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The Barn Dance Opera Journal



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Winter Edition

1

Barn Dance Band Profile Series

Fred Lewis, Picking Guitars & Guitar Picking

by Grant Heywood

If you've ever met Fred Lewis of the Barn Dance Band, you'd likely think he was born with six strings and a guitar neck in his hands. Fred loves picking guitar and works hard at mastering 24 frets into beautiful music. In reality, Fred's first instrument was drums at age 4, since his biggest influence as a kid was his dad, drummer Bill Lewis. Bill would have band rehearsals at the house and country music was always the music of choice, which had a profound impact on young Fred.

Fred still lives in his hometown of Woodstock, Ont. and continues to perform with his dad Bill Lewis. In fact, Fred attributes 2/3 of his musical influences came from Bill. Family played a big part in Fred's appreciation of country music. His aunt took Fred to buy his first record 'Storms of Life' by Randy Travis, then his grandparents got him 'Born To Boogie' by Hank Williams Jr., and his mom got Fred Merle Haggard & the Strangers 'Greatest Hits'. But the first record Fred really loved was by local artist, Guy Melanson.

It wasn't long before Fred became absorbed in music and at 16 started playing guitar. Fred says it was his mentor, Guy Melanson who had a major impact on his singing and playing guitar, and he learned a lot from Guy just hanging around his house. Fred would play house parties with Guy and later on performed shows with him and his dad. It was no secret that Fred always wanted to be a singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist like Guy, and a paint and body man/drummer, like his dad. Without any formal music education, Fred just forged ahead listening, practicing and gigging as much as he could.

Fred eventually attended Conestoga College and today he works as a metrologist, performing measurement studies and

projects, calibration and welding analysis, mainly in the car industry. Fred also has two beautiful daughters who he loves dearly and are a big part of his life. Besides playing music and working as a metrologist, Fred loves to tinker with amplifiers and guitars, build hot rods and read a good book. But I'd say pickin' and singin' is what he loves best.

When it comes to pickin' and singin', Fred loves it all, from country, blues, and bluegrass to rock, swing and jazz. As Fred says, "There is something to be learned from every type of music." Everyone has their favourite musical artists and Fred has many. "There are 3 or 4 that are clear standouts for me" says Fred. He likes Marty Stuart because Marty is a singer songwriter, player and historian. Then there's Dwight Yoakam, because of his own style and guitar heavy production. "I like George Jones, because he could sing anything" says Fred. Of course Conway Twitty is special, because Fred loves his voice and he could always pick hit songs. From ZZ Top, Neil Young and Led Zepelin to Elvis, Chet Atkins, Roger Miller and many more, Fred just loves good music and musicianship.

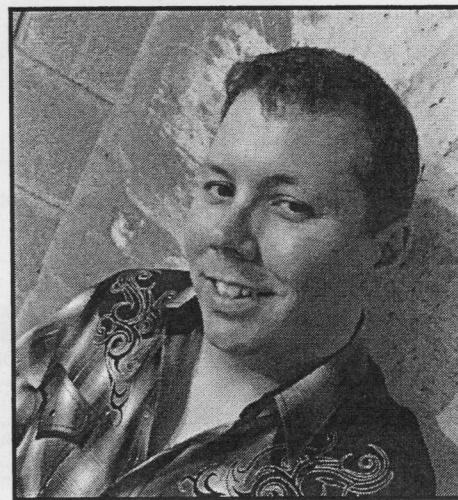
When Fred really got into guitars and pickin', he gravitated to mainly Fender Telecaster guitars (of which he has many). His amplifiers of choice are also Fenders such as a vintage Deluxe Reverb or Princeton Reverb. He also has a few custom telecasters and custom amplifiers. Besides playing guitar and drums, Fred also plays dobro, bass, mandolin and banjo....but not all at once. He can't pass a music store without taking a peek at those guitars hanging on the wall. Taking up steel guitar has become a recent challenge. Just type in *Fred Lewis telemodders.com* to learn about Fred's guitar, amplifier, & effects habit. It goes without saying that every guitar player has

their favourite pickers. Fred has a long list that include, Roy Buchanan, Redd Volkeart, Pete Anderson, Steve Pitocco, Paul Chapman, Brent Mason, Tony Rice, Albert Lee, Bernard Purdie, Vince Gill, Chuck Berry.....and so many more.

