

# The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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Winter Edition

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## STAND BY YOUR MAN

(Profiling Martha Heywood . . . an unsung hero)

by Grant Heywood

There have been several husband and wife entertainers throughout country music history. Some that instantly come to mind are: George Jones & Tammy Wynette, Johnny Cash & June Carter (Cash), Lulu Belle & Scotty, Donna & Leroy, Faith Hill & Tim McGraw, and of course, my parents, Earl & Martha Heywood. As the son of parents whose career was recording and entertaining, I can attest to the time and strength it took my mother who helped in singing, making stage outfits, being a magician's assistant, recording, touring, making radio and television appearances, keeping the home fires burning by making extra money as a saleslady, and assisting in my dad's career which later developed into the whole family becoming entertainers as The Heywood Family. Whew! That's a tall list for anybody. All mom's are special, but I believe my mom is overdue in being recognized on her own, right here in the Barn Dance Opera Journal.

Early on in my dad's career, (back in the early 50's) my mom would be by my dad's side for photo shoots when required, live radio broadcasts at CKNX Radio where they would sing as a duet on occasion, and she soon became a seamstress making many of my dad's outfits and eventually outfits for both of them. Dad persuaded my mom to be a part of his singing career as it was blossoming, and when singing as a duet she was given the stage name 'Martha Canyon'. Of course, in later years they became better known as the singing harmony duet, Earl & Martha Heywood, as she shared the spotlight with dad.

Dad first met my mother on the telephone line through brief conversation, as she was connecting a call for him. (She was a telephone operator) Dad lived on the Heywood farm outside of Exeter and my mom was from Zurich. Dad wrote songs while on the farm and during a stint in the army. They soon got married, lived on my grandparents farm for awhile and eventually moved to Wingham, where dad started his career with CKNX radio and the Barn Dance Gang. Dad's recording career was in 'full swing' by the late 1940's & early 50's and he was dependant on my mom to take care of the family while he was away for weeks on

end, appearing on live television, radio shows, and concert performances in the U.S. My dad seemed to be making great inroads and connections with people like Bill Haley, Hank Snow, and Gene Autry, as well as the Opry in Nashville at the time. But it was tough making ends meet for my parents, as there wasn't a whole lot of money to be made, in trying to break into the country music scene in the U.S., even in those days. Dad continued as a writer for the U.S. 'Country Song Roundup' magazine and eventually became a staff writer and part time announcer at CKNX radio while still maintaining his singing & recording career. Mom took on a job selling Avon cosmetics as my parents were trying to save up enough money to buy a house. Dad continued to perform on radio, television, and with the CKNX Barn Dance shows. Mom had to look after the family since dad was always playing somewhere in the evening hours. There was a lot of waiting and sleepless nights for my mother, especially when the Barn Dance Gang were out playing a dance and the weather would take a turn for the worst.

Martha helped Earl with song arrangements, and scripted jokes and stage patter when the Heywood Family became established in the late 1950's. In fact, she made all of the costumes for a 'Gay 90's Act', uniforms for the magic show where my mother became Earl's faithful assistant, outfits for a hayseed comedy sketch, as well as show outfits for both me and my sister Pat. Mom was always particular about looking like a star performer whenever we went on stage. Good grooming was also part of the

stage persona, so she even cut our hair, which helped defer costs. My mother invested countless hours in buying material, making patterns, sewing and fitting outfits for stage, as well as learning the songs to sing and teaching herself to play the vibraphone and piano for onstage performances. She even made covers for much of our musical gear. And then there was being a cosmetic saleslady, (and later on Fuller Brush) through the day, maintaining a home, and taking care of the family (especially those teenage years) was no easy feat. Looking back, I can honestly say that she was definitely a Supermom of her day.

I remember so well, when mom would pack a big cooler full of sandwiches when we toured the Maritime provinces, and she'd do the same thing when we spent so many gruelling hours recording at R.C.A. studios in Toronto, for the next Heywood Family album. When my dad became enthralled with performing more spectacular magical illusions for the stage show, he would always involve my mom. She would be tied, handcuffed, put into a locked mailbag and

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*An early "promo" picture of Martha Canyon ... but we all know her as Martha Heywood.*

## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



2011 already. Wow, how time flies. For me, it was a busy year of playing music with friends and great musicians and singers. The New Year is already looking good so far, as the calendar dates are starting to fill in for the concert season.

