



The Barn Dance Opera Journal



Price: \$2.00 (tax incl.)

Official Publication of:
The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.

A Not For Profit Organization
Barn Dance Website: www.thebardance.ca

Vol. 81 2014

Summer Edition

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Special Wingham Homecoming Edition

Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance Back Home Again

by Grant Heywood

On Sunday, August 3rd the Barn Dance will be a part of the Wingham Homecoming celebration. The original CKNX Barn Dance was a popular production for many years giving rise to several recording entertainers locally, such as CCMA honouree Canada's Singing Cowboy Earl Heywood, Ernie King & The Ranch Boys, award winning fiddlers Ward Allen (Maple Sugar), 1st Shelburne winner Mel Lavigne, Country Hoedown's Al Cherny, Eleanor & Graham Townsend, Main Street Jamboree star Jack Kingston, CCMA & Juno award winners The Mercey Bros., Hee Haw's Gordie Tapp, singer/songwriters Lynn Russwurm, Terry Sumsion, CCMA winners Shane Guse, Doug Johnson and Wendell Ferguson. Recording artists John Landry, Paul Weber, Randy Satchell, South Mountain, and Richard Knechtel, plus CCMA & Juno winner Marie Bottrel. These are just a handful of some of the local stars. The Barn Dance also attracted several famous entertainers outside the area such as C.B.C.'s Tommy Hunter, world class banjo player Maurice Bolyer, Grand Ole Opry stars Wilma Lee & Stony Cooper, Grammy award winning icon Gordon Lightfoot, television star George Hamilton IV, father of Kentucky bluegrass Bill Monroe, Grammy award winner Walter Ostanek, Doc & Chickie Williams of Wheeling West Virginia, even a young Shania Twain was on CKNX Good

Time Country T.V. show with Gerald Davidson ... and the list goes on.

It goes without saying that Wingham has had its share of luminaries over the years such as Alice Munro / literature, Murray Elston / politics, Doug Wood / sports, Andrew Kaufman / film, and of course there are others. These are people with a vision that made the town of Wingham proud in their finest moments. Wingham has also seen railways and notable people of industry help in its growth since its incorporation as a town in 1879. Fry & Blackhall, Lloyd Doors, Stanley/Berry Doors, Westcast Industries and Royal Homes became

established in Wingham over time, helping to build the town even further which spawned newer industries today.

But let's take a look back to some of Wingham's proudest moments in broadcasting and entertainment when a young Doc Cruikshank had an idea that really put Wingham on the map. From starting a local radio station in the late 1920's Doc would soon make history in 1955 by making Wingham 'the smallest community in the world with its own television station'. The Barn Dance was a huge part of Doc's vision. Here is a brief history

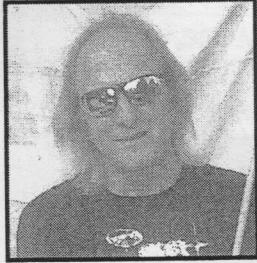
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1950's Brochure cover of the CKNX Barn Dance. Inside the brochure are pictures and biographies of all the Barn Dance stars of that era.

The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



Our 17th annual Campout Jamboree in Blyth was blessed with good weather this year and by all accounts we had a very successful turnout. Our Saturday night Barn Dance Show ran a bit longer than usual but that was okay as we extended the dancing hours as well. Thanks to everyone who came out to our biggest event of the year and a very special thanks to those who volunteered their services during the Campout Jamboree weekend. We couldn't have done it without you and are very grateful for your help and enthusiasm.

The Barn Dance Museum in Wingham will undoubtedly see quite a few patrons this summer especially since Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance will be performing a show at the Wingham Homecoming on Sunday, Aug. 3rd, at the Wingham Community Complex. It's not very often that the Barn Dance gets to perform in the home were it first originated, so this will be an extra special event for sure. There will be a lot of reminiscing from those who remember the 'good old days' when the Barn Dance was known as the CKNX Barn Dance. We hope to bring back a lot of those memories with a star studded cast for this special homecoming show.

Some of those performers who were part of the original CKNX Barn Dance and Circle 8 Ranch will be appearing on the show and some will even be on a special Barn Dance float in the Homecoming parade. I hope to get to meet and talk to as many friends and folks as possible at the Wingham Homecoming. Remembering names might be a problem but that's a two way street if you know what I mean.

The Barn Dance Show is the catalyst of The Barn Dance Historical Society, and has become a regional entertainment phenomenon since the it was resurrected in the mid 1990's by my father, Earl Heywood. Since then, the Barn Dance shows have grown in popularity with near sell out performances at every show. We have had audience guests from as far away as Australia, Europe, United States and from across Canada. Traditional country music is what the Barn Dance is all about, but helping to showcase young talent on the Barn Dance stage is part of the mandate as well.

