

# The Barn Dance Opera Journal

Official Publication of:  
The Barn Dance Historical Society Inc.

A Not For Profit Organization

Barn Dance Website: [www.thebardance.ca](http://www.thebardance.ca)

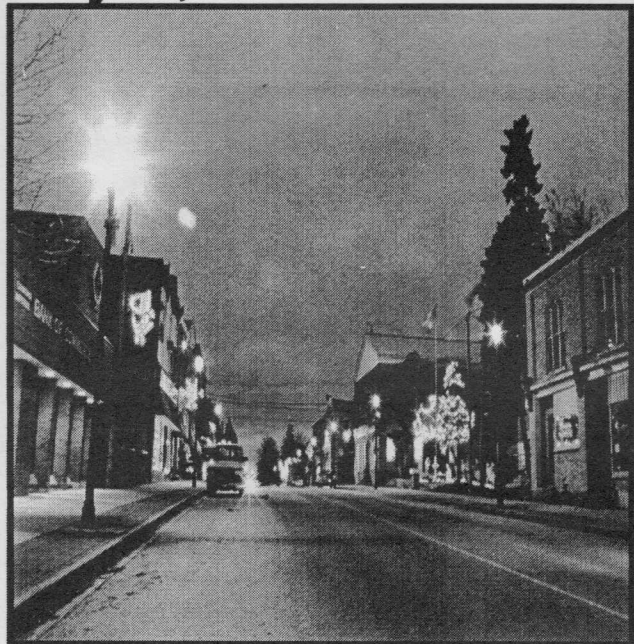
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Vol. 45 2005

Spring Edition

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## Blyth, Ontario - The Little Town that Could ... and Did!!



### BLYTH, ONTARIO

by Grant Heywood

Nestled in farm country, in Huron County just north on highway 4, is the pretty little village of Blyth, population 1,000. Once winter disappears, it's hard to imagine that this quiet little place becomes a beehive of activity from spring until fall where city folk and rural neighbours from near and far come to share the experience of all this village has to offer. With the Blyth Festival Theatre as it's centerpiece, it's mission has been to "give voice to the region and the country". And that it does, and does so well. This is rural Ontario arts and entertainment at its finest.

It was 1920 when the Blyth Memorial Community Hall (home of the Blyth Festival) was built by the village as a war memorial to the veterans of the first World War. When the building was in need of repair in the early 70's, locals, Keith Roulston and Helen Gowing, spearheaded the restoration of the hall and local citizens contributed by helping

to refurbish the interior. A government grant was used to put on a new roof.

By 1975 Keith Roulston mentioned his dream of a summer drama company for the hall to Paul Thompson, artistic director of Theatre Passe Muraille. Paul suggested James Roy, a young director who had grown up in the area, and he took on the project. That was the birth of the Blyth Festival Theatre which has become world renowned.

That year in 1975, two productions were mounted. The Mousetrap, by Agatha Christie was touted as a "surefire hit", and an adaptation

of Harry Boyle's novel, "Mostly In Clover" (considered a bit of a risk), which was a new play about the lives of the area people. When the figures came in at the end of the season, it was obvious what the people wanted to see. The rural play, "Mostly In Clover" outsold the Mousetrap by a 2 to 1 margin.

To this day the Blyth Theatre has sellout performances almost every season with great plays such as "The Outdoor Donnellys" by Paul Thompson, "Leaving Home" by David French, "The Drawer Boy" by Michael Healey and even a performance entitled "Bardance", which vignettted the original cast of the CKNX Barn Dance era of the 1950s and 60s. The Blyth Centre for the Arts also includes an art gallery hosting Canadian artwork for the past 30 years now. Community suppers are held in Blyth and surrounding area to cater to patrons who just can't get enough of "real country living".

But Blyth isn't just theatre. Thousands of visitors are attracted to the Huron Pioneer Threshers and Hobby Association every September, which has been running for years long before the theatre began. The

Bluewater Kennel Club hold their Annual Championship Dog Show and Obedience Trials here in September and attract over 100 breeds of dogs from all over North America.

When I was younger, I remember meeting Simon Hallahan, (Blyth resident farmer who got the Steam Threshers Reunion started). Simon was a big man with an even bigger smile and he was always receptive to new ideas. Especially when my mom and dad (Earl and Martha) performed live on a little bitty outdoor stage and suggested a fiddle contest. To this day the fiddle contest, and outdoor musical jamming has mushroomed and become a big part of this event.

