

The Barn Dance Opera Country Music Journal

Vol. 22 1999

Summer Edition

1

An Interview With:

Gordie Tapp, Country Boy at Heart

by Grant Heywood

On May 29, this year's Barn Dance Campout Jamboree in Blyth, featured Hee Haw performer, Gordie Tapp, did what he does best - give the folks a show, make 'em laugh, and send them home with a smile.

But what makes Gordie laugh? "Sometimes I make me laugh," says Gordie. Always the class clown, and sometimes imitating the teacher, Gordie was destined to get an A+ for a lifelong career in comedy. His math wasn't too bad either - 9½ years on

CBC's Country Hoedown, 25 years on Nashville's Hee Haw, not to mention one dedicated wife, Helen, 4 children and 10 grandchildren.

I was fortunate to talk to Gordie about his career and ask some candid questions. The following, is an exclusive interview with Canada's premier country comedian and showbiz personality, Gordie Tapp.

Where did Cousin Clem come from?

Cousin Clem was developed on-

stage with partner, Alec Reed, as Clem and Lemo. We'd walk on-stage with a guitar case, lie down, and I'd take out a harmonica. We'd play and sing this song, "I've Got Tears In My Ears, From Lyin' On My Back, In My Bed, As I Cry Over You." Clem also worked the Mainstreet Jamboree show in Hamilton.

Hee Haw was the pinnacle of your career. How did that opportunity come about?

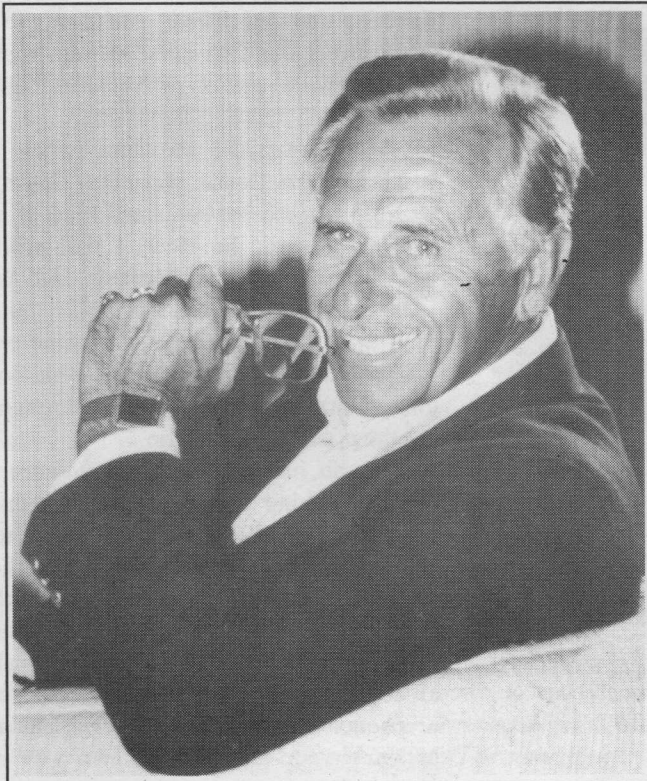
On March 16, 1969, I was at a truck festival in Flin Flon, Manitoba. I received a phone call

from Frank Peppiat, who was a producer at CBC, but was now writing and producing the Jonathan Winters show in Hollywood. He said he needed help, and wanted me to be the main writer for a new country comedy show, Hee Haw. I flew immediately to Hollywood, and proceeded to bring in Grand Ole Opry stars Archie Campbell, Minnie Pearl, Grandpa Jones and String Bean. Archie and I wrote the first 13 shows in Hollywood. We soon moved production to Nashville because of the cheaper studio costs and the exclusivity of all the Nashville artists being there. Plus, I couldn't stand being in Hollywood. I couldn't wait to get home, and back to the county.

What was one of the funniest moments on Hee Haw?

