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George Strait*



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Pull-Out Poster

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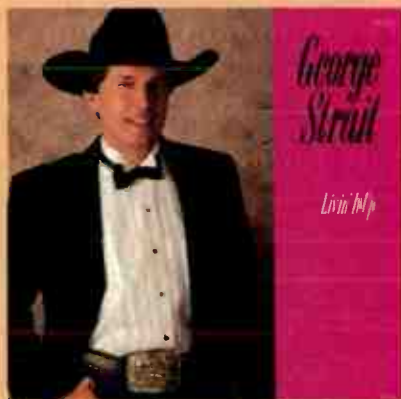
- 4 Letters**
Readers react to the latest surge of Strait Fever, Vern Gosdin's turn at the top and Ricky Van Shelton's centerfold. Plus more on Research in RandyLand, Whatever Happened to and Record Reviews.
- 21 People** *by Hazel Smith*
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- 39 New Kids on the Country Block** *by Bob Millard*
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- 42 Roy Clark: Showman** *by John Morthland*
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- 48 Willie Nelson: Minding Willie's Business** *by John Morthland*
Launching a cable TV network is just one of Willie's many projects. His new family is keeping him busy, too. As usual there's his music, his movie career and everyday business at his Austin headquarters.
- 52 Record Reviews**
Hank Jr. does it again. The Highwaymen are back, as are The Desert Rose Band, Jo-El Sonnier, Steve Wariner and sister acts Sweethearts of the Rodeo and Jennifer McCarter and The McCarters. Newcomers Jann Brown and Marsha Thornton debut, plus even more old favorites.
- 68 Buried Treasures** *by Rich Kienzle*
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- 70 Essential Collector** *by Rich Kienzle*
Essential Collector returns with a list of must-have books for country collectors, including Malone's *Country Music U.S.A.*, the CMF's *Country: The Music and the Musicians* and more.

COVER PHOTO: PETER NASH

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George Strait

Letters

Strait Fever Spreads

Thank you so much for the great cover and the story on George Strait in the March/April issue. I loved it! I have had Strait fever for a long time, and it just gets better. My friend and I were lucky enough to meet him. He is not only the most gorgeous man I've ever seen but also the nicest. He takes the time to stop and sign autographs whenever he can. He seems to truly care about his fans. If he is still singing when I'm 90 years old, and if I'm able, I'll still be standing in front of that stage reaching to touch the hand of the most talented, the nicest and the best-looking cowboy in country music!

Wendy Able and Deborah Garcia
Shreveport, Louisiana

Strait—The Shy Entertainer of the Year

Thank you! Thank you! I didn't think you could have done any better than to have included a centerfold of George Strait in the previous issue, but you have. The article on George Strait in the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine* was the best feature I've seen on the great performer in a long time. Not only did I enjoy reading the interview, but I love the pictures of George Strait—they're new! The shy entertainer of the year definitely deserves the attention. He's the best!

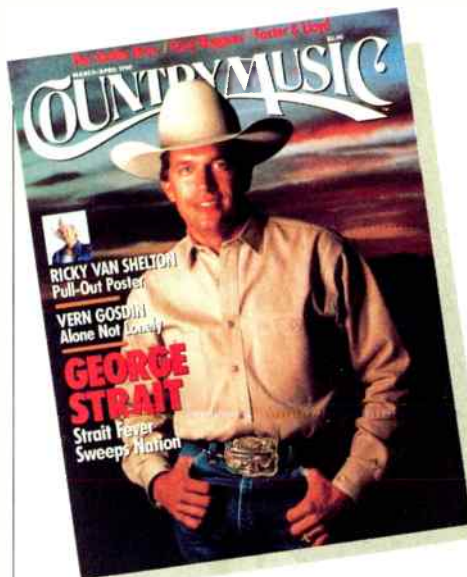
Dayna Orlando
Los Banos, California

A Question on Strait

Lord have mercy! What better man than George Strait to start out my perfect day! I just finished reading his article in your March/April issue, and it was fantastic! George Strait is the best thing that has happened to country music, and I give my thanks to your magazine for his articles and centerfold. There's only one question that wonders my mind. Was George Strait born in Poteet, Texas, like George Bush said in your March/April issue or in Pearsall, Texas, like you stated in *Facts of Life* on his centerfold in the September/October issue?

Sulema Flores
San Benito, Texas

Some sources say he was born in Pearsall. His management office now confirms that he was born in Poteet. He grew up in Pearsall.—Ed.



Keeping Strait Fans Happy

You people sure know how to make a girl happy! First you gave us the gorgeous centerfold of that sexy cowboy, George Strait. Now in this last issue you have a great cover story on him with an equally gorgeous cover picture. Keep this up, and I just might subscribe forever. Mr. Allen did a great job with the article. George is the perfect example of a man who has all the fame and adulation, but still remains a sweet, down-to-earth guy. He's a real honey! The article also shows that George has a good sense of humor. He seemed more open in this interview than any I've read about him. It was very refreshing.

Sheila Stigall
Murray, Kentucky

George Strait—A Credit to Country Music

Thank you so much for the cover story on country music's very best entertainer, George Strait. The cover picture was stunning—this man's face was meant to grace magazine covers. I really enjoyed the article. George proves that it is possible to be handsome and successful and still keep one's feet on the ground. He is a real credit to country music. Not only is he a clean-cut, decent family man, but he also gives us excitement, glamour and sex appeal. He truly deserves his Entertainer of the Year Award.

Wanda Chandler
McKenzie, Tennessee

Keeping Strait's Albums Straight

Thanks for the great article on George Strait by Bob Allen in your latest edition of *Country Music Magazine*. However, I would like to correct one error in this article. Mr. Allen states that *Beyond the Blue Neon* was George's eleventh album, but if you check this out, you will find that it was his twelfth album (including *Merry Christmas Strait to You*).

Brandi Murnan
Bartlesville, Oklahoma
You're right! Thank you! We had it right on the centerfold.—Ed.

A Fan Salutes Randy Travis

I really enjoyed your article on Randy Travis in the January/February issue. It was very refreshing to see that he was given some credit for his career and his personal life.

I realize that it helps 100% to have the love and support of someone to help you through the rough times, but I think Mr. Travis sells himself short on the accomplishments he has made for himself. I have a lot of respect for him—to have totally walked away from drugs and alcohol—and at such a young age. We are both the same age, and I know the pressure that we all were under during our teenage years. He should be extremely proud of himself for the way his life is now, because without being responsible and hard-working his career would not have happened.

I am in no way minimizing Lib Hatcher's very impressive handling of his career, I just think Randy Travis should give himself a well-deserved pat on the back for all he has accomplished. He deserves it!!

B.J.
Nashville, Tennessee

Randyland Fans

Thank you for an always great magazine, but thank you especially for the January/February issue featuring my favorite Randy Travis.

The article and pictures were superb. Patrick Carr was definitely at his best. He said just enough without any conjectures or intimation and said it well. In fact, I think it is the best, most interesting article I have ever read on Randy Travis—and I read everything I see on him. I shared Mr. Carr's article with other Randy Fans, and I know that you

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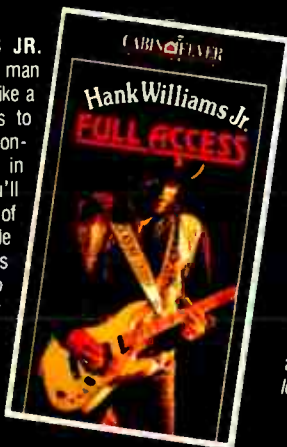
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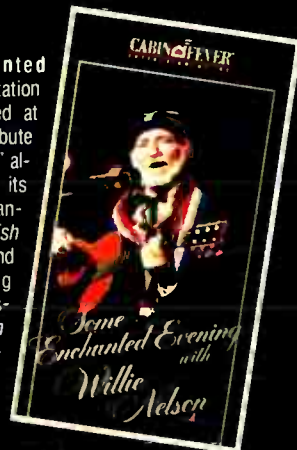
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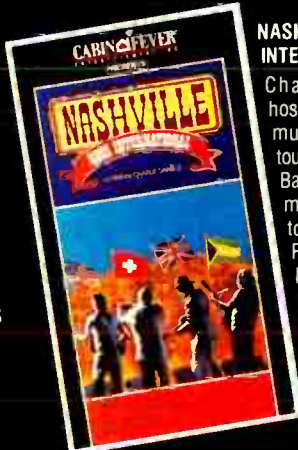
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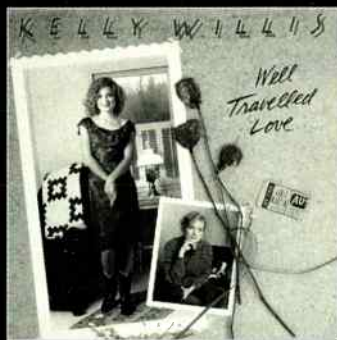
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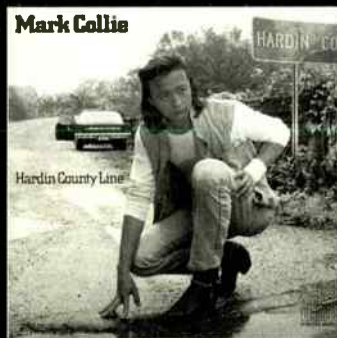
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are going to be getting some special orders for that issue. "Randyland" was clever, but we all know this whole USA is really Randyland.

Margie Coburn
Greenville, North Carolina

A Poem for Randy

On research in Randyland
I've always wondered what kind of life,
or should I say past Randy had.
As I can see he had a bad hand dealt to
him,
but thank God he put a wild card in his
hand
and came up with Lib Hatcher.
You all know some people around the
world
have had almost the same deal
But can't overturn a wild card like his.
Thanks a lot Lib for being there for
Randy.

He's the best.
To me he is the king of Nashville.
Good luck forever Randy.

John Korzenewski
Sandoval, Illinois



Nathan and Kevin Walker say howdy
to Randy Travis at a Michigan concert.

Randy Travis—A Family Man

I enjoyed your article on Randy Travis in the January/February issue. Our whole family loves Randy, and my husband and I have seen his show many times. Last October, Randy performed at the Palace of Auburn Hills, and with the cooperation of Randy and Jeff Davis, we were able to take our boys to meet Randy before the concert. They were so thrilled! Thank you, Randy, for making a whole family happy. We look forward to more GMC Truck American Music Tours with you as the headliner!

Janene Walker
Union Lake, Michigan

Good Things in Store for Ricky Van Shelton

I received my March/April issue of your enjoyable magazine today and was pleased that Ricky Van Shelton had been selected for the centerfold. He certainly deserves the honor!

I will soon be 73, and I have enjoyed and appreciated country music all my life. However, no voice has ever im-

COUNTRY MUSIC

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pressed and pleased me as has Ricky Van's. The emotion and tone control he puts into his singing has completely won my heart and touched my soul. I have all his tapes and enjoy every song he sings.

I also had the thrill and honor of receiving a phone call from his very capable and talented producer, Steve Buckingham. This was in response to a letter I had written him. I can only say if Ricky Van is as gracious and considerate as Steve, only good things can come their way.

Truba McCoy
Stockton, California

Speechless over Shelton

I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the centerfold in the March/April issue featuring Ricky Van Shelton.

This guy is beyond words, and I have yet to find a word that does justice to his voice.

To me, Ricky is the very best. I really appreciate what he's doing for country music.

Rebekah Wadsworth
Union, Maine

Chainsaws and Centerfolds

I've been receiving *Country Music Magazine* for over a year now. I take it to work with me as soon as it hits the mailbox. It's hard to imagine the McCullough chain saws of America are being made by 110-pound women like me, but your centerfolds keep us going!

The January/February issue of Dwight Yoakam was *hot!* Did you notice under his name on the centerfold what the year was? I don't think anyone would care after looking at the scenery.

Vickie Wilkison
Tucson, Arizona

Sorry for the slip-up. Something to confuse the experts in years to come when our centerfolds are history!—Ed.

Who's Hungriest?

I first would like to add my "Wow!" to the January/February issue. I couldn't believe my luck to have my three favorite country artists all in the same magazine—Dwight Yoakam, Randy Travis and Clint Black. And only a few months before another favorite...George Strait. I enjoyed the centerfold of George in the September/October issue. But I'd like to make a challenge to Sylvia Council of Miami, Florida. She says George Strait is the best-looking man in country music, and if George isn't the sexiest man alive, she'll eat her western hat! Well, Sylvia...I will eat your western hat if *Dwight Yoakam* isn't the best-looking and sexiest man alive!

Katinka Hanenkrat
Cottage Grove, Oregon

Now, ladies...—Ed.

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Country Music—Alive and Well in Canada

I've been subscribing to your fantastic magazine for a few years now and want you to know that country music is alive and well in Canada, especially in our province. At least twice a month we have concerts in our area of top names, and they always sell out.

We had the opportunity to see The Oaks in Vegas recently at Bally's Grande—what a concert! The energy level of those guys is unbelievable, and their rapport with the audience was wonderful.

My number one favorite male singer is Rodney Crowell—his album, *Keys to the Highway*, is his best yet. I can't get enough of it. The musicians seem so at one with his voice it's almost spooky, especially the steel guitar. It's a fantastic album, and as one of your reporters stated in a past issue, "Rodney Crowell is truly a poet."

Bonnie Krekoski
St. Paul, Alberta, Canada

Country Music Found Down Under

I was sent a copy of your magazine by a wonderful person in CBS's Nashville office and immediately sent off my subscription. I find *Country Music Magazine* a great source of information otherwise difficult to find.

I present a weekly program on The Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Australia featuring the latest American Country releases. At present, I receive promo copies from most of the major and some independent labels, and I am very grateful for these. There is a lot of interest in your music over here, although very little of it finds its way onto the radio and even less is released. Even harder to find, however, is information on many of the new and reasonably unknown artists. This is where *Country Music Magazine* comes in handy. We're always glad to receive anything anyone would care to send us at our Rockefeller Plaza offices in New York City.

Nick Weare
West Kempsey, Australia

A Sax Player in Support of k.d. lang

I'm on my second year of *Country Music Magazine*, and I love it. I have a request. How about giving k.d. lang a little attention? I think the lady has the most terrific voice I've ever heard. I'm impressed by her talent and courage. And k.d., if you ever need a sax player, I'd be thrilled to play for you anytime. As for those who choose to ignore k.d. lang because of her appearance, I have only one thing to say—it's your loss!

Denise Gordon
Fayetteville, Tennessee

Down Home with Shenandoah

Thank you, Shenandoah, for being the nicest bunch of down home boys to hit the country music scene in a very long time.

Recently, my friend and I saw you at "The Club" in Turlock, California. We were amazed to see that you were even more genuine and fun-loving than your music videos make you out to be. What a show you put on, and the extra time you took to get to know each and every one of your fans—whether it was signing an autograph or reaching out in a friendly conversation—was extra-special.

How about my favorite magazine, *Country Music*, featuring my favorite group, Shenandoah, in an in-depth article showcasing what a refreshing breath of change they have brought to country music? They not only sing it—they live it.

Michelle Gookin
Oakdale, California

Stay tuned!—Ed.



Michelle Gookin's friend, Yvette Plante, with Marty and Mike of Shenandoah at a club in California.

Vern Gosdin—Pure Country From Head to Toe

Thank you so much for the long-awaited article on Vern Gosdin in the March/April 1990 issue.

I am thrilled that he is finally getting the recognition he so much deserves. He not only can sing but he can write a song from the heart like no one else can. What a talented man. He is pure country from head to toe.

Mary Gillenwater
Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Appreciating Gosdin "Till the End"

Just wanted to say thanks for the great article on Vern Gosdin in the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine*.

I have been a fan of his since back in the 1970's when I first heard him sing "Till the End." I believe it was the most beautiful song I had ever heard. I have seen him in concert three times and enjoyed them all so much. I am glad he is finally being recognized for the great entertainer he really is.

Donna Ellis
Charleston, West Virginia



Laurie and Terry Collins with Zaca Creek.

They're New, They're Hot, They're Zaca Creek

We just want to have a chance to tell someone about the group Zaca Creek. In a new wave of groups that are now accepted as country music artists, it's nice to see someone that has the sound of the pioneers of country rock music.

We drove over 500 miles one way to see them, and it was well worth the drive. In the hour and twenty minutes they were on stage, they covered every emotion that country music has to offer—from keyboard player Jeff Foss' rendition of Kenny Loggins' "I'm All Right" to a heartfelt song the brothers wrote about their parents called "Mid-life Reunion."

The blend of vocals from these four is incredible not to mention their versatility on instruments. We think the four brothers from California have ex"zaca"ly what it takes.

Laurie and Terry
Glide, Oregon

Talk on TNN

Just love *Country Music Magazine's* stories on all the stars. We go to Nashville for 10 days each year, and our great thrill last April was meeting and talking with Lorianne Crook of *Crook and Chase*. It would be so nice to see a story on the great people who bring us super talk shows on TNN.

Mrs. Barbara Day
Sagamore, Massachusetts



Walter Day proudly posing with Lorianne Crook of *Crook and Chase*.



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Justin Tubb Tells It Like It Is

In the last year or so...in at least three national magazines (*Time*, *TV Guide*, and I think, *People*)...there have been stories on Randy Travis which stated that he was the youngest male singer ever to be invited to join the Grand Ole Opry. Patrick Carr made the same statement in his fine story on Randy in your last issue. Sorry to say, this is not so! Not even close!

I'm fairly certain I was the youngest...and while it may be no great achievement, it's a distinction I've held for almost 35 years...and one I'm quite proud of. I joined the Opry on September 10, 1955...exactly three weeks past my 20th birthday!

Several of my fans informed me that they wrote letters to all the other magazines, informing them of the error...but no corrections, to my knowledge, were ever printed. Maybe that's why this particular bit of misinformation still persists.

By the way, Margie Bowes was only 19 when she became a member a few years later.

Justin Tubb

Nashville, Tennessee

We regret this error. Please see the Letters column in our March/April issue for our first correction on it, and thank you for taking time to set the record straight.—Ed.

Country Music Travels East

Sometime ago I believe an artist on *Nashville Now* laid claim to introducing country music to the Orient.

I thought that it's time to set the record straight. I have been pickin' and singing since 1942, and although I have slowed down at times, I am still going great.

I served with the U.S. Marines in the Pacific from 1942-46. In the fall of 1945, we ended up in Northern China. A bunch of guys got together and formed a band, and when we could, we played in downtown Tientsin and in Peking. There was music being played in many clubs, but not what we had to offer. Everyone sure enjoyed our music being new to them.

Mr. Arthur Kathan Jr.
Meriden, Connecticut

Please send us a photo, if you have one, from those historic days.—Ed.

A Caring Country Man—Tom T. Hall

We want to share a special moment with Ole T. and one of his young fans, Gretchen Puckett. She has been a fan all of her sixteen years. On January 6, 1990, in Albermarle, North Carolina, Tom T. dedicated both of his shows to Gretchen's late Papa Acie, who passed away. Acie was a dear fan of Ole T.'s and took his family in his van to many Tom

T. Hall concerts across the country. The very kind dedication by Tom T. lifted our spirits. It is wonderful to know we have such dear, caring folks in country music.

Mrs. Acie Cox
Claudville, Virginia



Gretchen Puckett, 16, meets Tom T. Hall in Albermarle, North Carolina.

Another Morgan Fan Offers Support

I recently became a reader of your magazine. I read each issue cover to cover, and all I can say is keep up the great work!

I really enjoyed the article about Lorrie Morgan in the January/February issue. I'm very glad to know that she doesn't have to depend on drugs to get through the rough music business, especially with the loss of Keith.

Keep the great music coming, Lorrie.
Chris Van Allen
Chandler, Arizona

Lorrie Morgan Helps Others

As a person who lived with an alcoholic for twelve years and as a nurse, I know what alcoholism and drug abuse can do to people. Lorrie Morgan suffered a terrible tragedy, but it's good that she's "bouncing back" from it. I heard that she is now working to prevent alcoholism. If you're out there reading this, Lorrie, thank you for helping people and their families with this disease. Please don't forget to take time out for yourself. You're in my thoughts each and every day.

Darla Fredekind
Harlingen, Texas

A Very Special Fan of Hank Williams Jr.

I like the letter in your January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine* on Waylon Jennings. He performed at the Texas Special Olympic party. Well, I am a Special Olympic Athlete, myself, and yes, I do like country music. We have Special Olympics in Somerset County, New Jersey. I wish that we had somebody like Waylon or some good country star to perform in Somerset County—that would be something to see

for all of us. And yes, I do go out to listen to country music. That's all I listen to. My favorites are Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Vern Gosdin, Ronnie Milsap, Randy Travis, Clint Black, The Judds, Alabama and Dwight Yoakam. But my all-time favorite is Hank Williams Jr. I could listen to him sing every chance I get.

Karl Schwarz
Special Olympic Athlete
Bridgewater, New Jersey

The Highwaymen—A Truly "Awesome" Foursome

May I use your magazine as a means to let Willie, John, Waylon and Kris know how very much they are loved and how their Highwaymen tour was appreciated.

I had the good fortune to attend concerts in Peoria, Illinois, and Ames, Iowa, and I loved every minute of both. When these four multi-talented entertainers walked out on stage together, it was awesome. They are the very best in every way. Thanks, guys, for this unbelievably great tour.

Betty Anderson
Peoria Heights, Illinois



Johnny Cash and talented fan, Theresa Becwar, display a quilt of Johnny's life and achievements.

A Special Gift for Johnny Cash

I am writing to tell you Johnny Cash is still number one. He is a super guy, and I have been a fan of his since I first saw him on the *Ed Sullivan Show*.

I made a quilt for Johnny that records his life, his honors and records in blocks. I gave it to him last summer.

Sure love your magazine. I have been a subscriber for many years. Hoping to see an article on Johnny soon.

Theresa Becwar
Boscobel, Wisconsin

Suzy Bogguss' Real Home Town

Loved your story in the March/April issue of *Country Music Magazine* about Suzy Bogguss. She is one of the best things to come out of Illinois in a long

time, and we are very proud of her here in her home town.

However, you misspelled that town in the story. It is spelled "Aledo," not "Odelo" as stated in your article.

We know where she is from, but we want the rest of the world to know also.

Lee Stone
Aledo, Illinois

Thank you for this correction!—Ed.

A Fan for Foster and Lloyd

The article in the March/April issue on Foster and Lloyd was the favorite of my 20-year-old daughter. She thinks they are terrific. She saw their concert in Louisville, Kentucky, in September, and they are about all she listens to anymore. She has bought every one of their tapes. She wanted the article before I had a chance to read all of my magazine.

Thanks and keep bringing on the good articles. They are great and so is your magazine.

Wendy Hammons
Austin, Indiana

A True Entertainer — Barbara Mandrell

I just received my January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine* and was very happy to see the "20 Questions" interview with Barbara Mandrell. Barbara is my favorite entertainer, and having seen her in concert six times, I agree with her statement that a stage show should be something visual. Barbara doesn't just sing. She dances, jokes, talks with the audience and plays seven different instruments. While many other music personalities are simply singers, Barbara is an *entertainer* in the true sense of the word.

Barbara's appreciation of her fans and her continuous efforts to entertain them are what have made her so successful and will continue to keep her very successful for many years to come.

Deborah Buck
Bartlett, Illinois

Curiosity Quelled with Statler Brothers' 20 Questions

I'd like to thank you for a terrific magazine. This is my second issue, and I read all the articles over and over. I really enjoyed "20 Questions with the Statler Brothers" in your March/April issue. I'd always wondered where they were and what happened to them. I didn't know they were so close to me in Virginia! Keep up the great work. I'm looking forward to the next issue!

Laura Christensen
Glen Burnie, Maryland

Clint Black—A Man For All Ages

I would like to thank you for writing the article about Clint Black in the January/February issue. Once I brought this

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issue to school to read it. My classmates can't see how I like country music in the sixth grade. They think I'm crazy for loving country music. A while back I bought a Clint Black tape, and whenever I have some spare time, I listen and sing along. My mom and brother get annoyed, but heck, I love the music.

Tanya Young
Dover, New Jersey

More Requests for Clint

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Your article on Clint Black in the January/February issue made my day, and the pictures made my year.

I love receiving your magazine and look forward to the next issue. It is difficult to find *Country Music Magazine* on a newsstand where I live, so I subscribe to make sure I never miss a thing!

Being a big fan of Clint's, I was thrilled to see him in your book. Now... how about a cover?

Clint, hurry back to Atlanta! We love you!

Karin Pickett
Smyrna, Georgia

Never satisfied.—Ed.

Curious About Fiddle

I am writing concerning a fiddle that I have. I would like to find out the value of this instrument. There have been several people that think it may be an antique. It was made in 1716. The name on it is Antonnis Stradivarius, Cremonensis Faciebat.

Archie Blankenship
Phelps, Kentucky

Stradiveri's instruments were often copied. Write us for a list of qualified appraisers, or check your Yellow Pages for experts in your area.—Ed.

Seeking Info on Kenny Starr

My daughter recently found an old recording of Kenny Starr and surprised me with a cassette. It was a joy to hear this fine young man's marvelous voice again. We're both anxious to know what happened to him as he seems to have stopped recording. Hope you can help.

Trudy Karnitz

Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin

Kansas-born Kenny Starr toured with Loretta Lynn and had a Number One hit with "Blind Man in the Bleachers" in 1976. Who knows his whereabouts now?—Ed.

Any News on Allen Erwin, The Calgary Kid?

I was wondering if anyone knows what became of old timer Allen Erwin, The Calgary Kid. He was a Canadian-born cowboy singing star born in Portal, Canada. He was a Royal Canadian Mounty at one time. He was also a singing cowboy in the United States, sing-



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ing with people like Gene Autry and Hoot Gibson in Colonel Jim Eskews' Wild West Show. He made some pictures as fill-ins and posse leaders and had two song books published.

He worked with Pat Burrs, The Cattle King, and also for John Day Cattle Company in Oregon.

So many of the old timers are gone, and I wondered if he were still living. If anyone knows, I would love to hear.

M.P. Armstrong
Fairbanks, Alaska

Readers with info on Allen Erwin, come in, please.—Ed.

In Search Of...Lulu Belle and Scotty

I don't know if you can answer this question or not. But here goes...When I was a young girl some fifty years ago, living in Missouri, we used to listen to country music on the radio. My favorite at that time was a couple called Lulu Belle and Scotty. Could you tell me what ever happened to them? At that time they were very popular. Mrs. Jacob Obermeyer

Brookfield, Ohio

The CMSA Newsletter covered the duo back in November/December 1984. Back issues available for \$1.50 in New York. Scotty died in 1981, but Lulu Belle still lives in North Carolina. Their records are for sale in Closeout ads in this and other issues.—Ed.

Some News on Carl Belew

I am writing about singer/songwriter Carl Belew. He still lives in his home town of Salina, Oklahoma. He can be written to directly at: Carl Belew, Salina, Oklahoma, 74365. His health has been bad, so he'd love to hear from fans. His recordings can be found in the Ernest Tubb Record Shops in Nashville.

J. Dodson
Welsh, Oregon

Words to "Precious Jewel" Available

I really enjoy reading my *Country Music Magazine*.

I like reading the letters from the fans. In the March/April issue, there is a letter wanting the words to Roy Acuff's "Precious Jewel." They came from a 78 record, and I have them.

Lucille Perryman
Excelsior Springs, Missouri

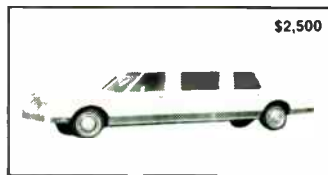
We also received a copy from longtime subscriber Magee in Florida. Readers may send SASE, and we will return a copy.—Ed.

Whatever Happened to "Little Miss Rita Faye"?

Enjoy your magazine very much, especially articles on country music stars of the 1950's and early 1960's such as your recent article on George Morgan in the

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5/6

September/October issue of the CMSA Newsletter.

Do you know whatever happened to "Little Miss Rita Faye"? This is how Ernest Tubb introduced her when she was a little dark-haired girl about 8-10 years of age with a big voice. She appeared on segments of the Grand Ole Opry hosted by Ernest which were taped for television in the mid-to-late 1950's. These shows were later packaged in the early 1980's as a series of shows called *Classic Country*. Rita reminded me a little of Brenda Lee. I am interested in knowing her full name. Any information you can provide would be appreciated.

Carol Knouse
Washington, D.C.

Rita Faye grew up, married, raised a son and a daughter, had one grandson, was active in church work and was helping her parents cope with old age—all this according to her grandma, Mom Johnson, who wrote us back in March/April 1988 in this column.—Ed.

Here's Ernie Ashworth

It has been brought to my attention that some sweet young lady in Winchester, Virginia, is wondering what happened to Ole Ern. I thought I would pass some information along to you. In February, 1989, I bought and took over ownership of WSLV Radio Station in Ardmore, Tennessee. Ardmore is approximately twenty miles west of my home town of Huntsville, Alabama. WSLV is sponsoring The Bill Monroe Bluegrass Festival here in Ardmore. It is scheduled for Memorial Day Weekend, Friday, May 25 through Sunday, May 27, 1990.

Ernie Ashworth
Ardmore, Tennessee



Ernie Ashworth, Grand Ole Opry Star and proud new owner of WSLV Radio Station in Ardmore, Tennessee.

Cowboy Copas Tribute Appreciated

A few months ago I wrote requesting a story on my all-time favorite, Cowboy Copas. What a wonderful surprise to open the March/April issue and see Rich Kienzle's "Legends of Country Music"



Stars Galore from Garman
Photographer J. Watson Garman caught John Denver and Carl Perkins, Kenny Rogers and son Kenny Jr. and Marty Stuart and Gary Morris at a couple of recent concerts. Denver, Perkins, Stuart and Morris were out for the L.I.F.E. (Love is Feeding Everyone) Country Christmas Concert.



featuring Copas in the CMSA Newsletter. It was apparent to me that Rich spent a lot of time and research for this tribute.

As Rich said, Cope could sing almost anything and do it well. He was more than a singer, he was an entertainer! His routines with Johnny Bond, Rod Brasfield and others were masterpieces. Thank you again and again for such a wonderful tribute.

Marvin Christman
Mertinsville, Indiana

Legends of Country Music in the Newsletter is one of our most popular features.—Ed.

Ricky Van Shelton Getting Better All the Time

I'm extremely upset with Rich Kienzle's record review of *RVS III* in the March/April issue. Obviously, Rich does not recognize a perfect voice. Ricky Van Shelton's fans love his variety of music. I've just attended my first concert since the new album. The crowd was as thrilled as ever. His concerts are better every time. Steve Buckingham and Ricky must know what material makes an awesome album since it has gone Gold in six weeks!

Debbie Cameron
Springfield, Massachusetts

"Simple Man" Not So Simple

Bob Allen was right on target in his review of Charlie Daniels' "Simple Man" in the March/April issue when he described its sentiments as "boorish, anti-intellectual and reek(ing) of sadism and vigilantism." He should have left it

at that. Instead he says "it's hard not to secretly applaud" Daniels' lyrics. You can't have it both ways, Mr. Allen. What this country surely *doesn't* need is a bunch of people taking the law into their own hands. It's ironic to think that if many of today's anti-drug zealots heard the original "Long-haired Country Boy," they might be rounding up ol' Charlie himself and heading for the swamp.

Chip DeNure
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Getting a Grip on Skip Ewing

I am writing in regard to the record review on Skip Ewing's *The Will to Love* by Rich Kienzle in the January/February issue of *Country Music Magazine*.

I read the review because I was interested in buying the album. I have liked what I've heard of Ewing on the radio so far. The comment about "It Wasn't His Child" sounding "like an amateur's poem" upset me enough to stop reading and write this letter.

Sweepstakes Winners

Kim Marsland of Burlington, North Dakota, won the \$1,000 *Early Renewal Sweepstakes* which ended October 9, 1989.

Thomas Soares of Westport, Massachusetts, won the October/November 1989 \$1,000 *Renewal Sweepstakes* which ended December 4, 1989. Martha Bowie of Nanjemoy, Maryland, won the 1989 *Country Music \$5,000 Raffle Sweepstakes* which ended December 31, 1989. Congratulations! Watch this space for future winners.

I first heard "It Wasn't His Child," the song about Jesus, on Sawyer Brown's *Wide Open* album. It touched my heart so much I looked at the album cover to find out who wrote the song. Seeing Ewing's name, I remembered him as a superb songwriter.

As for the other songs on *The Will to Love*, I cannot form an opinion yet, although if Kienzle is as wrong about them as he was about "It Wasn't His Child," I am going out to pick up *The Will to Love* right now! I have a feeling I will like it.

As for Rich Kienzle...get a grip!

Cindy Burnette
Dublin, Georgia

Another Fan for Ewing

I am writing in response to your review of Skip Ewing's album *The Will to Love* in the January/February issue. One question comes to mind: "Do you need a hearing aid?" Or perhaps we weren't listening to the same album. In either case, I think you need to be more open-minded.

Skip Ewing is an extremely talented singer and songwriter. I would hardly describe his songs as "overwrought, heavy-handed, or weak." Rather they express a wisdom far beyond his years. They are honest songs that come from his heart.

Unlike you, I believe Skip has "substance and artistic vision." He is a complete country artist for he puts emotion into each performance. His voice captures the love, joy and sadness we have all felt.

Perhaps, Mr. Kienzle, you need to expand your appreciation of the pop-oriented singers in today's country music. You also might benefit from reading the reviews of Skip's album published in *Music City News* and *Country Song Roundup*.