There is definitely a wide and varied audience who love traditional country music, especially when it is presented in a professional 'Grand Ole Opry' type format. Those who were around when traditional country music became very popular would be proud to know that their children and their children's children also love traditional country music as well. That's because as people age they become nostalgic and want to remember the good times when they were younger including the music of their parents. That's why classic rock is also quite popular as well.

Wingham had its own version of a 'mini Nashville' when owner/operator Doc Cruikshank spawned Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance, had local music artists play live on radio, and CKNX television was a magnet for the ever popular Circle 8 Ranch show hosted by the late, great Ernie King. When you come to the Wingham Homecoming show of the Barn Dance, you will be able to re-live those glory days of yesteryear. Barn Dance pioneer host and original CKNX announcer, Jim Swan, will whisk you back in time and you will actually believe you are watching and hearing a Barn Dance show that you might have remembered in the past. Funny thing, it still continues to this day as the Barn Dance Historical Society operates the Barn Dance Museum on Josephine St. in Wingham, honouring all of those who were involved with the Barn Dance since its inception in 1937. From regular folks to Canadian superstars, the Barn

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

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Ted Weishar, Doreen Armbruster,

and Lynn Russwurm.

Dance Museum showcases them all.

There's no denying Wingham's illustrious Barn Dance history has been the reason for the continuously successful Barn Dance Shows today. Just come out and see one sometime. The faces may have changed but the concept of real professional country music talent continues to make a BIG impression on audiences throughout western & southwestern Ontario. CANADA'S LARGEST TRAVELLING BARN DANCE lives on! Hope to see you at the next Barn Dance show.

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.

2014 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Sun., August 3	Barn Dance Show	Wingham Homecoming, Wingham Community Complex
Sun., October 19	Barn Dance Show - 2:30 p.m. SOLD OUT	St. Anne's Church Hall, St. Thomas

Continued from Page 1

of the birth of Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance condensed from thebardance.ca

It was 1926 when W. T. "Doc" Cruikshank founded one of the earliest radio stations in Southwestern Ontario consisting of a single tube transmitter built in his mother's kitchen. Doc was granted a licence and AM CKNX 920 was 'on the air'.

During the 1920's and 30's, Doc couldn't afford enough broadcast recordings and so he invited local talent to entertain on the air. On a Saturday night in 1937 CKNX ran a recorded country music program called 'CKNX Barn Dance'. Doc turned it into a regular program with live music. Crowds soon gathered on the street in Wingham to watch the Saturday Night CKNX Barn Dance through the front window of the studio. It became so popular that Doc took the CKNX Barn Dance on the road transmitting the show through long distance telephone lines back to the studio broadcasting it live over the radio. By 1950 the program was a huge hit throughout all of Southwestern Ontario and became internationally known as CANADA'S LARGEST TRAVELLING BARN DANCE.

The Barn Dance remained on the air for over 25 years and is recognized in the Canadian Encyclopedia of Music (U. of T.) as the longest lived radio show of its kind in the history of Canadian Broadcasting. The original CKNX Barn Dance show ran from 1937 to 1963. CKNX T.V. shows included Western Roundup, Good Time Country and the ever popular Circle 8 Ranch which ran from 1955 to 1978. A few Barn Dance Reunion shows were staged in the 1970s and 80s, including a string of shows promoted by folk recording artist Richard Knechtel of Walkerton.

It was 1991 when Earl and Martha Heywood had a vision of resurrecting the Barn Dance shows and to

have a museum to honour those musicians and entertainers who were a part of its legendary success. It became official on June 29th, 1993 when the Barn Dance Historical Foundation was born.

In Dec. '96, a documentary of the Barn Dance was presented on CBC's 'Country Canada' with excerpts from the CKNX Saturday Night Barn Dance staged earlier at the Howick Community Centre. The Howick Anniversary show was a joint venture of CKNX and the Barn Dance Historical Foundation. The newly resurrected Barn Dance then operated under The Barn Dance Historical Society. Promoting artists from the past and talented newcomers became the policy for the new organization.

The most successful production play of the '96 season at the Blyth Festival was the musical play 'Barn Dance Live' which paid tribute to the Barn Dance and its early performers. So popular it ran a repeat performance in '97.

Global T.V. with Bill Brahma produced a show in '97 at the home of Earl Heywood about the Barn Dance Historical Society and Museum. The Barn Dance and many of its performers have been featured on Univ. of Toronto radio station CIUT with Steve Fruitman as well as other radio programs.

