

September 2011

sgn **Scoops** digital
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The Hoppers



Celebrate Gold

Also In This Issue:

Wilburn & Wilburn, Tribute Quartet, Hannah Webb and The Journeymen



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All American Gospel Music Cruise





Letter From The Editor

Grace Received... Faith is Rising... Grace Extended

RHONDA FRYE

My first full month as the Editor has been one full of grace. Ha- with myself on the receiving end! The many notes of encouragement and positive feedback from our readers have overwhelmed me. I appreciate the kind words and compliments. We wouldn't have much of a magazine to publish if it were not for our talented and committed staff of writers! I can't explain how proud I am of our team. Putting together a magazine requires dedication and cooperation. We are scattered across the nation- all the way into Canada, but we come together- defying time zones and distances to present Scoops Magazine to YOU! I am very appreciative of our staff for what they do, but also for the grace and acceptance everyone has extended to me.

And...I stand in need of more grace! I would like to publicly apologize to Julie Groves and Emma Carter. These lovely and kind photographers donated pictures for last month's feature on the Diamond Awards and I neglected to credit them for their work. Woops! The pictures added so much life to the story and we are most grateful.

Although I didn't purposely plan a theme for the September issue, it seems the Lord wove a thread of "Faith & Faithfulness" throughout the magazine this month. Without planning, many of our articles "just so happen" to touch on the topic of faith. Actually,

I don't think it's a coincidence. The theology of "Divine Providence" turns my mind inside out and upside down. Many people believe in the existence of God, but deny the fact that He is actively involved with human affairs. I believe it takes more faith to believe in coincidence than divine providence. For whatever reason, someone somewhere needs their faith strengthened. I feel safe to say, September's theme of Faith is a "God-Thing!"

I love GOD-Thing stories! I wallow in "God-Thing" stories of the past. So much so- I've asked the Lord to let me be a reporter in heaven someday. I hope to interview eye-witnesses of great Bible stories and report the "rest-of-the-story" on the heavenly nightly news to folks who have an inquiring mind like mine! Believe me- I have a long list of stories I want the SCOOP on! It's fun to let my mind wander there, but I'm blessed to have the privilege of un-veiling and reporting "God-Thing" stories of the present.

My highlight this month was listening to the Hopper's God-thing stories. Again, I found myself in tears at the Divine Providence of God. He has orchestrated and arranged events in their lives allowing them to accomplish extraordinary things for the building of His Kingdom. The Hoppers are the first to credit God for their 50+ years of faithful ministry. Their story is beautiful and you'll see the faithfulness of God's providential hand all over it. It was a delight to personally learn from their experiences and absorb

their words of wisdom concerning ministry, industry, family and faith. Their sincere love for God, people and gospel music was evident, strong and contagious. The Hoppers left me with my faith charged and I am grateful for the experience.

I have a feeling God is going to bless my heart again by revealing more of His divine activity in the lives of those who love Him at the National Quartet Convention. We've booked our week solid with interviews with gospel favorites, veterans and new-comers. I'm excited to hear how God is moving in many different ministries. God is working and it's so exciting to report His activity with others- but I have to say, it is awesome motivation to get busy in God's work too. God has a plan for everyone. I'll remind you just as Claude

Hopper ever so gently reminded me: "Delight yourself in the Lord, and He WILL give you the desires of your heart." HE IS FAITHFUL!

I pray this issue of Scoops Magazine inspires you to keep the faith and share the faith until the day our Lord calls the faithful home! And... as a receiver of much grace, if I can extend it to you in any way, email me at rhonda@sgnscoops.com.

**God has a plan
for everyone.**





*Testimonies of
God's Faithfulness*
SEPTEMBER 2011

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"SGNScoops exists to promote the gospel by unveiling what is intriguing and real about Southern Gospel and Christian Country music. With integrity, we aspire to strengthen Christians, highlight people who are fulfilling a call to minister and emphasize the music that inspires audiences and glorifies God."

I Timothy 1:12b

"For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."

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Victoria first took the stage at 3 years old. Strong vocal abilities and harmonies are a God given talent that started in her at a very young age. Along with writing for SGN Scoops, she designs websites, is a Producer and Background Vocalist for Homeland Records out of Gallatin, TN and is a part-time cruise director for Paradise Tours & Travel. Victoria writes and arranges most of The Shirey's music as well. Most importantly, she loves the Lord with all of her heart and makes it her goal to let the love of God shine through her.

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Lou Wills Hildreth appears on the Gaither Homecoming Videos, and is a founding member of Texas First Family Of Gospel Music, the "Singing Wills Family." She helped pioneer Christian television as host of "Wills Family Inspirational TV." After moving to Nashville in the sixties, she was the first woman to own an artist management agency. Lou is an inductee of the Texas

Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, GMA Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, SGMA Hall Of Fame at Dollywood, and the Christian Music Hall Of Fame. She is a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate Of Sacred Music from Louisiana Baptist University. Recently, Gaither Homecoming Magazine named Lou in the "Hall Of Honor" series, and the Southern Gospel Music Guild gave her a "Lifetime Achievement Award." Lou is celebrating a 65th wedding anniversary in 2011 with Howard, and they live in Houston near son Dr. David Hildreth and daughter Kathryn Mumaw, and 4 grandchildren. <http://www.louhildreth.com>

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Lord and bring readers closer to the love, peace and majesty of the Almighty. lorraine@sgnscoops.com

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Evie Johnson-Hawkins is a native of Somerville, AL and has always had a passion for Gospel music and writing. She has written for newspapers and magazines and used her talents to develop EHA-Nashville, a management/consulting agency for the music industry.

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Sandi has worked in journalism for more than thirty years, and she is thankful that her love for God and Gospel music provides a great opportunity to positively impact the careers of so many in Gospel music. sandi@sgnscoops.com

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Christian Health & Fitness Expert Laurette Willis is an author with Harvest House Publishers, and the Director of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry with DVDs, a training program and PraiseMoves Instructors on four continents (<http://PraiseMoves.com>, on Facebook <http://on.fb.me/PraiseMoves>). Laurette invites readers to get started on the road to better health and fitness for spirit, soul and body. For a free, easy- to- follow 21 day program visit: <http://ChristianFitnessKit.com>

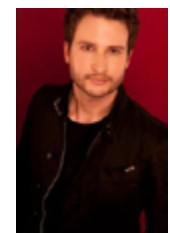
CLAYTON WATSON, WRITER



Big Clayton is a full-time piano player at a popular tourist spot in Branson, Mo, the Branson Landing. Not only has Big Clayton played in front of Millions in the past 4 years in Branson, but he has been head engineer in both studio and live events. He also served as lead tech in an audio/video company for several years. On stage and off, he is right at home.

<http://www.bransonpianoshow.com/>

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Through a series of events, Jeff Hawes has moved from the classroom where he taught high school English in Jackson county, Alabama to the tour bus of gospel great Karen Peck & New River. Jeff chronicles the fulfillment of his gospel music dreams and his road life exclusively for SGN Scoops. Learn more about him at karenpeckandnewriver.com.

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Rob Estep is a vital part of the ministry of the popular group, BEYOND THE ASHES. Currently serving as the Office and Road Manager, his wealth of experience in office management skills makes him a true asset to the group. His expertise of handling daily operations and road responsibilities go unsurpassed in quality. Rob has worked full time alongside of Anthony Facello for the past two years. Rob's Music Pastor Father exposed him to all genres of music growing up, therefore since childhood; he has had a rich love for Southern Gospel Music. Rob studied business at Columbus State University, is a HUGE Ohio State Buckeye Football fan, and is single- but open to dating when the right one comes along. robstep@sgnscoops.com

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Jennifer Campbell is an English teacher from Florida. She encourages others by singing, speaking, and writing songs. We invite you to be encouraged by reading scriptures and her powerful testimony at her website:

<http://www.jennifercampbell.net/>

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September marks the second anniversary of the re-launch of SGN-Scoops- all digital magazine! All I can say is that I am most grateful! I would especially like to say thank you to founder, Dr. Allen Smith. What a visionary he is and I appreciate him for allowing Coastal Media to acquire SGNScoops.com in 2009. SGNScoops.com launched "Scoops"- Southern Gospel's very first all-digital magazine and is also the home of the Diamond Awards. Dr. Smith paved the way in getting Southern Gospel Music News into the hands of fans using the most advanced technology available. I am grateful for our past, but excited about moving forward. We've enjoyed success over these two years and I intend to adapt to changing technology as we continue to serve artists, industry peers and fans. We strive to not only bring the latest developments in Southern Gospel and Christian Country news, but to also be a source of inspiration and encouragement for Christians.

We have worked very hard to assemble a staff of experienced writers. I am so proud to say our staff has a combined industry experience of nearly 100 years! Each month, our team brings the latest happenings in the Southern Gospel and Christian Country world with integrity, and I'm so proud! We are truly a trusted and

Happy Birthday SGNscoops!

ROB PATZ

reliable source of news in our industry.

Our editor, Rhonda Frye shares her many talents with us each month. She has a contagious enthusiasm for Southern Gospel music, and is passionate about the gospel and ministry. I'm looking forward to seeing where Rhonda takes the magazine under her leadership. We have several acclaimed, veteran writers on staff. Sandi Duncan-Clark, Lorraine Walker and Lou Wills Hildreth bring an element of excellence and experience to the magazine consistently. We also have a few young, talented and new writers too, striking a younger and wider audience. I am grateful for and very proud of her whole team.

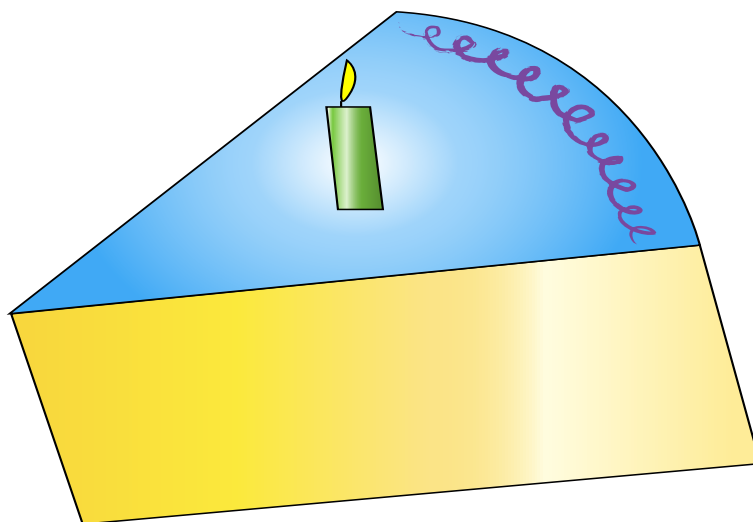
Over the past two years, it's been awesome to watch the magazine grow in popularity. We appreciate our readers interacting with us on Facebook and Twitter and also spreading the word about us.

I'm grateful the magazine is being supported, but it's also been amazing to watch so many people

get excited about the Diamond Awards too. This year we broke a record in Diamond Award voting participation! We've also extended the Diamond Awards event to include concerts leading up to the Diamond Award show. The Diamond Awards tour this year was successful and great fun. We're looking forward to planning more concerts in 2012.

Again, special thanks to Dr. Allen Smith for planting the seed and casting the vision of SGNScoops Magazine. It is our intention to keep spreading the gospel by using the most advanced technology and every available resource. I can't help but think of 2 Timothy 4:7. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." I want those words to be true of me as I give an account for my time as owner and publisher of Scoops Magazine.

Happy Birthday to us and thank you staff and readers for making these past two years a tremendous blessing in my life!





ABOVE: ALLEN HAMM & CB MCLEAN

From 1977 through the 1997, The Hallelujah Supper Club in Newton, North Carolina was THE weekend gathering "PLACE TO BE" if you were a fan of Southern Gospel music. For the best country cooking, even before we went to Cracker Barrel or Golden Corral, there was no place like the Hallelujah Supper Club.

The Hallelujah Supper Club was the brainchild of Charlie and Wilanna Birtwhistle and G.S. and Joyce Harris and their friends. We have some testimonials from some of the Volunteer Staff members and pictures of people and the artists you will know even if you didn't attend the supper club. Part of this commentary is taken from the Face Book Memory page, created by Joyce Harris and Charlie Griffin. This is exactly as I remember it, in the late '80s when I was privileged to attend the Hallelujah Supper Club!

Thanks to Charlie Griffin, a friend through the years, who acquired these photos and much of this information. Charlie, your volunteer work is not yet over!



The Hallelujah Supper Club Remembered

SANDI DUNCAN CLARK

HALLELUJAH SUPPER CLUB
NORTH COLLEGE ST,
NEWTON, NC 28658

In the late 70's the Hallelujah Supper Club was the brain child of several people in the Unifour (four country area of Burke, Catawba, Lincoln and Iredell counties) area of western North Carolina. The entertainment restaurant specialized in country cooking and featured gospel music. Each Friday and Saturday night, gospel groups graced the stage after an evening meal to entertain, minister and just laugh.

For almost 20 years a staff of volunteers served the best food, homemade biscuits and desserts, Ham biscuits which helped sponsor an evening of southern gospel music. There were so many friends who made the basement gathering place one of the most attended southern gospel venues in the Carolinas.

ORIGINAL HSC BOARD MEMBERS
CHARLIE AND WILANNA BIRTWHISTLE
GS AND JOYCE HARRIS
BOB AND BETTY JO MEDLIN
CLYDE AND HILDA COOK
GENE AND MARGIE BOWMAN
JAMES AND CATHY CRANDALL
ALLEN AND MARY BOWMAN

Other board members thru the years: Charlie Griffin, Irene Tucker, Wilma Keller, Roy and Becky Eller, Johnny and Rachael Presnell, Ethel Peters, Frank and Jeannette Sigmon, John Greene, Diane Davidson, Betty Small, Vaughn and Laureen McCracken.

Over the years the number of volunteers was tremendous. Many drove several hours to cook, serve,

clean and enjoy some music. That list is too many to begin to name. All are part of a special family. It is their work, efforts and love of gospel music and fans that made this a special place.

Good food, great gospel music, intimate, casual, relaxing, exciting and real people just describe the HSC. Many try to imitate it. Yet it is never duplicated. No one can match the passion and desire to impact the Christian community in the way the Hallelujah Supper did and still does today in our memories.

FROM THE PEN OF JOYCE HARRIS, HALLELUJAH SUPPER CLUB BOARD MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER...

The HSC beginning....Years ago, I heard of the Joyful Noise Supper Club in East Point, Ga. I told my husband, G.S. that I wished we could have one around the Hickory, NC area. He said, "We could not afford that type of place around here."

I felt as if God was leading in that direction. Not long after that conversation, we were approached by some friends about starting a Christian Supper Club. We went to some meetings spear-headed by Charlie and Wilanna Birtwhistle.

Soon everything began to fall in place for a Christian Supper Club in Western North Carolina. The name was chosen "The Hallelujah Supper Club." The search for a building began. The Cellar Restaurant had closed in Newton, NC. It was in the basement of a downtown building. Low ceiling, with support posts throughout the main dining area. The kitchen was small but efficient. There was a walk-in cooler and a stock room.

LEFT: FLORIDA BOYS

We signed the lease and the work started. We cleaned the building, kitchen, cooler, stock room and bathrooms. We painted, bought a freezer, some tables and chairs. Built a stage and placed some lighting for the performers. We bought the pots and pans, serving trays, plates and cutlery, a dessert counter, coffee pots, ice machines...and the list continued for 20 years.

The adventure had begun. A lot of hard work went into opening. The staff members were completely volunteer and remained that way for over 20 years.

The word began to spread about the "gospel music supper club." Often referred to as the Hallelujah Club, people came to enjoy some great gospel music and enjoy great country cooking. Many people came to the HSC that had never been to a church. Over the years, there were many decisions made for Christ. And for that we are thankful and most proud it happened as a supper club.

Many friends met at the HSC. There were a couple of marriages performed at the supper club. There were many friends who volunteered over the years. Some cooked; others served or cleaned the dining room. Dishes were washed, stock put up, trash taken out, bathrooms cleaned all the while gospel music was playing from the groups setting up or on the stereo. We could never get enough of that "good ol' gospel music."

So many of the gospel greats whether local or national performed on the HSC stage. Every Friday and Saturday night we shared a meal and gospel music with some of our closest friends from all over the southeast. We were just family.

