



# THE BARN DANCE OPERA JOURNAL

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## JIM SWAN'S CONVERSATION WITH THE LATE JIM REEVES

by Jim Swan, Barn Dance EMCEE

Jim Reeves was a star of Country music in the late 1950's and early 1960's. You might recall 'Mexican Joe' or 'Bimbo', a couple of hits in the 1950's. His recording of 'He'll Have To Go', was popular on both the Country and Pop charts in 1960. 'Welcome To My World', was a big hit in 1964, as well as 7 other singles. 1964 was also the year Jim Reeves died in a plane crash. He was piloting a single engine Beach Craft Debonair from Bateville, Arkansas to Nashville when they encountered a storm. Both Reeves and his business partner, Dean Manual, died in the crash.

1964 was also the year I started work at CKNX Radio. One of the radio shifts I was assigned included, 'Hayloft Hoedown' and 'Saturday Night Jamboree'. As a 21 year old full of energy and enthusiasm, I undertook correspondence with a number of Country Music artists of the day. Dave Timms, a DJ I worked with at CKOX in Woodstock, had cultivated good relations with the Country Music world at the time, and he shared his contact list with me when I left Woodstock to work in Wingham.

I wrote letters to these artists asking them to record station identification, and program liners. The artist would promote their record label and then give the CKNX call letters. They were also asked if they would be willing to record an open-end interview that would be used as part of a feature on 'Saturday Night Jamboree'. The program would feature the artist and their music for an hour. The questions would be asked live, and the answers played back from the recording.

One of the artists who responded to that request was Jim Reeves. He took time to answer the questions and mail them to me on 3 separate 'letter reels'. These were tiny 2 inch reel to reel tapes designed to allow people to exchange voices messages. The letter with the original request went out to Jim Reeves in February 1964. There are no dates on the tapes he sent back so I don't know for sure when they arrived at CKNX in Wingham. What I do know, is that it was shortly before or immediately after that fateful plane crash.

The interview was never aired on CKNX. The program director, John Langridge, was opposed to posthumous programs. Of course Jim Reeves death didn't halt his popularity. His widow, Mary, continued to release recordings. According to Wikipedia, she told a country music magazine, 'Jim Reeves, my husband, is gone, but Jim Reeves, the artist, lives on.

I recently rummaged through some of the things I have tucked away over the years, and came across the letters I had written to Jim Reeves, along with the interview tapes. What follows, is what I found on those tapes, in response to the list of questions that accompanied that letter. Here is that interview:

*\* Did you always plan on being a singer, or did it just happen to you?*

**Reeves:** Well, as I look back now Jim, I can understand that I always wanted to be a singer, even when I was very young, but the incidents leading up to my becoming a professional singer had a lot of chance connected with them and good



'Gentleman Jim' Country singer,  
Jim Reeves

luck.

*\* Where is your hometown?*

**Reeves:** My hometown is DeBerry, Texas. That's a small town in Eastern Texas about 30 miles from the Louisiana border.

*\* I understand you used the guitar to help you on your way through University. Did you ever then dream what was to come later?*

**Reeves:** Yes I played guitar from the time I was 7 years old. I played guitar through high school and college. I can honestly say it's been one of the best companions I've ever had.

*\* How did you get started in your professional career?*

**Reeves:** Well as I say, it was quite by chance that I got started in the singing business, although I was singing non-professionally for quite a while. I actually had a radio program when I was about nine years old and I did cowboy songs and sang and yodeled, raised Cain, and so forth, but I didn't get paid for it.

*\* You could probably write a book about your climb in the music industry, but perhaps you could give us a few of the highlights.*

**Reeves:** There are a lot of incidents connected with my becoming a professional singer. I was in radio as an announcer for several years. As a matter of fact, I had

Continued on Page 3



## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood

I think by this time, the recent pandemic has likely kept most of us at home or at least within our own community. It's been a year since Covid has restricted travel, seeing friends and loved ones, congregating for events, funerals, weddings, or other occasions, or just about anything for that matter. I hate to say it... but I'm kind of getting used to it. I don't like it, but it has just become a regular routine. I still don't understand those who flaunt wearing a mask or believe this is just a hoax. Stupid is as stupid does and there's no real way to fix people's ignorance.

