

The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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Spring Edition

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WHAT MAKES THE BARN DANCE TICK

by *Grant Heywood*

If you took a look behind the scenes of a theatre production, or a major music concert, you would find a busy beehive of activity. You only have to watch the credits role at the end of a Hollywood movie to know how many people are involved in making it happen. I've come to realize over the years that the Barn Dance Shows are no exception, and it takes a lot of people power and hours of planning to launch each and every performance.

It was 1937, when W. T. 'Doc' Cruickshank announced the first Saturday Night Barn Dance Show on CKNX Radio in Wingham. The show emanated from the radio broadcasting studio and soon went on the road to become a live performance show & dance. By the 1950's & early 60's it drew huge crowds and became known as Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance with many of the Barn Dance musicians and guest artists recording and becoming stars in their own right. I am sure that 'Doc' would never have dreamed that the Barn Dance would be resurrected (by Earl Heywood) to continue on a new path which is close to it's original values.

In the early days, 'Doc' would have local talent perform on the radio airwaves and soon afterwards on live Barn Dance shows. The exposure of music to the people of southwestern Ontario soon became a magnet for musicians, singers, and entertainers to strut their stuff. The Ranch Boys were one of the first bands, followed by the Barn Dance Gang, The Golden Prairie Cowboys, and others. CKNX Radio advertised the Barn Dances, had a technician at the shows (Elmer Purdon) to transmit the signal. A station wagon with trailer for instruments and sound system was made available to the core musicians and an emcee (Johnny Brent) became part of Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance. The organization hiring the Barn Dance would take care of tickets, renting the hall, providing dressing rooms, parking, security (hardly ever) and any incidentals.

Nowadays we are on our own when it comes to radio, television or newspaper advertising. We don't broadcast our shows and

it takes a lot more people power to put a show in motion. Our Blyth Campout & Jamboree is a perfect example. The Barn Dance Historical Society usually starts planning a year in advance for such an event. Everyone has a job and we try to make it run like clockwork, but that isn't always the case. Blyth Campout director / coordinator / musician, Bill Simmermaker, has the huge task of working with local service clubs, securing the event site premises and campgrounds, overseeing security, ticket and gatekeepers, food arrangements, seating plans, vendors & any other facilities, as well as working with all the other



Chairman Bill Simmermaker

personnel involved. That would include Treasurer, Gord Baxter & President, Ruth Baxter, who look after insurance, licensing/legal matters, tickets, advertising, gate receipts, and overlap many of the same duties as Bill Simmermaker when working at the event site. You will see Bill, Ruth & Gord helping out with almost any & every job if it is required. They are superb at what they do.

Organizing the event is one thing, putting on the entertainment shows is another. This double duty task belongs to Show & Music Director/musician, Doug Dietrich.



Music Director Doug Dietrich

Doug books the talent for the Friday bluegrass show (along with Lynn Russwurm), the Saturday night show/dance, as well as the Sunday Gospel Show (along with Mary Elliott). Doug arranges the musicians, practices, guest entertainers and songs, and works closely with the sound & light crew of Wayne & Scott, not to mention emcee, Jim Swan. Jim researches the musicians' & en-



MC Jim Swan

tertainers' backgrounds to provide information when it comes to showtime. Mary Elliott does the same for the Sunday Gospel Show as well as booking many of the acts, and is also the Sunday a.m. emcee. Many of our other directors, including myself, and the supportive VOLUNTEERS who are our UNSUNG HEROES, take care of raffles, silent auction, help with the continental breakfast, tickets, chair arrangements, souvenir tables, directing traffic, museum tours, security, directions, staging, sound systems, and anything else that helps to make the event run smoothly, including the final cleanup.

It's a lot of work, but the effort is to provide good wholesome country entertainment and a venue for up and coming younger artists to be showcased, as well as provide much needed funds to support our Barn Dance Museum in Wingham. Our Barn Dance website and museum pretty much tells the story of those who helped build the present day Barn Dance to make it what it is today. Many have passed on and we honour their contributions. 'Doc' would have been proud to see the tradition continue and not waiver from it's original intentions. I guess you could say that history sometimes does repeat itself. And for traditional country music lovers, that's a good thing these days.