Over the years we faced many obstacles, prayed many prayers, made many friends, and sang many songs. Many will try to duplicate the atmosphere, the spirit, the music and



ABOVE: GOLD CITY

even the food of the HSC, but there will never be another Hallelujah Supper Club.

The HSC would have never made it without the volunteers who worked tirelessly every week. The HSC would have never made it without the musical artists who saw our vision and shared in making it a reality.

We were truly blessed many times over to be part of such a great gospel music venue. I miss it. I miss the people, the music and even the work. But the Hallelujah Supper Club still lives as we share our memories and stories.

Thanks for sharing our memories.

JOYCE HARRIS
HSC DIRECTOR AND VOLUNTEER

MY FIRST TIME!

The first time I visited the Hallelujah Supper Club, I was only 17. I had graduated high school and during the summer my neighbor said she had a place she wanted me to go with her. It was a gospel music supper club.

I was singing in my home church in the choir and church quartet, so I said yes. As we traveled to Newton, NC she told me about the country fried steak and gravy with all the vegetables and how much she loved it there. Clara took me down some steps to the basement of an old drug store in downtown Newton.

I went thru the serving line, chose my entree and veggies. We sat down and after the blessing had a wonderful home cooked country style meal. The crowd was small, as word was just getting out about the place. We learned it was an all-volunteer staff. Each person who worked there made the rounds to talk to everyone. Joyce and G.S. Harris came over sat and just talked for a while with us.

At 8pm, the Bob Lemar Singers took the stage. Bob was familiar but I could not say from where. Then he said he had been with the Singing Americans when they first started. Bob, his wife and the group sang up a storm. He played the trumpet and I loved it.

At intermission, the group spoke to everyone in the building. They were at the record table, then at the



ABOVE: HEAVENBOUND
RIGHT: DIXIE ECHOES

counter getting a ham biscuit. They were so friendly.

When they sang the close of the program, Bob gave a time for prayer and an invitation. People were touched. I could hear a sob and an Amen in the crowd.

Charlie Birtwhistle and his lovely wife greeted the people and introduced the group. Joyce was the cook, G.S. the master server. I remember it as if it were yesterday.

I was so smitten with the place that I began to work there. Whatever needed to be done, I could do it, or so I thought. Cook, schedule talent, clean, wash dishes, paint, work on the computer, emcee, sing (with Meetin' Time, Ron Williams Singers and Vanguards) or just enjoy the singing. For over 15 years I worked there. I had some great people on my crew and am forever touched by the first visit to a place that affected lives for good, provided great food and music to entertain and became an iconic place noted for good people.



CHARLIE GRIFFIN
FORMER BOARD MEMBER AND
VOLUNTEER STAFF MEMBER

FROM KATRINA HARRIS BENTON

Before the Hallelujah Supper Club opened, I remember Mom & Dad (G.S. & Joyce) meeting with Charlie, Wilanna, Clyde and Hilda, etc. it was an exciting time. I was in the ninth grade. That year was 1977. By 1978 Charlie Birtwhistle's dream was a reality! Over the next 20 years the HSC became the place of a lot of "FIRST" loves for many people: The love of good country cooking, the love of great gospel music, love of new friends, and so much more! Most teenagers would have considered it a curse to have been dragged to the place EVERY Friday and Saturday, but I considered it a blessing! Even when I had to help mom cook :o) The HSC is a much missed place in the hearts of those who loved visiting.

BELOW: FOX BROTHERS



LOOKING BACK....

With any business, conversation surrounds: "What can we do to increase business and do something differently to get new people and keep our regular patrons returning." We booked the best regional and national talent, cooked some of the best country cooking dishes and entrees anywhere, and we tried some of the best theme nights with varied talents. From breakfast buffets to all you can eat Pintos, Cole slaw, fried potatoes, chicken and dumplings and all things in between.

Sometimes I think we tried things to keep the volunteers engaged. But one thing always came thru loud and clear; don't change the atmosphere and the good food.

We took to heart the compliments and suggestions. At our board meetings, discussions always came down to the experience. How could we keep the cost down for a family of four to come and enjoy a gospel music night out with good country cooking food?

We constantly checked food prices. Patrons donated vegetables from their gardens. Green Beans, Tomatoes, Corn, Okra, Cucumbers, Squash and the list went on. Pat and Patsy Lyons donated a truck load of honey dew



ABOVE: LESTERS

melons. Cases of peaches and pecks of strawberries were given and how we made those homemade desserts special.

I remember how we always answered so many requests with the standard buffet menu. As we talked with you, laughed about the funny experiences and just got to know what you wanted, we found we were really blessed to have you as part of our family.

The many memories are not forgotten, but cradled in our hearts. On this Face Book page, it is our hope to share those memories again, for the first time.

THE HSC WEEKEND BEGAN EARLY EACH WEEK...

The activity started early each week for the weekend. On Monday the stock order was gathered and placed with

BELOW: KEITH THORNTON
CRAIG PIPPIN
RIGHT: AFTER CONCERT



Bigger Brothers Distribution and IFH Distribution.

Mail was picked up and special foods delivered. After work on Thursday evening, the HSC was vacuumed, all tables and chairs washed down. The restrooms were cleaned and stocked with tissue. All counters in the serving area were wiped down. In the kitchen, everything was rechecked. The soft drinks were restocked.

Then the menu was planned. Preparation began for cooking on Friday, while the mail was answered, reservations booked and confirmed. Returned all calls for reservations were made. Artist bookings were finalized.

The lights were switched off and doors locked about 11pm on Thursday, because Friday was coming. It was time for another HSC gospel music weekend.

Friday food orders were delivered, just in time for the cook. The weekend was under way.....

RIGHT:
MIKE LEFEVRE



TYPICAL NIGHT FOR DINNER AND CONCERT AT THE HSC

What was it like to get everything ready for a concert at the HSC? Betty Johnston asked in an email. Most nights the cooking started no later than 2pm. For an average full night 4 extra-large chicken casseroles, one 20lb. sliced ham, 10lb. of meatballs, 20lb. bag of cabbage, 20lb. bag of carrots, 10 gallons of green beans, 20lb. of nib let corn, 16lb of broccoli (add the cheese now), 3 gal of Crowder peas, 3 gallons of gravy, 10 gallons of mashed potatoes, 600 homemade buttermilk biscuits, assorted desserts to feed 400 people, 20 gallons of iced tea, soft drinks, coffee and be ready to serve at 6pm, the concert started at 8pm. VOLUNTEERS WORKING: 3 in the kitchen cooking, 6 to serve, 4 to bus

BELOW: HARVESTERS





TOP LEFT: LORDSMEN



TOP RIGHT: SAVANNAH AND SANDI

BOTTOM LEFT: SQUIRE AND REDEEMED

BOTTOM RIGHT: RON WILLIAMS



tables, 2 to wash dishes during the serving. The clean up well it took all of us. If we all pitched in, we could listen to the concert after intermission. The best part of the night...to me was after the concert when the performers and all of the volunteers could have dessert and just laugh. Those were the days.....Great Memories!

THEY ARE LINED UP TO GET IN!!!!

At 6pm hungry gospel music fans would begin to line up at the door. As the doors opened fans walked down the stairs, Ethel began to handle the reservations and check everyone in. As they rounded the corner, Frank served the slaw, GS served the meat entree, Roy served veggies, Charles Estep served biscuits, Becky served drinks, Judy served desserts and Joanne manned the coffee. Joyce and Charlie was in the kitchen, Frank was on hand for the dishes while Laurine was the food runner. After the first run of fans was served, tables were cleaned and dishes washed. At 8pm Charlie recognized different groups, anniversaries, birthdays and introduced the performing group. On this night Squire Parsons was introduced. The first night he ever performed. It was the first of

many performances that were always sold out. About 8:45pm intermission began, ham biscuits were sold with drinks and desserts, people mingled, purchased CDs, talked with Squire. At 9pm Squire sang to close out the evening. All of the volunteers had cleaned, washed dishes and was able to listen to some great gospel music. As Squire closed many times with a special prayer, the equipment was torn down and loaded into the bus. Squire, Mac and the whole gang of volunteers were able to have dessert, talk, laugh and enjoy the glow of a great dinner and concert. And ask what's for supper on Saturday night? The answer was always the same...cooks choice. See you tomorrow night...the lights were off, the doors locked. Saturday is a new day, new menu and new concert. Let's do it again.....

If you have memories of the Hallelujah Supper Club that you would like to share, visit the Face Book page and share them. If you'd like to send them to us to share, please do so at sandi@sgnscoops.com

Again, a special thanks to Joyce Harris and Charlie Griffin!

BELOW: TIM RILEY

ABOVE:
SINGING
AMERICANSLEFT:
BIRTHDAY
PARTY

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LOVE, LIFE, AND LEGENDS

LOU WILLS HILDRETH



ABOVE: SINGING WILLS FAMILY-NQC 1957: BOB, BILL, CALVIN, JO, LOU, AND BETTY

The National Quartet Convention is celebrating 54 years of this glorious “family reunion” of artists, industry personnel, and fans, in Louisville, Kentucky, September 11-17, 2011. I have never missed one, and 54 years later, Howard and I will be there! Meeting with CEO Rob Patz, Editor Rhonda Frye, and other contributors to SGN Scoops, is on the schedule. You can also find us at Booth 178 with Judy Nelon, autographing my book, plus we will be taping television for Family Friendly Entertainment. Attending the Gaither Vocal Band Reunion on Thursday afternoon, and being onstage with the Bill Gaither Sing-Along on Friday afternoon, are part of this year’s NQC excitement, but I will never forget the FIRST National Quartet Convention!

The year was 1957 and a white Cadillac, driven by my brother Calvin, with two other brothers and three of us sisters on board, arrived at Ellis Auditorium in Memphis, Tennessee. The “Singing Wills Family” from Fort Worth, Texas, was there at the invitation of our colleagues, the Blackwood Brothers, who had planned and produced this event. The Wills brothers and sisters were excited to be appearing with the Statesmen, Speer Family, Blackwood

Brothers, Melody Boys, Chuck Wagon Gang, Rebels, Blue Ridge, Florida Boys, Harvesters, Plainsmen, Couriers, LeFevres, and the Oak Ridge Boys at this new venture, the first National Quartet Convention. At that time, we were singing concerts regularly with these artists, and how gratifying it is to know they are now recognized as “legends” in gospel music. Backstage with these friends, we felt a sweet spirit of reunion, and it spread to the fans out front who were cheering with jubilant appreciation! When it came our time to perform, the brothers and sisters—Calvin, Bill, Norma Jo, twins Betty and Bob—joined me onstage singing our signature song “I Have A Desire To Tell The World About The Savior.” As we sang, in my heart, I was thanking God for the privilege of traveling and ministering with the family, beginning in 1938. Calvin and I were members of the original Wills Family with our dad and an older sister. The younger brothers and sisters joined us as soon as they were old enough to walk onstage. At the NQC in 1957, those years of working together served us well, and the fans responded generously to our family harmony, colorful stage wear,

and passionate love for the message. The Wills Family sang on the NQC stage for the next fifteen years or more, but memories of that FIRST convention still take my breath away. I thank God for the blessing of being present at the first NQC and, personally, never missing a year of this gathering of fans, industry, and performers.

In 2011, as we celebrate the 54th Anniversary of the National Quartet Convention, we are indebted to innovative legends such as James Blackwood, J. D. Sumner, Jake Hess, and Hovie Lister, who turned a dream into reality, and to those who have kept that dream alive! A heartfelt congratulations is due Clarke Beasley, Executive Director, and the current NQC Board, for the growth and success of this “experience like no other.”

*Visit Lou Wills Hildreth at
www.louhildreth.com
or email her at
gospfvideo@aol.com.*

BELOW: REMAINING SIBLINGS, WILLS FAMILY, ALL STILL IN GOSPEL MUSIC, LOU HILDRETH, JO HAMM, BETTY STEPHENS, AND BOB WILLS



LOVE, LIFE, AND LEGENDS continued...



LEFT: EARLY NQC GAITHER SINGALONG--INCLUDED JIM HILL, CONNIE HOPPER, DAVID PHELPS, LOU HILDRETH, JAMES BLACKWOOD, GUY PENROD, AND REX NELON

RIGHT: BILL GAITHER AND GEORGE YOUNCE AT AN EARLY GAITHER NQC SINGALONG



ABOVE: LOU INTERVIEWING HOPPERS AT FFE BOOTH, NQC 2010

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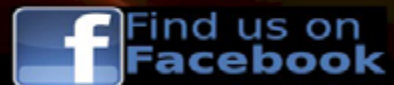
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HAPPY 50th ANNIVERSARY



The Hoppers Celebrate Gold

RHONDA FRYE

It is an accomplishment to celebrate over 50 years in ministry. What an achievement it is to reach the 50 year mile-stone in any career. What an honor it is to celebrate 50 years of marriage. It's hard to imagine that anyone could accomplish all three in just one lifetime, yet Claude and Connie Hopper have. With great joy, SGNScoops presents "America's Favorite Family of Gospel Music."

The Hoppers have realized each accomplishment with tremendous success. They have traveled extensively singing their many number-one hit songs across the nation and foreign countries. They have recorded more than 50 records and numerous CDs. The Hoppers' influence and involvement has had significant impact on the Gospel Music Industry. And...the family has received an unbelievable number of prestigious awards. Honestly, there are not enough pages in this magazine to adequately cover their achievements. Successful as they are, the Hoppers are quick to credit God and many other people that helped them along the way. In fact, Claude Hopper, implementing Will Rogers' philosophies, says: "I've never met a man I didn't like or couldn't learn from, so if I've been successful it's because I've been around a lot of successful people and I've learned

from them." With a gentle voice of experience, Claude continues, "God has given me the desire to accomplish a lot- if you delight yourself in the Lord, He will give you the desires of your heart."

In gathering information from the Hoppers' website, our interview and also from their latest book, "After All These Years," many qualities emerge that have been key to their success. It is apparent the Hoppers strive to remember the past, value leadership, love, overcome obstacles, and give God glory.

THE HOPPERS REMEMBER THE PAST

"Gospel music changed my life in 1956," says Claude. "I went to my first gospel concert, and I'm a conservative Baptist, but I'm telling you, when I heard the Speer family sing, I became a Bapticostal! I knew this was something I wanted to do, but didn't know how to do it."

Claude formed "The Hopper Brothers," and began singing, but needed a pianist. He remembered a girl named Connie from high school. Connie loved music, but at the time wasn't aware there was field called Gospel Music.

"I was going through the little town of

Maddison and Claude was standing on a corner," Connie recalls, "I knew him from high school, so I stopped for the light. He came over and pecked on the window. He didn't say hello, how are you- he just said, 'My brothers and I have just started a gospel quartet, would you be interested in playing the piano for us?' I said, 'Well, I'll have to think about it.' The light turned green and I said, 'Yes!'"

Connie continued with, "I started playing for them and we sang songs like, 'I've Been with Jesus,' and songs that I wasn't familiar with. It didn't take me long to realize that it was a lot more than music. When I really heard the lyrics of the songs, I was moved and I knew it was bound to touch other people."

"When we first started, we sang anywhere and everywhere anyone asked us to sing," explained Connie. "Sometimes we got paid three dollars and seventy five cents and sometimes fifty dollars, but we did it because God put the desire in us."

For the first 12 years, the Hopper Brothers & Connie sang part time, transitioning to full-time by 1970. In the early years, they ministered in churches, crusades and started old-fashioned camp-meetings in Watermelon Park.





THE HOPPERS VALUE LEADERSHIP

Influential businessman, Claude Hopper is the visionary and pillar of their ministry. "Claude has been the manager, the one that pushed us to go on," says Connie. "There have been times that were hard. I remember when our best singer left and I didn't want to go to a concert. Claude said, 'No! We're booked to sing, they're expecting us and we are going to be there!' Claude has taught us to be responsible. The only time I remember of ever missing dates was due to a death in the family," says Connie. "Oh, and there was that one time we never found the church in North Carolina."

THE HOPPERS LOVE...

The Hoppers are passionate about God, Family, Gospel Music and the Industry.