Take for instance, the recent Grammy Awards. As you may know, I'm not a big fan of awards shows of any kind. I've been to a few of them and I don't mind saying that the process for people winning awards would turn your stomach. It's not based on popularity unless the artist is bringing in millions in revenue sales. That's it!! It's not about the best song, the best album, the best male or female singer, or group... it's about \$\$\$\$\$\$. The Grammy Awards did have a few moments of sanity in award winners, but for the most part it was a (blank) show of auto-tune vocals, sexual flirtation, and lots of skin. It's not much about the music anymore folks. It's about the image, ratings... and oh yes, did I say... it's about \$\$\$\$\$\$.

Okay there's my rant for this edition. On another topic, I'm hoping that by late summer or fall sometime, we will all be experiencing live music at a venue or event or just anywhere. I've talked to many patrons of the Barn Dance Shows,

and even those who come to performances of the many bands I play in. They all say the same thing... 'I can't wait to get out, to hear some real live music'. For almost all musicians, they can't wait to get out, to perform real live music.

It could very well be 2 years before music events will be like they once were. It's really hard to predict, but there is no doubt there will be a craving appetite for it. Many of us will be a year or two older by the time that happens. Some musicians may decide to retire and some venues may not be around like before. Music has always survived, but it may not be what you expect when we get to emerge from our quarantined lives.

Most musicians are waiting, anticipating when they will be able to perform their first live show. Many musicians I know are practicing all the time to keep their chops up. Others have turned to listening to more, and sometimes different music, taking up another instrument, recording more, writing songs, watching video concerts. It's a way for many musicians to cope. It's sad to watch Facebook Marketplace and Kijiji to see the number of musicians who have given up hope and are selling their musical instruments.

I do hope that when this pandemic is all over for good, that people will come out to support live music. Especially, local live music, as musicians really, really, need to experience the acceptance from a live audience. For most musicians, it isn't about the money, although that does help to pay the bills. We need to get back to grass roots support of the arts in general.

Gone are the days of CKCO TV and its showcase of local talent on various programs. Gone are the days of most local radio stations spinning the latest record of a local artist. We really need to assess what's going on here. Local TV doesn't even broadcast local sports, or music events anymore. Radio only plays what they are told. Bell, Rogers, CTV, CORUS

Entertainment Radio, and all the other corporations are only interested in the bottom line... and that doesn't include local entertainment or sports. It's the Grammy factor... it's all about the \$\$\$\$\$\$.

We are anticipating when the first Barn Dance Show will be staged. It certainly can't come soon enough. And yes, it **will** include many local entertainers, including the band and emcee. We miss it as much as you people do. Hope to see you at the next Barn Dance... sooner than later, hopefully.

Comments? Please contact:

Grant Heywood

5584 Deborah Glaister Line,

R. R. #2, Wellesley, Ontario NOB 2T0

Phone: (519) 656-2552

E-mail: heywoods@xplornet.ca

or send a message on facebook.

## The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

P.O. Box 68

Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 530-8000

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## 2021-22 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Sat. June 19	Barn Dance Show - <b>CANCELLED</b>	Elma Logan Arena, Monkton
NEW DATE 2022	23rd Campout Jamboree	Blyth Arena and Campgrounds, Blyth, ON



*Continued on Page 1*

almost given up singing when one night when I was an MC of the 'Louisiana Hayride', a fella didn't show up to sing his song, and the show's producer, knowing that I had aspirations to become a singer said, 'Alright, we don't have anybody to sing, go out and sing a song'. I went out on stage with the guitar and a fiddle player and I sang a song and the people liked it. There was a record company man listening who came up and asked me to record for him. That was in 1952. The man who didn't show up to sing a song was Hank Williams.

Well there are a lot of highlights in my career, Jim, a lot of highlights that I can look back on now. I would say that the greatest highlight of my career was to make my first recording, which was 'Mexican Joe'. My becoming a member of the staff of KWKH in Shreveport, Louisiana, the connected with the 'Louisiana Hayride', which at that time was the biggest country show in the world, with members like, Elvis Presley, Hank Williams, Johnny Horton, Johnny Cash, Kitty Wells, Johnny and Jack, Faron Young, and myself, and the Browns and a few others. Then another highlight of my career, I suppose, is when I joined the Grand Ole Opry in late October, 1954. Those are just some of the major highlights of my career. There are a million others, and I'd waste your time if I stood here and talked about them.