Around the late 1990's original Barn Dance Master of Ceremonies passed the torch at a Barn Dance in

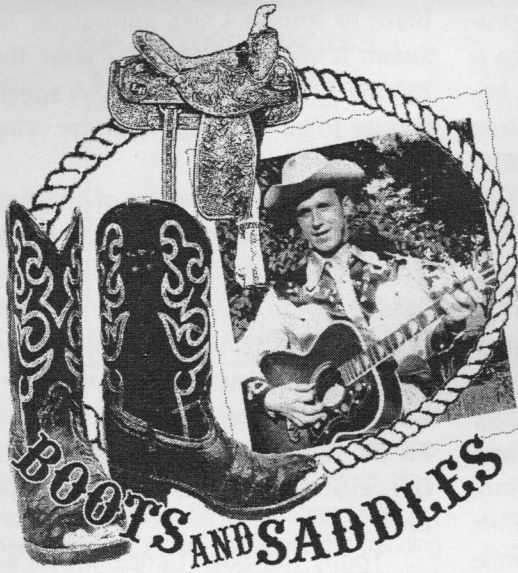
Blyth to former CKNX announcer Jim Swan. It was about a year later that Johnny Brent passed away. A special tribute to him took place at the Wingham Heritage Theatre.

In 2006, the founder of the Barn Dance Historical Society and Canada's No. 1 Singing Cowboy, Earl Heywood, passed away. In 2009, we lost singer Wayne Otterbein who was a board member responsible for promoting the Barn Dance. In 2012, Circle 8 Ranch singer and host, and Barn Dance Gospel host, Ernie King passed away.

Today the Barn Dance shows are about as professional as any country entertainment shows in North America. Almost 150 Barn Dance Pioneer Awards have been awarded to honour past and present performers. Four Barn Dance Souvenir C.D.'s and a DVD have been produced since the Barn Dance has come back. The new Barn Dance performs some 8 to 10 shows a year and has now been active for 22 years. Almost as long as the original Barn Dance from yesterday. Quite a musical heritage from a small town like Wingham. As long as people enjoy real country music the Barn Dance will be around for a long time. Come and celebrate the Barn Dance past and future on August 3d in Wingham. As Johnny Brent always said ... 'From coast to coast, people like old time country most'. Yes, indeed, Johnny, they still do!!!



Grand Finale at Country Heritage Park, Milton (Oct. 2001)



by Lynn Russwurm

The Golden Years are often not so golden. Along with longevity come the aches and pains associated with old age. Those of us who are fortunate enough to still be on the top side are often frustrated with the inability to do what we used to do with little effort. I still get up in the morning and look forward to the day's activities, even though the aches and pains are often with me. You have to adapt and change how you do things sometimes. I'm still in the record business, buying and selling records to collectors. Even though I announced that I was getting out of the business, the thrill of the chase is still with me. I can't go past a thrift

store or a garage sale sign without stopping to see what's there, still looking for that once in a lifetime find. I still go to record shows and book sales (who usually have records too) because I enjoy these things.

I also still play my guitar and bass as much as possible. I can usually be found every Tuesday night at the Galt Legion taking part in the bluegrass jam. Thursday night usually finds me at the Commercial Tavern in Maryhill for the open mike and many a

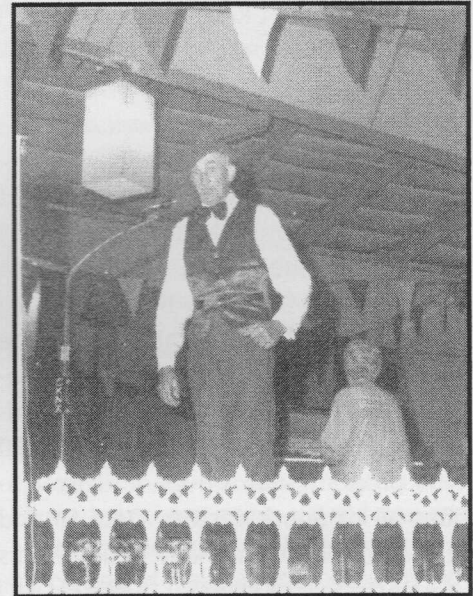
Friday or Saturday, I'll be there to enjoy the music. I take my guitar and sing for patients in the nursing home where my wife is a victim of Alheimers Disease. I also play with Bob Tremblay with the Two Plus Who in various locations, especially at the Top End Restaurant in Neustadt, where we have a standing engagement every second Saturday night in the month.

