

# The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.

A Not For Profit Organization

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Summer Edition

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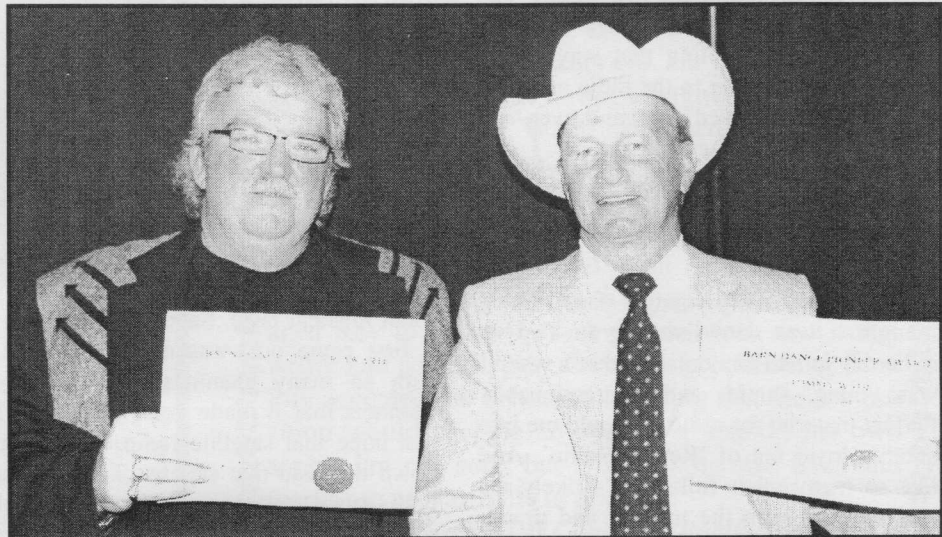
## WASN'T THAT A PARTY!!!

by Grant Heywood

The 13<sup>th</sup> annual Barn Dance Campout Jamboree in Blyth was certainly one of the best ever. The weather was a tad warm but darn near perfect. We had many old friends and members attending along with a whole bunch of new folks as well. The Friday night Bluegrass Show & Jam was almost at capacity level, as was the Sunday a.m. Gospel Show. The Saturday night Show & Dance was practically sold out. We also had several people take a walk down memory lane at our Barn Dance Museum located in Wingham.

We've got to know a lot of good people over the years and this event is almost like a weekend family reunion of sorts. We had a lot of members and Barn Dance followers from near and far, as well as some of Ernie King's special musical guests, Peggy & Wayne Smith, and Doug Hore, from Providence Bay, Manitoulin Island. Special thanks to everyone who helped out, especially so many of the volunteers. We couldn't do it without you.

Special thanks to Dave Wallace, from Ernie King Music, who provided the onstage piano. Dave has always been there for us and we can't thank him enough. He's also a pretty good singer too. Thanks to all the Barn Dance Historical Society members and board members who kept the event rolling on. Bill, Gord, Ruth and Doug, certainly deserve a lot of credit for keeping things organized. Most of the pictures in this issue, are smiling faces of people who worked, attended or performed at the Jamboree. Enjoy.



*Al Widmeyer and Tom Wade were proud recipients of the Barn Dance Pioneer Award.*



*The Donaldson Family Band was a big hit with the crowd on the main stage at the Saturday night Barn Dance Show.*



*Barn Dance emcee, Jim Swan gets the show started with three fiddles playing "Maple Sugar", backed up by the Barn Dance Band.*

## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



Have you ever had that feeling that you've heard it all before? Every once in a blue moon I get feeling that way. Especially if I'm listening to the radio and hear the same songs played over, and over, and over again. Don't get me wrong, I like good music the same as the next person, but I really don't need to be inundated with the same tunes I've heard a million plus times!

I suppose in my younger days I likely thought it was cool listening to Top 40 radio day in and day out. But that's when I was young, stupid, and impressionable. Perfect material for radio to mould me into another loyal fan of 'Repeat Radio'. And like so many other folks that's likely the reason I can hum the melody and practically sing all the lyrics almost on command. Kind of makes me feel like a robot.