This past year I had the opportunity to go to a lot of house jams and parties, some of them planned and some just happened on the spot. The cool thing about getting together at these planned (and unplanned) events, is that you never know who will be there, you don't know what to expect, and most times you are surprised at some of the hidden talents people really have. Some of my favourite jams have been at guitarist, George Lonsburys family barn near Cambridge. Like his father, George has hosted many jams and celebrations at the barn and they never cease to amaze me.

Several times before the passing of our close friend/fiddle player, Mike Slauenwhite, we would gather at the barn for some fun times of playing great country and sometimes 'not so country' music to satisfy our passion for playing music together. Mike Slauenwhite said it himself, "I don't know what I would do if I couldn't play music with my friends. This is such good therapy." I have no doubt that Mike was on this earth just a little bit longer because of his passion for playing fiddle with his musician friends. A few months before Mike passed on, I had invited him to a radio show on CKWR, where I was a guest with hosts Linda Axman and Suzanne Doyle. I told Mike he could tag along, only if he brought his fiddle to accompany me on some songs I was doing live over the airwaves. The best part was when Mike got to talk about his own career briefly and found

out that Linda & Suzanne had been playing some cuts from Mikes recent fiddle c.d. 'Mixin' It Up'. That was a magical moment as I saw Mike grin from ear to ear. It's pretty hard to top a moment like that.

When Mike passed away in December, we gathered once again at the Lonsbury barn where many of us paid tribute to a musician we loved so much. Even Mike's sons Gerry on drums, and Greg on guitar became part of the musical clan. Mike fought his battle with cancer to the bitter end and would still make an effort to play that fiddle on many occasions at jams or at Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill. Mike's fiddling partner, Victor Pasowisty passed on several years ago now. They brought together the 'twin fiddle' sound to the newly resurrected Barn Dance shows and recorded a c.d. together paying tribute to the great Canadian fiddler, Andy DeJarlis. They will not be forgotten.

It's hard to lose those that are so close to you but I find that music has become an integral part of the healing process. Especially, at that moment when it is needed the most. Music of hope and inspiration is what helps us get through times such as this and it is not always of the religious nature either. As a musician standing in front of grieving friends I get a snapshot of what songs of faith, hope, or just a common love for the song can do to help soothe their sorrow and pain. From Amazing Grace to I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry, and Dust In The Wind to Go Rest High On That Mt., it's always a good feeling to comfort those who have lost someone with music from the heart.

I think sometimes, depending on the circumstances, that losing a loved one should be more of a celebration of life. As I get older I realize that many of my senior colleagues and friends are reaching the end of life and even friends that are my own age or younger have passed on as well, much too soon. It makes me appreciate each and every day that I am alive and I always take pleasure in working with younger musicians and singers on stage and in the studio. It feels good to know that life continues on and that a lot of these

## 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:**

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### Earl Heywood

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artists carry on and build a career built on the respect of others who went before them. We may lose people on the way, but we come in contact with new friends as we move forward. We always think of those we have fond memories of and we are always aware of this at each and every Barn Dance performance. As my dad always said.....'The show must go on'. His words still resonate today. Hope to see you at an upcoming Barn Dance this year.

Comments? Please contact:

Grant Heywood  
5584 Deborah Glaister Line, R. R. #2,  
Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0  
Phone: (519) 656-2552  
E-mail: [heywoods@golden.net](mailto:heywoods@golden.net)  
or send a message on facebook.

## 2011 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Sat., March 26	Barn Dance Show - evening	Holstein Ribfest
Sun., April 10	Barn Dance Show - 2:30 p.m.	Purple Hill Country Hall, Thorndale
Sun., April 17	Barn Dance Show - 3:00 p.m.	Commercial Tavern, Maryhill
May 27 to 29	Campout Jamboree Weekend	Blyth Community Complex
Sat., Sept. 3	Barn Dance Show and Dance	Pioneer Threshers 50th Anniversary, Blyth
Sun., Oct. 30	Barn Dance Show - evening	Sheddon Keystone Complex, Sheddon

*Continued from Page 1*

pad-locked in a large trunk, and would have to learn how to escape in seconds. Then there was the time that my dad started doing rope tricks and using a bullwhip for the stage act. One day the neighbours couldn't help but hear the loud crack of the bullwhip, out in our driveway at home, as my dad would have my mother stand with a cigarette in her mouth, while he practiced snapping it out of her mouth with the bullwhip. She wasn't even a smoker ... thank God he never missed! It sure gave the neighbours a lot to gossip about.

