

The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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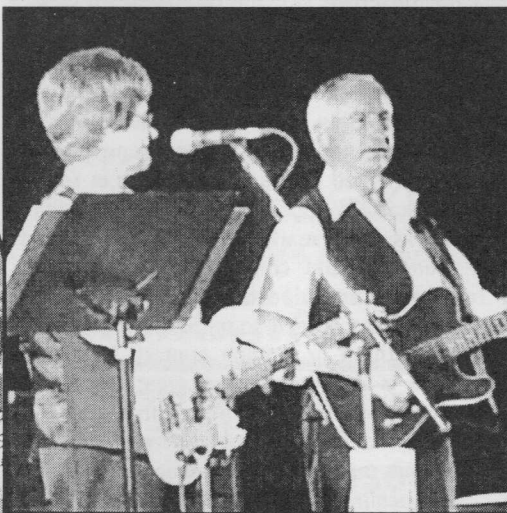
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Vol. 62 2009

Summer Edition

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BARN DANCE BLYTH CAMPOUT JAMBOREE BETTER THAN EVER



by Grant Heywood

This past May 2009 was our 12th annual Blyth Campout Jamboree and it was a rousing success. Just when you think it couldn't get any bigger or better, the traditional country music folks who attend these events prove that this is what they want, and more of it.

It's the camaraderie of meeting new friends and having a good old time with old friends as well. I was surprised by the number of people who were here for the first time this year when our Barn Dance Show emcee, Jim Swan asked for a show of hands, there were at least a third if not more. The Friday night bluegrass show/jam is almost a capacity crowd. The Saturday night show continues to be the main attraction and works well with the Ontario Singing Contest which is held in Blyth on the same weekend. It's great when we get to showcase some of the singing talent winners from the year before on our main stage show event on Saturday night.

Mary Elliott (Huyzen) from the original cast of Circle 8 Ranch on CKNX, has blossomed as the new emcee for the Sunday a.m. gospel church show, although Ernie King is still an advisor. We strive to give our patrons good value and it really shows when we pass the hat on Sunday morning and give the proceeds

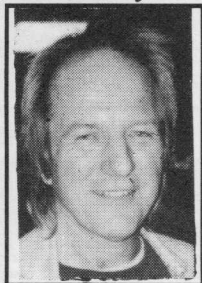
back to the community. Around \$1,800 was given by you folks at the Sunday collection and it is a testament to your good will and generosity. We can't thank you enough for your welcomed support. The Sunday morning show is fast becoming a rival of our Saturday night show and all because of getting the word out to our members and those who want a great weekend getaway complete with camping facilities, bluegrass, country, and gospel shows with excellent talent, and a place where everyone else can participate in jamming, singing and having fun with the kind of music they love best.

This is our annual fundraiser to help support the Barn Dance Museum. After 12 years we must be doing something right. The sound has certainly been honed to perfection, the talent is topnotch, the facilities and Blyth itself makes everyone welcome, the Lions Club put on a fine meal, silent auction, music vendors, guitar & quilt raffles, and jam, jam, jam...what more could you ask for. And let's not forget, our volunteers have been exceptional. We put out the call and many of you donated your time to making this event a success once again. A tip of the hat to all of you and we'll see you all again next year. Throughout this Journal you will find many pics from this year's jamboree. Please enjoy.



The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



Being a musician I get to hear a lot of different music and I have to agree with the late Ray Charles who said, 'There are only two kinds of music good, and bad'. Most people that I know tend to like a certain style of music although there are the exceptions who appreciate a good music mix. I personally grew up with traditional country music being played almost non-stop around our house. No doubt that was a big influence on me in my earlier years. But I soon became hooked on rock and roll in the 60's and beyond. This is when I started my first band and there were lots of paying jobs to be had playing rock and roll music during this time.

But rock and roll isn't my only love, as quite frankly I never had a sincere appreciation for traditional country until only about 20 years ago. I have some favourite heavy metal bands like, Kings X from Texas or even a totally new group from England called Porcupine Tree. Often times I will put jazz on the c.d. player in the car or listen to old British rock or blues on my iPod. When I go out to play country music with my friends I usually pick a few 'mouldy oldy' traditional classics to sing like Anytime or Time For Movin' On.

