

A gospel-music world view

sgn **Scoops** digital

July 2011 Branson Gospel Music Revival Program & Print Edition

CHASING GOD'S DREAMS:

Rod & Kelly Burton on the
HEART of Branson GMR

ALSO INSIDE:
Diamond Award Winners

New music:
Beyond the Ashes

Dino & the Ozark Area:
God's Restoration After
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SGN Scoops exists to showcase what is distinguished, intriguing, and real about southern & country gospel music. We seek with our stories to shed light on people fulfilling a call to minister - to make or support the making of music that excites an audience and glorifies God. And we seek to do it interactively.

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not so greenish me

farewell from editor-in-chief
kelly capriotti burton

reality. Having achieved an average monthly readership of 20,000 while offering completely free and refreshingly diverse content, *SGN Scoops* has become a new face of southern gospel – and gospel world view – journalism.

But like all journeys, sometimes the waters get rocky and a new captain needs to take the helm. And so it is here. With my family's move from Chicago to South Carolina, a new job for me at a family theater, and God's whispers in my ear becoming shouts that it is time to narrow my focus, I am stepping down as Editor-in-Chief of *SGN Scoops* after this month's issue.

My time here has been amazingly rewarding. Among other favorite moments, Scoops offered me the chance to interview and feature Joe Bonsall and the Oak Ridge Boys, to put forth a true work of the heart with our "Gift of a Second Chance" December 2009 issue, to pay tribute to SG media pioneer Susan Unthank after her passing in January 2011, to work alongside Sandi Duncan-Clark and Lorraine Walker, whose love for SG music shines through all their words, to showcase my friend Tom and his refreshing take on navigating entertainment as a Christian, to meet people who will be friends for life...including my dear friend Ms. Lou Hildreth, whose award to me at this year's Diamond Awards will always be treasured.

Like Ms. Lou, it is my hope, far beyond *Scoops* or any other job I do, that workers in the gospel music industry will put aside agendas and competitions and unite for the cause of Christ. We all have to do our best to make a living, but let us never forget that He came to give LIFE, and that should be the focus of the words we put forth.

I still believe that gospel music has many stories to tell, and I am proud that we featured stories not just from those singing to big crowds, but to those making a difference in the place God gave them to minister. Thank you for the support you have given to a magazine run by an SG unknown. I will continue to work on the outskirts of this industry to, as my friend Sue Duffield says, support the industry! Time is running short, and I want to work the harvest in the best ways I can.

May God bless each writer for and reader of *SGN Scoops*, those making the music, and those who need to hear it most. xo~Kelly

Two years ago, I was offered a dream position as a magazine editor. Publisher Rob Patz was taking over southern gospel's first all-digital magazine and had a vision for where it could go next. With his blessing and the help of some great writers, that vision became a



Receiving the Lou Hildreth Award.
Photo by Emma Carter



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Desire for Revival



Love, Life, & Legends with Ms. Lou:

"The Spotlight is on the Message"-- theme of the BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC REVIVAL-- expresses the deepest desire of my heart. An enormous effort has gone into making this event successful, and I applaud Rob Patz, Rod & Kelly Burton, and every worker for bringing it together.

The location at Tri-Lakes Center adds to the atmosphere of love for the Lord and love for each other. Tri-Lakes Worship leader, Allen Asbury, is adept at creating the right spirit. I heard Allen a few years ago in the role of Simon Peter at Branson's Passion play *The Promise*. In 2007, our paths crossed again at a Gaither taping in Nashville.

The DIAMOND AWARDS are always an exciting part of this gathering of artists, fans, media, and industry. I have been privileged to present the LOU HILDRETH AWARD at the Diamonds for many years. It is an industry award with the recipient chosen by me, and the award is given to a company or individual

who is making an extraordinary and significant contribution to gospel music.

Last year, Bill Traylor, CEO Mansion Entertainment Inc., received the award. The 2009 award was accepted by Mary Fay Jackson on behalf of "Family Friendly Entertainment," an all-gospel TV network. In 2009, we also gave an award to Allen Smith, previous owner of *SGN Scoops Magazine*.

This year, we are proud to present the 2011 "Lou Hildreth Award" to Rob Patz, President & CEO Coastal Media Group, for his outstanding contribution to gospel music. Also receiving an award is Kelly Burton, Editor of *SGN Scoops Digital Magazine*, for her commitment to excellence in digital publishing.

Howard and I always feel at home in Branson. Dino and Cheryl Kartsonakis (above) treat us like family, and we love them. SueAnn and Richard Clark make sure we are comfortable. An interview with Ken and Jean Grady (next page, top right) for "Gospel Music Today" is a fun part of our



visit to Branson. We see our Gaither Homecoming friends, Mike Allen and Ann Downing, who are always delightful. We love being with the many precious friends and basking in the sweet spirit of revival. Hearing Christie Sutherland (previous page, bottom), and other fabulous young artists, using their talents in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ is the ultimate confirmation of our journey.



We always enjoy doing TV interviews with Mary Fay, Family Friendly E, and working with Mike Culpepper, Pepper Productions (left), at various events. Our DVD series *Lou Hildreth & Friends* taped at Branson in 2009 and 2010 captures this very special fellowship and love. **We pray the spirit of the BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC REVIVAL will spread across America and beyond!!** Contact us: gosplvideo@aol.com www.louhildreth.com 🇮🇹

It is the Lord's desire- and ours here at *SGN Scoops Digital*- that you become one of His followers. God has promised eternity in Heaven with Him for all those who accept Him as their Personal Savior.

Admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Believe that, because of your sin, you deserve to spend eternity in Hell. However, Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross of Calvary to pay the debt for our sin. He then rose from the dead three days later, proving His victory over death, Hell, and sin. He offers this as a free gift to all who will accept it in faith.

