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# Music Row™

Nashville's Music Industry Newspaper

VOL. 5 NUMBER 6 SEPTEMBER 1985

ESTABLISHED 1981

## GRAM PARSONS

The Father of  
"Progressive  
Country"

## SONGWRITERS DENNIS MORGAN & STEVE DAVIS:

The Sneed Brothers  
On Wine, Women & Songs



### Inside:

- ★ Vinyl Conflict
- ★ Music Video Reviews
- ★ The Club Report and more . . .

### 45 RPM:

Gosdin Gets Single Of The Month

# GEORGE STRAIT

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# Music Row

Nashville's Music Industry Newspaper

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### ALL ABOUT THE COVER

**M**CA recording artist, George Strait, released "Unwound" in mid-1981, and accomplished the rare feat of scoring a top-10 single his first time out. Subsequent releases proved George was no one-hit wonder. He fulfilled that early promise with a string of solid hits, including "You Look So Good In Love," "Amarillo By Morning," "Fool Hearted Memory," and "Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind." In addition, Strait has just been nominated as a finalist by the CMA for Single of the Year, Entertainer of the Year, and Album of the Year.

Born in Poteet, Texas, he was raised by his father, a junior high math teacher who took over the family cattle ranch while George was growing up. It was there George learned to ride and rope steer, still one of his favorite hobbies. While stationed with the Army in Hawaii, George was chosen to sing in a country band on the base. Later after his discharge, he enrolled at Southwest Texas State University where he put together his Ace In The Hole band which is still with him today, and earned a degree in agricultural education.

Manager Erv Woolsey discovered George, and eventually brought him to MCA's attention.

The label is promoting George's new album *Something Special*, with a 'Something Special World Premiere radio weekend! The new album was digitally recorded and will be simultaneously available on CD format. The first single will be a song written by Dean Dillon, who wrote several of Strait's previous hits, "The Chair."

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**MUSIC ROW** . . . is distributed to studios, publishing companies, recording companies, pro audio stores, musician's unions and many other music industry related organizations in the Nashville area. In addition copies are sent out monthly to over 300 key reporting country music radio stations all over the U.S.A. We would appreciate receiving press releases concerning items of interest to the professional music community.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BRING BACK HANK

I am writing to express my frustration at an incredible act of omission on the part of country radio in not playing recordings of Hank Williams, Sr.

How can one of the greatest song-writing talents of all time be overlooked in this way? Hank's ingenious lyrics and his signature mournful delivery are well-known the world over. His deceptive simplicity, his understanding of human nature, his sadness, humor and spirituality are for many the epitome of country music. These qualities, which are sadly lacking in the assembly-line produced country music today, would be very refreshing to hear again on the radio. It would also be a much needed reminder of the kind of quality and sincerity that made country music original, before all the hackneyed and stereotyped writing made it as unsparkling and stale as old soda.

Michael Jackman,  
Nashville

### CLUB REPORT A HIT

Dear Editor;

Well, that does it. Do you realize that you have one of the finest rosters of contributing writers of any music magazine in this country? Congratulations on the addition of Jay Orr. I particularly enjoyed his Club Report in the August issue. This column is a much-needed service and I applaud both of you.

Elizabeth Thiels, President  
Network Ink, Inc.  
Nashville.

### NASHVILLE CONTRIBUTION

I must commend you on a most constructive issue of Music Row (August, 1985). It seems as though the music industry here has indeed lost the creative "trail blazing" quality that made it special to start with, and replaced that adventurousness with formulas, cliches and truisms about country music.

What's nice about last month's issue is that writers such as Lomax and

Oermann not only have the courage to identify these problems, but do so in a very positive and constructive manner. The reader can really tell that *Music Row* is making an effort to improve the Nashville Scene.

Your contribution to the Nashville music scene is not going unnoticed!

Bill Ferreira  
Ivory Interlude Music  
Nashville

### MASON DIXON FAN

Dear Robert K. Oermann,

Just had to drop you a note to say . . . fear not . . . there is a program director of a country combo in Traverse City that is sending the music of Mason Dixon to 26 counties in Northern Michigan as well as portions of Wisconsin and Canada! It was great to see some really nice comments about this super group. Thanks a lot!

Ryan Dobry  
Program Director, WTCM FM/AM  
Traverse City, Michigan

## ★ ★ CHARTBOUND ★ ★

# JOE DOWELL

## "Homeward On The Wind"



**B**orn in Bloomington, Indiana, Joe Dowell wrote his first song, "Tell Me," and bought a ten dollar guitar when he was 13. By the time he reached the ninth grade he was performing in amateur talent shows, and later majored in television and radio at the University of Illinois. During his days as a student he dreamed of being on the radio. "I tried to envision that I would be on the radio. I could actually hear my own voice on WLS radio which I listened to after and during homework."

*Chartbound is a paid promotional feature, to give exposure to new artists.*

The dream began to take shape when he impulsively borrowed a friend's VW and drove to Nashville in search of a record label only three weeks before his twenty-first birthday. He ended up at the offices of Teddy and Doyle Wilburn, regular singers on the Grand Ole Opry. They liked his voice and introduced him to Shelby Singleton Jr., then at Mercury records who was impressed with Dowell's voice and "all-American, Jack Armstrong look." Months later Singleton called him back to record "Wooden Heart" which floated up the charts all the way to the top (1961). After several less successful follow-up singles, Dowell returned to a career in radio-tv writing commercials and hosting his own radio show.

In 1980 the multi-talented artist left the advertising world to write a book, which he finished in 1985.

Joe Dowell has decided to return to the music which has been such an important passion in his life. He has written a new song, "Homeward On The Wind", recorded it with producer Al DeLory, and released it on Journey Records. For more information contact: Mike Borchetta, 47 Music Sq. E., Nashville, TN 37203. (615) 321-5080.



Former Cardinals' outfielder Lou Brock received congratulations from Lee Greenwood (in uniform) for his recent induction into baseball's Hall of Fame. Greenwood sang the National Anthem before a Cards/Dodgers game at Busch Stadium in St. Louis.

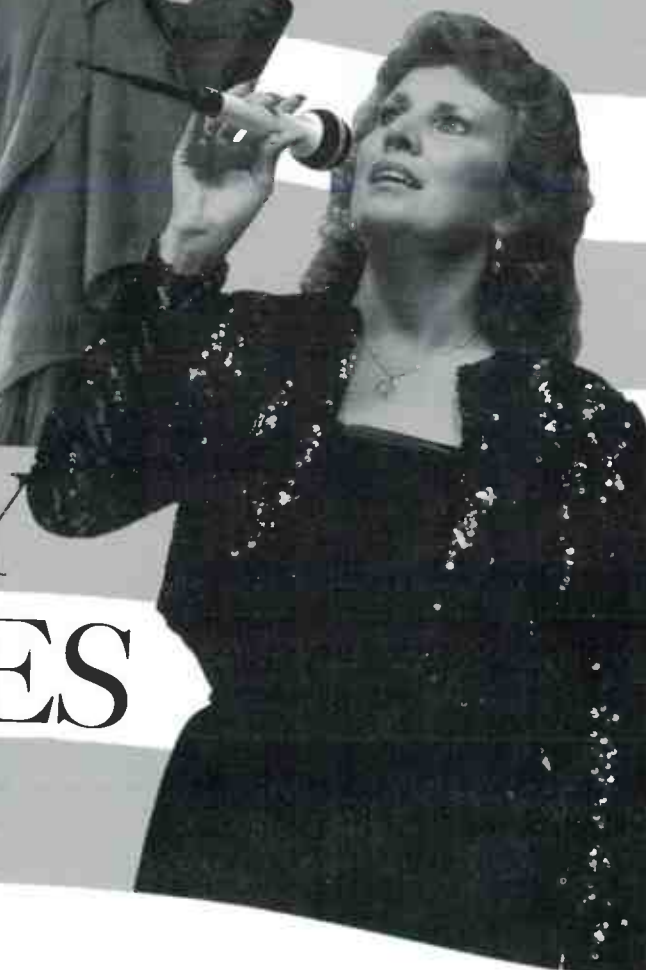
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BMI hosted a reception for Acuff-Rose-Opryland Music, Inc. in celebration of Opryland's purchase of the 43-year-old publishing firm. Framed certificates were presented to both Wesley Rose who managed the company since 1945, and Opryland president E. W. Wendell. (Left to Right) BMI's Roger Sovine, Wesley Rose, BMI's Frances Preston, and Bud Wendell.

**CMA AWARD FINALISTS ANNOUNCED**

**Single Of The Year:** Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On, Country Boy, Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind, Highwayman, Why Not Me  
**Song Of The Year:** Baby's Got Her Blue Jeans On, Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind, God Bless The USA, Mama He's Crazy, Seven Spanish Angels.

**Album Of The Year:** Country Boy-Ricky Skaggs, Does Fort Worth Ever Cross Your Mind-George Strait, 40 Hour Week-Alabama, My Kind Of Country-Reba McEntire, Why Not Me-The Judds.

**Entertainer:** Alabama, Lee Greenwood, Reba McEntire, Ricky Skaggs, George Strait.

**Horizon Award:** Ray Charles, Mel McDaniel, Eddy Raven, Sawyer Brown, John Schneider.

**Female Vocalist:** Rosanne Cash, Janie Fricke, Emmylou Harris, Reba McEntire, Anne Murray.

**Male Vocalist:** Lee Greenwood, Gary Morris, Ricky Skaggs, George Strait, Hank Williams Jr.

**Vocal Group:** Alabama, Exile, The Judds, Oak Ridge Boys, The Whites.

**Vocal Duo:** Moe Bandy & Joe Stampley, Ray Charles & Willie Nelson, Barbara Mandrell & Lee Greenwood, Anne Murray & Dave Loggins, Dolly Parton & Kenny Rogers.

**Instrumental Group:** Alabama, Exile, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Ricky Skaggs' Band, The Whites Band.

**Instrumentalist:** Chet Atkins, Floyd Cramer, Johnny Gimble, Hargus 'Pig' Robbins, Buddy Spicher.

**Music Video:** All My Rowdy Friends Are Comin' Over Tonight-Hank Williams Jr.; America-Waylon Jennings; Country Boy-Ricky Skaggs; Highwayman- Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, Johnny Cash, Kris Kristofferson; Second Hand Heart-Gary Morris.

The 19th annual CMA awards show will be hosted by Anne Murray and Kris Kristofferson live from the Grand Ole Opry on Monday, October 14, at 9:30 EDT. For the third year, a stereo simulcast will be satellite-delivered by the Mutual Broadcasting System. Finalists for induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame are: Rod Brasfield, Elton Britt, Flatt & Scruggs, Whitey Ford ("The Duke of Paducah") and Homer and Jethro.

**DIRT BAND REACHES TO PUBLIC TV**

The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band have produced a video that will ship to nearly 200 public television stations nationwide. "Telluride" is a five minute clip containing scenic footage, conversations with band member Jimmy Ibbotson and a performance. The piece was directed by Doug Stewart of TTS Video. A 12-inch single containing the song is also being shipped to 150 National Public Radio affiliated stations. The intended results are to attract non-country radio listeners to the band's acoustically-influenced music.



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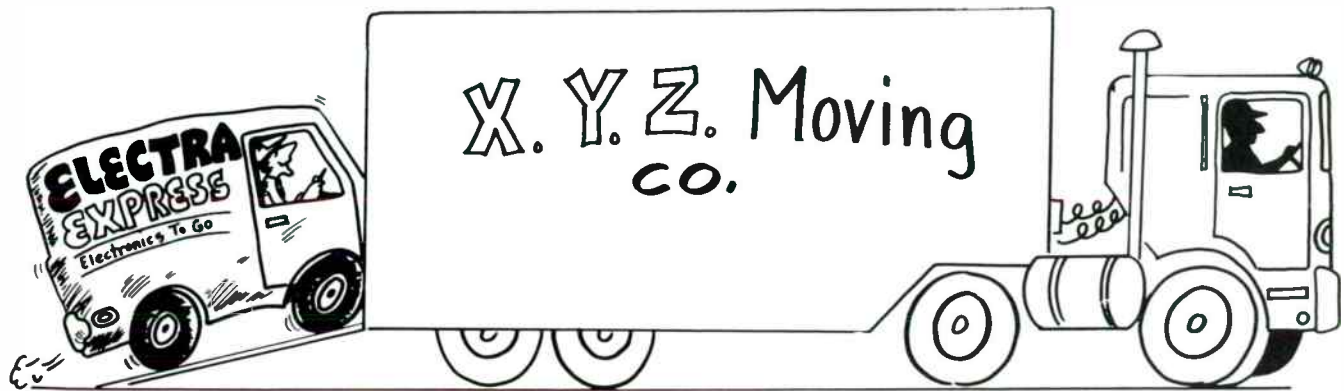


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## COUNTRY SLUMP: FACT OR FALLACY

A NEJA forum has been set for 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, September 11th, at Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music. The topic will be "The Country Music Slump: Fact Or Fallacy." Moderator for the event will be David M. Ross, publisher/editor of Music Row Publications. Panelists will comprise: C. Paul Corbin, TNN; Charlie Douglas, Music Country Radio Network; Nick Hunter, senior vp Warner Bros.; Bob Kirsch, Welk Music; Larry Schaeffer, Little Wing Prod.; Dan Wojcik, Entertainment Artists. Tickets are \$4 to the public and \$2 to NEJA members.

## MUSIC SALES TAX RULING WITHDRAWN

"The Department of Revenue is withdrawing 40 proposed rules changes including one that would tax the production of recordings" read the press release from the Governor's office on August 20. Several days earlier it had come to light that the state's revenue department was planning to amend the law to include a sales tax on all sound recordings.