The fact is, I used to be up on all the latest songs that came out on the radio, rock or country. I got to know everything about the latest trends in music, who were the current 'movers and shakers' in the music world and who was headed for the top. Now that I'm older I really don't care about that anymore. Could be because I'm not competing at that level as a music artist and quite frankly I'm glad I'm not. The rules have changed so much. Radio isn't what it used to be, media sources for getting exposure have changed

drastically too, what with, *myspace, youtube, blogs, streaming, twitter*, etc. etc. It's enough to make your head spin. It's even more 'dog eat dog' out there than it ever was before. The only real saving grace is that you can now promote your own talent to the world a whole lot easier than ever before. That's how bands like the aforementioned, Kings X and Porcupine Tree are doing it, and quite successfully. They virtually play to sometimes 20 or 30 thousand people on a given night without ever having a song on radio let alone a hit.

Country music, on the other hand is still controlled by Nashville and has become so homogenized that I really have a hard time differentiating some of the music that is out there nowadays. It has become more pop oriented and is much slicker in sound and sexually appealing in presentation than it was ever marketed before. For most young up and coming singers the only hope for any kind of recognition or stardom at any level is to try and win an 'Idol' competition or singing contest. Hey, and there is definitely some great talent out there but for the most part they all try to sound like their idols or someone else. This is what makes country music so stale and unappealing when it should be creative and vibrant.

It's not the fault of contestants or those trying to 'make it'. It's just the way things are done now and without a government bailout or a huge lottery win, most don't have a hope in hell of ever reaching their dream. Basically, a half million dollars is the starting point and then it goes up from there if you have the stomach for it. There have been some great success stories though in Canada like Shania Twain, Terri Clark, The Wilkinsons and a few others. Today it's The Road Hammers, Doc Walker, George Canyon, Emerson Drive, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Johnny Reid and others. It's wonderful to see these artists getting noticed even beyond our Canadian borders. They deserve all the recognition and success for the dues they have paid. But there is one thing that will never change as far as I can see. I don't mean to be cynical, but for as long as I can remember, most of these artists will always play

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

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(or leave a message)

BARN DANCE WEBSITE:

www.thebardance.ca

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second fiddle to a 'Nashville act' when it comes to a double billed live performance (at least in North America). One of the only current country music stars to break that barrier that I know of was Shania Twain. But it's going to take a long, long time before that is ever going to change of course unless you happen to win the lottery, have an extremely rich relative or partner or receive that elusive government bailout. ... Sure.

Comments? Please contact:

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2009 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Saturday, August 29	Barn Dance Show and Dance	Hensall Arena, Hensall - 8 p.m. start
Thursday, November 12	The Barn Dance Christmas Show	Norgan Theatre, Palmerston - 8 p.m/ start
December	Christmas Show in Wingham	Info: call 519-530-8000

NEWS & NOTES

* Murray Armstrong has taken over as Barn Dance Show manager which was held by the late Wayne Otterbein.

* We now have two new members on our Barn Dance Historical Society Board of Directors. We welcome Richard Holm and Ted Weishar to their new positions.

* Producer musician, Buddy Carlton has just inked a sponsorship deal with a major Niagara Wine Co. for recording artist, Lindsay Taylor. Lindsay's photo image will grace the label on one of the wine bottle brands. She expects to be doing select dates this summer and fall to help promote her latest c.d. She will also be doing corporate dates in conjunction with the wine sponsorship.

* Dobro player and multi-instrumentalist, Al Widmeyer has a brand new c.d. out called "Pickin' On The Dobro". Al will be touring the maritime provinces and Ontario this summer with Stompin' Tom Connors. Try and catch a performance when they are in your area.

* The upcoming Hensall Barn Dance show on Aug. 29 will certainly be an event to be remembered as this was the first Barn Dance (1942) that pioneer legend, Earl Heywood made his first debut. The Hensall show includes local musician and Earl's relative, Bob Heywood, as well as Patricia (Cook), Grant Heywood and Martha Heywood performing as the Heywood Trio to commemorate this event.



THE GRAND FINALE ~ at the Saturday Night Barn Dance show in Blyth with everyone singing the traditional "I Saw The Light."

