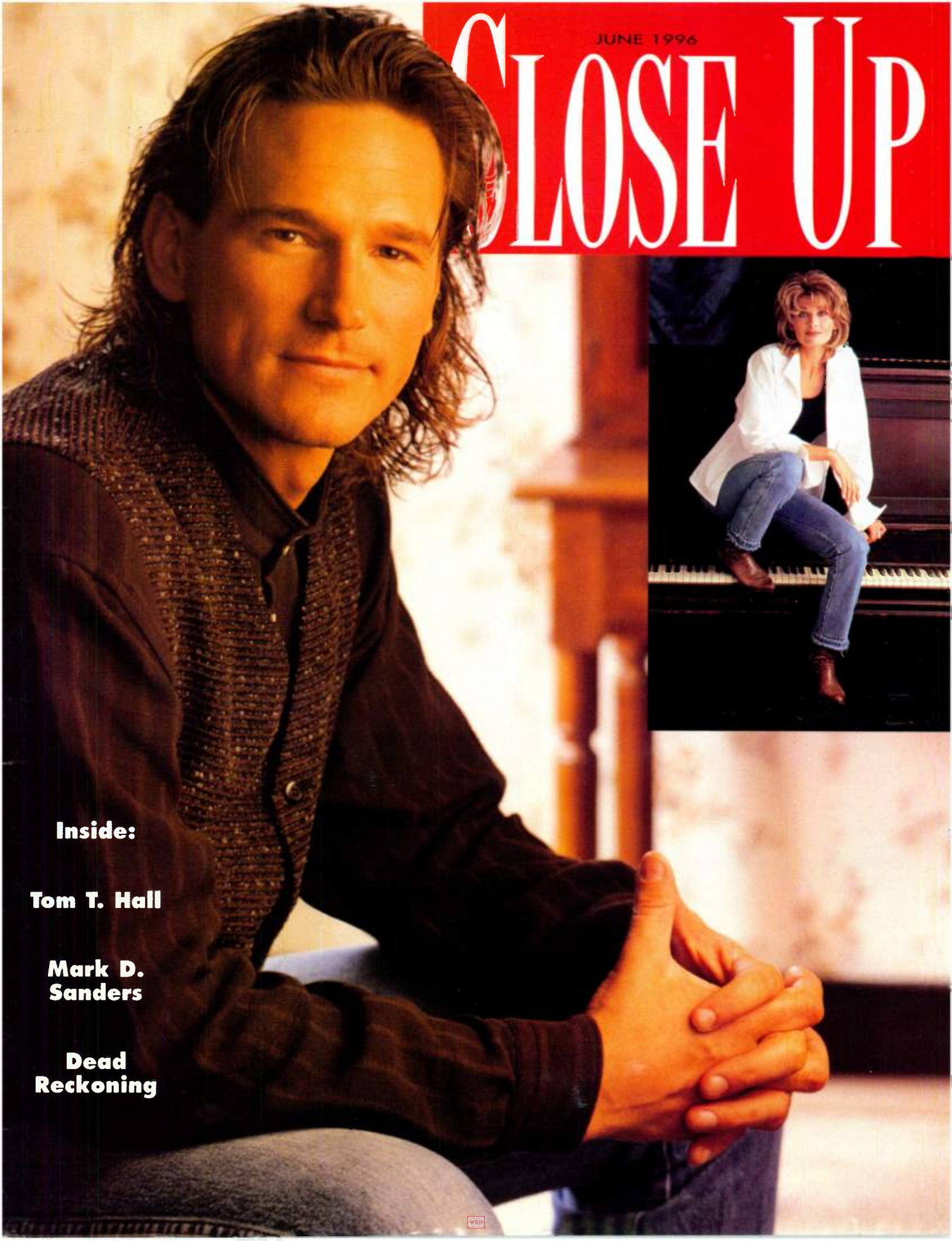


JUNE 1996

CLOSE UP



Inside:

Tom T. Hall

**Mark D.
Sanders**

**Dead
Reckoning**



"My favorite music is bluegrass music."

**-Tom T. Hall
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BILLY DEAN

Billy Dean settles down into a comfy patio chair on the deck of his airy home near Smithville, Tennessee. Although he's only been home about 30 hours during the past 14 days, he's ready to defer the start of some long-awaited "family time" in order to "meet the press" during a casual interview. Suddenly the screen door bursts open, yielding a scrambling toddler named Eli. "Hey!" yells the rambunctious soon-to-be three year old. "Look, Dad, I've got my holster on."

Billy switches from Country Music singer/songwriter to Dad with ease. "Okay, pardner. Can you go play for a little bit while I sit and talk with Janet? We're gonna do an interview. Can you say 'interview'?"

"Interview!" comes Eli's response as he disappears around the side of the house, perhaps to check on

his sleeping year-old sister Hannah. Billy smiles, takes a sip of coffee and eases back into his "work" mode. After having taken a year or so off - no real touring, just writing a few tunes around the house - he's made the commitment to get back into the "business" end of things in support of his latest Capitol Nashville album, IT'S WHAT I DO.

"I didn't miss being gone too much," he says of his self-imposed exile. "The only thing is there's a competitive side to me. That was the only part of me that made me really want to come back and try

"I needed to treat this album like I was a brand new artist."

to go to another level. I didn't know which level. I thought maybe I had achieved it already. I was here at the farm writing in my studio and playing with my kids and enjoying music and my family, but I don't think I would have been able to live with the fact that maybe I didn't make one more stab at it. Personally, the time off did help me quite a bit, just to get my priorities in order and find out what I do love the best and how I'm gonna go about balancing all of it."

Getting his priorities in order included a definite break from chart-watching. "I didn't pay any attention to it at all. I listened to a lot of different kinds of music. I would turn on CMT and watch the videos. I have to be honest - I didn't see myself out there with the crop of people there. I thought, 'If that's what I gotta do to be in the business, I don't want to do that.' It doesn't look like anybody's working for longevity in their careers."

Billy admits that he had reached a point where music wasn't as enjoyable as it once was. "I wasn't having fun mostly because of my voice. I couldn't sing 100 percent because my voice never had time to heal. I couldn't perform like I wanted to because my chops weren't there. I didn't do any music or anything for about four or five months. Then I started going out and playing some acoustic shows. I noticed just from talking that my voice was clearing up. When I went out and did these acoustic shows, I went, 'Wow! I haven't heard this part of my voice in a long time!' I ended up liking performing again because my confidence came back, the tone in my voice came back."

continued on page 6...



Tom T. Hall

Through a 30-plus album career, Tom T. Hall has scored more than 50 chart hits, become a member of both the Grand Ole Opry and the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame and is often referred to as "the Storyteller".

With hits like "Harper Valley P.T.A.", "Old Dogs, Children And Watermelon Wine" and "The Year That Clayton Delaney Died", he established himself as a master at his craft.

*Now, Tom is back with his first studio album in eight years, **SONGS FROM SOPCHOPPY**. The collection contains songs drawn from his experiences in a small community in Florida, where he now spends time away from his Nashville residence. The song ideas for the album came naturally, he explains, taken from his observations of everyday life.*

"I retired about three years ago and bought a house down in Florida. I get up every morning before daylight and walk on the beach

with my dog and watch the sun come up. I have no thoughts about writing songs, but one morning I thought I'd write a song about the island.

"I started writing the song, 'St. George Isle', and a fellow who had been doing some work on the house said he had a little studio in his barn where we could record it. I wanted to surprise my wife Dixie with it. He and I got

"I was really gonna write the great dirty American novel."

together on a Sunday afternoon, drank a little beer, barbecued shrimp and played a little music. A couple of days later I was walking on the beach, and I wrote another song. This went on until I had enough for an album."

From there, Tom's wife Dixie convinced him that he should pay a visit to Mercury Nashville president Luke Lewis. Tom's manager had already sent a few songs to him, thinking that they might fit in a boxed set that Mercury planned to release of Tom's songs.

"Luke said, 'You know I heard those songs you sent down, but I don't think they'll fit in the boxed set. I think we ought to do a new album on these songs.'

"I was a little surprised. I said, 'Luke, I want to tell you something. I'm old and cold, and I don't think I can sell any albums because it's a new age.' He said, 'Well, we won't do it for the money. We'll do it for the music.' That was one of the most startling things I had heard. I wasn't sure he was telling me the truth at first.

"I agreed to do the album. But I told him, 'Luke, I'm not coming to any meetings. I

understand you people have a lot of meetings.' All the while my wife was stomping on my foot saying I was talking my way out of a deal.

"Luke was very gracious, and we did have a meeting. We had lunch before we did the album, and we decided to just send some equipment down to Florida and cut it with the same musicians down there. It doesn't have a very Country sound. I call this little group of people down there reformed hippies. Some of them teach at Florida State University. Others are doctors, lawyers, architects, poets and authors, but they love their music and always play for the fun of it."

At first, music was something that Tom considered as only a pastime.

"Actually, I started off in journalism. After the army, I went to Roanoke College on the GI bill to study writing. All this time I was writing songs too. I was at a radio station, and some guy came in and told me he would take my songs to Nashville. Of course, when he got to Nashville, he put his name on them, and the publisher called and asked me if the guy had helped me write them. I said no. Then he offered me a contract.

"I was really gonna write the great dirty American novel. I was in the Fitzgerald and Hemingway mode. I was one of those guys roaming around campus in jeans and an old army jacket with my guitar strung around my neck. Unfortunately, I didn't learn too much in school. I had my own opinions about everything, but I always liked to read and write."

Tom says he's always been able to balance his writing projects and never really considered his "retirement" from the music business as a chance to pursue something else.

"I've always written other things. I've never separated it. I've got a word processor, a printer and a guitar. That's all you need. I didn't make a lot of plans for retirement. I told somebody that retirement is sort of like being dead, but you don't get any sympathy. I never really argued with it.

"I never make any big plans. I hear people make these big five year plans, but sooner or later, you're gonna run out of those five year periods. You're gonna get interrupted in the

middle of one of them. I thought I'd see what's in the mail and kinda do what comes naturally."

His latest book will be released in July.

"I told somebody that retirement is sort of like being dead, but you don't get any sympathy."

"My new book is a farce. I wrote it and reviewed it all at the same time. It's called 'What A Book'. I figured people who glance at the review are gonna see 'what a book', and they might buy it. Basically, it contains all the keys to being rich and famous.

"I like to support my books because I like the literary crowd. I like that kind of company - the quiet, well-intentioned, gentle liberal people."

One of Tom's favorite pieces of his work is "I Love". The song hit number one on the Country charts in 1973 and also became a pop crossover. Like Hemingway's work, Tom believes it succeeded because of its simplicity.

"I like 'I Love'. I wrote that song in five minutes. It's just a little list of things that make me happy. I had a psychiatrist friend who said you should get up in the morning and write

"I like to support my books because I like the literary crowd."

down your pet peeves and things that are troubling you. You're amazed at how short and trivial the list is when you get to reading it.

"I thought he was a good psychiatrist, but that is a negative process, and I didn't want to do it. I wanted to write a list of everything that I like. As I was writing, I started humming. The whole record is two minutes and one second long, verses and everything."

With his divergent interests and standards for his own work, one would be hard pressed to predict Tom's musical tastes.

"I like Hootie & The Blowfish. CRACKED REAR VIEW MIRROR was one of my favorite tapes, but I was on to them before they became fashionable. I like Darius Rucker, who plays acoustic guitar and sings. Until he came along you didn't see much of that. But now I think every rock act has an acoustic guitar and a baseball hat. But what do you expect? We've got another hat business going on here.


"My favorite music is bluegrass music. I grew up in Kentucky listening to Bill Monroe and the Stanley Brothers. Charlie Sizemore just did a new album with a version of 'How I Got To Memphis' that's wonderful. I went down to see him recently at the Station Inn in Nashville, and it was great.

"I have some Beethoven that I play when I'm working in the vegetable garden. I take a little boom box out there when I'm digging in the garden and play classical music for the onions. They like it."

When he's not working at home or on his books, Tom does some touring.

"I've been doing some shows in Florida and some casinos. I'm working pretty much where the demographics are people who remember my songs. You go to Florida, and I'm a teenager down there compared to some of those folks."

Even though he has two projects in the works, Tom is still hesitant to make any big plans or predictions about his future. With his trademark understated humor, he sums up what he'd like to happen.

"They'll have to rewrite the books now. The last Country Music encyclopedia that came out said that I had retired and gone back to where I came from. I told someone that in 1972 I was 'it'. I had CMA nominations, Grammy Awards and two or three number one records. A few weeks ago, Reba McEntire made more money in one night than I did in that whole year. The economy is interesting. I'd like to work three or four days a year at \$250,000 a night. I just hope I don't get too popular." 

-Mandy Wilson

CMA'S ENTERTAINMENT EXPO SRO '96

SRO '96, CMA's international entertainment expo, takes place October 3-5 at the Nashville Convention Center. With talent showcases featuring some of Country Music's brightest new entertainers, a full-service exhibit marketplace, informational and educational panel sessions and presentation of the annual SRO Awards, recognizing excellence in the touring industry, SRO is the industry's premiere event addressing the issues that impact all facets of the Country Music industry.