Terri Johnson
Villisca, Iowa

There's No Holdin' Randy Travis Back

A word of thanks goes to Rich Kienzle on his review of Randy Travis' *No Holdin' Back* album in the January/February issue. Rich, once again, is right on target.

Try as I might to capture that high level of enjoyment I got (and still do) from *Storms of Life* with the other two releases, I was unable to do so—until now with the release of *No Holdin' Back*.

This is "vintage" Randy—once again capturing you from start to finish, from song to song! This is the Randy you get in concert and the Randy I enjoy wholeheartedly via whatever method—CD, record, tape or live.

D. Guyer
Mt. Holly, New Jersey



Country Music Time

Merle Haggard takes time out with *Country Music Magazine* and George Strait. Denise Farrell snapped the Mighty Merle, recently profiled in *The New Yorker*, at The Legends Concert in Norfolk, Virginia.

A Peek into Country Music's Past

I received my March/April issue of your great magazine in yesterday's mail. I just can't put it down until I read it from cover to cover.

In response to how people first were introduced to *Country Music Magazine*: A lady I knew at work loved Waylon Jennings. She had bought a copy, and she brought it to me. After I read the magazine I subscribed to it in February of 1974 and haven't missed a copy except when you quit for awhile. I missed it like a good friend. I was in the hospital when the letter came that I could subscribe again. So as soon as I got home, I did. I hope you never quit again. I still have the letter that Russell Barnard sent when we could re-subscribe. So keep up the good work. You always miss a good friend when they're gone.

Lotus Roberts
Harrison, Arizona

Those were great days when Country Music came back. The return issue was September/October 1983. Russ Barnard's thank you to readers like you was printed in that issue.—Ed.

Hooked on Country Music

I started reading *Country Music Magazine* back years ago—I was "snooping" in my grandparents' basement when I came across tons of these magazines! I was hooked! I'm 29, and I like lots of new singers, but to me the "older" ones are best! I'm anxiously awaiting my first copy of *The Journal of the American Academy for the Preservation of Old Time Country Music*.

Brenda Linder
Wyanet, Illinois

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CHART 1 for Levi's® 501® button-fly jeans

AVERAGE	State waist	28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36	38
	then inseam	32, 34, 36	32, 34
TALL	State waist	30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38	
	then inseam	38	
EXTRA-TALL	State waist	34, 36, 38	
	then inseam	40	
BIG	State waist	40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50	40, 42, 44, 52, 54, 56, 58, 50, 52
	then inseam	38, 40	32, 34, 36

CHART 2 for Levi's® 505® zipper-fly jeans

State waist	29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36	38
then inseam	30, 32, 34	30, 32

Woman's Conversion Chart for men's jeans

Measure largest part of hips. For inseam, measure good fitting pair of slacks from crotch to bottom of leg.*

If hips measure	33½-34	34½-35	35½-36½	37-37½	
order men's waist	28	29	30	31	
If hips measure	38-38½	39-39½	40-40½	41-42	43-44
order men's waist	32	33	34	36	38

*For Levi's® Shrink-to-fit® jeans, refer to 501® Shrink to fit instructions above.

SIZE NOTE: AVERAGE (5'7" to 5'11"); TALL (5'11" to 6'3"); EXTRA-TALL (6'3" to 6'7"); BIG (5'7" to 5'11").

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THE CRTC MUSIC GUIDE

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Linda Ronstadt—Cry Like A Rainstorm. How Like The Wind. With Aaron Neville on Don't Know Much and All My Life. plus many more (Elektra) 389-874

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PATSY CLINE 12 Greatest Hits 365-924	HOLLY DUNN The Blue Rose Of Texas 384-222	WAYLON JENNINGS Will The Wolf Survive 343-236	JUICE NEWTON GREATEST HITS 328-609	GEORGE STRAIT GREATEST HITS VOL. II 361-006	MELISSA MANCHESTER GREATEST HITS 318-733	Charlie Daniels Band Homesick Heroes 375-626
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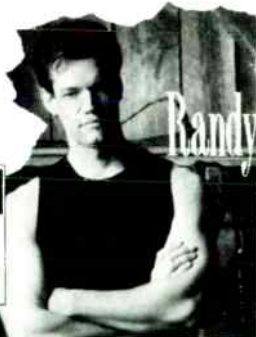
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Send me these 8 CDs for 1¢

Extra Bonus Offer. Also send me one more CD now, for which I've enclosed an additional \$6.95. ...and I'm entitled to this extra CD FREE!

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(But I may always choose from any category.)

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Ricky Van Shelton,
Hank Williams, Jr. | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy Listening
Johnny Mathis,
Ray Conniff | <input type="checkbox"/> Modern Rock
Psychedelic Furs,
Midnight Oil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard Rock
Eric Clapton,
Joan Jett | <input type="checkbox"/> Soft Rock
Richard Marx,
Paula Abdul | <input type="checkbox"/> Pop
Barbra Streisand,
Barry Manilow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Metal | <input type="checkbox"/> Jazz | <input type="checkbox"/> Black Music
Luther Vandross,
Regina Belle |

Mr.
 Mrs.
 Miss

First Name Initial Last Name

Address Apt.

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Do you have a telephone? (01) Yes No 348/590
Do you have a credit card? (03) Yes No
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How the Club works: every four weeks (13 times a year) you'll receive the Club's music magazine, which describes the Selection of the Month... plus hundreds of alternatives from every field of music. Up to 6 times a year you may also receive offers of Special Selections, usually at a discount off regular Club prices, for a total of up to 19 buying opportunities.

If you wish to receive the Selection of the Month or the Special Selection, you don't have to do anything—it will be shipped automatically. If you prefer an alternate selection, or none at all, just fill in the response card always provided and mail it by the date specified. You will always have at least 10 days to make your decision. If you ever receive any Selection without having 10 days to decide, return it at our expense.

The cassettes you order during your membership will be billed at regular Club prices, which currently are \$7.98 to \$9.98—plus shipping and handling. (Multi-unit sets, special and classical selections may be somewhat higher) And if you continue after completing your enrollment agreement, you'll be eligible for our bonus plan.

10-Day Risk-Free Trial: we'll send details of the Club's operation with your introductory shipment. If you are not satisfied for any reason, just return everything within 10 days for a full refund and no further obligation.

Order your first selection now at a big discount—and get 2 extra cassettes FREE! You may also choose your first selection right now—we'll give it to you for up to 60% off regular Club prices—only \$3.98. Enclose payment now and you'll receive it with your introductory cassettes. This discount purchase immediately reduces your membership obligation—you then need buy just 7 more (instead of 8) in three years. What's more, this discount entitles you to 2 more hit cassettes as a bonus, FREE. Just check the box in the application and indicate your first selection and 2 free bonus cassettes.

OR—IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY TAKE 8 COMPACT DISCS FOR 1¢

If you have a CD player, or are planning to get one, you'll surely prefer to get CDs now. As a new member, you may have any 8 CDs for a penny. Just indicate the 8 CDs you want and mail the application, together with check or money order for \$1.86 (that's 1¢ for your first 8 CDs, plus \$1.85 for shipping and handling). In exchange, you agree to buy just six CDs in the next three years at regular Club prices (which currently are \$12.98-\$15.98, plus shipping and handling)—and you may cancel anytime after buying six CDs. Otherwise, the Club works in the same manner as previously outlined.

Extra Bonus Offer: as a special offer to new members, take one additional CD right now for only \$6.95. This discount purchase entitles you to choose an extra CD as a bonus FREE. And you'll receive your discounted CD and your bonus CD with your 8 introductory selections.

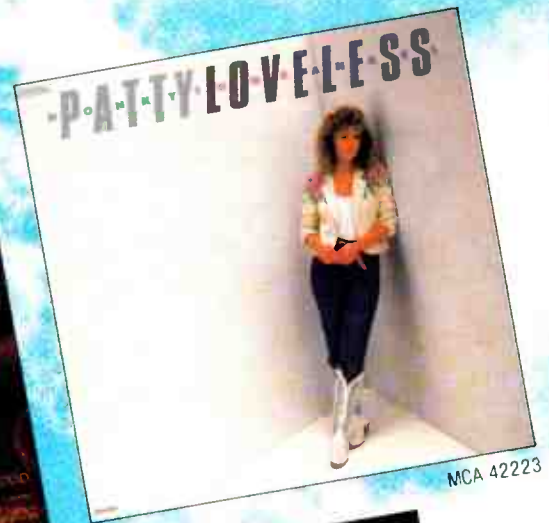
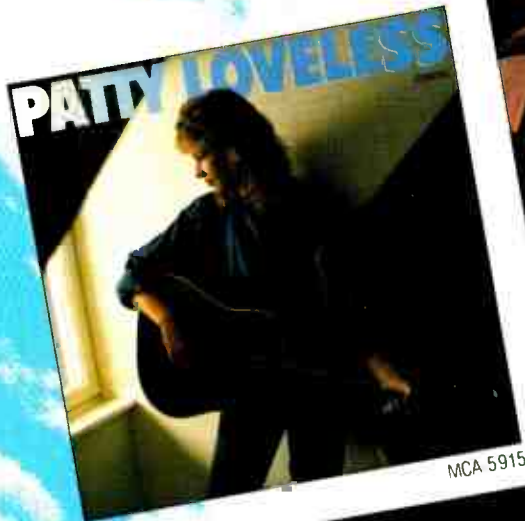
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*Selections with two numbers count as two selections—write each number in a separate box.

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IF THIS WAS
THE BEGINNING...



IMAGINE
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"ON
DOWN
THE
LINE"



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is back with more gutsy country. Gutsy—that's the difference between heartache and heartbreak. It's "traditional country with an edge"—and this new release gives her the edge to take her from Country's Favorite new star to the next female vocalist of the year!

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People

SNOW FOR 40 YEARS

When **Hank Snow** celebrated his 40th Anniversary on the Grand Ole Opry, I was there to cover the event for you fans. The party was televised on TNN. Opry manager **Hal Durham** told Hank weeks before that he could invite whom-ever he chose to be a part of the celebration. Hank's excellent choice fell on **Tompall & The Glaser Brothers** and **Mel Tillis**. Mel, of course, is a favorite of everybody and has steadily entertained over the years. The Glasers, on the other hand, split up in the late 1970's and have only performed together occasionally since. Nevertheless, the trio of Tompall, Chuck and Jim was in fine form. It was as if they had been singing every weekend on the road or on the Opry just as they had for 15 years before the split. There's no harmony like brother harmony, and Tompall & The Glaser Brothers were definitely amongst the best. The audience loved the 30-minute show. I wished it were longer. Of course, Hank was all sparkled in his pink rhinestone suit and red velvet bow tie.

Comedian and Agriculture Commissioner of the State of Tennessee, **Cotton Ivy**, presented Hank a plaque from **Governor Ned Ray McWherter** making the Canadian an outstanding Tennessean. See, anybody can come from anywhere and stay in Music City and sing country music. We not only love them, we adopt them.

NOT JUST ANOTHER HAT ACT

Cowboy hats and cowboy acts are the thing in country music these days, probably due to the pretty head of **George Strait** followed by the Virginia-country head of **Ricky Van Shelton** and the Kentucky-turned-California head of **Dwight Yoakam** and the smoking head of **Clint Black**. Now here comes another man-in-a-hat named **Garth Brooks**. In my book, George is the best looking, Ricky Van the shyest, Dwight the sexiest and Clint the hottest, but the nicest is Garth Brooks. Garth always takes the time to stop, look you



Jim, Chuck and Tompall Glaser, above, and Bill Anderson, Hal Durham, Bill Monroe, Jean Shepard and Mel Tillis, below, helped Hank celebrate.

in the eye and say hello. Plus, the hat he wears, he wears as naturally as he wears his britches. Garth is a natural born hat-wearing cowboy just like George Strait.

Following his first Number One single, "If Tomorrow Never Comes," a song Garth wrote, I got the feeling both Garth and Clint Black were gonna give the hearts and charts a run for their money. All the hat wearers and award winners are gonna sit back and watch these two boys for awhile now, I predict. Garth is talented, and he has the looks and personality to go with it.

SORRY, GIRLS

That cute Mark Miller, frontman for **Sawyer Brown**, said his vows with **Lisa Knight** recently. Miller met Knight sometime back when she was a makeup artist on a TV show.

Another person who married a makeup lady he met on a TV show is **Paul Overstreet**. He and wife **Julie** now have two sons, **Nash** and **Chord**, and a



daughter **Summer** and expect another child in May. The family has made Paul and Julie happy. We wish them and Mark and Lisa the best.

Sorry, girls...that cute Mark has said them fatal words.

ZZ TOP'S MANAGER IN MUSIC CITY

You bet your sweet patootie he was. **Bill Ham**, that is. There's more pretty singers than **ZZ Top**. Ham also manages young, handsome, hot **Clint Black**. You can look for Bill Ham to spend a lot of time in Music City now.

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People



The Joan Rivers Show was just one of the shows Charlie Daniels guested on.

SIMPLE MAN

Charlie Daniels is a star, yet he has remained a simple man with simple tastes and ideas. His "Simple Man" song created quite a bit of controversy but not enough to keep him off the country music charts. The single reached Number 12 while the *Simple Man* album reached Number Three status up there with Randy Travis and Clint Black. The single has also been Charlie's fastest-selling release since his Grammy-winning "The Devil Went Down to Georgia." The controversial lyrics have paid off in other areas too, especially TV. Charlie's TV appearances include *Arsenio Hall*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *The Joan Rivers Show*, *People Are Watching*, *Showbiz Today* and, of all things, *Crimewatch Tonight*. Give-'em-hell Charlie is the simple man's hero because he is one of them.

YET ANOTHER SPONSOR GOES COUNTRY

Bud Light's set to sponsor the Entertainer of the Year, George Strait, in concert. The deal includes 50 performances, running through December 1990. George will also be featured in Bud Light's "Know When to Say When" commercials, which encourage adults who choose to drink alcoholic beverages

to do so responsibly.

George received plenty of accolades in the 1980's. The new decade looks to be starting well, too. In addition to the Busch deal, demand for tickets for his appearance at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo was so strong that the show asked George to appear for not one but two consecutive nights. No other artist can boast this claim—only the Strait man.

CONLEE PICKING UP THE CHANGE

John Conlee was a little surprised last summer when members of the audience came forward with money while he was performing his hit song, "Busted." Word spread, however, and nowadays these donations are a common practice with the fans. Could be that they heard, as I did, that John donates all the monies to the Oklahoma City-based Feed the Children organization. John says he'll keep doing the song as long as it makes money for the organization. Don't you just love country stars?

AND AN OAK AGO

William Lee Golden, former Oak person, said his vows with his lady Brenda Kaye Hall at the Opryland Hotel. More than 200 guests attended the celebration.

CHUNG COMES CALLING

When Connie Chung made her moves on Music City to interview hillbilly hunk, Randy Travis, I thought, "Well, glory be, finally national television has recognized that Nashville is on the map and is gonna talk about it in living color." After all, 9 P.M. on a Saturday night ain't a bad spot for a hillbilly's face, especially if the TV powers-that-be want the music-loving world to see, hear and buy.

Most of us Randy Travis fans know that he got his start in Nashville cooking burgers, washing dishes and singing in between at the Nashville Palace located across from Opryland on Music Valley Drive. Fans, believe me when I tell you that you won't find a nicer country music nightclub nowhere. I take my friends from out of town to the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame and then to the Nashville Palace for supper and entertainment. The place is always clean, the music's great and the food is outstanding. On Friday and Saturday nights, stars like Ricky Van Shelton, Porter Wagoner, Johnny Russell and others just show up at the Nashville Palace to visit with their friend, owner/manager John Hobbs. They'll eat a bite, have a drink or get up and sing.



Sharing their first dance are newlyweds William Lee and Brenda Golden.

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MARTY ROBBINS Super Legend—120 mins.

This memorable video features 18 performances: *El Paso* *White Sport Coat/Devil Woman/Ribbon Of Darkness* *Singing The Blues/I Couldn't Keep From Cryin' (Don't Worry 'Bout Me/This Time You Gave Me A Mountain*, and many more, including Marty's Grammy winning song, *My Woman, My Woman, My Wife*. It also includes rare appearances from early television shows and the big screen, as well as exciting clips from his racing career. You'll also hear fitting remembrances from fellow stars like Roy Acuff, Faron Young and Barbara Mandrell.

THE STATLERS Brothers In Song

The Statlers are unquestionably one of country music's biggest attractions. *Brothers In Song* features some of their greatest hits, including the nostalgic *Sweeter And Sweeter*; the wedding day memories of *My Only Love*, voted 1985 Song of the Year; and the touching *Elizabeth*, voted 1984 Song of the Year by Music City News. Also included on this hit video are: *Whatever/Atlanta Blue/Guilty*. A must for Statler fans. 19 mins.

GEORGE STRAIT LIVE! The Dallas Reunion Arena—52 mins.

Now, this platinum-selling country superstar is captured for the first time on video cassette. Backed by his famed *Ace In The Hole* Band, he whips up the audience performing all of his greatest hits, including: *The Fireman/The Cowboy Rides Away/Amarillo By Morning/All My Ex's Live In Texas/Any Old Time/Hot Burning Flames/Dance Time In Texas/A Six Pack To Go/Marina Del Rey/You Look So Good In Love* • **AND MORE!**

ELVIS PRESLEY Elvis: '68 Comeback Special—76 mins.

December 3rd, 1968. The day the "King" returned for the first time in eight years with perhaps his greatest performance. This 50th Anniversary Special features: *Hound Dog/Trouble/Guitar Man/Lawdy, Miss Clawdy/Heartbreak Hotel/All Shook Up/Can't Help Falling In Love/Jailhouse Rock/Don't Be Cruel/Love Me Tender/Are You Lonesome Tonight/That's Alright Little Mama/Baby, What Do You Want Me To Do* • **AND A LOT MORE!**

COUNTRY MUSIC ON BROADWAY Filmed 1964, New York City, 96 mins.

Here is the first full length country music movie ever filmed. See the legendary Hank Williams in his only filmed appearance, uncut and crystal clear. Enjoy 30 full musical numbers by Hank and other great headliners like George Jones, Hank Snow, Porter Wagoner, Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper. Here's just a sample: *Hank Sr.—Hey Good Looking/George Jones—White Lightning: She Thinks I Still Care/Hank Snow—Moving On: Now And Then There's A Fool Such As I/Porter Wagoner—Satisfied Mind: One Way Ticket To The Blues* • **PLUS MORE!**

ROY ORBISON LIVE IN TEXAS A Special Tribute You Will Treasure

His words and music touched the hearts of millions. The timeless quality of his recordings resulted in over 50 million sales in four different decades. Now you can relive, forever, all the magic that was and will always remain Roy Orbison, with this fabulous video of Roy live onstage in Texas. It's 45 minutes of great hits like: *Only The Lonely/In Dreams/Oh, Pretty Woman/Running Scared/Mean Woman Blues/Candy Man/Crying/It's Over*

KEITH WHITLEY I Wonder Do You Think Of Me

On May 9, 1989, near the completion of the *I Wonder Do You Think Of Me* album, Keith Whitley passed away. One of his last conversations was of how much this record meant to him. He lives on in our hearts with this wonderful tribute featuring: *Don't Close Your Eyes? I'm No Stranger To The Rain/Ain't Nothin' Homecoming/Hard Livin'/When You Say Nothing At All*... plus a tribute by Country Music Television's Stan Hitchcock. 30 mins.

DWIGHT YOAKAM Just Lookin' For A Hit

Few can dispute the impact that this young star has had on the country music scene. And what better way to enjoy him than with this great Warner video featuring: *Honky Tonk Man/Guitars, Cadillac/Little Sister/Always Late With Your Kisses/Streets Of Bakersfield/Long White Cadillac*. There's even interviews with this talented new star as well as performance footage from I.R.S.'s "The Cutting." Be sure to order your copy. 30 mins.

TAMMY WYNETTE IN CONCERT Live From The Capitol Music Hall

It's the first lady of country music coming to you live on stage in this brilliant performance as she sings her heart out and shows off her astonishing talent to a grateful Wheeling, West Virginia audience. In a show that's chock-full of country music classics, Tammy sings her greatest songs, including: *My Man/Turn Around/You Light Up My Life/Makin' Lovell Don't Wanna Play House/Til I Can Make It On My Own/Amazing Grace/D-I-V-O-R-C-E/Will The Circle Be Unbroken* • Plus, Tammy's all time greatest hit: *Stand By Your Man*. It's 60 unforgettable mins.

HANK WILLIAMS, JR. A Star Spangled Country Party

"Visually awesome..." wrote the Los Angeles Times. "They turned the nation's mighty flagship into the world's largest floating honky tonk..." said The Tribune. It's Hank Jr., Waylon Jennings, Jessi Colter, Earl Thomas Conley and Gus Hardin singing such great hits as: *Texas Woman/Luchenbach, Texas/Are You Sure/Honky Tonkin'/Your Love's On The Line/Dixie On My Mind/Women I've Never Had/Family Tradition* • **MORE!** 60 mins.

MERLE HAGGARD The Best Of Merle Haggard—60 Mins.

"I have selected some of my favorite songs for this video...and I hope they will be your favorites too"—Merle Haggard. You be the judge: *My Favorite Memory/Stay Here And Drink/Mama's Hungry Eyes/Today I Started Loving You Again/Old Man From The Mountains/Kern River/If I Could Only Fly/When Times Were Good/Honky-Tonk Night Time Man/Ida Red/Big City/Okie From Muskogee/Footlights* • **6 MORE!**

KITTY WELLS With Johnny Wright & Family

She was the first female inductee into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Now, you can enjoy the Queen of Country Music alone and with her famous singer husband, Johnny Wright. Some of the songs included are: *Back Street Affair/We'll Stick Together/Ashes Of Love/Make The World Go Away/Prison Love/Crying Steel Guitar Waltz/I Love You Because/Long Tall Texan/I Heard The Jukebox Play* • **AND MORE!** 60 mins.

FREE GEORGE STRAIT RECORD OFFER:

Here's a great special for George Strait fans. When you order George's Dallas Reunion Arena video we will automatically send you his 1989 No. 1 album *Beyond The Blue Neon*...FREE! You'll love the video and you'll love listening to these fabulous LP hits: *Beyond The Blue Neon/Hollywood Squares/Overnight Success/Ace In The Hole/Baby's Gotten Good At Goodbye/What's Going On In Your World?/Angel, Angelina/Too Much Of Too Little/Oh Me, Oh My Sweet Baby* • **AND MORE!**

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People

Hats off to Larry Stewart (lead vocals/guitar), Greg Jennings (lead guitar), Dave Innis (keyboards/harmony vocals), Paul Gregg (bass guitar and harmony vocals) and John Dittrich (drums) on the road and on the records. On this particular evening, the band excelled, even on a moving train with one acoustic guitar. Their impeccable vocals and entertaining presence come naturally. The bass player, Paul Gregg, is a natural comic and is absolutely hilarious. He has the moves of a tall, slinky Elvis only more snake-like. The whole evening was just a first class move on the part of Restless Heart and the label. I had a good time, folks.

BLACK SMOKE RISING

I was talking with Joe Galante the other night. Joe, as most of you readers know ('cause you are smart and read my column), is the head honcho at RCA in Nashville. Joe allowed as how he had never seen an artist rise as fast as Clint Black. He talked about the fast-rising career of labelmate K.T. Oslin, but Clint's has somehow moved even faster than hers, which is incredible. As Joe put it, "Clint can do no wrong and has done everything right." All of us have seen Black smoke rising and spreading, from charts to interviews to awards to



Burt Reynolds and Bertie Higgins have become songwriting partners.

hits to women. And if you get us females, son, you got it all. Two of Clint's songs, "Better Man" and "Killin' Time," were Number One and Number Two singles in 1989. His *Killin' Time* album has been certified platinum, too. And in a gesture of thanks, Clint recently appeared on *Nashville Now* and presented host Ralph Emery with a Gold record for the *Killin' Time* album. Clint first appeared on TV on *Nashville Now*, and he wanted to thank everyone involved for their support.

BURT WHO?

Well, guess who has joined ASCAP/Nashville. Burt Reynolds, that's who. Seems Burt co-wrote the song "Palm Beach" with Bertie Higgins for an episode of *B.L. Stryker*. Higgins contacted his buddy, former Playboy girl Eve Vaupel, who signed old Burt up for membership. And if Hollywood don't need Burt, well, Burt honey, I do. Even if that "average looking" Loni Anderson doesn't need you, Burt, well, I do. Burt who? Reynolds, that's who!

Grieve for Eve. It seems that Bertie Higgins went on TNN's *Nashville Now* and announced ole Burt's new membership with ASCAP, and all of a sudden the phones lit up like Broadway, N.Y.C. Lo and behold, ole Burt could not be a new member of ASCAP, for he was already an old member of BMI and had been so since the days of *Smokey and the Bandit*. Seems that once you join one, you can't join the other.

RATTLESNAKE—PASSING THROUGH

Rattlesnake Annie called. She was in Music City doing an album of Hank Williams' songs. She and hubby Max now reside in Spain where she pens her homemade songs and sings them all over Europe. Rattlesnake could never get the "hold" in the U.S. that she has in Europe. So she just moved into a beach house on the banks of the Mediterranean Sea. Max paints, has shows and sells his work while Annie is two hours away singing her songs. She refers to their lifestyle as their little heaven on earth. These days, Nashville is just the place she passes through.

STORKING

Congratulations to fellow music journalist Tommy Goldsmith and his wife Renee on the birth of their son, Benjamin Hudson. Tommy writes music columns for a living, plays in the Nashville Jug Band for fun and knows well and good that God really meant for him to be an acoustic guitar player. And he's a great guitar player, too.

CABIN SONGS

Randy Travis and his manager/companion Lib Hatcher have a spread and a log house up in the country near Ashland City. Barbara Mandrell and hubby Ken Dudley and their family reside in a log palace on their hillbilly spread near



In a turnabout, Clint Black presented *Nashville Now's* producer Bill Turner and host Ralph Emery with a Gold record.

White's Creek. Now **Ricky Van Shelton** and his wife **Bettye** have built a log house on their property near Carthage and will soon move in. Remember the bluegrassers used to sing all those cabin songs? Songs like "Little Cabin Home on the Hill," "Cabin on the Hill" and "Log Cabin in the Lane." Friends and fans, they were singing about a three-room log cabin with a path! The latter day log houses have indoor plumbing and outdoor picnics. Them old codgers that penned them early cabin songs lived with indoor eating and outdoor toilets.

Times sure have changed for us country folks. And the early practices are the real reason that you won't hear tell of me camping or roughing it. My idea of a perfect vacation is Holiday Inns and room service. All of my young life I roughed it back home in Caswell County. I lived them cabin songs. When I build a house, it won't be log, either. The log house I was born in was the coldest place on earth. The lean-to kitchen had no insulation. You could see the nails in the tin roof overhead. When it snowed, the kitchen table, bed, floor, the whole place would be covered. Inside and outside snow. So cabins, snow skiing, winter sports and log houses are for folks who weren't born and raised in that natural habitat.

OMG (READ ON)

Opryland Music Group is calling itself **OMG** these days, now that their publishing division boasts the lion's share of its success in movies and TV. One can't blame them for bragging. It's human nature. **OMG** has the license to brag—they hold the copyrights on **Hank Williams**, **The Everly Brothers**, **John D. Loudermilk**, **Mickey Newberry**, **The Louvin Brothers**, **Boudelaux** and **Felice Bryant**, **Roy Orbison** and other pens-people. **OMG** songs have been used in 10 major movies and 25 network television shows lately. Films include *Steel Magnolias*, *Blaze* and *Bull Durham* and a bunch of others, *Pink Cadillac*, *Cocktail*, *Road House*, *Mississippi Burning* and more. I say they deserve congratulations.

ANOTHER EXILE

Weighing in at 7 lb. 2 oz. is **Laura**, the new daughter of **Exile's** drummer **Steve Goetzman** and his wife **Barbara**. Born in Lexington, Kentucky, where the family resides, **Laura** is also welcomed into the world by two-year-old sister **Sarah**.

GMM UPDATE: *Tennessee Ernie Ford*

Ernie's 50th Anniversary



Della Reese and Dinah Shore helped Tennessee Ernie celebrate.

It's Thursday morning, and Tennessee Ernie Ford is taking a few minutes before he goes to Opryland to tape his *TNN 50th Anniversary Special*. At 70, Ernie's not in the public eye as much as he used to be, in part because touring's no longer a big part of his life. At this point, it's possible that an entire generation of younger country fans may not know his name or may remember him only dimly.

The fact remains that the first country singer to make the transition to a network TV show—and become a household word—was Ernie Ford. On his own, he paved the way for everyone from Jimmy Dean and Johnny Cash to The Mandrells and Dolly Parton. "I was so enthralled with television because I like being in the home, and people are comfortable with me bein' there," says Ernie, summing up his groundbreaking career.

Things these days aren't quite as demanding as in his heyday. "I'm takin' it mostly easy now. I just did two concerts this year—one in Florida and one in Phoenix. I did one in St. Louis last April. I do two or three a year and maybe a television special," Ernie reflects. Remarried

after the death of his first wife, he and his new wife Beverly live in California and Idaho.

Ernie's early music, the hillbilly boogie numbers he performed on the old *Hometown Jamboree* radio and TV show hosted by Country Music Hall of Famer Cliffie Stone, has continued to remain one of his trademarks in Europe. This year Rhino Records will release a collection of those early hits for Capitol Records including several of the boogie numbers which, he maintains, got him his first appearance at the London Palladium in 1953.

Speaking of records, Ernie's not fond of today's recording techniques compared to those of the old days. Back then, he says, "We had fun doing it. You met everybody on your record sessions then. Now I go in with a combo and do the whole album, and I leave and never see anybody that's on my records." Of today's music itself, however, he says, "I think there's some great stuff out."

"I'm goin' home tomorrow," he concludes. "This special really thrilled me to death. They'd been workin' on it four or five months before anyone ever told me anything about it. My son Buck (Jeffrey Buckner Ford) produced it. Della Reese, Dinah Shore, Andy Griffith, Roy Clark, were all guests. They come poppin' out of everywhere. They showed some clips from old shows with Andy Devine and Ronald Reagan. I'm just sittin' there trying to hold back the tears at the table. My 20 singers I had on the show (known as Walter Schumann's Voices)...they found 18. The 19th couldn't make it, and one passed away. It was like a family reunion."

Ernie has no plans for a comeback—just more easy going. As he puts it, "I just keep doin' what I want to do and finding that some of these things were great. I marvel at how many people were out there that remember some of the old things."

—RICH KIENZLE

People



These four legends may be in your hometown soon. Watch for them.

THE HIGHWAYMEN TAKE TO THE HIGHWAYS

Their 1985 collaboration was certified platinum, so the lovable foursome decided to record another 10 songs. I'm talking about **Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson**. *Highwayman 2* is on CBS and in the stores if you want to get one, and who doesn't? In support of the album the lovable foursome took off to the highways in concert, marking the first time these legends have toured together. Historically, music-wise, it's as if George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, John F. Kennedy and FDR all took the stage together. It is powerful and it is historic. "Songs That Make a Difference," penned by Cash, made me cry.

WEDDING OF THE DECADE

The country music wedding of the decade at our house was the celebration of marriage of **Sharon Collie and Terry Smith**. Country DJ Hall of Famer **Biff Collie** and his lovely wife **Barbara** are the bride's parents, and the groom calls me **Mama**. **Glen Duncan** and **Steve Thomas** on fiddles and **Charlie Cushman** on acoustic guitar provided the pre-nuptial music. The selections included "Maiden's Prayer," "Kentucky Waltz," "The Bells of St. Mary's," "Precious Memories" and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." There were tears in the eyes of strong men as **The Whites** rendered angelic vocals on the country hit, "The Vows Go Unbroken." **Sharon, Cheryl and Rosie White** just outdid themselves. Their dad, the great **Buck White**, accompanied the girls on man-

dolin, and **Tommy White** played guitar.

The reception was held at Maryland Farms Country Club. Some of the guests at the wedding/reception were **Lucas Buck Skaggs** (7 months old) and his dad **Ricky Skaggs**, superstar **Waylon Jennings** and his lovely wife **Jessi Colter**, D.J. Hall of Famers **T. Tommy Cutrer** and **Tom Perryman**, CBS Records execs **Bob Montgomery**, **Kay Smith**, **Cathy Moore** and **Margie Hunt**, the bride's boss, *Country Music Television's* **Stan Hitchcock**, and **Clem-entyne Howard**, young daughter of

super-songwriter **Harlan Howard** and **Sharon Rucker Howard**. Also among the present were songwriter/folkstar/multi-instrumentalist **John Hartford** and his wife, gorgeous **Marie Barrett**, **Ed Dye** and **John Hedgecoth** of **The Nashville Jug Band**, **The Questionnaires'** lead singer **Tommy Littlefield**, former Opry manager **Dee Kilpatrick**, **Ronnie Pugh**, who is the librarian at the Country Music Foundation, perennial favorite **Rose Lee Maphis**, super publicist **Jeff Walker** of **Aristo**, former Opry star **Margie Bowes**, columnist **Robert K. Oermann** and his beautiful wife **Dr. Mary Buf-wack**, **Alan O'Bryant**, **Marty and Charmain Lanham**, and Opryland hotel photographer **Les Leverett** and his pretty wife **Dot Leverett**.

