

# The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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## Earl Heywood, Canada's No. 1 Singing Cowboy

### 1917 - 2006

by Grant Heywood

My dad just passed away Sept. 17th and as tough as it might be, I really wanted to dedicate this cover story to him. I have lost several very close musician friends of mine over the years in the prime of their youth, and although my dad lived a full life at age 89, I still have a hollow empty feeling inside that I don't expect will go away any time soon.

Now that he's gone, I have to admit that I never realized what a larger than life figure he was to so many people in Canada, the U.S., and even Australia. Our family was humbled and overwhelmed by the media attention given upon his passing. We are so lucky to have him remembered by so many, and even by fans who we never even met before. Thanks to everyone who were part of the musical remembrance service for dad. I am sure he would have appreciated the songs and music performed in his honour. Special thanks to the "Larry Mercey Trio", dobro player Al Widemeyer, and fiddler James Rutherford.

Here is a brief history of my dad's colourful career in the music business.

It was in the 1940's when dad moved from the farm near Exeter, Ontario to become a premier performer with the CKNX Barn Dance Gang in Wingham. Known as Canada's Largest Traveling Barn Dance, dad soon became leader and singer of the hot country and western group, The Golden Prairie Cowboys, which included twin fiddlers Mel Lavigne and Ward Allan, as well as Lucky Amebeault, Slim Boucher, Bill Mankiss,

Lloyd Bank, Danny Grummet and sometimes Maurice Bolyer, Jack Kingston and 'Red' Burns. It was CKNX radio owner, Doc Cruickshank who was my father's mentor and was instrumental in guiding and establishing dad's early cowboy singing career.

It wasn't long until dad's songwriting and singing talent got him signed to RCA Victor Records. RCA promoted "Tears of St. Anne" and "Alberta Waltz" to great success on radio across Canada, and the label soon honoured dad with an official "Earl Heywood Week" which helped him identify and garner new fans.

Highlights from that golden era included regular live radio shows, to guest appearances nationwide on CBC radio and TV, as well media stints in the USA.

Dad had his own show on CKNX television called Range Rider, and appeared quite often on Western Roundup and Circle 8 Ranch. He was also the host for several radio programs on CKNX, both AM and FM, and to the delight of many children, he was Santa Claus for several years running on television as well.

Dad had moments in his life when he could have hit it big south of the border. In his day, he would have been known as an 'industry mover', making inroad connections with the likes of Bill Haley, Col. Tom Parker, Gene Autrey, Hank Snow and Grand Ole Opry stars at the time. Dad made live appearances all over Canada and the US, including record store promotions, but he was

content on basing his already successful career out of Wingham where we lived as a family. While making personal appearances day and night, dad balanced his job on and off the air at CKNX radio, and once he was established, it wasn't long until he got the Heywood family into recording and entertaining as well. While touring as a family unit, dad would entertain folks with magic and comedy, as well as singing sweet harmonies with mom and the family.

Mom was a seamstress and always made sure that the family, and especially dad, were dressed as a 'class act'. Mom and dad's outfits soon became a signature standard at every performance. "That's the way an entertainer should look", dad would say.

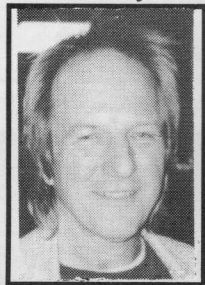
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**EARL HEYWOOD** - Featured Star of the CKNX Barn Dance.

## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



Being the editor allows me to reflect my opinion at times, give advice, or just say whatever pops into my head. I could talk about the weather, politics, do a concert review or tell you why I got married. But I really don't want to go there ... so since I don't have an editorial prepared as such, I am just going to leave you with an e-mail that I forward to friends and colleagues the day that my dad died.

To those who cared for my dad at the Wingham Hospital and at Huron Lea Home in Brussels, I can't thank you enough for all that you did while dad was in your care. You really are very special people and we will never forget that.

I promise I will be back in action in the next issue. Thanks.