On top of that I dabble in stamp collecting, song writing, I compile CD re-issues for the British Archives in England and for Rosedale Music here in Canada. I recorded my own CD about 2 years ago and now I find I'm getting an award from "The National

Traditional Country Music Association" in Iowa where I'll be going to pick up that award in August, the award is for "CD of the Year for Songwriting". On top of that, I have about 25 grandchildren who sometimes want a bit of my time.

Anybody out there need a bass player?? - I've still got some time on my hands.

Country Music Memories



CLARK JOHNSON at a Barn Dance Reunion Show in Listowel in 1972.



HUGHIE ELDER AND ERNIE KING at a Barn Dance Reunion Show in Listowel in 1972.



The Two Plus Who at the Top End in Neustadt May 2014. L to R Lynn Russwurm, Thum Murray and Robert Tremblay.

BRUCE ROBERTSON ~ Ranch Boy

by Lynn Russwurm

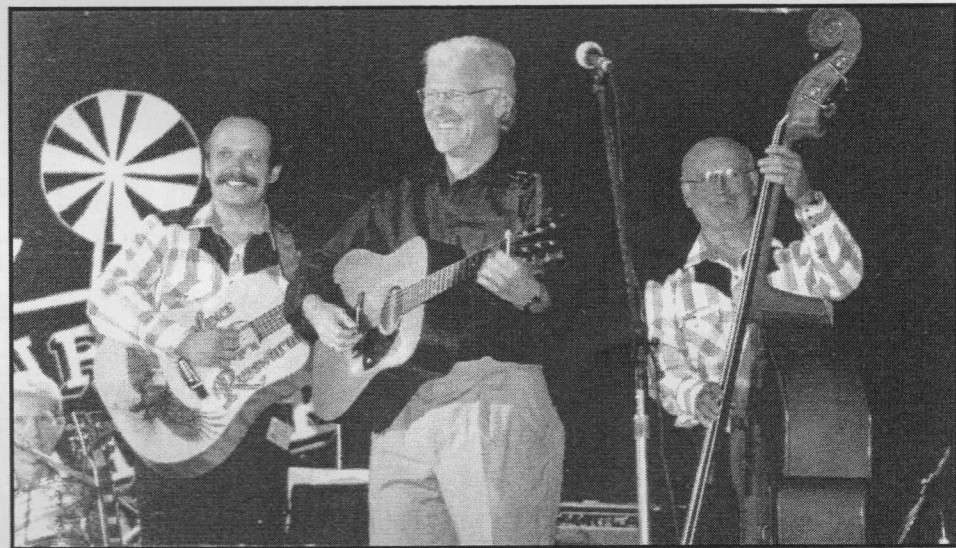
Bruce Robertson, musician, teacher, carpenter. An unassuming member of Don Robertson's Ranch Boys in the heady days of the original Barn Dance in the '50s. Many people assumed Bruce was a son of Don and Cora Robertson, not so, however he was a nephew. Born in 1937, Bruce was in the right place at the right time to step into Ernie King's shoes when Ernie left the Ranch Boys to take up a position with CKNX-TV. Bruce had taken some guitar lessons from Ernie and for a young man in high school, this was a golden opportunity, playing with the most popular country band in the area.

Sometimes it was quite demanding, playing 6 nights a week, and falling asleep in the classroom in the daytime. He decided to further his education and teaching seemed like a good choice for a career, so Teacher's College was the next step. He relinquished his position with the Ranch Boys to Hank Bedard who was an eager replacement. After spending 2 years in Teacher's College, Bruce took a position at King Edward School in 1958 where he stayed until 1962, when he applied for a position with the Howick Public School as principal. Now his life's course was set. He stayed with Howick until 1985 when he transferred to Wingham until retirement in 1992.

Through the years he kept up his skill with the guitar and

was persuaded to record one song on a Barn Dance CD, his only recording, which is a shame because his voice came through bright and clear. Today he can be found entertaining on a limited basis with the Barn Dance, also with The Two Plus Who for an occasional guest spot at the Top End Restaurant in Neustadt. Also dabbling in carpentry work which he enjoys

in between stays at the cottage, Bruce is a contented man, having raised 3 children and now enjoying 7 grand children. Be sure to come out to The Barn Dance at the Homecoming in Wingham on August 3, where he will be one of the featured performers in his home town. My hat is off to you, Bruce Robertson.



St. Clements Barn Dance, July 25, 1998 - Bruce Robertson (centre), with Gerry Boppre on drums, Lance Russwurm on guitar and Lynn Russwurm on bass.