 ★
 ★ **CROSSOVER JUNCTION** ★
 ★ 18 Song Bluegrass / Gospel CD ~ \$16.00 plus \$2.00 postage ★
 ★ To order: contact: Lynn Russwurm, Box 241, Elmira, ON N3B 3A9 ★
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FEATURE C. D. REVIEW

'CROSSOVER JUNCTION'

Bluegrass music certainly made a resurgence after the movie 'Oh Brother Where Art Thou'. This particular bluegrass c.d. is a little different in several ways though, made up of 6 and sometimes 7 members including two female vocalists, Guylaine (Lynn) Basque and Kathy Kirker. The group specializes in bluegrass/country gospel with top notch harmony vocals. Mandolin player / vocalist, Daniel Bennett and banjo player, Jim Milligan started the band and eventually recruited guitarist / harmonica player / vocalist, Rick Bell. The two female singers from K/W soon came on board and our own Barn Dance pioneer, Lynn Russwurm was asked to join them on stand up bass.



The 18 songs on this c.d. were recorded at 'Uncle Gerry's Place' in Kitchener and feature Mike Slauenwhite on fiddle as well as Bob Tremblay on flat top guitar and dobro. I caught the group recently at a c.d. release party outside an antique store in the Waterloo/St. Jacobs Farmers Market. The band has an appealing looseness to it that harkens back to traditional mountain bluegrass music, although the overall sound is very together. They played some uplifting standards such as Shouting On The Hills of Glory, Keep On The Sunny Side, and a fine rendition of a Lynn Russwurm tune called I Do Not Know You. The Ron Hines classic, Sonny's Dream is included here as well. There are a few songs on here penned by Lynn Russwurm as well as one by Kathy Kirker titled, It's Good To Praise The Lord.

It was nice to see the group dressed in colourful matching outfits which certainly sets them apart from the mainstream. The group made their debut at the Barn Dance Blyth Camp-out Jamboree on the Friday night bluegrass show. The audience was very appreciative of Crossover Junction's energetic sound and hopefully this is a sign of good things to come for this new group.

(Have a C.D. you want reviewed, please contact the Editor.)

BARN DANCE JOURNAL ADVERTISING PRICES

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\$75.00 plus GST

1/2 page -

\$150.00 plus GST

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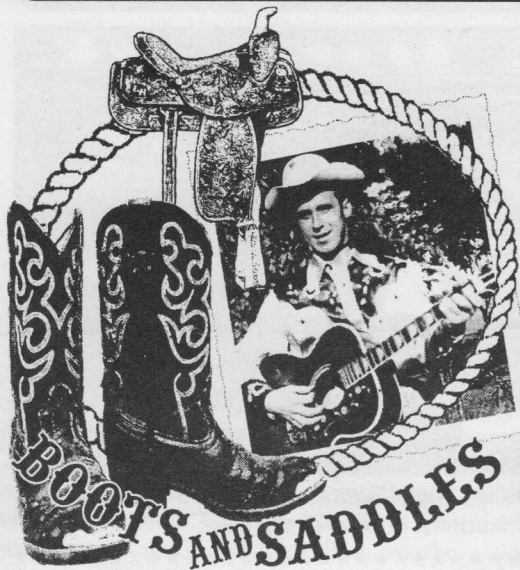
Full Page (back cover) -

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E-mail -

webmaster@thebardance.ca



by Lynn Russwurm

This time I'd like to touch on some of the movers & shakers in our Canadian country music business, some of which I've encountered and some I've never met. There are many who have contributed in one way or another that have produced the music we love. I've often talked about Fred Roden, who did so much for the young artists of the day, but others are largely unsung heroes, by the fact that they have been figures in the background.

First, I'd like to take a look at Jack Boswell, who heads up Rosedale Music, the relatively new company that has taken on our "Crossover Junction" project. Jack started out in the music business with RCA Victor sometime in the 50's. He could see beyond working for a large conglomerate like RCA, and took the step of going into business under his own banner. Allied Records was probably his first venture, with Allied he took on projects from U.S. companies and released them in Canada. However, he also saw a future in Canadian music and to this end he produced much Canadian content. At one point he recorded one Canadian band in his basement every Sunday and issued them on his various labels over a period of time. Not only did he delve into country music, he also recorded unknown rock bands. This is where his legendary status came in. People in the record collecting field discovered some of Jack's products, which became some of the most valuable collector's items to be found anywhere. They became known as the Canadian Psychedelics, group names such as "The Plastic Cloud", "Reign Ghost", "Christmas" and several others whose names escape me at the moment. These albums demand \$500 and up

on the collectors markets. There are others, besides the ones that Jack produced that fall into this category such as "The Haunted" from Montreal, "Jarvis Street Revue" which was on the major Columbia label, but the ones on Allied are in the forerunner of collectible records.