Blyth was also host to the 100th annual Fire Fighters Association of Ontario Convention in 2001. In 2004 Blyth was the winner in the provincial Communities in Bloom competition. Local retailer Sparling's Propane is the oldest propane service company in Canada,

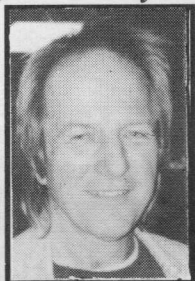
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BLYTH FESTIVAL THEATRE

## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood



Gald to see spring has finally arrived. This past winter was about as bad as the political climate in this country, and darn cold too. At least when the good weather arrives, most folks don't pay much attention to politicians and their problems. Most folks usually have enough of their own problems to contend with.

Speaking of problems, I thought after my own minor surgery in November that things would only get better. Wrong!! After my family and I battled a bad flu and cold virus, I made the mistake of playing hockey at our neighbour's outdoor skating rink, and broke my left wrist in the process. I tried playing drums with a cast on but I was useless to say the least. I have to thank George Lonsbury's brother Dale for filling in on drumming chores on some of the live dates that I obviously couldn't do.

After getting the cast off, I thought that I'd be able to get back to normal and catch up on work and projects that were put on hold. I finally got to complete my parts on Bill Simmermaker's new CD project, and I was hoping to wrap up the new Heywood Family CD project htat has been taking so long .... but as fate would have it I encountered some more roadblocks. I wasn't the only one who was experiencing bad karma, our dentist had an accident this past winter which led him to early retirement and as I was experiencing some tooth problems that required immediate attention, I waited until I was referred to a new dentist. What I thought would be routine fillings ended up being a root canal job with a referral for surgical extraction of my two exposed, lower molars where there had once been a couple of nice shiney, expensive crowns.

I seem to be slowly getting back on track now. Thus the delay on this issue of the Spring Opera Journal. My sincere apologies. My problems were really minor issues that just seemed to have a

domino effect when they happened one after another. Amazing how even the smallest of setbacks can make you appreciate life in general. My wife did have to remind me that I'll be 54 this coming June so some of these issues shouldn't be all that surprising. Hmmmmm, now she's got me taking a closer look at the seniors menu when we dine out. But then I got thinking about it a little more and said to her, "Don't worry honey. I qualified for the seniors discount at Zellers back when I turned 50." What was I thinking. I was making myself older than I really needed to be.

Then I looked at our old house. We just put a new roof on last year (again), we're trying to make the old clothes dryer last until we get warmer weather the sofit and facia need a new coat of paint, some of the windows need replacing, and much of the stonework needs repointing. And then I realized that me and that old house have a lot in common. For both of us it's just maintenance from here on in. Oh boy!!

Hope to see you all at the next Barn Dance.

Comment?? Please contact:

Grant Heywood  
5584 Deborah Glaister Line, R. R. #2,  
Wellesley, Ontario N0B 2T0  
Phone: (519) 656-2552  
E-mail: heywoods@golden.net

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ **The 8th Annual Barn Dance** ★  
★ **Campout Weekend** ★  
★ **and Jamboree** ★  
★ **May 27, 28, 29, 2005** ★  
★ **at the Blyth Arena Complex** ★  
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★ *Barn Dance Show and Dance,* ★  
★ *Sunday morning country gospel* ★  
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## The Barn Dance Historical Society and Entertainment Museum

P.O. Box 68

Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0

Phone (519) 357-2160

(or leave a message)

**BARN DANCE WEBSITE:**

<http://www.barndance.ca>

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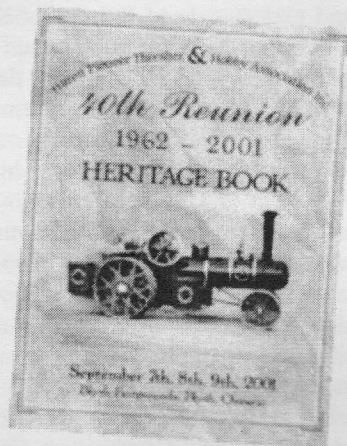
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since 1951. The largest selection of fine wool and leather in Canada can be found right in Blyth at Baintons and the Old Mill. The five generation family of Howson & Howson Flour Mill has been here since 1875.

