

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

Price: \$2.00 (tax incl.)

Vol. 54 2007

Summer Edition

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## Memories of 10th Annual Blyth Campout



Bill Simmermaker leads the Barn Dance performers with "I Saw The Light".



Wayne Otterbien featured with the Barn Dance Band.



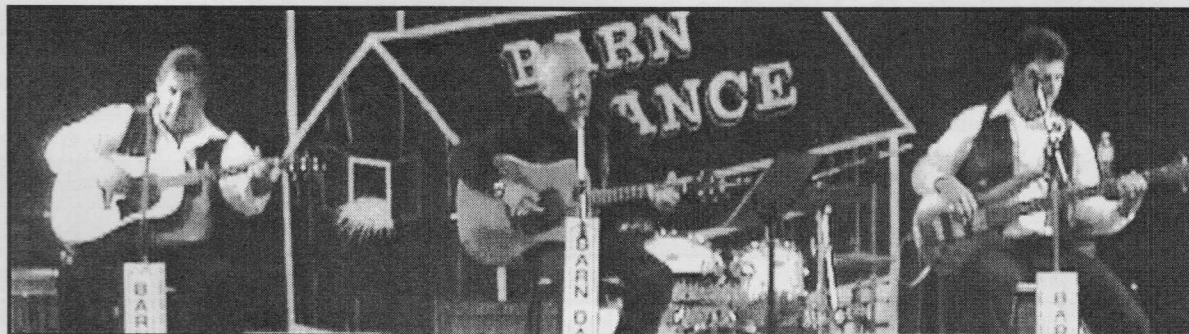
Grant Heywood and sister Pat Cook do their best Earl and Martha tribute.



Brenda Allen charmed the audience with her distinctive vocal style.



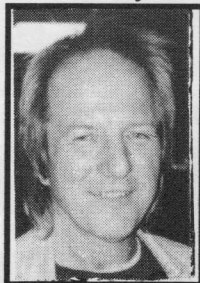
Barn Dance pioneer, Lynn Russwurm sang some of his best country & western songs.



Just back from a successful Maritime tour, the Larry Mercy Trio, featuring from left to right, George Lonsbury, Larry Mercy, and Al Alderson. They delighted the folks with their brand of country gospel harmonies Sunday morning at the Barn Dance Country Gospel Church Show.

## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Barn Dance Campout and Jamboree in Blyth this past May was undoubtedly one of our most successful events ever. We are most grateful to all the volunteers who participated and especially to all of you campers and traditional country music lovers who come out to make this weekend so much fun. Keep spreading the word for next year's 11<sup>th</sup> annual Campout.

I just got some feedback from my good buddy Kevin Westphal on his recent release of the 'Timmie Tune'. Seems like the good folks at CKNX Radio 920 in Wingham hopped on this one right away and the song is taking off in leaps and bounds on radio. I was talking with Kevin who also did a radio interview and he said his recent appearance at the Redneck Games in Harriston prompted a lot of positive reaction regarding the 'Timmie Tune'. If you don't know about the 'Timmie Tune', I'm sure you'll be hearing about it soon enough. If you like your coffee ... then you'll love the 'Timmie Tune'. Kevin tells me that they're even broadcasting it to the Canadian troops over in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Wow!!

I've been quite busy with musical endeavours this spring myself, performing in the studio and onstage with

Kevin Westphal, and Maryanne Cunningham as well as performances with The Barn Dance Band, Randy Satchell, Bill Murray, and good friend and neighbour, Bob Richards who is half of the Heywood / Richards Music Engine show that we decided to take on stage just recently. Gee, I better make room for a little vacation time for the family as well.

I'm looking forward to a fun-filled summer of good music and friends and hope I get to see you at some of the shows and dances. Don't forget to check the Barn Dance Schedule for upcoming shows and events this fall.