Probably Jack's major discovery was the highly talented Smiley Bates. Smiley was a raw talent who came to Jack's attention as a flat-top guitar picker par excellence. Not only could Smiley pick a guitar, he was also adept at the fiddle and at singing pure country tear-jerkers. He would come to recording sessions, completely prepared and usually knocked off a

number in one take. Jack tells me he recorded three complete albums with Smiley in one day.

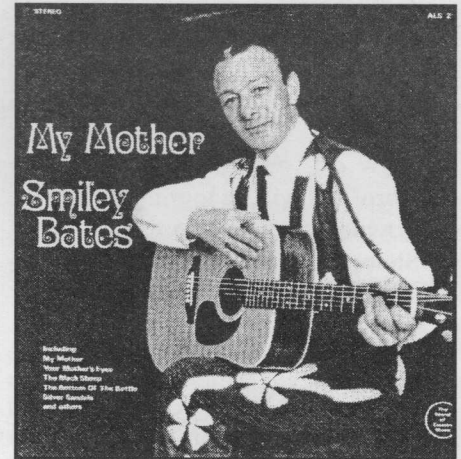
Paragon was his first country label, then the name became Marathon, which was probably his most successful and later evolved into Condor. Many of Marathon releases were five year lease deals, where an artist would record his album, bring it to Jack who would package it and release it to the public. Many major Canadian artists took advantage of this type of deal, including our own Jack Kingston, Donn Reynolds and many others whose talents would now be forgotten if they had not had the opportunity of placing their material in the hands of the public via men like Jack Boswell.

Jack lost control of his companies for a period of time due to various influences, however he retained the rights to the masters he owned, and eventually came out on top again, with Cheyenne Records. When vinyl began to phase out, Jack gathered together a catalog of compact discs under the banner of Heritage Music, set up racks in various locations and continued until he felt it was time to retire. He turned the business over to his son, Warren, whose work you can see in last month's review of the King Ganam CD. Warren is carrying on in his father's tradition, with much of Jack's old catalog under his wing, including the highly visible Smiley Bates material.

Retirement?? Jack missed the excitement offered with his business so when an opportunity to lease material from the old Rodeo catalog presented itself, he was back in the business. That's where I met Jack and "Crossover Junction" saw

the light of day, in their first release. I had produced 14 cassette albums for Rodeo in the late 80's, with people like Victor Pasowisty, Bill Mankiss, Lloyd Bank, Hank MacDonald, Kidd Baker and my own Jamboree Reunion Band, and now Jack plans to re-issue most of these projects on compact disc. Al Widmeyer has signed with Jack for a dobro album, also a re-issue of my Hummingbirds album is in the works. There are so many exciting things happening at this late stage in the game, and thanks to people like Jack Boswell, many dreams can come to fruition.

When I started writing this column, I thought to cover many other people but space is running out and I'll have to continue this discourse next issue, see you then.



SMILEY BATES ALBUM

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 ~

(519) 530-8000

E-mail: webmaster@thebardance.ca

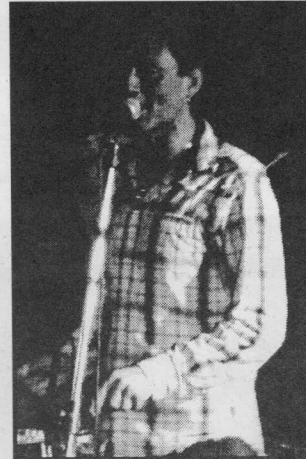
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Singer Mary Rowan was well received by the audience on the Saturday night Barn Dance Show at the 12th Annual Blyth Campout Jamboree.

Jay Riehl was a guest performer at the Norgan Theatre Barn Dance Show fundraiser for the Palmerston R.R. Museum this past May.

15 year old Kira Isabella from the Ottawa area was a special guest performer who sang her latest radio single "Come Around" on the Saturday night Barn Dance Show at the Blyth Jamboree. Kira won the female open and Rising Star award at last year's Ontario Open Singing Contest in Blyth.

IN MEMORIAM



May Lavigne, wife of Barn Dance fiddler and 1st Shelburne fiddle champion Mel Lavigne, passed away recently near her home of Midland, Ontario. May was in her 80's and was in declining health. She will be remembered by family, friends and all of those who knew her connected with the original CKNX Barn Dance gang. The Barn Dance Historical Society sends along sympathies to the family.

