

BARN DANCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

CKNX BARN DANCE



1998

SOUVENIR PROGRAM

CANADA'S LARGEST TRAVELLING BARN DANCE

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1998 Board of Directors



Pictured - left to right: Earl Heywood, Gerry Boppre, Hugh Elder, Len Love (past president), June Therrien, Wayne Otterbein, Lynn Russwurm, Al Widmeyer, Lois Schistad, Kim Souch, Shirley Russwurm, Ron Coulthard. Absent from photo was Grant Heywood.

The newly elected Board of Directors welcome you to this performance of the 1998 Barn Dance.

The Barn Dance Historical Society is now in its third year of operation. I can tell you we would never have reached our objectives without the dedication of over 300 members of our Friendship Club.

The Barn Dance Historical Society has many objectives. First is to fund our entertainment museum located in the Wingham Armories. Other objectives are to help local service clubs in towns and cities to raise funds for their projects. Musically, the Barn Dance wishes to welcome new talent of all ages, and faces you remember, to our stage for your listening and dancing pleasure.

Thanks to all from the Barn Dance Historical Society for your loyal support. Without audiences such as you people, these performances would not happen. Thanks to the entertainers who work for a nominal fee. Thanks to our sound and light man Wayne Greves and all the workers behind the scenes.

I ask you to sit back, relax and enjoy good hand clapping, toe tapping, good country music.

***Wayne Otterbein,
President***

A Report from the Board of Directors

A dream of one man, namely Earl Heywood, who had the fortitude to push ahead and make his dream come true. In September 1995, the Barn Dance Historical Society was formed.

From the members of the Friendship Club, a board of directors was elected. The Friendship Club now has a museum, a newsletter, a fiddle convention and this year a campout jamboree weekend. Accomplishments like these do not happen without dedication and hard work.

We have a membership of over 300.

In 1996, the CKNX Barn Dance began a new era. The first held in Howick and in 1997 seven more Barn Dances followed, being staged throughout midwestern Ontario. The Barn Dance is the hub of this organizational wheel.

Friends old and new meet at the show, whether on the stage or on the dance floor.

Pioneer Awards introduce our younger fans to the remembrance of people who went before us, singing, playing and entertaining.

The Board of Directors of the Barn Dance Historical Society invite you to enjoy the show and maybe you too will become a member of our Friendship Club.

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A Brief History of the Barn Dance

In February of 1926, the late W. T. "Doc" Cruickshank founded one of the earliest radio stations in Southwestern Ontario. The station consisted of a single tube transmitter Doc had built in his mother's kitchen. The station was granted a license to broadcast publicly on 920 kilocycles AM, and CKNX Wingham, soon to become known as the Ontario Farm Station, was born.

During the difficult economic times of the late 1920's and early 30's, Doc couldn't afford to buy enough broadcast recordings to fill his air time so he invited local talent to come to the studio and entertain on the air.

On a Saturday night in 1937, one of the station's announcers ran a program of recorded country music which he called the "CKNX Barn Dance". Doc liked what he heard and decided to turn it into a regular program utilizing live music. Crowds soon gather on the street to watch the Saturday Night CKNX Barn Dance through the front window of the studio.

When it became apparent that the show was popular both at home and with the radio audience, Doc decided to take it on the road. By utilizing long distance telephone lines, he was able to transmit the Barn Dance back to the studio and from there onto the air waves. By 1950, the program was a hit throughout all of Southwestern Ontario and had become known internationally as Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance.

The Barn Dance remained on the air for over 25 years and is recognized in the Canadian Encyclopedia of Music (University of Toronto Press) as the longest live radio show of its kind in the history of Canadian Broadcasting.

The most successful production of the 1996 season at the Blyth Festival was the musical play "Barn Dance Live" which paid tribute to the Barn Dance and its early performances. The production was featured at Blyth again in the 1997 season.

In December of 1996, a documentary of the Barn Dance was presented on CBC's "Country Canada". Included were excerpts from the CKNX Saturday Night Travelling Barn Dance staged earlier at the Howick Community Centre. The Anniversary Show was a joint venture of CKNX and the Barn Dance Historical Foundation. Artists from the past and talented newcomers were featured. These and other performers will appear in the eight Barn Dances to be presented throughout Southwestern Ontario in 1998, perhaps in or near where you live.

Barn Dance Museum

In April 1996 we opened our Museum to our membership as well as the general public. Our ceremony involved politicians, our executive and of course a speech from our founder, Earl Heywood.