Mom would always have to be the gracious host and make preparations whenever special guests would arrive like, Wilma Lee & Stony Cooper, Doc & Chicki Williams or Barn Dance musicians and guest performers and their spouses. Sometimes it seemed like a revolving door at our place with people always coming and going. Mom would always have to put things 'on hold' whenever we had to perform or tour. She was always the navigator for road trips and always took the brunt of dad's frustration whenever things didn't turn out right. But somehow she was able to juggle everything and still keep both feet on the ground.

My mother has lived a varied and colourful life. Being the wife of a cowboy star and also being an entertainer in her own right, has not always been an easy life by no means. During the last part of my dad's life, my mother endured a lot of stress from dealing with my father and his strain of coping with cancer and later on Alzheimer disease. Even in the recording studio my mom was steadfast and true, as she coached my dad and helped to guide him with song lyrics, vocals and microphone posture for our last Heywood Family recording. She was a trouper in every sense of the word. It was hard for her to see him slide away since my dad was such a vibrant and proud man. In his later years he spent an immense amount of time resurrecting the old Barn Dance, and creating the Barn Dance Historical Society. Dad was a visionary type person and always dreamed big. Mom was always there beside him through good times and bad. And she put as much time, effort, and sweat into helping Earl make the Barn Dance & Museum a reality, along with countless volunteers. Like many mothers, I sometimes think she deserves a medal.

Today, when I talk to folks at a dance, show or just on the street, they always ask 'How's your mother doing', or 'How is Martha'? And believe me, I am asked about my mom at least a dozen times a week, many times by people I don't even know. Although Martha is retired, it's nice to know that they still remember her just as much as my dad. The audience gave mom a standing ovation when she sang with me and my sister Pat at the

Blyth Campout Jamboree a few years ago. It even made news in the Toronto Star. It was great to see Martha get her own Barn Dance Pioneer Award in 2000, one year after Earl received his. I think in her own way, she's like the "Matriarch of the Barn Dance" to the many folks that know her. She'll always be mom, to me and my sister and we love her dearly. At the young age of 86, she still tells me what to do and I always comply. Grandkids and great grandkids are now her centre of attention. She has outlived many friends and colleagues, and always thinks of them with fond memories. But she was always a 'Stand by Your Man' kind of woman, and our family can't thank her enough for everything she has done.



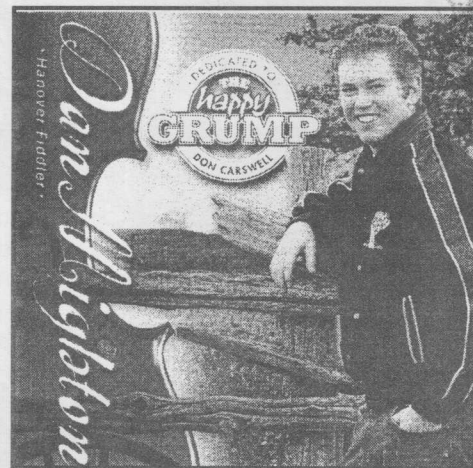
*Martha Heywood, looking and singing her best, at a Barn Dance stage performance.*

**God Bless you mom.**

## FEATURE C. D. REVIEW

### DAN MIGHTON ~ 'THE HAPPY GRUMP'

I think I've known Hanover native, Danny Mighton, since he was knee high to a grasshopper. Way back in the late 90's or early 2000's, young Dan made his first appearance on the Barn Dance Stage with fellow