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



I've been taking stock of my musical instruments and paraphernalia lately and it seems I'm due for a spring cleaning. (and I don't mean shining them up) I remember being a kid, and you couldn't wait to get that first guitar, or maybe a fiddle, keyboard or even a set of drums. There's just something about seeing that shiny new instrument in the music store window or a catalogue for the first time. Your eyes bulge out of your head and all you can think about is purchasing it so you can show the world that you are a future musician contender.

After 2 or 3 years of piano lessons, my dad bought my first set of drums for me on the condition that I play on shows with him and my mom, so as to pay them off. That was fair enough, and I soon started branching out into the local music scene with other young musicians. At the same time, I had a notion I wanted to write songs and play guitar, so I would steal away to my bedroom with my dad's old Martin guitar and learn how to play on my own.

I got my first acoustic guitar from Ernie King when the Martin Guitar Company had just introduced their new line of cheaper guitars called Sigma. I still have that guitar today and it has seen a lot of wear & tear and a lot of song writing over the years. I've now acquired some other performing guitars that I use regularly, including my Godin Acousticaster, which is a Canadian made acoustic electric guitar, and is my main axe. I'm also fortunate to have my dad's Martin D28, and his Gibson ES335 electric guitar that he originally bought from Ernie King as well. I now have my eye on another acoustic electric guitar, but I'll likely have to wait until I can afford it. I'm going to keep any sanity at home.

I have friends who wheel and deal musical instruments all the time, but mainly guitars. I never really planned on having too many guitars myself, and I'm not really a collector. I mean, you can only play one guitar at a time. I

know Barn Dance guitarist, George Lonsbury, has several guitars including his dad's old Gretsch. Part time Barn Dance guitarist, Fred Lewis, told me he has about 45 guitars in his collection, not to mention several Fender amplifiers. If you want to view a total vintage Fender amplifier collection, check out Long & McQuade (Murch Music) in Cambridge, Ont. I just heard on the radio the other day that ZZ Top guitarist, Billy Gibbons, from Texas, has over 700 guitars in his collection, including a rare Jimi Hendrix Fender Stratocaster.

Local record producer and guitarist Jason Berry, likely has a few guitars himself but he has a real penchant for Peavey Bandit amplifiers. I think he owns over a dozen at least and guitarist George Lonsbury also has a mini stockpile of Peavey Bandit amplifiers, one of which used to be mine. Musician friend, Bob Richards, told me that a keyboard player band member has been collecting drum kits over the years and now has to rent warehouse space to house all of them. I remember Barn Dance member, Al Widmeyer telling me about a guitar collector in Kentucky that his friend took him to see. He had a whole shop of guitars including a rare \$100,000 Martin acoustic that he reluctantly let Al hold ... as long as Al put on latex gloves and was extremely careful. Wow! That's insane. I remember wanting to purchase a Gretsch drumkit years ago and went to see a kit for sale in Brampton. When I got there the guy had about 10 or 12 Gretsch vintage drumkits. He didn't even play drums himself. He was just a collector and he wanted way too much money for the kit than I was willing to pay.

Today, vintage instruments command a very high price, but it is sad to see them locked up by collectors and not even played. Classical musicians have been fortunate recently, since an arrangement has been made to loan out very, very expensive Stradivarius violins to be played by some of the world's finest violinists. Vince Gill once said that it's great to have a collection of instruments as long as they get rotated and played once in a while, otherwise they become dead museum pieces. Realistically, wooden acoustic guitars, violins, cellos, etc. should be played regularly, as the vibrations keep the instrument alive and acoustically sound. This gives it the beautiful tone and resonance for which it is known.

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

P.O. Box 68

Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 530-8000

(or leave a message)

BARN DANCE WEBSITE:

www.thebardance.ca

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So I continue to comb over my musical instruments and electronic gadgets, trying to decide what I can do without and if I can maybe trade some stuff in on another instrument acquirement. Hmmm. If you are in need of a fine acoustic guitar, you can buy tickets on a Fender acoustic guitar package courtesy of SHERWOOD MUSIC in Kitchener. Tickets will be on sale at our upcoming Blyth Campout Jamboree. All the more reason to attend the Saturday night show, since the draw for the guitar package will take place that evening. Good luck.