God: The Hoppers belong to a church, but due to their schedule, regular attendance is difficult. However, they are creative in finding other ways to grow spiritually. The Hoppers listen to Dr. Charles Stanley and Dr. David Jeremiah messages on the bus. They also conduct Bible studies as well as have private devotions. Connie says she reads a lot, and in the early years, she grew by discussing spiritual matters with her friends like Vestal Goodman and Dottie Rambo. Connie says

reading the Bible, studying commentaries and allowing the Holy Spirit to be her teacher has been what has helped her with spiritual growth the most.

Kim Hopper agrees and adds, "We need this like everyone else! I learn a lot about the Lord from other people in their experiences. Every night, people share a few things that have happened in their lives and how maybe a miracle has happened or how one of our songs has touched them- that's very fulfilling right there. It lets me see that all of God's promises are true and He still performs miracles."

Each Other: Claude and Connie celebrated their golden anniversary, earlier this year. The night of their anniversary Connie recalls they were in Tulsa, OK. "We went to Arnolds and had hamburgers, and then we sang," she laughed. "We had told the boys we didn't want anything, we'd been traveling and going so much. When we got back to Greensboro, they had a BIG surprise for us. It was really nice," she said.

So what is the secret to 50 years of marriage? "We've not had time to look at each other and find faults," Connie joked. She explained what she admires most about her husband. "I wish I had his will power. He has all these goals he wants to accomplish. He

usually accomplishes those goals and I'm usually standing over there washing clothes," she teased. "You might say we've had a marriage, but we've had a partnership and a business. He's always been stable and I always knew he was going to do the right thing; I never had to worry about that."

She admires him for being great with the family and also for what he's done for the industry, especially those just starting out. Connie explains, "You can only do so much, but if there is something Claude can do, he will."

Claude's heart is tender when it comes to his family. "I have great admiration for my wife," Claude says. "She has a wonderful spirit. What you see is what you get. She's as pure on the inside as she is on the outside and she'll tell you the truth," he shares, "and she'll try to get you for fibbing or stretching the truth!"

Claude and Connie homeschooled their sons, Dean and Michael, and are very proud of them. Claude is amazed at Mike's talent of self-teaching. "He taught himself to play drums. He was teaching himself in the basement when

we didn't even know,"

...all of God's promises are true and He still performs miracles."

Claude shares. "We built a studio, and he taught himself how to run the equipment. He's a tech-genius; he knows how to

put it all together. He's great with video and he's constantly reading and learning." Claude continues, "He's an excellent singer too; he can hear the parts. He also picked that up in the studio. He does a lot of studio work and I admire the technology he's learned, that he wouldn't have learned in sound school or college. I'm proud of him."

Claude continues, "It's been a wonderful experience to be able to just look at my boys and see the talent they have. I look at Dean and say- man I'd love to be able to sing like him- or Mike. Both are accomplished musicians," Claude shares.

Daughter-in-law, Kim is accepted as a daughter by Claude and Connie. "Kim melted into the family and she's been here 22 years," Claude explains. "I remember when she was around 10 years old when I first heard her sing." Smiling, Claude continues, "She just melted me because of her voice. There's just something about a mountain sound- she's from Boone-and she just made me weep! And, little did I know then that the two of them would get together. I'm proud of her, I really am."

On the road as a child singing with her family, Kim recalls meeting Dean. "I was 12 and Dean was 17. I had a huge crush on him, but he wasn't interested in a 12 year old girl," Kim laughed. Through the years, their families worked together and a friendship bloomed. Dean and Kim had their first date when she was 20 and got engaged within three months. They have been married 22 years and have two children.

Kim admires that Dean is willing to help others: "He's the kind of guy that goes in and sets up and runs sound for others or is willing to do whatever it takes to make a concert good for all the others involved, even if that means he's worn out by the time he makes it to the stage," Kim explained. "Dean loves this industry and he loves the people and I love that completely about him. Dean is a great guy, wonderful dad, and he's been very good to me."

The relationship between Connie and Kim has been wonderful. Connie shares: "I remember when they first got married, all I'd ever shopped for was boys, but when I would go shopping I'd find myself pulling out things and saying- 'oh, Kim would like this,' it was a thrill to be able to do that."

Through the years, they've been able to get along well. "One night I was out at the product table, this woman pulled me over to the side and said, 'I want to ask you something. Do you really get along with your daughter in



law as good as it looks on stage?' I was shocked! No one had ever asked me that. I said, "Yeah, we do get along good!"

Claude and Connie have been respectful of Dean and Kim's marriage and have always given them space to make decisions involving their family. Claude and Connie strike a good balance of staying out of the way, but stay close if their advice or help is needed. Kim shares, "God has honored that we respect each other's marriages. There's hardly been a cross word. We just know that this is our job, our ministry. We live together and love each other and that's what it's all about isn't it? Loving God and each other."

Gospel Music: The Hoppers love the music and carefully choose the right songs. "I believe we're held responsible for what we say," explains Claude. "We spend a lot of time searching for the right songs to help and encourage people. God's been good to us in helping us select good songs."

Some of Connie's favorites over the years include: "That's Him," "Here I Am," "When He Comes Down," and "Jerusalem."

The song "Jerusalem" revolutionized



the Hoppers ministry, but was first sent to Kim as a soloist. She loved the song, but felt it was a better fit for the group. Kim recalls, "Connie started to cry when she heard it. It was different from anything we had ever done. We actually sent it out when it was finished to some of our gospel music peers and said, 'What do you think?' Some wrote back and said, 'It's a great song, but where are you going to sing it?' Now I want to say 'Well... we sang it in Jerusalem, here in Chattanooga, South Africa- we've sung it everywhere you can imagine.'" The Hoppers' version of "Jerusalem" is often played on tour buses as they go into the city of Jerusalem.

The Hoppers have released numerous

recordings, but the excitement of releasing a new one never gets old. The latest release is The Hoppers Hymns. This project is an unforgettable classic collection of great gospel songs and hymns of the church. There are a total of 14 songs including: "Rock Of Ages," "It Is Well," "Until Then," "The Love Of God," "The Solid Rock," "Down By The Riverside," "All Hail The Power," and more. The Hoppers Hymns will be available by the fall of this year.

A new project produced by Michael Sykes is expected next year. Kim gives a sneak peek: "This album is more acoustic based, there are strings on it but it's not the real produced church sound. It's a lot of heart, you feel every song. Some are so special, I get chills.

We're so excited and can't wait for everybody to hear it."

In 53 years, Connie recalls many memorable performances, but the Homecoming taping with the Gaithers in Atlanta brought her to tears as she recalled the story. Just as the group stepped onto the stage to perform "Shoutin' Time," Connie sensed an overwhelming presence of the Lord.

Connie shares, "The hair started standing up on my arms and I said, 'Claude, there's somebody up here standing besides us.' As we sang, 40 thousand people started standing and we sang it over and over. I think Bill put all 5 encores on that video, it was truly amazing."

Gospel Music Industry: The Hoppers have made huge investments into the industry. Claude explains, "When I became involved in gospel music, I wanted to be involved in every facet. I'm not boasting, but I wanted to be in publishing and promoting. I also wanted to be involved with radio and TV. The first thing we did was call Rex Nelon and got into publishing. We got involved with Southern Gospel Music Guild, Southern Gospel Music Hall of Fame. I got involved in everything and here again, I'm not boasting, I made myself become involved because I wanted to see what's happening in the intricate parts of Gospel Music."

Claude serves on the board of directors for the National Quartet Convention, the Great Western Fan

Festival and is a founding member of the North Carolina Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

Following in their father's footsteps, Dean and Mike are heavily involved in the industry. Dean serves on the board of the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame, Singing in the Sun, Gatlinburg Gathering, and the Great Western Southern Gospel Fan Festival. Mike serves on the board of directors for the Singing News Magazine and the great Western Southern Gospel Fan Festival. Both Mike and Dean work tirelessly behind the scenes in audio and video at the National Quartet Convention.

When Mike and Dean are home, they offer full services in recording, mastering and digital editing at their studio called, "The Farm Recording Studio."

THE HOPPERS OVERCOME OBSTACLES

"Gospel music is not a bed of roses- you're not exempt from problems," Claude admits. "There is no bitterness, about my brothers and me, but it was a great disappointment when they parted, I didn't know what I was going to do and I had to work myself out of it. Janet Paschal came along and helped us. The Talley's came along and we hired Roger, and then Kirk became involved."

Claude recalls the painful experience of Connie's breast cancer, "When we found out Connie had cancer, the boys were young and we didn't know what we were going to do. Back then, cancer was associated with death," God worked a miracle. God healed her. You can see that in her singing; she knows what she's singing about."



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Connie elaborates, "I met the Lord in a totally different way. The Lord paid me a personal visit through the Holy Spirit in the hospital and I knew that if He chose to take me on, it was alright. He didn't, He left me here and that's been 32 years ago."

An obstacle for Kim was making the decision to leave her family. "I sang with my family for a year after Dean and I got married. I didn't know how to find somebody to replace me at that point," Kim recalls. "The family was so broken hearted thinking I was going to leave. We tried to make it work, but Dean and I were on 2 separate buses. We had a great relationship but by the time we got home again on Monday, it was like we had to start over again learning about each other. Finally, Dean went to my parents and said, 'She leaves our house every Wednesday afternoon crying- I can't take this anymore and she can't take it emotionally either.' My family was great and found a person to replace me. My baby brother married the 3rd girl that traveled with them and she sang until he passed away."

THE HOPPERS GIVE GOD GLORY

The Hoppers never dreamed their ministry would make such an impact, but they are careful to give God the praise. "I never visualized I would be doing this 50 years," Claude admits. "I didn't visualize our ministry growing like it did. I'm very humble and appreciative of how God has used my family and ministry to encourage the saints of God and point people to Christ. This is what Gospel music is all about."

The Hoppers have been recognized many times. The list includes: Singing

News Fan Awards, Diamond Awards, SGMA, Dove nominations and many more. Proverbs 27:21 says: "Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but a person is tested by being praised." The Hoppers have a meek and gracious spirit concerning their recognition.

Kim shares: "The awards like the Singing News Fan Awards, are given by the fans, not your peers. That's not necessarily to say you're the 'best' singer, but our 'favorite.' I hope that means I've been true to them and when they come to talk, I always open my arms and let them." Kim continues with a smile, "My daddy used to say when I was little... 'Honey, you can sing and you have a great voice, but don't ever feel so over-confident that you think that you can make this happen without the Lord. Always remember, there is someone in the audience that can sing you off the stage, they just weren't given that opportunity.'"

Kim says she always keeps that in mind. "I know the people that come to the table and say 'I want to be a singer' can probably way out-sing me, I just have to be grateful for the gift of the platform that God gave me to be able to do what I love to do." Kim adds, "Winning awards from peers is pretty amazing as well. It's always special; I don't take any of them for granted. I want to say thanks to everyone that's ever voted and done wonderful things for me."

LEAVING A LEGACY

"I thought I would retire at 55," says Claude, "but that was before I really got involved with gospel music. People ask me, 'When are you going to retire'? I usually joke and say 'I'm not doing

anything now, what am I going to retire to?' I don't want nothing, need nothing, I enjoy this and quitting never enters my mind. But, I know that I'm getting older and Connie's getting older, but I don't know of anything else I'd like to do." Claude continues, "I've traveled - I can't say the whole world, but I've been to a lot of places I never thought I would ever have the opportunity of going. As far as we know, I'm in good health, Connie is in good health and we enjoy this because we have our entire family with us. Then... I go home to the farm. Farming is my second love."

When the time does come for Claude and Connie to retire, they want ministry to continue. Claude shares, "Charles Stanley had a message that says, 'It's not how you start, it's how you end up.' My prayer is that I'll end good. When we step from the stage, we want ministry to continue on regardless of who the boys gets as the Hoppers."

The Hoppers have a reputation of helping others realize success as they've experienced. Claude's closing comments, "I can't believe we hit 50 years! I feel like if you really want something bad enough- if the desire is really in your heart you can accomplish it. It's all about people helping people. If you accomplish what you want to in life, it's because someone helped you along the way. If I can help somebody accomplish what they want to do if they're sincere about it, I'm here for them and that is my philosophy."

*To learn more about
The Hoppers, visit:*

<http://www.thehoppers.com/index.html>



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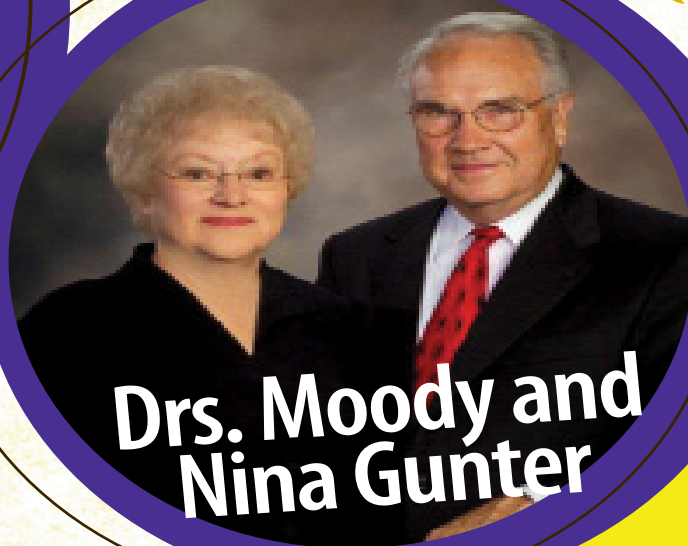
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ABOVE: THE MAULDIN FAMILY SINGERS

Talented artists, musicians, producers, engineers, and other music industry hopefuls have been seeking success in Nashville for many decades. Families are uprooted and replanted to only find the road to success is not necessarily paved; sometimes it turns to gravel, sometimes it turns to dirt, and sometimes...it doesn't turn at all. The success of brothers, Steve and Russell Mauldin, proves that no magic happens just because one has a dream. Steve Mauldin says, "You can have a dream, but it takes much more than simply having the dream. You need to be committed to hard work, determination, and perseverance to realize that dream." The Mauldin brothers' story will challenge the dreamer to set realistic goals, motivate the dreamer toward higher standards and a stronger work ethic, and inspire the dreamer to understand more about the old-fashioned principles founded on faith, that made Steve and Russell Mauldin's vision turn to reality.

From Steve Mauldin's first professional appearance at age 5, singing on his mom's piano stool in Greenville, South Carolina, to his work on acclaimed projects with Vince Gill, Marty Stuart, Casting Crowns, Carrie Underwood, Petra, Willie Nelson, Chet Atkins, Ray Price, Shirley Caesar, Jason Crabb, The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, The Gaither Vocal Band, Avalon, Collective Soul, Kenny Rogers, Floyd Cramer, and many more; he set a high standard for others to follow. That standard has been acknowledged and validated with his inclusion on the Arranger's

The Mauldins... More than a Dream

Part I of III

EVIE HAWKINS

Craft Committee for the Grammy Awards. He received a Masters of Classical Music Composition Degree from Belmont University and serves as Adjunct Professor in their prestigious School of Music. His extensive work with Legacy Five, Triumphant Quartet, Gold City (including Midnight Cry), The Hoppers, and other top Southern Gospel artists placed him on the map as one of the most sought-after producers and orchestrators in the business. Steve has been spotlighted in numerous trade magazines and his works have garnered many hits appearing in Billboard and Cashbox, and in 1995 Steve was on every #1 in the Singing News for the entire year. In 2007 he was awarded "Best Southern Gospel Album" and more accolades include six Dove Award nominations, and Arranger of the Year (1998, 1999 and 2002) by the Southern Gospel Music Association. He has conducted his arrangements with phenomenal orchestras that include the Nashville Symphony, and the North Carolina Symphony. His original compositions appear in jingles, television (CMT's 100 Greatest Love Songs), and several films, including the top-grossing children's animation Hoodwinked.

The brothers' story starts in Greenville, South Carolina where Horace and Joan Mauldin raised their children in the love and admonition of a Christ-centered environment. Steve says, "Sometimes I needed to be praised, and other times I needed to be disciplined. We are thankful for our parents who had that perfect balance of discipline and praise. At times, Dad used his 'velvet hand of correction' to challenge us to consider every action. Just the fact that we could have disappointed him was correction within itself. We had such a wonderful example from our parents." Horace Mauldin taught his sons carpentry work at a young age. His construction company

built houses and he hired the boys as part of his paid crew. But he did not turn them loose on the trim work until they could master their craft inside of the closets. If the header joint did not fit where it couldn't be seen, then they were not ready for the more visible trim spots. It was here that Steve and Russell learned how to build things from the bottom up and learned that hard work does pay off. There was lots of incentive, because payday came; but the young Mauldin boys were atypical. They didn't spend their weekends looking for ways to entertain themselves. As quickly as they laid their hammers down from their construction jobs on Friday, they made preparations and hit the road, sharing the Gospel in song. The family was able to record numerous projects that helped fund their travel; singing in churches, campmeetings, and occasional concerts with professional artists. They never charged a fee, but say the Lord always met their needs. The whole family sang. Their mother, Joan, played piano; Horace, Steve, and Russell swapped around on bass. The Mauldin Family Singers enjoyed seventeen years together on the road spreading the *good news*.

