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COUNTRY MUSIC™



ERIC LARS BAKKE

2 Letters

Readers respond to The Judds, Charlie Daniels and Don Gibson. Longlost artists turn up. George Strait lounges and Tom T. Hall picks. Plus new generations of famous music families.

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by Rich Kienzle

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by Rich Kienzle

Letters

Back to Basics with The Judds

I would like to tell you just how much I really did enjoy your article on The Judds in your March/April issue. It showed how down-to-earth they really are.

It's nice to see a relationship like theirs. And how they carried on! It's nice to see that some people who make it big don't forget where they came from or the people that helped them. They seem so friendly. Maybe someday soon I'll see them in concert.

Stephanie Olden
College Station, Texas

Congratulations on your superb article on The Judds. They are the greatest thing to happen to country music in recent history.

I'm personally very happy that they are two individuals, not just some typically bland, manufactured group that you often find successful. I wish them only the best in the future; they definitely deserve it.

I've tried unsuccessfully to find someplace to write to The Judds. Is there a fan club or somewhere else I could write to them?

Erin Erman
Defiance, Ohio

To reach The Judds, write Judds International Fan Club, P.O. Box 17325, Nashville, Tennessee 37217-0325.—Ed.

And Now a Word from the Hairdressers

In response to the article on The Judds: I enjoyed the article until I got to the last paragraph. Naomi should be a little more tactful. I am a hairdresser, and I'm not ashamed of it! She should be reminded that hairdressers buy records and *maybe* that has added to her success.

Not long ago she was just a nurse, and I'm sure she didn't like being "put down" any more than hairdressers do.

Anita F. Noel
Fayetteville, Tennessee

P.S. I'm fairly certain that entertainers have their hair done!

Ask Charlie Daniels

Dear Michael,
I just got my copy of *Country Music Magazine* with your article in it, and I can't tell you how much I like it. The



piece was really right on, and I appreciate all the nice compliments!

Michael, your writing is superb, but to tell you the truth, your golf game needs a little work. Anytime you think you need a few pointers from me, just say the word.

Again, thanks for doing such a great piece on me. I sincerely appreciate it, and look forward to seeing you on down the road soon. Take care!

Charlie Daniels
Nashville, Tennessee

Ask Charlie's Fans

I really enjoyed the story on Charlie Daniels in your March/April issue. The man truly is a legend in his own time. My

★ Our 15th Anniversary ★

Country Music Magazine marks its 15th Anniversary with the publication of the September/October issue. Any special thoughts or suggestions you have in connection with this occasion, let me know. I'd especially like to hear from our longterm subscribers.

Write to me at *Country Music Magazine*, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Mark your envelope, Attention: 15th Anniversary.

—Russ Barnard

husband and I are big fans of his, and we are Volunteer Jam regulars. My husband has been to seven, and I have been to four.

Something happened a while ago that I thought I would share with you. In the article, Charlie's quarter horse ranch was spoken of. My husband and I, being the horse lovers we are, visited Charlie's ranch a while ago. Never in our wildest dreams did we imagine meeting Charlie himself. But who should stick his head out of a doorway but Mr. Charlie Daniels! He spoke to us and shook our hands, and was very friendly and polite. Believe me, it made our day for sure.

Somehow when you think of stars like him, you can't imagine them being down-home friendly folks, but Charlie Daniels is, and I couldn't think of anything that could have made my husband or me happier!

Thank you, Mr. Daniels!

Carol and Steve Hanley
Portland, Tennessee

Memories of Don Gibson and Then Some

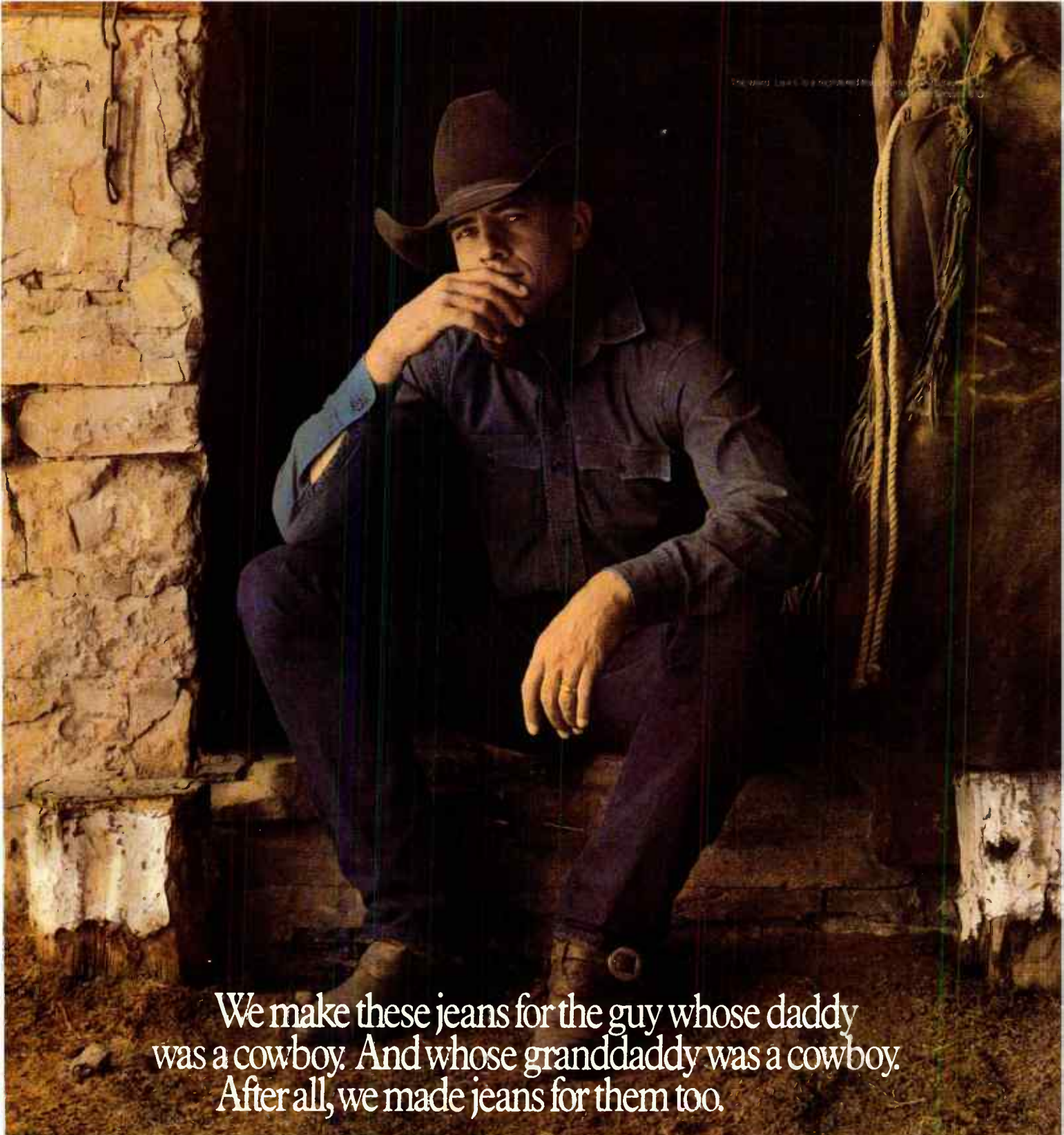
I remember Don Gibson. It was in the late 1960's at the Canton, Ohio, Civic Center that I last saw him. We had something in common—we both had beautiful redheads with us. I don't know if his was the girl from Shelby or not. My loved one now drinks a fifth a day and is two thousand miles away, but we loved Don and his music. I hope he can write some more great songs soon.

Robert Newton
Canton, Ohio

"Oh, Lonesome Me" is what I have been for many years because of *not* hearing Don Gibson. What a fantastic surprise, then, when I opened *Country Music* and found an article about him. This man has been my idol for many a year. As a teenager, I had admired his music, the pain in his music. For years, I have asked, "Where is Don Gibson?"

My thanks to *Country Music* for bringing him back to me. This man is a *true* country artist, and we fans who did not know about his troubles find them easy to excuse, in order to hear him and see him again.

If possible, I would like to know if he



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has a fan club. I, a young grandmother, would like to introduce my idol to my granddaughters.

Welcome back, Don.

Rosemarie Bell
Mesa, Arizona

Don Gibson is retired, but you can try writing him % Acuff Rose Opryland, Box 40427, Nashville, Tennessee 37204.—Ed.

What about Ray Price?

I loved your story on Don Gibson. I always said that if ever I went to the Grand Ole Opry, I hoped Don would be there. I've only been there once, that was in May, 1976, and sure enough, Don was there.

My all-time favorite is Mr. Ray Price. I wish you wouldn't neglect him so in your magazine. I think he has the best voice that has ever come out of Nashville.

I have been getting *Country Music Magazine* for years now, and I always look through my issues first to see if I can find anything about him in them. I have belonged to his fan club for a long time, and he is still going strong. So please, won't you print something about Ray Price soon?

Margaret Eastridge
Lynchburg, Virginia

We're trying.—Ed.

Spam, Beanie-Weenies and Herman Woonzel

I write this letter with heavy heart: Herman Woonzel is dead! You cannot know my sorrow. I, like Tom T., looked forward with great anticipation to his words of wisdom. So earthy and legitimate—such honesty!

Spam and beanie-weenies. Now there's something a *real man* can eat. Beanie-weenies are especially good warmed on the manifold of your car. From Webbville to Olive Hill, Kentucky, will heat 'em to perfection. Herman Woonzel would have known that. He was a hand-dug well of esoterica: lizards with breakaway tails, roller-skating bears, Packard cars. And he was against drinkin', funny smokes and dope takin'—testimony to his wisdom, making him a pillar of the community. The quart of moonshine Herman and Fred drank one night back in 1983 was just one of Herman Woonzel's jokes!

Benton, Tennessee, was most fortunate to have a native son like Herman. He was a legend in his own mind.

I hope the "Hall boy" will properly panegyryze our departed colleague in a future issue of *Country Music Magazine*.

Hazel Ferguson
Donnelsville, Ohio

Could he do better than you?—Ed.



Tom T. Hall and the World's Largest Bluegrass Band at Levelland, Texas.

Setting a Record with Tom T. Hall

Thanks for your article by Tom T. Hall and the Book Bonus photo spread on his and Miss Dixie's home.

Tom and Tandy Rice were in Levelland, Texas, on March 22 to dedicate the Tom T. Hall Recording and Production Facility at South Plains College. They

also participated in a new world-record for the number of musicians in a bluegrass band, which will be placed in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. TNN and other major networks were here to document the event.

Tom's concern was tremendous, and he was graciously received by the people

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Norma Pierce
Lubbock, Texas

Poetry With Minnie Pearl

On April 6, I watched the Academy of Country Music Awards. When Minnie Pearl was recognized by different individuals, Ricky Skaggs quoted a poem she keeps on her desk—something like, "Songs to Sing and Love to Give." Could you please print this poem? Minnie is a remarkable lady.

I enjoy *Country Music Magazine* and look forward to each new issue. I also received the *Country Music Stars and Their Homes*, which was great. Keep up the good work.

Betty Roberts
West Point, Mississippi
According to Minnie Pearl's Museum, Minnie received this poem years ago from a fan. She does not know the author or origin.

*A bell's not a bell till you ring it.
A song's not a song till you sing it.
And love in your heart wasn't put there to stay,
Love isn't love till you give it away.*

—Ed.

Like Mother, Like Son

I went to a concert of Loretta Lynn's and Conway Twitty's, but the highlight of that night was getting to meet Ernest Lynn. He really is a nice down-to-earth person and an asset to his mother's band. It really made me feel good to get my picture taken with him. Good luck, Ernest.

Martha Wheeler
Savannah, Georgia



Ernest Lynn was the real star for Martha Wheeler at a Loretta-Conway concert.

Loretta Led the Way

Thought I'd write and share my experience. I work for a printing company in central Illinois and this past year at our annual Women's Office Party we had a lip-sync contest. At eight months pregnant, I got up on stage with my dolls, clothesline, telephone, etc., and did Loretta Lynn's "One's On the Way." Based on talent and originality, I came in first, competing against numbers

based on Dolly Parton's "9 to 5," The Beach Boys, The Supremes, The Chicago Bears' "Super Bowl Shuffle" and many more.

Being a country and western music fan, I gave it my best shot and had a lot of fun doing it.

Kathy A. Clark
Shelbyville, Illinois

Life follows art.—Ed.

A Pat on the Back for Patrick and Pake—That's Carr and McEntire, Respectively

Patrick Carr's story on Pake McEntire in the March/April issue was well-written and informative and describes Pake as he really is: a man with his head on tight and right.



McEntire meets Siegrist in Missouri.

I had the pleasure of seeing and talking to Pake at a club called South 40 here in St. Louis where he put on two fantastic shows. He and his band, Limestone Gap, glide effortlessly from country-rockers such as "Bad Song" to such songs as "Love Gone Wrong" and "Heart vs. Heart" with such ease that by the time he's through with the show you cannot deny that talent runs in the McEntire family.

Pake is not only ready to sing, but deserves to.

Vicki Siegrist
St. Louis, Missouri

Trask Turns Up

For Dorothy Boyd of Collinsville, Illinois, in the March/April issue, who was wondering about the whereabouts of Diana Trask... Not long ago she was doing a national tour of "Down Under" (Australia). I guess y'all knew that Diana was originally from Australia!

Andy King
Madison, Tennessee

Thanks for the update.—Ed.

Whatever Happened to Curly Fox?

I am a new subscriber to *Country Music Magazine*, and I would like to know if you can tell me anything about Curly

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Vice President/Managing Editor
Rochelle Friedman

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Bob Allen**

Art Director
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Office Assistants
Anne Barnard, Bernadette Collins

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Editorial and Executive Offices

342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118,
New York, New York 10173
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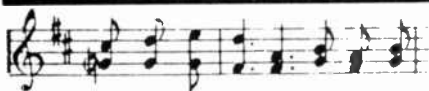
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Cruise-mate Susan Tate caught George Strait and his wife Norma on a Bahama beach. George looks good in any hat.

Fox and Texas Ruby. I met them when I was a child and haven't heard anything about them for years.

Last October I visited a music store in Nashville, where I inquired about them, and was told that Texas Ruby died in a trailer fire several years ago. I was wondering if you could tell me anything about Curly Fox. I have an autographed picture of both him and Texas Ruby that they gave me when I met them.

Please, if you can, tell me anything about Curly Fox and possibly his address, so I can write to him.

Thomas Boone
Riverview, Florida

Curly Fox, or anyone who knows him, come in, please.—Ed.

Strait from the Beach

I love George Strait and his music. My husband and I went on the country music cruise to the Bahamas last November on the S.S. *Emerald Seas*. George was the featured guest on the ship. We got some great pictures of him, and I'm enclosing one that my husband took of George and his wife Norma on the beach. My favorite artists are George Strait, George Jones, Merle Haggard, Nanci Griffith, Steve Earle, David Allan Coe and John Conlee.

Susan R. Tate
Aberdeen, North Carolina

Talk about ocean front property!—Ed.

Hank Jr. Wins at Last

My family and I watched the Academy of Country Music Awards on April 6, and were delighted and overjoyed that Hank Williams Jr. finally won an award. And what an award—Entertainer of the Year.

We follow country music closely. We listen to country music stations, read your magazine, watch all award shows and specials and attend local concerts—and we have never understood why someone who has been nominated as often as he has, has never won.

Rita Chandler
Portland, Arkansas

Hank, Try Cray

Just a quick suggestion for my lifelong

idol, Bocephus. Seeing as you seem to be into teaming up with other rockers like Van Halen and Stevie Ray, why not try someone with talent equal to (and not below) your own, with a sound like your own—someone like Robert Cray?

Scott R. Harcourt
Jefferson City, Missouri

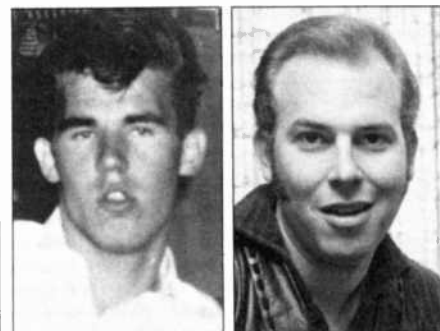
Hank, are you listening? By the way, the Robert Cray Band opened for Huey Lewis in New York recently. See People in this issue for Huey Lewis in Nashville.—Ed.

Beardless Beauties

Could you please publish pictures of both Kenny Rogers and Hank Williams Jr. without beards? I would like very much to see what they look like behind all that brush.

F. L. Reeser
Louisville, Kentucky

Anything for a fan.—Ed.



Kenny Rogers and Hank Jr. without their beards. We had to go back a bit!

Kenny Rogers' Workin' America

I just watched a Kenny Rogers' special titled *Workin' America* on TV last week. I really liked the special, but I'd like to find out if, by chance, there's a soundtrack available or if Kenny Rogers plans to release a tape of the songs that were sung in the special. I myself would like to see him release the songs and make them available. Could you check into it?

Randy Hull
Huntington, Indiana

There are no plans to release a show album. Some of the songs are out on Kenny's previous albums, and one or two may be on the one he's working on now.—Ed.

Eddie Rabbitt, A Special Star

A couple of years ago I had the pleasure of meeting Eddie Rabbitt backstage in Indianapolis after one of his concerts. Sheila Stephens, a local talent, was there to sing a duet with him. I play guitar and sing and was hoping to introduce some of my songs to him. My nephew Danny Thias also played guitar and sang at the time. He wrote great songs, and Eddie Rabbitt was the greatest as far as he knew. Knowing this, I asked if I could have an autograph for Danny. We talked for several minutes. The night just seemed so very special—if we had only known how very special.

Danny was very up on my music and got us into all kinds of musical talent events, hoping to boost my career and get his songs heard. We had a few opportunities and things looked good. I had entered a talent round-up and was chosen as a semi-finalist. Things were great for me, but Danny found out that he had Hodgkins disease and had six months to live.

I knew that the girl that sang with Eddie Rabbitt in Indy that night was also in this music round-up, so I spoke with her and gave her Danny's address hoping for a card or letter.

A few months went by, and I never said anything to Danny about this. I was afraid to get his hopes up.

Then I received a call saying Eddie Rabbitt had contacted Danny and wanted to see him. They met in Illinois where Eddie was performing. Mr. Rabbitt had dinner with Danny and took pictures, took him to the concert, even dedicated a song to him. It must have been the most special night of his short life.

I don't know how to express my thanks to Sheila Stephens and Eddie Rabbitt. I don't even know how it was we all met. But now I do know why. I wrote this letter to let everyone know that in this business that seems so harsh and ungiving at times, there are people like Eddie Rabbitt, who give us more than they take. I also wrote this to tell you that Danny Thias died not long ago in his sleep. I believe he died satisfied, thanks to Eddie Rabbitt, who must be one of the most special people in this world.

Sally Nellinger
Plainfield, Indiana



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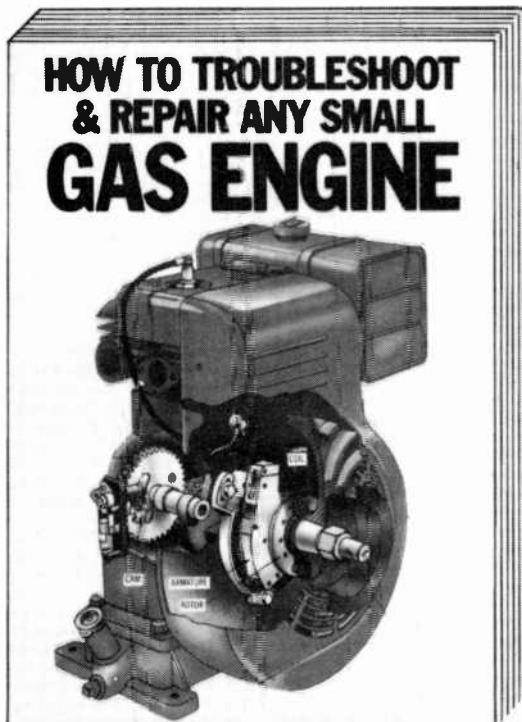
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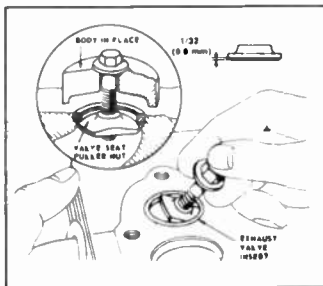
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Gone on Griffith

Yeah! Bob Allen's review of Nanci Griffith's albums in the March/April issue was right on target.

I first heard of Nanci Griffith on the PBS show, *Austin City Limits*. At the time, I didn't listen closely to the lyrics, but noticed the beautiful melodies of her songs. I then went out in search of anything of hers in the record stores.

Now, if only the radio stations would recognize her talent and give her songs some air play...

Patricia McQueen
South San Francisco, California

Thank you for doing a record review of my favorite singer, Nanci Griffith. She became my favorite over a year and a half ago, when I first heard "Daddy Said" on CMTV. I tracked down all her



Nanci Griffith caught by Guy Coffin in performance on TNN's *New Country*.

records, and since then I've gone to Nashville twice to see her. I've met her, and she is a lovely, gracious, talented, very friendly lady who does not put herself above her fans.

I must take exception to Bob Allen's assessment of her voice, however. She doesn't caterwaul or warble. She has a wonderful voice that can go all soft and dreamy or belt it out with the best of them. And she could duet with Kenny Rogers or anyone. I would personally love to hear her record a duet with Dan Fogelberg.

Rita Mears Coffin
Madison, Alabama

Please Don't Ask

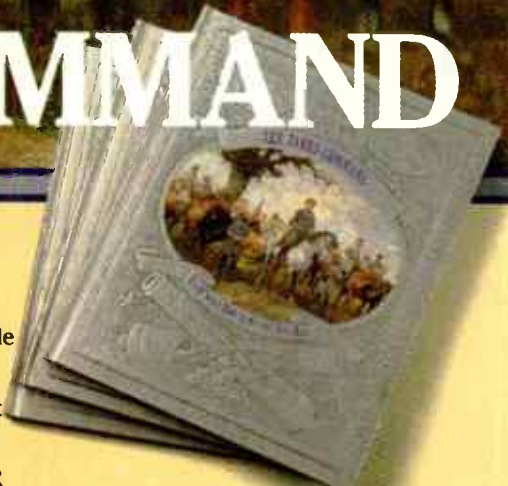
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Lieutenant John H. Chamberlayne, Virginia Artillery, C.S.A.



Not everyone cheered the selection of Robert E. Lee to command the army defending Richmond in 1862. Many thought him too cautious, too gentle. They called him

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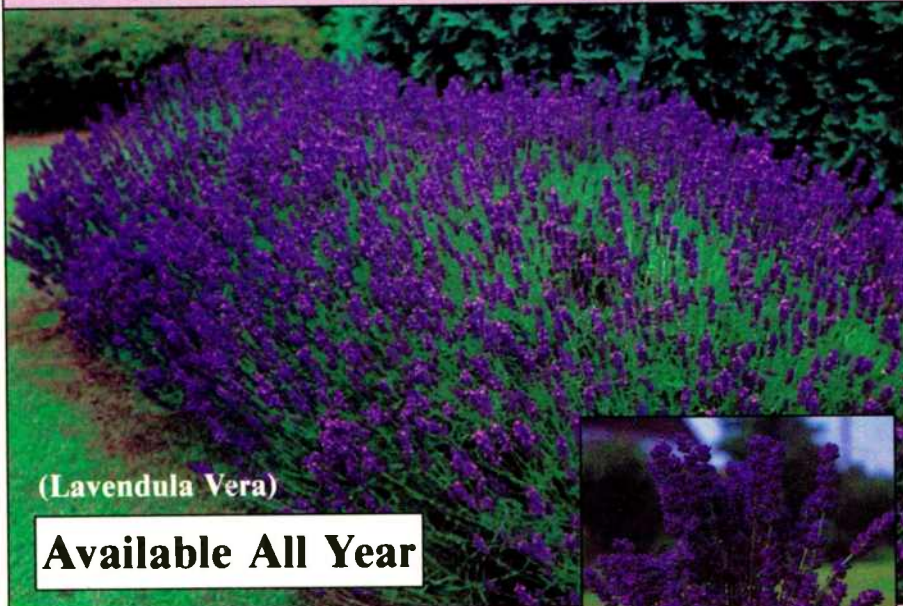
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John Anderson's Class Act

John Morthland must have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed the day he wrote that negative record review on John Anderson's new album, *Countrified*, in the March/April issue.

I'm sure all John Anderson fans do not share his opinion, and as far as John sounding less and less like Lefty Frizzell, why can't John just sound like John, leave Lefty out of it.

I'll put John Anderson up against any country music singer. He's the most versatile singer in the business.

Country music critics are always comparing John's voice to Merle, or George or Lefty. There's really no comparison. John Anderson is the very best there is.

I'm sure you won't print this.

Dianna Whaley
Davisboro, Georgia

Wanna bet?—Ed.

Brother Oswald—The Man Behind the Throne

A while back, in the November/December 1984 issue of *Country Music Magazine*, there was an article about Roy Acuff as King of Country Music. He is, there is no doubt about it. But I want to point out a great man and musician who helped a great deal to get him there. That is Pete Kirby—Brother Oswald. In my opinion, he is the greatest and so is the wonderful instrument he plays, the dobro. This man and this instrument never did get enough recognition. I think both deserve much more. I have been listening to country music for sixty years, and have heard them all.

Paul R. Harris

Winona, Minnesota

Oswald is at work on his autobiography. He also has two records out, released by *Country Heritage of Madill, Oklahoma: The Best of Oswald and Dobro Dreamland: Bev and Joe in the Land of Os.*—Ed.

Wants Robbins Jacket

This will be an unusual request, but I don't know anyone who could help me unless it's you at the magazine. Is there anywhere I could purchase a Marty Robbins jacket? I see all the ads and things you run and wondered if it's possible I could find a way to get one?

I was a great fan of his for years. I had one of his jackets, but it was stolen, and it nearly broke my heart.

Anything you could do would be greatly appreciated.

Mettie Thayer
Painesville, Ohio

The old jackets are all gone, but a new version is available, in satin, through the Marty Robbins Memorial Showcase, % Twitty City Music Village, 44 Music Village Blvd., Hendersonville, Tennessee 37075.—Ed.

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Kris Kristofferson ran into Jan Kendall at the Detroit State Fair last year.

Waiting for Kristofferson

I have been a reader of *Country Music Magazine* for almost six months, and I am so happy that you are going to be having an article on Kris Kristofferson. He is my favorite country songwriter and singer. Thanks to Kevin Jay, disk jockey at WKJC in Tawas City, I got a chance to meet Kris and Willie Nelson at the Detroit State Fair in August of 1986. I took lots of pictures that I will cherish forever. Thanks again for the coming article. This is a great magazine.

Jan Kendall
Tawas City, Michigan

Lane Brody and Jimmy Fortune—Just Colleagues

After watching country videos the other day, I've come up with a question. Is Lane Brody ("Yellow Rose of Texas") going with or married to the newest member of The Statler Brothers? Is she perhaps the lovely blonde in their video, "Only You"?

My husband and I both enjoy your

magazine and are so happy to be able to get it up here in Wisconsin.

D.J. Ray and Judy Schierland
Poy Sippi, Wisconsin
It's Lane in the video, but Jimmy is married to a woman from Charlottesville, Virginia.—Ed.

A Dream Come True For a Haggard Fan

After a recent concert, Mr. Haggard was kind enough to allow me on board his private coach and have some conversation.

Thank you, sir.
What a show.
What a legend.
What great music.

Butch Blanchette
Hope, Rhode Island

From Merle to Marty Haggard

I have always been a Merle Haggard fan. I've had the privilege of meeting Merle several times, so you can imagine how thrilled I was to meet his son.

I caught up with Marty Haggard at Little Nashville in Huntington, West Virginia. He was there for two nights in a row. This gave me the opportunity to talk to him and hear him in concert. Marty definitely has his own style. The crowd loved him too. He has a casual approach to his listening audience. He mingled with the crowd, signed autographs, and gave the fans a personal touch while he was on stage. He was available for the fans to take lots of pictures.

I met the members of his band and they reflect Marty's genuine interest in pleasing the fans.