Hope to see you at an upcoming Barn Dance show.

Comments? Please contact:

Grant Heywood

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Wellesley Ont. N0B 2T0

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E-mail: heywoods@golden.net

2010 COMING EVENTS

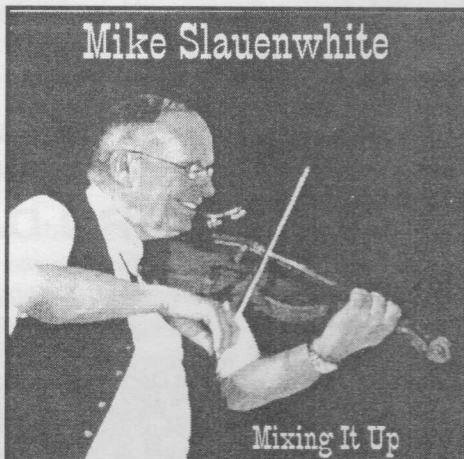
Date	Event Name	Place
Sun., April 11	Mike Slauenwhite CD Release Jam	2 to 5 p.m. - Commercial Tavern, Maryhill
Sun., May 2	Barn Dance Show - 2:30 p.m.	Purple Hills Country Music Hall, Thorndale
May 27 to 30	13th Annual Campout Weekend	Blyth Recreation Complex and Campgrounds
Sun., June 27	Barn Dance Show - 3:00 p.m.	Commercial Tavern, Maryhill
Sat., Aug. 28	Barn Dance Show and Dance - 8 to 12 p.m.	Hensall Arena, Hensall
Sun., Oct. 24	Barn Dance Show - 2:30 p.m.	Kirkton Woodham Community Centre, Kirkton

FEATURE

C. D. REVIEW

MIKE SLAUENWHITE -
'MIXING IT UP'

This is Mike Slauenwhite's first CD (it's been a long wait) and it is indicative of what a fine fiddle/violin player Mike really is. This project was spawned by producer, Lynn Russwurm, and includes Barn Dance guest musicians such as Lynn on stand-up bass/guitar, Ron



Coulthard on guitar/piano, and me, Grant Heywood on drums, as well as Mike's long time friend Robert Tremblay on dobro/guitar and multi-instrumentalist, Darin Parise on banjo and flat top guitar. But it is Mike's fiddle playing that really shines here, and it doesn't get better than this. The CD was recorded at Mike Stiver's Freightyard Studios in Kitchener.

A little background: Michael Slauenwhite is from Kitchener, married, with a family of 4. He began playing at the age of 8, played with the Silver Bar Ranch Band from '54 to '56 on CKCO-TV, as well as CBC Radio and TV. He performed with Clarence Petrie and the Nighthawks and played 20 years with the K-W Symphony Orchestra. Mike also played with the Westernaires, Ice Capades and even Broadway musical tributes. He's been with the Barn Dance for several years now and was part of the 'twin fiddles' along with the late Victor Pasowisty.

Standout cuts? Boy, that's a hard one to call, since I'm a session player on the CD as well as a Mike Slauenwhite fan. The CD is book-ended with perennial favourites Down Yonder and Maple Sugar. Among the 14 cuts, my personal choices would be: San Antonio Rose, Marie, Crooked Stovepipe and Mitton's Breakdown, I'm Confessin', Faded Love and Lady Be Good. Also, Marigold Waltz written by the late Vic Pasowisty, which in my estimation, the most beautiful waltz I have ever heard. Mike has been playing all of these 14 tunes for a long time and his expertise certainly shows. Mike told me that he never usually plays his fiddle parts the same way twice. He doesn't have to, because he usually nails it the first time, every time. Mike's training in classical as well as country, old time fiddle and swing, pretty much speaks for itself on this CD and his experience pays off here without a doubt.

Mike is a modest musician who just loves to play good music ... (as long as you're in tune). As a true friend and admirer, I have performed with him countless times, on and off the Barn Dance stage, from country to swing, and even rock and blues. At 74 years of age, and undergoing cancer treatment, Mike is still playing with his musician friends whenever possible. The Maryhill Commercial Tavern will be hosting a "Mixing It Up" CD release party and jam (with musical guests) for Mike on Sunday, April 11 from 2 to 5 p.m. We're looking for a great turnout.