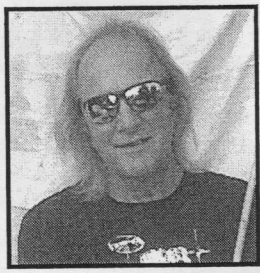
I think I first played with Fred at an outdoor event in the late 90's east of Oshawa, when we backed up Rick Jones with the Gone Country band, an Alan Jackson tribute act. Fred was younger then with long hair, but eager to get on stage and please the audience. To date, Fred has played with many artists including Sarah Cripps, Shelly Rastin, Country Justice, Naomi Bristow, Stacey Zegers, Marie Bottrell, Johnny Burke, Harold McIntyre, and Paul Weber. He also is the guitarist for Amberley Beatty's Patsy Cline & Loretta Lynn tribute shows. As well, Fred plays with the Highwaymen Tribute show, and of course he is the resident guitarist with the Barn Dance Band. Fellow Barn Dance fiddler, Bill Norris, also plays with Fred's own band 'Ridin' High', along with Paul Newell and Fred's dad, Bill Lewis.

Some of Fred's fondest show memories include, Sarnia Bayfest, many festivals,

Continued on Page 3



The Editor Speaks by Grant Heywood



2017 has finally arrived and I'm hoping it will be a better year than 2016. Not only did we lose a lot of well-known entertainers, but it was a tumultuous year for the whole world in many ways as well. Winter certainly came early with lots of snow which made for a white Christmas. I'm sure most folks had plenty of food and good cheer over Christmas and New Year's. I know my waist size didn't shrink. I think the only thing that was reduced was the Canadian dollar south of the border, which makes it tough for any snowbirds heading there to spend the winter.

Our kitchen is almost completed from last winter's renovation and now the upstairs bath has been designated as a renovation in progress. There's never a dull moment at our house. The end of 2016 also marked my retirement from my 'day job'. I was a fiberglass technician working for a company in Conestogo for almost 20 years. My job was repairing fiberglass/acrylic bath fixture units, and entailed residential, commercial, and new construction housing. Now I can get all the maintenance work that needs to be done at home. Oh boy!

An anomaly that has occurred for many musician folks my age recently, is the hours of performance. I have had this discussion with many musician friends who are usually 55 or older. Some of them play country music, while others play blues, jazz, rock or other music. I sincerely believe it's the demographics that dictate what hours musicians usually play at a job. Gone are the days of youth where you would play a gig from 9 'til 1 or even 2

a.m. I still remember when bands would play 6 nights at a bar and be required to play a Saturday afternoon matinee as well. That has all changed now to outdoor afternoon festivals, afternoon shows, or evening performances that end at 10 or 11 p.m. We are the 'new', old folks and our time clocks and bodies will tell us what we prefer.

I recently saw a post on Facebook of a friend who is 10 or 12 yrs. younger than me, and plays in a heavy rock band. He was delighted that the bar owner changed the time of the band's performance at a pub near Hamilton, from 7 to 11, as opposed to 9:30 to 1:30. I know what it's like to play in a rock band.....I still do, and it takes physical and mental stamina to get through a night. It's not uncommon now for many older...or should I say, seasoned musicians, to play more reasonable hours at a gig. It's not just the band performance that takes its toll, but the lugging equipment, set-up, and tear down, that makes for a long stretch of time.

I can remember many times arriving at least 3 or 4 hours before a gig, perform for 4 hours, tear down and be home just before the sun came up. Some folks thought we had roadies to do all that work. Yeah right! We were the roadies often times and if we did have roadies our paycheques were a lot smaller too. Most people don't see the 'behind the scenes' so called 'glamorous life of a musician. The untold hours of practice, cost of instruments and maintenance, and countless hours of driving (sometimes through blinding snowstorms), setting up, performing, and tear down. Just to make a meager paycheque and perform for adulating fans.

Our Barn Dance Campout Jamboree is no exception. The Saturday night show runs from 8 p.m. til 10 p.m. with a dance afterward that goes until midnight. I know there are a few that would like to stay longer and dance, but after an afternoon of activities, an evening show and dance, most are happy to see it end by 12. Plus, there is a morning gospel show the next

The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment

Museum

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(or leave a message)

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day. The volunteers, and musicians have been working all day to put on the best evening performance ever for all of the fans of the Barn Dance. As a matter of fact, this year will be our 20th Anniversary of the Blyth Barn Dance Campout Jamboree. We will be working hard at putting together an extra special effort to bring you the best country music show for your money. You can count on that! We look forward to seeing you at the next Barn Dance show.

