

The Barn Dance Opera Journal

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The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.



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Summer Edition

1

Hughie Elder ... Circle 8 Ranch Boy remembered

by Grant Heywood

It hasn't been long since we lost Ernie King, and now one of the last of the CKNX Ranch Boys has passed on as well. Television idols like Ernie & Hughie always seemed like they would be around forever. But on May 23rd we lost Hugh Elder, age 79, and he will not be forgotten. Hughie and Beth were blessed with 3 sons and 3 daughters, and resided on the family farm in the Ayton area.

It took almost 12 pages to write about Hughie's life in the 2010 edition of Mt. Forest magazine. An honest man who has most certainly led a full productive and colourful life. Hughie came from a musical family and between farming, as well as being a school teacher for many years, Hughie always kept music close to his heart. He bought his first guitar, while still in high school, for \$5.00 from a friend who was joining the Air Force at the time. Once that guitar was in his hands, Hughie was hooked into music.

Hughie played mandolin with the Sauguen Valley Rangers in the early 50's playing local dances in Durham. He soon hooked up with Clarence Adlam playing lead guitar with the Rhythm Rangers from 1954-1956. Hughie learned a lot from his contemporary, Clarence Adlam. He soon became a featured singer when he started playing with Sharpe's Orchestra on a regular basis. He also incorporated playing jobs with The Clifford Rhythmaires singing everything from Hank Williams to Elvis. "If I liked it, I learned it," Hugh said. Back in those days, Hughie was earning anywhere from \$7.00 to almost \$20 a night, but said "You played music for the love of it ... not the money."

Around 1958-'59, Hughie played a few jobs with Slim Boucher & the Golden Prairie Cowboys and soon appeared on CKNX TV. In the 1960's with a growing family, he took a break from music to raise sons, Robert, Richard & Raymond, and later, daughters, Karen, Susan & Linda. Hughie worked build-

ing silos for awhile but went back to teaching in the remote northwestern community of Pickle Lake and then near Collingwood, which was much closer. Hughie got into playing again and played his first hotel at the Palmer House in Palmerston.

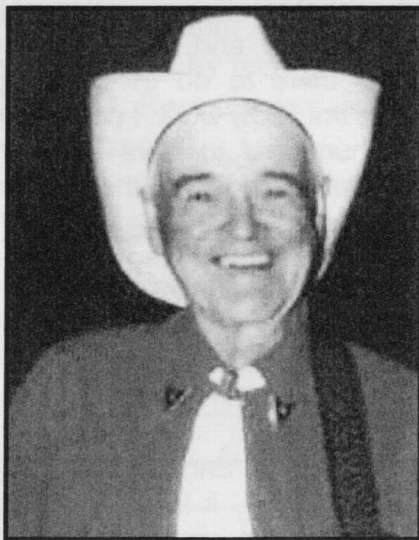
It was around 1963-'64 when it was announced on CKNX Circle 8 Ranch that Hank Bedard would be leaving the Ranch Boys to join another group. The next day, Hughie asked fiddler Rossy Mann if there was any chance of him becoming a 'Ranch Boy'. Both Rossy & bandleader Don Robertson paced up & down discussing the proposition until Rossy finally said ... "Yeah, you're in." Hughie remembered it was Mar. 1964 as he savoured the moment. Hughie appeared on T.V. every Tuesday night from 1964-1978 with Rossy and Don & Cora Roberston. There were always local guest performers on the show as well. Circle 8 Ranch came out of the popular radio program, The CKNX Barn Dance, which ended in 1963. As Circle 8 Ranch became popular, cast members became regional celebrities, including Ernie King, Wayne Riehl, Rossy, Don and Ron Coulthard.



Hughie Elder - doing what he loved!!

Besides a teaching career, Hughie was a licensed mechanic, full time farmer, Normanby Township Councillor, and Barn Dance Historical Society board member. From 1985-2000 Hughie & daughter Linda played many places as 'Tumbleweed North'. From nursing homes to hotels to the Barn Dance stage, Hughie has played them all. But the one moment that Hughie said he will never forget was when Rossy Mann said he would become a regular member of the Circle 8 Ranch Boys.

