

FEBRUARY 1999

# CloseUp

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# ALAN JACKSON

**T**ony Stephens, once a member of Earl Thomas Conley's band, was up on stage playing harmonica and singing his heart out to a small, but receptive crowd of 23. It was cold December night in a club 11 miles out of Nashville. The drummer had a brass floor lamp beside him to keep from fading into murky darkness. The acoustics needed work, but this band sounded incredibly tight, making the Haggard, Jones and Strait cover tunes shine. The tall background singer seemed to be enjoying himself - sometimes singing and sometimes just going back to the table when he wasn't needed, stretching out his long legs, nursing a drink and toying with a cigar. Then he would sing lead on a set. Someone in the sparse audience called out for "Chattahoochee", but the request was politely denied. For tonight, "The Chief" could enjoy being a club singer.

Alan Jackson says his perceived aloofness sometimes in the music industry has been misinterpreted. He says in high school he always felt on the fringes. Then when he started out in the business, playing intimate places like The Bluebird terrified him. "I'm just not like the politician type where I can go up and stroll around Nashville and say 'Hey, how ya doin'.' I just can't do that. I just kinda had to do what I did and hope that it would catch on somewhere." Writing tunes and playing small clubs with his band finally did catch on when he signed with Arista Records and released his first album in 1990.

Stardom has done little to ease his uneasiness in social situations. He says playing live in front of thousands is easier than making conversation mingling among a small group of people, something he says "would probably give me an anxiety attack." Performing live "I know what I'm gonna do. I know what I'm gonna sing and what I'm gonna say."

This trouble communicating seems a paradox from a man who has sold 25 million records and written some of Country Music's most

.....  
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The opening sentence of her liner notes reads LINDA LOVES YA, in bold capitalized letters. The closing sentence reads I'M YOURS. In the midst of the thank-you credits reads an inscription that dedicates the project to "The Country Music Fans!" The CD belongs to DreamWorks Records artist Linda Davis.

If you would have asked Linda this time last year if she thought she would be signed to a major record label, she probably would have said "No way, but I am keeping the faith!" Instead, she not only has a label deal, but also two singles featured on major movie soundtracks, a single climbing the charts, and the driving force to never give up.

"I'm like the Energizer Bunny. I never quit. We have got to hold our heads up and keep going. That's what I've done with my whole career. As a child, I knew from an early age that I wanted to be a Country artist. I can remember in the third grade my teacher said, 'Write a paper about what you want to be when you grow up.' Mine said, 'I want to be a Country singer.' Even before that I was already singing. I knew what I wanted so I taught myself to play the piano, and anytime I could gather a crowd I'd get them in front of me and I'd sing to them.

"The fans add to the desire that

# LINDA DAVIS

keeps me going. I get to see them night after night. It takes so little of your time and your honesty to touch their lives. It takes a little bit to get to those fans because we've got to get played on the radio and we need to have our videos seen. There's so much of the industry part that we've got to get over that hurdle to get to those people.

When you get to them – they are the easiest to please. And that's what keeps us going. The fans are so open-minded and open-hearted. Night after night I'm reminded of that. I just hope that with every CD that they purchase, they feel like they got their money's worth. I also hope they're getting a little bit more insight about the dimension of who Linda Davis is, and what I'm made of, and what touches me."

Since wrapping up a multi-city tour in mid-December as part of the Reba and Brooks & Dunn tour, Davis joined Reba for a three-week European tour. In addi-

tion to singing on Reba's show, Linda had the chance to showcase her talent and latest album I'M YOURS, produced by DreamWorks President James Stroud and producer Julian King.

**"I'm like the Energizer Bunny. I never quit."**

tion to singing on Reba's show, Linda had the chance to showcase her talent and latest album I'M YOURS, produced by DreamWorks President James Stroud and producer Julian King.

"This was such a team effort. I couldn't have been more excited for James and Julian, who co-produced it for me. James has touched so many records that have turned platinum. And for Julian this is the first one that he's ever been credited for. He has such good ideas and can hear everything. I give him all the credit for the fact that we've got seven old songs on this CD. He had no relationship with me or those songs back then when they were on my other albums. He took the old songs strangers to him, made them all fit and sound like one continuous album within my new songs. He remixed some, but we didn't re-sing them or redo them. He made them new again and I'm just am so grateful. I feel like we did a good job. With Julian's, James' and my ideas, and the wonderful musicians, I'm so proud."

Early last year, Linda was invited to become part of the DreamWorks film "Blackdog", starring Patrick Swayze and label mate Randy Travis. After the single, Linda became part of the DreamWorks family in a different sort of way...in front of 23,000 screaming fans.

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**"At DreamWorks, I feel like I belong to a home and a family of great teamwork."**

"It was so funny because this year, DreamWorks invited me to sing on their Fan Fair show. After my performance, I was given my recording contract on stage. At that time, I had the film single "I Want To Remember This" that they had taken out, sent to radio and were promoting. Other than the single, we had no commitment to each other after that. I had hoped that I'd be signed to a real deal, but I was taking my time and not getting my hopes up. I was just waiting and seeing if radio would be responding to my music again, something that they were wondering about too. After the show, we got back to the office celebration and they

As these songs are climbing the charts that's going to be more reason to do that. Reba is totally aware and watchin' and keeping her fingers crossed for me. I complement her show in her eyes and in Narvel's (Blackstock) eyes, so as long as it works then I will continue to do that. I can't draw ten thousand people into a gathering by myself right now. I think I'm in a real good spot."

Just like the bunny she compares herself to, Linda Davis keeps going and going and going and... **CU**

**Christy Grealis**

From the mouth of President and producer:

"LINDA DAVIS IS ONE OF THE BEST COUNTRY ARTISTS

IN OUR MARKET TODAY. NOT ONLY IS SHE A GREAT

SINGER AND STYLIST, BUT SHE IS ALSO A WONDER-

FUL AMBASSADOR FOR COUNTRY MUSIC AND OUR

NASHVILLE ENTERTAINMENT COMMUNITY."

JAMES STROUD President of DreamWorks Records, co-producer

I'M YOURS

# MAP

musicians' assistance program

Helping The Music Co



Country artist Lorrie Morgan recently shot a public service announcement for MAP in Nashville. from left to right: Ginna Marston - PFDA, Lorrie Morgan, her son and their dog (all three were filmed), Debbie Friedman - PFDA, Bobby Sheehan - the director, Jamie Amon - Nashville producer, Corall Fields - MAP Creative Director

**B**uddy Arnold has spent nearly 60 years as a professional jazz musician, what most people would consider a long and glorious career. But for 31 years, Arnold dealt with the horror of drug addiction. After getting sober himself, Arnold desperately sought ways to help others around him facing the same fight. He was so dedicated to this cause that he would often entertain hospital patients with jazz groups in exchange for a free bed for someone who needed to detox but didn't have insurance money.

From that ambitious beginning, he founded the Musicians' Assistance Program (MAP), headquartered in Los Angeles. Arnold says MAP has one simple purpose: to help music industry professionals recover from drug and alcohol abuse. For that reason, the program is open to

# Community Recover From Drug & Alcohol Abuse

anyone in the music community, including music industry executives, club and session musicians, recording artists, recording engineers and others. In addition to its Los Angeles headquarters, MAP recently opened a Nashville office. MAP also operates offices in New York, Seattle, Minneapolis, New Orleans and Boston.

But Arnold says that when he first had the idea to found MAP, others weren't as receptive as he first hoped.

"I went down to the musicians' union in Los Angeles," Arnold recalls. "We wanted an office, but they wouldn't give us one because they said they didn't have any members who had a problem like that.

"But we waited for a new regime, a change in the president and board. They didn't give us an office, but they rented a room to me for \$100 a month. From that, we went into a larger room and were able to bring in some counseling groups that happened twice a week that were facilitated by a psychologist. So far, we're really proud of what we've done. It's the people. There's a 60-percent success rate."

So how does MAP work? A phone call begins the process. A consultation/ assessment will be scheduled with a MAP representative at one of its locations. If this is not practical, the consultation is facilitated by telephone. Depending on the addiction and other factors, a referral is then made to a MAP Treatment Provider. The Provider Network includes services ranging from intervention, detoxification, inpatient treatment and residential programs to outpatient treatment, partial hospitalization, sober living houses and community referrals. MAP monitors the client's treatment while in primary care and then brings that person into its Peer Network of recovering


music professionals. When the music professional has no funds or medical insurance to cover necessary treatment, MAP will subsidize the cost.

Carole Fields, MAP's creative director, explains the process further.