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

WHO WROTE THE SONG?

(Maple Sugar)

Old time fiddle music is as Canadian as Maple Sugar. Ask anyone who attends any of the Barn Dance shows and they always expect to hear an old time fiddle tune or two. Fiddle contests have become popular all over Canada including many in western Ontario. The largest old time fiddling contest of all, continues to be the most spectacular event in North America, held in August each year at Shelburne, Ontario.

Ward Allen, a great Canadian fiddler born in Kirktion, Ontario in 1924, was one of the first to win the Shelburne contest over eighty seven other contestants. Ward Allen and first time Shelburne winner, Mel Lavigne, were part of the 'twin fiddle sound' that was so prominent at CKNX Barn Dance shows in the 1950's. Ward also went on to win top honours at the annual Western Ontario Fiddle Championship in Hensall, Ontario, where a top winner each year now competes for the Ward Allen Memorial Trophy.

Ward was a well known and respected fiddler and some say he was one of the best around. Although he may not have known it at the time, Ward left a legacy to fiddlers by writing one of the most popular fiddle tunes of all time, 'Maple Sugar'. It has become a standard in every fiddler's repertoire and is one of the opening numbers of every Barn Dance performance. Just how popular is 'Maple Sugar'? At the recent opening ceremonies at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics, a star studded cast of fiddlers including Natalie McMaster and Ashley McIssac, performed several old time fiddle tunes. One of those songs was 'Maple Sugar', and as it was being played there where thousands of maple leaves falling to the stage via video projectors, as thousands of people cheered during the performance. It was a defining moment as this was one of Canada's all time fiddle classics. Ward would certainly have been proud and honoured by this magnificent display.

Ward died too early in his career in 1965. His fiddle music will never die, and neither will the tunes he wrote like 'Maple Sugar'.

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

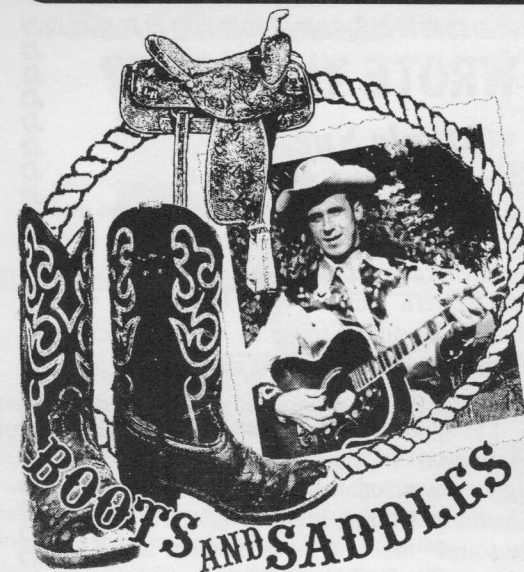
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by Lynn Ruswurm

As I write this, we've just come through two weeks of sunshine and spring-like weather, this coming in February and March leads me to believe we'll pay for it when March goes out, roaring like a lion. It's hard to believe that our weekend camp-out in Blyth is less than two months away. In addition to a special appearance by award winning bluegrass group, "General Store", we'll also have an appearance by the legendary Tommy Wade of Country Rebels fame. I'm looking forward to it.

The much awaited CD by Mike Slauenwhite has now been released by Rosedale Music in Newmarket with Mike leading the way on a variety of fiddle and swing tunes from Down Yonder and Maple Sugar to sentimental tunes like Have I Told You Lately That I Love You, mixed in with a bit of swing such as Lady Be Good. Mike will showcase the CD with a CD Release Party at Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill on Sunday,

April 11 from 2 to 5. Why don't you come out and enjoy the celebration??

This seems to be a good month for CD releases. Our own Jack Kingston has his first CD release on the market via the British Archives of Country Music, spotlighting Jack's 78 recordings. This honour has been a long time coming for one of Canada's foremost pioneers of country music, and I'm happy to say I compiled this set. Another one of my projects has also come to fruition via the two CD release of the complete duets of Elton Britt and Rosalie Allen, these come through the aegis of Rosedale Music. I'm happy to say there are

people out there that care about our pioneers.