Comments? Please contact:  
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## The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

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Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 530-8000

(or leave a message)

**BARN DANCE WEBSITE:**

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

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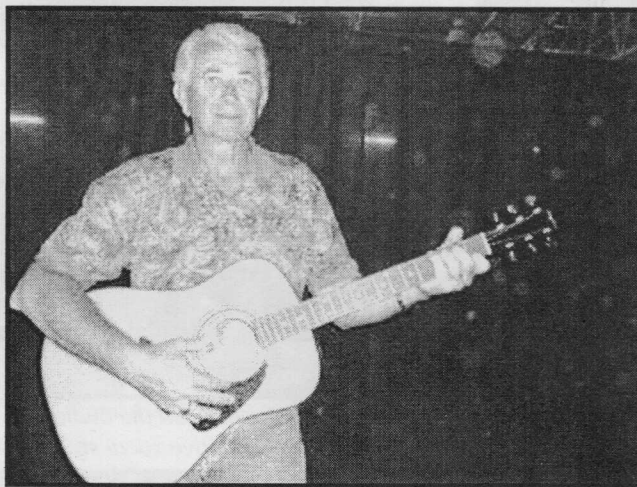
**Treasurer:** Gord Baxter

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Shirley Russwurm, Peter Saros, Bill

Simmermaker and Murray Armstrong.



*Jack Hackett of  
Kincardine was  
the winner of the  
Barn Dance  
Jamboree Guitar  
Raffle.*

*A Fender Guitar  
package courtesy  
of Sherwood Music  
in Kitchener.*

### 2007 & 2008 Upcoming Events:

Date	Event Name	Place	More Info
<b>Sunday, Sept. 30</b>	The Barn Dance Show	Arts & Cultural Centre, Meaford, Ontario	Starts 2:00 pm
<b>Sunday, Oct. 14</b>	The Barn Dance Show	Heritage Theatre, Wingham Town Hall	TBA
<b>Sunday, Dec. 9</b>	The Barn Dance Gospel Show	Heritage Theatre, Wingham Town Hall	TBA
<b>May 23, 24 &amp; 25, 2008</b>	11th Annual Blyth Campout Weekend	Blyth Recreation Complex & Campground	Check Website

### More Memories of 10th Annual Blyth Campout



Legendary Ernie King leading the Sunday Barn Dance Gospel Church.



Young Devon Martene's fiddle playing was spectacular to say the least.



Dave Wallace (owner of Ernie King Music) featured performer on the Saturday Night Barn Dance Show.

## BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY DONATES \$1,700 TO BLYTH COMMUNITY

The Barn Dance Historical Society & Entertainment Museum's 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Campout/Jamboree held on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup> in Blyth was a huge success. On Thursday, 134 Camping Units arrived to enjoy the upcoming weekend. By Friday approximately 340 units had arrived at the campout for a fun-filled weekend.

On Friday evening, campers were entertained by Bluegrass bands. On Saturday, a silent auction was held and on stage, various campers provided entertainment.

Approximately, one thousand people attended the Saturday evening show and dance presented by the Barn Dance Historical Society. Jim Swan was the MC and entertainers included Randy Satchell, Grant Heywood, Pat Cook, Brenda Allen, Devon Martene, Greg Williams, Bruce Robertson, Dave Wallace, Bill Simmermaker, Lynn Russwurm, Wayne Otterbein, Glen Hodgins, Jack Hackett, Barn Dance Band and the Millennium Cowboys.

700 people attended the Sunday morning Gospel Show under the direction of Mr. Ernie King. Mr.

Bert Pepper had over 30 violin players playing a melody of songs. Other performers included Ron Coulthard, Mary Elliott and Larry Mercy Trio. In all, the people donated \$1,663.12 at this event, which is donated back to the Blyth Community in appreciation for the campers and communities support of the campout/jamboree.

The Board of Directors of the Barn Dance Historical Society is pleased to announce that they are supporting a \$1,000 donation towards the new defibrillator for the Blyth Community Complex. \$300 is being donated to the Huron Pioneer Threshers and Hobby Association, \$100 to the Blyth Festival Theatre, \$50 to the Blyth Fire Department and \$250 to the Blyth Lions Club for the support they give to us.