Romans 5:8- But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us....Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Call upon Jesus and ask Him to come into your heart, forgive your sins, and make you one of His children.

Romans 10:9- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved... Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him. Then, you must believe this in your heart as well.

If you have any questions about salvation, or if you just prayed to receive Christ, please e-mail us at sgnscoops@gmail.com. Or here at the Branson Gospel Music Revival, speak to any of our artists. We'd love to rejoice with you! God bless you!

What Would Lewis Do?

Dawn Treader Treads Clumsily Where Lewis Tread Well



I finally got a chance to see the latest Chronicles of Narnia film, *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. The good news is that some of the most important scenes are there, rather than being cut or radically altered. The bad news is that some persistent mistakes are made again, and overall the filmmakers continue to show a lack of faith in the source material.

Mind you, I'm not one of those people who says that everything in an adaptation has to be exactly like the book. Film and books are two different mediums. But I do wonder why Walden Media wanted to make these films so badly if they don't seem to respect the material very much. (Of course, "money" was undoubtedly a big reason. But don't they at least want to try to make the fans happy to guarantee box-office success?)

The newest movie adapts the third of Lewis's *Narnia* books (third in published order, as it should be—but that's a topic for another day). Lucy and Edmund Pevensie are once again brought

into Narnia, this time with their obnoxious cousin, Eustace Scrubb. The Pevensies reunite with Prince Caspian, who wants to find the missing lords of Narnia who were banished during the wicked rule of Miraz, Caspian's predecessor. Along the way, Eustace learns valuable lessons and ultimately is redeemed through what he learns in this faraway land.

So far, the plot of the movie resembles the book pretty closely. But now, a new plot element is introduced: the "mist." There's a green mist that goes around consuming people. But apparently it doesn't kill them; it just kidnaps them and takes them to the Dark Island. What exactly the mist is made of, what force is behind it, and what its objective is in kidnapping people are never revealed. I couldn't help but think while watching these scenes that, apparently, the filmmakers just wanted to make sure that the Smoke Monster from TV's *Lost* continues to get good paying work.

Admittedly, there is a challenge in adapting *Dawn Treader*: mainly, that the story in the book doesn't have a strong "through line" that works so well in cinema. There's no time limit by which Caspian must rescue the Seven Lords, and if he doesn't rescue them, there's no danger to Narnia. I can see why the screenwriters felt the need to add some greater sense of danger. But this particular subplot requires the addition of three characters that are nowhere to be found in the book. Indeed, I would estimate that roughly 50 percent of the movie focuses on the new plot. Even though I've read the book multiple times, I had no idea where the story was going for much of its runtime. That's a problem.

Making matters worse is that the "mist" frequently reveals itself by taking the form of the White Witch. (Whether or not the Witch's spirit is actually behind the apparition is left open to question.) The Witch returns to tempt Edmund with making him king, just as she did in the first book. There are several problems with her temptation: Edmund already is king of Narnia; as a disembodied mist, the "Witch" has no way of controlling anything politically (and Edmund undoubtedly knows this); and Edmund overcame this particular temptation two movies ago.

I realize that the writers want to give a storyline for growth (that is, an arc) for each of the main heroic characters. But to have Edmund keep going over and over the same temptation in

every film weakens him as a character. In the books, he never considered betrayal after *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He's known as Edmund the Just. In the films, he could be called Edmund the Petty.

The filmmakers seem to think of the White Witch as Lewis' "Voldemort." In other words, to their minds, she's supposed to be the villain that keeps coming back, like Voldemort in the *Harry Potter* stories. It's as if they think that Lewis made a mistake in not including a recurring villain in the first place, and that the story needs to be "fixed." But, based on box-office receipts, audiences now perceive of the Narnia movies as cheap *Harry Potter* knock-offs and don't waste their time because of the redundancy of the reappearing villain. Did they ever think maybe it wasn't a mistake on Lewis' part after all?

Also, having the White Witch repeatedly return undermines Aslan's victory over her in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The power of that character is significantly diminished as a result.

As for the other characters, Lucy fares little better than Edmund. In the book, she undergoes a temptation at a magician's island regarding becoming more beautiful. Since girls and women constantly struggle with their appearance, this story element is a believable and touching one. However, the filmmakers stretch out this one moment from the story to last the entire length of the movie. Movie Lucy is endlessly obsessed with her appearance, meaning that a wonderful, pure-hearted character has been turned into an extremely shallow character. (Despite the way Lucy is written, though, Georgie Henley continues to imbue her performance with the right sense of wonder and sweetness. Henley seems to understand the character better than the writers.)

Soon, yet another plot element is introduced: In order to defeat the mist, the "seven swords of the seven lords" need to be laid at Aslan's table. Again, anyone looking for this storyline in the book will

be sorely disappointed. Methinks the swords were included so the toy manufacturers would have something more to sell. Get your Seven Swords today while supplies last!

Multiple people have said to me that



What if people never give the books a chance because of the insipid plotlines and banal "Americanized" dialogue of the movies?

it doesn't matter if the Narnia movies are radically changed from their source material, since the release of the movies might bring people to the books. But what if the opposite happens? What if people never give the books a chance because of the insipid plotlines and banal "Americanized" dialogue of the movies?

Before I'm too harsh, I must note that the two most important bits of dialogue from the book are included in the film. The one bit is where a recently transformed character says that he/she was incapable of the transformation him/herself; only Aslan could provide the personal transformation necessary. The other is when Aslan tells Lucy that she will meet him again in her own world: "That is the whole reason you have brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little while, you might know me better there."

