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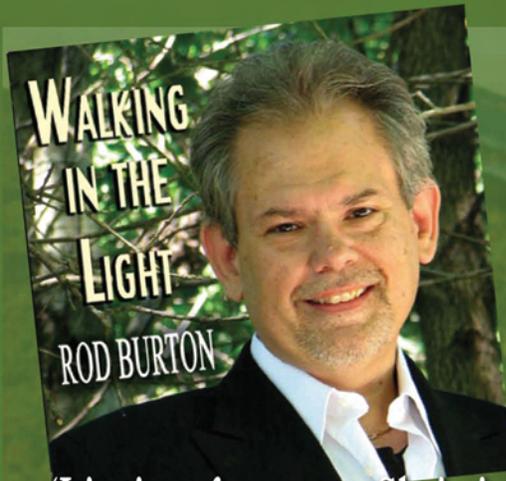
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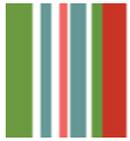
Artist Showcase, Wednesday at Noon, South Wing Conference Ctr.

Southern Spin Entertainment Meet & Greet,

Wednesday 4:30-6:30 pm, East Hall Rm 4

Sky Angel Brunch & Showcase, Saturday at 10:30 AM,

West Crowne Plaza Hotel (across from Expo Ctr),



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**sgn Scoops digital**



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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.

I often try to use words to explain feelings, essences, experiences that defy narrative. I'm not sure if that's part of being a writer or just, you know, part of being me.

But as much as I love to give description, or to read it in the words of others, I am learning that as humans continue to grow and challenge themselves, words are becoming less a means of message conveyance and more just a tip of a much grander iceberg. We need interaction. We need to see pictures and video footage, or at least a catchy graphic. We need to hear a theme song or a soundtrack. We need links to supporting information and a search bar nearby. We need to leave comments.

We need social media.

Had you asked me 10 or even 5 years ago if my lifelong dream of working with, much less editing, a magazine would be fulfilled by a digital publication, I'd have grown passionately opposed. "Print will never die! I need to splash coffee on pages. I need to tuck something in my bag to read in the grocery line. I need to tear out all those annoying subscriptions cards, thereby annoying my husband with the sound."

But here we are. These days, I hold only 2 or 3 magazine subscriptions as opposed to the dozen or so I used to. And though I still love little more than curling up with a book from Amazon.com or the library, most of my reading is done on pages that begin with www. I get breaking news on Twitter. I learn about parenting on blogs. I read the weather on my mobile phone. And I've caught up with old friends from kindergarten to my first job at Marvell Bakery via Facebook.

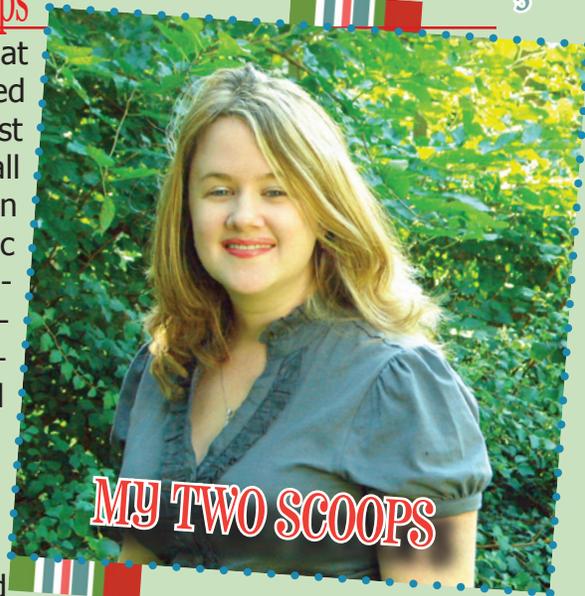
So how does the digital information age affect Christians, and more specifically, Christian music? Well, here we are, friends. SGN Scoops was the vision of Allen

Smith, and that vision included having the first full-time, all digital southern gospel music magazine. Others are following suit, because gospel music fans, like any others, crave the convenience, variety, and yes, interaction, that a magazine website brings.

As new publisher Rob Patz and I strive to further develop that vision, we're a little overwhelmed with ideas. There are many stories to tell in gospel music, and by the day, the ways to tell those stories is growing in number. So as we work month to month to figure it out, I make this pledge to you: we'll take our cues from the people making the news and the ones reading it. SGN Scoops will focus not only on the tops of the charts or the shelves of the stores or the pages of other magazines, but on the countless facets of the southern and country and sometimes contemporary gospel music world.

There are musicians, singers, promoters, producers, writers, families, pastors, bus drivers, bloggers, accountants, nannies, engineers, web designers, and fill-in-the-blank lay people who make gospel music happen. They all have stories, and we're here to tell them. ~ KELLY CAPIOTTI BURTON

(more importantly, [twitter.com/kellyburton](https://twitter.com/kellyburton))



### About the Editor

I started my professional career as a Tire Queen. For three years, I managed the accounts and the office for a hugely successful suburban tire and repair shop. I had about 12 big brothers there and all my paperwork smelled like rubber. I then broke into telecommunications and moved up a ladder quickly... from the person at the payment window of a cable company to a person zooming through airports as a 'corporate project manager.'

Then I got laid off, got married, finished college, became an English teacher, and, in spite of an infertility diagnosis, got pregnant. Twice in a row.

My husband is a southern gospel singer and my new company plans and promotes southern gospel events. Because of this (and social media!), I have met about 1000 or so new people in the last year. I want you to meet every single one of them, too, so SGN Scoops is going to be exciting for all of us.

Currently, I still reside where I grew up, in the south suburbs of Chicago. We travel a lot, on a bus, which I sort of like most of the time. Along with our two toddler girls, I am raising my "I Do" children, who are 18 and 16. And a Chow. Life is full..

The only constant in my adult life has been my writing, a love for chips and salsa, and the grace of Jesus. The rest.. I'm pretty much winging.

# Why are we doing this again? Some SG artists count

The month of September each year marks the pilgrimage to Louisville, Kentucky by hordes of southern gospel music fans.

The reasons people go to the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center are numerous, but suffice it to say that some of the reasons are to be able to rub elbows with favorite artists, to hear the best music this side of Heaven performed live and in person on the main stage, and to pick up the latest recordings of favorite artists under one roof.

Some thoughts, however, might wander to what brings southern gospel artists to Louisville each year. After all, this venture often involves time off other jobs, transportation and lodging expenses, and extra promotional preparation for those in the southern gospel business. What makes it worth the effort, and how do the reasons differ from artists to artist?

Donna Strong of Ohio-based Hearts of Faith, says, "We began exhibiting at NQC in 1989, when it was still located in Nashville, Tennessee. At that time, we'd only been singing as a family (with mom and dad) for 7 years and we wanted to expand our music ministry."

Hearts of Faith, which also consist of Strong's sister Brenda Messaros, is not alone in that initial goal. For the regional-based group, those sometimes referred to as *weekend warriors*, NQC is looked at as the grandest networking opportunity there is – a chance to get to know other artists, record companies, radio stations, promotional and media outlets, and of course, fans, who not only might purchase some music, but might help artists get booked into their churches back home.

Strong continues, "Today, even after 27 years of singing, and 20 years of attending, there are still new places where we can sing, and the convention is a great opportunity to meet a huge number of people at one time from many different areas."

Jonathan Bond of the group Young Harmony agrees, and also focuses on the community and fellowship among artists that the convention allows. "I love the opportunity to see friends from over the



Young Harmony at a showcase during NQC 2008.  
Photo by Kelly Burton

years all at one place." He says. "We usually don't get to see other artists, unless we sing with them. This gives us time to catch up. Also, it's wonderful to see friends and fans from the road."

The essence of the convention has changed for some artists over the years. For example, though the word "Quartet" remains as part of its name, the stages of the convention are shared by soloists, duets, trios, and bands as well.

Solo artist Kenny Bishop would see this as a natural inclusion. He put it this way: "The NQC is, I think, much more than just a singing event. Of course, the reason for the gathering is the music, but the spirit and the entertainment and the friendships I enjoy personally are much more important to me than being able to perform." He concludes, "This makes the word "quartet" seem pretty small."

**'NQC has been the point of contact for us for probably 90% of our out-of-state travels...'**  
- Donna Strong

Clearly, the emotional and relation satisfaction of NQC is an important factor. But logistically speaking, what do artists gain from attending the convention year after year?

Strong explains, "NQC has been the point of contact for us for probably 90% of our out-of-state travels. We've also had the privilege of becoming artists, and it's really like a second family. There are a great many artists that we know we can count on if we need prayer."

Messaros adds that the time spent enables Hearts of Faith to obtain "concert dates", and to fellowship with fans and other artists."

Bond adds that he and wife Ginger, continue gain "encouragement from friends, love from fans and friends that follow us on radio, but whose areas we may not get to visit, and the powerful testimonies of what God has done for others through our songs. That is always awesome to hear."

Another aspect that fans attending NQC might not consider is the sacrifice artists may entail in order to be in attendance at Southern Gospel's longest running event. Bishop explains, "Back when I was part of a full time singing group, there was a bit of financial sacrifice



# the pros & cons of their annual trek to Louisville *By Jerry Tinkle*

involved with being in a city for a few nights without some sort of daily compensation for performance. As our career developed it was easier for us to cover the costs with more sizable product sales. Until then, it was sometimes difficult to justify the costs. However, we learned that the expenses were actually an investment in being in the room, among the fans and other professionals, and being seen.”

He continues, “These days, for me personally, living so close to the event is not much of a sacrifice at all, with the exception of a few travel expenses.”

Bond says, “It [does cost] just the “family time, income from the road, and physical strength. ” while Strong reiterates, “[There is a loss of] money, time with family, sleep... it gets very expensive to attend NQC each year with booth cost and hotel. With the economy being as it is, finances are probably the largest sacrifice. ”

Messaros continues, “We also are away from our husbands and kids for the week

seeing old friends; enjoying the music that we love so much! I’m also a huge fan of BUTTER PECAN ICE



Hearts of Faith performs.

Photo courtesy of Donna Strong



and it’s quite a tiring event ... seems more so each and every year (must be the age thing!”

Obviously from the looks of hundreds of artists in attendance year after year, the sacrifices are more than made up for. With that, the artists turn to what they love about NQC.

Bishop says, “I first started attending the NQC in 1985 when it was in Nashville. With so much NQC history inside me, I think one of the things I enjoy most about the week is the spirit of reunion. When I was traveling a great deal more we worked with other artists quite regularly, it was common to share a lot of time with them. Nowadays, for me it is a treat to get to see them.

He continues, “Of course, the music is always enjoyable. I’ve always been a fan, so I still get chills when I hear a fantastic song.”

Strong agrees, well... strongly, “Meeting new people;

CREAM! By the way, if anyone wants to bless me at NQC 2009, our booth is 733!”