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

2017 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Sun., April 23	Fundraiser - Appin Presbyterian Church - 2:30 p.m.	Glencoe Agricultural Hall, Glencoe, ON
Sun., May 7	Barn Dance Show - 2:30 p.m.	Purple Hill Country Hall, Purple Hill
May, 25 - 28	20th Annual Campout Jamboree	Blyth Arena and Campgrounds, Blyth, ON
Sun., June 11	Barn Dance Show - 3:00 p.m.	Commercial Tavern, Maryhill

Continued from Page 1

Barn Dance shows and theatre performances. He's opened for Keith Urban, Tim McGraw, Brooks & Dunn, Doc Walker, Michelle Wright and many more. He's done studio recordings with Shelly Rastin, Sarah Cripps, Kristen Clark, Rose & Tom Merrigan and others. For the last few years Fred has been working on his own cd project of original songs. Fred used some great local musicians as well as some of the top musicians in Nashville for this upcoming release. Recently completed, it will be released sometime this year, 2017. I was glad to be a part of some of the backup harmonies and look forward to hearing it myself.

For a young man, Fred Lewis has had many musical opportunities, but he has not taken them for granted. When it comes to the Barn Dance, "That's like a family", says Fred. In regard to the Barn Dance Band, Fred says, "They're all great guys and we all work together so well." He's happy to be a part of the shows that keep the history of Canadian country music, and country music in general alive, and bringing forward new generations of artists. "I love all the people and fans I get to meet and talk to, as well as talk and play with so many other musicians and people who just like good country music," says Fred. I know how Fred feels when he says he's glad to see a new chapter for future artists via the Barn Dance, so it will keep real country music alive for others to enjoy.

Fred is undoubtedly a fine picker and singer and his goals are simple. As Fred says it, "I just want to continue playing music and keep learning everything I can." Who can argue with that.



Fred Lewis at a recording studio.

Notable Canadian Celebrities Who Passed On in 2016

At the end of every year we reflect on loved ones and personalities we remember who died. It is hard to compile a list of each and every person of significance who was either close or etched in our memories. I realize there are many more of celebrity status, who passed on in 2016. So, I decided to list just 7, who in my opinion deserve recognition in the Barn Dance Opera Journal.

1. Lynn Russwurm : Lynn is certainly a big loss not only to his family but to the Barn Dance Historical Society. Lynn was a singer/songwriter/musician & promoter of country music. His love for country music knew no bounds and just like my father Earl Heywood, Lynn kept going right to the end when he passed away at age 85.

2. Gordie Tapp: Gordie started out as a radio broadcaster and then became the fun lovin' 'Cousin Clem' on CBC's 'Country Hoedown'. He was also a cousin of my dad, Earl Heywood as well. He was a comedian, singer and entertainer and knew how to deliver simple corny jokes. He was a regular on TV's Hee Haw and also performed to the bitter end at age 94.

3. Ray Griff: Born in Vancouver B.C., and raised in Alberta, Ray was a singer/songwriter of great magnitude. He composed nearly 2,000 songs and had 750 of them recorded by the likes of Conway Twitty, Eddy Arnold, Crystal Gayle, George Jones, Dolly Parton, Mel Tillis, Loretta Lynn, Wayne Newton and so many more. Many will remember Ray's song 'Canadian Pacific'. Ray died at age 76.

4. Oscar Brandt: Oscar was a Canadian-born (Winnipeg) American folk singer/songwriter & author. He moved to Great Neck, N.Y., composed 300 songs and recorded nearly 100 albums of mainly patriotic Canadian & American folk songs. He wrote the theme song for CBC TV's 'Let's Sing Out'. His Canadian patriotic song 'Something To Sing About', actual title 'This Land of Ours', is one of Canada's national songs. A regular at the Mariposa & Newport Folk Festival, he appeared with Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Woodie Guthrie & Bob Dylan regularly. He died at age 96.

5. Bobby Curtola: Born in Port Arthur (Thunder Bay) Ont., Bobby was an early '60's teen idol singer with hits like, 'Indian Giver', 'Aladdin', and 'Fortune Teller', which sold 2.5 million copies internationally. In 1964 he wrote and performed the song 'Things Go Better With Coca Cola', and soon became the pitchman for Coke. Bobby had a successful TV show on CTV before moving on to a successful singing career in Vegas. He received many awards including The Order of Canada. Bobby died at his home in Edmonton at age 73.