The music community grouped together and voiced its deep concern over the proposed changes. The Nashville Music Association sent letters to all members advising them of the situation, and artist Gene Cotton supplied copies of the proposed rule changes. Robert K. Oermann ran a front page story in the Tennessean alerting the public to the impending threat to one of the state's major industries.

Mayor Fulton immediately came out against the proposed changes, and Governor Lamar Alexander also joined the battle. Shortly afterwards Tax Commissioner Don Jackson advised the industry that the proposal to tax recordings had been permanently withdrawn, and explained, "While the proposal may have been sound tax administration, it did not take into account the possible adverse effect upon economic development. Governor Alexander wants to avoid any change in tax policy which would discourage the music industry from further expansion of its activity in Tennessee."



**HALSEY SIGNS TWITTY.** The Jim Halsey Company has signed an "exclusive worldwide representation in all fields" deal with Conway Twitty which marks the first time since 1970 that Twitty's representation has not been part of his in-house operations. (Left to Right) John Hitt, executive vp Jim Halsey Co.; Twitty; and Jim Halsey, Chairman of the Board.

## CMA DEBUT OF U.K. ALBUM CHART

Being compiled for CMA by the Gallup organization, which also compiles the official British pop charts, a Country Albums Chart released every two weeks will feature the top thirty titles based on sales. The charts will be published by *Music Week* the UK's major trade magazine, and by *Billboard*.

The country album chart is a major step in CMA's efforts to develop Country Music in Europe. Funding for the chart is coming from the CMA and the UK offices of CBS, Capitol/EMI, MCA, RCA, and WEA. Artists and titles eligible for the chart will be decided by Gallup using guidelines set by the CMA. Essentially, all Country artists will be eligible. Other albums not usually considered Country may be included if there is airplay on UK Country programs or if there is US Country chart activity.

John Lomax III has been hired by *Music Week* to write a twice monthly Nashville column entitled "Country Matters."



Anne Murray and writer/producer David Foster team up in Toronto to record a song Foster co-wrote for Anne's forthcoming album. In addition to working with Murray, Foster has also completed pre-production work on Paul McCartney's next album and will soon turn his attention to a new Julio Iglesias LP.

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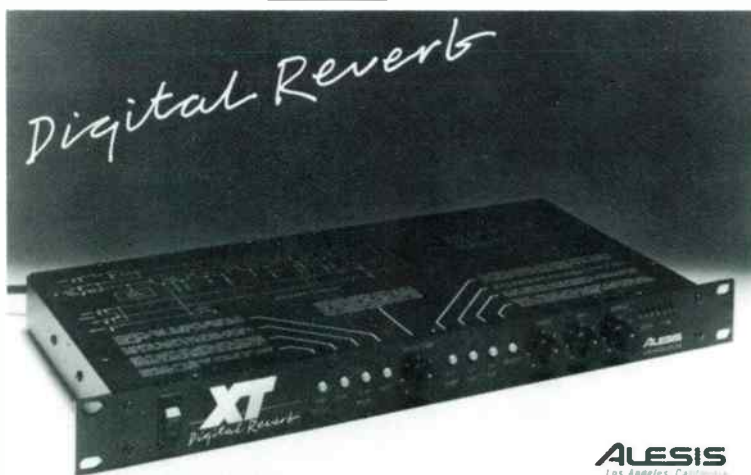
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## WORTH MENTIONING

★ The Country Music Foundation has voted Kenny Rogers the first recipient of its Roy Acuff Award in recognition of the entertainers service to mankind. Chairman of the Board, Frances Preston, commented, "Kenny has led a little publicized but very successful food relief program in conjunction with his recent concert tours. We feel this effort and his World Hunger Media Awards make Kenny a most deserving recipient."

★ Spearheaded by a number of music industry professionals including Tammy Wynette and Johnny Cash, the Touchstone non-profit Foundation has been created for "people in the entertainment industry and others who are having serious problems with alcohol and/or drugs. It is a residential center for men and women." The facility will be located in Dickson County. For more information call (615) 321-4401.

★ One year old and three songs in the top ten. The Writers Group founded by producer/musician James Stroud celebrated their first anniversary. The publishing company presently is represented on the charts with "Used To Blue" (Fred Knobloch/Bill LaBounty), "Modern Day Romance (Dan Tyler/Kix Brooks), and "I Fell In Love Again Last Night" (Paul Overstreet/ Thom Schuyler).

★ "Nashville: Music City USA. will firmly establish Nashville as a major American City and forever erase our stereotyped image as ignorant rednecks" predicted author John Lomax III. The 40 year old author is continuing a family tradition of writing books concerned with the songs and music of Americans. Published by Harry N. Abrams Inc., the book which contains 270 photographs (110 in color) and 75,000 words will be available as of September 16, and has a cover price of \$30.

★ Congratulations to Warner's Bob Saporiti and wife Jackie on the birth of their son, Julian Lihn.

★ Sawyer Brown is set for a concert tour of Japan this fall (September 26) which includes an appearance on a Japanese TV music special. Packaged with Kenny Rogers, it will be the first performances in Japan for both acts. Yes, they will have special Japanese language souvenir merchandise.

★ BMI hosted a luncheon for their million-airs. Writers whose songs have received more than a million air plays. Paul Williams and Roger Nichols (We've Only Just Begun) attained three million status; while Bob Montgomery (Misty Blue), Roger Miller (King Of The Road), and Don Gibson (Oh Lonesome Me) were among some 12 songs honored for two million plays.

— David Ross

# TOP INDEPENDENT COUNTRY SINGLES

As reported by The **IRC** Network Reporting Stations

"Compiled from over 300 IRC Network Reports"

Title, Artist, Label, Record #  
Producer, Publisher(s), writer(s), Contact

## Survey Period Ending August 25, 1985

Weeks Tracked	Last Survey	This Survey	Title, Artist, Label, Record #
8	1	1	<b>100 POUNDS OF CLAY</b> Orion/Kristal Wayne Hodge/Gil BMI/L. Dixon, B. Elgin, K. Rogers
4	10	2	<b>I'M NOT LEAVING</b> Ray Price/Step One Ray Pennington/Tree BMI/Southwing ASCAP/H. Cochran, R. Porter, D. Dillon
4	6	3	<b>I WANNA BE A COWBOY TILL I DIE</b> Jim Collins/White Gold Ray Baker/Baray BMI/D. Rosson
8	2	4	<b>COUNTRY BLUES</b> Krystyn Vaughn/AMI H. Hodges, R. Cottrell/Kelso Road BMI/My Melody SESAC/R. Cottrell, H. Hodges
4	5	5	<b>HOUSTON HEARTACHE</b> Mason Dixon/Texas Don Schafert/Baray BMI/MDS ASCAP/J. Henderson, D. Mitchell, J. McCollum
14	14	6	<b>EVERYDAY PEOPLE</b> Margo Smith/Tom Grant/Bermuda Dunes Al Hinson/Warner/Tamerlane/Blue Lake/Face The Music/Plum Creek BMI/Barnes, Seals
2	#	7	<b>OUT OF SIGHT, OUT OF MIND</b> Narvel Felts/Evergreen Johnny Morris/Kahl BMI/I. J. Hunter, C. Otis
6	3	8	<b>DON'T TELL MAMA</b> Mirinda/Stargem Johnny Dollar/Megahurts BMI/J. Staats
6	7	9	<b>DIXIE'S ARMS</b> Doc Randolph/Stargem Wayne Hodge/Tree/O'Lyric BMI/Cross Keys ASCAP/M. Garvin, B. Jones, T. Shapiro
8	12	10	<b>I'D DO IT IN A HEARTBEAT</b> Hill City/Moonshine Andy DiMartino/Dejamus ASCAP/Dick James BMI/R. Giles, G. Harrison
6	9	11	<b>CINCINNATI BLUES</b> Ray Pennington/Step One Ray Pennington/Almarie BMI/Cross Keys ASCAP/R. Pennington, D. Kirby
12	4	12	<b>YOU JUST HURT MY LAST FEELING</b> Sammi Smith/Step One B. Bobo, R. Pennington/Tree BMI/Southwing ASCAP/H. Cochran, R. Porter
4	16	13	<b>I'VE GOT EVERYTHING IT TAKES</b> Cheryl Handy/RCM Stan Cornelius/Robchris BMI/R. Jenkins, L. Jenkins
12	8	14	<b>I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU</b> Freddie Hart/EI Dorado Buddy Kileni/Heartline/Dobbins BMI/F. Hart, D. Brewer, F. Brewer
4	27	15	<b>WHEN YOU LEAVE THAT WAY</b> Bill Anderson/Swanee Walter Haynes/Music City ASCAP/S. Clark, J. Macrae
2	#	16	<b>TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT</b> Carlette/Luv Ray Ruff, Betty Gibson/Luvco BMI/Calente ASCAP/L. Fargo, C. Ruff
4	22	17	<b>LITTLE TOWN GIRL</b> Natalie Young/Angel Face Darrill Glenn/Vanessa ASCAP/M. Venet
2	#	18	<b>SAILING HOME TO ME</b> Loy Blanton/Soundwaves Joe Allen/Cross Keys ASCAP/Tree/Tamerlane BMI/D. Kirby, D. Morrison
12	15	19	<b>LOOKING BACK IS EASIER</b> Jack Greene/EMH Penrae Prod./Almarie BMI/R. Pennington
4	19	20	<b>SHIMMER IN THE NIGHT</b> Neal James/Neal James H. Shedd, N. James, F. Green/Lu-Faye, Cottage Blue BMI/N. James
4	30	21	<b>SHE'S GOT THE RHYTHM</b> Buckeye/NSD Roger Ball/Peso/Wallet BMI/L. Bastian, D. Blackwell
2	#	22	<b>SHE AIN'T DEALING (WITH A FULL DECK)</b> Stephen Oscar Burnside/Prospect Stephen Oscar Burnside/Swanwick Ave Pro BMI/S.O. Burnside
14	11	23	<b>SILVER TONGUED DEVIL STRIKES GOLD</b> Albert Updyke/Stargem Wayne Hodge/Tieche BMI/R. Upton
10	17	24	<b>CRY, CRY</b> Vicki Lee/Rustic Harold Bradley/Guava SESAC/B. Senseney
4	18	25	<b>BREAK OUT THE GOOD STUFF</b> Roy Head/Texas Crude Stephen Mendell/Tree BMI/Cross Keys ASCAP/M. Garvin, R. Hellard, B. Jones
10	21	26	<b>YOU CAN'T HAVE YOUR WAY (WITH A MEMORY)</b> Wayne Kemp/Doorknob D. Walls, W. Kemp/Doorknob BMI/M. Dodaro, K. Pittman
10	13	27	<b>YOU'RE MY RADIO</b> Sandy Lehman/Radiograph Stan Cornelius/Welbeck ASCAP/B. Hill, J. R. Wilde
2	#	28	<b>DANCING IN THE DARK</b> Loney Hutchins/ARC Loney Hutchins/Appalachia BMI/L. Hutchins
8	29	29	<b>HEAVEN KNOWS</b> Audie Henry/Canyon Creek Bart Barton/Sawgrass Music BMI/R. Squires, B. Williams, J. Darrell
4	26	30	<b>WAIT TILL I GET MY HANDS ON YOU</b> Wynn Stewart/Pretty World Charles Ammerman/Pretty World BMI/R. McOwen

# New Entry



INDEPENDENT RECORD CHARTS

41 MUSIC SQUARE EAST NASHVILLE, TN 37203

(615) 244-1027

This chart is compiled and paid for by the Independent Record Charts of Nashville, TN and represents the reported playlists submitted by the IRC Radio Network to IRC.

Music Row Publications is in no way responsible for its content. All inquires should be directed to Independent Record Charts.

## GEORGE STRAIT RADIO PROMOTION



MCA has announced a special promotion in conjunction with the release of George Strait's sixth album *Something Special*. The promotion billed as "Something Special World Premiere Weekend" was developed for the pop market

**TOUCHSTONE CONTINUING CARE CENTER.** Shown following a press conference at Tammy Wynette's home to announce the Touchstone Foundation are (Left to Right) seated, CMA's Jo Walker-Meador and Wynette; standing, Paul Richey, BMI's Frances Preston, and Wynette's husband George Richey.



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eight years ago by Bob Hamilton, of California-based HNE Productions and Radio Star. MCA first tried the concept several months ago with The Oak Ridge Boys *Step On Out* album. More than 300 country and A/C stations participated in the event.

The "Something Special" weekend scheduled for August 30 through September 1 was coordinated by Production Director, Katie Gillon; National Director of Promotion, Sheila Shipley; and Hamilton. It is not a 'canned' program and there is no charge to participating stations. It is a package of program elements which can be built into a personalized format. The package contains two discs. One contains a ten-minute collage of Strait's past hits, and a copy of the new album. On disc two is a 50-minute interview.

The new album was digitally recorded and mastered, and co-produced by Strait and Jimmy Bowen. A video is in progress, and the vinyl product will be released simultaneously on CD, the first such simultaneous release for an MCA/Nashville product.



**SEVENTEEN IN A ROW.** Alabama sets a new industry record with 17 number one singles in a row.

## ALABAMA'S 17TH SETS NEW RECORD

As "Forty Hour Week" made its way to the number one chart position, Alabama became the first recording act to have seventeen consecutive number one singles! At a celebration for the group hosted by the Country Music Association, RCA Vice President, Joe Galante presented a huge framed plaque of all seventeen hits to CMA Executive Director, Jo Walker-Meador.