The all-encompassing SRO Exhibit Marketplace will feature vendors from every aspect of the touring industry: booking agencies, management companies, record labels, lighting, audio, video, transportation, staging, merchandising and more. It's a prime time and place to network with the leaders of the Country touring industry. There are also numerous sponsorship opportunities available for the event. Sponsorship and exhibit information can be obtained by contacting CMA's Special Projects department at (615) 244-2840.

Since 1978, SRO has been presenting Country Music's top talent in a series of state-of-the-art showcases. Performers who began their careers by showcasing at SRO include Garth Brooks, Alabama, Lorrie Morgan, Pam Tillis, Tanya Tucker, Lee Roy Parnell, Patty Loveless, Vince Gill, George Strait, Trisha Yearwood, Tim McGraw, Mary Chapin Carpenter and many others. You won't want to miss tomorrow's superstars as they showcase their talents at SRO '96.

SRO '96 registration information will be available in July. CLOSE UP will bring you updated SRO information in the coming months.

BILLY DEAN

continued from page 3...

Although he spent a lot of time writing, only two of his tunes made it on the new album. "I didn't try to write for an album or anything. I wrote three or four spiritual songs. I wrote some movie score types of stuff. I had all this creative energy built up inside of me, and I was putting so much pressure on myself just to channel it all into Country Music and try to write a Country hit, and it was stifling. I gave myself permission not to do that, just to write and create anything I want to do without any kind of limitations or whatever."

In the meantime, the search for songs for his album was arduous. "Scott Hendricks (president of Capitol Nashville) was tough on material. I played him a lot of my songs, a lot of my new songs, and they just didn't quite hit the mark for Country radio. It's real hard for me, because I can find a song that I think would be great for Country radio but in my opinion it will be too novelty or it will be too much like everything else, so I'll pass on it. Then we'll find a song that's got great depth and integrity, great lyrics, well-written, but it's not structured right for radio. So then I've got to go find something that does both...it's radio friendly, and it lives up to my expectations. Those are the hardest songs to find. It's probably taken me a little longer to record that it does other people. I needed to treat this album like I was a brand new artist. I thought since I did have the time off there might be a lot of curiosity, 'What is the first thing he's gonna come back with?' It needed to have some impact.

"It's probably taken me a little longer to record than it does other people."

'It's What I Do' was just the perfect song. It sounded like a hit. It was a subject matter I thought a lot of people could identify with. And I had just experienced it, so I could relate to it. It had all the ingredients.

"I had a good time in the studio this time. The studio used to be a chore for me. I used to put this

pressure on myself, you know, the studio was like the reward. I wouldn't demo anything until I finished the song. Now I write in the studio. It's a lot more fun to do that. I had been working in the home studio, learning how to engineer and how to get certain sounds. When I went in the studio this time, I was excited. I wasn't gonna put the pressure on me to do anything but have fun: 'If this is the last one I'm gonna make, I am gonna do it differently. I'm gonna have a great time. I'm gonna sing good. I'm gonna be passionate about singing. I'm

"I've had about a year to do whatever I wanted to do."

gonna sing from the depth of my heart and just put everything into it that I can because it might be the last record that I ever make.'

"I've had about a year to do whatever I wanted to do. If I didn't get it in during that time, it's my own fault. Before, it was like I was taking three steps just to stay in one place. Now I'm taking three steps and actually getting three steps ahead. I don't mind working, and I don't mind the schedule that I have right now. It's grueling. It starts at five in the morning and usually ends at ten at night, but I don't mind it because everybody is working with me, and we're working together. It's my career, and it's the only one I've got. This is probably my last window of opportunity to move forward a little, so I can't afford not to work hard. I know how to do it now. I know how to pace myself and stay healthy."

As Eli comes furtively creeping back onto the deck, Billy smiles, the anticipation of a fishing expedition on his mind. "This little vacation, this 12 days I got off, was not a moment too soon. We work really hard for maybe three months, take some time off, work hard three months, time off. Boy, after three months of airports and buses and concerts and interviews, you're ready to have a week or so off!" **CU**

- Janet E. Williams

Reminder....



Don't forget to return the first ballot for the CMA Awards by June 20! Ballots were mailed to all CMA individual members in good standing on May 22. Each member may write in one nominee per category on the first ballot.

After the results from the first ballot are tabulated, any act, record or song receiving 10 or more nominations will appear on the second ballot, which will be mailed July 8.

Upon receiving the second ballot, members vote for their top five choices in each category. After these results are tabulated, the five receiving the most votes in each category will be announced at a press conference August 13 and will appear on the final ballot, which will be mailed August 22. On this final ballot, members vote for one nominee in each category.

The eligibility period for all 12 award categories runs from June 1, 1995 through May 31, 1996.

Winners will be announced during the live broadcast of "The 30th Annual CMA Awards" on Wednesday, October 2. The gala telecast will begin on CBS-TV at 8 p.m. EDT.

The entire balloting process is conducted and certified by the international accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche.

Staff members of CMA do not vote for the awards, nor do they handle or tabulate any of the three ballots.

Return CMA Awards ballot by June 20

Following is the 1996 CMA Awards schedule:

June 20	Deadline to return first ballot to Deloitte & Touche
July 8	Second ballot mailed to all CMA members in good standing
August 8	Deadline to return second ballot to Deloitte & Touche
August 13	CMA Awards finalists announced at press conference
August 22	Final ballot mailed to all CMA members in good standing
September 25	Deadline to return final ballot to Deloitte & Touche
October 2	Winners announced on live CMA Awards telecast, CBS-TV, 8 p.m. EDT

MJI TO LICENSE CMA AWARDS FOR INTERNATIONAL RADIO

For the first time, a broadcast of the CMA Awards will be made available to radio stations around the world. Special programming of the August 13th nominations, pre-Awards and post-Awards activities can be licensed as well. For details, contact Gary Krantz, MJI Broadcasting, (212) 245-5010, ext. 248; fax (212) 586-1090.

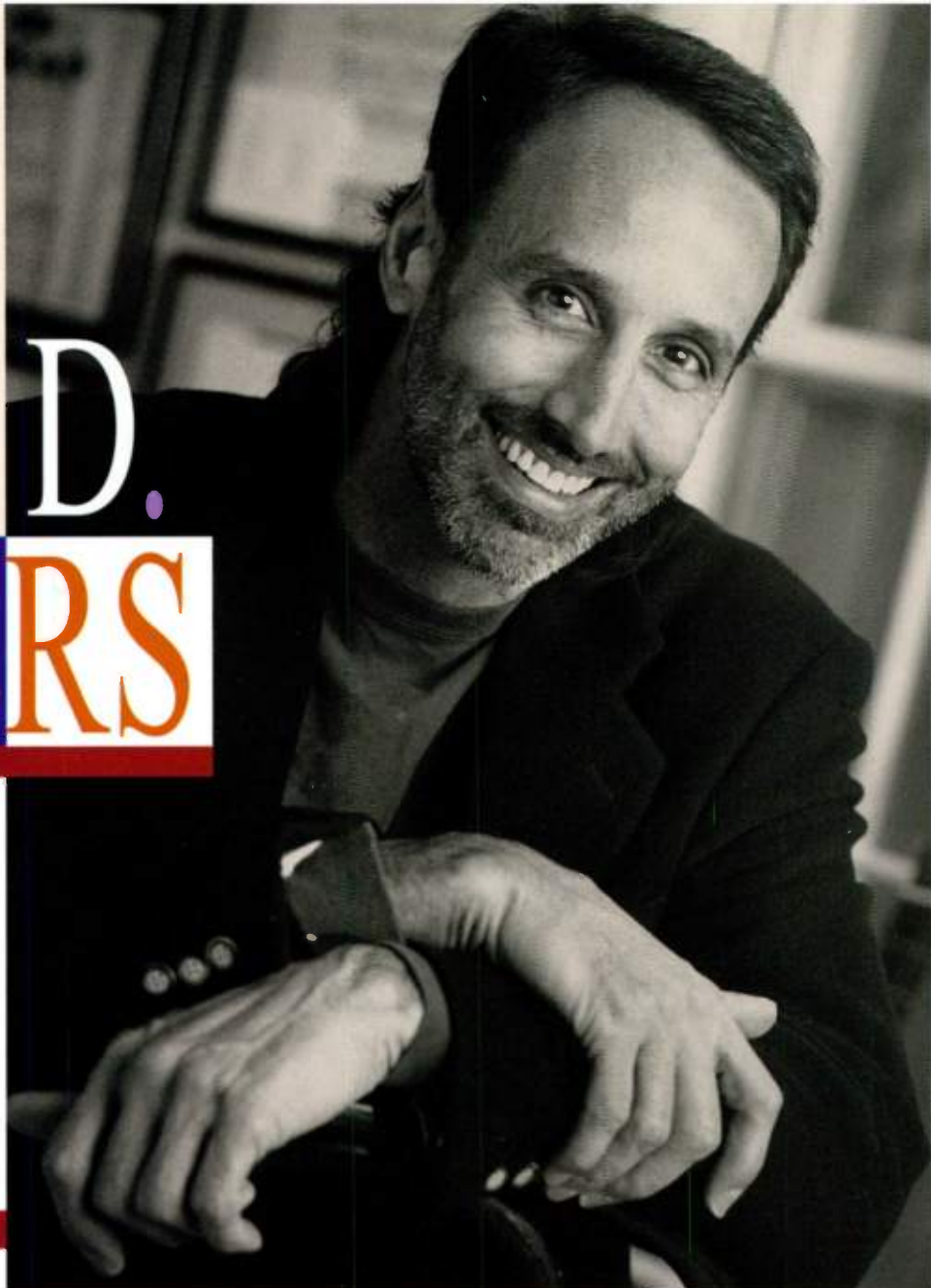
CMA AWARDS TICKET INFORMATION

Keep an eye on your mailbox! Ticket order forms for the 30th Annual CMA Awards will be mailed to CMA's sterling and organizational members on July 1. The gala event featuring Country Music's most popular entertainers will be broadcast live on CBS Television from Nashville's Grand Ole Opry House on Wednesday, October 2.

If you have not received your order form by July 15, contact CMA's special projects department at (615) 244-2840.

Remember: CMA Awards tickets are for use by CMA members only. Tickets to the private event are not sold to the general public.

MARK D. SANDERS



"The good composer is slowly discovered, the bad composer is slowly found out."

*- Sir Ernest Newman,
British musicologist.*

Take one look on the Country charts, and Mark D. Sanders' name becomes a familiar one. In mid-May, the writer had six tunes on the RADIO & RECORDS chart. But that wasn't the case when he finally got a Mel Tillis cut in 1982. Or four Kathy Mattea cuts in 1988. Even when he wrote "Victim Of The Game" with Garth Brooks in 1990 or when John Michael Montgomery's "If You've Got Love" and Reba's "The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter" were hits in 1994. But then came 1996 and a string of hits, including "No News" and "Blue Clear Sky". Now Mark has more writing sessions than he has time. He has his own publicist handling interview requests and has a bio in which he says it all: "Fifteen years, five kids, 500-and some songs. Overnight success!"

All this success started out innocently enough for one of Country Music's nice guys.

"I had to write to get my feelings out," Mark recalls. "I had to deal with family issues and

"...I figured out that I didn't need to share my inner soul in every song. Thank God!"

personal issues, et ceteras. I tried to be my own psychologist. At some point, I realized that didn't work. It felt better, but as far as being constructive in dealing with the problems I had, it didn't work. I think people love to see writers do that. But I sort of got past that.

"Somewhere along the line I just realized there were more things to write that were uptempo. I like to have fun when I write. When you sit there and think about the words of a ballad all day, it's just depressing. It's slow. I like to get in there, have fun and get done with it."

In fact, he points out, "It Matters to Me" was his only ballad in the last five years.

"At some point in my 16 years, (the songs) became a little less personal, because I figured out that I didn't need to share my inner soul in every song. Thank God! I've tried to get outside myself, and I think I've had a lot more success since I did that. But there's always going to be a little bit of personal stuff in what I do.

"I worked (in earlier years) with a couple of local counselors doing group therapy for codependency problems or any other kind of dysfunctional problems. Just people sitting down to talk. People would say things, and I'd think, gee, that would be a great song. One time I asked this one person if they would mind me putting that in the song. They said it would be OK, but it's still on my list. I never put it in. It's too sad. I love a good sad song, I just can't afford to write it.

"I have trouble saying what I've learned (over the years), but I've learned a lot. I think I can put it in my songs. One of the most self-damnation songs is 'It Matters to Me' - about a guy not talking. I've been the king at that. Now I can't do it anymore, because I wrote a stupid song about it. I'm caught.

"There are a few really personal songs, and sometimes they don't even come out. I might write them with the knowledge that they'll never be recorded, unless I make an album of my own for my own personal enjoyment. They're really personal. It's hard for me to look at them objectively.

"I always look for little morsels. Since I've had more songs out, people have come up to me and said, 'Mark, I've gotten to where when I listen to the radio, I can tell which songs are yours.'