A lot of times we'd tell a joke, and then you'd hear hoofbeats, and a goat would come out and butt someone. During a taping of the show, country singer and Playboy personality, Barbi Benton was on. So, we did the joke, then you'd hear the hoofbeats and the goat came running out and butted Barbi as she was bent over. Her bra strap broke and everything just fell out. We were all rolling on the floor in laughter. Barbi was screaming in rage, "Don't you dare let anyone see that!!"

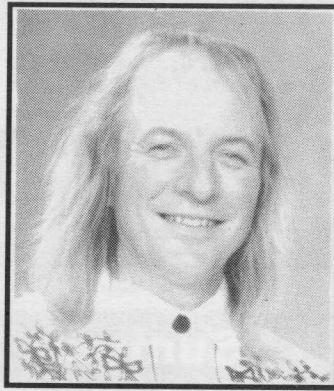
What do you miss most about those



Continued on Page 3

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



so I hope to add some newer content to blend with the old.

Comments. Please, we need your input. Let us know how we are doing; what you like about the newsletter, Barn Dance, etc.; or what you dislike; or changes, new ideas, any information. It's YOUR newsletter, so speak your mind, voice your opinion. We'd love to hear from you.

All information for the newsletter can be sent to:

Grant Heywood,
R. R. #2,
Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0
Phone: (519) 656-2552

P.S. No 'In Memoriam' in this issue. That's a blessing. Maybe we really are living longer.

The Barn Dance Historical Society

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

Earl Heywood
Founder, Honourary President, Advisor

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June Therrien, Carol Johnston,
John Jeaman, Hugh Elder.

The President's Report

by Wayne Otterbein

I wish to thank the Membership for their support and faith in my leadership and returning me to the office of President, for a second term. I hope I can live up to everyone's expectations.

A President can only advise and direct. It is the Directors who make the final decision with a vote. The talents and hard efforts our Directors put into their positions make my job as President much easier.

We support the Museum, which is why the Barn Dance Historical Society was formed and has remained kind of in the background. In 1999, I will work towards making the Museum *MORE VISIBLE, MORE ACCESSIBLE and MORE EXCITING*. In the meantime we will continue to make history with ongoing Barn Dances and Shows throughout the province of Ontario.

We do, however, need the volunteers to work behind the scenes to keep this business successful. People who wrote us and met us at the shows tell me and the directors and the entertainers, how much they like the shows. This is proof to me we are heading in the right direction. I ask all our members to keep in touch by letter or phone. Your input is so important to us.



Our newly elected Board of Directors for 1999. Pictures left to right: front row - Lois Schistad, John Heaman, Carol Johnston, Maryanne Cunningham and June Therrien. Back row - Earl Heywood, Hugh Elder, Wayne Otterbein, Al Widmeyer, Len Love, Ron Coulthard and Grant Heywood. Absent: Bill Simmermaker.

An Interview With:

Gordie Tapp, Country Boy at Heart

Continued from Page 1

times on Hee Haw?

I miss the comradery. They were all close friends; Archie Campbell, was one of my closest buddies. Mike Snyder was so genuine too. I remember when I went to our producer and said, "You've got to come over to Opryland and hear this kid." I soon had him on Hee Haw. Mike is so real, he's so country, he wouldn't chew gum unless it had gravy in it.

Who was your idol when you were growing up?

I'd have to say Bob Hope, and Jack Benny. They had great timing. Foster Brooks was someone I looked up to as well. I had the pleasure of being Master of Ceremonies at his golf tournament in Louisville, Kentucky for 19 years. He came to my 50th Anniversary in show business celebration. He was only supposed to perform for 6 or 7 minutes, but he continued for at least 20 minutes. He was hilarious.

What ticks you off?

People who know little about the profession, but want to make sure

their power's over the people that do.

Do you ever wish you had pursued another goal?

Well, I wish I would've gotten into more movies. I did do two movies. Acting came natural to me. I was acting every time I was on stage or doing a show.

Any advice for struggling young artists?