I know that radio in the 50's, 60's and even the early 70's, was a lot more forgiving and played a wider variety of tunes. Even specialized country and rock stations had a much larger playlist of material that you would never get bored with. Of course that was before BIG conglomerates started buying up radio stations and making Top 40 seem more like Top 20. A lot of larger big city stations started the ball rolling and it wasn't long before smaller stations would follow suit. The recent downturn in the recording industry certainly hasn't helped the situation either. There are still a few radio stations who have found their own niche in the industry, but not too many.

When I take family trips into the U.S., there are many more choices on the radio dial. We usually listen to public broadcasting stations that play unique and quite often 'homegrown' music. Sometimes you

can pull in stations that play nothing but bluegrass or old time traditional country music. Even the classic rock stations in the U.S. play a larger variety of songs, and several tunes that I haven't heard in years. There are a lot of classic rock stations in North America and it sometimes seems like people can't get enough of it. I've always wondered why there aren't as many classic country radio stations doing the same thing. There certainly is a market for it, or is country radio 'too cool' to play 'real classic country'. I don't have the answer to that one.

Now that satellite radio has become popular you can dial in the music you like without all the commercials. Granted you have to pay for the service, but many of my friends have satellite radio and they love the fact that they can listen to music that is tailored to their ears without compromising their personal musical taste. Satellite T.V., when it first came out, was much the same, with so many channels and specialty channels that it made your head spin. I just hope that satellite radio doesn't go down the road that satellite T.V. has ... with more and more commercials. I mean, the reason I got satellite T.V. was because I could get way more channels without commercial interruption. Is nothing sacred anymore?

One thing is for sure, if you like a wide variety of traditional country music played 'live', and without commercial interruption, then you should think about attending the next Barn Dance performance. Check the show schedule in this issue. Hope to see you at the next Barn Dance.

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)

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

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## BARN DANCE BOOKINGS

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## 2010 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
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**

**AL HEISER -  
'WHEN CIRCLE 8 CAME ON'**

Al Heiser's concept for a CD came to the attention of legendary Ernie King, who got the ball rolling for Al. Hailing from Wroxeter, Ont., Al has secretly been writing country songs for a number of years now, but hasn't performed or recorded them.

Ernie put him in touch with country/

bluegrass musician, Al Widmeyer, who worked with fiddle player Randy Morrison in putting this CD together. Piano player, Martin Aucoin and singer/guitarist, Ernie King make guest appearances.

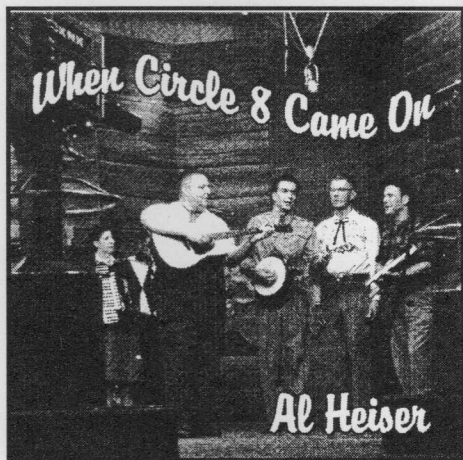
With his love for the Ranch Boys old CKNX T.V. Show. Circle 8 Ranch, it was Al Heiser's intention to put it into song and perform it at the annual Barn Dance Blyth Campout Jamboree someday. And so he did. Anyone who remembers Circle 8 Ranch will undoubtedly be moved by this tribute to his local country heroes. It is well done and the CD liner notes pretty much tell the story. A cameo by Ernie King singing 'Let's Say Goodbye Like We Said Hello' at the end of this song, is the icing on the cake.

Al has certainly spent some time songwriting in the traditional vein of country music and it shows, especially on tunes like 'Come Ridin' With Me' and the 'Bitter End'. The aura of this c.d. is almost a throw-back to a nostalgic style old timey approach to country music. Al's voice is not your typical slick Nashville cowboy type either. He's kind of like the guy who writes the songs but never gets to sing them. There is a bit of Tom Waits, Kris Kristofferson, and Tom T. Hall in his delivery, all wrapped up with a Johnny Paycheck honesty and sensibility. But there is no doubt that Al has the ability to write country songs that tell a story. Check out the waltz time 'Not Over You Yet' or the Buck Owens style, 'I Would If I Could (But I Can't)'.