As you can see from the picture, Marty took a second to pose for the camera. That means a lot to the fans. His music is new and refreshing. I'm really looking forward to meeting him again. He impressed me as a Super



Merle Haggard and Butch Blanchette compared notes after a recent concert. ...And here's Merle's son Marty Haggard, caught by Carol Jeffrey.

Star...on his own merits.

I enjoyed Patrick Carr's story about Merle Haggard in your January/February 1986 issue. It would be nice to see a story about Marty Haggard in an upcoming issue. Thanks for a wonderful magazine. Keep up the good work.

Carol Jeffrey
Barboursville, West Virginia

Clyde Foley Cummins Carries on the Tradition

My dad and I met Clyde Foley Cummins at the 1986 Florida State Fair, Tampa, Florida. After the show, I told Clyde that my dad was ninety years old. He



Clyde Foley Cummins, Red Foley's grandson, and 91-year-old fan, Joseph J. Kuzma.

said anyone that old that could sit through his show deserved a free album, which he was kind enough to autograph.

My dad and I recently saw Clyde at the Strawberry Festival, Plant City, Florida, and at the Sarasota County Fair, Sarasota, Florida. He remembered us from the Florida State Fair.

Clyde is a wonderful singer, entertainer and showman. He always has the audience as part of his show, plus you never know what he is going to do or say, which makes for a very exciting show. If you haven't seen Clyde's show, you have missed a great time.

He had my dad on stage several times, dancing and singing along with him, which my dad really enjoyed. Thanks, Clyde, for being such a nice person and a great entertainer.

Clyde Foley Cummins is Red Foley's grandson.

Ethel L. Kuzma
Clearwater, Florida

Send Letters to the Editor to Country Music Magazine, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Mark envelope, Attention: Letters.

People

DEDICATED COUNTRY GREATS

George Jones and Dickie Betts went out clubbing to see Johnny Paycheck perform. And speaking of George, he was doing a local morning show with my pal Keith Bilbrey, and I just about took the phone off the hook. Jones just kills me. His single, another winner, titled "Right Left Hand," was written specifically for George and his bride. Being the Texas gentleman he is, George dedicated the song to his friend's wife on TV. That's okay! George's friend was on the TV show too. His friend? The great **Charley Pride**, who dueted with Jones on "He Stopped Loving Her Today."

And speaking of Charley Pride, his first single on Opryland's 16th Avenue Records is "Have I Got Some Blues For You." Excellent song choice. Former RCA exec Jerry Bradley has the reins, and the label has moved in on the corner of 17th and Grand, a prestigious spot. Rumor has it that maybe big Johnny Russell may take up residence there with Charley and Jerry. He's a good one. I'd sure like to hear him sing some more hits.

ROCKIN' COUNTRY

I'm such a country girl, it's extremely difficult for me to get into any other music. I've learned, however, to appreciate the genius of the Beatles, and I've always counted Elvis, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Ray Charles as country. I go to the Grand Ole Opry often, and I've seen everybody there from Jimmy Carter when he was governor of Georgia to Doc Severinon. Last weekend as I turned the corner that leads by the last dressing rooms toward the stage, I spied a crowd of lookers just outside the Number One dressing room occupied by Mr. Roy Acuff. Thinking it was a bunch of musicians jamming, I just sidled up beside the The Whites' road manager, Mike Seidel, and asked, "What's going on?" Mike, who is country by birth and has a rock 'n' roll heart with a haircut to match, allowed as how Huey



Lewis was there. "Which one is he?" I asked. Mike looked pretty disgusted with me, but pointed out the handsome, slim one who was gazing at his surroundings with awe and amazement saying things like, 'Wow! can't believe I'm in Roy Acuff's dressing room,' or 'Hey, look at this picture' (Acuff's room is lined with photos). Any of you fans who dig Huey Lewis more than Jerry Lee Lewis, it's okay by me. Anybody that thrilled to be backstage at the Opry has got my vote. Matter of fact, I'd go backstage at one of his shows. Also, being the nosey know-it-all person that I am, I made it my business to check up on ole Huey. He is 36, been married once only, has a little girl and a son and is pretty much your normal, everyday homebody. In this day of fast living, hard drugs, easy love, cheating hearts and songs that encourage all the above, it sure feels good to me to know that rock 'n' roll has some folks who sing to entertain and not to amuse...know what I mean!!

GIVE ME THE LOUVINS!!

Do you have the cassette *The Louvin Brothers Radio Favorites '51-'57* marketed by the CMF?? I do. And I can tell you, it is absolutely the best. From the liner notes by Emmylou Harris to the picking and singing by Charlie and Ira

Louvin, there is just nothing but good, honest music. One side features gospel and the other secular. Fifteen songs in all, there isn't a bad one in the bunch. That could be because the Louvins didn't do no bad ones. Besides, Ira Louvin forgot more about songwriting and harmony singing than most of today's crop will ever learn.

NSAI (NASHVILLE SONGWRITERS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL) HONORS OVERSTREET

How long have I been singing the praises of Paul Overstreet? Longer than most, I'd say!! Well, now the famed songwriters' organization has recognized Paul as Writer of the Year at a do held at the fancy-schmancy Vanderbilt Plaza Hotel. That is a far piece from Mississippi where he was born. Just a kid of 18 when he first migrated to Nashville, Paul ended up married to Dolly Parton's little sister Freda. Too poor and too young to take, the marriage ended, though today the two have no bad things to say about each other. Paul has since remarried to his lovely Julie. They have a son Nash and expect a second child.

Wanna know some Paul Overstreet songs?? "On the Other Hand," "Diggin' Up Bones" and "Same Old Me," recorded by Randy Travis, Randy

Reporter: Hazel Smith

Editor: Rochelle Friedman

People

GRAMMY WINNERS



The Judds and Bruce Hornsby enjoyed the fruits of their labors when they were awarded Grammy Awards recently. Hornsby won for Best New Artist and The Judds took away awards for Best Country Vocal Performance by a Duo or a Group and Best Country Song. Congratulations to all.

Travis and George Jones respectively. In addition to his song-writing exploits, Paul was a member of SKO, the MTM Records recording group that is no more. The two other members were Thom Schuyler and Fred Knoblock. Paul allowed as how he wanted to cease and desist the group. He wanted to go out on his own, record gospel and country records to his own liking with a solo atmosphere. Paul talked with me about the situation and, yes, it does have a lot to do with his spiritual feelings. That's okay, too. This is a free country.

RATTLESNAKE SIGNS WITH CBS...

Somebody finally learned!! Rattlesnake Annie has been in my column many times. Like a lot of "lesser knowns," Rattlesnake and I have laughed a bunch when we could've been crying. Tough, talented and determined, the East Tennessee hillbilly has sung on Beale Street in Memphis with blues madam **Memphis Ma Rainey**, and she has performed at Beanblossom, Indiana, with **Bill Monroe** and sung every other kind of music in between. It's called paying dues on Music Row; however, back home in Caswell County, we called it making a living. With an album released this spring, Rattlesnake's flawless vocals are now avail-

able on vinyl with the blessings of a major label. She's pushed and picked, sworn and sung, laughed and smiled, and up to now by the grace of God and her talent chosen her own songs, chosen her own musicians, paid for her own sessions and booked her own shows. After all, she was making a living.

Her one last try to make it with a major label was with CBS and header-upper, **Rick Blackburn**. Of course he wanted Rattlesnake. She's the answer to a label's prayers. No overdubs!!

Be on the lookout for Rattlesnake. I promise you, you are going to enjoy her unique singing style, and you might even find a little bit of the same magic that attracts all of us to **Willie Nelson**, who duos with Rattlesnake on one tune.

Rattlesnake's first single, "Callin' Your Bluff," is an up-ten:po ditty.

STRAIT IS NUMBER ONE

...in my heart and on the charts! Fickle me! **George Strait's** album, *Ocean Front Property*, surpassed all country albums by thundering onto the charts at a non-challenging Number One. Strait to the charts and Strait in my heart! Sounds like a country song to me. Or should we say Strait made a record with a record! Anyway, the album's title song was also a chart-topping single for the

tall Texan. From the prolific pens of **Dean Dillon**, the old song-horse **Hank Cochran** and **Royce Porter**, the song does have a very clever twist.

MCA TRIES RE-RELEASE ON LOVELESS

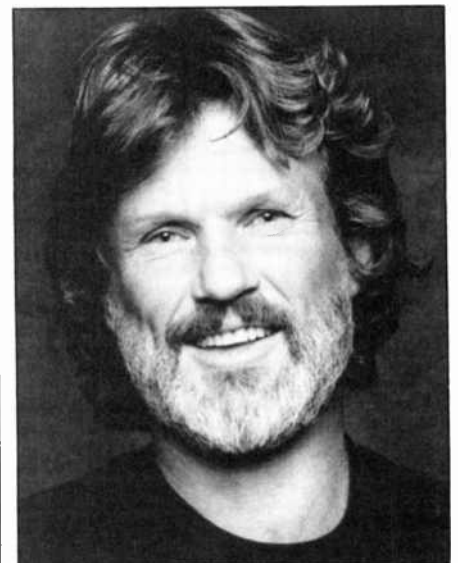
A year to the day from the first single release of **Patty Loveless'** "I Did," MCA re-released the record. This strategy worked for **Randy Travis** with "On the Other Hand." Maybe it will also work for **Patty**. Listen folks, if you love country music, you should give **Patty** a listen. Personally, I feel there is enough room for **Loveless**. I hope "I Did" does more than before. This is my sermon for today on this up-and-comer.

HEY, MY NAME'S HAZEL

I am raving about the West Virginia car dealership who gifted the gifted **Kathy Mattea** with a customized Chevy Blazer. It ain't Christmas, but I'd bet anything I ain't got that one of them jobs would fit in my stocking! **Songbird Mattea** is walking the way the wind blows, opening shows for **Ronnie Milsap**, **George Strait** and **Randy Travis**.

KRIS GOT A NEW ALBUM

Repossessed by his highness **Kris Kristofferson** is a good record. And as you fans know, the controversial mini-series *Amerika* starred our own **Mr. K.** **Kris** can and will stir up a hornet's nest or ten. He has been known to take sides with the meek, hang out with the lowly and be about as opinionated as a woman



Kris—repossessed.

People

looking for a hat. I believe we can always count on Kris to do and say what he believes is right. I might not always agree with him, but I gotta respect him. And I like the album.

WILLIE PUT ON GOOD BRITCHES

Or should I say, the leader of the "sneaker movement" puts on a tux to greet the king? Maybe. For the first time to my knowledge Willie Nelson dressed in a tuxedo. The King of Country Music, Mr. Roy Acuff, was so surprised he exclaimed, "I don't believe it! Willie Nelson in a tux." What Acuff didn't know was that Willie wore the outfit in Roy's honor. Actually, Acuff was honoring Nelson in recognition for the work he has done on behalf of the financially strapped American farmer. Willie received the Roy Acuff Community Service Award. The organizer of FarmAid I and II, Nelson announced that FarmAid III will be held in September, 1987, in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Some of the outstanding folks who also turned out to honor Willie this night of nights were Mae Axton and her famed son, Hoyt Axton, Waylon Jennings and wife Jessi Colter, David Allan Coe, Emmylou Harris, Rattlesnake Annie, Johnny Rodriguez, CMF pres Joe Talbot, *Tennessean* publisher John Seigenthaler, CMF Director Bill Ivey, Lee Clayton and Harry



Willie got all dressed up to receive his award from Roy Acuff.

Browning, General Manager of the *Tennessean*, and other famed and famous.

AND THEN

Eye saw very pretty, very pregnant Lorrie Morgan shopping at Rivergate Mall.

Eye saw J.P. Pennington, lead singer of Exile, having ice cream with his wife and baby at the ice cream shop in

Rivergate Mall.

Eye saw the King of Country Music, Mr. Roy Acuff, and his lady friend dining at Morrison's in Rivergate Mall. Bobbi, Mr. Acuff's friend, had on a T-shirt with a caricature of Acuff on the front...with letters that spelled out ROY. The duo eased out through the mall and dropped by Hickory Farms. They did attract a lot of stares and whispers. It does give one a rush to see a star of Mr. Acuff's caliber.

Eye saw R.C. Bannon at Cain Sloan in Rivergate Mall, shopping for polo shirts. He assured me he and wife Louise Mandrell couldn't be happier with their little daughter they recently adopted. Lucky parents and lucky child!

Ran into my friend Marie (Mrs. John) Hartford at Rivergate Mall. She was shopping and getting a haircut. While she and I were catching up on girl talk, up walked Ricky Skaggs with his boss, three-year-old daughter Molly Kate. Why am I at Rivergate Mall so much?? Well, that's where I walk. I'm up to two miles a day and down 40 pounds! So if you want to see me, meet me at the mall!

AT THE GUV'S BALL

Rumor had it that Tennessee's new Governor Ned Ray McWether had the good sense and taste to utilize hillbillies for his inaugural music. Well, not exactly true, but the country folks showed how to give a party, rocking and getting down with the singing of Hank Williams Jr., Jessi Colter, Waylon Jennings, Danny Davis and the Nashville Brass, Barbara Fairchild and others who sang and partied till the night was no more. Welcome, Ned, to the world of country music.

TNN COOKING UP A STORM IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE!!

The Nashville Network is out of the red, in the black and looking like it's a solvent moneymaker. Gentleman Paul Corbin, program director, told me the network was ahead of schedule in the financial area and was thinking about adding to and upgrading their programming. Personally, I feel Corbin and the entire sheebang have done a heckuva job to have a television network running without a loan in five years.

I was out at the network not long ago for *Country Cooking*. My pals, The Whites, were laying some chicken enchiladas on Florence Henderson, who hosts the show, Billy Paul Jones, the producer, and Alan Reid, who runs and owns the chicken and the show!! I



Dwight Yoakam's gained a rap of p.o.-ing everybody in sight. He, however, was every inch a star during his visit to *Nashville Now*. He and host Ralph Emery got a long like two country gentlemen should.

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345793. Steve Earle—Guitar Town. Title cut, Hillybilly Highway, more! (MCA)



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341562 DIONNE WARWICK FRIENDS (ADDIS)	347047 Hank Williams, Jr. MONTANA CAFE (WARNER BROS./COLUMBIA)	287003 EAGLES 1971-1975 GREATEST HITS (RELENTLESS)	306241 THE DOORS GREATEST HITS (ELEKTRA)	350108* PIA ZADORA LIFE AS WE KNOW IT (CBS/ASCAP/EPIC)	327177* ROY ROGERS (COLUMBIA) (MCA/EPIC)
353847 RICKY VAN SHELTON WILD-EYED DREAM (COLUMBIA)	266660* CAT STEVENS GREATEST HITS (E.P.) (E.P.)	293597 LED ZEPPELIN HUES OF O' HOLY (MCA/EPIC)	291278* DOOBIE BROTHERS The Best of the Doobies (COLUMBIA)	309633 GEORGE JONES AND TAMMY WYNETTE EPIC (EPIC)	346122 T. L. SHEPPARD IT STILL RAINS IN MEMPHIS (COLUMBIA)
341306* ROBERT PALMER RIPTIDE (RELENTLESS)	347039 BILLY IDOL Whiplash Smile (COLUMBIA)	351403* CONWAY TWITTY A NIGHT WITH CONWAY TWITTY (MCA)	291773 The Best Of Peter, Paul And Mary (COLUMBIA)	350090 DAN SEALS ON THE FRONT LINE (MCA)	326629 Bruce Springsteen Born In The U.S.A. (COLUMBIA)
353607* LOU GRAMM READY OR NOT (RELENTLESS)	331819 THE BEST OF DOTTIE WEST (LIBERTY)	339317 SAWYER BROWN SHAKIN' (COLUMBIA)	346304 LACY J DALTON HIGHWAY DINER (COLUMBIA)	306672 ANNE MURRAY'S GREATEST HITS (CAPITOL)	345888 GENE WATSON Starring New Memories (EPIC)
341006* DEL SHANNON RUNAWAY HITS (MCA)	346643* ANDREAS VOLLENWEIDER DOWN TO THE MOON (CBS)	351361 VERN GOSDIN'S GREATEST HITS (COLUMBIA)	291302* JAMES TAYLOR'S GREATEST HITS (COLUMBIA)	350058 MEL BACHMANN ALICE CAN'T SIT DOWN MUSIC (CAPITOL)	319541 ELTON JOHN'S GREATEST HITS (MCA)
353573 STEVE WARNER IT'S A CRAZY WORLD (MCA)	331801 MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHY (MCA)	336109 LEE GREENWOOD GREATEST HITS (MCA)	346296 JANIE FRICKE BLACK AND WHITE (COLUMBIA)	339200 STEVE WONDER In Square Circle (MCA)	345785 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK TOP GUN (MCA)
340729 BARBARA MANDELL GET TO THE HEART (MCA)	346635 EXILE GREATEST HITS (EPIC)	350997* LONE JUSTICE SHELTER (MCA)	329631 RICKY SKAGGS COUNTRY BOY (MCA)	349993 JOHN CONLEE CONLEE COUNTRY (MCA)	323774 KENNY ROGERS 20 Greatest Hits (LIBERTY)
353565 THE WHITES AIN'T NO BINDS (RELENTLESS)	330738 PROFILES II THE BEST OF EMILY LOU WARREN (WARNER BROS.)	296403 CHARLIE RICH GREATEST HITS (EPIC)	346288 RAY CHARLES FROM THE PAGES OF MY MIND (COLUMBIA)	338608 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK SWEET DREAMS (MCA)	345781 PAUL SIMON GRACELAND (WARNER BROS.)
340463 THE BEST OF FRANK SINATRA (CAPITOL)	346636 THEN & NOW THE BEST OF THE BOOGIES (MCA)	350272 MARIE OSMOND I ONLY WANTED YOU (CAPITOL/COLUMBIA)	329235 BARBARA MANDELL, LEE GREENWOOD... MEANT FOR EACH OTHER (MCA)	349985 JOHNNY MENCHESBY MAMON THE HOLLYWOOD MUSICALS (COLUMBIA)	323410 JOHNNY LEE GREATEST HITS (RELENTLESS)
353540 RONNIE McDOWELL OLDER WOMEN AND OTHER GREATEST HITS (EPIC)	330720 JOHN ANDERSON GREATEST HITS (WARNER BROS.)	261248 LORETTA LYNN'S GREATEST HITS (MCA)	346156* WIZARD OF OZ Original Soundtrack (MCA)	338558 DAN SEALS WON'T BE BLUE ANYMORE (RELENTLESS)	345744 BEST OF THE NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND (WARNER BROS.)
340323 SADE PROMISE (RELENTLESS)	346510 THE FORESTER SISTERS PERU, LINDA & STEARS (RELENTLESS)	350124 JOHN ANDERSON COUNTRYFIED (WARNER BROS.)	328809 JUICE NEWTON GREATEST HITS (CAPITOL)	349647 LIBERACE Concert Favorites (MCA)	322867 LACY J DALTON GREATEST HITS (MCA)
353490 RAY STEVENS GREATEST HITS (MCA)	329672 MERLE HAGGARD HIS EPIC HITS (EPIC)	347187* THE GREAT ROY ORBISON / ALL TIME GREATEST HITS (RELENTLESS)	329235 BARBARA MANDELL, LEE GREENWOOD... MEANT FOR EACH OTHER (MCA)	338475 CHARLY McCLAIN BIGGEST HITS (EPIC)	345389 GEORGE STRAIT NUMBER SEVEN (MCA)
340158 HANK WILLIAMS, JR. (WARNER BROS./COLUMBIA) GREATEST HITS Vol. 2	355115 PRINCE (MCA/EPIC) SING 'O' THE TIMES (MCA/EPIC)	347182* THE BEACH BOYS MADE IN THE U.S.A. - Their Greatest Hits (CAPITOL)	346156* WIZARD OF OZ Original Soundtrack (MCA)	349621 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	322198 LARRY ORLUM & THE ORLUM BROTHERS BAND GREATEST HITS Vol. 7 (COLUMBIA)
353458 BRUCE WILLIS THE RETURN OF BRUNO (MCA/EPIC)	320705 BOB BAKER & THE SILVER BULLET BAND LIVE BULLET (CAPITOL)	346445 THE BEACH BOYS MADE IN THE U.S.A. - Their Greatest Hits (CAPITOL)	329235 BARBARA MANDELL, LEE GREENWOOD... MEANT FOR EACH OTHER (MCA)	338350 THE FORESTER SISTERS (COLUMBIA)	346231 JOHNNY CASH WILLOW BROTHERS - REUNION (COLUMBIA)
339911 JIMMY BUFEY'S GREATEST HITS 2 SONGS YOU KNOW BY HEART (MCA)	352765 JOHNNY CASH 1956-1958 (COLUMBIA)	353427 TAMMY WYNETTE (EPIC) 30 YEARS OF HITS (EPIC)	346156* WIZARD OF OZ Original Soundtrack (MCA)	349589 CHICAGO 18 (WARNER BROS.) Chicago's a registered trademark	321380 Barbra Streisand's Greatest Hits, Vol. 2 (COLUMBIA)
353383 MOE BANDY YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE LAST OF ME (MCA/EPIC)	345454* DIANA ROSS & THE SUPREMES 25TH ANNIVERSARY (MCA/EPIC)	343857* CHUCK BERRY 353636 THE Chuck Twenty-Eight (EPIC)	349647 LIBERACE Concert Favorites (MCA)	338319 JOHN CONLEE Greatest Hits Vol. 2 (MCA)	345108* 38 SPECIAL Strength In Numbers (A&M)
339796 DON WILLIAMS GREATEST HITS (MCA)	319996 MOTOWN'S 25 #1 HITS FROM 25 YEARS (EPIC)	351206* BILL COBBY - COBBY AND THE KIDS - COBBY CLASSICS (RELENTLESS)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	313239 KEVIN ROGERS AND DOTTIE WEST - CLASSICS (LIBERTY)
352757 CHARLY McCLAIN STILL I STAY (EPIC)	310219 JOHNNY MARTIN SILVER ANNIVERSARY ALBUM (COLUMBIA)	342163* RICKY NELSON 392118 SILVER ANNIVERSARY ALL MY BEST (RELENTLESS)	337899 The Very Best Of JANIE FRICKE (COLUMBIA)	349521 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	344812* BILLY OCEAN LOVE ZONE (RELENTLESS)
339689* ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK "BIG RIVER: The Adventures of Huckberry Finn" (MCA/EPIC)	351148* STEVE RAY WOODMAN & DOUBLE TROUBLE LIVE ALIVE (EPIC)	350793* ARETHA FRANKLIN 390789 30 GREATEST HITS (RELENTLESS)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	349521 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	310235 THE OAK RIDGE BOYS GREATEST HITS (MCA)
353380 DAVID ALLAN COE (MCA/EPIC) A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH (MCA/EPIC)	341271 TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS LIVE UP THE PLAYERS (MCA/EPIC)	334396 BILLY JOEL (MCA/EPIC) 394390 GREATEST HITS (MCA/EPIC)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	349521 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	344721 LIGNEL RICHIE SHAKING ON THE CEILING (MCA/EPIC)
262445 THE LETTERMEN All-Time Greatest Hits (CAPITOL)	318147 GEORGE JONES - TEN YEARS OF HITS (EPIC)	348987 LINDA RONSTADT ROUND MIDNIGHT (RELENTLESS)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	349521 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	321349 CRYSTAL GAYLE Greatest Hits (MCA)
352179 VARIOUS ARTISTS TRUE ROMANCE - A COLLECTION OF GREAT LOVE SONGS (EPIC)	291864 ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK WOODSTOCK (COLUMBIA)	329649 MICKEY GILLEY 395642 Ten Years Of Hits (MCA)	348979 TINA TURNER BREAK EVERY RULE (CAPITOL)	349521 REPO COUNTRY REBUILTS VOL. 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS (EPIC)	344897 THE WHITES GREATEST HITS (MCA/EPIC)
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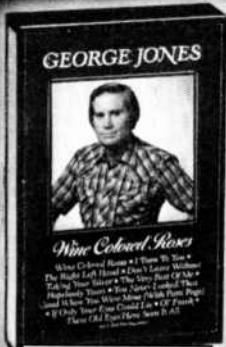
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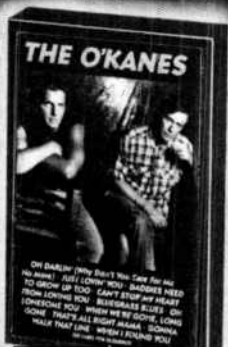
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349233. The Gattin Bros.—Larry, Steve, Rudy—Partners. *Talkin' To The Moon*, etc. (Columbia)



344614. Dwight Yoakam—Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., etc. *Honky Tonk Man*; etc. (Reprise)



353250. George Strait—Ocean Front Property. *All My Ex's Live In Texas*, more! (MCA)

354449 (REISSUE) U2 THE JOSUAH TREE

347966 (ORIGINAL) HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEW POWER GENERATION

348342 (REISSUE) CRYSTAL GAYLE STRAIGHT TO THE HEART

335653 (REISSUE) BARBARA MANRELL'S GREATEST HITS

348318 (REISSUE) THE POLICE EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE

335638 (REISSUE) THE BARBARA MANRELL COLLECTION BARRY MANLOW 20 CLASSIC HITS

348227 (REISSUE) JOHN SCHNEIDER LOVE ME THE OLD FASHION WAY

335639 (REISSUE) MERLE HAGGARD HIS BEST

348128 (REISSUE) LEE GIBBERNWOOD LOVE ME THE OLD FASHION WAY

339291 (REISSUE) JAMES TAYLOR That's Why I'm Here

348094 (REISSUE) ORIGINAL SOUND TRACK STAND BY ME

335067 (REISSUE) JERONIMO CARBONELL, JERONIMO WILEY AND THE BROTHERS WITH MORRISMAN

347880 (REISSUE) GEORGE THOROGOOD AND THE BROTHERS LIVE

335000 (REISSUE) GENE WATSON GREATEST HITS

349571 (REISSUE) BOSTON THIRD STAGE

351254 (REISSUE) THE STEVE MILLER BAND LIVE! IN THE 20TH CENTURY

354456 (REISSUE) NIGHT RANGER BIG LIFE

348312 (REISSUE) BILLY JOEL THE BRIDGE

344408 (REISSUE) NEIL DIAMOND HEADS FOR THE FUTURE

319568 (REISSUE) ELTON JOHN'S Greatest Hits, Vol. 2

344242 (REISSUE) JOURNEY Raised On Radio

324327 (REISSUE) JOHN CONLEE'S GREATEST HITS

343608 (REISSUE) LORNE HAMILTON Sentimental Journey

318733 (REISSUE) MELISSA MANCHESTER'S GREATEST HITS

343582 (REISSUE) VAN HALEN 5150

314443 (REISSUE) NEIL DIAMOND 12 GREATEST HITS VOL. 1

343336 (REISSUE) WAYLON JENNINGS Will The Wolf Survive

313734 (REISSUE) WILLIE NELSON ALWAYS ON MY MIND

343012 (REISSUE) TANYA TUCKER GIRLS LIKE ME

335628 (REISSUE) BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN & THE EAGLES FEEL LIKE IT USED TO BE GLENN MILLER DIGITAL SERENADE

353946 (REISSUE) BRYAN ADAMS INTO THE FIRE

352658 (REISSUE) CLUB NOUVEAU LIFE, LOVE & PAIN

315341 (REISSUE) LEFTY FRIZZELL

347427 (REISSUE) MICKEY GILLEY ONE AND ONLY

314922 (REISSUE) The Golden Hits Of The Everly Brothers

347237 (REISSUE) AIR SUPPLY Hearts in Motion

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347195 (REISSUE) JIMMY BRUFFETT FLOORDAYS

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347161 (REISSUE) AMY GRANT THE COLLECTION

334391 (REISSUE) WHITNEY HOUSTON

347153 (REISSUE) CYNDI LAUPER True Colors

331645 (REISSUE) MADONNA LIKE A VIRGIN

347104 (REISSUE) T. CAROLAN BROWN I TELL IT LIKE IT ISN'T TO BE

354324 (REISSUE) FERRANTE & TEICHER AMERICAN FANTASY

354100 (REISSUE) CROWDED HOUSE

351692 (REISSUE) BEASTIE BOYS LICENSED TO ILL

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342956 (REISSUE) DON WILLIAMS NEW MOVES

318711 (REISSUE) HANK WILLIAMS, JR. GREATEST HITS

348235 (REISSUE) RAY STEVENS Surely You Joust

316305 (REISSUE) GENE AUTRY COLUMBIA BEST OF GENE AUTRY

342733 (REISSUE) WILLIE NELSON The Promiseland

318089 (REISSUE) MICHAEL JACKSON THRILLER

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317768 (REISSUE) EAGLES GREATEST HITS - VOLUME 2

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343319 (REISSUE) JANET JACKSON CONTROL

349738 (REISSUE) BELLAMY BROTHERS GREATEST HITS

347054 (REISSUE) DAVID LEE BOTM EAT 'EM AND SMILE

348896 (REISSUE) RICKY SKAGGS LOVE'S GONNA GET YA

342106 (REISSUE) BANGLAS Different Light

354076 (REISSUE) JOHN CONLEE AMERICAN FACES

349316 (REISSUE) WILLIE NELSON PARTNERS

342162 (REISSUE) BING CROSBY—THE RADIO YEARS Vol. 2

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People

CELEBRATING WITH MERLE



In honor of Merle Haggard's 50th birthday, daughter Dana, Wynonna Judd, daughter Kelli and Naomi Judd presented the country music legend with a giant 6 foot guitar shaped cake during his set at the Marlboro Country Music concert in Los Angeles.

want to mention, too, that I had the opportunity to say hello to Eddie Rabbitt, who was also a-cooking. I hadn't seen Eddie in too long and must say it was a delight to reminisce about old times... long ago and far away. He seems to be doing well. We didn't discuss the fact that the publishing companies he and his pal/partners Even Stevens and David and Jim Malloy own were sold to MTM (Mary Tyler Moore), however.

