

The Barn Dance Opera Journal

Official Publication of:

The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.

A Not For Profit Organization

Barn Dance Website: www.thebardance.ca

Price: \$2.00 (tax incl.)

Vol. 73 2013

Spring Edition

1

The Joe Firth Story

by Lynn Russwurm

Perhaps you've never heard the name of Joe Firth. In recent years he's been keeping a low profile in what the public sees. But behind the scenes Joe is still in there pitching for country music. His North American Talent Agency keeps many country bands working across the country, from shore to shore. Although Joe admits the golden days are gone, there is still a living to be made if you're willing to work at it. And Joe works at it. Now in his 73rd year, he is still masterminding touring schedules that reach from the East Coast to the West Coast of our fair country.

But where did this story begin? Well, Joe tells me of an appearance with the KKNX Barn Dance in 1955 at the age of 15. It was in his home town of Shelburne where he shared the stage with another newcomer who was also making his first appearance. That was Larry Mercey and we all know where that career went.

Joe Firth lived and dreamed country music throughout his formative years on the farm. At a young age he joined forces with two cousins, Gord Henry and Grant Middaugh, to form a band to play at any gig they could come up with. They went through several name changes, such as The Country Gentlemen, then The Rockabillys, in the age when rockabilly threatened to sink the country music ship.

But Joe Firth never gave up. He worked day jobs and played country music at night and many times for little or no pay, booking dances and other gigs wherever he could. Eventually Joe headed for Toronto where the bar scene was just beginning to take shape. Beside the Horseshoe and The Edison, there was The 300 Club and that was where Joe would hang out just to sing a few songs with the band. Leader of the band was Eddie Coyle and Joe finally joined the band when an opening offered. For the princely sum of \$6.00 a night, Joe was now a working musician. And about a month later, when Eddie was called to Montreal for a better gig, Joe got the chance to take over the band, and that paid him \$8.00 a night. By this time Joe

was married so the day job was still paramount.

Joe was eventually led to Jack Boswell of Paragon by Ollie Strong, which resulted in his first taste of the recording industry. "Too Many Memories", one of his early recordings took off and convinced Joe there was a living to be made in music. It was a major decision to give up a good paying job for the insecurity of the music business, but he never looked back. He branched into touring across Canada with his band, now named "The Promised Land".

Come 1973, he hooked up with a hot young steel man, Mike Weber. Mike was a tremendous help with running the band, and soon his younger brother, Paul, also came aboard. With the Weber boys, Joe Firth and The Promised Land reached new heights of popularity. In addition to covering Canada from coast to coast, Joe set his sights on the European market. Hooking up with an agent in Holland he embarked on his first tour of England where he had to work with a local band. But this worked out well as the band learned his material before he ever reached their shore. Eventually Joe



JOE FIRTH

brought some European bands over to tour Canada.

Mike Weber stayed with Joe for 13 years, Paul for 7. Paul then formed his own band and worked through Joe's agency which also included overseas tours. Finally the Weber boys tired of the road and bought into the hotel business, Paul in Maryhill, and Mike in New Hamburg. But Joe and The Promised Land kept at it until 1997, when he decided to put all his efforts behind the booking agency.

Today, Joe has no regrets, he still loves country music and can occasionally be found singing a few songs at Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill. Recently there was a reunion of The Promised Land in Maryhill which was sold out three weeks before the date. Joe was happy to see old friends that he hadn't seen in 20 years or more. Many who had traveled many miles to share this night of honour with Joe Firth and his lifelong love affair with country music. Don't be surprised if you should spot Joe Firth at your favourite watering hole sometime down the road.

One of Joe's favourite philosophies is ~ if you believe in something, go for it, even if they tell you it can't be done just because it's never been done before.

One of Canada's most prolific and



JOE FIRTH & PROMISED LAND

back, l to r: Bob Hiliard, Joe Firth, Larry Brennan. front: Paul Weber, Mike Weber

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



It's never a dull moment with Mother Nature. February and most of March was quite like the old fashioned winters of yesterday. I was glad to finally see it come to a close ... and then the ice storm hit. We've never had a 'state of emergency' in Wellesley Township before, but I understood why once I surveyed the damage done by the storm and the extended period of time that so many went without power. Some people had no electricity for up to 4 days or so I'm told. The elderly and those with small infants could at least go to warming stations set up for an emergency such as this. Luckily the temperature didn't dip below freezing.