The song 'N.A.S.A.' exposes a sense of humour and 'Another Country Song' is just different enough to get attention from one of Nashville's old guard. There are 11 songs altogether and it takes a few listens to really appreciate the potential here. Al Widmeyer and Randy Morrison did a good job producing and playing on this c.d., in spite of the short time frame.

Al Heiser continues to write songs and was certainly a big hit at the Blyth Barn Dance Jamboree Campout when he sang 'When Circle 8 Came On'. Those who love older traditional style country will appreciate this c.d. I'd just love to hear what bare bones record producer, Rick Rubin, (Johnny Cash 'The Man Comes Around') could do with Al Heiser if they should ever chance to meet. Now that would bend a few ears to say the least.

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



**WHO WROTE THE SONG?**

*(Canadian Pacific)*

There are lots of country music train songs, including, *Wreck Of The Old '97*, *Canadian Railroad Trilogy*, *Movin' On*, *Freight Train*, and oh so many more. One of the best songs ever written about a train is *Canadian Pacific*. It was Canadian born songwriter/performer, Ray Griff who composed the song.

Born in Vancouver, Griff moved to Calgary when he was about 12 years old. He grasped most of his musical knowledge through singing in choirs, and barbershop quartets. When he turned 18 he put together his own band and started playing country music throughout much of western Canada.

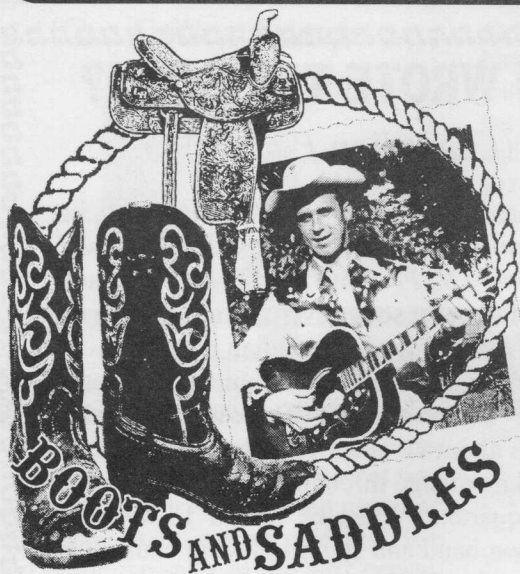
Back in 1964, country star Jim Reeves heard Ray Griff singing with his band at an Alberta nightclub. Reeves got talking to Ray that night and he encouraged Ray to come to Nashville to work as a songwriter and song plugger for a music publishing firm. Ray accepted the invitation knowing that the job position would become an avenue to exploit his own songs. I'm not sure, but I believe he still lives and works out of Nashville to this day.

Ray Griff recorded *Canadian Pacific*, and so did Hank Snow, and George Hamilton the IV. And so *Canadian Pacific* obviously became a big chart success on radio for Ray Griff more than once. *Canadian Pacific*, is a true Canadian country music classic.

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



*Musician guests, Peggy Smith and Doug Hore of Little Current, Manitoulin Island, pose with their Barn Dance pal Ernie King.*



by Lynn Russwurm

A problem that has always faced young would-be country artists has been "where to go to get some experience under my belt". First of all you get a guitar and learn a few chords, then you test out your voice. Use every opportunity to sing and play with other people, and steal guitar licks wherever you can. If you just play by yourself you may get into some bad habits related to timing, or you may tend to speed up during a song. You should maintain the same tempo throughout the song and you should be going at the same speed at the end of the song that you started with. You need to learn how to tune a guitar, there are excellent tuners at reasonable prices, but you should still develop the ability to tune your guitar by ear, this should come with a little bit of practice. Today there are Jamborees where anybody can put in their name and perform, almost every town has one, many are on a monthly basis, a little checking will show you where they are.