The convention, in its 52<sup>nd</sup> year, remains the largest annual event in southern gospel music. It draws artists from all over the country and even others, and fans who buy their tickets a year in advance. However, as with all things, there is a wish list from those in attendance.

Messaros says she wishes there were “more opportunities for up & coming artists to showcase their ministries,” one that Strong echoes. She adds, “The Regional Artist Showcases have been a blessing, but it’s difficult to really convey to the audience what your ministry is about through only one song.”

Bond would like to see a focus shift to the ministry side of the southern gospel world, or in his words, “Less about us and more about HIM!”

Bishop keeps his focus on what works by saying, “The talent at NQC is the very best of the genre. The staging and sound is top notch. The venue, especially with the new renovations, is spectacular. The people are the sweetest. The managing board and the director are all professionals. The parking is great. If there is anything I’d like to see change it’s the price of those frozen bananas. However, I don’t think the folks in charge of the singing have much say in that.”

With talk of NQC comes also the talk of the revered Main Stage. Many artists in attendance sing at a showcase, but only a chosen few will sing in front of the nightly audience. Those who don’t, who might not ever, know what it’s like to hear from the stage, but

### NQC artists - con't

what is it like to *sing* from the stage?

At the thought of a main stage invitation, Strong says, "WHOA.. That would be incredible! With so few duets, especially female, in SG music, it would be an honor to sing on the main stage. We truly enjoy what we do for the Lord and we've been told by several



Kenny Bishop leads a chapel service at NQC 2008. Photo by Kelly Burton

when we sing that they can see from our faces that we're having a good time when singing. We try our hardest to communicate to folks that there is a JOY in serving Jesus. When we've accomplished that, we have been successful in ministering to the congregation."

Bond again is in agreement: "Anytime that we get an opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus, it is awesome! The larger the crowd, the more who

actually hear and hearts that are touched."

Bishop recalls, "[The Bishops'] first time on the NQC main stage was in 1990. The Nashville Municipal Auditorium was the venue and the stage was at the far end of the room. That made the place seem even bigger. We were terrified - absolutely terrified. I think we only had like eight minutes to sing, but I honestly didn't know if it was going to end. It felt like hours. We pulled it off though, and when we walked back stage into the encouraging support of folks like the Florida Boys and the Hoppers and the Speers it was incredible. I remember the moments after we sang better than the stage time. A few years later we joined the Kingsmen and the McKameys as the very first artists to perform at an official NQC matinee concert. That was a real treat, too."



Jerry 'JT' Tinkle is the baritone for the Ministers Quartet from Muncie, IN. He hones his writing with their weekly newsletter, which he fills with inspirational stories from the road and from life. His mantra stands, "Just one more soul, Lord Jesus, just one more soul." Learn more at [ministersquartet.com](http://ministersquartet.com)

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## Conventions and gatherings part of happy memories Lou Wills Hildreth



Congratulations to Rob Patz, Coastal Media Group, and Kelly Burton, Editor-in-Chief, on this issue of *SGN Scoops*. We pray God's blessing on their efforts as they continue the mission of Dr. Allen Smith, former publisher, honored during the Diamond Awards at the recent Branson Gospel Music Convention with many expressions of apprecia-

tion for his years of publishing this magazine and producing the Diamond Awards. With great pleasure, I presented him with the "Lou Hildreth Award."

How appropriate for this issue of SGN Scoops to cover the National Quartet Convention meeting in Louisville, Kentucky, September 13-19. This will be my 52nd year at the NQC! My singing family, the Wills, sang at the first NQC in 1957 and for the next twelve years when the convention was in Memphis. Howard and I moved from Fort Worth to Nashville in 1968, and the NQC relocated to Nashville a few

years later, before moving to Louisville. I HAVE NEVER MISSED ATTENDING THE NQC. There is no experience like this monumental gathering of performers, industry personnel, and fans! One of the highlights will be the Gaither Homecoming concert, Wednesday, September 16, 12:00 until 1:30, East Hall, A-B, at the Kentucky Expo Center. To be onstage with my Homecoming Friends is always special!

Most of the week, Howard and I will be at the "Family Friendly Entertainment Network" booths taping television interviews. I will have my book plus DVDs of interviews taped at the great Branson Gospel Music Convention. Bill Gaither sent us advance copies of the latest Gaither DVD's *Nashville Homecoming & Joy In My Heart*; they feature more than 250 artists singing lively Southern gospel music. I had a nice surprise when Howard and I were viewing *Nashville Homecoming*: Bill included an interview with me on the DVD. I am humbled by his generous comments. One of God's blessings is our friendship of many years with Bill and Gloria.

*Check the complete listing of Gaither DVDs at [www.louhildreth.com](http://www.louhildreth.com). Contact Howard and Lou at PO Box 271106 Houston TX 77277 Email: [gosplvideo@aol.com](mailto:gosplvideo@aol.com)*

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The Interaction of  
Faith and  
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## THE CULTURE WAR:

TIME FOR a NEW STRATEGY

BY TOM HOLSTE

These days, the culture war rages in our country as hotly as ever, if not more so. Like the war on drugs or the war against terror, it has no definable end point. As long as there is culture and entertainment, there will be those who argue about the things that happen in those spheres.

The battle has been a costly one, with victories and failures on both sides. Christians cry out against consistently negative portrayals of themselves in the media, while the media defends themselves on the grounds of First Amendment rights.

Is there any hope in sight? I think that there is definitely a potential for change. But it will require a radical re-thinking of the church's current position on many things.

First, I humbly submit that, as a rule, the Christian church in America needs to cease its obsession with boycotts. (I speak of the American church not because it's worse than other churches around the world, necessarily. I speak of it because I know it better than the others.)

It's not that boycotts are wrong, in and of themselves. I'm participating in a few right now myself, because some companies have decided to give money to political special-interest groups. To my mind, these companies don't need to give money to churches either. They should just stay out of the culture wars altogether.

The thinking behind boycotts seems to be that if enough Christians stop buying the company's products, the business will financially topple and its CEO's will be forced to change their policies. That may have been true at one time, but in a day and age where any conglomerate has so many different profit centers at once, this strategy seems extremely unlikely to be successful.

I choose not to buy the products simply because there are other companies out there selling similar

things that have policies that I appreciate more. The issue is no bigger or smaller than that.

Before I sound too pretentious, I should say that I myself subscribed to these theories for many years. But my thinking has started to change, in large part because of these questions: how I would feel about Christians (or any other group) if the only time I ever heard from them was when they were screaming at me or threatening my livelihood?

Also, and perhaps even more importantly, when has an angry Christian with a picket sign ever led a single person to Christ?

I know of a Christian who was working at Universal Studios back in 1988, when that studio's film *The Last Temptation of Christ* was released. As he and a co-worker drove out the studio parking lot, where his co-worker's car was jumped on and battered by angry protesters, that fellow turned to the Christian and said, "You know, I would hate all Christians everywhere . . . if I didn't know you."

Something else to think about: When is the last time (if ever) we heard about a Christian group writing let-

'When has an  
angry Christian  
with a picket sign  
ever led a single  
person to Christ?'

ters to a company to thank them for what they do? When was the last time Christians bought more of a certain product because they liked the company's policies, and told that company why?

I know of a pastor who got very rude service from a manager at a grocery store one time. The manager

## Eyes Wide Open - CONT'D

even made some snide comment about the man being a pastor. The pastor resolved that, on the next Sunday, he would tell all his parishioners to stop patronizing that grocery store because of the man's anti-Christian bias.

By the time Sunday came around, though, the pastor knew he couldn't go through with it. The Holy Spirit had been working on his heart all week. And the message that he was supposed to give that week was from Matt. 18:23-34: the parable of the ungrateful servant. So, instead, he asked everyone in the congregation to start patronizing the store more often, and to be sure to compliment the manager on what a nice place it was while they were there. The pastor didn't tell them why - he just asked them to do it.

The congregation responded well to this request, and soon the manager was inundated by kind, caring and unfailingly polite people that had made his revenue go way up. Several months later, when the pleased but befuddled manager finally asked why he was the center of such attention, the church people told him

that the pastor of their church had asked them to do these nice things. His curiosity piqued, the manager attended that church's service the very next Sunday.

When the pastor came out to speak, and the manager saw who it was--he recognized him as the man he had been mean to, several months earlier--his life was completely changed. That very day, the manager came down to the altar to accept Christ as his Savior.

Why was the manager's heart moved toward God? Because he was drawn in by smelling the sweet fragrance of Christ working through His people. That's what we need to be to a dying world--salt and light. Unfortunately, all too often, we're tar and feathers instead.



*Tom Holste studied communications at Trinity Christian College and film at Act One, a screenwriting program specifically geared towards Christians. He performs in local plays and leads a puppetry group at his church. He lives in the south suburbs of Chicago, and is the proud uncle of his sister's three fantastic kids.*

# Come Meet the Family!

## Southern Spin Entertainment

### 2009 NQC Family Reunion

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Evie Hawkins

# THE MUSIC MIX

Take a gallon of music, throw in a cup of psychology and a lock of blonde hair & you may be surprised at what you get...



In an industry constantly changing as it draws in masses of musically-minded hopefuls, there remains one common, simple fact. There is also a simultaneous and continuous departure of broken dreams, wounded egos, and injured bank accounts. However, for those who stand out heads-above the crowd, who God tapped to

me realize that only the determined and passionate would be able to survive the recession that was lurking around the corner.

With many years of my life being closely involved with Gospel music, my heart aches for my dear friends and acquaintances who have dedicated their lives to reaching the lost with their songs and music. I could see the light at the end of the tunnel, but as the saying goes, I realized it was an on-coming train. My heart hurt with the thought of this affecting Gospel music and the ministries that surround it. I want to know my children and many more generations ahead will experience the same joy this music contributes to my life and hundreds of thousands of others.

My concern led me to reconnect with old acquaintances that I knew and loved when I traveled with a regional Southern Gospel group. I realized that so many of these people are still determined to stay afloat, and I have faith they will. These dedicated artists, whose lives have been centered full-time in music, refuse to bow to hardships, recessions, set-backs, and disappointments, in their goal to carry out their mission. Many individuals I interviewed in the course of collecting stories for this column have been tried by fire, at some point in their lives. Somehow, they are still traveling, recording, producing, or playing, and using their God-given gifts to continue to bless others with their music.

These are the stories of true warriors who are not only determined, but still in demand after many years in the entertainment industry. Their presence has not only survived the recession thus far, but it seems their

fulfill a purpose so great, the worst recession may not be powerful enough to shut them down.

As a Christian, I've never bought into Darwin's theory of evolution; however, as I studied it in a class years ago, my mind began to wander right back to music. I could somehow compare the "Survival of the Fittest" analogy to the music industry.