Still, let's hope that the next film (if there is one) manages to treat the series with more respect. Walden Media needs to get rid of Christopher Marcus and Stephen McFeely, the screenwriters who have been with the *Narnia* films since the beginning, but admitted on a podcast for *Creative Screenwriting* magazine that they don't care for much of what C.S. Lewis wrote in the books. They seem to agree with the series' previous director, Andrew Adamson, that Aslan is not a representation of Jesus (as opposed to leaving it open to audience interpretation). They're the ones who changed Mr. Beaver's line in the first story from referring to Aslan as the "Great Lion, the Son of the Emperor Over the Sea" to referring to Aslan as "the top geezer." I wish Marcus and McFeely well on other projects, but these two clearly don't belong in Narnia.

After the box-office disappointment of the last two films, Walden Media is now shopping around the prequel story *The Magician's Nephew* to Hollywood. (Unfortunately, that story also contains the White Witch, but this time at least, it's what Lewis originally wrote.) One can only hope that the next set of filmmakers will be people who love the story, and actually want to make an honest-to-goodness Narnia movie rather than just a generic *Lord of the Rings* Lite.

Tom Holste lives in the suburbs of Chicago, but is willing to fly to L.A. at a moment's notice to join in story meetings for *The Magician's Nephew*. Hey, a guy can dream...



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Frequent television guests, Lynda & Bud Lynn, are Country Gospel Music Association's International Media Personalities of the Year for 3 consecutive years. They also received a Publisher's Award from SGN Scoops Magazine.

Lynda & Bud with Gregg Busch honor the Purple Heart Recipients at Branson's Chateau on the Lake. Branson cares for our Veterans. Lynda & Bud performed Lynda's song *One Voice* at the Missouri state capital in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Photo George Kurlin

See Lynda, Bud, & friends at Booth 59



Dr. Lynda Lynn is a 14 time ASCAP award winning songwriter. Her latest CD, *Reach Out For Him*, features 16 Branson artists and 19 songs. Barbara Fairchild, Randy Brooks, Andrea Blackwood Carter, Glory-Anne Prophet and more. Gene Higgins' Powersource Magazine, Nashville, listed *Little Boys & Little Toys* by Barbara Fairchild at #7.



An Ozark winter wonderland at Chapelwoods, this was built to make a difference as Rod Burton stated. Rod chose this as an image for the front cover of his new CD titled *The Difference*. Come see and pray. God will "God Zap" you as you enter through the door of this quaint little chapel.

Lynda has co-authored a book with her son Rory titled, *The Turning Point, A Teenager's Rebellion*. The book focuses on trusting God to bring families with troubled teens through rebellious times allowing family restoration.



The Power of GODPRAISE

As the 2011 Branson Gospel Music Revival begins, I can't help but feel excitement and anticipation of what God has in store for each artist, minister, fan and attendee as we gather from all places near and far to praise and worship the true, living God!

BGMR 2011 brings an awesome opportunity to witness the workings of God in the lives of those who choose to GODPRAISE as a way of life, to make every moment of their day revolve around giving God the honor and glory He so richly deserves.

If ever there was someone who understood the POWER OF GODPRAISE, it was King David. His exploits are legendary, as are his weaknesses and failings, but through it all, David consistently GODPRAISED and served the Lord he loved so much. One need only to study Psalm to fully embrace the extraordinary way David GODPRAISED in all times! His battles were God's battles, his strengths were God's strengths and in all of his glorious victories, David gave God the credit and GODPRAISE all the way, no matter the circumstance!

Perhaps even more extraordinary were the ways David would GODPRAISE when things weren't going as he desired. David knew GODPRAISE was a way of life, not something to do when God has richly blessed and forget when things were going bad. If nothing else, David knew GODPRAISING when he didn't FEEL like would bring extraordinary blessing into his life, and this was proven time and time again!

We, as human beings, will at times attribute God's goodness to our circumstance, but God is His same GREAT self no matter my circumstance! God's goodness is not contingent upon my circumstance! He is perfect every moment of every day!

The theme of my life over the last 11 years has become to GODPRAISE! It is in this time that I have been diagnosed with four different cancers; pancreatic, melanoma, thyroid and squamous cell carcinoma of the tongue which had spread to my lymph nodes. I know what despair is. I also know disappointment, hardship, pain and just about anything you can think of when it comes to the Adversaries assaults. But I know, as David did, the power of making GODPRAISE a part of every moment in my life and harnessing the awesome power that only God can provide. He alone is my redeemer and shepherd!

The Adversary will talk us into defeat when he can. It is really his only weapon. Talk. Lies. Deceit. Ultimately, his untruthful, foul ways must pass by God, who is more than his match and will forever have THE LAST WORD in the lives of those who belong to HIM. Satan has NO DOMINION where the Blood of the Lamb has been applied!

He will, without doubt, rear his ugly head at some point during this time of Revival

and attempt to discourage, disappoint and destroy. In each moment where he seeks to disrupt, let us answer with GODPRAISE in our music and behaviors. In this way, God will be glorified and the Enemy scattered, all in one action! Certainly, God deserves nothing less than this, for this is HIS TIME!

GODPRAISE opens the powers of God in your life! EXPOSE THE LIES OF THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS TO THE LIGHT OF TRUTH THAT ONLY THE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE CAN PROVIDE and do it with GODPRAISE!!!

Let us each dedicate our time at Branson Gospel Music Revival 2011 to lavishing our Savior with GODPRAISE, both in our music worship, ministry opportunities and relationships with one another. **May the world see Jesus in us** and in each service in the great days ahead. Imagine what God can do in a REVIVAL full of His servants who seek to do nothing but worship, praise and adore Him as only He is worthy of! The promise is enticing and the possibilities are AMAZING!

Embracing this years REVIVAL offers each of us the opportunity to demonstrate a servant's heart and a worshippers mindset. Let us join together as one body, the body of Christ to share the gospel in song and bear witness of our living, miracle-making God!