I'd suggest they stick with their ambition, through thick and thin. They should learn their craft, and present themselves as best they can. It's got to work. Desire is the most important thing in any performer.

What's your view on today's country music?

Most of today's country music is all produced for money. There's no thought to writing a tune that's going to last. A lot of today's performers won't stick around like Cash and Haggard. A lot of them are sound-alikes. No more Tammy Wynettes. They established a sound and stuck with it. But it is a lot tougher today to get heard.

What's the story behind you, Earl Heywood and the Martin Guitar?

Earl's dad and my uncle were brothers and lived on farms across from each other, outside of Exeter. I'd spend my summer vacations there, working, and eating Earl's mom's great tasting bran jams. Before I was about to go into the army, I came over to see Earl, and let him pick my Martin 0018 guitar. Earl asked what I wanted for the guitar and I think I said \$150.00. So Earl bought it. What a mistake on my part. I've been tryin' to get the darn thing back from him ever since.

How did you like the Barn Dance tonight?

I loved playing this barn dance. It was great talking to old friends like Ernie King and Lloyd Bank. And Victor Pasowisty. I haven't seen him in 30 years. I used to call him Victor Pass The Whiskey. The band was super and the audience was just great!!

Any future plans?

I love to work in front of an audience. I'm mainly doing a lot of shows for seniors. I keep working for my self-preservation. The good Lord willin', I'll continue to keep folks laughing into the next century.

HELP! HELP! HELP!

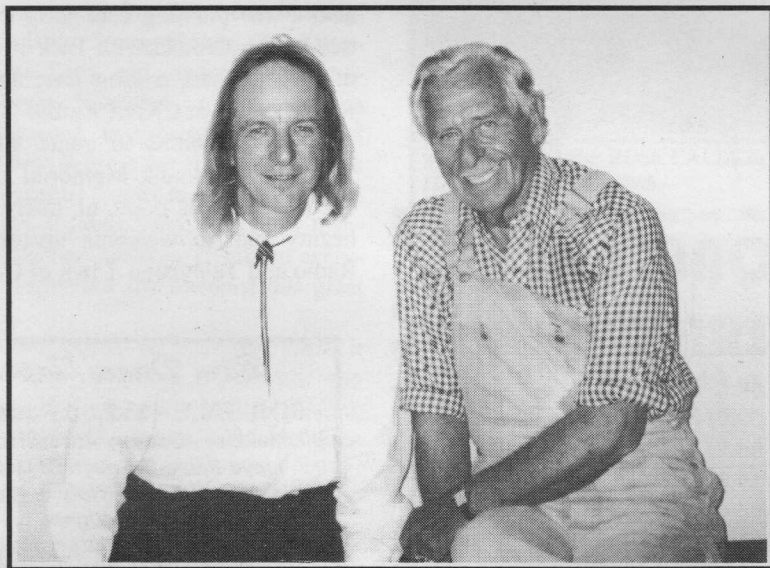
Volunteers Needed. If you can find the time to volunteer to help out at our functions such as Barn Dances, Fiddlers Convention or behind the scenes with various committees, please get in touch with us. Phone (519) 357-3021.

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Country performer and editor, Grant Heywood, and Cousin Clem, a.k.a. Gordie Tapp, chat after an interview session in the dressing room. The discussion revolved around, what it's like to reach the ripe old age of 39 or something.

Tribute to the "Great Andy DeJarlis"

by Victor Pasowisty

My association with Andy DeJarlis and his music began at a very early age, long before I met the distinguished gentleman. When I was a young boy, growing up in Manitoba, I had listened to many of Andy's weekly radio broadcasts. His unique style of fiddling and his rendition of his theme song "Blueridge Mountain Home" soon became his trademark. His music had great appeal and he gained tremendous popularity in Western Canada. It wasn't long before he became a household name.

In 1949, after moving to Ontario, I began to lose contact with his music. It wasn't until 1956 when he began to record for Quality and London Records, that I reacquainted myself with his distinctive style of playing. His unique style of fiddling was very contagious and I soon became hooked on his masterful touch. He made a host of new friends across Canada through his recordings.