The displays include items from Al Cherney, Ward Allen, Earl Heywood, The Mercey Brothers, as well as pictures and stories of many, many more. You'll learn about Doc Cruickshank, the man who brought radio and television to midwestern Ontario. We have a P.A. System built by Scott Reid and used by the Ranch Boys in the 1940's. More is being added all the time.

In the year since our opening, we have shared smiles and memories with more than 250 visitors from all over Ontario. The interest from the public continues to grow along with our enthusiasm as we collect more memorabilia and add more displays.

The Barn Dance Historical Society is pleased to invite you to include a stop at our Museum as part of your itinerary of interesting places to visit. Located directly behind the Town Hall Heritage Theatre in Wingham, it is open to coincide with all related performances there, as well as any other time year-round by appointment by calling (519) 357-3021.

Our admission is a modest \$2.00 per person for casual visitors or only one looney each for bus tours.

For more information please call or write.

BE A FRIEND!

Join the Barn Dance Friendship Club.

Membership Fee: \$20.00 annually

Benefits of Membership include:

- Performing privileges at Hoedowns.
- Subscription to the quarterly Journal.
- Voting rights on the elections and operations.
- Invitations for Barn Dance Get-Together.
- Advance notice of Special Events.
- The opportunity to hold office or be on a committee.
- Personalized Club Membership Certificate.
- Half Price to Jamboree Campout Barn Dance.

Board of Directors

Directors are elected from and by the membership. (12)

Executive Officers are then elected from and by the Directors. (5)

(President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary)

Committees

- * Membership * Volunteer * Fundraising *
- * Finance * Special Events and Performing Artists *
- * Artifacts, Membership and Historical *
- * Public Relations, Publicity and Promotion *
- * Legal, Insurance and Property *

*To become a member, or receive more information about
The Friendship Club, please contact:*

**BARN DANCE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION,
Box 68, Wingham, Ontario N0G 2W0
Phone: (519) 565-2102**

The Story of the Barn Dance

PIONEER AWARDS

One Saturday night in 1937, a radio announcer by the name of Reg Douglas working on the night shift of the local radio station in Wingham, Ontario, began playing records of Hillbilly singers and old time music. On the break he announced it as the CKNX Barn Dance.

W. T. "Doc" Cruickshank, owner of the radio station, was listening. He liked the idea, but it didn't fit his vision of the station's policy of producing and developing live talent. Yes, "Doc" had a better idea and from then on began featuring live talent at The CKNX Barn Dance and it clicked. Soon he discovered the theory of remote broadcasting by telephone and thereafter the Barn Dance was presented live from some town or city throughout southwestern Ontario.

By 1950, the radio show grew so big it became known as "Canada's Largest Travelling Barn Dance". Today (1998), after 60 years of progress "Doc's Barn Dance" has become internationally known as the longest lived radio show of it's kind in the history of Canadian Broadcasting.

On June 29, 1993, an organization was established to become the Barn Dance Historical Society and begin the process of preserving the history of the Barn Dance, a most remarkable phenomenon.

Lest we forget the Pioneers who helped to keep this show alive over so many years must not be forgotten. At each Barn Dance presentation in the future there will be a special ongoing Tribute and Pioneer Award presented in honour of one of your Barn Dance celebrities.

DON'T MISS IT! The Presentation of the Barn Dance Pioneer Awards.

Barn Dance Production Staff

Manager - Wayne Otterbein
Musical Director - Ron Coulthard
Promotions - Hugh Elder, Lynn Russwurm
Stage Manager - Hugh Elder
Tribute Co-ordinators - Ron Coulthard, Earl Heywood
Treasurer - Lois Schistad
Master of Ceremonies - Jim Swan
Souvenir Table - Martha Heywood, Beth Elder, Shirley Russwurm
Sound and Lighting by - Wayne Greve Productions

1998 Barn Dances

May 23rd - Jamboree Campout, Blyth Arena Complex
June 6th - Palmerston Hand Car Races, Palmerston Arena
June 27th - Monkton Lions Club, Monkton Arena
July 25th - Paradise and District Lions Club, St. Clements Arena
August 1st - (*private*) Firefighters Convention, St. Jacob's Arena
August 22nd - Durham Huskies, Durham Arena
August 29th - Perth County Cattlemen, Stratford Coliseum
September 19th - Howick Fair Board, Howick Arena Complex

Booking The Barn Dance

If you are interested in finding out more information about booking the Barn Dance for 1999, please write to:

Barn Dance Historical Society
P. O. Box 68,
Wingham, Ontario
N0G 2W0
or phone: (519) 565-2102