"We're on call seven days a week. There's a clinical director, and it's never closed down. Someone can always get through to the office. Normally, someone will go through a treatment program and go back home or go back on the road. Whatever they do, they still need support. Sometimes people are shy about that because it's like talking to a whole other family.

"MAP has something where you can continue to get support. You don't even have to be in our treatment program. Anybody in the music industry can go in for this additional support. It's like, 'Hey, I'm going back out on the road,' and all the people sitting there will give them guidance and support. Some people go home or back on the road, and they're in the same environment. It's scary."

In addition to its direct involvement in facilitating drug and alcohol treatment programs, MAP has also joined forces with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (PFDA) to create a series of public service announcements featuring top name artists from various musical genres. Among the artists featured so far are Lauryn Hill, Chuck D. of Public Enemy and KISS. Lorrie Morgan has also become the first Country artist to shoot a spot for MAP.

To find out more about MAP and its services, contact Jack Freckman in the Nashville office at (615) 331-4MAP or the Los Angeles headquarters of MAP at (888) MAP-MAP1. 

**Mandy Wilson**

# Chet Flippo



Chet Flippo accepted the CMA Media Achievement Award during the nominee press conference for the 1998 CMA Awards while Neal McCoy looks on.

**I**n 1998, Chet Flippo, **BILLBOARD**'s Nashville bureau chief, received the CMA Media Achievement Award. The award was established to recognize outstanding achievements in the media as they relate to Country Music. Besides his work with **BILLBOARD**, Flippo has a long history of covering Country Music, including a stint with **ROLLING STONE** and as the author of several books such as "Your Cheatin' Heart: A Biography of Hank Williams". He was kind enough to take time out of his busy schedule to share some career anecdotes with **CLOSE UP**.



My interest in writing about Country Music developed via some fairly random avenues. Growing up in Texas in the heyday of the growing rock'n'roll revolution, I shunned Country Music, especially the hardcore Texas honky-tonk music of the '50s, as hopelessly Neanderthal. Even though the first performer I can recall seeing as a child was Bob Wills, Country Music was derided as "Osh\*tkicker music" in my Elvis and Buddy Holly teenage crowd. The first show I saw that really electrified me was a Delbert McCClinton-Jimmy Reed beer joint bash in Fort Worth and later in college I booked shows with the likes of Lightning Hopkins and Roy Head. Those experiences really established my music sensibility.

Then, in the Navy in the late '60s, I was fortunate to be able to travel extensively and see rock artists from Jimi Hendrix to the Who to the Doors. I had a chance meeting with the Rolling Stones in Morocco when I was stationed there. As I devoured all of current rock music, I started finding threads that ran back through the blues and through Country and I became a musical fanatic, carrying hundreds of books and records with me through several Navy postings. I also discovered

So, my bride and I pulled into the parking lot of Woodland Studio in East Nashville one morning in July of 1971. When we walked into the studio, the producer, Bill McEuen, introduced us to a pantheon of my Country Music heroes: Mother Maybelle Carter, Roy Acuff, Doc Watson, Earl Scruggs, Jimmy Martin, Merle Travis, and such stellar musicians as Vassar Clements, Junior Huskey, Brother Oswald, and Gary and Randy Scruggs. Suddenly, Roy Acuff was inspecting my ponytail and sandals.

I had met and interviewed Acuff before, for a story in ROLLING STONE when the Grand Ole Opry left the Ryman Auditorium for Opryland and had been surprised to discover that Acuff hated the Ryman and wanted a modern, air-conditioned building with real dressing rooms. Like all nouveau- arrivistes to Country, I had assumed that old is best and that there had been some kind of shimmering golden age of Country hidden away somewhere backstage at the Ryman. Not for Mr. Acuff. "I'll be the first one to knock the bricks out of that old building," he told me.

The Dirt Band guys told me that Acuff had been initially hesitant about recording this meeting of the emerging youth culture in music

## **That was not the first recording session I had been to, but it will eternally be the best, the biggest, the most significant.**

the new music magazine ROLLING STONE, which was eagerly passed around on the ship. ROLLING STONE was ostensibly a rock sheet, but really encompassed a way of incorporating and looking at all of popular music as an integral part of everyday life and culture: Johnny Cash, Miles Davis and Bob Dylan were all components of the Big Picture of social history and pop culture. (ROLLING STONE at the time amounted to a letter from home.)"

What really opened my eyes about the Country overview was Bill Malone's 1969 book, "Country Music U.S.A.," the first comprehensive Country Music history, which tied everything together for me and showed me why Country Music was so significant.

After the Navy, I went on to grad school at the University of Texas and fell into a music crowd that included such former folkies and Country prodigies turned rockers as Doug Sahm, Johnny Winter and Janis Joplin, and I started writing about them and sending the stories to ROLLING STONE, which - to my amazement - started buying them from me.


Then, in 1971, I eloped off to Mexico to marry Martha Hume (our 28th anniversary is in July, 1999) and we set off to drive to her parents' home in Kentucky, to allow them an opportunity to inspect me and comment on my ponytail and sandals. Just before leaving, I got a call from my editor at ROLLING STONE. Ignoring my protests that I was honeymoon-bound, he assigned a story. "Since you'll be driving through Tennessee anyway," he said, "stop off in Nashville. The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band is cutting some kind of record there. Check it out. Might be a story in it."

and the Old Guard in Country, but he had finally realized its import. Bill Monroe had been approached about taking part in the project, but had declined. When we later met Monroe and became friends, he said in so many words that he was not particularly interested in any situation where he was not the focal point, not The Star.

Everyone else at the sessions at Woodland, though, was gracious to a fault. Maybelle Carter discovered that Martha and I were sort of spending the first half of our honeymoon in the recording studio there and took us under her wing.

That was not the first recording session I had been to, but it will eternally be the best, the biggest, the most significant. Days sailed by in a blur of great songs and great takes. I'm still awed by the fact that I got to witness Maybelle recording "Wildwood Flower" for the last time, and Acuff cutting "Wreck On The Highway" for the last time, and Travis recording his "Dark As A Dungeon" for the last time.

Maybelle's throat was ailing and she sucked on lemons before every take, but she was magnificent. She was the first to invite Martha and I to sing background vocals on the album's title cut, "Will The Circle Be Unbroken." What an amazing experience. Listening to the song today brings back in a rush the experience of standing behind some of the giants in Country Music and actually singing with them.

So, for our honeymoon, we got to sing with Maybelle and Roy and all the boys, later getting a gold record for our efforts. I got to provide the liner notes for one of country music's most historic projects. We made a lot of lasting friends. Country Music, I decided, was a pretty cool deal, all the way around.  **Chet Flippo**

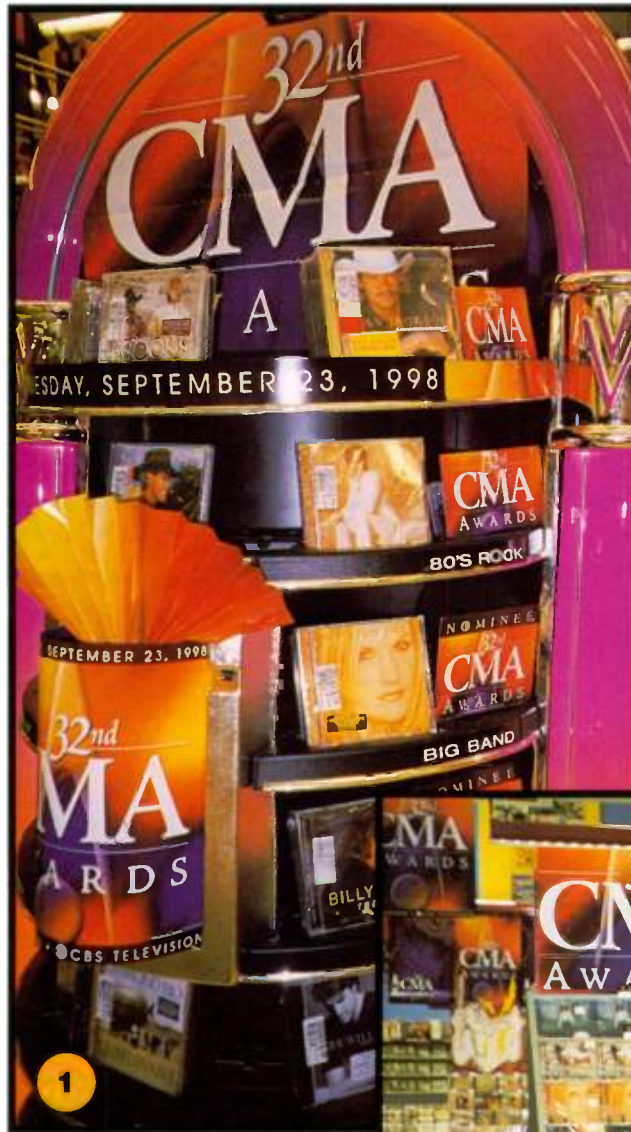
# Winners Announced In Annual CMA Awards Point-of-Purchase Contest

**W**inners have been announced in two divisions of the annual CMA Awards point-of-purchase display contest, held in conjunction with NARM. Retail winners are:

- Independent** - Crow's Nest, Crest Hill, IL;  
**Chain** - Tower Records, #153, Nashville, TN.