GODPRAISE worked for David, it has worked and is working for me and it can work in your life, as well. The time is now. Branson Gospel Music REVIVAL is here! GODPRAISE AND BE BLESSED!

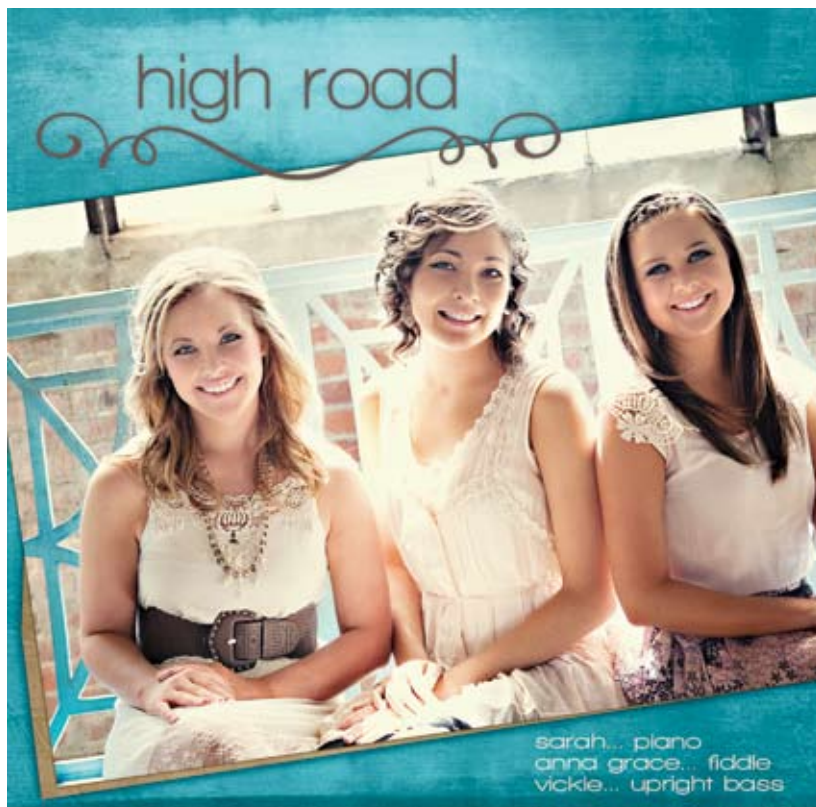
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‘This is our church.’

Sandi Duncan Clark talks to founders Rod and Kelly Burton about the **HEART** of **BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC REVIVAL**

On June 28th through July 1st, 2011, artists and fans will make their way to the Tri-Lakes Center in Branson, Missouri for the third annual Branson Gospel Music Revival. This event, a celebration of the Gospel in music, testimonies, and fellowship, is a wonderful place for a great vacation.

As a Christian, when an idea or event comes as a dream that miraculously materializes, you know that God is at work! In late 2008 the Branson Gospel Music Revival was an idea, an inspiration to bring artists together to enjoy the fellowship of each other’s ministry and to share their message with fans. Branson, Missouri was a logical location, since it is the music capital of the Ozarks with lots of activities available. As always when God is working His Divine will, the opposition gets heavy and yet the event turned into a great success.

Rod and Kelly Burton are Vice President of Artists Relations and CEO respectively, of YMR Music, which is the parent company of Branson Gospel Music Revival (a company they began and incorporated for the purpose of producing BGMR). The Burtons enjoy sharing their excitement of these past two years of revival in Branson and their anticipation for this year’s event. We recently spent a few hours sharing their excitement.

Kelly, who handles the operational duties and a lot of the little details, said, “That first year was a huge learning experience.” She stated, “Our little girls were both under two years old when Rod came home from work one day and said, ‘We’re having a gospel convention. In Branson.’ I asked him immediately if he’d gone crazy. We’d never even been to Branson before! But we’d been through enough together at that point that I knew to trust what God had laid on his heart.”

Within a week of that conversation, a website was up and artists began signing on. Kelly recalls that 2nd Generation was the first one, and Brenda Denney of the group was on the phone immediately, asking how they could help. “A lot of loops were thrown our way preparing for that first year,” Kelly says. “I can remember moments when I sent certain emails out, how nervous I was. I also remember a day Rod and I looked across our dining room ‘office’ at each other to decide whether to carry on or cancel the event altogether.”

Needless to say, the event went on as planned. The couple recounts that God took care of each need and problem, and as the event approached, key people from the Branson area were put in their paths and everything just fell in place. “Those four days of concerts and worship in 2009 were hectic but God was good, and we were blessed,” Rod said.





Opposite page: Rod and Kelly on the final evening in 2010. Clockwise from top: Ann Downing ministers; several artists celebrated birthdays booth-style in 2010; Jeff Duffield (at piano) plays a Diamond Awards selection for Mike Allen, David Cook, Wendy Word, and the Wilsons (Stone Carter on drums); Kelly and Rod try to remain side by side throughout the event, but let friend Kenny Bishop in for a photo; the Burtons' teenage daughter Paige and Emma Carter of the Jay Stone Singers are two of the many family volunteers who serve at the event; *Photos contributed by Julie Groves and Sue Duffield.*

One of most important pieces of BGMR is the fellowship the artists share. Rod said, "We (the artists) are all in the ministry and we are focused on sharing the Gospel of Christ with our audience. Sometimes we feel so much pressure for the travel and the details, that we forget we need the fellowship of others in the ministry to recharge our batteries."

2010 was even more of a blessing. Kelly commented, "I think God brought together the artists and fans that needed BGMR most. Our hearts are focused on the ministry and seeing people touched with the message of God's love. I think last year, God brought like-minded people together for His glory and honor."