I've got to also mention the antics of Williams and Ree on the show. They are absolutely awesome. They had me laughing so hard. These guys write their own stuff. None of this stale ho-hum from Minnie Pearl's bag of jokes. Actually what they do is find out who the guests are and what food they are preparing... and write jokes around the



One of Ricky's duties was very tasteful.

recipe and the personnel at hand. Delightful.

Whilst I am on the TNN subject, must tell you that I took myself out to watch Ricky Skaggs guest host *Nashville Now* while real host Ralph Emery was off skiing. I killed two birds with one stone, watched my pal Ricky do a bang-up hosting gig and got my Ralph Stanley fix. Most of you who have read my work over the years know that I require a Ralph Stanley fix every six or eight months. If I don't see him perform, I get out of sorts, depressed...swearing mad is what I really get! The family says, mama, go hear Ralph Stanley sing. Along with Ralph, Ricky's guests were songwriter Harlan Howard and the great Owen Bradley, who never does TV and seldom leaves the house, and Jeanne Pruitt. Jeanne's got a cookbook out that has a bunch of great recipes. She prepared a wonderful dish on TV that night, and I'll have you all to know that I didn't only see the cake, I ate some! So, like I said, TNN is cooking up a storm in every way, every day.

HAVE YOU MET HIS T-NESS??

Always knew that T Graham Brown was royalty, but I failed to learn his title until recently. "His Country T-Ness," vying for national acclaim, has spread his regalness from Music City to Munich...he dazzled 'em in Dusseldorf and livened 'em up in London...and probably he applied cologne for those in Cologne. Press releases bragged about how His T-ness met "Her She-ness"—Tina Turner—in Germany. The way the charts, concerts and gossip are going, it appears to me that the royal "T" might

catch up with the fame of the royal "SHE." Now, that is a new phrase...both on Capitol Records, "Royal-T and Royal-She." Tina and T Graham. Wonder how Capitol Records Execs Don Zimmermann and Jim Foglesong would like that!

CARSON STILL IN MY BEDROOM!—OR, TRIO KNOCKS THEIR SOCKS OFF

For every year he has been on TV, Johnny Carson has spent the night in my bedroom and the bedrooms of more homes in America than any other man. No wonder his personal life is such a hassle. Anyway, he and I thrilled to the Trio, Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris. Performing three songs from their much heralded album, the trio announced that they would be touring together. Don't you know them three 40-year-old broads could entertain the socks off a body.

KEEPIN' IT COUNTRY



When New York's WHN radio asked their country fans to respond to a listener survey, they were happy to answer. Response was overwhelming with over 85% of the respondents giving WHN favorable feedback. Now let's see what happens after the fans learn that the station is changing its format to all sports, leaving New York without a country radio station. Hopefully there'll be enough listener mail to make a difference. Pictured above is air personality Dan Daniel and WHN's fan mail.

People

In their band I spied Mark O'Connor (who is only 24), John Starling (who is a practicing doctor in Maryland), Leland Sklar, Herb Peterson (who is part of the country group Desert Rose) and others. Emmylou told the world how John Starling sorta arranged all the music.

Now, the recording is on Emmylou's record label, Warner Brothers. I have no earthly idea how them gals are gonna divide up the money. All I know is they got a doctor to arrange the music, a doctor who resides north of Washington, D.C., which sorta discredits Nashville, Los Angeles and New York. I mean, we got a town full of unemployed arrangers and John Starling arranges a record for three of the hottest female singers on the planet. It would be kinda like if Chet Atkins performed surgery on Loretta Lynn! Well, that's show biz!!

IN MEMORIAM

In this ludicrous biz of music there's the lookers, the seers, the dreamers, the planners, the hangers-on, and then there's the doers. Don Gant was a doer. The tall, handsome Gant tended to smile easy and laugh hard. He had "good ears," that is, he knew a hit song when he heard it. He had a quick wit and a bunch of buddies. I won't get preachy with you. His death at 44 made me scared and angry. His fall, the break he suffered and the high blood pressure all hit too close to home. Plus, I like Don Gant. Don, unlike others of equal success, would speak to me as quick as he'd speak to the millionaire or star at the next table. Beginning his career as a teenager he ran the gamut as performer, songwriter and business man. He was Jimmy Buffett's first record producer, he produced records on Lefty Frizzell, he worked with Don Gibson, John D. Loudermilk and Mickey Newbury in the world of music publishing. As an exec with ABC Dunhill Records, he signed both Delbert McClinton and The Amazing Rhythm Aces. His knowledge, foresight and presence will be sorely missed. Sympathies go out to all.

THE WHITE NAMED ROSIE

The Whites' sister Rosie is such a cutie. And a country girl if I've ever seen one. Following her stint performing the closing hymn with Roy Acuff and band and her family at the Opry, Rosie said, "What a thrill to sing in the same mike with Charlie Collins and Oswald." Collins and Oswald are two of Acuff's band members.

CMM Update *Ferlin Husky*



Ferlin Husky's preparing to hit the road again. In his 40th year in the business, and at age 59, he's leaving his home on the lake at Hendersonville to work shows with Kitty Wells.

"I still work about 150 days a year," he explains. "I carry my wife Marvis, and two adopted kids, Ron and Roxanne. Most of the time we work with the house band or somebody else's band. I'm doing a lot of package dates now with Kitty Wells, Johnny and Bobby Wright. She furnishes the band and they back all of us up. We're still playin' coliseums, package shows and the larger nightclubs."

1947 was the year Husky left his native Missouri for California to break into music. After a stint doing bit parts in westerns, he began performing and recording for Four Star Records under the name Terry Preston, then moved to Bakersfield in the early 1950's to work as a deejay. Along with Tommy Collins, he became one of Bakersfield's earliest country stars. In 1953, he signed with Capitol and had two hit duets with Jean Shepard, "A Dear John Letter" and "Forgive Me, John." By 1955 he was recording under his own name.

Two years later his operatic version of Smokey Rogers' ballad "Gone" hit Number One and Number Four on the country and pop charts, respectively. Its crossover success wasn't surprising. But, Ferlin adds, it wasn't deliberate. "I didn't aim 'Gone' at nothin'," he admits. "The country jocks wouldn't play it when it first came out." "Country Music Is Here to Stay" hit in 1958; then in 1960 "Wings of a Dove" became a Number One country and Number 12 pop hit.

Ferlin's still recording. "I just finished a new album," he declares, happily. "It's gonna be marketed on television this summer. The pickers went in and laid the tracks down. I was hoarse a couple days, so I just went in and sang to the tracks. I got 'Wings of a Dove,' 'Gone,' 'Sing All Night,' 'My Hometown.' There's about five songs there that I did in different movies."

These days Ferlin thinks a lot about what is and isn't country, but he tempers those views with a necessary objectivity. "I figure, well, if they have to ask if it's country, it ain't. But I can't gripe, because I was the instigator of the voices to back up singers when I had 'Gone' and 'Wings of a Dove.'"

He admits the New Traditionalists have changed things. "They remind me of myself when I was first tryin' to get started. I like Dwight Yoakam a lot, and naturally I like Randy Travis. He don't try to sound like anybody...A lot of 'em says he's imitatin' Lefty or whatever, but he sings the way he talks."

Like everything else, the road is different today than when he started. "So many tours when I first come to the Opry, goin' up into Canada, we'd have to wash at a truck stop or a gas station. It used to be we slept in the car. We'd have six in the car with the bass fiddle on top and when it started rainin' you'd have to take it off the top. I wouldn't take nothin' for them days. I wouldn't go through it again, but I like to sit and talk about it."

His family figures prominently in his career these days. He wants to "sell albums and tour around and try to help my other children—Terry, Julie, Jennifer and Alanna. I might be around a long time; if I'm not, my kids—my blood—will," he comments. "I don't want to push them in it, but it'll rub off on them. On this album there's two or three of them singin' background with me."

Off the road, Ferlin's still in the public eye. "I spend most of my time when I'm home at my Wings of a Dove Museum in Twitty City. I've got a lot of things, gold records and things I've saved over the years. I got a limousine sittin' in there that I've traveled in and a lot of movie clips, awards. The main exhibit is about the Life of Christ.

"An old man built the three dimensional scenes—all hand carved. Bill Monroe's museum is in my same building. He's got one side of it. It's called the Bluegrass Hall of Fame."

As he approaches 60, Ferlin's clearly proud of having achieved goals he set when he was growing up in rural Missouri. "I used to say I was gonna go to California and get in the movies and make records, and I was gonna get a gold record and go to the Grand Old Opry. Just about every one of those things I've accomplished, through the help of other people, naturally.

"When I leave this old world, if people say, 'That was a good man, honest, a good father, a good husband,' there ain't nothin' else you can want more than that. That's how I want to be remembered—as a good person." —RICH KIENZLE

People

PRaise THE LORD AND PASS THE SOUP.....

My sentiments verbatim! Yep, the above were my very words when **Hank Williams Jr.** finally won Entertainer of the Year at the Academy of Country Music Awards. I was ecstatic. Hank has recorded over 50 albums, his average per show in dollars for 1986 ran about 88 thou, he's got a room full of gold and platinum singles and albums, he writes like **Stephen Foster**, sings like a songbird and entertains like a pro. What is the reason it took so long?? Lord knows, I don't know. But from the screams of the Knotts Berry Farm audience, I would wager that the son of Hank Williams Sr. will be on the minds of the voters next ballot time!!

Congratulations also go out to **Randy Travis**—winner of Male Vocalist and Album of the Year, **The Forester Sisters**, Group of the Year, **Reba McEntire**, Female Vocalist of the Year and **The Judds**, who took home the Duet of the Year award. New Male and Female Vocalists were **Dwight Yoakam** and

LORETTA'S A REAL TROOPER



Loretta Lynn spent three weeks travelling with her band to entertain American troops around the world. The event was taped and televised on *The Nashville Network*. She visited military hospitals, U.S. submarines and a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. A spokesman said that this is Loretta's way of taking a bit of home to the men and women who are serving their country.

Holly Dunn. Both had a fine year and certainly were deserving.

I cried like a river when all-time-hero **Carl Perkins** was surprised with his Career Achievement plaque. His wife of 35 years, lovely **Val**, was in on the deal, while Carl just went along for the ride. Another surprised recipient was **Minnie Pearl**, whose lover, hubby of 40 years **Henry Cannon**, was in on her shocker, the Pioneer Award. **The Ricky Skaggs Band** picked up their fifth consecutive "Hat" Award as Touring Band of the Year, whilst the **Nashville Now Band** received their second Non-Touring Band award.

PERFECTLY WONDERFUL, NOT WONDERFULLY PERFECT!!

A couple of issues back, several fans of **The Oak Ridge Boys** took offense at my reporting the goings on within the organization. As we speak, the well publicized "firing" of **William Lee Golden** by his three peers, **Duane Allen**, **Joe Bonsall** and **Richard Sterban**, is in the minds and on the lips of fans and foes alike. Course, it ain't over yet, and we will see. The trouble in the amen corner had been brewing for a time. Rumors ran rampant and I felt the fans deserved to know that "All that glittered was not Golden, Sterban, Bonsall or Allen."

The fact that some fans were offended did not offend me; however, it sorta raised my dander a little that some public relations types questioned what I reported as rumors in the first place.

You fans are a horse of a different color, though, and you deserve the best I have as well as the best from your favorite entertainers. We all got a job to do. To you fans, and fans alone, just let me say in this instance and any other time that I may not report something verbatim, please remember, I do not claim to be wonderfully perfect, just perfectly wonderful! Can you dig it! And that is show biz!

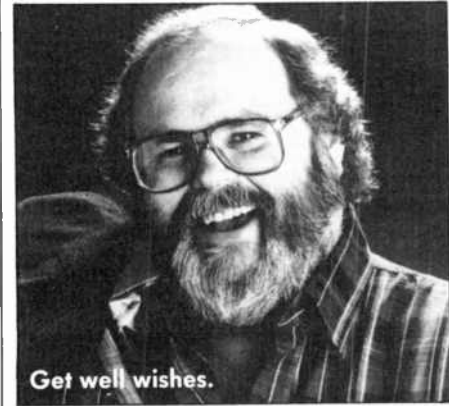
ROCK OF AGES

The hullabaloo within the gospel music industry caused a bit of a riff in Music City during Gospel Music week. With all the sinning coming out of the closet, preachers going into the tower, millions flying in from Lord knows where, accusers and abusers pointing fingers and getting cured... plumb out of breath and patience wearing thin, my decision was not to report on all the scandals but let you readers read between the rhyme. Frankly, I am embarrassed with the whole thing and a little angry. And I

do hope the Good Lord has a sense of humor through this whole scandalous episode. Mine is about gone.

HOSPITALIZED

Experiencing numbness in his right arm and leg, **Big Johnny Russell** suffered what is described as a light stroke. Weird. Johnny had lost 75 pounds before the occurrence. He is in Nashville Memorial undergoing therapy. Prayers go out to Johnny.



THIS 'N' THAT

Tom T. Hall's book *Acts of Life* is in its third printing. Legendary producer **Jerry Kennedy** is producing songstress **Lynn Anderson**, who had the first hit on "Rocky Top." **The Osborne Brothers** were the first to record this perennial favorite, however.

Nelson Larkin, who produces **Earl Thomas Conley**, is at it with former rocker **Tommy Roe**.

The Statler Brothers have a new Silver Eagle bus. In hillbilly lingo, that's "home away from home on wheels." The specially "tall" vehicle gives the four-some six more inches of headroom and boasts walls of wormy chestnut from the state of Virginia. Ain't that just like a hillbilly, bragging about wormy walls!! The bus was designed by **Lock Raven Coach**, Hendersonville.

There's a great new hillbilly bumper sticker, "Western Swing Ain't Dead, It's Asleep At The Wheel!" Clever, I say. Recording for Epic, the Texas group **Asleep at the Wheel** is very entertaining. I met them years ago through **Chet Flippo**, who hasn't been to Nashville in eons. From the pen of the legendary **Billy Joe Shaver**, the group's single is titled "Way Down Texas Way." Good song. An album is out, the video is on TV and the group is working. What else does a hillbilly need except some loving? That too, can be arranged!!

20 Questions with



JIMMY BOWEN

by Michael Bane

The first time we met producer Jimmy Bowen was in the back room of Tompall Glaser's studio, widely known as Hillbilly Central, in the mid-1970's. The cowboys were having a tough time figuring out Bowen, who had already been everything from a teen idol to record company president by the time he arrived in Music City. Bowen came to Nashville to produce records, but not the kind of records Nashville was used to. He brought with him an unerring ear for quality and a commitment to music that had earned him huge hits with Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. Over the

years, Bowen swept through Nashville like a storm, altering forever the way country music albums are produced. One of his biggest successes was with Hank Williams Jr. Co-producing with Hank, Bowen crafted an unprecedented string of hits, helping to turn Hank Jr. into one of the most successful artists in country. As the head of MCA Records, Bowen is presently working with artists like George Strait and Reba McEntire. We caught up with the harried executive in his car and nailed down 20 quick questions.

1

It seems like you've been

producing records practically forever...

It does, doesn't it? Let's see, I started in 1955, recording at this little radio station in Dumas, Texas, where I worked. When we were off the air, we went in and recorded.

2

This was in the Buddy Knox and the Rhythm Orchid days?

Yeah. I guess back in 1954 my parents got worried about me being in music. So they sat me down and had a long talk about how they understood I liked music, but they hated to see me end up in a Texas beer hall. Maybe if I could

just go to college... So I went for a little while. But we went from the radio station to Clovis, New Mexico, and that's where we did "Party Doll" and "I'm Stickin' With You." "Party Doll" was supposed to be on the back of "I'm Stickin' With You," but it didn't work out that way.

3

So you became a teen idol?
I was a teen idol for six or seven months!

4

Was it wonderful?
You know, Michael, when you're that young, it all happens so fast. It was over before I knew what was going

on. Our first gig was at the Paramount Ballroom in Times Square, one of the Alan Freed rock 'n' roll shows. I like to say I started at the top and worked my way down.

5

So you're out being a teen idol—when did you first realize it wasn't going to last forever?

Well, actually, I was singing about half-a-note flat, so I suspected my career was limited. As long as you shook your butt on stage, though, the little girls didn't seem to care. We'd been out on the road for about four or five months when we got a call that it was time to come back and cut the follow-up. I thought, uh-oh...

6

How did you get from there to producing full-time?

Well, when you're a singer in the 1950's, being a producer in the 1960's looks pretty good. Things really took off around 1963, when I met a person named Murray Wolf, who was a good friend of Frank Sinatra's. That's how I started working with him. In early 1964 I had "Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime" for Dean Martin—those were incredible years. You know, now they call that music MOR. Back then, we just called them pop hits.

7

After "Strangers On the Shore" you went on to become the youngest record company president in history, right?

Almost. Actually, I became the second youngest record company president in history. I took over as president of MGM from Mike Curb, who was a lot younger than me. I must have been 35-36 years old, but Mike was still in his 20's. We had a lot of success there, too. We started Donnie and Marie Osmond, then a couple of hits with the Osmond Brothers, then Donnie alone. We did some disco stuff—I can't believe I don't remember names—and C.W. McCall. You remember

"Convoy," don't you?

8

Who doesn't, good buddy?...

You know, the funny thing was that when Polydor, the German company, came in and said we couldn't sign any acts for six months, we had 12 contracts pending that we weren't able to pick up—people like Bob Marley and the Wailers, Stevie Nicks, Charlie Daniels... When I run a label, I draw the music people, because I'm one of them. I've been there. The Germans wanted me to go to New York City...and I said sure. All I needed was a helicopter to get me around, a car and a driver, a flat in town and a house in Connecticut... They said, "Sounds like you don't want the job." I said, "Yep." And that's when I decided to come to Nashville.

9

Did you come directly to Music City?

Actually, no. First, I moved to Arkansas for a year. I wanted to live around country people. I mean, I grew up in rural Texas in the 1950's, and I was a rock 'n' roller. None of that country stuff for me! But I wanted to live in the country for a while.

10

What did you learn living in the country?

It scared me to death. It scared me when I saw how few albums country music fans bought. Scared me when I learned how few country records sold. Remember, I was from pop music, and we were used to talking big numbers.

11

You rethought your move to Nashville?

No, but it scared me. It seemed to me that the Nashville power structure—the 12 or 13 people who ran the business—didn't seem to like country music all that much. Which was weird, because it turned out I loved the stuff. Loved it! I still don't think a lot of the Powers-That-Be like it.

12

You must love it, given your schedule. You must be producing half the acts in Nashville, not to mention running MCA Records.

I put in the hours, but I do like it. But that's how you stay ahead, stay competitive. A lot of my competition goes home at night and eats supper. I try to get home in time for breakfast.

13

What's the most important thing a producer brings to a recording session?

Well, a producer should be better acquainted with what's happening in the marketplace, what's being played on commercial radio—I mean, a producer needs to know where radio is headed, where it's going in the next three to six months. A producer is there to help the artist do their music, not do it for them. I instinctively go to the artist—a good example is Hank Jr. It's their music, and they know what it should be.

14

Nashville is a town that's been known in the past for its strong, distinctive producers..

And it's the worst thing that can happen to an artist. It's the wrong thing for an artist to have the producer dominate the session.

15

Have the production values changed since you came to Nashville?

Have they! Finally, there are good studios. Everything we're doing on multitrack digital... Eighty-five percent of the cost of doing a record is studio costs. My competition is not other country music producers. It's pop and rock—that's the music I've got to keep up with. And that means money and technology.

16

What's it cost to cut a country album these days?

Remember in the "old days" when they'd give you \$25,000 and tell you to go cut an

album? Last year at MCA we averaged about \$140,000 an album, and we've held that cost for this year. If you're going to compete in music, you've got to be willing to spend the money. Because the listener is more sophisticated. The country listener expects more, and we should be willing to give him or her more. You've got to have three minutes of magic to get the listener's attention, but if you don't have 30 minutes more of quality, you aren't going to sell albums.

17

Okay, what's been your role in the changes that have taken place in producing country music?

I goaded them and I poked them and I prodded them so much that about half the people in the industry hate me. But I made some changes, and I think they're good changes.

18

In addition to running a record company, you're carrying a huge production load. How do you manage it?

Well, I've got nine engineers who work with me, and one person who's director of scheduling. Sometimes all nine engineers work on an album. Mainly these are good producers, and it's the artist's music. We're booked for the whole year of 1987. Actually, it just boils down to hard work.

19

Any final words on producing?

You build an artist, not produce a record.

20

I recall running into you during D.J. Week (it's now Country Music Week) after you'd been in town about a year. You were sitting on top of a bank of speakers watching a show, and you told me that, with a little luck, "In four or five years, I'll own this town..."

(Laughter.) That was the arrogance of youth. Or maybe the ignorance. ■

Dolly's Magic Touch

As a kid she had dreams, dreams that would take her out of the mountains. As an adult she put them to work and success became her trademark. As a superstar she's still setting new goals and taking charge. Currently her Trio album, a new record label, an upcoming TV show, plans for a new country album, and a successful theme park are keeping her attention. It's apparent that whatever Dolly Parton does turns to gold.

*I've been like a captured eagle
You know an eagle's born to fly...
Like an eagle, I am eager for the sky*
—Dolly Parton

In the early 1980's, beset by severe voice and health problems which slowed her career and created financial pressures, Dolly Parton, an eagle born to fly, appeared a bit earth-bound.

But in the inimitable Dolly Parton style she has bounced back, and if it's possible, with more vim and vigor than ever before. With a tinier, healthier body, even more stunning beauty, and generating an energy and excitement that's pure megavolts, she is soaring. There's a new record label, her Number One *Trio* album, recorded with long-time friends Linda Ronstadt and Emmylou Harris, her ongoing songwriting, television and movie production plans, including a weekly network TV show set to air in September, Dollywood success, and—catch your breath—much, much more in the “dreamin’ and plannin’ stages.”

Leading the way in all this newness is

Dolly's switch to a new record label. After almost two decades with RCA, Dolly is now on CBS, where she joins country stars Willie Nelson and Ricky Skaggs and pop giants Bruce Springsteen and Barbra Streisand. There are no hard feelings. It was just time for a change.

“I had been with them almost 20 years, had made a lot of friends there,” Dolly says. “But most of my friends had come and gone. In fact, I was the only person I knew that was still at RCA that had been there when I started. They've always treated me real nice, always having a lot of special records, but I often thought it was kinda like we loved each other a lot and we were *comfortable* in that situation, not particularly *happy*, sort of like an old marriage where you take each other for granted. I just sort of felt that I needed new excitement, and new incentive. They were very nice about it, and they told me I should do it, and we certainly did not part enemies in any way.”

As part of her new contract with CBS, Dolly will record two albums a year, one in the country category and the other

with a pop/Top 40 sound. The first pop album is due out this fall, scheduled to coincide with the debut of her weekly TV show. The country one will follow, but, she says, “It will be a while, because the *Trio* album is doin' very good, and we've still got the first single out. We think we could possibly have four or five singles off the album, so it'll be at least a year.” While country music fans will rejoice that Dolly will be making “real” country albums again, record executives should note that *Trio* not only topped the country chart, it also hit Number Six on the pop chart—disproving the unshakeable Nashville notion that the only way to make country music palatable to the pop folks is to drown it under an ocean of violins.

Another aspect of Dolly's CBS deal gives her control. Dolly will be the executive producer of the pop album, as well as actually produce many of the songs on it, along with several others. She says that she'll probably produce the country album herself, although, she adds, “I might work with Linda and Emmylou.” In fact, she's even looking forward to doing a solo traditional coun-

By Deanna Starkey and Andrea Dzik





Harris, Parton and Ronstadt waited 'til the time was ripe to record.

try album. "That's one of the reasons I wanted to have the freedom to do a pop album and to do a country album, where I don't have to mix and match, to do up both, in both records," she explains.

As far as country music is concerned, she admits that there's a lot going on nowadays. Take some of the young traditionalists—Randy Travis, Reba McEntire, Dwight Yoakam, for example. "Huh," she squeals, "you mean as a trio?" In a more serious vein she continues, "Oh, I think they have really added an old, new tradition to country music. You know, they are so authentic, for real, and yet they're young and new, and I love what they've brought back, and what they've added to it."

But an older well-established star is who she has her sights on for a future album project. "I've always loved Merle Haggard," she notes, "and Merle and I have often talked that we'll eventually get around to doing an album together. A duet album. I think we'd sing great together, and, of course, Merle would probably write the bulk of the songs.

But, you know, I'll probably come up with some songs that are mine, too." There are some among the ladies Dolly has her eye on, too. "I'd love to sing with different people," she confesses. "I think The Judds are very good. They're big fans of mine, and I'm certainly a big fan of theirs. There's no tellin' what combination I might get around to. I'd love to sing with Tammy and Loretta, too."