A handsome man, Hughie had a trademark smile that I will personally never forget. He was a good musician/singer and when I look on stage to see if he's about to perform Waltz Across Texas ... he's not there. He was a family man of high standards and as a Barn Dance Pioneer Award recipient, he has enriched all of us and will be missed by so many. I will always remember Hughie Elder as, 'The Smilin' Cowboy with a heart'. Just to see Hughie & Beth riding around in their old Model A Fords once more would be so grand. With his cowboy hat and signature Gretsch guitar, we have once again lost a Barn Dance timeless treasure. Since losing Ernie King recently, it's hard to say goodbye one again to another friend.



HUGHIE ELDER

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



A 'BIG' thank you to everyone who participated in the 15th annual Barn Dance Campout Jamboree in Blyth this past May. The weather was great and so was the music that prevailed over the course of the 3 day event. Randy Morrison and the Flat River Band performed to a full house on Friday night and many were delighted to see them make a return engagement to the Barn Dance stage. The lineup of guests on Saturday night were performers from past Barn Dance shows over the years and emcee Jim Swan, made them feel right at home. Our friend from down Nashville way in the U.S.A., George Hamilton IV was our special guest on the Saturday night Barn Dance Show and he was ever so much the gracious country gentleman in performance. People loved his songs and stories and George didn't disappoint. He is very fond of Canada and Canadians and even stuck around to perform a couple of songs on the Sunday morning Gospel Show hosted by Mary Elliot. The Sunday Gospel Show was also well attended with some new and exciting performers as well. It was a great weekend and most have said it just keeps getting better and better.

Some of the special moments on Saturday night occurred when the Barn Dance Pioneer award was given to special guest, George Hamilton IV. It was a great to see our sound & lighting technicians, Wayne Greve & Scott Taylor re-

ceive awards as well, for their tireless efforts over the past 15 years of the Blyth Barn Dance Campout Jamboree. And it was a touching moment for me when I sang my dad's signature song 'Moonlight On The Manitoulin Island' with my mother (Martha Heywood) singing harmony. It really meant a lot to have the audience give us an unexpected standing ovation, and touched the hearts of both my mom and I. Dad (Earl Heywood) would have been proud for sure.

It was wonderful to see so many friends at our annual event in Blyth. Always nice to catch up on news, swap some stories, pick and sing songs out by the trailers and RV's, and generally enjoy the fellowship of musical friends who love the value of traditional country music. It is also a time to remember many of our Barn Dance members and performers who have passed on. It isn't easy after losing some of our Barn Dance stars as we did this year. Ernie King and Hughie Elder, Barn Dance performers who had radio/TV fame with the Ranch Boys on the CKNX T.V. show Circle 8 Ranch will be missed a lot. It's not the same when you perform as a musician on the Barn Dance stage and look around and see that they aren't there to do their part to make the show work. I personally feel honoured to have been on the same stage as these Barn Dance pioneers. They are a part of our musical heritage and will never be forgotten. They too will be an integral part of our Barn Dance Museum where we can cherish the memories they have left behind.

But as the Barn Dance tradition continues, it is gratifying to see new and younger singers

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment

Museum

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Phone (519) 530-8000

(or leave a message)

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and musicians step on to the Barn Dance stage remembering those who paved the way, so that they could have their chance to showcase their talent. Let's hope that tradition continues for many years to come. And as Jim Swan says at the end of every Barn Dance show 'The Show must go on'.

Comments? Please contact:
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E-mail: heywoods@golden.net
or send a message on facebook.

The brand new "Singing My Songs" CD

by Lynn Russwurm
will be featured when
C.D. Reviews returns
in the fall issue.



BLYTH CAMPOUT 2012 - Martha Heywood pleased the crowd with "Moonlight on the Manitoulin".



BLYTH CAMPOUT 2012 - Evening performance by "Grassland".

WHO WROTE THE SONG?
(I Never Promised You A Rose Garden)

Singer, songwriter Joe South of Atlanta, Georgia, is another one of those country artists who is better recognized for his songwriting. He maintains writing a song is like writing a book. The only difference, you tell the whole story in three minutes. South has written songs that back up this statement. In 1970 he won a grammy award for 'The Games People Play', classified as more contemporary than country.

Joe first got the knack of songwriting by setting music to his mothers poems. In 1970, Lynn Anderson, a regular performer singing middle of the road country music on the Lawrence Welk Show, began recording for Columbia Records. The Joe South tune, 'I Never Promised You A Rose Garden', was selected as a last minute effort to complete a Lynn Andersons record session. Who knew that Lynn would become a country music star by recording the Joe South tune 'I Never Promised You A Rose Garden', which was destined to be a country music classic.