Andy was unique in many ways. He was more than just a fiddle player. He became a prolific composer / arranger and lyricist of fiddle music. He composed approximately 350 fiddle tunes.

His original ideas were like a breath of fresh air - he molded his ideas and made fiddle music a work of art. He elevated the

level of fiddle playing to its highest level, as we know it today. Many of his peers would describe his rhythmic expressions as most exciting. When Andy played the fiddle, people would stop and listen.

Andy was many years ahead of everyone. He was in a class all by himself. He received many awards and a citation from the Mayor of Winnipeg for his musical contributions and achievements.

After 60 years, when you hear fiddle music, whether it's at a fiddle contest, a concert hall, dance hall or wedding, you will hear fiddlers from across Canada, both young and old playing fiddle tunes composed by Andy DeJarlis. He became a legend - a Canadian institution.

Congratulations, Reverend Franceene Watson, for your relentless efforts in preserving the music of the great Andy DeJarlis who created the "Red River" style of Old Time Fiddling which was the soul and spirit of the early settlers.

Thank you, Andy, for providing us with the world's greatest fiddle music. May the music you created live in the hearts of people for many generations to come. You will always be my greatest hero.

Sadly missed - your friend,
Victor Pasowisty

COMING EVENTS

Mark These on your Calendar
Wed., Sept. 22, 1999 - Barn Dance Shows at the International Plowing Match at Dashwood, Ont. Two shows with the first show starting at 10:00 a.m.

October 3, 1999 - Canada's Ole Time Fiddle Convention, at the Canadian Legion, Wingham, Ontario. Seminar at 10:00 a.m. Fiddle Contest at 1:00 p.m. Other entertainment to follow.

CANADA DAY in "DOC" CRUICKSHANK PARK

submitted by Earl Heywood

The Wingham Horticultural Society have been busy for the past two summers restoring and beautifying Wingham's Cruickshank Park.

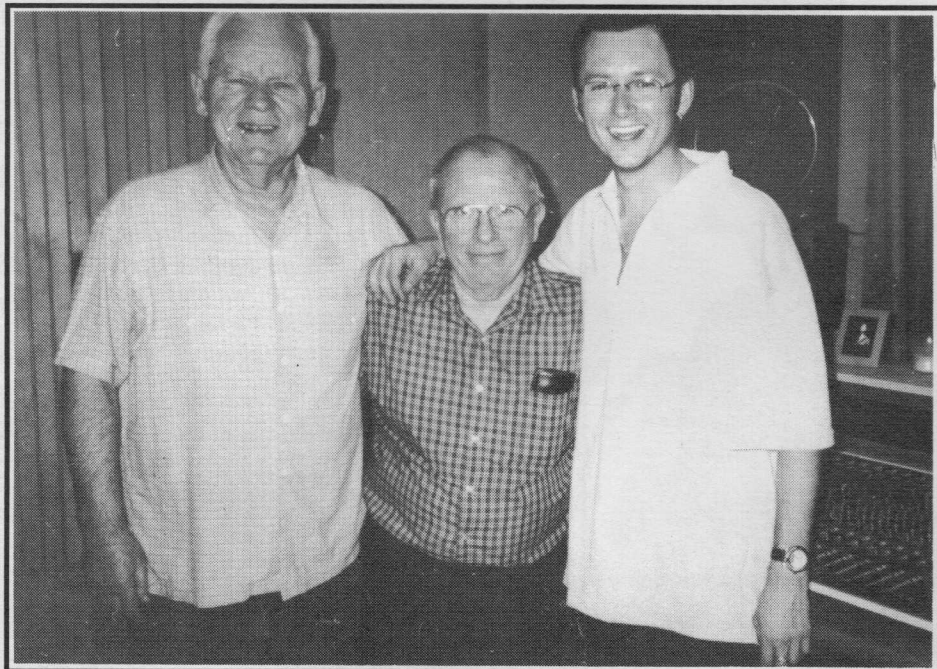
On Thursday, July 1, 1999, members of the Society went all out to stage their first celebration in the park with a barbecue, and a program of live music from 6 to 8 p.m. Other activities at the get-together included the presentation of a donation from CKNX Radio to install a new water fountain and lighting. There was also a tree planting ceremony of an oak tree in the Cruickshank Park in memory of Bob Carbert, a long time agriculture farm reporter at CKNX Radio.