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum looks forward to presenting its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Campout / Jamboree weekend on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Ruth Baxter, President  
Barn Dance Historical Society

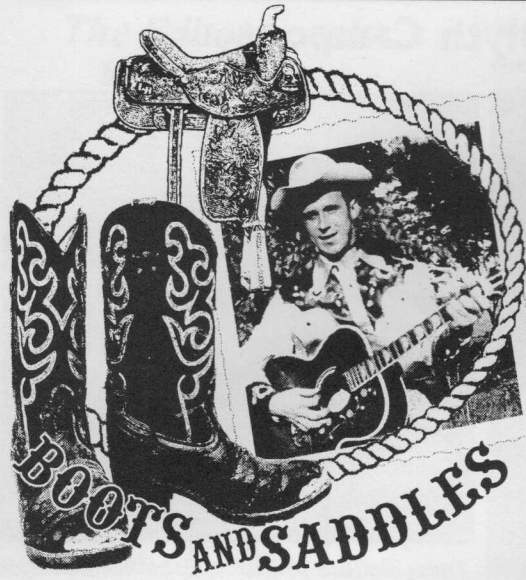
## WHO WROTE THE SONG? (City Lights)

Late in 1957 young Bill Anderson, a twenty year old University junior, climbed to the roof of the hotel in Commerce, Georgia. He was a summer radio D.J. and a sports writer for the Atlanta Constitution. Anderson got to thinking about the temptations and frustrations that come to heart-broken souls who venture into the big city.

From the rooftop of that hotel, Bill Anderson wrote ... "A bright array of city lights, as far as I can see, the great white way shines through the night for lonely souls like me." Almost as fast as he could get it down, he was writing the song "City Lights". Now, he had to figure out what to do with the song.

Bill had been singing since high school and thought he'd take a risk and make 500 copies of the song. Somehow, one of the copies reached the attention of Ray Price in Nashville. Ray Price recorded "City Lights" in 1958 and in that same year it topped the hit parade charts. The song became a country classis and Bill Anderson also became a star.

... And now you know who wrote the song.



by Lynn Russwurm

One thing about the Jamboree Campout, it gives us a chance to talk with our members that we would not otherwise have. Most people today will not take pen in hand to write a note in appreciation for something they enjoy. But at the campout, that's different. I had several people come up to me to say how much they enjoyed my little chit chats via this column. And they apologized for not writing to let me know. Little things like that make it all worthwhile. Years ago it was different, people would write you about little things like that. Artists were used to getting heaps of fan mail, but those days are gone.

Today I'd like to bring your attention to a few people in the entertainment world who are multi-talented and have been a success at almost anything they turned their hand to. This came home to me when I was watching a movie called "The Big Land", starring Gregory Peck and Jean Simmons. Also in the movie was a gentle giant by the name of Burl Ives. Now in the



Burl Ives

movie he was anything but a gentle giant. He played the part of Old Man Hennessy, father of a clan of ruffians who needed a strong hand to keep them under control and Burl played the part to the hilt.

Now my first awareness of Burl Ives was way back in about 1948 when I saw a movie called "Smokey", it was the story of a magnificent black horse and Burl played a cowpuncher who played guitar and sane. That's where the song "On Top of Old Smoky" became part of our folk repertoire, it wasn't long until everybody was singing the song and it also made household names of The Weavers. At that time Burl was known only

as a folk singer and a legendary one at that. Some time later Burl did an about face, move4d to Nashville and became one of the top country artists of the 60's with songs such as "Funny Way of Laughing", "Mary Ann Regrets" and many more. Throughout his career he also invaded Broadway, and recorded some awesome pop material on a par with anything that was being done at the time. All the time he would be appearing in films in such widely acclaimed roles that it seemed he could not be type-cast. He played gentle people in some of Disney's great movies, then the next thing he would be an old meanie such as in "The Big Country" movie, or who could ever forget the character of "Big Daddy" that he brought to life in another film.

Eventually he gave up his C & W career and went back to his beloved folk music until his passing a few years back. Burl Ives brought excellence to everything he ever did and will not be forgotten for many years to come, it could be said he left his mark on the world.