We have a lot of trees on our property and we lost many major limbs and a couple of trees as well. I have enough firewood now to last all next winter. Glad we had a woodstove to heat our downstairs area and it also served as a cook stove while we were without power for a couple of days. We don't have a generator but I was told by the local hardware store they sold out of generators, flashlights & batteries in a short few hours. I'm sure that chainsaws flew off the shelf the next day.

On a brighter note, our Barn Dance show at the Commercial Tavern in Maryhill on April 7th was a 'sold out' performance. The audience was treated to some of the best country

vocalists I've heard in a long time. CCMA Hall of Famer, Johnny Burke was taken by surprise when he was presented with a Barn Dance Pioneer Award. Tavern owner Paul Weber sang a duet with Johnny Burke that pretty much brought the house down. It was a Sunday afternoon filled with country music classics and then some.

Paul Weber has really been working hard at presenting first class entertainment at his establishment, and not just country either. Yes we do a couple of Barn Dance shows there every year and they are always a success. But did you know that he has top caliber tribute acts such as Patsy Cline, Johnny Cash, The Eagles, Kenny & Dolly, Neil Young, Billy Joel, Roy Orbison and many more showcase there as well. Some of Canada's award winning entertainers are also featured time and again. Everyone from Larry Mercey, Harold McIntyre, Marie Bottrell, and Gordie Tapp, just to name a few. And let's not forget Paul Weber himself. Paul and his sister Sue usually perform every Thursday night with an open stage jam. Friday and Saturday nights are reserved for feature special guest musicians/vocalists and bands, as well as Paul Weber's own band Top Hand. Every 2nd Tues. night Canada's very best western swing band, The Western Swing Authority take to the stage, and every 2nd Wed. night is bluegrass night with some of the best bluegrass pickers around.

It's not easy anymore to find a place with such a stellar lineup of talent. Not only is the talent top notch, but the food and hospitality are also very good as well. The Commercial Tavern in Maryhill is a place where you can see & hear

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

Earl Heywood

Founder and Honourary President

Executive Board:

President: Ruth Baxter

1st Vice President: David Wall

2nd Vice President: Richard Holm

Secretary: Ron Coulthard

Treasurer: Gord Baxter

Directors:

Grant Heywood, Doug Dietrich,
Bill Simmermaker, Ron Shaw,
Ted Weishar, Doreen Armbruster,
and Lynn Russwurm.

some of your favourite entertainers in an intimate setting at a reasonable price, and Paul always makes you feel at home. The atmosphere is great and I always feel at home every time I play on stage or take in a performance.

Speaking of performances, check out our lineup of Barn Dance Shows in the Barn Dance Show Schedule. Every year gets better and better and this year is no exception. Hope to see you at the next Barn Dance

Comments? Please contact:

Grant Heywood

5584 Deborah Glaister Line,

R. R. #2,

Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0

Phone: (519) 656-2552

E-mail: heywoods@xplornet.ca

or send a message on facebook.

2013 COMING EVENTS

| Date | Event Name | Place |
|---------------|---|---|
| Sun., May 5 | Barn Dance Show - 2:00 p.m. | Purple Hill Country Music Hall, near Thorndale |
| May 23 to 26 | 16th Annual Barn Dance Campout/Jamboree | Blyth Community Complex |
| Sun., May 26 | A Taste of Country - Dance - 2 p.m. | Pelee Island Winery & Plowing Match, Mitchell Arena |
| Sun., Oct. 20 | Barn Dance Show - 2:00 p.m. | St. Anne's Centre, St. Thomas |

IN MEMORIAM



Stompin' Tom Connors



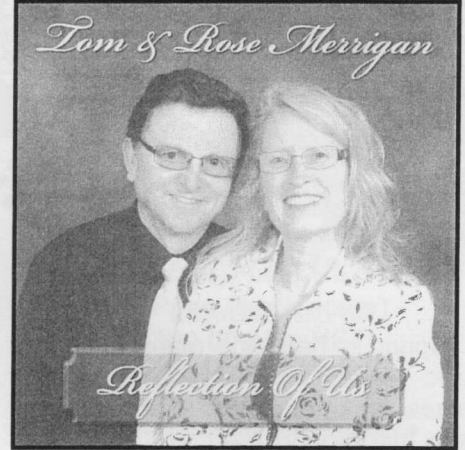
One of Canada's most prolific and well-known country and folk singer/songwriter's died March 6th, 2013 at his home in Ballinifad, Ont. at the age of 77. Tom was born in Saint John, New Brunswick but spent time living in Skinners Pond, P.E.I. He wrote more than 300 songs, recorded 4 dozen albums and sold 4 million records. Some of his most popular songs: Sudbury Saturday Night, The Hockey Song, Bud The Spud. A national tribute to Stompin' Tom Connors was televised on National T.V. in his honour. He was honoured by politicians and fans across the country. A Canadian musical icon who gained legendary status in the land he loved. Our condolences to Tom's wife and family. (* More on Stompin' Tom Connors in the next issue)