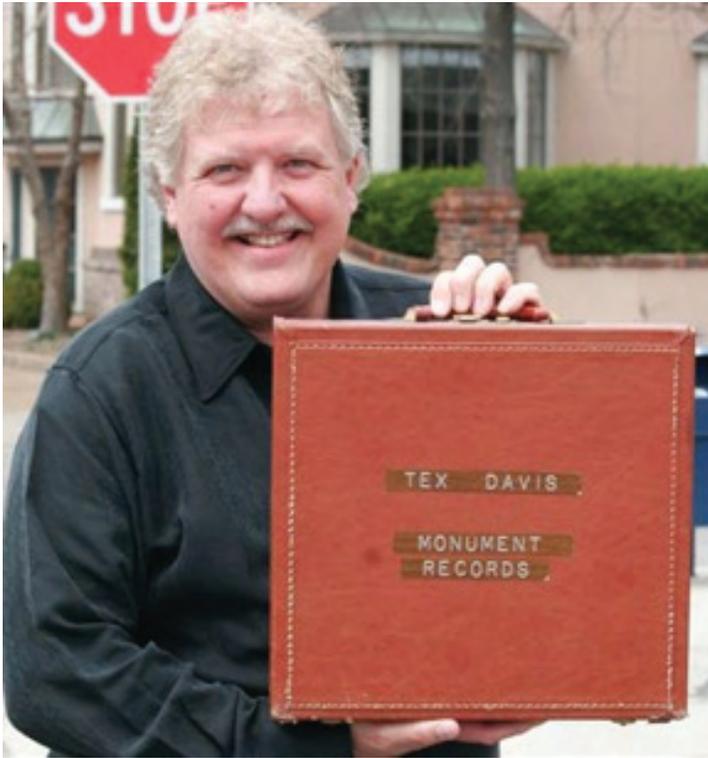
Animal survival tactics have always fascinated me, and so I visualized the shows we watched on Discovery Channel. Over and over, the camera catches the tragic demise of the weaker animals. Some never had a chance. Others ran hard for awhile, but eventually succumbed to unbearable obstacles and finally gave in to total defeat.

As pessimistic as this may sound, there is still a happy ending for the animal Darwin called, "the fittest," the one well-prepared for battle, willing to run a tough race until the bitter end and never look back into the eyes of the enemy, lest he stumble, fall, and become the next tasty meal for the aggressor. This breed does not necessarily stay ahead of the pack, but knows how to stay strong through conditioning, discipline, self-control, and determination. When others fall out of the race, this breed just gets his second wind. He is the survivor. Relating Darwin's theory to the music industry didn't make me an evolution fan, but it did help

**'These are the stories of true warriors who are not only determined, but still in demand.'**

talents are in greater demand as they continue to hone their skills to the finest degree. I hope you enjoy reading these *scoops* on the real artists and people who continue to impact our music and our world.

*Evie Hawkins's love for writing spun many articles that were read by music industry professionals and lead to the development of the Evie Hawkins Agency, in Nashville. Evie keeps residence in Alabama and Tennessee, and enjoys as much time as possible with her husband, their family, and the musicians whom she loves very much.*



**T**his story starts with a dad...who shaped the history of rock-and-roll music...ignited the careers of country music icons, and inspired a son to reach for his dreams....

If it is possible one can be born a musician, the subject of this article might just prove that theory. It truly amazes me how an artist is sometimes illuminated among the masses, leaving no doubt a God-given gift and mission is set in place. This story is no exception.

With that said, it has been a challenge to complete one story that could easily be made into two.

The subject, Michael Douchette, and his father, the late William Douchette, better known as the country music DJ, Sheriff Tex Davis, both have made a tremendous impact on the music industry. Today, the son of this Rock and Roll Hall of Famer, continues to spread his music over the airwaves as a session player on hundreds, and possibly thousands of recordings, live performances, streaming video feeds, and various outlets. The fascination eight year old Douchette experienced as he listened to Jim Ed Brown's "Pop a Top" on the radio, would inspire him to not only learn to play the steel guitar, but would later propel him into a rewarding lifetime career as a professional musician.

But let's first start with Douchette's dad, so you can get the bigger picture of his musical influence. William Douchette was born in Connecticut in 1914. After serving in World War II, he continued his education in a New York radio school. This eventually led him to

## MUSICIANS ON THE MOVE / Evie Hawkins

### Musician and listener: Steele player Michael Douchette

Norfolk, Virginia and landed him in a country music disc jockey position that motivated him to create a "country" stage name. "Sheriff Tex Davis" soon started hosting talent contests in Norfolk and discovered Gene Vincent. Davis and Vincent co-wrote the rock-and-roll hit, "Be Bop-a-Lula," and in 1956 it became a Capitol Records international sensation with recorded versions too many to count, including covers by Paul McCartney, John Lennon, Jerry Lee Lewis, and many more. Sheriff Tex Davis and Vincent penned several popular rock-and-roll hits, but his management, songwriting, and radio expertise landed him a promoter position with Nashville-based Monument Records. In 1967, he moved his family to Hendersonville, TN, a suburb of Nashville where he began making even a greater impact on the music industry by promoting; and consequently, igniting the explosive careers of Dolly Parton, Jeanne Seely, Kris Kristofferson and many other pioneers in music history.

With such a rich heritage passed on by his father, it is no surprise that Douchette's love for the country music he had been bathed in from childhood would thrive. His father took every opportunity to see that his interest was cultivated, and it wasn't long before Douchette was mastering four instruments; rhythm guitar, steel, harmonica, and dobro.

Douchette says one of his first Gospel music opportunities presented itself during the one time in his life that he worked a job outside of his professional music career. He was making pizzas and playing in the band at Papa John's Pizza in his neighborhood of Hendersonville, TN in 1973. The owner, Jay Jackson, was the brother of the late Gene Jackson, a bishop in the Assembly of God organization. Gene recruited Douchette for a TV show as a piano player, and little did he know this would give him his first push



## MUSICIANS ON THE MOVE - CONT'D

into the Southern Gospel music world.

From his first professional session, at age 19 - in a harmonica overdub with Ronnie Profit - to a long list of credits that include a seven-year tour with George and Tammy Wynette, Douchette has earned a solid reputation of integrity, honesty, and impeccable work-ethic.

His creditability and phenomenal musical gift positioned him early on as one of the most in-demand session players in both Country and Gospel music. A short list of his credits include sessions and/or live performances, from the Grand Ole Opry, to around the country, and abroad artists such as Ronnie McDowell, Billy Joe Royal, Bill Hanff, The Perry's, Tammy Vice, Legacy Five, the Steeles, the Hinsons, the Gaithers, Alan Jackson, Mark Chestnutt, Faith Hill, Lorrie Morgan, Alabama (played on the Platinum "Mountain Music" project that sold over 6 million units), John Berry, Clint Black, Jack Greene, Ace Cannon, Paulette Carlson, Earl Thomas Conley, Bobbie Cryner, Dixiana, Vern Gosdin, Frankie Lane, Johnnie Lee, Loretta Lynn, Wayne Newton, Ray Price, Bonnie Raitt, Eddy Raven, Linda Ronstadt, Johnny Russell, Dan Seals, Doug Stone, Mel Tillis, Pam Tillis, Randy Travis, Conway Twitty, Billy Walker, Keith Whitley, John and Audrey Wiggins, Maurice Williams, Chely Wright, and far too more to list.

An interview question that is always beneficial to ask is "What kind of advice would you give a new musician coming into the business?" Douchette says, "Things have changed a

For more info: Michael Douchette:  
[steelharp@yahoo.com](mailto:steelharp@yahoo.com) (615) 578-5966  
<http://www.myspace.com/michaeldouchette>  
*In memory of Sheriff Tex Davis,  
 born 1914 (William Douchette) Connecticut,  
 died 8/29/07 Nashville, TN*

lot over the years I've done this: Sounds, technical advancements, etc. One thing is still the same. The most important tool you have is your ears, not your hands. The key is listening, paying attention to what's going on in the song, the band, and the things around you. You have to compliment what's going on. Sad songs don't need bebop licks. Try to emulate the vibe

of the lyric in your playing. Anyone can learn to play a thousand notes; the pros are the ones that can recognize the right notes of all those thousands to choose from."

Douchette is a man who is still living his dream. What started out as a hobby for an eight year old boy, flourished into a rewarding and successful career through hard work, determination, and the influence of mentors. Sheriff Tex Davis made a tremendous impact on his son's music career and created a legacy to be passed down to many generations to come. His father penned a gospel song, "Baluthahatchee," which Douchette says was the name the natives used for heaven when



Photos courtesy of the Douchette Family

his father was in the Pacific during WWII. He notes, "It's a simple song, but it was from his heart." Hopefully, a future generation will record and share this one with the world, as Sheriff Tex Davis always had an ear for music the masses would embrace.

Douchette continues his session work and live performances and plays in his church praise band at Cornerstone Church in the Madison suburb of Nashville. : osten to their services: <http://www.maurydavisministries.com/>. Douchette and his wife, Lisa, make their home in Gallatin, Tennessee, where he has a Pro Tools recording set-up. His contributions and overdubs on projects make for a top-knotch commodity as he adds his own instrumentation to the mix. He and Lisa are proud of their seven children and four grandchildren, and he continues to enjoy frequent visits with his mother, Betty, and contact with his sister, Bobbi, of Cincinnati.

Even with a busy life filled with music, family, and church, Douchette finds time to occasionally squeeze in a hobby or two. He says his favorite past-times, outside of family, include photography, target shooting, and an occasional run down a bowling alley and adds, "I'm blessed to have a job that's a hobby. I enjoy it that much!" Knowing Douchette is a privilege and blessing, as he always carries with him a passion for his trade, a heart for his family, and no unmissed opportunity to give a word of encouragement to a neighbor or friend.

## Grateful for the call

Monthly encouragement from one called to  
teach & share Good News By Rhonda Frye



I'm excited to have the opportunity to write for SGN Scoops. Since I'm a "new kid" on the block, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Rhonda Frye and I live in Ringgold, Georgia. With the support of my husband and three teenage children, I

tor. I wear many hats at church because we are considered a small congregation. We are small, but we are a unified, growing and loving body of Christ. My responsibilities include teaching, leading worship and general support of the senior pastor. I am delighted to share my thoughts with you occasionally from a pastoral perspective.