I must add that 16 Boones (my family) drove 500 miles in two vans from Caswell County, North Carolina, for this wedding, and I am truly grateful. I am especially grateful that they kept on coming in bad weather. Family members who made the trip included my 75-year-old mother and two brothers and their entire families, even though one of the girls was seven months pregnant. If that isn't love, God didn't make country music.

My dress was aqua/blue, and my eyes matched my neck. Of course, my neck is naturally red. My eyes were red from crying.



The wedding was a huge success. **Hazel** with grandson **Jeremy**, at left. Top, **John Hartford**, **Waylon Jennings**, the bride and groom and **Jessi Colter**. Near left, **Hazel's** boys **Billy** and **Terry** with **Billy's** sons, **Adam** and **Jeremy**.



CANDID

K.T.

The story so far is both upbeat and unlikely. A little over two years ago, there came forth from Music City a song called "80's Ladies" which, with its real-life, modern womanly attitude and its utterance of the word "bra" on record (as in "we burned our bras and we burned our bridges and we burned our candles at both ends") caused a sensation in country radioland.

That song sold tickets and kicked off a hot career for K.T. Oslin, its writer and singer. Her first album entered the charts at the Number 15 position, higher than any woman's debut album ever in country music. It quickly went on to become the first debut album by a woman to achieve Gold status since Anne Murray's *Snow Bird* back in 1973. Ms. Oslin attracted all sorts of attention and was awarded just about every plaque and statuette her profession has to offer, including a Grammy.

You can speculate in many ways about the factors behind such instant success, but perhaps it's really quite simple. This woman's superbly crafted songs were the stuff of which the most effective country music has always been made: personal reflection on an intensely lived life. Then, too, their writer/singer was much more closely in tune with the prime consumers of country music—that is, women—than were most of the men who write most of the songs for most of modern country's women singers. Whatever the main-spring of her jump to the top, though, the K.T. Oslin phenomenon was upbeat indeed.

And it really was unlikely, too, for this woman broke the mold. She wasn't even close to what a new female country singer was (and is) supposed to be: pretty if not downright beautiful, no older than thirty if not plain young and, well, conventional. Not, for instance, big-mouthed and brassy in the manner of a been-around-the-block, 46-and-single Broadway babe straight from the liberal-artsy-hardball world of New York show business and certainly not as independent and willful as mature, gifted songwriters tend to be. K.T. was the unlikeliest country singer in a long, long time.

It's not surprising, then, that less than a year into Kay Toinette Oslin's new career, Music Row's long-suffering chic set (yes, there is such a thing) began calling her "The Diva." Neither is she herself very shocked that some folks around town still refer to her as "that ball-busting bitch from New York" (even though she was born and raised in Texas, spending only her adult life in Manhattan) or, somewhat more politely, "the dragon lady."

It's been almost two years since I last visited with the colorful Ms. Oslin. Then, I found her in a ritzy Nashville hotel suite, dressed to kill in scarlet silk and black leather for the razzle-dazzle of a Marlboro Country Music Festival press conference, and in our hurried interview she was as smart, fast and borderline outrageous as she looked. This time, dressed for comfort on a cold Tennessee winter day, made up only minimally and at home in the familiar surroundings of her publicist's interview room, she seems a lot softer.

*Patrick Carr
sits down with
K.T. Oslin
for an intimate
chat and finds
the '80's lady
open, honest and
realistic about
her newfound
stardom.*



by Patrick Carr

CM: You look well. What are you up to these days?

OSLIN: Thank you. Well, I'm off the road, and I'm in the throes of writing songs for my third album, and I'm finding that there are no new words, and there ain't no more notes, and I don't know what I'm doing, and they'll find out. You know?

CM: Oh yes, I know. How long have you been trying to write, and have you actually written anything yet?

OSLIN: I thought it would take me a couple of weeks to settle down to writing after two years of the road, but in fact it's taken two months. I haven't written

in love in a small town. I think that's because I'm out of New York now and less provincial—when you live there, only New York exists for you; you don't know about the rest of the country where they drive cars and go to supermarkets—and I'm experiencing a small-town kind of feeling. I mean, Nashville's not a small town, but for me it is because I'm famous here. People recognize me wherever I go and know a great deal about me, just the way they would if I were "the Oslin girl" in some small town.

CM: So how are you handling the loss of anonymity? How are you handling fame?



"My first year was really rough, because we had a different bus every week, so I was constantly hauling my stuff on and off buses."

a whole song, but I have written bits and pieces of several songs. Isolating myself to write is hard and so is being creative on a time schedule. The record company's being very nice about it, though; I'm not getting pressured to have it done by Monday. I've got an eight-album deal, and they say they don't care if I deliver in eight years or eighty.

But it's always a terrifying process to sit down and start creating on a blank piece of paper. It was hard enough to do it when all eyes weren't upon me, but now the microscopes are out, and they've got my own work to criticize me against.

I try to write every day. I don't have a set time; I try to do it when the mood strikes me. When I lived in an apartment in New York, I used to write during the day because I didn't want to disturb my neighbors by writing at night, but now that I live in a house in Nashville, I find that I do drift in at odd hours of the night and do some things. I get up early in the morning—I'm keeping farmer's hours these days, and I really like that—but I don't write then; I get other things done. I can plan better early in the day.

CM: What are you writing about? Any new directions?

OSLIN: I'm toying with small towns. Being in love in a small town. Being not

OSLIN: I think it handles you for a while, more than you handle it. The worst thing for me is missing my friends. Since I'm not married and I don't have kids, you see, my friends have always been a very important part of my life—but they're all back in New York. I can pick up a phone, of course, but it's not the same, and I've got friends here too, but that's not the same either. My friends in Nashville are new friends. There's nobody I've known since we were chorus girls together, you know?

CM: Do you miss New York itself?

OSLIN: Oh, yes, of course I do. All that excitement, all those things to do; it's nice to have them going on even if you don't take advantage of them like I didn't. I've kept my apartment there, and I cling to it like pure platinum, even if I'm never there. But I don't think I'd want to live in New York again.

CM: You live a lot of your new life on the road. How do you like that?

OSLIN: It's wonderful fun sometimes, and other times it's just the biggest drag. It's something you get addicted to. You go through withdrawal when you're not doing it, but then, once you get into the habit of not doing it, the thought of doing it again makes you want to fall down and weep.

I was talking about the road with Shelby Lynne, who if you don't know is a

new 21-year-old singer on the scene, and she *loves* it. She can't wait to get out there. Not me, though, because I'm a nester—I always have been, whether or not my nest was very great—and these days I hardly ever see my nest.

When you're working, you see, the way it goes is that you leave town at 10 P.M. on Thursday and drive all night to get where you're going on Friday and set up for the first show. Then you keep doing that until you get back into town sometime on Monday. You're a zombie till sometime Tuesday, and then you do a little laundry, maybe do a little business and get ready to leave again on Thursday. Or maybe you have a Thursday/Friday/Saturday gig, so you leave Wednesday night. Or maybe you have to leave Wednesday afternoon 'cause it's a long haul.

So now you're back on the bus, and you have no nest. You're always looking through your things. You're constantly not knowing where anything is. You're thinking, "If only I could lay my hands on my damned tweezers."

Maybe that doesn't sound very bad, but, believe me, it is. My first year was really rough, because we had a different bus every week, so I was constantly hauling my stuff on and off buses, losing things, leaving things behind, *never* knowing where anything was. Then we got two buses, one for me and one for them, and it got better. Still, though...

The thing about the road is that the hour when you perform can't be matched by anything. Nothing is ever going to come close to that. But the 23 hours you have to fill are—well, you don't realize before you get into it how hard it is. You don't realize how much you have to sacrifice to do that one great hour.

Your throat, for instance. To keep it in shape, you have to get rest. So that means my partying days are over—thank God, 'cause I was a party-er, yes, ma'am. Now I can't drink, and I can't stay up late, and I can't hoot and holler and scream and I can't eat wrong or do this or do that. I've had to become disciplined. And some days I feel like being disciplined, and some days I feel very deprived. It's like, "Everybody else is out playing, and I have to stay in and protect my throat!"

And I've started living in fear of colds—truly in fear, because they cost me money.

CM: Is it the same for a 21-year-old as it is for a 40-plus-year old?

OSLIN: I don't think so. Twenty-one-year-olds are never going to die. They're never going to be 40, and they don't have to worry about protecting themselves. And in reality their voices will stand up to more abuse than mine will. But they

will cave in, too, and too much abuse will probably cause long-term damage, so that when they get to 40, they can't sing. I was fortunate that way, because I didn't ever do serious club work—you know, substandard sound systems, singing for drunks, breathing cigarette smoke, keeping vampire hours. So my voice went into my 40's in good shape.

CM: *You think everybody sees the road the way you do?*

OSLIN: Oh, no. I think younger women enjoy it more than older women, and men enjoy it more than women. Men have more freedom, you see. They can come and go a little easier.

A male star can go down to the hotel bar and have women hang all over him if he wants to, or he can pick one and go off with her, but for me to go down there is a different thing. Probably people will want me to sign autographs, so I'll spend my time with my head buried, going, "What was the name of your grandmother again?" That's not very satisfying for anyone. You'll walk off with a piece of paper you'll probably lose, and I'll never even have seen your face. We'll have zero human contact. I mean, I have nothing against signing autographs, but really, I'd much rather we look each other in the face and schmooze.

It's just not easy. I end up being in my room, alone, while the band is out there laughing and screeching and having all the girls say how cute they are. Drinking a few drinks, getting a little hung over. Who cares if the band shows up with circles under their eyes? But I can't do that stuff, and I can't look like that. I can't be a little under par.

Then again, a lot of guys in this business are running from a nagging wife and a houseful of screaming kids. They're thrilled to go out on the road. They have their food cooked for them. The maid comes in and does the laundry. They don't have to get their feet off the coffee table. They can watch sports they can't watch at home. They don't have to take the garbage out. They're free! Or they have three ex-wives who are hounding them, so they get on the road where they can't get phone calls.

Me, though, I miss my animals, I miss my plants, I miss my bed, I miss my pillow, I miss my home, I miss my schedule, I miss my nest.

CM: *It sounds like no fun at all.*

OSLIN: Well, that's not really true. I do still have fun, even on the road. People often ask me that, because I appear to be rather serious about it all, but I think it's just that I'm very hard-core realistic.

Some of that's a defense to protect myself, because I know all the fame and

everything is going to be taken away from me eventually, and I don't want to want it so much that I'll be devastated when it's gone. So I tell myself that I just won't quite get carried away while it's happening. But then another voice says, "No, no, you've got to get carried away because this is going to be *it!*" I go back and forth like that.

CM: *They say, you know, that these days a new star in country music has about five years of really prime time, and the thing to do is work your tail off during those years. After that you can go part-time if you want, because there isn't that much demand for you any more.*

OSLIN: Well, as Spencer Tracy said, you can only be the icing on the cake for so long, and then you become the cake. The cake is the long part where you're not setting any records or winning any awards. You've got your coterie of fans, and you're pretty much guaranteed of selling a certain number of records, but all the real excitement is over.

CM: *Where are you in that scheme of things?*

OSLIN: That's interesting, you know, because I'm not sure. I know where I think I am, but then things happen like what just happened with me and Shelby Lynne.

We weren't just talking together, you see; it was an interview for a magazine

your retirement. I guess I'll keep doing this as long as I'm happy doing it and as long as I'm good at it. If I'm churning out mediocre work, I'll know it and I'll quit. You see, I'd rather be either fabulous or god-awful than mediocre. The mediocre stuff is what makes most of this business go round, and I want no part of that. No part of it.

CM: *Which suggests the next question. How are you fitting in with the folks on Music Row? Are you fully integrated?*

OSLIN: No, I'm not. I think some of the old guard in the business are suspicious of me. You know, "Here's another act that's using country as a stepping stone to go pop." That's not the case at all in reality, because if I wanted to be pop, I could have been there a long time ago and made a hell of a lot more money and been a lot bigger star. Country's where I want to be, and it's what I do; it's just a different kind of country from what some people are used to around here.

I took everybody by surprise when I first came here, and I think some people, the ones who don't know me, still have a preconceived idea of what I'm like. You know, "She's from New York; she must eat babies for breakfast. She wrote that song about burning bras, she's never been married; she must be women's lib, we *know* she hates men." Really, a lot of people think of me like that.

"The thing about the road is that the hour when you perform can't be matched by anything. Nothing is ever going to come close to that."



here in town, and their twist was that they wanted a newcomer to interview an old timer. When they first called me about it, I thought, "Oh, great! They want me to interview, like, Tammy, or Loretta. How cool!" But then the lady said, "No. *You're* the old timer." That really floored me, you know? An old timer after two years!

I'm in a weird place. I've won just about everything that can be won, so I don't have that to look forward to. I guess I can always come back and win it again, but it's not the same. The real kick is winning for the first time.

But, you know, after two years in something, you're not usually planning

Partly, I think, that's because I'm not a socializer. I don't hang out. I'm not politically connected. And I generate very little money for the rest of the bunch. I'm not using other writers' material, and I'm not hooked up with BMI or ASCAP, the big song publishers' organizations, and so I'm not really playing the game right.

CM: *You're making the music you want to, though—right?*

OSLIN: Right, but partly that's because I'm a writer. The control that being a songwriter gives me is phenomenal, and being a control freak, that makes me very happy. I don't think I could do this

without that control. I'd hate to have to do it the way Shelby Lynne has to, for instance. I was listening to her earlier, and I don't think she really loves the material she's going into the studio with. I don't think she has a real understanding with her producer. She's being told what to do.

In my case, though, I'm the writer, and I have ultimate control. I can say, "I want you to play this, here. I want *you* to play *this*. No, that's not the right feel; do it this way." And I can control the overall picture. Right now I'm writing for my third album, and I find that I'm writing with my total show in mind. What kind of song do I need to really make it move right, with *no* seams? I don't like the kind of shows where you hear just single after single after single, 'cause everybody's singles tend to be approximately the same song: You find the stuff you sound good singing, you find out what the people want to hear you sing and you churn it out time after

more questions asked. But look what I had to do! I really had to be writing really good and singing really good in order to get that respect.

CM: *You think it's tougher for women than it is for men?*

OSLIN: Oh, yes. I'm not sure that women will ever have the power careers that men have in show business. There's always going to be exceptions, like Barbara Streisand who has her own production company and makes her own movies, but she had to do that in order to work at all.

In the country music business, though, the women are the consumers. They buy the records. They call the radio station and request the songs. They buy the concert tickets; they drag their husbands along, but usually it's their idea to go. So you have to appeal to women. The easiest way to do that is to be a cute guy singing a nice love song that they want to hear. And it's really

at least, less neurotic?

OSLIN: Yes, in many ways I am happier. I have a great sense of accomplishment. I did it, you see. It's hard to do it at any age, and I did it at an age when it's almost impossible. So that's wonderful. I think a lot of people feel something missing in their lives as a result of feeling that they haven't accomplished something they set out to do. I've wanted to be in this business as far back in my life as I can remember, and now I've made it.

I was neurotic before, and I'm still neurotic. Success brings a lot of responsibility, once you get your hands on some money. There was a point where I thought that if I could just have \$50,000 in a year, what more could I need? I could pay my rent, go out to dinner when I wanted, buy good bottles of wine, have my friends over, I could buy a new skirt today instead of having just one skirt for the year, and everything would be just fine. But then I got all this money, and the first thing I thought was, "It's not enough. It's not even beginning to be enough!" So there's a craziness attached to that.

And success. Yes, you've barely taken your place at the top of the mountain when you're looking at all the others coming up after you. It's like you say; you've got five years. Say that to an IBM person or someone else in a regular line of work, and they'd say, "What do you mean? It'll take me five years just to get settled, and then I'll have twenty years and then I'll have tenure!" So there is *no* security, and that wears you down after a while.

It's nice to be famous and recognized, and it's not nice. More nice than not nice, I think. That's where being female is an advantage. You don't get mauled and torn and shredded by teenage girls, and if you want, you can disappear. If I wear sweats and sneakers and an old baggy shirt and no makeup and a hat on my head and I keep my mouth shut, I can be Average Mary. You would not pick me out in the crowd at all.

But in the end, you know, I do worry that it will all be taken away tomorrow.

CM: *Well, it won't. They can take away the money and the power and even the fame, but they can never take away the fact that you made it.*

OSLIN: That's true, I guess. You're right. You know, I'm basically the same as I was. I've had it harder than some, but then I've had it so much easier than others, it's ridiculous. I'm just not jumping up and clicking my heels together like a younger person might. My adult self is telling me, "Be cool about it. There are bigger things. You made a record and some people bought it. Big deal." ■



"The control that being a songwriter gives me is phenomenal, and being a control freak, that makes me very happy."

time after time. That's because you don't have writing.

I can write what I need, though. I'm not at the mercy of what just happens to come along. I would hate to have to sit there listening to song after song, thinking, "Well, I like the first verse, but the second verse doesn't really say anything" and just be stuck like that.

CM: *Did you have control from the start, or did you have to fight for it?*

OSLIN: You very definitely have to prove yourself. When I went into the studio for my first album, I was acutely aware of being the new chick singer.

I was among this group of session musicians, you see, who are the cream of the crop. They play a lot of sessions as a group, from the best to the worst; in the course of a week they see it all. And it was like, "Here's the latest chick singer. Ooooooh, this one's a little long in the tooth. She's a little overweight. She doesn't have the big hair. Man, she'd better sing good."

Well, yes, I do sing good, and then it was, "Oh. She *wrote* this song?" and no

not very hard to do that. If you're sort of cute and you're sort of a nice singer and you wear a hat, you're in.

That's if you're male. If you're female, you have to be gorgeous, or you have to be really, really smart and really, really talented. And even then, the men get paid more. Look at Reba McEntire. She's making top dollar, but there are men who've had the same success as she has, or less, whose show price is significantly higher.

Women, you see, aren't seen as having long term careers. If you fall in love and get married and have kids, in whatever order you do those things, that can nip your career in the bud. Or you have to drag your kids around, and it's five times harder on you than it would ever be for a man. Or you leave them at home, and you end up with these neurotic kids who don't love you. Or you're guilty about this stuff all the time, and you're torn up when you have to leave.

CM: *All in all, though, would you say you're happier now than you were before you became a star? More secure*

CMSA NEWSLETTER OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA MAY/JUNE 1990—EDITOR, HELEN BARNARD

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Be Your Own Favorite Songwriter

It's always a pleasure to publish members' efforts in the songwriting department. We don't review songs or give advice on how to get recorded or published, but we love to read lyrics and to let all our members see those we find most interesting. Let us know if you enjoy our choices this time.

Drawings are also interesting. One artist will catch this about a familiar face, another will catch that. The results are always food for thought. As for puzzles, the mailbag brought in several we thought you puzzle bugs out there would enjoy. So, Readers Create returns to these pages with a bang.

In addition, we catch up on the mail. It means a lot when members write in to thank us for running their contribution or

request. We also like to hear how you liked our features each time. It helps to know if we are on the right track. We lead off with Mailbag.

Whereas some styles of music seem to divide the generations, the enjoyment of country music appears to unite young and old. Witness the frequent letters we receive to that effect in the Letters to the Editor column. In the *Newsletter*, we see another side of that same issue—how the enjoyment of country music, the participation in writing or performing, keeps members young. The rest of Reviews & Features in addition to Mailbag plus the fine print in Readers Create this time will show you what we mean.

Mail Bag

Thanks to all who have written in comment on past issues. Herewith a sampling of what we have received.

Thanks ever so much for printing a little about me in the May/June 1989 *Newsletter*. It was very nice, and I have heard from ten people, including Brenda Lee.

Marguerite Theriault
Halifax, Nova Scotia

I read with great interest the letter from Big Bill Johnson in the September/October 1989 *Newsletter*. He said the song "Keep Off the Grass" by Stonewall Jackson hasn't been released. I have a copy of the song by Stoney and will send Bill a copy. It is on a cassette released by Golden Circle, Inc., Stamford, Connecticut 06902—just down the road from you.

I also enjoyed the article about George Morgan in that same *Newsletter* very much. I got to meet him at the Brush Creek Follies here in Kansas City in 1952. He was a great singer and a fine gentleman. I have almost every song he recorded. Thanks, Rich Kienzle. You did a great job. Keep up the good work.

Lonnie E. Holder
Missouri City, Missouri

You don't know how much I enjoyed your article on George Morgan in the September/October 1989 *Newsletter*. I have thought about him so many times. He was one of the best, like Jim Reeves—"The old Smoothies."

I was born near Bowling Green, Ken-

tucky. We used to take the battery out of our car and hook it up to the radio so we could listen to WSM Radio. When our neighbor got a radio, we all would go on Saturday night to listen to such greats as The Delmore Brothers. I have lived in Indianapolis for 47 years, and I now listen to WFMS. I'm still country and will be till I die. I would sure like to hear more of George Morgan's songs.

Nella Ruth Ford
Indianapolis, Indiana

George Morgan is featured in *Buried Treasures* in this issue. —Ed.

I enjoyed your article on Ray Price in the May/June 1989 *Newsletter*. I believe that Ray has the best voice that country music has ever known. It really amazes me that Ray has not been given the recognition he deserves for his contributions to country music. Ray started doing Bob Wills long before it became the "in" thing to do, i.e. his *San Antonio Rose* (CS-8556) album, and of course he introduced strings and caught a lot of flack for that. Ray also opened the door for country artists on the Las Vegas strip.

Then there are the former members of

Ray Price turns up on the CMSA's Legends calendar.



his Cherokee Cowboys band who went on to fame and fortune, not to mention the ones that are now successful Nashville sidemen, i.e. Buddy Emmons, Buddy Spicher, Johnny Gimble, etc.

Concerning the albums that other Ray Price fans want, mentioned on the For CMSA Members Only page in the September/October 1989 issue of *Country Music Magazine*, I have two extra sealed copies of *Town and Country* and one extra copy of *Touch My Heart*. I would be happy to sell them to a fan of Ray's if they would contact me.

I have almost everything Ray has ever done: his first 78 on the Bullet label, all of his 45's except three of the early ones, COL 20833, 20863 and 21025, most of his EP's, including COL 2137 which has "Four

In This Issue

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- Fans Young and Old
- Readers Create
- Hawkshaw Hawkins
- Collections

Walls," "Fallen Star," "Gone" and "Bye, Bye Love." I don't believe these four songs were ever released in any other form than on this EP. I also have every LP that has ever been issued as far as I know. I have done a discography on Ray. I would be happy to mail a copy of it to anyone who would send me a SASE. I would also be glad to make a cassette tape of any of Ray's material that I have.

Jim Martin
2333 Ramada
Houston, Texas 77062

In answer to "Members Respond to Ray Price" on the For CMSA Members Only page in the September/October 1989 issue, I have copies of *Town and Country* and *Touch My Heart*. I would never part with the albums but will gladly copy them on cassette free of charge for anyone who will send me their name and address. I also have Ray's tribute to Bob Wills, *San Antonio Rose*, and the single, "Born to Love Me," which was never very popular but which I think is one of the most beautiful songs he ever did.

The *Newsletter's* Collections columns are great, and I received a mountain of mail in response to my request for information about Al Dexter's "Down at the Roadside Inn." I even received a letter from Al Dexter's widow.

David Gray
3552 Jane Lane
Fort Worth, Texas 76117

Calling Holland and Martin

Joe Holland, if you are still out there, we owe you a stamp and an answer to your question. Please try again. Curly Ray Martin of the Country Bound Band, we need your address, too.

My ad appeared in the September/October 1988 *Newsletter*. I received over 400 letters, and they all got answers. Some of them I helped and others I couldn't, but I wrote each one and told them either way.

You do a great job on the *Newsletter*. You don't know how much folks that like country music appreciate the *Newsletter*. It's one of the greatest things that happened for *Country Music Magazine*. It's a great magazine, and I couldn't do without it. The calendar is just great, too. If I can be of help to anyone on old song books, magazines, records and tapes from the 1930's to 1980's, just write and send SASE.

F. D. Porter
408 N. Oak Street
Harrison, Arkansas 72601

I think I've found the answer to most of the requests for hard-to-find records, tapes, etc. Country, bluegrass, you name it, they're more than likely to have it. Just

received a magnificent collection of Bill Monroe's old albums and tapes from them and have died and gone to heaven listening to them. For the most extensive catalog anywhere, send \$2 to Longhorn Records, P.O. Box 93457, Hollywood, California 90093. Excellent service, careful packing, good people.

V. R. Langenbach
Sacramento, California

I love your magazine and especially look forward to the Letters to the Editor and also the Collections. It amazes me the things people have or are interested in having. Along that line, a friend of mine told me he once went to the Mission Beach Ballroom in San Diego to see Bob Wills and The Texas Playboys. This was in 1942 and money was tight, but he said that people were having Bob Wills sign his name to \$20 bills. I'm curious to know if anyone else remembers that or even has one of those 20's today!

My family and I are gearing up for Bob Wills Day in Turkey, Texas, the last Saturday in April. Y'all come!

Dayna Wills
P.O. Box 690732
Stockton, CA 95269

The article on Charlie Daniels in the September/October 1989 *Newsletter* really hit home with me as I had the opportunity to go to one of his concerts in N. Ft. Myers, Florida. He was appearing along with Alabama and Jo-El Sonnier. I won the tickets off the radio station. Whew!

Since I have moved back to Pontotoc, Mississippi, there isn't a single song that Charlie Daniels has recorded that I haven't heard! His songs tell deep-down feelings. Some stars would be afraid to speak up because of their reputations. We just respect him more and love him more for voicing his feelings. I've always loved him and his music for that. When are you going to feature him, as I don't want to miss that issue? How about a centerfold?

Mary Tutin Williams
Pontotoc, Mississippi

North Woods Fun

Fourth Annual Chippewa Valley Country Festival outdoor concert, June 15, 16 and 17 in Cadott, Wisconsin, will feature one performance each of the following stars, plus local performers: Doug Kershaw, Lacy J. Dalton, The Statlers, Eddie Raven, Tanya Tucker, Charlie Daniels Band, Asleep at the Wheel, Lorrie Morgan, Janie Fricke and more.

Three-day ticket, \$50. For info, call 1-800-326-FEST. Anyone who goes, send us a photo.

I could not let the letter on "Me and Crippled Soldiers" in the March/April *Newsletter* go unanswered. First of all, I believe Mr. Haggard was writing for all of us in this song. And I appreciate him standing up and writing about the flag that we are proud of. I only wish I had the talent and foresight to do so. I had the privilege of seeing Mr. Haggard in concert twice this past fall; both times Hag closed the show with "Me and Crippled Soldiers," and at each show the audience gave him three standing ovations. I think this says a lot for the song.

Dorothy Gilbert
Marion, Kansas

A Reference Tool

Recommended by Rich Kienzle, chockful of information and loaded with great photos, too, Jerry Osborne's *Country Music Buyers-Sellers Reference Book and Price Guide* will give you album titles, label numbers, going-rate prices for both good and near-mint condition and year of issue for a wide range of country artists, plus listings of private collectors and independent dealers. We don't want to put Information, Please out of business, but this book could answer many members' questions. Available from Osborne Enterprises, P.O. Box 28312, Tempe, AZ 85282 for \$14.95.



Jerry Osborne's
Guide.

Country Music Unites Young and Old

Country music appeals to both young and old and, with its roots in the past, provides all of us a peek back in time. The new Academy Journal, soon to begin publishing for those who have joined the American Academy for the Preservation of Old Time Country Music, will provide many a peek. Thanks to all who have written in with suggestions for cover stories.

CLAUDE MOYE

I have an autographed picture of Claude Moye (Pieplant Pete) from a negative taken in 1927. It shows him in breeches and high-laced shoes. If you could use this in your *Journal*, please let me know. Claude Moye has been deceased about two years. I had corresponded with him quite regularly for



Seward Sibley and the slide guitar.

about three years before his death.

I learned to play the guitar with slide steel about three years ago at age 64. Having more fun than a barrel of monkeys! I am a personal friend of Lee Moore, the Coffee Drinkin' Nitchawk who was on WWVA for about 25 years. He has stayed at my house six or seven times while making personal appearances in this area. I also correspond on a quite regular basis with Wilf Carter in Arizona. He is 85 now and cut a new record in Canada last year at 84.

**Seward A. Sibley
De Peyster, New York.**

Lee Moore was featured in the Newsletter in July/August 1987, Wilf Carter in March/April 1989. Send us your photo for the Academy Journal—we'll take a look. —Ed.

YOUNG COUNTRY FANS ON RISE

A few years ago, it was very "uncool" to enjoy the wonderful world of country music if you were a teenager. Today the most popular kids in school, who you would think were the last to love America's music, join the ranks of the country fans. At a recent party, I stood around the jukebox and watched people select their favorite songs and punch in the numbers. Only five or six country tunes were listed. I saw the gleam of excitement in the eyes of my friends and in the eyes of people I didn't even know as they gasped and said, "Ooh, 'Cathy's Clown'" or "Dear Me"! I felt a sense of pride in knowing that I held a little piece of country society in my heart when everyone in the building was swaying and singing along with Clint Black and Bocephus. Country music is the link that can hold together the world.

**Duane Gordon
Jackson, Mississippi**

EYES ON DALE POTTER

My wife and I, aged 66 and 69, wish to take this opportunity to thank you and all of the personnel that publish *Country Music Magazine*. We love it and digest every line in it.

I have played country fiddle since 1928 and have met and known some of country music's most accomplished entertainers. The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention America's best country and western fiddler, Dale Potter. You may ask Chet Atkins about Dale. From 1948 through



HISTORIC PHOTOS

A Rose Maddox fan from Wisconsin, Johnny Bond, sent us this shot of Rose and her brothers from their heyday years, the 1940's and 1950's, when they were one of the hottest bands on the West Coast. Bond enjoys hearing about the older stars. "I get so tired of Alabama or Exile, and I'm only 30. I'll take the pure hard-core country any day." Others interested in Rose Maddox may obtain a video on her life and continuing career, *The Life and Times of Rose Maddox*, from Bay Area Video Coalition, 1117 17th Street, San Francisco, California 94107 for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling.

1959, he had first refusal on all record sessions in Nashville. He is on an awful lot of records that he did not get credit for, from Bill Monroe to any direction you want to go. He was the fiddler on Hank Williams' "Wedding Bells" but is not given credit for it.

Dale had cancer operations in 1986. He lost muscles from his left shoulder and half of his voice box. I'm happy to say he has recovered nicely and is back on the country

circuit. I was fortunate enough to have him invite me on stage with him for one number at Bill Grant's festival in Hugo, Oklahoma, in August of 1989.

For more about Dale, you could also contact Bill Monroe, Roy Acuff, Grant Turner, Judy Lynn, Little Jimmy Dickens or any of the Grand Ole Opry stars who were popular in the 1950's. It's true, Dale had a problem with the bottle. I'm happy to report that he's solved it.

**Henry N. Jones (Uncle Zeke)
Henderson, Nevada**



Fiddler Dale Potter has a friend in Uncle Zeke. Here's Dale in 1982.

MARCH 1990 POLL Album and Single of the Month

Clint Black *Killin' Time*
Clint Black "Nobody's Home"
Clint Black scores again! This time it's a double hit. *Killin' Time* is the CMSA's top album for the second month in a row, and his single's on top, too. Ricky Van Shelton's *Loving Proof* is second in albums again; George Strait's *Beyond the Blue Neon* is third. Runners-up in singles are Shelton's "Statue of a Fool" and Vern Gosdin's "That Just About Does It." Don't forget to vote in this month's poll.

Collecting the Magazine

Help each other complete your collections of *Country Music Magazine*.

- For Sale: *Country Music Magazines* 1985 to present. Also *Music City News Magazines* 1985 to present. N.J. Ellis, 16 N. Stewart, Danville, IL 61832.
- Send SASE for list of *Country Music Magazines* for sale by star covers from 1973-1982. Also country music paper in the 1970's. Glen Arvin, P.O. Box 107, Celestine, IN 47521.

Information, Please

Write to these members directly if you have the items or information they need. Enclose SASE if you must correspond.

- Have ticket stubs! Also front stage photographs from 1980-1985 of Alabama, Gary Morris, Jerry Reed, Oak Ridge Boys, T.G. Sheppard and The Beach Boys in concert. Excellent photos of Gary Morris close-up, backstage. All original and excellent condition. Send SASE for selection and price list. Tina Sams, 4754 Castleberry Rd., Cumming, GA 30130.

- Wanted: VHS tapes of Sylvia, Patty Loveless and Reba McEntire. Also looking for posters and articles. Please send list. I am a 30-year-old who would like to hear from the ladies out there! I live near Chicago, and it's hard to find people around the area who like country music. David Anderson, 1707 S. Ridge Dr., Arlington Hts., IL 60005.

- I have a very nice set of three albums by Tex Ritter in the original box, titled *An American Legend*. The album covers are loaded with pictures and stories of Tex and his friends, telling of his lifestyle, likes and dislikes. Tex introduces the songs on the records. Please write if interested! Virginia Laws, P.O. Box 575, Cherryville, NC 28021.

- Looking for information on two picture records—does anyone know the year and what each one might be worth? Also looking for anyone interested in buying them. Albums are: Patsy Montana, *When I Get Where I'm Goin'* (Vogue, The Picture Records, 721) and The Down Homers, *Who's Gonna Kiss You When I'm Gone* (Vogue, R-736). Barbara Mathistad, 540 1st St. N., Butterfield, MN 56120.

- For Sale: country, classical, rock records and tapes from 1960's-1980's. Send for free listings and prices. Also selling old boxing and wrestling magazines. K.M. Furney, 1108 Shutler St., Utica, NY 13502.