The previous record holder, Sonny James, who had a string of sixteen consecutive toppers in the early 70's was on hand to offer congratulations to the group. Lead singer Randy Owen commented, "It's hard to believe that on July 12, 1980 we were playing for tips at the Bowery, in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina."

A recent Gallup Youth Survey of 5000 teenagers nationwide between the ages of 13 and 18 years old ranked Alabama as the fourth favorite behind Def Leppard, Journey, and Quiet Riot as overall favorite musical group.



## MUSICAL CHAIRS

Eddie Rabbitt is the newest signee at RCA records, however the Little Nipper label recently lost twenty year roster favorite, **Charlie Pride** . . . **John Conlee** has left MCA . . . **Karen Brooks** also joins the casualty list at Warner Bros. . . . **Donna Hilley** has become executive vice-president, **Joe Huffman** assumes the position of director of business affairs, and **Harriane Condra** becomes general manager of the copyright division all at Nashville-based publisher, **Tree International** . . . **James V. Carlson** has been promoted to Associate Director, Product Marketing, Columbia Records. Carlson's responsibilities include monitoring advertising expenditures, and initiating and developing music video productions . . . **Redlock Music** a new publishing company owned by members of the late Otis Redding's family, signed with BMI . . . **Hot Ax**, booking agency created by **Allison Frank** and **Nita Grisham**, will book groups that play "original, progressive type music." They can be reached at 383-0080 . . . **Mike Feurt** has joined the sales staff of **Top Billing International** . . . **The Blackwood Brothers** have signed a recording agreement with **Riversong Records** . . . **Helen Cornelius** signed a recording deal with MCA-DOT. **Billy Strange** to produce her new album . . . Columbia artist, **Ronnie Robbins**, has pacted with **World Class Talent** for exclusive representation on all of the singer's personal appearances with the **Marty Robbins Band** . . . **Merle Haggard** did a benefit in Sioux City, Iowa for the Farm Crisis Committee. Merle stated, "The farmers need the help of all entertainers—and country entertainers in particular. In these times of rural crisis, I call upon all of them to 'Take a Stand For American Agriculture!'" . . . **Loney Hutchins** is the first artist signed to newly created **Appalachia Records**. The label will use in-house as well as independent services for marketing, distribution and promotion. (615) 451-1916 . . . **New Clarion Music Group** has announced the signing of **Don Sampson** and **Steve Seskin** to exclusive writer agreements. In addition, **Karen Charleton** and **Billy Dean** were signed to production agreements with SKP Productions . . . Capitol records continues to expand their Nashville artist roster with the additions of **Don Williams** and **Tom Wopat**. Williams formerly on MCA records is again reunited with label head **Jim Foglesong** . . . **WNOX**, Knoxville, Tennessee's oldest radio station, will launch its live "New Tennessee Barn Dance" on September 20 with a gala celebration and building dedication preceding the premiere broadcast. The original Barn Dance show which ran from the 1930's to the mid-60's is credited with the discovery of dozens of country music stars many of whom are invited to return for the new opening night. **Archie Campbell** will MC the event . . . **Fran Dalton** has been ap-

pointed VP of operations, and will head the publicity department at **Roy & Roy**. Formed earlier this year, the public relations/marketing company is a division of Stellar Ent. which coordinates Kenny Roger's tours as well as other C.K. Spurlock and G. Gerald Roy events . . . **The Whites** will appear at the Mercedes-Benz Festival of Country Music in Peterborough, England on August 26. MCA is also releasing their latest album to the British public, "Whole New World." . . . Hawaii-based producer/director/arranger, **Joe Gannon**, has been working with **T. G. Sheppard** on his all-new stage show which is getting rave reviews. Gannon has worked with artists such as **Neil Diamond**, **Diana Ross**, **Alice Cooper**, and **Mac Davis** . . . **Nite Records of America**, president, **Randy Nite** announced that **Laura Mahaffey** has been added as administrative manager, **Ray White** as manager of press and artist relations and **Sol Greenberg** will act as product distribution consultant . . . **Vern Gosdin** has re-signed management and the **TMG** affiliated companies, have moved their offices to 818 Eighteenth Ave South, Suite 300. Their phone numbers remain the same . . . **Copperfield Music Group** has opened offices at 58 Music Sq. West. The Georgia-based company has vp **Jack Eubanks**, and office manager **Angela Robbins** in their Nashville office. Artists signed to the label include the **Chuck Wagon Gang** and **The Northams** . . . **MTM Music Group** has added **Claudia Welker** in retail promotion, and **Jane Cleveland** who will handle college promotion . . . Canadian country stars **Carroll Baker** and **Dick Damron** will be joined by **Charley Pride** to co-host the **Canadian Country Music Awards** in Edmonton on September 8 . . . Motion Records Artist, **Michael Dillon**, will headline the Muscular Dystrophy Fundraising Concert and Auction on September 1. This is Dillon's third year spearheading the local MD drive . . . **Bobby Fischer** and **Dan Mitchell** have formed **Partner Productions** to feature record productions, artist development, and co-writing songs. Mitchell recently signed writers **Robby Feutz**, **Lorin Reyzek**, **Joe Lake**, and **Joe Henderson** to his newly formed publishing company, **Rebel Run**. **Fischer and Lucus Inc.** will continue to distribute and promote records nationally . . .

**Barry Beckett** has been appointed Director of Artist and Repertoire, Warner Bros., Nashville. According to label head **Jim Ed Norman**, Beckett will play an active role in the day-to-day creative mechanics as well as serve as producer for various WB artists. One of the key forces in the Muscle Shoals music scene, Beckett's production credits include **Bob Dylan**, **Dire Straits**, **Delbert McClinton**, **Phoebe Snow** and **Joan Baez**. As a member of the famed **Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section** he played keyboards on

albums for **Julian Lennon**, **Bob Seger**, **Paul Simon**, **The Oak Ridge Boys** and many others . . .

September 7 is **Charlie Daniels Day VI** in Mt. Juliet, hosted by the Kiwanis Club and WSIX Radio. The event includes a parade, crafts, live music, and earns money for the community . . . **Debra Waldren**, formerly with United Record Pressing has been appointed executive assistant at **Chumley Productions** . . . and this last but not least entry; **Keith Whitley** has been elected into the CSBC (cute & sexy bunn club). The club's executive director, **Cheri Cohee** presented the prestigious award from their Bath, Illinois offices, and Whitley's publicist, **Mike Hyland**, dutifully brought it to our attention. The club's motto, "never be afraid to turn the other cheek." . . . Well, that's the bare facts for this month . . .

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**FORESTERS SIGN WITH ASCAP.** CMA Horizon Award nominees, The Forester Sisters recently presented ASCAP's Connie Bradley with their new album after signing with the performing rights organization. (Left To Right) Christy, Kathy, June, ASCAP's Connie Bradley and Merlin Littlefield, Kim, and the group's manager Gerald Roy.

## CMA PRESENTS TBEM

The Country Music Association will present the first annual Talent Buyers Entertainment Marketplace (TBEM), with the theme 'Turning Problems Into Opportunities' at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Nashville, October 11-13.

"TBEM is a new event evolving from the 13 year old Talent Buyers Seminar, which is designed to meet specific communication and information needs of promoters, buyers, agents, managers, and representatives of parks, auditoriums, fairs, clubs, and colleges," said committee chairman Joseph Sullivan, president of the Sound Seventy corporation. "With TBEM the format of the Talent Buyers Seminar has been upgraded and expanded to include many new events and activities, more new and developing talent, and more chances for participants to speak as well as listen."

The event will include two panels, three showcases with a total of fifteen performers, and "agents alley" a space where actual business and bookings can take place. Keynote speaker is syndicated columnist and author, Lewis Grizzard.

Seminar registration for CMA members is \$125 in advance and \$175 after a September 16 deadline or on-site. Non-members registration is \$175 advance and \$225 after the deadline. For more information call (615) 244-2840.

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### EVENTS CALENDAR

#### September 11

NEJA forum 6-8 PM at Vanderbilt Blair School of Music. "The Country Music Slump: Fact or Fallacy." Tickets are \$4, \$2 to members & students. 320-5492

#### September 12

NMA, Ampex Corp., and Mitsubishi Pro-Audio present a free forum on state-of-the-art Digital Tape and Digital Recording. Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel 5-9 PM. Reservations 321-5662.

#### November 2

Nashville Entertainment Journalist Association sponsors their third annual Journalist Seminar at the Blair School, Nashville. 327-2484.

#### October 29

NEJA sponsored, "Bob's Barbecue." A music industry tacky-roast for Robert K. Oermann, at the Nashville Palace. Tickets \$9.99, Time - 7:01 pm. Proceeds to go to the scholarship fund. 225-8855.

# The Father Of "Progressive Country" Gram Parsons

An Excerpt From The New Book "Nashville: Music City USA"

by John Lomax III

Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson have received most of the credit for creating "progressive country" out of thin air in the mid-1970's, but they were not the first to attempt to fuse country and rock elements. Three albums made in California for A & M Records late in the 1960's preceded those cut six years later by the two Texans.

Two of these albums have received scant recognition, and their creators fared little better, at least in terms of commercial success. Steve Young's *Rock Salt & Nails* and *The Dillard & Clark Expedition* recorded by Doug Dillard and Michael Clark represented two of these exceptional efforts. But when it comes to the successful mating of country and rock, the real unsung hero is the late Gram Parsons, a vastly talented, extremely troubled son of the South whose love of country music during the turbulent late 1960's brought him more derision than acclaim while he lived.

Parsons' name probably will never be inscribed on a bronze plaque hanging in the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville, but his influence on the course of country music exceeds the contributions of some artists and executives who have been so honored. Beginning with his 1967 International Submarine Band LP, *Safe At Home*, and in subsequent recordings with the Byrds (*Sweetheart of the Rodeo*), the Flying Burrito Brothers (*Gilded Palace of Sin*), and as a solo artist (*GP*, *Grievous Angel*), Parsons unveiled his love of country music. At a time when rock 'n' roll and acid rock ruled the airwaves, Parsons was determined to bring the purity and beauty of country music to the attention of his own generation, who perceived the form as the exclusive province of aging rednecks.

It must have been an awfully lonely task! Parsons' long hair and open drug use did not endear him to the country traditionalists whose music he so dearly loved. And his country stylings were decidedly unappealing to his generation. They were then enamored of the many electric and electronic rock experiments going on in what was called "progressive rock." These songs' lyrics were generally shrouded in abstruse symbolism; some were so mysterious that their meaning eluded their composers as well. The leading American bands of the day were the Jefferson Airplane, the Doors, Jimi Hendrix, Vanilla Fudge, Iron Butterfly, and the Grateful Dead. Even the Beatles and the Rolling Stones had become psychedelized, as such discs as *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Their Satanic Majesties Request* plainly showed.

Parsons joined the Byrds in April of 1968 and quickly became the major influence in the group. "We set out to hire a piano player and



Gram Parsons several months before his death.

— Photo by John Lomax III

we got George Jones in a sequined suit," the group's Chris Hillman later remarked. Their *Sweetheart of the Rodeo* disc, released late in 1968, can be considered the first recorded attempt by an important rock group to integrate country and rock styles. Alas, it did not do well at the retail counter. The Byrds' many fans, won by such "folk-rock" fusions as "Mr. Tambourine Man," "Eight Miles High," "Turn, Turn, Turn," and "So You Want To Be A Rock And Roll Star," weren't impressed when they heard the group perform country standards like "I Am A Pilgrim" and "You're Still On My Mind" or such gorgeous originals as Gram's "Hickory Wind," "One Hundred Years From Now," and "Blue Canadian Rockies."

Parsons moved on to form the Flying Burrito Brothers with Hillman, introducing rock fans to steel guitars and the handiwork of Nudie of Hollywood, the gaudy tailor to such country stars as Porter Wagoner and Hank Snow. *Gilded Palace of Sin*, which contained nine songs written or co-written by Parsons, sent critics scurrying to the dictionary in search of superlatives. But it was a poor seller.

A second Burritos album also failed commercially, then a third. By this time Hillman was the only original member left.

Undeterred, Parsons continued to pursue his dream of a rock-country fusion, a marriage he termed "cosmic American music" or "soul country cosmic," by launching a solo career with *GP*, a brilliant album featuring country standards—"The Streets of Baltimore," "We'll Sweep Out The Ashes in the Morning"—and his own gems, including "The New Soft Shoe," "She," and "Still Feeling Blue." *GP* also rescued Emmylou Harris from the Washington, D.C., area folk-bluegrass scene, where she was slowly going nowhere, and introduced her to mass audiences. The group built around the album took to the road early in 1973 for a honky-tonk tour, traveling in an old bus rather than by air, as was the rock custom in those heady times.

Alas, Parsons, nicknamed "The Crown Prince of Excess," succumbed to his bad habits that September, just after finishing his follow-up LP. He was twenty-six. He died alone at the Joshua Tree Inn, a drug overdose who passed away before ever seeing the hardy crops that were to grow from the seeds he had sown. His final recordings were issued posthumously on *Grievous Angel*, an album that surpassed even *GP*. The disc was once again a mixture of classic country tunes, including "Love Hurts," "Cash on the Barrelhead," and "I Can't Dance," and Parsons' new tunes, "Return of the Grievous Angel," "Las Vegas," and "Brass Buttons." The album closes with "In My Hour of Darkness," the only song Gram and Emmylou wrote together:

In my hour of darkness,  
in my time of need  
Oh Lord, grant me vision,  
oh Lord, grant me speed

That song, like much of Gram's material, deserved to be recorded by top country artists. However, the Nashville producers were not searching for material from California country rockers. Few of them knew, or would have cared had they known, that Gram was raised in Georgia and Florida; when they looked at Parsons, all they saw was the dreaded association with rock 'n' roll and drugs. Gram's wild and woolly reputation was one of the reasons Merle Haggard backed away from producing *GP* after originally agreeing to the project.