Hello To Everyone:

We just wanted to let friends know that our dad, Earl Heywood, died on Sunday, Sept. 17th. Earl had been suffering from Alzheimer's and died suddenly from a heart attack at the Huron Lea Home in Brussels, Ont. Most of you will remember him as a pioneer of country music in Canada and a radio & T.V. personality from the CKNX Barn Dance days in Wingham, Ont. Some of you will remember him as a friend as well as a singer / songwriter / musician. My sister Pat and our mother, Martha, will always remember him as Dad, or Grandpa as the grandkids will remember him.

We don't want to go on about Earl's importance and lifelong contributions to pioneering country music in Canada. Without a doubt, his music,

merits and awards, and overall persevering spirit will attest to that. His dedication to helping others in 'getting a leg up' in the music business was immeasurable. He was genuine and sincere, and made it his path in life to balance his country singing career along with family.

Originally, an RCA recording artist, he never measured his career success in record sales but by the friends and fans he touched along the way throughout Canada, the U.S. and even Australia. He was a C.C.M.A. founding member and appeared nationwide on tour and television in the 50's & 60's sometimes with his wife, Martha, and daughter Patricia and son Grant. (The Heywood Family). The latest Heywood Family C.D. was about to be officially released at the time of his untimely death.

His friend, Hank Snow, said it best when he told dad that he was part of the 'Big Three' Canadian cowboy singers on RCA, which included Hank, Wilf Carter, and Earl. Although he gained notoriety and respect as 'Canada's No. 1 Singing Cowboy', we just knew him as our dad.

We will miss him dearly.

Funeral services were conducted by McBurney Funeral Home in Wingham, with service at the Wingham Presbyterian Church. (befittingly, right next to the Barn Dance Museum). Our many thanks to Doug McBurney and associates, as well as Pastor Bernie Skelding.

Comments?? Please contact:

Grant Heywood  
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R. R. #2,  
Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0  
Phone: (519) 656-2552  
E-mail: heywoods@golden.net

## 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](http://www.thebardance.ca)

Earl Heywood

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and Doreen Armbruster.



Picture from the original Heywood Family recording "Good Ole Country Singin'" in 1959.

## 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

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Mom's support with approval from the family was a key factor in keeping dad's career moving forward. But dad was supportive in helping us kids too. He helped in establishing my sister Pat's hairstyling salon and was supportive when I took up drums and guitar, even when I wasn't playing country music.

Since dad has passed on, I've located a couple of boxes of old recordings of his amongst the other memorabilia in the basement at home. Timeless treasures that I hope to listen to soon. With a bit of time and luck, I expect to eventually get his book about the early Barn Dance days published as well. Dad's song, "Moonlight on the Manitoulin Island" is without a doubt his most cherished, and his "Tales of the Donnelley Feud" album is considered by many critics as a musical milestone. Dad has several albums to his credit, numerous awards including being honoured in the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame.

In re-establishing the Barn Dance shows, both mom and dad worked long and hard for several years in getting the Barn Dance Historical Society up and running so that dad could see his dream of a Barn Dance Museum come true in Wingham. Dad was a visionary, he dared to dream. Sometimes they were lofty ideas, but he was determined and dedicated to giving back to musicians and the community a sense of history and pride that was part of Wingham and southwestern Ontario when the CKNX Barn Dance ruled the airwaves. That tradition still continues with Barn Dance perform-

ances today, and the museum is a testament to that era.

Beside being Canada's No. 1 Singing Cowboy, I am sure his legacy will live on through the Barn Dance Historical Society and what he has accomplished and I am proud of him for achieving that. He had a fan club in Canada and Australia and his fans will certainly mourn his passing.

My dad delighted in entertaining people from age 5 to 95 and he never wavered from wanting to please an audience. In his early years his voice was smooth and true and it stayed that way right until the bitter end. His stories would always bring a smile to faces of everyone he met, and he had lots and lots of stories, but then he also made a whole lot of friendships over his lifetime as

well.