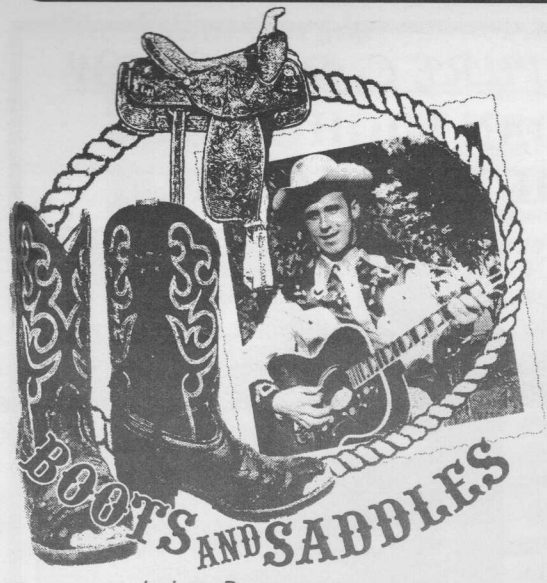


Durham fiddler, Ian Leith. Since then, Dan has been playing with the Mighton Family Band and performing at almost every fiddle competition in the province, winning several awards. Dan's teacher and mentor is Doug McNaughton of Stratford. I remember playing on Dan's first CD 'The Dancin' Fiddle' recorded at the Walter's Family Studio, but I must admit with this latest CD he has really 'hit it out of the ballpark'.

Although this CD was released around 2008, I only recently received a copy and felt it worthy of a review. The CD was recorded at Astronomical Studios in St. Paul, Alberta, with Jake Charron on piano, and the legendary Calvin Volrath handling, guitar, mandolin, fiddle, spoons, bass, and production chores. Dan has certainly done his homework and this CD is an excellent showcase of his fiddling talents and arrangements. There are 18 selections on this CD with a vast array of styles and every cut is designed to be as good as the last and keep your interest. As fiddle CD's go, I give kudos to Calvin and Dan not just for the fine production effort, but the selection of instrumentation used in the arrangement of each and every song.

Besides a few traditional favourites, Dan has chosen some excellent and challenging fiddle tunes that aren't just 'run of the mill'. There are reels, hornpipes, jigs, waltzes and swing tunes, some written by Calvin Volrath, others by Dan himself, and some like the 'Larry Stacey Breakdown' by Exeter fiddler & Barn Dance Pioneer award winner, Gerry Smith, as well as 'Frenchy's Reel', by Barn Dance pioneer fiddlers, Ward Allen & Mel Lavigne. The CD title & song 'The Happy Grump', is a dedication to Dan's friend, Don Carswell, who has helped take Dan on his fiddling journey. Dan appeared recently on two Christmas Barn Dance shows and we look forward to more performances and another CD hopefully in the near future. If you want to hear 'first rate' fiddle playing, I would strongly suggest this CD.

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



by Lynn Russwurm

We always complain about there being a lack of good country music venues in the area. But how much support do we give to a new venue when it does appear? Several issues ago I alerted our readers to Marina's, a bar in Kitchener that was bringing in bluegrass & old-time country music on Saturday afternoons, from 1:00-4:30. Now rumour has it that this may come to an end if more support from the public (meaning you), is not forthcoming. Marina & Gord Bickford, the owners have been bringing in good bluegrass & old-time country bands, only to have (sometimes) a near empty house. Among the bands to appear, were Hometown Bluegrass, Grass Taxx, Generation Gap, Rhyme 'N Reason (major bluegrass award winners this year), Eph Frey & Olde Tyme Country & The Jimmy Phair Show. The entertainment has been on an excellent level but where is the audience that complains about a lack of good country entertainment? I sure hope we don't lose this one too.

On the plus side, the Waterloo-Wellington Bluegrass Association is still moving forward after a year and a half of operation. They've just come off a highly successful Christmas party at the Galt Legion that was attended by more than 100 people. The executive board of this association is to be highly commended for all their hard work in putting this together and keeping on the move. The weekly Tues. Night jams are well attended with jammers coming many miles to attend & enjoy the picking sessions. Pickers come on a regular basis from Toronto, Hamilton, London, Burlington, Exeter, Cayuga & many other places. Several nights of workshops have been held, a new logo has been de-

signed by Tim Kitchen, and a one hour slow jam is part of each Tues. night for beginners. This club is highly recommended.

I believe we unearthed a great new talent this summer at the concerts in Elmira, when we had Amberley Beattie on one of the shows. A local girl, who has been doing Loretta Lynn/Patsy Cline tribute shows, was part of the Paul Weber variety night. She followed up with an appearance on the Barn Dance in Palmerston, where she stole the show with her tribute act. She's a fine, young entertainer, with a bright future.