"The only thing I seem to recognize in my songs is that I have this recurring 'church' imagery. Not necessarily religious, but 'church'. Like in 'Daddy's Money', the line 'I can't concentrate on the preacher', and 'Walking To Jerusalem'. And in 'Heads Carolina, Tails California', there is 'Like two modern day Moses, searching for the promised land'. If you start listening there's a whole bunch of stuff. And I go to a Methodist church. I grew up with my parents in the church choir. It's not necessarily religion, but it's just images of the church and the Bible...I guess I told my subconscious I could go over there and get stuff and put it into the songs."

Whatever the subject, many artists look to Mark's songs for their albums. Like a tailor, his craft is to try to find something that fits the artist.

"What happens is you get all this going, and everyone calls you and wants to cowrite. I have many cowriters that I've been working with for years, and I'm always trying to add new people.

I haven't been able to write by myself lately. I have Mondays set aside for me, but I end up cowriting everyday. Hopefully, when I go on vacation in the next few weeks, I'll be able to write by myself. My wife is all for it, because she sees the royalty checks," he says laughing. "When I write by myself, I would write a lot fewer songs because it takes a lot longer.

"In order to be universal, you have to be specific."

"In the last month or so, people are saying I want a song like 'Heads Carolina, Tails California,' and I go, 'Right. Yeah, I'm going to try to write a song just like that one,'" Sanders says wryly. "Sometimes the song comes out good like that, and it's just a freak of nature. The last thing I want to do is copy something.

"When any artist comes in, I feel pressure...the pressure of writing something good enough for them to record. Then there's the pressure of...say they're not really a songwriter, so it's trying to do something good enough by yourself. It could be a long day. Being a writer, you sometimes work against other writers. The worst thing a cowriter could do to me is when I get an idea that is worth pursuing, and the other guy says 'Oh, I don't think I could sing that.' I've had times where I felt I could hit a cowriter for saying, 'Well, I don't know about that first verse we

"I always look for little morsels."

wrote.' And I'm trying to write the second verse. I don't care about the first verse. If it's not right when we're finished, then that's OK. My mind has to be able to deal with that.

"I write a lot of songs. My theory is if I write 10 songs, five or six of them are probably going to be pretty good. Of those, maybe two could be singles. But if I only write five songs, then I only have two or three that are credible. It's a lot better for me to just write them and go on. I write some that I just don't think are worth dealing with. Back in '89, I wrote a song with Steve Seskin, and I thought, 'This is awful.' But sure

enough Delbert McClinton cut it. So I thought, 'Well, there's something to be learned here.'"

Though Mark says some work has gone towards pitching his songs to artists outside of Country, he's happy to be working in the genre.

"I consciously try not to crossover, because if you look at the last five years, there's a lot of money in Country Music, why go outside? I don't get it at all. If we try to be universal, we lose the Country.


"I learned that in college - in order to be universal, you have to be specific. It was from the poetry of Carlos Williams and the photography of Edward Stevens. It's like 'It Matters To Me' is one person talking to one person. The universality is that a lot of people handle conflict that way.

"To me, that's the neat thing about Country Music - it is so specific. Pop isn't."

An area he's considering moving into is producing.

"I have fun in the studio. And it's taken a long time to get to that point. I look at what Mutt Lange has done with Shania, and that's pretty amazing. Just to be able to go in with an artist, and write some of their songs, and have your friends write the other songs. Where you don't have to sit around and listen to songs all day. Just go in and have fun in the studio and then have it come out on the radio. I think that would be pretty neat. If I were to progress to another thing, it would be production."

What's the best part of all of this fame and fortune?

"The best part is just being a songwriter. It's nice to have all this money. It frees you from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. Although after having worried about money for 40 years, it's taken me a long time to not worry about it. Just being a recognized songwriter is unbelievable. When I was 29, I had been a schoolteacher, and I thought there was nothing I could do. I couldn't handle life very well at that point. Where I am now, that's a wonderful thing." 

- Shannon Heim

On Tour With Travis Tritt



Travis Tritt makes his European concert debut.

Travis Tritt is well known as a superstar in the U.S., but recently he took his show overseas for the first time ever. With support from Warner Bros., Tritt did shows in London, Dublin (both were sellouts), Holland, Switzerland and Germany during a two-week trip. About six weeks ahead of the tour, he did a promotional visit to each of the countries, visiting with radio as well as TV and print journalists. His co-manager, Gary Falcon, talks with CLOSE UP about the experience.

“London took me completely
by surprise.”

CU: *We've heard great things about the trip. What was your reaction?*

FALCON: Well, London took me completely by surprise. It was sold out six weeks in advance, so I knew going in that we had a good crowd. But the crowd turned out to be so young! I've always heard that Country crowds in England, especially, are the older Don Williams-type crowd, which is great, but it turned out that for Travis, there's a whole new audience there. I saw kids from 16, and there were people in their 30s. In fact, standing by the sound board was a mother in her 30s and her daughter who was 16. I talked to them for a while, and one of the cool things that they thought about the concert was that they found an artist that they

both could go see.

CU: *How did people know about Travis' music?*

FALCON: I think it's just a grassroots, growing interest in Country over there. The newer and hipper artists are catching on in small pockets. It mostly was word-of-mouth, because we hadn't been there. Travis has also had several videos do very well on CMT-Europe, and I think that had a lot to do with it.

CU: *This was the first trip other than a festival date. Did it exceed your expectations?*

FALCON: I think overall, we definitely accomplished the mission of the first trip, which was number one, to expose Travis to a new way of touring, a new culture. And to establish that there was interest. Since we've returned (to the States), I've seen in every single country a spike in record sales. It's not huge, but it's enough to demonstrate to me that these are markets that are worth our time to go back and work.

CU: *Did you have enough time?*

FALCON: For the first time, yes. I'd like to next time spend maybe another week - we spent two - and I think three would be better, so we could travel a little slower and enjoy the countries that we're touring through.

CU: *So you're definitely planning to go back?*

FALCON: We're talking about next spring. Travis

told me on the way home on the airplane that he had a very, very good time and to go ahead and start looking at next spring to go back.

CU: *It couldn't have all been perfect. Give me some examples of things for fellow managers and artists to look out for or of problems that came up.*

FALCON: I think one of the main things I learned about taking an artist over there with promoters who are not extremely well-known over here is that the deals should all be monetary with airfares and hotels all being considered in the price of the act. And then, have the individual acts book their own hotels, their own limo transportation, book their own air flights.

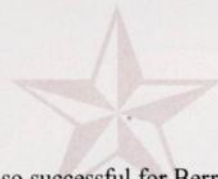
CU: *Instead of having the promoter do it?*

FALCON: Exactly. Because I think the promoter may have his own best interests at heart, which is to save as much money as he can and not necessarily take into consideration the particular needs of the artists. That was one thing that I definitely learned - do it yourself.

And also to work directly with the promoters as opposed to using outside sources to help with that. I think working directly with the promoters will lessen the communication gap, which is already there.

CU: *From your perspective, and if you can speak for Travis, why was this such a good experience? What is it that makes it worthwhile?*

COUNTRY MUSIC DOWN UNDER



Several top Australian Country artists are planning showcases in Nashville during Fan Fair week. The artists, along with numerous Australian music industry executives, will participate in a special seminar at Warner/Reprise, followed by a lunch hosted by CMA and a reception presented by NSAI.

Two of the artists who will be attending, Troy Cassar-Daley and Lee Kernaghan, have been invited to perform at a benefit for the American Red Cross on June 13 at the Wild Horse Saloon. John Berry, who is hosting the benefit, invited the artists after meeting them during his recent trip to Australia. Berry performed with the two artists during two music festivals in the outback of New South Wales. The festivals as well as a pro-

motional showcase in Sydney were so successful for Berry that his management is planning another trip to Australia next year, said BeBe Evans.

Dwight Yoakam recently returned from his first tour of Australia, selling out dates in Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney and Newcastle. Yoakam's first show in Sydney sold out in 15 minutes, so another date was added. *GONE*, Yoakam's latest Warner/Reprise album, made the top 20 on Australia's national album chart.

"Hot Country Dancin'", the award-winning instructional dance videos, will be distributed in Australia by PolyGram Video. The four-volume collection was produced and distributed in the U.S. by Reel Productions, Inc.

FALCON: It really was about the response from the audience. In every country, without exception, the audience's response was much greater than our expectations. The fear of going over after establishing such a strong career here in the States is that maybe you fill a small venue, but how will they accept you? Will they relate to Country lyrics that are about everyday life in the life of a boy from Marietta, Georgia? And they did.

Even in Germany - where I'm told they're probably the most reserved and if they're having a good

packed. The whole concept was to fill up a small nightclub and let people talk about it and let the word filter out. We could have done a place four times the size with the demand we had. But I think this way, the word gets out on the street about what a great show it was and how intimate it felt. Next time we'll go larger.

CU: *How important was the advance publicity trip?*

FALCON: It was immeasurably valuable. Absolutely. It's a hard thing to get an artist to understand the concept of schlepping all the way over to Europe six weeks in advance. But, for instance, I went out in Zurich to try to find some of Travis' records. I like to see how they're positioned in the stores in Europe, and I did that in every country. But in Switzerland, we did such a good job of publicity, at first I thought because I could not find the record that the record company wasn't doing a good job stocking. But then when I talked to some of the stores owners, I found out that they had sold out of Travis in the weeks since the promotion.

CU: *Anything else that you want to add?*

FALCON: The only thing I can say to other managers and artists is that I'm already seeing the results of this first attempt at breaking Europe. I believe that there's absolutely a market for Country Music over there. We saw evidence in every single country that we went to. It's worth the time and the energy.

"I've seen in every single country a spike in record sales."

time, they're clapping politely - they were out of their seats and making noises that sounded a whole lot like screaming.

The response of the audience everywhere really made the trip worth going.

CU: *What about the size of the venues? Next time would you go for larger or smaller?*

FALCON: I think in some countries we would go larger. For instance, in England, we sold out the 2,200-seat theater six weeks in advance. I would probably want to go just a little bit larger to maybe a 5,000-seat hall and just do one night.

In Ireland, we chose on purpose a small nightclub that only held a thousand people. It was jam-

JCMA HAS NEW ADDRESS

•

The Japan

Country Music Association

has moved its office to

Akasaka Central Mansion

511, 9-2-13

Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo #107.

The phone number is

+81-3-3796-6730.

The fax is

+81-3-3796-2952.



MEET THE FANS

As Fan Fair celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, we thought you'd like to meet some of the folks who have been regular visitors to the annual event.

Cathy Larson

Cathy, who currently lives in San Jose, California, has attended four Fan Fairs ('87, '88, '89 & '95). She describes what the Fan Fair week in Nashville means to her.



"I first heard about Fan Fair through my mother, who started coming in the early '80s. She told me about the wonderful fan club parties, the new artists, the autograph sessions, the food and the new friends. She did forget to tell me about the hot and sticky weather and the long lines!

"Every year does have its own personality. You may have mud puddles and downpours one year and muggy, scorching heat the next year. People share little portable fans or umbrellas. It's friendly. Nobody gets hostile. Nobody pushes or shoves too bad. Fighting the crowd is like getting together with relatives that you want to see - just once a year, not everyday.

"You get friends out of Fan Fair. You're standing there in line for hours and hours to meet a star, and you get to know the people in the front of you and the people in back of you. You trade addresses and end up having good times with friends that you met in the lines. People share stories and visit while in the lines

"I also think it's not just the music of Fan Fair but the personality of the stars. You get to watch how they treat their fans. You get to watch them interact with people, and you get a better sense of who they are as real people. Country Music performers treat their fans

better than any other kind of music. At Fan Fair, you get to see who they are inside, not just the music that they play."

Mel & Constance Wohler

Mel and Constance live 150 miles northwest of Minneapolis in Morris, Minnesota. They both are semi-retired and have attended 15 Fan Fairs. Constance recalls some of their favorite Fan Fair favorite memories.



"We were inspired to go by our friend, entertainer Sherwin Linton from Minnesota, who had an award-winning booth at Fan Fair the previous year. He told us that if we love Country Music like he knew we did, it was the closest thing to hillbilly heaven. Our first trip was oohs and aahs because we couldn't believe we were really there. It was pretty awesome. All these famous stars were at the booths - Ernest Tubb, Marty Robbins, the roots of Country Music.

"To be able to talk with them and get your picture taken with them was so wonderful. We later became involved with Sherwin's fan club. There was quite a difference between going to Fan Fair as a fan and going to man a booth! In 1983, our husbands couldn't make the trip down. We didn't know how we were going to get Sherwin's booth to Fan Fair from Minnesota, so our husbands took a boat trailer and mounted the booth to it. And off we went - six ladies on the road to Tennessee pulling an orange tarp covered booth on a boat trailer with a sign on the back that read NASHVILLE OR BUST.

"Well, we made it to Fan Fair, but the adventure wasn't over. After attending a late show at the Opryland Hotel, we got back on the freeway about 1 a.m. to head back to our hotel. The car stopped and wouldn't run. We looked at each other not knowing what to do. We had to take a cab back to the hotel and leave the car on the side of the road. The next morning we had a tow truck pull the car to the station garage to see what was wrong. How embarrassing...In the excitement of Fan Fair, we had simply run out of gas!"

