

FEBRUARY 2018

SGN

SCOOPS

MAGAZINE



LANDAN SMITH & MORGAN EASTER SMITH *Best Friends Forever*

ALSO FEATURING:
POET VOICES, CHUCK DAY & MERCY RAIN



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OUR MISSION

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.

Publisher- Rob Patz

Editor-in-Chief- Lorraine Walker

Copy Editors- Joan Walker, Craig Harris

Feature Editor- Craig Harris

Layout/Design- Pete Schwager, Staci Schwager

Cover Design- Stephanie Kelley

Founder- Dr. Allen Smith

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PUBLISHER'S POINT

by Rob Patz

Welcome to the February edition of the Publisher's Point. So how was the first month of the year? Did you complete everything you wanted to accomplish? Did you keep your New Year's resolutions? Are you on the path to a successful 2018?

Okay, right now is a moment of transparency. To be completely honest with you, I haven't kept either of my resolutions. One was to exercise. Now, I'm not saying I haven't exercised at all, but I haven't exercised with any consistency.

I blew the other resolution too. I was going to be more organized. Yeah, that one hasn't worked out too great either. In fact, I probably will lose this Publisher's Point at least once before it actually makes the magazine. If that doesn't make you laugh, nothing will.

Sometimes in life, we set standards and goals for ourselves, both of which are sometimes not attainable. I'm not saying we shouldn't strive for high standards, or for lofty goals ... far from it. I think we should always dream bigger than we can imagine, because we serve a God who wants us to set goals that are beyond our normal beliefs.

However, I do want to talk about something that has been weighing on my heart, and that is missing the mark when you set goals and standards. I'll be honest with you ... over the last month, I have struggled with my own self-worth. They say, in life, you can be your worst critic, and there have been times when I have questioned my own decisions. I'm not saying we shouldn't question our own decisions. Again, this is something that we need to pray about.

When I wrote last month's Publisher's Point, I didn't realize how the words that God had given me would come to such life, when I said, "2018 is a new year and new you." As I have watched circumstances and events unfold in my own life over the last 30 days, it has made me realize that I may miss the mark I have set for myself.

I sometimes struggle to even see the mark, but I know that God is with me. I know that He cares very much for me and for what I'm doing, but He hasn't brought me to this point to leave me. I do know that He alone is who I



should focus on.

For so much of our life, we want to set these great and grandiose New Year's resolutions. Please listen to me ... I do think that we should all set goals. I think we should have things that we want to accomplish, because without goals – especially written down – we will never accomplish anything. But what I'm saying is that our first and foremost thing in life should be to immerse ourselves in what Jesus wants.

This month, I want to encourage you to know that if you are a Christian, you serve a God who is closer than a brother and who sees everything that you're doing. He knows what you're striving for. He knows that, at times, you're going to miss the mark that you have set. Remember, He may not make the goal that you believe you should reach.

He is the God of grace, the God of love, and the God of peace. He loves you regardless of what you are striving for and wants you to make His goals your standard for your life this year.

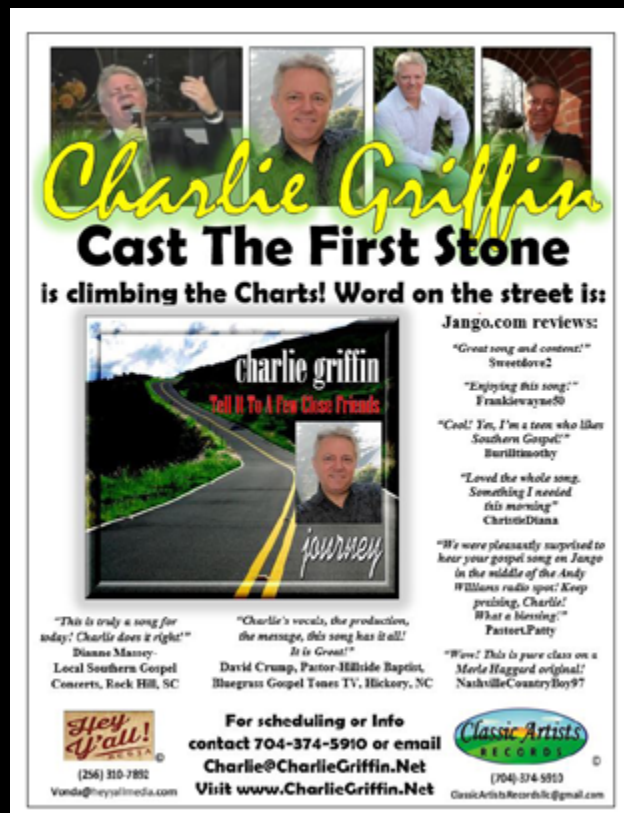
Make plans to join me in Oxford, Ala., from March 1-3. We are going to have an awesome time. God is going to move, and we believe that lives will be changed. See you then.