A new CD release by Jimmy Phair, spawned a CD release party on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>, at the Commercial Tavern in Maryhill. Jimmy was in fine form for some great entertainment that included a classic country music jam that will be fondly remembered by all who attended. Jimmy's new release consists of taped performances when he was a regular on the WWVA, Wheeling West Virginia Jamboree. We're hoping to see some new performances by Jimmy in the near future. Jimmy also appeared at Marina's not long ago.

Sad to report, we've lost one of our greatest fiddlers within the last month, in the passing of Mike Slauenwhite. Many of you will remember Mike from his appearances on the Barn Dance. Who can ever forget Mike & Victor Pasowisty playing twin fiddles on 'The Orange Blossom Special'. My association with Mike goes back to

1953 when we were both in Johnny Siska's Westernaires, in Kitchener, where we played every Sat. night at the Bridgeport Casino. Our paths diverged in 1954, and Mike continued on with the Silver Bar Ranch Boys, including several stints on CKCO-TV. We finally came back together when I brought Mike into the Barn Dance Band. If you haven't picked up the CD that Mike recorded, I would suggest you do, as it spotlights the talent of a great fiddler.

Throughout the last year & a half of his life that he was fighting his illness, Mike never lost his sense of humour and was seen playing his fiddle wherever he could. He was often present for the Thursday night 'Open Mike' sessions at Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill. He was there for my 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party on Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>. We had a great CD release party for Mike in April, where Mike was astonished at the full house that turned out to celebrate with him. He also participated at several of our Spotlight Concerts on Sunday nights in Elmira. Mike was truly a great trouper and a great friend.

Another loss to the country music fraternity and to the Barn Dance especially, is recent pioneer award winner, Slim Gordon Slim, whose real name was Murray Lewis, was a long-time resident of Exeter. A native of Nova Scotia, he came to Ontario in the early 50's, where he was deeply involved in the Main Street Jamboree in Hamilton. He was also instrumental in the early career of Smiley Bates, and took him under his wing as part of his band. I worked with Slim on the

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At the Jimmy Phair CD Release Party. From left to right: Doug Dietrich, Carmen Bouchard, Jimmy Phair, Lynn Russwurm and Bob Tremblay.

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Main Street Jamboree several times and always found Slim to be a real country gentleman.

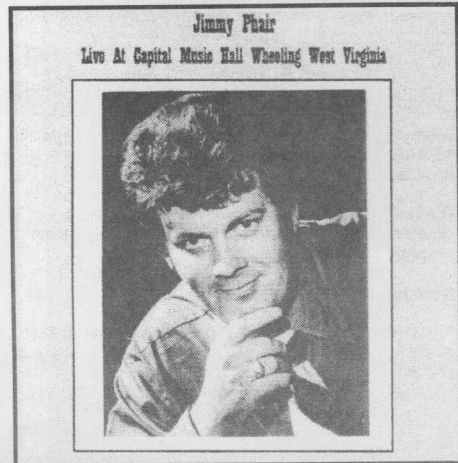
Also, condolences to former Barn Dance musician, Lloyd Bank, who lost his wife recently. Grace was one of the truly beautiful people of this world. She was always caring of other people, and had the ability to make you feel special. She will be missed by all who knew this wonderful lady. Once again, I'd like to mention, remember to get out and support the venues that are giving us the music we want. Otherwise, you have only yourself to blame if it all goes down the drain.



Left to Right: Doug Dietrich, Carmen Bouchard and Jimmy Phair

FEATURE C. D. REVIEW

JIMMY PHAIR ~ 'LIVE AT CAPITAL MUSIC HALL WHEELING WEST VIRGINIA'



Lynn Russwurms' association with Jimmy Phair is partly responsible for the release of this 'live' radio recording. Jimmy has recently been a guest entertainer on the Barn Dance and at various shows with Lynn Russwurm and band. Jimmy had his own CBC television country show in Canada for four years running. This collection of 'live' performance classic country songs, sung by Jimmy Phair, shows why this Sarnia Ontario native, was a featured artist so often, at the Capital Music Hall in Wheeling West Virginia.