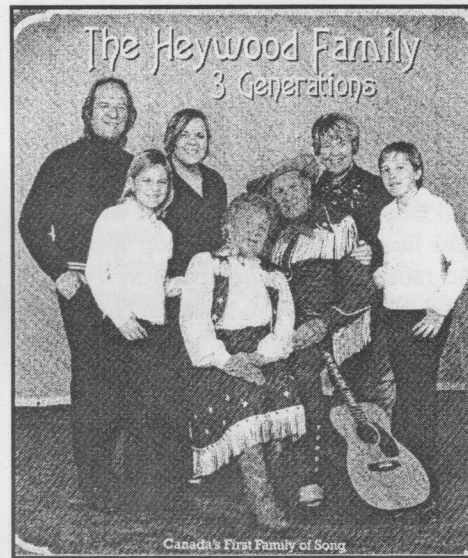
As a family, we cherish those moments most when he wasn't entertaining but just being dad or grandpa, joking, laughing, humming a tune, enjoying the view, pulling a prank, eating watermelon, making a plan, or helping to build something with his hands.

The guitar is now silent and the voice has faded away, but he has left his gift of music for us to treasure and enjoy for years to come.

I will always remember my dad with a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye, a song in his head, and a story to tell. My Dad ... My Hero. God only knows how much I will miss him.

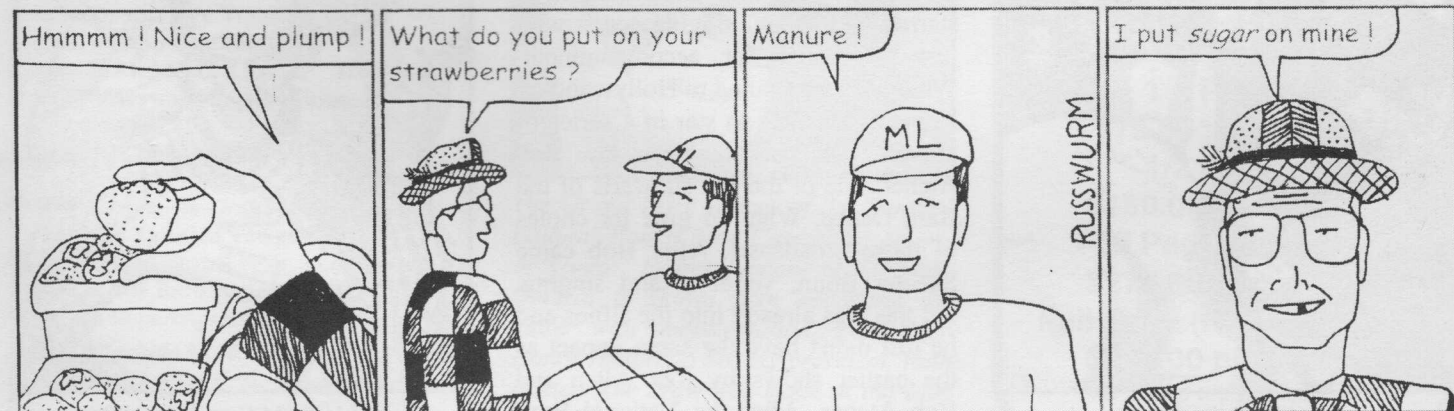


**EARL HEYWOOD** - Always a Great Performer. Pictured here at a recent Barn Dance Performance.

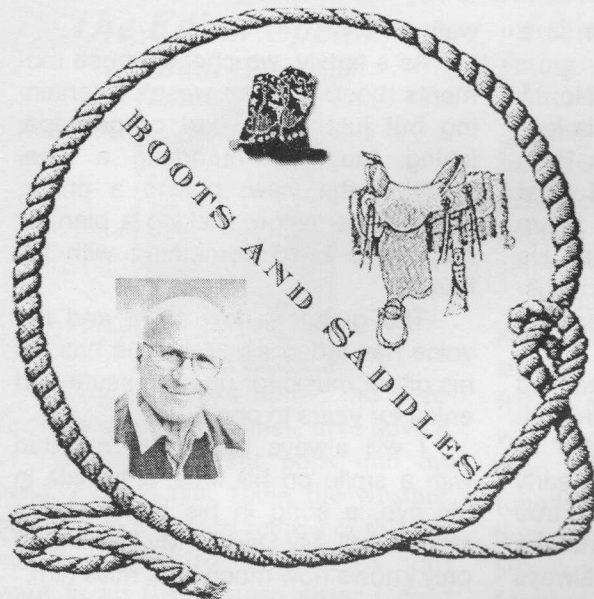


One of Earl's biggest dreams was the completion of this new CD. Three Generations of The Heywood Family.