6. Leonard Cohen: Born in Westmount Quebec, Cohen pursued a career as a poet & author during the 50's & early 60's. He began recording in 1967, and his lyrics explored religion, isolation, sexuality and personal relationships. 'Suzanne', recorded by Judy Collins, became a cult classic. An iconic songwriter, Cohen was inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, Songwriters Hall of Fame, and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. He also received the Order of Canada and Glenn Gould Award. His hit song 'Hallelujah' has become a world-wide standard. Cohen died at his home in Los Angeles at age 82.

7. Gordie Howe: Dubbed 'Mr. Hockey', Gordie was born in Floral, Saskatchewan. From 1946 to 1980 he played 26 seasons with the NHL and 6 seasons with the WHL. Much of his career was with the Detroit Red Wings and had 4 Stanley Cup wins with the Wings. He won the Hart Trophy for most valuable player 6 times and 6 Art Ross Trophies for leading scorer. He received many awards in his lifetime including the NHL Lifetime Achievement Award and induction to the Hockey Hall of Fame. Howe held many hockey scoring records until they were broken in the early 80's by fellow Canadian, Wayne Gretzky. Gordie was also ambidextrous and could shoot both left and right handed. He was the only player to have competed in the NHL in 5 different decades. The Gordie Howe 'hat trick' was, a goal, an assist, and a fight, all in the same game. A true legend of hockey, Gordie passed away at his son's home near Toledo Ohio at age 88.

CD Review

'Green Mountain Standard Time' Rick & the All Star Ramblers

By Grant Heywood

This is the 6th cd from Rick & the Ramblers western swing band from Vermont, and it certainly is one of the best efforts from the band to date. This is western swing done in retro style the way it was intended, and this 7, sometimes 8 pc. band proves it on every track. Many vocal styles abound on this recording and the harmonies are priceless. Put this on when driving your vehicle and you'll forget all about any traffic problems you may encounter.

Just listen to the old Hank Williams song, 'Fly Trouble', opening with Doug Reed's buzzing fiddle and it's the perfect tune to put a smile on your face. When it comes to songwriting, lead singer Rick Norcross is no slouch, and certainly keeps the swing vibe happening with 'Don't Do Me Like That With Your Cowboy Hat.' Rambler's resident female singer, Taryn Noelle has such a sweet sultry voice on 'I'll Get Over You,' and completely owns the song on 'I'm A Blue Baby Now'. Bass player, Dave Rowell's vocals are buttery smooth on the Rick Norcross tune 'They Say You Can't Take It With You When You Go'. This song certainly wins the prize for the longest title on the cd.

Rick Norcross has a number of cuts on the cd, including a co-write with good pal Panama Red, and Charlie Williams, on a tune 'Lost In Austin'. This song should definitely be enshrined as a Texas swing classic. The title cut, 'Green Mountain Standard Time,' was co-written by myself, (Grant Heywood) with Rick Norcross. It's a brief glimpse into Rick's long musical career that always ends up with Rick at home in the Green Mountain State of Vermont....with no snow. The Nashville 'Time Jumpers' Larry Franklin penned instrumental, 'Texoma Bound,' is a real treat, and showcases the Rambler band as a well-oiled Texas swing machine to be reckoned with.

There is no doubt that Rick Norcross grew up in Vermont when he sings 'Shelburne Yesterday'. The song harkens back to simpler times in Vermont of which Rick lived every minute. Other songs by Rick include the narrated history of western swing on 'I Love Western



Rick & the Ramblers Green Mountain Standard Time album cover.

Swing,' and the tongue in cheek tune 'I'm Gonna Take It With Me When I Go'.

I have known Rick Norcross now for almost 20 years and had the pleasure of playing with his band on many occasions including the cd release event for 'Green Mountain Standard Time'. Rick was the recipient of the 2015 Academy of Western Artists 'Western Swing Song of The Year Award' for his song 'You Can't Make It Up'. I can honestly say with this most recent cd, that Rick and the Ramblers have hit this one 'out of the park'. Even if you don't like western swing, this is one cd that just may make you change your mind for the better.

Produced by: Rick Norcross Exec. Pro-

ducer: Ken Grillo. Recorded at: Lane Gibson Recording & Mastering, Charlotte, Vermont.

