

The Barn Dance Opera Journal

Official Publication of:
The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.

A Not For Profit Organization

Barn Dance Website: www.thebardance.ca

Price: \$2.00 (tax incl.)

Vol. 47 2005

Fall Edition

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Catchin' Up with Shane Wilder

by Grant Heywood

Four years ago I did an interview article in the Barn Dance Journal with the infamous Shane Wilder called 'Living The American Dream'. While attending the A.F.M. convention in Vegas this past summer, I took the opportunity to connect with Shane and got to find out what this ramblin' cowboy has been up to lately.

Shane lived in California for 35 years and has spent the last 5 years at his new ranch on the edge of Las Vegas where his weekly Trans America Broadcasting syndicated radio show is produced. I called him on the phone and was able to sit down for a long chat at the Riviera Casino on the strip in Vegas. No grass grows under this man's feet as he has done more in his lifetime than many of us could ever dream to do in two lifetimes. From radio announcer, to cowpuncher, to being a regular on the T.V. series Rawhide with his good friend Clint Eastwood, there isn't much that this cowpoke hasn't done. We sat down at Katy's Grill at the Riviera for a coffee and I proceeded to find out just what Shane Wilder has been up to lately. I have to admit that since I talked to Shane 4 years ago now, he seems timeless and looks the same as he did then. I wonder what his secret is?

So Shane, what's the latest thing in Vegas right now?

Hey the biggest thing goin' right now are those penny slot machines. One woman just won a million dollars on a penny machine and one month later she won another million.

My wife gives me hell for spending time at the casinos, but I always come home with more money than I left with.

I heard through the grapevine that you are involved with a new movie project. Can you tell me about that?

I'm working on a \$40 million dollar movie about the life of American Indian legend and chief, Cochise. We were to start filming in August but one of the main

investors died in a plane crash so finances are temporarily on hold. A lot of the money for the movie comes from native casinos down here and they are re-investing their earnings into worthwhile projects such as this one.

Who will be playing the lead role?

I've been talking to Val Kilmer to play the part of Cochise. Val is half native you know. Also, I've been talking with close relatives of Cochise to find out more about him. Did you know that Cochise lived to be 110 years old?

Are you acting in the movie or just producing it?

Oh, I might play a small part in it, but mainly I'm producing the movie. We'll be shooting in New Mexico and it will likely take about 12 weeks to shoot. The scriptwriter gets about \$3½ million and I'll be in for about \$1 million dollars as producer. When I told my wife what I'd be making from producing the movie, I got a list a mile long of things she wanted to get. Oh boy!

Tell me about Rawhide, and Clint Eastwood.

Clint's about a year older than me and we were just a couple of damn fools when we did the Rawhide T.V. series. But Clint struck it big in Hollywood when he did those Sergio Leone movies like, Fistful of Dollars, For a Few Dollars more and so on. He got \$40,000 for Fistful of Dollars, \$100,000 for For a Few Dollars More and \$250,000 for The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. Once he became a box office draw he was enticed to be part of Warner Bros. who gave him a 50/40 split. 50% for Clint and 40% for Warner Bros., plus they even gave him his own office. I still talk to him now and then. I told him he'd win an Oscar for his movie The Unforgiven, and he couldn't believe I predicted it would happen. Neither can I.

Did you like the Roy Rogers / Gene Autry style of television cowboy shows?

Not really. I was never impressed by those type of cowboy movies. They'd do stupid stuff like shooting 20 bullets out of a six shooter. Or Roy would be ridin' Trigger chasing a Cadillac full of bad guys. Come on! Give me something real like The Lonesome Dove series.

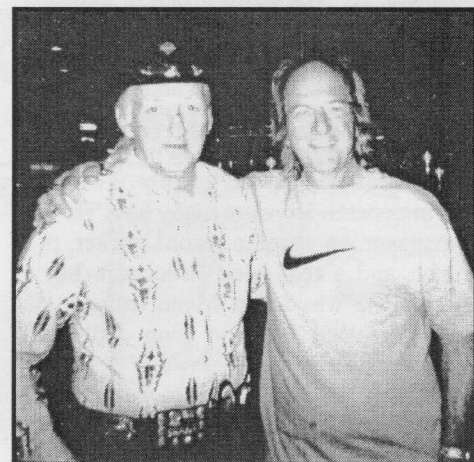
Your Trans America Broadcasting syndicated radio program covers almost 80 stations nationwide. You promote a lot of Canadian talent on the show. Anyone new lately?