Parsons' influence upon country artists lay in seeding the ground that the progressive country acts later harvested. Without his seminal work, it's doubtful that Waylon and Willie would have found such a ready audience for their own recordings several years later. These ushered in the "outlaw" phase of country music, which rescued the form from the sales doldrums and led it to new heights of success.

(Continued on page 18)



# Vinyl Conflict



**NANCI GRIFFITH**  
*Once In A Very Blue Moon*  
Philo 1096

*Producers: Jim Rooney, Nancy Griffith*

**LOMAX:** Pete, there's so much to tout here I hardly know where to begin. I cannot recall when an "unknown" artist has blossomed so brilliantly since the initial outings essayed by Dolly, Loretta and Tammy back in the 1960's. Just in case you've been busy sopping up pina colodas with the Young Nashvillians at Maude's, here's the rundown.

Nanci co-produced the record along with Jim Rooney, wrote eight of the thirteen songs (and co-wrote another) and even collaborated with noted Texas artist Bill Narum (creator of many zippy ZZ Top album covers) on the front and back wrappers. Take one look at the quality of that cover and you'll receive a large hint as to the nature of its contents.

Inside, the promise is delivered by sparkling production, glittering songs and a stellar cast of pickers drawn equally from "old guard" masters like Kenny Malone and Lloyd Green, "young Turks" like Bela Fleck, Mark O'Conner, Phillip Donnelly, Ralph Vitello and Texas stalwarts Lyle Lovett and Stephen Doster. This elite crew provides gorgeous settings for Nanci's songs and the well-chosen covers of work by such underappreciated writers as Richard Dobson, Lovett, Eugene Levine, Pat Alger, Bill Stains and Eric Taylor.

Griffith's songs are densely packed vignettes of everyday life as free from cliché as Brenda Lee is from pretention. The overall result of this marriage between strong material, crisp understated production and scintillating players stands as an example of how good Nashville musicians can be when they turn their thoughts away from stamping out an endless and ennui-inducing supply of "counterfeit Country" and "Yuppie & Western."

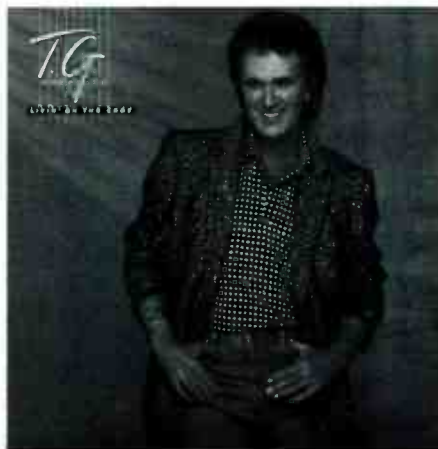
*Once In A Very Blue Moon* stamps Nanci

Griffith as a major American artist. Pete, and I trust that those pina colodas haven't rendered you too punch-drunk to agree.

**LOESCH:** John, that you could discern the elegant excellence of this album—despite a chronically malfunctioning turntable—represents a stirring triumph of man over machine.

In a genre seemingly fixated on the mystical powers of blue jeans, the lp would be welcome merely for its literacy and scope. What distinguishes Nanci Griffith from so many intricate lyricists, however, is her recognition that the use of a memorable melody and refrain (as in the lovely "Time Alone") does not amount to an unpardonable sellout. Also, as a vocalist, Nanci imbues her work with both smooth and rough textures. Like Emmylou Harris, she understands that a "sensitive" female artist will not be banished to Lower Broadway for singing a gritty passage when the occasion demands. For that sensibility, we can surely forgive Griffith's occasionally choppy diction and falsetto rides.

Unfortunately, *Once In A Very Blue Moon* will not likely find favor among those whose penchant for observing life is limited to tracking arrivals and departures at Tavern On The Row.



**T.G. SHEPPARD**  
*Livin' On The Edge*  
Columbia FC 40007

*Produced by Rick Hall*

**LOESCH:** As you know, John, it's not just the vinyl that's recyclable in the Nashville music machine: So are the artists. No sooner is a disenfranchised veteran released by a major league country ball club than his or her signing by a competitor is celebrated with a spread that is seldom as lavish as the accompanying

rhetoric. (On rare occasions, the insignificance of such an event can be conclusively demonstrated by the discovery that even I was invited.)

Which brings us to T.G. Sheppard. Presumably trying to cure a "seven year ache" after his stint with Warner Bros., the dapper housewife's heart-throb has joined the CBS squad. On the heels of that career development comes news of an elaborate sweepstakes promotion involving T.G.'s "Fooled Around And Fell In Love" video, his first album for Columbia, and . . . K-Mart.

It thus devolves on me to announce, in my most piercing voice, "Attention, shoppers! This is K-Mart country." Notwithstanding Muscle Shoals producer Rick Hall's injection of a drum machine, keyboard flourishes, and background vocal gimmicks (including more "doo wops" than a Sha Na Na partisan might tolerate), *Livin' On The Edge* still spotlights a singer of limited breadth and vision. Thematically, the material displays all the range of an aging outfielder: Compared to the journey from "Crazy In My Heart," to "In Over My Heart," to "Banging My Heart Against The Wall" (whose melody should be fined for not showing up), the conjugation of a Latin verb would crackle with excitement. And if we need to hear another ballad about a woman who is but a "good imitation" of "A Great Work Of Art," then I need to gain ten pounds.

I pray, Lomax, that this uninspiring record will not push you—and others livin' on the edge—over it.

**LOMAX:** Pete, it's a wonder T.G. even survived this outing to live "on the edge", albeit rather nattily dressed. He opens matters bragging about a woman who will never forget him but by cut #2 he's suffering "emotional insanity" and his body's "out of control". The next track finds a "time bomb goin' off" in his heart but he recovers quickly and pledges a life of fidelity in cut #4. He then urges a burnt victim of love to "love it out on me".

Side two begins on an ominous note: T.G. is "drowning fast but goin' down slow", a calamity which fails to forestall an adulterous relationship in the next selection. A woman foolishly tries to help him only to be told she's "a great imitation". He spends track #9 crying over a photo of an old love, jealously berating her husband for "tasting her love". By the album's end, another woman has left him "with my hands tied", slowly "banging my heart against the wall".

I can see why they cast an orangutan as his leading lady in the video of "Fooled Around And Fell In Love."





**DAN SEALS**

*Won't Be Blue Anymore*  
EMI America ST-17166

Producer: Kyle Lehning

**LOMAX:** In the past three years, Dan Seals, has placed four consecutive top-10 singles. With this turn at bat, *Won't Be Blue Anymore*, seems likely to keep his status as a radio staple. Pete, I don't hear anything here that would drive me to fury; in fact, I find the words "engaging" and "listenable" popping to mind every time I give this platter a spin. Sure, I'm not wild about the cliched situation presented in "City Kind Of Girl," but Seals pleasantly rises above even that overused setup.

Credit producer Lehning for the overall mellow flow to *Won't Be Blue Anymore* and for helping to locate eleven songs worthy of Seals's considerable talent. The arrangements are sparkling excursions in "modern country" territory; yet such acoustic stalwarts as Jerry Douglas, Bobby Thompson and Mark O'Connor are also given room to shine.

I was also pleasantly surprised by Seals' writing: his three contributions begin the disc and all are as solid as Larry Holmes. The title song is particularly endearing and it moves Seals firmly into territory currently occupied by Ricky Skaggs. "Everything That Glitters," a Seals-Bob McDill collaboration, is also a standout effort which gives Dan room to stretch his supple upper register.

I'm told that we can expect "Bop," a Paul Davis-Jennifer Kimball concoction, as the next single and I must applaud that choice. "Bop" is just the sort of uptempo, happy dance selection that country radio needs as desperately as Hank Snow needs a new "rug."

All in all, *Won't Be Blue Anymore* is a fine effort by an artist we'll likely be hearing more from in the future. I hope that you'll take the time away from watching reruns of obscure boxing matches, Pete, and address the issue of Mr. Seals ability.

**LOESCH:** Amazingly, Lomax, the truth about this album was not a casualty of your tireless promotion of your first book. I would submit, however, that "Everything That Glitters," a beautifully drawn portrait of a relationship soured by stardom, deserves a loftier tribute than "listenable" or "engaging." In any case, *Won't Be Blue Anymore*—a recording noteworthy for

its liveness and immediacy—undeniably features more than enough material approaching that standard to outweigh the few rather imitative tracks. (In that regard, I fear that the success of "Meet Me In Montana" means that it won't be long before we learn from some hastily-concocted duo the reason God made Kansas.)



**THE FORESTER SISTERS**

*The Forester Sisters*

Warner Bros. 25314-1

Produced by J.L. Wallace and Terry Skinner

**LOESCH:** The sudden ascent of the Forester Sisters, in the wake of the recent acceptance of the Judds and Whites, documents the reemergence of female family harmony as a marketable Music City commodity. Sounding (as one artist has remarked) somewhat like four Terri Gibbs, the Lookout Mountain, Georgia natives fashioned a storybook breakthrough with "(That's What You Do) When You're In Love." Spearheaded by that mini-drama of guilt and forgiveness, this charming debut album explores moral, familial, and inner turmoil to a degree rivaled only by the prime-time soap operas.

There's a daughterly apologia reminiscent of "Mama He's Crazy" ("Mama's Never Seen Those Eyes"); a poignant commentary on mother-and-child abandonment ("Reckless Night"); and two heart-versus-mind romantic conflicts ("Something Tells Me"; "Crazy Heart"). Fittingly, the Civil War is even reenacted in Bobby Keel and Billy Stone's "Yankee Don't Go Home"—wherein the singer surrenders to a Northern suitor who is likened to the advancing Union Army. (Funny, I never seems to elicit a white flag on that kind of mission.)

In the best Muscle Shoals tradition, the musicians complement the quartet's irresistibly Southern inflections with punchy, uncluttered backing. The seamless incorporation of steel guitar (Sonny Garrish) and fiddle & mandolin (Hoot Hester)—instruments not commonly associated with that recording site—speaks particularly well for the production.

That the Foresters' harmonizing remains infectious on a pedestrian composition like "Dixie Man" testifies to their considerable appeal. And—perhaps most importantly—the lp is guaranteed not to contain one duet with Willie Nelson.

**LOMAX:** Well, Pete, I'm delighted to find that the Forester Sisters maiden vinyl voyage is as tasty as their two fine singles. The album should not only solidify the fans attracted by "(That's What You Do) When You're In Love" and "I Fell In Love Again Last Night" but win new converts as well. With the exception of "Yankee, Don't Go Home", the Sisters present a very convincing set of four-part harmony propelled by a country-rock beat. That they strike out so decisively on "Yankee" may simply mean they aren't up to a ballad as yet. Since everyone else is spewing them out like Mt. St. Helens once ejaculated rock, gas, fire and ash, that's a blessing in my book.

So which Forester sings lead on which selection? Can the art director be held back a grade for such an ugly cover? These are minor quibbles in packaging which are easily remedied. The important fact is that the Forester Sisters have presented a solid album which should make the Judds breathe a bit harder. I wonder if the Forester Sisters' mother can sing? . . .

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# The Sneed Brothers

**S**itting in the upstairs attic workshop at Dennis Morgan's in-town office, it's easy to sense the excitement and enthusiasm that this relatively new writing team is feeling. Two electric pianos, a set of vibes, a drum machine, and several guitars are in view, as well as an eight track recorder in the adjoining control room. The late afternoon light covers it all in a blanket of calm and I can't help feeling like I've entered a secret clubhouse.

In two years the team of Davis-Morgan has produced eight singles and numerous other cuts. "Just A Little Love" (Reba McEntire), "There's No Love In Tennessee" (Barbara Mandrell), "Down On Longboat Key" (Alabama), "Only A Lonely Heart Knows" (Barbara Mandrell), "With Just One Look In Your Eyes" (Charly McClain-Wayne Massey), and "Radio Heart" (Charly McClain) are some of their work.

Steve Davis, who had already taken his second shower of the day, originally came to Nashville at age seventeen and almost immediately had a hit with Percy Sledge, "Take Time To Know Her." It was Norro Wilson, who heads Merit Music, Davis' publisher today, whom he originally played the song for about twenty years ago. Searching for an artist deal he bounced over to London and released several albums "but nothing popped." As he explains, "in 1975 I decided that all these people I knew were having great success with country music, so I bought some records and started listening." Davis worked with folks like Norro Wilson, Billy Sherrill, and Larry Butler, but claims that his association with Morgan is "the first time I've ever written with someone on a constant basis."

Dennis Morgan has been a staple on the country charts for quite some time. Once labeled by the *Tennessean* as one of Nashville's "Most Eligi-

ble Bachelors" the recently married tunesmith co-wrote 'bunches' of hits with former partner Kye Flemming-Gill. At 33 years old, he has been writing songs for most of his life. His warm sense of humor immediately put me at ease, and as he puffed on his pipe, I tried to picture the young man who left home and high school at sixteen for the highway that eventually brought him to fame and fortune in Nashville.

**MR:** How did you begin writing together?

**Dennis Morgan:** I'd see Steve around town and think, man there's something there, he was always real friendly and saying "Let's write."