Back in the old days, Johnny Brent would often be involved in talent shows at various locations where he would emcee the event. And I can remember where The Main Street Jamboree from CHML in Hamilton would run talent shows following the main Saturday night show. They also had the Ken Soble Amateur Hour on CHML radio. In Kitchener, Kidd Baker provided a venue for young people to perform if they wished. His legendary Sunday night shows at the Golden Lion Restaurant are still fondly remembered by many. Kidd and his band, The Pine Ridge Boys, would put on a one hour show and after intermission, anybody could get up and do their stuff. There would be a great variety of talent, some good and some bad, but it

made for good entertainment, and all the young would-be cowboy singers would get a little bit more experience under their belts. And where is the Golden Lion Restaurant today? At the same location stand the studios of CKCO-TV.

There have always been opportunities to gain experience, all you have to do is look for it. When you are ready and able, an opportunity will come along to become a musician, if that is what you wish. And if you just want to play music for your own satisfaction, there is no greater enjoyment than playing music.

Today there is a bluegrass association that holds a weekly jam at the

Galt Legion in Cambridge every Tuesday night. One hour is set aside for a slow jam, for beginners to practice their chosen instruments. I've been amazed by the tremendous talent that shows up at these jams, many that have no aspirations to perform professionally, but just want to play music. But there are also professional and semi-professionals that show up at these events and are willing to share their expertise. For music to be really enjoyed it has to be shared with others, if you're playing on a stage, around a campfire, or even trading licks with a like minded individual, it's the sharing that's important.



The Pine Ridge Sweethearts, Laura and Lynn Russwurm, during a guest appearance on the Kidd Baker TV show.

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 ★ **SHOW CASE CONCERTS** ★  
 ★ A series of Sunday night Showcase Con- ★  
 ★ certs have been set for Gore Park in El- ★  
 ★ mira. Concerts will begin at 7:00 p.m. and ★  
 ★ will run from July 4 to Sept. 5. Country, ★  
 ★ gospel or bluegrass music will be featured ★  
 ★ at all concerts.  
 ★ Co-ordinating the concerts is Lynn ★  
 ★ Russwurm and anyone wishing to partici- ★  
 ★ pate can reach him at 519-669-2386. At ★  
 ★ the time of this writing there are still a ★  
 ★ few openings.  
 ★ Line-ups to date as follows:  
 ★ July 4 ~ Crossover Junction  
 ★ July 11 ~ John Doerr & Greenwood Hill  
 ★ July 18 ~ Dick Holm & The Ole Country  
 ★ Mishaps  
 ★ July 25 ~ Gerald Davidson & The Country  
 ★ Versatiles  
 ★ Aug. 1 ~ To be announced  
 ★ Aug. 8 ~ Laverne Ferguson & The Country  
 ★ Ways  
 ★ Aug. 15 ~ Lynn Russwurm's Anniversary  
 ★ Jam  
 ★ Aug. 22 ~ Maryanne Cunningham & The  
 ★ Red Rascal Band  
 ★ Aug. 29 ~ Variety Night with Paul Weber  
 ★ Sept 5 ~ Crossover Junction  
 ★  
 ★\*\*\*\*\*

**CAMPOUT DRAW WINNERS ~**

50/50 Draw - May 28  
 Gerald Cook, Stratford - \$217.

50/50 Draw - May 29  
 Marilee Hore, Little Current,  
 Manitoulin Island - \$247.

Quilted Throw -  
 Sue Widmeyer, Kitchener  
 Fender Guitar Package -  
 Merle Hindle, Owen Sound