DRAW WINNERS

- ★ These are the winners of our draws held at the Barn Dance Jambo-ree / Campout Weekend in May ~
- ★ **SHARE THE WEALTH DRAW - Fri., May 23, 2014**
- ★ Milo Westlake, 2940 Nafziger Rd., Wellesley, ON; and
- ★ Ray Stock, 3988 James St., Shakespeare, ON.
- ★ **SHARE THE WEALTH DRAW - Sat., May 24, 2014**
- ★ Gerry Danen, 2165 Line 29, Tavistock, ON; and
- ★ Burnell Kipfer, R.R. #1, Sebringville, ON.
- ★ **GUITAR WINNER -**
- ★ Arnold Clarke, 5746 Union Rd., Port Stanley, ON.

★ *Congratulations to all winners, and thanks to all who tried to win.* ★

Country Music Memories



BARN DANCE REUNION SHOW 1979 - for the Wingham Centennial, featuring Sharon Strong.



THE RANCH BOYS - 1947 - with Cactus Mac as a featured artist performer.



ST. CLEMENTS BARN DANCE SHOW 1998 - Fiddler's Delight featuring Graham and Eleanor Townsend; with fiddlers Vic Pasowisty and Mike Slauenwhite in the background.



CKNX TELEVISION SHOW - Western Roundup from the 1960s. L to R - Danny Grunnett, Lucky Ambeau with Al Cherny, Johnny Day, Don Steele and Slim Boucher.



St. Clements Barn Dance 1998 with both Barn Dance MCs Jim Swan and Johnny Brent.

Country Music Memories



BARN DANCE REUNION SHOW 1979 - for the Wingham Centennial, with original MC Johnny Brent.



An offstage picture at THE BARN DANCE CAMPOUT JAM-BOREE AROUND 2003. L to R - Hank Bedard, Walter Ostanek and Wayne Otterbein.



From left to right - Doris Webster, Doc Cruikshank and Jean Gaunt. The two ladies are members of The Howard Sisters, Barn Dance singers.

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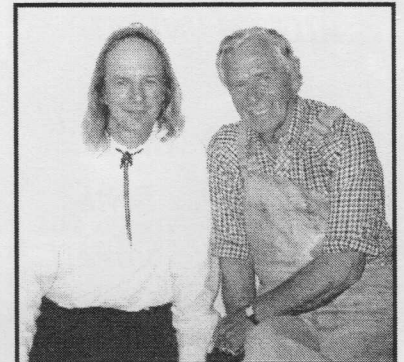
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Comedy Duo Elmer and Jed with a young fiddler, Al Cherny, at a Barn Dance in 1954.



Grant Heywood and Gordie Tapp, aka Cousin Clen, backstage at the 2000 Blyth Barn Dance Campout Jamboree.

Country Music Memories



BARN DANCE REUNION SHOW 1979 - for the Wingham Centennial, featuring Earl and Martha Heywood.



BARN DANCE REUNION SHOW IN BRUSSELS - From the 1970's. An "All Star Cast".



CKNX Radio and Barn Dance performers "THE SERENADE RANCH GANG". L to R: Maurice Bolyer, Lloyd Bank, Earl Heywood, Bill Simms, and Jack Kingston.



"THE RANCH BOYS" - as seen on CKNX T.V. Circle 8 Ranch (early 1960's picture). L to R: Bruce Robertson, Cora Robertson, Ernie King, Don Robertson, Ross Mann and Reg Bitton.