*\* By the way, any plans for that book?*

**Reeves:** Well I don't know what book you're talking about. Evidently, someone has told you I was writing a book. I've had ideas to write several books. I have completed one, but my name won't be on it. It's an Erskine Caldwell type book. I'll use a pseudonym and I won't tell you the title because if I told you the title here, then you'd know who wrote it. But I am completing a book I hope to get published.

*\* I understand you once played baseball. A minor league star in fact. Do you ever wish you'd stayed with baseball?*

**Reeves:** I was in professional baseball for three years, and I was the property of the St. Louis Cardinals. I played with Houston in the Texas league, Lynchburg in the Piedmont League, and some of the others. I don't wish I'd stayed with baseball, because I had an injury and baseball was never too good to me anyway. But I had a lot of fun.

*\* Why do you prefer country music?*

**Reeves:** I prefer country music because I am at home there.

*\* Many of your recordings have been hits*

*on the popular charts, do you think there's any reason for this?*

**Reeves:** Yes I have been lucky enough to have some of my songs on the popular charts in the past. I think the reason for this is, for so many people accepting country music... I'll answer two questions at once here... the reason for so many people who are so called pop fans accepting country music in the past few years, is because country music, and popular music as well, have progressed. But country music's instrumentation has changed a lot and there's been... well if you please, an integration of the types of music and one has benefitted by the other. I sound like an authority on this but that's the way I feel about it. There are a lot of different kinds of country music today, one helping the other. One pure country artist, an artist who sings with fiddle and steel guitar, helps an artist like myself, and I kind of feel like I help an artist who is a purely country artist that is not semi-pop. With some of the recordings I've done, both types of recordings in the past, but I'm very fortunate to have my recordings accepted to a small degree by the pop crowd, therefore, selling more records.

*\* Do you have a favourite type of song?*

**Reeves:** My favourite type of song? Let's see... a good hurtin' song or a ballad. One that's well written and a nice melody, a good meaning, and...uh...I'm happy with that kind of a song, although I like the fast ones too.

*\* When a song is written, how is it decided that you will record it?*

**Reeves:** Most of my song material is sent to me because I have three publishing firms, and they're either sent to me to publish, or to you to listen to for a possible recording. However, a lot of my song material is sent directly to Chet Atkins, at RCA Victor, in Nashville, and he passes that material along to me.

*\* Have you ever written any songs?*

**Reeves:** Yes I've written a lot of the songs that I recorded. I wrote 'Am I Losing You', 'I'm Getting Better', and several of the songs, none of them real big hits. However, 'Am I Losing You' has been one of the biggest money makers of the songs that I recorded.

*\* What ear marks a song as being country or western?*

**Reeves:** Now I can't answer what ear marks a song as being country or western. I would have to say that the instrumentation more than any one thing else.

*\* During your tours, you must meet a great number of people. Are there any*

*incidents that stand out in your memory?*

**Reeves:** No. I don't have any incidents in my memory that stand out above the others. I've had an awful lot of fun. I've enjoyed a lot of travel and a lot of friends and a lot of happiness connected with my profession and uh... one of the incidents that stands out I suppose is my first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry.

*\* Are Canadian audiences any different than those in the U.S.?*

**Reeves:** Canadian audiences are basically no different than audiences in the U.S., except they may be a little friendlier, a little more receptive, and at times for the most part, a little happier.

*\* Is there any undone thing in your life that you hope someday to do?*

**Reeves:** Well, I don't have anything in my life that I'm really digging for. A lot of things I'd like to do, but if the chance comes by I'll give it a try.

*\* Well thanks very much for being with us tonight Jim, any last words.*

**Reeves:** Jim, it's a real pleasure to go on air with you, and I hope I have answered some of the questions you wanted, and answered them sensibly. All the best to you and it's kind of you to write to us. We hope that you and your listeners will keep in touch with us and that one of these days you'll come down to Nashville and visit with us. All the best to you.

## BARN DANCE JOURNAL

### ADVERTISING PRICES

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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

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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

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# WHO REMEMBERS THIS?

by Grant Heywood

These days you cannot go anywhere without being inundated with advertising. It seems to be everywhere and is constantly interrupting our lives. But advertising goes way back to Roman and Egyptian times when papyrus paper was used as posters to advertise a product or event. Today, you cannot go anywhere without being besieged with advertising.