As a matter of fact, I've been promoting a young red headed gal from up your way in Beeton, Ontario. Her name is Judy Kanyo, and man can she sing! She sings more along traditional lines and she's been picked up by more radio programmers than I can count. They all like her style. She's the most programmed artist on the international country music charts right now. She's had four #1 singles internationally from her first c.d. effort. She must be doing something right.

So what do you think of the latest Nashville scene?

Personally, you don't have to go to

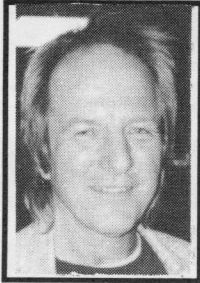
Continued on Page 3



Legendary Shane Wilder and editor / musician Grant Heywood seen here at the Riviera Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada this past July.

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



With such warm weather it seemed like this summer would never end. But our seasons have a life span all their own and seem to fade into the next season to follow.

Reflecting on this past year, I was just lamenting over the passing of one of Canadian country music's finest singer / song-writers, Terry Carrisse, who hailed from the Ottawa Valley area. Then, just before leaving for a musician's convention in Las Vegas, I was again saddened by the death of Bill Geffros, who was my friend and personal manager when I was with the Desert Dolphins country group in the late 90's.

I knew Bill when he originally worked as a booking agent for DRAM Agency in the K-W area. He really hit his stride when he became the head entertainment agent and co-ordinator at Lulu's Roadhouse between Cambridge and Kitchener. From there, he took the Desert Dolphins under his management and helped form American Grandstand agency/management and the independent music label/publisher, Wolfe Lake Music. Bill knew so many people in the music business. He was instrumental in introducing me to well-known artists and associates on Music Row and the Nashville scene. He worked with me and many other Canadian country artists in getting established with recording, and radio airplay.

Bill had a genuine love for music and life in general. He wore many hats. He was a manager, an agent, a record tracker, promoter, and a real good fisherman, but in the end he was a fun friend to hang out with. He went way too soon and I will miss him dearly.

Later, this past August, I was hit again by the death of one of our colleagues, Bill Oja. His column 'Just Fiddling Around', was a pictorial feature of Canadian fiddlers, appearing in the Barn Dance Opera Journal over the years. Ironically, I met Bill Oja by way of Bill Geffros while he

was helping to get the Desert Dolphins established.

Bill Oja was once a columnist for Country Music News, but his real passion was promoting Canadian fiddle music. Bill spearheaded a petition to get C.B.C. to be more pro-active in playing Canadian fiddle music on the airwaves. Bill received several awards in many of his efforts and was always a welcome participant in our Blyth Jambouree Campout Weekend in Blyth, Ontario.

Bill passed on as a result of a lengthy illness and I am so sad he is gone. Both Bill Geffros and Bill Oja leave a noticeable void as they were both real leaders in their own way, in helping Canadian artists and promoting Canadian talent.

I would also like to note that local Stratford musician, Murray Eggert passed on earlier this year and many musicians and friends waited in long lineups to pay their last respects. And I was just informed recently of the death of Ken Kalmusky of Stratford. Ken was the guitarist with 'Great Speckled Bird' who originally backed up Ian and Sylvia. Ken's son, Dave Kalmusky is a freelance guitarist with Farmers Daughter, Jason McCoy and many others and works as a producer at Jay Riehl's Signature Sound Studio. I know that Ken was undoubtedly Dave's mentor, and will be greatly missed.

I have the utmost respect for these folks who have given so much to make music a part of their lives and ours. They will not be forgotten.

Comments?? Please contact:
Grant Heywood
5584 Deborah Glaister Line, R. R. #2,
Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0
Phone: (519) 656-2552



Celebrating 50 years of marriage Hughie and Beth Elder had many, many friends and relatives over to their farm near Ayton to help celebrate this landmark anniversary. A lot of pickin' went on and even a government official from the tax office got involved in the all day festivities. Congratulations to both of you.

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

P.O. Box 68

Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 357-2160

(or leave a message)

BARN DANCE WEBSITE:

www.thebardance.ca

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A BIG THANK YOU TO

*Theron Kramer and staff of
The Ontario Trillium Founda-
tion, for their help in funding
support for The Barn Dance
and Entertainment*

Museum in Wingham, Ont.