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A BIG THANK YOU  
to all the Volunteers  
at the 17th Annual  
Barn Dance Blyth  
Campout Jamboree!!  
~~~~~



1963 Barn Dance rehearsal with: from L to R: Jean, Isabelle, Doris and Laura of the Howard Sisters, with Hap Swatridge, Elmer Purdon and Earl Heywood.



1947 Barn Dance. L to R: Bud Cruikshank; George Jordan; Cactus Mac; Pauline Swanson, Sweetheart of the Barn Dance; Cora Robertson; Don Robertson. Front and centre, Earl Heywood and Johnny Brent. Behind the mic, Rossy Mann. Archie Mann; Fred Templeman.

MARY ELLIOTT ~ Versatile

by Lynn Russwurm

I used to watch this little girl with her shy little smile on Circle Eight Ranch. She would never say very much on TV, letting others talk for her, but since I've gotten to know her I find she's very good at talking. But that's what life experience can do for you.

Mary Elliott was into music at a very young age. At age twelve she was fronting her own band which included Scotty Pawson, Doug McNall and her sister, Phyllis. In high school her grades suffered and she flunked out in Grade 11. However, her mother felt she needed more education and decided to send her to Goderich to take a course in business. Mary took the \$365.00 to enroll in the course but instead found her way to Rossie Mann's music store in Bluevale and came away with a D-18 Martin guitar.

Now you can believe that caused quite a stir in the Elliott household. However, Mary's mother relented when Mary started singing regularly on Circle Eight. But Mary had to repay all of the \$365.00 and in order to do so she went into factory work and then in a clothing store for several years, but she paid her mother back in full. Finally she went to work in a bank where she stayed for many years, until she decided to go back to school, with the result she now has a P.H.D. and is an ordained minister. She retired from the bank in 2000 and is now a Psycho-Therapist Counselor and often works with disturbed teenagers which she finds very rewarding.

Now to get back to her music, Mary worked many dates with the Ranch Boys plus the Barn Dance and Circle Eight Ranch on TV. She also fulfilled a life-long dream of recording in Nashville which she did with her Teenage Runaway album in 1989. She did the whole production on her own, wrote the songs and travelled to Nashville a number of times until she had her dream fulfilled. And today she feels it was all worthwhile.

At Ernie King's request she took over the Sunday morning Gospel Sing at the Blyth Camp Out and has turned it into one of the major events of the weekend Jamboree.

My hat is off to someone who followed her dreams and can look back on a satisfactory life. Mary will be the first to say she could not have done it without the support of family and friends. She has two sons she is very

proud of and two grandchildren to dote on, what more can anyone ask for.

Mary returns to the Barn Dance stage on August 3 for the Wingham Homecoming. Y'all come and hear this exceptional lady one more time



Mary Elliott receiving the Barn Dance Pioneer Award from host Sue Widmeyer.



The current Barn Dance Band - l to r: Bill Norris, fiddle; Grant Heywood, drums and vocals; Doug Dietrich, steel and dobro guitar; Al Alderson, bass guitar and vocals; Fred Lewis, electric and acoustic guitar and vocals.

The Mercey Brothers Labyrinth of Distinction Inductees

Hometown country group 'The Mercey Brothers' were honoured on Canada Day, July 1st as they were inducted into Hanover's Labyrinth of Distinction in Heritage Square. The Labyrinth is a design feature of Heritage Square, visioned to honour and perpetuate individuals whose accomplishments, contributions and dedication have been influential to the betterment of, or have bestowed honour on the Hanover community.

The Mercey Brothers, Larry, Ray and Lloyd Mercey, are Canadian Country Music icons. Originally from Hanover, they rose to fame across the nation from their inception in 1957 to their retirement in 1989. They appeared on CKNX T.V. and the CKNX Barn Dance, and were National Winners of CBC's Talent Caravan in 1960, leading to international success. Some of their chart topping hits include, 'Just The Snap of Your Fingers', (written by Barn Dance pioneer, Lynn Russwurm), 'Uncle Tom', 'Hello Mom', 'Who Wrote The Words' and so many more.

The Mercey Brothers were 7 time Juno award winners and toured Europe in the early 1970's, appearing on a number of BBC T.V. shows. In Canada they made appearances on the Tommy Hunter Show, Don Messer's Jubilee, The Ronnie Prophet Show, Tommy Banks Show, and weekly on the George Hamilton IV Show for two seasons, and many others.