For the last eight years Blyth has been host to our annual Barn Dance Jamboree Camp Out Weekend fundraising event. There is no doubt that Blyth was the perfect location to have such a huge and successful weekend event of fun and music. From the "get go" the people and service clubs of Blyth have been more than willing to extend a helping hand to make this annual weekend a special event. The Barn Dance Historical Society is a not for profit organization. Everyone including musicians, crew, and staff work this weekend for free so that we can raise money to operate the Barn Dance Museum located in Wingham, Ontario, and we wish to continue to provide great country music shows and dances in the Barn Dance tradition.

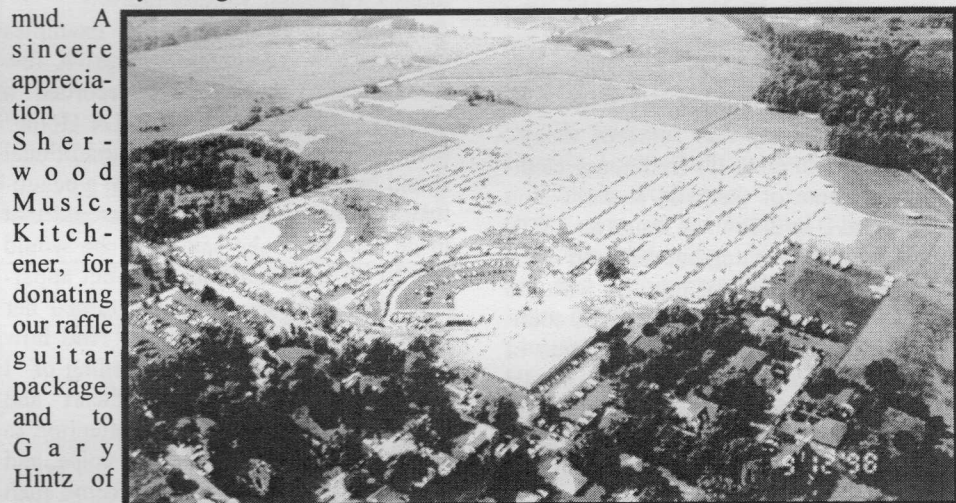
A "BIG" THANK YOU to the following folks. We couldn't do this without

you. The Blyth Lions Club provided the stage and on-site food barbeque. Tim Hortons always comes through with great coffee and donuts for our continental breakfast Saturday morning. The Blyth Fire Department has always been there for our security and safety concerns. Huron Pioneer Threshers and Hobby Association have allowed us the use of shower and washroom facilities in Shed No. 3 for our campout guests. Manning Lumber provides the use of a forklift to make the job easier for setting up seating and the stage as well as taking it down. Ernie King Music has always been steadfast in helping with any musical equipment concerns, especially in the onstage piano department. Scrimgeour's Food Market has helped keep our energy up by providing food and beverages to our cast, crew and volunteers. And without Burkholder 24 Hour Towing service our overnight guests would be stuck (literally) if the weather should get too wet and they can't get their RV out of the mud. A sincere appreciation to Sherwood Music, Kitchener, for donating our raffle guitar package, and to Gary Hintz of

the newly opened Riley Music in Kitchener for donation of studio time. Also, Wayne Greve and company for excellent sound and lighting.

To our many advertisers: Grand View Restaurant and Gas Bar in Blyth, Sparling's Propane, Blyth, M.G.M. Townsend Tire, Londesboro, McGavin Farm Equipment of Walton, Northgate RV Centre Ltd. of Elginfield, The Dollar Store in Wingham, Wayne Otterbein's Barbershop, Exeter, The Township of North Huron, Ernie King Music, Wingham, Anna Mae's Restaurant, Millbank, and CKNX Radio 920, Wingham, and everyone else who devotes their time voluntarily to help make this Jamboree weekend happen.

Blyth is undoubtedly a community of people helping people. We are happy to be part of that community experience. On May 27, 28 and 29, come on out and have a musical weekend of fun with friends in Blyth.