In the months to come the W. T. "Doc" Cruickshank Memorial Park will become a focal point of interest and a beauty spot to welcome visitors to the Radio and Television Town of Canada.

Barn Dance Tapes

FOR SALE - \$12.00 Postpaid
Bill Mankiss - Country Accordion Swing
Lloyd Bank - A Touch Of Dobro
Hank MacDonald - Hobos, Hank &
Jimmie Rodgers
Victor Pasowisty - Forget-Me-Nots
You ng Mathew Johnson

LYNN RUSSWURM
Box 63, Elmira, Ont. N3B 2Z5



Pictured from left to right: Fiddlers, Victor Pasowisty, and Mike Slauenwhite, with producer Jay Riehl, at his recording studio. The 16 song tribute C.D. to Andy DeJarlis is expected to be released this summer.

FROM THE STAGE

WAYNE OTTERBEIN, *Show Manager*

The annual Campout Jamboree weekend and the Saturday Night Barn Dance turned out to be another great success with more than double the amount of trailers over last year.

The highlight of it all was Gordie Tapp and his sidekick Cousin Clem, stars of T.V.'s Hee Haw, truly a thrill to watch. The familiar and popular country songs Gordie Tapp sang, backed up by his harmonica and the downhome country comedy of Cousin Clem held the audience spellbound with laughter for his two performances on the 1½ hour Barn Dance show.

On behalf of the Barn Dance Historical Society, it is my pleasure to thank Gordie Tapp for donating his time and talent. May we also wish him a belated happy birthday and may he have many more birthdays in the future. To all the entertainers and the volunteers, a very special thanks - their time and talents help to develop the goals of this organization.

Country Gentleman JIM SWAN kept the show moving, with outstanding guests, like Janet Turner, 16 year old songstress loaded with charm, and comic singer Johnny Heaman, and his wife Geneva. Even the Dobro sounds by Lloyd Bank and other regulars like Royce Riehl on bass guitar, plus the sweet double sounds of The Barn Dance Fiddlers, Vic Pasowisty and Mike Slauenwhite, with Ronnie Coulthard providing piano and sounds of the steel guitar gave the crowd what they really wanted to hear. The songs by Bruce Robertson, a regular, and Billy Simmermaker, Jim Otterbein, Mike Eedy and singer-rhythm guitarist, Kevin Westphal, plus drummers Grant Heywood and Karry Jackson, kept the solid beat in place for all the singers. As well as a special thanks to Randy Morrison for his special fiddle work. The show manager has this final word - - Thanks to everyone who supported and attended this great rally.

I would like to let everyone know it was Al Widmeyer, the musical director who did a super job of producing and putting this show together. Thanks, Al, for all your help.

The Barn Dance Gang will be looking forward to seeing you all at the International Plowing Match at Dashwood, Ont., Wednesday, Sept. 22, 1999. The first show starts at 10:00 a.m.

We'll see you there.

Annual Barn Dance Campout Jamboree



CORA ROBERTSON, *First Lady of the Barn Dance*, pictured after receiving the Pioneer Award, at the Campout Jamboree in Blyth. Cora is most noted for her many years of playing piano with The Ranch Boys, on the CKNX T.V. show, Circle 8 Ranch.



Pictured left to right: ROSS CALDER, CAROL JOHNSTON, and fiddler FRANK STILES, at the May Campout Jamboree in Blyth.