### COUSIN OPIE

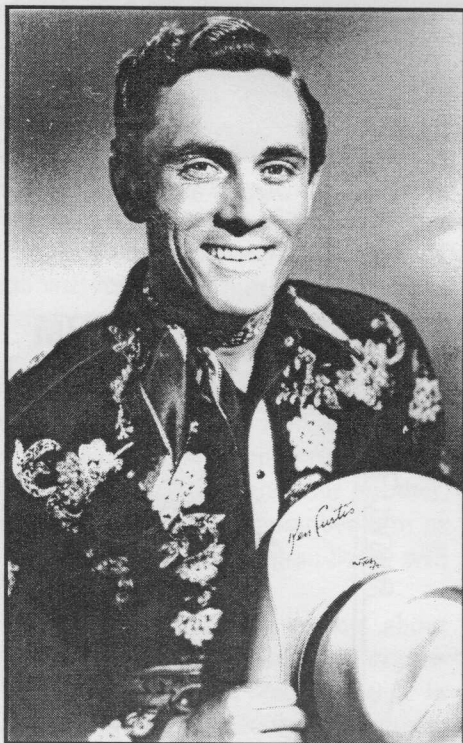


### BY LARRY RUSSWURM



by Lynn Russwurm

Getting back to my favourite gripe about the state of our so-called country music, I'd like to reminisce about the old days once again. I was raised on a farm where we were exposed to nothing but country music until the advent of radio in our home in 1939. After that it was still mostly country music, but we would also hear big bands and pop music on the radio. I can remember Ray Noble's band on the Chase & Sanborn Hour with Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy with vocalist Dale Evans, who would



KEN CURTISS

think she would one day become the great star that we think of when we hear her name today? Another one that comes to mind, although I didn't know of him back then, is Ken Curtiss. Ken also started out as a vocalist in Shep Fields Band. An amazingly talented man, Ken Curtiss went on to become a singing cowboy in the forties with a series of B-Western movies to his credit, co-starring with the Hoosier Hot Shots. From there he went on to a career as one of the Sons of the Pioneers for a number of years. In fact it

was Ken's voice that graced one of their most popular recordings, "Room Full of Roses". From there he played many character parts in innumerable movies, including some with John Wayne. Of course, his most memorable role was that of Festus Haggen in the "Gunsmoke" TV series, how could so much talent be wrapped up in one man?

Getting back to the radio, we would listen to the Barn Dance and then switch over to either WSM and The Grand Ole Opry or to WLS in Chicago and The National Barn Dance. Actually, my preference was WLS. Although the days of Gene Autry on the National Barn Dance were already long gone by then, I still revelled in the performances of people like Lulu Belle and Scotty, Arkie, the Arkansas Woodchopper, Bradley Kincaid, and many others. My favourite show was a one half hour broadcast from the WLS studios that followed the big Barn Dance. When I first discovered it, it starred Rex Allen, singing songs with just his guitar for accompaniment. When Rex was called to Hollywood by Republic Pictures to star in a series of movies, he was replaced by Bob Atcher, one of the old stalwarts of the Barn Dance. What I'd give for copies of those broadcasts. After Bob came Skeeter Bonn, yodeling and singing, but this was already into the fifties and he just didn't have the same impact as the earlier shows by Rex Allen and Bob Atcher. After the National Barn

Dance was shelved by WLS, it moved over to WGN where it was continued as a TV show into the sixties. I have a VHS video tape of half a dozen of these shows and what a pleasure it is to see these great performers again.

The Grand Ole Opry forged ahead with the signing of major stars, many of whom came from WLS or WWVA in Wheeling, such as Red Foley, and Hawkshaw Hawkins and Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper from WWVA, and when The Opry obtained Hank Williams their dominance of the country music airwaves was complete. However, I still felt that although WSM had the big names with the hit songs, WLS still had a more entertaining show with more accent on comedy and more down-home type entertainers. It was more of a family affair, they released a souvenir book every year in which were pictures of all the artists and announcers along with their families. Although WLS was never on a network, such as the Grand Ole Opry with its Prince Albert segment every Saturday night, their artists made many 16 inch transcriptions that were heard around the country via their subscription service. These transcriptions were never available to the public and you were fortunate if you were within the hearing range of a station that did

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LULU BELLE and SCOTTY

Continued from Page 4

subscribe to this service. We were very fortunate to be able to tune in to the Chatham station which broadcast these transcriptions every day from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m. That's when we were in the house for our noon meal, and then we would return to the fields for the afternoon work.