Using one word to best describe myself, I choose the word "Grateful." I am most thankful for what God has done in my life and I am passionate to encourage others to really know God. I had an excellent Christian upbringing. I attended church faithfully, received a Christian education and was loved by a Christian family. I was full of Biblical knowledge, but it wasn't until July 3, 2000 I received Christ into my life. I asked Him to be my Lord and Savior and we began a relationship.

accepted a staff position at a church plant in Rossville, Georgia. Currently, I am serving as the Associate Pas-

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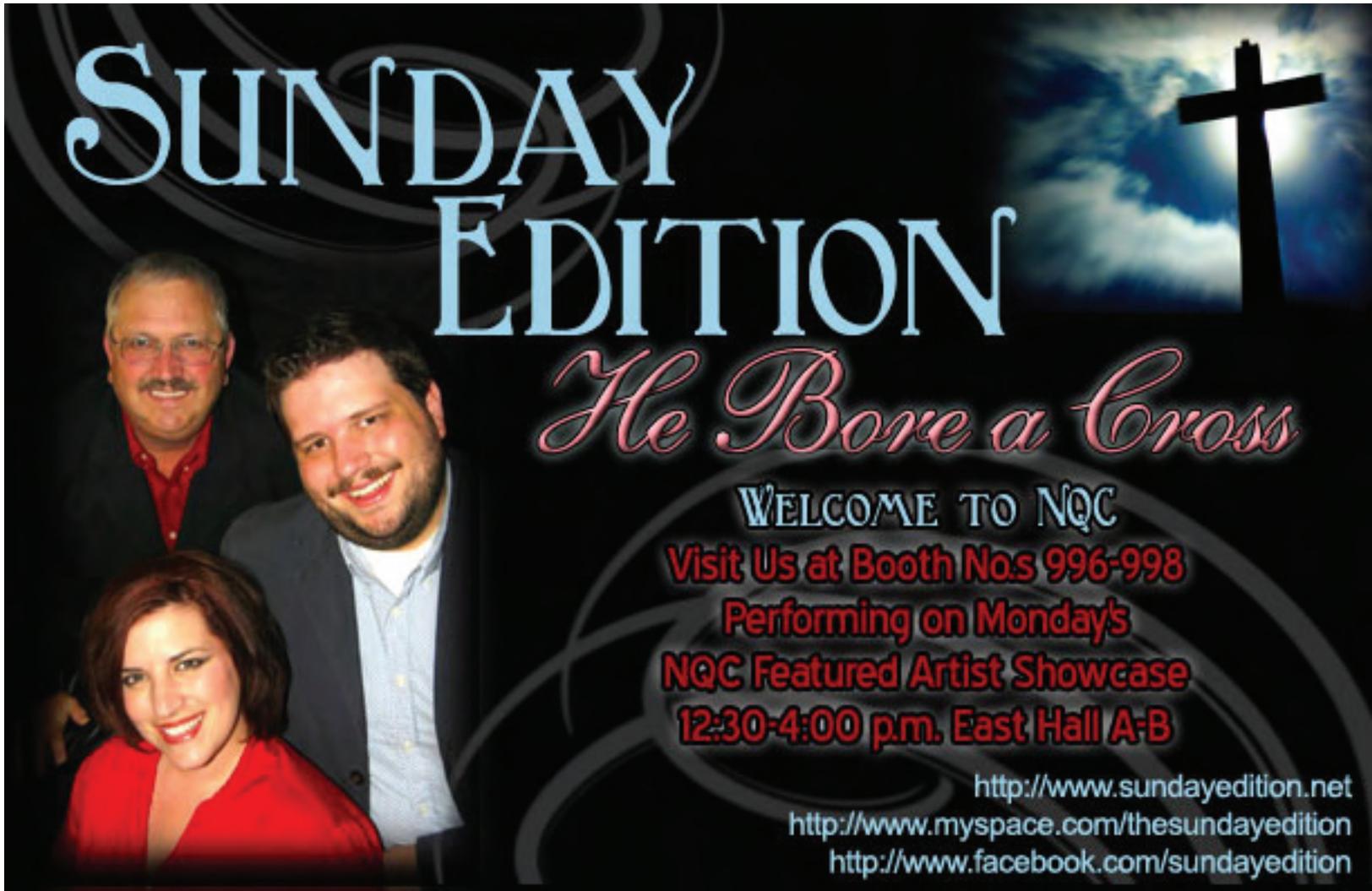
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## Grateful - cont'd

Since Jesus Passed By" means the world to me. Oh, what a difference, since Jesus passed by!

As our relationship bloomed, I served faithfully in many leadership roles within the local church. I discovered, developed, and nurtured my gifts and I learned how to dwell in His presence.

It was in His glorious presence January 2006; my heart heard His call into ministry. Like most people, I struggled with accepting it at first, but diligently began to prepare. God laid a message on my heart as well as to whom He wanted it spoken. The message is simple, but profound. "God is good and He wants to KNOW you." God burdened my heart for those who are going through the motions of church attendance, but their hearts are far from Him. I relate to those kinds of people well. I know what it's like to dress up, sing pretty, line the kids up on the pew, but yet make my grocery list during the sermon. God never crossed my mind again until it was church time the next week. My heart truly breaks for those who don't have a

meaningful and loving relationship with God.

When I think about God choosing "Me" I am humbled and feel inadequate, but God chooses the ordinary for extraordinary purposes. Completely dependent on His help, I am living out my calling. I'm determined to be His voice whether I am singing, writing, teaching or serving in any way. It's only because I am grateful for what He has done for me and it's my greatest desire for you to discover the most faithful friend you will ever have.

Rhonda Frye is a full time minister of music serving the Lord in at least three different ways. She teaches a preschool music program, she serves her local congregation as the worship leader and associate pastor and she is a singer/songwriter/recording artist as well. Rhonda lives in Ringgold, Georgia and is supported by her husband, Eric and their three children.



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# Chris Hester gets out there

By Lorraine Walker

Chris Hester may not currently be a household name in Southern Gospel, but one day that name will be as familiar as Kenny Hinson and Jason Crabb. From his home in Oklahoma, Hester's smooth, polished vocals and honest delivery are garnering fans all across the United States. His latest album may be entitled, *Steps I've Taken*, but this artist is moving forward, taking steps into a brand new day of ministry.

The follow-up recording to 2003's *It's a Good Life*, *Steps I've Taken* was released in January 2009 and was featured on the cover of *New Day Christian Distributors Magazine*. Like honey for the

soul, Hester's voice on this project soothes and sweetens as it works its way deep into your spirit. The first single was the Dottie Rambo hit, "Tears Will Never Stain", a tune Hester recorded with Misty Freeman. Sung with a haunting tenderness, the single was cut just a week before the passing of the legendary songwriter.

Hester's current single, "Get Out There," is a fast-moving country tune with lots of harmonica and piano riffs, a song that urges listeners to get out of their pew, go to their friends and neighbors, and tell them what the Lord has done. The song was written by Monica Otten, published by Gaither Copyright Management, and can be heard on Hester's MySpace page. Getting out there is just what Hester does every week as he travels from his Oklahoma home across America to share his illustration of where gospel meets country.

"A typical Chris Hester concert is a place where people can feel the presence of the Lord and hopefully are blessed," says Hester. "It's a place for people to walk with me through my own struggles in life. I mix it up at times and it depends on how the Spirit leads as to whether I decide to play the piano or not. I sing songs that the Lord puts on my heart, songs about my life and how I feel."

Radio stations across the United States are playing Hester's music and the deejays as well as the listeners are enjoying his songs. "Chris's lyrics make sense," says Matt Bond

of WYGS in Columbus, Indiana. "When was the last time you heard an artist sing about his grandmother's recipes and cheering at a football game? We are so quick to share those experiences, but hold back on the one



Chris Hester on the set of a new video. Property of Chris Hester Music.

**'I don't feel we every fully know our calling to its complete extent.'**  
**-Chris Hester**

## Hester - cont'd

thing that saves our very souls: Christ dying for our sins. It was an act of love that nobody else has come close to repeating."

Hester has been singing about Jesus and His love for most of his life. "My first recollection was when I was four years old. I attended my grandfather's church in Oklahoma and was encouraged to sing a special song by my mom and dad. I'll never forget it. The song that I sang was very popular at the time, entitled 'Hallelujah Square'."

"It was received as 'cute' because at the age of four years old, you don't always remember the lyrics in the correct order. Apparently when it came time to sing the second verse, I repeated the lyrics to the first verse. I knew I'd made a huge mistake, so when I finished I told the crowd that I'd have done it correctly if the pianist hadn't have played the first verse twice when it was time to sing the second verse!"

Hester taught himself to play the piano and was soon actively involved in his church's music program. He is the son and grandson of pastors and the desire to minister has been placed in his heart as well. Hester is using his musical talents to answer the call to reach his world for Christ.

"I don't feel we ever fully know our calling to its complete extent," says Hester. "I've just been singing ever since I sang at four years old in church. I've walked through every door that God has led me through, which has been in the direction of the music ministry. I'm always open to whatever He'd have me do for Him. Breaking into the industry has probably been one of the most challenging things I've ever experienced. It is not an easy road."

Hester has been



Hester backstage before presenting and performing at the 2009 Diamond Awards in Branson, MO.

*Courtesy of Chris Hester.*

asked often by beginning artists about how to get started in Southern Gospel. "To answer this honestly I'd have to say this: 'Don't worry about breaking into the industry, just set your mind on Christ and always put Him first in every effort you make to further the Kingdom of God'. Matthew 6:33 has always been my focus, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

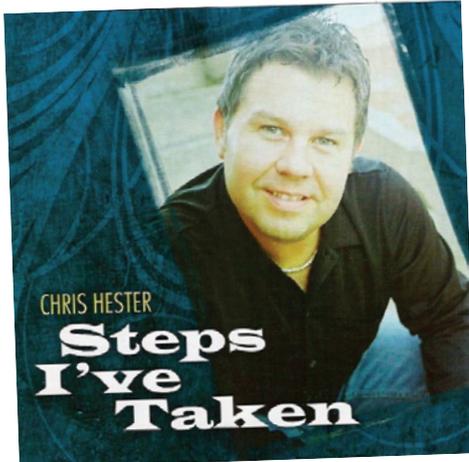
As he toured and sang during the early '90s, Hester eventually met his wife and started a family, and then dropped off the music scene. "I took a short time off the road to focus on my priorities," says Hester. "The health of my father was failing. I spent a lot of time filling in for him while he was out of the pulpit. God has restored his health once again and he is back full swing, pastoring in the church. It was great to be able to spend some working in my home church where many of my family, including my grandparents, are serving in ministry."

Since the release of *It's a Good Life* in 2003, Hester's schedule has kept him busy. "Currently my travel dates have mostly been within the United States, but I've done a few overseas cruises and my last seven singles are spinning on radio stations across the world," says Hester.

**'Breaking into the [Southern Gospel music] industry has probably been one of the most challenging things I've ever experienced.'**

**-Chris Hester**

The Gospel Station Network in Oklahoma plays a lot of Hester's material. Rick Cody, Program Director, says "We enjoy hearing from our listeners daily who request Chris Hester's music. We have joyfully added every song he has released to radio because we feel the anointing and spirit of God on his ministry. It's a privilege to have such talent in our music line up each day."