Horace Mauldin's background as a respected Businessman, Songwriter, Singer, and later Music Minister was instrumental in passing on his passion for Christian music to his young sons. It was obvious they both had a natural ability to "hear harmony." Horace says, at an early age Russell could easily fill in the part needed with the group and always shared his brother's passion for music. Russell, who owns Maestro Productions, is a 1981 graduate of Furman University with a B.A. in Music Theory. He is known as one of Nashville's best talents and has worked with Garth Brooks, Martina McBride, George Strait, and Vince Gill as orchestrator and vocalist. His arrangement and orchestration of the

Country Music song, "Home" helped garner a #1 for Blake Shelton. In addition, Russell has arranged, written, produced, and performed on projects for Larnelle Harris, Amy Grant, Steve Green, Sandi Patti, 4-Him, The Gaither Vocal Band, and many more, with numerous platinum and Grammy Award winning recordings to his credit. Nevertheless, he is best known for his prolific work in Choral Church music. With over 100+ seasonal musicals and collections having sold well over 5 million copies, Russell is without a doubt the best-selling arranger in the Christian Music industry. His success writing, orchestrating, and printing choral music has earned him various awards that include three GMA Doves and other coveted industry awards and honors. From their early years traveling with The Mauldin Family Singers and working in sessions at Mark Five Studios, until they successfully staked their claims in Music City, the brothers have never competed. Steve and wife, Deborah, live in Hendersonville, TN and have two children. Russell and wife, Janice, live in Brentwood, TN

and have three children. Both men are quick to give credit for their success to those who have been rocks of strength to their ministries and businesses; God, their Godly parents, and their supportive wives. The Mauldins are members of Christ Church in Nashville where Russell serves on the Board of Directors, is Chairman of the Human Resources Committee, and a member of the Worship and Arts Committee.

With the unselfish spirits of these two men, comes a concept that can only be defined as "brotherly love." The pair continually accentuates the strengths of one another, making their individual businesses in Nashville fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Yes, this story began with a dream, and both brothers say it all started with their Dad who grew up in the small Bible-belt town of Lavonia, Georgia. Their father's autobiography, "My Walk with God," answers many questions on how to not only dream the dream, but how to live following God's will; embracing faith, family, prayer, and hard work. In teaching these life lessons, Horace has led his boys with



ABOVE: HORACE'S 80TH BIRTHDAY

a loving, guiding hand and constructed new paths for their families to follow. Yes, this road has already been paved. Be looking for Part II of "The Mauldins...More than a Dream" in the October issue of SGN Scoops Magazine.



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Tasty Foods that Fight Fat? Plus—a Contest

LAURETTE WILLIS

Want to lose some excess fat, eat REAL food (not make-believe “diet food”) and enjoy the journey? Here are some foods that are good for you, packed with nutrition and tasty enough for the whole family.

ALMONDS – These delicious nuts are high in alpha-linolenic acid, which can accelerate your metabolism of fats. Recent studies show that dieters who ate three ounces of almonds daily were able to cut down their weight and body mass by an amazing 18% compared to dieters who skipped eating almonds.

BERRIES – Want to burn up to 30% more fat? Strawberries, raspberries and other fruit high in Vitamin C can turbo-charge your workout, helping you to burn more fat.

CINNAMON – Try adding just ¼ teaspoon of cinnamon to food to help prevent an insulin spike (can help keep your body from storing excess fat).

SOY BEANS – Soybeans are rich in choline, which appears to block the absorption of fat and also seems to break down fatty deposits.

SWEET POTATOES – Definitely better than starchy white potatoes, sweet potatoes contain a high fiber content which helps keep insulin levels steady. This means less fat stored by your body.

MUSTARD – The turmeric in mustard not only gives it a yellow color. Now scientists have determined that turmeric also seems to slow the growth of fat tissue. Put it on hot dogs—and more!

ORANGES – The flavones in oranges help fight fat. Studies reveal that women who ate the most flavones have a much lower increase in body fat as they age. Don’t make the mistake of drinking orange juice and thinking it has the same effect. One must eat the entire peeled orange. Undiluted orange juice also has too much concentrated fruit sugar, spiking blood sugar too quickly.

SWISS CHEESE – Calcium-rich foods reduce fat-producing enzymes and increase the breakdown of fat in the body. Swiss cheese contains more

calcium than many of its cheesy side-kicks.

Contest!!!! You can win a PraiseMoves Fitness DVD and Laurette’s book “The Busy Woman’s Guide to Total Fitness.” Submit a menu using all eight of the foods listed above in one meal (breakfast, lunch OR dinner), and you could win! We’ll also feature the winning menu plan in next month’s article. If you are able to include all eight foods in ONE recipe (and have it taste good, too), you’ll get extra points. Submit your menu and recipes with your name and that you read this article in Scoops magazine to:

*Laurette Willis at
praisemoves@gmail.com*

*Christian Fitness Expert
Laurette Willis is the Director of
PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry
(<http://PraiseMoves.com>).*

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GRAND OLE GOSPEL REUNION, 2011

SANDI DUNCAN CLARK

One of Southern Gospel music's most exciting annual summer happenings is Charlie Waller's GRAND OLE GOSPEL REUNION in Greenville, South Carolina in August. This gathering attracts hundreds of fans, who, for an entire weekend, enjoy mingling with many of their SGM heroes from years gone by.

GOCR Staff had a number of outstanding events for fans to enjoy. The weekend opened on Wednesday, August 10th with "Charlie's Party," where he welcomed all the early arrivals with food, fun and a lot more! And Charlie says "A whole lot more!" This was the kick-off for all the events hosted by Charlie and his staff. Included were "This Is Your Life," honoring Ed O'Neal of the Dixie Melody Boys, celebrating Ed's fifty years in Southern

BELOW: HAVING THE SINGING NEWS REPRESENTED BY ADAM AND ANGEL BORDEN BROUGHT BACK SO MANY MEMORIES FROM ALL THE "ALL-NIGHT SINGING" WHERE J.G. WHITFIELD WOULD INTRODUCE THE SN FROM THE STAGE AS ADAM DOES.

BOTTOM LEFT: FANS ENJOYED CHARLIE BURKE'S NEW QUARTET, THE MASTER'S MUSIC MEN.



Gospel music. Dr. Jerry Goff and his wife, Little Jan (Buckner) Goff were honored as 2011's Living Legends. The Piano Roll of Honor recognized one of the industry's great pianists, Charles Abee.

The jam sessions always have a lot of music and fun and even an air of suspense, since none of the artists know who Charlie will group them with, to sing. Another fun event was "Let's Make A Deal" and Charlie declares, "That was fun for everyone except the singers, who always get egg on their faces!"

Charlie scheduled six to eight artists on each evenings program with specific allotted times to sing. He kept the line-up moving, especially on Friday and Saturday nights when fans were able to enjoy "Breakfast With The Stars" when the music was finished.

BELOW: CHARLIE WALLER HOSTS THE GRAND OLE GOSPEL REUNION AND EMCEES THE NIGHTLY PROGRAMS.



TOP LEFT: DERRELL AND REVA STEWART ALWAYS LOVE ATTENDING THE GOCR.

TOP RIGHT: FANS LOVE THE DIPLOMATS AND THE DIPLOMATS LOVE SINGING AT GOCR. THESE FOLKS BRING A LOT OF JOY TO THEIR MUSIC.

BOTTOM RIGHT: THE FLORIDA BOYS' UNIQUE ATTIRE CERTAINLY SETS THEM APART. THEIR FANS LOVE IT!

The Hyatt Hotel in the heart of downtown Greenville is headquarters for the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion. Charles and his staff arrange a package deal, which includes parking with easy access to the hotel. There is a gift shop and four restaurants on the premises so that one never needs to leave the hotel. Should one choose, there are a number restaurants and excellent shopping within three blocks walking distance. The Grand Ball Room is a great accommodation for the concert with plenty of room, wonderful acoustics and access to the artists to talk, take photos and purchase their music. Make your plans to attend next year!





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A Week in the Life of Beyond the Ashes

ROB ESTEP

Have you ever wondered what life is really like for a Southern Gospel Group? Rob Estep of Beyond The Ashes shares his journal with SGNscoops giving us a behind the scenes look! This week in the life of Beyond The Ashes begins the Monday following the bus fire that took place during the night, Friday July 30, 2011.

August 1st –

I was able to sleep a few hours last night after only getting a few during the entire weekend. I am still in somewhat of a daze from the aftermath of what could have been a much worse weekend than it was. I keep thinking there is so much to do and I'm not even sure where to begin. I guess I will just hit it! Dusty Wells and I returned the truck we rented for the weekend and now I'm on my second cup of coffee. I plan to help Anthony get transportation for this upcoming weekend arranged, and then we'll work with the other guys to figure out the daily details to keep BTA rolling. I am overwhelmed as is Anthony, Casey, Kellan and Dusty to see and feel the love, prayers and support from everyone. It's unbelievable and makes me so proud to walk alongside of these folks.

August 2nd –

Tuesday is starting out to be a great day. I've downed my second cup of coffee and sent three emails already. I'm feeling like I can get a lot accomplished today. I'm ready to see if we can book some dates, and set up some radio interviews. I love working with radio DJ's! Amongst our already crazy schedule, we have to plan a trip to go back to Marshville, MO to clean out the rest of the bus. I am dreading that, but yet I know that God is faithful

and in control. We received a blessing today. Our friends Todd Stewart and Olan Whitt are going to loan us sound equipment! It is crazy to see how God and our friends are pouring out love onto BTA in this difficult time!

August 3rd –

Today, Anthony and Kellan leave for Missouri to get anything and everything that's salvageable off the bus. A little more reality has set in, as I'm here in the office today. I feel overwhelmed again. I have so much to do- emails to read and answer, phone calls to make and return, and I still need to fill open dates. I'm thankful that I am busy, it keeps me focused. Now I need another cup of coffee! Hey- I just booked another date, praise the Lord! And...I just heard from Anthony- they made it to Missouri after a long 8 hour drive. They are surveying the severity of the damage and hope to bring home what is salvageable. I am praying for them, I know seeing the bus is disheartening.

August 4th –

Today...more phone calls and emails! Anthony and Kellan have had a long week and are on their way back to Nashville with what could be saved off the bus. We are still trying to figure out transportation for this weekend. Again, as always and right on time, God is working on our behalf. I love watching Him work, and I see things are falling into place, as only God can make happen.

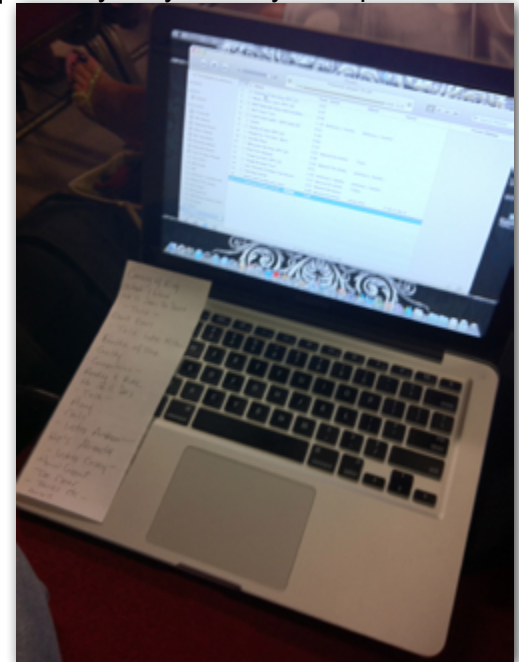
This is a very hard time for the ministry of Beyond The Ashes, especially for Anthony. He's bearing the weight of everything that's associated with the

bus fire. I cannot even imagine what he is feeling, but I am praying for strength, wisdom and new vision for him and all of us. I refuse to allow the devil to have victory in all of this. He is a liar and has no place in this ministry. We are determined to not let this slow us down, in fact it has just stoked the fire in all of us a little more, no pun intended! We are uniting for a new purpose!

August 5th -

Today we got an early start, and I am not an early morning person! For those who know me- I am getting better! We loaded our borrowed equipment, the new product that people have helped with, our clothes, and our bags into a rented RV. We are now on the way to Dayton, OH. We're stopping in London, KY to pick up a trailer that our covenant brother and friend Dwayne Brown has for us. He was able to work this out free of charge! God is working in a way that is truly beyond my comprehension,

“... I know that God is faithful and in control.”



and I know, believe and trust He's got something even greater in store for Beyond The Ashes. We have a new zeal and are definitely glad to be back on the road. We've always stood our ground and known our calling, but now more than ever before, we are certain that we will make a difference. We are going to stand up, sing and share our hearts and testimonies about how great His love is for not only us, but for everyone! We will keep going no matter what the devil throws our way!

The trailer is now picked up and we are well on our way to Dayton, OH to be with the Martins! This should be a great night!

Later...

We got the table set up, and the guys figured out how to use the borrowed sound system. Beyond The Ashes and the Martins both got sound checks and are set to go. Thank God for my momma coming so I could speed over to McDonalds and get everyone something to eat. I got back in time to change, and to go over specifics with Anthony and Jonathon for the Martins. Now that I know the song order, it's concert time! I still get awe struck that this is my job! I love it and I am so thankful God has allowed me to do this for this time in my life. I love what the power of music can do for others, just

like it does for me.

Wow! What a great night!! The crowd at First Baptist Kettering was definitely there to have a good time and hear from God thru these wonderful artists! After the concert, we loaded up and all went to Applebee's for some great food (I love food) and laughed until we hurt. There is so much truth about laughter being some of the best medicine. Now we are shutting things down in another Wal-Mart parking lot in Dayton, Ohio and calling it a night. After some sleep, we're onto Canton, Michigan to be with the Martins again at First Baptist Church!

I also have to say that how great the fans and friends of BTA are. They truly have been showing love for us! There are not enough words to express our thankfulness for the support they've shown. BEYOND THE ASHES LOVES YOU AND THANK GOD FOR ALL OF YOU. Let's keep running the race with one another!

August 6th –

We arrived at our next destination about 1pm and realized that we were close to an Ikea. We were a little excited!! So with a little bit of time we had lunch at Ikea and then looked around for a little bit. The bad part of that store is that you really need a whole day there. Only going there for a little time, is like going to Disney World for an hour!

Ok- time for the glamorous part- SET UP- ha ha! We unloaded just in time for the rain to start pouring. Then it was onto sound-check for both groups to get everything ready for the evening. Another great night, despite the sound system sounding like it was a machine gun. After the concert, we had a great dinner with our friend Tonia. We are now shutting down in another Wal-Mart parking lot, then on the way to Flint, MI for Sunday morning! I'm thankful for another great night and God's hand of safety on us as we travel!



August 7th –

What a great day so far! Early this morning we started out with a stop at McDonald's then we were onto Westside Church in Flushing, MI. Our friend, Zac Caldwell, met us there and brought his sound equipment with him! We truly have some great friends.

We enjoyed a very worship filled service tonight with a great congregation! A sweet couple from the church fixed chicken, bacon, ranch subs that would rival Subway any day of the week. After stuffing our faces, we were off to Holland, Ohio to WPOS FM Worship Center. On the way, we got detoured a little but made it right on time for it to start raining. When we arrived at WPOS we quickly set up because there were several other groups performing as well. As of the 3rd, we still didn't have a date for Sunday night, and our wonderful friend Sherri LaFontaine called and asked if they could host a benefit concert for us to help with all the expense. This was just one of the many ways that God showed me that everything would be okay for BTA! We had a great concert with: the Difference, First Creation, the Amazing Grace Praise Band, Art Bishop, and one my favorites, Sheri LaFontaine! Following, it was time for some much needed food fellowship with some friends.

Continued on page 32.