Dianne McGuire

Dianne lives in St. Louis, Missouri and has come to every Fan Fair since 1984. An active member in various fan club organizations, Dianne shares what Fan Fair means to her each year.



"My first Fan Fair was a shock to me. I didn't know

what to expect, and the crowds really surprised me. Of course it is even more crowded today, but that's part of it, and I've met a lot of nice people. I think that's what means the most to me is all the people I have met. I mean the other fans that are there to have fun just like you. Total strangers become good friends.

"I always wanted to meet Barbara Mandrell. For years I came close but never got to meet her until a few years ago. Now she remembers me every year, and that's something special to me. People waiting in the lines understand what I mean. I waited in line over eight hours to meet Barbara. I didn't make any big deal of it 'cause the people in the front of me and the back of me waited just as long. That's a long time, but like I said, it's worth the wait once you finally get your turn. You forget all the hours you waited to get there."

Joe & Helen Marino

Joe and Helen Marino, from Boardman, Ohio, have been making the trip to Nashville and Fan Fair for several years and even get "paid" to come here. Joe is a charter tour bus driver, and Helen is a tour escort for Anderson Tours of Greenville, Pennsylvania. Taking charge of a busload of vacationers can be uncompromising, however, Helen has a special fondness for Fan Fair bound charters.

"It seems like we get many of the same people that go back year after year. We know who their favorite entertainers are and what fan clubs they're in. There seems to be a general consciousness that certain aspects of Fan Fair, like the weather and the crowds, add to overall personality of the event. We take tours to New England and other parts of America, and each person on the bus is looking for something different - whether history, culture or geography. The people on our Fan Fair Express all have a common bond and are all headed for the exact same destination. They all will get a unique experience.

"The fans are very dedicated to Fan Fair. We'll have people on our tour wait six or seven hours and not think anything of it. The weather can be a factor, and we try to let our new Fan Fair trip members know that Nashville's summers can be grueling. I encourage people to use lots of sunscreen because it is always very hot.

"I personally wasn't a Country Music fan until I started taking groups to Fan Fair. You get caught up in it. You can't help it. The bond between the artist and the fan is special, and you see it. The Fan Fair trip is the only trip that my husband and I request to take. In this business, you normally just get assigned tours. With Fan Fair, it's the only one that we ask and hope to get to escort. Being with that bus group to Fan Fair every year is like old home week for us."

James & Virginia Hockmeyer

James and Virginia Hockmeyer from St. Charles, Missouri, have been to the past 15 Fan Fair celebrations. Virginia explains her very practical approach to this annual June tradition..

"I really didn't know what Fan Fair was like and wanted to see for

myself. Once we got here the first time, I really fell in love with it, especially the shows. So many concerts everyday, at one place, at one time.

"In the 15 years we've been coming, of course Fan Fair is more crowded but look at the number of fans listening to Country Music today. Look at the age range from teenagers to retired folks who are fans and look at all the people trying to become stars. You can see this growth by just looking at Fan Fair. The pushing, shoving and waiting in line at Fan Fair just makes you a tougher fan! And just the excitement of the stars when they're coming in or out of booths through the crowd - it's a great energy.

"I personally have enjoyed seeing Reba, Garth, Billy Ray and all of Country's big stars at Fan Fair. The time they give the fans makes you respect them and like them so much more than just people with songs on a radio. Fan Fair makes these stars human. You meet their families and see that they're just like everybody else - except their houses are bigger!"

Bill & Susan Sark

Bill and Susan Sark, from Stoutsville, Ohio, found out about Fan Fair while honeymooning in Nashville. Since their first Fan Fair attendance, they haven't missed a year. Susan explains how they've become avid Fan Fair veterans.



"We started coming to Fan Fair in '83, and we were really amazed our first time. We could not have imagined all the displays, the music and the stars in one place. It was beyond our expectations - to be right there with the stars and to spend time with them. At Fan Fair, you get to talk with them, share opinions, get your picture with them and meet them one-on-one. It took some time getting used to the constant crowds, the limited schedules of entertainers and the amount of things to do. We do have friends that we sit with at the show every year and spend time with while we're there so it has been really nice.

"I like it during the shows when the entertainers bring out gold records, talk about awards and share comments to the fans that they might not do otherwise. It's like you know the star when they talk to you. You really feel connected watching the performers. It's hard to describe that feeling sitting in the stands during the Fan Fair shows but it really is nice."

- Hugh Waddell



BEHIND THE BOOTHS

Ever wonder about the folks found behind the booths of your favorite Country singer? Let's meet some Fan Fair veterans!

Leroy Van Dyke

Leroy Van Dyke has been in the Country Music business for 40 years, having recorded such classic hits as "Walk On By" and "The Auctioneer". He and his wife Gladys, who have had a Fan Fair booth for over 10 years, share their unique respect and approach to Fan Fair.

"Every time I think of Fan Fair, I recall when it was just in the embryonic stages," says Leroy. "I was on the board of CMA, and every fall we would have a disc jockey convention where radio got together with the entertainers and songwriters making the music. The word got out about this convention, and the fans could not be kept away. This gave rise to the idea of Fan Fair."

"When we open our booth every year, Leroy is there at the beginning and at the end," Gladys explains. "We don't subscribe to the thinking of showing up to sign for an hour a day with people waiting for hours and hours to meet us. The reason you don't see many lines at our booth is because we're there the entire time. Our fans know this and come see us when it's convenient for them during the entire run of Fan Fair."

"I make myself available to anyone without showing any favoritism to anybody," Leroy promises. "Our booth has pretty much stayed the same from year to year with slight differences. We discovered several years ago that what my dad said was true in that if you want something done right, do it yourself. We have found that we can take better care of our business as it relates to the fans so our booth is staffed by just my family. It's not paid help. No managers or agents. It's a family affair."

"People will come near asking me more questions than they would Leroy about his career, and we have developed friendships this way at Fan Fair," says Gladys. "Year after year, they have come to know our family. Fan Fair

for us is almost like a huge family reunion! We don't herd people through. As long as they want to talk with Leroy, they can."

"But there is a certain amount of importance of Fan Fair to the new acts that the fans have not yet met," Leroy adds. "Once the fans meet a young act and like him/her, they become a permanent base of fans for that act. And will be for life. Fan Fair is a very important concept because we come to the fans. They're going to be here for the entire week so we come to them to show that we do feel the bond between the artist and the fan. It's a very stressful week for both. The hours are grueling, and the weather is hot, but obviously everyone including entertainers and fans keep doing it and keep coming back. Thank God they do!"



Cyndi Benavedes (Wynonna)

Cyndi Benavedes works for Judd House and handles numerous responsibilities relative to Wynonna's fans. Cyndi explains Wynonna's "hands on" approach to the Wynonna Fan Fair booth.

"1993 was my first Fan Fair, and it was the first year for Wynonna to have

a personal booth to support her solo album and career. The Judds had always participated with Fan Fair since the late '80s and haven't missed one yet! Fan Fair is important to the fans, but it is also very important to Wynonna. Even though the booth is Wynonna's, of course, Naomi is a part of it.

"We really put a whole lot of effort in the preparation of our booth. I start the preparation in January when I get on the phone and talk with Wynonna, throwing themes around. What does this theme look like in this concept? We'll go back and forth, and around March or April we'll start calling different companies getting their ideas based on the themes that Wynonna has selected. I'll sit with Wynonna with the sketches, and we decide how we want the booth for that year.

"I think the thing that makes Wynonna so special and so loved by her fans is that she's there every step of the way. She demands to be involved in the color schemes, the fabrics, the building materials, the artwork, the images, the installation. She is very hands-on, and she has a good eye. She knows what she wants, and I think she understands what her fans expect of her. She will go to any length to make sure she delivers. She considers the fans an extension of her family."

Anita O'Brien (George Strait)

New Jersey native Anita O'Brien, a former schoolteacher, has worked for George Strait's fan club since 1984. She has seen this organization grow from 175 members in the mid-'80s to become one of the largest Country Music fan clubs in the world. Even though George has been absent from Fan Fair for the past few years, Anita knows the importance of the event.

"Our first Fan Fair booth went up in 1984, and my brother built the booth for George. He did a great job and used screws instead of nails. It was very solid. We now have a company that puts our booth up. In January, I go to them to discuss our display themes. As this year is our 15th (fan club) anniversary, we came up with a cake theme to celebrate.

"Fan Fair is fun for us because we can get away from the telephone and the mail and meet the fans in person, face-to-face. We have a large group from Australia coming to town for Fan Fair this year and afterwards, they'll catch George's concert in Dallas before they head back home. We become friends with the fans in our fan club. That's what really neat. To be able to hug old friends, shake hands and feel the warmth of fellow George Strait fans.

"We look forward to Fan Fair every year. It's not like, 'Oh no! Here it comes!'

We never have that kind of attitude. In our booth, we may sign up anywhere from 150 to 400 new members a year during Fan Fair week. My daughter, Darcy, has come to Fan Fair every year, and fans look for her. Back in 1987, I was expecting with her at the exact time of Fan Fair. George and all of us were in the booth the first time I felt my baby girl move. Here was the excitement of another new George Strait fan coming into the fold!"



Willie Wilson (Marty Stuart)

In 1992, Willie Wilson came to Nashville from Dallas, Texas to study the music business at Belmont University. Working part time with Marty's fan club since '93, Willie graduated this past December and is now a full time employee at Marty Stuart's office. Willie shares the joy of his new music business career.

"At Fan Fair, we've got a booth that we've had for two years, and each year we change the artwork to reflect the upcoming or latest album. With a new album coming out in mid-June, we are gearing up for the release with new merchandise and a banner of the album cover that Marty will use for photo opportunities with fans. Just getting all the new merchandise ready for Fan Fair has been a task. From ball caps and t-shirts to bandannas and magnets, all of this stuff has to be planned out, ordered and stocked in time for the fans.

"We'll have lots of fun in our booth this year. In addition to the times Marty will be there signing, Marty's band, The Rock and Roll Cowboys, will be there on one of the days. Marty's sister, Jennifer, is going to come in and help us. Preparing our booth has taken up so many hours of preparation - it's worth it when you see the smiles on the faces of Marty's fans at Fan Fair. We're excited for it to get started because to know Marty's fans is to know Marty." **CU**

- Hugh Waddell

AWARDS

Tim McGraw and Shania Twain roped in awards at the **Country Dance Music Awards** held at the Wildhorse Saloon in Nashville, TN. McGraw's "I Like It, I Love It" was voted Favorite Dance Song of 1995 and Favorite Extended Country Dance Remix of 1995. Twain's **THE WOMAN IN ME** was voted Favorite Dance Album of 1995. Favorite New Dance Step of 1995 went to Jeff Moore's "Fever".



Trifecta Entertainment was honored as 1996 Small Business of the Year at the **Ninth Annual Small Business Awards**, sponsored by the **NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL** in conjunction with the **Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce** and the **Owen Graduate School of Management at Vanderbilt University**. Trifecta, an entertainment marketing and public relations firm formed in 1993, boasts a diversified roster of clients including **Fruit of the Loom**, **Naomi Judd**, **George Dickel Tennessee Whisky**, **John Berry** and **Emilio**.

MEDIA

Lee Roy Parnell and Brent Mason are spotlighted on new video releases from **Hot Licks Productions**. Parnell displays his masterful skill on acoustic and electric slide guitar in "The Art of Slide Guitar", while Mason demonstrates his lead guitar playing in "Nashville Chops and Western Swing Guitar". For more information, contact Hot Lick Productions at P.O. Box 337, Pound Ridge, NY 10576; phone (914) 763-8013; fax (914) 763-9453; e-mail: hotlicks@ix.netcom.com.



Arista's Linda Davis uses some "off time" to meet fans during one in a series of national retail visits.

Dwight Yoakam stars as a bull-fighter in the **Americana Images'** action/suspense thriller "Painted Hero". The movie, released in theatrical markets earlier this year, is scheduled for home video release through **Cabin Fever Entertainment** on June 25.



Victoria Shaw and composer/pianist Earl Rose have written "All For The Sake Of Love", a song for CBS-TV's **As The World Turns**. The song, recorded by Shaw, will be heard regularly on the daily soap beginning in May.



BILLBOARD magazine is now available through the Internet as **BILLBOARD Online** at <http://www.billboard-online.com>. The service will allow the browser to access current issues of the trade as well as search the archives for particular articles. For more information call (800) 449-1402 or e-mail: info@billboard-online.com.



Westwood One Radio Networks announced new radio prep services for its affiliates. Services

include show prep faxed each weekday, daily audio cut service and morning drive satellite press tours. **Andrea Dresdale**, previously of SW Networks, will oversee the new services. For more information, call (212) 641-2000; fax (212) 641-0393.

NEW COMPANIES

Associated Talent, Inc., led by **Eddie Rhines**, is a full-service management, booking and public relations company. The current roster is comprised of **Confederate Railroad**, **Chely Wright**, **Don Cox** and **Branscombe Richmond**. Other staff members include agents **Jeff Norris** and **Tracy Jones**, publicist **Rachel Hartline**, office manager **Sherry Hohimer** and assistant to the president **Shelly Collins**. The office is located at 118 16th Avenue South, Suite 201, Nashville, TN 37203; phone (615) 254-8600; fax (615) 254-8667.