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Cassette - Vol. 2	\$10.00 each
CD - Vol. 1 & 2	\$30.00 set
Souvenir 1997 Calendar	\$ 5.00 each

Please include \$2.00 per item for mailing or pick up at Ernie King Music.

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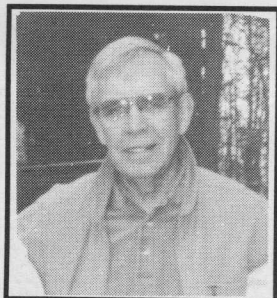
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Just Fiddling Around . . .

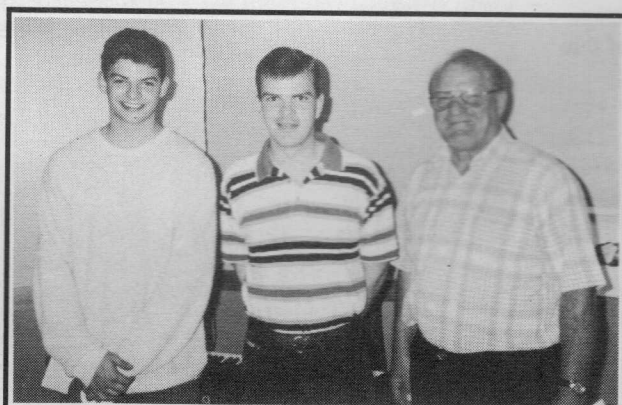
with Bill Oja



AMBER DAGENAIS, 8 months, gets a little advice from dad, **ROBBIE**, while winning the one and under category at the Douro Fiddle Contest.



Woodstock's **ED GYURKI**, seven-time winner of the Shelburne Canadian Fiddling Championships has been invited to be the special guest artist at the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championships. These will be held August 27, 28 and 29, at the Centrepointe Theatre in Nepean, Ontario.



Another successful fiddle contest was held at Black Creek Pioneer Village just outside of Toronto. Thirty fiddlers competed in six categories for ribbons and cash prizes. Winners of the Championship Class are **SHANE COOK** of Dorchester, who finished first, closely followed by **SCOTT WOODS** of Fergus, and **GERRY SMITH** of Exeter.



At the Hamilton Convention, on of the headliners was Cape Breton's **NATALIE MacMASTER** seen here with **DARREN WALTERS** of Bright, Ont. Natalie is one of the star attractions at Fiddlers of the World in Halifax, July 11 to 15, 1999.



LYNN RUSSWURM and the Jamboree Reunion Band play a stage show at the Farm Museum in Milton. Special guests included **MELISSA DIEBOLD**, and the young fiddle sensation from Loretto, **BRIAN DUCHOWSKI**.



At last years CKNX Barn Dance at the Listowel Arena, Master of Ceremonies **JOHNNY BRENT**, with special guest **MELISSA DIEBOLD**, of St. Agatha.



At the CRTC / CBC Hearing in Sudbury, **JACINTHE TRUDEAU** is interviewed on MCTV. Jacinthe is the lead fiddler of the Northern Ontario Fiddlers who are headlining at this years Massey, Ont. Agricultural Fair.

COUNTRY CALENDAR

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

* **July 1 - 4th** - The 7th Annual Canada's Largest Newfoundland Garden Party Reunion, Bridgeport Rod and Gun Club, Maryhill, just 10 minutes from Kitchener. For ticket info call 1-888-399-8299. Vendors and crafts welcome, call (519) 743-3723

* **MULTI DATES** - Easter Passage Restaurant and Night Club, 30 Melanie Drive, Brampton, has live country music. July 1-4 - GARY & WILLIS; July 8-11 - IRENE DOUCETTE and WAYNE FERGUSON; July 15-18 - ALEX SEAWARD; July 22-25 - BOYS FROM THE ROCK; July 29-Aug. 1 - BURT AUSTIN.