*Much appreciated,
on behalf of the Barn Dance
Historical Society.*

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Nashville to have success. There's all kinds of talented folks proving that all over the world right now. A lot of artists out of Nashville all sound the same. You can't turn your back on your roots, and that's where traditional country music comes from.

When did you first meet my dad, Earl Heywood?

That was way back in the 50's. I was in Toronto and caught up with him at RCA studios. I had heard a lot about him and once I heard him sing I told him, "You're one hell of a singer." Our friendship has lasted ever since that day.

You get to introduce a lot of artists when they come to Vegas, who's been to town lately?

I recently introduced David Allan Coe. Sometimes I'll just do a short intro and other times I'll tell a few jokes. And I've got lots of them. I've introduced a lot of people in Vegas here. Most of them are good friends of mine like, Willie Nelson, Stella Parton, and Tanya Tucker just to name a few.

I heard that you were instrumental in getting Willie Nelson out of that I.R.S. dilemma a number of years ago.

That was a good one. The I.R.S. was going to auction off all of Willie's worldly possessions, from his recording studio, to gold records and even his guitar. The gov't said that Willie owed a LARGE sum of money in back taxes, so they were going to squeeze it out of him by auctioning off all his stuff. By the time we got the word out to all of Willie's neighbours, relatives and friends, everyone knew what they had to do when they started the auction. Those I.R.S. fellas had to take whatever they could get once the bidding started. Folks only bid up to \$50 or maybe a

\$100 dollars for things that were worth way more than that. Needless to say, Willie got most of his stuff back and the I.R.S. went back to Washington with their tail between their legs and a small handful of cash.

Shane, it's been a pleasure once again to talk about your colourful life and memories. Do you have any regrets?

Hell no! I'd probably go out and make all the same mistakes all over again. Ha. Ha!

THANK YOU NOTE:

We would like to thank Verna Steffler and staff of the Wingham Horticultural Society for the Red Oak tree planting and plaque established in our honour and situated in Cruikshank Park in Wingham, on Sunday, Oct. 16, 2005. We humbly appreciate your efforts in this presentation and we were honoured to have so many friends attend.

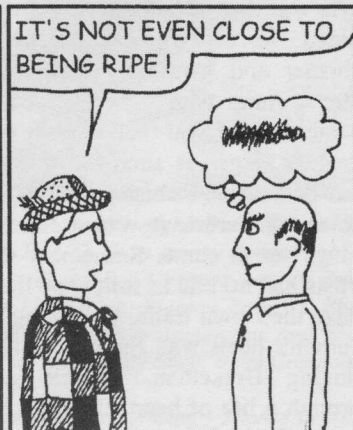
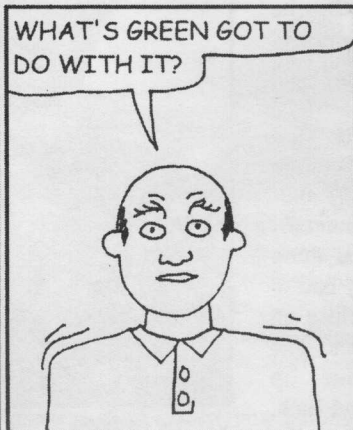
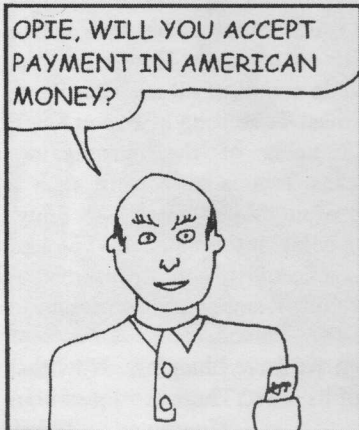
*Thank you so much,
Sincerely,
Earl and Martha Heywood*