Some of these artists included Doc Hopkins, Rex Allen, Judy Martin and The Mountain Rangers, The Overstake Sisters, and other great artists who never got the exposure on radio that they should have. Today, in retrospect many are at last being heard on CDs as these performances are now all in public domain and many smaller companies are scrambling to release these long lost classic country artists. A lot of the Rex Allen material has been released, Judy Martin's output which included Red Foley has been released on at least 4 CDs and I understand that Bear Family will issue a box set of this material. Judy Martin was Red Foley's wife and was also one of the Overstake Sisters, along with the great songwriter, Jenny Lou Carson; the third sister continued on WLS as Miss Evelyn for a number of years after the sister act was discontin-

ued.

Kudos go to the smaller labels, many of them European, that are seeking out these works and making them available to the public that still fondly remember these pioneers. A few others I remember hearing via live broadcasts were Asher Sizemore and Little Jimmie, Red River Dave singing "Me and My Burro", Wayne Raney and Lonnie Glosson on WCKY Cincinnati singing and selling their harmonicas, Pete Cassell, the blind singer with the great country voice, Lee Moore, Hawkshw Hawkins on WWVA. Most of these would be 15 minute live programs. CKNX would come up with one occasionally in addition to Earl Heywood's regular shows, Cactus Mac had his own 15 minute show for awhile and I remember one show by Georgie Faith, who was in Wingham for only a little while, and he made me a lifetime fan. Georgie went back to Toronto to various shows, cut a few records, made some TV appearances, worked the CFCF Jamboree in Montreal for a time, then crossed south of the border to work with The Sons of the Purple Sage, where he was spotlighted as their lead singer on an album, then dropped out of sight.

Maybe another time we can remi-

nise about some of the great local and network TV shows we used to have the privilege to see. Today TV is a complete wasteland for the true country music fan, but it wasn't always so.

***Funny Song Titles***

- \* "One Day When You Swing That Skillet (My Face Ain't Gonna Be There)"
- \* "Get Off The Stove, Grandma, You're Too Old To Ride The Range"

\*\*\*\*\*

**The 10th Annual Barn Dance Campout Weekend and Jamboree**

**May 25, 26, 27, 2007**

**at the Blyth Arena Complex and Camp Grounds.**

*A weekend of bluegrass, main stage jam, silent auction, raffles, Barn Dance Show and Dance, Sunday morning country gospel church. For complete details, see: [www.thebardance.ca](http://www.thebardance.ca)*

**Registration forms available February 2007 by writing to: Box 68, Wingham, Ont. NOG 2W0**

*R.V., Trailers and Camp Sites are limited, so please make your reservation soon to avoid disappointment.*

\*\*\*\*\*

**BARN DANCE SOUVENIRS**

- Souvenir Mugs - \$ 5.00 ea.
- CD - Vol. 1 \$15.00 ea.
- CD - Vol. 2 \$15.00 ea.
- CD - Vol. 3 \$15.00 ea.
- CD - Vol. 1, 2 & 3 \$40.00 set
- Cassette - Vol. 1 \$ 6.00 ea.
- Cassette - Vol. 2 \$ 6.00 ea.
- Cassette - Vol. 3 \$ 6.00 ea.
- Souvenir 1997 Calendar \$ 5.00 ea.
- Barn Dance Logo T-Shirts (gold logo on blue only)
- Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL \$10.00 ea.
- NEW "Heywood Family Three Generations" CD \$15.00 ea.
- NEW Al Cherny CD - "Live / The Lost Recordings" \$20.00 ea.
- NEW Eleanor & Graham Townsend CD "The Talented Townsends" (36 unheard recordings) \$20.00 ea.
- Best of The Barn Dance CD \$20.00 ea.