Rod Burton shared, "I remember last year following one of the performances of Beyond the Ashes, I really felt the need to have an altar call. I looked out over the audience and saw hands raised in praise and tears falling. Then we saw artists coming from backstage doing the same thing, and I realized more than ever, *this* is what it's all about. Kelly and I are not pastors, but at that moment we knew that as long as we have this event, this is our church."

He continued, "I think I can speak for other artists when I say that last year they didn't come just to sing... they came not only to *be* a blessing, but to *receive* a blessing from others who minister. I know that's what Kelly and I felt."

Chris Unthank has been the event's publicist since the beginning, and he has recently taken over the popular website AbsolutelyGospel.com (formerly SoGoNews.com). For the past two years, Branson Gospel Music Revival has won the website's acclaimed "Pacesetter of the Year" award. Chris says, "The event has been up against real industry mainstays for the past two years. Rod and Kelly actually introduced themselves to the audience when accepting the award," he laughs. "But something about Branson GMR draws people to it, and I think it's the atmosphere of real worship and friendship. There is very little stress and people have fun. It's what artists need and what audiences want to see."

Kelly and Rod are humble but grateful for the event's success. "We don't have any grand plan to grow into something bigger," Rod says. "This is just us, our family, expanding in a way we never could have dreamed. We want the time in Branson each year to grow deeper in significance and higher to the throne of grace. We do marketing and try to get new people involved, of course, but our worry is not how many are in the seats; it's about pointing the people in the seats to the love of Jesus."

This year the Branson Gospel Music Revival dates are June 28th through July 1st. Activities begin on Tuesday, June 28th with a 10:30 AM Chapel Service. The first concert of the day is a matinee from noon till 4 PM, and features a number of artists, plus The Heirwave Radio Showcase. At evening concert

begins at 6 PM and climaxes at 10:30.

The same schedule follows each day with the matinee on Wednesday featuring the Piano Praise Showcase. Mansion Entertainment Showcase and a one-hour set by acclaimed pianist Dino is a highlight of the Wednesday evening concert.

On Thursday, Mansion Entertainment's Pathway Records will sponsor a Talent Search at 10

AM. The Matinee concert begins at 11 AM, featuring a "New Faces Showcase." This showcase will be followed by a concert, then a break at 4PM to allow for preparations for the evening awards show and concert. The highlight of Thursday evening, June 30 at 6 PM will be the SGN SCOOPS Diamond Awards. Following the awards, fans will be treated to more great Gospel music.

BGMR comes to a close with a full day on Friday. The matinee features the Albert Brumley Jr. Sing-Along, plus a full concert. The evening concert brings to a close another exciting Branson Gospel Music Revival.


BGMR recently announced that Allen Asbury, current worship leader of Branson's Tri-Lakes Church, will be the worship leader each evening of this year's Branson Gospel Music Revival. Asbury has a number of accolades in the Christian music industry and has three nationally released recordings to his credit.

Branson Gospel Music Revival is supported by a board of directors and advisors, and the artist application review is conducted by the Artist Advisory Board, composed of a number of well-known Gospel music personalities. These include soloist Kenny Bishop, Brenda Denny (2nd Generation), Dusty Wells, (Word Entertainment), Johnathan Bond, (Young Harmony), Bobby Carter, (Jay Stone Singers), Anthony Facello, (Beyond The Ashes), Jimmy McMillan, (McMillan and Life), Rob Patz, (SGM Radio & SGN Scoops), and longtime friend to gospel music, Wayne Deering.

Around 85 artists have signed on to participate in the 2011 Revival at press time, including HisSong, Ann Downing, The Gree-sons, Mystery Men, Mike Allen, Shannon Bunch, Praise Inc, and The Williamsons, as well as dozens of rising and new regional groups. Kelly comments, "As someone who married into southern gospel - never having heard much before my late 20s, I have found that the most

joy I get out of a concert is when I'm listening to people I know and love. Our event gives the audience a real chance to know the artists, and it became clear in just the second year that people had discovered new favorites, folks they might not have heard at other events or even on the radio. As a friend to so many 're-gional' artists in particular, it's personally very gratifying to me to see people finding their niche audience and being able to be a blessing to specific needs."

An Ohio church publication referred to the event as "known for a politics-and-competition-free time of fellowship and ministry for artists, those on the national plain as well as the regional." Kelly and Rod agree that will always be their vision. While they emphasize quality in the groups sharing the stage, they also place much of the effort on the spiritual tone of the event. In 2010, they began a weekly "virtual prayer meeting" on the event's Facebook page. This year, they expanded on that idea by adding a prayer team before and during the event as well as an 80 Days of Prayer Countdown, where specific needs and praises are shared.

Rod Burton commented, "The anticipation is rising the closer we get to the event. We look forward to being able to worship, pray, fellowship, and socialize with our fellow singers and musicians. We also enjoy meeting the fans who truly appreciate and enjoy our music. It's a lot of hard work but the benefits are many and often not seen in this lifetime." 

This is just us, our family, expanding in a way we never could have dreamed. We want the time in Branson each year to grow deeper in significance and higher to the throne of grace. - Rod Burton



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JR Richards &
Gold Harbor
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Praise HIM, Southern Style

By Lorraine Walker

Did you know we were created to praise our Creator? Praise is what Christians are called to do, whether we sing for a living, flip burgers or push paper. We praise God by our words, our songs, the way we live and the way we serve Him. Worship music in our churches generally invites the singer to praise God directly from their heart to His. Southern Gospel artists praise God as they proclaim to their audiences what He has done. Gold Harbor is taking the sound of Southern, mixing it with the vertical theme of worship music and creating what they call "Southern Praise and Worship", the title of their soon-to-be-completed CD.