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

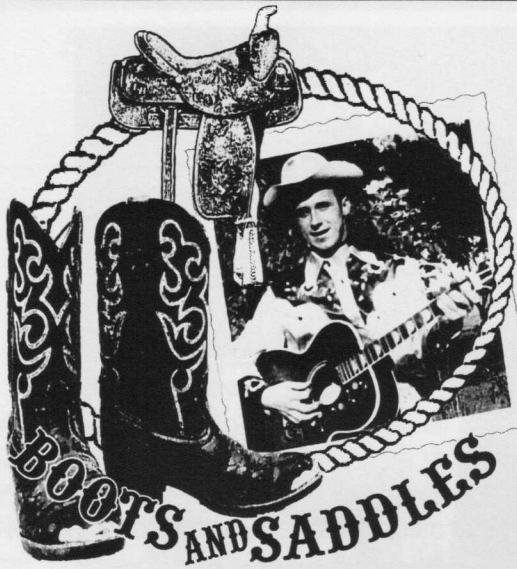
**BARN DANCE
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- Barn Dance CD's \$15.00 ea.
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 - Souvenir 1997 Calendar \$ 5.00 ea.
 - Barn Dance Logo T-Shirts (gold logo on blue only) Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL \$20.00 ea.
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 - Best of The Barn Dance CD \$15.00 ea.
- All purchases include HST.

Please include \$3.00 per item for mailing or pick up at Ernie King Music.

2012 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Thurs., July 12	Barn Dance Show - 8:00 p.m. Fundraiser for Goderich	Blyth Community Campgrounds & Arena Complex
Mon., July 16	Blyth Campvention (private)	Blyth Community Campgrounds & Arena Complex
Sun., Sept. 30	Barn Dance Show - 3:00 p.m.	Commercial Tavern, Maryhill
Sun., Oct. 14	Barn Dance Show - 2:00 p.m. Fundraiser for Christmas Care	Southwold Keystone Complex, Shedden



by Lynn Russwurm

By the time you read this, another highly successful Blyth Camp-Out has come and gone. I hear a lot of complaining about there not being enough good country music to be found. Of course, if they're talking about radio or TV, that is quite a Wasteland, when I think of all the good shows that were on the air, both radio and TV. Think of all the Barn Dances that were aired including our own CKNX Barn Dance and how about The Main Street Jamboree, and in the US, the National Barn Dance, The Louisiana Hayride, the WLW Hayloft Hoedown and so many more.

On TV, we had Country Hoedown, Red River Jamboree, Holiday Ranch, The Stu Davis Show, Cross Country Barn Dance, Circle Eight Ranch, Western Round-up, and so on and so on.

Today what is there? A weakened Grand Ole Opry and that's about it. Ah, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. We are blessed with so much live music and hope we don't lose it by apathy. If you want it to continue be sure to get out and support it. And what are these live venues? Well first there's our Annual Camp-Out Jamboree which is well attended, but here's the catch. Most of the audience is older people, we need more younger people in the audience, so if you can interest some younger friends to come out, by all means do so, their interest can mean that these things will con-

tinue.

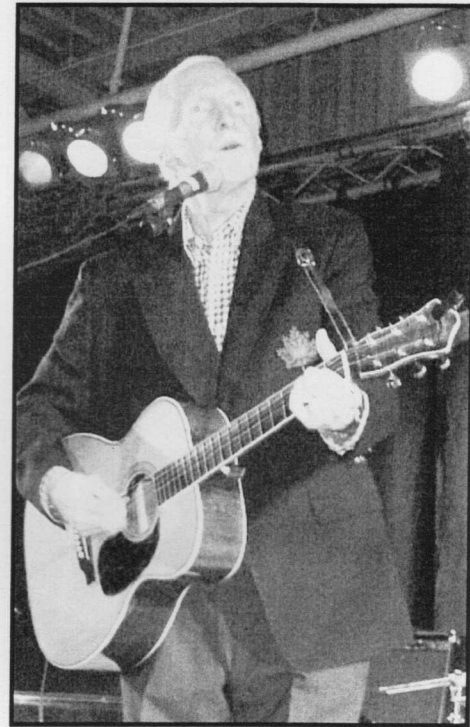
Next, we have many successful Bluegrass Festivals, so that it's impossible to take them all in. There are Bluegrass Associations that all have regular jams and the Waterloo-Wellington one is probably one of the most successful with regular Tuesday night jams at the Galt Legion in Cambridge, with many great pickers attending from miles around. Then there is Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill. Paul is finding success with bringing in Sunday shows almost every weekend, such as George Hamilton IV,

Tribute shows featuring Johnny Cash, Hank Williams, Patsy Cline, as well as being the home base for The Western Swing Authority, every second Tuesday. This is without a doubt the best country/swing band I've ever heard, and I've heard them all.