**Steve Davis:** I talked to Sneed for about two years about writing together, but he was in a writing situation and couldn't at that time. Finally we ran into each other at the Barbara Mandrell 'Lady Is A Champ' special at TPAC . . .

**Dennis:** We talked about it that night and wrote three songs the following Monday. All three got cut. One was "Just A Little Love," by Reba McEntire. So we had a single out within a month and a half of when we started writing. Another one was later cut by Greenwood and Mandrell called "One On One."

**MR:** Where does the Sneed Brothers marque come from?

**Dennis:** Simple, we 'sneed' your business.

**Steve:** We were sittin' right here in this room one day and I said "Give me a weed (cigarette) Sneed." We just started laughing and it stuck. Besides, it's easier to say here's a Sneed Brothers composition than a Dennis Morgan, Steve Davis song.

**Dennis:** It's foolishness that's a lot of fun. It goes back to the element of let's have some fun doing what we do. Right now we're having a ball, and

that's the main thing. There's even some Sneed jokes going around. People just know us as the Sneed Brothers, for whatever that means.

**MR:** Well, what do the Sneed Brothers think about current lyric trends?

**Steve:** The music has been in a slump for six months writer-wise. But from what we do and talking to other people it seems like right now there's a wild-type energy level coming back into the city. It just sort of eases in and out like a fog. Right now it's getting ready to pop. We're getting some of it and other writers are too. I think everyone got to a point where they just started going back and copping and ran out. The music showed that. Right now it feels like a surge is coming.

We've been working recently with people like David Malloy, Vince Gill and J. D. Souther. There's a lot of people in Nashville that weren't here before, a lot of records being made and a lot of people capable of making 'middle America' music. Not necessarily all-out pop or all-out country records but a kind of music that has all the elements for multi-format radio. There's going to have to be an outlet for them.

**MR:** Do you think it can all co-exist with the traditionalists on the same chart?

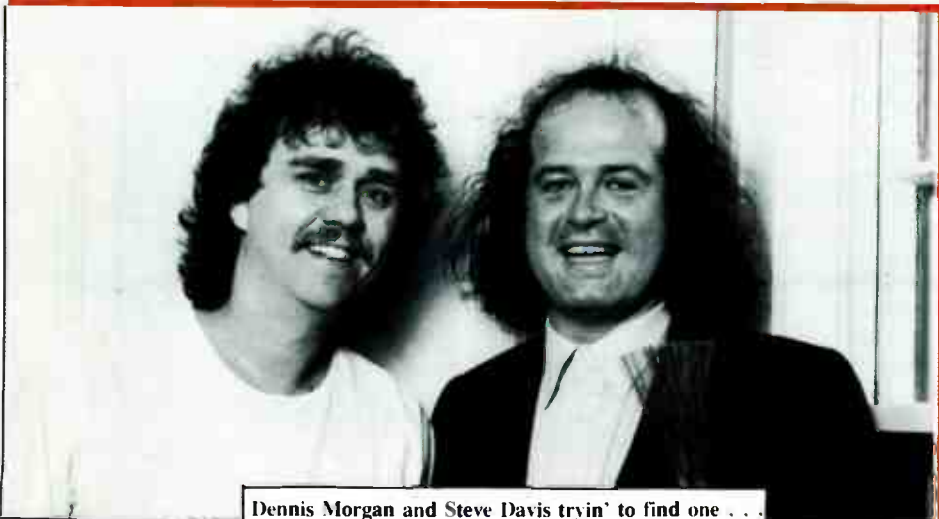
**Dennis:** It's not now. Wouldn't it be nice if they got rid of all the charts? There are country songs, middle of the road AC songs, and your pop stuff. But the AC chart is not really accepting country records anymore. We need additional outlets.

**Steve:** There's too many followers. There needs to be more experimentation. Maybe some jocks out there will start playing some different things and it won't be just 20 songs on a playlist. That's killing people. I'll bet you a dollar that the listening audience of those type stations don't like it a bit.

**MR:** But of course the stations will show you research supporting the format.

**Steve:** Those people all too often are just trying to have a job. The guy out there listening to the radio is just some ol' boy that they can't really put a number on. They call 50 people and get a word but you may get 50 guys that are brain surgeons, and you need the construction worker, farmer, bartender, etc.

Another problem is that the A&R departments at the labels are structured around accountants and lawyers. I'm sorry but they haven't got the ears. They won't take a shot on something. Most A&R departments are real weak, there's only a few that you can go into and even get a response like 'No'



Dennis Morgan and Steve Davis tryin' to find one . . .

by David M. Ross



or 'Yes'. Instead you get "Oh I love that, let me get back to you on it . . . my lawyer will call yours."

**Dennis:** I think if everybody would just continue to write the best songs they can and make the best records they can, everything will take care of itself. If we all get a little more concerned about each other things will work out bigger than ever, but it's gonna take everybody.

**MR:** The typical tried-and-true song structure has been the verse, chorus, with a bridge sometimes added. Do you feel like there's more freedom now to do things differently?

**Dennis:** There are cycles and similarities. Let people make music and quit analyzing it so much. The only answer is to surround yourself with the most creative people you can and write what you think is great. That's where the trendsetters come from, and if someone gets out there and they break the rules a little bit, fantastic.

**Steve:** You've got to break them in a way that conforms, but at the same time be 'pushing the envelope' as they say.

**MR:** Why are you in Nashville?

**Steve:** I've got credit at Commerce Union Bank! (laughs).

**Dennis:** It would be nice to be a little more mobile, but there are a lot of people coming here. Nashville is the happening place and should continue to be if people will give us a chance.

**Steve:** But New York and L.A. don't. All you've gotta say is the record was cut in Idaho and you got a shot, but if it was cut in Nashville they immediately don't want to hear it. I don't know if it's a jealousy syndrome that they're afraid of losing business or what.

**Dennis:** It'll happen, there's too much talent. But someone is going to have to open the door, and let it break wide open.

**MR:** What is co-writing all about?

**Steve:** There's got to be no ego involved.

**Dennis:** Make the best music you possibly can . . . if somebody suggests a way to make something better, the door must be open. Let's take it a little further, and a little further yet.

**MR:** What's it like when you're writing together?

**Dennis:** Steve plays piano, I play guitar.

**Steve:** Sometimes I'll wind up playing guitar and he won't play anything. Dennis is an incredible guitar player, melodic-wise, and technique-wise. I'm a good keyboard player and singer so we got all that going for us.

**MR:** What about that drum machine I see over there on the piano? Do you program it?

**Dennis:** Yeah. But usually we just pop a beat and go. Whatever blows your skirt up! But it still goes back to sounds do not make great songs. Great songs are vehicles for interesting innovative new state-of-the-art sounds.

**MR:** Demos, how do you present them to producers?

**Dennis:** Almost a finished record.

**Steve:** Often times they are copped lick for lick on the final records. We cut expensive demos. You can't go in with just a guitar and vocal anymore. You got licks on the side and vocal stuff that's got to be there in order to make them hear

the 'record.' There's too much going on now, you've gotta get it to a point where it's really good to listen to. If you can't do that you're out of the running.

**MR:** I understand you're going to produce an album for Wayne Massey on Epic. How did that come about, why production?

**Dennis:** Production is something I've been interested in for a long time. But it's like everything else, you've got to have somebody give you a break.

We both went to Norro Wilson last Christmas and said "We appreciate having been a part of this project," (Charly McClain album from which came her career record "Radio Heart"

written by Davis & Morgan) and asked if we could have a credit as co-producers. It took him about 2 seconds to say sure.

**Steve:** So now we're going to produce a Wayne Massey album, and a future McClain-Massey duet album is also being planned.

**MR:** As writers are there things you don't like about Nashville Production techniques?

**Dennis:** Well you know what, it's no different here than anywhere else. Personally, I have been let down very few times.

**Steve:** Perhaps one of the reasons that we've gotten into production is that almost every time we get a cut, we get invited to be there in the studio. We do demos that are almost masters, and



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often they want to cop our arrangements exactly. And I'm glad to be there cause you don't want to waste a song or a cut.

**Dennis:** We're not saying that we're gonna do anything different than anybody else. . . . there's some great producers around . . . but we know damn well that we can do it, cause we've been doing it for years. You write the song and make the demos like we do . . . we have as much right as anyone, in my opinion, to go in there and do our best . . . and that's exactly what we're gonna do.

**MR:** Is there anything special you would like to add?

**Dennis:** Everybody is looking for a new direction, and that keeps it exciting. What we've done

is great but we're all young people we need to jump in there together and create history.

**Steve:** You've always got a chance writing songs. You can be cold as death, and then one afternoon pop one and six months later be living in a mansion or whatever. . . . the sky's the limit.

**Dennis:** That's what felt so great about "Radio Heart." We just told the truth and nailed one. There's so many talented people around that can and do and will have the ability to dictate the future. The torch has got to be passed. The new breed is starting to come in.

Yes, there may be a bit of a slump going on but don't let it throw you. We all can change it. We just can't get scared. We've got to go for it.

**Steve:** Slumps are fixed by hard work. We had four records on the charts a month ago. That week instead of being out drunk, or in Hollywood, we were here on this piano stomping, looking for the next one. The whole thing is also having someone who believes in you. It's hard to sit at home alone trying to do it.

**Dennis:** Everybody is looking for a genius to come along. I think those things have to be written in the stars. The real trendsetters, the Beatle-Elvis types, they don't just happen, it's almost pre-destiny. But it's time for that. And it's political too. Political not within the business, but with the state of a nation, it's people. Like the death of a John F. Kennedy is the germ for escapism and these four guys from Liverpool fit the space.

Radio has too much power. . . . we're the people who write the songs and make the music, and we're not doing it to sell lawn mowers, we're doing it to reach people. It's turned into some kind of weird, capitalistic make-a-buck thing that I guess we're all somewhat guilty of.

**Steve:** But you don't get a chance to change it if you're not at bat sometimes hitting the ball . . . I mean everyone can sit in the dugout and bitch. You've got to be swinging. You might miss the ball, or you might knock a pitcher on the head but you've got to be on the field.

**Dennis:** That's all we try to do day after day, keep foul ticking it 'til we hit one out of the park.

**Steve:** Yeah knock the shit out of it!

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### Gram Parsons (Continued from page 13)

Gram paved a new road to success for rock acts as well. Poco made it big with—guess what?—a fusion of country and rock, complete with steel guitar. Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, Jackson Browne, Linda Ronstadt, and the Eagles later incorporated country elements into their sound to win large-scale commercial success. Even the Grateful Dead went country: their *Workingman's Dead* and *American Beauty* albums presented an acoustic sound with a decided country flavor.

And Gram's vision can also be found as an influence upon the Rolling Stones. Following a tour of South Africa by the Byrds—which aborted due to Parson's distaste for the country's apartheid policies—Gram stayed with Keith Richards in France. The Stones subsequently released several country-flavored songs: "Honky-Tonk Women," "Dead Flowers," and "Wild Horses," the last said to be dedicated to Gram.

Today, over ten years after Gram's death, his work still sounds as fresh as it did then. His approach was vindicated by the changes that overtook country music in the next few years. A scruffy group of rebellious country musicians changed the sound of the music by following the Parsons formula of mixing rock and country elements to create a new type of music. The critics immediately tagged it "progressive country" and hailed its chief stylists as "outlaws."

A moment of silence for Gram Parsons, please. May his soul find the peace that eluded his mind.

— Reprinted with permission from the book *Nashville: Music City USA* by John Lomax III. Published in 1985 by Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York.

# The Club Report

## STEVE FORBERT

*Bluebird Cafe, August 15*

The story goes that Steve Forbert left Meridian, Mississippi in 1976 when his employer, White's Auto Store, went out of business. Forbert had played in local rock 'n' roll bands for ten years. He felt ready to match songs in what was left of the Greenwich Village folk scene, so he headed for New York, figuring if he could make it there he could make it anywhere.

Forbert eventually established himself as a performer, and when John Rockwell described the re-emergence of a Village folk-singing community in an April, 1978 *Sunday Times* article, he named Forbert as one of the leaders of the movement that included the Roches, George Gerdes, Carolyn Mas, and Jack Hardy. By November Forbert had recorded his first album, *Alive On Arrival*, for Nemporer Records, a Columbia subsidiary. The lp drew critical acclaim and, to his dismay, earned Forbert membership in the "new Dylan" club that already included John Prine and Bruce Springsteen.

Forbert has since recorded three other albums. *Jackrabbit Slim* (which included his hit, "Romeo's Tune"), *Little Stevie Orbit*, and *Steve Forbert*. The last appeared in 1982; only the first two are still in print.

Now Forbert joins the steady stream of strong songwriting talents who have decided to relocate in Nashville. Lucky us.

Forbert has toured on occasion with a full contingent of rock 'n' roll musicians. He chose to keep it simple in his recent solo appearance at the Bluebird Cafe, stating at the outset that he was "just gonna play." If Forbert had any misgivings about exposing his wares for the music industry crowd, they must have vanished quickly. From his first number, "Thinkin'" from *Alive*, Forbert had the audience applauding enthusiastically, calling out the names of favorites, and even singing along occasionally. The whole evening had a living room informality that allowed Forbert's intelligence, humor, and intensity to draw the audience close around him as he worked out his feelings in song. The easy atmosphere made the mistakes and miscues more fun than embarrassing. When he strained in places on Felice and Boudleaux Bryant's "Take A Message To Mary," Forbert interjected a vow to "sing it in F next show."