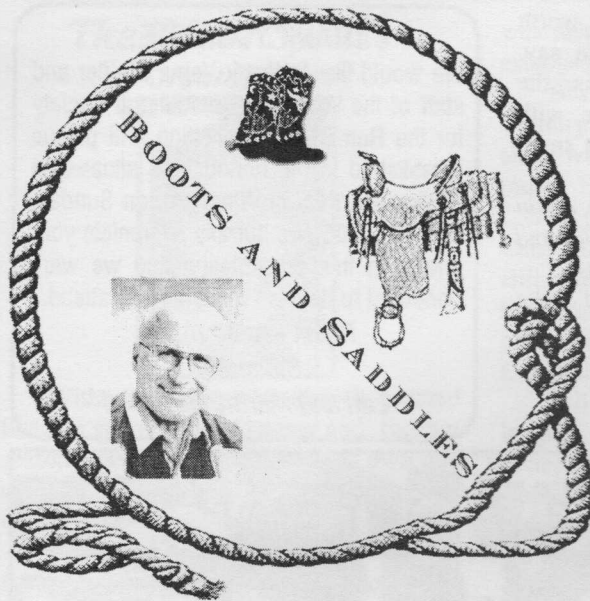


Earl & Martha Heywood seen here at the celebration on Oct. 16th / 05 at Cruikshank Park in Wingham. Verna Steffler / left (looking on with others) of the local Horticultural Society spearheaded the effort to honour Earl & Martha with the planting of a red oak tree and plaque on behalf of their contributions over the years to the town of Wingham through, music, song, and the establishment of the Barn Dance Historical Society.

COUSIN OPIE

BY LARRY RUSSWURM





by Lynn Russwurm

I'd like to talk about things in today's country music which I think are actually detrimental to the genre. I'm sure that those of you that grew up with real country music will agree with me.

First and foremost is the fact that "our" country name is now given to anything as long as the artist wears a cowboy hat of sorts and dresses in old blue jeans that more than likely will have holes in them. Now, I'm not denying that many of today's artists are talented but I wish they'd call their music something else because most of it is NOT country. To know that what is actually country music we have to label it as "Traditional Country". Through the years as country music built its foundations, there were a lot of influences that entered the big picture such as western swing, cowboy music, yodeling, a touch of Hawaiian, honky-tonk and then bluegrass which eventually forged its own distinctive sound.

Let's take a look at some of these influences. Probably the earliest recognized style was that of Vernon Dalhart when he joined forces with guitarist/composer/whistler and harmonist Carson Robison after a romp with light classical concert music. I grant you that Vernon was not a cowboy singer as such but the combination of Dalhart-Robison was country music at its purest. It was a forerunner of things yet to come. Remember that these artists had no one to follow so they had to blaze their own trails. Following close on Vernon's heels was Jimmie Rodgers, The Singing Brakeman. Jimmie came up through a life of heartaches and bad luck, some of which he created himself but he

had such a sunny, optimistic outlook on life that one feels he knew where he was going but didn't know when he would get there. His music was very simplistic but it was the voice of the common man and when he hit, America was awakened to this man who laughed at depression, his own poor health and he will always be remembered for this through the musical heritage he left behind. His music encompassed the life of the cowboy, his lonesome, blue yodels, the authentic train songs that he knew from personal experience, the songs of Hawaii as well as some of the music from

his own day. His backup included Hawaiian bands, jazz bands which even included Louis Armstrong as a backup man on a recording session as well as his unfettered simple guitar backup, which to me were the best of all.

Following Jimmie Rodgers there came a young blues singer who idolized Jimmie and started out almost as a clone of the venerable Rodgers. But once in a while we would get a glimpse of the real Gene Autry in some of his own great original songs which veered toward cowboy songs, where he would also incorporate his yodels. Then came the great "Silver Haired Daddy of Mine", which was really his stepping stone to fame along with his advent into the singing cowboy of the silver screen.

Next we need to take a look at Bob Wills and western swing. Probably best



Jimmie Rodgers - "The Singing Brakeman"

remembered for his dance music, he also recorded yodel songs, including those of Jimmie Rodgers as well as his western swing. At times he carried 12 piece bands and even larger, bringing in a strong rhythm section with drums and rhythm piano to complement his twin fiddles, and the steel guitar of Leon McAuliffe, creating the basic format for western swing which was emulated by many other bands but Wills was the originator of the style. One of these groups was Spade Cooley, the self dubbed King of Western Swing who was probably the smoothest of these groups. It's sad that he is best remembered for the tragedy that ended his musical career, the murder of his wife in a drunken rage and the publicity that surrounded his trial and then the fatal heart attack on the upcoming eve of his parole from prison.