Finally I come to our own Sunday Night Showcase Concerts at Gore Park in Elmira every Sunday in June, July and August, until Labour day weekend. We offer a two hour free concert featuring the top bluegrass, country and gospel groups in Ontario (one group coming from Wisconsin, this year). The bands love this venue with it's beautiful setting and receptive audiences and are willing to play for the collection, with average crowds of 400 every week. As I said we have almost too much to choose from, but please support as much of it as you can or it might all go away.

Schedule for Elmira

July 8 - Crossover Junction Reunion
 July 15 - Grant Carson Band
 July 22 - Grassland
 July 29 - Rhyme 'N' Reason
 Aug. 5 - Ephraim Frey
 Aug. 12 - Burie Family (from Wisc.)
 Aug. 19 - Paul Weber
 Aug. 28 - Doug DeBoer / Hard Ryde
 Sept. 2 - Harold McIntyre



BLYTH CAMPOUT 2012 - Evening performance by George Hamilton IV.

★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★
 ★ **The Barn Dance** ★
 ★ **Historical Society's** ★
 ★ **General Meeting** ★
 ★ **Mon. Aug. 25 - 7 pm** ★
 ★ **at David Carson Farm &** ★
 ★ **Auction Centre,** ★
 ★ **R.R. 3, Listowel (Hwy. 86 E)** ★
 ★ **RE: Recommended Notice** ★
 ★ **of Motion Bylaw Changes.** ★
 ★ *See attached sheet with* ★
 ★ *this journal.* ★
 ★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

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Full Page (back cover) -

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A PIONEER AWARD FOR STAN TAYLOR

by Lynn Russwurm

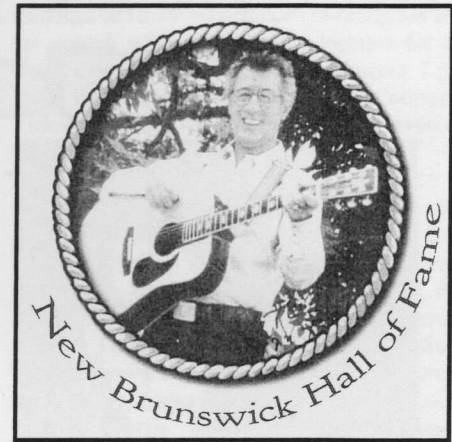
For the first time the Pioneer Award presentation has stepped outside the stage of the Barn Dance. Stan was scheduled to appear on the projected Barn Dance in Elmira on Mother's Day, sponsored by the Elmira Sugar Kings. However, a cancellation of that show was prompted by light ticket sales.

Stan, a native of Nova Scotia, now living in New Brunswick would be in the area so a hastily conceived Showcase Concert was mounted at Gore Park, in Elmira as a pre-season concert. Although the audience was much smaller than the regular season concerts, it was nevertheless a success. A much surprised Stan Taylor was given the award by Grant Heywood, just prior to intermission time. After Grant read the preamble to presenting the award, Stan remarked "I thought they were talking about someone else". Once again it shows what the awards can mean to an artist as an expression of appreciation for that artists' efforts in forwarding the cause of country music.

Stan Taylor ~ To many the name is much less than a household word, but to me it's a close friend for many years and I would like to elaborate. I first met Stan in 1950 when we were both working at B.F. Goodrich in Kitchener. He had just come to Ontario at the age of 16, looking for work. Our conversations eventually turned to music, which was of mutual interest to two young fellows who both played a little guitar. By practice and countless hours, honing our craft, we felt we were onto something, so by 1951 we had a few numbers worked out pretty good and got up the nerve to audition for CKCR radio.