By request, Forbert did crowd favorites that included "Complications" (with a couple of verses from Arthur Alexander's classic "Everyday I Have To Cry Some" as an intro), "Grand Central Station, March 18, 1977," "Going Down To Laurel" (in which he calls my birthplace a "dirty stinking town"—and I still like him), "What Kinda Guy?," and "Romeo's Tune" (imitating the distinctive piano intro on his harmonica). Personal favorites were "If You Gotta Ask You'll Never Know" from *Stevie Orbit*, a new number called "Because My Heart Says So," and

Lou Reed's "I'll Be Your Mirror."

Forbert has a dramatic delivery. He stayed seated for most of the show, keeping time with an animated foot. He occasionally squints and puckers like he just popped a whole lemon. His voice is distinctive and stylized: just as we know Van Morrison and Mose Allison when we hear them. Forbert's voice is unmistakable.

I hope Forbert plays out from time to time in his new hometown so that we get a chance to see him. It's been a while since I've heard an artist who impressed me sufficiently to inspire a trip to the record shop. After the Forbert show I made it to the store before closing, headed home clutching the two records still in print, and stayed up well past midnight listening.

## SANDY MASON

*Bogey's, August 9*

Let me admit right away to a personal bias or emotional deficiency, depending on how you look at it. Lately I have trouble relating to tender, introspective songs by women about whether or not the writer is in love, or if she is in love, then by how much and with what results, or how close she is to being out of love. When I hear a songwriter like Sandy Mason, who can clearly write well about these kinds of things, I worry about not being as sensitive as I ought to be. I wish I could get sensitive, but they don't sell sensitive.

Now, I realize that just about all pop music deals with mediating the gender wars, but Motown, for instance has funky to go along with it. When it gets so out front that the words and emotions create a little soap opera, then my cynicism rears up, and I get a little fidgety and nervous. I can't help it.

I enjoyed Sandy Mason all the same. Not all of her songs are that way. She brought a great little band with her to Bogey's (Chris Leuzinger, guitar; Spady Brannon, bass; Kenny Malone, drum; Cordie Christopher, backing vocals) who were fun to watch (Kenny Malone has the most animated face of any drummer I have ever seen) and easy to appreciate. Mason was clearly glad she had invited them. They helped her get funky on a couple of numbers. "Love Will Be The Next Thing I Find" had a steamy New Orleans kind of grind that made me forget about sensitive and think of something else for a while. Mason turned "All I Want To Do In Life" into a Brechtian audience/performer interchange, dancing through the tables and out the door while the band explored the groove. Before she made it back to the stage Kenny Malone had given a drumming clinic.

Mason did her Crystal Gayle hit, "And When I Dream," and some other sensitive songs like "Feel The Love Go Round," "Where Love Goes," "Only Love Will Do," "Everything I Ever Dreamed Of," and one angry number she said she wrote two days before her period (see what I mean? How am I

supposed to relate to that?). Call me a sexist (I hope I'm not), call me insensitive (I guess I am), call me the wrong demographic: I just don't think these songs were written for me, but I did sort of come around on a few, and—you gotta believe me—I do appreciate Mason's songwriting craft.

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**45 RPM**

**W**hen I came to Nashville nearly eight years ago, the businesses of Music Row were run like businesses anyplace: Pleasant, stable groups of people worked together for long periods of time at companies, developing reasonably smooth-running music machines.

Now you can't tell the players without a scorecard. Beginning about three years ago, the record labels began shuffling staffs like gigantic decks of cards. Almost every week, it seems, somebody's promotion, A&R, or publicity staff is restructured.

And lately, acts have been dropping off rosters like flies sprayed by Raid.

I certainly hope all this confusion results in something positive for this community in the long run. As it stands now, an awful lot of nice, competent folks are walking the streets.

Ironically, the two labels that seem to have the most efficient, happy, stable staffs and reasonably healthy rosters—Capitol and MCA—are run by two totally opposite personalities, Jim Foglesong and Jimmy Bowen. Maybe these guys have more in common than they think.

Nevertheless, Label of the Month kudos go to Warner Bros. Led by Hank Jr., Bugs Bunny's company has the strongest collection of singles this month.

Music Row DISCOVERY honors go to a North-of-the-border stylist named James H. Robinson. His bio indicates he's had four other singles, but I've never seen or heard any of them. If they're all as nice as "Only Natural" I'd like to add them to my collection.

(Sincere congratulations to former DISCOVERY winners The Forester Sisters for posting their first #1 record recently in "Radio & Records.")

Single of the Month was a race between Exile, Hank Jr., Earl Thomas Conley and Vern Gosdin. "The Voice," perhaps one of my favorite top-10 country stylists of the past 20 years, gets the nod. As any of you who've ever interviewed ol' Vern can attest, the man can't talk much . . . but he sure 'nuff can flat SING.

Into the fall season we go.

All comments and all singles welcome. Send both to: Music Row, P.O. Box 158542, Nashville, TN. 37215.

\*\*\*\*\*

**FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

**"For Lack of a Better Word" EP**

Writers: various; Producer: Rob Hoskins & Joe Funderburk; Publishers: various. Track 1002 (615-833-6169).

Attention college promotion experts: This 6-song 12-inch EP is the calling card for one of the freshest sounding bands in Music City. Freedom of Expression plays in a spare, clean rock style heavily influenced by Jamaican reggae. Can white kids sing the blues? Yes. Recommended listening.

**BRYSON BOWDEN BAND**

**"I Don't Love You Anymore"**

Writers: J. Bryson, Bowden; Producer: Loyd Maines & Richard Bowden; Publisher: Time Bomb. BMI. Texas Soul 5585.

Galloping hillbilly raucous fun. The guy gets points for good-natured personality on vinyl and clever self-promotion.

**JAMES H. ROBINSON**

**"Only Natural"**

Writers: Jim H. Robinson; Producer: Bob Hathaway, Rich Dodson; Publisher: Skyhigh. CAPAC/ASCAP. Skyhigh 36.

"Only Natural" is not only the title of this Canadian's single; it also describes his deeply masculine vocal, his tasteful production, and his memorable melody. This very pretty outing decidedly deserves your attention.

**EARL THOMAS CONLEY**

**"Nobody Falls Like a Fool"**

Writers: Peter McCann, Mark Wright; Producers: Nelson Larkin, Earl Thomas Conley; Publisher: April/New & Used/Blackwood/Land of Music. ASCAP/BMI. RCA 14172.

Earl's voice floats to the top of his feathery tenor register for this wafting melody. The chiming, echoing harmonies ice the cake on the chorus. McCann & Wright provide all the right hit hooks in all the right places.

**LANE BRODY**

**"Baby's Eyes"**

Writer: Lane Brody; Producer: Harold Shedd; Publisher: El Brody Music. BMI. EMI/America 8283.

This woman has been called "promising starlet" for so long. As had been said before, she sings like an angel and writes like the devil. This single just confirms it once more. On this, the strongest track on her debut LP, Shedd surrounds her with strings a-plenty. If this doesn't fly, my advice would be to let her wait out on a solid two-step hillbilly tune, instead of letting her continue in her MOR groove.

**LISA MAREE**

**"Lights and Mirrors"**

Writer: Linda Young; Producer: Greg Kane; Publisher: Guyasuta. BMI. Tygreye 101 (214-262-9880).

Take your thumb off the tape. This sounds like somebody took a Terri Gibbs record and played it on a machine that badly needs oiling.

**MEL McDANIEL**

**"Stand Up"**

Writers: Channel, Rector, Throckmorton; Producer: Jerry Kennedy; Publisher: Old Friends/Tree. BMI/ASCAP. Capitol 5513.

Uptempo tune, catchy lyrics, great production, and good pickin' disguise vocalist's limited abilities.

**JOY FORD**

**"Blues Stay Away From Me"**

Writers: A. & R. Delmore, W. Raney, H. Glover; Producer: Andy DiMarino & Joy Ford; Publisher: Trio/Fort Knox. BMI. Country International 207 (615-327-4656).

Country classic gets an urban jazz remake. Effective and appropriately bluesy, but somewhat "busy" sounding.

**TOM JONES**

**"Not Another Heart Song"**

Writers: R. Bourke, S. Bogard, J. Tweel; Producer: Gordon Mills; Publisher: Chappell/Robin Hill, ASCAP/BMI. Mercury 884-039-7.

I hate these skipping-through-the-daisies, raindrops-keep-falling-on-my-head melodies. And WHEN is this Welsh rock-head going to get a new producer, junk the philharmonic orchestral backings, and get serious about record making?

**T. J. KIRBY**

**"Ft. Worth I Love You"**

Writers: Boomer Castleman, Michael Murphy; Producer: Boomer

Castleman; Publisher: E. H. Morris, BMI. BNA 016 (615-776-2343).

GREAT song. Good Cajun fiddle. Nice vocal. I don't much like live recordings, but this one could change my mind.

**THE SHOPPE**

**"Holdin' the Family Together"**

Writers: Frank Myers, Don Pffrimmer; Producer: Fred Foster; Publisher: Collins Court, ASCAP. MTM 72056.

Another nice disc from the folks at MTM. I don't understand the label's commitment to ALL unknowns at the expense of signing name talent, but I have to admit the releases have all been strong ones so far. It might be bad business sense, but it's good music. The sound here is The Oaks meet a dobro.

**VERN GOSDIN**

**"I Know the Way To You By Heart"**

Writer: Tony Lualaba; Producer: Vern Gosdin, Robert John Jones; Publisher: Blue Lake/Hookit, BMI. Compeat 145.

This hillbilly sonofabitch makes me fall to my knees and weep in gratitude for the love of music. Another masterpiece from "The Voice." God bless 'im.

**DANNY DARST**

**"Jimmy's John Deere"**

Writer: Daniel Dean Darst; Producer: Jerry Kennedy; Publisher: Al Gallico, BMI. Warner Bros. 7-28930.

Stronger as a writer than as a singer (you should never have tired to hit that low note). Still, this record has a certain undeniable "presence." And the song has true hit potential.

**DEBBIE DRUMMOND**

**"Breaking All the Rules"**

Writers: Cyril Rawson, John Gulley; Producer: Tony Migliore; Publisher: Northwood/NuDown, PRO/CAPAC. Comstock 1791 (913-631-6060).

Contrary to the title, not ALL the rules are broken here. Just one: Wandering aimlessly on and off pitch for two excruciating minutes.

**JOHN REX REEVES**

**"When You See It For Yourself"**

Writers: J. Elgin, D. Mize; Producer: Johnny Elgin; Publisher: Socagee/Second Base, BMI. Soc-a-Gee 114 (615-824-8025).

Jim Reeves' nephew. You guessed it: he tries to imitate his famous relative's style and suffers miserably by comparison.

**GARY MORRIS**

**"I'll Never Stop Loving You"**

Writers: Dave Loggins, J. D. Martin; Producer: Jim Ed Norman; Publisher: MCA, BMI/ASCAP. Warner Bros. 7-28947.

Gary gets beautifully bluesy. Besides the obvious joy of hearing him wrap his voice around something other than a love ballad, this disc boasts absolutely seductive electric guitar playing.

**SHELLY WEST**

**"I'll Dance The Two-Step"**

Writers: John Greenbaum, Randy Albright, Becky Hobbs; Producers: Barry Beckett & Jim Ed Norman; Publisher: WB Music/Make Believe/Beckaroo, ASCAP/BMI. Warner/Viva 7-28909.

Given a good song, Beckett is capable of getting a decent single out of Shelly. Alas, this is a rather Mickey Mouse piece of material; and everything sounds predictable, another routine day in the studio for everyone concerned.

**ROBERT GRIEGO**

**"Learn How To Love"**

Writer: Roberto Griego; Producer: John Wagner; Publisher: Ojos de Avellano, BMI. RJG 2141.

One of my favorite things about country music is that it has room for ethnic traditions from Cajun to polka to Tex-Mex. This is a nifty Spanish-English



outing. Vocalist has that heart-in-throat Mariachi quality and the guitar work is full of South-of-the-border ripples.

#### COUNTRY SILK

##### "It's So Good To Be Alive"

Writer: John Milner; Producer: L. D. Allen; Publisher: none listed, BMI, NSD 210.

You call this living?!

#### SHERRY ANN

##### "Don't Waste Your Love On Her Tonight"

Writers: Dan Bagan, Les Eveneshen; Producer: Patty Parker; Publisher: White Cat, ASCAP, Comstock 1792 (913-631-6060).

Much too pop for country radio, but a very insinuating record. The lady sings well and the melody is terrific. Longtime Music Row fave Patty Parker delivers one of her most haunting productions.

#### HANK WILLIAMS JR.

##### "This Ain't 'Dallas'"

Writer: Hank Williams Jr.; Producer: Jimmy Bowen & Hank Williams Jr.; Publisher: Bocephus, BMI, Warner/Curb 7-28912.

A delightful record from a truly beautiful COUNTRY artist. If this isn't a #1 single, Nashville deserves to be nuked.

#### ALLEN EDWARDS

##### "Walk Out Backward"

Writer: Ron Ogle; Producer: none listed; Publisher: Tata Grande, BMI, AEE 5658.

If this were 1956 this would have a shot as a Ray Price sound-alike. But it isn't and it doesn't.

#### KEN SCOTT

##### "Ballad of President Reagan"

Writer: Ken Huens; Producer: Bobby Rich; Publisher: Bo-Rich, BMI, Universal Artist 1046.

Lyrics straight out of grade school Civics class. Vocals so bad Reagan, himself, could probably sing it better. What a shameless bid for an invitation to the White House. An abuse of First Amendment rights.