* **MULTI DATES** - Appearances by DOREEN BROWN, Opry Orillia - July 17; Erin Park BBQ and Jamboree - July 18; Port Perry Fiddle Club - July 28; Classic Country Music Reunion, Trenton - July 1st weekend; Gospel Show - August 1; 12th Annual Musicians' Corn Roast, Blackstock - August 8; Holland Landing Jamboree - August 19.

* **July 16 & 17** - THE BELLAIRES, from Coldwater, featuring MERV BELL at The Tremont Hotel, Collingwood. For further info, call (705) 789-7165.

* **July 17** - Opry Orillia is now back at the Sundial Restaurant. Join the fun at the Opry Jamboree with CHUCK MOORE..

* **July 25** - The Sadler's Apple Orchard Opry Country Jamboree, Clarksburg. Also Aug. 22, Sept. 26 and Oct. 24 Potluck Supper - Appreciation Jamboree.

* **MULTI DATES** - The Rose & Shamrock, 226 Queen St. East, Brampton, presents: July 2-3 - REG BENOIT; July 9-10 - THE STARLITES; July 16-17 - 52 PICK-UP; July 23-24 - DEPUTY; July 30-31 - TIME MACHINE.

* **July 4, Aug. 1, Sept. 5** - Join the fun at the Warminster Legion. Bring your musical instruments to the jamboree, also dancing.

* Appearances by YOUNG COUNTRY: **July 1, Canada Day** - 12 to 5 p.m., Town of Newmarket, Main Street; **Aug. 13 - 14** - Cactus Pete's, Scarborough.

* **Ongoing** - Puffins Bar & Eatery, 614 Trethewey Dr., Toronto, presents live country music with open jam Wednesdays, with DON WOOD and Newfoundland Music 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Sundays with GREG FITZPATRICK..

* **September 25** - The Great Northern Exhibition 1999 Annual Old Tyme Fiddle and Step Dance Contest at Collingwood Fairgrounds. This year, the GNE introduces the Townsend Memorial Trophy in recognition of

Graham and Eleanor Townsend, and their contribution to the world of fiddling. It will be awarded annually to the winner of the Open Fiddle Class..

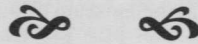
* **August 5 - 7** - The Shelburne Rotary Club presents the 49th Annual Canadian Open Championship Fiddle Contest. Tickets for the Main Event on Sat. night, phone 519-925-3531. Trailer park opens Aug. 2. Camping tickets, phone 519-925-5674.

Thurs., Aug. 5 - Special feature: SCOTT WOODS AHOW and McLEAD (4 fiddlers). Also, entertainment in the beer garden.

Fri., Aug. 6 - Fiddlers Fiddlefest (try and say that one five times fast)

Sat., Aug. 7 - at 1:00 p.m. parade with Metro Toronto Police and Winged Wheels. Plus the "Main Event", the fiddle finalists.

Sun., Aug. 8 - A non-denominational church service at 10:15 a.m.



'THE HEYWOOD TWINS', Janessa and Kianna. Pictured here in the studio, for their first ever recording. More information in News, Notes 'n Events.

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NEWS, NOTES 'N EVENTS

"Goin' Down The Country" is a brand new record release now available recorded by Ross Calder and Carol Johnson singing together in beautiful harmony. Together they recorded a cassette of songs such as, "Paper Rosie", "Cold, Cold Heart", "A Petal from a Faded Rose", "When It's Apple Blossom Time in Annapolis Valley", and many more. Ross plays guitar, and Carol on keyboards. Together they have appeared at various events throughout Ontario, like Steam Shows, The Plowing Match and Barn Dance events. You can add this cassette of songs by Ross and Carol to your collection by writing to Carol Johnston, 121 Dodge Drive, Kitchener, Ontario N2G 3W5, for further details.



No one every heard of a Diamond Award until Canadian born singer, song writer and recording artist, Shania Twain, arrived on the scene. Shania recently became the world's all time top selling female recording artist. Yes, it's true. She was presented with two Diamond Awards at the 1999 Academy of Country Music Awards held at the Universal Amphitheater in California on May 5, 1999. The Inaugural Presentation recognized the World Record Sales of 10 million units of two of Shania Twain's Albums "The Woman In Me" and "Come On Over". Remember Shania Twain claims she got her first break when she appeared with the Country Versatiles on CKNX television. She even made this known on one of her appearances on television. Congratulations, Shania, from all of us who belong to the Barn Dance Historical Society.