Dale Widmeyer, father of Barn Dance performer and multi-instrumentalist, Al Widmeyer, passed away recently after a lengthy illness. Dale who was also a musician (especially accordion) was a staunch country music supporter and attended Barn Dance performances. Dale was 77 and will be greatly missed by his wife Betty, Al and Sue Widmeyer, family members, relatives and friends. A musical memorial jam in his honour took place after the funeral. The Barn Dance Historical Society extends sympathies to the family.

Robert Dietrich, father of Barn Dance steel guitarist and Musical Director, Doug Dietrich passed away. Bob will be sadly missed by his wife, Mary, family, friends and relatives as he was so well known by so many. He ran a garage business in K/W for many years and garnered many friendships. Bob was also a musician and played fiddle and banjo with his friends. He appeared on the Bluegrass Show at the Barn Dance Blyth Campout Jamboree on several occasions. He will be missed, including all of us at the Barn Dance Historical Society.

A special tribute picture / plaque to the late Wayne Otterbein, Barn Dance Show Manager, was unveiled by Jim Otterbein and Beulah Patterson at a ceremony on the Saturday night Blyth Barn Dance Jamboree Show.



WHO WROTE THE SONG?

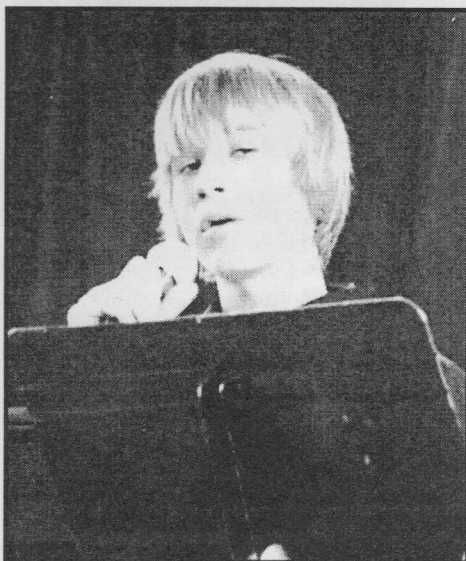
(Candy Kisses)

It was George Morgan, the 'Candy Kid', who wrote and recorded Candy Kisses back in 1949. The song made Morgan a Superstar in 1950 and it became his biggest selling hit at that time, selling more than two million records. Morgan first launched his career with a radio station in Akron, Ohio, and was working on the big Wheeling Jamboree when he auditioned for a job with WSM Grand Ole Opry. When Morgan was hired on the Opry, he became the first performer to go on salary. He was with Columbia Records for 19 years and also recorded for Four Star Records as well as MCA.

Before Morgan died of a heart attack in 1975, he had spoken out on the changing scene of country music. He was deeply concerned that the original traditional country sounds were being interwoven with other sounds and he felt it was diluting the genuine country music sound. I wonder what George would have thought of country music today. But there is no doubt that it was an original country sound that sent George Morgan's Candy Kisses to the top of the charts. Later on George's daughter, country music star, Lorrie Morgan would also top the charts with several country hits, following in her Dad's footsteps.

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

COUNTRY MUSIC Memories



*PICTURES OF
GUEST
PERFORMERS
AT THE BLYTH
JAMBOREE
SUNDAY BARN
DANCE GOSPEL
SHOW.
HOSTED BY
MARY ELLIOTT
HUYZEN.*



COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

* **July 16 - 19** - Preston Springs Park 16th Canadian Country Family Jamboree. Line-up: Sweet BGrass, New Frontier, Friendly Fires, Sawmill Road, Aiden McGill, Ken Harrison and Campfire Country, Black Fly Band, Kylie Joe Masson and Friends. Info Lynne Preston, 1579 Con. 10, RR 4, Norwood. www.prestonsprings.com or e-mail info@prestonsprings.com 1-705-696-2268

* **July 9 - 12**, The Country Roads Music Festival, Napanee Fairgrounds, presents special guest Ronnie Prophet and Glory-Anne headlining on July 11. Other performers include Dennis Whitty, Steve and Spike Pitocco, Joanne Post, Dusty King and many more.