**Claiming honors in the Rackjobber division is: Grand Prize - Handleman Co. - Kmart, #4911, Anaheim, CA - Los Angeles Branch.**

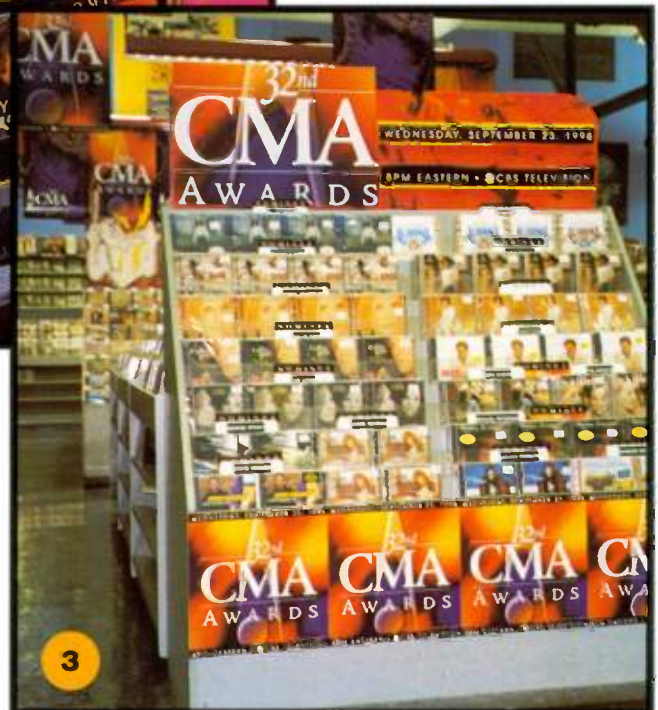
Cash prizes totaling \$2000 were distributed.



**1** The colorful and creative display of the 1998 CMA/NARM POP Display Contest for the Rackjobber division - Kmart #4911 in Anaheim, CA.



**2** The Crow's Nest in Crest Hill, IL is proud of their display, which won the Independent Retailer prize for the 1998 CMA/NARM POP Display Contest.



**3** The Retail Chain winner of the 1998 CMA/NARM POP Display Contest is Nashville's own Tower Records store.

## JO DEE MESSINA WRAPS FIRST VISIT TO ASIA PACIFIC

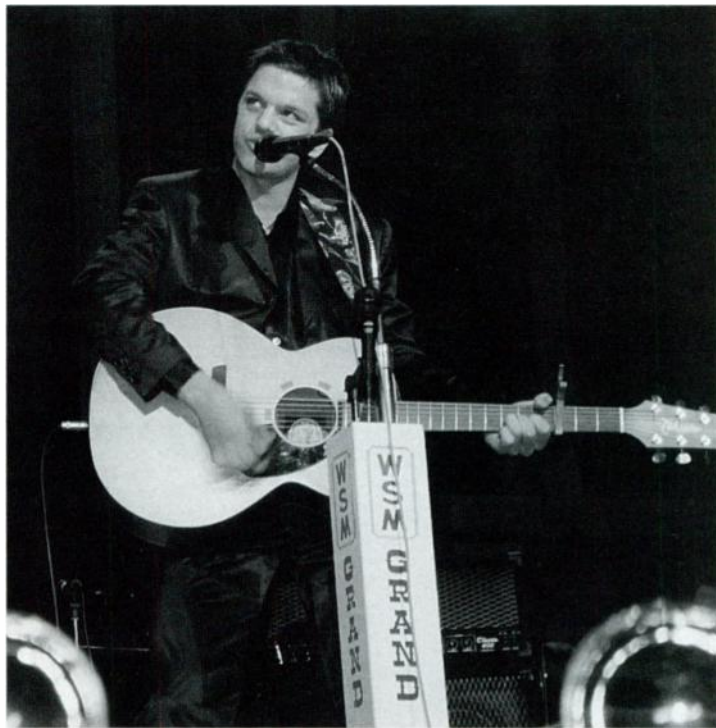
• Curb recording artist Jo Dee Messina completed her first trip to Australia and Japan recently as part of a promotional tour and performance at Japan's Country Gold festival in Kumamoto. Messina's media blitz took her to Sydney and Melbourne, where she made television appearances on "Midday With Kerri-Anne", "Good Morning Australia", "Denise", "In Melbourne Tonight" and the "Today Show". She also did an on-camera interview with 2UE Radio and television personality John Laws between in-store appearances at retailers Canelands Music and Grace Brothers.

• Asleep At The Wheel, Sam Bush, Charlie Nagatani and the Cannonballs, River Road and Bryan White joined Messina in Kumamoto, Japan, at the Country Gold Festival before 25,000 fans. The concert was taped for broadcast on NHK-BSTV in December. At the concert, promoter Charlie Nagatani received the 1998 CMA International Talent Buyer/Promoter of the Year Award.

## CMAA RELEASES RESEARCH RESULTS

• The Country Music Association of Australia (CMAA) has released its annual Australian Country Music Survey, now in its third year. Conducted by Amr: Quantum Harris, findings indicate nearly a quarter of the adult Aussie population (over 3 million) named Country Music as their favorite - an increase of 10 percent over last year. Twenty percent of those surveyed (the equivalent of 2.75 million) said they bought at least one Country album in the last year.

• On the radio side, more than half the respondents said they listen to Country radio regularly, but 61% of the sample said there isn't enough Country played on radio in Australia. Seventy-eight percent said they would listen more if it was available, and 62 percent would be inclined to listen to particular stations if they played Country. For more information, contact the CMAA via email at [cmxaa@mpx.com.au](mailto:cmxaa@mpx.com.au). **CU**



**Seventeen-year-old British singer-songwriter Adam Couldwell recently made his debut on the stage of the Grand Ole Opry. The performance was part of a two-week trip to Nashville that included recording sessions at Imagine Studios, as well as an interview on WSM radio and a showcase at Opryland Hotel. The trip was covered by a news crew from the UK and will be used in a documentary about several young people pursuing various creative careers scheduled to air on ITV this year. Couldwell recently signed a publishing deal with Acuff-Rose Music.**

**CMT International celebrated new programming changes for the 24-hour Country Music channel in Brazil at a party in Sao Paulo, Brazil in December. Danni Leigh performed during the party. Leigh's debut video, "If The Jukebox Took Teardrops", went to number one on CMT International's Latin American video service. CMT International and Warner/Chappell Music recently sponsored a "Brazilian and American Songwriters Night" at the Bluebird Café in Nashville. The sold-out performance was filmed for use in a documentary for CMT International in Brazil. Pictured (from left): Reinaldo Barra, Cesar Augusto, Michael Peterson, Cesar Lemos, Danimar and Marty Stuart.**



## awards

**Donna Hilley**, president and CEO of Sony/ATV Music Publishing Nashville, has been named as a forthcoming inductee into the **Alabama Music Hall of Fame**. Hilley will be joined in the 1999 induction by fellow Nashvillian **David Briggs**, along with **Bobby Goldsboro**, **The Temptations** and



After a performance for the patients at the Nashville Veteran's Administration Hospital, Warner Bros. recording artist Hal Bynum met and talked with the patients and signed photographs for them.

**Wilson Pickett**. A special tribute to the late **Tammy Wynette** will also be presented. The event marks its eighth year for Alabama's Music Hall of Fame to honor music achievers who are natives of Alabama.

Sugar Hill Records' artists won top honors at the **Ninth Annual International Bluegrass Music Awards**. **Sammy Shelor** of the Lonesome River Band won the award for Banjo Instrumentalist of the Year. **Kenny Smith** of the Lonesome River Band received

Guitar Instrumentalist of the Year. **Jim Mills** shared Instrumental Group of the Year honors with **Ricky Skaggs** and **Kentucky Thunder**.

**Reba McEntire** joined the list of fellow Okies when she was inducted into the **Oklahoma Hall of Fame** in Tulsa. Born and raised in Southeastern Oklahoma and living in the state until 1988, Reba sang in bands throughout her years there. She is being honored for becoming one of the biggest selling and most awarded women in music history.