The 2008 CD release

A recent venture of Hester's is his own involvement in the radio industry. Hester is currently sitting on the board

of directors for Pearl Communications which was founded by his father in 2002, with the purpose of starting new Christian radio stations across the country and programming them with Southern Gospel music. Pearl Communications was a proud sponsor of the 2009 Diamond Awards, held at the Branson Gospel Music Convention in July of this year.

"Every minute of the Convention was a special time," says Hester. "The Spirit of God was there from the first song to the last! I will definitely be back there next year and look forward to watching the convention continue to grow. Probably the biggest highlight of the Branson GMC was the prestigious Diamond Awards Ceremony. The Branson Convention Center is a remarkable place for this event and I can't wait till next year!"

Hester is excited about another new project which is a concept video for a song from his latest project. "My current favorite song from *Steps I've Taken* is called "Empty Handed." I recently just cut a brand new video to this song and it was pitched to CMT and GAC television networks as well as many other networks. God has continued to open doors for me and has blessed my ministry in so many ways."

Hester continues, "The video was directed

by country music renowned videographer Glenn Sweitzer and Fresh-Design Films Inc. Once again, it was a God thing. I've had the opportunity to work with the absolute best in the industry. Glenn produces all the major country label videos you see on networks such as CMT. I know God had his hand in every move along the way. The song is special because it says that you can have all the wealth and fame the world has to offer, but if you don't know Jesus, you're really living 'Empty Handed.' We are nothing without Christ living and working in our lives daily."

'Empty Handed' and the other cuts from latest album have been very well received. Jonathan Edwards, a DJ from Missouri, says, "We have been playing Chris Hester's music since his debut album in 2005 here at KWFC. The new project *Steps I've Taken* is incredible and we are enjoying the first class pure southern gospel songs with Chris's rich vocal abilities. The anointing and charisma in his voice touches hearts across our broad listening area. We featured his new album on an hour program on a Sunday evening and the response was overwhelming!"

Hester's emotional intensity and vocal range are very reflective of his favorite singer, Kenny Hinson. He says that although the influence of the Hinsons and others has affected his music style, Jesus has affected his life the most. "If it wasn't for Him, I wouldn't have a ministry. I spend my time in prayer asking the Lord for continued strength and guidance, which keeps my relationship with Him fresh. Along with that, comes spending time in the Word. Without that, there is no renewing of my spirit."

Every day brings a new day in faith and new steps along the journey that Hester sees as a ministry. Chris says, "It's more of a calling than a career. To me there isn't one setting more important than another. As I see it, every audience is filled with souls and each one is extremely important."



Born and raised in southern Ontario, Canada, Lorraine Walker has been interested and involved in Southern Gospel Music since the mid-80's. Since 2005, she has also authored the popular 'Reality Check' column and other features for [www.sgmradio.com](http://www.sgmradio.com).

# The start of something big at inaugural Branson Gospel Music Convention

By Jimmy McMillan



*Anthony Facello & Beyond the Ashes brought a worship atmosphere to the crowd.*

the setting for the Branson Gospel Music Convention. A year ago this event was simply a vision and dream of Rod and Kelly Burton. Now with this year's success, the Branson GMC promises to become a standard in the landscape of Southern Gospel music.

According to Rod Burton the goal of the Branson GMC was to "create an event where artists could focus on ministry and leave the competition at the door." The fulfillment of this goal was obvious throughout the week as artists and fans alike visited, sang, prayed and encouraged one another. An amazing sense of expectation and single minded purpose permeated the convention center.

With both daytime and evening concert events, the music never seemed to stop. The programs were packed full of music and ministry. The roster of over 150 artists included the Ron Blackwood Quartet, The Stamps, Kenny Bishop, Chuck Wagon Gang, Rod Burton, Jay Stone Singers, Beyond the Ashes, Young Harmony, McMillan & Life, Shannon Bunch, 2nd Generation, Sunday Edition, Wendy Word + Forgiven, Honduras-based Samaritan Revival, and many more.

One great idea implemented for this event was to have the daytime concerts be free of charge. This concept used the power of curiosity to attract a large number of people that perhaps would never take the time or spend the money on tickets for something that was not familiar to them. It was great to see a wide variety of people that one would not normally see at a gospel concert.

Click here to watch the convention's opening song, a multi-group performance of the Hinson classic, 'Hallelujah Meeting.'

This past July 14-17, 09 marked the beginning of a new era in gospel music. Branson, MO was

There were other firsts during the week as well. As of this year the Diamond Awards Ceremony moved to Branson. They took place Thursday evening and among the guest artists were Dino and Kirk Talley.

Wednesday morning His Choice Music sponsored a talent competition. In addition to a recording session and other prizes, the top three winners were slotted on the Friday evening program. There was a great pool of talent but in the end the winners included 1st Cross Point Quartet, 2nd Jericho and 3rd Darryl Marshall.

Perhaps one of the most poignant moments was surprising and showed the true spirit of the Branson GMC. Though he was only allotted a standard fifteen minute



*2nd Generation was a crowd favorite - and member Elaine Parks got engaged on the platform during the final concert night.*

set, Anthony Facello with Beyond the Ashes chose to spend much of their stage time sharing his amazing testimony. After telling how God had delivered him from drug addiction and restored his life B.T.A. sang an anointed acoustical version of "That's How Much I Need a Savior." When they finished there was not a dry eye in the house and it was clear that the Spirit of God had shown up in an amazing way. Instead of "sticking to the schedule" Rod Burton came on stage and spoke about how this was the whole purpose of the Branson GMC. Then he asked the guys to sing it again and the worship continued into the afternoon break.

Branson GMC was definitely the place to be this July. If you weren't able to attend be sure to start making your plans for next year. Tickets will be available starting in September. In 2010, it will be expanded to include Monday evening. The dates are June 28 through July 2, 2010. Be sure to visit [www.bransongmc.com](http://www.bransongmc.com) for detailed information and tickets.

Southern Gospel artists, be sure to register for the 2010 Branson GMC. There is no doubt that this event will be bigger and better next year and you will want your ministry to be a part of it.



*Sunday Edition's Chris Unthank and Jay Stone Singers' Bobby Carter were two of many artists who served the convention as ushers and backstage workers.*

A diamond represents quality, prestige, value and even eternity. Southern Gospel Music's "Diamond Awards" encompass all these things and this was evident on the night of Thursday, July 16, 2009. Allen Smith and SGN Scoops hosted an awards show that attendees at the Branson Gospel Music Convention will not soon forget.

The Diamond Awards are fan-based prizes, with voting performed through both print and on-line ballots. The website at <http://www.diamondawardsonline.com/> sees a flurry of activity when the nominations begin. At a time when more Gospel awards programs are springing up across the country, the Diamond Awards, in its 18th year, have retained their reputation for the excellence of their recipients and the quality of the awards show.



Top: Emcee Johnathon Bond & Young Harmony  
Center: The 'Quartet Choir'  
Bottom: Dale & Cheryl Golden with Dino & Cheryl Kastronakis

For years the Diamond Awards were held during the National Quartet Convention in Louisville Kentucky. This year, the inaugural Branson Gospel Music Convention was the venue for the program. Performers during the program included Dale and Cheryl Golden, Jericho, Young Harmony, Kenny Bishop, and Kirk Talley. Appearances were also made by Dino and Cheryl Kartsonakis and some legendary quartets for a special performance.

There was a sweet spirit in the Convention Center as emcee Johnathon Bond began the program. Among this year's presenters were 2nd Generation, Ginger Bond, Evie Hawkins, and Rod and Kelly Burton. Presenters and performers alike kept the evening moving swiftly, and the musical performances invited a spirit of worship as well.

## 2009 Diamond Awards

recap by Lorraine Walker|File Photos

The Diamond Awards were presented to fan favorites both national and regional, and some artists received several awards. Among the multiple-Diamond Award winners were Karen Peck and New River for Song of the Year and bum of the Year. Brian Free and Assurance received the Group of the Year and Favorite Artist Website awards. Ricky Free also won the Anthony Burger Instrumentalist of the Year award. The Booth Brothers won Trio of the Year and Michael Booth received the nod for Male Vocalist of the Year.

Other award winners included Faithful Touch who received the Sunrise Award; Janet Paschal, who won for Soloist of the Year; Amazed for Duet of the Year; and Mark Bishop who was the Christian Comedian of the Year. The Favorite Female Vocalist award went to Sheri Easter and the Bluegrass Gospel Artist of the Year was presented to the Primitive Quartet. Hearts of Faith won the award for Favorite DVD/Video and Sogospelnews.com for Favorite Industry Website.

The J.D. Sumner Living Legend Award presentation was bittersweet, as the winner had passed on to glory after the voting was complete. It was presented to posthumously to Southern Gospel great, Eva Mae LeFevre.

Gospel music legend Lou Hildreth presented the Lou Hildreth Award, which recognizes excellence within the gospel music industry, to Gospel Music Television. SGM Radio's Rob Patz presented the Paul Heil Award for excellence in radio to Tom Ennis of Missouri.

"I truly enjoyed this year's Diamond Awards," said Rob. "It was a total team effort. Everyone was there for the same purpose and we really had church!"

Rob Patz introduced Chris Hester of Pearl Communications, the main sponsor of the Diamond Awards. Also sponsoring the event was Coastal Media Group, which incorporates SGMRadio.com and "The Southern Styles Show", and SSE Group, Inc. which includes Southern Spin Entertainment, SouthernSpinRadio.com, and SSE Design Group.

Three legendary quartets took the stage to sing together for the show's grand finale with The Stamps, The Florida Boys, and the Blackwood Quartet bringing the house down together. It was a night of quality, prestige and value, as well as a time to worship the Lord. Truly it was an awards program befitting the name Diamond.

## CrossPoint Quartet of Bryant, AK Wins recording session, performance at "His Choice Music" Talent Search *Evie Hawkins*



His Choice Music of Chat-tanooga, TN hosted its much anticipated talent search this month during the first annual Branson Gospel Music Convention. The competition was an extra treat for early-arriving fans that were able to enjoy an array of diverse southern gospel talent from around the country. Impressive harmonies and uplifting messages were well-received by the judges and listening audience.

Johnathan Bond, President of His Choice Music, and host of the contest, partnered with Branson GMC to offer winning artists custom recording packages and performance slots on the convention finale stage.

The all-male group, CrossPoint, of Bryant, AK, grabbed the number one spot with their unique, yet familiar style of silky-smooth harmonies and stage presence that quickly set the audience at ease. The quartet is popular group and has witnessed impressive growth in their fan base as they continue to record and spread their message. Quartet members are Brian Clark-Tenor, Adam Robbins-Bass, Damon Cleghorn-Lead, and Kevin Cleghorn-Baritone. One

fan tried to sum up CrossPoint's performance in only a few words and said, "They soothed my soul and made me calm with their smooth vocals and music."