"Southern Praise and Worship is Praise Music bent over to Southern Gospel by arrangement, to bridge standard 'southern' and contemporary praise and worship," says Jimmy 'JR' Richards of Gold Harbor. "[This creates] a genre that both types of gospel music fans will worship with and enjoy."

Southern artists have been performing Praise and Worship music for quite some time and find that it is effective in introducing audiences to a Southern flavor while still keeping them in their worship comfort zone. Canada's Torchmen Quartet recorded a full CD entitled 'Southern Gospel Praise and Worship'

in 2008, taking current praise songs and coloring them with the Torchmen's southern-country style. Southern Gospel is not as generally well-received in Canada as it is in some areas of the United States, so artists of this genre have been singing songs from other styles such as Contemporary Christian and Alternative Worship for many years, in order to reach a broader audience.

Such is the case for some areas of the United States as well, even in the traditional 'Bible-belt' areas. Richards says, "In the south-east, I have been to so many churches who don't care for Southern Gospel or Contemporary Praise and Worship. I know this differs in some churches and parts of the country. But you know what? God gave the old and the new songs. So it's my calling and my passion to bridge the two together for all Christians to worship, sing and pray with. Southern Praise and Worship



I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

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(SPW) is new only in name. I have heard so many groups taking a chance to record this type of song and praying that the powers that be will play it. The thing they haven't realized is that they are a big part in helping start this new genre."

Whether this is a completely new genre or just another of the many facets of Southern Gospel, it can be said that Southern Gospel songwriters have been praising God from the beginning, whether it is praise directed to Him or to others about Him. As Christians we are called to "proclaim the praises of Him who called [us] out of a darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, New King James Version, Holy Bible). We were created to worship Him. J.R. Richards explains his definition of Praise and Worship.

"It's that communication with God, whether it be through a song or in that private closet of prayer, where we find our soul crying out for blessing, strength or direction," says Richards. "Praise and Worship in numbers, when we sing, seems to explode His spirit to unending heights in our bodies and our lives." To Richards, then, Praise and Worship is a vertical conversation from man to God. Gold Harbor, however, does not limit itself to this type of music.

"You will find that Gold Harbor is a group of many styles from several genres of music," says Richards. "Worship has been and will always be first and foremost with anyone who sings in this group."

"Concerning the praise music we do, most of the songs southern gospel groups or audiences have never heard and not every song we do fits this new genre of music. Holy Rain and Children of God were written by David M Edwards or Regi Stone. Holy Rain for example was the 2006 Choral song of the year. I have gone through several hundred songs to pick out material that fits what we are doing." Richards' goal is "to produce something new and something spiritual that has excellence in quality." Children of God is the current Gold Harbor single, sung by Christy Tullus and Noel Walters.

Richards has had many vocalists join Gold Harbor since 2008. Jim Peretic, Scotty Aldridge, Noel Walters

and Darlene Chapman are alumni of the group. Richards continues listing the roster of singers.

"In 2010, Michelle Knight and David Folenius came to Gold Harbor for a live digital video recording at the Opryland Hotel, ten days before the great flood of Nashville," says Richards. "Why are so many personnel changes happening? Well, it seems that God wanted me to know that with each change of music style, singers would probably change to keep in or

stay out of their comfort zone... Gold Harbor is not your traditional group that you see the same people over and over from year to

year." Gold Harbor also does not travel as many miles and play as many venues as most Southern Gospel artists.

"At this point in my life, I just want us to do specific dates rather than being gone 200 days a year. I already did that!" says Richards, who has been singing since 1966. "I go to Christ Church in Nashville and when I'm at home I sing with the Christ Church Choir. There is a rich talent pool for me to pick from for Gold Harbor."

A Christian gifted in leading public worship should also be a private worshipper of the Almighty God. Richards says, "My favorite way to worship is to find a private place and read His Word. I exchange my spirit to Him and for Him to recharge mine every day. I like to be in the bus sometimes alone or when everyone is asleep and just thank Him for letting me do what I do."

"Without His blessing I would surely wilt in spirit and be lost forever. It is not so important what I have or have not done but [what is important is] what Jesus has blessed me to do through the years."

Whether JR Richards and Gold Harbor are truly introducing a completely new genre of music may be up for debate, but what is certain is that Gold Harbor is continuing the tradition of Southern Gospel by proclaiming the Lord's praises. In an era where churches become divided over music styles, Richards is using his talents and giftings to bridge the gap and invite all listeners to the Throne of the Almighty. In the presence of God, all any of us can do is Praise Him! ■■■

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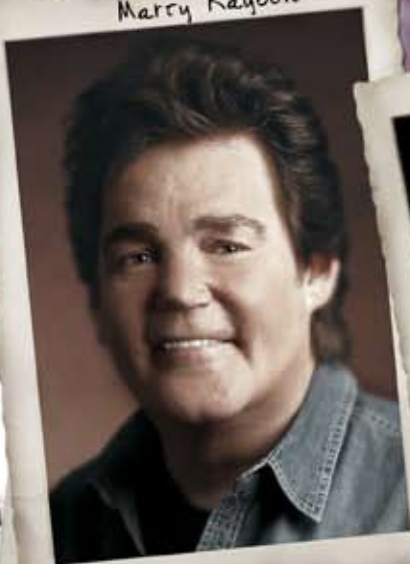
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TOUGH TIMES.



Joshua Heston & Dale Grubaugh of StateoftheOzarks.net look at God's restoration after the area's devastating floods.