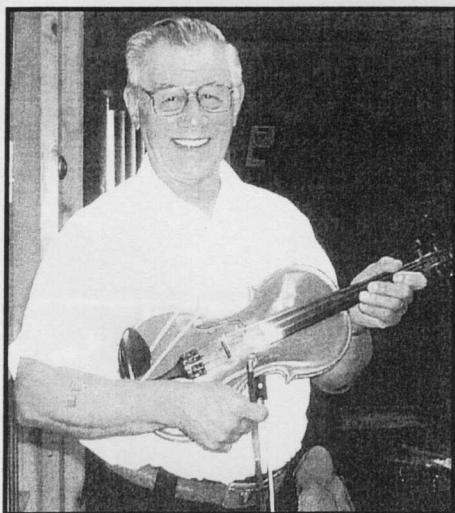
And lo and behold, after a successful audition we were given a 15 minute spot on the radio every Saturday afternoon, without pay of course. Now in those days, live country music radio was flourishing and others had led the way. Kidd Baker had the most popular show and had been on the air for several years, using the radio show as advertising for his 6 nights a week dances in the area. Others such as Hank MacDonald also had their own program until he was invited to join the Kidd Baker Show. Anyway it was a pretty big deal to us and we in turn introduced June and Marie, The Karges Sisters, on our show. In 1952 they joined The Barn Dance as regulars. Anyway, our show was forced off the air by a complaint from the local Musicians Union. After this our paths diverged as Stan went into the Army and I continued at B.F.G., got married and joined the Westernaires as guitarist where I spent 1-1/2 years playing with young Mike Slausenwhite on fiddle. Eventually, my wife and I felt it was time to start our own band, so The Pine River Troubadours was formed. In time we needed a lead guitarist, so I tracked down my old friend. He was now out of the army, married and working on a fruit farm in the St. Catharines area. I convinced him to come back to the Kitchener area to work with me. This lasted about six months, but work was hard to come by, as the bars had not opened to live music at that point and so the band broke up. Stan went on to work with other bands such as The Silver Bar Ranch Boys.

Eventually a new band emerged, with hand-picked musicians to form The Rhythm Masters. In addition to Stan, band members included Rusty Walker on steel, Carl Kiewetter on bass and fiddle, Wilf Chartrand on vocals and rhythm guitar,



Fred Emberson on drums, what a sweet band that was. They auditioned and landed the job of house band at the Edison Hotel in Toronto where they backed up American headliners every week. Now in addition to playing 6 nights a week, they all held down day jobs, what a grind that must have been. At one point in 1967, they were chosen to do a series of Centennial Barn Dances sponsored by CKNX. If anyone remembers that series, I would like to hear from them about it, about all I know is that Cindy and Donn Reynolds were featured on those shows. After the Rhythm Masters folded, Stan continued in music with different groups such as The Rounders with Reg Cable. Finally the call came from Vic Mullen that he had just signed with CBC-TV in Halifax for a regular show called "Countrytime" to follow the Saturday night Maple Leaf hockey game. Vic and Stan had grown up together in Yarmouth, Nova Scotia, and both had followed musical paths. After a successful TV series, Stan settled down to working road shows throughout the Maritimes and beyond. There followed a spell of non-musical pursuits including long range truck driving, working in lumber camps, etc. Eventually, the call of music brought Stan back into the fold, and an honoured spot in the New Brunswick Hall of Fame. He still can be found picking and singing around the Maritimes and his visit back to Ontario sure brought many fond memories. Stan and I have always had the type of friendship where we might have no contact for 10 years and we could pick up again as if it had just been yesterday.

Have many more, old friend.



Stan Taylor



Country Music Memories



Amberly Beatty as Loretta Lynn.

Memories
from Blyth
Campout
2012



Host Mary Elliott opening the show.



John Heaman as Elvis.



Kiley Joe Masson.



Randy Morrison and Flatt River.



Doug Dietrich presenting the Pioneer Award to George Hamilton IV.

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

* **Upcoming Events:** July 5 to 8 - River Valley Country and Bluegrass Gathering; July 8 - Michael Cleveland and Flamekeeper, Innisfil; July 12 - Valley Bluegrass Festival, Renfrew; July 20 - Linden Hills Bluegrass Festival; July 26 to 29 - Palmer Rapids Country and Bluegrass Festival; July 29 - Junior Sisk and Ramblers Choice, Innisfil; Aug. 1 to 5 - River Valley Bluegrass Jamboree; Aug. 10 to 12 - Holstein Bluegrass Celebration; Aug. 12 - The Claire Lych Band, Innisfil; Aug. 15 - The Claire Lych Band, Toronto. Aug. 17 to 19 - Conestoga Trail Bluegrass and Gospel Festival, Princeton; Aug. 28 - Rhonda Vincent / Gene Watson, Colborne; Aug. 31 to Sept. 2 - River Valley Bluegrass Country Windup; Sept. 22 - Wendell Ferguson, Innisfil.