For information to purchase this cd or information about Rick & the Ramblers

Please go to:

www.rickandtheramblers.com



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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

The Tradition Continues

by Doug Dietrich

The Barn Dance Society, our museum and our shows are steeped in tradition. Each one honours the heritage built by the ones who came before us and got it all started back in the 1930's. At the start of each show, you can recall Johnny Brent as our current master of ceremonies, Jim Swan proclaims "from coast to coast people like country music most" and Bill Norris' fiddle on Down Yonder and Maple Sugar brings back memories of Rossy Mann and Ward Allen. We try to stay true to the traditions and spirit established so many years ago. Sometimes, I swear Earl Heywood and Ernie King still roam the stage making sure we do it right.

Over the years we have presented the Pioneer Award to honour many individuals who started the original Barn Dance and many of our traditions. We also have awarded many who have not only carried on the traditions but also established some new

ones. If you check under Awards on the Barn Dance website, www.thebardance.ca, you will see a long list totaling 140 times that the award has been presented since 1997.

Going forward, there will still be some "pioneers" to be honoured but we have now started rewarding a new generation of Barn Dance performers and musicians who are working diligently to carry on the tradition. In May 2016, Naomi Bristow was the first to receive our new Heritage Award. Although she is still in her teens, Naomi has been appearing on the Barn Dance shows for over 10 years and travels all across Canada and the U.S. promoting traditional country music. More recently two members of the current Barn Dance Band, Al Alderson and Fred Lewis, were presented with the award. Future shows will see us presenting more Heritage Awards to a younger generation working to sustain the music and the tradition.

As we roll into 2017, we are fast approaching the 20th anniversary of the annual Blyth Campout and Jamboree in May, a great chance to witness and celebrate the traditions of the Barn Dance and its Society. We want to thank the membership and anyone reading this newsletter for their support and acknowledge that to keep it going requires continued work and support.

I look forward to seeing you at shows in 2017!

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Grant Heywood Attends CD Release Event in Vermont



Grant Heywood performing with Rick & the All Star Ramblers.

It was a proud moment to be able to attend the recent Rick & the All Star Ramblers western swing band, Green Mt. Standard Time event at the Hotel Vermont in Burlington, Vermont. My wife Jeanette and daughter Kianna also attended as Rick and his band played some of their most requested tunes as well as every song on their recent 'Green Mt. Standard Time' cd.

Band leader, Rick Norcross had radio and media people in attendance as well as many die-hard fans. The band went through a dress rehearsal and it wasn't long until the room was jammed and the Ramblers were in 'full swing mode'. Even former ' Rambler' vocalist, Julia Shannon-Grillo returned to sing the Patsy Cline classic, 'Walking After Midnight'. What a treat. Special guest vocalist Amber de Laurentis was also part of the Rambler party that day and didn't disappoint with her 'right on' vocals. Rick had me come on stage to sing the chorus on the title cut, 'Green Mountain Standard Time' and it was certainly a proud moment for both of us.

The Rambler band has to be the hottest outfits in the New England states. These guys & gals 'rock,' and by that I mean they are definite 'pros' when it comes to western swing. Band arranger, Charlie MacFadyen, is a master at piano, accordion, Hammond B-3 organ & lap steel. Taryn Noelle & Amber deLaurentis pro-

vide the necessary female vocal ingredient. Doug Reid's fiddle playing knows no boundaries, and Dono Schabner is Doug's equal on lead & rhythm guitar. The Rambler rhythm section of Dave Rowell on bass & vocals, and Ian Koeller on drums, are totally in sync in providing the 'swing' to this musical genre. Band leader Rick Norcross struts on stage like a proud papa with his custom acoustic guitar and western wear outfit, singing right on cue with the band. A good western swing band, is a sight to behold and hear. A great western swing band is all that and more.

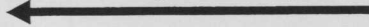
There were a lot of smiles on everyone's face that day and Rick invited us to a special guest supper after the show. It definitely was an honour to be part of the Rick & the All Star Ramblers event and meet some of Rick's close friends. I hope to attend a performance by the group again sometime in the summer.

Thanks Rick.

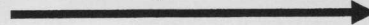
Remembering Gordie Tapp 1922-2016



Gordie and his wife Helen 70th wedding anniversary



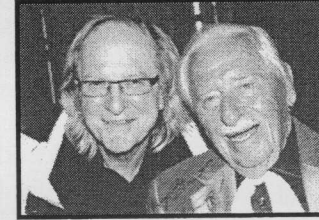
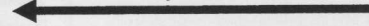
Gordie Tapp (Cousin Clem) with Archie Campbell on Hee Haw.