#### WAYLON, WILLIE, JOHNNY & KRIS

##### "Desperados Waiting For a Train"

Writer: Guy Clark; Producer: Chips Moman; Publisher: Chappell/World Song, ASCAP, Columbia 38-05594.

If it takes these four to give songs like this, "The Highwayman," "Deportees," and "Jim I Wore a Tie Today" the hit exposure they deserve, more power to them, I say.

#### KEITH WHITLEY

##### "I've Got the Heart for You"

Writers: Larry Boone, John Greenebaum; Producer: Blake Mevis; Publisher: Make Believus/WB, ASCAP, RCA 14173.

Goodbye Merle and Lefty. Hello Steve Wariner and Keith Stegall.

#### FREDDY POWERS

##### "Ridin' High"

Writers: F. Powers, D. Reynolds; Producer: Merle Haggard, Jimmy Bowen; Publisher: Mt. Shasta, BMI, MCA 52665.

Lovely, haunting song. Powers is, admittedly, an acquired taste as a distinctive vocal stylist. But need I remind you, so was Willie Nelson?

#### JIMMY BUFFETT

##### "If The Phone Doesn't Ring, It's Me"

Writers: J. Buffett, W. Jennings, M. Utley; Producer: Jimmy Bowen, Michael Utley, Tony Brown; Publisher: Coral Reefer/Willin' David/Blue Sky Rider/Coconutley, ASCAP/BMI, MCA 52664.

Buffett, wisely I think, reminds us that he's more than a novelty singer by returning to his "Come Monday" love song style.

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## ALABAMA

### "Can't Keep A Good Man Down"

Writer: B. Corbin; Producer: H. Shedd, Alabama; Publisher: Sabal ASCAP. RCA 14165.

It is to Alabama's credit that they continue to hold aloft the banner of country-rock. Country radio persists in believing that overblown Vegas ballads are more appropriate to tradition than anything with a beat. This of course is preposterous as well as making the entire field grow duller by the minute. This superb single will hopefully flap a few program directors into line and lead the way to the acceptance of more wonderful hepped-up hillbillies like the Ft. Payne Four.

## RON SHEPARD

### "Talkin Eyes"

Writers: R. Shepard, C. Shepard; Producer: Doc Martin; Publisher: Shepco, ASCAP. Sneljo 800.

A solid country-rock performance with the accent firmly on country. I like Shepard's macho delivery and the slapping electric guitar strings.

## ATLANTA

### "Can't You Hear That Whistle Blow"

Writers: C. Dodson, S. Throckmorton; Producer: David Hungate, Jimmy Bowen; Tree, BMI/ASCAP. MCA/MDJ 52671.

I have always liked this song . . . until now. Yet another awful production from an act that seems to have an endless supply of them.

## RICH LANDERS

### "Your Sexy Eyes"

Writer: R. Landers, G. Landers; Producer: Rich Landers; Publisher: Silver Heart/Silver Dust, BMI/ASCAP. AMI 1326 (615-822-6786).

Landers rides atop a Big Sound production this time out. Disco beat. Super guitar solo.

## MARK BARNETT

### "Baby When Your Heart Breaks Down"

Writer: Kix Brooks; Producer: Ray Pennington; Publisher: Golden Bridge, ASCAP. EMH 0038.

Longtime Opryland performer makes respectable disc debut.

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## NICOLETTE LARSON

### "Building Bridges"

Writers: Larry Willoughby, Hank DeVito; Producer: Emory Gordy Jr., Tony Brown; Publisher: Goldline/Granite/Drunk Monkey, ASCAP. MCA 52653.

The title tune of Willoughby's fine Atlantic/America LP of last year is revived by this year's ACM Top New Female Vocalist. For my money, both singer and song are first-rate. An airplay natural.

## EDDIE RAY

### "Until We Meet Again"

Writer: Eddie Ray; Producer: Joe Deaton; Publisher: Eddie Ray, ASCAP. Castle 586 (813-694-1540).

Incoherent: Babbled "reminiscences" telling Elvis all the things that happened to him in jerky, plotless snippets with no connection. Surely Elvis has read all the books and already knows what occurred in his life.

## RAY CHARLES & HANK WILLIAMS JR.

### "Two Old Cats Like Us"

Writers: T. Seals; Producer: Billy Sherrill; Publisher: WB Music/Two Sons, ASCAP. Columbia 38-05575.

Affection in every groove.

## EXILE

### "Hang On To Your Heart"

Writers: S. Lemaire, J. P. Pennington; Producer: Buddy Killen; Publisher: Tree/Pacific Island/Careers, BMI. Epic 34-05580.

The boys from Kentucky strike paydirt again. Pop group harmonies and a twitchin' rhythm track back up J.P.'s ever-distinctive countryboy lead vocal to create one of their most listenable singles yet.

## DAVID WALSH

### "Tired Of The Same Old Thing"

Writer: D. Walsh; Producer: Charlie Fields; Publisher: Jason Dee, BMI. Charta 198 (615-255-2175).

He and the song are both quite good. The record is a tad over-produced. Tone it down a bit and send more singles.

## HONORABLE MENTIONS:

Johnny D. Weathers/Can't Get You Out of My Heart/Sunshine

Southern Empire Band/A Little Bit of Me/Axbar

Bruce Wallace/I Found Love/On Target

Ray Stevens/The Haircut Song/MCA

Noel/P.S./Maddcash

Allen Frizzell/Where the Cheaters Go/Epic

Lee Greenwood/I Don't Mind the Thorns/MCA

Krystyn Vaughn/Country Blues/AMI

James & Michael Younger/In South Texas/Permian

Stonewall Jackson/Heaven Tonight/Universal Artist

Bugs Henderson/Dance 'Til the Moon Go Down/Permat

Willie Nelson & Neil Young/Are There Any More Real Cowboys/Columbia

Shelley Townes/Lady of Liberty/NLT

Don Malena/One More Night/Comstock  
Mickey Gilley/You've Got Something On Your Mind/Epic

Mark James/Blue Suede Heaven/CRS  
Barbara Mandrell/Angel In Your Arms/MCA

Kellie Renee/Thank You/Skyway

Judy Lindsey/Stop Hiding Your Heart/Gypsy  
Bandana/Lovin' Up a Storm/Warner Bros.

T.G. Sheppard/Doncha?/Columbia

Caglo Mac & Kitty Willow/Starting Again/Medical

Jim Glaser/In Another Minute/MCA-Noble Vision

Terry Stafford/Love's Been Hell on Me/Player  
Jeremiah/Gone/Chariot

Jim Christopher/Building Bridges/Skyway

Bellamy Brothers/Lie To You for Your Love/MCA-Curb

Bobbi Lacey/All Day Singing/GBS

John Anderson/Tokyo Oklahoma/Warner Bros.

Mel Tillis/California Road/RCA

J. J. Meredith & Robert Couch/Woke Up In Love/BFI

Geary Hanley/Late Movies & Memories/Kansa

Joe Stampley/I'll Still Be Loving You/Epic

Karen Taylor-Good/Up On Your Love/Mesa

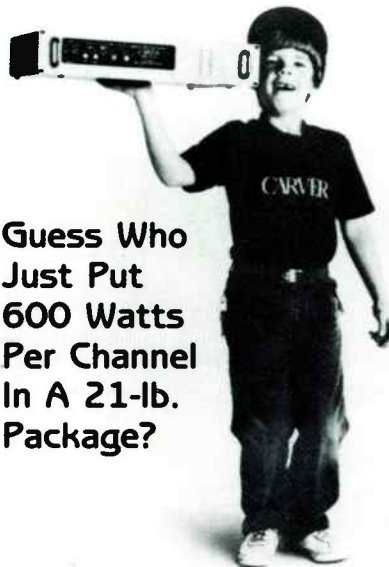
Pat Garrett/Cruisin'/Gold Dust

The Statler Brothers/Too Much On My Heart/Mercury

Loney Hutchins/Dancing In the Dark/ARC

Jimmy Windrow/Sweet Geraldine/Hilton

Shane Sawyer/Pasadena Cowboy/CAS



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# Video Vision

**D**o you have a perverse desire to plumb the pits of bad taste? Do you want to make a truly bad country video? Okay, here's how you do it.

The main thing you need is a cliché. If you'll just abandon creativity and base your video on a clichéd concept, you can successfully bore most viewers into a goggle-eyed stupor. Country video is relatively young, so not too many clichés have taken root yet, but there is one that has been used in clips starring Hank Williams Jr., the Statler Brothers, Crystal Gayle and a gaggle of lesser-known artists: the much-beloved Civil War motif.

Don't make the mistake of showing the Civil War from the Union point of view: that would smack of originality. Stick with everyone else and use the romantic Confederate angle. Make sure you have plenty of chivalrous Southern officers in grey suits and hats with ostrich plumes. You'll need a love interest too, so scatter some belles in hoop skirts through the video. And if you've got the budget, rent an antebellum mansion for the set. Voila! You've assembled a veritable abyss of predictability.

Bad lip-synching can go a long way in further damaging a video, so use it liberally. When the vocal reaches a bellowing peak, have your singer stare blankly at the camera with his or her lips sealed. Bad lip-synching seems like a small detail, but it's essential if you want to prevent viewers from enjoying a video.

Finally, make sure the action on the screen contradicts the lyrics. When the words tell about heartbreak, show your singer yukking it up at a singles bar. When the words tell about the joy of love, show your singer shopping for yogurt.

\* \* \* \* \*

**JUDY RODMAN**

**"You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone"**  
*Producer: Kitty Moon. Director: Marc Ball. MTM.*

Don't make a video like this if you want to bore people. "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone" can only increase interest in Rodman. Judy sits at a table in her bedroom penning a "Dear John" letter to her unappreciative man. The props are few but effective. A green lamp provides a dash of color, a dog acts as a foil for Rodman. We don't see any walls in the room, just blackness at the edge of the simple set. At the end, Judy looks directly into the camera as if the viewer were her no-good

lover. Her performance is riveting in this superb video debut.

**ALABAMA**

**"You Can't Keep A Good Man Down"**  
*Producer: David Naylor. Director: David Hogan. RCA.*

Boy, have Alabama's video's ever improved. This one starts with bug-eyed shots of Randy Owen awakening in his trailer as his woman walks out the door. He twitches his nose in a riotous wide-angle shot that spreads his face across the entire TV screen. Next we see him with flyswatter in hand as he goes on an insect safari. Randy soon recovers from the onslaught of twitching his lover's departure brings on and resumes his search for love from an airplane and more conventional viewpoints. The romantic quest is fine, but the twitching cracks me up the most. Very amusing.

**AFRIKAN DREAMLAND**

**"Apartheid"**  
*Producer: One World. Director: Lou Chanatry. Ayo.*

These guys have got great timing. The hottest political issue of the year gets a powerful examination from Aashid Himons and company. They contrast the well-groomed golf course of white South Africa with the rutted dirt road walked by black South Africans. Newsreel-type shots of police beatings and military maneuvers add to the video's timeliness. A particularly nice—and evidently symbolic—shot shows a torch being quenched by a rush of water. "Apartheid" has the smooth look of film, and should get plenty of attention for the Dreamlanders.

**JOHN DENVER**

**"Don't Close Your Eyes Tonight"**  
*Producers: Robert K. Glassenberg, David Naylor. Director: David Hogan. RCA.*

Ooo wee, can we talk steamy? This is it. Lock up the children and hide it from grandma. Denver plays a hard-hat who can't wait to get home. Why? Because his wife wants to tear off his work clothes and bounce him on the Beautyrest. Shots of wet bodies on the sheets follow. Later the couple gets dressed up for a black-tie cocktail party. Denver's transition from hard-hat to high-stepper seems a tad far-fetched, but the biggest problem here is the contrast between the lyrics and the action. The lyrics plead for John's lover to quit fantasizing when they make love and start looking him in the eye. In the video, however, John's lover seems quite wide-eyed and eager for him alone; she shows no sign of having anyone else on her mind. Anyhow, watching Denver dump his chaster-than-thou image is fun.

**MALCHAK & RUCKER**

**"I Could Love You In A Heartbeat"**  
*Producer: Jim Owens Entertainment. Director: John Sprague. Alpine.*

Malchak gets wheeled into an operating room by a team of medics. Just as Dr. Rucker prepares to put him under the knife, Malchak recovers enough to sing and dance with a skeleton. Okay, I'll make no bones about it: the concept ain't great. But Malchak and Rucker's performance is. They've got the visual spark many musical performers lack, and they appear totally at ease cutting up on the lyrics. With a less obvious concept, they'd be irresistible.

(Continued on page 30)



Ronnie Milsap (driver) and the gang on the set of "Lost In The Fifties" cruisin' down the highway. The video was produced by David Naylor and directed by David Hogan.