Grant Carson

A country singer/entertainer who was truly a well-known country music showman. Grant died at his home in Fenwick, Ontario on March 20th, 2013, at the age of 76. The Grant Carson Band played throughout southwestern Ontario including a recent performance at Paul Weber's Commercial Tavern in Maryhill, Ont. Grant was a character of sorts but could certainly belt out a good old country song. Ironically, if you go to YouTube you will see & hear a performance of Grant singing 'What A Way To Live'. Respecting Grant's last wishes, there was no funeral or visitation. He will be missed for sure. Our condolences to Grant's wife and family. (*More on Grant Carson hopefully in the next issue)

FEATURE C. D. REVIEW Tom & Rose Merrigan "Reflection Of Us"

Tom & Rose Merrigan from Hensall, Ont. are really transplanted Canadian Maritimers. They certainly have a lot of patience too, as this first CD project was well over a year in production. They approached me with their ideas for a CD so steel player Doug Dietrich and myself, (drummer Grant Heywood), brought in Barn Dance musicians, guitarist Fred Lewis, bassist Al Alderson and Western Swing Authority fiddler Dan Howlett. Also included were, Ron Beingessner on banjo/dobro, and Chris Dahmer on accordion with background vocals by myself and Allison McLaren.

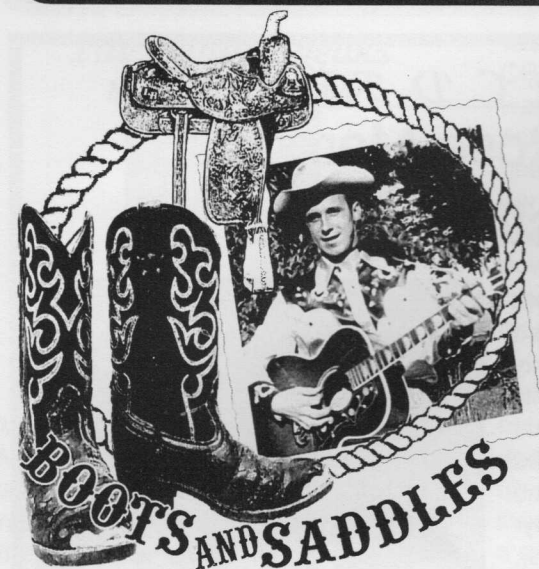


We recorded the CD at Dave McLaren's 'Downhome' studio in Kitchener and spent many days and nights ... and months getting everything sounding just right. This was a first time experience for Tom & Rose in a recording studio and they really wanted to do their very best. The CD is a testament to everyone's endurance but most of all it is a true reflection of Tom & Rose Merrigan as a husband & wife singing duo. The beauty of the selections on this CD is that you really get a bit of everything musically speaking.

Two Roy Payne songs bookend this recording with 'Don't Pick The Flowers In My Garden' & 'I Wouldn't Take A Million Dollars For A Single Maple Leaf'. The Fred Eaglesmith classic gets the bluegrass treatment on 'Thirty Yrs' Of Farmin'. Tom & Rose are right at home singing maritime songs such as 'Sonny's Dream' & 'No Price Tags On The Doors In Newfoundland' and they do a great rendition of Rita MacNeil's 'Working Man'. 'Till Each Tear Becomes A Rose' is also a harmonizing beauty.

A personal favourite of mine was 'Bed By The Window'. Vocally, Tom & Rose were able to really put their brand on this touching lyrical song. It's all about an elderly man in his final days at the nursing home and is a real touching story. Fred Lewis, Dan Howlett and Doug Dietrich went the extra mile giving this song a spiritual musical treatment. The Stonewall Jackson tune 'Big House On The Corner' truly sounds like Tom & Rose have been singing this song for years ... and it really shows. The solo performance by Rose on 'Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On' showcases the most delicate characteristics in her voice.