- Wanted: any memorabilia on Roy Orbison, old or new articles, photos or any VHS of any of his TV specials. Will pay! Irene Malone, Rt. 4, Box 477, Rolla, MO 65401.

- Wanted: anything and everything on Anne Murray. Please send list and prices. Wendy Bupp, 1209 Glenn Valley Dr., Matthews, NC 28105.

- Leathercrafts: for the finest handmade belts, wallets and purses. I am incarcerated in Texas and I do leather work to support myself. Johnny Smith 492286, Ellis II Unit, Rt. 6, Huntsville, TX 77340.

- Looking for anything on VHS of Barbara Mandrell, especially any of the shows with sisters, *1984 Country Music Awards*, Louise Mandrell's *Diamonds*,

Gold and Platinum TV special and the VHS of *Girls Have All the Luck*. Also, I'm 19 years old and would love to correspond with any other big Barbara fans. Christanne Saleino, 96 Indiana Place, Brooklyn, NY 11234.

- Wanted: Information as to where I can find cassette tapes or albums by Cassie Parton and by The Original Dillards. Eva Hicks, P.O. Box 2345, Boone, NC 28607.

- Looking for good quality VHS copies of Sawyer Brown's 12th week of competition on *Star Search* in 1983 and 1984. Also looking for recordings of songs written by Mark Miller, recorded by Mickey Gilley and Charlie McClain. I also understand there's a song called "Listen In" by Mark Miller. Leann Silvernail, 610 Whispering Oaks Place, Nashville, TN 37211.

- Looking for years for Freddie Hart's recording of "Drink Up and Go Home." This was very popular in the 1950's. Have never seen it on any albums. Greta Welch, 1191 A Aeneas Valley Rd., Tonasket, WA 98855.

- Wanted: Porter and Dolly albums as follows, "Always Always," "Once More" and "20 Great Country Hits." We will pay any reasonable price for those records or good cassette tapes. Frank & Peggy Konopasek, 1430 Virginia Street, North Bend, OR 97459.

- Looking for Barbara Mandrell memorabilia, especially older TV appearances on VHS videos and some of her earlier singles. Willing to buy or trade. I have material on Barbara to trade. Would also love to correspond with any big Barbara Mandrell fans. Vicky Bergfeld, 203 Kalen Dr., St. Louis, MO 63114.

- Wanted: recording of "You've Got a Daughter Growing Up" and "She Wants To Be Like You" by Jimmy Gately. Ora Troyer, R.R. 1, Box 513, Alburtis, PA 18011.

- Anyone wishing to purchase new country music cassette tapes, send \$3.00 each or eight for \$20.00. Cost includes shipping, but sorry, no records, disk or 8-tracks. Send phone number and list of tapes wanted. No checks accepted, only money orders and cash. Tapes include Jones, Travis, McEntire, Strait, Elvis, Brown, Judds, Tucker and Gibson. David T. Miller, P.O. Box 205-153040, Ridgeville, SC 29472.

- Looking for the following: "I'll Go on Loving You" by Les Paul and Mary Ford, "I Was Leaving Anyway" by Billy Montana and The Longshots, "Thank You Ever-Lovin'" by Kenny Dale and "You're Playing Hard to Forget" by Eddy Raven. Also looking for "I'll Get Over You" by Nick Nickson, is not to be confused with Crystal Gayle song of the same title. The Nick Nickson song was played frequently in the 1970's on a New Orleans station by DJ Charlie Douglas. Wanda Owen, P.O. Box 254, Paris, AR 72855.

- Looking for the Elvis Presley doll made by the Danbury Mint. Will pay what it sold for by the company. Doll is dressed in the American Eagle outfit. Does someone have the heart to sell? It's all I need is to make my Elvis room collection complete. Brenda West, P.O. Box 593, Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474.

- Looking for cassettes by Ronnie Milsap with the songs: "Let's Take the Long Way

Around" and "There's No Way." I would be also interested in albums. Patty L. Atterberry, 1103 Bradley Lane, Fulton, MO 65251.

- Wanted: Patsy Cline clippings, photos, magazines and books. I will buy or trade on this country music legend. Bob Bethia, P.O. Box 80224, San Marino, CA 91118-8224.

- Looking for some concert photos of Patty Loveless, Reba McEntire and Holly Dunn. Also looking for some old recordings of Patsy Cline and Hank Williams Sr. Will pay providing the price is right. If anyone has one of these items or wants to write, I'm looking for female pen pals. Billy Cline 96797, SMU 214, N T C Box 479, Burgin, KY 40310.

- Wanted: words to the songs "I've Been Everywhere" by Hank Snow, "A Tiger by the Tail" by Buck Owens and "Always Been Crazy" by Waylon Jennings. Martin Detweiler, 15865 Chipmunk Ln., Middlefield, OH 44062.

- Looking for VHS tape of Merle Haggard's *On Track*. Also interested in his other tapes. Elsie Reynolds, 2750 Wheatstone St. 83, San Diego, CA 92111.

- Wanted: Hank Williams Jr. albums. Please send lists of what you have and prices. Linda K. Lowe, Rt. 1, Box 225, Henry, TN 38231.

- Wanted: anything and everything on The Judds. Interested in clippings, videos, newsletters and pictures pre-1989. Chrissi Scherer, P.O. Box 715, Westwego, LA 70096-0715.

- Looking for three 45's: "Turn Me to Love" by Keith Whitley and "Two People in Love" and "Tell Me I'm Only Dreaming" by Lorrie Morgan. Interested in bluegrass albums by Keith Whitley. Also looking for pictures or anything on Keith Whitley or Lorrie Morgan. Ramona Moore, Rt 1, Box 1334, Verona, MI 65769.

- Wanted: photos, LP's, 45's, VHS video recordings and newspaper clippings of Billy Joe Royal and B.J. Thomas. Interested in a 45 recorded by Billy Joe Royal titled "Perhaps Dark Glasses" on the *Farlane Label*. Looking for pen pals who like either or both entertainers. Diana Rollinger, 1704 Latigo Trace, Round Rock, TX 78681.

- Looking for VHS copy of the *1989 Country Music Awards*. Willing to pay for cost of tape. Bobby Sizemore, 306 East Iola, Saltisaw, OK 74955.

- Looking for Marty Robbins? I have most anything in records of all kinds 78's, 45's and LP albums. Have a few George Strait photos for sale. Send SASE for replies. Donnie Jennings, Rt. 2, Box 97, Blackwell, OK 74631.

- Wanted: compact discs of Browning Bryant music. Janet Spurling, Box 446, Macedonia Rd., Rt. 2, Blanchester, OH 45107.

- The fan club you have been waiting for, Dennis Lee Gilliland and his Memphis Connection. Dennis wants to hear from you. Friends of Dennis Lee, Tami Garcia, Pres., P.O. Box 778, Sharpes, Florida 32959.

- Looking for a book and any articles or videos on Anne Murray. The book title is *Anne Murray, The Story So Far*. Jeri Lawhead, 3831 Rome Dr.,

Lafayette IN 47905.

- Do you know this song? "He rode the rodeo, three months on the road, and I can still remember as he rode away alone. And everybody said to me, girl you gotta wait awhile. But he just tipped his Stetson hat and smiled. And he sang, Lady, lady someday you'll be mine, cause this love I feel is just too strong. Lady, lady, it might take a little time, but I'm gonna love you from now on." If you know anything about this song, please write. Kathy Padgett, Rt. 5, Box 580, Summerville, GA 30747.

- Help! I am attending Fan Fair for the first time this summer. I need all the information and advice I can get from anyone who can help. Stephanie A. Wagner, 1835 Mallard Lakes Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27106.

- Hit CD's, cassettes, LP's by your favorite country artists. Over 500 titles to choose from. (Also receive additional catalog including hundreds of LP's, cassettes, 45's by independent country artists.) Send \$2.00 (refundable with purchase). Durwood Haddock, Curtis Wood Records, 4416 Eaton's Ck. Rd., Nashville, TN 37218.

- Looking for a song title "Shelly's Winter Love" on a cassette, tape or album by Merle Haggard. Would like to buy at a reasonable price. Doris Curtis, Rt. 1, Box 100, Liberty, TN 37095.

- I'm 21 years old, and I want to meet the man with the most beautiful smile in the world, Clint Black. Okay, is that asking too much? If anybody has any photos, negatives or posters of Clint, please send me list of prices. Jennifer Holland, 312 Magnolia Dr., Thomson, GA 30824.

- Looking for a sheet music book titled *1001 Fiddle Tunes*. I would appreciate hearing from anyone who knows of this book or of the publisher. Debra Story, 718 Pearl St., Grinnell, IA 50112.

- For Sale: my Ernest Tubb record collection. Over 650 songs, 197 records from 1936-1978. It's in excellent condition for \$300.00. Lee Nelson, Box 38, Jim Falls, WI 54748.

- My favorite star is Vern Gosdin. At present however, I'm looking for "Precious Jewel" by Charlie Louvin. I have tried all the record shops here, and they say he is an independent artist, therefore they don't have his tapes. Can someone tell me how to get a copy of this song? L. Newman, 2110 Junius, San Angelo, TX 76901.

- Wanted: pictures, videos, old newsletters, interviews and recordings by The Judds. Would also like to find Judd fans to correspond with! Tammy Nichols, 34707 E. Benson Rd., Lone Jack, MO 64070.

- Wanted: VHS tape of the 1987 and 1988 *CMA Awards Shows* and *ACM Awards*. Interested also in *Nashville Now* the night Hank Williams Jr. received the Gold album for *Wild Streak*. Would be more than happy to pay. D.R. Agin, R.R. 3, Harrisburg, IL 62946.

- Help! my home was burnt, and I lost all my country star pictures. Any-



RICKY SKAGGS

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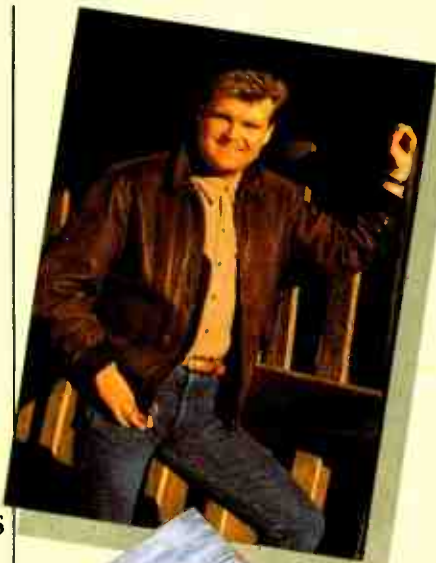
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PULL-OUT
CENTERFOLD
OF THE MONTH

RICKY SKAGGS Facts of Life

Personal Data

Birthdate: July 18, 1954
Birthplace: Cordell, Kentucky
Family: Wife, Sharon; children, Mandy, Andrew, Molly Kate, Lucas.

Vital Statistics

Height: 6 ft.
Weight: 180 lbs.
Color eyes: Blue
Color hair: Blonde
Famous for: Instrumental proficiency.

Recording Career

Record Label: CBS/Epic Records, 34 Music Square East, Nashville, Tennessee 37203

Albums	Release Date
<i>The Clinch Mountain Boys' Tribute to the Stanley Bros.</i> (includes Ricky Skaggs)	1971
<i>2nd Generation Bluegrass</i> (with Keith Whitley)	1972
<i>That's It</i> (with Keith Whitley)	1975
<i>Boone Creek</i>	1977
<i>Boone Creek One Way Track</i>	1978
<i>Sweet Temptation</i>	1979
<i>Skaggs & Rice</i> (with Tony Rice)	1980
<i>Waitin' For the Sun to Shine</i>	1981
<i>Family & Friends</i>	1982
<i>Highways & Heartaches</i>	1982*
<i>Don't Cheat in Our Hometown</i>	1983*
<i>Country Boy</i>	1984*
<i>Favorite Country Songs</i>	1985
<i>Live in London</i>	1985
<i>Love's Gonna Get Ya!</i>	1988
<i>Comin' Home to Stay</i>	1988
<i>Kentucky Thunder</i>	1989

Number One Singles
"Crying My Heart Out Over You"
"I Don't Care"
"Heartbroke"
"I Wouldn't Change You If I Could"
"Highway 40 Blues"
"Don't Cheat in Our Hometown"



Major Awards

1982 CMA Horizon Award & Male Vocalist of the Year/ACM New Male Vocalist
1983 CMA Instrumental Group of the Year
1984 CMA Instrumental Group of the Year/Grammy Best Country Instrumental Performance for "Fireball" (with The New South)/ACM Touring Band of the Year
1985 CMA Entertainer of the Year, Instrumentalist of the Year/Grammy Best Country Instrumental Performance for "Wheel Hoss"/ACM Touring Band of the Year
1986 ACM Touring Band of the Year/*Country Music Round Up* (England)
Most Popular Internat'l Solo Act (Male)
1987 CMA Vocal Duo of the Year (with Sharon White)/Grammy Best Country Instrumental Performance for "Raisin' the Dickens"/ACM Touring Band of the Year/Edison Award (Holland) Best Country LP, *Love's Gonna Get Ya!*
1990 BBC Radio 2 Artist of the Decade

"Honey (Open That Door)"
"Uncle Pen"
"Country Boy"
"Cajun Moon"
"Lovin' Only Me"

Videos

Broadcast Videos
"Don't Get Above Your Raisin"
"Heartbroke"
"Honey"
"Country Boy"
"Cajun Moon"
"Thanks Again"
"You Make Me Feel Like a Man"
"Let It Be You"
"Highways & Heartaches"
"Waitin' For the Sun to Shine"

Home Videos
Live in London, also includes "Country Boy" and "Honey (Open That Door)."

Producer's Credits

Produced all his own projects for CBS/Epic; co-produced *Kentucky Thunder*, latest album, with Steve Buckingham. Produced *White Limozeen* for Dolly Parton and *Old Familiar Feeling, Forever You, Whole New World* and *Doin' It By the Book* for The Whites.

Fan Club

Ricky Skaggs International Fan Club membership includes membership card, color magnet, color photograph, biography, quarterly newsletters, memo pad, pen, merchandise brochure, concert schedules, Birthday and Christmas Card and information on special fan activities.

How to Order

To join the Ricky Skaggs International Fan Club and get all the items listed above for \$10 U.S. and Canada (\$13 international), send check or money order made out to Country Music Reader Service to: *Country Music Magazine*, Reader Service Department, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Add \$1.95 postage and handling.

thing would be great. **Jeannie Pettus, P.O. Box 36, Wellington, AL 36279.**

● For Sale: cassette tapes played only twice since they were new. "Meant for Each Other" by Barbara Mandrell and Lee Greenwood, "Hank Live" by Hank Williams, "Past the Point of No Return" by Jim Glaser and "The First Word in Memory" by Janie Fricke. Also interested in "You've Got a Good Love Comin'" by Lee Greenwood and "Fire at First Sight" by The Kendalls. Will take any reasonable offer or a trade. **Eric Timm, Box 268, R.D.1, Birdshoro, PA 19508.**

● For Sale: five-record set by Buck Owens, *Let the Good Times Roll*. Also five-record set by Johnny Cash, *Born to Sing* featuring Jeannie C. Riley. Will send list of songs if you send SASE. Would be interested in songs by Bill Walker. **Arlene Elyear, 327 Sutherland, Cheboygan, MI 49721.**

● Wanted: Someone to make me a VHS copy of Barbara Mandrell's *Something Special*. Will pay for taping, mailing and the tape. **Marie Haley, 4844 Dahlia Dr., Stockton, CA 95212.**

● Looking for a good photo of George Strait taken this New Year's Eve in Dallas, TX. Send price and description. **Carole Gambrell, 2019 Collins Dr., Waco, TX 76710.**

● Will trade centerfold picture of Reba McEntire that was in Nov/Dec 1989 *Country Music Magazine* for any of the same size of Clint Black, Lionel Cartwright or Johnny Rodriguez. **Diana Dilts, R.R.1, Avon, IL 61415.**

● Do any of you readers remember a song by Tex Ritter called "Christmas Carols by the Old Corral" and "Lead Me Gently Home, Father" by Texas Jim Robertson. I used to hear both of these songs in the 1940's. Please let me hear from you. **Mrs. Franklin (Barbara) Kassien, 781 South Biron Dr., Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54494.**

● Wanted: Dolly Parton picture disc "Great Balls of Fire" and Dolly Parton's 45 or album with "Wings of a Dove" on it. Also interested in Dolly Parton's 1976 poster from *Country Music Magazine*, the one where she is *Lady Liberty*. If you are willing to give them up for a reasonable amount of money, then let's talk. **Gary McArdle, 131 Sugarcreek Lane, Smyrna, TN 37167.**

● Looking for a record or 8-track tape by Del Reeves titled "Santa's Boy." It was on 8-track by United Artists. I will pay a reasonable price. **Norma Rodenback, 1580 Raubsville Rd., Easton, PA 18042.**

Pen Pals

Make new friends and keep the old.

● Hi! Would like to correspond with males and females, ages 35-50. I like Randy Travis, Dolly Parton, Merle Haggard and Tom T. Hall. Will write those who will answer. No inmates, please. **Mrs. Penny Dietz, P.O. Box 3176, Temple, TX 36505.**

● Hello! My name is Kim Martin, and I am a 20-year-old. I would love to hear from any country music fans, male or female, aged 16-25. My favorites are

Sawyer Brown, Randy Travis, Highway 101 and Sweethearts of The Rodeo. Will answer all and exchange photos. **Kim Martin, 1660 South Franklin Street, Christiansburg, VA 24073.**

● Hi! Calling country music lovers from U.S.A. and Canada. I would love to hear from male and female pen pals, 50 years and older. I am a 57-year-old divorced female. My favorite artists are Willie Nelson, Loretta Lynn, Hank Snow, E. Tubb, Randy Travis and Clint Black. I will answer all letters, so please don't hesitate, pick up a pen and write to me! **Barbara Bennett, 427 W. Revere Ave., Northfield, NJ 08225.**

● Hi! I am a 19-year-old Texas girl who loves country music. I am looking for a friend who really likes country music. Some of my favorite stars are Clint Black, George Strait, Randy Travis and Ricky Van Shelton. Will answer all. **Carole Anderberg, Rt. 2, Box 20, Hico, TX 76457.**

● Hi! My name is Mark Natale. I'm a 29-year-old male who loves country music. Some of my favorites are George Strait, Ricky Van Shelton, Keith Whitley, Reba McEntire, Tanya Tucker, Barbara Mandrell and Lorie Morgan. Some of my interests are photography, concerts and the rodeo. Would like to hear from female country music lovers. I'll answer all letters. **Mark Natale, 3307 Concord Dr., Cinnaminson, NJ 08077.**

● I am a 33-year-old male who would like to hear from females who are Elvis Presley, Everly Brothers and Keith Whitley fans. Send photo if possible. Will answer all. **McRae Davis, Rt. 15, Box 317-B, Fayetteville, NC 28306.**

● My name is Cindy Courville. I am 17 years old and love country music. My favorites are George Strait, Clint Black, The Judds and Garth Brooks. On my free time I like to go to friends' houses and watch the Nashville station. I also love country boys, so y'all write. **Cindy Courville, Rt. 2, Box 524, Iowa, LA 70647.**

● I am a 28-year-old male who loves country music. I enjoy Dwight Yoakam, Alabama, The Oaks and especially Leon Everett. I am looking to correspond with people of any age who have the same love for country music. We could even exchange music cassettes! **Ivor Putnam, 13 Abbot Avenue, Paddonhurst, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.**

● Hi!, country fans! We are a 25- and 27-year-old couple from Denmark and are planning a trip to some of your Southern states in 1990. Would like to get to know some nice people before that. Our favorites are Rodney Crowell, Guy Clark, Albert Lee, Vince Gill and Dan Seals. **Frank Larsen, Pilevangan 3, Boeslum, 8400 Eveltoft, Denmark, Europe.**

● I am a 28-year-old male. I like art and drawing. I've done quite a few greeting cards and posters for the inmates. It would be a change for me to do the same for you, if you're seeking a good-hearted and crazy man. **Steve D. Morton 1161-13, Rt. 1, Box 36, Jackson, NC 27845.**

● I am a 40-year-old widow, pleasingly plump, and I was raised on country music. I'd like to hear from men and women of any age. My favorite per-

formers are Randy Travis, John Conlee, Hank Williams Jr., Kathy Mattea, Becky Hobbs, Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn. I would like to hear from those of you who live in the country and are self-sufficient. Also, how do I go about getting the stars' autographs? I can't afford to join countless fan clubs, and I can't get to most of the concerts without a car. **Molly R. Moody, 114 Quinta Rd., San Antonio, TX 78210.**

● I am a 36-year-old male who has blue eyes and dirty blonde hair. I love children and country music. Please send a picture and let's be friends. I am in a state hospital for about 3 years now. **Ronald Hoffman, P.O. Box 7001, Wd 25, Atascadero, CA 93428-7001.**

● I am a 20-year-old girl from Florida, originally from Alabama. Looking for fans who like Alabama, Lionel Cartwright, Garth Brooks, Keith Whitley and Steve Wariner. Would love to hear from people between 19-27. I'll answer each and every letter. **Tammy Goble, Rt. 2, Box 1274, Old Town, FL 32680.**

● Hi! My name is Sherri Bickta. I'm 30 years old and would like to write to country music fans of all ages. My favorites include George Jones, George Strait, Vern Gosdin, Ricky Van Shelton, Keith Whitley, Marty Robbins, Clint Black, Bill Monroe, Willie Nelson and Desert Rose Band. **Sherri Bickta, 634 Centre Ave., Reading, PA 19601.**

● Hi! I am a 35-year-old single male in prison. I'm looking for correspondence with people who enjoy c/w music. I truly enjoy Reba McEntire, Alabama and George Strait. I will write to all who write me with a prompt return. **Michael Newberry, 120707, Box 548, Lexington, OK 73051.**

● Hi! I'm 20 years old, and I love country music, especially George Strait. So, all you Strait addicts, write soon! I also like Reba McEntire, Patty Loveless, Garth Brooks and Clint Black. I'll answer all letters. **Dawn Johnson, 601 East Sixth St., Villisca, IA 50864.**

● Howdy! I am a 21-year-old cowboy who loves country music. My favorites are George Strait, T.G. Sheppard and Hank Williams Jr. I would love to hear from country girls ages 18-30. Will answer all. A picture of you gets one of me. If you live near the Dallas area, maybe we can meet. **Michael E. Denson, 6176 Brandeis Lane, Dallas, Texas 75214.**

● Howdy! I am 23 years old. I love Dan Seals, Restless Heart, Louise Mandrell, Holly Dunn and Michael Martin Murphy. Please send me pictures or information about them, because I collect them. Love to hear from you about them. **Michele Stockwell, 18205 50th Ave Ct. N., East Moline, IL 61244.**

● This male loves all country artists, especially Conway Twitty and Ronnie McDowell. I hope to re-locate to the States soon, but in the meantime, I surely would like to hear from all you females. Will answer all! **Julio Reyes, R.D.O. 15 Calle S.E., 6-4 Aves., 36 Bo Medina, San Pedro Sula, Honduras C.A.**

● Hi! I'm a 30-year-old country music fan. I would like to hear from single country gals aged 25-32 who love their country music. My favorites are Becky Hobbs,

Randy Travis, Reba McEntire, Highway 101 and Patty Loveless. I also enjoy the great outdoors, photography, collecting country records and working on my HO train layout. Would like to hear from you and will answer all letters. Please write and send a photo. **Bill Erickson, 1219 North Randall Ave., Janesville, WI 53545.**

● Hi! My name is Mary Kay. I'm 36 years old, single and a nurse. I love country music, traveling, reading and writing letters. Would like to hear from country music fans from all over the world. **Mary Kay, R.D. 2, Box 299A, Charieroi, PA 15022.**

I would like to hear from females over 19 years of age. I love Reba McEntire, and I would like to hear from fans who also like her. My other favorites are Keith Whitley and Lorie Morgan. I love dogs, cats, birds, horses, photos and reading. **Karyn Gerber, 2003 Rolling Rd., Cortez, CO 81321.**

● Hi! My name is Bill. I'm 23 years old, single and just moved to a small country town high in the Colorado Rockies. My favorite stars are Patsy Cline, Reba McEntire, Crystal Gayle, George Strait, Clint Black and Keith Whitley. I need to make some new friends. Will answer all. Photos will be appreciated. **Bill Rutherford, 1309 16th St., Penrose, CO 81240.**

● Hi! I'm Vallie, a 66-year-old widow who enjoys country music. My favorites are K.T. Oslin, Alabama, George Jones and Conway Twitty. Would love to hear from anyone who loves country music. **Vallie Mae Leavitt, 1910 Emanuel Ch. Rd., Rockwell, NC 28138.**

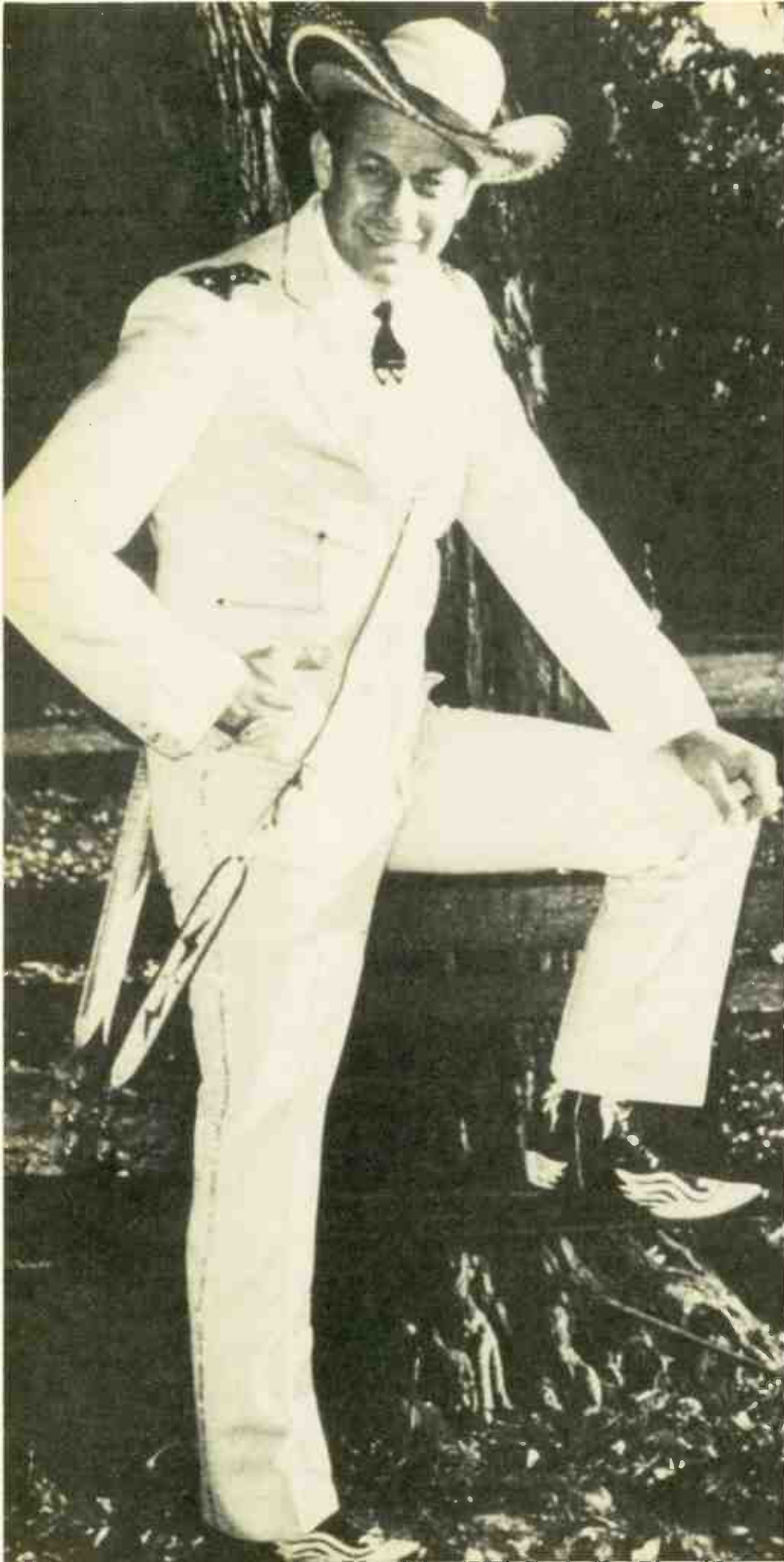
● Hi! I'm a 14-year-old who loves to laugh and have fun. I also love to write to pen pals and write poetry. My main country interests are Foster and Lloyd, Dwight Yoakam, Dan Seals and The O'Kanes. Would love to hear from anyone, anywhere, any age! Will answer all letters. If you can, please send a photo! **Chantel Davis, 4041 Bull Lake Rd., Troy, MT 59935.**

● I am a 19-year-old female. I would like to hear from anyone who loves country music, any age, male or female. Some of my favorites are Sawyer Brown, Clint Black, George Strait, Steve Wariner, Garth Brooks and Reba McEntire. Will answer all! **Sharlene Hinds, P.O. Box 765, Jamestown, TN 38556.**

● Hi! I'm 26 years old, looking for pen pals of all ages, convicts included. My favorite stars are Reba McEntire, Elvis Presley, Loretta Lynn, Randy Travis, Highway 101, Hank Jr. and Dwight Yoakam. Answer all! **Missy Johnson Tilley, P.O. Box 1534, Yadkinville, NC 27055.**

● I'm 38 years old, currently serving a two-year sentence with just nine months to go. I'm looking for someone special to share my life with. I play guitar and sing country songs as well. Some of my favorite stars are Randy Travis, Dwight Yoakam, George Strait and Ricky Van Shelton. **Jeff A. Bailey 892388, P.O. Box 41, Michigan City, IN 46360.**

Send material for Newsletter to Country Music Magazine, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Mark your envelope. Attention: Newsletter.



Hawksh

With Patsy Cline and Cowboy Copas in that plane on March 5, 1963, was one other legend, one who had much in common with fellow passenger Copas: Harold "Hawkshaw" Hawkins. Of the three who shared the ill-fated trip, Hawkshaw has been all but forgotten for several reasons. No major research has ever been done into his life and career, nor have many articles been published; most country music reference works list him only briefly or as a footnote, one usually related to the plane crash. And though he sold records consistently when he recorded for King in the 1940's and early 1950's, he had only eight major chart hits from 1948 until 1963, when "Lonesome 7-7203" hit Number One shortly after he died.

Tall (six feet, nine inches), dapper and possessing a smooth, clear voice, Hawkshaw, like Copas, could handle just about any type of material competently. Born Harold Franklin Hawkins on December 22, 1921, in Huntingdon, West Virginia, he was one of that small group of legendary country musicians from along the West Virginia-Ohio border. He started playing guitar as a youth, and tradition has it he traded five rabbits for his first guitar. He became proficient enough by his late teens to win a talent show that led to a \$15-a-week job performing over WSAZ Radio in Huntingdon, the beginning of his professional career.

Like most radio performers, Hawk moved from station to station. For a time he was at WCHS in Charleston, West Virginia, and at WLAW in Lawrence, Massachusetts. By the time World War II rolled around, he had gained a strong reputation and was about to join the *WWVA Jamboree*, one step closer to the Grand Ole Opry itself. Fate stepped in, and he was inducted into the service in 1942. Stationed in the Pacific, he worked for a brief time over WTVM, a radio station in Manila, in the Philippines, after American forces reclaimed those islands from Japan.

After his discharge in 1945, Hawk had to retrace some of his steps. One set of liner notes describes a brief period during which he worked as a welder. If this ever happened, it didn't last long. By 1946 he'd returned to West Virginia, where he finally joined the *WWVA Jamboree*. His popularity began to soar. Around that same time, he signed with the Cincinnati-based King

PHOTOS: COUNTRY MUSIC FOUNDATION

Law Hawkins

by Rich Kienzle

label, just as Copas had. He made his first records in July 1946, none of them particularly impressive.

King owner Syd Nathan, a cigar-chewing hustler who had his country artists recording rhythm and blues (and vice versa) years before Elvis did the same thing, initially saw Hawk as King's version of Ernest Tubb, for at his second King session two months later, Hawk wound up recording a number of Tubb favorites, from "Blue Eyed Elaine" and "Walking the Floor Over You" to "Mean Old Bed Bug Blues" and "Try Me One More Time." Since the public already had E.T. himself, they didn't need Hawkshaw doing the same songs. Not surprisingly, none sold.

Hawkshaw Hawkins' last performance, a benefit concert in Kansas City, March 4, 1963, for DJ Jack Call. The next morning, he left in a plane for Nashville with Cowboy Copas and Patsy Cline.



He did better at his third King session in 1947, which yielded one song that became a Hawkshaw favorite if not a huge hit: "Sunny Side of the Mountain." He recorded 20 numbers at his fourth session in late 1947, a potpourri of material that included everything from the traditional folk ballad, "Barbara Allen," to the honky tonk standard, "The Last Letter." Two releases went into the Top Ten, one right after the other. His version of Hank Williams' "Pan American" reached Number Nine on the *Billboard* charts that spring, followed by "Dog House Boogie," which made it to Number Six that summer.

In September 1949 Hawk was back at King's Cincinnati studios to cut three numbers including "I Wasted a Nickel," a Top 20 hit late that year. At the same session he recorded a raw, bluesy follow-up to "Dog House Boogie." "Back To the Dog-

house" was no hit; Hawk's delivery was so raw he sounded like a black Chicago blues singer, not the pure-voiced balladeer of "Barbara Allen."

