son bowed out at Liberty Records to concentrate on general professional manager duties with Central Songs, Inc. in Hollywood. Liberty prez Al Bennett thanked Joe for developing labels C&W department. Opry execs grabbed Capitol Records' red-hot Sonny James as its 53rd star act. Claude King's Columbia discing "Wolverton Mountain", penned by Merle Kilgore, finally dropped out of the C&W charts after a 27 week reign including five weeks on the Number One throne. It came heartbreakingly close to the magic million circle just barely missed. Bill Mack's "Ballad Of Jed Clampett" theme later became a Columbia hit single for F&S... Pee Pee King blew out the candles on an anniversary cake marking 25 years of C&W handling.

CMA uncorked a TV survey of U-S and Canada showing 172 stations with live or canned C&W shows; 86 with Gospel Music shows... Syd Nathan snagged for his King label, a big C&W star who he had discovered years before—Hawkshaw Hawkins.

*October AFTER A decade with talent boss Hubert Long, Capitol Records star Faron Young inked personal management papers with the Shelley Snyder Talent Agency and moved to Mercury Records... Pro's-pro Buck Ram, longtime friend of C&W, opened offices in Music City... Mercury's Leroy VanDyke, with a world-wide 2-million seller in "Walk On By", joined America's most exclusive C&W cast—the Grand Ole Opry.

*November C&W A&R director Joe Alli-