Not only are there some wonderful vocal performances on this CD but also some great playing by all the musicians involved. The CD includes country classics, a bit of bluegrass, and some down home maritime favourites. There are 14 songs on the CD and each and every one of them are gems. It was a real pleasure for Doug Dietrich and me producing this CD. Not only because we enjoyed it, but because we are good friends of Tom & Rose. They have been staunch supporters of the Barn Dance for years now, helping out and appearing onstage every year at our Barn Dance Blyth Campout Jamboree.



by Lynn Russwurm

Spring is here and many country music venues will be opening up in the near future. Even the Blyth Jamboree is just around the corner. All the bluegrass festivals will soon be at hand and I would urge everyone to attend as many events as possible. If you don't, think of the possible consequences, poor attendance could mean that event may pass into memory.

Paul Weber in Maryhill has been bringing in many exciting concerts and "Tribute" shows, including The Barn Dance and a Joe Firth & The Promised Land Reunion. The Waterloo Wellington Bluegrass Association has been bringing in American Bluegrass Shows in the past few weeks to the Galt Legion that have been less than well attended. This might mean that this venue will not be on the schedule next year.

Some of the Legions have been using entertainment on Saturday afternoon such as the Army & Navy on Gage Street in Kitchener and The Red Chevron in Guelph. A while back we had Marina's running bluegrass on Saturday afternoons which was discontinued because of sparse attendance; I was there almost every Saturday afternoon, where were you??

Then there is the Top End Restaurant and Tavern in Neustadt, specializing in great food and entertainment from 5 to 9 on a Saturday. Among the featured artists that have appeared include Jimmy Phair, Al Widmeyer, Bob

Montgomery, Lance Russwurm and Bruce Robertson. My Sunday night concerts at Gore Park in Elmira will begin in June and will run every Sunday night in June, July and August from 7 to 9 through to Labour Day weekend. We have a full slate of top bluegrass and country entertainment lined up for this year. These shows were well attended so they will continue.

Then there are the Jamborees that are held in many towns on a monthly basis. They give everyone a chance to perform in front of an audience without the pressure of competition. So there are lots of things happening, that won't be unless we get behind them.

The big news of the past month was the passing of Stompin' Tom Connors. We're all going to miss the old Stomper, but none as much as his loving wife, Lena and son Tommy. These people have been good friends in the past and my heartfelt condolences go out to Lena and Tommy. The clouds will pass and there'll be sunshine again.

Another loss to our country music family is Grant Carson who passed away about a week after

Tom. The Grant Carson Band was one of the mainstays at our Sunday night concerts and we'll certainly miss him. Our condolences also go out to his wife Jackie, to band members Stan Vaughn and his wife, and to steel guitarist George Webb.


Grant Carson spent a lifetime chasing his country dream and to a large degree he found it. He recorded a number of albums and did extensive touring both in North America and in Europe. He appeared on Opry North as well as on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville. At one point The Grant Carson Band provided back-up for Lucille Starr for extensive touring across Canada. By choice he stuck with pure country, as country should be and was a master of the Ray Price / Faron Young style of "shuffle" country. He excelled on fiddle and lead guitar along with his laid-back vocals.

Grant was blessed with a sort of wry humour and you never knew what his come-back would be. But you would never hear a derogatory remark about another performer. He knew the value of building himself up by not tearing somebody else down, a true gentleman who was not afraid of following his own heart. We will miss you, Grant Carson.



Grant Carson and his beautiful wife, Jackie, before the beard turned white.

**IN
MEMORIAM**



Rita MacNeil

The sweet singing voice of Canada's Rita MacNeil will forever be remembered. The lady who was one of 8 children, was from Big Pond, Cape Breton Island and died at age 68, on April 16th from surgery complications. Rita was a gentle soul loved by everyone. She recorded 24 albums, selling millions worldwide. She had her own national T.V. show, won several awards. Rita was a member of the Order of Canada and has received 5 decorations. Her most memorable song was 'Working Man' sung with the Men of the Deep.

The Barn Dance Museum

During the Blyth Barn Dance Jamboree Campout, the Barn Dance Museum at 273 Josephine St., Wingham, will be open to visitors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Come & see a piece of Canada's musical heritage. Donations appreciated.