*All purchases include GST.*

*Please include \$3.00 per item for mailing or pick up at Ernie King Music.*



*The Grand Prize winner of the "Special Edition" Ranch Boys Caricature Acoustic Guitar, Fraser Lamont of Tiverton, Ontario is shown here accepting the guitar with documentation, from Barn Dance Historical Society president, Ruth Baxter. The draw was made at the May 2006 Blyth Campout Jamboree.*

**BARN DANCE JOURNAL ADVERTISING PRICES**

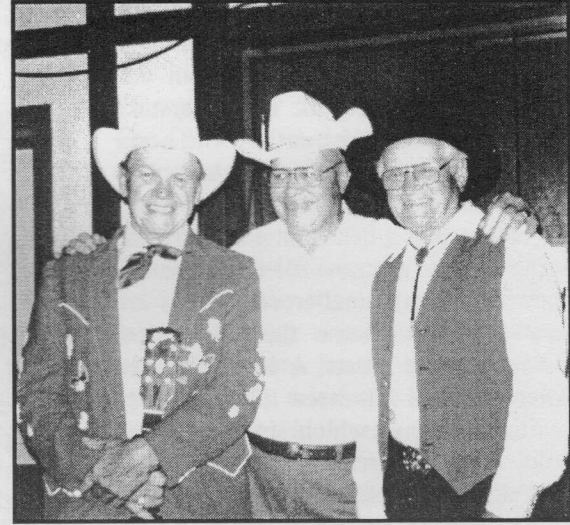
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  - Full Page (inside) - \$275.00 plus GST**
  - Full Page (back cover) - \$300.00 plus GST**
- All prices are per issue.*

# Country Music Memories

as compiled by Lynn Russwurm



**JAMBOREE REUNION, KITCHENER, 1991** - left to right - Mel Lavigne, Lorne Prince and Lynn Russwurm.



**BINGEMAN PARK, AUGUST 1985** - left to right - Earl Heywood, Roy Thompson and Kidd Baker.



←  
**BACKSTAGE AT MAIN STREET JAMBOREE** - over CHML Hamilton at the Hamilton Forum, May 1955 - left to right - Alonzo Marsh, Lynn and Laura Russwurm, The Pine River Sweethearts, and an unknown musician who played with Alonzo Marsh.

→  
**LLOYD AND GRACE BANKS** - attending Earl and Martha's 45 Anniversary. (1991??)



**TOURING BAND with TOUR OF CHAMPIONS** - left to right - Mike Slauenwhite, Lynn Russwurm, Lance Russwurm and Ron Coulthard.



**1951** - Carl Smith and Lynn Russwurm

## COUNTRY CALENDAR



by **Doreen Brown**

(Toronto and surrounding area)

\* **The Dolsons** appear the last Sunday of the month at The Country Jamboree in Erin. For a country touch for all occasions call 519-941-2954.

\* **Grand Valley Jamboree**, Lafontaine, first Sunday of the month.

\* **Newfie, Country, Rock & Blues** - drums and vocals. Call Mark Mathews, 416-658-0535 or email mark-mathews170@hotmail.com

\* **European Pub and Grill** - 3051 Lakeshore Blvd. W., Toronto, 416-253-0600.

\* **Army, Navy & Air Force** - Lakeview, Unit 262, 765 Third St., Mississauga. Live bands every Friday and Saturday night. Jamboree with Joe Tucker first Sunday of the month.

\* **Peter Solmes**, Appearances call Psolmes1@hotmail.com

\* **Dave Whalen**, for bookings, old and new country, call 416-255-8387.

\* **Bond Head Fiddle Club**, the fourth Tuesday of the month.