* **July 17 - 19** - QBBC Secon Annual Can. Bludgrass and Campout. Scheduled: Bluegrass Edition, Grassfyre, Hyme N Reason, This Time Around Crosswing, Canucky Bluegrass Boys. Rough camping available. Contact Dan or Shannon 529-371-5037 or www.queensbush.ca You must be a paid member.

* **July 16 - 19** - First annual Lindsay Country Jamboree. Farmer's Mutual Ex Building. Headliners include Terry Sumsion, Paul Weber, The Larry Mercey Trio, Johnny Burke, Harold MacIntyre and Crystal Creek.

* **July 29 - Aug. 1** - 25th River Valley Jamboree featuring Russell Moore and Third Time Out, Josh Williams Band, Don Rigsby and Midnight Call, The Dale Ann Bradley Band, Cabin Fever Band, Hard Ryde, Rush Mountain, Scotia Junction, Honeygrass, C. Denny Bluegrass, River Valley Grass, Traditionally Wound, The Canucky Boys, Pine Road Concession 23, Loesome Wind, Ducharme Family. Also a reunion with Grasswork. Contact Tony De Boer, PO Box 148, River Valley. 705-758-9049.

* **July 23 - 26** - Palmer Rapids Twin Music Festivals - 29th Bluegrass Festival and 23rd Country Festival. Highlight by US band David Parnley and Continental Divide and Canadian bands The Good Brothers and Bytown Bluegrass. Country stage features Deric Ruttan, Sane Yellowbird, Carroll Baker, Ambush, Eddie Francis and Silver Eagle, Madison Kozak and other fine acts.

* **July 17 - 19** - Foster's Country Jamboree, Picton. 613-476-7290.

* **Classic Country Music Reunion**, July 31 - Aug. 2, Trenton. 705-878-3102.

* **Aug. 9** - 22nd Annual Musicians' Corn Roast, Blackstock. musicianscornroast@yahoo.ca Phone Paul or Charlene 905-986-0292.

* **July 31 - Aug. 2**, Flinton Jamboree, 613-336-8354.

* **Aug. 2**, 2nd Music in the Fields Concert. Lucknow, featuring Johnny Reid, Doc Walker, George Canyon, Beverley Mahood, Tara Oram and Alex J. Robinson.

* **Aug. 13 - 16**, Havelock Country Jamboree with Johnny Reid, Tara Oram, Deanna Carter, Mustang Sally, Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, The Road Hammers, Loretta Lynn, Craig Morgan, Kellie Pickler, Charlie Major, Jaydee Bixby, The Higgins, Randy Travis, Jodee Messina, George Canyon, Corb Lund, The Good Brothers, Grand Ladies of Country Music featuring Jean Shepard, Jeannie Seely, Jan Howard and Helen Cornelius; plus Doug Kershaw, Shenandoa, H. and Carroll Baker's thanks for the memories.

* **Aug. 14 - 16**, Conestoga Trail Bluegrass and Gospel Festival. Acoustical Strings with the Spence Family, Roger Spence, Barry Spence and Loraine Overholser; Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice, The Wells Family, Rick Prater and the Midnight Travelers, Level Crossing, Bill Whiate and White Pine and Prairie Siding. MC Dan Bieman, CKNX Wingham and Dan Joseph, CKWR Waterloo. Contact Gerry and Fran Morgan, Princeton 519-458-4515. gerrfran@sympatico.ca www.conestogatrailbluegrass

* **Aug. 21 - 22**, Lions Head Jamboree.

* **Holland Landing Jamboree** third Thursday of the month. All Welcome. Musicians, Dancing.

* **Bond Head Fiddle Club** 4th Tuesday of the month.

* **Warminster Jamboree** first Sunday of the month with Tex Howard and Band. Lots of dancing and musicians welcome.

* **Aug. 29** - Barn Dance Show and Dance, 8 pm in Hensall.

* **Sept. 3 - 6** Auction Barn Jamboree, Keeler Centre, 80 Division St., Colborne. Live country music, nightly stage shows, open mic, dancing, breakfasts and dinners. auction-barnjamboree.ca

* **Canadian Open Old Time Fiddle** Championship, Aug. 5-9, Shelburne. Info 705-435-1881.

* **Bluesky Bluegrass Club** at Barrie Legion will be third Sunday in September, 1 pm.

* **Appearances by Doreen Brown** - Warminster Jamboree, first Sunday of month; Rosemont Jam, third Tuesday; Bolton Community Centre, second Wednesday; Holland Landing third Thursday.