Jimmy is a great Canadian country music singer / entertainer and this live performance, backed by some top notch musicians, showcases Jimmy at his best. It kicks off with a great rendition of 'The Heart is All That Matters.' Jimmy has a smooth country voice that projects well in a live situation, somewhat like Jim Ed Brown. There are 13 songs featured on the CD including 'What's Goin' On in Your World', 'The Hand That Rocks The Cradle', and 'Storms of Life'. I've had the pleasure of being a backup musician for Jimmy and he's not just a great singer, but he knows how to capture the attention of his audience. He's a 'class act' whose years of stage experience have served him well.

Some of my personal favourites on the CD include the old Moe Bandy classic 'Too Old To Die Young', the beautiful waltz 'We All Have The Right To Be Wrong', and the rollicking gospel standard 'Let's All Go Down To The River'. The sound is pretty decent for a 'live' recording and includes all the onstage introductions and stage banter. Jimmy is still making appearances and I wouldn't be surprised to see him as a guest on one of our upcoming Barn Dance shows this year. Catch him when you can.

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

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Don't miss the CD Release Party for dobro player, Bob Tremblay at the Commercial Tavern in Maryhill, on Sunday, February 20, 2011. 1:00 p.m. There will be a showcase of hot musicians backing up Bob on many of his latest CD hits.

BARN DANCE BOOKINGS
Phone: 519-530-8000
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# Country Music Memories

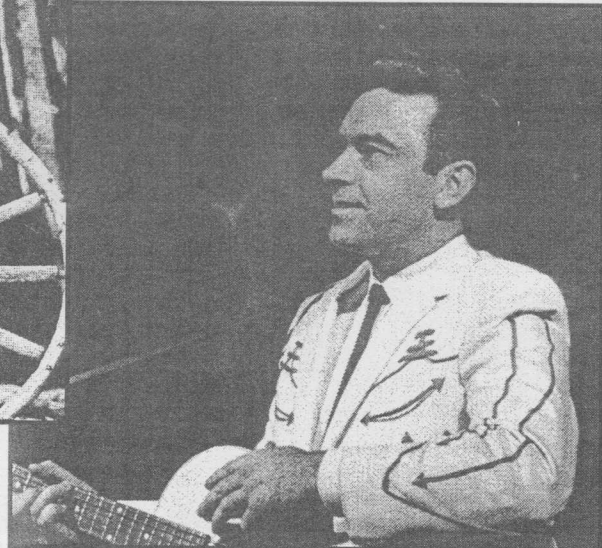


**Lucky Ambeau -  
Original Barn Dance  
Personality**



**Buddy Reynolds -  
Cowboy Singer**

**Ron McLeod**



## WHO WROTE THE SONGS?

*(My Swiss Moonlight Lullaby & Silver Bell Yodel)*

Wilf Carter is a legend, when it comes to Canadian country music. In fact, he is widely acknowledged as the father of Canadian country music. He was born Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>, 1904 at Port Hilford, Nova Scotia. His father was a Baptist Minister, and Wilf was one of nine children in the family. He got the singing bug, after seeing a travelling Swiss performer known as 'The Yodelling Fool'. He was 15 when he left home, and Wilf and his brother headed west riding the rails by boxcar. They were given work on a ranch near Calgary, Alberta. Wilf learned cowpunchin' and followed the rodeo circuit. He'd play and sing guitar at parties and dances while travelling throughout the Canadian Rockies. He soon developed his own yodelling style during this time which became known as the 'echo yodel'.

Wilf performed on several radio programs and became quite popular in the region. It was around 1933, during the Depression, when he recorded his first 78 recording for RCA Victor in Montreal, and it wasn't long before 'My Swiss Moonlight Lullaby' and 'The Capture of Albert Johnson' became the first Canadian country music hit songs on radio. His popularity grew and he was invited to be on a radio program at WABC in New York City, and he eventually moved there. While hosting a CBS country music radio program in New York, someone gave him the name 'Montana Slim' which also became a trademark name.

Wilf moved back to a ranch in Alberta and continued to perform on radio and do live concerts in the U.S. and Canada. During the 1940's, he didn't perform as much because of a back injury from a car accident. But he resumed his career by 1950, playing to capacity crowds at the CNE in Toronto and toured the U.S. and Canada once again. He soon included his daughters, Carol and Shiela as dancers and singers on shows across Canada known as 'Family Show with the Folks You Know'. The 'Heywood Family' performed for the first leg of an east coast tour when Wilf asked label mate, Earl Heywood to help him out as Wilf was recuperating from an illness at the time. Wilf Carter, Hank Snow and Earl Heywood were Canadian country music label-mates on RCA Victor during the 1950's, and sometimes they would share the same stage.