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## VIDEO UPDATES

"Sweet Dreams" distributed by Tri-Star Pictures, starring **Jessica Lange** as the late **Patsy Cline**, will be released in late September, along with the Novelization of the film written by **George Vecsey** with **Leonore Fleischer** for **Pinnacle Books**. The sound-track album on MCA should be available on September 2. The film traces the life of Patsy Cline—her struggle to establish herself in the music industry and her volatile marriage . . . Scene Three's **Joe Askins** has been promoted to Post-Production Supervisor, and **Mark Sedgwick** to Production Supervisor. The production company has just finished work on the first music video ever produced

for the **MTM** music group. Featuring artist, **Judy Rodman**, the clip is titled "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone" . . . **Celebration Productions** has completed editing on "Tumbleweed Theater's" 3rd season. Hosting 90 minutes of uncut western cowboy movies are **Opry** members, **Riders In The Sky**, the Nashville based trio who recreate the music and harmonies of the old west. This year's shows were produced at **Opryland Studios**... "Grand Ole Opry Live," a thirty minute segment of the longest running country music show in the world carried on the **Nashville Network**, is now being offered for simulcast by radio stations in the United States

and Canada. **TNN** will not charge the cable systems or the local radio stations for the simulcast. The station will receive thirty minutes of programming, plus the opportunity to sell local advertising time within the broadcast. In exchange, **TNN** will receive five minutes of air time from the radio station for **TNN** promotional spots . . . **T. G. Sheppard**, **Lacy J. Dalton** and **Ronnie McDowell** are among country artists who will guest host **TNN's** show "Video Country" while **vee-jay** regular, and former Miss Tennessee, **Shelley Mangrum**, performs before **U.S.** troops in five countries in a musical review titled "The Queens." The tour started on July 29.

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# Dollars & Sense

## KEOGH'S (Self-Employed Retirement Plans)

The Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1982 (TEFRA) made some dramatic changes in the rules for retirement plans for self-employed persons. For taxable years beginning after 1983 they essentially equalized the benefits available to plans established by corporations and those established by sole proprietors and partnerships. The rules for KEOGH's are very complex but the benefits can be well worth the hassle. As a test of your knowledge, I've listed below three statements regarding KEOGH's - which ones are true?

- contributions are tax deductible;
- earnings compound tax free;
- plan distributions may be subject to favorable tax treatment.

Fortunately, all of the above are true. There isn't the space in this article to cover all the details concerning KEOGH's but I'll highlight some of the points mentioned above:

- "Contributions are tax deductible"**
  - If a plan calls for a defined contribution (profit sharing plan, money purchase plan), then a contribution of 25% of the participant's compensation, up to \$30,000, can be made.
  - If the plan calls for defined benefit, the annual benefit to be funded can be as

high as \$90,000 (or 100% of the participants average compensation for the last 3 consecutive years, if less).

- "Earnings compound tax-free"**
  - Not much more needs to be said except the magic of compound earnings, with no annual tax burden, can generate phenomenal growth in your plan's value.
- "Plan distributions may be subject to favorable tax treatment"**
  - If a participant receives his entire account balance within one taxable year, it may qualify for 10 year averaging. The distribution must be made because of death, separation of service from the employer, or be made after age 59½. For self-employed owners, the distributions must be because of death or made after age 59½ unless the person was previously disabled.

As you can see there are many benefits to having a KEOGH. A well maintained and thoughtfully managed retirement plan can be a cornerstone investment in your financial plan. If you are interested in setting up a KEOGH, you must establish it by December 31st in order

for it to be effective for 1985. However, you have until April 15, 1986 (or the extended due date of your return) in order to make the contribution.

Finally, for existing KEOGH plans, there have been recent developments you need to be aware of, as follows:

- KEOGH plans are now required to file a form 5500-C with the IRS. The due date for filing was July 31st for plan years ending December 31, 1984 (there are substantial penalties for failure to file). For one-man KEOGH's the due date was extended to September 30th;
- TEFRA mandated that KEOGH's be updated to reflect recent tax law changes. Plan sponsors have differing dates by which these amendments must be filed. You should contact your plan sponsor (for example, Dean Witter) to make sure that your plan has been updated. Failure to do so may result in your KEOGH plan being disqualified by the IRS.

Please consult your personal advisor for questions concerning your specific situation.

Good Luck and Take Care.

# EXPERIENCE

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### Video Vision (Continued from page 24)

#### SYLVIA

##### "Cry Just A Little Bit"

Producer: Bob Jason. Director: Martin Kahan. RCA.

Elephants roar and the jungle shakes as Sylvia gets swept off her feet by a young stud who combines the worst attributes of David Lee Roth and Tarzan. She enjoys his attentions—although she can't help noticing that he spreads his favors around among other appetizing young ladies. Bananas and the salad bar at Wendy's also prove powerful lures to Sylvia's Don Juan-in-loincloth. The pair bill and coo happily in Bomba the jungleboy's treehouse, which raises a puzzling question: If they're so darn happy, why does Sylvia want to cry just a little bit?

#### GAIL DAVIES

##### "Jagged Edge Of A Broken Heart"

Producer: Joanne Gardner. Director: Michael Herzmark. RCA.

It hurts to review this video. The song is absolutely awesome, but the video is, at best, unflattering. Gail looks good in the full-length opening shots and emotes the lyrics fittingly. But she's soon reduced to a singing head in a harshly lit scene that has the unpleasantly real look of video at its worst. The ending superimposes multiple images of Gail as her vocal overdubs chime in with the lead vocal.



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# KEEPING TRACK



**TRACK FACES:** Pianist Floyd Cramer and CMA's Jo Walker-Meador celebrate his first gold albums; Eddie Rabbitt and manager Stan Moresso are welcomed to RCA by label head Joe Galante; Jessica Lange plays Patsy Cline in the new movie "Sweet Dreams"; Vice President Bush greets Loretta Lynn following her performances at the Kennedy Center.

## AND NOW TO THE STUDIOS . . .

The A STRINGS sweetened projects for Mel Tillis, Rob Powell, Tammy Faye Baker, Lowenbrau Beer, and a TV show with Lane Brody. Touches were also given to a video project by Cityscapes, which featured the city of Nashville.

Alabama cut the last few tracks for their upcoming Christmas album recorded and currently being mixed by Joe Scaife and Jim Cotton at the MUSIC MILL. Producer Barry Beckett was in recording tracks with Johnny Lee and Karen Brooks, Scott Hendricks and George Clinton engineering; Dave Lehman from Word Records cut overdub tracks on Shirley Caesar; Jack Eubanks produced material for Showdown's new album project; and Mark Wright from RCA mixed a new single on Pake McEntire.

At GRAND CENTRAL STUDIO Pat Patrick and Tom Woodward produced several jazz sessions for the Mickey Basil Group featuring Stan Lassiter, Dale Armstrong, Tom Roady, Roy Vogt, Craig Nelson, and Kevin Madill. Engineering the cuts was Kent Madison.

Lee Hazens' STUDIO BY THE POND hosted an array of projects by Nashville Rock and Rollers Davis Deluxe. Jack (Stack-a-Track) Grochmal, who engineered the groups last single, is once again at the console. Davis Deluxe



Alabama presents a gold tribute album to the writers of "40-Hour Week." (Left to Right) Standing are ASCAP's Bob Doyle, writers Dave Loggins and Don Schlitz, Alabama's Jeff Cook, Teddy Gentry and Mark Herndon. Kneeling are ASCAP's Merlin Littlefield, writer Lisa Silver, and Alabama's Randy Owen.

## SHOWCASE



Johnny Travis and radio personality Larry Byers at KFYO-AM/KRUX-FM listen to Travis' single "Ode To Murphy's Law."

## JOHNNY TRAVIS/"Ode To Murphy's Law"

Johnny Travis started his first band in Lubbock, Texas at the age of 25 after spending four years in the U.S. Air Force and three years as a policeman in Los Angeles. Although he played every chance he got, Johnny's main source of livelihood was in real estate which afforded him a good living and gave him time to sharpen his music skills. In 1971 his first major label release was produced by Eddie Kilroy, for Capitol Records. Things were going great . . . but tragedy struck. Johnny's brother who played bass in the band was killed. Johnny withdrew from his music, throwing himself back into the real estate business full-time.

In 1979 he released an album of Tom T. Hall songs titled *Songs I Wish I'd Written, Johnny Travis sings Tom T. Hall*. Recently Johnny has put together a record label, mail-order house and publishing company which is just now beginning to come into its own. An offering of Johnny's song "American Citizen" in the form of a wall plaque was advertised on The Nashville Network and enjoyed wide spread success. Johnny has made two appearances on the "Nashville Now" show, and his second single, "Ode To Murphy's Law" from his album *Iced Tea & Taters* has just been released. For more information contact: Tip Music, 2304 Avenue Q, Lubbock, Texas 79405. (806) 765-0777.

*SHOWCASE is a paid promotional feature to give exposure to developing acts.*





Don Williams doesn't get mad easily. But when Coke changed their formula he took a public stand against it. Consequently, when the manufacturer decided to reinstate the original product, Coke representative Claude Clements delivered 25 cases of Classic Coke to Don in Nashville. It quenched his thirst and quelled the gentle giant's gripe.

will be showcasing at Roosters on September 18th.

The NASHVILLE STRING MACHINE enlightened sessions with Shirley Caesar, Mel McDaniel, Chris Wyrzten, Keith Thomas, and Howard Keel of "Dallas". Jingles included Lowenbrau, Gordon's Fish Filets, Shadybrook Farms, and a Honda ad with Ed Bruce.

WILD TRACKS recorded demos with Pat McLaughlin, Rick Klang, and Lee Clayton. Projects were also tracked by Tom Cherry, and John Pell with Maria Fletcher.

In the front studio at SOUND STAGE, Scott Hendricks and Chris Hammond were engineering the soundtrack for an upcoming "Dallas" movie. Artist Mark Gray was recording a new lp for CBS. In the back, Jimmy Bowen produced tracks on John Schneider with engineers Ron Treat and Chuck Ainlay, and Patti Loveless sessioned tunes for MCA.

Ron O'Brien produced several sides at TREASURE ISLE on the MTM group In Pursuit. Tom Harding engineered lp cuts with producer Warner Hodges on Jason and The Scorchers; Billy Chinnock tracked sounds for the daytime television show, "Search For Tomorrow"; and Paul Worley with engineer Ed Seay recorded a new single for Marie Osmond.



Tom Jones (front) pays a visit to WHN air personalities Sheila York and Dan Taylor at their New York studios.

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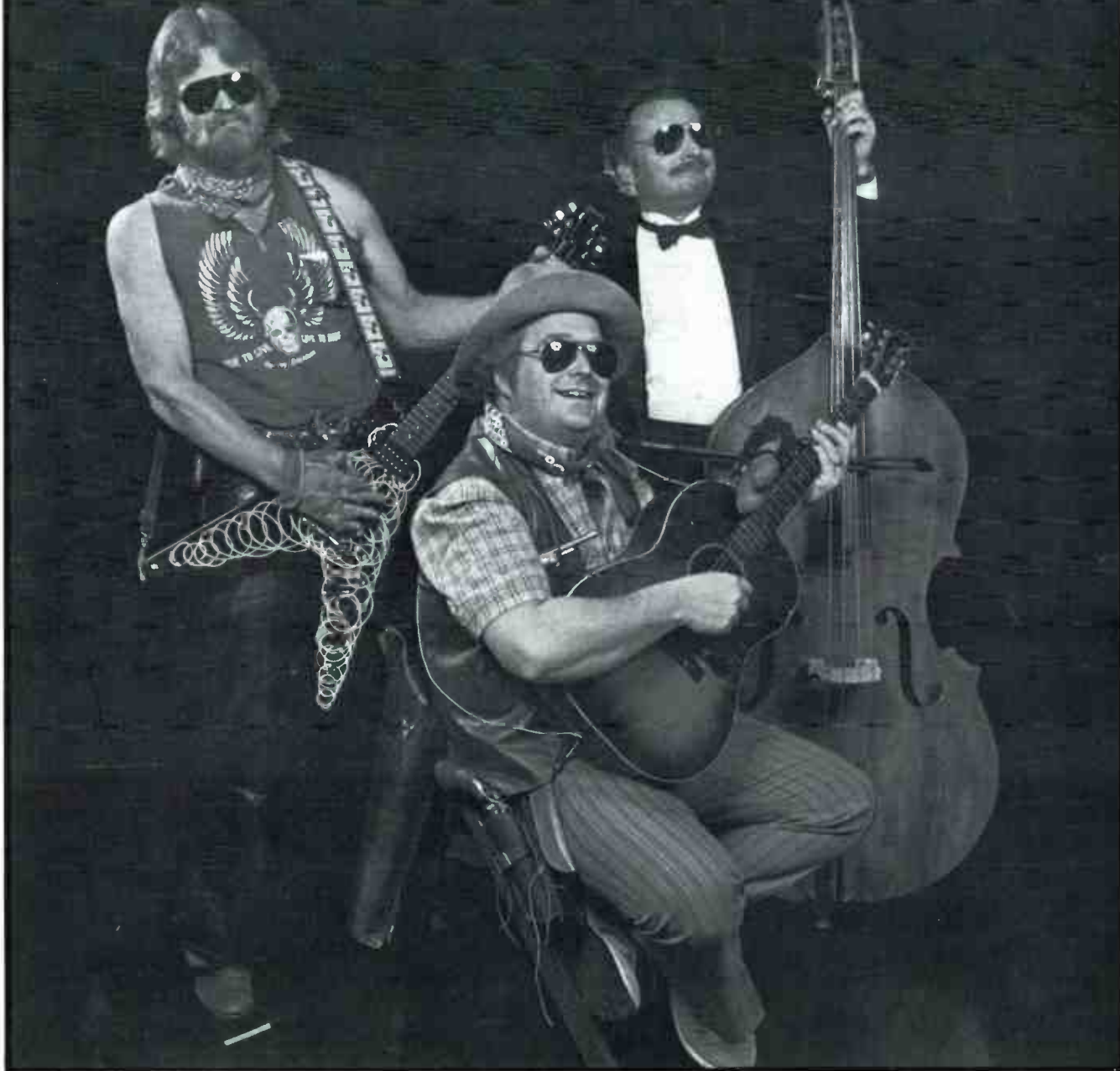
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