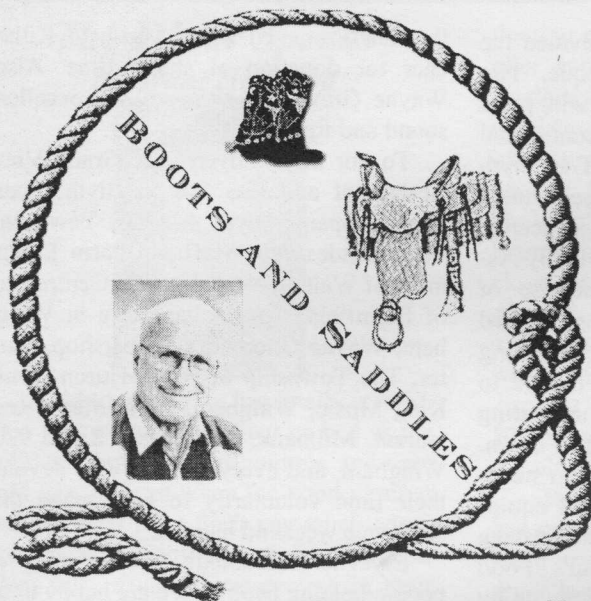


Aerial View of the Blyth Campgrounds, taken during a recent Thresher's Reunion.

## COUSIN OPIE

BY LARRY RUSSWURM





by Lynn Russwurm

I don't know how you folks feel about the state of country music today. Personally I never listen to the radio anymore because they never play the kind of music I love. A major part of what passes for country music today is not country music, but rock. The problem is that they've taken the name of country music and pass off the music as country when it's not. This is not to say that some of today's country artists don't do traditional country, and some of them do it well. You might find 2 or 3 country songs on a CD, but the rest are nothing but rock and roll.

Most of the fault of this lies with the radio stations who call themselves country, but their country is a pale shade of what country music is or should be. I'd wager that if one of these stations would play real country music and there's lots of it hidden away on the artists CDs, that that particular station would be a runaway hit. Today some stations are calling themselves Classic Country or something else with the same meaning. Of course the recording companies try to produce the type of music that the radio stations want and therefore today everybody is trying to imitate the artist that's hot with the result that nine out of ten artists sound alike. If an artist would audition for a recording company with a sound that was different he wouldn't have a snowball's chance in hell of being recorded. There will never be another artist with a distinctive sound like say, Ernest Tubb, Hank Snow, Hank Thompson or even Hank Williams. If Hank Williams auditioned today he would soundly be turned down. Oh, for

the days when you could tell who the artist was just by hearing the first few bars of his musical introduction. They all looked for an individual sound and they found it. I remember Hank Thompson being interviewed and he said when he was building his great Brazos Valley Boys, he told them that the first musician that played a Bob Wills lick would be fired; and one of his steel guitar players found a unique way of playing that gave Hank his distinctive sound. Remember the Billy Byrd sound on Ernest Tubb's recordings, how unusual that

was. Now Billy Byrd was a great guitarist who loved to play jazz and other guitar styles, but when he was with Ernest he had to keep the simple style that Ernest required. But those days are gone forever and the loss is strongly felt by today's true country music fan.

I'd like to bring up a few examples that stand out along these lines. A few years ago, Tanya Tucker recorded a Jimmie Rodgers song, "Daddy & Home" and she used a completely traditional sound including dobro and what a beautiful recording that was. I understand that in an interview she said that she would like to do an album like that, but apparently the label she was with turned her down saying it wouldn't sell. And how about Leann Rimes early recording of "I Want to be a Cowboy's Sweetheart" and how it set everybody paying attention to this little girl and her amazing voice, and when her follow-up "Blue" became such a big hit giving her a much more contemporary sound it was discovered that the song had been recorded many years before by Kenny Roberts on a Starday album. Now, have you heard anything by Leann Rimes that can compare to her Cowboy's Sweetheart? A few years before that Suzy Boggus also made her first mark on country music with the same "Cowboy's Sweetheart", it almost sounds as if these youngsters use this song as a stepping stone and when they get there they discard this pure country style for what the recording companies want them to do, another slap in the face of the real country music fan.

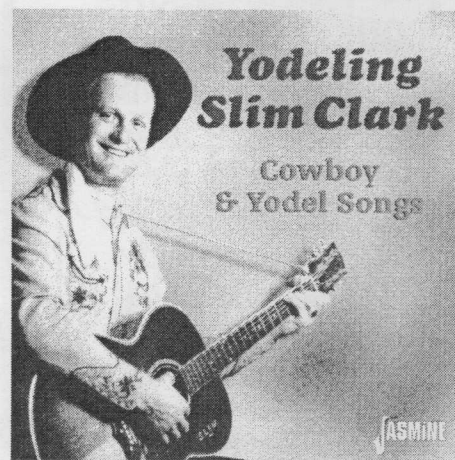
Many people will argue that there were always new elements brought into