**Shania Twain** won the **Billboard Music Awards' Female Artist of the Year**. She was also announced as the **Hot 100 Singles Artist of the Year**. **Garth Brooks** picked up six awards including **Country Artist of the Year**, **Country Singles Artist**, **Country Album**, **Country Single**, **Male Country Artist**.

**LeAnn Rimes** walked away with four awards, among them **Top Female Country Artist** and **Contemporary Christian Artist of the Year**. She was also presented with a special award acknowledging her all-time world record for her version of "How Do I Live" remaining on the Hot 100 Singles chart for 69 consecutive weeks.

**ASCAP** recognized **Guy Clark** with their prestigious **Lifetime Achievement Award**.

## newslines

The new **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum** is \$25,000

closer to being built, courtesy of **American Express** and service establishments in the Nashville area. The "Help Preserve Country Music's Heritage" promotion by American Express helped to fund the Hall of Fame by raising \$10,000 along with \$5,000 donated by area restaurants and retail establishments that accept the American Express® card.

**country.com** and the **Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum** announced partnerships that will enhance the site's Country Music content and provide the Hall of Fame with its first online presence. The Hall of Fame's staff experts will utilize the museum's vast historical resources to develop the content for the country.com history section.

## on the move

**David Macias** has been promoted to senior director, sales & marketing for **Arista Nashville**. He came to the label in 1992 as the western region's director of sales and & marketing and was most recently director, sales & marketing for the label.

**Fred H. Baker, Jr.** has been promoted to the new post of product manager for **Giant Records**. His responsibilities have been expanded to include increased involvement in the overall strategic marketing of individual artists on the Giant roster. He will work in creative services and production.

**Regina Stephens** has been appointed to manager of publicity and artist development for **Virgin**



**Records Nashville.** She will continue efforts in publicity, production and artist development. **Lorie Lytle** has been named vice president of publicity for the label. She was most recently the vice president of publicity for Capitol Records Nashville.

**Susan Levy** has been appointed to vice president of artist development for the label. She will be responsible for all things visual – artists imaging, photography, packaging, advertising production and music video.

**Pat Payne** and **Tatum Hauck** have been upped to promotion manager and promotion coordinator respectively for **MCA Nashville**. Payne will focus on daily administrative functions, facilitating the core operation of the promotion team as well as oversee budgets, scheduling and special events and running the intern program. Hauck will coordinate all concert ticket duties with radio as well as oversee special promotions and projects to aid the regional staff in obtaining airplay.

**Walt Wilson** has been appointed vice president of sales and marketing for **Asylum Records**. He has been an independent consultant to

the label and was previously in sales and marketing with MCA Records and most recently general manager and executive vice president at Capitol Records.

**Damon Moberly** has joined the staff of **Mercury Nashville's** promotion department as manager of northeast regional promotion. He was previously employed by WVLK in Lexington, KY where he served as program director, music director and afternoon drive on-air personality.

**Burton Brooks** has been added to the staff of **Hamstein Productions** as coordinator, creative services. He was previously administrator of recording services for RCA Records.

**Dan F. Ekback** has been promoted to vice president operations for **Bluewater Music Corp.** He will be in charge of all administration, licensing and foreign publishing operations.

**Marty McFly** has been named co-host of the nighttime syndicated show, **"Nashville Nights"** of **Jones Radio Network** and **Capstar Broadcasting**. He will join Dallas Turner live from the studio within

flagship station WSIX-FM's facilities. CMA has recognized him with nominations for Air Personality of the Year during his time with WGSQ in Cookeville, TN.

**Lyn E. Aurelius** has been named special projects manager for **The Nashville Chapter of the Recording Academy®**. She is responsible for planning and execution of the company's events. She was previously manager of operations resource group for CMA.

**Andi Varagona** has been added to the staff of the Nashville-based production company, **The Collective** as director of sales and marketing. She was previously director of sales for Picture Vision.

**Kurt Poole** has been added to the staff of **The Filmworker's Club/Nashville** as senior editor for the second of their AVID editing suites.

**left: Arista/Nashville's Shannon Brown** filmed her debut video "I Won't Lie" in Saugas, CA with director, **Steven Goldmann**. One portion of the video required **Shannon to stroll past a burning building without acknowledging the fire. She didn't flinch until she discovered that her hair had caught fire! The crew came to her rescue, she assessed the damage, brushed her hair and continued to shoot.**

**below: Lari White** recently departed on a C-141 Starlifter loaded with banners, cards and letters containing messages of love and encouragement for her to deliver to the troops. She performed for thousands of American soldiers in Italy, Bosnia, Turkey and Germany. She is pictured here with **Brigadier General David S. Sibley, United States Sir Force**. Photo by Alan Mayor



right: Columbia recording artist Wade Hayes continues to support his favorite charity, Habitat for Humanity. He recently traveled to Cleveland and Akron, Ohio to work on houses being constructed in each city.

**Chris Blizzard** has been named affiliate relations manager for **United Stations Radio Networks**. He will be operating out of United Stations satellite office in Nashville.

**Robert Prisament** has been appointed director, online communications and webmaster at **BMI**. He was most recently president of his own advertising-supported web site, **Wedding Central**. **Carole**

**Easterling** has been named director, performing rights for the company. She was previously director, TV operations.

**Noah Dewey** has been added to the staff of **On the Mantel Music** as creative director and will be



**Mel Bilbo** has been named chief executive officer and president of the **Silver Dollar City Corporation** in Branson, MO. He has held top positions for major corporations such as Walt Disney and Sea World.

pany since October 1997 and was previously creative manager.

**Avalon Entertainment Group** has announced a new name **TBA Entertainment Group**. As their services and capabilities have expanded, they have recognized the need for a new name that encompasses what they have become. It reflects their growing wealth of resources as the flagship company of TBA Entertainment Corporation.

## new companies

The Music Industry Private banking division of **SunTrust Bank**, Nashville announced plans for the construction of a new branch office on 17th Avenue South. The new branch is scheduled to open in late 1999 and will be the largest in SunTrust's 42-branch family in middle Tennessee.

**Cal Turner III** has announced the launch of **Cal IV Entertainment**, a mid-size independent publishing company. Acquisitions include Killen Songs, Inc., Buddy Killen Music, Blonde Hair Music, David 'N' Will



Actor **Gary Busey** appeared in **The Tractors** new video "Shortenin Bread" as the whacky chef in the kitchen making shortening bread. The video was filmed in Los Angeles and directed by **Michael Oblowitz**. Pictured below are (l to r) **Walt Richmond**, **Casey Van Beek**, **Jamie Oldaker**, **Gary Busey**, **Steve Ripley** and **Ron Getman**.

involved in catalog exploitations and writer development. He was previously director of creative services for **Hamstein Productions**.

**Penny Chubb** has been promoted to director of copyright administration for **Starstruck Writers Group**. Chubb has been with the company for five years and was most recently manager of royalty accounting.

**Mark Williams** has been named production director and imaging producer for **WPOC FM** in Baltimore. Music director **Todd Berry** has been named assistant program director for the station.

**Steve Phillips** has been promoted to creative director for **Crutchfield Music**. He has been with the com-

Music and the Eddie Crook gospel catalogues. Writers include Mike Lawler, Randy Thomas, Roger Hamilton and Dusty Drake. The company can be reached at 1307 Division Street, Nashville, TN 37203; (615) 242-4200; fax (615) 242-8759.

**Peter Fisher and Dan Raines** announced the formation of **Fisher Raines Entertainment, L.L.C.** a personal management firm for recording artists. The company can be reached at 1910 Acklen Avenue, Nashville, TN 37212; (615) 463-5035; fax (615) 297-5020.

**Welk Music Group** acquired **Sugar Hill Records**. Sugar Hill will continue as a separate and independent label and maintain headquarters in Durham, NC.

## signings

PUBLISHING: **Bonnie Baker** and **Tommy Polk** to The Farm...**Bob McGilpin** and **Jolie Holliday** to NorthStar Entertainment, LLC  
...BOOKING: **David Ball, Vern Gosdin, Springer** and **Dale Watson** to Buddy Lee Attractions...**Jeff Carson** and **Eric Heatherly** to **The Bobby Roberts Company, Inc.**

...MANAGEMENT: **Gary Chapman** to TBA Entertainment...**Jessica Andrews** to rpm management...**Lynn Anderson** to Gurley & Co.  
...RECORDING: **Nickel Creek** to Sugar Hill Records.