In 1950 Nathan tried a mixed bag with Hawk. This time he recorded Lefty Frizzell's megahit, "I Love You a Thousand Ways," which made it to Number Eight behind Lefty's version in March 1951. Also recorded at the session was a winsome version of the Ruth Brown rhythm and blues hit, "Teardrops From My Eyes," which Hawk skillfully turned into a honky tonk ballad. He also cut a jumping version of the old blues, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy," with some blistering guitar from Ohio studio guitarist Al Myers, who did many sessions at King.

As "Thousand Ways" became a chart success, Hawk returned to King in March 1951 to record "I'm Waiting Just for You," which went to Number Eight that fall. On September 21, he recorded his version of the Pee Wee King-Redd Stewart hit, "Slow Poke," which at that very moment was racing to the top of the charts. Apparently record buyers still loved the song, for Hawk's version went to Number Nine late that year.

Hawkshaw did what he thought would be his last session for King on January 16, 1953, barely two weeks after Hank Williams died. Since the country was on a tribute kick, he recorded "The Life Story of Hank Williams" as well as a version of "Kaw-Liga." They went nowhere.

This didn't leave Hawkshaw in the lurch. In fact, in 1955 he finally joined the Grand Ole Opry, around the same time he signed

with RCA Victor. The RCA period produced some excellent material. His upbeat "Car Hoppin' Mama" was an enjoyable, swinging number with a buoyant vocal and lively backing from steel guitarist Bud Isaacs, Nashville's pioneer pedal steel player; a video clip of Hawk singing it still exists. However, none of Hawk's RCA recordings were hits, despite the help of Chet Atkins. The period was a disappointment from the standpoint of sales.

In 1960 Hawkins married Opry star Jean Shepard and settled into the life of a country squire. Chet Atkins has described his farm outside Nashville where he trained horses and kept other livestock as well.

Hawkshaw hadn't had a record on the charts since 1951 when, towards the end of the decade, he got in on the ground floor of the "saga song" boom best known through Johnny Horton numbers like "North to Alaska" and "Battle of New Orleans." In 1959, Hawk's Columbia recording of "Soldier's Joy," based on a Revolutionary War theme, made it to Number 15. Around that same time he recorded another more modern saga song, "Twenty Miles from Shore," which dealt with a contemporary theme: the life of offshore oil drillers.

There had to be a sense of having done all this before when Hawk returned to King's Cincinnati studios on September 10, 1962. He cut 12 songs that day, most of them solid honky tonkers, as well as "Silver Threads and Golden Needles" and Justin Tubb's "Lonesome 7-7203," an upbeat shuffle in the style of Ray Price and other honky tonk singers that remains a minor classic, a durable song that could make it again today should Strait or Shelton try it.

Things were clearly looking up in Hawk's career. Then he, Patsy and Copas decided to fly to Kansas to do that benefit and.... No one knows what would have been had the plane landed safely. One can visualize him today, a senior member of the Opry, being interviewed on TNN's *Backstage at the Grand Ole Opry* with his buddy and fellow West Virginian, Little Jimmy Dickens. Maybe someday his versatility will be seen for what it was, and "The Hawk of the West Virginia Hills" as he's known will no longer be just a passenger on an ill-fated plane trip.

Albums Available
See For CMSA Members Only page.

Readers Create

A to Z on Dwight Yoakam

Teresa Wooddell of Piqua, Ohio, has too many favorites to name them all, but Dwight must be one of them. Words in her puzzle run horizontally, vertically, diagonally, backwards and forwards. Answers in next issue.

S I X F R R E X Z P L T E A H N
G O T N E D N E P E D N I P A N
U N E O T U N I Q U E T O P N X
I E R D S Z E A L O N P O N D S
N L N O I C A M B I T I O U S S
B A T T S V I D A L E K O Y O R
L I C O E B L U M Z Y E K U M A
E C O R L R Q V Q Y W V I G E E
Y E U A T D T E R E V I A N D Y
D P N T T O S A S A N L I I Y Y
O S T Y I R T T I Z P L Q R E T
N A R F L I E W Y N E E U A A N
T R Y S U R E K E L I N I D U E
A T A G N A C O L D E N A Y A W
E X P E R U S T I C Y O G Z Q T
U W E S T T S I S E Y E E U L B
Q E L N N A J K T E E F X I S U
Z O E O M I N E R S P R A Y E R
Y K T T S U O L A E Z E O L I N
B F L O Y D C O U N T Y U O K Z
D F H J L N P R T V S A T X W Y

- A Ambitious
- B Blue Eyes
- C Country
- D Daring
- E Entertaining
- F Floyd County
- G Guitar
- H Handsome
- I Independent
- J Jeans
- K Kentucky
- L Little Sister
- M Miner's Prayer
- N Naive
- O Old Style
- P Pikeville
- Q Quaint
- R Rustic
- S Six Feet
- T Twenty Years
- U Unique
- V Videos
- W Western
- X Xtra Special
- Y Yokel
- Z Zealous



K.T. Oslin—A Favorite

K.T. Oslin is Lisa Trautman's favorite country singer. She's done a portrait of K.T. in oils which she's sent to the fan club. She hopes K.T. has seen it. "I want K.T. to know that she is the greatest in my heart," says Lisa. The *Newsletter* is Lisa's favorite part of the magazine. She enjoys "seeing the artistic talents that so many people have from all over the world." Lisa's from Roseville, California. Her fiance is the subscriber.

Two Songwriters

Rita Gordon's song lyric published in the November/December 1989 issue of the *Newsletter* rang a bell with Cora Schroeder of Gilbert, Arizona. She's been a country music fan for all of her 50 years. A music company has put some of her words to music, but, as she says, "Aren't there some of you singers out there who will listen to lyrics from an unknown? After all, you might find something you like." Vern Dailey of Wills Point, Texas, describes himself as a "potential" songwriter. He likes *Record Reviews* and articles "on and about songwriters." Vern is gracious enough to say he hopes his lyrics are "good enough to print in your fine magazine." Vern's also a cartoonist. For more of his work, stay tuned.

My Little Redheaded Boy

I looked down at the foot of the bed
There peeked back at me a little redhead
With sparkling eyes and a grin a mile wide
He said, "Hi, Granny, I come up by your side."

A soft little arm slides around my neck
Soft little lips give me a firm smack
A soft little voice says, "I wuv you, Granny."
Ah, the ways to his granny's heart are many.

"Get up, now," he says as he bounds out of bed
"Come on, Papa," and he pats him on the head
He stands beside us, his hands folded with care
And repeats, word for word, The Lord's Prayer.

Engrossed in play, the 'accident' takes him by surprise
"Funny, huh, Granny," he says with hope in his eyes
I assure him it isn't as I show him the way
With a long, sad face he says, "Sorry, Granny, okay?"

He's rowdy and loud, a rambunctious little boy
He's shy and loving and fills our hearts with joy
He's a blessing from heaven, all cute and coy
But mostly, he'll always be Granny's little redheaded boy.
—Cora Schroeder

There's Nothing Longer Than a Lonely Night

Last night we had a silly little fuss
Early this morning Baby hopped a bus
I laughed and told her she'd be back by noon
Now I'm lying here so lonely I'm talkin' to the moon

Old moon peekin' through my window curtain
Can you see Baby's gone and I'm hurtin'?
I see her empty pillow in your light
It's telling me it's gonna be a long, lonely night

Chorus

There's nothing longer than a lonely night
When the one I love's not here to hold me tight
It's gonna be an eternity until the morning light
No, there's nothing longer than a lonely night
Old moon I sure could use some help from you
If you see her from your lofty point of view
Please tell my baby I know I was wrong
And not to let me have to spend another night alone
—Vern Dailey

New Kids

ON THE

Country Block

You've heard their songs and seen their videos. Now it's time to take a look at just who these new voices in country music belong to. ■ By Bob Millard

The past year-and-a-half has seen a sudden outcropping of new young male singers, each one undoubtedly gunning to become "the next Randy Travis." Of course, the first to come to mind is Houston native Clint Black, who broke through on his first single to garner the Country Music Association's Horizon Award for 1989; his first album became a million seller, too. In addition to his obvious talent and the strength of that first song, "Killin' Time," Clint has the right connections. His manager hails from the Z.Z. Top organization and has both the experience and the money to heighten his exposure.

Most of the rest of the newcomers are establishing themselves one record and one radio station at a time. If you ever stop to count the number of country oldies, pop-country tunes and middle-of-the-road songs the big-market country radio stations play, you'll have a clue as to just how hard that could be.

It's time to put some of the facts with the sounds and faces. Hopefully, your favorite will be among those profiled here.

■ Garth Brooks ■

Garth Brooks was born and raised in Oklahoma, the youngest of six children. His signing at Capitol Records must have seemed like a repeat performance for the label, since Garth's mother, Colleen Carroll, recorded for Capitol in the mid-1950s when she was a regular on Red Foley's *Ozark Jubilee* radio program.

Garth's first album on Capitol

Records, *Garth Brooks*, has been very successful. His single, "Much Too Young (To Feel This Damn Old)," went to Number Eight on the charts, and "If Tomorrow Never Comes" reached Number One. As of this writing, another Brooks single, "Not Counting You," is climbing up the charts, followed by "The Dance," also out on video. A new album is due out in August of this year.

Compared to some of our new kids on the country block, Brooks' professional debut came rather late in life. He played his first paying gig at nineteen—a four-night-per-week singing stint at Shotgun's Pizza Parlor in Stillwater, Oklahoma, which must have made his studies at nearby Oklahoma State University a bit of a strain. Like George Strait, Brooks got his college degree before striking out full-time in pursuit of a music career.

His first trip to Nashville was in 1985, when he blew in with an ego as big and fragile as a weather balloon. Within the first 24 hours, he realized he wasn't ready and went home to the woodshed rather than embarrass himself—he's not dumb. "I thought the world was waiting for me, but there's nothing colder than reality," he says. "I wouldn't trade that experience for the world."

Brooks may be one of the few country artists wearing cowboy hats who doesn't do it to hide a bald spot, and despite his chunky build, his stage act is energetic. As a songwriter he shows a lot of promise; he wrote or co-wrote about half the tunes on his album. With producer Allen Reynolds (of Kathy Mattea, Don Williams and Crystal Gayle

fame) in the studio to guide him, look for more good records from Garth Brooks.

■ Lionel Cartwright ■

"Give Me His Last Chance" was a brushfire hit for Lionel Cartwright—it caught on quickly and seemingly everywhere at the same time. That song reached Number Three on the charts. "Like Father, Like Son" made it to Number 14, "In My Eyes" went to Number 12, and "You're Going to Make Her Mine" also did well by not forgetting that they still dance down in Texas. Nine of ten songs on his debut MCA album, simply called *Lionel Cartwright*, are his. Aided in the studio by Mark O'Connor, Newgrass Revival's Pat Flynn and a host of other "top name" Nashville session players, Cartwright nonetheless promises to show out instrumentally in concerts as he plays keyboards, mandolin, fiddle and guitar himself on the record. For his obvious vocal, instrumental and songwriting skills, *Chicago Times* critic Jack Hurst calls Cartwright a triple threat.

A second album, *I Watched It On the Radio*, is out now with a video/single, "I Watched It All on My Radio," in release as well. His recordings have something of Ricky Skaggs' kind of bouncy drive and occasionally touch those same bluegrass roots to good effect, but the sound is strictly Cartwright.

Cartwright hails from West Virginia, though he confesses he was born in Ohio, because "that's where the hospital was." As a teenager he came up through a tried and true country apprenticeship



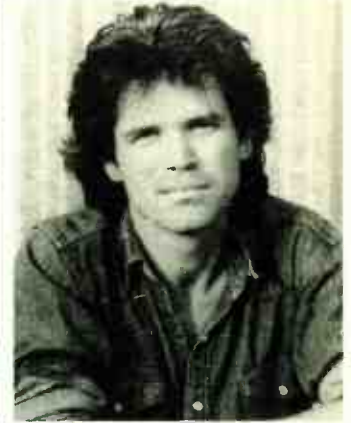
Garth Brooks



Lionel Cartwright



Scott McQuaig



J.C. Crowley

of first local then regional live radio work that peaked when he became a piano player on the *Wheeling Jamboree* on WWVA. He worked his way through college that way, then moved to Nashville where he was featured in the (blessedly) ill-fated Nashville Network sit-com, *I-40 Paradise*, before turning his talents to more promising avenues.

■ Scott McQuaig ■

Down in Meridian, Mississippi, they have a little musical celebration once a year at the city's great old art deco Shrine Theatre, a celebration of country music in all its Deep South traditions, old and new, to honor native son Jimmie Rodgers. It's always hot enough to fry eggs on the sidewalk that time of year in deep Mississippi, but no one seems to mind. Part of that two-night musical extravaganza is a talent contest that draws some of the best Louisiana and Mississippi boys to vie for honors at the festival honoring the old Singing Brakeman, the Father of Country Music. In 1987, Scott McQuaig won.

Mind you, I can't begin to count the number of guys who have come along sounding too much like Merle Haggard for their own good, as McQuaig comes close to doing. "I never tried to really sing like Merle, but he was the standard," McQuaig admits. "Merle was how you're supposed to sound—perfect." Which would be okay if he were talking about some artist who was dead or retired, but Hag is still cranking out great records on his own, thank you. Guess you gotta remember how long it took Hag to stop singing like his own mentors, Lefty Frizzell and Buck Owens. With a talent as obvious as McQuaig's, I assume he will eventually emerge with his own voice.

Scott McQuaig is as good at contemporary honky tonk as anyone doing it, though, Merle Haggard intonations or

not. If he can put together a band as good as the session players he uses on his debut Universal Records album, *Scott McQuaig*, he ought to be tearing up the dance halls from San Antonio to Wheeling. Two singles, "Honky Tonk Amnesia" and "Johnny & The Dreamers," have hit the charts, and a new album is due out soon.

I think the key to McQuaig's breaking out of the pack lies in somehow getting himself out there and identified. His music, some of which he writes or co-writes with some of the hottest country writers around, is there.

■ J.C. Crowley ■

Crowley is a Texan of a different stripe. He was a late 1970's soft-rock star, having written the pervasive adult contemporary hit, "Baby, Come Back," for his group Player more than ten years ago. Several years after Player's breakup, Crowley, who is now 41 and looks 30-something, put Los Angeles behind him and turned to country songwriting to take a run at a new field.

His first single from RCA, "Paint the Town and Hang the Moon," hit the country charts' Top 15 right off. In a lot of ways, Crowley is made to order for country music videos. He has a leading man's face and a generally romantic visual image. In other ways—musically, for instance—he suffers from trying too hard to touch all the bases in his first album.

Crowley has a good voice but not the kind that says "I'm here!"—usually a must for an artist who'd like to break out of the pack. His records, on the other hand, are thoroughly likable, especially his romantic, mid-tempo numbers like "Beyond the Great Divide," where he gets vocal help from Rosanne Cash, and "Beneath the Texas Moon." Given the calibre of the progressive country helpers lending their tal-

ents to his debut RCA album, *Beneath the Texas Moon*—Bonnie Raitt, Sam Bush, J.D. Souther, ex-Eagle Timothy Schmidt, Dirt Band member Bob Carpenter, Russell Smith and Vince Gill—it is safe to say that Crowley is the current darling of the hip Nashville insiders' set. In the actual country music market, you are going to be the judge; not me. He is one to watch, but no shoo-in. Currently between record labels, Crowley is working on songs for a new album.

■ Tim Mensy ■

Tim Mensy is the man who wrote Shenandoah's compelling breakthrough hit, "Mama Knows." His own mother was a performer on *The Old Dominion Barn-dance* radio show. When one of her youngest children, Tim, showed serious inclinations toward music at age seven, his mama *did* know there would be no stopping him. So she added him to the family band, already featuring husband, wife, two sons and two daughters. They toured around the mid-Atlantic coast states opening for the likes of Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton, The Wilburn Brothers, Loretta Lynn and Merle Haggard.

After the family band broke up, Tim migrated to Nashville where he helped organize a band called Bandana. Bandana, some of you may recall, was a Warner Bros. recording act for a short while in the early 1980's. They were sharp and hardworking but never managed to gain a foothold.

Following Bandana's break-up, songwriting took up the next four years of Mensy's time. He got songs recorded by John Conlee, The Whites, T.G. Shepard and, of course, Shenandoah. Producer Bob Montgomery more or less "discovered" him while sifting through demos in the files of Mensy's publisher, Combine Music Publishing.

It's a little early to call Mensy's



Tim Mensy



Larry Boone



Shane Barmby



Skip Ewing

chances, as there have only been a few releases from his Columbia album, *Stone by Stone*, including the title song, "Hometown Advantage" and "You Still Love Me in My Dreams." He's got talent, though, and plenty of drive. Actually, he's something of a gritty perfectionist, which can be a wild card, working for or against an artist in this age of laidback cowboys. He bears watching.

■ Larry Boone ■

This blond-haired, blue-eyed, deep-voiced cowboy scored a Top Ten hit with "Don't Give Candy to a Stranger" from his first album, *Larry Boone*, and scored high as co-writer of both George Strait's "Beyond the Blue Neon" and Kathy Mattea's "Burnin' Old Memories." His second Mercury Records album, *Swingin' Doors, Sawdust Floors*, is about as solid a contemporary honky tonk collection as you'll find. His third album, *Down That River Road*, is currently on the charts with the single, "Everybody Wants to Be Hank Williams," in release.

Boone was raised in a little town in Florida, where his mother taught him to play guitar at an early age. His father was a professional athlete, though, and only an injury in college turned Larry's mind from athletics back to music. He loaded an old VW van with everything he owned and headed to Nashville right after graduation. He found compatible songwriting mentors and partners in the Nelson brothers, Gene and Paul, who wrote "Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses." Soon, one little cut led to a little bit bigger one, and it all added up to making a decent living. But Boone wanted more, and his deep, smooth voice just might give it to him.

There's nothing flashy about Larry Boone, but then George Strait and Randy Travis aren't exactly sparkling conversationalists, either. Boone just

keeps clumping along, his music now firmly fixed in the traditions of Western dance-a-billy and honky tonk. I think he's making himself one of those "in for the long haul" kind of artists.

■ Shane Barmby ■

Of all the new male artists who tap at least one visual element of the cowboy image for their own—and few can resist the hat, fringed buckskin jacket or at least the boots or horse—Shane Barmby is the only one who posed with a lariat on his album cover. Like old Will Rogers, he's been known to use it on stage.

Barmby's roping comes naturally. He hails from a rodeo family. His father taught him lariat and guitar. "He showed me my first chords on guitar," Barmby recalls. "I remember him slapping my fingers when I didn't position them right on the neck." He grew up passing guitars around sawdust campfires with professional ropers and riders, and it was cowboys who first pushed him on stage.

Vocally, he is very much an inheritor of the Jerry Lee Lewis sound. He handles a shuffle easily with the old Otis Blackwell Sun Records-era rocker, "Let's Talk About Us," from the Mercury album of the same name. The record's been slow to take off. His video, however, *Ridin' & Ropin'*, went to Number One on CMT. Never can tell about those late bloomers.

■ Skip Ewing ■

Skip Ewing is a 25-year-old who knows where he wants to go. He figured it out the first time he heard Merle Haggard sing: "I wanted to be able to get up there and sing and tear somebody's heart out and say something that really means something, because that's what Haggard did for me."

His first MCA album, *The Coast of Colorado*, bore him several radio hits, among them "The Gospel According to Luke," "I Don't Have Far to Fall" and "Burnin' a Hole in My Heart," which reached Number Three on the country charts. "It's You Again," from his second album, *The Will to Love*, was at Number Five as of this writing, and a new single, "If a Man Could Live on Love Alone," is his newest video.

His father's military career caused him to be uprooted on a regular basis. Music became his entry into each new school. He grew up fast, accepting responsibility for his own life at sixteen rather than continue being jerked around by his parents' divorce and constant relocation. Ewing has focused on his first love—music—from the time he was about thirteen. In Nashville, he made his way from the Opryland theme park stage to a recording contract at MCA by working harder than the next guy.

A little stiff and scripted-looking as a performer, Skip's strength lies in his songwriting—he's got one of the best ears for solidly commercial riffs and words to come down the pike in a long time. As a vocalist, he reflects a mesh of Merle Haggard and Eddie Rabbitt influences picked up during his sound-alike Opryland shows. Fortunately, he seems to emerge as his own man on his new album, *The Will To Love*. Like his first collection, this album, too, is superbly crafted.

More newcomers worth mentioning are Mark Collie, Travis Tritt, Alan Jackson, Doug Stone, Jason D. Williams, James House and Mac McAnally. We'll be talking to you about them soon, along with other new faces or new releases that land on the country music block. Let's not forget new women on the horizon, either. Watch for them, too. ■

ROY CLARK: SHOWMAN

More than a quarter-century has passed since Roy Clark started out on the road. He's been to Russia twice, co-hosts Hee Haw, owns a family theater and still plays over 200 dates a year. Slowing down just wouldn't be Roy.

by John Morthland

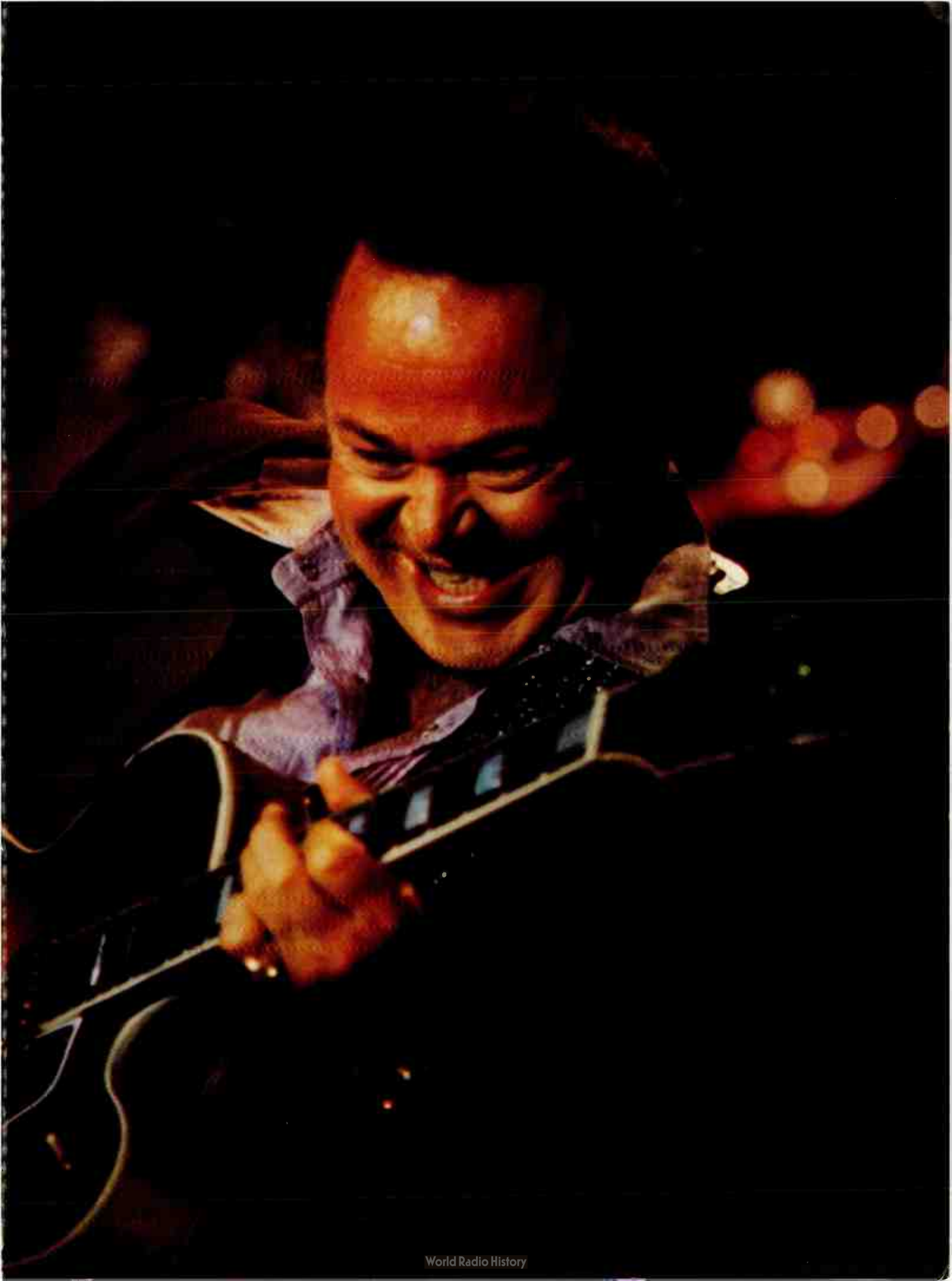
At almost the very top of the Highway 76W strip, better known as Country Boulevard, in Branson, Missouri, sits Roy Clark's Celebrity Theatre. On this early August afternoon, two buses are parked in the lot outside the theater, and in one of them is Roy Clark himself, dressed casually in Nikes, designer jeans and a white shirt, a red plastic cup nestled in his lap that he uses, between sentences, as a snuff disposer. Roy has already done his two o'clock afternoon show and is resting up before the eight o'clock dinner show. But he's more than happy to talk a while about the extraordinary Ozark Mountains resort town of Branson because he, after all, now has a stake in it himself.

"This place is like a mini-Las Vegas without gambling," he exclaims, still a bit wide-eyed about it all though he's been in business here for five years now. "I mean, I'd heard of Branson maybe eight or nine years ago, but I didn't really associate it with what's really here at first. Then it blew me away. It's so unique, there's nothing else like Branson anywhere. People have no conception of all the music theaters here, all the traffic..."

Indeed. Roy Clark has opened television up to country music, and he has opened the Soviet Union up to country music. But he has also opened Las Vegas up to country music, so he has a pretty fair idea whereof he speaks. Even compared to Vegas, Branson's 76W strip is unique and then some.



On stage, Roy is the consummate entertainer, weaving comedy into his musical shows. His jokes and clowning, developed while he was working in clubs, have become an integral part of his act. His fans have come to expect them along with his musical expertise.





Branson is filled with country music theaters. Roy's has been part of the strip for several years.



In recent years, Branson has been discovered by stars, and by former stars attempting to hang on. In addition to Roy's theater—which has auditorium seating for 1000, dinner tables for another 200, and is adjoined by Roy's Lodge of the Ozarks—there is Boxcar Willie's; Boxcar has been in business here for several years. During the April-to-October 1989 season, Danny Davis and The Nashville Brass set up shop next to Roy Clark, while Freddy Fender opened a Tex-Mex cantina in the Kirkwood Motor Inn. The Ozark Mountain Amphitheater books the biggest names—Willie Nelson, Wayne Newton, Merle Haggard, Reba McEntire and others—while the Lowes Theatre joins Roy's room in booking Nashville names like Moe Bandy, Porter Wagoner, John Anderson, Gene Watson, Conway Twitty, Tammy Wynette or Mel Tillis. The others survive strictly by presenting local, in-house family acts nobody outside Branson's ever heard of—but they do much more than just survive, thank you. Branson plays host to four to four-and-one-half million visitors annually, the 43,000 seats of the 20-plus country music theaters being responsible for as much as a half-billion dollars worth of business yearly, according to local guesstimates.

And that doesn't even take into account the rest of the strip, an unbelievable montage of mini-golf courses, water slides, go-kart tracks, souvenir shops with hillbilly themes, mountain arts and crafts galleries, buffet restaurants and independent motels with names like J.R.'s Little Dallas or Melody Inn (plus, it should be added, some of the most relentless traffic jams since the invention of the horseless buggy). A family can start the day off with a fixed-price, all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet, shoot some miniature golf, ride a water slide or race go-karts, stop by a shop for a bag of chocolate-covered potato chips or "hillbilly chop sticks" (long flat strips of wood attached to clothes pins), knock off for an all-you-can-eat buffet lunch, ride the "ducks" (tour vehicles that go on land or water), take a quick hop in a *Magnum P.I.* chopper, visit a childrens' midway or petting zoo, stop by a gallery for a handmade quilt or velvet Elvis, wolf down an all-you-can-eat dinner, then hit an evening show or two, maybe topping it all off with some after-show dancing in one of the lounges.

So it is Roy Clark's kind of town we are talking about here, and he gives these family crowds the kind of show he knows they want: lots of picking and grinning and joking around with his nine-man band, some uptempo toe-tappers, some "Malaguena" and Russian tunes. As it turns out, this is the kind of show Roy Clark has been putting on his

"Just knowing that I'm still doing it and people are still coming makes a difference. Longevity overcomes a lot of problems."

For years, Branson (pop. 2250), just north of the Arkansas state line, catered mainly to bass and trout fishermen. If you stay downtown, near the lakes, you'd still have no idea that things have changed much. But if you turn off onto 76W and follow it up the ridge out of town, well.... Let's do things in order here.

In 1960, the Baldknobbers Hillbilly Jamboree Show was launched as the first country music revue in Branson, playing downtown to the fishermen and families who'd come for such nearby attractions as Silver Dollar City and the Shepherd of the Hills pageants. In 1967, the Presleys' Mountain Music Jubilee became the first theater on 76W, and

that three-lane road has since grown into a four-and-one-half mile strip. Most of the attractions are local family groups such as The Plummers, The Wilkinson Brothers, The Foggy River Boys, The Braschlers and The Lowes. They present old-fashioned country variety shows with comedians and lots of choreography, squeaky-clean stuff for the whole family. Then to add to the mix, there are such oddities as the Shoji Tabuchi Show, fronted by a man who plays classical violin and bluegrass fiddle, and such historical entries as Albert E. Brumley Jr., the son of the masterful gospel songwriter responsible for "Rank Stranger," "Turn Your Radio On" and "I'll Fly Away."

whole career, even going back to the days when he was struggling in the clubs around Washington, D.C., and so-called country acts didn't put on one-man variety shows.

Influenced by Bing Crosby as much as by Hank Williams, and more than a little insecure about his musicianship, Roy always placed a premium on showmanship, figuring that was the way to reach the most people, to avoid the country-music pigeonhole he'd seen limit the careers of so many others in the area who had talent to burn but never got anywhere with it. After stints in the bands of Jimmy Dean and then Wanda Jackson, he went solo in 1959.

"The comedy has always been a strong part of what I do," he recalls. "I was never aware of doing it to be different; it just developed working in clubs and stuff. I always knew my limitations musically, and I never set out to be a master musician. I just learned as I did, which wasn't the approved method and I don't recommend it."

In his first full year, he spent 345 days on the road traveling with his wife by car with a trailer; in 1963, he had his first hit record and moved up to better clubs and package shows. But it was only 13 years ago that he finally formed his own band. Until then, he'd always worked as a single, meeting the evening's backup band for the first time upon arriving in each town, and there are, he realizes now, easier ways to do these things.

"The only way you can make it as a single is through youthful energy. I found out very early on that when I got into a town, a small rehearsal with the backup band was worse than no rehearsal at all," he chuckles. "They think they know your songs if you have any kind of rehearsal, and then they don't pay attention. When they don't know what you're going to do next, they sit and watch you closely during the show."

To this day, Roy Clark remains an entertainer first and foremost, which is why he's most comfortable in places like Branson (where he appears 30 times per season), or on television, or in Las Vegas. When you consider how few hit records he's had, his enduring success is all the more remarkable, hit records being the way most artists keep their name before the public. He is not unaware of the ironies involved there.

"Recording has always been like a third part of my career, something that was done with free time," he points out. "We used to do my records, from picking the material to the finished record, in five days. If something didn't come off, it was too late. The record would come

out, and I'd say I sure didn't know that song well enough to record it. I could hear my uncertainty on those records."

As we speak, he's spent almost two years on his current album to avoid that embarrassment again. And while he's the first to concede that "everyone wants a million-seller," it's not as if he needs one. No, Roy Clark the performer has guaranteed that Roy Clark the recording artist need never worry.

Last June, for example, marked the beginning of the 22nd season (and 20th year) of *Hee Haw*, which first aired in the summer of 1969. Roy Clark has been co-host from the beginning. Every June and every October, he drops everything



for two-and-a-half weeks, and shoots 13 shows at a pop. Roy says that he's gotten over much of his insecurity about show biz simply by lasting at his career so long he figures he must be doing something right—but anyone who can stick at one job for as long as he's stuck at *Hee Haw* is clearly in it for the long haul. Ask his former co-host, Buck Owens.

"I guess the reason it never gets to be too much is that we really only shoot it twice a year, and that leaves me free plenty of time to do everything else. If we ground it out every week, it'd get old fast. Now it's like a family reunion when we go in there. As you can probably tell, we don't exactly over-rehearse, so we

Co-host of *Hee-Haw* for over 20 years, Roy prizes his friendship with the cast and enjoys visits with special guests such as Minnie Pearl and baseball's Tommy La Sorda, shown below.



"As you can probably tell, we don't exactly over-rehearse, so we don't burn out."



CAROL G. ANDERSON

Roy's career takes him to many charity and show business events. Above, he chats with Eddy Arnold and Gene Autry, backstage at a CMA Awards show rehearsal. He joined Bob Hope at a recent fund-raising event, center. Below, he entertains public school children in New York City as a UNICEF ambassador.



STEVE JENNINGS



don't burn out.