country music, for example the western swing and jazz sounds of Bob Wills and Spade Cooley, or the bluegrass sounds of Bill Monroe. However, this was a time when country music was being defined by the pioneers who followed their own paths of discovery. Originally it was hill-billy music that had been handed down from generation to generation by the rural and mountain people, then was added the tenor voice of Vernon Dalhart who made his music country by using the guitar and harmonies of Carson Robison. Next to enter the picture were the blue yodels of Jimmie Rodgers and his many imitators like Gene Autry who added his own singing cowboy music to the genre. The swing music of Bob Wills fused jazz, big band sounds and everything in between, his music was even known to embrace blue yodels ala Jimmie Rodgers by his greatest vocalist, Tommy Duncan.

These are the elements that eventually shaped country music. Several other elements also entered the picture for a time such as Elvis Presley, whose songs appeared on the country charts, as there was no rock and roll chart at the time. When they came up with rock and roll charts, this element was dropped from country. Most of the country artists were forced into doing some rock and roll, as country wasn't selling and nearly was wiped out by Elvis and his rock and roll followers. But this eventually changed and country once again came to the fore.

Going back to radio stations and their Classic Country formats, most of them consider any song as a classic if it's over five years old. To me the classic designation should be reserved for pre-1980 songs. Many people have told me they

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*Continued from Page 4*

would like to hear other than the greatest hits by the so-called classic artists. Often the songs that were released as singles and attained hit status were in many cases inferior to some of their album cuts, why can't we hear these?

What can we do to combat the inroads that today's so-called country music has made? I would suggest writing your favourite "country" radio station and let your preferences be known. You can also seek out and buy CDs of traditional country music by mail, you will not find it in today's so-called record stores. If anyone would care to write me, I can send you a list of companies, both in the US and in Europe that have much of this material available. There are CDs by Red Foley, Elton Britt, Jimmy Wakely, Red River Dave and practically all of the great traditional entertainers of the past, companies like Bear Family, Cattle Records, Jasmine, all from Europe.

I've just been involved in two releases by Jasmine where I supplied them with photos for covers. One is for an Elton Britt CD and a Yodelling Slim Clark CD, and what an excellent job they do. In the past I've worked with Bear Family by providing them with pictures for CDs by Orval Prophet, two box sets of Wilf Carter, providing them with records for a Stu Phillips CD, a record for a Tom Tall vinyl album, for Cattle Records, also of Germany with records and photos of Alonzo Marsh, performances by Red Foley and his wife, Judy Martin and for a CD by Jimmie & Eddie Dean, the Dean Brothers.

One Canadian source is Heritage Music, who are including our Barn Dance CDs in their catalog, as well as our Al

Cherny and Graham Townsend projects and also will handle our projects yet to come. They have over 100 CDs of Canadian traditional artists in their catalogue.

I'd really like to keep our traditional country music alive and we can all help in this matter by supporting concerts, buying traditional music (CDs / used records), writing letters to radio stations to let them know what you, the listener, would really like to hear. By working together we may just be able to make a bit of a difference in what is pushed at us by radio and the so-called country music.

### 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*

*Wayne Otterbein,  
(home) (519) 235-4783,  
or (bus.) (519) 235-0559*

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Souvenir Mugs -	\$ 5.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 1	\$20.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 2	\$20.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 3	\$20.00 ea.
CD - Vol. 1, 2 & 3	\$50.00 set
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(36 unheard recordings)	\$20.00 ea.
<i>All purchases include GST.</i>	

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## NEWS & NOTES

Our Country Calendar columnist, Doreen Brown will be appearing as a special guest at the Jamboree on the Mountain in Monteagle, Tennessee, during the first week of May. She will also be helping with M.C. duties for both the country and gospel shows.

Barn Dance musician and Historical Society director, Bill Simmermaker has been working on his first solo CD effort this past winter at producer Bill Braun's "The Bridge" digital studio in K-W. Bill Simmermaker cut some of his favourite cover tunes as well as a few originals, including a great wedding song he wrote. Many of the Barn Dance musicians are included as backup on most of the cuts. The CD should be available in May or June.

The Three Generations Heywood Family CD has certainly been an ongoing project for some time now. The mixing is nearly completed for the 16 song CD and should be completed and available by June or July. The front cover CD picture of the Heywood family was done at a photo shoot in the old CKNX television studios in Wingham, Ontario. How's that for nostalgia.