The exciting and powerful melodies of Jericho garnered the group second place in the competition. Jericho members are Tracy Bone-Baritone, Mike Dunivan-Tenor, Bill Clouse-Lead, and Alan Null-Bass. Jericho is a much sought after group, not only in their home state of Missouri but all across the country. Their finale performance was a foot-stomping, hand-clapping, "Long as I Got King Jesus" that quickly earned a standing ovation from the pleased crowd.

Third place winner was soloist, Darrell Marshall, of Nashville, TN. Currently Darrell tours as a soloist but sometimes enjoys traveling with The Heritage Singers. He has been involved in several men's trios and quartets and has released several CDs over an impressive 20 year span, making him no stranger to southern gospel fans. Darrell's personality and powerful



Crosspoint PR photo; Darryl Marshall performs

vocals is his trademark, as he not only spreads his music, but shares his contagious enthusiasm across many miles of southern gospel music road.

Judges for the 2009 talent search were Rob Patz of Coastal Media Group, Jonathan Edwards - KWFC Radio Springfield, MO, and Evie Hawkins of Nashville, TN.



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# A gospel story, a gospel music reunion, in Branson Reported by Sue Ann O'Neal



L-R: Roy Morris, Barbara Fairchild, Sue Ann O'Neal, Ray Burdett

Just like falling off of a bicycle and after a twelve year hiatus, gospel artists Barbara Fairchild, Sue Ann O'Neal, Roy Morris, and Ray Burdett were back on for a gospel music reunion at the Barbara Fairchild Diner in Branson, Missouri.

Their group began twelve years ago in the first of its kind worship service held in a Branson Theater. Started first by Johnny Minick in the Willie Nelson Theater, Barbara Fairchild then took the reins and began a Sunday Worship Service that became a proverbial must see and experience in Branson for several years.

O'Neal, who then performed for the Presley's Show in Branson, joined Fairchild that first year. Morris had just moved back to Branson when invited to the Worship Service where he met Fairchild and joined the two women to sing. (Morris and Fairchild married nearly a year later). Bass singer Burdett, the last voice added, had been in several

shows in Branson, but also had recorded with the Chuck Wagon Gang, Loretta Lynn, and others. Affectionately called "The Power and Light Company" by Fairchild, this talented group sang together for the next six years, 1992-1998.

Their reunion performance of Thursday night, August 6 was received in front of a standing-room-only crowd who feasted on the comedic antics of the group as well as their four-part harmonies. As the evening went forward and memories came flooding back, it was clearly evident that this group has a strong love for the Lord Jesus. Barbara Fairchild stated, "He is the reason why I sing! He is the reason why I do anything! I give it all to Him!"

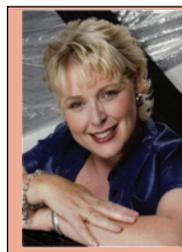
A Vietnam Vet, Burdett paid tribute to beloved America as the group backed him up with "God Bless America Again."

"We had a hard time holding back tears," Fairchild says, recounting songs "The Lighthouse" and "Beulah Land." She explained, "We've all said goodbye to our moms and dads and some of us more recently (right Sue Ann?), but, we'll see them again!"

It was with clear difficulty for the artists involved that the melodic reunion experience was brought to a close. The last song, "We Shall Wear a Robe and Crown" encored with everyone up and singing and no one headed for the doors.

O'Neal describes the experience as, "Being together again singing once more with love for the music that sounded like it had never stopped was amazing. Careers had pulled each one in different directions, but all came back to join together in song.. beautiful four-part harmonies with a love of the Lord and a love of good Southern Gospel Music in Branson, Missouri!"

Until this group meets again, fans can find Fairchild and Burdett at The Diner in Branson and at the Sunday Worship Service in the Starlite Theatre every Sunday morning during the Branson season. O'Neal an ordained Music Evangelist traveling around the country to share her music and God's Word!



*Sue Ann is a singer, songwriter, evangelist, ordained minister, wife, mother, grandmother and soon to be published author. She travels extensively for church concerts to minister with a "message in song"! She can be reached through her website, <http://celebratesunday.org>*

# 85 years and counting: The Stamps celebrate a legacy

By Evie Hawkins

*Author's Note: Being the compassionate person I am, I will spare you the details of my "I'm a Stamps fan, have been since I was 13 years old, also traveling and singing, but when we weren't booked to sing ourselves we went to hear groups such as the Stamps, collected the albums, bought the t-shirts, loving every minute and after exactly 40*

*years of being a fan, I'm honored to get to write about it" story. Aren't you glad I wouldn't do that to you? My goal is to set the stage of awareness about a group that shaped Gospel music history, and continue to put their "Stamp" on its history, by taking a brief glimpse into where they've been, where they are now, and perhaps most exciting... where they are going!*

The legendary Stamps Quartet, of Nashville, Tennessee, is celebrating 85 years singing Gospel music

this year. The group that originated from Gilmer, Texas in 1924 is the oldest, professional Gospel quartet in the history of America still singing today. Their October, 1927 recording, "Give the World a Smile," became a hit, and they became the first professional, Gospel quartet on a major recording label, when they were signed to RCA Victor.

This year marks Ed Enoch's 40th anniversary of singing Gospel Music. Enoch is the owner, manager, and lead vocalist of this group that has made their mark in American music history. The Stamps have not only been trendsetters in the Gospel quartet arena, but they became a household name with their contributions to Elvis Presley projects and performances. Their distinctive Gospel sound that has become an often-imitated trademark.

In celebration of their legacy, the Stamps are excited to announce the completion of a brand new recording project in honor of this significant 85 year old milestone. The new project consists of eleven original songs, never before recorded.

Enoch states, "I am very proud of this project. Every song on this recording is wonderful and we're blessed

to have the opportunity to record them. I'm very blessed to have a group of wonderful Christian gentlemen as members of the Stamps Quartet." Those members are Brian Worley, Tenor; Terry Allen, Baritone; and Brandon Barry, Bass. Individually, and as a whole, this powerful and sensational group carries a tremendous

punch selling to packed houses and excited fans all across the U.S. and abroad.

Brandon Barry got his start at age 16 with a Chattanooga, Tennessee group from his home church and later sang with the Old Paths Quartet of Atlanta, Georgia. He won several industry awards during this time as a favorite among bass singers in his region. Brandon contributes so much to not only with his gift of hitting amazing low

notes, but his positive energy and audience-engaging enthusiasm. He resides in Chattanooga, TN with his wife, daughter and infant son.

A typical first impression of Terry Allen is a statement of humility, enormous talent, and a calm demeanor that speaks volumes: confidence and remarkable stage presence that is characteristic of the Stamps image. His powerful Baritone vocals are obviously a gift that perhaps his dad, a pastor for 42 years, and his mother, a pianist and singer, fostered during his youth. Terry got his start playing bass guitar in church, moved to Nashville to tour with the Encores, and later landed a job playing and doing backup vocals with many legends on the Grand Old Opry. It was there, Enoch discovered this young man's diverse talent and recruited him for the quartet. His humble spirit and amazing vocals set the stage for yet another Stamps trademark: exceptional class and unsurpassed style.

As this year marks a significant milestone for the Stamps Quartet, Enoch also celebrates his 40th year singing Gospel music. His early beginnings started with Jake Hess in Nashville, TN, near his native home. Enoch's long tenure with the Stamps Quartet began in



The Stamps now includes Brandon Barry, Brian Worley, Terry Allen, and in front, owner Ed Enoch.

Promotional photo



The Stamps were a headliner at this year's Branson Gospel Music Convention. Photo By Evie Hawkins

1969, and soon they became backup vocalists for the Elvis Presley, from February 1971 until August 1977. During his shows, Elvis introduced Enoch from the stage as, "The best and most powerful lead singer in the world." >Click here for more photos

Accomplishments of this group create such a long list, space won't allow all of them in one story. A small sampling includes an NBC Dateline News Special in 2003, The Ralph Emery Show, Crook and Chase, Grand Old Opry appearances, Gaither Homecoming Videos, Elvis' "He Touched Me Video," Elvis' 25th Anniversary video, and many television specials including "Aloha from Hawaii," Elvis on Tour.

Recently, The Stamps performed at the annual Elvis Tribute in Decatur, Alabama to a full house at the historic Princess Theatre, where they opened as special guests. This was another in prestigious venues at which they have performed; others through the years include Radio City Music Hall, New York City, Madison Square Garden, New York City. The Astrodome, Houston, TX., The Silver Dome, Pontiac, MI., Grand Old Opry, Nashville, TN., Wimbley Arena, London, England, and others throughout Europe, Asia, Australia,

Enoch has never looked back, nor questioned God's call to fulfill an important lifetime work. As he was granted the official trademark of ownership for the historical Stamps Quartet name from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, DC, Enoch knew his journey would continue on and has it ever! Enoch's powerful lead voice is used as an instrument of a God-given gift. His many years of experience and a strong faith have given him the insight, wisdom, and stamina to continue the amazing journey and mission of the Stamps Quartet.

For more about The Stamps, visit [www.thestampsquartet.com](http://www.thestampsquartet.com).

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## Glimpses of Gospel's Future:

# Meet Jacob Crisp – 18 Years old & playing with The Hoppers

By Kelly Capriotti Buron *Author's note: I met Jacob Crisp at the Angelic Showcase during the 2008 National Quartet Convention. I was so impressed by his talent, but just as much so by his humility and willingness to help others. His dad, Rick, was with him as well, and it also struck me how important parents are in the lives of young musicians and singers. A few months later, I reconnected with Jacob on Facebook to discover that he had auditioned to play piano for The Hoppers at that NQC.. and gotten the position! That news, the development and promotion of a great young man, is what inspired me to include these monthly profiles. As we continue to lose the legends of Southern Gospel music to their home in glory, it's time for us to get to know the new, young faces that are working and rising through the ranks.*

"I first dipped my feet in the Southern Gospel industry when I was 14," Jacob Crisp says. He is 18 now, hailing from Lenoir, North Carolina, though rarely at home these days. "I have always had a love for music, especially Traditional & Southern Gospel Music, since my childhood."

Crisp began playing at the age of 10 and quickly amazed teachers with his grasp of musical terms, ease of familiarity with classical arrangements and composers, and ability to improvise, all within a few months of lessons. Two years later, he was playing for his church's choirs and song services, and in another two years, first began to play for a Southern Gospel group.

The musical journey that followed was a whirlwind, and one that left an impression on Crisp and changed his life (see sidebar). The teenage mixed quartet he first played for disbanded after 18 months, but not before he fell in love with traveling and ministering to different people with different needs." Though distraught after that particular group ended, "I knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt," Crisp recalls, "that this was more than a hobby for me, it was

a calling. And from that day forward, God has led me step by step through many circumstances into what has become who I am."