A Conversation With Hannah Webb

VICTORIA SHIREY

Family...live across America" to celebrate our 30th Anniversary at the beginning of 2012. It will contain clips from our concerts at Shadow Mountain Community Church, El Cajon, CA, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, FL and the National Quartet Convention Main Stage.

*To find out more about the release, go to our website
www.TheRickWebbFamily.com*

When looking for a young, Southern Gospel artist to write about in this month's issue, a beautiful, talented young lady came to mind, Hannah Webb. Her family has been in the ministry for a long time, so I knew she would have some great insight. A lot of people only see us Southern Gospel singers from the stage, so I think it's important to let them know we're just normal people like them.

Victoria: Alright Hannah, tell us about your family and some things that are going on in the Rick Webb Family's ministry right now.

Hannah: Our family has had the privilege of singing over 150 concerts each year, for many years. In fact next year marks my mom and dad's 30th Anniversary in music ministry. One of the blessings we have experienced through the years is the way we have crossed denominational lines and have sung in most of the largest churches in America, as well as some of the smallest. We never take for granted and are always appreciative of each opportunity we have to share the gospel.

We have had a lot of exciting opportunities for ministry this year; however we are always grateful when we release a new project. I am excited that our record company is releasing our very first DVD, "The Rick Webb

Victoria: That's awesome! We'll definitely have to check that out! Now tell us, being as pretty and talented as you are, I'm sure your dad has to beat the guys off with a stick haha. Do you have anyone special in your life?

Hannah: You are too kind! As my dad says from the stage, "Hannah is saved, single and not available."

Victoria: Well, at least that's better than what my mom says about me, "Victoria is saved, single, searching, and desperate!" Haha! That's definitely not true, but my whole family likes to give me a hard time about it. I know being in full time ministry can be a challenge sometimes. Is this something you can see yourself doing in the future? What is your main goal for yourself in the years to come? What do you see yourself doing in the next 10 years?

Hannah: If you had asked me ten years ago, I would have said a professional horse trainer or a missionary in the jungles of Angkor. My goal is to honor and glorify our Creator. The rest is up to Him, and I'm prepared to be surprised. (Although, I do hope to have my own cookbook published by then.)

Victoria: That's great. It's so important to keep your focus on the reason that we sing at all. It's so easy for our attention to be diverted. Now, while traveling, a lot of people like to do a lot of different things. What is your

favorite thing to do on the road?

Hannah: I enjoy finding a good book to read or a good movie to watch while on the road. Life stays so busy when we are home, so the travel time is quite nice.

Victoria: I totally understand that. Being in a family group myself, I know it can be "interesting" traveling with your family sometimes. haha What's it like traveling with the Webb Family?

Hannah: We have the best time on the road... always laughing! It's a treat to be able to travel with three of the most wonderful people you'll ever meet.

Victoria: What is your favorite place to eat while out on the road?

Hannah: My favorite place to eat while on the road would have to be Panera Bread!

Victoria: Is there anything exciting going on with you right now?

Hannah: Releasing our new DVD and finishing my Graphic Design/Photography degree this year is exciting! We just moved from our farm, which has forced my hobbies to go from horse riding, hunting, and bottle-feeding newborn animals, to cooking, cake decorating and running/exercising. Slightly harder to keep things interesting while I am home, but where there's a will, there is a way. I do still plan on going deer hunting this fall, though!

Victoria: I love the fact that even though you are a classy girl and seem to be very fashionable, that you still like the outdoorsy stuff too. Speaking of fashion, you have some of the most beautiful outfits! Where do you like to shop?

Continued on page 32.

HANNAH, FROM PAGE 31.

Hannah: Thank you! I love shopping at artsy little boutiques for my stage clothes.

Victoria: There are a ton of places that you get to travel and so many states you get to sing in. If you had to pick one though, what has been your favorite state to sing in?

Hannah: I always love singing in my beautiful home state. North Carolina is God's country, for sure...Why else would the sky be Carolina blue?

Victoria: Thank you, Hannah, for taking the time to answer some questions and letting myself and the readers get to know you better.

Hannah: You are very welcome! Thank you for the opportunity!

I had a great interview with Hannah and would like to thank her very much for giving me the opportunity to work with her. If you get a chance, go hear the Rick Webb Family. You will not be disappointed!

You can visit their website at, www.therickwebbfamily.com. Be looking next month for my interview with Adam Brown of The Browns!

ASHES, FROM PAGE 30.

After such a horrible disaster the weekend before, this was a great week of God showing us how faithful He is and how much He cares. It also showed me how much we are loved. I hope you enjoyed the look behind the scenes of Beyond the Ashes. Not every week is this hectic or eventful, but it just turned out to be the week I decided to write the article! Thank you to Rob Patz and SGN Scoops for letting me share!

Finish Well

Ministry follows Faith Testing

RHONDA FRYE

I'm so excited to introduce my Grandmother this month! There's not another person, in my eyes, that illustrates this month's topic of "faithfulness" like she does. I will introduce her later, but first- let's look at "Faith."

In the Christian life, everything begins and ends with faith. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 12:2 that God initiates AND perfects it too. First we step out in faith, and then we walk in faith. As we're walking, God will test our faithfulness. When we pass the faithfulness test, God will lead us into new realms of ministry requiring a new leap of faith. Following an intense time of faith-testing, a God-initiated ministry will emerge. I believe our Christian life follows this cycle until we're called home.

The Discipleship Tools website gives a great explanation of faithfulness: "Faithfulness is the Fruit of the Spirit we give to God so He can change us inside and out. It is the ability to

take what Christ has done in us and be a blessing to others with loyalty and trust. Faithfulness goes against modern psychology and society's thinking, as it requires us to move beyond ourselves, whereas psychology tells us to be selfish putting 'me' first, rearranging the world to {meet} our needs which creates self-destruction and broken relationships. We have to keep the goal of faithfulness in our minds always, as it will allow God to work deeper in us then we respond to His call."

Everyone LOVES new assignments, but no one likes what it takes to get there. No one likes tests, but you can be sure that if you are experiencing an intense period of testing- let me just



say, "Congratulations- God's about to do something in your life!" Relax and know the testing period is the tough part and God will be faithful when you are unfaithful, for He cannot deny who He is (2 Timothy 2:13). When we lose a battle during the test, we have to get back up, own it and ask for help. God is faithful enough to give more chances for us to get it right. God does require obedience, but He also looks at the heart. He's not impressed with flawless performance or perfect behavior. More than anything, God wants us to be faithful to be honest before Him. He wants us to be faithful to

OWN our sin and/or weakness and be faithful to continually depend on Him for help. When we're faithful in honest communication with Him, we're on the right track of passing the test. The truth is, God's work in us will develop the quality of faithfulness if we are faithful to admit we can't do it ourselves.

There is always a sigh of relief once the test is over, but just about the time we slide into a new comfort zone, God nudges us right out of it! When God initiates ministry- it's going to be impossible to pull it off on our own. As the Holy Spirit initially whispers the call, our flesh responds in resistance. "I can't do that, I'm not qualified, experienced, or trained," we whine.

"Faithfulness is the Fruit of the Spirit we give to God so He can change us inside and out."



"Lord- not me, I'm broke," we contest. "Lord, not me I'm too old," some of us wail. Yes, I admit I've used "I'm too old!" That excuse didn't work for Moses; it didn't work for me OR my Grandmother.

My Grandmother stepped into a relationship with God 60 years ago. To celebrate her spiritual birthday, she spent time in prayer at the little church where she placed her faith in Christ. If Grandmother were writing, she would be quick to say, she's never looked back since deciding to follow Jesus.

During her 60 years, God blessed her faithfulness and granted her many ministry opportunities. In her younger days, she taught Sunday School, sang in the choir, served on the church board and filled many roles within the local church. In fact, she's been faithful to attend church three times a week- and joined only 3 different ones in the whole 60 years.

In addition to church ministry, Grandmother had a special talent for creating beautiful flower arrangements. As a florist, she kept her church decorated each season and brought countless smiles to shut-ins, friends

and family with her gift of flowers. When Grandmother wasn't able to keep up with making the flower arrangements, she devoted herself to a vital prayer ministry. For many years, every Thursday was her day to lock herself inside the church and cry out to God on behalf of her family, church family and friends. I'm sure that's why I'm saved and am in ministry today. A lot of people would have been done with serving the Lord by age 85, but not my Grandmother. At age 85, still longing to share her faith, the Lord opened the door for her to write and publish her life-story and testimony. Grandmother released her first book "I've Come, Lord" three short years ago.

In July 2011, my sweet Grandmother suffered a stroke and was sent to a nursing home for rehabilitation. For the first time in 60 years, she was sure that ministry was over. "Many times I have walked the halls of this very place bringing flowers, candy or gifts. I always noticed the little ladies sitting in their wheelchairs in their rooms- I was on the outside lookin' in. I never dreamed that I would someday be the one in the wheel-chair lookin' out," Grandmother explained. "When I got here, I just knew my time was over, that

God was done with me and I began to cry- but you know what, Rhonda? God put me here- He is still on the throne! He knows there are people here that I'm supposed to tell about Jesus," she said waving her little hand.

Grandmother passed her faithfulness test and God began to open new doors of ministry for her at age 88, right there in the nursing home! Her smile and kindness infiltrated the building, and she's been giving out her books left and right too. She's been there for a few weeks and everyone knows her- the patients and the entire staff. She's often called upon to open activities with prayer. Maybe she's called upon because she gave all of her BINGO prize money away-with a cheerful heart! As she rolled past another patient the other day she asked, "How are you?" "Angry," he replied. "I'll be back to see you, then," she said. Without a doubt, Granny's on a mission! The other day she told me, "I don't know if I want to leave here, but when I do- I believe I'm gonna write another book!"

My Grandmother's picture is in God's album of faithful heroes and I want my there too. To get there, we have to start with being faithful in our honesty with God admitting we can't be faithful without His help. Thank goodness HE that started the good work in us WILL perfect it in my Grandmother- Juanita Cronnon, in you and in me to the very end! And as my Grandmother would say, "Well, Glory be to God!"

Reference: (<http://www.discipleshiptools.org/apps/articles/default.asp?articleid=36691&columnid=4166>)



Pauline Patterson



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ABOVE: GARY CASTO

Almost five years ago, Gary Casto's dream of leading a Southern Gospel quartet became a reality. Today, Tribute is a nationally recognized quartet with charting hits, television appearances and Singing News nominations. These mountain top experiences along with inescapable valleys have strengthened their testimony and given validity to their claim that God is faithful. Scoops recently caught up with the ever-busy, eternally-optimistic Gary Casto in the middle of a hot, summer Virginia tour to discuss goals planned and realized, as well as life-lessons learned.

In the years this writer has been acquainted with Gary Casto, there are some qualities that are unmistakable. Compassionate, level-headed, with a head for business and a heart for people, Casto lives and breathes Southern Gospel. He is the indefatigable leader of a quartet that has gained commendation from fans and from the industry alike. Tribute Quartet is one of the busiest groups in the industry and Casto talks about some of their recent activities.

"We just finished a TV taping with the

TRIBUTE QUARTET

Learning What Faith Is About

LORRAINE WALKER

Inspirational Network who is doing a series on Healing," Casto related. "They chose several artists to do songs about the subject, mostly contemporary artists, and did a compilation CD as well. We've had the privilege of doing a lot of TV lately, including TBN and Daystar."

"We've also just released our fourth major CD, called *The Waiting Is Over*, produced by Mr. Roger Talley," continued Casto. "There are a lot of great songs on this project, and terrific writers like Melissa Brady and Rodney Griffin. I have co-written a couple of songs with Barbara Huffman, including 'The Climb' and 'Songs of Zion.' We have written a few songs together in the past, and she has also written songs for The Hoppers and The Inspirations, including 'Something About A Prayer'."

Tribute's previous CD was a compilation of favorites, time-honored classics that listeners appreciate. However, the new material on this release has brought renewed excitement to Tribute concerts. "We currently perform two songs that bring a lot of response from our audience," said Casto. "One is our new release to radio, 'Bring On The Joy,' which is an upbeat song. Another song that the audience always seems to enjoy is a big ballad featuring our tenor singer, Riley Clark, called 'Homecoming Day.' It was written by Melissa Brady and is an incredible song. I've sung a lot of songs over the years and this is probably one of the most tremendous songs I've been a part of in my 26 years in Southern Gospel."

Daniel Mount of SouthernGospelBlog.com recently reviewed Tribute's new CD, and said, "The Waiting is Over is easily Tribute's strongest project yet." (<http://www.southerngospelblog.com/archives/11590>)

The strength of the quartet's lineup contributes to the great sound of the new project. Current Tribute members include original member and Singing News award-nominee Josh Singletary, along with two relative new comers to the industry. "Our Tenor, Riley Clark, was nominated for three Singing News Awards, only seven months after entering into the Industry," said Casto. "I joke with him that he didn't even know who Vestal Goodman was when he started with us. He sang at a local church, but didn't know much about the industry except for the Steve Hurst School of Music, which he had attended for many years. Now, only seven months after joining Tribute, he has been nominated within the Singing News Top Ten for Horizon Individual, Young Artist and Favorite Tenor Singer."

"We have a new bass singer as well, Anthony Davis, of Dyersburg Tennessee. He weighs about seventy-eight pounds soaking wet." Casto is proud of these new members and of the current sound of the group. Changes are inevitable but difficult for quartets where so much depends on team interaction and compatibility. "We hope these changes will be the last for a long time," Casto said. "I've got them all on 62-year contracts! By that time, I'll have passed on and be spending time with the Lord...but they can keep going on!"

Gary Casto is no stranger to changes and challenges within the southern gospel industry. After 26 years in the business, there isn't a whole lot this artist hasn't experienced. However, when he discusses the events of last winter, emotion thickens his throat. The horrific memory of a night that could have had a tragic end is related through a story now told many times, but one that is obviously still fresh in

the mind of this quartet owner.

"The bus fire in January was very traumatic," Casto began. "It happened on January 21, 2011, 62 miles west of Texarkana, Texas. We blew a rear right tire and as far as we could tell, a wire in the tire grabbed hold of a steel wire and sparked. Within five minutes, the back end was gone. We had a City fireman behind us and he called the fire department immediately. They were there within 12 minutes. They shot it with water and it went up in flames. One place reported that the flames were 35 feet high.

"We were able to get out the sound equipment, some product and personal belongings, before it all went up in flames. We were blessed that no one was hurt. The expression of support was unbelievable. The fans, the industry, our peers – there was just an outpouring of love and financial help from many areas. We are very grateful, very thankful, and very blessed!" Casto paused and reflected on those few terrifying minutes when everything could have turned out very differently.

"The fire marshal told me that if we had not stopped within seven minutes and got a door or window open, we would have been sealed up in the bus. The metal gets so hot and all the doors and windows seal shut, which builds up pressure, and that would cause an explosion." With no time or opportunity to escape, it would be doubtful that this scenario would have ended without tragedy.

"The fire was all over the national news, on both the west coast and the east coast. Initially it had been reported that there were fatalities, so I had to make sure people knew that everyone was safe and sound." Casto concluded, "It makes you think about what's important. God's been faithful. Like the song we sing almost every night, 'He's still faithful through all the trials, and that's why we love Him so'. I can't even tell you how blessed we



ABOVE: TRIBUTE QUARTET

are that everyone was safe. You can always replace the material things but you can't replace the individuals."

When Casto looks back on the history of Tribute, the evidence of God's faithfulness was clear even prior to the traumatic fire. From the beginning, it was obvious that God's favor was on this group of men and their leader. "This December will be five years since we did our first date," said Casto.

"Anytime that you start a new group, there are unknowns. No matter how long you or the other members have been involved in the business, when you start over, you are starting from square one. We are overwhelmed with the media attention that we received from the beginning, and we have been blessed. For instance, a year after winning the Singing News' Award for Horizon Group in 2008, Tribute was featured on the cover of the Singing News. It was the first time ever that a Horizon Group was placed on the cover. So we have just been really blessed all the way around."

"He's still faithful through all the trials, and that's why we love Him so."

"Not too much has surprised me over the last five years," Casto continued. "The reason that I say that is that

everything over the years, traveling and being involved of every aspect of each ministry I've been a part of, has prepared me for today, for Tribute Quartet."