As early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, much of Europe's population couldn't read, so instead of having a sign that read *Cobbler, Miller, Tailor or Blacksmith*, they would have a boot, or clock, or picture of a candle, or horseshoe to advertise outside the establishment. The first American newspaper advertisement was published in 1704, in the Boston News Letter. Even a town crier who rang his bell up and down the streets shouting out information, was a form of advertising.

Thomas Barratt, of London, England, is known as the father of modern advertising in the late 1800's. Working for the Pears Soap Company, he used slogans, images and phrases to advertise. His slogan, 'Good morning, Have you used Pears' Soap today?', is still used today. Today, advertising mediums are used everywhere, and as frequently as possible.

Even now, you might see a person on a street corner walking around with a front and back board slung over their shoulders advertising a restaurant, an event, or even a special sale. I remember back in the 1950's when a car with a large horn-driver speaker on top would drive up and down the street advertising a bingo, or dance, or even a circus coming to town. Billboards have also been popular for decades. You can't drive down I-75 in the U.S. without seeing rows upon rows of bill-

board advertising, or huge towering signs advertising the Cracker Barrel, McDonalds, or a gas station.

Radio and television advertising is so popular that you can't watch a program on TV without being interrupted by 9 or 10 ads before the program starts again. It only used to be 2 or 3 if I remember correctly. Jingles were also a popular advertising gimmick which started in the 1920's and progressed into the 1950's and 1960's. Who remembers this one... 'You'll wonder where the yellow went, when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent', or this one... 'Ajax, the foaming cleanser. Washes stains, right down the drain'.

When my parents used to take us kids on vacation in the U.S., we used to see tobacco advertising on many of the barns as we drove by. Often times advertising came in the form of a banner stretched high above the street. Remember the Goodyear blimp. It's still used today at sporting events. Even airplanes would advertise in the sky by skywriting slogans or names, or dropping flyers. City buses all have advertising plastered all over. You used to be able to go to the movies and watch a cartoon, maybe an upcoming movie trailer and then the movie. Not anymore. Now, you're forced to watch at least 6 or 7 ads about new vehicles, insurance, restaurant chains etc.

Newspaper 'want ads' are almost a thing of the past now that we have Facebook Marketplace and Kijiji. And don't get me started on computers and cell phones. Every time you play a game online, you have to put up with some form of advertising. In fact ads pop up out of nowhere when you least expect them. That's because today we are all being tracked. The industry now knows what clothes you wear, your

favourite vacation spot, where you shop for groceries, even your credit score. When Thursday's newspaper arrives, the flyers are sometimes triple the bulk size of the actual newspaper.

When satellite dishes started becoming popular, there were hardly any ads at all, and you could get an unlimited amount of channels. Now you have different service plans to choose from your satellite provider and no matter which channel you switch to... the ads are all on at the same time, and you have less channels to view because many of them are duplicated. We're so smothered by advertising that we will pay more money to wear sneakers or a shirt that says NIKE, or Ralph Lauren, or Eddie Bauer, on it. They should be paying us for advertising.

Advertising has become a tool that invades our lives in a daily barrage. Nowadays, you have to pay for Sirius Satellite Radio to hear music without advertising. Hmmm, I wonder if I can get a sponsor to advertise on the front of my bass drum. No thanks.



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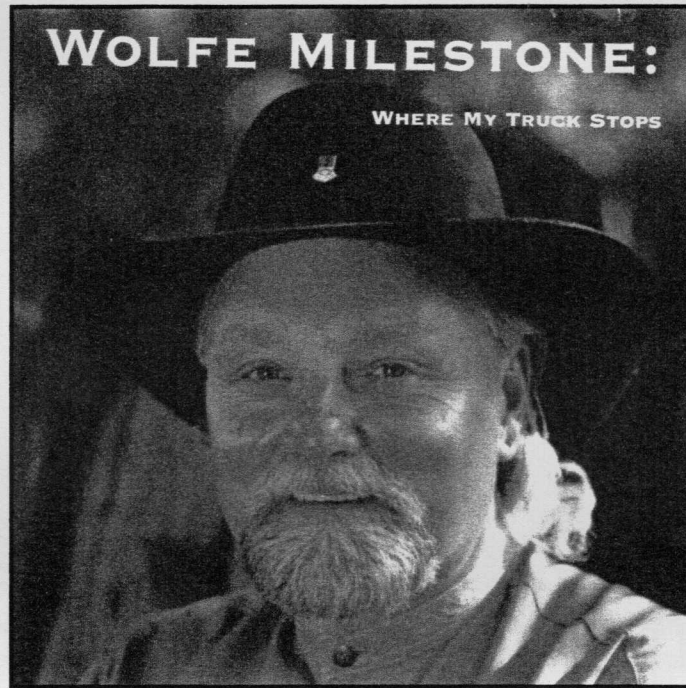
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# CD REVIEW WOLFE MILESTONE WHERE MY TRUCK STOPS