They also appeared on the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, and achieved Gold Album status with their 9th album 'Comin' On Stronger' and produced more number one and top ten hit singles from their 18 albums. The Mercey Brothers were inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame in 1989.

Hanover Mayor, Kathi Maskell announced that 'The

Mercey Brothers have earned distinction in the music industry, bestowing honour on themselves and our community as a result of their talents.' Along with The Mercey Brothers, and also originally from Hanover, Patrick Switzer is a pioneer in downhill longboarding and is a 3 time Canadian and World Longboarding Champion who will be inducted as well.



The Mercey Brothers - Larry, Lloyd and Ray.

Crippled Duck receives Barn Dance Pioneer Award



Barn Dance M.C., Jim Swan, and Barn Dance Historical Society President, Ruth Baxter, present the Barn Dance Pioneer Award to Harry and Debbie Busby of "Crippled Duck" at the recent 17th Annual Blyth Barn Dance Campout Jamboree.

COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

* **July 10 - 13** - Valley Bluegrass Festival, Renfrew. Email: info@valleybluegrass.ca 613-432-5000. Presents Junior Sis & Ramblers Choice (Virginia); The Dick Smith / Mike O'Reilly Band (Virginia/Canada); Hard Ryde PEI County; Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers (Ohio); The Delaney Bros. (New York); Traditionally Wound (Central Ont.). Also featuring The Gibson Bros.; Concession 23; Dusty Drifters; Thyme & Reason; Maple Hill. MCs Mike O'Reilly and Howard Bonner and guest radio DJs. www.valleybluegrass.ca 613-432-9084. The above number is also for advance tickets.

* **July 11 - 13** - Preston Springs Country Jamboree, Hastings. www.prestonsprings.ca 705-698-2268.

* **July 17 - 20** - Lindsay Country Jamboree, www.lindsaycountryjamboree.com 800-954-9998. Line up - Riki Knox; Bill White; The Hughey Band; Montana Sky; Stacey Zegers; Chuck Simms; Dave Barber; Marvin James; Diane Chase; Jamie Warren; Wendy Lynn Snider; George Hillier; John Fraser; Mark Laforme; Eddie Eastman; The Garretts; Paul Jones; Gord Youmans. Lindsay Ag. Grounds and Facility, 671 Erskiline Ave. Open Mic Thurs. - Sat. 1 to 5 pm; shuttle bus service; rough camping is in effect; sites are on a first come first serve basis. Campers can come in starting Tues., July 15.

* **July 18 - 20** - Minden Hills Bluegrass Festival - Feature band Eddie LeBlanc & Friends; Rhyme 'n' Reason; Traditionally Wound; The Tebworth Bros.; The Scholts; Randy Morrison & Flatt River; Acoustical Strings; The Sweet Grass Band. 1-800461-7677 or Denis at 705-457-9783

www.mindenhillscuegrassfestival.ca

* **Bond Head Fiddle Club** - at the Community Hall. Jam Session and dance starts 7 pm, the 4th Tuesday of the month. 519-941-2124.

* **Holland Landing** - Community Centre, country and western jam session and dance. 7 pm, the 3rd Thursday of the month. Info 905-473-7072.

* **Aug. 28 - 31** - Auction Barn Jamboree, Colborn. www.auctionbarnjamboree.ca. Main stage line up Gary Hooper; David McComb; Kirstyn Cross; Anita Bird; Ken Harrison

(digger); Honey West; Amberley Beatty; Naomi Bristow; Rob Hood; John Lester; Kurk Bernard; Jodi Moffatt; Barry Munro; Brad Munro; Arlene Quinn; Mike Mamelin; Rodger Collombe; Tom Mark; Harold MacIntyre; Paul Weber. Open mic Thurs. to Sun. 1 to 5 pm.

* **July 24 - 27** - Palmer Rapids Twin Music Festival. www.palmerrapids.ca

* **July 31 - Aug. 3** - Boots and Hearts Music Festival. www.bootsandhearts.com

* **July 31 - Aug. 3** - Classic Country Music Reunion. Since it's inception in 1992 was in Lindsay, not at Centennial Park, Trenton. Legends, pioneers and new frontiers. A reunion of artists and history of Canada's country music. Join us for this great weekend of classic country music. Info 705-878-3102. Everyone welcome. Open mic 1 to 5 pm. Main stage - Friday - Tim Sanders Band; Reg Benoit; Scotty Gartshore; Barb Grenier; Bob McQuaid; Eileen Walsh; Neville Wells; host John Blake. CHEX TV. Saturday - Mitch Barker; Wendell Ferguson; Jaxon Gartshore; Kiley Joe Masson; Ginny McIlmoyle; James Ryce. Host John Lester. Sunday AM Gospel show 11 am. Sunday show 6:30 pm - Adrian Boudreau; Cheryl Casselman; Steve Piticco; Dan Paul Rogers; Mary Rowan. Host Barb Grenier. Sound Doug Deveaux. Tim Sanders Band featuring Tim Sanders, Andy Schick, Fran Woodcock, Dusty King Jr. and Sean Kellett. 705-878-3102.

* **Aug. 1 - 2** - Flinton Country Bluegrass Jamboree. www.flintonrecreationclub.ca 613-379-9972.

* **Aug. 7 - 8** - Hitchin' Post Jamboree, Grafton. www.ambrec.com/hitchinpost 905-349-3765

* **Aug. 14 - 17** - Havelock Country Jamboree www.havelockjamboree.com 800-539-3353.

* **August 17** - Musicians Corn Roast 905-986-4437.

* **Sept. 11 - 14** - Marmora Country Jamboree. 613-395-0774.

* **Sept. 19 - 21** - Trillium Country Jamboree, Hastings. www.trilliumjam.mine.nu 705-696-2897.