The old White River Hills of the Ozarks Mountains are better known to most folks simply as "Branson Country." The area is rugged, covered in dense, hardwood forests. The mountain ridges are traced with intricate caverns. This region is graced with great history. This was the land of the Caddo and the Osage, both Native American civilizations of which we know far too little. Spanish explorers pressed inward to the White River as early as 1540. The Delaware peoples were pushed here by federal relocation early in the 19th century. The Cherokee would follow in the 1830s.

Through all the years, one constant remains: the rough, hardscrabble mountains. These are the mountains Harold Bell Wright described when he wrote, "Take 40 acres o' flat now an' hit's jest a 40, but you take 40 acres o' this here Ozark country and God 'Imighty only knows how much 'twould be if hit war rolled out flat. 'Tain't no wonder 't all, God rested when he made these here hills; he jes naturally had 't quit, fer he done his beateenest an' war plumb gin out."

It is a wild country, pretending hard to be tamed. These days, the tourist and music industry overshadows the wildness. The White River has been dammed in four locations, creating Beaver Lake (in northwest Arkansas), Table Rock Lake (just west of Branson), Lake Taneycomo (which winds its way next to Branson) and Bull Shoals Lake (which stretches to the east into central Arkansas). Flood control is important. For, you see, flash floods in these old hills are not the same as floods in the flatlands. Here, the soil is thin. A pleasant little ravine, home perhaps to a wet-water spring, may become a torrent. We have seen bridges and roads wash out

with little or no warning. Yet man in all his wisdom decided such powers could be tamed, hence the dams, hence the lakes.

For the most part, it all works pretty well. This year it did not. After an already cold and wet spring, the heavy rains began on Good Friday. By the time Easter weekend was over, we had gotten more than 15 inches of rain. Table Rock Lake filled. The great dam shadowing Branson is controlled by 10 floodgates. There was a time when the opening of all 10 gates was described as a "once-in-a-lifetime" event. It has happened three times since 2008.

"Ya'll got some rain down here?" was a common question from visitors unaware of the damage taking place. The 76 Strip was unaffected. But as those gates opened, Table Rock began to empty at 65,000 cubic feet per second. To keep the gates closed could compromise the integrity of the 52-year old dam. To open them meant by day's end over 2,000 homes would be flooded, many beyond repair.

The waters in Lake Taneycomo rose rapidly that dark, misty weekday morning. By afternoon, the lower portions of the Branson Landing flooded. The campgrounds and parks next to the lake were underwater. The Bass Pro boat dock broke loose, colliding with the nearby White River Restaurant before sailing off downstream. The dock floated almost to Powersite before it was retrieved. Residential areas near Alexander Park, Foggy River Road, Acacia Club Road, Point Royale and Fall Creek were inundated. Traffic across Table Rock Dam stopped, as did traffic across the Business 65 bridge. In Hollister, the usually placid Turkey Creek was

a furious torrent in the morning. By afternoon it was as calm as could be. But it was everywhere. The downtown businesses along Turkey Creek flooded. Water lapped over BB Highway. The Casey's General Store was sandbagged.

Many Branson and Hollister churches moved into action, proving that on-the-ground support could be more effective than large disaster-relief organizations. Teams came together to help folks evacuate homes (evacuation teams turned into clean-up teams as water receded). First Baptist of Branson, First Methodist Church of Branson, and the Tri-Lakes Center were converted into shelters. Hot meals were provided at each location for both victims and workers.

Branson entertainers came together, hosting a benefit. Dino and Cheryl Kartsonikis (whose home was destroyed by flood waters) led the charge, marshalling Branson greets Jim Stafford, Tony Orlando, and others. A silent auction, entertainment and fundraiser dinner at the Branson Convention Center were quickly organized.

And yet, some of the most heart-warming stories are simply those of neighbors helping neighbors. Of folks loading belongings into pickups and welcoming others into the safety of a home on higher ground. Through it all, the rain continued, at one point causing mudslides on the earthen portions of Table Rock Dam. Tensions mounted. "It was frustrating," notes Dale Grubaugh, area pastor. "People would come down to Branson and not realize that a major part of the city was threatened and there was real tragedy going on." By mid-May the waters began to recede and some sense of normalcy returned.

Branson was a major disaster until 6:05 p.m., May 22. After that moment, everything we have gone through pales in comparison to the disaster in Joplin. As reports continue to



Opposite page: A look at the volume and power of the flood waters. Above: The sun shines. Photos by Joshua Heston

come in, our hearts go out to the people of a city torn apart by the dark side of nature.

It is in times like these we realize what is truly important: Our loved ones. The salvation of those around us. There is true strength found in the Body of Christ. When we set aside our petty differences — our day-to-day frustrations — and reach out to God and one another, we become stronger, kinder, more patient, more loving. We become a better people.

Any one of us may be called home at any time. It is imperative we live knowing God through Jesus. And so, pray. Pray for those affected by the floods and tornadoes. And pray that you can be a light in a dark place, changing the world for the better, one person at a time. 🇺🇸

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Driven won three Diamonds this year! Photo by Denise Salchow

J.D. SUMNER LIVING LEGEND AWARD:
Gloria Gaither

QUARTET OF THE YEAR:
Gaither Vocal Band

MIXED GROUP OF THE YEAR:
Jeff & Sheri Easter

TRIO OF THE YEAR:
Booth Brothers

DUET OF THE YEAR:
Aaron & Amanda Crabb

FEMALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR:
Janet Paschal

MALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR:
Jason Crabb

SUNRISE AWARD:
Voices of Glory

SONG OF THE YEAR:
"Please Forgive Me" – Gaither Vocal Band
(written by Gerald Crabb)

ALBUM OF THE YEAR:
Driven Quartet – Driven Quartet

INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR:
Gordon Mote

SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR:
Squire Parsons

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY GROUP OF THE YEAR:
Driven Quartet

**CHRISTIAN COUNTRY FEMALE ARTIST OF THE
YEAR:**
Sheri Easter

**CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MALE ARTIST OF THE
YEAR:**
Guy Penrod

BLUEGRASS GOSPEL ARTIST OF THE YEAR:
Ricky Skaggs

VIDEO/DVD OF THE YEAR:
"Somebody Like Me" – Jason Crabb

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An artist choir kicked off the show. Photo by Emma Carter

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Behind the Music

WOW... all I can say is WOW! Beyond The Ashes are known for their expressive vocals and close harmony and that is only reinforced on this new recording. Every time I play it I hear something anointed and new; something fresh and more exciting than I heard before.