## music videos

### artist/label

Shannon Brown  
The Tractors

### title

"I Won't Lie"  
"Shortenin Bread"

### director

Stephen Goldmann  
Michael Oblowitz

## Alan Jackson continued from page 3

poignant Country love songs. "I always communicate...but I do it on my terms."

*"Here I am alone again tonight  
In this old empty house  
It's hard to learn what you don't  
Think you need  
You can't live without..."*

Those lines and others like them make "Gone Crazy" his wife Denise's favorite song on Alan's latest cd HIGH MILEAGE, probably because it holds a mirror up to their marriage in the last year.

When asked what his biggest success has been, he says the survival of his marriage. He had a much-publicized split with Denise and moved out of their new Franklin home the day after Christmas of 1997. They reconciled in May 1998. He said, with help, they were able to "figure out problems that had been there all along...Finally we're at a place where we can enjoy each other."

Another of Alan's lifelong enjoyments is cars.

One of the first, he bought for \$40, fixed it up and sold it for several thousand. "I just love bringing things back to life. I've done it so many times with cars and boats and houses."

What kind of car would his marriage be before the separation and now? Alan pauses and thinks, a smile appearing. "Well, I think it's always been a classic, even when it was rough. But it was a 'nice driver.' He explains the collectible car term "kinda patched up, looks pret-

ty good underneath, kinda rough, but they're called nice drivers - unless you drive it. Somebody can open the door on it." Now he says of his marriage, "it's been taken apart and rebuilt completely."

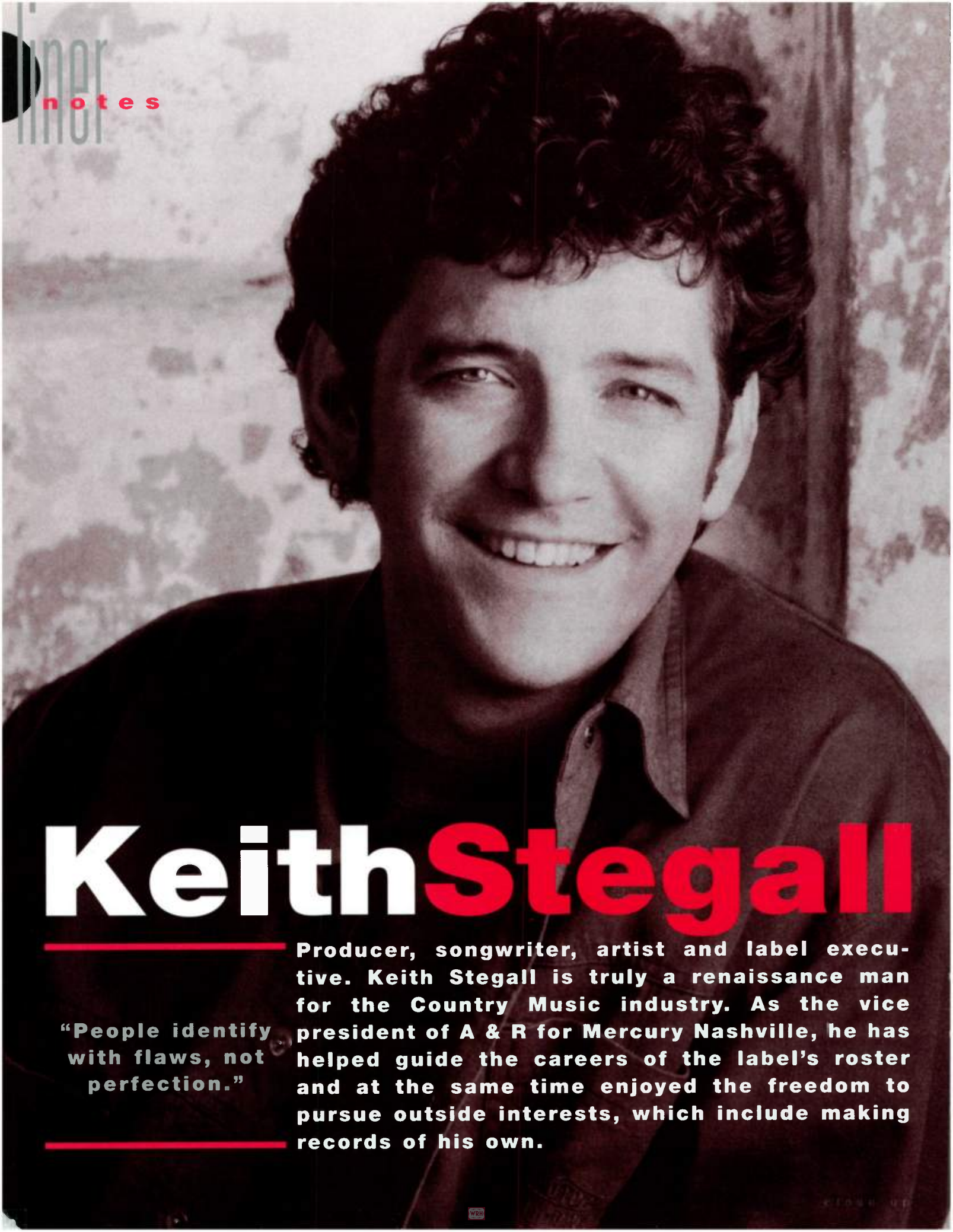
Another accomplishment on a smaller scale has been obtaining his private pilot's license a few years back. "I had to study and pass these tests and learn to fly. And I had really done something, like a real person, you know, working...Sometimes I feel like in the music business, I'm cheatin. I don't work, and I make all this money and go out there and just sing and people scream for you. And it's like I get paid for this, and it's not like a job."

One job he wouldn't want is to be a new act trying to break into the business today. "I'm too old to start now!" And he adds, "I don't think I would ever make it now, especially for somebody who likes to do real country stuff."

He's hoping The High Mileage Road Show will help out some fledgling acts who need some exposure. So far five acts are confirmed - Andy Griggs, Sara Evans, Chad Brock, Clint Daniels and Danni Leigh. Four or five of the new artists will be backed by one band with each act performing three or four songs.

Once Alan hits the road this spring, he'll be carrying four tractor trailers, 20,000 pounds of sound equipment and 30 pounds of lights while performing the Alan Jackson hits fans love. Until then, you might just catch him singing a George Jones tune in some small club, just for the fun of it. **CU**

**Teresa George**



# Keith Stegall

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**“People identify with flaws, not perfection.”**

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**Producer, songwriter, artist and label executive. Keith Stegall is truly a renaissance man for the Country Music industry. As the vice president of A & R for Mercury Nashville, he has helped guide the careers of the label’s roster and at the same time enjoyed the freedom to pursue outside interests, which include making records of his own.**



In 1996, Keith released *PASSAGES* on Mercury Nashville. But unlike most people negotiating a record deal, he was also offered an executive position by the label's President, Luke Lewis. Though he was reluctant at first, Keith accepted the offer and says he's found a way to make each of the roles he plays complement each other.

"It's just a question of time management," Keith responds when asked if he ever feels overwhelmed.

"The only time I get crazy is when I'm thinking about what kind of record I'm going to do."

Keith's introduction to music came early. His father was a steel guitar player for Country Music legend Johnny Horton, and this led to opportunities to attend countless shows before he even began attending school.

At age four, he was playing piano. Shortly afterward, Keith showed the first signs of talent for his life-long passion of songwriting.

"By age six, I was writing songs," Keith says. "I would spend hours doing that. I guess that was strange for a kid."

But those around him appreciated his talents and encouraged him. Keith's uncle owned a studio and would often take him along while he was working. One night while he was there, his uncle heard him playing the piano and decided to record him. Keith recalls that he played four or five tunes for his uncle, including "Six Days On The Road". At age eight, this marked his first experience in the studio.

Impressed with the interworkings of the recording process, Keith became curious about the role of the producer and took particular notice of how songs were crafted into records. He cites Billy Sherrill, widely known for his work with Tammy Wynette among others, as an early influence.

By the time he reached high school, Keith had taken the experiences of his childhood and begun dabbling in several different kinds of music, including stints with a rock group called The Pacesetters and a folk group called The Cheerful Givers.

All the while, he was honing his songwriting skills. Then he got the chance to play some of his original songs backstage for Kris Kristofferson. Kristofferson liked what he heard and advised Keith to go to Nashville.

"My first trip to Nashville was in 1975," Keith remembers. "I got a taste of the writing community and was just blown away by it. I moved to town officially in 1978."

But during the span of time between his meeting with Kristofferson and his move to Music City, Keith was also getting lots of attention in Los Angeles from publishers and pop artists wanting to record his songs, among them Helen Reddy, The Commodores and Johnny Mathis.