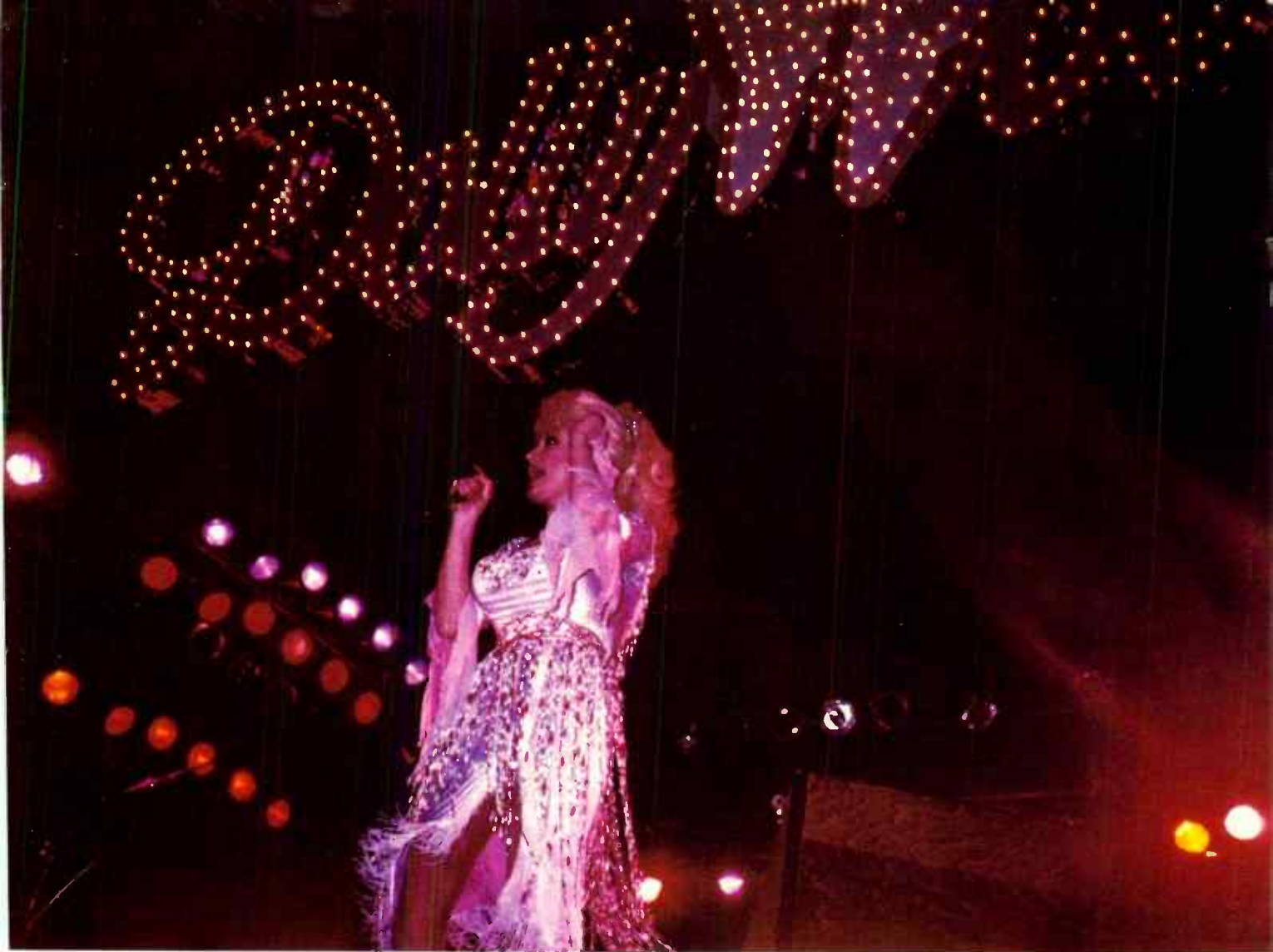
But she also remembers a time when there really weren't so many women in country music to choose from and acknowledges that it's easier now. "There's just so many women around now," she explains. "I don't think you're limited by the fact that you *are* a woman. I just think you're limited by your talent. Back then it was a little hard, but only because of how many women—there were not a lot that were in the business. Of course, Kitty Wells had been the reigning queen. I can't remember hearin' about more than three or four... Loretta, and Patsy Cline was big at the time.

"It was not hard for me, let's put it that way," she admits. "I never had the



"I don't think you're limited by the fact that you are a woman."





Dolly's unique showmanship is most apparent when she performs. Her country heritage is irrepresible on stage.

big problems that a lot of the women performers seem to have in their business life. I've always been very fortunate, very lucky. I guess I didn't even realize I had a problem, so I didn't. And if somebody was trying to hold me back, I didn't know it, so I just kept goin' anyway."

Never one to let anything stand in her way, Dolly has embarked on another new venture. Some 18 months ago, Dolly and her manager ever since her crossover move, Sandy Gallin, became partners in Sandollar, a Los-Angeles-based television and movie production company. Their first offering was the made-for-TV movie, *A Smoky Mountain Christmas*, which aired on ABC last December. The special was the highest-rated ABC-TV movie of the past two years. The company has about 20 more projects in various stages of development.

Sandollar's biggest deal to date is a \$40 million-plus contract for a weekly ABC variety series, *The Dolly Parton Hour*, scheduled to run at 9 P.M. on Sunday nights starting the third week of

September. The two-year, 44-program commitment by ABC is rare for a new network show. But, as Brandon Stoddard, president of ABC Entertainment notes, "There are few stars in the world who have the instant recognition and immense likeability of Dolly Parton... Dolly and television are made for each other."

Sandy Gallin will be executive producer for the series, while Dolly will be in action on both sides of the camera. Besides hosting the show and performing, she will decide on program content and format, guest selection, and script.

Her creative control will be complete. "Complete!" she emphasizes. "It's not the network's control. That was part of the deal I made. For this wasn't something I needed to build my career, so to speak, and it wasn't something I needed to do for the money. Of course, it will make money. But I just felt it was something that had to be done and it was the right thing to do now. So, I have total creative control...it's my own company."

Topflight producer Don Mischer has just signed with the show. Mischer has

such major credits in his pocket as the Kennedy Center Honors and Statue of Liberty shows, the Willie Nelson and Pointer Sisters specials, and, currently, the Tony Awards.

The show's format is still up in the air. And Dolly makes no bones about that: "To be honest, we're still working on it. We just now set our staff of writers, and I feel very good about producer Don Mischer. We are definitely going to do some comedy, and we'll certainly have music, and we'll be workin' with the people, talkin' with them, the regular American people, coverin' every story like a roving reporter kind of situation. Probably we'll be doing some skits, and I'll probably have some characters in the show. We have not narrowed it down exactly." However it turns out, viewers can certainly look forward to some pure country Dolly on every show. Dolly makes clear that "every week there'll be my down-home section—my Tennessee Mountain Home segment—where I'll do my country songs—my "Coat of Many Colors," my gospel songs, or whatever."



Dollywood is a dream come true. Family and memories blend there. That's Dolly with her dad, top, and her museum.

As for guest stars, Dolly includes, "Linda and Emmy. And down the line the predictables—Kenny Rogers and Jane Fonda and Lily Tomlin, and people like that." There may be some surprises, too. "A lot of my guests," she confides, "even my musical guests, won't necessarily be famous, but may be people I find in different places, like in a club or on the streets, or just other wonderful people I've hired."

As for rumors we've heard about Elizabeth Taylor appearing on the show, Dolly confirms, "Yeah, she probably will be." Is it possible that the ultimate reverse-crossover is in the making, that we can look forward to Elizabeth Taylor's rendition of "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels"? In any case, Dolly has promised to "spring a few surprises," and Dollywood is about to meet Hollywood head on.

Movie plans are also whirling around in Dolly's brain. Several scripts for a spy/comedy movie with Lily Tomlin and Jane Fonda have been rejected by the three women, but they still intend to

work together eventually. As Dolly puts it, "All of the scripts we've come up with so far have been lackin' in one way or another. And we have to do something not only as good as *9 to 5*, we have to try to do something better. We really want to feel when we go into it that we've got a great one on our hands. Whenever we get that right one, we're definitely going to do it."

Dolly is also looking for a more serious movie, something along the lines of *The Dollmaker*, in which Jane Fonda played the role of a poverty-stricken Appalachian woman who moved north with her family to find work. When she finds such a script, she is willing to take off the wig, and the spike heels, and even the fingernails.

She's got some ideas about male and female co-stars she'd like to work with, too. Dudley Moore, for one. "I've always wanted to do somethin' with Dudley Moore," she admits. "I always thought we'd be cute together. We're both so little and cuddly and goosey. I'd love to do something with great people like Dustin Hoffman and others that are experienced actors. But I'm more

intrigued by workin' with the women. I've had more success with that. I love Bette Midler. I'm developing a thing for Oprah Winfrey and myself. And for a few of my other friends. And so I'm more intrigued with workin' with women than I am with men."

Even with all of Dolly's Hollywood plans, the project closest to her heart is Dollywood. Located in Pigeon Forge in eastern Tennessee, just a few miles from where she grew up, Dollywood was conceived several years back with the dream of a theme park and a need to "give something wonderful back to the area that I love." And so she has, with Dollywood bringing huge jumps in tourism revenues for Sevier County, hundreds of new jobs, benefit concerts for the medical center and local schools, and, if we're being picky, traffic backed up for miles in all directions.

After a couple of years of negotiations, Dolly entered into a joint venture with Pete and Jack Herschend to transform their Silver Dollar City into Dollywood, and the dream became reality.

Before the grand opening in May 1986, a multimillion expansion of the park gave Dolly plenty to talk about. She appeared on *The Nashville Network*, Johnny Carson, Phil Donahue, the three major network morning shows, and *Entertainment Tonight*. Each time, she said, "Y'all come." And, we' all did. 1.34 million of us in 1986, to be exact. These figures almost doubled Silver Dollar City's previous attendance records and made Dollywood the fastest growing theme park in the country.

Despite all its homespun attractions—and they are many—there is no question that the heart and soul of Dollywood, as well as its major attraction, is Dolly herself. She makes several scheduled and unscheduled visits to the park during the season. But when Dolly isn't present, her music is. Yes, the bushes and other inanimate objects in the park are wired for sound. It's fun to watch the faces of first-time park-goers who almost dump their funnel cakes or BBQ when their bench starts to play "9 to 5." And, yet, the idea works. Most people end up toe-tapping or singing along to themselves.

Dolly's park favorites are "the museum, 'cause it's so very personal to me, and the Family Back Porch Theatre, where my family, my relatives perform." "Rags to Riches," the museum, documents Dolly's childhood, high-school days, early career, years with Porter Wagoner, television show *Dolly*, times with the family band, international tours, movies, and current accomplishments.

Ann Warden, the wife of Don Warden, Dolly's road manager and her friend Judy Ogle assembled the collection of photographs, videos, mementos and costumes out of things Dolly had saved. Even though she was familiar with every single item, seeing them all together had a tremendous impact on her. She explains it this way: "I mean, I knew the stuff I had that I had never seemed to display, and they did such a beautiful job in layin' it out and puttin' it together that the first time I saw it, it was a real strange feeling.

"I think it was the first time I'd ever thought of myself as being successful," Dolly continues. "It was the first time, you know, that I thought of myself being called a star. I don't mean it as an ego trip, in fact it was just the opposite, it was so humblin' to me, it was almost like I was dead, and I was walkin' through and lookin' at my life. It was overwhelming to me. It struck me in a really funny place."

The Family Back Porch Theater also focuses on Dolly. Here various family members perform "A Kinfolk's Tribute to Dolly" several times daily. Dolly's maternal aunt, Dorothy Jo Owens,

"Even after we're all dead and gone, it will be sitting in the courthouse lawn."

uncles Bill and Lewis Owens, and the humorist of the group, Uncle John Henry Owens, are all regulars. Various Owens cousins also sing and play instruments in the show.

On the Parton side of the family, this year Dolly's brother Randy has a contemporary country show. It features songs that he has recorded and those he has written himself, or with Dolly or sister Stella.

Another \$6-million has been put into the park for 1987, and Dolly hopes one day to build a 2,000-seat indoor theatre, for special concerts and events, complete with audio and visual live TV feeds, and maybe even a radio station and recording studio.

At 41, some serious honors are beginning to illuminate Dolly's uniqueness and compassion. In 1986, *Ms. Magazine* named her a "Woman of the Year." Gloria Steinem, founder and editor of *Ms.*, notes both Dolly's "capacity to dream what she could not know," and her faithfulness to herself: "By staying true to herself as a country artist, a strong businesswoman, and a mountain woman with loyalty and love for her roots, Dolly Parton has brought her own world into a much larger one, and so added richness



Her statue in Sevierville.

and understanding to them both."

On May 3, 1987, Dolly dedicated the Dolly Parton Wellness and Rehabilitation Center of Sevier County Medical Center, and she has already made a grant of \$100,000 to the Dr. Robert F. Thomas Foundation, which raises funds to support the center. Another \$70,000 was raised by two benefit concerts last year and Dollywood's opening day proceeds this year.

Most Southern courthouse lawns can boast of a general on horseback, but Sevier County is refreshingly different. In its county seat, sculptor Jim Gray has captured the spirit of Dolly Parton in bronze. After all the hullabaloo of the dedication ceremonies this spring, Dolly went back to take a quiet look at the statue. She sighs, "Well, that, I think, was the highlight of my life. Because, I guess, just somehow, I feel like it will be there forever, even after we're all dead and gone, it will still be sitting in the courthouse lawn. And, you know, for my relatives and friends, it was just a great honor."

Dolly rethinks her moment with the statue. Softly, she goes on, "That day of the unveiling, there was so many people I couldn't see it. That night, on my way back to Nashville, my husband and I went by there after we went up to my mom's to say goodbye to everybody. It was probably about eight o'clock, and there was still a few people millin' around, but I had a chance to kinda get the effect of it.

"And the other day, I went home to see my folks and I had some other business to do, and Judy and me went by there on our way out just to see it. There was nobody, you know, in the courthouse yard, so I got the real feelin' of it. I had a great sense of pride."

Other locals are proud of her, too. Dian Robertson, Dolly's friend since childhood, is chairman of the statue steering committee, and some of the money for the statue was donated by school children from the area.

Perhaps the finest thing of all about the 1987 Dolly Parton—the megastar with the megabucks and the megapower—is that she is also the irrepressible, corny, kind, nice Dolly Parton that she always was. Perhaps that's why Hazel Smith, in this magazine's People column, called her one of an "endangered species." Perhaps that's why, like an eagle, she continues to fly higher and higher. ■



JOHN SCHNEIDER

Speaks His Mind

John Schneider is changing his tune. No more sweet, syrup-y ballads.

No more big eyes.

He's churning to make his mark with protest songs and character parts.

Ladies, what's happening to this former leading man?

by Kip Kirby

John Schneider has an attitude, and he doesn't care who knows it. After nearly four years in country music, Schneider is ready to kick some ass. Forget the Mr. Nice Guy image. He's got rock 'n' roll in his soul, ready to be unleashed. Not that the singer aspires to be Billy Idol; but what's wrong with some anger, some sexuality, some politics in country music, anyway? Can we r-o-c-k?

Schneider's conversation these days is liberally laced with references to Bruce Springsteen and John Cougar Mellencamp, who, in his opinion, perform heroic blue-collar music under the guise of rock 'n' roll.

"In my opinion, what Bruce Springsteen is doing is hard country," Schneider begins. He's thought this thing through, all right, and warms to the subject. "Springsteen is singing songs about working-class people. He observes his hometown through eyes that make us all think of our own hometowns. Same with Mellencamp. These guys could be legitimate country artists if they wanted to..."

"Anyway, at first I couldn't figure out why their music is accepted by all kinds of people, and country music *isn't*. Why do people go so crazy over rock 'n' roll? Even mediocre rock 'n' roll? I kept thinking, what is it that country's missing? How can we bridge that gap?"

"Then it hit me: rock music has anger! It has anger and feeling, sexuality, honest emotion. It's not, 'You left me and I feel terrible,' it's 'You left me and that's *your* problem.'"

His latest MCA album, *You Ain't Seen the Last of Me*, is Schneider's response. He chose songs for the album by asking publishers what they'd pitch to Springsteen if the Boss showed up in their office. The album's core is hard-driving uptempo stuff meant to show that John Schneider is just another truck-drivin' redneck hillbilly boy at heart. There are only two ballads, a

calculated gamble by Schneider to downplay his trademark vulnerability on vinyl.

"I'm sick of doing those soft, sweet, very painful, this-poor-guy's-going-through-hell-I-hope-he-lives-through-the-night songs," Schneider groans. "I'm not going to do that kind of music any more."

Schneider has effectively distanced himself from the *Dukes of Hazzard* days when he faced an uphill battle to win credibility in country music. But the same creative restlessness that drove him from Hollywood to tempt the fates in Nashville remains a powerful force in his life, and now, ironically, the tables have turned.

Last year he logged 170 days on the road. This year's schedule, which includes tours with Alabama and a heavy round of fair dates and personal appearances, could be even more demanding. With Schneider's country career pulling at him from all directions, there's little time left to pursue film interests.

Still on the back burner sits the project closest to Schneider's heart: *Seven Ways From Sunday*, a spaghetti western he wrote and hopes to produce and star in. The picture has been plagued by more false starts than a NASA space launch, mostly because westerns aren't considered big box office booty; but Schneider lovingly refuses to abandon the project.

There is *Angel and the Bad Man*, a Johnny Cash/Waylon Jennings movie in which he will co-star. There is a TV movie with former *Dukes* buddy Tom Wopat later this year. And there are the two original screenplays Schneider wrote himself, *Love Songs*, about a singer in Las Vegas who barter sex for money, and *Dead Center*, a police thriller riddled with violence.

These last two projects may require a stronger starring presence than Schneider's if they're going to get financial backing; the singer's films have, so far, been resounding box office flops. *Eddie Macon's Run*, Schneider's 1983 screen debut, occasionally bellies up on TV as late-night fare for insomniacs, while *Cocaine Wars*, an anti-drug shoot-'em-up he made in the Argentine jungle, died a merciful death shortly after its release.

If Schneider has been miscast onscreen, it's his own doing. He refuses to capitalize on his two most obvious assets—rugged good looks and irresistible charm. He flatly rejects romantic leading-man roles, preferring to submerge himself in offbeat character parts such as the "nerdy TVA agent with glasses" that he portrays in David Keith's *The Farm*, or the grizzled

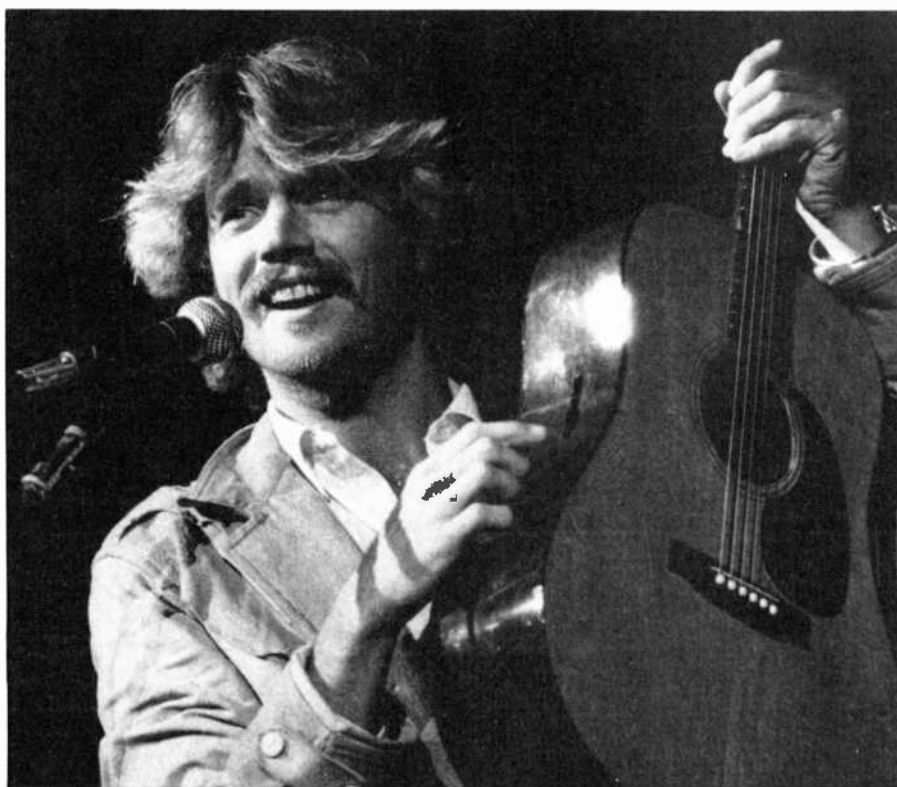
mule-team driver he played last year in TV's *Stagecoach* remake with Waylon Jennings and Johnny Cash.

Schneider seems to regard playing against type as a defense mechanism to prevent looks from controlling his career.

"If something happened to me physically, I could still be a writer, or a character actor. I could sing. I could direct or produce. I've proven—at least to myself—that I don't have to be the

nuclear annihilation. He is proud of having played at FarmAid and sometimes lectures audiences on the farm crisis from the stage.

"Credit" and "The Gunfighter," two cuts he wrote for the current album, reflect Schneider's own raging turmoil about the fate of world peace. "I happen to think that we're living in a very dangerous time right now," he explains. "Countries have the power and the technology to end everything if they



A young John Schneider in one of his first publicity photos.

"John Schneider isn't going to pretend anymore."

center of female attention in order to work in a movie. I've worked hard to position myself on either side of the camera, on either side of the recording process, so I'll be all right no matter what happens.

"I mean, just because you can't pitch doesn't mean you have to go to the bench."

In recent months, Schneider has taken to championing political issues, taking stands where once he'd have remained silent. He's been speaking out against inflated government spending, poor pay for teachers, the plight of American farmers, the possibility of

want to. You can be passive and sit around and when everything starts to glow, say, oh well, I guess I should have done something. Or you can speak out and try to make a difference.

"People say, aren't you afraid you're going to get some people aggravated at you? Well, if this is me and this is what I believe, and somebody sitting across from me violently disagrees with what I'm saying and thinks I'm an idiot for thinking that way, so what? Why should I care whether he likes my movies or my music or my politics?"

"In the past, I would have done everything I could to make that person like me, or to make him think that I agreed with him. Not any more, though. John Schneider isn't going to pretend any more."

He flashes a grin that crinkles his eyes. "Why should I? This time no one can say I haven't been around enough to know." ■

CMSA Newsletter of the Country Music Society of America JULY/AUGUST 1987—HELEN BARNARD, EDITOR

Newsletter

REVIEWS & FEATURES

Old Age Has New Horizons

Old eyes see what younger eyes don't. Old ears hear differently. Experience lends breadth of vision and an ability to judge. Where would we be without our oldsters to correct our view or lend perspective?

Some people well into middle age or beyond are even willing to risk starting over, or starting up—taking up something they had

long wished to do but didn't have time for.

This issue salutes the vision, the talent, the daring and the persistence of old age: a performer steeped in the music who knows what's country and what isn't, instrumentalists and songwriters who've found an outlet late in life for talent, a correspondent who's made many connections over the years. Here's to them.

Set Your Life to Music

Imogene Bloomfield has been writing country songs for over thirty years. One of her pleasures in writing is that she is able to tell stories that are part of her life, stories that are real to her. She praises God for giving her the talent to set her life to music.

I was born and raised in a small town in Western Mound Township, Haganan, Illinois, and I played cowgirl from the time I could ride a horse. I listened to country music on the radio and became a fan. Gene Autry was my favorite. When I was about ten years old, I voted for him as best cowboy singer on the radio, and he won. That's what really got me started in country music. Soon we moved to Carlinville, Illinois, where I finished junior high. In school I took a Hawaiian guitar class.

In 1947 we moved to Pueblo, Colorado, where I gave up guitar playing and got down to writing country music. We had a neighbor, Warren Robb, a country music artist, who helped me put together my first song, "My Chicken Pen," which he recorded. That got my music rollin'. In 1949 Nordyke Music published my song "Forever and a Day."

By radio I became acquainted with Boots Faye. In a letter she mentioned that she needed some western souvenirs to take on a tour. I dressed a doll in a western outfit with "Boots" embroidered across the skirt. This doll led me to western shirtmaking for radio and television artists, which in turn led to my meeting more and more country artists.

Another time, a disk jockey from KSTL, St. Louis, played one of my records at an outdoor picnic at Chain of Rocks Park. There I met the great Ernest Tubb, who encouraged me to continue with country music.



I have many unused lyrics which are part of my life story. For thirty years I waited for the right voice to sing them. One day, a few years ago, I read in the paper that Ace

In This Issue

- Seniors Start Over
- CMSA Q & A
- Flatt & Scruggs Revisited
- Collections

ACE COLORADO COUNTRY

ACE BALL SINGS GENE BLOOMFIELD
AND SOME OF HIS OWN



Imogene got her start making shirts for country singers. "This is the beginning for me," she wrote on the back of this photo in 1950. Imogene Bloomfield, today, left, and, tap, the album she made with Ace Ball.

Ball was doing a performance in Pueblo. The thought came to me that I had to hear him sing. When I attended the performance, I knew why; when he played and sang the first song, I knew I was hearing the voice that should sing my songs. I introduced myself to Ace and asked if he would be interested in making an album. He said yes, and arrangements were made to record in Nashville. It was in Nashville that I heard and saw my dream come true: an album entitled *Ace Colorado Country*. I know the Lord gave me the love for country

music that had led me to the best country singer, Ace Ball.

There is one more reason, however, that I love country music, and that is because the music gives me pleasure to tell my stories. One song on the album, "Will the Angels Light the Candles on my Christmas Tree?" is real to me. From 1955 to 1957 I was very ill with allergies. My doctor told me I would have to take Antigen shots for the rest of my life if I wanted to live. I said no. That night I lay down to sleep and thought, that's that, but I looked up to the ceiling. All over the ceiling were beautiful Christmas tree lights. I thought it was the end, and then words came to my mind. I wrote them down to remember, and later the melody came. I knew there had to be a reason for it all. There was. In May of 1957, I was divinely healed by my God. The talent, the healing, the music are all gifts for which I give Him praise, honor and glory.

Imogene Bloomfield
Pueblo, Colorado

Ace Keeps the Tradition Alive

*Throughout the years, singer-songwriter teams have been an important part of the country music business. Imogene Bloomfield and Ace Ball are two people who formed their partnership late in life, and have recently cut their first album together, **Ace Colorado Country**.*

Ace Ball has been singing country music for decades. Quite well known in the Colorado area, he has sung with many of the great country musicians.

When he first started out in the busi-



Ace Ball had the perfect voice for Imogene Bloomfield's songs.

ness, Ace learned by listening to Bob Wills, Roy Acuff, Eddy Arnold, and the Sons of the Pioneers. He developed his style by following the lead of his favorite artists.

In 1953, Ace got his first big break, recording in Nashville for Columbia Rec-

ords. He recorded on the Okeh label, the original nationwide country label.

A few years ago, he met Imogene Bloomfield, who approached him after an appearance in Pueblo. They have enjoyed a strong friendship and a rewarding working relationship since. Imogene wrote many of the songs for Ace's new album, *Ace Colorado Country*.

Ace still prefers material that is considered "traditional" country music. "Songs these days are not much different from when I was starting out, it's the producing that's different," he says, referring to keyboards and other state-of-the-art equipment used for recording. "But," he continues, "country music isn't too country any more. It sounds like it's all made by the same producers, in the same studios, with the same musicians." He commends artists Randy Travis, George Strait, George Jones, Merle Haggard and Reba McEntire for sticking to the true sound of country music.

—Jeanine Morley

Album Available

Ace Ball's album of Imogene Bloomfield's songs and some of his own was produced by Little Roy Wiggins and features Wiggins on steel guitar. Cover is by Imogene's niece Lettie Crays.

To order *Ace Colorado Country*, send \$6.50 to Imogene Bloomfield, 1414 N. Santa Fe, Apt. 3E, Pueblo, Colorado 81003. Add \$1.50 postage and handling for each album ordered.

Country Music Never Grows Old

Joe Taylor, of the Indiana Red Birds, featured in the September/October 1986 Newsletter, is old enough to know what is a country standard and what isn't. He recalls this story about a young woman who shocked him with her new-found interest in some famous songs.



Joe Taylor's kept up-to-date.

Not long ago, Joe Taylor and his Indiana Red Birds were playing at the Fort Wayne Senior Citizens Center. The senior citizens were enjoying themselves, requesting old favorites and dancing all night.

That same evening, a young college girl was also working at the Fort Wayne Senior Citizens Center, getting experience as a business manager. She was in charge of paying the groups that played and of overseeing the events of the evening. As she sat in the lobby listening to the unfamiliar sound of country music, she found herself enjoying it tremendously.

After the show, she went to pay the group. She approached Joe first, and said to him, "I never listen to country music, where did you get those beautiful songs? Did you write them?"

Joe stopped and thought for a moment, because he couldn't remember playing any of his own material that night. "Well, which songs do you mean?" he asked.

"Have I Told You Lately that I Love

You?' and 'Blue Skirt Waltz' are the two that I liked most," she answered.

Joe laughed because he says this happens all the time. People who don't really know country music mistake old standards for new material. "It goes to show ya," he says, "that even radio isn't doing the job it used to," referring to the dwindling number of traditional country music stations. He says that radio stations should take an hour here and there each day and play only the oldies. "This way," he says, "everyone can hear their favorites."

All this is not to say that Joe doesn't enjoy some of the newer country musicians. "Ricky Skaggs became so popular because he brought back old standards and styles. Now both old and young people like him."

Lost Address

Joe Holland, membership number HLL 7880, come in, please. We owe you an answer about something.

In the process of making plans for the Red Birds' 40th anniversary in 1988, Joe says, "Country music hasn't really changed—there's just some people who never heard the real thing."