* **Sept. 10-13**, Marmora Country Jamboree 613-395-0774.

* **Sept. 18 - 20**, Trillium Country Jamboree, Hastings 705-696-2896.

* **Sept. 5** - Railway Blues and Bluegrass Fest. Performances by Emory Lester, Hard Ryde, Honeygrass, Grant Lyle, Russ Strathdee and Ken Losell with the Links, Silverbirch, Hurrican Mike Thompson, Even Steven and Mose Stephenson. Toronto North, Cookstown, KOA Campgrounds, Hwy. 89 and 400. Info www.railwayblues.com or www.ticketmaster.ca

* **Sept. 4 - 6** - 7th Annual River Valley Country and Bluegrass wind up weekend featuring Social David Church, AK, The Hank Williams Show Friday only; Jenny, Josie and Lori Saturday only; Kevin Russell and Co., Whiskey Farmer, Stan and The Valley Boys, The Bluegrass House Band, Hard Ryde, also Lazy John and Winterline. www.northernbluegrass.com Call 705-758-9049. Also children's program.

* **Sept. 11-13** - Huron Pioneer Thresher and Hobby 48th Reunion, Blyth, Ontario. www.blythsteamshow.on.ca Entertainment Wed. Sept. 9 old tyme dancing; Thurs. fiddle jam session; Friday country and fiddle, also dancing; Saturday Pierce's Orchestra, Twilight Serenaders. Jam sessions and dancing.

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	\$20.00 ea.
NEW "Heywood Family Three Generations" CD	\$20.00 ea.
NEW Al Cherny CD - "Live / The Lost Recordings"	\$15.00 ea.
NEW Eleanor & Graham Townsend CD "The Talented Townsends" (36 unheard recordings)	\$15.00 ea.
Best of The Barn Dance CD	\$15.00 ea.

All purchases include GST.

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E-mail: webmaster@thebardance.ca

BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

CMT.com on-line columnist and Editorial Director Chet Flippo recently observed there are no geniuses in Nashville today.

It was a hard thing for a die hard fan to read. It felt like a hammer driving just one more nail in the genre's coffin.

His claim doesn't speak well of the music scene today or its future.

But I still love country music without prejudice, so I wanted to take up his challenge, drop some names and prove him wrong.

However, every time I thought of a new country artist to consider crowning a country virtuoso, I compared him to a by-gone star and I began to understand what Flippo is getting at.

At the time, Flippo was writing a piece about Brad Paisley when he made his bold and troubling observation.

Paisley recently took home three trophies at the CMT Music Awards and just placed his latest single "Then" atop the Billboard charts for two weeks. He is obviously a fan favourite. He is also in-

sanelly talented.

Nonetheless, Flippo denied Paisley the title of genius. Instead he acknowledged and emphasized his significant contributions to the industry. More than his music, he championed Paisley's devotion to family and respect for heritage and tradition.

I thought it strange those attributes should set an artist apart from his peers, much less a country one. It wasn't that long ago, or so it seems, that a familiarity with heritage and respect for tradition were assumed in any country musician.

Aren't those things the bedrock of the tradition? Isn't that what country music is all about?

In trying to find the geniuses of tomorrow we would be well served to remember the past.

The stars of The Barn Dance certainly understood the role of family and tradition. They were arguably the two pillars of the CKNX institution.

Recall Doc Cruickshank's emphasis on live local talent during the heyday of the Barn Dance. He insisted upon it.

That live local talent came from all the small towns across southwestern Ontario and beyond.

Those small places, the dots on the map where the city limit signs are back-to-back (thank you Roger Miller), were as vital a part of the Barn Dance family as anything. They were truly the heart of the show.

The Barn Dance, despite all its stars like Earl Heywood, Cactus Mac, and Ernie King, was about the people. That was made clear when the Barn Dance traveled to the people every week.

That is what set it apart from all the other barn dance programs. It wasn't based on one city or community, it belonged to everyone.

And everyone got to share in its magic when it came to their home town.

Today's Nashville stars can't manufacture, fake, or even understand that kind of relationship.

That's what being "country" is all about. It's not just the accessories, references and clichés.

It's organic. It's the dirt beneath your feet and the dirt on your hands.

It is in that fertile ground that genius takes root.

Perhaps Flippo was suggesting that Paisley, who once titled an album *Mud on the Tires*, might want to get a little more of that country dirt on his hands as well.

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