"I can say this: I've learned more of what faith is all about," said Casto. "I've always had faith enough for everyone else. People call me all hours of the day and night for prayer, and it seems that praying for someone else is easier.

But when you yourself go through the heat of the battle, whether it is losing a bus or whatever, it is different.

I have learned personally how to stand strong on His Word and how faith still makes it through."

Going through difficult and even traumatic experiences makes many of us turn to family for comfort. Those who travel the roads for a living don't often have that luxury. Casto concedes, "I don't see much of my family from back home. They come to see me when we are close on the road, but as far as really spending time with my family, that only happens at Christmas. If it weren't for their outpouring of love and support, things would be a lot more difficult." So why is it that artists like

Gary Casto spend so many days away from the support of family?

"When you are part of a ministry, you have to know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you have a calling on your life," Casto said. "When we are younger we may join a group because we like to sing or it's a job. But when it truly becomes your calling, and God places that call on your life, it is easier to deal with life and its uncertainties. It's easier to be far from home and not see your family as much as you would like, because you know that you are doing something to further the Kingdom of the Lord."

As they press on toward furthering the Kingdom, Gary Casto and Tribute Quartet have set some major goals for the next five years. "We are wanting to do more international ministry and the Harper Agency is working very hard on that for us. We do have the privilege of doing some of the cruises to the Bahamas and other countries, and also of working in Canada quite a bit, but we would like to do other countries as well. That is a big focus, to take our ministry worldwide."

BELOW: TRIBUTE QUARTET



Much of what Tribute has been working on in the last few months is geared toward the realization of these aspirations. "The TV work that we have been doing is assisting in that goal. The appearances on the Inspirational Network, TBN, Daystar, and others, are helping us fulfill those dreams and goal. It has helped us walk through a lot of new doors. The internet is also helping us become more internationally known as it helps to take our music to other countries."

Meanwhile, back at home in America, Tribute's music has impacted many and garnered many fans and friends across the nation, as well as within the industry itself. Soloist and West Virginian Ed Crawford noted, "I've known Gary Casto a long time and he comes from great singing stock in West Virginia. Tribute Quartet is one of the best young groups in America today. Their harmony and singing are great. Their energy is over the top and their commitment is unsurpassed."

Industry insider Dusty Wells commented, "Anyone who knows me or follows me on facebook, knows that I absolutely love Christian music and I am a huge, huge, huge - did I say huge - fan of great Southern Gospel music. I have a wonderful heritage and story of how Christian music impacted my life as a teen and I have spent many years working alongside of The Rambos and being involved in the Christian music world for over 30 years, so I have heard it all. Recently, I was fortunate to have been at an event where Tribute Quartet sang and honestly I was moved and truly excited about their fresh and wonderful sound and style! I had heard of Gary and the group, but had not followed them. Needless to say I purchased their latest CD, *The Waiting Is Over*, and I have played it non-stop for the last several weeks. I love it when a Southern Gospel (SG) group takes time and shows class with their projects, and this to me is such a fine example of great SG music. My two favorites are 'Homecoming Day' and 'Bring On The Joy.' I have only

met Gary once or twice, and shook the other members' hands, but to me they are going to go far. They represent our industry well. I wish them the best! I am excited to hear more from them and hopefully hear a whole concert soon!"

Tribute Quartet has covered many thousands of miles in the days since the SGN Scoops interview. Regardless of the numerous concerts performed, the countless songs sung and the many words shared, Gary Casto is stronger in his faith today and even more willing to share the life-giving words of faith with a listener, simply because of the experiences God has led him through. Casto shared the specific message that was on his heart, in hopes that it might touch and bless those who read this feature.

"As we do a lot of summer sings and annual events with other artists, the Lord has impressed on me the need to show each other God's love," Casto began. "There are so many hurting people out there. Night after night after night, you can hear story after story about how much people are hurting. I want to encourage each of us, as artists and ministers, to bind together and show our audience love and understanding, and to take that extra time to offer comfort. That's what has been on my heart and what we feel as a quartet. When we go to a venue we are usually the first one there and the last ones to leave. We want to be there for the people."

"Our industry and our artists are great about having that listening ear," continued Casto. "I just want to encourage us all to do that even more. There are just so many hurting people and I'm glad to be a part of an industry that pays attention to them. It's great that we have that caliber of ministers of the gospel that are equipped to do that."

Continued on page 41.



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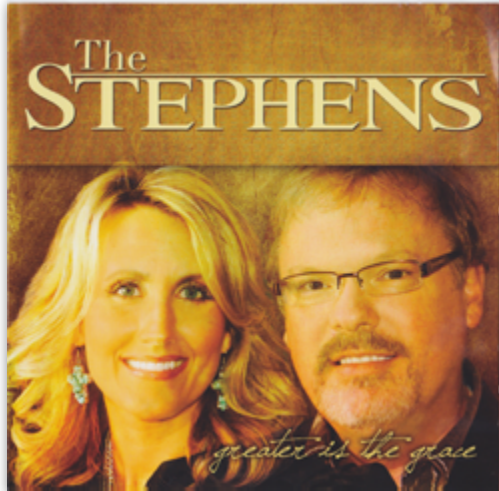
NEW MUSIC FOR SEPTEMBER

SANDI DUNCAN CLARK

WELCOME TO THE 2011 NATIONAL QUARTET CONVENTION! This is the largest annual congregation of Southern Gospel music fans and artists, all under one roof, in the entire nation, and a wonderful opportunity for you to enjoy marvelous Southern Gospel music!

This month we have some great new music, and if you're in attendance at NQC, you'll be able to purchase most of these CDs while you're here! Be sure to check with each artist!

(Reviewer's Note: We regretfully listed an incorrect song writer on a song in our August New Music. The song, "John In The Jordan," from the album, *Sounds Like Heaven To Me* by Lou Reid and Carolina was written by William L. Golden Jr. and Jerry Dean Salley Jr. We apologize for the error and for any inconvenience it might have caused.)

**GREATER IS THE GRACE**

THE STEPHENS
INDEPENDENT

PRODUCER, JASON CLARK
FOR GENESIS PRODUCTIONS

Smooth, rich vocals, close, tight harmony and ten well-chosen songs combine for great listening on the latest recording from a family group from Alabama, The Stephens. Fans will remember Melody Givens Stephens singing sweet, soprano vocals with the Nelons around 1999 or 2000. She also appeared on the Gaither Homecoming videos. Melody and her husband Thom are joined by her sister, Bethany, and have that unique family harmony, so enjoyable and so very hard to beat.

The title song, "Greater Is The Grace" was written by producer, arranger, Jason Clark, of the Nelons and is one of my favorites from the album. Another special song, "How Deep The Father's Love For Us," is soothing, worshipful and most enjoyable and the attitude with which Melody, Bethany and Thom bring this to us, allows us to know their heart for the ministry. Most of the ten songs recorded here are familiar songs and hymns we all learned in church, and you'll soon be singing with on each one. The unique arrangements and awesome music tracks bring new life and excitement to these old standards.

The trio added "Daniel Prayed," a wonderful bluegrass song, with lots of acoustic instrumentation. This song and arrangement shows the versatility of this trio, allowing us to sample the individual talent of each member, as well as the exciting talent of the musicians. Great song!

You may visit www.thestephensmusic.com for contact information from this dedicated family group and their music.

ANOTHER BLESSING is just that; a real blessing and it's one of the best albums I've heard from another Alabama artist, New Ground. This is a real winner for Robbie and Dale Maxwell and their third vocalist, Dale Owens.

"It Is Well," kicks off with some really hot licks on the steel guitar and a totally impressive music track. That song and "I'd Rather Be" are two songs that grabbed my attention immediately! Robbie does a wonderful job on this song, written by Buddy Hyatt.

"Power Of Prayer" was written by a well-recognized DJ in the industry, James A. Metcalf. What a wonderful message there is in this song and New Ground does a solid job on it. The current song you are enjoying on your local Gospel radio station is "If You Take Me, You're Taking Jesus, Too." It's a song co-written by Joseph Habedank and Jim Waggy and speaks to our devotion to Christ and how we show that to others.

Robbie Maxwell has a clear, unique soprano/harmony vocal that bonds the vocals of Dale and David. This distinctive ability contributes to the smoothness of the trio's tight harmony and easily recognizable sound.

One of the exciting things about attending a New Ground concert is their live band, and producer Dave Wilcox has provided music tracks on this recording that the New Ground band will definitely enjoy playing. While Robbie, Dale and David sing pure Southern Gospel, the choice of instruments on each song provides a variety of musical styles for the most discerning listener.

**ANOTHER BLESSING**

NEW GROUND
INDEPENDENT

PRODUCER, DAVE WILCOX

Visit www.newgroundministries.com to learn more about New Ground and their new recording.



HEY, STORYTELLER
 MIKE UPRIGHT
 MIKE UPRIGHT MUSIC
 PRODUCER, MIKE UPRIGHT

For several years, Mike Upright traveled as lead singer with Standing Tall, a prominent Bluegrass Gospel group, who had several songs to reach the national play lists. A few years ago, Mike followed God into a very successful solo Christian country music ministry and this is his current musical offering.

Hey, Storyteller is a compilation of story songs written or co-written by Mike, Mark and Joy Wheeler, James Isaac Elliott, Billy Field and Lance Carpenter. Ten songs with the theme of storytelling along with distinctive country tracks combine on Mike's latest album.

Mike knows what his fans enjoy and his strong country vocal tells the story in all these songs. The title song speaks of the need to hear the story of God's love and his measure of grace and perseverance of the Christian, to the person who has lost their faith.

My favorite song on this recording is "When You Pray." A slight up-beat tempo, and words to live by captured my attention on this one.

For all Country Gospel fans, *Hey Storyteller* is a must have for your music library. Check out Mike's web site for information on his ministry and his music at www.mikeuprightmusic.com.

A special compilation of the Top Ten charting songs for the year has been produced for the past fourteen years by the team at New Haven Records, with the help of *SINGING NEWS* magazine. The compilations are taken from the actual CD recordings of each artist, with permission from their record company and with the cooperation of *SINGING NEWS* magazine. These are the songs you've requested most, as reported by all Southern Gospel radio stations who faithfully report to the magazine. This recording is the latest in the annual compilations and we will list each song, along with the songwriter and record company.

I always enjoy these compilations, since there is a variety of music and artists and I don't have to change the CDs! I think you will too!

"Faithful One," The Booth Brothers, CD *ROOM FOR MORE*, Daywind Records
 "Love Came Calling," Triumphant Quartet, CD *LOVE CAME CALLING*, Mansion Entertainment
 "Never Been," Greater Vision, CD *WELCOME BACK*, Daywind Records
 "Never Walk Alone," Brian Free & Assurance, CD *NEVER WALK ALONE*, Daywind Records
 "Just Stand," Legacy Five, CD *JUST STAND*, Daywind Records
 "By Your Grace, For Your Glory," Gold City, CD *MOMENT OF TRUTH*, New Haven Records
 "Celebrate Me Home," The Perrys, CD *BLUE SKIES*, Daywind Records
 "Testimony," Mark Trammel Quartet, CD *TESTIMONY*, Daywind Records
 "Somebody Died For Me," Triumphant Quartet, CD *EVERYDAY*, Daywind Records
 "The Shepherd's Point of View," The McKameys, CD *THE MESSAGE*, Horizon Records

If you would like to order any of the 14 recordings of the *SINGING NEWS* Top Ten Southern Gospel Songs, you may contact New Haven Records at www.newhavenrecords.com.



**SINGING NEWS 2011 TOP TEN
 SOUTHERN GOSPEL SONGS**
 VARIOUS ARTISTS,
 VARIOUS PRODUCERS
 NEW HAVEN RECORDS, WITH
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PART OF THE FAMILY
THE COLLINGSWORTH FAMILY
STOWTOWN RECORDS
PRODUCER WAYNE HAUN

Family harmony is a plus for any artist, and without a doubt, The Collingsworth Family has that harmony, the stage presence and the anointing in double portions! This new album will blow your socks AND shoes off! It is so thoroughly refreshing that you'll definitely play it again and again.

Wayne Haun is one of my favorite producers and song writers, and not only does he produce for Kim and Phil Collingsworth, he also wrote two songs on the project. As a fan of Gospel music for any length of time, one will remember the songs and music of Lanny Wolf and the Lanny Wolf Trio. The Collingsworths kick off this new album with one of Lanny's songs from 1975, titled "God's Family." The arrangement and orchestration along with the vocal presentation is brilliant.

From huge orchestration on some of the ten songs, to simple acoustic instruments on others, arrangements are uniquely suited to the song and the singer. "I Pray" and "That's The Place I'm Longing To Go" have the simple acoustic tracks and amazing messages. These songs help you focus on your relationship to God and are a breath of freshness to start your day. The record company has just shipped "Tell The Mountain" and if you aren't hearing it on your local Gospel station, give them a call and request it! What an encouraging, uplifting song! It's truly a blessing when you feel the anointing of God on an artist and a song. "At Calvary," one of our familiar church hymns, allows us to feel that anointing on the Collingsworths. If you enjoy a touch of jazz in your music, then "Nothing's Worrying Me" will please you. "Just Another Rainy Day" has an up-tempo arrangement and will have you singing along and tapping your toes to the music in a matter of seconds.

One reviewer has stated that it's difficult to describe the new album from the Collingsworths. This is true, however the brief description here might urge you to get your copy to enjoy personally. There is definitely something here for everyone! You'll find all the information you need from the Collingsworths' web-site at www.thecollingsworths.com

TRIBUTE, FROM PAGE 37.

After the difficulties Tribute has faced, Gary Casto feels they are even more able to share their trust in a great God who is faithful. "It's the experienced Christian that can reach out to the one who is hurting. How can we minister if we don't have a testimony? If we haven't been through the valley, how can we share with someone else how to make it through, how to have faith, and how to depend upon the Lord to guide you through it? Even though it may be tough sometimes, our testimony is what our ministry is all about."

For more information on Tribute Quartet, click on to:
<http://tributequartet.com/>

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION HOW TO KNOW FOR SURE THAT YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN.

It is the Lord's desire- and ours here at SGNScoops- that you become one of His children. God has promised eternity in Heaven with Him for all those who accept Him as their Personal Savior. It's as easy as "ABC."

A: Admit that you are a sinner.

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

B: 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 the grave. He offers this as a free gift to anyone 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.

C: 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. Your prayer might sound something like this:

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that I deserve Hell because of it. However, I believe that you died on the cross and rose again in three days to pay for my sin. I ask you to come into my heart, cleanse my sin, and make me one of your children. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Please remember that simply saying a prayer doesn't save you. 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 rhonda@sgnscoops.com. We'd love to rejoice with you!



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WILBURN AND WILBURN

SANDI DUNCAN CLARK

A young boy stood proudly beside his Mother; fresh-faced, his dark hair parted and combed perfectly. His suit was spotless and his tie looked just like Dad's. One could see the young boy's face in the shine on his shoes. His voice was strong and he sang the melody and harmony perfectly. This was Jonathan Wilburn's debut performance with his family which led to a sixteen year career with The Wilburns. Jonathan later enjoyed a twelve year stint as the award winning lead singer with the Gold City Quartet.

A few years later, the same scenario played out with a few variations. Another little boy, about 7 years old, with blonde hair and shiny blue eyes, commanded the stage. His white shirt was pressed perfectly and the tie was just right. His suit was very much like Dad's and Grandpa's. Jordan Wilburn joined his Dad and the rest of The Wilburns on stage and quickly stole the audiences' heart. He had a shy smile, but he loved to sing and did so with gusto. Jordan Wilburn was following in his father, Jonathan's footsteps. Jordan loved Southern Gospel music and his favorite song was "Where Could I Go But To The Lord." On this particular night, the stage was in Nashville, Tennessee, and the event was the National Quartet Convention. One of Jordan's all-time heroes, J.D. Sumner walked out on that stage and stood beside Jordan, singing right along with him.

Jonathan continued the story, "That was a great experience for Jordan; for all of us, really, and when we started off the stage, I said 'J.D., thanks for helping us with the song.' J.D. shook his head and said 'I did it for the kid.'"

Recalling this and speaking about Jordan's and Jonathan's announcement in March, 2011, that they would begin accepting concert dates, singing together as Wilburn & Wilburn, lots of memories came flooding back for Jonathan and his wife Sandra. "If I told you that I never expected this to ever happen, that wouldn't be true," Jonathan shared. "We've known from a very young age that Jordan would someday sing Gospel music. God has had His hand on him and I could see the desire in his eyes. Jordan has always had an ear for music and harmony, and having him on stage with me is an awesome thing."