I haven't done a cd review in some time now, and dug through the archives to find a nugget I may have overlooked. Wolfe Milestone recorded this cd quite some time ago when he lived in Surrey, British Columbia. He surrounded himself with a fine bunch of musicians from the area. Most of the songs are written by Milestone/Lane, with *Seasons I've Spent With You*, written by fiddle player/co-producer, Ed Molyski, and recorded at Bear Creek Studios.

*Where My Truck Stops*, is a strong lead off, up-tempo song that's sure to catch your interest, and followed by an appealing tune called, *Love Her Tonight*. *Sure Miss The Good Times*, is a personal favourite. *Bottle On The Bar*, is a swingin' honky tonk dance tune with fiddle, that's sure to be a choice tune on a live dance floor. The Molyski penned song, *Seasons I've Spent With You*, reminds me of an old cowboy waltz for some reason.

The final cut, *Love or Fantasy*, clocks in at 4 minutes, but it's defi-

nitely one of the best crafted songs on the cd. The songs are well arranged on this 10 song cd, and feature some nice guitar, steel, piano, and fiddle work. Wolfe Milestone is an award winning country singer who has been around for a while now, and grew up in Holland Landing, Ontario. One of Wolfe's mentors was Michael T. Wall, who helped in Wolfe's promotion. Now back in Ontario, Wolfe has 6 cd's to his credit, has played many concert stages, gotten extensive airplay, and been inducted into America's Old Time Country Music Hall of Fame in Iowa.

*Where My Truck Stops*, is Wolfe's first cd and it's obvious what direction he is headed with all original songs, and is a fine first start. Wolfe Milestone now resides in the Toronto area where he continues with his country music career. See & hear Wolfe on Spotify or YouTube. For cd's and more information go to: [wolfemilestone@rogers.com](mailto:wolfemilestone@rogers.com)

## COVID-19 Announcement:

Dear Barn Dance Members,  
Friends and Campers;  
Due to the continuation of COVID-19 and the restrictions imposed by the government, local health unit and the municipality, we will not be able to hold our annual Barn Dance Jamboree and Campout again this year. Hopefully, we can reassess the situation early in 2022 once people receive their vaccine and COVID-19 subsidies. In the meantime, we wish you a safe and happy summer.