“Who Wrote the Song” will return next issue.

**BARN DANCE JOURNAL
ADVERTISING PRICES**

- Business Card Size - \$25.00 plus HST
- 1/4 Page - \$75.00 plus HST
- 1/2 page - \$150.00 plus HST
- Full Page (inside) - \$275.00 plus HST
- Full Page (back cover) - \$300.00 plus HST

All prices are per issue.

E-mail -

webmaster@thebardance.ca

Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance

**16th
Annual**



**BARN DANCE
JAMBOREE/CAMPOUT**

May 23, 24, 25, 26, 2013

Blyth Arena Complex

Blyth, ON

May 23rd, 2013 - Campers Jam

May 24th, 2013

Bluegrass Show & Open Stage

May 25th, 2013

Barn Dance Show & Dance

May 26th, 2013 - Gospel Show

full details & schedule online at

www.thebardance.ca

or call: 519-530-8000

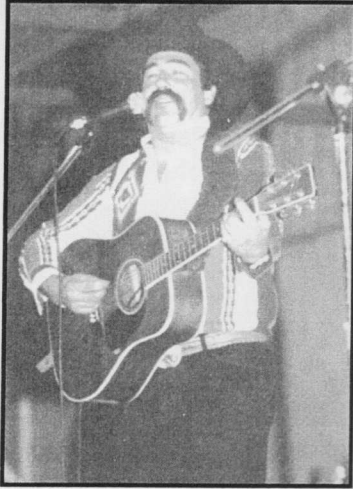
Camping packages available

Barn Dance Show & Dance Tickets available at the door

Sponsored by the Barn Dance Historical Society
Box 68
Wingham, ON
N0G 2W0

Country Music Memories

1998 Barn Dance Pictures



Paul Weber



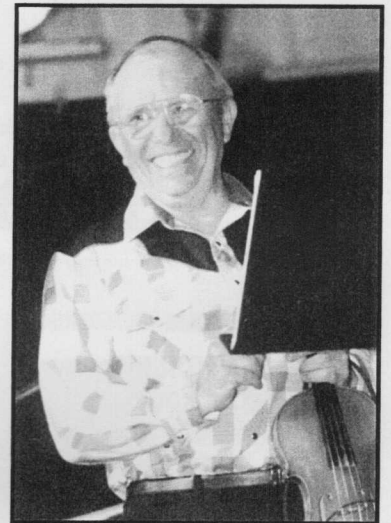
Earl and Martha Heywood



Victor Pasowisty



Larry Mercey



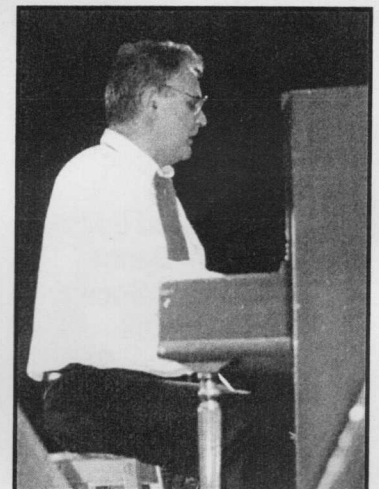
Mike Slauenwhite



Linda Elder



Bill Simmermaker



Len Love

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

*** Appearances by The Country Versatiles** - (all times the same, 8 to 12 pm, except where listed) Apr. 5 - Hanover Legion; Apr. 6, May 4 & June 1 - Lambeth Legion, 2 to 5 pm; Apr. 6, May 4 & June 1 - Danceland, 8 to 12 pm; Apr. 7, May 5 & June 2 - Jamboree Centennial Hall, 39 Main St., Princeton, 1 to 5 pm; Apr. 11 - Belmore Community Centre, 12 noon; Apr. 13 - Wyoming Legion; Apr. 13 & June 23 - Kirkton Community Centre, 1 to 5 pm; Apr. 27 - Elora Legion; Apr. 28 & June 30 - Sebringville Community Centre, 1 to 5 pm; May 3 - Clinton Legion; May 17 - Crystal Palace, Mitchell; May 25 - Stratford Legion; May 26 - Cherryhill Mall, 301 Oxford St., London, 2 to 4 pm; June 16 - Brussels Legion, 7 to 11 pm; June 27 - Theatre, Woodstock 2 to 4 pm; June 29 - Alma Community Centre.