Nevertheless, Keith's heart was set on moving to Nashville and being a part of its artistic scene. "Being from the South and growing up in Louisiana, a lot of my decision at the time also had to do with the sense of community. I thought it would be easier to adjust to Nashville."

In 1980, Keith scored a top-five pop smash with Dr. Hook's recording of "Sexy Eyes", a song he co-wrote. In 1981, Al Jarreau's recording of "We're In This Love Together" marked another hit for Keith. Country artists were also recording his songs, among them Mickey Gilley, who took "Lonely Nights" to the top of the charts in 1981.

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**"I got a taste of the writing community and was just blown away by it."**

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Keith says he felt like he was on top of the world as far as his songwriting success was concerned. "My first two records were pop. I thought there was nothing to it." Feeling confident in his accomplishments, Keith then set out on a recording career of his own. The early '80s yielded such hits as "Pretty Lady" and "California". But by 1985, Keith was ready to get back to writing and recording.

"You get out on the road, and the respect that you gain in Nashville doesn't mean anything. After three or four years of hanging around on the road, my greatest love was being in the studio."

Because of his love of all kinds of music, Keith also felt constricted as an artist.

"It was difficult to corral a certain style for myself. The record deal was there, but they wanted me to be a certain thing. I was so diverse that it was hard for me. As a producer now, it's very easy for me to look at an artist and tell them what I think they should do. I can look back now and think about what I should have done then."

After he stopped performing on the road, Keith says his career seemed to go downhill, and his songwriting was affected as well. But things began to turn around when he was asked by a then nightclub singer known as Randy Ray to produce an album to sell at his club performances. Randy Ray later became known as Randy Travis, and Keith had the opportunity to produce two songs on his first major label lp, *STORMS OF LIFE*. The album made Randy Travis a bonified star, and Keith sold him his touring bus to replace the converted bread truck Randy had been travelling in.

From there, things began looking up for Keith. A songwriting buddy by the name of Alan Jackson asked him to produce a tape to pitch for a record label deal. Today, the two have gone on to become some of Country Music's most successful collaborators, with Keith sharing co-writing credits on hits such as "Dallas", "Don't Rock The Jukebox" and "Love's Got A Hold On You", along with producing all of Alan's albums.

"I believed in Alan when I met him," Keith says. "It's a wonderful experience to take an artist and watch them become huge."

Besides his projects with Alan Jackson, Keith has also worked with many other artists including Sammy Kershaw, Terri Clark, Billy Ray Cyrus, Tracy Byrd and Aaron Neville.

And from his perspective as a producer, Keith says the key to successful recording is not losing the essence of the artist or the song.

"I do pay attention to what other producers are doing. But I want to be on the other side and have people follow me. To a certain degree, producers get trapped in producing. Music cannot be perfect. I have to remind myself not to let technology become the center of a record. People identify with flaws, not perfection. Some of my favorite records are full of flaws. I look for stylists over singers."

As for his own records, Keith says that on his next project he would like to get back to his roots and release something he considers really Country, in the vein of Johnny Horton and Bob Wills.

But in the meantime, Keith plans to continue working on what he believes is the key to any success he's enjoyed so far.

"I see myself as a songwriter foremost. Songwriting is the dearest thing to my heart. Production is great, but everything is built on the song." **GU**

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**"It's a wonderful experience to take an artist and watch them become huge."**

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**Mandy Wilson**

## 1998 was a banner year for Country Music internationally with growing record sales, sell-out concerts and increased radio and TV exposure.

### ■ UK/IRELAND

**Country Music made dramatic gains in the "end of year top 100 best sellers". In the singles market Country's genre share grew to 2 percent from 0 percent. In the albums this was an increase from 1 to 3 percent year to year. Following are highlights of the year.**

- Five Nashville-signed artists - Shania Twain, LeAnn Rimes, The Mavericks, Trisha Yearwood and Faith Hill - made their debut in the Top 40 of UK pop singles and/or album charts.

#### RECORD SALES

- Country sales grew more for retail chain HMV than any other genre with increases in Country sales of 39 percent in September and 61 percent in October. The six-month growth from May was 39 percent.

- LeAnn Rimes' version of "How Do I Live" sold 700,000 copies, certifying platinum in 21 weeks. The single debuted at number seven on the pop charts and ended the year as the sixth best-selling single and the longest chart career of any 1998 hit, 34 weeks. SITTIN' ON TOP OF THE WORLD sold 100,000, certifying gold in 12 weeks, and debuted at number 11 on the pop album chart.

- The Mavericks exploded in Europe with the release of "Dance The Night Away." The single sold 300,000 units, certifying silver. The song debuted at number four on the pop charts and remained in the top 10 for eight weeks. The single is platinum in Ireland. The album TRAMPOLINE sold 400,000 to reach platinum certification in 24 weeks. It debuted at 17 on the pop album chart and climbed to number 10. The album is double platinum in Ireland, with sales of 30,000.

- Shania Twain had three top-20 singles. "You're Still The One" peaked on the UK pop charts at number 10; "When" peaked at number 18 and "From This Moment On" hit number nine.

- Twain's album COME ON OVER sold 180,000 units, to certify gold in 15 weeks. It peaked at 15 on the pop album chart.

- Faith Hill made her UK chart debut with "This Kiss," which peaked at number 13.

- Trisha Yearwood's album WHERE YOUR ROAD LEADS was a top 40 debut with sales in excess of 30,000. In Ireland, Yearwood's version of "How Do I Live" sold 20,000 units to certify double platinum and hit number five on the charts.

#### CMA AWARDS

- "The 32nd CMA Awards" broadcast on BBC2 Television garnered a peak of 2.6 million viewers and an average of 2.1 million. The CMA Awards received unprecedented media coverage with BBC Radio 2 having a "Country Music Week". In addition top-rated morning program "GMTV" covered the Awards for the first time along with London's C1035.

- The CMA Awards Retail Campaign drove over 82,000 sales of the campaign titles over a five-week period. Sales of award winners, nominees and performers titles were up from 34,000 in 1997 to 41,000 in 1998.

- HMV reported that the chain sold more Country albums the day following (the TV coverage) than they had on any other Sunday in the year.

#### TELEVISION

- "The National Lottery Draw" (11 million viewership) featured the following artists in the studio: Mindy McCready, the Mavericks, Dolly Parton and Shania Twain.

- "Later with Jools" (1 million viewership) featured performances by Wynonna, Trisha Yearwood, the Mavericks and Shania Twain.

- "Top of the Pops" (5 million) featured performances by the Mavericks, Shania Twain, and LeAnn Rimes on the back of their singles success.

- "Top of the Pops 2" (2.5 million) has programmed over 24 Country videos this year plus a special performance by Mindy McCready.

- "VH1" continues to support Country Music throughout the year in its weekly specialist program "VH1 Country". In addition they playlisted Shania Twain, the Mavericks, LeAnn Rimes, Faith Hill and Garth Brooks.

#### RADIO

- BBC Radio 2 earned a record share of 13.6 percent as its audience rose by 340,000 this year to 8.9 million. This station actively plays Country Music as part of its daytime programming.

- Capital Radio, London's premier CHR station, has playlisted Shania Twain, the

Mavericks, LeAnn Rimes and Faith Hill.

- Full-time Country Music stations CMR and Country 1035 continued their support of the music.

#### TOURING

- The Mavericks played to over 51,000 people in 20 shows and 11 countries, in addition to their appearance with Shania Twain and other European pop stars at London's Hyde Park in front of 100,000 (including Prince Charles) at a charity concert for "The Prince's Trust".

- Trisha Yearwood's UK tour in November was sold out.

### ■ GERMANY/ SWITZERLAND/ AUSTRIA

#### TELEVISION

- ARD Germany TV show "Geld Oder Liebe" (6.5 million viewers) featured Sherrié Austin, Diamond Rio and John Hiatt. After the appearance over 25,000 units of Diamond Rio's GREATEST HITS album were sold within four weeks. Austin's appearance garnered an album debut at number 44 on the charts.

- In December, LeAnn Rimes appeared on Europe's most popular TV show, "Wetten Dass", the only Country artist ever to do so. The telecast garnered record ratings with a 47 share and 16 million viewers and resulted in instant chart action for the single and the album the week after. The show earned 51 share in Switzerland and a 58 share in Austria.

- The ONYX cable television network, which reaches 7.5 million households, airs a one-hour Country Music video program three times a week.

- Shania Twain appeared on the ZDF Network's AIDS charity show, "Stars '98", which aired in Germany to 4.35 million viewers. The special, which also featured Jon Bon Jovi, generated a 14 share. Her subsequent chart entry at number 16 was the highest for a Country act in more than a decade.