Another man who would fit the mould of multi-talented is Sheb Wooley. Lately I've been seeing him in his character of Pete Nolan in the "Rawhide" series. For many years before that he had been playing cowboys and bad men on the silver screen, in fact he was the bad man that Gary Cooper had to face in "High Noon". The other side of Sheb Wooley was his musical side. He recorded many albums throughout the years, mostly for MGM. He did a beautiful album called "The Big Land" which was a concept album about our pioneers trip into the great unknown future that



Sheb Wooley

they were willing to face. And Sheb wrote all the songs on the album. But probably his greatest claim to fame was writing and recording a weird little ditty called "The Purple People Eater". No who would connect this song with Pete Nolan on "Rawhide"? The record came about almost by accident as a throwaway tune to complete a recording session, and went on to storm the rock and roll world, as well as the country genre.

Another side of this man's zaniness is his alter ego, Ben Colder, who went on to become one of the funniest spin-offs of all time, with many MGM albums to his credit. He would do hilarious spoofs of many of the top hits of the day, such as "Almost Persuaded, No. 2". Lately I've seen him in the "Reunion" series out of Nashville, where Grand Ole Opry stars sit around in a circle, reminiscing and telling stories. Sheb was in some of these and I remember him telling about the latest song he had written, "I Don't Look Good Nekkid", I guess he still has the same zany humour.

Ken Curtis is another candidate for the multi-talented role, I've talked about him before, but I'll mention some of his highlights. He started out in the entertainment business as a big band singer with the Shep Fields Band and was listed as the vocalist on some of their early recordings. Then he entered the field of singing cowboys and did a series of films, with the Hoosier HotShots as his sidekicks. When Bob Nolan left the Sons of the Pioneers, Ken was drafted to take his place and he stayed with them for about ten years, in fact his was the voice on one of their

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greatest hits "Room Full of Roses". He played many supporting roles in movies, but his greatest recurring part was that of "Festus Haggan" on the Gunsmoke series. Earlier on he invaded radio as MC and star of The Chuckwagon Jamboree syndicated series out of Hollywood, no Nashville boy, this Ken Curtis.

We've taken a look at some awesome talented men, who it seemed could do no wrong in anything they tried, how many people are in the world of entertainment today who could do half as much?

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Business Card Size -

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**Pioneer Awards for The Karges Family**

by Lynn Russwurm

Ernie Karges played fiddle. He was one of the early fiddlers with the Ranch Boys when the Barn Dance was broadcast from the studios of CKNX. It was pretty hard to support a family in those days, so necessity had Ernie pull up stakes and relocate to Kitchener for a career with B. F. Goodrich. Ernie and his wife, Mame, raised five children, June, Marie, Louise, Bobby and Billy.

Born and raised in Listowel, Ernie took to the fiddle at an early age, which eventually led him to Wingham and The Ranch Boys. I met Ernie at a party where a young group of local musicians were to play. I had been asked to bring my guitar and when the young and inexperienced band fell apart, Ernie, who had brought his fiddle and I ended up playing out the evening. His daughter, June, had brought her accordion and she also joined us. Sometime later, Ernie booked Stan Taylor and myself to accompany him at a small church dance. I was amazed at his repertoire, he carried the evening with his fiddle and Stan and I accompanying him on guitars.

From that time on, Ernie satisfied himself by playing for house parties, however, June and Marie had inherited his musical abilities and were soon singing in harmony. In 1951, Stan Taylor and I approached radio station CKCR for a Saturday afternoon program, we added



Ernie Karges

June and Marie and thus the original Pine River Troubadours were born. We lasted throughout the summer season and broke up in the fall of that year. June and Marie went on to sing with the Westernaires at the Bridgeport Casino every Saturday night and Stan Taylor joined the band as guitarist.

The CKNX Barn Dance came to the Waterloo Arena in the Spring of 1952, and renewing old acquaintances with the Ranch Boys, Ernie invited them to his house after the show. When Johnny Brent heard June and Marie sing in harmony he booked them as regulars on the Barn Dance. However, marriage broke up the act later in the year, bringing an end to a promising career for the girls.

Marie passed away in 1985, leaving June with her memories of her day in the sun.

Pioneer Awards were presented to both Ernie Karges and his daughters, June and Marie, The Karges Sisters in absentia at this year's Jamboree in Blyth. Awards that were long overdue.