\* **Appearances by Grant Carson Band**: Oct. 15, Fonthill Legion, open mic, country dance 2 to 6; Oct. 20, Cathy's Café, Brooklyn (Grant, Stan and George) 6 to 9; Nov. 19, Fonthill Legion, open mic, country dance 2 to 6; Nov. 24, Savoy Dunnville, Fri. night, Sat. Mat. 4 to 8, Sat. 10 to 1:30; Dec. 1 and 2, Savoy, times as above; Dec. 31, Fonthill Legion, hot delicious dinner 6:15, also mid-night buffet, band starts 8 pm, \$35.00 per person, tickets on sale now. Call Emily Vaughan 905-680-4244 or svaughan@cogeco.ca or www.grantcarsonband.homestead.com

\* **Appearances by Darren Freeman** - Oct. 6 & 7 and Dec. 1 & 2, The Newfoundland, Scarboro; Oct. 20, 21, Nov. 17, 18, Dec. 31, Caven's Alley Bar, Mississauga; Oct. 13,

Dec. 8, Royal Canadian Legion, Ajax; Oct. 28, Nov. 11 Dec. 16, RCL, Toronto.

\* **Upcoming Hensall Circle Jamborees**, call 905-277-2902.

\* **Oprey Orillia shows**, at ANAF, Barrie 4th Sunday of month. Music with special guests. This is the homeplace of Canadian Country Music. The Oprey Orillia band provides the backup music each show.

\* **Chef Adams presents Maple Leaf Country Jamboree**. Traditional country music, Moose Lodge, Lindsay, Oct. 29 at 1 pm. For info 705-324-7884.

\* **Ruff Cut**, live entertainment and dance music. Greg Cromochuk 905-939-8215. e-mail cromotion@hotmail.com

\* **Slim & Don Celsie Jamboree**, ANAF Hall, Victoria Ave., Orillia, second Sunday of the month 2 to 6.

\* **Appearances by Bill Beattie**: Oct. 21, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16, Danceland, Lakeside, 8 to 12; Dec. 31, Elora Legion, 7 to 1.

\* **Jamborees**, Caledon East Agricultural Society presents jamborees in Nov. on the second Sunday, then the third Sunday to April, inclusive.

\* **Appearances by Doreen Brown**: Nov. 5 - ANAF, 765 Third St., Mississauga. Oct. 26 - Holland Landing; Oct. 8 - Moose Lodge, Lakeshore and Brown's Line; Oct. 23 - Bond Head Community Centre; Oct. 22 - Blueshky Bluegrass Club; Nov. - Barrie Legion; Dec. 26 - Oprey Orillia; Dec. 13 - Bolton Community Centre.

\* **If you like to dance** or listen to traditional country music, join us at the Bolsover Community Centre, 16 Bolsover Rd., just north of Hwy. 48 first Tues. of month, 7 to 11. Admission \$5.00 per person. Country music by Ralph Cashen, Glenda Gill, Earle Jones, Ray Lamorche. Round and square dancing, door prize, 50/50 draw, spot dance, no smoking. Sing a song or two, or play a tune on your favourite instrument with the band. Info 705-426-1787. E-mail raplph@ralphcashen.com

\* **Appearance by Scott Woods**: Oct. 1 - Aberfoyle; Oct. 13 - Feversham; Oct. 14 - St. Andrews Pres. Church, Huntsville; Oct. 15 - Grand Valley Arena Hall; Oct. 21 Brant Hills Pres. Church, Burlington; Oct. 22 - Knox Pres. Church, Tiverton; Christmas Tour - Nov. 5 to Dec. 18; Nov. 5 - Watford Centennial Hall; Nov. 10 - St. John's on the Hill United Church, Cambridge; Nov. 18 - RCL, Creemore; Nov. 23 - 24 - Grace Tipling Hall, Shelburne; Nov. 26 - Knox Pres. Church, Ripley; Nov. 29 - St. Andrews Pres. Church, Fergus; Dec. 7 - St. Mathew's United Church, Belleville. For more info www.scottwoods.ca or email swwoods@symbtco.ca

\* **Swinging Hits of the Blitz**, Favourite big band hits with the Norm Amadio Band featuring Marie Gogo, Tom Leadbeater and The Skylarks. Top songs of the 1940s. Hit parade tributes to war ange Very Lynn, Sultry Marlene Dietrich, The Swinging Andrew Sisters. Novelty songs of the day, sensational Carmen Miranda, whacky Spike Jones, invigorating dance numbers - the jitterbug and the Charleston. Tickets \$28.50. Nov. 10 at 2 pm and Sanderson Centre, Brantford. 1-800-265-0710.