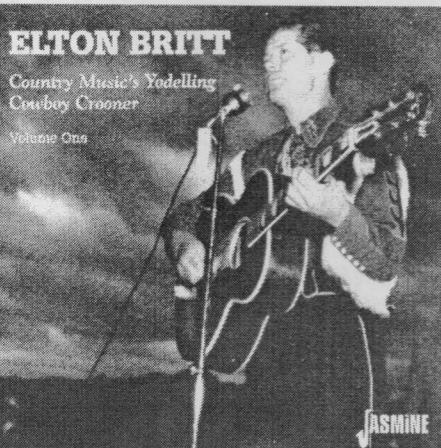
Lloyd Otterbien, a.k.a. "Cousin Opie", was in the hospital for a few days this past spring. Nothing too serious, but I'll bet he tried out a few new jokes on the nurses while he was there. Lloyd's wife, Helen, who is a Barn Dance volunteer, was in for hip surgery this past winter and is doing fine. Lloyd said, "She must be feeling better now. Her favourite song is "Let's Chase Each Other Round the Room Tonight."

Dobro wizard, Al Widmeyer is slated to record a new CD sometime soon with his old bluegrass bandmates, "The Dixie Flyers". The Flyers haven't recorded for several years and have just recently gotten together for select gigs. We'll let you know when the CD becomes available.

Hanover fiddler, Dan Mighton suffered a broken left wrist recently playing basketball. Likely bowing the ball when he should have been dribbling it. It's been a bad season for wrists.

### ELTON BRITT

Country Music's Yodelling  
Cowboy Crooner  
Volume One



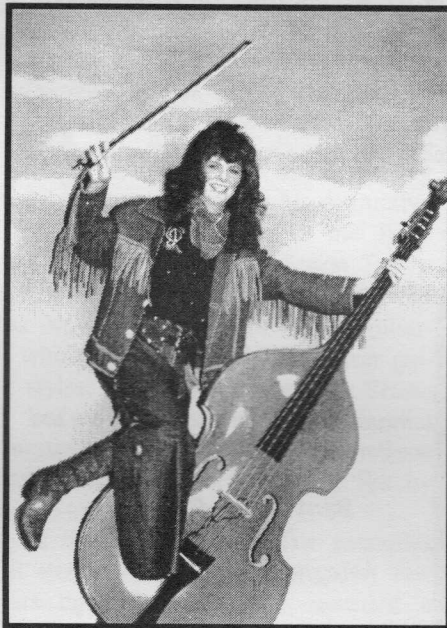
JASMINE

# Country Music Memories

*as compiled by Lynn Russwurm*



*Patricia & Grant Heywood, doing their impression of Earl and Martha at Earl & Martha's 65th Anniversary 1989.*



*Michelle Lubinieki  
"Ridin' The Fiddle"*



*KIDD BAKER, New  
Brunswick Country Music Hall  
of Fame Charter Member*



*Jamboree Reunion in Kitchener in 1986.  
L to R: John Trombley, Roy Thompson,  
and Fred Emberson.*



*Barn Dance Band touring with Tour of  
Champions. Left to Right: Mike Slauen-  
white, Lynn Russwurm, Lance Russwurm,  
and Ron Coulthard.*



→  
*STAN TAYLOR  
from "Countrytime"  
on CBC - TV*



## COUNTRY CALENDAR



*by Doreen Brown  
(Toronto and surrounding area)*

\* **Country Dance** the last Tuesday of every month at RCL, Branch 43, 471 Simcoe St. S., Oshawa, from 1 to 4. Guest singers and players welcome. \$5.00 per person.

\* **For Bluegrass Jam Sessions**, contact Terry Calvert at Blue Sky Country Blue Grass Club at [bluskycountrybluegrass@rogers.com](mailto:bluskycountrybluegrass@rogers.com). They are held at the Barrie Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion.