Hawaiian music was mostly heard in the back-up bands, especially when the steel guitar came into prominence. There is a unique Hawaiian music industry that is by and large not a part of country music, mostly emanating from the Hawaiian Islands. The country side of Hawaiian is recognized by the great steel guitarists, and the highest level of these brings to mind the late, great Jerry Byrd. Throughout his career in Nashville's country industry he managed to record a fair amount of Hawaiian material. He was so enthralled with the music of the islands that eventually he turned his back on Nashville, moved to Hawaii to devote the rest of his life to the music of Hawaii.

When we come to the so called honky tonk music, we find Ernest Tubb at the forefront. This was Ernest's main category, especially the period with Billy Byrd on guitar. But Billy who was a great jazz guitarist was suppressed in the Tubb aggregation to playing the simple style that was the trademark that Tubb demanded. Eventually Billy was able to break that mould and record four albums of his own where he could fly on his own. Ernest had the most definable sound of all and you knew it was an Ernest Tubb song after you heard the first 3 notes of the introduction. Ernest's Texas Troubadours were such a great group when they did their own thing. I remember being at the Opry in 1964 and when they came on to do an instrumental all the other musicians gathered around to watch them.

And then we have bluegrass. Now that is a story all its' own. There is a lot of con-

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jecture about where bluegrass music originated, well it's pretty simple in my mind, it all started with Bill Monroe and The Bluegrass Boys. They joined the Grand Ole Opry with a unique combination of instruments and when Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs joined Bill it touched off the spark of greatness. Even today that is regarded the greatest bluegrass band ever. Bill had named his group The Bluegrass Boys, so how can anyone else take credit for the bluegrass phenomenon?

Again I seem to be running out of space but I would like to touch on a few more items that I can't reconcile with. Years back performers were careful of their appearance on stage with carefully selected stage wear, and here today we are faced with faded, worn and sometimes dirty old blue jeans. What has this done to our country music but turn off people who have paid good money to see their favourite performers and then be treated to this display of I don't give a damn kind of attitude. I've always felt that if a band is dressed like a band, then they've won over 50% of the audience without playing a note. And on top of this, many people are turned off by the sheer volume that beats at them from the stage. I remember when bands would play for dances in arenas with their own small P.A. systems and you could hear them in the farthest corner of the room. But today we have these huge banks of speakers and you can't under-

stand the vocalist because the band is drowning him out. I say, is this progress? Johnny Brent used to say "make them strain to hear the music and they'll come back for more". How true.

There are probably more things I should say but for now this will have to do. Thanks for staying with me for another of my "sound-off" sessions and please write and let me know where you would like me to go with these columns and who you'd like to see covered in future issues. You can contact me: Lynn Russwurm, Box 421, Elmira, Ontario N3B 3A9.

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Back Row, left to right - Billy Byrd, Dickie McBride and Jack Drake. Front Ernest Tubb.



Donations Made: Gord Baxter (left) and Shirley Russwurm (far right) of the Barn Dance Historical Society, presented cheques to various Blyth groups, July 23, from money donated at the Sunday morning gospel service at the Campout Jamboree held in May. Cheques went to (from second left): Karen Stewart, Blyth Festival; Bev Blair, Blyth Lions Club; Eleanor Babcock, Blyth Business Association; Paul Josling, Huron Pioneer Thresher and Hobby Association and Blyth and District Fire Department; Thelma Johnston, Blyth Legion; and Nancy Snell, Blyth Communities in Bloom.

(Thanks to Blyth Citizen for e-mailing photo to our printer. - Thanks Bonnie)

Country Music Memories

as compiled by Lynn Russwurm



THE MAIN STREETERS - Roly D'eon, Wally Trogott and Lloyd Bank; from CHML, Hamilton. Photo obtained from Wally on July 6, 1954 at Fonthill Ball Park.



LONNIE & LOTTIE - from CHCH T.V., Hamilton. Featured Stars of Radio, Stage, Television and Records.



THE MERCEY BROTHERS - Ray and Larry.



ADA, KIDD AND BONNIE BAKER - from CKCO T.V., Kitchener



Check out the new U.S. Stamp with Roy Acuff. What a collectable.

BOOKING THE BARN DANCE

If you are interested in more information about booking the Barn Dance Musical Production, please write to:

Barn Dance Bookings,
P. O. Box 68,
Wingham, Ont. N0G 2W0;
or call Wayne Otterbein,
(home) (519) 235-4783,
or (bus.) (519) 235-0559

The Barn Dance Historical Society would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Joyous New Year this holiday season.