### EDITOR'S SPECIAL NOTE:

*During one of our more recent Blyth Campouts, I had a musical table on a Saturday morning. A casually dressed gentleman, dressed (not in cowboy hat or boots or attire), but had on a long sleeved shirt, neat trousers and hair combed back, came up to my table and stood quietly by looking at me and finally said "Hi, how are you?" I said, "Fine, thank you", and he just stood there. I wasn't really thinking, but quickly looked at him and said, "You look like Earl Heywood", and he replied, "I am Earl Heywood". I wasn't long going around the table to give him a hug and we both had a good laugh.*

*Like many others, I will miss this wonderful gentleman very much, our many long interesting chats and I learned so much from him about the beginnings of CKNX radio, The Barn Dances and country music in general. My deepest condolences to all the Heywood family and to Earl, I am sure there is a special star in the heavens shining down on us.*

A couple of popular Earl Heywood songs recorded by other artists: "Moonlight on the Manitoulin Island" by the Moms & Dads; and "Wedding of Clubfoot Bill" by Cousins of The Moose.

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### HOWDY FOLKS:

As the son of Earl, it is with mixed emotions that I will have to discontinue this column. I have been covering for my dad for the last 2 or 3 years now. At first it was easy to get him to tell me what he wanted me to say for him. Then as dementia progressed with dad, I was pretty much on my own. Dad really love to write this column and he had lots of practice as a staff writer at CKNX radio for many years, as well as a Canadian writer for Country Song Roundup, (a U.S. magazine) back in the 50's and 60's. Writing farm market reports was a cinch for dad as he was born on the farm. But writing copy for CKNX consisted more of two finger typing which my dad acquired through trial and error.

Dad had a pretty good handle on writing commercials for radio at CKNX, but it was songwriting that he really enjoyed the most. I guess I came by writing quite honestly as well, although I had taken a year at journalism college which certainly helped. Songwriting was a passion with dad and I

have to agree with him since I understand the feeling you get once you put a melody to words. Dad really liked writing, I mean, he loved writing almost anything! I don't know if it was just the thought of putting the pen to paper or the excitement of not knowing what words would instantly appear when he finally did have a great line or thought that might work.

Art was another talent that both dad and I were fairly good at. Songwriting and art are quite similar in the fact that they can both convey the same feeling. One, through words and music, and the other through a beautiful picture or painting. Dad also spent a lot of hours on writing and re-writing the Barn Dance book which had to be done chronologically. That must have been some task.

A lot of times he'd write down ideas on a scratch pad, or maybe write a letter of concern to a politician. I can remember when my dad left me a note after having a long discussion in my teenage years. Seems like I didn't take his advice and he basically was going to take back some music gear that I had borrowed and was quite reluctant to return. Darn teenagers! He sure was upset. He even signed his name at the bottom. It read ... From your dad, Earl Heywood. I guess he wanted me to remember who he was. Ha. ha.

Signing his name was kind of special though, especially for autograph seekers. He loved that. Even if his hand got cramped he would still continue to satisfy a friend or fan. Dad really cherished his signature though. He said a handwritten signature and the way it is written could tell a lot about a person. Over the years I

noticed that the way I write my name is quite similar to my dad's. I don't know if this is by accident or design. Amazing when you think about it. I wonder if this same trait follows true for most siblings.

It was really sad though to see my dad in the last few years trying to chicken scratch a thought or even his name on a piece of paper. I know that it was tough for him too as the onset of Alzheimer's slowly robbed him of his creativity. Oh, he loved writing so much. I really appreciated his writing skills though. Especially in my younger days when I really needed financial help. Nothing looked better than dad's signature on that cheque.

It is for certain that this is the last roundup for Canadian Corral. Peter Saros who is on the Barn Dance executive board has expressed interest in writing a new replacement column. Peter is a traditional country music enthusiast and has a college background in writing. Aw shucks, don't worry folks. I don't think he'll get too uppity or fancy with his words. I hope you'll welcome Peter as he makes his debut either in the next issue or the new year. Looking forward to reading it myself.

So I will sign off for the very last time, keeping in mind what Earl would always say ...

**Remember ...  
THE SHOW MUST GO ON .....**

Grant Heywood  
c/o Earl Heywood  
Founder, Hon. President,  
Advisor, Museum Curator

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