* **Aug. 27** - Auction Barn, Keeler Centre, Colborne presents Marty Haggard & Leona Williams www.auctionbarnjamboree.ca at 7 pm

* **July 11 - 13** - Napanee Country Jamboree presented by Hart Acre. Mill Pond Music and Lisa Hart Concert.

* **Aug. 8 - 10** - Holstein Bluegrass. Lineup in last country calendar. Make it a bluegrass music weekend. Info Bill Crooks 416-460-6489 wjcrooks@sympatico.ca

* **Sept. 11** - Auction Barn presents Gene Watson, the golden voice of Nashville. Special guests Darlene Thibault and Dan Paul Rogers. Show time 7 pm, doors open 5 pm. 433

* **Appearances by Doreen Brown:** July 17 - Lindsay Country Jamboree; July 31 - Aug. 2 - Classic Country Music Reunion; Aug. 8-10 - Holstein Bluegrass Celebration.

* **Appearances with Music** - by band, Sunrise. Doug Dietrich, Brian Scholtzhauer, Ken Meadows and Don Maxwell as follows: July 29 Danceland, Lakeside; Aug. 16 Stratford Legion; Sept. 20 Victory Legion, London; Sept. 27 Stratford Legion; Oct. 11 Victory Legion, London. All shows are 8 to 12 pm

* **Sunday Night Concerts:** Gore Park, Elmira. July 6 Paul Weber; July 13 Peace River Band; July 20 Ridin High; July 27 The Two plus Who (Bob Tremblay and Lynn Russwurm) with Jimmy Phair, Linda Elder and Carmen Butchart; Aug. 3 Steve Parkinson and Stony Lonesome; Aug. 10 Southbound; Aug. 17 Steve Piticco and South Mountain; Aug. 24 The Two plus Who; Aug. 31 Larry Mercey Trio.

Much appreciation and thanks to all the wonderful folks that helped make our annual Blyth Campout a super weekend. Attendance keeps climbing and thanks to those who tell a friend. Have a great country - bluegrass summer and be safe.

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BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

The entire town of Wingham, Ontario is serviced by the single postal code N0G 2W0 which is sometimes jokingly said to be a mnemonic for No-one goes to Wingham, Ontario.

I count myself as one of the countless exceptions to that rule who sincerely consider Wingham, Ontario an exceptional place.

Wingham has a special place in my heart. It was in Wingham that I first came to know and fall in love with the Barn Dance, past and present. It happened in that lovely downstairs museum with the wonderful members of the Barn Dance Historical Society. It was there that an entire world of Canadian country music history was revealed to me.

Before coming to Wingham, I knew of Wilf Carter, Hank Snow, and Earl Heywood. I didn't, however, know, that the barn dance mythology which had played out all across the United States during the heyday of radio

had its own Ontario version here at the confluence of two branches of the Maitland river.

I learned all about Wingham's W. T. "Doc" Cruickshank and the birth of CKNX, the home of the Barn Dance in that unexpectedly glorious and elegant Barn Dance Museum downstairs at the North Huron Museum. In another self-effacing moment in Wingham history, know that Cruickshank dubbed his fledgling broadcast as J.O.K.E. because he thought in many ways it was just that, nothing more than a pastime or a hobby.

If Doc's early transmissions in 1926 were indeed a joke, then the emergence of the CKNX Barn Dance in 1937 was the punchline, with the emphasis on the punch. The Barn Dance was a musical technical knockout, hitting well above its weight in tiny little Wingham, Ontario.

Begun in 1937 as a half an hour program of recorded old time music, the Barn Dance switched to live, local talent and quickly became the most listened to program on CKNX. An institution was born.

The Barn Dance's emphasis on local talent perfectly echoed Cruickshank's insist-

ence that the broadcast content be close to its listeners. Cruickshank demanded that all news on CKNX have fifty percent local content.

When Johnny Brent came on as the manager of the Barn Dance in 1942 and took the road on the show as a travelling unit, the influence and significance of the CKNX Barn Dance rivalled that of WSM's Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, Tennessee.

Charitable organizations were allowed to sponsor the show that claimed to attract 150,000 listeners to its now three hour broadcast which included professional talent.

Household battles were fought every Saturday night at 8:00 pm from Tobermory to Port Dover and from Sarnia to Toronto as families had to choose between CBC's Foster Hewitt calling the Leafs game or Johnny Brent emceeing the Barn Dance.

The Barn Dance remained on the air for over 25 years and is recognized as the longest live radio show of its kind in the history of Canadian broadcasting.

More than Alice Munro, the Barn Dance defined the town of Wingham, Ontario.

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