On Saturday, May 22nd more Canadian History was being made when Kianna and Janessa Heywood, 6 year old twin daughters of Country Music singer songwriter and recording artist Grant Heywood and wife Jeanette, cut their first sound track for a three generation record of the Heywood Family. The session was at Uncle Gerry's Place, Multi Track Recording Studio, in Kitchener, Ontario.



Grant Heywood and the Desert Dolphins are back in the studio putting the final touches on their about to be released single, on E.M.I. Records. The tune "Friday Night In Lafayette" is a Cajun type number, co-written by Grant and Dicky Lee at Polygram, in Nashville. Special guests performing on the C.D. are Al Widmeyer, on acoustic and dobro guitar, and Randy Morrison, on fiddle. Listen for it on your local country radio station.



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



HOWDY FOLKS:

Here we are with the summer edition 1999 of the Barn Dance Opera Journal. Stop and think a moment. Just six months from now we will be waving good-bye to a century of progress we'll never see again. Then with a tear or two in each eye we'll be greeting the new Millennium, the year 2000.

The story and history of Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance has been finally completed. Thanks to Dave Wall my co-author for computerizing the script. Right now it is being reviewed by a major

publisher in Toronto. In the meantime we have to line up the pictures and check everything over before it is finalized for printing and a deal closed with the printer.

May I express my sincere appreciation to Sheila Copps, Minister of Canadian Heritage for her faithful support and encouragement in helping me capture the history of "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance", and how it became the longest lived Radio Show of it's kind in the history of Canadian Music and Broadcasting.

Thanks to Sheila Copps for requesting that the Canadian flag be present on every stage appearance ... and also in The Barn Dance Hall of Fame, and W. T. "Doc" Cruickshank Museum. Thanks to the local representative of the Federal Government, Paul Steckle, and the Ontario Government's local representative, Helen Johns, for issuing us our Provincial flag ... for both the road shows and the museum.

Since I proposed to our Board of Directors the creation of shelving to serve as a showcase in the museum of our people who

have won Pioneer Awards, etc., I have promised to provide a budget. I also proposed an Honour Role for those who have supported this organization to display their names on a plaque. I will require the co-operation of the membership committee to help create this valuable and honourable recognition for all those who helped to keep the Barn Dance Historical Society alive ... or it cannot happen.

Don't forget to keep Sunday, October 3 in mind for Canada's Ole Time Fiddle convention at the Canadian Legion in Wingham. Seminar at 10:00 a.m. Fiddle Concert at 1:00 p.m., plus singers, dancers, instrumentalists and other entertainment to follow.

Remember ...

"THE SHOW MUST GO ON".

Earl Heywood
Founder, Hon. Pres., Director, Advisor

Annual Barn Dance Campout Jamboree



Piano player, extraordinaire, **MIKE EEDY**, flashes his shoulder nametag, while guitarist, **JIM OTTERBEIN** waves to the camera person, while still playing the guitar. Amazing!!



Fiddlin' favorites, **VICTOR PASOWISTY**, **MIKE SLAUENWHITE**, and **RANDY MORRISON**, got a thunder of applause when they performed a medley of classic fiddle tunes in three part harmony.



Hometown boy, **DOUG McNALL**, seen here at centre stage, with the Barn Dance Band, singing some vintage Hank Williams ballads.



COUSIN CLEM kneels before the audience, and gets down to **JOHNNY HEAMAN'S** level on the Barn Dance stage.



AL WIDMEYER (left) this year's Barn Dance Musical Director, with **GEORGE LONSBORY** (right), pictured here during a rehearsal at George's practice studio / barn facilities in Cambridge.