Doug Walker has left **McFadden & Associates** to form **Maverick Management**. The company's clients include **Charles Allen** and



Lari White and director Michael Salomon take a break while filming White's current RCA video, "Wild At Heart". The two-some paired up to shoot the clip at the abandoned Middle Tennessee Mental Hospital.

Patsy Cline, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Cowboy Copas and manager Randy Hughes will be remembered in a July 4-6 weekend celebration in Camden, TN, near the site of their fatal plane crash in 1963. Opry stars **Little Jimmy Dickens, Jean Shepard, Kitty Wells** and Cline's daughter **Julie Fudge** are scheduled to appear. For more information, contact Amy Barrett at the Benton/Camden Chamber of Commerce at (901) 584-8395; fax (901) 584-5544.



ASCAP is now offering its members the option of participating in a credit union, which also includes several other banking services as well. This first-time benefit for any U.S. performing rights organization, has features such as direct deposit and personal loans. ASCAP has made an agreement with the **IAG Federal Credit Union** to supply its members with these services.



Mandy Barnett and Bobbie Cryner kicked off the **Wal-Mart Country Music Across America Tour** on May 4 with a free concert in Franklin, TN. The tour is designed to accelerate the career development of Country Music's newcomers and provide retail support for well-established acts. Some confirmed artists participating in the tour are **Wade Hayes, Joe Diffie, Bryan White, Rick Trevino, Ricochet and M.C. Potts**.



Naomi Judd kicked off the 22nd **Annual Great American Music Festival** at Silver Dollar City in Branson, MO on May 31. **Ricky Skaggs and Chet Atkins** will also appear at the festival, which continues through June 16.



Faith Hill has launched a worldwide literacy campaign, **The Faith Hill Family Literacy Project**, with help from Time Warner companies, the American Library

Jason Roos. Maverick Management is located at 9 Music Square South, Suite 262, Nashville, TN 37203; (615) 746-4228.



Peg Trobec heads up the new Nashville based concert promotion company, **Jam Nashville** in association with **Jam Productions** of Chicago. Trobec has been involved in concert promotion for the past five years and will focus her efforts on buying and promoting country music nationally. **Jam Nashville** can be reached at P.O. Box 656, Antioch, TN 37011; (615) 731-4613.

NEWSLINE

Ty England has been named spokesperson for the **National FFA Alumni Association**, which boasts a membership of 40,000.



Jerry Clower has signed on as commercial spokesperson for **Charm Pederma Footbath Treatment**. Clower will tape national radio spots, included on the **Grand Ole Opry**, which will begin airing next month.



Association and several other organizations. The project will include Hill in public service announcements, which can also be seen on her website through Warner Bros. For more information, call (212) 484-6404; fax (212) 484-6417; or <http://www.wbr.com>.



Corlew O'Grady Management has moved to 1102 18th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212; (615) 329-1102; fax (615) 329-1103.



Hamstein Cumberland Music Group (formerly Stroudavarious and Great Cumberland Music) and parent company **Hamstein Music Group** have moved to 914 18th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212; (615) 320-9971. Hamstein Cumberland's fax is (615) 322-9288; Hamstein Music's fax is (615) 320-7835.

ON THE MOVE

Eddie Reeves has been promoted to executive vice president/general manager of **Warner/Reprise Nashville**. Reeves, previously senior vice president/general manager, will manage the daily Country operation at Warner/Reprise Nashville.



AVI Entertainment Group Inc. announced the closing of its Nashville Music Publishing office and the sale of the Nashville-based publishing operation to **Merlin Littlefield**, AVI's former vice president/general manager. AVI's 8,000 title library of master recordings includes the historic Nashboro and Excello Records catalogs.



Sandy Neese has been named senior vice president/media relations for **Mercury Nashville**. Neese, formerly vice president/communications, will continue to handle the label's corporate public rela-



New mom Katie Haas gives MCA honky-tonker Marty Stuart a lesson in changing diapers during a recent edition of "Prime Time Country".

tions and oversee all artists' publicity activities.



David Renzer has been appointed president of **MCA Music Publishing Worldwide**. Renzer, previously with Zomba Publishing, will oversee the worldwide activities for the company.



Alison Smith has been named vice president, performing rights at BMI in the New York office. Smith, who has been with BMI since 1985, will continue in BMI's royalty systems and assist music publishers and composers in research and distribution. **Ann Booth** has been appointed to vice president, executive administration and special projects. Booth, who has been with the company since 1983, will continue to assist the president in daily administrative functions.



Katie Gillon has been promoted to senior vice president of production and creative services at **MCA Records/Nashville**. Gillon, who has been with the label for 17 years, was formerly vice president of

production and creative services. She will continue to be responsible for the scheduling, manufacturing and packaging of all product for both MCA Records / Nashville and Decca Records.



Cynthia Grimson has joined the staff of **Almo Sounds** as head of marketing & product development. She was most recently with A&M Nashville and was previously with Mercury Nashville.



Mike Sistad has been promoted to manager of A&R for **Arista/Nashville**. He was previously coordinator of A&R. **Kerri Pauley**, formerly A&R assistant, has been promoted to A&R coordinator.



Bob Gabrielsen has joined the roster of video directors at **The Collective**. Gabrielsen, 1986 graduate of the USC Film School, won an Academy Award for Best Dramatic Short for his first independent film, "Poppy". He has directed music videos for **Marty Stuart**, **Steve Wariner** and **Don Williams**, among others.

◆ ◆ ◆
Pamela Pribble has been promoted to executive vice president and named as a member of the board of directors for **Triangle Talent**. **Eric Wiegel**, who has been with the company for four years, has been promoted to vice president. **Bob Brickley**, with Triangle Talent for over eight years, has been promoted to vice president.

◆ ◆ ◆
Eric Beggs has been appointed to mid-Atlantic regional promotion manager for **RCA Records**. Beggs was formerly Southeast regional director of promotion at Capitol Nashville.

◆ ◆ ◆
Nancy Richmond has been promoted to director, regional Country promotion/Southwest and **Clint Marsh** to regional Country promotion manager/Midwest for **Columbia Records Nashville**. Richmond was previously Southwest regional promotion manager, and Marsh was formerly program director for **WIXY**.

◆ ◆ ◆
Michael Eck has been promoted to vice president, information systems for **SESAC**. Eck, previously director of information systems for the company, will retain his responsibilities of overseeing the daily operations of the department.

◆ ◆ ◆
John Pence has been named president of **Speer Merchandising**, a division of **Speer Communications, Ltd.** Pence, previously of Home Shopping Network Mail Order, Inc., will develop and procure quality merchandise through volume purchasing relationships.

◆ ◆ ◆
Gary Greenberg, Robin Lightner, Matt Corbin, Shari Reinschreiber, Rosie Fitchpatrick and Michelle

Goldsworthy have joined the staff of **Rising Tide Entertainment**. **Greenberg** signs on as West Coast regional promotion manager; **Lightner** joins the staff as Southeast regional promotion manager; **Corbin** has been named Midwest regional promotion manager; **Reinschreiber** serves as Northeast regional promotion manager; **Fitchpatrick** is Southwest regional promotion manager; and **Goldsworthy** is promotions coordinator.

◆ ◆ ◆
David Felker has been promoted to program director for **Hot Country** and **Mainstream Country**, two of **Westwood One Radio Networks'** 24-hour formats.

◆ ◆ ◆
Shannon Parks has joined the **MJI Broadcasting** team as the Nashville correspondent. Parks has written for the *Nashville Banner* and **COUNTRY WEEKLY**.

◆ ◆ ◆
Darla Roll has joined forces with

the **A.V. Squad** as creative services producer, representing director **John Lloyd Miller** and producer **Selby Miller** for commercials, music videos, television and long-form projects. Roll also serves as creative services manager and songplugger/executive producer for **Makin' Pictures**.

◆ ◆ ◆
Jennifer Mckinney has been promoted to senior commercial banking representative within the music industry division for **First American National Bank** in Nashville.

◆ ◆ ◆
Tony Baylis has been appointed executive vice president and chief operating officer for the newly renamed **Balmur Entertainment**. Baylis, formerly with John Labatt Entertainment Group, will be responsible for both the Toronto and Nashville offices.

◆ ◆ ◆
Keene Garrett, formerly president of **Keene & Co.**, has joined **Pecos**



Magnatone artist Rich McCready gets some tips from director Thom Oliphant during filming of "Thinkin' Strait".

Films as executive producer, bringing with her four directors she currently represents. **Michael McNamara**, who produced and directed the television music series "The Road"; **D.J. Webster**, who has worked with such artists as **Stevie Ray Vaughn** and **Pam Tillis**; **Lynn Spinnato**, executive producer/director for music videos by the **Stone Temple Pilots** and **Collective Soul**; and **Jayne Rogovin**, who assisted in the production of the **Nashville Music Awards** show.



MOR Music TV's "That's Country" has named **Katrina Owens** as the primary host of the music shopping network program. Owens, previously a host of the Home Shopping Network in Tampa, FL, will also host special editions of "That's Country" called "Artist's Choice", which will feature a guest Country Music artist.

Jim Roach has been named vice president of **New England Country Music Festivals**. The company, based in Windham, NH, promotes shows in the New England states and Maritime Canada.

SIGNINGS

MUSIC PUBLISHING: Dawn Thomas to Hamstein Music...**Jeff Huskins**, **Billy Falcon**, **Brian McComas** and **Robert Vega** to PolyGram Music Publishing...**Gordon Kennedy** and **Cris Moore** have re-signed with PolyGram Music Publishing...**Templeton Thompson** to a joint venture with **Bizzy Music** and **MCA Music**...**Brett James** to **EMI Music Publishing Nashville**...**Jerry Dale McFadden** to **Monk Family Music Group, Inc.**...**RECORDING:** **Doyle Dykes** to **Step One Records**...**Johnny Rodriguez** to **HighTone Records**...**MANAGEMENT:** **Alyssa Owen** to **Stoney Lonesome Music**...**Eddie Rabbitt** to **The Brokaw Company**...**Cledus T. Judd** to **Williams Bell & Assoc.**...**BOOKING:** **Mel McDaniel** to **Joe Taylor Artist**

Agency...PUBLICITY: **Vince Gill** to **Alison Auerbach Public Relations**.

VIDEO

Dwight Yoakam directed his latest Reprise video, "Sorry You Asked", which was shot on location at a roller rink in California's San Gabriel Valley. The clip begins with a dramatic short co-starring veteran actors **Harry Dean Stanton** and **Bo Hopkins**. For his part, Yoakam takes a turn singing and playing mariachi trumpet, expressively underscoring the sad comedy in this tune about a shattered romance.



Neal McCoy shot his latest music video, "You Can Tell Me Goodbye", near the Knick Glacier by Anchorage, AK. The **Atlantic Records** artist worked with **Think Pictures** director **Martin Kahan** to film the clip.



Bobbie Cryner and **A.V. Squad** director **John Lloyd Miller** teamed up again to film the **MCA** artist's latest video, "I Didn't Know My Own Strength" at Nashville's 328 Performance Hall.



Ricochet's debut video portrays the impact of a live performance with their **Columbia Records** single, "Daddy's Money". **Marc Ball** directed the clip for **Scene Three**, with the help of a crowd of enthusiastic fans at a club in St. Louis.



Steven Craig Harding's debut video spotlights his **Dur Music's** single, "Tonight My Heart", which utilizes rodeo action in the arena and behind-the-scenes. **Producer Dee Butler** shot the clip in

the **Calsonic Arena** in **Shelbyville, TN** for **Scene Three**



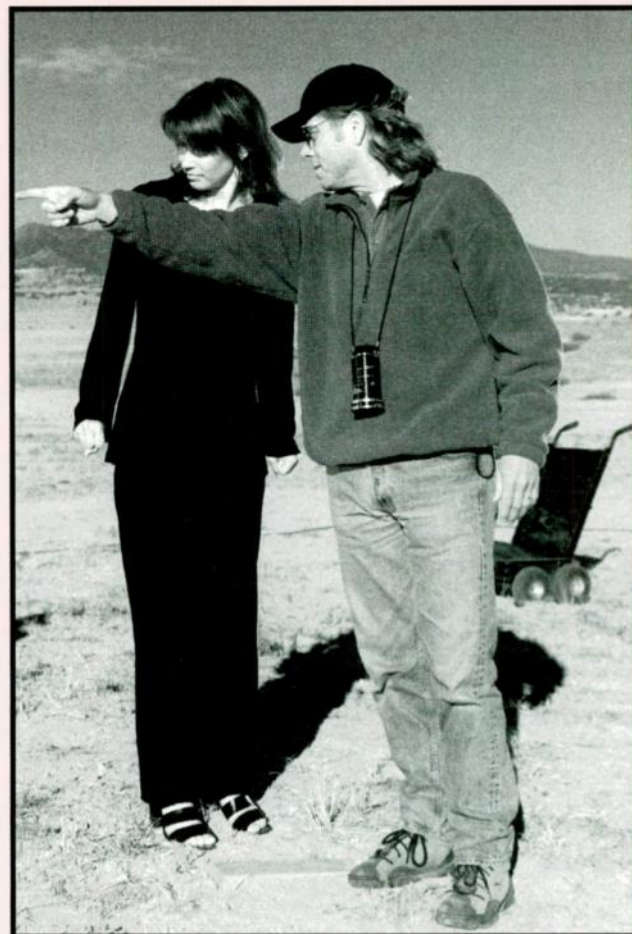
Steve Azar recently completed filming his second **River North Nashville** video, "I Never Stopped Lovin' You". Director **Chris Rogers** utilized numerous downtown Nashville locations for the clip. **Hunter Hodge** produced for **Pecos Films**.