—Jeanine Morley

Red Birds Fan

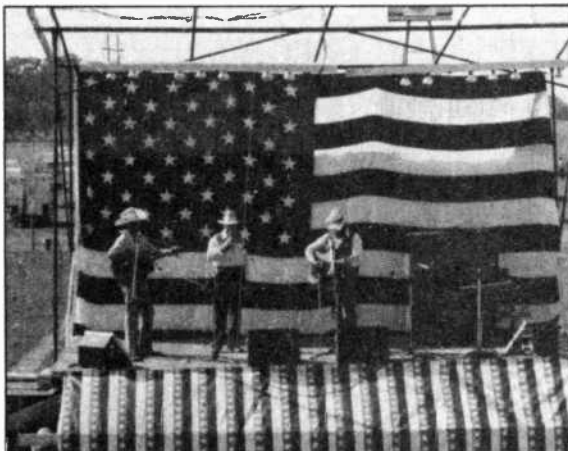
I am a big fan of the Red Birds, and I want to tell you how much I enjoyed the article and pictures of them in the September/October 1986 *Newsletter*.

We live thirty-five miles from Ft. Wayne, and the Albion Eagles Aerie #2455 hires them as often as they can.

Also, Bud Phillips, who played the steel guitar (he was one of the original members) with Joe, was our daughter-in-law Tammy Halferty's grandfather.

Thank you again for the great article on Joe Taylor and the Red Birds.

Nancy Halferty
Albion, Indiana



John Jehoich loves to perform. He first tried his hand at the Avoca Country Music Festival and Competition in 1983, top left, saying, "It's a real fun get-together." A few years later, in 1986, bottom left, he joined Jim Price, Minnesota State Champion Fiddler, and friend Jan Kolbrek at a fiddle contest, near Minneapolis. (John says he's like Grandma Moses.)

Correspondence the Country Music Way

Eleanor Chamberlain is almost a celebrity as a result of her correspondences with pen pals around the world. For twenty-three years, Eleanor, a devoted country music fan, has been writing to other country fans, exchanging ideas and gaining friends.



CHAMBERLAIN

I am an avid country music fan, and my pen pals come from joining many country music fan clubs, especially the Johnny Cash Fan Club and the Ernest Tubb Fan Club, which I joined in 1964. I love to promote country music,

and I now belong to the Country Music Association.

I have pen pals in all fifty states and in many foreign countries. We exchange tapes of country music shows as well as letters. I have met many of my pen pals in person. We discuss biographies and exchange photos of country artists. My latest endeavor has been writing frequently to Justin Tubb in Nashville, requesting his dad's songs on *The Midnite Jamboree*.

It is thrilling to meet country music friends and attend country music shows in nearby cities. I often get phone calls from my pen pals in the different states. We're like a big family, and we help each other out in any way we can. Country music friends are the greatest!

Eleanor Chamberlain
Olean, New York

Starting at Sixty-Five

John Jehoich, a devoted fan of country music, has been playing the harmonica for over sixty years. Although he has never had any formal training, he knows he can hoot with the best of them.

I have been a country music fan as long as I can remember. I am almost seventy now, and I've been married since 1943 and have three daughters. I started playing the harmonica when I was about six or seven years old. I started the accordion about 1933 and have been playing the organ for about five years now. I play mostly by ear, as I have never had a music lesson. I do read music some and have written a few songs. Although I never had them recorded, I think they have some potential.

Back in the 1930's and 1940's, I played dances. Mostly just for the hell of it. They didn't pay much in those days; if you got three dollars for the night, you did good. I sat in with some top bands, though. Just for a few numbers or to help out when someone was sick. I don't claim to be a musician, but I play the harmonica as well as anyone else, and I'm going to make some records of the old-time songs that relate to the harmonica.

Three years ago I decided to try and market some of my songs, so I entered the country music contest put on by Bob Everhart every year in Avoca, Iowa. They have folks from all over the globe there competing on three different stages over a three-day period.

Friends of mine, the Kolbreks, were to play along with me, but there were so many folks around that I didn't see them until after I had been on stage. The last minute I found two fellows who were willing to play with me. I had no time to show them my songs, so we decided to get along on some of the old numbers. I picked out three that I thought I remembered. They said they knew them, so we went up and got through the first two okay, but on the third song, they played about three bars and then quit; they had taken it for another song that they knew, so they just quit playing! I made out like I didn't know they'd quit and finished anyway.

That was the only time I had ever been on stage that way performing, and it was a bit scary, but I survived. Since then I have decided to do some recording of my own. I'm not a singer, but I try anyway. I record with harmonica, using organ for background music and a few vocals to scare away the spooks.

I sent Cliff Ayers in Nashville some tapes last year, and he wants me to come down there and record with some of his top musicians. He has called several times, but I am on Social Security and can't afford the trip, so until things get better, I can't visit him. But like I told him, if Grandma Moses can make a new career for herself after sixty-five, I think I can too.

John S. Jehoich
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Fiddlin' Betty Matthews

It's never too late to start again. That's what Betty Matthews discovered when she took up the fiddle for a second time at age fifty-nine. I am what they call a "Late Bloomer." At the time in one's life when many musicians decide to slow down and take it a little easier, that's when I started in.

I had played the violin some as a child, learned by ear, but for numerous reasons, I didn't stay with it.

Then around eight years ago, my grandson started playing, and at about the same time, my brother-in-law started a country band. The desire to be in a band overcame my good sense, and I talked my dad into giving me the violin I had played before. After thirty-seven years away from the violin, I finally returned.

Needless to say, I had to start all over again. And with the stiffness in my hands and all those great things that come with age, it has proved to be one of the most difficult, yet challenging and rewarding, experiences of my life.

I will probably never be a great fiddler, but so be it. I played in a band called John's Country Blend for a couple years until it broke up, and now I've joined a band called Marge and the Country Folks.

For a while, I was so nervous when I played in public that I couldn't hold the bow still. Many a night an eight-minute session of playing "Bill Bailey" for a square dance would leave my arm feeling as though it



Betty Matthews playing with John's Country Blend. Now she's with a new band, honing her skills. She's even taken up mandolin.

would fall off. But there isn't anything greater than playing and knowing that people like what you're doing.

I now have added the mandolin, and with Marge and the Country Folks use it as much as the fiddle.

Thanks, Interns

Diane Bossotti and Jeanine Morley helped in the preparation of this issue. Jeanine's by-line appears on two interviews. Thanks, girls, you were both terrific.

There are five in our band, and we play all kinds of country music, from the old to the new, for clubs, lodges, weddings, square dances and festivals. Marge Weaver is on drums, and Larry Weaver, her husband, is on bass. Fred Holley plays rhythm guitar, sings and calls square dances. John R. Walker plays lead guitar and sings, and I play the fiddle and mandolin.

Some people may think I'm crazy, and they may be right. But I enjoy every minute of it, and I hope to continue playing for the next ten or fifteen years.

Betty Matthews
Athens, Pennsylvania



Look again, it's not really Willie, Tom, Hank Jr. and Reba. It's Andrea Martin, Les Thomas, Hayden Williams and Dara Aylor performing "Mind Your Own Business" at their school talent show. Are these future stars?

You Have to Start Sometime

Instead of starting late in life, as many of the members featured in this Newsletter have done, these youngsters have begun early. Some day they may look back and laugh at these antics.

I thought your members might enjoy the picture of my daughter's school talent show. These four third graders rehearsed for two months lip-synching to Hank Williams Jr.'s song "Mind Your

Own Business." They really went all out to dress and act exactly like the four singers in his song—Hank Jr., Reba McEntire, Tom Petty and Willie Nelson. In a talent show full of rock songs, this act was the only country act and the audience went wild with applause. Maybe this experience will inspire them to pursue a music career.

Donna Aylor
San Angelo, Texas



*And the
winner is.....
MAY POLL results will
be in September issue.
Count is slow,
due to huge
volume.*

Truck Driver's Life-Saver

Lee Moore's late-night radio show on WWVA kept truck drivers, gas station attendants and other late-night people awake for twenty-three years. Plus, Lee was a performer. Some of you have asked about him. Here's the latest.

Lee Moore, "The Coffee Drinkin' Nite-Hawk," still performs regularly. In a recent month, every weekend on his calendar was filled with showdates. Lee's current base of operations is Wynantskill, New York, not far from Troy and Albany. Lee's wife is a *Country Music* reader.

In addition to keeping people entertained today, singing and playing guitar, Lee looks back with fondness on his midnight to 6 A.M. radio show, broadcast on WWVA out of Wheeling, West Virginia, for twenty-three years. In those days, thermos bottles came with a cork in them. "I used to bring in my jug of milk and coffee in a thermos," Lee reminisces. "It was a big thing with me that I used to put the milk in the cup first.

"Well, anyway, I'd hold the thermos right up to the mike and make a lot of squeakin' with the cork. Then," he continues, "It's coffee drinkin' time with ole Lee Moore," I'd say, and bang the spoon on the edge of the cup. It was real shrill. Truck drivers used to tell me I'd almost saved their lives with that. It would wake them right up.

"It was good for somethin'," Lee concludes.

In addition to his radio show, Lee performed Saturday nights, live, with the *WWVA Jamboree*.

That's the latest on "The Coffee Drinkin' Nite-Hawk"—still going strong.

—H.B.



Lee Moore performs regularly.

CMSA Q. & A.

Old songs, old performers and old records—a precious link to the past. Here Rich Kienzle answers more of your questions about them.

If you have a question for Rich Kienzle about an old song, an old performer or an old record, send it to the Newsletter, Attention: CSMA Q & A. And watch for a feature by Rich Kienzle on How to Find Old Records in an upcoming issue.

Q: I'm looking for a record of "Old Rattler" by Grandpa Jones that was out on the King label.

David S. Miglores
Indianola, Michigan

A: *The Greatest Hits of Grandpa Jones* (Gusto SD 3008) is an excellent package of his best-known recordings for King. It includes "Old Rattler," "Mountain Dew," "Eight More Miles to Louisville" and others.

Q: I'm looking for an album called *Hey There, Girl* by an artist named David Rogers. You never hear anything about him anymore. Do you know what's happened to him and where I can get this record?

Glenda Martin
Forbes Road, Pennsylvania

A: Don't know where Rogers is nowadays, and *Hey There, Girl*, which came out on Atlantic about the same time as Willie Nelson's *Phases and Stages* in 1974, has long been out of print. You might try *Jack's Record Collar*, 254 Scott Street, San Francisco, California 94117 or *Keith Kolby*, 6604 Chapel Lane, Fort Worth, Texas 76135. They both have a substantial stock of old albums and singles but naturally charge higher prices since they deal mainly with collectors. For more on these and other dealers, see feature on *How to Find Old Records* in an upcoming issue.

Q: I really like the old records that Buck Owens did in the 1960's like "Tiger by the Tail" and "Waitin' in Your Welfare Line." Where can I get them?

Jason Ralleck
Waco, Texas

A: Right now, you can't. When Buck Owens left Capitol Records, he bought all his old recordings. Right now nothing

new is available. You may find some of his older albums in flea markets or through dealers catering to collectors. However, rumors are that Buck, who recently retired from *Hee-Haw*, may someday release some of his old material through a major label. Buried Treasures will cover that if it happens. For more on Buck Owens and what he's been up to lately, see 20 Questions in the May/June issue of *Country Music*.



Steel guitarist Speedy West.

Q: Do you remember Speedy West, the steel guitar player who performed on the *Home Town Jamboree*? Do you know where he is, and also Eddie Kirk, and Cliffie Stone, who was the host?

Earl Freund
Opa-Locka, Florida

A: Speedy West lives quietly in a suburb of Tulsa. A severe stroke has left him unable to play steel guitar anymore, but he remains active and interested in the business. Cliffie Stone works in song publishing in Los Angeles and maintains a ranch north of the city. Eddie Kirk is reportedly retired and in ill health in the L.A. area.

—Rich Kienzle

FLATT & SCRUGGS



PHOTOS COURTESY DOUGLAS S. GREEN

Flatt and Scruggs' combination of distinctive talent and revolutionary style swept bluegrass out of the backwoods into national prominence and favor worldwide.

by Rich Kienzle

It was bad enough when Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs left Bill Monroe's Blue Grass Boys in 1948 after helping him set the standards by which bluegrass is still judged. It was worse in the early 1960's when their success grew to include interest from the urban folk music audience. Monroe was the founder of bluegrass, but to millions who had never heard of him, Flatt and Scruggs were bluegrass.

Lester and Earl, of course, never claimed they invented it. But their contributions were substantial. Flatt's flawless singing and guitar work set the definitive standard for all bluegrass guitarists. Scruggs made the five-string banjo a lead instrument; the revolutionary picking style he popularized remains the basis for all bluegrass banjo today. Their 1985 election to the Country Music Hall of Fame was overdue.

Flatt and Scruggs numbers like "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," "Old Salty Dog Blues," "Flint Hill Special," "Don't Get Above Your Raisin'" and "Crying My Heart Out Over You" have become standards. These songs and others like them widened the audience for bluegrass, which began as a regional music, beyond anyone's wildest dreams.

Lester Raymond Flatt, born June 28, 1914 in Sparta, Tennessee, learned banjo as a boy and then guitar. During the years he worked in the local silk mills, in the early 1930's, his musical inspirations were Bill and Charlie Monroe. In 1939 he turned professional, debuting on WDBJ in Roanoke, Virginia. His wife Gladys was also a professional musician. By 1943 they were both working with Charlie Monroe's Kentucky Pardners, and Lester's reputation began to get around.

Lester quit music briefly, but Bill Monroe offered him a job with the Blue Grass Boys in the spring of 1945, and he jumped at the chance. By then his punchy rhythm guitar style and his vocal skills were equally well-honed, and he would become Monroe's favorite of all the Blue Grass Boys' vocalists.

Earl Eugene Scruggs was ten years younger than Lester. Born January 6, 1924, in Flint Hill, North Carolina, he, too, grew up around music. While most five-string banjoists used a two-finger "frailing"—or strummed—style, similar to Grandpa Jones', in Earl's region players picked the strings with the thumb and two fingers. This banjo style had a driving "roll" to it, and local musicians who played it, like Snuffy Jenkins and Smith Hammett, were Earl's inspiration.

When he was ten, he figured out his own version of the technique, and by age 13 was working local radio shows. In 1939, just as Flatt was turning pro, Scruggs did likewise, joining up with local favorites, The Morris Brothers. During World War II he worked

in a defense job supporting his widowed mother but returned to music in 1945, as one of Lost John Miller's Allied Kentuckians. When Miller quit touring later that same year, Scruggs auditioned for Monroe. He astounded Monroe—and Flatt—and was hired.

Monroe, realizing what talent lay before him, worked to fit Flatt and Scruggs into his musical vision. They quickly found their direction. Lester sang lead and Monroe featured him on duets as well. In contrast to his procedure with Stringbean, the banjoist who had preceded Scruggs in the Blue Grass Boys line-up, Monroe featured Scruggs as an instrumental soloist. Augmented by Chuggy Wise's brilliant fiddling, the new sound was a quantum leap for Monroe.

These new Blue Grass Boys helped Monroe create such classics as "Blue Moon of Kentucky," "Molly and Tenbrooks," "I'm Going Back to Old Kentucky," the Monroe/Flatt duets "Little Cabin Home on the Hill" and "Summertime Is Past and Gone," and the instrumental "Blue Grass Breakdown." Everywhere they played, they inspired other younger musicians, some of whom, like Bobby and Sonny Osborne, would later make bluegrass history themselves.

Early in 1948 first Scruggs, then Flatt, left the group, infuriating Monroe, who did not speak to either of them for 20 years.

By May of 1948 Flatt and Scruggs had set up shop in Bristol, Tennessee, organized their own band, The Foggy Mountain Boys, and gathered a following, influencing other musicians who were Monroe fans. They signed with Mercury and started recording that fall. Over the next year, as they moved from radio station to radio station throughout the Southeast, their popularity grew, which undoubtedly contributed to their signing with Columbia Records late in 1950.

While they were working in Knoxville in 1953, a Martha White Flour salesman convinced the company to sponsor them on WSM Radio. Two years later Martha White put Lester and Earl on TV with their own program, which, in turn, soon landed them on the Opry.

A renewed interest in folk music had gradually attracted some younger fans and musicians, many of them around college campuses, to bluegrass. They were drawn to the music's authenticity and to Scruggs' banjo style, and before long Lester and Earl found themselves the darlings of the folk crowd. Banjoists across the country struggled to learn the Scruggs style, and in the fall of 1959, the duo was featured in an *Esquire Magazine* article on bluegrass.

There was another factor at work here, Earl's wife Louise, who managed both Lester and Earl. A trained accountant and shrewd businesswoman, she saw the value of publicity and exploited it on a far more sophisticated level than any other blue-



Lester and Earl joined the Opry in 1955. Here they are in action, left to right, Paul Warren, Scruggs, Curly Secker and Flatt.

grass act of the day. Her intelligently-written press releases and close work with Columbia Records gave Flatt and Scruggs and The Foggy Mountain Boys a visibility no one could match. Most of their singles wound up on the country charts.

Lester and Earl became favorites on college campuses and in folk music clubs nationwide as well as in more traditional venues throughout the South. Young folkies could even buy Earl Scruggs banjos made by Vega. In 1962 the producer of a new TV program, *The Beverly Hillbillies*, snared them for his soundtrack. Though Lester and Earl were initially skeptical about being involved in such a stereotypical program, they finally consented. They did the instrumental work for the theme, "The Ballad of Jed Clampitt"—Hollywood studio singer Jerry Scroggins sang the words—and performed most of the background music on the soundtrack.

Their own version of "Jed Clampitt" hit Number One on the country charts late in 1962. Another song from the show, "Pearl, Pearl, Pearl," hit Number Eight early in 1963. Their cameo appearances on the show and other TV guest spots gave them unparalleled exposure throughout the 1960's as did the successful live recording of their Carnegie Hall concert done in 1963. Such exposure embittered Monroe and his partisans even further.

In 1967 they played San Francisco's Avalon Ballroom. That same year, their old Mercury recording of "Foggy Mountain Breakdown" (their first recorded instrumental) found its way into the film *Bonnie and Clyde*—further exposure for the bluegrass sound.

These two incidents, seemingly fortunate at the time, sowed the seeds of the act's eventual breakup. The Avalon performance and the use of the song in the movie attracted fans from the era's hippie culture. This addition to their audience disturbed Lester and many of the duo's older, hardcore fans. Further difficulties arose when

Bob Dylan's producer Bob Johnston took over from Don Law as their producer at Columbia Records. He tried making them more contemporary by having them cut folk-rock songs, augmented to a greater degree than they were used to with Nashville studio musicians. Singing Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" and other, similar songs, Lester was clearly unhappy.

They finally split early in 1969 after playing at the Presidential Inaugural Parade. That fall, Earl was back in Washington, the only Nashville star to play at an antiwar rally, backed by Gary, Randy and a then-unknown Charlie Daniels.

Lester continued in the traditional vein he preferred, keeping the original sound, though he changed the band's name to The Nashville Grass. He recorded first for RCA and then for CMH, an independent, traditionally oriented L.A. label, and energized the group by hiring 12-year-old Marty Stuart in 1971. That same year Lester and Monroe reconciled to the point where they performed together. But Lester's heart trouble, which began with a 1967 coronary, led to open heart surgery in 1975. He recovered, then suffered a stroke late in 1977 and didn't return to the Opry until March, 1979. That April he suffered a relapse and died May 11.

Earl had wider success than Lester through the 1970's with the Earl Scruggs Revue, particularly with the original band, consisting of Gary and Randy (and later Steve), fiddler Vassar Clements and dobroist Josh Graves, among others. They played at rock clubs and concerts and recorded a series of albums for Columbia before disbanding. Following an unsuccessful collaboration with Rodney Dillard a few years back, little has been heard from Earl, who, lately, has been plagued with back problems.

Bill Monroe's place as the Father of Bluegrass, always understood by serious bluegrass fans, eventually became clear even to the new converts. But Flatt and Scruggs created a vast body of enduring music and established instrumental styles still imitated. They set the stage for the eventual "discovery" of Monroe as well as did much themselves to assure the present wide popularity of bluegrass. For these reasons and many more, we owe them an enormous debt.

Albums Available

For details on Flatt and Scruggs albums available and how to purchase them, see For CMSA Members Only page elsewhere in this issue.

COLLECTIONS

Country Music Magazine collectors continue to help each other complete their collections. Here is a letter from a member who did just that. Now he's got something for record collectors.

For Sale

• I wish to thank you for my previous letter you printed in the *Newsletter*. I was able to furnish *Country Music Magazine* to other readers in a very short time. This was issues dating back to 1970. I also have some *Country Song Roundup* left and over 1000 C&W, bluegrass, gospel and rock 'n' roll records (albums, some 45's) that I will sell. If anyone is interested, please send large SASE to: **Willie L. Pollard, P.O. Box 127, Landis, North Carolina 28088-0127.**

Collecting the Magazine

Write to these members directly.

- I have the following back issues for sale: January/February 1982, November/December 1983, and November/December 1984. **Edna Crader, 619 Koch Avenue, Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701.**
- I really do like your magazine and the Society. I have a complete collection of your magazine and am working on the second one. There are a few that I need for the second collection if your readers can help. They are February, May, June, October, November and December of 1978; November and December, 1981; February, March, April, June, July, August, September and November of 1977; April, July and November of 1976. Any help will be highly appreciated. There are two extras that I would like also. They are October 1974 and November 1975. **Ernest Sabins, 2516 Mitchell Avenue, Waco, Texas 76708.**
- I'm lacking these issues in order to have a complete set: The Preview Issue; September, October, November and December, 1972; January through June and November, 1973; January and October, 1974; February and March,

1976; June and September, 1977; May, 1979; October, November and December, 1981. Thank you. **James M. Ahles, FF-4 Yunquecito St., Carolina, Puerto Rico 00630.**

Information, Please

Can any of you readers answer these questions? Contact the members directly if you have the information or items they need.

- Have a number of older records of Tubb, Hank Williams, Homer and Jethro, Robbins, Acuff, Mullican, Rainwater, Reeves, Horton, Locklin, Bob Wills, Kitty Wells, Boots Randolph and others. Reasonably priced. **Robert D. Johnson, 914 Larson Street, Knoxville, Iowa 50138.**
- I would like to know if anyone can tell me where I might find the record "I Wanna Hold You in my Dreams Tonight," by Stella Parton? I would appreciate any help. Thank you. **Lorraine Cap, 609 Maryland Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21221.**
- My mother has always liked the song "Don't She Look Good in the New Dress I Bought Her and Don't She Look Good When She Smiles" by Bill Anderson. We can't find it on an album anywhere. I have looked in books at record stores, called radio stations, and even written to the record company. Can someone help me find this song, preferably on an album, for my mom? **Sue Ann Kanzenbach, 302 Gideon Street, Apt. 8, Dowagiac, Michigan 49074.**
- I would really appreciate any help in locating a recording by The Wilburn Brothers, "It's Another World," hopefully on 45 r.p.m. The magazine is great. Keep up the good work. **Helen Davidson, 506 East Telegraph Drive, Gastonia, North Carolina 28052.**
- I am looking for a fiddle tune called "Bear Creak Hop," record or tape. Anybody with any information on this tune, let me know. **Oscar Jones, 635 South Grant, Colby, Kansas 67701.**
- I am looking for a 45 r.p.m. record from 1949, "Slipping Around" by Margaret Whiting

and Jimmy Wakely on Capitol. Can anyone out there help me find it? **Nina Bilik, 803 Martin's Chapel Rd., Lawrenceville, Georgia 30245.**

• I have been looking for the last five years for the following records and I hope you can help. Albums: R.C. Bannon, *Have Some R.C.*, and Barbara Mandrell, *This Time I Almost Made It*. Singles (45's): R.C. Bannon, "Somebody's Gonna Do it Tonight," Louise Mandrell, "Everlasting Love," "I Never Loved Anyone Like I Love You," "Wake Me Up," Randy Wright, "Hurry On Home" and "I'm a Booger When I Love." I would appreciate any help. Thanks for a great magazine. **Jan Giese, 2032 Delray Drive, Mechanicsville, Virginia 23111.**

• I would like to find Ronnie Milsap's "I Can Almost See Houston From Here," Margo Smith's "Take Your Memory When You Go," George Jones and Melba Montgomery's "We Must Have Been Out of Our Minds," Merle Haggard's "Here in Frisco," and the album, *Introducing Johnny Rodriguez*, by J.R. Thanks. **Wanda Owen, P.O. Box 254, Paris, Arkansas 72855.**

• I'm writing to see if your readers can help me out. I'm a big fan of Dolly Parton and have been trying to purchase the album, *Hello, I'm Dolly*. If anyone has this album and would like to sell it, please write me. **Lisa Russell, Grassy Creek Rt. 1 Box 72D, West Liberty, Kentucky 41472.**

• I am trying to find a copy of the souvenir book offered at Anne Murray's Tour '86 concerts. Anyone who has a copy to sell, please contact me. I would also be interested in any other Anne Murray material. **Claude R. Packer, P.O. Box 112, Beech Creek, Pennsylvania 16822.**

• I've been trying to find two old 78 recordings that I had in the 1940's. They are "Once I Married a Tattooed Lady," by Skeets McDonald, and "Silver Dew on the Blue Grass Tonight," by Dave Denning (I have Cal Smith's version, but it's not the World War II version). Also an

album by Ernest Tubb on Decca #DL 75122 entitled *Saturday Satan, Sunday Saint* and Jay Lee Webb's *She's Looking Better By the Minute*, Decca #DL75121. Could anybody please help? Thanking you in advance. **Mrs. Carrie Reynolds, 2736 Vanderburg St., Lake Station, Indiana 46405.**

• *For Sale:* Lots of older records including Acuff, Mullican, Robbins, Tubb, Hank Williams and many others, also some rare 45's, reasonable. Also lots of *Country Music Magazines* in excellent shape. Send note on wants and include an extra stamp. **Robert D. Johnson, 914 Larson St., Knoxville, Iowa 50138.**

Pen Pals

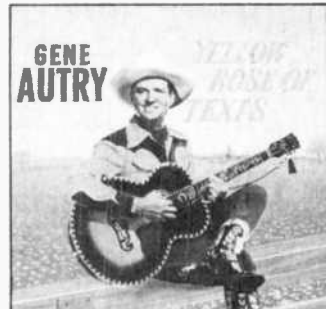
Here's a chance for you members to get to know one another.

• Hi! I'm an 18-year-old Anne Murray fan. I'd love to write to other female Annie fans (all ages are welcome)! Please write soon, I promise to answer all sincere fans! **Connie Ann Anzalone, 316 Pinefield Road, San Jose, California 95134.**

• Hello, my name is Tristin McGannon. I am a 22-year old female who would love to hear from men or women of any age. I live in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and I am a dancer! I keep myself busy travelling, going to concerts, dancing and going to new and different places where I can meet interesting people! Some of my favorite singers are Gary Morris, The Bellamy Brothers, Steve Wariner, The Gatlines, Alabama, George Strait, Eddie Rabbitt, Ricky Skaggs, Janie Fricke, and many many more! I am looking forward to hearing from some new pen pals with the same or different interests. **Tristin McGannon, 4089 Kentucky Avenue No., Crystal, Minnesota 55427.**

To submit material to the Newsletter, write to Country Music Magazine, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Mark your envelope, Attention: Newsletter. Include membership number.

FOR CMSA MEMBERS ONLY



Flatt & Scruggs Special

Bill Monroe did the world a favor when he discovered Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. Lester and Earl went on to found their own band and to reap the rewards and problems of national favor and fame in the 1960's. Their career is featured in *Legends of Country Music* in the July/August *Newsletter*.

Many of the duo's albums remain in print, plus various re-released packages of their early material. Here's a selection: *The Original Bluegrass Band* (Rounder SS 06), \$11.98, covers their days with Bill Monroe; their earliest solo recordings turn up on *The Mercury Sessions, Vols. 1 and 2* (Rounder SS 18 and SS 19), \$11.98 each volume. *Don't Get Above Your Raisin'* (Rounder SS 08), \$11.98, and *The Golden Years* (County CCS 101) \$9.98, present some of their earliest and best Columbia singles, while their 1963 Carnegie Hall concert can still be heard live on *At Carnegie Hall* (PC 8845), \$9.98. Members deduct \$2.00 from the price of each album. Rounder albums available in records or cassettes, others in records only.