"When Buck left, we could feel it coming. *Hee Haw* didn't benefit him because it mainly helps promote your records and concerts, and he hadn't toured or recorded for years. Meanwhile, he had his radio stations and publishing companies keeping him busy, and it wasn't worth it to him to pull up twice a year and quit what he was doing.

"Buck had just lost that fire down in the belly for five years or so. I remember I'd see him at tapings, and he'd ask me what I'd been doing and I'd say, 'I just came off two months on the road.' He'd shake his head and say something like, 'I did all the touring I'm ever gonna do.' Then when he decided to retire from music entirely, Dwight Yoakam visits, they record a song and he has a hit. That's how it works in this business sometimes. I've seen him since then, and he seems tickled to death again. That fire is always there on some level."

That fire has taken Roy Clark to some pretty unlikely situations, too. Last November, he toured Russia for the first time since his ground-breaking 1976 sojourn. Had things changed much? Boy, had things changed.

"The people were so much more open and friendly. It was like a cloud hanging over them in '76, they were so depressed. This time they would smile and talk to you on the street. I understand this change has all been in the last couple years, since Gorbachev.

"I noticed lots of outside influences now, too," he continues. "In some areas there's Pepsi every hundred yards. There's a Baskin-Robbins in Moscow. You see Audis and Mercedes on the street. Before, if it wasn't built in Russia, it didn't exist."

The Friendship Tour, as it was dubbed, offered other *glasnost*-inspired surprises. For one thing, Clark's retinue was able to take cameras and video equipment virtually everywhere to shoot their TV special. They had tried to arrange that in 1976 but had had no luck. This time, they also found home-grown country music in Russia.

"There was no country music in '76, and this time I ran into '75 or so musicians," Roy exclaims. "New Dawn is the name of the country music club, and they're primarily into old, traditional country and bluegrass. I would imagine it reminds them of their folk music. I met a banjo player who was a surgeon, a fiddler who was an aeronautics engineer, a guitar player who was an architect. I found that amusing, to say the least. Because over there, when they get out of school they have to repay the state by working four years at what

they were trained for. So I asked this guy why anyone who was a doctor would want to be a banjo player instead, and he said, 'I can make more money as a banjo player.'"

Roy, a pretty serious man when he is not facing fans, allows himself one of the few laughs of the interview. With a little prodding, he goes on to discuss the Russian music he and the band learned for the Friendship Tour. It has now been incorporated into the current show, prefaced usually with Roy's remark to his audience that the Russian response confirmed for him that, "People are the same everywhere; only governments are different."

"I'd thought about doing Russian music before, but it was probably this tour that decided it for me," he notes now. "Ethnic music in general is intriguing to me, because you can always feel the people in it—when you play Spanish music you can always see the twirling ladies with their castanets, and things like that.

"But they reacted very well to the music we did. They realized we had to make a real effort to learn it, and they appreciated that. In Russian music, to my way of thinking, melodies are not consistent; with our tunes you can tell where they're going just by the flow. With their music it's different—you could learn the notes easy enough, but the actual music to my way of thinking is a little chopped-up. So it was hard for us to learn that."

In fact, Roy and the band had learned "Lara's Theme" from *Dr. Zhivago* for the 1976 tour. Before the tour, they'd had to submit their repertoire for approval, and that one had passed the test even though Boris Pasternak (author of the novel from which the movie was made) was considered a traitor by the Russian government. Before the first concert on that 1976 tour, however, Russian officials had a quick 30-minute meeting and informed Roy that they'd changed their minds, that he couldn't perform it. This trip, with the novel finally released in Russia, though Soviet citizens have still never had a chance to see the movie, there was no such interference. The band played "Lara's Theme," along with "Moscow Nights," to tumultuous applause.

"Moscow Nights" is like a national anthem to them," Roy says. "On TV, they use it almost like for time-chimes, they play it so regular."

As evening shadows begin closing in on the parking lot in Branson, fans and friends begin gathering around the bus for a look at the star, and, hopefully, before too long, an autograph or a snapshot too. Roy is talking about the fact that he's still away from home 220 nights a year, and maybe it's time to slow down



During his recent Russian tour, Roy visited Red Square. *Country Music Magazine* covered his first pilgrimage to Russia in 1976. Roy says much has changed since then. Below, he signs autographs in Leningrad for some of his many Russian fans.



"I always wanted to be the first one to laugh at me. I was always afraid to be serious."

a little. I'm reminded of a remark he made between songs the night before, when, in the midst of much lampooning of his band members and himself alike, he suddenly turned to the audience and announced quite seriously, "It's my security blanket, you know, we all need a security blanket and this being so squirrely and flaky is mine." For a moment, the room was silent, like nobody was quite sure how to react.

"But it happens to be true, too," Roy adds now. "All my life it's been true. I always wanted to be the first one to laugh at me. I was always afraid to be serious. I'm probably a little more balanced about it now, in fact, because I've been doing this long enough that I'm not

as insecure as I used to be. A friend called me on it once after I'd played 'Malaguena' at a show. I always used to ham it up on that song, and he said, 'You know, you play that well enough now that you don't have to clown about it.' You might have noticed that I play 'Malaguena' straight now. That's because with age has come longevity. Just knowing that I'm still doing it and people are still coming makes a difference. Longevity overcomes lot of problems."

And with that, Roy Clark lets an old friend on to the bus so they can catch up with each other for a few minutes while the star changes back into his suit. Showtime, as always, is just round the corner. ■

Minding Willie's Business

Willie Nelson has many irons in the fire, including the launching of his own Cowboy Television Network. Action centers on Willie's Austin headquarters, where our writer got the low-down on what the superstar is up to.

by John Morthland

Willie Nelson opened the door to the recording studio at his Pedernales Country Club headquarters outside Austin, and the lobby area filled with the sound of Johnny Gimble, fiddling around...sweet as ever. As Willie started to step inside the studio, an aide rushed up and shoved a manila folder in his hand, urging, "Here, Will, you gotta look this over right away." So Willie stood there in the doorway, one foot in the anteroom of the studio, one foot in the office area, an ear cocked to the music and his eyes on the business papers. That's a pretty fair picture of how things are for Willie these days in Texas.

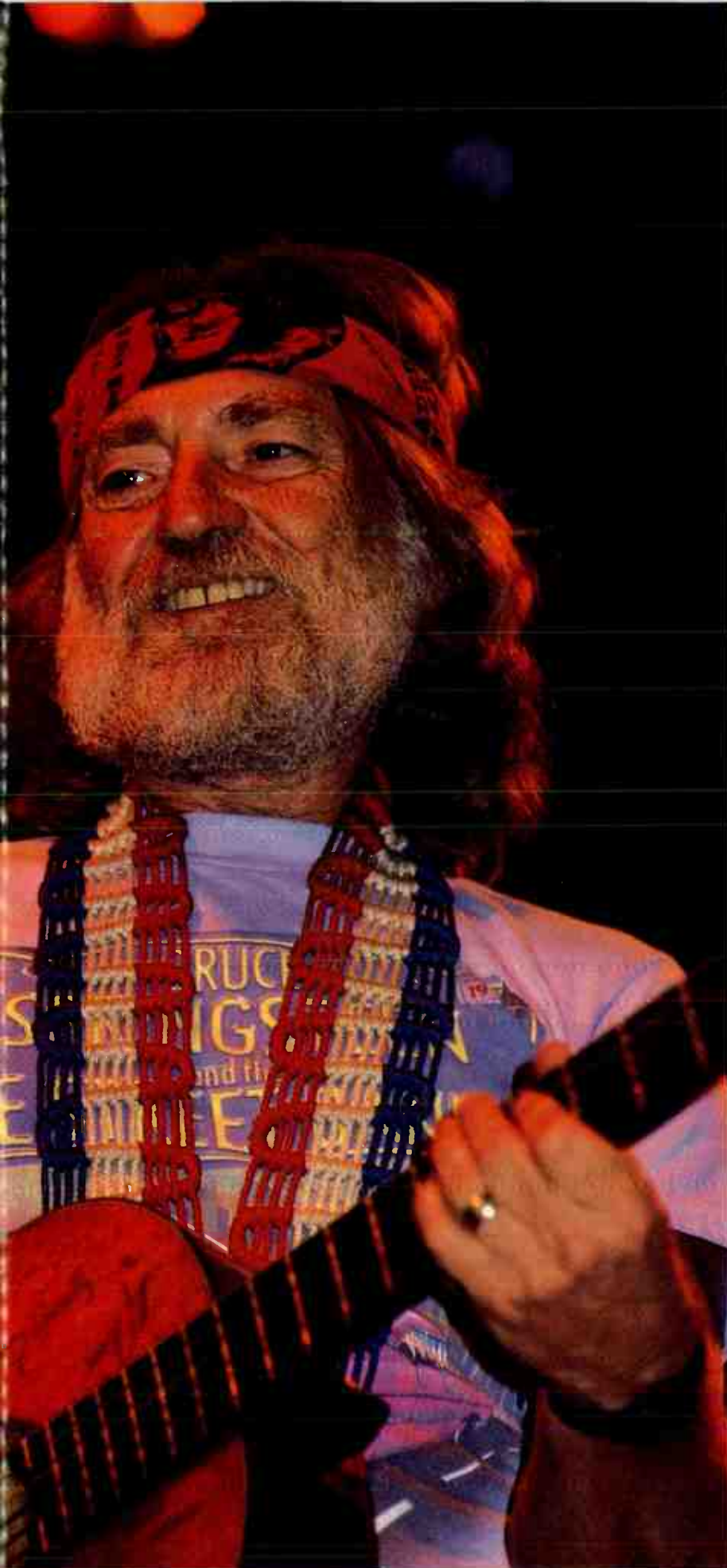
Willie, the musician, recently enjoyed his first Number One single in quite a while, "Nothing I Can Do About It Now," from *A Horse Called Music*. Willie, the businessman, is contesting an IRS claim that he owes Uncle Sam another \$25 million or so. Willie, the musician and businessman, is in the process of launching his Cowboy Television Network, a 24-hour satellite cable station which, if all goes

according to plan, should be on the air sometime during the fall of 1990.

On the personal front, Willie is enjoying being a father again, for the sixth time in his 56 years. His 18-year marriage to Connie is over, and Lucas Nelson was born on Christmas Day 1988 to Willie and his girlfriend, Annie D'Angelo. Asked if he'd recommend being a father at 50, Willie grinned and replied, "It's great. I'd recommend being a father at any age."

On the professional front, though, the big news for Willie is the Cowboy Television Network. The idea came from Mack Long, who goes back to the early 1960's with Willie when Long was editing *Performance*, a concert trade magazine out of Fort Worth, and Willie was working the friendly neighborhood honky tonks in those parts. The two men stayed friends over the years as Mack left journalism and went to California to become that most mysterious of showbiz creatures, the freelance deal maker. Mack booked and managed some rock bands, did management projects for record companies, managed arenas,





worked for various promoters. Basically, he put people together to their mutual advantage. A little less than a decade ago, he put Willie together with Wrangler—reportedly to the tune of \$9 million, and that is, of course, a very good way to make friends. So when Mack got the idea for the Cowboy Network early in 1989, he knew right where to take it.

“I walked into Willie’s office and he was playing checkers,” Long had recalled a couple of weeks earlier, standing outside a honky tonk in Bandera, Texas, while Willie prepared to go inside and join Johnny Bush on stage. “I said, ‘Will, I’ve got a heck of an idea,’ and he said, ‘What is it?’ And I told him and he said, ‘Well, shoot, let’s call so-and-so.’ A week later I was sleeping on the floor at one of those condominiums at the country club, working on the project, with my family still a couple thousand miles away in Los Angeles. And we’ve been working on it ever since, but now my family’s out here, too.”

Long and Nelson picked up two partners immediately—Bud Shrake, the Austin writer who ghosted Willie’s autobiography, and Doug Halloway, whose Pedernales Films made one B-movie and shot a lot of TV commercials and public service announcements in the area. By October, when the network was actually filming shows such as *Johnny Gimble’s Music Ranch* and Willie’s appearance with Bush, which will be an installment of the *Honky Tonk Concert Series*, they were entertaining offers from other backers, including The Family Channel. They had their place on the satellite and were set to go into some 10 million homes, a drop in the bucket by cable standards, but still a start. They had already sold some \$15 million worth of advertising contracts, and all systems were go. A staff of 12 was working out of the country club headquarters, but Long was predicting a payroll that would ultimately grow to 100 or so. The plan was to begin by showing a lot of already existing material they’d purchased, along with some new shows, but to be airing 12 hours of original programming daily within the next two years. There was talk of documentaries and regular series and all the usual things you see on network TV, the difference being that most (but not all) of these dealt with music. So things were definitely heating up out at WillieWorld, as the locals refer to the golf course, offices and condos overlooking Lake Travis that make up the man’s Hill Country base of operations.

In the lobby area of WillieWorld headquarters, between the pro shop and the studio, a makeup artist had set up next to the pool table that looks out over the swimming pool and then out over miles and

JOHN LEE

miles of Texas. On the walls are photos of Willie in various incarnations—from child to Nashville slicky to cosmic cowboy to all-around entertainer—plus Farm Aid plaques and a slew of gold and platinum records.

While Gimble taped his show, a pair of women set up a chicken-fried steak lunch buffet for the musicians and crew, grumbling good-naturedly about hangovers as they laid out the food. Kris Kristofferson wandered through looking for directions into town; he was there because he co-stars with Willie in *A Pair of Aces*, a CBS/TV buddy flick written by Shrake and Gary Cartwright (of *Texas Monthly*) that was due to begin shooting in a few days. A doctor arrived to give Willie a physical.

2300 hours of old music TV shows, too—some 580 editions of the vintage *Porter Wagoner Show* featuring a young Dolly Parton and two or three other guests per installment (including, sometimes, Willie himself), plus about 300 old Wilburn Brothers shows with the young Loretta Lynn, some Billy Walker shows, even a black dance party called *The Beat* that features soul stars like Joe Tex.

But there are also plans afoot for original material like a cowboy cooking show called *Home on the Range*, hosted by Gordon Fowler, from the first family of Texas chili; *The Sammy Allred Show: Radio—Live on TV*, which will take Austin's whacked-out morning radio show full of humor and old and new records

resembles many of the other pipe dreams Willie used to have in those days, most of which wafted off with the smoke, as pipe dreams so often do. Whether they're jumping the gun by predicting the same for something as ambitious as the network is a question to consider. But it's hard not to want to ask Willie one, too. Is he, now that his concert fees and record sales are beginning to taper off, looking to rebuild a base in his old stomping grounds, to "get back," as the catch-phrase goes?

"Well, maybe in the back of my mind that's what I'm thinking, but I sure don't think so," he replied. "I dunno, I'm still just sorta taking things as I go. This is just where we are now, and it's time to try to utilize all the talents around here. It's really just like it was when I first came. There's always been plenty of talent here. It's an amazing place for talent."

And in many cases, it's the same talent as ever. Willie is not one to forget the old friends, the people he met on the way up and no matter how many times he goes around the world or visits the White House or duets with Julio Iglesias, his idea of a Big Time remains to jam in a Texas juke-joint with a hardwood floor. So what if guys like Johnny Bush or Johnny Gimble aren't exactly everybody else's idea of a star?

"The thing is, in my mind, those guys are stars," Willie emphasized. "These are guys who, to me, *did* make it, even if maybe they didn't make it on the scale I supposedly made it. They're great musicians, good showmen and lousy businessmen—just like me and everybody else. I may be making more money than them, but believe me, there's more money going out of here, too. Sometimes it feels like my situation isn't much different than theirs. But these are the people that I've always liked to play with and always will."

Indeed, just a couple of weeks before saying that, Willie had joined Bush at the Cabaret in Bandera, a beautiful western town surrounded by dude ranches a few short hours from Austin that bills itself as the "Cowboy Capital of the World." When Willie first fled Nashville in the early 1970's, he and Paul English and various members of the entourage settled into five houses at the Lost Valley Dude Ranch there and made it their base for the next year. Willie was even in residence at the Cabaret. Now Johnny Bush, who lives an hour away in San Antonio, is in residence there weekends. What better place to shoot a segment of the *Honky Tonk Concert Series*?

The marquee out front billed it as Johnny Bush and The Bandoleros with Special Guests. Billy Joe Shaver, whose next album will be on Willie's revived



Willie onstage with Johnny Bush and The Bandoleros at the Cabaret in Bandera. Willie and Bush, far right, go way back. The show was taped for cable.

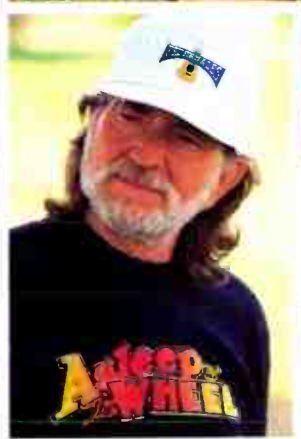
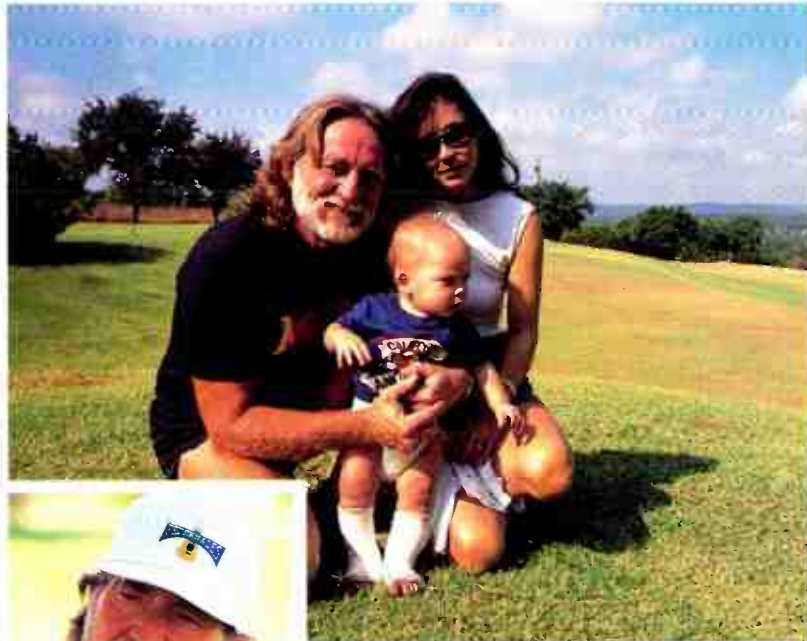
Back in his private offices, decorated with Indian headdresses and antique farm implements, Willie sat behind a table, calm and collected as ever after a morning out on the links, dressed in black jeans, a blue tee-shirt under a blue v-neck sweater, red bandana and running shoes. He was going over a list of shows the network has lined up and talking about his idea of a cowboy.

"It's always been a freedom-of-spirit type of thing with me," Willie said. "I never thought the Indians and the cowboys were that much different. The cowboy is a person that has a lot of freedom and a lot of soul, and we think there's a lot of modern-day cowboys out there, not just in Texas but in San Francisco and Miami, Florida, and even New York City. So we'll do things that relate to modern-day cowboys, not just show old westerns and things like that, much as I like those old westerns myself."

They had indeed purchased a package of classic western movies and cowboy series, but they've bought up more than

and give it visuals; *Noontime in Nacogdoches*, music and chatter with Paul Buskirk, from the oldest city in Texas; some kind of nightly live show out of Nashville; *Austin Nightlife*, live showcases hosted by Ray Benson of Asleep at the Wheel; *Johnny Gimble's Music Ranch*; and the *Honky Tonk Concert Series*. Willie will make frequent appearances on the last two; years ago, after all, he played on Gimble's TV show out of Waco.

All in all, it looks almost as if Willie is attempting to reconsolidate his affairs in Austin, the town that launched him a decade-and-a-half ago when beer-guzzling old cowboys and pot-puffing hippies gathered at places like Armadillo World Headquarters and annual summer picnics to discover that they had a lot more in common with each other than they thought. A lot of faces out at WillieWorld working on the cable network these days look familiar to anyone who was around Austin in the mid-1970's. Some local skeptics have speculated that the network closely



Willie has so many different things going on in his life. Here he plays a concert date, spends time with his new family, shoots a few holes of golf and tapes a cable show with longtime pal Johnny Gimble, with fiddle at right in studio photo.

Lone Star Records label, was one such guest, and the name of the other was one of the worst-kept secrets in the Hill Country that weekend. Once 1100 people had crowded in, the doors were shut so the dancers would still have some room. Up on the stage, Johnny and The Bandoleros, now up to a whopping 13 musicians, all dressed smartly in cavalry shirts, were stomping through an unusually brassy set of Western swing. Johnny, whose throat problems put him out of business for several years, was in especially good voice early on; it took no imagination to recall the days when he

was called "the country Caruso."

After a few numbers, he stepped up to the mike and announced, "This next man don't need no introduction, so I'm not gonna give him one. Ladies and gentlemen, here's one of the best entertainers that ever lived, Willie Nelson." And Willie, Johnny and band jumped right into "Time Changes Everything," followed by "Whiskey River," the perennial Willie set-opener that Johnny wrote.

As the band reeled off into "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain," "I Saw the Light," "On the Road Again" and the like, the

evening began more and more to resemble, yes, one of those nights from the early 1970's in Austin when Willie was right on the verge of making it big and everyone in the room knew it and wanted to savor this moment while they could, when people drank maybe a little too much and got a bit crazy without being obnoxious, and the music went on and on into the night. Austin hasn't really seen nights like that for a while. If Willie has his way, Austin will now be seeing them again more regularly and sending them out to the rest of the world as well. ■

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Hank Williams Jr.
Lone Wolf
Warner Curb 9 26090-2

There are times when Hank Jr. does an incredible job of pulling everything together—all the little pieces of country and rock and rhythm and blues and lyrics and music and songwriters and wacky friends that make up the most eclectic world in popular music.

When he does, it's a stunning reminder of just how good Hank Williams's kid really is. *Lone Wolf* is that kind of album.

Trends come and trends go; folkie girl singers get replaced by guys with hats; guys with hats get replaced by groups with names we all forget; last year's famous face moves from *People Magazine* to *Weekly World News*; hunks fade and icons age, but Hank Williams Jr. just keeps getting better and better.

Nobody has more fun on a record than Hank, and *Lone Wolf* sounds it. He does the Cajun classic, "Big Mamou," with the legendary Jimmy C. Newman singing along and Jo-El Sonnier cranking a mean accordion, and he does it so good (I mean, he was born down there, after all). He writes off-the-wall lyrics like: *You can be my Lily Langtree/And I'll be your Billy the Kid.*

There's a song titled "Hot to Trot." Let's be real here. Is there any other artist in country music who would dare even title a song "Hot to Trot?" Clint Black? Alabama? The Oak Ridge Boys? Give me a break. Nobody else has the nerve to try it or the talent to carry it off.



And when was the last time you heard "Almost Persuaded"? With Sammy Hagar from Van Halen playing lead? This cut alone is worth the album, folks. It's a country classic filtered through a Memphis back beat and L.A. heavy metal. This song will make you move, whoa! That's not to mention a vocal that borders on stone crazy. Boy, this is good!

Hank also chose to add a new version of probably the best single honky tonk song ever recorded, "Stoned at the Jukebox," which originally appeared on his semi-legendary *Friends* album. I have to confess having spent some hard nights, your basic dark nights of the soul, with this song, and, unfortunately, I expect to spend some more. It's a perfect song, a beer-stained diamond: *But there's the cold, hard dawn/And I'm stoned at the jukebox/Playing "I Can't Help It If I'm*

Still In Love With You"/But that's the kind of song it takes to get all that old hurting out/Lord, I love that hurting music, 'cause I am hurting, too...

I think what I like about Hank Jr.'s music after all these years is that it's still real. He and I have seen some cold, hard dawns together, shared some good and totally weird times, and I see those reflected in his music. I see the real world reflected in his music.

In the martial arts there's a concept called centered, sort of not only knowing who you are but where you stand. As the song says, Hank Jr. is a lone wolf. The ground he stands on has been paid for with sweat and blood and not a few tears.

This is his best album in years. I don't need to tell you to go buy it, because you're going to anyway.

—MICHAEL BANE

Jo-El Sonnier
Have a Little Faith
RCA 9718-1R

You can tell that Jo-El's popularity is growing by the fact that some of his earlier recordings for Louisiana-based Cajun labels like Gold-band are being re-released. Last year's *Come On Joe*, his RCA debut, was a magnificent effort that melded Cajun music with the sounds of the late 1980's without sacrificing Sonnier's Louisiana identity, much the way Ricky Skaggs blended modern country with bluegrass ten years ago.

As good as *Come On Joe* was, this album is stronger yet. Cajun purists, often an outspoken lot, who've been buying his stuff for years, may not be totally pleased with the high-tech production values of Bill Halverson and Richard Bennett, but, realistically, none of the Cajun artists, from Jimmy "C" Newman on, who've preceded Jo-El into the mainstream ever made it without adding some contemporary touches. In fact, both Halverson and Bennett as well as Jo-El do an outstanding job of merging Cajun and contemporary sounds into a unified whole.

The best example is the rip-roaring version of Dennis Linde's "Scene of the Crime" (previously recorded by newcomer Lori Yates), which Sonnier skillfully converts to a swamp-rocker with his ever-present accordion kicking along the rhythm. "Ooh, Ooh, Ooh" is a spicy blend of zydeco and New Orleans rhythm and blues, while "The Hurt in My Heart" is pure swamp blues. Even with the obvious synthesizer drone in the background, the number

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sounds straight out of a hot night at a Crowley, Louisiana, tavern.

Granted, he doesn't push the bayou bounce on every track, but the energy still doesn't quit. The 1990's boom-chicka of "If Your Heart Should Ever Roll This Way Again" is electrifying, in part because Jo-El's vocal doesn't reflect the shallow rockabilly posturing of certain other modern artists, who shall remain nameless here.

The two John Hiatt ballads, thoughtful and finely crafted, placed in a row, meld into the album just as well. Sonnier sings Hiatt's pleading, reflective ballad, "Have a Little Faith in Me," with true conviction. He does nearly as well with "I'll Never Get Over You," capturing the anguish and loss Hiatt had in mind when he wrote it. Too many artists today add contemporary songs without considering how they'll work in the context of their albums. All too often they stick out like the proverbial sore thumb because they were consciously included to grab the "country rock" audience. In picking new songs that help unify his album, Sonnier has set a real standard in this regard. "Walls" works nearly as well in this way as the two Hiatt ballads.

The 1970's Delbert McClinton fave, "Solid Gold Plated Fool," was another very right choice. Jo-El's accordion sets the tone and catches the essence of the song, which was pretty swampy itself to begin with, as you'll note when you hear the lyrics. And his interpretation of the Iry LeJeune Cajun standard, "Evangeline Special," is a delightful ending, with Louisiana fiddle master Michael Doucet sawing away in the background as Jo-El lets fly with voice and accordion.

If you're a Cajun purist looking for purity here, you won't find it. But then you'll not find it in authentic Loui-

siana music either, with its mix of blues, French *patois*, jazz and hillbilly music. What you will find is something good. Even more than on his first album, Sonnier is doing it right and doing it consistently. —RICH KIENZLE

The Desert Rose Band *Pages of Life* MCA 42332

Life's harsh realities have been a major theme in country music since way back when. Remember "The Wreck of the Old 97"? Porter Wagoner sang plenty of hard-edged, bittersweet tales, too. In 1967 he even had a hit called "The Cold, Hard Facts of Life."

Pages of Life is The Desert Rose Band's equivalent, a serious and unified effort which looks at things as they are and confronts some happiness, ample frustration and despair and also some tough realities.

Naturally, many of the problems arise from romance and are expressed in straightforward numbers such as "Story of Love," their current hit "Start All Over Again," "Missing You" and "God's Plan." These songs, all Chris Hillman originals, co-written for the most part with others including DRB guitarist John Jorgenson,

tackle their respective subjects well. On "Desert Rose" the band confronts not only romance but the displacement of many who've had to leave industrialized home towns to find work as well: sort of a "Detroit City" of the 1990's.

"Darkness on the Playground," written by Hillman and frequent songwriting partner Steve Hill, is a very different number for the group, tackling (without one ounce of preaching) the drug problems and other temptations any responsible parent worries about today. The line, *When our children are tempted/Left all alone/Seeking the values/They can't find at home/There's darkness on the playground/Where did right go wrong*, is a powerful one that sets the blame where it belongs—at home, a point overlooked by those politicians who want to censor records that contain certain types of lyrics. It does, in the end, all begin at home.

"Everybody's Hero" takes a well-placed shot at media celebrities who let fame, power and their own arrogance blow them off the track; the song lets the listener fill in the blanks as to whether sleazy TV preachers or sleazy politicians best fit the category. "Our Baby's Gone," a Herb Pedersen original, is a more tranquil tale of

watching kids grow up, but one done with a great deal of wit and flair. Happily, it's free of the sticky-sweet cuteness that usually torpedoes such numbers from the get-go. "In Another Lifetime" serves up a mixture of regret and satisfaction that is as uncertain as anyone's look back at his or her past.

One disappointment: the band's instrumental abilities are less prominent this time. In fact, only on "God's Plan" and "In Another Lifetime" do lead guitarist John Jorgenson and steel player Jay Dee Maness approach the kind of work they've done on earlier albums.

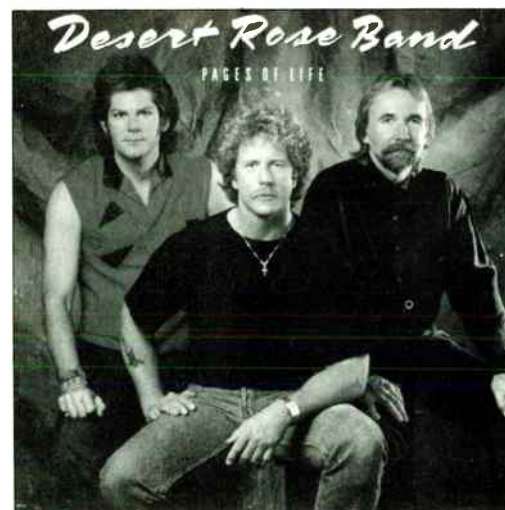
This is a totally competent album from a band that's set some pretty high standards for themselves. It was obviously meant to be a unified effort, not just a collection of singles, and it works as they meant it to. Nevertheless, I hope that they keep trying varied approaches as in the past. —RICH KIENZLE

Willie Nelson/ Johnny Cash/ Kris Kristofferson/ Waylon Jennings *Highwayman 2* Columbia C45240

One thing which you can't accuse these four veterans of is riding on each



HAVE A LITTLE FAITH



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other's coattails. None of the four, at least at the moment, has very long coattails: none of them, with the occasional exception of Willie Nelson, is exactly burning up the record charts. The somewhat misleading title of "Living Legend"—as Cash and Kristofferson well know—might be better saved as a requiem. It might get you into the Hall of Fame, or (along with a quarter) get you a free phone call to Goodlettsville. But it sure won't get you into the Top Ten anymore all by itself.

Thus, you can't help but wonder just what mixture of camaraderie and commercial considerations inspired Nelson, Cash, Jennings and Kristofferson to team up for a sequel to their original 1985 *Highwayman* collaboration.

As might be expected, *Highwayman 2*—much like its predecessor—proves to be a somewhat lopsided musical effort. It's got its lame moments, yet it's also got its shining moments of inspiration. It's got three or four blockbuster tunes, some fair-to-middling ones and a couple that just sort of lay there and die a slow death.

Highwayman 2 kicks off with an absolutely stunning rendition of Lee Clayton's "Silver Stallion." Does anybody out there besides me remember Lee Clayton? For about fifteen minutes or so

back in the late 1970's, he made some brilliant music and seemed on his way to becoming Nashville's answer to Bob Dylan before he faded back into the woodwork.

All four Highwaymen lend their voices on "Stallion" for some ragged but right harmonies. They trade off lead verses, giving Clayton's haunting, sensual lyrics just the sort of spiritual yet macho interpretation the song requires.

The second song, D. Cook's and J. Jarvis's "Born and Raised in Black and White," is a dramatic parable of two brothers whose lives become contrasts in good and evil. It's another real standout that sort of grabs listeners by the ears and lifts them up.

On both these songs, as well as on "Angels Love Bad Men" (Jennings' and Roger Murrah's effective rewrite of Lee Clayton's "Ladies Love Outlaws"), it's Jennings who shines a head above the others as a singer. His powerful mixture of machismo and vulnerability gives a chilling resonance, immediacy and bedrock emotional credence to the overall vocal mix.

Willie Nelson is, as always, just busy being Willie Nelson—in fact, in places he's even *vintage* Willie. He contributes two fine original songs, "Two Stories Wide" and "Texas," which were recorded in his own Texas

studio and are more or less solo efforts. "Two Stories Wide," with its timeless, philosophical lyrics and austere gut string guitar fills, sounds like some unearthed gem from Nelson's *Shotgun Willie* and *Phases & Stages* days.

Kristofferson *still* can't sing after all these years. But his meandering drawl and awkward, drunken barbershop quartet sincerity do give a leathery authenticity to songs like "We're All in Your Corner Tonight" and his own preachy but philosophically challenging "Living Legend."

Johnny Cash sounds a trifle weary and distracted throughout, but he is in top form on "American Remains," a strange ballad about the fine line between heroism and survival. He also shines with understatement on "Anthem '84." Another intellectually challenging Kristofferson original, "Anthem" uses romantic love as a metaphor for patriotism and makes the point that you can still love your country deeply even after you've grown disillusioned with its government's mistakes.