*** April 7** - Barn Dance Show, 3 pm, Commercial Tavern, Maryhill; Apr. 21 - Barn Dance Country / Gospel Show, United Church, Hensall; May 5 - Barn Dance Show, 2 pm, Purple Hill Country Music Hall, Thorndale; May 23 to 26 - Blyth Campout, Blyth Arena; May 26 - A Taste of Country Dance, 2 pm, Pelee Island Winery; Plowing Match, Mitchell.

*** April 20:** Kenda's Country Open Mic, featuring live music. Contact Mike Pollard, 905-440-4131.

*** Appearances by Johnny Burke:** April 7 - Travelling Barn Dance, Johnny Burke, Kurk Benard, Pam Miller and more, Commercial Tavern, Maryhill; Apr. 14 - La Salette, 2 pm, Johnny Burke, Paul Weber, Naomi Bristow, Linsey Beckett; Apr. 20 - Renfrew Legion, 8 pm, Johnny Burke and Eastwind with Dan Paul Rogers; May 5 - Haliburton Home Concert, 7 pm, Johnny Burke, Cheryl Thibideau, 705-455-9177, also on June 9 with Johnny Burke and Wendell Ferguson.

*** May 25** - Georgian South District pre-

sents Gone Country. 2nd Ann. Tribute Artists gala fund raiser. Proceeds to War Amps. Line up - Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, Reba McEntyre and Shania Twain. MC Victor J. Hanson and comedian. Geri & The Koaters Band. Cash Bar. Doors open at 6:30. 7:30 to 10:30. 99 Morrow Rd., Barrie. Tickets \$35.00. Call 905-775-4649.

*** Appearances by Doreen Brown:** Apr. 14 - Shelburne Jamboree; Apr. 16 - Rosemont Jamboree; Apr. 23 - Bond Head; May 24 to 26, Blyth Campout; June 14 - Tottenham Bluegrass Festival; June 18 - Rosemont Jamboree; June 20 - Bluesky Bluegrass, Barrie.

*** Bluegrass Jam**, every Monday night at Man of Yorke, 11 Mill St., Tottenham.

*** June 14 - 16** - celebrating the 30th Tottenham Bluegrass Festival. 1-888-866-4566. MC Mike O'Reilly. Line up - Crish Jones & The Night Riders, Audie Blaylock and Redline, Junior Sis & Ramblers Choice, Eddie LeBlanc & Friends, The Barn Katz, Oh My Darlings, Traditionally Wound, Hometown Bluegrass, Bill White and White Pine, Simcoe County Ramblers, Higher Ground.

*** Lindsay Country Jamboree** - July 18 to 21, Hwy. 7 at 354 Angeline St. 1-800-854-9998 or 705-741-6097. Open mic Thurs. to Sat. 1 to 5 pm. List of entertainers on main shows listed previous country calendar. Additional 21st Gospel Hour TBA. The Wildwood Flowers, Wendy Connelly and Linda Robertson. Sound and lighting Doug Deveaux. Free shuttle service from grounds to site.

*** Pineridge Bluegrass Club** - Apr. 7, May 8 and June 2, Woodbine Community Centre, 151 Cadillac Ave. N., Oshawa. Info Gary at 416-281-1479.

*** 16th Annual Barn Dance Jamboree Campout:** May 23 to 26. Fri., 7 pm, Bluegrass Show and Open Stage; Sat. Afternoon, Open Stage; Sat., 8 pm Barn Dance Stage Show with dancing to the sounds of the Barn Dance after the show. Sun., 10 to 12 am, Gospel Show. Saturday line up includes Jimmy Phair, Al Widmeyer, Linda Elder, Aaron Muir, Donna Muir, Jeff Barry, Michael Warren, Don Maxwell, Lance Russwurm and The Wildwood Flowers.

*** 22nd Annual Classic Country Music Reunion & Jamboree**, Centennial Park, Trenton, Aug. 1 - 4. Camp opens

12 noon. No RVs prior to this time. Aug. 1 open mic, 7 pm. Aug. 2 open mic, 1 pm; 6:30 main show; 10:30 open mic. Aug. 2, 12 pm open fiddle jam; 1 pm open mic; 6:30 main stage show; 10:30 open mic. Aug. 4 11 am Gospel Show; 1 pm open mic; 6:30 main stage show; 10:30 open mic. Aug. 5 12 camp closes. Info 705-878-3102.