Even seasoned veterans can attest that life on the

road is wearing and stressful, and Crisp testifies to what keeps him engaged and calm as he travels all over the world. He has a fascination with technology ("If it has lights, buttons, and a screen, you can bet I'll be near it")— including the great American teenage pastime of text messaging. He is cultivating an interest for arranging and composing, and he would eventually like to explore co-writing. As for the adjustment to traveling with a busy professional group, Jacob says, "It's funny how the Lord knows exactly what we need and when we need it. He is my rock, and has helped me adjust to road life quickly."

He continues to draw both inspiration – from great such as the late Anthony Burger and Roger Bennett, and Kim Collingsworth – "Their finesse and expertise on the piano is astounding!" He also draws support from his family, his church, and his girlfriend Victoria Shirey, another young person active in Southern Gospel music (she sings solo and with her family group, The Shireys). Crisp recalls being taught as he grew up, "Honor the Lord and He will honor you" and is finding that to be a truth.

Support is especially important as Crisp continues in his role with The Hoppers, certainly a well-known name in Southern Gospel and an establishment that has, in just one year, taken him all over the world. Crisp plays the piano as well as takes care of some behind-the-scenes duties: keeping up the water supply, charging the credit card machine, and maintaining the email-list database for the group. "But when all is said and done," he explains, "I love to just sit and listen to stories from past concerts, and hear tales of the ones that we all loved so much that are now walking the streets of gold. Of course, there's always time for a joke or two as well."

Crisp seems to enjoy the moments and knowledge



Backstage at a grand piano.  
Courtesy of Jacob Crisp



Promotional photo

## Jacob Crisp - cont'd

shared with the group members, as well as sharing his own stories of road and ministry life, a life that has taken him to Ireland, Norway, and Holland in the last year.

"I can remember being on stage in Belfast, finishing our last song, 'Shoutin' Time.' The entire audience was on their feet cheering, praising God. It was so incredible," Crisp recalls. "We went off stage as the crowd begged for more. We went back out and did another encore of 'Shoutin' Time,' and the Spirit fell. I had 'Holy Ghost Chills' all over me. It was life-changing."

Crisp completes the interview with some very sage-sounding advice for a man of his age. This seems to show that those who not only have musical talent but also have poise, stamina, and a teachable spirit will find success in their musician endeavors.

He says, "To all the young people who are seeking a career in Gospel Music, I say to you: No matter what circumstances come up, no matter what life throws at you, keep working at your talent. And in everything you do, give credit to the One who



*Crisp on stage with Claude Hopper.  
Photo by Jessica Moore*

gave you your talent. Your persistence will pay off if you keep Jesus first."

Adding a nod to those who have paved the way for the next generation of southern gospel movers and shakers, Crisp adds, "To all the SG veterans: Thank you for staying with your calling. God has given you fruit for your labor. I would like to encourage you to be an encouragement to those who are just starting. It's not an easy road, and it's very easy to get discouraged. Sometimes just the extra boost of support can make an unbelievable difference."

Here's to the future of Southern Gospel, paved by the likes of Jacob Crisp, and to all the unbelievable differences that lie ahead!

## Hoppin' on down the road...

'As previously stated, I started traveling with my first SG group at age 14. When that group disbanded, I - along with the alto from that group - did a few dates as a duo; later in the year, the Lord blessed us with a soprano and we began traveling as a trio. We gained favor with churches throughout the region as our harmonies continued to blend. God was really opening doors for us, and we were so thrilled! We continued on virtually argument-free for the next year and a half. In the middle of 2008, the 2 female singers finished high school and were making plans for college. To my dismay, we were going to have to regroup. I went to the NQC to promote the group, and hopefully make some connections with other singers. I played one song on the Regional Artist Showcase, and after I played, Dennis Sparks, manager for The Hoppers, came and introduced himself to me and told me they were holding auditions for a pianist. I prayed very hard about it, and consulted the other group members about it. All the answers were the same: "If that's what you feel that the Lord is leading you to do, then go for it!" It is through the NQC and the recommendations of some wonderful that I have a job that I have always wanted, and I couldn't be more happy.' - Jacob Crisp



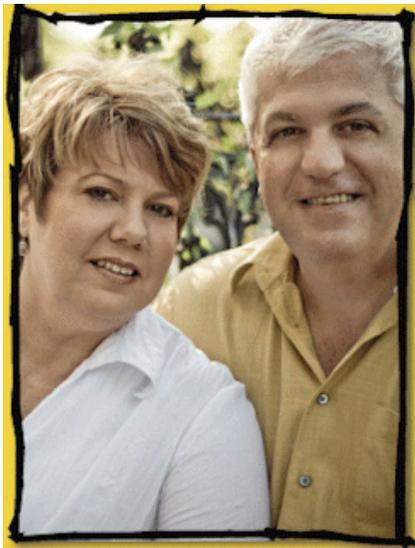
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## Sue & Jeff Duffield: Inspirational Entertainers (with line dancing!) By Evie Hawkins

*The author asks: How on earth am I going to describe all of Sue Duffield's many talents, unless I can come up with a name that will encompass all of them. Sue and husband Jeff make up a diversely talented couple that have taken their gifts out into the highways and bi-ways for many years, blessing others with their positive, uplifting approach to the stresses that face us all in our daily lives.*



It doesn't take long to get to know Sue, because this lady meets no stranger! "Singer, songwriter, author, and speaker, and proud mom of David and Annie, married to Jeff Duffield for 34 years," is Sue Duffield's assuming portrayal of herself. This low-key, self-description is but a tiny fragment of the cheerful and giving spirit of a right-hearted woman. Those who have been blessed by her magical music and sparkling wit see not only a loving wife and mother, but also combustion of comedy and joy. The 34 years she has spent perfecting her craft is rewarded in the hilarious, heart-warming, true stories and the impeccable timing which fetches tears and laughter to her packed audiences.

Sue's star began to rise in high school when her first album was released while she was a Junior at Penn's Grove High School. She was constantly asked to sing other kinds of music, but she refused to leave her roots of singing only gospel music. She turned down a scholarship to play basketball at Immaculata College in '73, to pursue her music ministry.

Jeff and Sue's star-studded career started with a two-year tour, straight out of high school with the Sammy Hall Singers of Sevierville, TN. During that tour, The Duffields acquired valuable 'on-the-road' education and honed their music abilities. After two years with The Sammy Hall Singers, they returned home to New Jersey to pursue their own music ministry and later opened SJD Sound Studios."

Jeff started playing the piano at the age of ten. It wasn't too long after that he began playing for church

services in his hometown of Bridgeton, NJ. He studied with piano teacher Reinhold Freche for eight years and began playing for recording sessions at the age of thirteen. He studied with the Berklee School of Music in arranging and orchestration. Jeff became a sought after accompanist for many artists and vocalists and has produced and played on over 300 albums. He is currently the owner/operator of "SJD Sound Studio." From jazz, to gospel, to country, and classical, Jeff is one of the most versatile keyboardists in today's music. His style and early influences include George Shearing, Peter Nero, Nick Bruno, Larry Goss, and Dave Grusin.

Jeff's production, stage, and studio client list includes many great Gospel artists as well as a variety of other genres including: Ben "Cooter" Jones Band (Dukes of Hazzard), Boots Randolph, Gary S. Paxton, Dave Boyer, Sammy Hall, Anita Bryant, Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, The Cathedrals, Doug Oldham, Glad "A Chorus Line" -Philadelphia, PA, and "Beatlemania" -Wilmington, DE.

Sue also sports a list of accolades and accomplishments that has kept her busy and on the go since she was a teenager and includes: She's a media and radio personality, formerly with WNRK Radio, Newark, DE, scriptwriter, and voice of local and national radio commercials. She has recorded over 28 albums, earning national chart recognition. She has guest hosted for Canada's top rated Christian TV show, One Hundred Huntley Street, Toronto and FOCUS FOUR TV program, Cornerstone Television Pittsburgh. She received a BMI Songwriter and National Merit Award. She is a Worship leader for Prison Fellowship



Photos courtesy of Sue Duffield

Ministry Briefings, with Chuck Colson and Child Evangelism Fellowship National Conferences, has been the devotion leader for NASCAR's Nextel Cup race drivers and wives, Dover International Speedway, Dover, DE, and speaker for Baylor Correctional Women's Prison chapel services, Wilmington, DE. She's co-owner of SJD Sound Productions-digital recording studio, and a frequent keynote speaker and music guest for various venues and events.

Among the songs Sue has written is the theme song for the Women of Purpose Conference in Hershey, PA back in 2008, called "Steppin' Out." She had no idea it would make such an unusual impact!

She says, "As soon as I started singing it, 3000 women got up and started line-dancing, totally unorchestrated! I was amazed! At my next event I watched

to see if it would happen again, and sure enough: [it did!]. This went on for the following several weeks, in totally different and e c u m e n i c a l venues! Crazy! There was no stopping this hilarity! So, I went with it! Now I get invitations around the country to do Inspirational Line-Dancing and Devotion with Sue Duffield!"

O b v i -  
o u s l y , Sue is having the time of her life, not to

mention her audience, as they gather by the masses to have "Girls Night Out" events for churches, featuring comedy, music, and chocolate!

Sue says "Jeff is my voice, musically. He has made me sound good for almost four decades. We started in High School, singing everywhere we could. Funny now to look back because one note I wrote home from camp one year said, 'Dear Mom - met this guy (with a quartet haircut!) who "unfortunately" plays the accordion too! I think his name is Jeffery Dunsfield'. My kids get a kick out of that one! We were 13."