Sandra Wilburn echoed her husband's comment, "Jordan loved music from the time he was a baby. I knew he loved singing, but this new work was a surprise for me," Sandra emphasized. "One Monday Jonathan called me from the car dealership, and said honey, 'God said I can't do this anymore. God wants us to sing.' I found out that 'us' was Jonathan and Jordan!"

Sandra continued, "When Jonathan left Gold City, I knew in my heart that he would be singing again, I just didn't know where or when. I always pray for my family and continued to do so, trusting God for His leadership." Concluding, Sandra said, "This has been a wonderful experience for all of us, and I'm so happy that the two of them are serving God together."

Picking up the story of the Monday morning phone call, Jonathan said, "After I left Gold City, I loved working for the car dealership. It was the right

place for me to be, and I learned so much while I was there. Yet God was dealing with me, calling me back to the music ministry. That Monday morning was the last fight I had with His call. I felt Him tugging, saying 'Jonathan, you need to be out there serving me. All I need is a father and son willing to answer my call.' I have to say that my faith was not strong, but God's call was sure, and Jordan felt that call too. I finally said 'Lord, if you'll lead, I'll go.'"

Having the right songs with a strong message to fit their style and vocal range, as well as their testimonies was a major priority for Jonathan and Jordan. "We want the music we sing to point people to Jesus Christ," Jonathan and Jordan acknowledged. "We also want to have fun and let people know they don't have to be down-in-the face to be a Christian. We sing some traditional Southern Gospel songs, some with a little country flavor and other types of music that suits our preference and encourages our listeners," the two testified.

Jonathan and Jordan agree. "There are so many hurting people; people who don't know that Jesus cares and that He is the only one who can truly make a difference in their lives. We want our time with our fans to be the time we introduce them to the One who really cares about them, their problems and their souls. If we use that time wisely then we can stand before God with a clear conscience and know that we did our best."

When Jonathan and Jordan felt confident enough in their music, they began contacting people for directions for their new career. They began to look for an opportunity for a recording of their music and for booking dates.

"After all the time I've known Norman Holland, I trust his judgment and knowledge and I asked his thoughts

on our music,” Jonathan explained. “I wondered if we were the quality that he might want on the Daywind Record Label and I couldn’t wait to hear from him. When he called back I told him I was anxious to know his opinion, and he almost caused my heart to stop,” Jonathan said. “Norman said flatly that after listening to our music and giving it a lot of thought, he just didn’t think that Daywind could do anything with our music. I just about cried, and then Norman said ‘Jonathan, I’m joking. Of course we can work together!’ That was a big thrill for Jordan and me.”

In explaining the Daywind opportunity with Wilburn & Wilburn, Norman Holland said, “As Vice President and A & R Director for Daywind Records I must say we couldn’t be more thrilled to have Wilburn & Wilburn with us! The title of their debut album, *FAMILY TIES*, really sums up how we feel about this father and son duo. They are like family to us. Jonathan Wilburn and myself have been friends since the Gold City days and, now, his son Jordan, with his tremendous voice and great heart for ministry, has come along to join his incredibly talented Dad in serving the Lord. It just doesn’t get any better than that! We’re so excited for the world to hear them!”

FAMILY TIES was released in early summer on Daywind Records, and “I Ain’t Giving Up On Jesus” has been playing on Gospel radio. Ben Isaacs produced the album and shared his thoughts, “Jonathan and Jordan are



ABOVE: JONATHAN AND FAMILY

so easy to work with and would try anything I suggested on the songs. Many times a producer will try to make an artist into the producer’s version and not let the artist shine.” Ben thought for a minute, then, continued, “I wanted this to be a Wilburn & Wilburn record and not a Ben Isaacs record. I believed that’s what we accomplished and I am really pleased with the project.”

Ben continued, “Jonathan and Jordan brought in a bunch of songs and I brought some and we listened to them and decided what we thought worked the best. With a new artist, I like to help them make their own style and not try to put them into any musical category. Jonathan and Jordan have such a fresh, organic sound with great vocal range and tone, and I was very comfortable working with them. I do believe they have a big future in music.”

Jonathan said, “It was remarkable to work with Ben, who just happens to be one of the most desired record producers in the music business. He just finished producing the Oak Ridge Boys’ new album, as well as Charlotte Ritchie’s new one. We were blessed to have a lot of different artists come in to do background vocals with us, and make us sound better,” Jonathan smiled. “One thing we enjoyed was that Bill Gaither was instrumental in helping us pick the right songs. We enjoyed having his input.”

As the dust has settled a bit on the announcement, the excitement of the

new recording has subsided just a little and the first months of meeting fans and making new friends has past, Jonathan tried to explain his feelings. “It’s been a tremendous experience,” Jonathan replied. “God has shown us some great things, and we continue to be blessed. The anointing on this ministry just amazes us. We stay busy, and we love it, yet at the same time, if we want to extend a trip and take an extra day, we have that opportunity too. One of the best things is that Sandra (my wife) goes with us whenever she wants.”

“We recently had a couple of dates booked in Gallup, New Mexico and Granite City, New Mexico, with old friends of ours from Brewton, Alabama, Dr. and Mrs. Gary Pugh,” Jonathan recalled. “Gary moved his practice to New Mexico and we flew to Albuquerque. Sandra went with us and when we got there, Gary had a 45 ft. camper for us to use. We took it to Durango and Silverton, Colorado, and enjoyed a few days sight-seeing in the area. That was one of our favorite trips.”

The future, with God’s help and leadership is wide open for Wilburn & Wilburn. Fans are enjoying the seasoned vocals and personality of Jonathan Wilburn, along with the fresh new face and voice of Jordan Wilburn. Each man’s personality compliments the other and their testimonies appeal to young and old alike.

Continued on page 46.





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Zack Swain



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FAVORITE DUET: Marvin & Gracie Wilson, Wendy Word + forgiven, Hearts of Faith (top 5)

FAVORITE BLUEGRASS ARTIST: Leipersfork Bluegrass (top 10)

FAVORITE INSTRUMENTALIST: Zack Swain (top 5)



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Rhonda Mitchell-Frye



The Davis Family



Eyewitness



Tank Tackett

Congratulations to charting artists this month:



Tane' Miller

Darrell and Tojuana,
Eyewitness,
Homeland Quartet,
The Drummond Family,
Randy & Wendi Pierce,
Praise Incorporated,
Tank Tackett,
Ron Brewer,
New Vision (Ohio),
and Men of Music.



The Drummond Family



Bill Dykes

Congratulations on new projects:

The Davis Family,
Tane' Miller,
Gloria Larson,
Steven Doan
Leipersfork Bluegrass,
Men of Music
Tank Tackett,
Bill Dykes
Tammy Jones-Robinette
I Randy & Wendi Pierce
New Vision Quartet,
The Drummond Family,
Darrell & Tojuana,
Eyewitness,
Rick Solomon,
Classic 4,
Redeemed Quartet,
Ron Brewer,
Daryl Petree.



Gloria Larson,



Darrell & Tojuana



Steven Doan



Homeland Quartet



Randy & Wendi Pierce



Tammy
Jones-Robinette

Have Faith

JENNIFER CAMPBELL

As I was visiting with a friend one afternoon, I happened to pay special attention to the perpetual calendar on their desk. The daily message read, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1 NIV). When was the last time you had complete faith that something you wanted would come to pass? Can you honestly say that you always put your faith in God, no matter what trials come against you? Or does Satan often wriggle his way in, causing you to question whether or not God truly has everything under control? No matter what you may encounter on your journey, have faith. God will see you through.

On August 28, 2005, one of the deadliest hurricanes recorded in U.S. history struck the coast of Louisiana. Hurricane Katrina was responsible for the loss of more than 1,800 lives. I can recall sitting in front of the television, barely able to believe what had happened. With every levee that gave way, my heart sunk a little deeper into my chest. The homes destroyed, the lives lost, and an entire city changed forever. While I prayed fervently for the people residing in the path of destruction, I wondered, how can they have hope? When they are wading through waist deep water full of sewage, how could they possibly even think God exists? As they pull a loved one out of the water, only to find they were a moment too late, how can they put their faith in God? Still, I prayed that God would walk beside them, helping them from one moment to the next.

As I switched the channel from CNN to The 700 Club, I was introduced to a precious woman of God whom I will always remember. Her name is Gerta. She lives in St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. She was being interviewed because she had experienced a deadly hurricane



many years back. Even though the location where she lived was being evacuated, she was unwilling to leave. Instead, she stood inside her kitchen, surrounded by glass windows, praying. She had complete assurance that God would see her through the storm. While many homes around her were completely demolished, her home remained unscathed. Although I cannot recall her last name, nor would I recognize her face if she walked in the door of my home, the words she spoke are forever etched in my memory bank. She said, "If you're anchored in Jesus, you'll be safe." At that very moment, I knew she had said something wise beyond my years.

A few days later, I wrote a song titled, "Have Faith." The lyrics of the song talk about a woman who is sitting next to a loved one who has gone on to be with the Lord. Then, it talks about little children who are crying out in fear. In life, there are situations we cannot avoid. There are problems we cannot solve on our own. There are moments when we may want to simply throw in the towel. I want to encourage you by telling you that there is never a time in your life when you should just give up. When you feel like giving up, give your burdens to Jesus. He is waiting with open arms, waiting to help you when life gets too hard to handle. He will walk with you through the flood. He will be your Shelter from the storm. He loves you more than you could ever imagine. Have faith. God will see you through.

*In Christ's Love,
Jennifer*

WILBURN, FROM PAGE 44.

"That is truly our goal," Jonathan testified. "Gospel music is my way of telling people what Jesus means to me. Our objective is to bring fathers and sons, mothers and daughters close again through Jesus, and to do that with our music."

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THE WAY THINGS WERE

NEWS FROM THE JOURNEYMEN QUARTET

SANDI DUNCAN CLARK

There's nothing more enjoyable and encouraging than talking with someone who is happy and excited about what God is doing in their life and ministry. It's difficult to keep from sharing in that excitement and enthusiasm!

Catching up with John Bledsoe, owner, manager and lead singer with the Journeymen Quartet is not an easy task with both our busy schedules, however once that was accomplished the joy he shared was well worth the time. John is thrilled with what God is doing both in his life and for the quartet, and eagerly shares the story.

The quartet originated in 1957 and John began singing with the Journeymen when he was sixteen years old. He is the only current member to have been a part of the original quartet. "Just being able to tell others about the Lord with our music, is a life-long dream," John said. He brings more than forty years of experience in Southern Gospel music to this quartet's ministry.

John is joined by three young men who truly love Southern Gospel music. Corey Laney is eighteen years old and sings baritone with the Journeymen Quartet. Blake Bledsoe is twenty four years old and sings tenor, and twenty seven year old Jason McSweeney sings bass. "Each of these young men love the Lord, they love the music, and they love coming to meet the bus every weekend. It's a thrill to have my son, Blake singing with me, and the two other young men are just like family," John said.

In early spring of this year, the Journeymen were in the studio with

Shane Roark to record their annual CD on the Chapel Valley record label. They had spent almost six months acquiring new songs, choosing the final ten and working with Shane on arrangements for the new CD. "We have new songs sent to us just about every week," John said. "We listen to everything and over the months accumulate quite a few. I also have a buddy who has thousands of old quartet albums, and we pull some songs off those albums, too. Our preference is traditional quartet songs: that's what fans expect when they come to see the Journeymen Quartet and that's what we try to record and sing."

John continued, "We narrow that down to about twenty five plus the ones Shane brings, then we all listen to everything and offer input." He concluded, "Shane, Corey and Blake work with the final ten songs and arrangements to see which song each of us should sing. Shane and Travis work on the music and then we put down the vocals. It's a joint effort, with everyone involved."

THE WAY THINGS WERE came hot off the presses the third week of July and features the style and talent of this West Virginia quartet. The exciting piano intro and up-tempo music on "The Pleasure Is Mine" provide an enthusiastic kick-off for the Journeymen's new album.

"We love four part harmony...the old fashioned quartet harmony, done the way the quartets did it back in the years," John said. "Not many things are the way they use to be, but we love singing that style. I'm happy that these young men traveling with me enjoy that style of music."

And as to the old fashioned quartet style, "We also want to dress the part," John and the men agree. "I just

think that a neat haircut, a coat and tie and neat, clean shoes make a big difference," John clarified. "I guess this summer, for the first time ever, due to the excessive heat at one of our outdoor concerts, we wore dress pants and dress shirts, with no jacket and tie." Everyone agreed it was easier to sing, and yet they still maintained their stage presence.

One special song on the new album features John and was written by Shane Roark. "I often marvel how a story becomes a reality and 'I Know Where You Are' is just that story for me," John explained. "Shane had no idea who would sing this or who needed it, when he wrote the song. We were looking through the music he brought and as I read the words to this, it fit me completely."

When John was twenty eight years old, he and his wife, Debbie, lost their two year old daughter in a horrible fire. "I just couldn't handle it," John testified. "I was singing and we were going to church, and everything, and I just couldn't see how God could let that happen. I gave up for almost eight years. He finished the story, 'My wife kept going to church, and praying for me and I finally realized that it was not a punishment, that God had a reason and that I needed to acknowledge His will.'"

John admitted, "I was angry at God and couldn't see why He would allow this to happen. Now, when I sing this song, I want people to understand that it's okay to be angry with God and to let Him work in us and through us and our trials to increase our faith and help us to encourage others."

Blake also has a testimony regarding the song and his Dad's health issues during this past year. "Dad was in the hospital off and on for more than six

months this year, and sometimes I just didn't understand why," Blake blogged on the Journeymen's web site. "This song became reality to me during that time."

How Blake came to sing with his Dad is another good story. "We knew he loved the music, but never thought about it, especially him singing tenor," John disclosed. "I came home one weekend and Debbie told me that Blake had something he wanted us to hear. He had made a CD of himself singing 'Oh What A Savior,' and Debbie and I were thrilled. He was sixteen at the time and has been singing with me since then."



Corey's experience with music came from a solo ministry he had for about ten years, prior to coming to the Journeymen. Corey plays guitar and loves Gospel music. He had participated in another local quartet, but when he met the Journeymen, he knew this was where God wanted him.

and came to the group on the recommendation from a local vocal coach. "I actually ran into his Dad in one of the stores in Huntington, W.V. and told him I would love to talk to Jason," John said. "Both young men have been with the quartet for about a year now and we're all very happy they are with us."

schedule. They stay busy just about every weekend and Blake informs, "We usually book between 15 and 18 dates each month."

Becoming acquainted with the Journeymen Quartet was a blessing; telling their story was heartwarming and sharing in their excitement was a delight. Their smiles are contagious and their eagerness to share the message of Jesus Christ in their music is so rewarding.

Jason sang bass with his family

Evidence that the old fashioned quartet style fits this group is their busy

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THE FANS HAVE SPOKEN

A Concert Review From Fans Like You

MARK TRAMMELL QUARTET ANNIVERSARY

LYNN MILLS

"I have nothing to brag on if Calvary is not real - if Calvary's not sufficient, we are wasting our time." - Mark Trammell

Those are the words Mark Trammell unashamedly declared from stage at his Homecoming Sing, concerning their ministry as Gospel Singers. Though the weekend was filled with many moments that will not be easily forgotten, the focus on spiritual things was just as strong. There is no better way to spend a weekend than to couple both the things of the Lord with Southern Gospel Music! Without further ado, let's get this Gospel Sing started!

I was very excited on the nine hour drive down to Anniston, Alabama for the 6th Annual Mark Trammell Quartet Homecoming at Hill Crest Baptist Church. On the other hand, I was not very enthusiastic about the road construction that caused me to pull into parking lot thirty minutes after the concert started!