Bluegrass in this area seems to be gaining a bit of ground since the bluegrass association was formed. The

Thursday night jams have now moved to the Galt Legion in Cambridge and also to a different night, now on Tuesday of each week. There is also a Sunday afternoon bluegrass gig starting shortly at a club in downtown Kitchener called Marina's, so if you want more bluegrass in your life be sure to get out and support these venues. So many things fall by the wayside because of lack of support and then we wonder why.

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*



AWARD WINNING BLUEGRASS BAND "GENERAL STORE"

General Store will be headlining the Friday night bluegrass concert in Blyth on May 28. After winning the crown as Canadian Bluegrass Gospel Group for five years, they have now been retired from that category. On top of that, Norm Tellier is a two-time winner in the mandolin category. Quite a record for a group that has been in existence for only eight short years.

Coming from many divergent areas, the group stemmed from an idea formulated by banjo player Bill Blance. Other members of the group include Brian Riseborough on guitar, Helen Lewis on autoharp and John Perkins on bass. Most of them have come up through the ranks of other groups and with perseverance and dedication to their craft they have emerged as one of the leaders in the bluegrass idiom. A stand-out of their performance is the tight vocal harmonies on the gospel numbers.

With two CD's under their belt and a third in preparation, they have certainly left their mark on bluegrass in Canada. We'll let their appearance in Blyth speak for itself.

BARN DANCE JOURNAL ADVERTISING PRICES

Business Card Size -

\$25.00 plus GST

1/4 Page -

\$75.00 plus GST

1/2 page -

\$150.00 plus GST

Full Page (inside) -

\$275.00 plus GST

Full Page (back cover) -

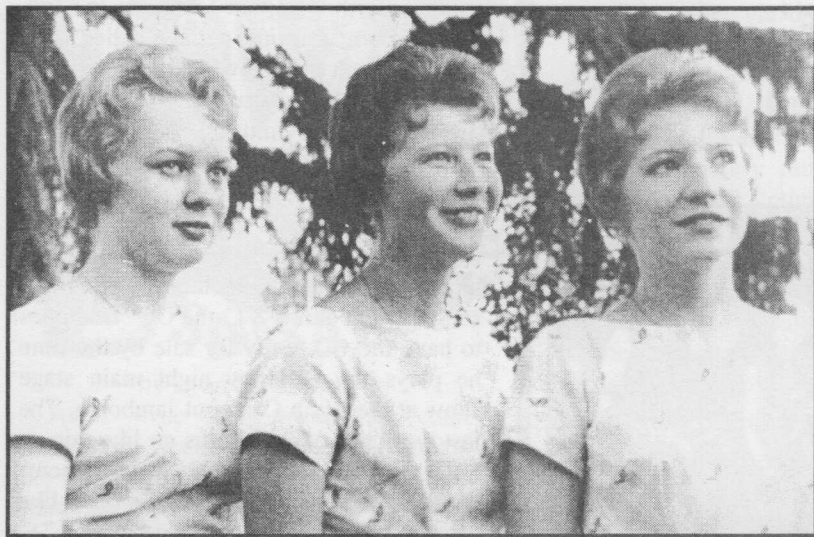
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Country Music Memories



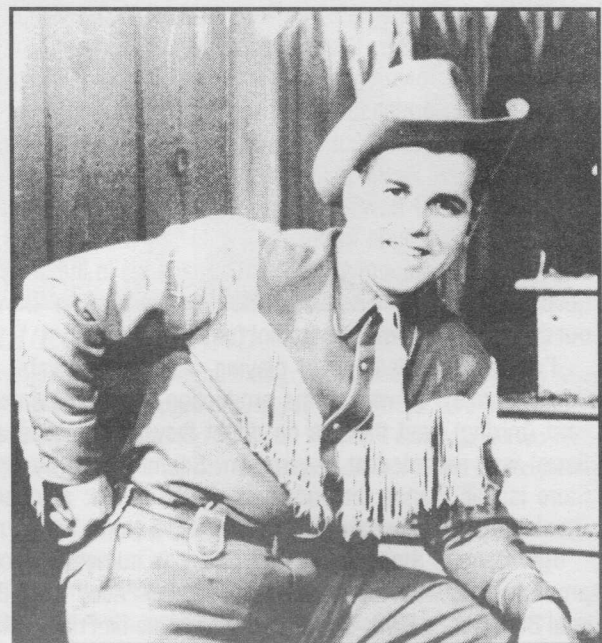
Circle 8 Ranch singing trio "The Circlettes". From left to right: Judy Bitton (daughter of Circle 8 Ranch piano player, Reg Bitton), Elizabeth and Carol Robertson (daughters of Don and Cora Robertson of the Ranch Boys).