*Congratulations to all!!*

326 Josephine St., Wingham (519) 357-2811



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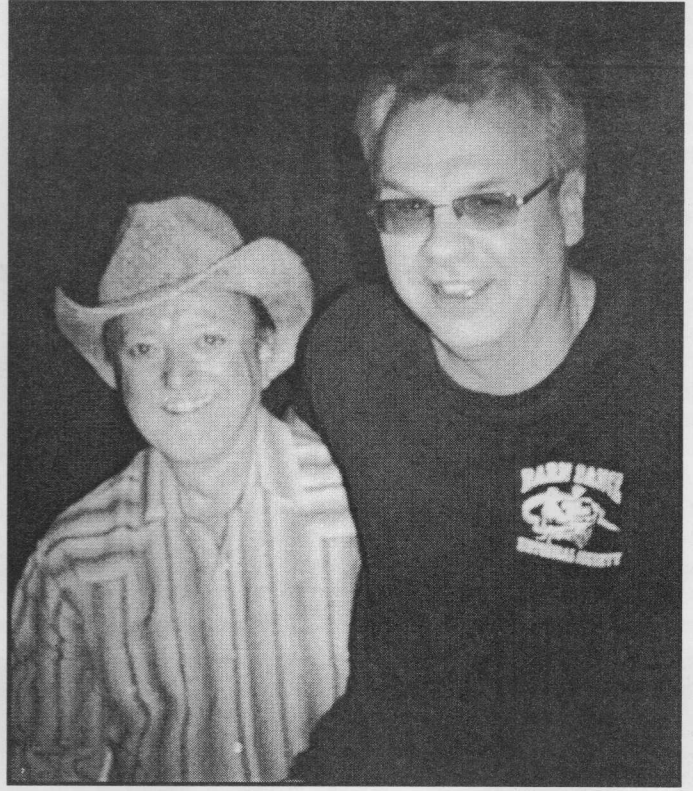
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*Doug Hore from Manitoulin Island was proud as punch to play his fiddle on the main stage at Blyth.*



*Chairman of the Blyth Campout, Bill Simmermaker, and Barn Dance Music Director, Doug Dietrich.*

**4th Annual**

# **HOLLYROOD COUNTRY JAMBOREE**

901 Harmony Rd., Corbyville, Ontario ~ 4 miles North of Belleville, Ontario

**JULY 2, 3, & 4, 2010**

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Info: call Glen or Jeanie @ 613-967-9551  
Or visit [www.hollyroodcountryjamboree.com](http://www.hollyroodcountryjamboree.com)



Singer / song writer, Al Heiser was a guest performer on the main stage with the Millenium Cowboys.



Award winning bluegrass group, "General Store", put on a great Friday night show, on the Barn Dance stage in Blyth.



Barn Dance follower and fan, Marilyn Hartung of Bamburg, seen here modelling the latest trend in Barn Dance Campout Jamboree apparel, just for fun.

\*\*\*\*\*  
 ★ Special thanks to Peggy Smith for taking most of the pictures at the  
 ★ 13th Annual Blyth Barn Dance Campout Jamboree.  
 ★  
 \*\*\*\*\*



The whole cast of the Barn Dance Show at Blyth performing the traditional Grand Finale song, "I Saw The Light".



## COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

- \* **June 27** - Barn Dance Show, 3:00 p.m., Commercial Tavern, Maryhill.
- \* **Aug. 28** - Barn Dance Show and Dance, 8 to 12 p.m., Hensall Arena, Hensall.
- \* **June 14** - Ray Price, Empire Theatre, Belleville.
- \* **Bolton Fiddle Club**, Community Centre, second Wed. of the month, 6:30 to 10:45. For info 905-853-6338.
- \* **July 2 & 3** - 27th Annual Southwestern Ontario Open Fiddle and Stepdance Championships, Tavistock and District Recreation Centre, 1 Adam St., Tavistock.
- \* **July 29 to Aug. 2** - Second Annual Boot Hill Country Jamboree. 18 music bands featuring: George Canyon, Larry Gatlin and Gatlin Bros., Little Texas, Deric Ruttan, Jessie Farrell, Jamie Warren, Mustang Sally, Jay Allan, Marie Bottrel, The Laws. Boot Hill Country Jamboree is located between London and Chatham, 14 km north of Rodney towards Bothwell. Tickets phone 1-888-655-9090 or [www.boothilljamboree.com](http://www.boothilljamboree.com)
- \* **Appearances Canucky Bluegrass Boys** - July 9 to 12 Valley Bluegrass Festival, Renfrew; July 17 to 19 Queen's Bush Bluegrass Festival, Owen Sound; July 28 to Aug. 1 River Valley Blue4grass Festival; Aug. 8 Manitoulin Country Fest, Manitoulin Island; Aug. 27 to 29 Railway Blues Festival, Cookstown.
- \* **June 18 - 20** - 20th Annual Tottenham Bluegrass Festival. [www.tottenhambluegrass.ca](http://www.tottenhambluegrass.ca) or call 1-888-886-4566.
- \* **August 13 to 15** - Conestoga Trail Bluegrass and Gospel Fest, Princeton. [www.conestogatrailbluegrass.ca](http://www.conestogatrailbluegrass.ca) or phone 519-458-4515. Line-up: Audie Blaylock and Redline; Amy Gallatin and Stillwaters; The Steven Family; Kentucky Border; General Store; Hometown Bluegrass; Bluegrass Edition. A family oriented festival.
- \* **Sept. 10 to 12** - Huron Pioneer Thresher and Hobby Assoc. 49th Reunion, Campgrounds, Blyth. Exhibits and activities; antique featured tractor; parade; camping; hot meals; pancake breakfast; musical events.