* **Kiley Joe Music Entertainment** for upcoming appearances go to www.kilyjoe.com

* **July 6 to 8** - The HollyRood Country Jamboree. For tickets, contact Glen Jarrell 613-967-9551. Houseband: Lead Guitar Joe Howe; Steel Guitar Al Brisco; Bass Guitar Bill Lintner; Drums Frank Woodocok; MC Mike Polard; Sound Doug Deveaux. Vendors, food, music and memories.

* **July 6 to 8** - Country Roads Music Festival, Napanee Fair Grounds.

* **July 13 to 15** - Preston Springs Country Jamboree 705-696-2268.

* **July 26 to 29** - Palmer Rapids Twin Music Festival. 613-758-2747.

* **July 12 to 15** - Lindsay Country Jamboree, 1-800-954-9998 or 705-741-6097. Thurs. Lineup includes: Cheryl Casselman, Jamie Spurvey, Marie Bottrell, Gerald Davidson, Montana Sky. Friday: Scotty Gartshore, Angie Austin, Stompin' Jon, Ralph Robinson, Keene Country. Saturday: Mitch Barker, Deter Boehme, Amber Beatty, Phillip Denault, Mahogany Ridge. Sun. Gospel Hour 11 to 12 a.m. with The Tonettes, Gloria Downer Pearson, Kevin & Doug Parish, Zack Zacharia. Open Mic Thurs. to Sat. 1 to 5 pm. Fantastic music to be announced. www.lindsaycountryjamboree.com

* **Victoria Playhouse, Petrolia** presents July 18 to 29, Country Sunshine, starring Canadian Idol, Jaydee Bixby, Jenn Kee, Patrick Cook, Callandra Dendias, Jesse Grandmont, Michael Hogeveen, Janelle Murray, Alex Baerg. Coun-

try music has been moving us for generations, bask in the glory of Country Sunshine. Fantastic vocals, frenzied fiddle playing, rich harmonies.

* **Appearances by Scott Woods** - Sept. 9 Aberfoyle, Dugg's Pres. Church; Sept. 15 Lions Club of Kingston; Sept. 16 Merrickville Com. Centre; Sept. 17 Glengarry Dist. High School, Alexandria; Oct. 5 First United Church, Owen Sound. "Fiddle Legends" Cross Canada Tour2012. www.scottwoods.ca

* **Appearances by Doreen Brown:** July 8 Shelburne Legion; July 12 to 15 Lindsay Country Jamboree; July 24 Bond Head Fiddle Club; Aug. 2 to 5 Gullyefest, Collingwood; Aug. 9 Grafton Country Jamboree; Aug. 31 to Sept. 2 8th Annual Auction Barn Jamboree, Colborne; dedicated in the promotion of Canadian Country Music and the artists that perform.

* **Aug. 2 to 5** - Classic Country Music Reunion, 21st Annual Event, Centennial Park, Trenton. Info 705-878-3102. The CCMR is a non profit organization founded by Lorne Hachey in 1992. ccmr1992@aol.com

* **List of Jamborees:** Aug. 2 to 5 - CCMR Trenton; Aug. 2 - Boot Hill Country Jamboree; Aug. 3 - Flinton Country Bluegrass Jamboree; Aug. 9 - Grafton Country Jamboree; Aug. 9 - Grand Old Enterprises Country Jamboree, Centerville; Aug. 19 - Musicians Corn Roast, Blackstock; Aug. 16 to 19 - Baldwin Country Jamboree; Aug. 16 to 19 - Havelock Country Jamboree; Aug. 20 to Sept. 2 - Auction Barn Jamboree, Colborne; Sept. 6 - Marmora Country Jamboree; Sept. 14 to 16 - Trillium Country Jamboree, Hastings.