June and Marie Karges

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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

# Country Music Memories

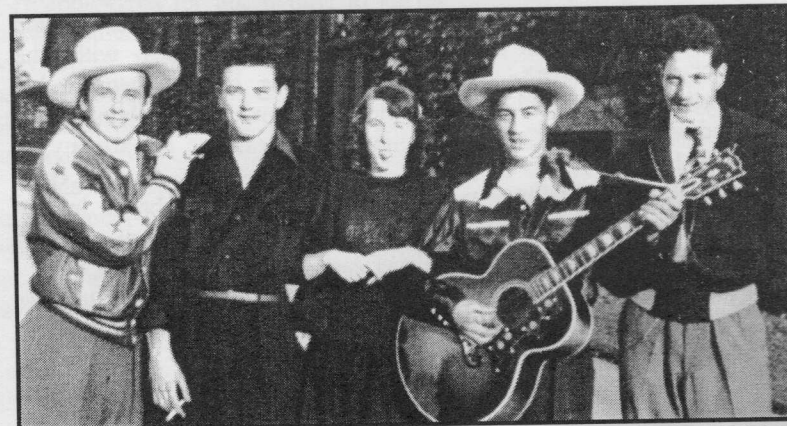
as compiled by Lynn Russwurm



*Abbie Andrews & The Canadian Ranch Boys - left to right, Bill Hurdle, Colin Saunders, Eric Harmen, Poncho Patrick, Grace Powell, Abbie Andrews, Tom McMullen and Bob McMullen.*



*Eric and Johnny, The Lincoln County Peach Pickers - left to right, Eric Goerz, John Harder. Both were about 19 years of age. John passed away recently.*



*ABOVE - After a CKCR Broadcast of The Pine River Troubadours in 1951 - left to right, Lynn Russwurm, Alec Meinek, Marie Karges, Stan Taylor, Ken Norris.*



*ABOVE - 1956 at The Dundas Arena - left to right, Mr. and Mrs. Buddy Reynolds with Bill Long.*

*RIGHT - At the Ottawa Coliseum in 1964. Hank Snow and Hank Rivers.*



### Winner of the Barn Dance 2007 Quilt Draw

The lucky winner of the Barn Dance Quilt draw for 2007 was Eleanor Smith.

The Barn Dance was proud to present Glen Hodgins of Exeter on the Saturday night Barn Dance show at the 10th Annual Blyth Campout. Glen was picked from several performers on the Saturday afternoon jam session and has been a regular Barn Dance supporter. Great performance. Way to go, Glen!!

## COUNTRY CALENDAR



by **Doreen Brown**

(Toronto and surrounding area)

\* **14th Annual Canadian Country Bluegrass Family Jamboree** Preston Springs Park, July 13 - 15, on the Trent Severn Waterway, Hastings. Line up: Neon Blue; Neon Moon; Friendly Fire; New Frontier; Sawmill Road; Hughes and Curtis; Campfire Country; Steve Wright and the Back Porch Pickers. Info contact Lynn and Al Preston 705-696-2268. www.prestonsprings.com

\* **Upcoming appearances** for July to September contact Scott Woods at www.scottwoods.ca

\* **Pot Luck Dinner & Music Jam**, July 21 & Sept. 12, 2 pm at The White's Barn, 439628 Lakeshore Dr., Hwy. 26 to County Rd. 15 (old County 20); 3 Rds. west of Billy Bishop Airport; go north on 15 to Annan (4 way stop), go straight through on Lakeshore Drive to 911 Sign #439628. Optional musical instruments and/or vocal. Bring lawn chairs.

\* **The Reflections Band**, July 22, with Roger Young and Cathy at the Warminster Legion.

\* **Havelock Country Jamboree** August 16 to 19. Talent lineup mentioned in previous Country Calendar.

\* **Sept. 18 to 22** - International Plowing Match Country Festival. www.ipm2007.ca or call 1-800-975-7174 at Crosby, in the township of Rideau Lakes. Entertainment at it's best; from old time country and fiddle to blue grass, rock and roll, jazz, modern country. The seven stages at the IPM will feature it all.

\* **Auction Barn Jamboree**, Colbourne, Ontario, Labour Day weekend Aug. 30, 31, Sept. 1 & 2.