Gordie Tapp, a gentleman and true entertainer.



Tommy Common, Gordie Tapp, & Tommy Hunter on CBC TV Country Hoedown.



Grant Heywood & Gordie Tapp seen here just after a performance by Gordie a year ago at the Commercial Tavern in Maryhill.

Powell Printing Listowel Tears of Change *by Grant Heywood*



Dani Cassel and Debbie Powell in the Powell Printing storefront.

Owner/operator of Powell Printing in Listowel for 30 years, Debbie Powell, retired last fall, passing the torch to her niece, Dani Cassel. Dani is now the new owner/operator of the business and will continue to provide the service we expect from Powell Printing.

It was with great sadness hearing of original owner, Debbie Powell's passing on Nov. 1, 2016. Debbie was a hard working, kind hearted woman who has kept our Barn Dance Opera Journal going for almost 20 years. Her service and timing was impeccable and she never let us down. Debbie had a lot of hardships in the past number of years losing her dad and her partner Bob. She was a fighter and battled back from cancer, but recently it became too much to handle.

Debbie is one of the finest people I have ever known. I have laughed and cried with her. I have joked over a beer with her and in her last days I played and sang songs for her. I will always remember her dedication and friendship.

Debbie's niece, Dani has taken over the business and I am sure she will have many of the qualities that Debbie had. I look forward to working with Dani and know our relationship will be as if Debbie were there supervising in the wings. Thanks Debbie. Onward, and upward Dani.

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COUNTRY CALENDAR



by Doreen Brown

(Toronto and surrounding area)

* Second Sunday of the month - Don Celsies Jam, at the Orillia Army and Navy Club, 74 Victoria St, Orillia, 1-4:30 p.m., all are welcome.

* Dave Whallen and the Starlite band appearances as follows - Army and Navy, January 3 and 21, Michell's Place, Weston Rd, Toronto on January 7 and March 18. Moose Lodge, Brown's Line, Lakeshore on February 25. Newfoundland Tavern, Danforth Rd, Toronto on January 4 and March 25.

* For upcoming shows at the following - Chic n' Deli, 744 Mt Pleasant Rd., Toronto; Moose Lodge, Etobicoke, 3751 Lakeshore Blvd. West, 416-522-1248. The Newfoundlander, 472 Danforth Rd, Toronto 416 292 6125; Royal Canadian Legion, Hensall Circle, 456 Hensall Circle, branch 582, 905-277-2902.

* For Live Entertainment - Contact Gary Peters, Lindsay, 705-324-9354.

* Every Second Sunday - Upstairs at the Shelburne Community Centre, Jam, all welcome.

* Tuesdays and Fridays - Midland REC Centre, Midland, Ontario has a live band with open mic 1-3 p.m.

* Fiddles and Square - Fiddling and old time square dance parties with Ralph and Sandy Price, 22 Trillium Trail, R.R.# 4, Coldwater Ontario, phone 705-335-3159 or email ralph.sandyprice@sympatico.ca.

* January 7 Upcoming Appearance - Westway United Church, 8 Templar Dr, Etobicoke, one block north of Westway and one block east of Kipling Ave, Etobicoke, live band.

* Every Third Tuesday of the month - the Rosemount Fiddle Club, Rosemount, Ontario has now moved to: 54

Plus Seniors Centre, 7300 Industrial Parkway, New Tecumseh, Rec Centre, Alliston, Ontario 705-435-1055, on the by pass; park left side back of building; Jams 7 p.m. Also Jam same address by sr's 54 plus club last Wednesday of each month.

* March 7 - the Barn Dance band will be performing at the Columbus Centre, Wingham.

* Appearances by Doreen Brown - Shelburne Jams, also above mentioned.

* For Those Preparing For Summer Shows - The Goods, (Good Bros) will be at the Havelock Country Jamboree on August 17th.

* Pickin' In The Park - July 27 - 30, open mic jamborees, camping, no hydro. \$40 per person which includes camping. www.pickininthepark.webs.com, Greg and Heather Holmes 519-925-3017.

* March 25 & 26 - 9 a.m. -12 p.m. ppearance by Debbie McLean with Kim Inch and Steve Peticco at family maple in the country at Walt's sugar shack, 1671 Salem Rd, Consecon, Ontario, phone 613-905-638.