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

* **Appearances by Paul Jones of Kountry Klassics** - Oct. 28, Nov. 18, Dec. 2, and Dec. 16 Trentwinds Int. Centre, Landsdowne St., Peterborough. Dec 16 will be Christmas Party and Dance, Santa will be there 8 to 12 p.m.. For bookings contact Paul Jones 705-745-6489.

* **Nashville Songwriters Assoc. Int. (NSAI)** celebrating it's 10th year. Workshops are currently held at the Brampton Arts Council, 24A Alexander St., Brampton, from Sept. to June and meetings are twice a month. For artists, NSAI also holds open mike night every month in the Mississauga area where they feature a local writer and showcase talents of songwriters throughout the GTA and beyond. For info please visit <http://ca.geocities..co/torontonsai@rogers.com>

* **Upcoming Bluegrass Festival** - Nov. 18 to 20, The Central Canadian Bluegrass Awards, Deerhurst.

* **Upcoming Country Shows**, Contact Johnny Burke at the Loft, 12 Graham Ct., Newcastle.

* **Maple Leaf Country Jubilee**, Moose Lodge, 10 Moose Rd., Lindsay at 1 pm. Nov. 27 - Artists Don Gibbings, John Morris, Don Tandy, Roy Jones, Louise Wright, Randy Morrison. Christmas show and Hank Williams Show TBA. Call Chef Adams 705-324-8793.

* **Thornton Old Tyme Fiddle club**, will be holding its monthly dance at the Thornton Lions Hall 7 to 11. Everyone welcome. For info 705-326-9675.

* **Live Country Music**, with a country touch for all occasions. Contact the Dolsons, 519-941-2954

* **Hensal Circle Jamborees** - call 905-277-2902.

* **Bluesky Country Bluegrass Jam**, the first Tuesday evening of the month and third Sunday afternoon at 1 pm at the Barrie Legion.

* **Oprey Orillia** hosted by Chuck Moore, the third Sunday from 1:30 to 6. Sidestreets Restaurant and Club, 2450 West Street S., Orillia.

* **Upcoming Entertainment Schedule**, con-

tact Hollywood on the Queensway, 1184 The Queensway, Etobicoke, 416-251-0288.

* **Appearances by Doreen Brown:** Nov 6 - Jamboree Army, Navy & Air Force, 765f Third St., Mississauga with host Joe Tucker; Nov. 6 - Moose Lodge, Brown's Line and Lakeshore with Norma Gayle and friends; Dec. 9 - Alton Community Centre; December Christmas hows TBA.

* **Dundalk Olde Tyme Musical Jamborees**, Call 519-923-3406.

* **Various Jamborees** - Elmvale Legion, third Sunday; Orilla Legion, fourth Sunda; Bolton Community Centre, second Wednesday; Longford Community Centre, first Saturday 8-12; every Sunday, Good Time country music club, Oshawa, Kingside Park.

* **Appearance by Gordon Wilcox**, Wiley St. Records, Nashville, TN, call 416-465-4965.

* **Auction Bard Jamborees**, Nov. 6, 7 pm, special guest Gily Jo Masson, Will Murray, Kristin Scott and Wallace Hoard, back up band, Stu Peters and Miners Bay with Bob McQuaid, Tom Hall and Randy Hill; Nov 13, 1 to 5 pm, special guests Dennis Whitty, dancing, open stage, same back up band as above; Nov. 27 and Dec. 11, same time and info as above.

* **Special Notice:** registration for the 2006 Auction Barn Country Weekend Jamboree at the Keeler Centre in Colborne, Sept. 1, 2, 3, 2006, will be available at all these upcoming functions. Book early as they expect a sell out.

* **Mapleleaf Country Jamboree**, Dec. 11 at the Moose Lodge, 10 Moose Rd., Lindsay.

* **The Wee Hideaway**, Country Musicians Jam Session, SE corner of Olive Ave and Wilson Rd., Oshawa (plaza south of Macs Milk). every Sunday afternoon 3 to 6, hosted by Anita Perra and Frank Woodcock. Come out and enjoy some great country music featuring special guests and local artists and musicians.

* **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Very saddened to learn of the passing of Bill Oja. Deepest sympathies to his family.

* **Thanks**, to Bob Gardner of Niagara Falls, who attended the Hastings Jamboree, Sept. 16-18 weekend, where he noticed it in the Barn Dance Opera Journal.