Wed. Camper's Jam Session and Thurs.; Fri. Campfire Country dancing 8 to 12, arena auditorium; Sat. Pierce's Orchestra, dancing 8 to 12. Local entertainment; fiddle competitions; step dance competitions; Teeswater pipe band. Sunday Church Service. [www.blythsteamshow.on.ca](http://www.blythsteamshow.on.ca) or 519-523-9100 or email [hptha@bellnet.ca](mailto:hptha@bellnet.ca)

\* **Appearances by Bluegrass Band Rhyme 'n Reason:** June 18 Tottenham Bluegrass Festival; July 3 Double Showing, Dominion Hotel and Pub, 13 Bobcaygeon Rd., Minden; July 17 Niagara on the Lake Farmer's Market; July 23 Palmer Rapids Bluegrass and Country Fest; July 25 Music in the Park, Tweed Memorial Park; July 28 River Valley Jamboree; Aug. 20 Shalemar Lake Ann. Bluegrass Festival, Niagara on the Lake in the Park; Sept. 10 Marmora Country Jamboree; Sept. 17 4th Annual Upper Canada, Upper Canada Campground.

\* **Aug. 19 to 22** - 21st Annual Havelock Country Jamboree. [www.havelockjamboree.com](http://www.havelockjamboree.com). Lineup: Dwight Yoakam; Gretchen Wilson; Tanya Tucker; Ricky Skaggs; Marty Stuart and his fabulous Superlatives; Mark Chesnutt; Earl Thomas Conley; Mandy Barnett; Willy Mack; Buckwheat Zydeco; Mustang Sally; The Good Brothers; Dean Brody; Ridley Bent; Codie Prevost; Alex J. Robinson; Snezy Waters; Jetty Road; Shari Lynn; Naomi Bristow.

\* **Down Yonder Show Dates:** June 20, July 18, Aug. 15, Sept. 5 Burns Wharf Theatre, Manitowaning; July 2 Mindemoya Arena Wall of Fame Show.

\* **Sept. 2 to 5** - Auction Barn Jamboree, Keeler Centre, Division Street, Colborne. Early bird shows Aug. 31 and Sept. 1. Lineup: Gene Watson; Dallas Arney; Nelson Colt; Mike Pollard; Christine Valincourt; Gary Hooper; Dusty King Jr; Grant Carson; Jeff Code; Marie Bottrell; Kristen Scott; Darlene Thibault; Sean Carson; Gerald Davidson; Barb Grenier; Libby McGrath; Mary Rowan. Open Mic, live country music, nightly stage shows, dancing, pancake breakfast. email: [gwarner@eagle.ca](mailto:gwarner@eagle.ca)

\* **Doreen Brown Upcoming Shows** - Tottenham Bluegrass Festival, Classic Country Music Reunion in Trenton, Rosemont Jamboree all in June. None in July and August. Warminster Jamboree, Colborne Auction Barn Jamboree, Maple Leaf Jubilee, Baldwin, Musicians' Corn Roast, Baldwin and Thornton Jams.