THANKS!

CMA thanks the following members who recently recruited new members:

John Alexander, Brenna Davenport-Leigh, Dene Hallam, Dan Halyburton, Jim Hester, Sammy Kershaw, Eddie Reeves, Bud Schaetzle, Harold Shedd and Judi Turner



Lisa Brokop gets some pointers from director Michael Merriman while filming her latest clip, "West Of Crazy". The Capitol Nashville video was shot on location in Stanley, New Mexico. Lisa Lethcoe produced for Pecos Films.

BACK·TO·BACK

It's a Friday in mid-May, and Linda Davis is preparing to go to Detroit for a show. She's gotten a break from her touring schedule singing backup for Reba McEntire and will be performing her own material. Her second Arista lp, *SOME THINGS ARE MEANT TO BE*, already has yielded a top 10 single with the title cut. Her current single, "Love Story In The Making", is climbing the charts. The Texas native says she had a specific reason for choosing "Some Things Are Meant To Be" as the title cut.

"When I chose that title, I believed there was a correlation between that title and my career. Everyone that's followed me for a while knows that it hasn't been an overnight thing. I've always known this is what I was born to do. Thank goodness the great people that I'm associated with now have come into my life to give me direction and take me to the next level."

One of the most crucial points of putting the new album together for Linda was the song selection process.

"There was a team helping me find songs for the album. The A & R department over at Arista helped me, and my manager Narvel Blackstock hired someone to help find songs. I called on my writer and publisher friends too. With everybody looking and listening, after about nine months, we found 10 songs.

"A lot of these songs have a real special place in my heart. One of them is called 'Either One Of Us', which was a song that I used to do in the piano bars. Of course I learned it from Gladys Knight. That's where most people have heard it before. I wanted to make sure and keep it Country, because that's who I am. I'm not an R & B artist. I didn't want to do a vanilla job of an R & B song.

"I got the guys gathered around me in the studio and told them I wanted to play something for them. They stood around me and listened to me play and sing it. Then they played it on their instruments, and it was even better than I had heard it in my head. They made it Country and made it me. Until I heard it and knew it was right, I wouldn't have put it on the album."

Linda is a firm believer in making career decisions when she feels the timing is right.

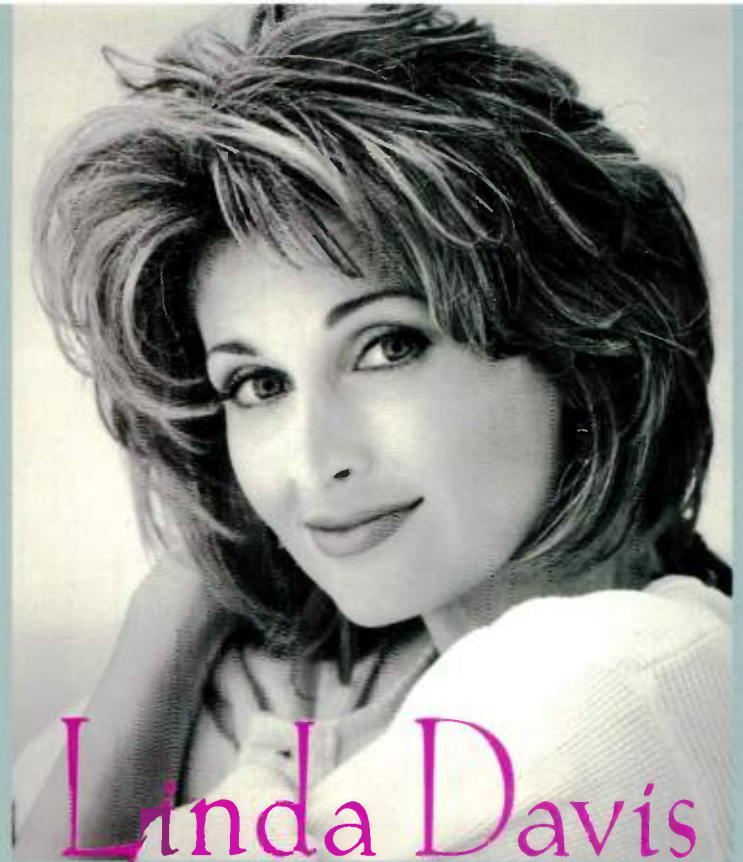
"I don't take success for granted, and I don't expect it to be here forever. That's why while I'm living this dream, I'm trying to make the best decisions and really make it last as long as it's supposed to. I don't want to be frivolous with opportunity. I think the time that it's taken and the seasoning I've gotten have helped me be more particular and not fly by the seat of my pants.

"However, some doors that open come out of the blue. As much as you can prepare, you're never prepared for everything. I never dreamed that success would come in the form of a duet with Reba. I'm always thinking ahead and trying to plan, but sometimes things fall out of the sky from heaven. There are no by-chance things in my life."

Along with her career, Linda's family is top priority in her life. Her husband Lang Scott also travels with Reba McEntire as part of

"I don't want to be frivolous with opportunity."

"There are no by-chance things in my life."



her band. Linda and Lang have a 10-year-old daughter named Hillary. According to Linda, she and Lang have found a way to balance their careers with the demands of having a child.

"Hillary is so understanding about it. We have real heart-to-heart talks about it. This year Lang and I have the bus that we ride on, and it will make things even better for her to go with us because she'll have her own bunk.

"I've explained to her that the reason that we are working so hard is because we want to have more choices in our life regarding her being with us and regarding the quality of life that we can have and the decisions that we can make."

Linda also has enjoyed sharing her success with other family and friends.

"It's more fun when you share it. I still get phone calls from people back home who I have crossed paths with through this little journey. They'll tell me that they bought the cd or watched us on television. It's just so fun to have folks that you know love you for you and are so proud to see things coming around. I can't imagine having opportunities and success and nobody to re-live some of the hard times with."

With that said, Linda knows that many people find it tough to compete among the ever-growing challenges of a musical career. But her philosophy for keeping her enthusiasm is very simple.

"You have to persevere and never lose the faith. We're always trying to get better, trying to be more aware of our business and learn. We're trying to find people of integrity to surround ourselves with. Find happiness in now. Don't be happy for what might be or what you want to happen because we're not in control of that." **CU**

-Mandy Wilson

Lee Greenwood Theatre Opens

Superstar Lee Greenwood has opened his own theater in Sevierville, Tennessee. The 1,780-seat, state-of-the-art facility opened in early April with a special debut attended by former President George Bush and his wife, Barbara, longtime friends of Greenwood.

The venue kicked off its 1996 season with over 40 shows sold-out before the theater opened. Greenwood will perform more than 250 shows this season. "Doing the show in the same theater each night will allow me to put a lot more into it," Greenwood said. "Lighting, staging, special effects and a state-of-the-art sound system will make it a bigger and better spectacle than I've ever been able to carry on the road. I'm finally going to have a chance to try new things and challenge myself."

The Lee Greenwood Theater is the first element of an entertainment complex located at River Bluff Landing. Upon its completion, the 295-acre development will boast a four-star hotel, themed restaurants, shopping facilities, family entertainment areas and an aquarium.



Loretta Lynn Honored

Country legend Loretta Lynn will be honored with the Kentuckian Award during the A.B. Happy Chandler Foundation's Annual Dinner and Awards Banquet on July 27th at Marriott's Griffin Gate Resort in Lexington, Kentucky. The award recognizes outstanding Kentucky natives for their achievements.

A native of Butcher Hollow, Kentucky, Lynn's entertainment career spans 35 years.

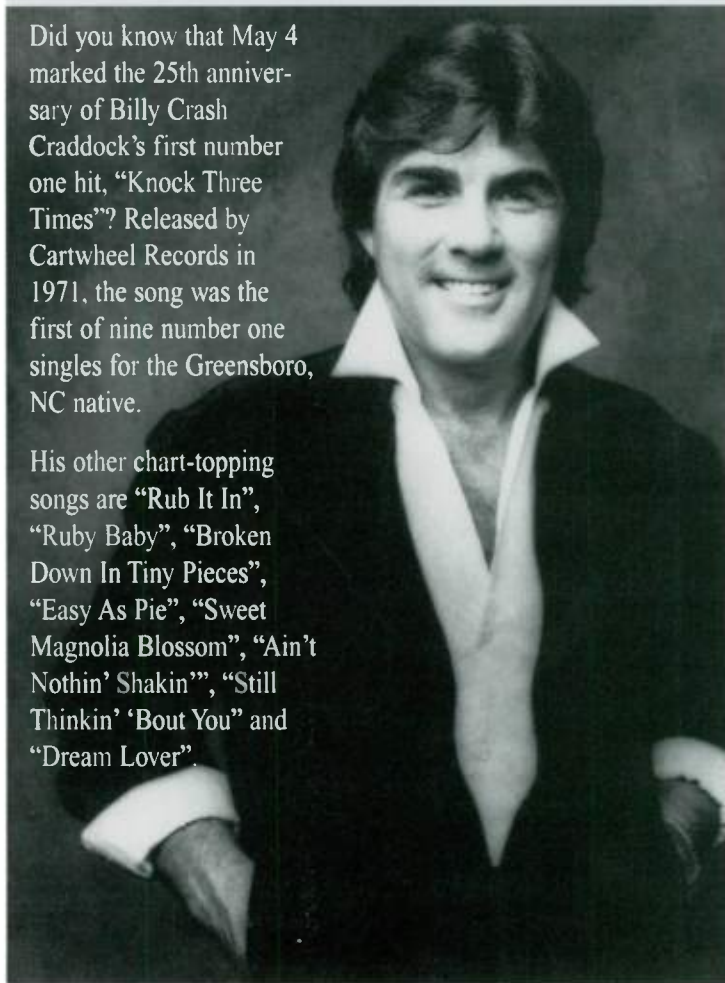
The A.B. Happy Chandler Foundation is a non-profit organization which provides scholarships to outstanding Kentucky students in memory of former Governor Chandler. Previous recipients of the Kentuckian Award include NBC sportscaster Tom Hammond and renowned heart surgeon Dr. William Devries.

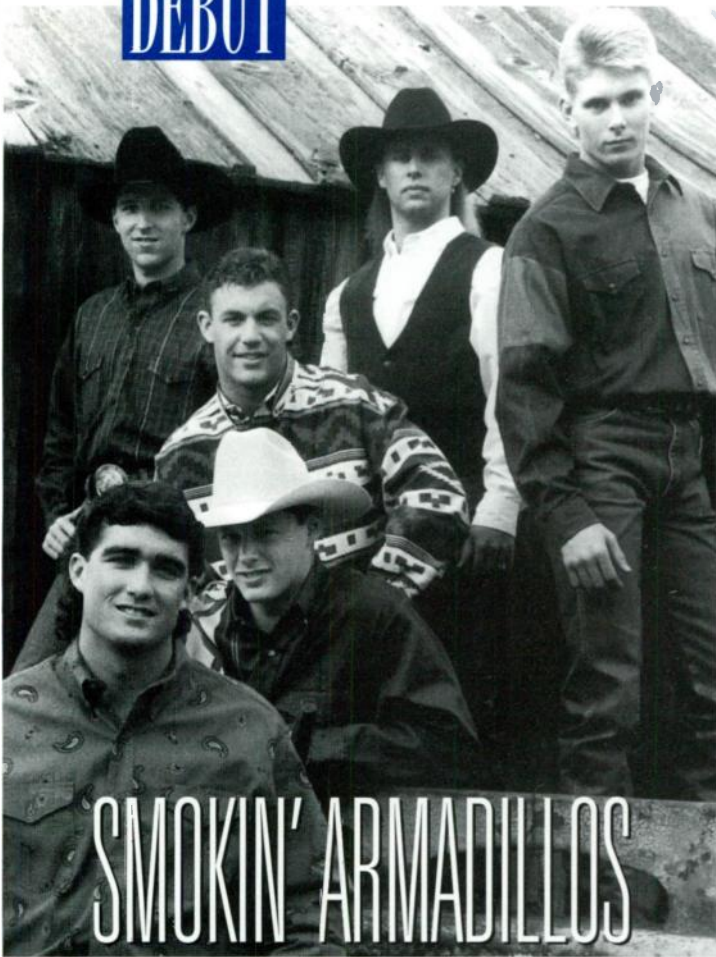
Tickets for the banquet are \$100. For more information, contact the A.B. Happy Chandler Foundation at (606) 873-3225 or P.O. Box 8393, Lexington, KY 40533-8393.

DID YOU KNOW . . .

Did you know that May 4 marked the 25th anniversary of Billy Crash Craddock's first number one hit, "Knock Three Times"? Released by Cartwheel Records in 1971, the song was the first of nine number one singles for the Greensboro, NC native.