Buried Treasures Bargains

Members are also entitled to \$2.00 off each album offered in Buried Treasures/Essential Collector in the May/June and July/August issues.

May/June Buried Treasures include George Jones' tribute album to Hank Williams and Bob Wills and the beautiful Gene

Autry picture disc album *Yellow Rose of Texas*, with digitally-enhanced sound. See p. 71 in the May/June issue.

July/August offerings include a super-rare Johnny Horton album, George Jones live in a Texas honky tonk, and two outstanding Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash oldies—Haggard's *Branded Man* and Cash's 1964 Indian protest, *Bitter Tears*. See p. 71 in this issue.

Newsletter Highlights

Pleasures of membership in the CMSA include discounts on records, books and cruises, and opportunity to vote in polls. In addition, the *Newsletter* provides a way for members to share their interest in performing, in meeting stars, in writing songs, puzzles and poems and in finding old, out-of-print songs and records.

How to Order Specials

To order any of the Flatt & Scruggs albums listed here or any album from May/June or July/August Buried Treasures, send check or money order to *Country Music Magazine*, Dept. 7887-N, 342 Madison Avenue, Suite 2118, New York, New York 10173. Include \$.95 postage and handling for each item ordered—that's \$1.00 off the regular postage and handling charge, another special for our members. Specify records or cassettes.

To speed your order, include membership number from your CMSA membership card.

MEMBERS POLL/JULY 1987

VOTE

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

Bought Any Good Records Lately?

1. Did you buy any albums (records or tapes) in the last month?

Yes No

How many records? _____ How many cassettes? _____

2. Which ones did you like best? List performer and album title.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

Your Choice for Album and Single of the Month

3. To vote, list the numbers of your top 5 favorites from the Top 25, page 68.

Singles (list 5 numbers)

Albums (list 5 numbers)

Who Can Vote

Only CMSA members are eligible to vote. If you are a member, fill in your Membership Number _____

If you are not a member, but want to join and vote immediately, fill out the poll and enclose a check for \$12 for a one-year CMSA Membership (you get an extra year of *Country Music Magazine* plus other CMSA benefits, too).

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

If You Are Not a Member: You may join and order from this page at the same time at member's prices. Just include a separate check for \$12 (one-year's dues, includes an additional year's subscription to *Country Music*) payable to Country Music Society of America and follow member's ordering procedure above.

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HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: 16 GREATEST HITS Featuring: I Suppose/Lonesome 7-7203/Sunny Side Of The Mountain/Little White Washed Chimney/I Love You A Thousand Ways/I'm Waiting Just For You/Teardrops On Your Letter/Dog House Boogie/Slow Poke/I Wasted A Nickel/Pan American/Barbara Allen/Be My Life's Companion/Silver Threads And Golden Needles/I'm Slowly Dying Of A Broken Heart/Rattlesnakin' Daddy.



COWBOY COPAS: 16 GREATEST HITS Featuring: Alabam/Signed, Sealed And Delivered/Beyond The Sunset Flat Top Guitar/Cowboys Deck Of Cards/Louisian Goodby Kisses/From The Manger To The Cross/Tragic Romance/Satisfied Mind/Cope's Wild Flower/There'll Come A Time/Sunny Tennessee/Waltzing With Sin/Filipino Baby/I Dreamed Of A Hillbilly Heaven. A classic collection of old time country.



WILMA LEE & STONEY COOPER: THE CARTER FAMILY'S GREATEST HITS The combination of old Carter Family songs and the artistry of the Coopers assures that this album is country music at its purest. Included are: Sweet Fern/You Are My Flower/Keep On The Firing Line/Hello, Central, Give Me Heaven/Worried Man Blues/Wildwood Flower/Picture On The Wall/Little Darling/Pal Of Mine/Lulla Wall, more!



"LITTLE" JIMMY DICKENS: THE BEST OF THE BEST OF Every major hit recorded by this country music mainstay is included on this special album. Such as: May The Bird Of Paradise Fly Up Your Nose/Take An Old Cold Tater And Wait/Country Boy A-Sleeping At The Foot Of The Bed/Hillbilly Fever/My Heart's Bouquet/I'm Little But I'm Loud/Out Behind The Barn/Another Bridge To Burn, more!

Rated ★★★★★ In *Country Music*, Sept./Oct. '85

Hawkshaw began with King covering whatever Ernest Tubb was doing. But "Sunny Side of the Mountain" and "Slow Poke" in 1948 and 1951 were enough to establish him as a force in his own right. Like Copas, Hawkins fell by the wayside, with no hit records, though he was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and had contracts with RCA, Starday and Columbia. Then in March 1963, just days before he died, his King recording of "Lonesome 7-7203" hit Number One. Hawkins, like Copas, made other fine records, "Rattlesnakin' Daddy" and "Dog House Boogie" among them, that hinted at rockabilly. *16 Greatest Hits of Hawkshaw Hawkins* (Gusto SD-3013) covers all these and more.

Copas first made his mark as a vocalist with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys... "Filipino Baby," his first hit, came in 1944. Throughout the 1940's he had still more hits—with "Tennessee Waltz," "Tragic Romance" and others. In the early 1960's, Copas was successful with Starday, with the hits "Alabam," and "Signed, Sealed and Delivered" in 1961. Some of his best-known songs are available on *16 Greatest Hits of Cowboy Copas* (Gusto SD-3012). Most of the material is from his Starday period, though "Filipino Baby" and "Tragic Romance" are also included. Copas never got the credit he should have, considering his rich, supple voice and laconic, offhand delivery.

Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper worked together nearly 40 years... *Early Recordings* (County CCS 103) compiles 12 Columbia songs, leased from CBS, that helped establish their reputation. A second Wilma Lee/Stoney album from the 1970's is *Wilma Lee and Stoney Cooper Sing The Carter Family's Greatest Hits* (Starday SD 980), an outstanding salute to the Carters cut in the early 1970's. Wilma Lee and Stoney tackle such Carter classics as "Keep on the Firing Line," produce a delicate version of "You Are My Flower" and are back on Wilma Lee's stops-out treatment of "Lulla Walls." The Carter style and the Coopers' sound blend easily here.

RICH KIENZLE, SEPT/OCT. '85
PAGE 67, *Country Music Magazine*



THE BLUEGRASS HALL OF FAME Stringbean: String's Mountain Dew/Grandpa Jones: Old Rattler/Stanley Bros.: Rank Stranger/Flatt & Scruggs: Foggy Mountain Break-down/Carl Story: Tramp On The Street/Lonesome Pine Fiddlers: Windy Mountain/Hylo Brown: Hills Of Georgia/Country Gentlemen: Sunrise (Instrumental)/Reno & Smiley: Home Sweet Home/J.E. Mainer's Mountaineers: Run Mountain/Jimmie Skinner: Fallen Leaves/Rex Allen & Kentuckians: Beautiful Blue Eyes/Jim & Jesse & The Virginia Boys/Let Me Whisper, and more!



CARL SMITH: GREATEST HITS In this album Carl sings better than ever, giving a warm new glow to these classic hits he created. Included are: Mr. Moon/Are You Teasing Me/Hey Joe/Deep Water/I Just Loved Her For The Last Time Again/You Are The One/Don't Just Stand There/If Teardrops Were Pennies/Take My Ring Off Your Finger/Kisses Don't Lie



MAC WISEMAN: GOLDEN CLASSICS This album is a compilation of some new recordings of the very best traditional bluegrass songs, plus some newer releases. Included: Jimmie Brown, The Newsboy/Goin' Like Wildfire/I Saw Your Face In The Moon/Barbara Allen/The Prisoner's Song/Johnny Cash & Charlie's Pride/Sweeter Than The Flowers/18 Wheels A Humming/Don't Make Me Go To Bed, more!



LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEETHEARTS OF COUNTRY MUSIC Their style and songs made America think of them as close personal friends. Here's a sample: Homecoming Time In Happy Valley/Each Time You Leave/Have I Told You Lately That I Love You/Remember Me/The Brown Mountain Light/When The Blue Moon Turns To Gold Again/In The Doghouse Now/Sunday School/Sweet Lips/Mountain Dew, more!



LULU BELLE & SCOTTY: SWEETHEARTS STILL More classic recordings, including: I Told Them All About You/First Whippoorwill Call/Molly Darlin'/Between You And Me/Bonnie Blue Eyes/I'll Be All Smiles/Try To Live Some (While You're Here)/Blue Eyes Cryin' In The Rain/When I Yoo Hoo In The Valley/Rocking Alone In An Old Rocking Chair/Sweet Evalena/Sunset Years Of Life. Why not order both.



SKEETER DAVIS: THE BEST OF THE BEST OF A gracious star with a different sound, especially with harmony. Included on this great album are: Set Him Free/(I Can't Help You) I'm Falling Too/The End Of The World/I'm Saving My Love/Gonna Get Along Without You Now/I Forgot More Than You'll Ever Know/I'm A Lover (Not A Figher)/My Last Date With You/Bus Fare To Kentucky, more!



PATSY CLINE/COWBOY COPAS/HAWKSHAW HAWKINS: GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN Patsy: Lovesick Blues—Just A Closer Walk With Thee—There He Goes/Hawkshaw: I Suppose—Little White Washed Chimney—Sunny Side Of The Mountain—The Life Of Hank Williams/Cowboy: Wings Of A Dove—Cowboy's Deck Of Cards—He Stands Real Tall—Beyond The Sunset. A truly fitting tribute to some great legends.



WILF CARTER: "Montana Slim" Many of the great old favorites of yesteryear and more. Including: Two Little Girls In Blue/Put My Little Shoes Away/Daddy And Home/One Golden Girl/Hey Hey Mr. D.J./Granddad's Yodelling Song/Lonesome For My Baby Tonight/Shoo Shoo Shoo She Lah Lah/Two Little Stars/The Little Shirt My Mother Made For Me



BEN COLDER (SHEB WOOLEY): GOLDEN HITS There are few aspects of the entertainment field that this star has not been highly successful in. This album is another success story with tunes like: Easy Lovin' #2/Almost Persuaded #2/Detroit City #2/Little Green Apples #2/Rollin' In My Sweet Baby's Arms/Don't Go Near Eskimos/Sunday Morning Falling Down/Games People Play/10 Little Bottles, and more!

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Rated ☆☆☆☆

—Editorial Staff, Country Music Magazine

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Forgotten | <input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP346) | <input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1346) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5346) |
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of Fame | <input type="checkbox"/> LP (SLP181) | <input type="checkbox"/> 8TK (SLPT1181) | <input type="checkbox"/> Cass. (GT5181) |

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787-9

GEORGE JONES



George and new wife Nancy—things are looking good again. Right, the tastefully furnished bedroom.



Above: George and Nancy's new home, one of the many Jones houses in the course of a long career.

Right: There's nothing better for relaxing after a long road trip than this sunken tub.

George Jones, sang Hank Williams Jr. a few years back, is finally getting straight. George and his new bride Nancy have settled into a lifestyle in his new Texas home that shows little sign of the destructive behavior that has long haunted this great country star. Since he first hit big in 1955 with "Why, Baby, Why," George Jones' life has been one of

controversy, turmoil and brilliant country music. His singing style is best described as hard, hard country, and in recent years it's been good for guaranteed trips to the top of the charts. George Jones represents a living link with country music's hardcore past and is, in the opinion of many, one of the greatest country singers ever. His new lifestyle suits him very well.

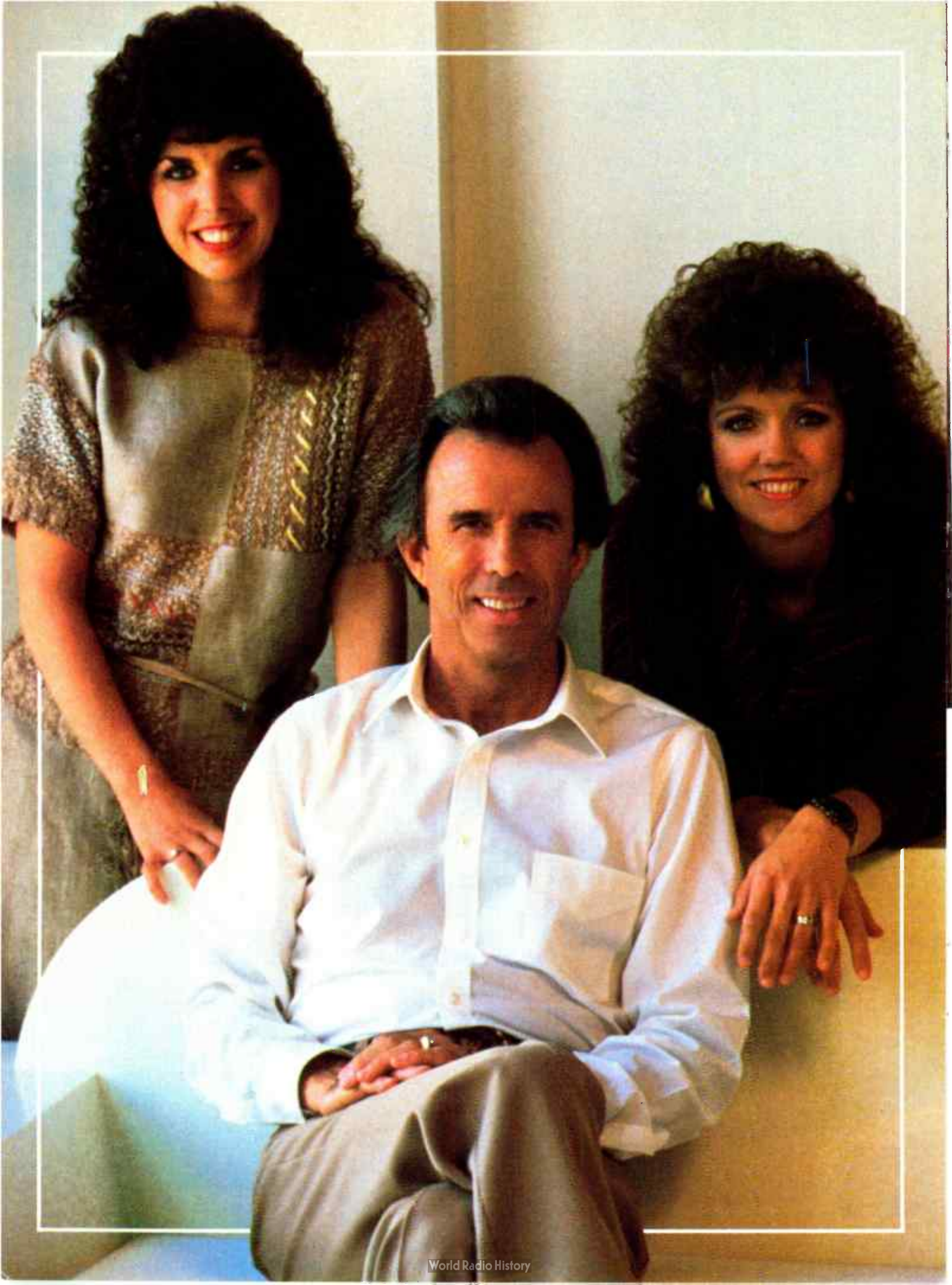
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Country Music

STARS *and their* HOMES



THE WHITES

Evolution or Revolution

Like their music, change has always been natural to the Whites. Today they are experimenting with a newer sound, which they hope will put them in tune with a wider audience.

by Bob Allen

I remember one wintry Saturday night several years ago, I was listlessly flipping around the TV channels, wading through the usual morass of prime-time garbage, searching in vain for something actually worth watching. Then, all of a sudden, I happened to stumble across a taped rerun of *Austin City Limits*, which that evening happened to be featuring The Whites.

There, coming off the airwaves of the local public TV channel, like a rejuvenating wave of fresh air and inspiration amidst the networks' dreary sludge of lame-brained sitcoms and childish made-for-TV mini-series, were Buck White and his two lovely daughters. Off on a solo roll of his own on the bandstand, Buck was working his free-form bluesy-swing-gospelly magic on piano, while daughters Sharon and Cheryl backed him up with their beautiful homespun harmonies and master dobroist Jerry Douglas spun out his own wondrous riffs and fills.

The Whites' music, that night, possessed a delicious exuberance, and an acoustic forcefulness and charm which, even when filtered through the small speakers of my TV set, seemed to bring the whole room, the whole dreary evening, to life.

Such is the infectious down-home magnetism and talent of The Whites. It is a talent which has enabled them to tiptoe gracefully across a wide range of musical movements. Their unaffected wholesomeness coupled with their supreme musical dexterity—built mostly around Buck White's fluid, ver-



Their first professional job was in 1967.

satile piano style and the extraordinary dobro work of Jerry Douglas, who has now left them for a solo career—has won them the respect and admiration of the bluegrass/newgrass and folk/traditional crowds. It's also made them a favorite on the summertime festival circuit, as well as one of The Grand Ole Opry's most popular members. And while The Whites are decidedly *not* a

gospel group, their countrified sense of purity and their natural fondness for old-timey inspirational songs have made them a hit with the Sunday-morning church-going set as well.

Though The Whites are devout members of the Southern Baptist Church, they prefer to let their music do whatever preaching there is to be done. "We had people tell us, when we first came to Nashville, that if we'd just go gospel, then we'd be drivin' a big bus in about two months," Sharon White smiles, with not a trace of cynicism. "But we just never felt like taking that route. You know, we love gospel, and we really love the Lord, and we feel like we're doing what he's called us to do. He never called us into a total gospel type of thing. And we do feel like we're taking gospel music to people who never hear it. And it's not in a heavy, preachy way. It's just showin' how we're one little family that lives and works together and loves the Lord and gets along, and enjoys our music and tries to make people happy with it."

It's been sixteen years now since The Whites, then known as Buck White and The Down Home Folks, cut their first album together in a Nashville motel room. In the years since, they have climbed slowly but steadily to a pinnacle of respectability and credence within the music industry, a feat achieved by few artists. Lately critics have taken to calling them things like "the new First Family of country music" and "the closest thing that the 1980's has to The Carter Family."

So why then, in talking to The Whites

on the eve of the release of their latest album, *Ain't No Binds*, does one detect a sense of uncertainty and of none-too-smooth transitions? A sense of crisis, almost?

Part of it may have to do with the fact that The Whites, in the year or so preceding the release of *Ain't No Binds*, had reached an uneasy career plateau. After stints with several major record labels, including Capitol, Warner/Curb and MCA, they had yet to parlay their overwhelming cult-hero status and their collection of critical raves from the print media into the sort of across-the-board mainstream acceptance measured in terms of radio airplay and record sales that keeps smiles on the faces of record company executives.

As a result, there has been, of late, somewhat of a shake-up in The Whites' usual way of making records. For starters, longtime producer Ricky Skaggs — Sharon White's husband— was eased out of the picture. It was time, so the word came down from the upper echelons at MCA, for The Whites to make some adjustments in their sound. Nothing drastic, mind you. And certainly nothing personal. It was just high time for them to start getting played on the radio a little more often, to start adapting a little more strenuously to the realities of the market place.

The Whites have always favored musical evolution over *revolution*, and in the past, they've had the freedom to let things flow along at their own rate. Their initial reaction was dismay.

"Yeh, sure, there was some resistance at first, some hurt feelings," says Buck White, who is sitting in the board room of his booking agent's Nashville office on an early spring afternoon, with his two daughters, Cheryl and Sharon. He recounts the group's dilemma with the steadfast calmness of a farmer who has just lost his crop to a tornado but finds peace in the knowledge that the hand of God is in everything—even tornados.

"We just never had those big records you need," Buck explains softly over a cup of black coffee. "We were havin' mediocre success on the radio, and it comes a time for a change. Your band has to change, your music has to change, if you're gonna keep it fresh."

The Whites' new album does represent change—in spades. At the helm this time around was veteran producer Larry Butler, who, at first glance, seems an unlikely choice for the job. Butler's biggest claim to fame is the string of early country hits that first put the bearded, gold-chained wonder, Kenny Rogers, over the top and into M-O-R Land, in the mid- and late 1970's. During the 1980's, he has been considerably less visible.

It was Butler who came up with most



In the fifties Bill Davies and Red Fields accompanied Buck.

of the songs on *Ain't No Binds*. "Most of them were presented to us by our producer this time," Buck acknowledges, "even though we had the option of turning them down."

Butler was also the one in the studio who aggressively built upon some changes in The Whites' sound that had already shown up in their live performances.

"Jerry Douglas left the group about a year and a half ago," says the stunningly beautiful Sharon White. "He'd played with us for seven years, and so much of our live sound was actually made up of him on dobro and Daddy on piano and mandolin. When he decided to leave, we knew it would be impossible to find another dobro player who could replace him. So we added a steel guitar and a fiddle instead. Our sound had changed already; it had begun featuring those instruments even before we went in the studio with Larry Butler. And they turned out to be the exact instruments he chose on the new album."

"The new album is a change, musically," Buck emphasizes. "Now, I am a real traditionalist, and I think Sharon and Cheryl are too. But we're also wantin' to be real competitive and get played on the radio. And I think the overall sound of the new album is closer to what radio is playing these days."

In the past, changes in The Whites' sound have been very organic. This is the first time they have been pressed upon them so dramatically by an outside party—all in the name of commercialism.

However, the capacity for change—and an accompanying openness to new influences—is part and parcel of The Whites. It's always been there. Right from the start, it's what set them apart, and sent

them off on a path all their own.

You can trace this characteristic all the way back to the early and mid-1940's, when Buck, who's always had a more than open ear for everyone from Bob Wills and Jim & Jesse McReynolds to Ray Charles, was a gangly school kid, learning to play piano.

"I was influenced by Texas dance music quite a bit, and also by some black guys, like Pete Johnson and some others, who played piano back in the 1930's, whose records I got hold of. I was influenced by Fats Waller and Fats Domino—he was a young guy back then, and he had this kind of lefthanded rhythm that he really cashed in on on all his hit records. I got to tryin' to play what they call boogie-woogie. It's a style that, I think, a lot of Jerry Lee Lewis' playing must have come from. I think he must have heard the same guys."

"*Nobody* plays like Daddy!" daughter Cheryl suddenly interjects with a giggle. "And he don't play like nobody else!"

As Buck grew older, he continued moonlighting with his music while raising his family of four girls. (Two other daughters have chosen career paths other than music.) He worked as a carpenter and pipefitter by day, while living around Wichita Falls, Texas, and later, in rural Arkansas.

Along with his wife Pat and a couple of friends, he formed a group he called The Down Home Folks, in 1962. When Cheryl and Sharon got old enough, they joined in as well.

"Daddy had played piano for years, and then when we moved to Arkansas, out to the country, he started playing mandolin, and got real interested in it," Cheryl recalls. "As Sharon and I got older and started learning to play, we got into it through bluegrass music. We sang together mostly in church, and



The whole White family back in 1979.

wherever there was a piano, Daddy would use it. He also taught us all those old swing tunes he knew."

"It got to where the folks around home knew they could always count on us to be there to sing on Sunday morning," Buck adds. "And they got to where they were thinkin' of us as sort of half-gospel and half-country. We always did some gospel songs, no matter where we sang. But, shoot! I love to play the blues, too. There's sure nothin' wrong with that!"

Eventually, The Whites began taking their show on the road in their spare time. Usually, when they played bluegrass festivals, there was no piano available, so Buck would just settle in on the mandolin.

But then one day, Sharon recalls, "we played at a festival where they did happen to have a piano, and Daddy just worked it in. The crowd went crazy. From then on, we started using the piano with our acoustic instruments, and it just started evolving."

"Back then," laughs Cheryl, "the bluegrass people would say, 'Y'all just sound so *country!*' And the country people would say, 'Y'all just sound so *bluegrass!*' They just couldn't figure it out. But we just did what we liked. It didn't matter if it was a bluegrass song from The Stanley Brothers or a country song from Kitty Wells or a gospel song or an old Sons of the Pioneers song or an old blues song Daddy had heard years before. We'd just do it. And we found people liked that variety."

"I think what made us so popular at the bluegrass festivals back then was just that we were different," Buck picks up the narrative. "After all the high-geared bluegrass bands, one after another, we offered 'em a pleasant change, with some female harmony. I guess, except for The Lewis Family, we were

the only ones to use three women. (Buck's wife, Pat, was still singing with them at the time.) And I don't think you had many groups with women playing instruments on the stage back then, either.

"I love The Lewis Family," Buck laughs, reflecting on his own totally comfortable mixture of gospel and blues influences. "Sometimes Little Roy will come out and play a banjo breakdown and make like he's doing a religious song, but actually all he's doin' is *shuckin' the corn*. All he's really doin' is playin' 'Orange Blossom Special' and callin' it 'Gospel Train' or somethin'."

"That was a great time in the music, in the early 1970's, on the bluegrass festival scene," Cheryl recalls. "There were many people comin' up on the bluegrass circuit that we got to be friends with, who are here in Nashville now: Ricky, Keith Whitley, Emmylou Harris, Marty Stuart, Vince Gill, Doug Dillard, Carl Jackson... a bunch of others."

The encouragement and overwhelming response that they received at Bill Monroe's annual Bean Blossom Festival finally prompted The Whites to make the move to Nashville. During the early 1970's, they recorded five albums for various small labels and worked sporadically on the road, while filling in with day jobs.

"For the first two or three years here, it was lean," Buck remembers. "I had to get around and do different things in the construction business to make ends meet. The girls worked through Manpower, the temporary employment agency. They worked in warehouses, in factories. Sharon sold clothes for a few months at one of the malls. I'll never forget one year, I think it was around 1975, when we thought we'd really crossed the mountain. For the first

time, we were able to get all the way through the winter, playin' music, without any of us having to take a side job."

In 1981 they got their first shot with a major label. In the years since, their following has increased and their popularity has grown.

But not fast enough, it seems, to suit their present gate-keepers at MCA.

Like everyone else, I have my fingers crossed that *Ain't No Binds* will do what it's supposed to for The Whites. Even so, I cannot mute my disappointment. The Whites do still *sound* like The Whites. But Butler has stripped away far too many of the essentials for my taste. The one Skaggs-produced cut on the album, the Sharon White/Skaggs duet, "Love Can't Get Better Than This," which also appears on Skaggs' latest album, has a natural snap and vitality to it that serves as a painful reminder of what's missing from much of the rest of the music.

The Whites, who clearly have *their* fingers crossed that this experiment will work, have nothing but kind things to say about Larry Butler—and about MCA. They are even a bit indignant about being criticized for a move that may be a matter of economic survival.

"There was a lot of resistance to this whole change on our part, at first," Sharon explains. "It took us some time to realize that MCA was not being critical or putting down the music we'd done in the past, because we feel very strongly about that. But now we can look back and see that God really took care of us in a real touchy, sensitive situation. If Ricky had had to come to us and tell us that he was too busy to keep producing us, or if we'd gone to him and said we needed a change, there would have been a lot of hard feelings. But the way it worked out, it was just a matter of all of us being mad at the record label there for a while, thinking that they didn't like what we'd been doing. And it wasn't that at all."

"Where we are now is where we were slowly going, with Ricky producing us, anyway," adds Cheryl. "It's just that we suddenly moved a whole lot more rapidly in that direction."

"We're not so darned bullheaded that we are just *determined* to stay like we are," Buck yawns, as he polishes off the last of his coffee and offers the final word on the subject. "We *wanta* be on radio, we *wanta* be played on those contemporary country stations.

