huron County jail was saved, and today it is a prominent and major tourist attraction. Had I not sang my song about the Huron County Jail, this grand old landmark may not be standing there today.

Many times it has been said, music is a universal language of the world. In both stories, I would say there is a musical connection worthy of becoming a part of the Barn Dance Hall of Fame and Museum. More will be covered on this in my next column. I strongly believe in preserving our National History of Music, but to preserve it,

"THE SHOW MUST GO ON".

Earl Heywood

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