Wilf became one of the most requested guests on the Tommy Hunter television show and went on to be inducted into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame, and the Juno Awards Hall of Fame. Wilf's 'no nonsense' approach to just singing, playing guitar and yodelling garnered him many fans and he recorded over 40 original and compilation LP's in his lifetime. Yodelling became a trademark for Wilf Carter a.k.a. Montana Slim. At age 86, Wilf recorded his last album and performed on 'The Last Round-up Tour' from Nova Scotia to Manitoba. He retired in Scottsdale, Arizona and died in 1996 at the age of 91. He was an inspiration for many young Canadian country singer/songwriters, and will always be remembered as Canada's yodelling cowboy with hits such as 'Swiss Moonlight Lullaby' and 'Silver Bell Yodel'.

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

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown  
(Toronto and surrounding area)

- \* **Bluegrass and acoustic**, every Monday, 8 p.m., Man of Yorke Pub, 11 Mill St. E, Tottenham, 905-936- 4486
- \* **Express yourself every Thursday** open Mic night, Grounswell, 96 Victoria St. W, Al- lison. 705-434-0873.  
www.grounswellcoffeehouse.com
- \* **Welcome musicians:** Sing your heart out at Community Sing Along; The Stouffville Lebo- vic Arts Centre: 19 Civic Ave., under the town clock tower on Main St. Contact; Trudy & Al Yetman at [www.alvetman.com/singalong](http://www.alvetman.com/singalong) Dates are: Jan. 16. Feb. 20. Mar. 20. Apr. 17. May 15. June 20. All times the same 1:00-3:30, Sun- days.
- \* **For upcoming shows:** Purple Hill Country Music Hall: [www.purplehillcountryhall.com](http://www.purplehillcountryhall.com)
- \* **Dundalk Jamboree**, Last Sun. Of the month: Shelburne 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun: Rosemont, 3d Tues. Harrison, 3d Sun; Erin, last Sun; Warminster, 1<sup>st</sup> Sun.
- \* **Appearances by Brad Paisley**, London, Jan. 27; Hamilton, Jan. 28, & Ottawa, Jan. 30.
- \* **Hugh's Room**, Toronto, presents Russell Decarle, Jan. 28.
- \* **April 2**, Crystal Gayle will be at the Thun- der Bay Community Centre.
- \* **Masonic Hall**, Ingersoll has Fri. Night jams, late Sept. To May: Potluck lunches.
- \* **First Sun. of the month**, Princeton Commu- nity Centre, Open mic with Country Versatiles.
- \* **The following Jams:** First Sun. run by Jim Swan; 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. Courtland Community Centre, supper available; 3d Sun., Woodstock Moose Lodge, supper available; 4<sup>th</sup> Sun., St. Williams Community Centre, supper available 2 p.m.
- \* **Annual Barn Dance Campout**, Blyth, May 26-29. April 10, Barn Dance Show, Purple Hill Country Hall, 2 p.m.
- \* **For upcoming entertainment**, contact RCL, 456 Hensal Circle BR 582, 905-277- 2902.
- \* **2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month**, The Belairs are at ANAF, Barrie, 1-5 p.m.
- \* **Appearances by Doreen Brown:** Jan. 10, Shelburne Jamboree, incl. Roast Beef Dinner. Also, Feb. 13; Rosemont Jamboree Jan. 18 and Mar. 22; Holland Landing, Feb. 17; Harrison Jamboree, Feb. 20 and Mar. 20. Incl. Roast Beef Dinner; Mar. 27, Erin Jamboree, music provided by The Dolsons; Mar. 13, Barrie

ANAF, music provided by Merv Bell. The Dolsons will also appear the 5<sup>th</sup> Sun. of the month at Warminster.

\* **Tommy Hunter** Scheduled dates are: Mar. 24, Grand Theatre, 7 p.m., Kingston. Ticket info. 643-530-2050; Mar. 26, Acad- emy Theatre, 2 p.m., Lindsay, info. 705-324- 9111; Mar. 27, Community Aud., 3 p.m., Thunder Bay, info. 897-684-4444.