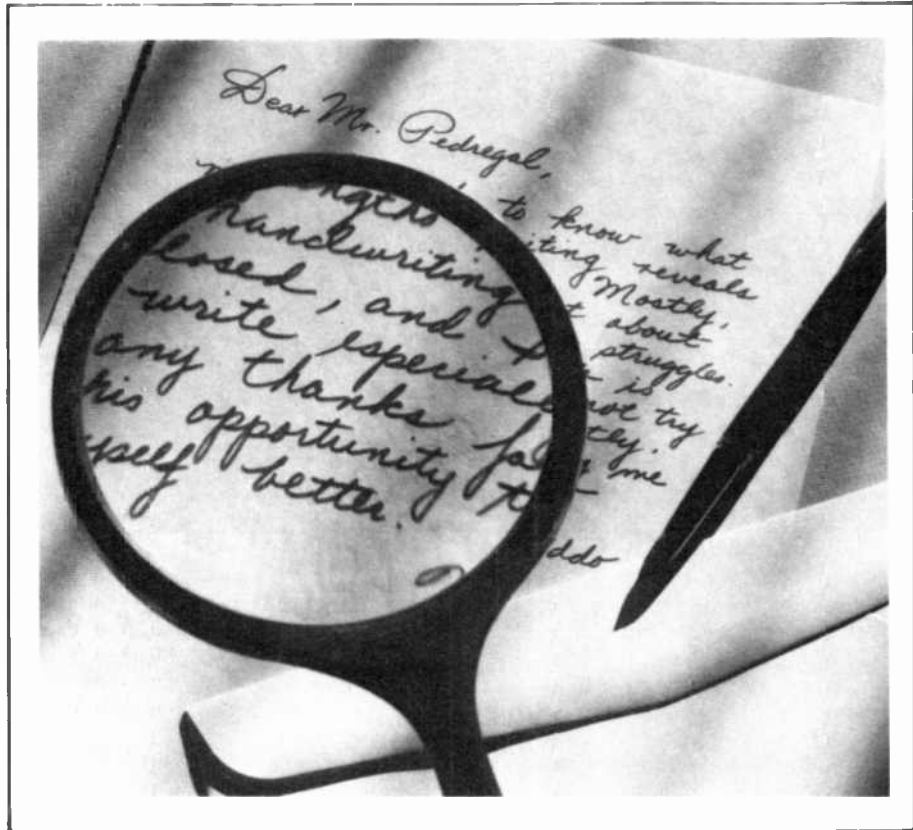
"We *wanta* be what we believe in, and what the reviewers always refer to us as, which is a traditional musical family," he adds with a polite smile. "But we *wanta* be competitive too.

"And there ain't nothin' wrong with that!" He smiles again. "It's a natural enough thing." ■

That's Write!

Want to find out what makes you tick? Just pick up a pen.

By J. J. Leonard



I guess, I'm a skeptic at heart. I make it a point not to trust in things like graphology. So I never expected anything to come of having my handwriting analyzed. A few laughs, maybe. But certainly nothing revealing. Nothing of consequence.

I was wrong.

I recognized the truth of most of graphologist Carlos Pedregal's assertions right away. But, when he announced that I was very decisive but often not patient enough, I was sure that I'd caught him in a mistake.

It took me a week to accept the fact that, as much as I didn't want to believe it, signs of my impatience stood out like highway markers in both my professional and personal life. I'd simply chosen to ignore them. I had to confess, Carlos Pedregal knew me—or at least certain aspects of my personality—better than I knew myself.

Had I known more about the science of handwriting analysis at the time, I might not have been so surprised. Graphology operates on the same principle as, for example, the Rorschach psychological tests. In putting words on a piece of paper or in interpreting inkblots, a person projects her unconscious personality. The physiological and neurological impulses that shape our handwriting and reveal our personalities are reflected in everything from the choice of writing implement and pressure applied to the page, to the slant of the letters and our signature.

In all, a graphologist examines over 300 aspects of a person's script. The result?

"Your handwriting will tell an expert things that your best friend or mate wouldn't know after a full 10 years," says Pedregal. Not surprisingly, a graphologist can actually provide new insights into yourself, your relationships and your life, by simply scrutinizing your scrawl.

Take Mike and Susan (not their real names) as an example. For the most part, husband and wife were pleased with the results of their handwriting analysis. Each, however, adamantly disagreed with one of the characteristics listed in their respective analyses. Mike's handwriting had revealed that he placed too much importance on himself and his family. His attitude: "The rest of the world can die so long as we're okay." His wife, however, felt that the analysis was right on target.

Susan's point of contention was about a characteristic in direct opposition to the quality Mike had argued about. Her script showed a tendency to put other people's needs first, before her own or her family's, something which Mike had accused her of time and time again.

The conflicting reactions sparked numerous discussions between the two. Finally, Mike and Susan realized that they—and not the graphologist—were mistaken. Their opposing personality traits had blinded them to each other and fueled their conflict. That awareness allowed them to look at the situation from a new angle and put it in perspective.

Graphology can also reveal character traits that people who've been close to each

other most of their lives aren't aware of. For years, one 65-year-old Canadian had felt that his five children didn't know who he really was. When he received his handwriting analysis, he felt it was so accurate that he ended up mailing a copy to each of his now-adult kids. "For the first time, I felt that somebody understood me," he explained.

Graphology can even shed light on "real life" mysteries. The adoptive mother of a 15-month-old foundling wrote Carlos Pedregal asking for help. "All my baby has of her natural mother is the note she was found with. Could you please see what you can discover about the woman who left her from the note? I would like to be able to tell my daughter something about her mother when she is old enough to question her abandonment."

What Does Your Writing Say About You?

This is your chance to find out what your handwriting reveals. Though most experts charge \$100 or more, Carlos Pedregal has agreed to make the following offer to the readers of *Country Music*. For only \$12, your handwriting sample will be analyzed by this internationally renowned graphologist and his staff. You will learn which characteristics surface in your handwriting and you will receive a comprehensive printed explanation of their conclusions. To take advantage of this offer, simply follow the instructions on this page. Anyone over sixteen may participate.

The note was very short, written on a corner of what looked like a brown paper shopping bag. Though there was not enough written material to be able to do a comprehensive analysis, Pedregal was able to learn a lot about the child's real mother. And, while the analysis may not have turned up the specific woman who left her baby on the church steps, it satisfied the child's new mother. "Thank you," she wrote Pedregal. "You've added substance to the shadow of the person who gave us such a wonderful gift."

Occasionally a graphologist can actually foresee the future when examining a person's handwriting. One young couple who'd recently become engaged was told that their marriage would not last more than six months. They married in spite of the graphologist's warning. Five months later they separated. What the expert had concluded, based on two handwriting samples,

turned out to be all too true.

These examples may astound you, but they shouldn't. After all, "brainwriting" is what graphologists call handwriting, and they should know.

Get the Write Idea

To find out what your writing reveals about your personality, just follow these easy directions.

- Copy the letter on the right, designed to provide Carlos Pedregal with the sample he needs for the analysis. Use an ink or ball-point pen and write in the blank space at the bottom of the page. (You can also use a sheet of unlined writing paper . . . just make sure to attach all the necessary information that's been requested.) And remember, don't try to write neatly. Just relax and write the way you usually do, and then sign your name.

- Be sure to complete the order form below. If you are sending more than one sample, include payment and an order form for each.

- Send the entire page or clip along dotted line and send order form and sample with a check or money order for \$12 plus \$2 postage & handling to:

GRAPHOLOGY OFFER, 230 Adams Ave.,
P. O. Box 17041, Hauppauge, NY 11788.
Orders must be post-marked by
September 30, 1987.

Dear Mr. Pedregal:

I'd like to know what my regular handwriting reveals about my personality. Mostly, I'd like to find out about my strengths and my struggles. My handwriting sample is enclosed, and I did not try to write especially neatly. Many thanks for giving me this opportunity to know myself better.

(Signature)

Don't forget your signature! If you use two different signatures, please include both.

I want to have my handwriting analyzed. Here is my check or money order payable to: GRAPHOLOGY OFFER. Enclosed are _____ writing sample(s) at \$12 each, for a total of \$_____

Postage and handling \$2.00 _____

NY residents add sales tax. _____

TOTAL \$_____

Money back guarantee

(Please print information in block letters)

NAME _____

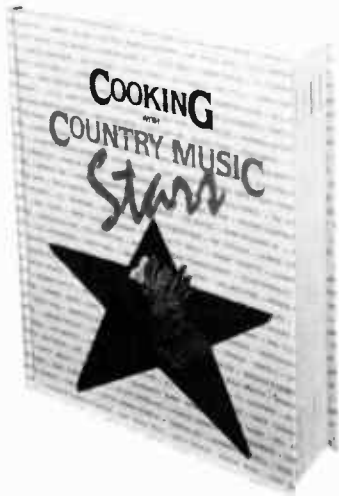
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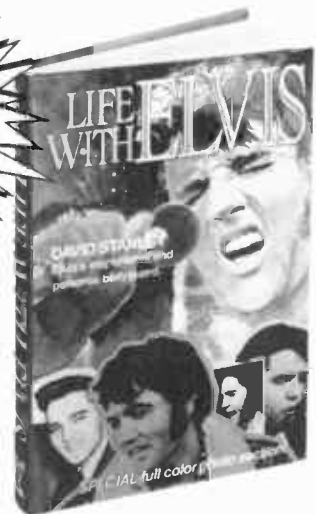
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RECOMMENDED READING FO



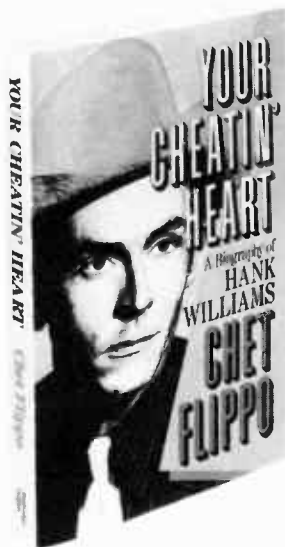
COOKING WITH COUNTRY MUSIC STARS

It's actually two books in one. You not only get the recipes of some of country music's biggest stars (and country music's top cooks), you get their life stories too. And it's all brought to you by the Country Music Foundation, so you know all the biographical facts are right. There are even fabulous full page color photos of just about everyone. But, most of all, it's great down home cooking that this book is all about: dishes like Conway Twitty's acclaimed Baked Ham with Peach Honey Glaze and Hank Williams Jr.'s Cajun Rice Casserole...The Statler Brothers' Baked Pork Tenderloin with Gravy and Kenny Rogers' Country Chicken Salad. There's everything from soup-to-nuts. It's a country music and culinary delight. Hardcover... 8¼ × 10¼... 219 Pages... 37 Color Photos of the Stars. Item No. B9E—NOW \$14.95



LIFE WITH ELVIS

When author Dave Stanley was just four years old, his mother married Vernon Presley. For the next seventeen years, he called Graceland Mansion "home" and knew Elvis as a big brother and friend. In this revealing new book, Dave tells about living at home and on the road with the King of rock 'n' roll. He reflects on the fun times, their crazy escapades, Elvis' moments of glory and his tragic demise. Dave also reveals the darker side of his own life as a member of Elvis' entourage... how life in the fast lane came to a grinding halt on August 16, 1977, when Dave found Elvis' lifeless body lying facedown on the bathroom floor. It's a truly fascinating story. Hardcover... 6 × 9¼... 223 Pages... 14 Pages of Rare Photos. Item No. B2M—NOW \$13.95

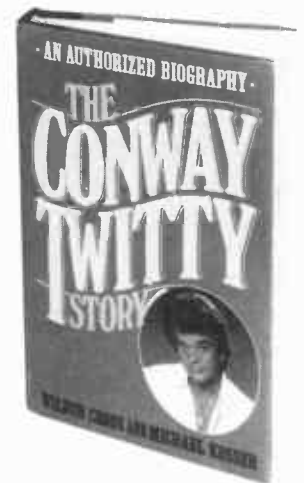
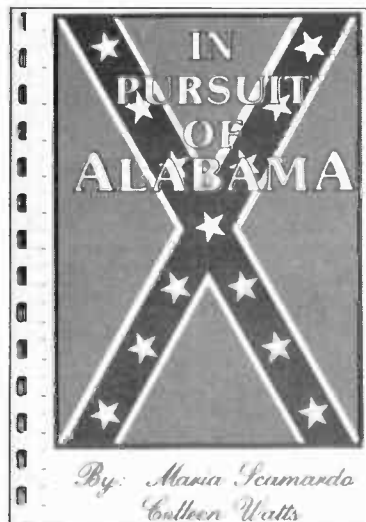


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No serious country music fan should go without reading this classic 1981 bestseller by noted writer Chet Flippo. Here's just a little of what has already been said about it: "The consummate Hank Williams biography... the explosive life story that deserves to be read by every urban cowboy in America."—*Playboy*. "I'm sure Hank would be glad you done it this way."—Waylon Jennings. "Flippo has managed to put flesh and blood on the sturdy bones of the Williams legend."—*People Magazine*. It's truly a country classic. Softcover... 251 Pages... Illustrated. Item No. B9F—ONLY \$8.95

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THE CONWAY TWITTY STORY: AN AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

In this colorful, vivid portrait packed with fascinating anecdotes, you'll meet the dirt-poor Southern boy who grew up on a houseboat, and who, by the age of twelve, was writing songs and hosting his own radio show. You'll learn about the athletic teenager who was offered a baseball contract by the Philadelphia Phillies. And you'll discover the wonderful music man who turned his talent into a lifelong career of composing and singing everything from rockabilly and blues to gospel and mainstream country. It's must reading. Hardcover... 193 Pages... Illustrated... Discography. Item No. B9G—NOW \$14.95

Record Reviews

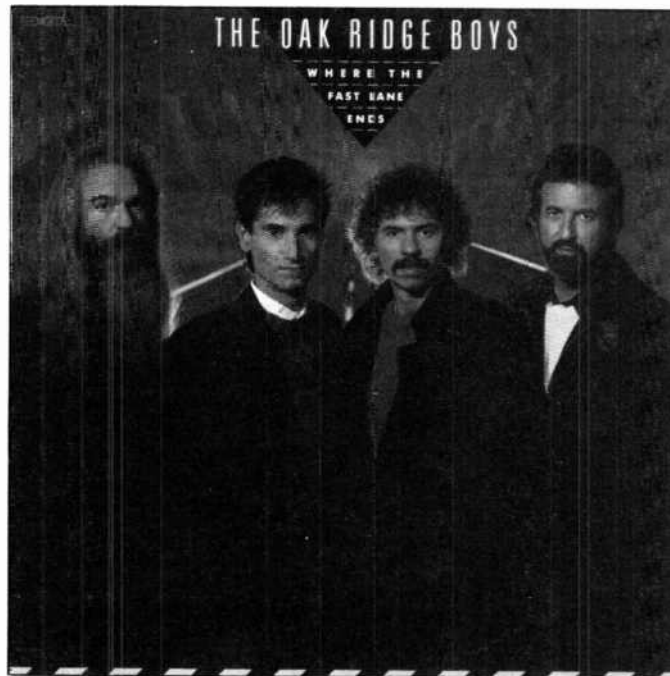
The Oak Ridge Boys *Where the Fast Lane Ends* MCA-5945 \

In recent years, I have had more and more difficulty taking The Oak Ridge Boys seriously as musicians. Their last couple of albums have been simply dreadful; their live shows seemed to have all the spontaneity of a well-orchestrated puppet show. While bass singer Richard Sterban seemed to be putting far more energy into expanding his wardrobe than into broadening his musical sensibilities, member William Lee Golden—who now, of course, is history—was off making a solo album that ended up being better than anything The Oaks themselves have done in a long time.

Applying my lowered expectations to the task of reviewing The Oaks' new album, *Where the Fast Lane Ends*, I must admit I was not in the least prepared to discover what a strong effort it really is.

Where the Fast Lane Ends is Golden's swan song with The Oaks. That makes it doubly ironic that at least one of the most adventurous—if slightly over-blown—cuts on here, "Rainbow at Midnight" (which features guests ex-Eagle Joe Walsh on super-sonic electric and slide guitars and Patti Labelle on vocals), is more or less Golden's show.

Producer Jimmy Bowen has added a new and much needed sharper edge to The Oaks' overall sound. The album is rife with synclaviers



and other space-age embellishments. But the real star this time around is Joe Bonsall. His talent shines through here and gives the album a vitality that has been lacking in their last few efforts. At least to my ear Bonsall's Philadelphia "blue-eyed soul" influence has never come through as strong as it does here on cuts like "Whatever It Takes," which is a real killer and easily the hardest-hitting thing on the album.

Aside from a couple of rather droll inclusions, much of the rest of *Where the Fast Lane Ends* is pretty run-of-the-mill Oak Ridge Boys fare. The title song is a Fred Koller/Sonny Throckmorton composition, which I think Throckmorton did better on his own solo album a year or so ago. Yet even on the most predictable of these songs, there is an added spark, due to the snappier, more contem-

porized production style that Bowen has brought to the group. I strongly sense that The Oaks feel a renewed challenge as vocalists. They seem to be singing with more spirit and definition than they have in a while. Maybe, what with all that's been going on within the group and all the sweeping changes taking place in the overall tapestry of country music right now, The Oaks actually got a little scared and decided to try and put substance over form for a change; decided to finally dig down and take their music seriously once again. After all, in today's climate, yesterday's super-groups can easily become tomorrow's has-beens — particularly if they spend an undue amount of time fussing over their designer wardrobes and their oh-so-perfect hair styles.

It's far beyond me to even try to guess what sort of changes await The Oaks in

their post-Golden era. But at least, on the eve of Golden's departure, they have come through with a solid new album that will keep them in the running while they make the transition, and which may even win a few new converts to boot. —BOB ALLEN

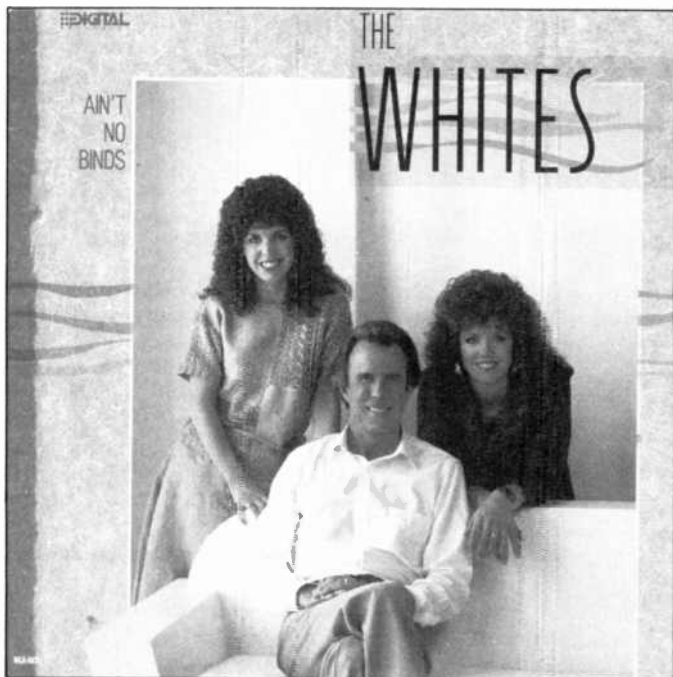
The Whites *Ain't No Binds* MCA 5820

I have never been that much of a fan of The Whites. While I admired their music and their honing to the older traditions, I never found myself picking up a Whites' cassette and popping it in just to listen. I'm not sure what the problem really was, although it might be akin to the fact that while I like '57 Plymouths, I don't drive one every day.

Ain't No Binds changes all that, though. *Ain't No Binds* is a gem of an album, as smoothly crafted a country album as I've ever heard. The Whites—Cheryl, Sharon and daddy Buck—trade off flawless vocals and sound as good as they ever have. The pickers (notably Mark O'Conner on fiddle and Jimmy Capps and Pete Wade on acoustic guitar) are excellent.

I think what sets this album apart from earlier Whites' releases is a more forward-looking viewpoint. The music still retains its traditional flavor, but, to me, this album is more concerned with bringing those traditional flavors into the present. I know that's vague, but it's a hard point to explain. The danger in working with traditional forms, traditional

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family harmonies and bluegrass instrumentation, is the tendency to allow those traditional forms to dictate the music. An example would be an old time fiddlers' convention, where you might hear "The Orange Blossom Special" several hundred times, each version more authentic than the last.

While it's certainly important to preserve the old forms, it's just as important to reinterpret the present through those eyes. And that's what we have with *Ain't No Binds*. It's as country as grits, but we aren't talking "Orange Blossom Special" here. Sharon especially excels at singing hard country music. "There Ain't No Binds" and "She's Written All Over Your Face" are especially strong, more reminiscent, I think, of The Forester Sisters' first album than much of the Whites' earlier material. Cheryl has two leads, "Run, River, Run" and "Jesus, Rock My Baby." Her higher, sweeter voice works well on those ballads. Buck has found his voice with the Haggard-styled "Sunshine's Just a Smile Away" and "Mama's Rockin' Chair." "Sunshine" especially is a

brilliant piece of work, with Buck's honey-smooth vocals working perfectly with James Stroud's percussion and just a hint of Mark O'Conner's fiddle. And "Mama's Rockin' Chair" is a good ole days' song that really works, thanks mainly to Buck's powerful vocals.

This is The Whites' first album with veteran Nashville producer Larry Butler, and it's a case where a new producer really worked to the group's advantage. Butler, like a fine racing mechanic, tweaked the engine, jiggled the suspension, and helped turn an already fine machine into a real racer.

This is a brilliant record.
—MICHAEL BANE

T Graham Brown
Brilliant Conversationalist
Capitol ST-12552

I'm not going to compare T Graham Brown to Steve Earle, the O'Kanes or anyone else. That wouldn't be fair since they come from different backgrounds. Brown is a less visionary songwriter,

more a country-rock act. But don't take that as a slur, for unlike some similar acts who shall remain nameless (you can guess who if you think a second), Brown has excellent taste. He refuses to lean on simplistic rural themes and shallow, watered-down rock music to make his point.

The strong rhythm and blues overtones in his sound, which hearken back to Tony Joe White or Delbert McClinton, and Brown's gritty voice, backed here by the Muscle Shoals rhythm section (including legendary bassist David Hood and drummer Roger Hawkins), give him a more natural, relaxed feel than many of his peers, a tone or quality that comes across loud and clear on *Brilliant Conversationalist*.

The autobiographical, celebratory "R.F.D. 30529" has the same direct, swampy feel and imagery as John Fogerty's best work; the arrangement, in fact, borrows liberally from Creedence Clearwater's "Green River." And "Save That Dress," though a mere novelty, works because of its clever take on current 1960's nostalgia.

Brown's ability to overcome dry material is one of his

greatest strengths. Example: Dave Loggins' "Anything to Lose" is a mundane number that in Brown's hands is super-charged by a strong performance and a punchy, barrelhouse arrangement. Likewise "Brilliant Conversationalist," the perfect singles bar anthem, is a fairly weak number. The chorus is so awkward, he and his backup singers barely make it through. Yet the roadhouse shuffle arrangement and Brown's singing are so infectious you don't even care.

When Brown switches moods as he does on "The Last Resort," an excellent ballad he co-wrote, the transition is perfect. The nostalgic weariness—of a couple at the end of their rope—burns through every note. Few country singers have tackled Otis Redding's rhythm and blues classic "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay," which always struck me strange, since it's as much a country song as anything else. Brown sticks to the original arrangement and does it right.

He falls short only three times. "The Power of Love" is another dumb, generic country-rock number, though I suspect he could've done won-



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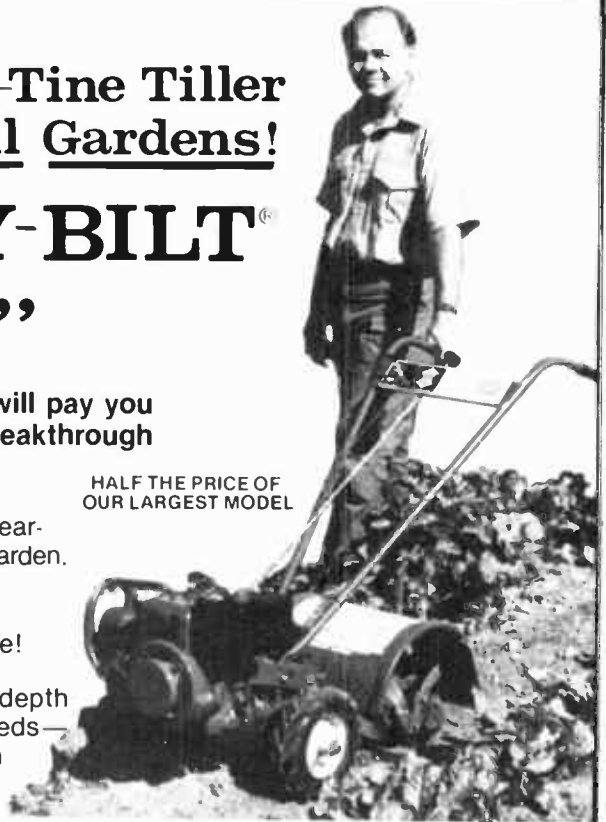
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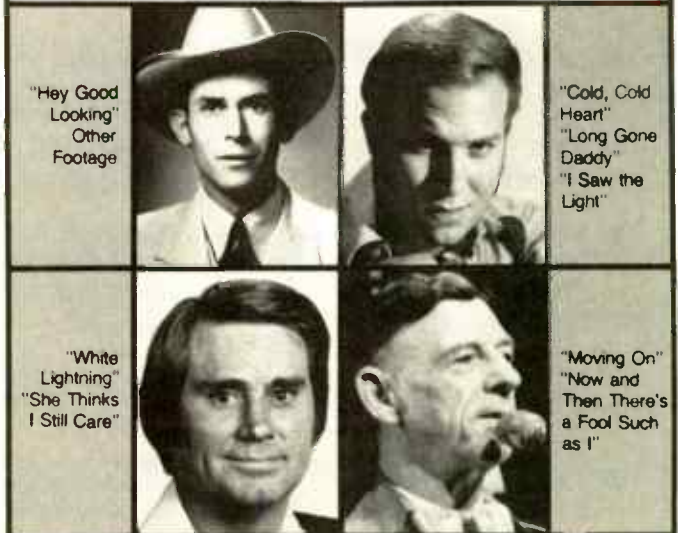
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ders with Huey Lewis' song of the same name. Likewise, "She Couldn't Love Me Any-more" sounds like three dozen or so other songs, and the dead-end "Walk on Water" sinks like a stone. In a few places, Brown's voice sounds even buried in the mix, at least on my advance cassette.

If you've still not guessed who the country-rock acts I slammed in the first paragraph are, it really doesn't matter. Brown's fresh, commercial voice and approach are head and shoulders above the competition. This isn't a perfect effort, yet it'll bring me back for more.

—RICH KIENZLE

finest voices in country music harmonizing, singing old songs and new songs, Jimmie Rodgers songs and Kate McGarricle songs. I don't know, but to me it sounds like a class project in American folk music, circa 1933 to 1987 (inclusive).

As such, *Trio* is a tremendous success. It is impeccable. The voices are so pure and so clear that even the most hardbitten of us can't stifle images of mountain streams and sunshine on wildflowers. The instrumentation is every bit as impeccable as the harmonies. Albert Lee, doing yeoman's work on acoustic guitar and mandolin, proves that he is one of the great unsung masters of those instruments. David Lindley drifts through on Hawaiian guitar, autoharp, dulcimer and mandolin. Steve Fishell does a marvelous job on the occasional pedal steel and dobro.

Aw, heck, it's real good. It's really great to hear Ol' Linda sing something other than that awful cat-screech Nelson Riddle noise she's become addicted to in the last few years. She sounds so good on "Hobo's Meditation" that it'd like to break your heart.

Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris

Trio
Warner Bros. 25491-1

Oh, gee, what's a guy to make of this latest superstar effort? Here we got Dolly, Emmylou and Linda, just singin' up a storm. It's hard not to like *Trio*, being, as it is, so extraordinarily well disciplined. Three of the



The Judds



Heartland

The Judds

Heartland
RCA 5916-4-R

Dolly's writing pretty songs again—"Wildflowers" is reminiscent of the old days in Tennessee, back before everybody darn near got famous. (I also like it that there's a Porter and Dolly weeper, "Making Plans," included on this here record I personally miss Porter.) Even "To Know Him Is to Love Him," which I wasn't all that thrilled about when the Teddy Bears recorded it in 1958—of course, I was younger then—is captivating. These girls are so good.

I suppose, though, I would have liked a little fire now and then. I'd like to have seen them take a shot at something on a par with Linda's "Silver Threads and Golden Needles" or Dolly's "Jolene" or Emmylou's "Two More Bottles of Wine." Sort of reminds me of one of my uncles, who, in the old days, ran moonshine from North Carolina into the wild country of northeast Mississippi. He built a Mercury with an engine that rumbled and quaked like a volcano when it was sitting still. But, heck, everybody knew that baby wasn't born to idle; it was born to run. Crank it up, girls.