On "Songs That Make a Difference," Cash's one original contribution to this project, he laments and longs for the return of the good old days when artists like himself actually wrote and sang

songs that may have changed the world in some small way. However, his tired singing and lackluster lyrics suggest that this time it's the singer, not the audience, who's gotten lost along the way.

At worst, the music on *Highwayman 2* offers painful glimpses of four aging superstars fumbling around for a sense of musical purpose. At its best, it's like a magical window back to those golden years when these four guys *were* country music.

Mind you, it's by only a slender margin that the best outweighs the worst. Yet the ratio is still good enough to justify the effort. Are we ready for a *Highwayman 3*?

—BOB ALLEN

Sweethearts of the Rodeo Buffalo Zone Columbia C45373

It's almost impossible not to like *The Sweethearts of the Rodeo*. This hit duo's music is, in many ways, as delightfully predictable as their name. The name itself was, of course, taken directly from the title of a landmark country-rock album by The Byrds which long ago inspired *The Sweethearts* (siblings Janis Gill and Kristine Arnold) to follow their own musical dreams. Both The Byrds and their influential *Sweethearts of the Rodeo* album are given grateful acknowledgment in *Buffalo Zone's* liner notes.

Though Arnold and Gill are not the most innovative singers ever to grace country radio, they are fine vocalists and savvy musicians. Together with producer Steve Buckingham (who, this time around, shares production credits with Gill), they have an unerring instinct for the sort of tight, bouncy, silky-sweet harmonies and hooks that enable them to live up to their evocative name and image.

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Yet, somehow, like The Judds in their maudlin moments, Gill and Arnold, with their hip Western wear outfits and little girl harmonies, have at times limited themselves artistically. At first they were faced with the need to establish a strong identity with the record-buying public—never an easy task. But now, as the subtle changes of direction on *Buffalo Zone* indicate, even they realize that they may have succeeded a little too well in this regard and thus boxed themselves up a little too tightly in their pretty, self-invented musical package.

The growing pains and musical role-shifting heard on *Buffalo Zone* reveal that The Sweethearts are working hard to loosen up a little and fashion themselves a more mature and stylistically versatile musical identity. Arnold, this time around, is much more in evidence as lead singer. Gill, meanwhile has chosen to settle into the background a bit more and stick to harmonizing and songwriting. In fact, she wrote nearly half of the songs on *Buffalo Zone*, with able assistance from co-writers like Don Schlitz and Wendy Waldman.

For all this, the music on *Buffalo Zone* is, by and large, pretty, engaging and—alas—forgettable. Despite studio assistance from the

likes of Ricky Skaggs, Albert Lee (guitar), Roy Huskey (bass) and Mark O'Connor (fiddle), it just comes out like good "radio" music, leaving little lasting impression. Even on potentially powerful numbers like the Latin torch song, "Come Se Dice," and the marital/sexual paranoia of "He Doesn't Tell Me Anything," Gill & Arnold seem to be skating over the lyrics' deeper emotional implications. You never get the feeling that they're really taking risks and busting rocks down deep in their souls, as you do with the best confessional and autobiographical music of a Rosanne Cash or a Nanci Griffith.

Please don't get me wrong: for all its shortcomings this is an impressive piece of work. Though Gill and Arnold may not have wholly succeeded in shaking away the chains of the past, *Buffalo Zone* shows that they're at least heading in the right direction.

—BOB ALLEN

Larry Boone *Down That River Road* Polygram 842 156-4

Larry Boone has impressive credentials as a songwriter, co-writing such hits as George Strait's "Beyond the Blue Neon" and Kathy Mattea's "Burnin' Old Memo-

ries." Even so, Boone's last album, *Swingin' Doors, Sawdust Floors*, didn't impress me much. Too much of it jumped back and forth between Texas barroom music and slick, facile country-pop numbers that came off as contrived. I ended up wondering where Boone was. The effort seemed less of an artistic statement, more an overly earnest stab at showing his versatility.

In all fairness, many great songwriters aren't great singers but still have successful recording careers. However, Boone's tendency to over-sing and over-phrase in order to get certain effects can grate on you after awhile. At times you can hear him straining more than he should.

Happily, *Down That River Road* is a noticeable improvement. His singing is less strained, and with a couple of exceptions the material is far more consistent than before. "Everybody Wants to Be Hank Williams" covers an old Nashville obsession but does it cleverly with a more realistic viewpoint and, thankfully, without another instrumental imitation of The Drifting Cowboys. "Hard Time Taking the Easy Way Out," despite its awkward title, remains a nicely sung number of frustration. "I Know Who Drove Her There" is an adept confession of guilt and

contrition.

The clever lyrics of "Too Blue to Be True" are much of its strength, but Boone's weak vocals suggest the song could be delivered more effectively by someone else. "Best Performance by a Fool" is just as witty, and Boone's singing works well here, as it does on the upbeat "A Quarter at a Time." His vocals are far stronger on fast tempos.

Only two numbers totally collapse, but boy, do they. The title track, a self-conscious country-rock number loaded with superficial rural imagery, sounds custom-written for any number of today's top bands (though I doubt The Kentucky Headhunters would touch it). The overly maudlin "The Moon Over Georgia," a prissy, superficial ballad, never leaves the gate.

The weakness of these two songs is driven home by the masterpiece of a ballad that follows to end the record. "Crow Hill Road" is everything the other songs aren't: evocative of a past time and place, a beautifully sketched miniature with the kind of imagery only the best writers can conjure up.

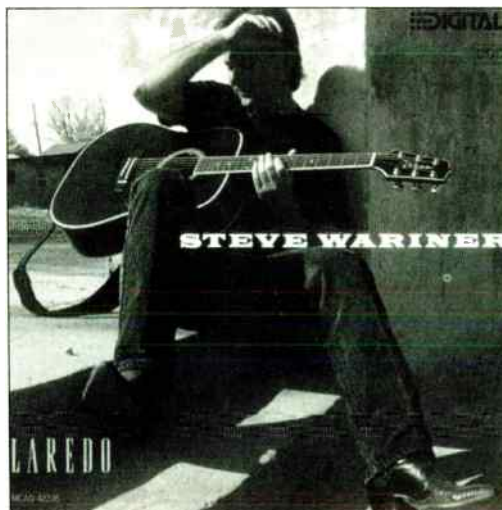
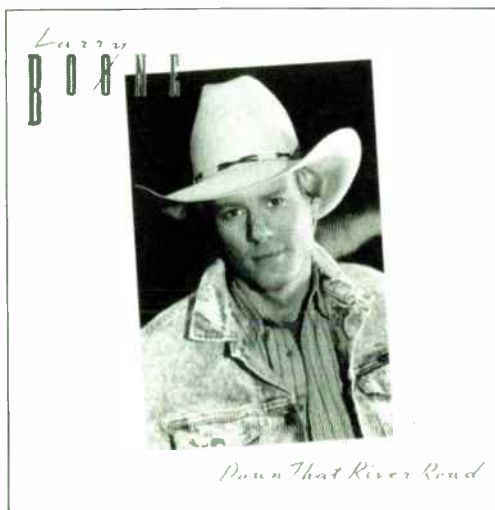
I think Boone has made a step forward. If he can pull it together just a bit more on the next one, he can have a truly consistent effort. He came close this time.

—RICH KIENZLE

Steve Wariner *Laredo* MCA 42335

I've always thought of Steve Wariner as country music's invisible man, Nashville's unsung hero. It's a not-so-well-kept secret that he is one of the nicest guys in the business as well as one of the industry's most low-key and underrated talents.

For any number of years, Wariner has just sort of gone quietly about his business, which has included making



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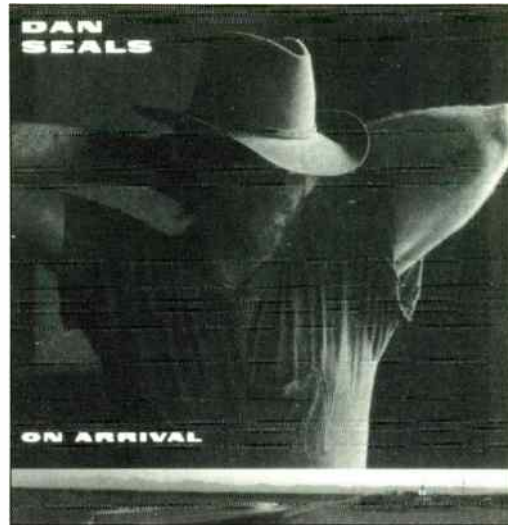
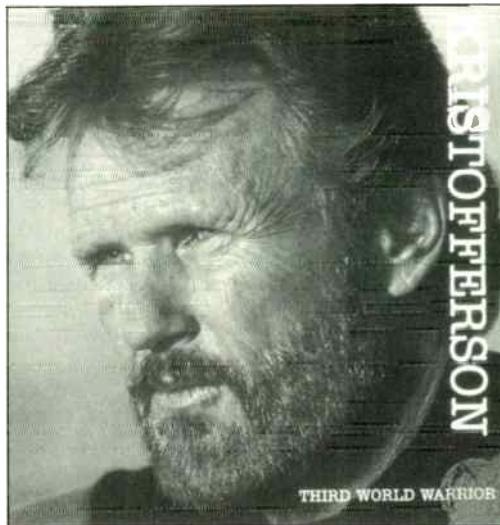
nine Number One records and earning several Grammy and Country Music Association award nominations. And, as *Laredo*, his latest album attests, he just quietly and methodically keeps getting better and better.

With *Laredo*, you can sense Warner's sweeping ambition: his intention of taking a great leap forward and squeezing out of himself some of the very best vocal performances he's got in him. And, to a large measure, he's succeeded as never before.

Production assistance on *Laredo* comes from not one, but three of Nashville's hottest producers. Randy Scruggs (who co-produced The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's recent *Circle II* album) produced four of the ten cuts. Superstar producer Tony Brown (Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle, Rodney Crowell, Patty Loveless, Nanci Griffith, etc., etc.) contributed three songs, as did Garth Fundis, whose past work has been with Don Williams, The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and Keith Whitley.

"I Can See Arkansas," *Laredo*'s opener, is the sort of great pop-country ballad about long-distance loneliness that Glen Campbell (whose influence can be heard in Warner's music) used to specialize in. Here, the vast American landscape—in this case, the wide Mississippi—becomes a metaphor for the aching distance between two hearts.

"Where Fools Are Kings" is a fine country-flavored confessional of bitter romantic disillusionment. Warner's great vocal outing here has "Number One" written all over it. "The Domino Theory" is a sassy, up-tempo, fiddle-laden number where the symbolism of global politics is playfully applied to domestic romance. "There For a While" is another weepy, steel-embellished country ballad with Warner once again devastatingly on target with his singing.



Mind you, *Laredo* isn't a perfect album. Warner can't seem to get more than half-way though a session without succumbing to his abiding weakness for schmaltzy pop ballads. This time it's "She's in Love." There are also two sentimental and overly idyllic Norman Rockwell-like childhood reminiscences here—"I Wanna Go Back" and Warner's own "When Times Were Hard." And that's about one too many.

All in all, though, *Laredo* is an exceptionally strong showing and a forceful, resolute step upward for country music's "invisible man." Hopefully it will serve to raise Warner's public profile a notch or two. He deserves it.

—BOB ALLEN

Kris Kristofferson *Third World Warrior* Polygram 834 629-2

I believe Kristofferson when he says he's permanently sober and drug free this time. I've never heard anything more sober and sobering than this album. I have seen a roomful of Texans hooting and ordering rounds of beer while Kris has run through the lecturing, enlightening songs in this, his second wholly political album, but even they seemed

hard-pressed to exult and party around so many blood-dripping themes of America's historical malfeasance in Central America and among its own minorities.

To begin with, you are not going to hear these songs on any radio station—at any time—which in itself is no pure indictment. But, I also doubt you are going to want to listen to this album all the way through. Too many graphic pictures of dead babies, murdered women, assassinated heroes; too much self-righteous anger. "And if you don't like it mister I don't care," he sets forth in "The Eagle and the Bear," and he clearly means to have his say. But with only one even remotely softening moment of humor and no tenderness of any sort, Kristofferson engages in spirit-dampening, heavy-handed overkill here, essentially the worst blunder of a political pamphleteer such as he sets out to be. I wish more people shared his views, but I don't want to listen to the reading of them very often.

My biggest problem in panicking this record is that it is really well-written and executed. Kristofferson is highly intelligent and a talented man. Taken on his own terms, I can't fault his lyrics, his music or his grasp of history and his political conclu-

sions—with the exception of his simple-minded rave up of Jesse Jackson.

One danger in singing passionately about Third World politics lies in how quickly the underlying political reality may change. For instance, Kristofferson sings the praises of the Sandinistas, and yet before he could even get a single out, Nicaragua held free elections and voted the revolutionaries out of power.

Kris dishes out a lot of strong truth here, but this ain't Willie Nelson slipping in a few biting lines about the plight of the family farm. Nothing subtle about it. *Third World Warrior* is a bitter and unrelenting dose delivered like a hellfire and brimstone sermon.

—BOB MILLARD

Dan Seals *Love on Arrival* Capitol 4 91782

Ol' Dan starts off upbeat and rambunctious on his latest album with a remake of the late-1950's Sam Cooke party song, "Good Times" (as in "Let the Good Times Roll"), but with a few exceptions he then settles into a pretty thin and wistful outing.

Seals carries the energy

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Sunny Side of the Mountain • I'm Slowly Dying of a Broken Heart • I Suppose • Barbara Allen • Rattlesnakin' Daddy • I Washed a Nickel • I Love You a Thousand Ways • Pan America • Be My Life's Companion • Lonesome 7-7203 • Silver Letter • Dog House Boogie • Little White Washed Chimney • I'm Waiting Just for You • Slow Poke • Love, Dead Tonight • After All We've Meant to Each Other • A Heartache to Recall • Loaded With Love • If I Ever Get Rich Mom. Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS21

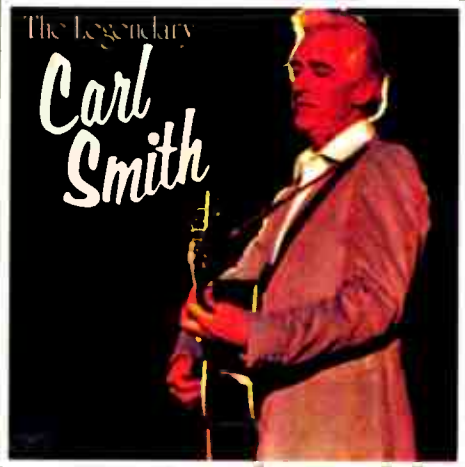
34 GREATEST HITS
COWBOY COPAS



COWBOY COPAS

Filipino Baby • Louisiana • Goodbye Kisses • From the Manger to the Cross • Satisfied Mind • Copas' Wildflower • There'll Come a Time • Sunny Tennessee • Waltzing With Stu • I Dreamed of a Hillbilly Heaven • He Stands Head Tall • Sugar, Sealed and Delivered • Beyond the Sunset • Breeze (Blow My Baby Back to Me) • Tragic Romance • Tennessee Waltz • This So Secret to Be Remembered • Wings of a Dove • Cowboy's Deck of Cards • Flat Top Guitar • Alabama • 3 MORE! Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS22

The Legendary
Carl Smith



CARL SMITH

Let Old Mother Nature Have Her Way • Mr. Moon • Just Wait Till I Get You Alone • Back Up Buddy • Deep Water • Hey Joe • Are You Teasing Me • If Teardrops Were Pennies • It's a Lovely, Lovely World • You Are the One • Don't Just Stand There • Satisfaction Guaranteed • Kisses Don't Lie • Our Honeymoon • Trademark • Let's Live a Little • Take My Ring Off Your Finger • I Overlooked an Orchid • Go, Boy Go • This Orchid Means Goodbye. LP No. LP268TK No. T26/Cassette No. CASS26

America Remembers...



JOHNNY HORTON

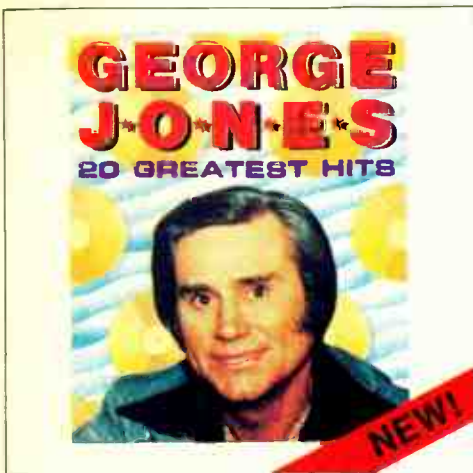
North to Alaska • Battle of New Orleans • When it's Springtime in Alaska (It's 40 Below) • Johnny Reb • I'm Coming Home • Hunk's Tank Man • Stuck the Bismarck • All for the Love of a Girl • The Mansion You Stole • Comanche • Jim Bridger • I'm a One-Woman Man • Sleepy-eyed John • They'll Never Take Her Love from Me • Old Slowfoot • All Grown Up • Sad's Got a Sugar Lip • Whispering Pines • Johnny Freedom (Freedom Land) • I'm Ready If You're Willing. LP No. LP278TK No. T27/Cassette No. CASS27

ROY ACUFF



ROY ACUFF

Great Speckled Bird • Tell Mother I'll Be There • Wait for the Light to Shine • Wreck on the Highway • I Saw the Light • The Precious Jewel • The Great Shining Light • If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again • The Great Judgement Morning • Great Speckled Bird (No. 2) • Wabash Cannon Ball • Lonesome • Old River Blues • Be Honest with Me • Fireball Mail • Tennessee Waltz • Mule-skinner Blues Blue voad (no. 3) • Low and Lonely • Pins and Needles • Freight Train Blue • MORE! LP No. LP288TK No. T28/Cassette No. CASS28



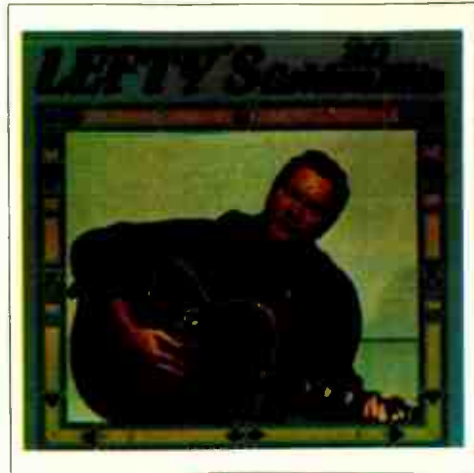
GEORGE JONES

Walk Thru This World With Me • A Good Year For The Roses • The Race Is On • Take Me • Things Have Gone To Pieces • Developing My Pictures • Tender Years • From Here To The Door • You Gotta Be My Baby • Run Boy • White Lightning • I'm Ragged But I'm Right • If My Heart Had Windows • Why Baby Why • They'll Never Take Her Love From Me • Go Away With Me • Blue Side Of Lonesome • I'll Follow You Up To Our Cloud • 2 MORE! Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS34



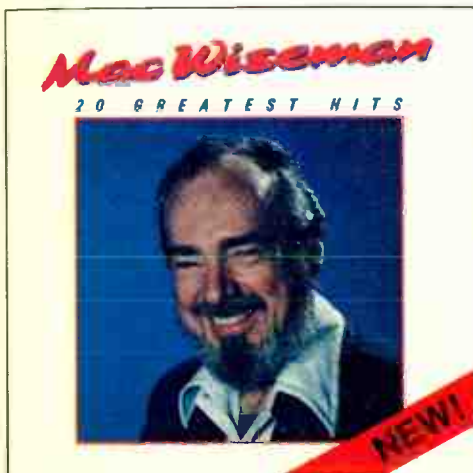
STONEWALL JACKSON

Waterloo • Life To Go • Read Between The Lines • A Wound Time Can Erase • I Washed My Hands In The Muddy Water • Why I'm Walkin' • I Can't Get Enough Of You • My Hero And The Plastic Radio • Things To Think About • Love Gets All Over Me • Ol' Blue • Lovin' The Fool Out Of Me • Shake 'Em Up, Roll 'Em • Herman Schwartz • Should I Go Home • Keep Off The Grass • Don't Be Late • Clean Your Own Tables • B.J. The D.J. • and MORE! Cassette Tape Only. No. CASS33



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MAC WISEMAN

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Record Reviews

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l with "She
upe," which
e one of those
nmer hits with
chm, its top-down
s romantic treat-
a potentially dan-
ituation that recalls
ilaration of all the
summer fun I can
mber. On "(Nothing
ts Like a) Heart in
rch of Love," he serves up
e of those great, on-the-
oney, medium tempo hooks
hat will jerk a knot in your
Adam's apple every time he
sings it if you're in that mood.
Only problem is, it's a great
hook, but the rest of the song
is the lyric equivalent of ham-
burger helper.

"Border Town" is meant to
be a romantic look at law and
illegal immigration; it turns
out to be unrealistic and
unbelievable baloney. "Wood"
likens a young man to a piece
of unworked wood, which
works pretty well as an anal-
ogy, but the song, like much
of the album, lacks the fire
and vocal passion of *Rage On*,
Seals's last effort. What I
kept waiting for was a song-
one would have been enough-
to jump out like "Addicted"
from *Rage On*, but it just isn't
here.

There are sad songs
("Lonestar," "Game of Love"
and "Water Under the
Bridge") and love songs
("Made for Lovin' You" and
the dopey "Love on Arrival")

but none are anything to brag
about. Dan Seals has a lot of
soul when he gets wound up
around a really top notch
song. He can sell a story and
a feeling if there is any genu-
ine story and feeling in the
song to begin with. What he
has here is two and a half
pretty good songs. Pleasant
but uninspiring. Dan, you
deserve better.

-BOB MILLARD

Jann Browne
Tell Me Why
Curb D4-77251

Marsha Thornton
Marsha Thornton
MCA 42319

It's a tenuous connection
which causes Jann
Browne's and Marsha Thor-
nton's debut albums to share a
review, for their only shared
quality is, well, quality:
These are both very good
records from very welcome
newcomers. Otherwise they
don't have much in common.

They come, in fact, from
opposite poles of the country
music recording business.
Jann Browne's *Tell Me Why* is
a product of the hip-angeleno
fringe which gave us Dwight
Yoakam and Lone Justice
among others, while Marsha
Thornton's record, produced
in style by Owen Bradley (to
whose name one is now

almost obliged to add "the
legendary"), comes from the
very heart of yesterday's
Nashville. So as you might
expect, these records are
very distinctive: different
from each other and even
more distinct from the run of
Nashville's mill.

Jann Browne, bless her,
made a killer debut. Singing
with a slightly hoarse, open-
throated energy which at
times shares something with
the sound of the young
Loretta Lynn and other
times suggests a powered-up
Emmylou Harris (though
that wonderful natural trem-
olo is hers alone), she handles
the superior songs on this
album—and this album only
has superior songs—with a
casual, free-wheeling
authority.

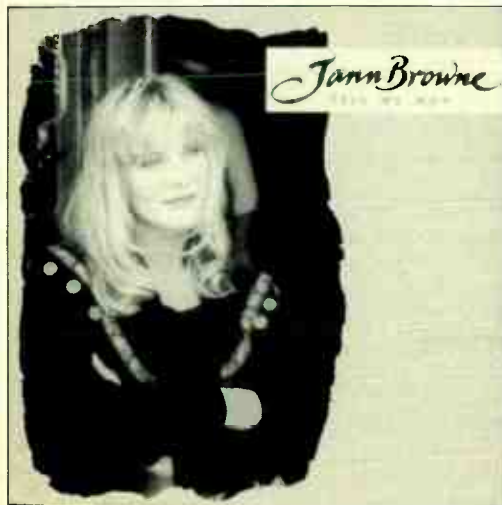
The whole album, in fact,
sounds like it could have been
recorded live and kicking in
some Western roadhouse.
Jann's vocals are natural and
immediate, the band sounds
actually there behind her, the
whole thing sounds like real
people really performing.
That's refreshing, and pretty
entertaining too, because the
band isn't exactly bush
league. Among others it
numbers the ultra-dynamic
Albert Lee; SoCal worthies
John Jorgenson and Bill
Bryson, currently of The
Desert Rose Band; John
Molo, who drums for Bruce
Hornsby and The Range; the

members of New Grass
Revival; and Mr. James (also
"the legendary") Burton, for-
merly of Elvis Presley, the
Hot Band, *et al.* And they're
all playing like they're inter-
ested in this one.

Ms. Browne comes by her
authority honestly. An Indi-
ana native, she spent much of
her childhood on the road
throughout the South with
her parents, professional
square dancers and Opry regu-
lars. As an adult she spent
two years in the early 1980's
singing with Asleep at the
Wheel. She's been a profes-
sional gospel singer. She won
consecutive California Coun-
try Music Association "Enter-
tainer of the Year" awards in
1987 and 1988. She became,
and is, a songwriter. Two of
the more luminous tracks on
Tell Me Why are "Louisville,"
which she wrote with Pat
Gallagher, and the all-her-
own "Mexican Wind," done
here with harmonies by
Emmylou. These songs, I
think, compare with the clas-
sics on the album (like "I For-
got More Than You'll Ever
Know" sung with Wanda
Jackson, no less). Far out-
classing the forced country-
politan ditties of today's
Nashville song factories,
they are unique, natural,
heartfelt and imaginative.

It seems, then, that this
woman has it all: taste, intel-
ligence, smarts, confidence,
looks and tons of talent.
Despite all that she may go
far. You should consider *Tell
Me Why* very strongly
recommended.

If Jann Browne's sound
comes out of the hard and
ready West, young Marsha
Thornton's style is very much
an echo of Owen Bradley's
sweet, smooth Nashville.
Her single, "A Bottle of Wine
and Patsy Cline," says it all:
the specific influence of coun-
try's late great lady sophisti-
cate (whom Owen Bradley of
course produced, long before
he revamped k.d. lang's
career); the Nashville Sound
tradition of sweeping strings
and stylish arrangements



Record Reviews

(which Bradley developed in his famous 16th Avenue South studio); and the strong, stately, mostly sad material on which country's torch singers really thrive.

Marsha Thornton, a 25-year-old Alabaman who graduated to the majors after six years as an Opryland show singer, is indeed a stylist as opposed to a singer-songwriter like Jann Browne, and her style plays best at the lush end of the spectrum. Her debut album's most affecting tracks are therefore the melancholy-midnight numbers which, not so coincidentally, also lend themselves best to Bradley's particular genius: "A Bottle of Wine and Patsy Cline" by Lindy Gravelle and Tommy Rocco, "Climb the Walls" from Max D. Barnes and the wonderful "Deep Water," a venerable Fred Rose song first vamped by Bob Wills (Bradley, as it happens, wrote out the original lead sheet for it in 1948). With such material Ms. Thornton truly excels; this is great stuff, as delicately moving at times as the k.d. lang/Owen Bradley torch masterpiece *Shadowland*.

That's the good news; very good news, well up from average. The less-good news is that the more conventional modern country tunes on *Marsha Thornton* don't fare as well. The young lady's performances just aren't very special. There's nothing unusual about that, of course—country albums almost always have three or four clunkers or throwaways and often more than that—but it does suggest that Marsha has a fairly narrow range in which she really blossoms, and so in the future she may have to be rather careful about her material and, of course, her producer. Mr. Bradley certainly did her right this time around.

You may consider *Marsha Thornton* almost as strongly recommended as *Tell Me Why*, and a lot better than most.

—PATRICK CARR

Jennifer McCarter and The McCarters

Better Be Home Soon
Warner Bros. 4-25896

The news for McCarter fans is not good. If you go out and buy *Better Be Home Soon* on the quite reasonable assumption that the package contains music in the same lustrous mountain-music vein as *The Gift*, The McCarters' utterly gorgeous stone-country-folk debut album, you're going to be unhappy.

Basically, the girls have gone pop. Or maybe, since the act is now "Jennifer McCarter and The McCarters" rather than simply "The McCarters," it's big sister Jennifer who's gone pop and hauled the twins along with her. This is not merely my aesthetic judgment, either. It's official policy. As the record company bio explains with unusual candor, "The widening musical influences represented on the album are something Jennifer hopes will translate into a wider audience."

Maybe the musical "widening" Jennifer seeks is her own idea, in which case goodbye, kid, and thanks for the memory (really thanks, because *The Gift* is still a great joy). Or perhaps other people, producers and record company executives and the like, talked her into it. Wherever the new course originates, though, it's wrong, because its effect has been to reduce The McCarters' music from the purely sublime to the—well, I'd say reasonably competent. Not bad. More or less okay, no better or worse than a lot of stuff out there.

The vanishing of spirit which occurred at some point after the recording of *The Gift* is palpable in *Better Be Home Soon*. You can actually feel Jennifer's lowered energy and muddled vision as she grasps after the gold ring with her new, routinely con-



temporary-country material. She and the twins sound sort of lost, almost anonymous. And with reason: Anyone could sing most of these songs, wear their hair big and try to go places.

This is not to say, mind you, that Jennifer doesn't have some great material to work with. Mary Chapin Carpenter's "Slow Country Dance" is a complex and lovely work, for example, and New Zealander Neil Finn's title track, though well worn already in pop circles, is a legitimately beautiful ballad. But Jennifer's handling of these songs is no more interesting than a dozen young female country-pop singers could have managed and significantly less convincing than the writers' originals. Likewise her take on another of the album's better songs, Bob McDill's "Shot Full of Love," is disappointingly tame compared with Juice Newton's energized romp a couple of years back. In fact, all Jennifer's interpretations sound dull.

Unfortunately that shortcoming is not accidental. It's the result of the conscious decision that this time around, the music made by The McCarters and their producers and musicians—the very same people responsible for the loveliness of *The Gift*—would be Nashville-ized; mainstreamed, if you will. And, really, it's amazing what you can do when you really try, because sure enough, the new product has that good old authentic Music Row sheen: slick, soulless, shallow and just plain insignificant by any

standard that meets the heart and time.

In her bio, Jennifer explains her new direction saying, "I want to make the right moves so that I can do this the rest of my life," but I really wonder if this shedding of roots and loyalties (and fans) is as smart as she seems to think it is. I mean, does her belated swerve into the middle of the road, and presumably into the affections of major-market radio programmers, really give her a good chance at a lifetime career? Where, I wonder is the real common sense in being one of the dozens of young women trying to become a country-pop star—the new Dolly Parton or Barbara Mandrell, say—when *The Gift* has already proven that The McCarters are the only act in the world with a good shot at becoming the new Emmylou Harris?

Admittedly, Emmy is no TV star, but doesn't Jennifer (or her handlers) know that the tradition-loving, pop-avoiding, uncompromising Ms. Harris is the one and only—only—female country artist who's been scoring country hits consistently, one after the other, since the early 1970s?

Pop, you know, is most often followed by fizzle. But hell, though it's our loss, it's Jennifer's life.

—PATRICK CARR

How to Order Albums Reviewed Here

All albums covered in Record Reviews in any 1990 issue of *Country Music* can be ordered from Nashville Warehouse, Review Dept., Box 1226, Hendersonville, Tennessee 37077. Include performer's name, album title and album number. No LP's. Cassettes (\$9.98), CD's (\$16.98). CMSA members deduct 25%. Add \$1.95 for one, \$.95 for each additional. Make check payable to Nashville Warehouse.

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Hawkshaw Hawkins Special

Hawkshaw Hawkins is the star of the CMSA's Legends of Country Music this month. Rich Kienzle stars again as the writer. The Country Music Foundation in Nashville even came up with a photo of Hawkins' last performance in Kansas City on March 4, 1963, to complement the feature.

Like Cowboy Copas, Hawkshaw Hawkins was versatile, and he must have been photogenic, all 6'4" of him. The CMSA has received many a snap of him from photo albums in the last few years.

Two albums of Hawkshaw Hawkins' music are available. *Hawkshaw Hawkins, Vol. 1* (KLP 587), reviewed in detail by Rich Kienzle in Buried Treasures in this issue, is available in CD, LP or cassette. Regular price CD \$9.98, member's price \$7.98/regular price LP or cassette \$7.98, member's price \$5.98. Songs on the album were recorded in the 1940's and 1950's. The album was originally released in 1958, re-released in 1963 after Hawkins died. Hawkshaw Hawkins, *22 Greatest Hits* (CASS21), pictured in the Nashville Warehouse Close-out Record Sale ad in this issue, is available in cassette only. Regular price cassette \$9.97, member's price \$7.97. Most of the songs on this one, listed in the ad, are later Starday cuts, re-makes of his originals done by Hawkins for Starday right before he died.

Collections Overflows

The Collections page in the *Newsletter* is jammed again.

The more we run, the more you write. Letters are backed up from three to six months, especially in Pen Pals. Fair warning! It may be a long wait. At the same time, members tell us Collections is one of their favorite features. Some people like to read it just for fun.

Buried Treasures Specials

Members may deduct \$2 from the price of any album offered in Buried Treasures in this or any issue. Old favorites covered this time include Lefty Frizzell, Claude King, Marty Robbins, George Morgan, Mel Tillis, Wayne Raney, Cowboy Copas, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Moon Mullican and lots of Bob Wills. CMSA members are also entitled to 25% off the Top 25 albums listed on page 72.

Sweepstakes Winner

Kim Marsland, the CMSA member who won the \$1,000 Early Renewal Sweepstakes which ended October 9, 1989, put her winnings to good use this winter. Kim lives in Burlington, North Dakota—her \$1,000 helped her repair her boiler. The day she wrote, it was snowing heavily. Congratulations, Kim! More lucky winners, non-members, are announced in this issue's Letters column.