The CKNX Barn Dance and Circle 8 Ranch "Singing Sweetheart", Sharon Strong.



Barn Dance pioneers, Martha and Earl Heywood rehearsing a Gay Nineties act.



Original Barn Dance emcee, Johnny Brent on the CKNX T.V. show set of Western Roundup.

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

- * **Monthly Jams at Joe Tomatos**, 1020 10th St. W., Owen Sound. 519-371-5637. Also Bluegrass Jams first Sunday of each month 1:30 to 4:30. There are also Thurs. night jams every week 7:30 to 10:30 in the North Atlantic Room at Owen Sound Legion. www.queensbush.ca.
- * **Singhampton Community Centre** has a Jam every third Sunday.
- * **Warminster Legion** presents Tex, Dottie and Hometown Country the 4th Friday from 8 to 12.
- * **Mary Florence and Friends** present George Hamilton, Sun., April 18, 7 pm at Downtown Theatre, 1 Dunlop St. W., Barrie. Tickets 705-728-1583. www.mary-flo.com.
- * **Community Sing-along** Trudy and Al and musician friends, 19 on the Park, Main Street Clock Tower, Stouffville. 905-642-6331. April 25, May 16 & June 20.
- * **Appearances by The Golden Tones** Merv Bell, Lloyd Preston, Leigh Wishart, Wally Bonnis - the 4th Sunday at Warminster.
- * **Utopia Community Hall** presents Jill Jambor, Jeff Williams and other local musical talents the last Sunday of each month, 2 to 4. 1-877-499-4255. Also on /April 24, May 30 and June 27.
- * **Barn Dance Historical Society** 13th Annual Campout / Jamboree Weekend May 27 campground opens to May 30. See you there!!
- * **Cargill's Pickin' by the Pond** Country and Bluegrass Festival at the Community Centre, July 1 to 4. Info 519-366-1231 www.cargillcdf.com
- * **Purple Hill Country Hall** and the Barn Dance Society presents 32 years Canada's largest traveling Barn Dance May 2, 2:30 to 5:00 at the Purple Hill Country Hall, 20903 Purple Hill Rd., Thorndale. 519-461-0538.
- * **August 19 - 22** - Havelock Country Jamboree. More info with line up in next issue.
- * **Appearances by Doreen Brown** - Blyth Campout; Classic Country Music Reunion; various jamborees - Maple Leaf Jubilee,

Rosemont Jamboree, ANAF Barrie.

- * **July 3 - 5** - Just Past the Pines Jamboree, Marysville. 613-396-1372.
- * **July 28 - Aug. 1** - Annual River Valley Bluegrass Jamboree www.northerbluegrass.com
- * **July 7** - Charlie Pride, Essar Centre, Sault Ste. Marie.
- * **June 19 - 21** - Trillium Country Jamboree, Hastings. 705-696-2896. www.trillium.mine
- * **July 30 - Aug. 1** - Classic Country Music Reunion, Centennial Park, Trenton 705-878-3102 www.ccmr.ca
- * **Aug. 20 - 23** - Maple Leaf Country Jubilee, Sentimental Journey, 23906 Highway 48, Baldwin. 905-989-8989.
- * **Sept. 3 - 6** - Auction Barn Jamboree, Keeler Centre, Colborne. 905-355-2106. www.auctionbarnjamboree.ca
- * **Aug. 8** - Musician's Corn Rost, 4790 M Kee Rd., Blackstock. 905-986-0292. www.ambrec.com/cornroast
- * **June 18 - 27** - 20th Annual Tottenham Bluegrass Festival. www.tottenhambluegrass.ca 1-888-886-4566. Featuring: Lonesome River Band; Daughter's of Bluegrass; Carolina Road; Janet McGarry and Wildwood; Nothing Fancy; Gary Waldrup Band; Hometown Bluegrass; Bluegrass Edition; Rhyme'N Reason; Canucky Bluegrass Boys with MC Mike O'Reilly. Workshops. Sunday Gospel Show. Craft and Food concessions. Barbecue.
- * **Appearance Canucky Bluegrass Boys** July 3 to 5 River Valley Bluegrass Country. Contact Tony DeBoer 705-758-9049; July 9 to 12 Valley Bluegrass Festival, Renfrew.
- * **Gladstone Hotel** 1214 Queen St. W., Toronto 416-531-4635 with country music, Sat. 7 to 10 and bluegrass Sun. 6 to 9.
- July 17** - Sarnia Bayfest, Centennial Park. Keith Urban and Road Hammers 16th; Alan Jackson, Dean Brody and Shane Yellowbird 17th.
- July 23** - Voyageur Days Festival in Mattawa.
- Upcoming Appearances**, contact Gerald Davidson, The Country Versatiles 519-539-2653. www.countryversatiles.com