*R. Baxter*

Ruth Baxter, President

## BARN DANCE SOUVENIRS

Souvenir Mugs -	\$ 5.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 1	\$15.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 2	\$15.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 3	\$15.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 1, 2 & 3	\$40.00 set
Cassette - Vol. 1	\$ 6.00 ea.
Cassette - Vol. 2	\$ 6.00 ea.
Cassette - Vol. 3	\$ 6.00 ea.
Souvenir 1997 Calendar	\$ 5.00 ea.
Barn Dance Logo T-Shirts (gold logo on blue only)	
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL	\$20.00 ea.
NEW Heywood Family Three Generations CD	\$20.00 ea.
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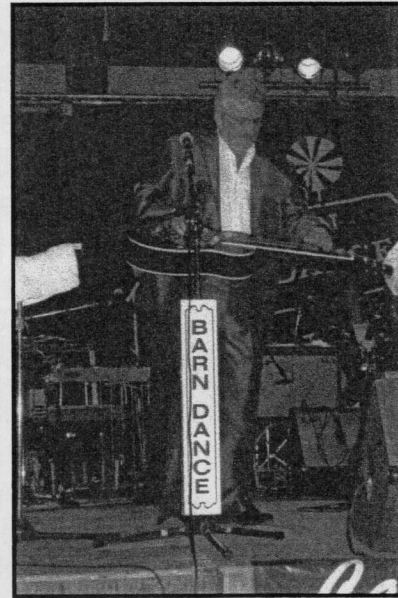
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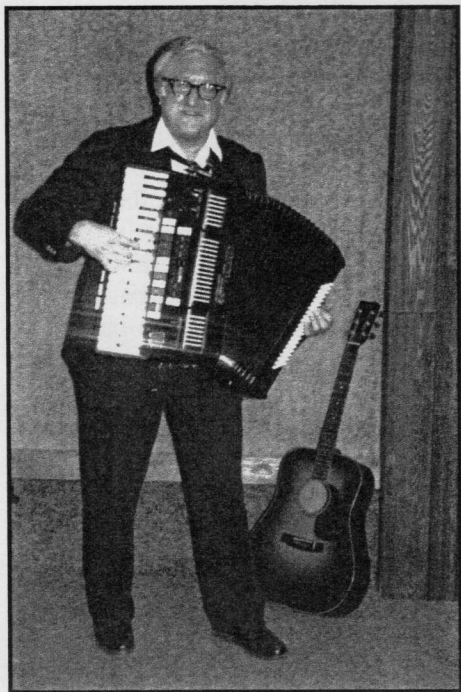
*Grammy Award winning accordion player, Walter Ostanek on the Barn Dance Stage.*



*Fiddler extraordinaire, Mike Slauenwhite, getting ready for a Barn Dance Show.*



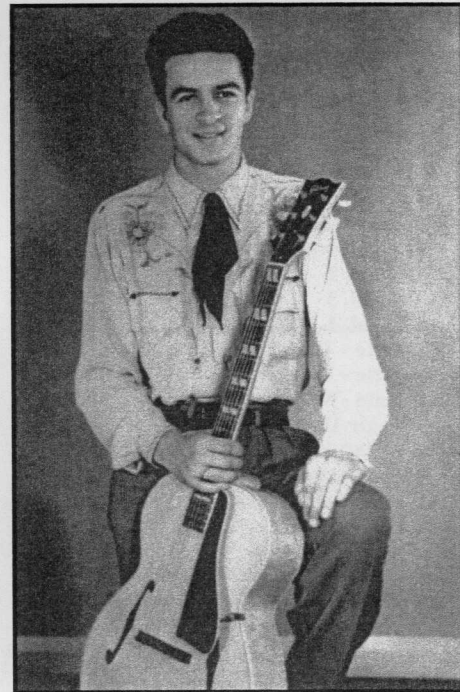
*Al Widemeyer on Dobro, making a guest appearance on the Barn Dance stage.*



*Accordion player, Bill Mankiss, who was a long time band member of the CKNX Barn Dance Band.*



*Michael T. Wall, Canada's Singing Newfoundlander, recording some lead vocals in the studio.*



*An early picture of a young Ernie King, of the Ranch Boys and TV's Circle 8 Ranch.*





## Country Calendar

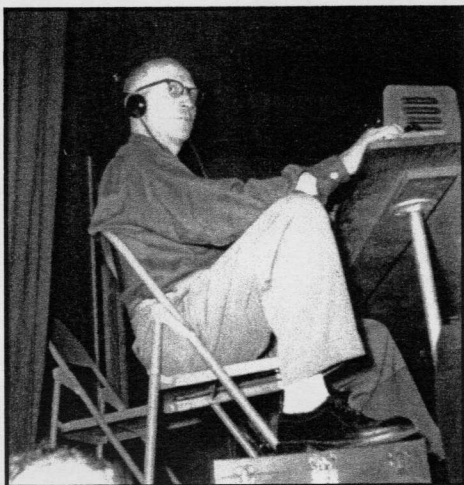
by Doreen Brown  
(Toronto and  
surrounding area)

Country Calendar updates  
have been postponed. May  
everyone stay healthy!

Country Cheers,  
*Doreen Brown*



Left to right: Chef Adams, Doreen Brown, Stompin' Tom, and Juanita Garron, at the Classic Country Music Reunion in Lindsay, 1993.



Elmer Purdon, "The Judge," (because of this technical knowledge in remote broadcasting). Elmer did remote broadcasting for the CKNX Barn Dance, and is the guy who Jim Swan talks about when doing the countdown before every Barn Dance Show, when he says "Are you all set Elmer?"