\* **22nd Annual Tottenham Bluegrass Festival** - three days of bluegrass music held June 24, 25 and 26, in the natural amphitheatre of the Tottenham Conservation area. The host will be the entertaining and hilarious Mike O'Reilly. The lineup, at this time, is: Blueridge; Gerald Evans and Paradise; The Flint River Boys; Special Edition Bluegrass Band; Hometown Bluegrass; Silverbirch. Added attractions - Workshop, band workshop to be held Saturday with the Farris Family; Children's Program; Beef BBQ; Gospel Hour and Crafts and concessions, during the weekend. For info, call 1-888-BLUGRASS, 9 0 5 - 9 3 6 - 4 1 0 0 or [www.tottenhambluegrass.ca](http://www.tottenhambluegrass.ca). The village of Tottenham is located 30 miles northwest of Toronto in a picturesque rural setting.

\* **Dundalk Jamboree**, is the 4th Sunday of the month; Warminster is the 1st Sunday; and Grand Valley the 1st Sunday in the Community Centre.

\* **Old Tyme Jamboree** at the Shelburne

Legion, Br, 220, May 8.

\* **Trillium Country Jamboree**, June 17, 18 & 19, Hastings Farmers & Flea Market, Hwy. #45, south of Hastings. For info call Hank VanBaden 705-696-2996, or Chef Adams 705-324-7884. The main stage entertainment is only part of the 3 day event. Also enjoy the Trillium Corral with continuous line-up of amateur and professional entertainment on stage daily starting at 1 pm. Camping gates open 1 pm on June 16. There will be a roast beef dinner served Friday and Saturday.

\* **Show 'n Shine**, (Antique Cars), sponsored by the Mapleleaf Country Jubilee, at Sentimental Journey, Hwy. 48, Baldwin, south of Sutton. Sat., June 11, 10 am to 4 pm. A portion of the proceeds will assist The Southlake Health Centre, Pediatric Ward.

\* **Appearances by Doreen Brown:** Jamboree on the Mountain, Monteagle, TN, Country Show, May 6, 7 & 8, also helping MC the Gospel Show and Country Show (A major event for Indie Artists); 8th Annual Jamboree Camp Out Weekend, Blyth, May 27, 28 & 29; Moose Lodge with Norma Gayle & friends, Brown's Line & Lakeshore, June 5; Bond Head Fiddle Club, June 27.

\* **Summer Jamborees:** Marysville July 1, 2 & 3; Preston Springs, July 8, 9 & 10; Lake Dore, July 15, 16 & 17; Blackstock Musicians' Corn Roast, Aug. 7; Marmora, Sept. 9, 10, & 11; Hastings, Sept. 16, 17 & 18.

\* **OV's Queen Street** has Saturday afternoon shows featuring Larry MacLean, Mickey Andrews and Mary Moe Satry.

\* **Annual Classic Country Music Ren-  
ion**, Trenton, July 28, 29, 30, & 31. For info contact Lorne Hachey 1-905-986-0292. Camping, main stage and watering corral all weekend.

\* **16th Annual Havelock Country Jamboree**, Aug. 18 to 21, Havelock, 1-8 0 0 - 5 3 9 - 3 3 5 3 or [www.havelockjamboree.com](http://www.havelockjamboree.com). The following are confirmed: Travis Tritt, Tanya Tucker, SHEDaisy, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Ricky Skaggs, Ronnie Hawkins & The Hawks, Marty Stuart, Ricky Van Shelton, Emmerson Drive, Jason McCoy, Gen Watson, Aaron Pritchett, Beverley Mahood, George Fox, Tommy Cash (a tribute to his brother Johnny Cash), Johnny Reid, Good Brothers, Car-

roll Baker, Jamie Warren, Scotty Campbell, Tim Armick, and more to be announced later.

\* **Appearances by Gerald Davidson:** May 7, Lakeside, 8-12; May 14, Elora Legion, 9-1; May 28, Lambeth Legion, 2-5; May 28, Victory Legion, London, 8-12; June 4, Lakeside, 8-12; June 18, Lambeth Legion, 2-5; June 18, Victory Legion, London, 8-12.

\* **Opry North** for upcoming shows contact [www.oprynorth.com](http://www.oprynorth.com) for shows at Stampede Ranch, Guelph, and Stampede Corral, Kitchener.

\* **5th Annual Maple Leaf Jubilee** Aug. 26, 27, & 28, at Sentimental Journey, Baldwin. Camping, country music all weekend on main stage and open mike, BBQ, lots of parking, lineup in next issue. For info contact Chef Adams 705-324-7884 or Geroage Grey 705-325-8793 or email [mapleleafcountryjubilee@yahoo.com](mailto:mapleleafcountryjubilee@yahoo.com).