\* **The Bellaires**, (with Peter Johnston on drums) at the following: at Penetang Legion July 1, 1 to 5; Aug. 18, 3 to 6; Aug. 19, 1 to 5; Sept. 1, 3 to 6; Sept 2, 1 to 5. at Army & Navy in Barrie July 8, 1 to 5; Aug. 12 & Sept. 9, 1 to 5; Sept. 22, 9 to 1 dance. Coldwater Legion Jam Sept. 23, 1 to 5.

\* **Classic Country Music Reunion** will be held Aug. 2, 3, 4 & 5 at Centennial Park, Trenton. Info at www.ccmr.ca

\* **Live Jam Nights** - bluegrass, folk and ac-

oustic at Man of Yorke Pub, 11 Mill St., Tottenham - 905-036-4486.

\* **Open Mic** every Thursday 8 pm, Groundswell Coffee House, 96 York St., W., Alliston, 705-434-0873.

\* **Adolphustown, Ontario** July 6, 7 & 8, contact Brant Zellerberg 613-373-2196.

\* **Flinton, Ontario**, Aug. 3, 4 & 5, Flinton Jamboree. Contact Dwayne or Donna Thibault 613-336-8354.

\* **Lions Head Blue Grass & Country Music Festival**. Aug. 25. Aug. 24 Jam Session. Contact 519-793-3533.

\* **Hastings, Ontario** September 14 to 16. Contact Hank Van Baden 705-696-2896.

\* **Grant Carson Band**, performing Aug. 24 & 25 at Mapleleaf Country Jubilee, 23906 Hwy. 48, Baldwin, Ontario at Sentimental Journey. Contact Chef Adams at 705-324-7884 or George Grey at 705-326-8796.

\* **Old Tyme Country Jamboree**, with Rod's Country Classic, Erin Legion, Erin July 22, Aug. 26 and Sept. 23.

\* **Every Tuesday Night 7:30**, it's fun to square dance (Modern Square Dancing), Shelburne Fiddleville Steppers. Contact Gary & Ruth Brown, 435-6409 or Don & Betty Cushing 925-0280.

\* **Appearances by Doreen Brown**: July 27, 28 & 28, Gullyfest, Collingwood Fairgrounds; July 23, Bond Head Fiddle Club; Aug. 5, Warminster Legion; Aug. 12, Moose Lodge; Aug. 30, Colborne Auction Barn.

\* **Mactier Jamboree** at the Legion, the last Sunday of the month.

\* **Foster's Fishing Centre and Camping Resort** features country jamboree July 20 to 22, featuring Gordie Tapp. Directions 401 exit 566 south.

\* **Silver Eagle Band** - July 14, Aug. 11 and Sept. 22. Dance and jam session. Hwy south out of Tillsonburg to #45 Hwy., turn left, look for balloons at the end of the driveway.

\* **St. Williams Jamboree**, 1 p.m., every 4th Sunday, Jan. to Nov. inclusive. Supper available. Performing musicians dine free.

\* **Country Troubadours Play dates**: Contact Al Weatherall 376-2825. July 1, Warton, First of July celebration at the park 2 to 5; July 8, Wingham Singles dance 7 to 11; July 15, Weatherall Fish Fry at the farm 206, come and enjoy music and dance all afternoon, supper 5 pm; July 21, Ester & Ceil White's Jamboree at Annan; July 28, Meaford Legion Jamboree, supper served; Aug. 12, Weatherall Corn Roast and Jamboree, 2 to 7; Aug. 18 Hepworth Legion 3 to 6; Aug. 26 Meaford Legion Jamboree, supper served. Sept 2, Weatherall Jamboree and Pot Luck 2 to 6; Sept. 9, Warton Propeller Club Jamboree, supper served; Sept 16, Bognor Jamboree, pot luck; Sept. 22, Ester and Ceil White's Jamboree, pot luck; Sept. 30, Meaford Legion Jamboree, supper served.

\* **Congratulations to Michael T. Wall**, on all the appearances and events he attended while overseas at many places. A world of well deserved credit for all his support of country music, not only to artists, but DJ's, magazines, fans and the general public.