# 'OVER 80 CLUB' COUNTRY STARS AGING GRACEFULLY

by Grant Heywood

- ♫ C.W. McCall, known for his big hit, *Convoy*. Age - 92
- ♫ Leroy Van Dyke, big hit song, *Just Walk On By*. Age - 91
- ♫ Loretta Lynn, *The Coal Miner's Daughter*. Age - 89
- ♫ Stonewall Jackson, hit song *Don't Be Angry*. Age - 88
- ♫ Willie Nelson, *Country's Outlaw Statesman*. Age - 87
- ♫ Ian Tyson (Canadian), *One half of Ian & Sylvia*. Age - 87
- ♫ Ronnie Hawkins, 50's/60's *Rock & Roll* singer. Age - 86
- ♫ Jerry Lee Lewis, *R. & R./Country* singer, pianist. Age - 85
- ♫ Kris Kristofferson, *Outlaw country* singer-songwriter. Age - 84
- ♫ Don Everly, *One half of the Everly Bros. w/brother Phil*. Age - 84
- ♫ Wanda Jackson, *Rockabilly/country* singer. Age - 83
- ♫ Bill Anderson, *singer & songwriter with many hits*. Age - 83

Please check  
**[thebardance.ca](http://thebardance.ca)**  
for Barn Dance Shows  
& possible cancellations.

# BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

Is McBride and The Ride's 2021 re-emergence on the mainstream country music scene, some thirty-odd years after their 1989 Tony Brown produced MCA debut album *Burnin' Up the Road*, a crazy case of life imitating art?

When Rolling Stone's Jon Freeman described Dierks Bentley 2020 parody project Hot Country Knights as, "...a bunch of Nineties country refugees who never quite made it and are finally getting their shot 30 years too late," he could have just as easily been describing Terry McBride, Ray Herndon, and Billy Thomas.

Both never quite crossed over to the many stream success they aspired to reach. The Knights got done in by bad timing brought on by a pandemic, but country music was king in the early nineties when the Ride could get no closer to a number one hit than the dreaded number two chart position with their 1992 single "Sacred Ground." In total they logged eight top-thirty hits. Most largely forgotten and

completely unknown by today's country music fan.

Yes, both the Knights and The Ride are/were mullet-ed players wearing high-waisted, too tight jeans. The Ride, however, was a collection of insanely gifted musicians with some serious country credentials.

The Ride's lead guitarist Ray Heron intermittently toured with Lyle Lovett's band since 1985. Anyone who knows the level of musicianship in Lovett's ensembles understands the significance of Herndon holding that honour. Similarly, drummer Billy Thomas was Vince Gill's touring drummer and also Gill's partner behind the kit for The Time Jumpers, the much celebrated western swing band composed of studio musicians who turned Music City on its ear with their live shows at Nashville's The Station Inn.

Terry McBride meanwhile toured with Brooks and Dunn as their bassist and made hay as a super successful songwriter. Beyond his bosses, everyone from George Strait to Reba McEntire to Alan Jackson cut his songs.

Yet, despite all this individual talent The Ride never grabbed the brass ring as a trio. A serious case can be

made the chill-bump inducing three-part vocal harmonies on their 1992 single "Just One Night With You" deserves to be rediscovered today. It's that good. I remember my university roommate - a vocal music major - stealing my cassette after hearing me play the song and rewinding it over-and-over-again on his stereo to absorb the effect of that performance.

Perhaps the sentimental vein for '90's era country music mined by the Hot Country Knights is what has inspired The Ride to tour Texas again come this summer. Certainly mainstream country has course-corrected from the bro-country era of the past decade to echo the now classic sound commonly known as '90's country. The creativity and breadth of talent then was as significant as any other high point in the genre's history. With some perspective and distance, we can seriously celebrate what happened beneath the country music tent pitched between 1986 and 1998.

Mark Twain observed, "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes." and in the case of McBride and The Ride's harmonies, it still sounds amazing doing it.



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**THE BARN  
DANCE MUSEUM**

The Barn Dance Museum at 273 Josephine St. Wingham, is **temporarily closed** until further notice. Sorry for the inconvenience.



*The Singing Heywoods, Martha, Grant and Earl, at the 1989 Jamboree Reunion at Bingeman Park.*