\* **Army, Navy & Air Force Veterans** in Canada, 765 Third St., Mississauga, 905-274-9981, features Joe Tucker the first Sunday of the month. Come a pickin' or come a listener.

\* **Oprey Orillia** for upcoming country music shows, contact Chuck Moore 705-324-2233.

\* **Appearances by Willy of Maple Grove:** Hayden Shore Pavillion, first Wednesday of the month; Bowmanville Arena, third Wednesday of the month, start at 7 pm; Port Perry Community Centre Arena, fourth Wednesday; Country Club, Kinsmen Hall, Oshawa, every second Monday.

\* **Appearances by Dan McVeigh:** Tin Pan North Show, June 4 & 5 at Hugh's Room, Toronto, starts 7:30 pm; there will be two nights of original music from over 35 songwriters and there will be a lot of country music. It will feature music from all musical genres. Wendell Ferguson is one of the top performers at the show.

\* **Appearances by Josie and The Boys:** May 28, Newfie Corner, 3051 Lakeshore Blvd. 416-526-0600; July 1, River Valley Music Festival.

*Have a Great Summer Folks,  
and see you at  
The Blyth Campout.*



#### HOWDY FOLKS:

When it comes to good old time country music, it better include a fiddle player or two. No Barn Dance was ever complete without have a fiddle player in the band to get folks up and dancing, especially square dancing.

In the early days of country and western music, Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys pretty much personified western swing music by using twin fiddles as well as California's Spade Cooley. Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance also included twin fiddlers at various times, such as Mel Lavigne and Ward Allen, as well as Eleanor and Graham Townsend. During the 90's the newly re-established Barn Dance showcased the twin fiddlers of Victor Pasowisty and Mike Slaunwhite. It sure was sweet!

Archie Mann was one of the earlier fiddle

players to appear on the CKNX Barn Dance as well as local fiddler Clarence Adlam. Who could forget Ross Mann of Bluevale, who undoubtedly helped signify the Ranch Boys sound on stage, as well as the old Circle 8 Ranch TV show. It was Mel Lavigne of Midland, Ont. who became the very first Old Time Fiddle Champion in Shelburne, when it first started in the early 1950s. Mel was also a part of the CKNX Barn Dance gang, as was the infamous Ward Allen, whose "Maple Sugar" fiddle tune became one of the all time Canadian fiddle standards. Barn Dance musician, Lucky Ambeau also bowed the strings occasionally, besides playing guitar, bass, etc.

I remember contacting a young fiddler from Medicine Hat, Alberta, who eventually arrived by train in Wingham, making his debut on the CKNX Barn Dance. Al Cherny became a real personality on stage, and his style of fiddling won him two championships at Shelburne. Al married one of the Seiler Twins, (Marion) who also appeared quite often on Barn Dance shows. It wasn't too long before Al teamed up with Gordie Tapp on CBC's Country Hoedown TV show and later with the Tommy Hunter Show on CBC television.

Famous Canadian fiddling champions Eleanor and Graham Townsend also guested on the CKNX Barn Dance throughout the years. Other fiddlers that where a part of the early Barn Dance era were: King Ganam, Gerry Smith, Lloyd Warwick, Wayne Riehl, Ken

Ducharme and there were likely others that I may have missed as well. There have also been many locally talented young fiddlers on our Barn Dance stage over the last few years too., including Mathew Johnson, Ian Leith, Dan Mighton, Melissa Diebold, and Erika and Patrick Weiler, just to name a few. Some of the regular Barn Dance fiddlers include Doug McNaughton, Randy Morrison, as well as Al Widmeyer and Bill Norris, and sometimes even Johnny Heaman has been known to do some fiddling. Others who have appeared on the Barn Dance include Carl Kees, Frank Stiles, and Sudbury's Don Reed.

When the Heywood Family toured Canada's east coast in the late 50s and early 60s, we hired award winning maritime fiddler, Ned Landry to accompany us on many of our live performances. Who could forget one of Canada's best know fiddlers, Don Messer, who was also from the maritimes and became a household name across the country through his long running CBC television show. Canada is definitely a hotbed for great fiddlers with the likes of Natalie McMaster, the Leahy Family, Jacinthe Trudeau, Scott Woods, Frank Leahy, and Shane Cook. And that's just the tip of the iceberg.

And remember -

#### *The Show Must Go On.*

Earl Heywood, Founder,  
Honorary President,  
Advisor, Museum Curator

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