\* **Thank You** - for all the wonderful support for those who attended the Blyth Annual Campout, Number 10. It was a great event and for those who didn't make it, hope to see you next year.

*Have a wonderful, safe, happy and Country Music Summer.*

## IN MEMORIAM



### Wilfred Calvert 1926 - 2007

Wilfred Calvert born April 14, 1926, only son born to Edwin and Florence Calvert in Liverpool, England. He and his family, wife Betty, son John, daughter Margaret, moved to Canada in 1951 to the Nobleton area. He worked for Aeospace - fire fighter - ambulance, and was a legion member for over 30 years.

Their own family band the 'Vertones', consisted of Wilf on bass guitar, wife Betty on rhythm guitar and vocals, her brother Peter on guitar/vocals, and her two sisters on vocals/harmony. They moved to the Durham area in 1991. Wilf played in the Durham Legion with the 'Ole Boys', 'The Star Duster Band', Mike O'Neil (Guy Lombardo sound from Markdale), 'Barry Woodyard Band' at Chesley's own Grande Ole Opry twice a year with proceeds going to charities.

He also played with 'The Bruce-Grey Connection', Mary Anne Cunningham & the 'Red Rascal Band', 'Great Pretender Band' with Reg McManus, Wroxeter, Reg Manner-son, Chesley, Barn Dance at the Wingham Legion, Blyth Campout & Threshers Reunion, Lucknow Jam, and many dances and nursing homes throughout the area.

Companion and Barn Dance volunteer, Joyce Steurnol said that Wilf continued to play with all the groups she was in, as Wilf literally loved playing music and being with friends. Sadly, Wilf passed away at the Durham hospital March 1, 2007 and is survived by his son John, daughter Margaret and families. He will always be loved and very much missed by Joyce Steurnol, his Wingham companion and music partner.

Remembered by many Wingham friends as well as those associated with the Barn Dance Historical Society.

## BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

The way we listen to country music is changing. The isolation provided by personally selected I-pod song lists, and the exclusivity of satellite radio's narrow-casting, has eliminated the shared sense of experience that defined live events such as tent shows and barn dance performances. While technology has allowed never-before experienced access to obscure artists and sub-genres of country music, it has been at the expense of community. It has unfolded alone.

I was floored by the number of guitar pulls and jam sessions in the campground during the May weekend jamboree and campout at Blyth. Even more impressive was the musicianship at the impromptu performances. What I thought were CDs or radios playing proved to be life performers at every turn. The camaraderie between the musicians and those gathered round in lawn chairs and picnic tables provided the event with a palpable energy, even

well before the featured Barn Dance show. The audience was a full participant in the weekend-long event. They were not just ticket holders who came to see a show. They were the blood and guts, the backbone, of the event.

This visceral, hands-on connection is missing from the mainstream contemporary country music scene. As the stage sets, costumes, choreography and pyrotechnics have grown to rival arena rock shows of the 1980s, the human scale of the performances has been lost. Country music is diminished for not being able to recreate the intimacy of barn dance parking lot audiences. It has gotten above its raising.

This sense of ownership and participation is the foundation of the musical style. The invitation to participate and listen provides the opportunity to share not only in the music, but also in one another's lives. The relationships born of that experience last a lifetime. They are the real ongoing legacy of the festival and campout circuit. For the regular attendees, the events are not just a date circled on the calendar; they are a lifestyle.

That commitment is what is missing from the country Top 40 country

music scene. It is disposable. As sexy and seductive as the current generation may be, it is not anchored in the bone. It is a lifestyle accessory but it ain't a life.

In turn, the country music community is at risk of losing this beautiful legacy as it ages. Even shows such as the venerable Grand Ole Opry, whose foundation was built upon fostering a lifelong relationship between its musical pioneers and their fans, are showing the white-haired audience the door. What should be cherished is being actively discarded and devalued by the mainstream purveyors of the music.

Young country music fans who have only experienced arena tours, stadium shows, and concert hall performances owe it to themselves to attend a local campout festival show. They will be stunned and moved to discover that the audience and the performers are one large extended family. The music is to be shared. Above all, there is that wonderful sense that the circle will indeed be unbroken and the assuredness that what is passed on will endure.

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