His other chart-topping songs are "Rub It In", "Ruby Baby", "Broken Down In Tiny Pieces", "Easy As Pie", "Sweet Magnolia Blossom", "Ain't Nothin' Shakin'", "Still Thinkin' 'Bout You" and "Dream Lover".

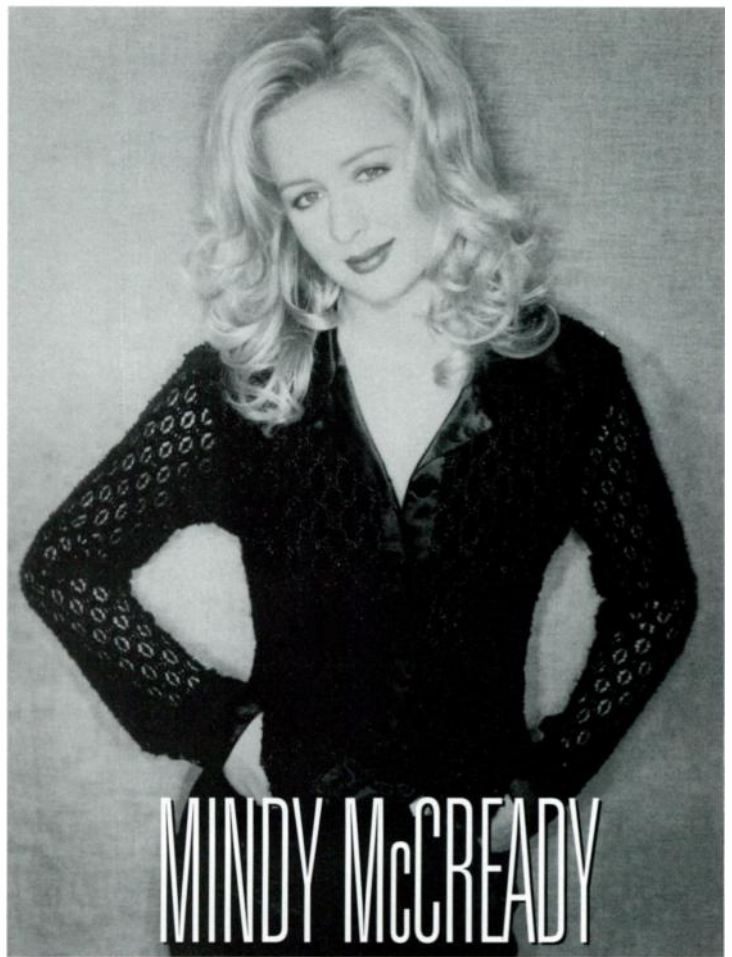




RECORD LABEL: MCG/Curb
DEBUT ALBUM: SMOKIN' ARMADILLOS
SINGLE: "Let Your Heart Lead Your Mind"
INFLUENCES: George Strait, Eagles, Randy Travis, Led Zeppelin, Restless Heart, Hank Williams Jr.

The members of this talented six-member band include Josh Graham (rhythm guitar), Jason Theiste (fiddle), Aaron Casida (bass guitar, backing vocals), Rick Russell (lead vocals), Scott Meeks (lead guitar, vocals) and Darrin Kirkindoll (drums). They got their start in California, where they played clubs and released their own independent CD before coming to Nashville and signing a recording contract with MCG/Curb.

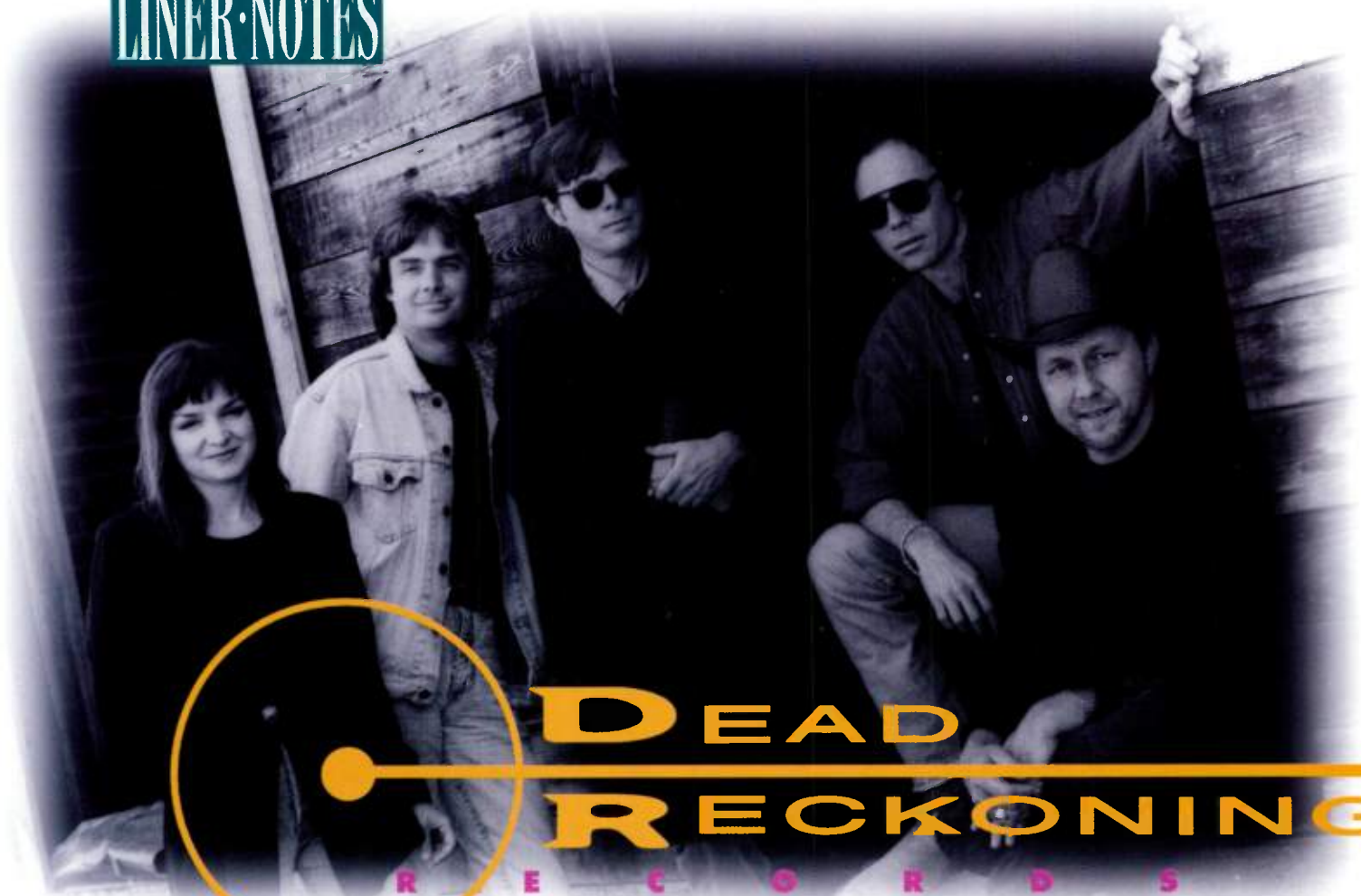
Fans of the band love its diversity and high-energy performance. The members of the Smokin' Armadillos believe their musical chemistry works best in their live stage shows. "We try to make the crowd feel like they're onstage with us, that they're part of the band, part of the show," says Darrin. "If we've done that, then we've had the best times we can have."



RECORD LABEL: BNA Records
ALBUM: TEN THOUSAND ANGELS
SINGLE: "Ten Thousand Angels"
INFLUENCES: Alabama, Amy Grant, Sandi Patti, Loretta Lynn, Anne Murray

Though her mother wanted her to attend college, Mindy McCready longed for a career in music. She made a deal with her mom that she would spend a year trying to make it in the music industry, but if nothing happened she would return home and take a stab at higher education. She moved to Nashville at age 18, armed with a few tapes recorded while singing karaoke in her home state of Florida.

Soon, she met songwriter/producer Norro Wilson, who was impressed by her sound. He introduced her to producer David Malloy, who worked in the studio with Mindy for about a year. Finally, Mindy got an audition with RCA Label Group President Joe Galante. Exactly 51 weeks after moving to Music City - one week under the self-imposed year deadline - she signed a recording contract with BNA Records.



(l to r) Tammy Rogers, Harry Stinson, Kieran Kane, Kevin Welch, Mike Henderson

DEAD RECKONING

To catch the wind, a vessel's sails must be set off-center. Smooth sales in the music industry require keeping to the middle.

A group of talented artists whose music overflows the boundaries of commercial Country Music have set a new course for their careers. Kieran Kane, Harry Stinson, Kevin Welch, Tammy Rogers and Mike Henderson are Dead Reckoning, one of Nashville's most impressive young record labels. The name of their company is significant of their mission.

"Dead Reckoning is a nautical term," Kieran explains. "It's something that sailors use to get from point A to point B. Basically, you use whatever information is available - be it a compass, a stone, a tower - you use all this information to plot your course to get you to where you need to be. That's what dead reckoning is. And invariably, you will get blown off your course. So you re-plot it. But you're always heading toward the same goal no matter what happens.

"It seemed somewhat prophetic. It is what we do," Kieran adds. "And beyond that, it's what life

is. It's about getting from point A to point B and every time you get new information, hopefully, you take it and use it properly to get yourself on the right path."

"We're not selling millions of records, but we're still here after a year, and I would like to believe that's a major accomplishment."

Kieran Kane

The Dead Reckoning group unanimously agrees they have chosen the right path.

"I think the coolest thing about this label is that we can put out a blues album, we can put out a Country record, I can put out some whacked-out instrumental, whatever we want to do," Tammy says. "I don't know of any other situation that I could be part of and do these things."

The group knows from experience that the path most often traveled is not always the easiest. After several major record label deals in their

combined past, they became disillusioned with the stringent rules dictated by larger companies.

When a Norwegian distributor, who had distributed Kieran's Atlantic Records album, offered to handle current material, Kieran decided it was time to make an album. At the same time, Welch was talking to different labels about a new deal.

"I don't think Kevin was too keen on going down the same path," Kieran explains. "It's not really a reaction to major label situations, but most of us have been down that path for a number of years, and I think we've come to the conclusion that the major labels are set up to do a specific thing and they do that specific thing very well. If you're sort of to the left or to the right of what that narrow parameter is, it's real difficult to figure out what to do. Often times, those kinds of projects end up with modest sales, and it's just not physically possible for them to make any money or whatever they need to do, and so you're kind of stuck.

"We can market records in a much different way. The money that goes into them is not as extravagant as at a major label. In this situation, there's

virtually no fat at all. We're not selling millions of records, but we're still here after a year, and I would like to believe that's a major accomplishment.

"To me, the thing is really about the music," Kieran continues. "If five years down the line or whatever, we go out of business, the legacy would be that we put out really good records that will stand on their own, where the creative process is encouraged."

"The challenge, like any record company, is to bring something over the top that really gets to the people. We're going around the country now building a fan base and doing whatever radio we can, whatever retail outlets that we can. And it's moving along."

Was there no fear of mutiny among friends going into business together?

"We've been mixing business with pleasure for years one way or another," Mike says. "Harry and I have been playing together off and on for 10 years, the same with Kieran. We knew we could do it without too much friction."

"That's one of the reason this came together so easily and organically," Harry agrees. "We know each other pretty well and felt like what we were about to do was important enough to really give it a shot."

"Everybody, I think, has the same general philosophy about music overall and about the way you want to go about making it in particular," Tammy agrees. "It's like everybody sort of arrived at the same place from different backgrounds or different places."

While the five take turns making albums, they all share their talents by playing, singing or producing on one another's tracks.

"For example, my record that's coming out," says Tammy. "Harry worked with me really closer than anybody getting the songs picked out, getting everything organized, but then we pulled in Mike and Kieran and Kevin for the recording. That was kinda my little boat to row for awhile and get that going."

The group credits their peers with pitching in as well.

"We've gotten a tremendous amount of help I think from the music community here in Nashville," Tammy says. "I don't really think the majors view us as competition, so people have been so giving with information, with moral support, with advice. Studio owners are giving us really good deals. Even now making videos, peo-

ple are donating their time and video tape, and that's been a really great thing."

"I think that if anything for the majors," Harry says, "it's in their interest to sort of hope that we can kind of crack things a little bit and open up another way to sell music. Because when you've got 150, or I don't even know how many acts there are in town right now, and only thirty or forty spots on the radio..."

"It's depressing," finishes Tammy. "It has to be to them too."

"One of the surprises to me was being approached by a major label in Nashville to find out what we do," Kieran says. "Majors have always had people who don't fit. It's been a little ironic for me to see people go, 'Well, how do you do that?' The information sharing has become not only involved in indies - we do co-op advertising and all kinds of things with indie labels. There's a sense of certain sort of being in the same boat."

"We've gotten a tremendous amount of help I think from the music community here in Nashville."

Tammy Rogers

Though they continue to hit up mainstream Country radio, Dead Reckoning has found friends in GAVIN's Americana stations and music videos.