Kicking off TREASURES UNSEEN is the song you're currently hearing on Gospel radio from BTA, "The Coming of The King." It's a toe-tapping, hand clapping song and you'll soon be singing along. This song lays the foundation for ten more great songs.

Depp Britt (formerly with The Cumberland Boys Quartet) joined Wayne Haun and Joel Lindsey to contribute two great songs to TREASURES UNSEEN. The first, "What I Have I Give" has great music tracks with a little jazzy flavor, and features lead singer Casey Rivers. I've played this one over and over because of the music and the message.

With a hot music intro; guitar, percussion and Hammond B3 organ, "Test of Time" gets off to a rousing start, and as my Daddy use to say, you'll want to "crank it up and play it again!" The message in this is so real, and the music intensifies the song.

The title song, TREASURES UNSEEN, written by one of Gospel music's great lady writers, Ann Ballard, features the soulful tenor of Anthony Facello. What an awesome version of an older song, which proves that the message in the music stands the test of time.

While every song touched my heart in a unique way, one of my favorites is "When We Pray," written by Rachael McCutcheon. What powerful words with an encouraging message for each of us.



"Tough As Nails," has grand orchestration and a strong message. The thought comes from the background of Jesus in Joseph's carpenter shop. You'll have to hear this one to really appreciate it.

Baritone Kellan Monroe brings "When I Look Upon My Savior's Face" to life. This song touched my heart with the blessed promise for the Christian.

I would be remiss not to mention Beyond The Ashes' version of "We'll Soon Be Done With Troubles And Trials!" While sticking to the original melody, BTA has given this song new life with their exciting arrangement, vocal expertise and I promise, you'll be singing the bass run before the song is finished! They have a catchy tag on the chorus that you'll love!

From dynamic songs, outstanding production, unprecedented music tracks, and classy, updated arrangements, there is something on this recording for every discriminating Gospel music fan. My litmus test on any new CD is whether I add it to the collection in my car. TREASURES UNSEEN went immediately to my "traveling" collection! 🇺🇸

TREASURES UNSEEN
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Karen and me, along with our friend Montana at Gaither Family Fest in the Smokies.



This summer has been extremely busy for Karen Peck and New River, and I could not wait to share what has been going on us.

It seems just like yesterday that I was writing about Easter, but now it is already July. Can you believe that we will be doing Christmas shopping before we know it?

We finished the month of May with Bill and Gloria Gaither's Family Fest in the Smokies. If you have never been, you are definitely missing out on a weekend full of the best gospel concerts, exceptional guest speakers, and a great environment for the family. We loved getting to share the stage with so many of our best friends in Gospel music, and one of the best parts of this year's concert was being able to debut our new CD, *Reach Out*. We were able to begin selling pre-release

copies and began singing several of the new songs. We were thrilled to have some new songs to throw into the mix.

After Memorial Day weekend we came home and hit the ground running--wide open, that is. We began preparing for our first of two Alaskan cruises and our annual homecoming at the home of Karen Peck.

The Chronicles of a Singing English Teacher:

*Mercy &
Grace*

A Counting Series by

Jeff Hawes

of Karen Peck & New River

Alaska has always been one of the few states that I never knew much about. Honestly, I have seen pictures in books and shots of the beautiful state in a few movies, but I never really had any idea of the magnitude of majesty the state had to offer; it is gorgeous!

We went with Paradise Tours as a part of the Freedom Alaska Cruise with Governor Mike Huckabee. We were thrilled to be included in the line up that included the Nelons, Dixie Echoes, Guy Penrod, Ryan and Friends, Aaron Wilburn, and Triumphant Quartet. We loved getting to sing on board this beautiful ship and got to see God's handiwork at its best. We stopped at several ports along the way, but my favorite was Victoria, British Columbia. It was the shortest visit on the trip, but I loved the architecture of the buildings and the unforgettable food at the Old Spaghetti Factory. YUM!

There seemed to be a million places to visit and different types of fish to eat,



Freedom Alaska Cruise with several of the singers and groups as we stop for a quick picture in Juneau.

but we will get a second chance to tour Alaska as we head back with Dr. Charles Stanley and In Touch Ministries later this month.

When the plane landed in Atlanta, we switched out our parkas, scarves, and gloves with our short-sleeve shirts, shorts, and flip-flops. We immediately began preparing for our homecoming concert that would happen later that weekend. Early Monday morning we woke up and began mowing, weed eating and painting the homecoming stage at New River Park. Every year KPNR celebrates its homecoming by bringing in Gospel artists, lots of food, fun, and fellowship. This year, Brian Free and Assurance, Mark Bishop, Jeff and Sheri Easter, CS&K, and the New River Band provided entertainment for the weekend. It was also the group's 20th year celebration, and the group was honored with a framed collage of album covers and Grammy memorabilia as well as a proclamation by the Lumpkin County Commission for their service and hard work throughout the years.

We are excited that our newest single, "On the Banks of the Promised Land," has finally hit Southern Gospel radio and we are excited to see how the lyrics of the songs touch so many of you as they have us. I have never been so thrilled to be a part of such an anointed project. 🇺🇸

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