Thanks always for your support of The Barn Dance and all entertainers. Have a great summer and see you there!!

Barn Dance Historical Society Annual General Meeting

The Barn Dance Historical Society will hold the annual general meeting at the North Huron Museum / Barn Dance Museum, on Josephine Street, Wingham, Ontario, on Monday, April 12th, commencing at 7 p.m. All members are welcome to attend and we encourage participation in the election process to fill vacant board member positions. The Barn Dance Historical Society is an active (not for profit) organization keeping the country musical heritage and history of the local region and southwestern Ontario vibrant and alive, through Barn Dance performances and the establishment of the Barn Dance & Entertainment Museum.

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.
<i>All purchases include GST.</i>	

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BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

In his 2009 autobiography *Man of Constant Sorrow: My Life and Times*, Ralph Stanley champions the old ways over the new.

In life and in music, he wants to be remembered as a musician who stuck to his roots no matter what.

Those roots are anchored in the Clinch Mountains of southwestern Virginia where he grew up close to the land. The music he sings is of the land. It is as rugged as the hollers in the mountains of southern Appalachia and earthy as the grassy pastureland of the high ridges.

Despite being celebrated as one of the great three bluegrass outfits of all-time (Bill Monroe and his Bluegrass Boys and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs being the other two). Ralph Stanley never thought of the music he created with his older brother Carter as the Stanley Brothers as bluegrass. His music is simpler. He prefers to call it tradi-

tional or old-time mountain music. Songs learned in church, on the back porch, and behind a mule were handed down from generation to generation.

He laments the passing of a way of life and the music it created. As evidence Stanley observes at the book's end how he can no longer find any shrubby chestnuts called chinquapins growing on the land. He remembers roaming the hillsides with his brother as a boy, eating chinquapins by the handful. He said, "One day, they were as thick as huckleberries, and the next thing you know, they're all gone like they never was. That's something that will set you thinking."

It did. And it still does. It's frustrating because most of the time I still can't figure out exactly what it is I am thinking about. I know I've tried to write about it in this column before.

Should we cling to the past or leave it behind and move on? How do we mix it in with the new?

I guess it is the ongoing challenge of how to make the past present, the difficulty of preserving legacy. We

can't pretend we can in any way recreate the conditions of Stanley's childhood that caused his music. Nor can we pretend his music never existed.

How then to take the old things and make them new? I guess by making sure we always have a past to return to. We do it by keeping the doors to the memories our home places open to allow someone to rummage through yesterday and discover the old for themselves.

Isn't that what the Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum is all about? It certainly was for me. I still remember the joy of discovering the beautiful museum and the people who served it. A new tradition opened up to me. People and places I was not familiar with before came to life. I was obsessed with learning more about their past.

Ralph Stanley worried about things he didn't see anymore, in his words, "things that ain't no more."

I'm thankful the Barn Dance ain't one of 'em.

COME JOIN US!!

We need you as a member of

THE BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY and ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM

P. O. Box 68, Wingham, Ont. N0G 2W0 Phone: (519) 530-8000 E-mail: webmaster@thebardance.ca

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- Advance notice of SPECIAL EVENTS.
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- Special membership only rates at some of our events.

2

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\$ 40.00 - 1 year