\* **19th Annual Classic Country Music**

Reunion and Jamboree, Centennial Park, Trenton July 30 to Aug. 1. Lineup: Friday - CCMR All Star Band; Dallas Arney; Dick and Jane Babcock; Clarence Deveau; Charlie Lemmon; Genny McIllmoyle; Rip and Tim Saunders; Host - Barb Grenier. Saturday - George Hillier; Laura Power; Dusty King Jr; Laura Lavery; John Lester; Looking Back; Host - John Lester. Sunday morning gospel show with Louise Wright and Barb Grenier. Sun. 6:30 show Kristen Clark; Naomi Bristow; Winston James; Bob McQuaid; Julie Simpson; Neville Wells; Jennifer Brant and Mustand; Host - Ed Garland. Know will be great to see so many friends and meet new ones. CCMR All Star Band, Leader Tim Sanders, Sound Doug Deveau. See you there.

\* **Upcoming Summer Jamborees** - July 15 to 18 Lindsay Country Jamboree Second Annual. [www.lindsaycountryjamboree.com](http://www.lindsaycountryjamboree.com). Sept 9 to 12 Marmora Country Jamboree; Sept. 9 to 12 Trillium Valley Country Jamboree; Sept 17 to 19 Hastings 705-696-2897.

*NOTE: Much appreciation to all who attended our Annual Blyth Campout and for your support of all artists whether on stage or chatting. Also to all volunteers, in all areas, that worked over the weekend. The success of the weekend is due to the support of all who attended and welcome to all who came for the first time. Have a great, safe and country music summer.*

## 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.
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# BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

It's the community, stupid.

Go ahead and fret about today's young stars posturing at being country. Go on and gripe about the music not even sounding like country music anymore. Blame Garth, Shania or Taylor if you need a scapegoat.

Do what you will, however, and you will still miss the forest for the trees.

The consistent success of the annual Blyth Campout Jamboree tells a different tale about the state of country music.

The Barn Dance Historical Society has established a contemporary and relevant legacy every bit equal to that of the original CKNX Barn Dance.

That may be a lot of gravy on the jamboree's potatoes, but it's deserved.

The musicians, coordinators, and volunteers have given flight to this top-notch annual event by keeping it close to the ground. They have kept it simple by honouring the traditional trinity of bluegrass, gospel and country music. Sort of a play and they will come kind of simplicity.

Nothing is over-thought or over-analyzed. It is just good people and good music well met.

The people behind the scenes at the Barn Dance Historical Society know their audience. They get the sense of community and camaraderie that drives the success of the campout.

For starters, nobody is priced out. \$141.00 dollars buys two people admission to all the events and access to a campsite for four nights. Here in Toronto, I can't go to dinner with my wife for two hours without spending more than that. And I live in the decidedly unhip gritty east side of town.

The Blyth Campout represents the still beating proud heart of country music. Nashville's CMA Music Festival (formerly known as Fan Fair) operates in a similar fashion. Music and events are bundled at bargain rates, providing fans access to what they otherwise could never afford individually.

And that is the future of live country music, if not country music in general.

Chet Flip reported recently in his online column *Nashville Skyline* that album sales are at an all-time low. Total sales across all genres for the week ending May 30<sup>th</sup> totaled just 5 million copies.

Imagine that. It's hard to believe. I remember when the artists mentioned at the opening of this piece could sell 1 million copies per week by themselves.

Those days are gone. Just another thing that ain't anymore, to quote Dr. Ralph Stanley.

Until the suits in Nashville figure things out, country music will be sustained through live and local music. Sound familiar?

Doc Cruickshank founded the CKNX Barn Dance on those very principles almost 75 years ago.

And by The Barn Dance Historical Society continues to give life to those ideals today.

I could go on tipping my hat to the Barn Dance Blyth Campout Jamboree 'til the cows come home. But then I might be accused of being all hat and no cattle.

A stronger witness to what the campout is all about is provided by the hat passed during the Sunday morning gospel show.

Over \$2,000.00 was raised. All of it will be given back to the service clubs and community.

Country music is the community, stupid.

## COME JOIN US!!

*We need you as a member of*

# THE BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY and ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM

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