Friday Night - The Whisnants and Mark Trammell Quartet:

The Whisnants brought a variety of both new and old songs to the stage. With the release of their brand new project, More Than Enough, fans enjoyed new ballads and "barn burners" from this popular trio...and of course, the standards you would expect to hear at a Whisnants concert! One of those new songs was a ballad called "Weapon of Prayer," featuring Jeff Whisnant. This song urges the Believer to use the greatest weapon we own, prayer. Susan shared about a time when their son Ethan was sick while they were on the road, not knowing what to do; she phoned her

mother and explained the situation. Her mom responded, "Don't pray." Susan questioned, "Don't pray?" Her mom answered, "If you are going to worry - don't pray. But if you're not going to worry, then go ahead and pray." She said that piece of advice impacted her life greatly. While that has continued to impact her, the next song she sang has been impacting our nation. That song is "Church Across The Street." Susan shared that she has received many e-mails from pastors across the country, telling of lives that have literally been saved because of the message of this song. She told of a time when Mark was riding the bus with them and she played him that song and he began to weep. That very same day, they went into a restaurant where a lady came up to Susan and began telling her story: she wasn't married and found out that she was pregnant; originally, she was going to have an abortion. When she heard "Church Across The Street," it

changed her view and she kept the baby. When Susan sang that song the whole auditorium was held captive by its message. Not a soul stirred or made any noise during the ballad - all was silent as Susan sang. The "barn burner" of the night was no other than "New Day Dawning," which was encored three times! The crowd was on their feet and the roof was raised note by note!

The Mark Trammell Quartet just has a knack for taking songs that you've heard other artists sing a thousand times and giving them a new spark. So it was with the set they performed Friday night. Tunes like "Wedding Music," "Echoes From The Burning Bush," "Gentle Shepherd" and more, flooded off the stage with the conviction and power only MTQ can offer. All weekend, Mark gave Pat a hard time (ya' know, everyone LOVES bass singers!) So, when Mark quickly introduced the guys, it really showed: Joel was first, Dustin second, and when he finished with Dustin he said, "Now this next young man," (Pat steps right up to Mark and smiles), "he's easy going, good looking and an all-around a nice guy - and his name is ... Mark Trammell!" The look on Pat's face





was priceless! The audience roared with laughter - Mark had everyone convinced that he was talking about Pat, who nodded and agreed with everything. Mark was saying as if it were about him! It was hilarious! Before the night ended, Mark told the fans about his passion for the cross - especially songs featuring that subject. The quote that opened this article came from this part of the evening, when MTQ performed their melody of hymns about Calvary. After intermission, Jay skipped up on stage behind the drums and said to Mark, "Mark! Introduce me!" Mark walked out to the center of the stage and introduced the emcee for the weekend. Meanwhile, Jay is in the background rolling the drums as Mark says, "Please make welcome to the stage...Jaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay Parrack!" Jay comes bouncing around the stage and performs a little jig before bowing and exclaimed how he always wanted to do that!

The highlight of Friday night was definitely the following: Mark began, "I 'gotta' do this - Jay, come here." While Jay was making his way to the stage, Mark humored the audience with this little story, "I've been threatened with my life to do this...I'll be honest with you, it's almost worth dying for." Though no one knew what was coming, the audience still laughed. "My mama taught me not to say the word 'hate' - so I'm not going to say it,

but I've sung this song so many times I have a great disdain for it." They proceeded to sing "Glory Road" and let Jay and Joel duel out the high parts! Joel was the first to take on the "I can see the lights of home" lyrics, while Jay was doing this little dance in the back ground. On Jay's turn, Joel made sure that everyone saw him doing a thumbs down - but, Jay hit a "screaming high" note and brought the audience to their feet. Joel made a nice come back and hit a pretty high note himself. This tenor duel was heartily enjoyed by all.

Saturday Night - The Booth Brothers and the Mark Trammell Quartet:

Switching things up a bit, the Mark Trammell Quartet were the first to take the stage and kick off the evening Saturday night. MTQ brought a lot to the table, and you could tell it had the desired effect because of the crowd's response. One of the first times I noticed it was on the second song they sang, "Mansion Over The Hilltop." Mark asked the audience to sing the chorus along with them, and I have to say, a 1,000+ voice "choir" is AMAZING! They were fulfilling a number of requests that night, one of which was "Loving the Lamb." Its message moved the crowd like none other. MTQ sang their hearts out on this one...their passion for the Lord poured off the stage into the audience. That's no exaggeration either! For when they held their last note, the entire crowd instantly stood to their feet - even those in the balcony! (Now, you know it's something special when you get the balcony in a standing ovation!) A song or two after that, the Spirit was so strong that Mark turned to where the Booth Brothers were sitting off to the left and said, "When ya'll come out here, just mind the Lord - it's wonderful." Then on silly note he added, "Well, Jim and Ronnie, you two mind the Lord...Michael doesn't mind anyone! If he had a mind, he would take it out and play with it." (The crowd just ate that up!) Another song that sent chills up my spine that night was "Statue of Liberty." Mark introduced this song by describing a time when

he was in an airport and a plane came in that carried a fallen soldier's casket with our flag draped over it... one lone color guard stood there to receive it. That experience, Mark said, will change a person's life. That ballad not only received a standing ovation, but had everyone on their feet after just a few words were sung.

"We had some of the strangest requests tonight," Mark shared with the audience, "we are going to try to fulfill the strangest one right now." With anticipation, I awaited to hear what song it would be...I mean, C'mon, how many songs can you entitle - strange? Leave it be, the song was "O Holy Night!" With power and precision, Mark delivered the verses with everything he had. A standing ovation was the only result! (And you know that MTQ didn't get to warm up on this one - it was a pure request performed like true pros!) Mark shared how such a "strange" request came about. He was at the table and this little old lady came up and asked if they would sing a certain song. He asked which one - she replied, "O Holy Night." Mark jokingly shared, "I'm thinking to myself...it's 100 degrees outside - that's not holy!" Their very popular number, "I Want To Know" followed, and had to be the highlight of the night. Michael came on stage at the end of the song and said that he noticed how three out of the four guys singing were really into it. Looking Mark in the eye, he declared, "Guess which one I didn't think was into it?" So they did the song again, and the Booth Brothers sang with them. Michael tried to get Mark to dance, even did his best Elvis impression - but that just DIDN'T work! You know what Mark did? - Spontaneously, he began doing jumping jacks in response to Michael's dancing! Michael dropped to the floor laughing! (So did the audience!)

As you can imagine, the crowd was really warmed up when the Booth Brothers came on stage! With the release of *Let It Be Known*, the Booth Brothers new Cd - there was great anticipation in seeing those songs

performed live. On Saturday night, the BB's did not disappoint! One of those songs on that new Cd is an old Imperials song called, "Keep On Casting." Jim Brady sang the verses and the crowd really loved the up-beat tempo. It was a pretty fast song and after it, Michael said, "We would have done more of that...but it's not in the bulletin!" Of course, as he's saying this he's panting for breath. Ronnie looks at his brother and says, "Hey! I think the skinny guy is out of breath! – Michael, why don't you loosen up your tie?" Horrified, Michael replies, "What? Oh, no!" Jim asks, "Why not?" Michael sticks his nose up in the air in mock of pride and answers, "Because, I'm a Baptist!" Another song off of their new project that received a great response was the Celtic styled, "See What A Morning." It's so powerful live! Halfway through the concert there was a short intermission. When the BB's came back on stage after they sang "I Want To Know" with MTQ, Michael said, "I have to sing a serious song right now and I can't!" After the

crowd chuckled again, Michael added, "I should have took my pill today!" (Which caused the audience to roar even more). Ronnie casually replied, "I wish there was one!" (Causing even more laughter!) All through the night Michael was adding encouraging and challenging thoughts on the songs and their messages, but when it came to this next one, he laid his heart out there. He went on to explain that the next song held a challenging message, asking an individual how they know that they're really saved? "Too many times we point to things that DON'T MATTER," Michael said passionately, "They may beautiful landmarks (speaking of walking down to the altar, or writing the date you were saved in the cover of you Bible) – but where you need to go is the Word of God." (Satan can't argue with the Word!) He shared that after he arranged some notes and passages of Scripture in order, he asked Jim to write this song. Jim re-wrote this ballad three times, it's called, "What About Now?" The conviction in the lyrics brought everyone to their feet. Before the BB's could get off the stage, Mark brought the guys back on and they all sang, at Marks request, "Still Feeling Fine."

Sunday Morning – Mark Trammell

At the Sunday morning worship service, Mark Trammell delivered the sermon. The topic of his message is definitely worth repeating! He spoke on the Priceless Presence of Peace, taken from the Scripture Isaiah 26:3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Mark asked the inevitable question: do you have



peace in your life? If you would be honest with yourself – what would the answer be? If you don't have peace in your life, what could you remove from your life to get it? He told of a time when he asked a 21 year old what his definition of peace was. Without hesitating, the young man said, "A house paid for, a car paid for and a family." Mark observed that as a good answer, but urged us to go a little bit deeper. The Path to Peace (his first point) took us to Philippians 4:7, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This Scripture points out that peace is not the absence of something, but the presence of Someone. The path to peace is so obvious, (The Word of God), it stares at us every day. "Why," Mark challenged, "do we choose to let it remain in the pages that we don't have time to read?"

Conclusion: Three wonderful groups encouraged and entertained us over the weekend of August 12-14th at the Mark Trammell Quartet Homecoming. That event was one of the best that I've ever been too. The atmosphere was touched by God. Though there were many times when Mark or Michael would have us rolling on the floor with laughter, they knew when the appropriate time was to talk about the serious things of God....and when they did; it would send chills up your spine.

Continued on page 54.





THE "EQ"

Last month I covered the "Gain" knob on the mixer board and this month we are going to be following the signal flow and talking about the "EQ" knob. Let me first start by saying this, Audio Engineers are much like painters, but for your ears. It is the job of the audio engineer to make sure everyone hears everything and to hear it at a pleasant tone and level. Every engineer has a signature sound. Some like some crisp on vocals, some like to keep it warm, but for the most part, every sound man has a unique sound. The reason I say this is because I can only give you my personal guidelines for setting "EQ" so I am going to avoid this and just give some basics.

"Less is more" is my first recommendation. If you have poor audio quality to start with, you're only going to be trying to paint the old barn. It is still going to be bad. Let's start the EQ discussion with the source. Whether it is a microphone or an instrument you're dealing with, you have to have good quality. To get a good quality microphone, the cost is going to be at least around \$100.

At the beginning of your sound check, start with all your "EQ" knobs in the zeroed, or 12 o'clock, position. Each mixer board labels the knobs differently and some boards have more knobs in the "EQ" section than others. The top knob on the mixer is the "HF" or High Frequency selection. Every manufacture is different, but this knob general covers 1kilohertz all the way up to 20 kilohertz or even higher. This is the high's that can create the

Sound Advice

crisp. They can also create that high squeal feedback. Higher frequency's travel in rooms faster and reflect off walls easier than the low (or bass) frequencies. Adjustments here have to be minor.

The next two knobs go together. Look for the little white line connecting the two. This is a "sweepable frequency." The top knob selects what frequency you want to adjust or to pin point then the lower knob is the gain/decrease knob. This is my favorite kind of "EQs." If I am on a system that does not have a 31 band "EQ" (will discuss this later) and I have no way of "notching" a troublesome frequency, I will use this sweepable to find the feedback frequency and notch that frequency. This is not as of a narrow notch as a 31 band can provide, but on a limited system this is one of my tricks. I also like to add a boost to the 10k area of vocals and snares.

Again the next to knobs is another sweepable section, but for more lower to mid-level frequencies. Same rules apply as above. I try to cut the 400 "Hz" area to get rid of some muddiness of toms on the drums so I use this sweepable on the "toms" channel of the mixer.

The last knob, the "LF" or Low Frequency adjustment, can be used to add some "thump" to the kick drum or adding some size to the bass singer.

Then the button after the "LF" is the "EQ" "IN" button. This enables the "EQ" section.

There are many websites that contain "EQ" engineer tips and tricks. There have been many books written on the subject alone. Gather from all the tips learned to create your own sound. One major recommendation: I would try to mix similar to what you hear coming out of Nashville. Why? This is what people hear on the radio and

BIG CLAYTON

are used to hearing. This would be a great place to start. The engineers in Nashville mix full time and have engineered a many of albums. Who better to learn from?

IN THE STUDIO

THE "D.A.W"

Probably one of the biggest inventions in the audio world is the "D.A.W." The Digital Audio Workstation has quickly replaced tape recorders of the past. Being digital, there are many advantages with the main one being no moving mechanical parts, minus the hard drive the audio is being recorded too.

The heart of the DAW is the audio interface. This is the device that connects the microphone or the source to the recorder. The recorder in the "DAW" world is the computer. The computer hosts and handles the processing of the audio. The audio interface connects to the computer by fire-wire or by "USB." The computer then captures the audio to the computer's hard drive. Then once it is on the hard-drive it can be edited along with effects added. The nice part of the "DAW" is that the audio is recorded "dry," without effects, to the hard drive. During playback, reverb and "EQ" can be added. If you want to change the reverb or try some crazy settings, it can be changed without affecting what is on the hard drive.

You may have read or heard about "mixing in the box." "The box," in this case, is the computer's recording software. Because computers can handle so much more information, it has made it more affordable for the end users achieve higher track counts at a lower entry level price. As with "pre-amps" that we talked about last month, the audio interface's quality really makes a huge difference in the quality of the recording.

Sound Advice continued...

I would love to hear from you readers and other engineers. Do you have a funny story or a personal tip?

Drop an email to me at clayton@claytonwatson.com and I will add them to the articles. Also if you have specific questions you would like to have answered, you can send them too. One of my favorite questions is, "Can you make me sound better?"

Until Next Time
Big Clayton

TRAMMEL, FROM PAGE 52.

I was out by MTQ's product table Sunday morning after the service when Mark was telling another fan that his whole sermon was done without notes. The only thing he had was his title, three main points, and Scripture references to go along with them. I left that Homecoming thinking, "The whole world needs to see and hear what I just saw this weekend." I want to give a special thanks to SGN Scoops for being the first step in making that happen by letting me cover this event for them. Also, to the Whisnants, the Booth Brothers and the Mark Trammell Quartet – each one of you have a special ministry in the Kingdom! Stay strong and keep pressing on!

Scoops Staff Says: Be sure to check out the moment-by-moment review of the Mark Trammell Homecoming at:
<http://lynnschronicles.com/>.
Thank you, Lynn for a GREAT concert story!

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Rhonda Frye

LOOK FOR MY NEW RELEASE ON
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"Come To Me"

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August was one the most eventful months I have experienced since I joined the group almost two years ago. After coming off two Alaskan cruises, we were pushing ourselves into overdrive—pressing toward the excitement that awaited us.

We were thrilled to be a part of the 1st Annual Swedish Homecoming Festival. Thanks to Bill and Gloria Gaither and his Homecoming videos, the Swedish people recognized our group as well as several of our songs which have been featured on the videos. They immediately greeted us at the entrance of the concert venue (a beautiful church), making sure that we knew just how excited and thankful they were that we had come to share our songs with them. We all (The Collingsworth Family, Lynda Randle and Marshall Hall) sat on stage together during the event's first concert and supported each other in song.

It seemed as if the precious Swedish folk couldn't get enough of southern gospel music. They especially loved when we shared hymns or other familiar gospel classics. Most of the time, they sang along and clapped if they knew the songs. I'll never forget the second concert and the feeling of the Holy Spirit as worship filled the church auditorium. As we finished

CHRONICLES OF A SINGING ENGLISH TEACHER

Karen Peck and New River Goes to Europe:
Halleluiah in Every Language

JEFF HAWES

singing "On the Banks of the Promised Land," the people began raising their hands toward the sky. Karen decided to sing a chorus without any music, and the rafters almost exploded. What a joy and excitement it was to see that the word halleluiah is familiar to all mankind. The act of worshipping and praising the Lord is familiar to all Christians; it is a result of His salvation for us.

At the end of the set, the people began clapping—over and over and over again (not merely for KPNR but for what the Lord has given them). As soon as we headed to our table in the lobby, person after person came up to share their longings to see loved ones who await them in heaven. What a thrill to know we will someday reach for His nail-scarred hand, and be led "from grace to glory" on the banks of the Promised Land.

It seemed as if everyone (the artists) were working together and connecting with the sweet people—making friends for a lifetime. Even to my surprise, one lady introduced herself and shared

that she knew a lot about me and my hometown. This was because she had read several of the articles I had written for various Christian magazines. She said she was the one responsible for translating the articles from English to Swedish.

What a great time we had in Sweden as we praised the Lord. It is such a wonder to realize that God is the same no matter where we are in the world. He is faithful and just to forgive; His mercies are new every morning.



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