#### SALES

- Shania Twain's COME ON OVER has sold over 70,000 units and entered the German pop chart at number 16, the highest entry in more

than 10 years for a Country artist.

- Garth Brooks has sold 530,000 units of all his albums combined.
- 101% COUNTRY, a four-CD box set featuring Nashville artists, was offered via TV only in Germany and has sold over 85,000 boxes.

#### **RADIO**

- Shania Twain's "You're Still The One" hit number nine on the Swiss pop chart and entered the German singles chart at number 72. The single was the most played track on one of the biggest German pubcasters, Hamburg's NDR2, a station with a reach of 5.6 million listeners which regularly programs music by Nashville-based artists.
- The Mavericks also scored with the single on NDR2, where the "Dance The Night Away" occupied the top airplay spot for four weeks.

#### **CMA AWARDS**

- The 32nd Annual CMA Awards was the only major music program to air in Germany in 1998. Europe's largest public broadcaster, WDR, aired an edited version on December 31.

## **BENELUX & SCANDINAVIA**

#### **SALES**

- The market share for Country Music in the Netherlands doubled in 1998. According to NVPI (Dutch IFPI) figures for the first three quarters of '98, total market share for Country over the year is projected to come at out at well above 2 percent. Total value of annual Country sales in the Netherlands is now up from about \$5 million to \$11 million.
- Joint Warner/Benelux and Warner Bros. Nashville artist Ilse DeLange's album WORLD OF HURT rocketed to number one on the Dutch sales charts in its second week of release – the first Country album ever to hit the top spot on the Dutch charts. It has already been certified platinum (100,000).
- Shania Twain's COME ON OVER certified gold in Norway (25,000 units) and in the Netherlands (50,000).
- The Mavericks' TRAMPOLINE is nearing sales of 25,000 in the Netherlands.
- Gold single certifications went to LeAnn Rimes' "How Do I Live" (Norway and the

Netherlands) and "Shania Twain's "You're Still The One" (the Netherlands).

#### **RADIO**

- Country FM, the first full-time Country radio station in the Netherlands, ended the year with a major expansion that increased the number of potential listeners to more than 4 million. Country FM can now also be received via Eutelsat W2.
- The Netherlands enjoyed an unprecedented number of Country single hits in 1998 at radio. LeAnn Rimes' "How Do I Live" and "Shania



Garth Brooks sold out a series of shows in Belfast, Northern Ireland faster than any artist in history, selling more than 35,000 tickets in four hours for the five dates. Trisha Yearwood opened the shows, following her successful stint of dates in England with labelmate Allison Moorer. left to right: Garth Brooks, Parlophone UK MD Keith Wozencroft and Trisha Yearwood. photo Roisin McMurray

Twain's "You're Still The One" both went to number one on the national airplay chart, eventually spending more than 10 weeks in the top 10. Other Nashville hits in the top 30 of both airplay and sales included the Mavericks' "Dance The Night Away", Ilse DeLange's "I'm Not So Tough".

- "You're Still The One" was the number-one airplay hit single of 1998 in the Netherlands.

#### **CMA AWARDS**

- This was the first year the Awards were broadcast throughout Scandinavia. Viewing figures were up by more than 15 percent over last year's broadcast in Finland and Denmark.
- Dutch network KRO broadcast an edit of the telecast 48 hours after the event in Nashville as part of a whole evening of Country programming.

#### **TELEVISION**

- Hip Dutch youth music channel TMF (The Music Factory) featured an hour and a half concert special on Ilse DeLange, its first ever of a Country artist.

#### **OTHER**

- Nine full-time Country radio stations are based in Australia, Brazil, Czech Republic, the Netherlands and the UK.
- 3,400 hours per week of Country Music are programmed in 31 countries outside North America.
- Country Radio Prague, a 24-hour Country radio station that reaches one-third of the Czech Republic. CRP is the Czech capital's most popular commercial station with an 18.5 percent market share.

Country Music Radio Europe is available in 32 countries from northern Europe to the border of Russia and northern Africa via satellite, reaching a potential audience of 6.2 million people.

- Trisha Yearwood's SONGBOOK: A COLLECTION OF HITS has been certified gold in Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Thailand. Her single "How Do I Live" hit number one on the pop charts in Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.
- Vince Gill's I STILL BELIEVE IN YOU album has sold 100,000 copies in Indonesia, spurred by the title track's use in a series of commercials.
- For the first time in four years, the CMA Awards was telecast in Japan on the WOWOW network. **CU**

horizon  
The sophomore jinx?

It's doubtful that

Lee Ann Womack has to worry about that. In September, she released her second album, *SOME THINGS I KNOW* on Decca Records, the former home to Patsy Cline, Brenda Lee and Loretta Lynn (one of Lee Ann's biggest supporters).



# Lee Ann

The saying goes, "You have a lifetime to make your first album, but so little time to make your second." Lee Ann Womack can attest to that. Her second album, *SOME THINGS I KNOW*, is proving to be as good, if not better, than the first.

"Unfortunately, you're usually a lot more busy when you're making the second one. Out of town a lot and that sort of thing. Thankfully, I have some great people involved in my career. My producer, Mark Wright, who's responsible for sounds of the album, and Frank Liddell, who is in the A&R department at Decca and is responsible for finding songs. They both do such a great job that I really relied heavily on them this time."

The radio climate for traditional Country artists is tough, but Lee Ann does not let herself get frustrated with that. She has had great success recently with radio. At press time the first single, "A Little Past Little Rock", climbed to the number-one spot on the Country charts, and recently earned her a Grammy nomination for Female Vocal Performance.

"I would be lying if I said, 'No, it's not difficult.' I mean, 'Never Again, Again' stopped right around 20, but it was a very successful song. It sold a lot of records for us. Hopefully, that's the one song in my career that I'll be able to hear 20 years from now, and those real avid fans will

remember that one. I make the records and then the label picks what they're going to put out as singles. Not that I don't have any say in it, but it's not my job to pick...it's their job. I think it's a lot easier for the label to get records played if they have a true artist on their hands rather than just a radio friendly kind of artist. At least for the long haul, and I'm definitely here for the long haul.

"They [radio] have their own job to do. There's nothing that I can do about that, and I'm not about to go chasing it. I don't think they want us to, as artists. I don't think that, at least the radio people that I have gotten to know (the program directors and station managers), they don't...I don't think they want us sitting up here just making stuff. I think they want us to make music, and then they're going to pick what they are going to play and what they are not going to play. I hope that what happens is if you give them something that they don't play one time that they are not unforgiving or they won't come back to play another one next time. We don't make money off that. We make money selling records. That's what I want to do."

One of the highlights of 1998 for Lee Ann was being nominated not only for the prestigious CMA Horizon Award, but also CMA's Female Vocalist of the Year.

"I'm not easily excited, I take things in stride, usually. I don't get real

**"That would bother me...if there was no place for traditional Country."**

nervous about things. I don't get real excited, but I get angry sometimes (laughs). I'm not saying I'm not a passionate person, which I definitely am, but that's probably the most exciting moment I've had since I started. When I got the call from Tom [Cheney], here at the management office [Erv Woolsey Co.], he said, 'You got two nominations.' I began to think...I figured Horizon, but what could the other one be. I waited all my life to be nominated for CMA Female Vocalist of the Year. I knew it was a shot in the pitch-black dark, but just to be nominated was wonderful. I was really just very, very happy to be there and be nominated along with those other women and the women that had won it and had been nominated before."

Lee Ann sees the state of Country Music as being healthy right now. She likes the mix of music coming out of Nashville.

"Style wise, I don't care how mixed up it gets. Bad music bothers me. No matter if it's real...I've heard real traditional Country Music just done bad, and that bothers me. I've heard pop-oriented Country Music done well that I like. To each his own. I don't want everybody doing real traditional stuff because that's what makes me different. It's my favorite kind of music. I would be real upset when the day comes, if the day were to ever come, that there was no place for it. I don't believe that's going to happen because it is an art form, if it's done right, I just think will always be there. That would bother me...if there was no place for traditional Country. But just because there's only a few spots for it...it doesn't bother me. I don't want everything tasting the same...all my food or all my music to sound the same. There are some great artists out there that are doing more pop-oriented stuff and that's fine. I really like the artists that can do it all. Like Vince Gill he can pull off a real pop sound and then come back and do a real Country thing. That's probably my favorite."