\* **Naomi Bristow**, Apr. 15, Jubilee Presby- terian Church, Stayner; Apr. 17, Breast Can- cer Support Group, Peterborough; Apr. 30, Steven Leacock Theatre, Keswick; May 28, Barn Dance Campout; June 26, Kinmount Kountry Jamboree, Kinmount.

*A very Happy New Year to all read- ers, entertainers, fans and support- ers of our country music. May it be the best ever. See you at our Barn Dance Campout in Blyth in May.*

**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](mailto:webmaster@thebardance.ca)*

**BARN DANCE SOUVENIRS**

- Souvenir Mugs - \$ 5.00 ea.
- CD - Vol. 1 \$15.00 ea.
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- CD - Vol. 1, 2 & 3 \$40.00 set
- Cassette - Vol. 1 \$ 6.00 ea.
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*Please include \$3.00 per item for mailing or pick up at Ernie King Music.*

*E-mail: [webmaster@thebardance.ca](mailto:webmaster@thebardance.ca)*

**IN MEMORIAM**



**Grace Bank**, wife of former Barn Dance steel guitarist, Lloyd Bank passed away suddenly in K-W from stroke complications in Dec. 2010. She will be sadly missed by friends & family. Our hearts go out to Lloyd and the rest of the family as well.

**Slim Gordon** (Murray Lewis), Barn Dance Pioneer Award winner, guitarist/singer, passed away just this past year. Slim was living in Exeter and will be remembered by all of those he touched, especially musicians and performers from the Barn Dance Gang.

**Mike Slauenwhite**, violinist, fiddler extraordinaire, passed away in K-W, Dec. 2010, after a lengthy battle with cancer. Mike was part of duo fiddle team with the late Victor Pa- sowisty, and continued as the resident Barn Dance fiddle player. Mike just released his first CD of fiddle songs called 'Mixing It Up' just last year. Sadly missed and remembered fondly by family and friends, and all of us involved with the Barn Dance group.



Mike Slauenwhite

## BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

I wish I could remember where I read it. Maybe then I could better expand upon it. I could place it within a time and a place, and give it some life.

But I cannot.

I do, however, most certainly remember who said it. It was the 2009 winner of Song of Year honors from both the Country Music Association and Academy of Country Music for his tune "In Color." I am talking about Jamey Johnson, owner of the steel-wool beard, bedraggled bangs, and booming barroom baritone.

And what did Johnson say? Something to the effect that being a country music singer demands having received an education from those who came before. A seemingly simple enough observation upon first listen, but the more one thinks about it the more significant it becomes.

At a time when the country charts are still dominated by a youth move-

ment bordering on the juvenile, there doesn't seem to have been enough years lived by many of the artists to have received a country education – much less internalized one. An education implies a commitment and assumes a genuine interest. It demands recognition of the masters and the classics of the topic at hand. This all takes time.

In the case of country music, Johnson means the genre's pioneers, visionaries, and rebels cannot be ignored. It is not optional to be intimately familiar with their music. It is not a matter of personal taste or preference. It is a prerequisite to choosing to identify as country.

It is all well and fine to admit popular musical influences as a country music star today, but you better know your white man's blues from Jimmie Rodgers to Merle Haggard. And it is not as simple as paying lip-service to the obvious legends. The music needs to pay the tradition forward. It is not sufficient to thump one's chest about being country. You better damn sure sound

country.

And there is no audience more astute at smelling bull than a country crowd. That is why Johnson's music stands out in Nashville like a lion in a litter of kittens. He is the contemporary king of new country. His call for others to follow his trail might just save Music City from itself.

Johnson puts the music where his mouth is on his latest album *The Guitar Song*. He doesn't name-drop the easy legends on this expansive 25-song, two CD collection. Rather, he proudly shows his country student ID card by covering songs by Vern Gosdin, Mel Tillis, and Ray Price.

Wouldn't it be great if a leading Canadian country star rose to the challenge of honouring this country's country music legacy? Imagine Johnny Reid, Terri Clark, Jason McCoy, or Deric Ruttan bringing the music of the Barn Dance stars back to small towns across Canada.

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum has certainly done its part to let them know school is still in session.

## COME JOIN US!!

We need you as a member of

## THE BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY and ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM

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