—MICHAEL BANE

Before I say anything about The Judds' new album, *Heartland*, let me relate a quick incident. I'm playing the tape of *Heartland* when my girlfriend moseys in from somewhere or other. I am thinking of snide, critical things to say, because I notice that Judd-bashing has become, if not popular, at least acceptable among those who know. Girlfriend listens for a few minutes, then plops down on the couch for the duration. She is entranced by Judds' music, asks, in fact, if she can have the tape when I'm finished to listen to in her car.

I am forced to take a closer look.

Why was I even thinking about Judd-bashing in the first place? It's probably because The Judds, Naomi and Wynonna, and producer Brent Maher have dealt out a couple of my favorite songs in the whole world on one of the best albums ever to be recorded—*The Judds*. I happen

Record Reviews

to play that album and those two singles—"Why Not Me?" and "Mama, He's Crazy"—every couple of days. I can be in such a bad mood that even my Chow Chow goes into hiding and my VW won't start, but with the first few bars of "Why Not Me?" I feel the clouds lifting.

That makes it hard for me to be objective about other Judds' releases. I mean, I'm not looking for *good*; I'm looking for world-shaking.

I don't think *Heartland* has any world-shaking to offer. I don't hear a "Mama, He's Crazy" or "Grandpa, Tell Me 'Bout the Good Old Days" on this album. But there's some good music here. Judds' music is like lowering yourself into a soft featherbed; it works around the edges of your mind to soften you up. By far and away my favorite song on this one is "Maybe Your Baby's Got the Blues," a creamy ballad that the two women can really get their harmonies into. My second favorite is the uptempo "Turn It Loose," where I particularly like the vocal gymnastics on "...the *stiiiiiiiide* of a steel guitar..."

A lot of this album reminded me of Maria Muldaur's first

album (Lord, how we date ourselves)—a fine sense of swing tempered with country lyrics ("Cow Cow Boogie" and "I Know Where I'm Going"). I feel a little ambivalent about the Judds' cut of "Don't Be Cruel." I think the Billy Swan version probably still stands as the definitive one.

I suppose it's clichéd to say this is a *tasteful* album—such a Yuppie word. That about sums it up, folks.

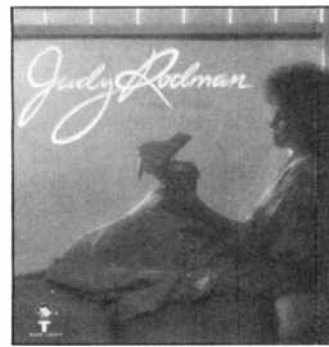
—MICHAEL "WHITE ZINFANDEL" BANE

k.d. lang and the reclines

Angel with a Lariat
Warner Bros. 25441-1

We have a rather serious case of clashing sensibilities here. Here's a singer who, the first time I ever heard her, stone cold blew me away, being produced by someone whose work I both like and respect tremendously. Yet the result, to me, is a seriously flawed record.

Although, as one of my more cynical friends mentioned yesterday, what can one expect from a Canadian



Patsy Cline revivalist (the Re-clines, get it?) who spells her name with lower case letters being produced in England by a British rockabilly revivalist?

Up front, k.d. lang has this incredible voice; she's got a voice like Roy Orbison has a voice. Like her own personal Wall of Sound. In terms of range and power, it's a voice reminiscent of Patsy Cline's, and darn few of those come down the pike.

She first surfaced in Music City on a couple of videos from Canada, which were passed from person to person like rare jewels. On the videos, she was riveting, captivating, a cowgirl burning with the intensity of a small sun.

Her wide-ranging taste, though, is her downfall on *Angel With a Lariat*. Working with Dave Edmunds in England—as fine a producer as there is—k. d. lang races across musical styles like a dervish. I get the feeling here of a kid turned loose in a candy shop—a real recording studio with a budget and everything! The result, for the listener, is that you're getting jerked around from Patsy-styled ballads to swing polka to a bizarre remake of Lynn Anderson's "Rose Garden." Lang's voice should have been the unifying factor to hold the whole thing together, but the string slips away.

The problem here, I think, is Edmunds' production. He and lang opted for a style that might be described as Nostalgic American Musical Film country, background music

for a film starring a young Jimmy Stewart maybe. There are a few too many "Yee-haws" and "Swing your partners" in here for my taste.

What we end up with is an interesting interpretation of country music, just as much of early British rock was a reevaluation of American rhythm and blues and rockabilly. I can't imagine k.d. lang singing this stuff on a dance floor or in a honky tonk. Instead, I imagine lights and cameras and shadowy figures in the background arranging hay bales.

There are a couple of exceptions to my overall lack of comfort with this album, though.

"Diet of Strange Places" is easily the best ballad I've heard this year. It showcases lang's powerful voice in a way that all the other songs should. Like Tom Waits', lang's delivery is totally arresting; "Diet..." washes over you like a warm blue blanket. The album's other main ballad, "Three Cigarettes in an Ashtray," is equally moving, equally powerful. If the rest of the album were this good, they'd be ringing bells in churches by now.

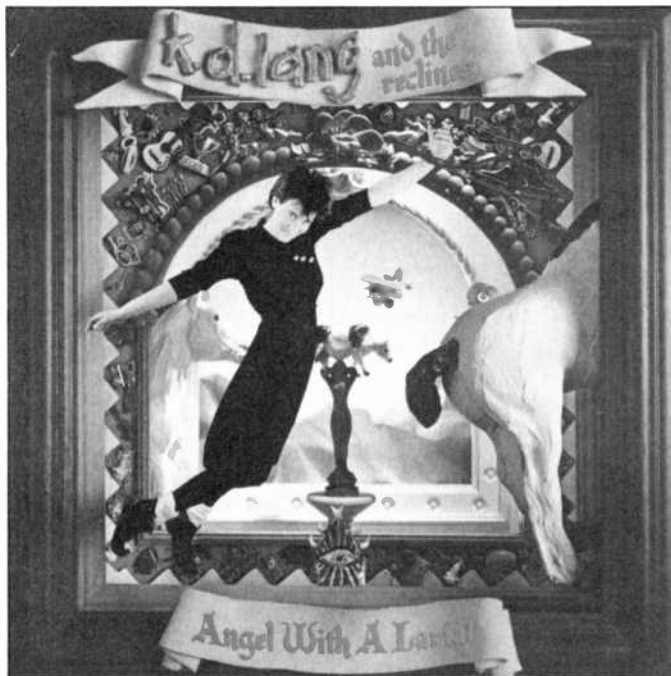
—MICHAEL BANE

Judy Rodman

A Place Called Love
MTM ST-71060

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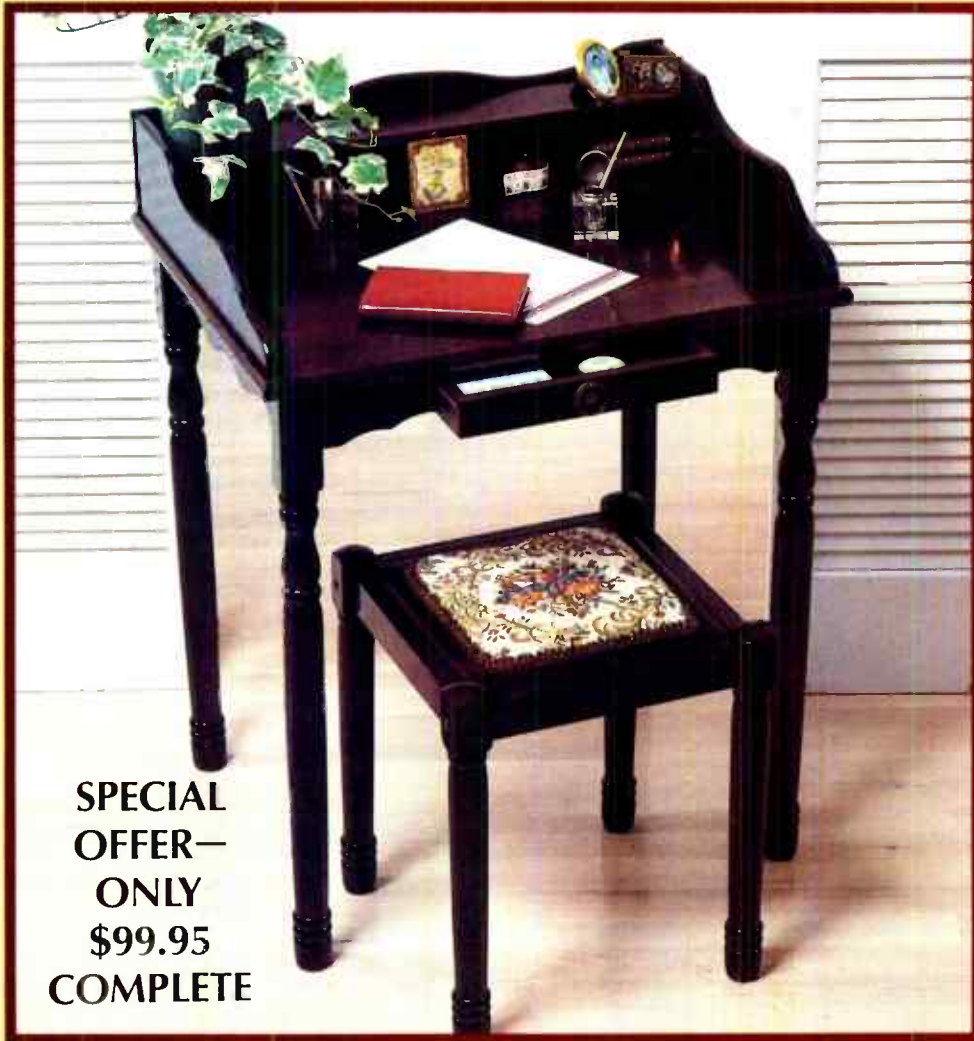
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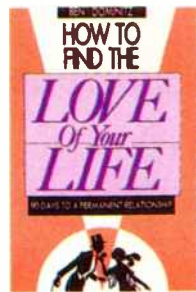
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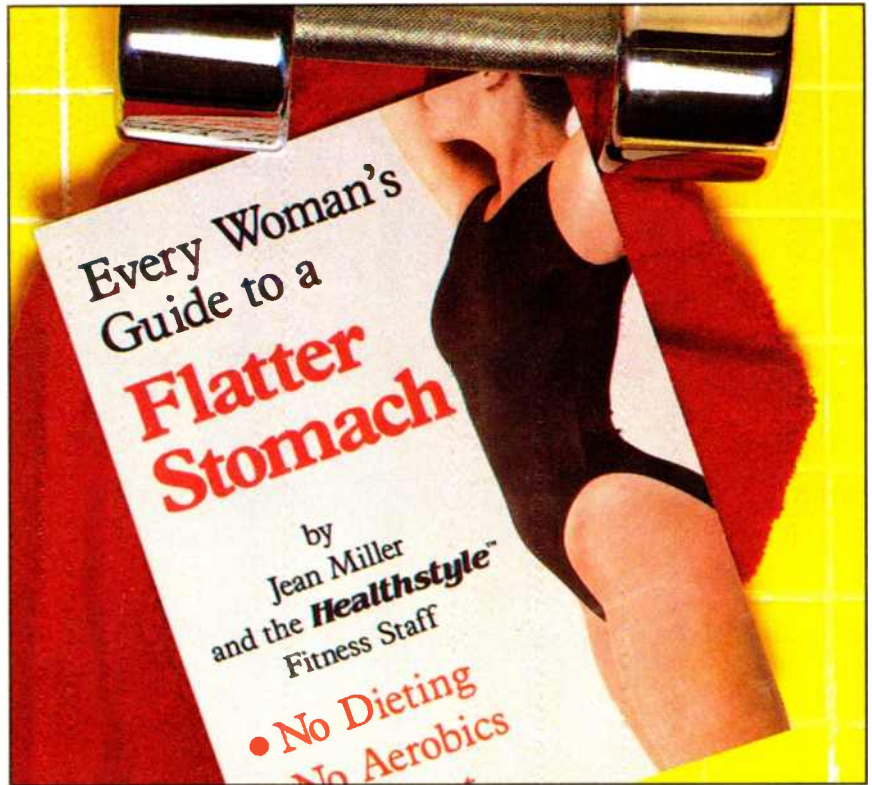
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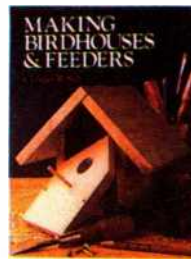
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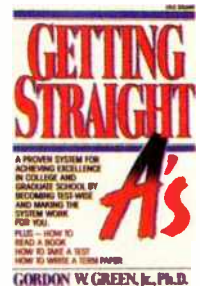
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Record Reviews

starting point. Their inspirations are Janis Ian (who sings background on one track of this album), Wendy Waldman, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, etc. Transplant it to Nashville, adjust it here and there, and...you've got it!

There's nothing inherently wrong with this. Those who like softcore country should have it. Besides, many people's frame of reference (including many in country radio) lies exclusively in 1970's pop and rock. Whether this music is country is a matter of opinion. But an album's worth of "sensitive" songs can get tedious after one listen, if your attention doesn't drift the first time.

That's the problem with *A Place Called Love*. Its songs, melodies, music and vocals run together like a gooeey, congealing chocolate cream valentine heart. Look at these titles: "A Place Called Love," "I Want a Love Like That," "Girls Ride Horses, Too" (the silliest type of gauzy cowboy romance), "That Was Then, This Is Now," "Please Don't Take My Heart," "Love Is a Winding Road" and "Love Comes From Inside of You." Listen to each; with three exceptions, I defy you to distinguish one melody and lyric from the other.

But when Rodman breaks free those three times, she soars. Her interpretation of Bob Dylan's "I'll Be Your Baby Tonight," freed of Al Delory's and Bergen White's bland, unimaginative string arrangements, is the best performance on the album. The strings that help sabotage four of the ten songs almost take down Rodman's own "Early Fall," a beautiful, well-conceived ballad that deserved better. The third fine number, "What's a Broken Heart," with its imaginative, Phil Spectorresque arrangement, is excellent.

Those three songs make Rodman's potential abundantly clear. But she'll surely lose it if she and West don't escape this one-dimensional rut they're in. In some ways



the worst sin of all is to make a record that, like this one, is not only dull, but forgettable. Everyone takes that risk, but those who rely on a formula face it for certain sooner or later.

—RICH KIENZLE

Asleep at the Wheel

10

Columbia BFE 40681

I still remember the cold Tuesday morning in March, 1973, when I received *Asleep at the Wheel's* first United Artists album, *Comin' Right at Ya* from a college acquaintance who did freelance promo work for Pittsburgh-area radio. It immediately became one of my favorites. I loved their musicianship and taste in material, which ranged from Hank's "I'll Never Get Out of this World Alive" and their own "Space Buggy" to Moon Mullican's "Cherokee Boogie." Before long, I'd worn my copy out.

That was 14 years ago, and the band's now been around about 17 or 18 years. Some formidable talent has passed

through the ranks during that time, including singer/songwriter Leroy Preston, steel guitarist/co-founder Lucky Oceans, vocalist John Nicholas, drummer Fran Christina (now with the Fabulous Thunderbirds) and singer Maryann Price. They're gone, and since singer Chris O'Connell left last year, only founder/leader Ray Benson remains of the original group.

This is AATW's second CBS affiliation; in 1974 they did an album for Epic, but their four years with Capitol (1975-1979) were clearly their best. From *Texas Gold* to *Served Live*, they were never less than inspired. In 1978 they recorded the original version of Preston's "My Baby Think's She's a Train," which gave Rosanne Cash her first hit in 1981. Their 1978 version of Count Basie's instrumental "One O'Clock Jump" earned them a Grammy and their final Capitol effort, *Served Live*, captured their onstage excitement admirably.

The trouble started after they left Capitol for MCA in 1980. Their sole MCA album, *Framed*, had its moments, but the band was floundering, desperately trying for a hit single that never came. The

magic returned when Benson, O'Connell, Nicholas and a few AATW alumni reunited on Lucky Oceans' 1983 solo album for the small Blind Pig label. But their next, issued on Canada's Stony Plain Records and later on Dot, was tired and dull.

10 continues that sad trend. The new musicians are competent enough but have all the fire and distinction of a lounge act. Benson, always a limited vocalist, hasn't improved, and the repertoire, always one of their strengths, is stagnant.

"Way Down Texas Way" and "Boogie Back to Texas" parallel the dull, generic Lone Star anthems on Alvin Crow's recent comeback album. Even a western swing chestnut like Leon McAuliffe's "T-U-L-S-A Straight Ahead" is handled so routinely it's almost trivialized. "Big Foot Stomp" is silly without a trace of wit.

It gets even worse. "Coast to Coast" is forgettable, and though the group often invokes boogie woogie, nothing here equals the brilliant boogie rendition of "Route 66" they did for Capitol. They actually manage a boring version of the 1940's boogie classic "House of Blue Lights." Even the rockabilly version of rocker Huey Lewis' "I Want a New Drug" is pale and forced. Only the final number, a remake of The Delmore Brothers' "Blues Stay Away From Me," with some sweet, melancholy vocal harmonies, carries any conviction.

Writing this is no fun for a charter AATW fan. But listening to *10*, and thinking of their current catchphrase "Western swing ain't dead—it's just Asleep at the Wheel," all I can say is if you want to hear them at their peak, search for the now out-of-print Capitol albums or the newly released reissues of *Comin' Right at Ya* and their first Epic album on the British Edsel label. That's how I want to remember them, and the way you should.

—RICH KIENZLE

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After 15 years with the minors, the New Grass Revival has signed with a major label. The music is the same as before, but the rules have changed. There's a chance that country radio is finally ready for them.

NEW GRASS GETTING ITS DUE by Patrick Carr

It's an odd historical fact that all the way through the 1960's and 1970's, when the country airwaves were full of all sorts of "hyphenated country" (country-rock, country-pop, outlaw-country, progressive-country, urban-

cowboy-country), the one type of music which was closest to the mainstream all along never made any significant penetration of the charts, or even of the major country recording labels. That music was Newgrass, which can be

defined as the application of Bluegrass instrumentation and structure to non-Bluegrass music. It flourished in the college concert market and in urban clubs and even on its own homespun festival circuit—still does, in fact—but



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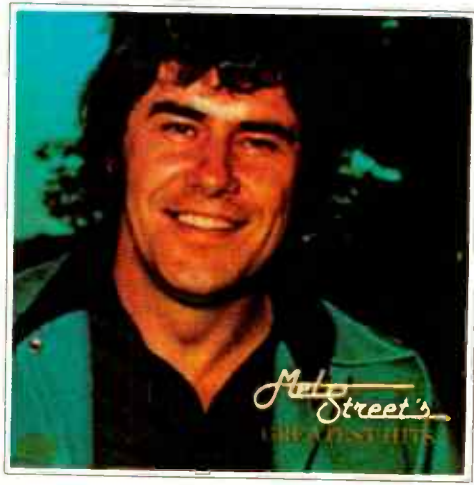
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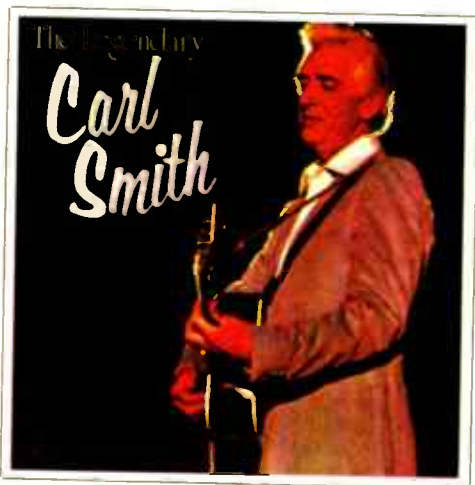
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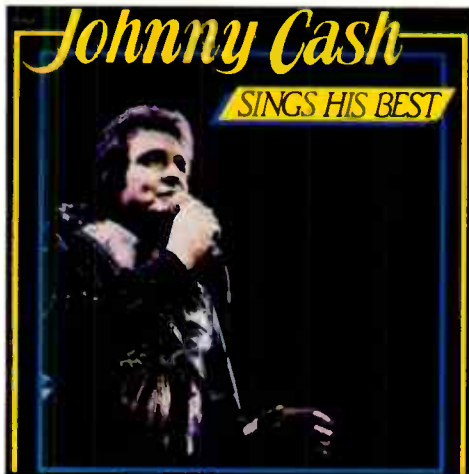
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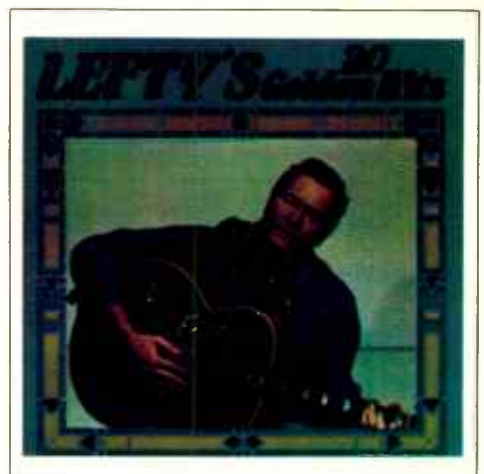
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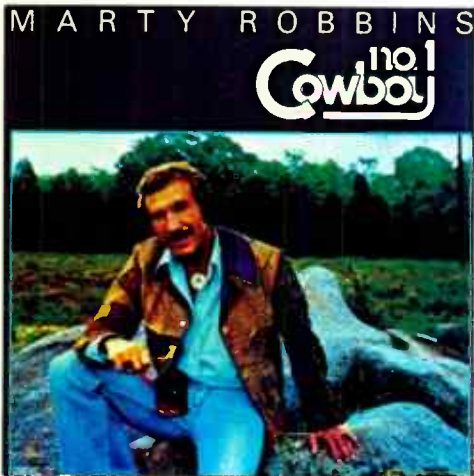
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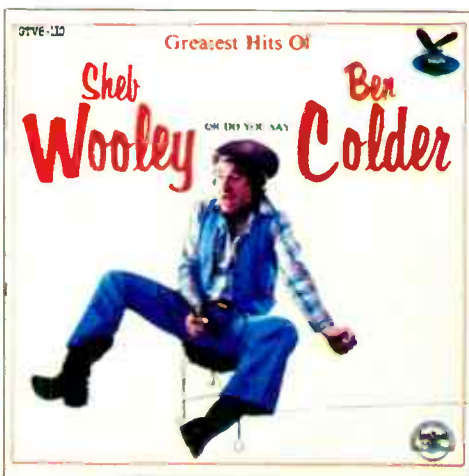
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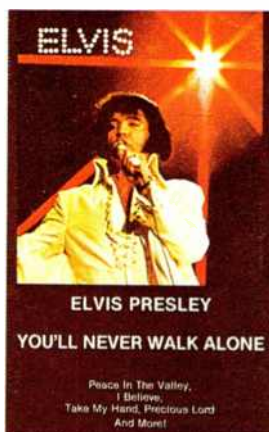
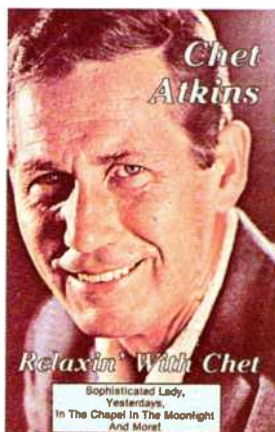
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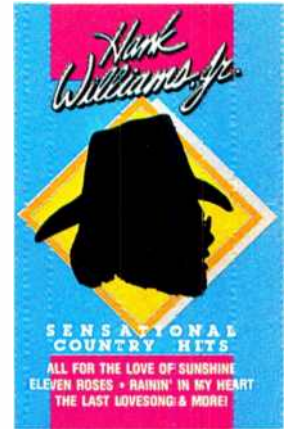
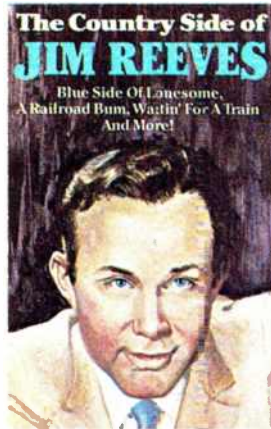
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Highway/I'm Gonna Bid My Blues Goodbye—No. CAK514

PORTER WAGONER—A SATISFIED MIND: A Satisfied Mind/Eat, Drink And Be Merry/Born To Lose/Ivory Tower/I Can't Live With You/Settin' The Woods On Fire/Company's Comin'/I Like Girls/Your Love/As Long As I'm Dreaming/Midnight—No. CAK769

KITTY WELLS—INSPIRATIONAL SONGS: You Better Get Down On Your Knees And Pray/Jesus Remember Me/Too Far From God/Too Much Sinning/Trails And Tribulations/How Far Is Heaven/My Mother/Pray Together And We'll Stay Together—No. CAK620

DOTTIE WEST AND THE HEARTACHES—THE SOUND OF COUNTRY MUSIC: You Ain't Woman Enough/Together Again/Pick Me Up On Your Way Down/Someone Before Me/Don't Hurt Anymore/Heartaches By The Number/City Lights/Slowly/Crazy Arms/I Miss You Already—No. CAK2155

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JAIL AND OTHERS: I'm Casting My Lasso Towards The Sky/There's A Rainbow In Ev'ry Teardrop/I'll Never Pass This Way Again/Birmingham Jail/Wabash Waltz/I'm Crying For You/Paint A Rose On The Garden Wall/Tears Can Never Drown The Flame—No. CAK954

DON WILLIAMS—WITH THE POZO SECO SINGERS: Guantanamo/If I Were A Carpenter/Spanish Harlem Incident/Green Grass Of Home/It Ain't Worth The Lonely Road Back/Come A Little Bit Closer/You've Lost That Lovin' Feelin'/You Better Sit Down Kids—No. CBK3024

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TOP 25

Singles

1. The O'Kanes *Can't Stop My Heart From Loving You*
2. The Oak Ridge Boys *It Takes a Little Rain*
3. Conway Twitty *Julia*
4. Dan Seals *I Will Be There*
5. John Conlee *Domestic Life*
6. The Forester Sisters *Too Many Rivers*
7. Nitty Gritty Dirt Band ... *Baby's Got a Hold On Me*
8. Moe Bandy *'Til I'm Too Old to Die Young*
9. T.G. Sheppard *You're My First Lady*
10. Keith Whitley *Hard Livin'*
11. Eddy Raven *You're Never Too Old For Young Love*
12. Randy Travis *Forever and Ever, Amen*
13. Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris... *To Know Him Is to Love Him*
14. Sweethearts of the Rodeo *Chains of Gold*
15. Earl Thomas Conley..... *That Was a Close One*
16. Dwight Yoakam *Little Sister*
17. Charley Pride *Have I Got Some Blues For You*
18. Judy Rodman..... *Girls Ride Horses Too*
19. Tanya Tucker..... *It's Only Over For You*
20. Charly McClain..... *Don't Touch Me There*
21. John Schneider *Love, You Ain't Seen the Last of Me*
22. George Strait *All My Ex's Live in Texas*
23. Mickey Gilley *Full Grown Fool*
24. Crystal Gayle and Gary Morris..... *Another World*
25. Steve Wariner..... *The Weekend*

Albums

1. Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris... *Trio*
2. George Strait *Ocean Front Property*
3. Randy Travis *Storms of Life*
4. Hank Williams Jr..... *Hank "Live"*
5. The Judds..... *Heartland*
6. Restless Heart..... *Wheels*
7. Dwight Yoakam *Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc., Etc.*
8. Sweethearts of the Rodeo *Sweethearts of the Rodeo*
9. Dwight Yoakam *Hillbilly Deluxe*
10. The O'Kanes *The O'Kanes*
11. George Jones *Wine Colored Roses*
12. Alabama *The Touch*
13. Reba McEntire *What Am I Gonna Do About You*
14. Kathy Mattea *Walk the Way the Wind Blows*
15. Oak Ridge Boys *Where the Fast Lane Ends*
16. Lyle Lovett *Lyle Lovett*
17. Steve Earle..... *Guitar Town*
18. Asleep at the Wheel *Asleep at the Wheel*
19. The Judds..... *Rockin' With the Rhythm*
20. Earl Thomas Conley..... *Too Many Times*
21. Alabama *Greatest Hits*
22. Eddy Raven *Right Hand Man*
23. John Conlee..... *American Faces*
24. The Bellamy Brothers ... *Country Rap*
25. Ricky Van Shelton *Wild Eyed Dream*

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