Lee Ann has always been the captain of her own ship. Now with two children and a rapidly moving successful career, she is trying to let those involved with her career take over some of the rein.

that kind of stuff whether it's a company (like this one) or at a label or whatever. That kind of stuff comes from the top down. Why was it set up that way? Because the big guy [George Strait] puts his family first. He certainly did spend some time in his earlier days paying a lot of dues. It is nice to see somebody that realizes, as much as he loves it, that it's not the most important thing in his life. So, yes, everybody got to enjoy the benefit of that tour."

It helps having other women and "moms on the road" like Faith Hill and Martina McBride to look to for support, helpful hints and advice in balancing it all, but Lee Ann finds that her most valued and best advice still comes from her favorite stars...her mom, grandmother and sister.

"I've gotten a little advice from different people. Basically I read about maybe things that Reba does or doesn't do or whatever. I'll ask like George's [Strait] wife [Norma], when she was out on the tour, because their child is remarkable. He is just phenomenal. They've done a great job with him. I try to look at that also and get some advice.

"But I try to take my mom's, who is the best mom in the world, and my grandmother and my sister's, who is an awesome wife and mother. I try to take my advice and things from them because they're not in the music business. They're very grounded. So I really try to borrow from them and try to make it work in what I do."

The success Lee Ann has achieved is no accident...she expects herself to reach goals that some people would never even imagine setting for themselves. Yet, after achieving what some may think impossible, she continues to look for more in herself.

"I set goals so high and so far beyond what I can reach and then push, push, push, myself and those around me. I push very hard. I expect the world from myself and the people around me. I know it's frustrating for them. It's frustrating for me. I expect [daughter] Aubrie to make straight A's in school. I expect the promotion department to take every song I give them and take it to number one. I just expect great things from people. I don't know that I'll ever reach all the goals that I

# Womack

"Thankfully, I have six to eight people involved in my career. From Frank [Liddell] and Mark [Wright] to Erv [Woolsey] and Tom [Cheney] here at the company and Joey Lee [Buddy Lee Attractions]. Some great people that are handling things for me at least until I can get my head back in the game. I have had to really slow down the last couple of months and take a step back and take another look at things. As much as I love music, as hard as I've worked and as long as I have waited for this, it is not the most important thing in our lives. In mine or in Erv's or in Mark Wright or Tony Brown's or whoever. Even though we are all eaten up with the business, it is not the most important thing in our lives. So I've really had to take some time away from that staying up all night and worrying about my career because I have other things to worry about right at this minute. Hopefully I will learn how to balance it all."

Lee Ann was honored to be asked to be a part of the George Strait stadium tour last summer. The tour made stops in cities across the country, but only on the weekends thus allowing the artists to either be home with their families during the week or free to work smaller venues. Lee Ann says she enjoyed being on tour with so many other artists that have families (Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, John Michael Montgomery and George Strait).

"Wonderful. On that tour...yeah, very family-oriented, and of course,

have for myself. I never want to leave Country Music. However, there are other kinds of music that I love too that I would like to dabble a little bit in and play with. I don't have any aspirations to act or anything like that. It's all about music for me. Growing up, I never thought much about having children or anything like being a mom. All I ever wanted to do is sing. Obviously, when I started having children, that changed.

Now that is my top priority. So I have a lot of personal goals that I want to achieve. If I can balance being a great mother and having a successful career and look back 20 or 30 years from now and say, 'Ok...I did that. I raised two great kids, smart and healthy and was able to sell a few records,' I think I will be satisfied. Today that's not good enough but years down the road it probably will be."

Lee Ann takes an opportunity to say something to her industry peers.....

"I certainly say thank you for the support I have gotten in the industry, it is so important to me. I'm not saying that I wouldn't like to sell multi-platinum every time out but you do make a choice and I did make a conscious choice to make music to please certain people. I certainly was aimed at this industry when I made my records and they [the industry] supported it and I'm certainly very thankful for that." **CU**

"I expect the world from myself and the people around me."

**Dixie Weathersby**



John Anderson, Mark Collie and Lee Roy Parnell played The Tarvin Brothers in an episode of "Walker, Texas Ranger" recently. Lila McCann also made her acting debut on the show in December. Pictured here (l to r) Parnell, Collie and Anderson.

Photo by Monty Britton/CBS

**congratulations:**

**Travis and Theresa Tritt** are expecting their second child in June. Tritt also recently appeared in the CBS-TV Movie of the Week, "Outlaw Justice".

**Tanya Tucker** is engaged to songwriter Jerry Laseter.

**Gary Allan**, one of PEOPLE magazine's "Sexiest Men Alive" is officially off the market. He recently married his girlfriend-model Danette Day, who is featured in his video for "I'll Take Today" and whom he met at one of his concerts over a year ago.

**Emily Erwin** of the Dixie Chicks has set a date for her wedding to singer **Charlie Robison**. It will be in the spring.

**lending a helping hand:**

**Joe Diffie's** "Country Steps in for First Steps" concert has been scheduled for February 14. He will anchor the benefit show and is scheduled to appear with **Michael Peterson**, **Collin Raye** and **Ricochet**. The show benefits several programs that help physically and mentally challenged kids.

**Tracy Byrd** helped to raise more than \$340,000 at a benefit for former world champion bullrider **Jerome Davis** who was paralyzed in a bullriding accident. At the live silent auction one of the highest selling items was a hunting trip with Tracy that netted \$20,000.

**LeAnn Rimes** spent the day with a group of disabled children from the LA Therapeutic Center, an organization that is a very special cause to the Los Angeles Dodgers Dream Foundation. She worked with former Dodger manager **Tommy LaSorda** to teach the kids how to play softball, and they enjoyed ice cream and hot dogs together. Highlights were featured on the "Oprah Winfrey Show". Oprah's Angel Network arranged for LeAnn's participation.

**making milestones:**

**Garth Brooks** is already thinking toward the year 2000. He has conquered the arena tour of music history, and now he is checking out the possibility of a stadium tour in the new millennium.

The mayor of Ashland, KY proclaimed Tuesday, November 24 as "Billy Ray Cyrus Day" and presented him with a key to the city. The mayor of Flatwoods, KY declared Billy Ray Cyrus Blvd., formerly KY. 693. In addition the American Dairy Association ads touting milk with famous faces sporting "Milk Mustaches" announced a survey that **Billy Ray Cyrus** was voted the most-popular of the campaign.

**Neal McCoy** and **The Warren Brothers** both recently made their debut at the Grand Ole Opry.

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 Design: EVAMARIE OGLANDER  
 of McConnell & Assoc.  
 Separations/Film: COMMERCIAL  
 ENGRAVING  
 Printing: HARRIS PRESS

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# next month



**Steve Wariner**



**Gary Burr**



**The Wilkinsons**

# Close

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## cma events

### February

1-2 Board Meeting/ The Luxury Collection Hotel / Houston, TX

### April

29-30 Board Meeting / The Palace / New York, N.Y.

### June

14-19 1999 International Country Music Fan Fair / TN State Fairgrounds / Nashville, TN

### July

22-23 Board Meeting / Hotel Monaco / Seattle, WA

## datebook

### February

5-March 21 International Country and Western Festival 1999 / Schutzenhaus Albisguetli / Aurich / contact Albi Matter at (41) 1-461-00-66 fax; (41) 1-462-70-30

### March

10-13 30th Annual Country Radio Seminar / Nashville Convention Center / Nashville, TN

Don't forget CMA's website at [www.countrymusic.org](http://www.countrymusic.org)

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CLOSE UP MAGAZINE (ISSN 0896-372X) IS THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION, INC., ONE MUSIC CIRCLE SOUTH, NASHVILLE, TN 37203-4312, (615) 244-2840. AVAILABLE TO CMA MEMBERS ONLY. CLOSE UP'S SUBSCRIPTION PRICE OF \$25 PER YEAR IS INCLUDED IN MEMBERSHIP DUES. PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO CMA MEMBERSHIP, ONE MUSIC CIRCLE SOUTH, NASHVILLE, TN 37203.



COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

FOR INFORMATION ON CMA EVENTS, CALL (615) 244-2840; FAX (615) 726-0314. [www.countrymusic.org](http://www.countrymusic.org).

Recently at the ASAP Nashville office a party was held to honor Jess Leary and Craig Wiseman for their recent number-one "Where The Green Grass Grows" by Curb artist Tim McGraw, published by Almo/Irving Music, Daddy Rabbit Music, Famous Music and Song Matters, Inc. Pictured (l to r) are: Famous Music's Pat Finch, CMA Executive Director Ed Benson, Dong Matters Robbin Palmer, Leary, McGraw, Wiseman, ASCAP Vice President Connie Bradley and David Conrad of Almo/Irving Music.