"Mainstream Country radio is in the business to sell advertising, and that's what their number one concern is," Mike says. "The Americana format is more of an album format. When I was calling stations that would play my record, there was no one song that they were concentrating on. They were all over the album, and it's not near as compressed and rigid."

"Things like CMT and TNN and some of the other satellite outlets have become really good to us too," Kieran adds, "because it actually is a way for us to present the records almost as though they're like singles. You sort of treat the video programs as though they were singles."

Has being the artists as well as the bosses changed their music?

"It didn't so much change my music as it did just open up the field of what I could record," Mike says. "For my RCA Record, of course, we were thinking we had to make a record that had sin-

gles on it. The songs all needed to be short - hold down the instrumental part of it and really work the hook of the song and do all that kind of stuff. Last month I didn't have to do any of that. I just made what I thought was good music, and the response has been really good. It's kind of a freedom more than it is a change. It's like all of the sudden, we get to use the home field."

With offices in London and Dublin, spreading their music around the world is a priority for the label.

"That is one of the most unique features of Dead Reckoning, actually," Kieran says. "Basically right now, if someone goes over to Europe to do a tour, there's a lot of promotion before they get there and while they're there. And when they leave, that's about it. For us, that's not the way it works. Tammy's got a single coming out over there right now. We're talking about doing another single off of my album, which is a year-and-a-half old, and we're still talking about releasing singles off of that. We're able to keep the records alive for much longer period of time. My record was selling more copies a year after it was released. That was a goal. To keep records alive for a long time. That's been great."

The group is becoming well-known for its combined live show, called "A Night Of Reckoning".

"If people get exposed to the show we do as a label, it's like nothing you've ever seen before," Harry explains. "It's so exciting. It's not just somebody playing through some hits. It's a real musical experience. I think that's going to keep sailing us down the road. That show and how unique it is... We're sort of an MTV flash frame society now, with cameras moving so you can't tell what you're looking at. What we're doing is saying take a deep breath and pay attention for more than five seconds. It's pretty amazing."

"I think now the work is really ahead of us," Harry says. "I think that's something I'm realizing - that the future is gonna be in getting down and dirty, because we started this path and kind of cleared the way and we've gotta keep going."

"We'd like to be big," Harry admits. "But we want to make sure that we really start from the ground up and make sure we don't have any kind of weeds growing in the garden on a small level, so that we can grow in a real positive musical way. If we can break down a few doors and open up some outlets for us and all those other people that want to do what we do, then great." **CU**

- Shannon Heim

Peter Herschend

VICE CHAIRMAN, SILVER DOLLAR CITY, INC., BRANSON, MISSOURI

Peter Herschend and his brother Jack founded Silver Dollar City, the Branson, Missouri, Ozark-themed amusement park, in 1960. Since then, they've added to their extensive list of tourist properties to include eight other attractions located in Branson, Atlanta, Myrtle Beach and Pigeon Forge: *The Grand Palace, The Grand Village, The Showboat Branson Belle, White Water: American Adventures, Dollywood, The Grand Mansion and the Dixie Stampede.*

"Nobody in their wildest fantasies could have projected for Silver Dollar City in 1960 what it would do or become or what this region (Branson, Missouri) would do or become. The vocabulary wasn't there. It would have been like selling some shoreline in Arizona!"

Consumer demand led to the company's growth.

"It was obvious to anybody with half an eye what the customer was looking at. There was a huge change occurring in the customer sense of expectation, what he or she was looking for when they came to Branson. In the 1970s, people came here because there was a place called Silver Dollar City and a nice lake called Table Rock, all set in some very pretty hills. In the late 1980s and particularly in the 1990s, the customer was telling us - we didn't tell the customer - that this community gained a reputation for entertainment, for fun, enjoyment, etc. And specifically for theatre entertainment.

"While Silver Dollar City continued to grow, we well recognized the customer sense of expectation was, 'Yes, many of us are coming to see Silver Dollar City but more of us are coming down here because of the stages and who is on them.' That's how we ended up in the Grand Palace business and the Showboat Branson Belle business and Dixie Stampede business."

Of all the company's properties, The Grand Palace is the one which integrates major Country artists. Sunday nights are "Super Sundays".

"It's a little more difficult when you have a venue and you're not working with a set name. If you like Glen Campbell, you can come down, and - guess what! - you can go to the Glen Campbell theatre and the vast majority of the time you're going to find a guy named Glen Campbell! We opted not to go with a single personality and have tried to find that best combi-



nation that meets the guests' needs in terms of their entertainment and their search for the kind of entertainment that really appeals to the individual."

From Monday through Saturdays - this year featuring a Legends show of celebrity impersonators - the Grand Palace attracts largely bus tours. On Sundays, the audience shifts to those from the local region who want to see, for example, Wynonna, who opened the 1996 season in April.

"A boom like Branson went through is a very fascinating experience..."

"The folks who come in to see Wynonna are coming to see Wynonna. They're not coming to see the Palace or the Ozarks. They may do all those things while they're here, but we know in advance, just by the way the tickets sell, that those folks look at the schedule and say, 'OK, I want to see Wynonna.'"

Much has been made of the so-called rivalry between Branson and Nashville. Pete and his Branson-based associates have always embraced the Nashville music community.

"Last time I was in Nashville, I was talking to some of the fellows at Gaylord Entertainment. We said, 'What has been created here is a crown of Country Music and for years and years the crown had one shining stone in it, one great royal gem called Nashville. What has happened today is that the crown has increased in value and brilliance. It has two stones. The stones work and make the crown of Country Music bigger and better. Not two crowns - it makes one crown.' The phrase we used was 'Nashville-to-Branson or Branson-to-Nashville is the Golden Road of Country Music.' The concept that I would love to see us collectively work towards is saying the best of America's Country entertainment is on that Golden Road. And we can do it if we put our minds to it. But we've got to put our minds to it!"

Pete is actively involved - as are most theatre owners in the community - with the strategic planning of Branson. The city's growth continues, even if it has slowed compared to the past few years.

"What we had happen in 1991 to 1993 was a rapid and not thoughtful expansion. People didn't think through very well the consequences of growing from 13,000 theatre seats to 26,000 theatre seats to ultimately today 53,000 seats. A boom like Branson went through is a very fascinating experience, not necessarily a financially or socially healthy experience, because it's like a child who grows. Sometimes you've been around kids who have grown too fast. They're gangly and awkward and bump into things and hurt themselves. In a way, that is what happened in this community. We ended up with significant over-capacity in theatre seats and restaurants, hotels, far greater than the boom in attendance, even though there was a significant growth in attendance. The last two years this community has spent literally catching up with itself.

"Where do we go from here? I think a very healthy road lies in front of us. We are targeting to grow in the range of 200 to 250 thousand new visitors a year for the next eight to 10 years. If it grows at that rate, we will see a sustained growth in the range of...3 percent attendance a year. Some will say that's not much. That's an outstanding rate of growth - it compounds to about 10 percent growth every three years. That's just right." **CU**

- Janet E. Williams

WALTER HYATT

Walter Hyatt, renowned singer/songwriter, died when the airplane on which he was traveling crashed into the Florida Everglades on May 11. He was 46.

Born October 25, 1949, Hyatt grew up in Spartanburg, South Carolina. In 1970, he formed the critically acclaimed Uncle Walt's Band with David Ball and Champ Hood, moving to Nashville in 1971. Two years later, he settled in Austin, Texas, where he was instrumental in the emergence of that city as a music center. He found a kindred spirit in Lyle Lovett, who opened shows for Uncle Walt's Band early in his career and who produced his KING TEARS lp in 1990.

Hyatt relocated to Nashville permanently in 1987, where he quickly became a favorite among Music City's songwriting population. Taking his inspiration from Bob Wills and the early string, swing and jazz bands of the '20s and '30s, Hyatt released MUSIC TOWN, a jazzy swing-flavored recording featuring former bandmates Hood and Ball, on Sugar Hill Records in 1993. Hyatt was known for his easy-going, friendly

acoustic Country Music and incisive songwriting that moved easily through sarcastic, sensitive, sentimental and sublime lyrics.

"You couldn't help but like him," Lovett told The Tennessean. "Walter was a fine songwriter and craftsman, but it was the way he treated people and how he thought about people that made him special. His character made everything he did attractive. Everybody who ever heard him liked him."

"Walter was always ahead of his time," said Sugar Hill's Bev Paul. "He was doing Western swing and incorporating inventive mixes of jazz, folk, pop and Country when no one else was doing it. Walter, Champ and David added smart songs and sophisticated harmonies to this musical melting pot - all of which led to a devoted following throughout Texas, the Southeast and the Mid-Atlantic. Visionaries aren't always household names, but it's clear that Uncle Walter's Band was the fore-runner - if not direct inspiration - for much of the hot mix of style found in today's Americana music."

Hyatt is survived by his wife, Heidi; three children, Taylor, Rose and Haley; one sister, Kathy Clark of Atlanta; one brother, George Hyatt of Lexington, South Carolina; and his mother, Emma Hyatt of Spartanburg.

PATSY MONTANA



Patsy Montana, a Country Music pioneer known best for her 1935 classic, "I Want To Be A Cowboy's Sweetheart", died May 3 at her home in San Jacinto, California. She was 87. The cause of her death was under review. Montana had a history of emphysema, and a family member said she died of heart failure.

She is often credited as the first female Country artist to sell a million records, although no statistical data exists as evidence.

Born October 30, 1914 as Rubye Rose Blevins in Jesseville, Arkansas, Montana was raised in the community of Hope, Arkansas, where she recalled listening to Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry. She enrolled at the University of Western Louisiana, but eventually cut short her academic career to concentrate on show business.

"I got my name from Monty Montana, who was the world's champion yodeler," she once explained of her name change. "I started to work with two other girls in a trio, and the name automatically became the Montana Cowgirls. My real name is Rubye, and one of the girls was

name Ruthie. The names conflicted when there were announced over the air. At the time, we were working with Stuart Hamblen, and he named me, being more Irish than the others, Patsy, while we were on the air."

She moved to California with an older brother and his wife, eventually appearing in some Gene Autry westerns. On a trip to Chicago to visit the World's Fair, she joined a group called the Prairie Ramblers, appearing with them from 1934 until 1948. Starting in 1935, Montana and the group were regulars on the Chicago-based WLS "National Barn Dance", for which she remained a headliner into the 1950s. She was also a frequent guest on the Louisiana Hayride.

Montana began her long recording career in 1933 with songs such as "I Love My Daddy Too" and "When The Flowers Of Montana Are Blooming". She recorded for a variety of labels, including RCA Victor, Columbia, Surf, Vocalion, Decca and Starday into the 1960s. Her recordings include "I'm An Old Cowhand", "There's A Ranch In The Sky", "Singing In The Saddle" and "A Cowboy Honeymoon."

During 1946-47, she had her own radio program on ABC called "Wake Up And Smile", and appeared in concert with her daughters, Judy and Beverly, as the Patsy Montana Trio. During the 1970s, she found a new audience by appearing at college campuses across the nation, where she performed classic Country songs such as "Wabash Cannonball" and "Great Speckled Bird" in addition to her repertoire of Western songs. She continued to make personal appearances until her death.

Montana is survived by her husband, Paul Rose; her daughter, Beverly Losey; and two brothers, Ira Blevins and Kenneth Blevins.

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JUNE

- 7-10** IEBA 1996 Annual Meeting / International Entertainment Buyers Association / DoubleTree Hotel / Nashville / (615) 244-0628; fax (615) 244-4466
- 8** Swiss Alps Country Fun Fair / Sportzentrum / Grindelwald, Switzerland / Contact Jay Barron, Barron Entertainment at (615) 726-1777
- 10-16** 25th Annual International Fan Fair / Co-sponsored by CMA and the Grand Ole Opry / Tennessee State Fairgrounds / Nashville
- 13-15** Second Annual North by Northeast Music Festival / Toronto, Ontario, Canada / Contact Andy McLean at (416) 469-0986

- 15-16** Country Festival Zvenbergen / Zvenbergen, Netherlands / Contact John Melissen at (31) 0-168-324313; fax (31) 0-168-324558.

JULY

- 17-18** CMA Board of Directors Meeting / Memphis, TN

AUGUST

- 13** CMA Awards Press Conference / Nashville, TN

SEPTEMBER

- 9** Canadian Country Music Awards / Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- 27-29** Bluegrass Fan Fest / Owensboro, KY / International Bluegrass Music Association / (502) 684-9025

OCTOBER

- 2** 30th Annual CMA Awards / Grand Ole Opry House / Nashville, TN
- 3-5** SRO / Nashville Convention Center / Nashville, TN
- 20** 8th Annual Country Gold Festival / Aspecta / Kumamoto, Japan / Contact Judy Seale, Refugee International at (615) 258-8615



TNN: The Nashville Network and the Canadian Country Music Association hosted a reception for the CMA board of directors at the Hockey Hall of Fame during the board's quarterly meeting in April. TNN's Paul Corbin (also a CMA board member), Canadian artist Sylvia Tyson and CCMA Executive Director Sheila Hamilton welcome CMA board member John Berry and CMA Executive Director Ed Benson to the gathering.