*Since this will be the last issue for 2005,
Season's Greetings to all for a
Healthy, Happy and Prosperous New
Year!!*

FOR IN MEMORIAM
PLEASE READ
THE EDITOR SPEAKS
ON PAGE 2.



NEWS & NOTES

Congratulations to Paul Weber of Maryhill, who recently received the Barn Dance Pioneer Award at the Oct. 16 performance at the Heritage Theatre in Wingham. Paul is a very well known Canadian country music singer who follows in his dad's (the late Smokey Weber) footsteps who also received the award a few years ago.

The Barn Dance and Entertainment Museum in Wingham used the last installment of funding from the Trillium grant to initiate a new overhead lighting system for artifacts and displays. This is a major improvement and will certainly put the museum in a new light (so to speak).



Circle 8 Ranch Boys, Ernie King and Hughie Elder seen here at the 8th Annual Barn Dance Blyth Campout Jamboree. These two happy guys are holding a special "one of a kind" Circle 8 Ranch acoustic guitar with caricature artwork of the Ranch Boys on the guitar body. Tickets are being sold on the guitar to help raise money for the Barn Dance & Entertainment Museum in Wingham. Draw for the guitar will take place at the 9th annual Blyth Campout in May 2006.

9th Annual Barn Dance Jamboree / Campout Weekend

at the Blyth Arena Complex,
Blyth, Ontario

May 26, 27, 28, 2006

Registration forms available
January 2006, by writing to:
Box 68, Wingham, Ont. N0G 2W0
or at the web site
www.thebardance.ca



HOWDY FOLKS:

As an entertainer I'm often asked what it was like being 'on the road' or 'on tour'. Luckily, during the glory days (1950's) of the CKNX Travelling Barn Dance shows, we were usually back home every night. Most of our dances and shows took place within the CKNX broadcasting area, which was anywhere from Sarnia to Tobermory or Chatham to Toronto, basically southwestern Ontario. Well, there was the one time we played over on Manitoulin Island which yielded the song Moonlight On The Manitoulin Islands while riding on the S.S. Norisle ferry on the way back. But you've likely heard that before.

The CKNX Barn Dance was a going concern then, and we were working almost every weekend. We were lucky enough to have the exposure of live radio advertising and almost every Saturday night a live radio broadcast of

the CKNX Saturday Night Barn Dance from a different location. And it wasn't just weekend performances either. There were times when we were booked almost every night of the week. With this much work for the musicians, it was no wonder the Barn Dance attracted the attention of some of the best talent around.

When it came to touring personally, I remember travelling to the U.S. during the early 1950's, namely Philadelphia and Baltimore with the late, great Bill Haley, who at that time was playing country and western music and experimenting with country rockabilly. I also spent some time with booking agent, Jack Howard trying to gain a foothold in the U.S. market as Canada's No. 1 Singing Cowboy. I also made treks through Kentucky and spent time down in Nashville as well.

When we recorded the first Heywood Family album, around 1959, we toured around southwestern Ontario and several times to Canada's east coast. We were billed on some of the bigger country concert shows with other U.S. and Canadian artists in places like Bathurst and Moncton, New Brunswick. Besides other country artists, there were old vaudeville acts such as 'Uncle Frank' who would wear tails and a top hat and come out on stage on roller skates while he sang. Another entertainer from the U.S. was 'Lazy Jim Day' who was like a Grandpa Jones type

character. Then, our family would play some of the smaller venues in 'out of the way' places such as Sambro or Musquodoboit Harbour in Nova Scotia and sometimes we'd be booked for a television or radio appearance in some of the bigger centres as well.

On the bigger shows we'd perform our best selected songs. When we headlined our own shows in smaller towns, Martha and I would sing some of our more popular numbers followed by our daughter Patricia. I would do a little magic and Martha and I would be in costume for a 'gay nineties' act complete with jokes and songs. Then we would bring out the youngest family member, our son Grant, (age 7 or 8 at that time) to sing solo and with the family. A lot of the songs we sang included some good old country gospel singing as well.

As I look back now, those were very special moments for the family. It was more like a working vacation for us and we all traveled together as a family. We got to visit the maritime provinces, perform, make new friendships and appreciate 'down east' hospitality. We didn't make a whole lot of money but we were richer for the experience and the memories. Remember –

THE SHOW MUST GO ON.....

Earl Heywood
 Founder, Hon. President,
 Advisor, Museum Curator

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