* April 10 - Country show at Oshawa Legion Br 43, 905-723-4511. 471 Simcoe Street South, Oshawa by Ambassador Records, 905-579-7476 ambassador@ambrec.com. 1-5 p.m. as follows; Debbie McLean and daughters of the king; Robin Evans, Frank Woodcock, Chuck Stewart.

* For Upcoming Appearances - Contact Jim Beech, recording artist for bookings 519-353-5801 email jimbeech@bmts.com.

* Thornton Jams - are the second Thursday of the month and Bond Head

Fiddle Club the fourth Tuesday of the month.

* The Barn Dance band performances - April 23, fundraiser Appin Presbyterian Church, 2:30 p.m., Glencoe Agricultural Hall. May 7, 1-2:30 p.m. Purple Hill; May 25-28, 20th Annual Campout, Blyth Arena, Friday afternoon jam upstairs, Friday night show; jam Saturday afternoon in arena; Saturday night show; Gospel show on Sunday.

Please check the website www.thebardance.ca for our annual campout and list of barn dance bands' appearances.

Best in the New Year of 2017. Thanks to all who support our barn dance family of country music and all DJ's internationally and promoters/fans who support our country music, hats off to our Michael T. Wall who recently has a new Christmas release, also to thank him for the many artists' that he has sent their material overseas for consideration of airplay; all are truly appreciated.

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Barn Dance Corner

by Peter Saros

The best gifts of Christmas are the unexpected ones.

This past season I was given Robbie Robertson's autobiography. Robertson is best known for his work as guitarist and principal songwriter in the Band, a roots rock musical outfit. The group of four Canadians (Rick Danko, Garth Hudson, Richard Manuel and Robbie Robertson) and one American (Levon Helm) is perhaps most famous as Bob Dylan's chosen backing band for his 1966 world tour. Robertson's book is titled "Testimony" and is a collection of stories beginning with his childhood on the Six Nations Indian Reserve right through to his current independent work producing movie soundtracks.

The core of Robertson's stories unfold in the 1960's and early '70's. Even so, Robertson chooses to mention a classic 1959 country music song in his brief epilogue

establishing the importance of "serious storytelling" to his upbringing.

The Band would later cover that song, Lefty Frizzell's "Long Black Veil," on their 1968 debut album *Music From Big Pink*.

What fascinates me is that Robertson is quick to establish his country credentials even further by mentioning the importance of the *Louisiana Hayride* to his guitar playing. *The Louisiana Hayride* was a famous barn dance radio program out of Shreveport, Louisiana that provided exposure to young and upcoming talent ranging from Hank Williams to Webb Pierce to Elvis Presley. It was dubbed "the cradle of the stars." By page 16 of his nearly 500 page autobiography, Robertson is describing how Fred Carter Jr.'s experiences as a guitarist on the *Hayride* stage came to influence his own playing.

The *Hayride's* history is so similar to that of CKNX's *Barn Dance*. Both began as experimental stations that stuck to their regional roots on their way to becoming hugely influential institutions. *Hayride* announcer Frank Page could have just as easily been speaking of southwestern On-

tario when he said, "Let's look at it this way. There was no TV. And it was the important thing to do in this area, in this part of the country, was to go to the Louisiana Hayride on Saturday night or to tune it in on Saturday night. It was the only thing to do. It was the only ballgame in town."

And that is the unexpected gift; that a book written in 2016, a time when there will never again be just one ballgame in town, can easily celebrate the importance of radio barn dance programs from the 40's and 50's. Just as Robertson shares how what he heard as a child had a powerful impact on him, the hope is that today's readers will learn how Robbie Robertson influenced their favourite musicians and connect the dots. The past is always present.

That reality is what is at the heart of the Barn Dance Historical Society. Preserving the memory of the builders, the musicians and entertainers who were featured over the years on the CKNX *Barn Dance*, and on the radio and TV shows broadcast from the CKNX facilities over the years, will ensure the show goes on!

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May 25, 26, 27, 28, 2017

Blyth Arena Complex

Blyth, ON

May 25th, 2017 - Campers Jam

May 26th, 2017

Bluegrass Show & Open Stage

May 27th, 2017

Barn Dance Show & Dance

May 28th, 2017 - Gospel Show

full details & schedule online at

www.thebardance.ca

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