Souvenirs

Mugs	— \$ 5.00 each
Calendars	— \$10.00 each
Barn Dance Tape	— \$10.00 each
Barn Dance CDs	— \$19.00 each

Retired Performers



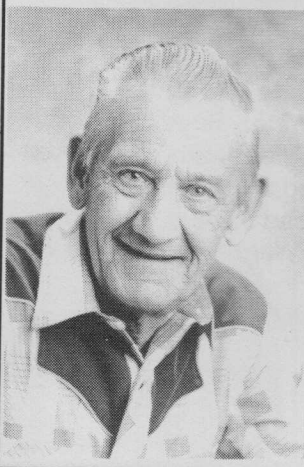
JOHN BRENT

In 1942, Doc Cruickshank was in need of an announcer for CKNX radio and a manager for the Barn Dance. He chose John Brent, an experienced announcer at CKCO Kitchener to fill the dual role. John quickly became popular with CKNX audiences as an on-air personality and as emcee of the Barn Dance. His talents and energies seemed endless as he personally attended to the hiring, promotion, ticket sales and setting up chores associated with the shows.



CORA ROBERTSON

In addition to being the wife of Don Robertson, the legendary founder and leader of the "Ranch Boys", Cora was also a factor in the success of the group. She is a popular performer with excellent musical abilities. Cora is a music teacher, organist, accordionist and pianist. Her rendition of "Down Yonder" was the opening number of the Barn Dance for many years and became the most widely recognized musical introduction in this area.



LLOYD BANK

A Kitchener native, Lloyd began his musical career as a steel guitarist with the "Tumbleweed Troubadours" and the "Westernaires" before joining the Barn Dance. He then moved to Main Street Jamboree in Hamilton as a member of the "Mainstreeters" and appeared with that group at the Grand Old Opry. Lloyd also did TV shows out of Toronto and toured with other stars. After a temporary retirement, he joined the "Jamboree Reunion Band" in Kitchener.

Retired Performers



ERNIE KING

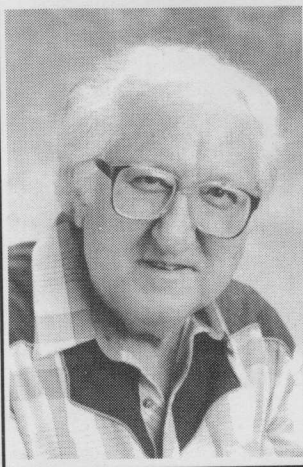
A product of Penetanguishe, Ernie arrived in Wingham after a stopover in Kitchener. His musical career as a member of the "Ranch Boys" and his performances on the Barn Dance, along with his dual role as emcee and star entertainer on "Circle 8 Ranch" established Ernie as one of the most popular and best remembered Barn Dance performers. Formerly a staff member at CKNX and proprietor of the Ernie King Music Center, Ernie still finds time to perform musically on occasion.



MERCEY BROTHERS

Because of their age differences, Hanover natives Larry, Ray and Lloyd Mercey began their country music careers at different times during the early 1960's. Larry performed as a solo artist before being joined first by Ray and later by Lloyd. The brothers went on to Country Music fame, not only in the area but nationally too. Among

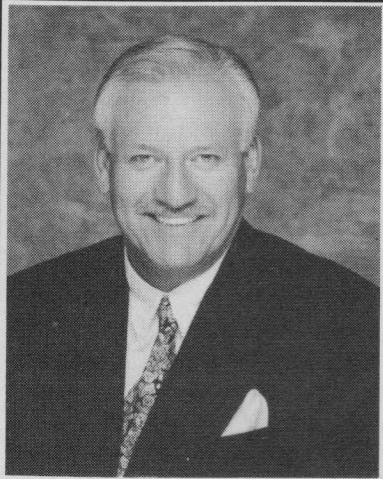
their many successes are: Canada's Country Group of the Year (several times); Charter Members of the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame; and numerous hit records and albums.



BILL MANKISS

Born in Manitoba, Bill joined the Barn Dance as an accordionist. He later played with Mel Lavigne's "Blue Water Boys", with King Ganam on CFTO-TV and with Toronto area bands. Bill recorded a polka album for ARC Records and provided backup for a number of artists including Ward Allen and Al Cherney.

Deceased March 18, 1998.



JIM SWAN

Jim Swan has been the Morning Host at AM 1410 CKSL the River since October 1995, bringing listeners a combination of soft favourites of yesterday and today, timely information, and comments.