* **Aug. 28 to 29** - The queen of bluegrass and the golden voice of Nashville together for on show. Gene Watson and Rhonda Vincent. 7 pm at the Keeler Centre, 80 Division St., Colborne. Tickets contact Gary Warner 905-355-2106 or www.auctionbarnjamboree.ca

* **Baldwin Country Jamboree** - Aug. 16 to 19. Covered concert. Pickin' in the campground. Open mic. Kierstyn Cross, Bob Bunton, Brittany Jordon, Wade, Jamie Spurvey, Aggie, Debbie Bechamp. D.J. Rowatt, Pat Arnott, Scott Gartshore, Angie Roboison, Austin, Terry Harrison, Crystal Gage. Sun. Gospel Show 11 to 12. 1 to 3 pm Robin Harris, Sam Fattore, Laura Powers and Bob McQuaid.

* **Join Dottie Kirkpatrick** and Common Ground, 4th Sunday of the month at ANAF, Barrie 1 to 5 pm. 705-323-9862.

* **Third Sunday of Month** Barry Brookes and Calico Creek, Warminster Legion at 1 pm. Supper at 5:30 pm.

* **Aug. 17 to 19** - 5th Annual Conestoga Trail Bluegrass and Gospel Festival, Princeton. Joe Mullins and The Radio Ramblers; The Stevens Family; Amy Gallatin and Stillwaters; The Bluegrass Martins; Mountain Faith; Northland Ramblers; Flatt River Bluegrass. All day Sunday gospel music. MCs Dan Bieman, CKNX and Dan Joseph CKWR. Info Gerry and Fran Morgan 519-458-4515. This is a fundraiser for the Brant Community Healthcare System.

NOTE: A special "Thank You" to everyone who helped celebrate the 75th Year of Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance and 15 years of The Barn Dance Historical Society. On a personal note ~ the writer is most honoured to be a part of this organization and being on the Sat. Show. To quote Mr. Earl Heywood: "The Show Must Go On."

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,
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BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

I guess I feel like I am looking a gift-horse in the mouth probably because I am. More than anything, I feel like a curmudgeon and thankless ingrate. Let me tell you why.

Included with the purchase of my new Ford F-150 pick-up was a six-month free subscription to Sirius satellite radio. I was initially thrilled by the prospect of commercial free, niche marketed music channels disc jockeyed by passionate and knowledgeable industry insiders. I still remember tuning into Willie's Roadhouse on channel 56 for the first time. In all my radio listening life, I had never heard such a bonanza of classic country music singers and songs on one station. This wasn't a once-a-week hour-long music program honouring the past. It was 24 hours of non-stop Hank Williams, Webb Pierce, Faron Young, and Patsy Cline.

The other channels dedicated exclusively to country music and Bluegrass were just as exciting. I actually tend to listen to the

hits of the eighties and nineties on Prime Country on channel 58 as much as anything because it is the country music of my coming of age years. It is comfortable and familiar as the music from that part of a person's life can only be.

After only three months, however, the satellite radio began to feel a lot like, well, radio. And, unexpectedly, in a weird isolated out-of-time-and-place sort of way, it was also disconcertingly unlike radio. Again, let me tell you why.

I guess my brain is hard-wired to expect local advertisements and weather updates while listening to the radio. I want traffic reports. I subconsciously crave the false excitement of the remote broadcasts from suburban car dealerships. All of those elements are as important as the music is to the full radio experience, which has always been local, from the personalities to the paid spots. Even as play-lists became the same coast-to-coast, one could never shake the regional aspect of radio. I loved having to scan the dial to find new country music stations as one community's station faded to fuzz, only to lock in on the stronger one from the town up the road.

Satellite radio stands above this regionalism. It is beyond geography. If you are a Sirius subscriber it is safe to assume you are serious about music. And satellite radio is supposed to be all about the music.

Oddly enough, it is on this point that satellite radio drops the ball. Once the new wears off the crystal classics, it becomes clear that satellite radio still suffers from small play-lists. The world should be Willie's Roadhouse sonic oyster. Think about it. We should potentially hear everything from Fiddling John Carson up to Merle Haggard. Instead, we get a lot of Vern Gosdin, Gene Watson, and Johnny Bush.

I feel pretty small complaining about hearing too much of three of the greatest vocalists country music has known, but there are so many other singers and songs time has forgotten.

Shouldn't they share the satellite radio stage?

COME JOIN US!!

We need you as a member of

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- Special membership only rates at some of our events.

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Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone No. _____

Yes, I want to become a member of

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