THANK YOU

Kim Marsland's thank you.

How to Order

To order albums listed here, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 5690N, 329 Riverside Avenue, Westport, Connecticut 06880. Add \$1.95 postage and handling for first item ordered, \$.95 each additional. Include membership number. Allow six to eight weeks for delivery.

MEMBERS POLL/MAY 1990

VOTE

Your opinions can help influence record companies, radio stations, record stores, concert promoters, managers and performers. As a CMSA member, you have an organized way of making your opinion known, by filling out the Members Poll. We forward the results of the Polls to those involved in the business of country music who are interested in what fans are thinking and doing, and we publish the results.

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

- Did you buy any albums (records, cassettes or compact discs) in the last month? Yes No
How many records? _____ cassettes? _____ CDs? _____
- Which ones did you like best? List performers and album titles.
 - _____
 - _____
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Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

- To vote, list the numbers of your top five favorites from the Top 25 on the last page in this issue.

Singles (list 5 numbers)	Albums (list 5 numbers)
<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Do You Shop by Mail or Phone?

- About how many purchases have you or someone in your household made by mail or phone in the last 12 months? _____
- About how much was spent for all purchases made by mail or phone in the last 12 months? _____
- Did you or anyone in your household buy any albums by mail or phone? Yes No
How many records? _____ cassettes? _____ CDs? _____
- Do you or anyone else in your household belong to any record clubs? Yes No
- Check any of the following from which you or anyone in your household bought an album in the past 12 months.
 - Columbia Record and Tape Club
 - RCA Music Service
 - Time-Life Music
 - Reader's Digest Music
 - TV album offer

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, write your membership number here. _____

If you are not a member but would like to join and vote immediately, fill out the poll and enclose your check for \$16 for one-year CMSA Membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine*, too).

Fill out poll and mail to: May Poll, *Country Music Magazine*, Suite 2118, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10173.

So Long LP, Hello CD

Say goodbye to the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm LP record. It's the wave of the past...the buggy whip of the recording industry.

Oh, there will continue to be collector's records available, but Nashville has stopped putting out any new releases on LP records. So, if you want the next album by Randy Travis, George Strait, Ricky, Reba or anyone else, you better have a good player for cassettes...or, for the real replacement for the LP record, a player for the fabulous CD (compact disc).

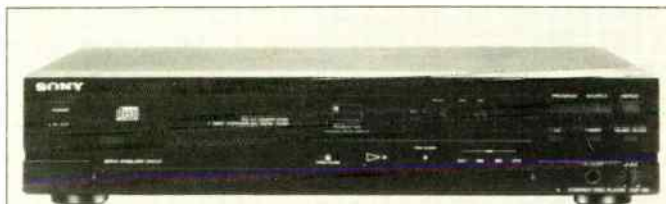
Compact Discs: The New Standard

The CD is definitely the wave of the future...the horseless carriage to the LP's buggy whip. The CD sound quality is incredible. If you haven't heard one, go directly to a good stereo equipment store and take a listen.

Sound quality is not the CD's only advantage. A CD will last forever...that is if you don't drive your truck over it or leave it on top of the toaster. But playing it won't wear it out. The reason is that the CD has no needle running around a groove, gradually digging out the music.

Instead of a needle, the CD player uses a tiny laser beam to shine in the groove. The CD has a mirrored surface which reflects the laser's light back in the pattern of the music.

For those of you who insist on the best sound quality, a CD player is a must. But to get full mileage out of CD's, the rest of your stereo system needs to be of good quality too, especially your speakers. Check the back of your stereo receiver or amplifier to see if it has a place for you to plug in the CD player. It should be marked AUX for auxiliary.



Best Buy CD Player: The Sony CDP-190 (\$199 list, CMSA members \$149) provides a good combination of quality, price and features. We use it at *Country Music* to review CD's.



Best Buy Cassette Deck: We use the Sony TC-W320 (\$199 list, CMSA members \$149). It has dual cassette capability and high speed copying features.

The only problem with the CD is cost. First, you have to buy the player. You can now get good ones for under \$200, but not much under. We use a Sony CDP-190 (\$199 list) in our office. (You can order one through us.) You can spend a lot more, but it's not worth it unless the rest of your stereo system is top-notch.

Second, the CD albums are expensive: typically \$16.98 for

new albums. Even at discount you pay \$10 to \$12. But these prices are coming down and eventually will be no more than LP's were.

Cassettes: The Old Standby

The other alternative to the LP record is the cassette tape, which has been around a long time. In recent years cassettes have been outselling LP's two or three to one,

Best Buys: How to Order

Those of you who know that you want a high quality CD player or cassette deck at a good price can order the Sony CDP-190 compact disc player from us for \$199 (CMSA members \$149) and the Sony TC-W320 dual cassette deck, also \$199 (CMSA members \$149). We consider these "best buys" because of their combination of quality, price and features. You can find cheaper models, but not much cheaper, and you can probably find others with similar qualities at similar cost, but we don't think you can find better.

If you are not a CMSA member and want to buy one of these items, it will pay you to join because you'll save more than the \$12 cost of membership. Just figure the amount of your order at member's prices and add \$12. (Membership includes another year of your *Country Music* subscription.) If you already are a CMSA member, include your membership number on your check. Add \$4.95 postage and insurance for each item. Make checks payable to: *Country Music Audio*, 329 Riverside Ave., Westport, CT 06880.

mainly because they can be played at home, in your car, your truck, your boat, your tractor or your kid's walkman.

So, if you have a good cassette player, you won't miss the passing of the LP. Unless, that is, you want top sound quality.

We have a Sony TC-W320 dual cassette deck (\$199 list) in our office. (You can order one from us.) The dual cassette feature enables you to make a cassette copy of a cassette. Any cassette deck will make cassette copies of records, CD's or music from your FM radio tuner. Cassette decks come in all prices; but to get top sound quality and dual cassette capability, you should stick to a quality brand name, and the cost will be close to \$200.

There are many quality brands of stereo equipment: Sony, Pioneer, Kenwood, JVC, Yamaha, Technics, NEC, Sharp, Magnavox, Fisher, Hitachi and many others. These companies also make packaged systems which include AM/FM receivers, record turntables, cassette decks and matched speakers all in one package. If you care about top-notch sound quality and need a CD player and/or a cassette deck, unless your receiver/amplifier and speakers are already good quality, you may want to investigate such a packaged system. A visit to your library to read in *Consumer Reports Magazine* about how to shop for stereo equipment will be time well spent. Jot down their brand ratings. Once you know the basics, you may also be able to find what you want at good discounts, but you need to be well-informed first.

—RUSS BARNARD

Buried Treasures /

Reissues,
Rarities and the
Hard-to-Find

CBS Records has now released the second wave in their *American Originals* reissue series, again available in cassette and compact disc only, with beautiful cover art. I wish the format included more than ten songs and liner notes per disc cassette, but it does present many gems at a reasonable price.

Lefty Frizzell: *Lefty Frizzell* (CK/FCT 45067) includes ten essentials, "Saginaw, Michigan," "Mom and Dad's Waltz," "Long Black Veil," "A Little Unfair," "Don't Stay Away," "She's Gone, Gone, Gone," "Always Late," "Look What Thoughts Will Do," "Forever" and "I Want to Be With You Always."

All speak for themselves and, happily, all are the original recordings, not the later re-recordings Lefty did of his hits. My one complaint is that the set doesn't have his two earliest and most essential hits, "If You've Got the Money, I've Got the Time" and "I Love You a Thousand Ways." Why they were omitted is utterly beyond me.

Claude King: Conventional wisdom has it that Claude King, represented in the series by *Claude King* (CK/FCT 45067), was a one-hit artist known mainly for his 1962 Number One hit, "Wolverton Mountain" (the story of Clifton Clowers and his pretty young daughter and the bears and the birds, etc.), which crossed over to the pop Top Ten as well. T'ain't that simple. King actually had 30 hits on the *Billboard* charts.

This package has five of his six Top Ten hits, including "Wolverton," the Civil War saga song titled "The Burning of Atlanta," "Big River, Big Man," "Tiger Woman" and "The Comancheros." The others are Top 20 hits like "I've Got the World by the Tail"—Number 11 in 1963, "I'm Building a Bridge"—Number 12 in 1963 and "Catch a Little



Raindrop"—Number 13 in 1966.

Marty Robbins: As fine a collection as *Marty Robbins* (CK/FCT 45069) is, it lacks the essentials, "El Paso" and "White Sport Coat," favors a couple too many Western/Mexican numbers and excludes Marty's great rockabilly and pop recordings. Robbins' versatility makes it tough to sum his contribution up in ten songs, but with a couple of changes, the job could have been done.

Don't misunderstand, there's nothing wrong with putting "Singing the Blues," "Tonight Carmen," "Cowboy in the Continental Suit" and "Ruby Ann" together with his first (1952) hit, "I'll Go on Alone." But I'd rather have seen "Adios Amigo" or "Tonight Carmen" dropped in favor of something else. I was pleased that Columbia chose to insert Marty's final hit during his lifetime, "Some Memories Just Won't Die," from 1982.

George Morgan: A few *CMSA Newsletters* ago, I chronicled the life of George Morgan in our Legends of Country Music section and am now glad to report that a new George Morgan collection, *George Morgan* (CK/FCT 45076), is finally available. It was long overdue. Fans of George's daughter Lorrie (especially younger ones) may not realize the greatness from which she sprang. George was a smooth singer much like the young

Eddy Arnold, but unlike Arnold, Morgan, who died in 1975, kept close to his traditional sound.

This is the first Morgan album available since a Columbia collection compiled shortly after his death in 1975. Nearly everything that matters is here, from his 1949 megahit, "Candy Kisses," through "Cry Baby Heart," "Room Full of Roses," "You're the Only Good Thing That's Happened to Me" and "I'm in Love Again." All are well worth hearing again. But where's his 1949 Number Eight hit, "Rainbow in My Heart," as well as "I Love Everything About You," "Lover's Quarrel" and "There Goes My Love"?

Mel Tillis: For my money, this one, *Mel Tillis* (CK/FCT 45089), is the sleeper of the entire group. Since Mel's big hits were with MGM and MCA, plenty have forgotten (or never heard) his incredibly compelling Columbia honky tonk sides, recorded back in the late 1950's when he wrote nearly every Top Ten hit Webb Pierce had. His Columbia material wasn't a huge success, but not because the records were bad. They showed the raw, whiskey-drenched stuff of greatness, but nobody realized it.

Included here are Tillis' own versions of hits he wrote for Pierce, including "I Ain't Never," "No Love Have I," "I'm Tired" and "Tupelo County Jail." Two other numbers are original ver-

sions of Tillis compositions that became hits for Mel on MGM—"Heart Over Mind," a 1961 hit for Ray Price and a 1970 hit for Mel, and "Take My Hand," a 1971 hit for Mel and Sherry Bryce. Alas, "Lonely Street" and the oddity "Loco Weed" were included instead of his two minor Columbia hits, "The Violet and a Rose" and "Finally."

We've finally managed to land copies of some vintage King and Starday albums now being reissued by the International Marketing Group (IMG). Some haven't been available for years and include some true classics that needed to see daylight.

Wayne Raney: Anyone born after 1945 probably won't remember when singer/harmonica player Wayne Raney had a Number One country hit with his own number, "Why Don't You Haul Off and Love Me." Raney was also selling millions of harmonicas on his radio show over WCKY in Cincinnati and playing on The Delmore Brothers' King recordings.

IMG has finally reissued Wayne Raney's *Songs of the Hills* (KLP 588), released by King in 1958 and one of my all-time favorite albums. This collection of raw, rural material from 1948 through 1951 is a near-perfect collection. "Haul Off and Love Me" leads off. Two 1948 boogie hits recorded with The Delmores reveal the real roots of rockabilly, especially "Lost John Boogie" and the intense "Jack and Jill Boogie." "The Roosters are Crowing," "Gone With the Wind This Morning" and "Catfish Baby" are hillbilly music in the best sense of the word. Raney's haunting, eerie side is represented by 1948's "Lonesome Wind Blues" with The Delmores and by the awesome, chilling "My Annabelle Lee" from 1950.

Cowboy Copas: Last issue,

the *CMSA Newsletter* examined the career of Cowboy Copas. Copas, like Hawkshaw Hawkins (see below), was a singer able to tackle a wide variety of material. This was at the same time a blessing and a curse. It made him versatile but kept him from establishing a strong identity, as good as his records generally were. Like the other IMG albums here, Copas's 1960 King album, *Tragic Tales of Love and Life* (KLP 714), was a mix of 1940's and 1950's recordings, with an emphasis on the 1940's.

Among them are his bizarre 1949 hit, "Hangman's Boogie," in which a convict jauntily discusses his upcoming date with the noose. His popular version of "Tragic Romance" is also among the 13 numbers along with the earnestly sung blues tune, "Ashamed of Myself." The ballads are sentimental to the max, from the nostalgic "An Old Farm for Sale" and "It's Wrong to Love You But I Do" to the 1950's number, "The Postman Just Passes Me By." The latter two boast Jerry Byrd's exquisite steel guitar. "As Advertised," from 1947, is a talking blues in the style of Tex Williams' "Smoke! Smoke! Smoke! (That Cigarette)" with hot swing accompaniment (is it Pee Wee King's band, perhaps?)

Moon Mullican: Jerry Lee Lewis and his cousins Mickey Gilley and Jimmy Swaggart learned their music around Haney's Big House, the black nightclub in Ferriday, Louisiana. And they also listened to Moon Mullican, the King of the Hillbilly Piano Players and one of the pioneers of country boogie. Two vintage Moon albums cover the essentials. *All-Time Greatest Hits* (KLP-555), released in 1958, covers all Mullican's big hits: the classic "I'll Sail My Ship Alone" and "Mona Lisa" (1950), "Cherokee Boogie" (1951), "Jole Blon" (1947) and the sappy "Sweeter Than the Flowers" (1948). Other ingratiating numbers include "Sugar Beet" and the wild "Pipeliners' Blues."

In 1959 King released a fine

collection of 1940's and 1950's singles by Mullican, none big hits; that album, *The Old Texan* (KLP 628), remains a terrific companion volume to *All-Time Greatest Hits*. It's well-known Moon unofficially helped Hank Williams with the lyrics to "Jambalaya," and Moon's 1952 version is included along with the jiving "Southern Hospitality" and his 1950 version of Tiny Bradshaw's rhythm-and-blues hit, "Well Oh Well." "Seven Nights to Rock" and "I'm Mad With You" feature Moon with the popular rock band, Boyd Bennett and His Rockets. Among the sentimental ballads are "Where Beautiful Flowers Grow" and "Love Is the Light That Leads Me Home." If you remember Moon or want to hear one of the musical fountainheads Jerry Lee and Gilley drank from, this is it.

Hawkshaw Hawkins: The current issue of the *CMSA Newsletter* profiles Harold "Hawkshaw" Hawkins, who died along with Copas in the infamous plane crash with Patsy Cline in 1963. Until Stetson's recent reissue of his 1950's album for RCA, nothing on Hawkshaw had been reissued at all. *Hawkshaw Hawkins, Vol. 1* (KLP 587), recently reissued by IMG, originally appeared in 1958 and was re-released in 1963 after Hawkins' death.

These 16 numbers were also recorded in the 1940's and

1950's; like the Mullican album, *Hawkshaw Hawkins* is a varied package with an ancient folk ballad, "Barbara Allen," as well as sentimental tunes, "If I Ever Get Rich, Mom" and "I Can't Tell My Broken Heart a Lie." Only one hit is present: his 1951 hit version of Pee Wee King's "Slow Poke." Hawkins, like Moon, also recorded black music (Elvis never was the first to do this); examples here are a terrific version of the old blues number, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy," from 1950 and his interpretation of the rhythm-and-blues classic, "Teardrops From My Eyes."

Longhorn Records also comes in with some interesting re-issues this time.

Bob Wills: In 1963 Bob Wills, his health beginning to falter, gave up leadership of The Texas Playboys, selling the name to a Texas businessman named Carl Johnson. From then on Bob simply fronted the group. At that time he was between his Liberty and Kapp recording contracts and did four sessions in Dallas for Longhorn Records, including the only all-fiddle album he recorded.

Collector Series: The Texas Sound on Longhorn (Longhorn 007) features ten Longhorn recordings, none of them big sellers or even well-known outside of the Southwest. Despite Wills' poor health, he created some competent work for Longhorn, in

part because he used ex-Playboys like Johnny Gimble and pianist Al Stricklin from his prewar Tulsa days. The material itself represented what he did on the road: fiddle tunes like "Bob Wills' Waltz," "All Night Long," a re-recording of "Faded Love" and the funky, bluesy instrumental "Wills Junction." Two respectable honky tonk ballads, "If He's Movin' In" and "Let's Get It Over & Done With," spotlight his then-vocalist Joe Andrews.

Keepsake Album #1 (Longhorn 001) was a different and important album for Bob: the only album he ever made without a Western swing band. It teamed him with former Playboy guitarist Sleepy Johnson, Light Crust Doughboys banjoist Marvin Montgomery and bassist Luke Wills to record some of the classic Texas fiddle tunes like "Done Gone" and "Put Your Little Foot," which he'd learned from his dad and grandfather. Bob's between-song comments are worth the album price alone for the insight they offer into his musical roots.

31st Street Blues (Longhorn KK-011), produced by the late collector Keith Kolby, brings together some incredibly rare 1940's Bob Wills material taken from the 1944-1946 period when he first moved to California where he organized a smaller Playboy band. A couple of tracks are from Armed Forces Radio, others from the *KMJ Fresno Roundup* featuring the incredibly hot guitar of Lester "Junior" Barnard. The performances with Tommy Duncan are loaded with gusto and in some cases surpass the versions for Columbia. Skeptical? Listen to "Darktown Strutter's Ball," "What's the Matter With the Mill" or the roaring "Seven Miles Out of Town" (the latter never commercially recorded). The 1944 four-minute "Bob Wills Special" with fiddler Louis Tierney and the twin guitars of Jimmy Wyble and Cameron Hill is nothing short of amazing.

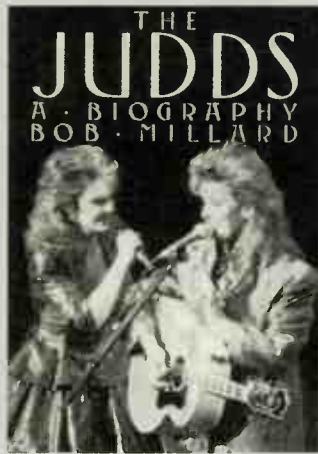
-RICH KIENZLE

How to Get These Treasures

American Originals series available in CD or cassette: *Lefty Frizzell* CD (CK 45067) \$15.98, cassette (FCT 45067) \$7.98/*Claude King* CD (CK 45075) \$15.98, cassette (FCT 45075) \$7.98/*Marty Robbins* CD (CK 45069) \$15.98, cassette (FCT 45069) \$7.98/*George Morgan* CD (CK 45076) \$15.98, cassette (FCT 45076) \$7.98/*Mel Tillis* CD (CK 45079) \$15.98, cassette (FCT 45079) \$7.98. King and Starday albums (IMG) available in LP, cassette or CD: Wayne Raney, *Songs of the Hills* (KLP 588) CD \$9.98, LP or cassette \$7.98/Cowboy Copas, *Tragic Tales of Love and Life* (KLP 714) CD \$9.98, LP or cassette \$7.98/Moon Mullican, *All-Time Greatest Hits* (KLP 555) CD \$9.98, LP or cassette \$7.98/Mullican, *The Old Texan* (KLP 628) CD not available, LP or cassette \$7.98/Hawkshaw Hawkins, *Hawkshaw Hawkins, Vol. 1* (KLP 587) CD \$9.98, LP or cassette \$7.98. Longhorn albums available in LP only: Bob Wills, *The Collector Series: The Texas Sound on Longhorn* (LH 007) \$10.98/Wills, *Keepsake Album #1* (LH 001) \$10.98/Wills, *31st Street Blues* (LH KK-011) \$10.98. To order send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 5690, 329 Riverside Ave., Westport, CT 06880. Add \$1.95 postage and handling for first item ordered/\$.95 each additional. Allow 6-8 weeks for delivery. CMSA members, see For CMSA Members Only page.

Essential Collector / *The Country Library*

The Essential Collector has been on an extended vacation. We thought it was time for him to get back in harness and cover some collectible country music books, all still in print. Next time Essential Collector will recommend some classic country videos, some collector's records and more books.

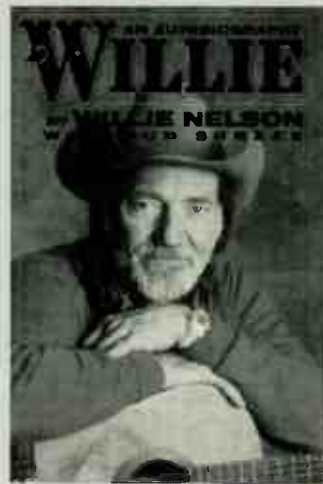


The Judds: A Biography. Next to Randy Travis, The Judds have been Nashville's media darlings for several years now, as much for their looks as for their music. Publicists like to emphasize certain aspects of any performer's life, but Bob Millard's *The Judds: A Biography* paints a far more balanced portrait. He traces the duo's long route from Ashland, Kentucky, where Naomi was born Diana Judd, to her ill-fated marriage and pregnancy (which produced daughter Christina/Wynonna) and the family's back-and-forth moves between California and Kentucky, ending up in Nashville.

Millard skillfully captures Naomi's diverse personal roots: middle-class Kentucky upbringing, West Coast sophistication and love of rural mountain folk life. He's equally frank about her shrewd, calculating (occasionally manipulative) flair for self-promotion and image-polishing, which undoubtedly helped insure the act's suc-

cess. His account of Wynonna's musical development and personality is equally well-drawn as are his probings of the mother-daughter clashes that were calmed only by their singing-clashes that nearly split them in their early days. The only problem with the narrative, and an unavoidable one, centers around the alternating references to Diana/Naomi and Christina/Wynonna before they legally changed their names. One breathes a sigh of relief when the two finally make the switch. In any case, Millard's account is far superior to the average quickie showbiz bio. *Country Music Magazine* ran an excerpt from *The Judds* in September/October 1989.

Willie: An Autobiography. Willie Nelson wrote his autobiography in 1988 with former sportswriter Bud Shrake. While the resulting *Willie: An Autobiography* isn't loaded with surprises, it all somehow seems more authoritative coming from the Man himself. His childhood, musical influences, early jobs, fights (domestic and otherwise), early suc-



cesses, boozing, doping, eating and sleeping are all recounted. Willie explains his rationale for fighting the Nashville system as well as what prompted him to jump whole-hog into causes like Farm Aid. His own philosophy is as individualistic as you'd expect, some of it practical, most of it tolerant and some of it, particularly the spiritual messages in Chapter 19, a bit convoluted.

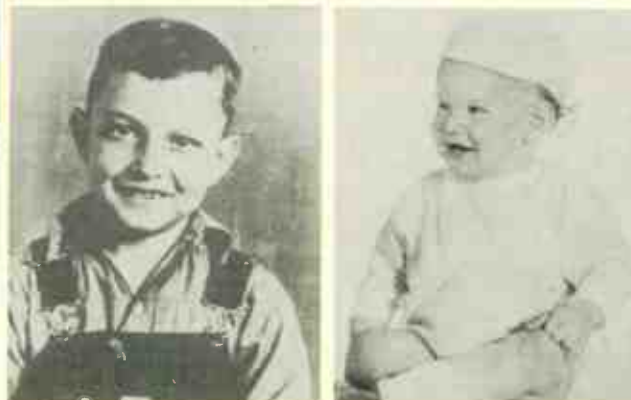
The inclusion of a kind of running commentary (or "chorus") of friends, relatives, band members, road

crew and admirers could have simply been space-filler; however, some of these folks recall old anecdotes Willie had forgotten. Occasionally these recollections deflate longtime legends. Willie's first wife, Martha, reveals that the shopworn story about her sewing him up in his bedsheets and beating him isn't so ("I tied him up with the kids' jump ropes before I beat hell out of him"). The comments from his roadies are interesting, too, in that they show just how hard, and complicated, touring can be, especially with a free spirit like Willie.

Whisperin' Bill. One notable difference between Bill Anderson's *Whisperin' Bill* and the other autobiographies is that Anderson, holder of a journalism degree, did it all himself with no ghostwriter. It shows. The writing in this 464-page work is many cuts above most ghostwritten autobiographies. Anderson didn't grow up dirt poor, struggling against booze, drugs or other miseries, but he has been dealt some hard blows over the past decade. He shifts his narrative throughout from the story of his life and career to his struggles following a violent car crash in 1984 caused by a drunk driver, a crash that left his wife Becky having to relearn most basic skills of living.

Anderson's eye for detail makes the reader feel the joy of having Ray Price record his song, "City Lights," the satisfaction of his first tour with George Morgan and Roger Miller and the frustration and trauma he's experienced in connection with his eldest daughter's bout with cancer and his own business setbacks with a Utah Radio station and the Po' Folks restaurant franchises. He deals frankly with his split with Jan Howard (no scandal—just professional differences) and

WHO ARE THESE COUNTRY KIDS?



They are superstars now. Both have been on the cover of this magazine in the last year. You'll find the answer in one of the most unique country music books ever published, *Baby Photos of the Country Stars*. There are 321 photos of over 150 stars, seen as babies, as school kids and as they appear today. Lots of fun.

his decision to dissolve his original Po' Boys band. Anderson's clearly accepted that his chart-topping days may be behind him (hence his work in the game show business in the 1970's). His ability to adjust, paired with his gifts to cope with some very real adversities, put this life story right up there on a par with Loretta Lynn's *Coal Miner's Daughter* and Hank Jr.'s *Living Proof*.

A Daughter's True Story
STILL IN LOVE WITH YOU

HANK & AUDREY WILLIAMS



Lyrecia Williams and Dale Vinicur

Your Cheatin' Heart. Has the definitive Hank Williams biography been written? I don't think so. In any case, Chet Flippo's controversial *Your Cheatin' Heart* is the only one currently available. Flippo aimed for a Hank bio with the fire, passion and atmosphere of both the man and his era, and he succeeded. The *feel* of the 1940's and early 1950's drips off every page. My major gripe (one shared by Hank Jr. and others) is that Flippo included certain re-created, fictionalized scenes, not tagged as such: dialogue and bedroom scenes to which there could have been no eye witnesses. Juicy reading it is, and the text would make a terrific screenplay. But by not noting the fictionalization, Flippo invites criticism he could have avoided.

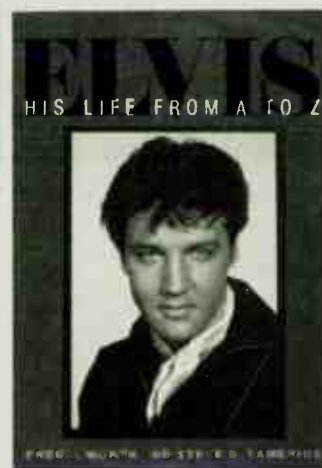
Nonetheless, Flippo turned up some worthwhile new research, such as the fact that on top of his problems with his mother, Audrey and the bottle, Hank was battling a crippling birth defect, spina bifida occulta. Flippo also made some new discoveries about the origins of

some of Hank's best known songs and found the last words he wrote on a slip of paper during his final trip north on New Year's Eve, 1952. The photographs include some rare ones not in the original hardback.

Still in Love With You: The Story of Hank and Audrey Williams. One person who was around through much of Hank and Audrey's marriage was Lyrecia Williams, Audrey Williams' daughter by her first marriage. Lyrecia never told her story until she wrote *Still in Love With You: The Story of Hank and Audrey Williams* with Dale Vinicur. Though she witnessed things Flippo and other Hank biographers could only surmise, this well-done narrative really takes off with Audrey's attempts to become a star after Hank's death.

Audrey had tried for a singing career while Hank was alive, despite a total lack of singing ability; the attempt aggravated problems in her marriage and caused trouble for her the rest of her life. Amid her carousing and wild spending, she developed a drinking problem as lethal as Hank's. By 1975, as Hank Jr. recovered from his near-fatal fall, her health collapsed, and the IRS prepared to seize her home for back taxes. She died the morning the agents were due.

Elvis from A to Z. Although more books have been written about Elvis than about any other American singer, serious reference works have been few and far between. Peter Guralnick's now writ-

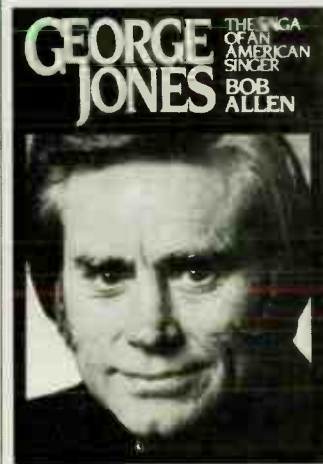


ing what may prove to be the definitive Elvis biography; in the meantime, a heavyweight volume worth having is *Elvis From A to Z* by Fred Worth and Steve Tamerius. I'll bet the producers of ABC's *Elvis* TV series, the best show ever done about American music (stupidly canceled by ABC programmers), spent plenty of time consulting this 618-page monster.

Elvis From A to Z answers nearly any question you'd ever have about any aspect—and I mean any aspect—of Presley's life: a biographical sketch of someone who wrote a song Elvis recorded, the name of the gas station attendant he slugged in 1956 and even the name of the cop from Tupelo, Mississippi, who sang three songs at the 1979 dedication of the Elvis Memorial Chapel. Also included are exterior photos of all Elvis' homes, complete lists of his records (including tributes by other artists) and data on his films. Illustrations include Dr. Nick's last prescription for Presley, a pro-

gram for the 1953 Humes High talent show in which Elvis appeared and a business card from his employer, Crown Electric.

George Jones: The Saga of an American Singer. Bob Allen's *George Jones: The Saga of an American Singer* has never received the credit it deserves as the best book ever done on any living country artist. It does not paint a pretty picture. Allen vividly captures Jones' family, his life and surroundings. From the rugged poverty of his upbringing in the Big Thicket of East Texas to his days singing on the streets of Houston and in the small honky tonks of the region, you can see George's character shaping. By weaving in anecdotes from friends, family and fellow artists, Allen creates a picture that's funny, pathetic, frightening and moving, sometimes all at once.



His ability to capture George's brilliance, sadness and basic decency is the book's greatest strength, for as much as George burned promoters, friends and his family, he victimized himself most of all. Allen names those who steered Jones wrong during his worst period in the early 1980's as well as the friends who tried to protect George and found themselves driven up the wall (or worse) before he settled down in the mid-1980's. *Country Music Magazine* ran an excerpt from the book back in November/December 1984.

—RICH KIENZLE

How to Get These Collectibles

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TOP 25

Singles

1. Randy Travis *Hard Rock Bottom of Your Heart*
2. Paul Overstreet *Seein' My Father in Me*
3. Garth Brooks *Not Counting You*
4. Lorrie Morgan *Five Minutes*
5. Patty Loveless *Chains*
6. Alan Jackson *Here in the Real World*
7. Mary Chapin
Carpenter *Quittin' Time*
8. Ronnie Milsap *Stranger Things Have Happened*
9. Dan Seals *Love on Arrival*
10. Don Williams *Just as Long as I Have You*
11. Eddy Raven *Sooner or Later*
12. Highway 101 *Walkin' Talkin' Cryin' Barely Beatin' Broken Heart*
13. The Oak Ridge Boys ... *No Matter How High*
14. Vince Gill with Reba ... *Oklahoma Swing*
15. Restless Heart *Fast Movin' Train*
16. Eddie Rabbitt *On Second Thought*
17. Travis Tritt *Help Me Hold On*
18. Hank Williams Jr *Ain't Nobody's Business*
19. Shenandoah *See If I Care*
20. Vern Gosdin *Right in the Wrong Direction*
21. Jann Browne *Tell Me Why*
22. Reba McEntire *Little Girl*
23. Clint Black *Walkin' Away*
24. Earl Thomas Conley ... *Bring Back Your Love to Me*
25. Sweethearts of the
Rodeo *This Heart*

Albums

1. Ricky Van Shelton *RVS III*
2. Clint Black *Killin' Time*
3. Hank Williams Jr *Lone Wolf*
4. Kentucky Headhunters . *Pickin' on Nashville*
5. Randy Travis *No Holdin' Back*
6. Restless Heart *Fast Movin' Train*
7. Kathy Mattea *Willow in the Wind*
8. Lorrie Morgan *Leave the Light On*
9. Charlie Daniels Band .. *Simple Man*
10. Garth Brooks *Garth Brooks*
11. Reba McEntire *Reba Live*
12. Sawyer Brown *The Boys Are Back*
13. k.d. lang *Absolute Torch & Twang*
14. Patty Loveless *Honky Tonk Angel*
15. Willie, Waylon,
Johnny & Kris *Highwayman 2*
16. Paul Overstreet *Sowin' Love*
17. Vern Gosdin *Alone*
18. Dolly Parton *White Limozeen*
19. George Strait *Beyond the Blue Neon*
20. Desert Rose Band *Pages of Life*
21. Randy Travis *Always & Forever*
22. Hank Williams Jr *Greatest Hits III*
23. Rodney Crowell *Keys to the Highway*
24. Shenandoah *The Road not Taken*
25. Dwight Yoakam *Just Lookin' for a Hit*

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