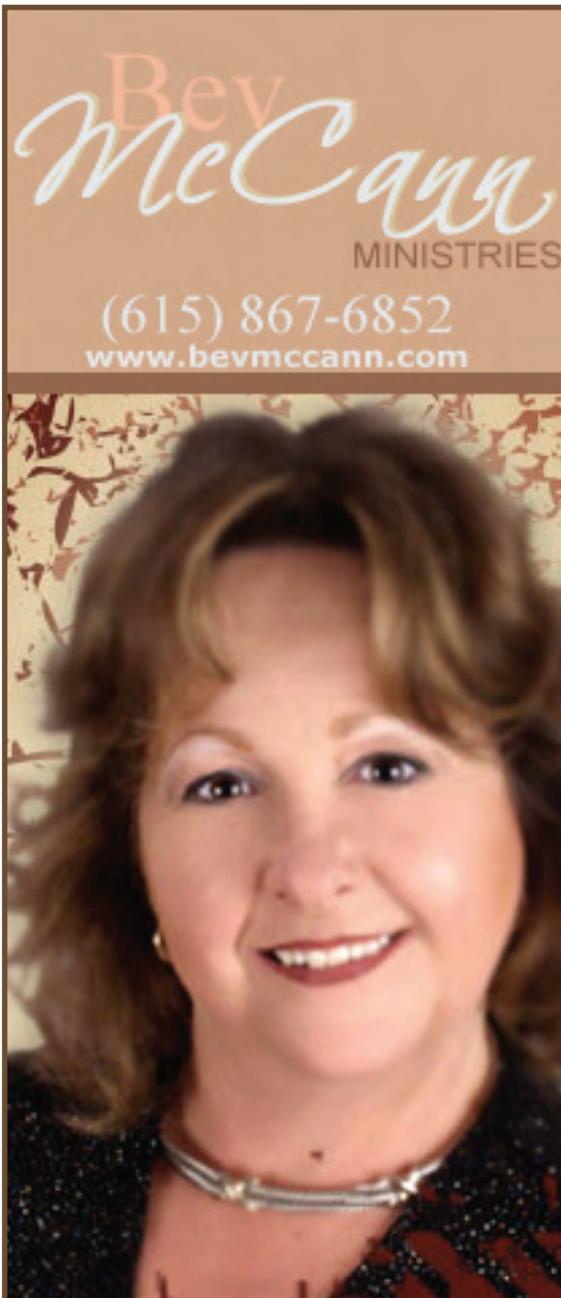
Sue's optimism shows even as she recounts obstacles she and Jeff have encountered along the way. She notes, "The 'bumps' in the road are the real deal - it's what makes everything else clear and steady." Losing her dad suddenly back in 2002, while he led the final prayer after preaching, gave the family a new perspective to the song, "What A Way To Go". The song (performed by the Duffields) was written by Phil Enloe, a dear friend, but Sue re-wrote the first verse to dedicate to her dad.

Sue says that she'd love to do more women's events; she would especially like to continue to team up with speaker friends like Pam Farrel, Donna Parlow, and Sheri Rose Shepherd, being the "color" or comedy for the event, as well as leading worship. She hopes to begin a new album project early this fall.

Jeff and Sue attend Cornerstone church, but will be starting to help Jeremy Medkiff at Living to Go Church for their early service, which will be traditional, with a Southern Gospel feel.

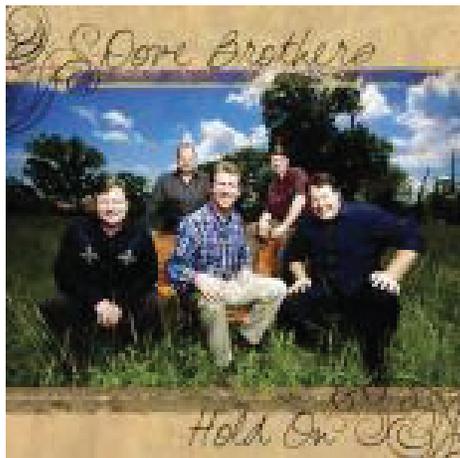
The Duffields have been blessed with two kids, David, 24, is a mechanic in Delaware and Annie, 23, is with them in Hendersonville, TN. Anne recently graduated with a degree in music business, and is anxious to put her musical expertise to work full-time.

The Duffields have rapidly settled in to their new home as old friends have welcomed them in the Nashville neighborhood with open arms. Many sessions with other veteran session players have proven to be quite enjoyable for Jeff, as the mark he made on this industry, in the days of his youth has followed him. This seasoned producer and session player, and his delightful wife, should have many years ahead filled with the joy of knowing how they have impacted the lives of their followers and fans. The Duffield name is synonymous with extraordinary Gospel music, filled with energy, compassion, and yes, humor. Throw line-dancing and chocolate into that mix and we're all on our way to see the Duffields!



## Who's making new music...

### CD Reviews by Chad Hayes



Dove Brothers Quartet  
*Hold On*

[www.dovebrothersquartet.com](http://www.dovebrothersquartet.com)

In 1998, McCray and Eric Dove formed what today has become one of the premier quartets in the Southern Gospel Music industry. The Dove Brothers Quartet has had several hit songs and won several industry awards over the years, and they show no signs of stopping anytime soon. Current group members include McCray Dove (lead), Eric Dove (baritone), Jerry Martin (tenor), David Hester (bass), and Jerry Kelso (piano).

*Hold On* is the group's latest album. It contains 10 songs done in much the same style as the group used on their previous album, *Life*. The inside of the album cover contains interesting information about each group member, but I think that this sort of thing is best left for a group's website. The album opens up with an up-tempo McCray Dove song called "Hold On," which the baritone and tenor stacked above the lead in the chorus. I was not aware that McCray that as much of a low range as he shows here, and it makes for a nice sound. The tempo stays much the same for the second song, a more traditional-sounding number called "I'm Gonna Rise, I'm Gonna Fly." This song showcases the groups's great blend. They then dip back into the past for Rusty Goodman's "Leaving On My

Mind". Hester is featured here with some smooth bass vocals.

"When I Wake Up In The Morning" is an up-tempo number that features tenor Martin taking the lead and solos throughout. Martin has long been, in my opinion, one of the best tenors in Southern Gospel music. He has a powerful voice and wide range, but he knows how not to overuse that range. His vocals are distinctive, and this song should be released to radio at some point. Baritone Eric Dove is featured on the medium-tempo "He's Gonna Smile On Me." Eric, while not the most "flashy," is one of the most underrated baritones in the industry today.

The eighth song is an old one that I used to love as a kid. "Little Da-

vid" is a moderately up-tempo song featuring bass vocalist David Hester, and should go over well both in concerts.

This is another solid album by the Dove Brothers. They are one of the most consistent groups in Southern Gospel as far as quality is concerned, and seem to have taken a step forward in the sound that they've been using since their previous CD. I do think this project could have used at least one more true, slower, power ballad to balance things out - even though I am admittedly a definite fan of the up-tempo stuff.

*Favorites: "Hold On", "When I Wake Up In The Morning", and "Jesus, He's Everything"*

**OVERALL: 9/10 Microphones**



Kingdom Heirs  
*When You Look at Me*  
[www.kingdomheirs.com](http://www.kingdomheirs.com)

For 23 years, the Kingdom Heirs have been the resident gospel group at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, TN. In that time, they have become one of the most well-known and well-respected groups in Southern Gospel. Current group members are Billy Hodges (tenor), Arthur Rice (lead), Steve French (baritone/co-owner), Jeff Chapman (bass), Andy Stringfield (piano), Kreis French (bass guitar/co-owner), and Dennis Murphy (drums).

*When You Look At Me* is the group's most recent album. They picked songs from some of the best writers in the industry- Dianne Wilkinson, Joseph Habedank, Matthew Holt, and Rodney Griffin to name a few. I like the concept of the album cover. It features the group standing in a line looking at a picture of each of them as babies/children standing in a line directly across from them. I also was glad that the song lyrics were included inside the cover.

Kingdom Heirs have a solid group of vocalists that seems to have gelled. This particular CD, while not their best, is a solid, quality effort. There are some very bright spots throughout, but it did tend to drag at times. Maybe a rearrangement of the song order and a reduction of at least one song would help with this.

*Favorites: "He Locked The Gates," "Fire Away," "When The Story Of My Life Is Told," and "Jesus Showed Up."* **OVERALL: 8/10 Micriphones**

Chad Hayes is also the resident CD reviewer for SGMRadio.com. Beginning next month, you can read reviews of more CDs as well as get track listings and more at [SGNScoops.com/reviews](http://SGNScoops.com/reviews).



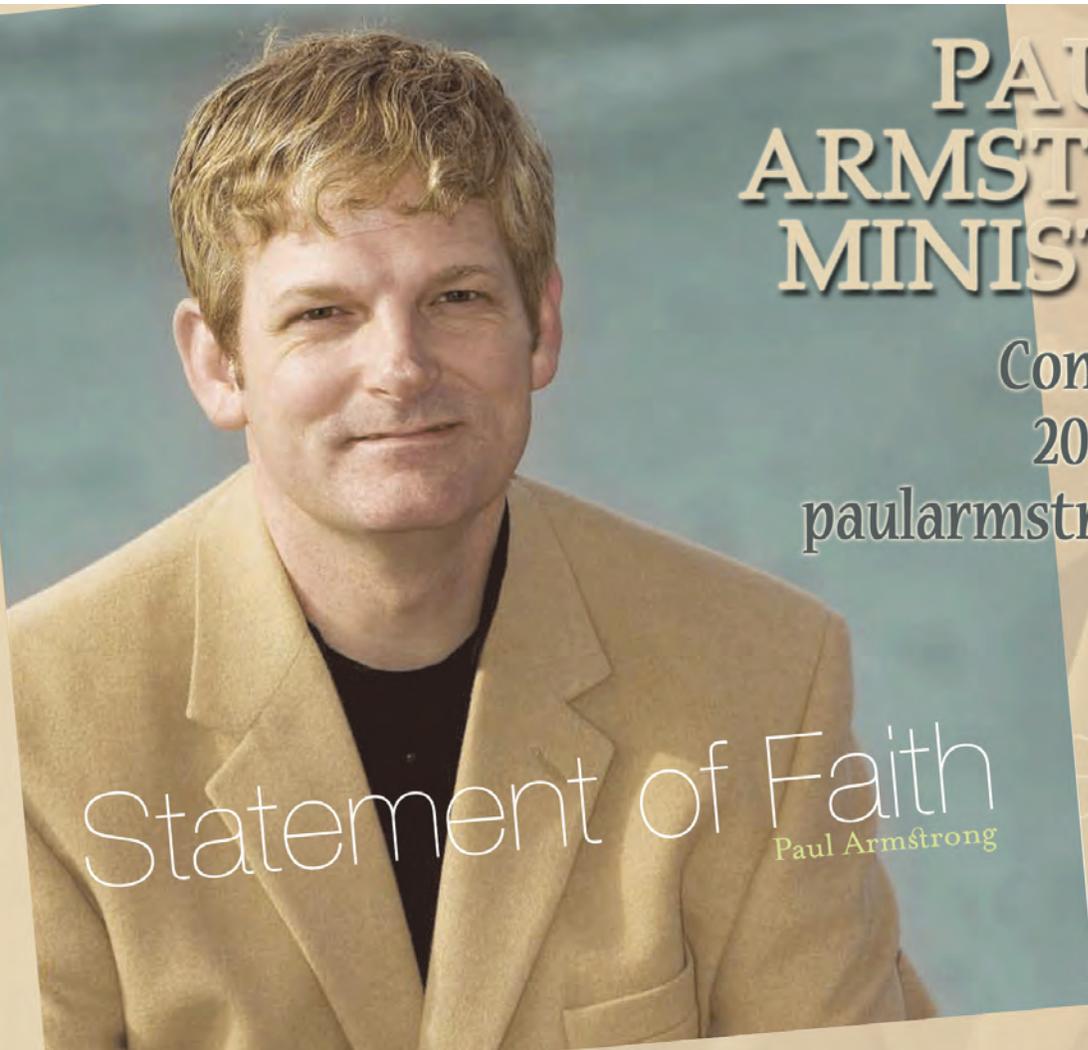
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