Jim's return to radio on AM 1410 CKSL the River, followed nearly 20 years with CFPL-TV where Jim served as Community Relations Coordinator, a position he held for close to a decade. During that time he appeared on "What's On", a daily community events program. His career with CFPL-TV began when he joined the "Morning Break" program as co-host, and continued as co-host of "First Edition", a program he eventually produced.

Jim appears annually as the co-host of the Children's Miracle Network Telethon.

Jim Swan was born in Bright, Ontario. He went to high school at Huron Park Secondary School in Woodstock. He began his broadcasting career in Woodstock, as an announcer for CKOX-AM Radio (now FM-104).

In 1964, he moved to CKNX Broadcasting in Wingham, where he appeared on both radio and television. Jim hosted the radio morning show, and is remembered for his participation on the children's program, "East of the Sun". Jim also hosted "Circle Eight Ranch" for a time.

Jim is very involved throughout the community. He is an active member of the Board of Directors for the Agape Foundation. He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Blyth Canadian Theatre Festival. Jim also serves as an advisor to Fanshawe College Business and Applied Arts Advisory Committee, The Public Relations Committee of Mission Services London.

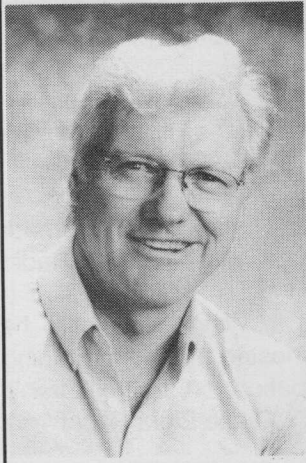
Jim was a recipient of the Howard Caine Award for outstanding Public Service presented by the Central Canada Association of Broadcasters in 1991. In September of 1993, he was recognized by the London Community Foundation with the Ivey Award for Excellence. Named for the Richard Ivey family, the award recognizes distinguished professional community service by a Londoner.

Jim lives in London with Joanne, his wife of 19 years, and their children Jill 14, and Adam 13.



EARL AND MARTHA HEYWOOD

Earl was a Barn Dance performer from the early 1940's until the show disbanded. He has since been a prime factor in its revival. Earl starred on radio and TV shows and in countless concerts and other performances. He was inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame and has recorded with Dominion, RCA and Rodeo. In addition to his singing and guitar talents, Earl is also a song writer of note. He and his wife Martha are a very popular entertainment duo and continue to perform in the area.



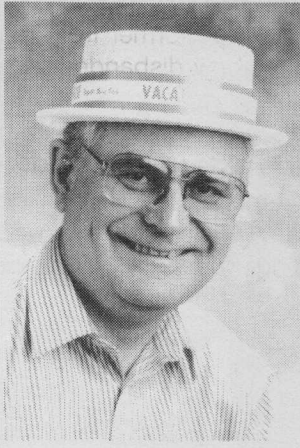
BRUCE ROBERTSON

After developing his fine guitar playing and vocal talents, Bruce joined his Uncle Don Robertson's "Ranch Boys". He became a popular performer with the group and also appeared on "Circle 8 Ranch" for eight years.



WAYNE RIEHL

Wayne hails from Stratford and has been performing in public since he was 13. He was a member of "Royce Riehl's Country Cousins", a group which won Top Country Band honours at the Cookstown Competition three years in a row. With Len Love, Wayne formed the "Country Versatiles" and still performs with that group. Wayne was also a regular on TV's "Good Tyme Country" and has made many appearances on the Barn Dance and other programs.



LEN LOVE

A devotee of the piano styles of Reg Bitton and Cora Robertson, Listowel native Len Love first appeared on the Barn Dance at age 15. With Wayne Riehl he later organized the "Country Versatiles" and is still performing with that group. Len considers his career highlight to be his appearances on CKNX-TV's "Good Tyme Country" from its first to its final broadcast. The program twice won the prestigious Canpro Award as best show of its size in Canada.



HANK BEDDARD

Hank apprenticed musically with the "Ranch Boys" and became a popular member of the Barn Dance cast. He went on to perform with a number of other groups including "Pete Brady and the Playboys" and also fronted his own groups. Hank now resides in London, Ontario, and performs at functions in the area.



SHARON STRONG

Known as the Sweetheart of the Barn Dance, Sharon was one of the most popular entertainers on the show. A regular on "Circle 8 Ranch", she also appeared on shows on CTV Toronto and CHCH Hamilton. She also recorded an album for ARC Records. Following an extended hiatus, while she raised her three daughters, Sharon is now performing again.