*** April 13**, Karen Reid & Crossbow in concert in Waterloo at The Button Factory, Waterloo Community Arts Centre.

*** May 12**, Crystal Gage will be performing at Sweet Water Country Music, Victoria Hall, Cobourg. Tickets 905-372-2210 or 855-372-2210.

*** Cargill's Pickin' by the Pond** - Country & Bluegrass Festival. www.cargillcdef.com

*** Shelburne Jamborees**, Apr. 14 & May 12, Rec Complex, Shelburne 1 pm.

*** Holyrood Country Jamborees**, July 5 to 7 - 901 Harmond Road, Corbyville, north of Belleville.

*** Holstein Bluegrass Celebrations**, Aug. 9, 10 & 11. Info Bill Crooks 416-460-6489. Line up - Blue Moon Rising (TN), Hard Ryde, Host Band, Bill White & White Pine, Maple Hill, Dan Campbell & Bluegrass Edition, Georgian Blue, Stay Tuned, The Black Family, and Rescue Junction.

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



Ernie King
Music (1993) Ltd.

*"The Complete Music Source
for the Amateur or Professional"*

70 Courthouse Sq., Goderich (519) 524-4689
E-mail: webmaster@thebardance.ca

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. NOG 2W0;
or call ~ (519) 530-8000
E-mail: webmaster@thebardance.ca*

BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

Last November I became Co-chair of the school council at Secord Elementary, the primary school my two boys attend here in East York in Toronto. I thought it would be a good way to become more involved with the goings-on of the school, as well as become more engaged with the larger community.

What I got was a crash course in Toronto District School Board, and provincial, posturing and politics. Secord is an inner city school with many challenges facing it, from poverty to ageing facilities to student overpopulation. Its problems are huge and very real, however, the biggest concern for me as Secord School Council Co-Chair month-to-month was how to open the monthly meetings attended by faculty, parents, administration, and community support workers.

The obvious, at least to me, answer was country music.

I decided that a musical prelude would be the perfect indication the meeting was about to start. Nailing down this start time is

difficult because pizza is provided by the school for anyone attending the meeting. This includes the kids, which means chaos and confusion. Things don't happen on time.

A nice two-and-half-minute country song seemed to be the perfect transition from pizza time to parent time.

The inaugural song selection was a no-brainer. I played the Tom T. Hall penned 1968 cross-over smash hit for Jeannie C. Riley, "Harper Valley PTA." The song, laced with themes of hypocrisy and prejudice as relates to the Parent Teacher Association at Harper Valley Junior High, inspired a feature-length movie, starring Barbara Eden as widow Johnson. A TV series was then spun off from the movie. The song was an international multi-million seller. It topped both the country and pop charts. I guess the best indication of "Harper Valley PTA's" reach and popularity is that it was the song to knock the Beatles' "Hey Jude" from the top of the Billboard pop charts.

I opened the next school council meeting with another #1 hit from 1968, Henson Cargill's "Skip a Rope."

Although the song sold over half a

million copies that year, and reached #25 on the pop charts, it didn't connect with those at the meeting. Perhaps this was because, as Cargill said, "[the song] was something new, different, and a little heavy for the times, because the song puts the blame for racism and dishonesty squarely on the shoulders of the parents."

I revisited the Tom T. Hall songbook last month. I opened the Secord school council meeting with Hall's 1970 top 20 hit "100 Children." This is a song about good things that can still be done in the world on behalf of the children. Pure water and uncut forests. Don't blow up the world. Don't kill all the flowers. Simple, heart-felt sentiments.

Though I don't think anyone in the room had ever heard the song before, in a school where 73% of the student's parents were born outside of Canada, the line about brave boys and girls coming from nations all around the world must have resonated.

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

Membership is still only \$25.00 per year.

As a member you will receive:

- A personalized MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATE and CARD.
- The right to VOTE at our annual meetings.
- Advance notice of SPECIAL EVENTS.
- A one year subscription to our quarterly JOURNAL.
- The opportunity to PARTICIPATE by sitting on Committees.
- Special membership only rates at some of our events.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone No. _____

SINGLE MEMBERSHIP

\$ 25.00 - 1 year



Yes, I want to become a member of

**THE BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
AND ENTERTAINMENT MUSEUM**

P. O. Box 68, Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

DUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$ 40.00 - 1 year