Until next month, this is the Publisher's Point.



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Charlie Griffin
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“Can You Handle The Truth?”

Are You a Protester?

By David Staton

Black Lives Matter, Antifa, NFL, along with many other organizations have decided that protesting the flag is the way to draw attention to any issue they want to champion. In most cases, the end result to their actions is anger from many Americans. Why?

I believe, like most Americans, that the American flag encompasses and stands for something far more important than one person or the issue they represent. I believe the majority of Americans feel much like I do when it comes to respecting our flag and our country. I believe the cause for such protests stems from the idea that nothing is more important than an individual or even the cause that they are passionate about. This loss of focus or skewed perception does not help their cause ... it only hurts their efforts.

Every time I see an athlete who refuses to stand during the Pledge of Allegiance, or our national anthem, I realize how they are often acting out of ignorance. It's not that they are stupid. There is a huge difference between stupidity and ignorance. When someone is ignorant, it means that they are simply choosing to ignore the facts and information that is clear and often right in front of them. To protest the flag because of an issue that is taking place within a nation that provides the freedom we all enjoy is like someone protesting the cross because they have a disagreement with a deacon in their church.

All of this has made me realize that at some point in our lives we all have done or continue to do the exact same thing on a much larger scale. When we hear the gospel of grace and begin to understand what Jesus did to forgive us and redeem us, and we refuse to bow and surrender to His lordship, we protest the cross. When we selfishly hold on to whatever we want and refuse to surrender it,

we silently say that what we want is more important than what God wants. When we hold to the sin and refuse to put it on the table and repent, we protest.

We know about the cross and the freedom that He gives, but we ignore it. We are ignorant, and so we protest. Our will is more important than God's will. Can you imagine how we look in the whole scheme of things?

So the next time you see an NFL player refuse to stand for the national anthem, remember the times you've refused to kneel and surrender.

I'm guilty. I am still at times an ignorant protester. I hear that still small voice that at times is louder than the anthem being played in a sports arena, yet I ignore it. I protest.

If you think this is hard to read, you should have tried to write it about yourself.

Today, I surrender. Forgive me Lord when I protest the cross that gave me eternal freedom.

David Staton is a singer/songwriter/author/speaker from Nashville. After singing with such groups as Priority and the LeFevre Quartet, Staton served as the executive vice president for Song Garden Music Group in Nashville. In recent years, the National Quartet Convention has asked Staton to be a part of an industry advisory panel to help artists who need assistance and training. Not only has Staton made a mark in gospel music as an artist and a writer, he is passing on his knowledge and experience on to new artists, which will influence and shape the future of gospel music. He can be reached by e-mailing david-statonmusic@gmail.com.

What I'm Looking for in 2018



By Craig Harris

Sure, it's a new year, and with a new year comes endless possibilities. Here are a few things that you may want to keep an eye on as we journey through 2018 ...



The Hoppers have faced a series of challenges over the last couple of years, but it took many by surprise when Dean Hopper had two strokes in December of 2016. Then, when it appeared that he had recovered and was almost back to normal, Hopper suffered

three more strokes in August. Hopefully, those medical hurdles are over, and the Hoppers can continue to produce great music, such as "Jesus the One," "Song of Moses," "If We Ever Gotta Look" and the title track off of their "Life Is Good" project ... though one of the hidden gems from the project is the yet-to-be-released track No. 4, "Walk Two."



I'm looking forward to seeing what lies ahead for the LeFevre Quartet now that those fellas have joined the Daywind

Music family. Already possessing a commercial sound, it will be interesting to see if being a part one of the elite record companies in the Southern gospel industry leads to even greater success at radio and in other avenues as well.



Cana's Voice burst on to the scene two years ago, featuring three dynamic vocalists in Doug Anderson (for-

merly of Ernie Haase and Signature Sound), TaRanda Beene (the Greenes) and Jody McBrayer (Avalon). Their debut project – "This Changes Everything" – contains hit songs "Heavenly Father" and "Jesus Never Fails." My only complaint ... I didn't see Cana's Voice in concert in 2017, due in part to a limited touring schedule as a result of all three group members having their own solo ministries. However, the group has started off 2018 along with David Phelps on the Big Voice Tour. What am I hoping for in 2018 ... for my ears and their voices to spend more quality time together in live concert settings.



Group changes are never easy. However, as we all know, they're inevitable. What a soulful asset that Ricky Braddy brought to

the sound of Karen Peck and New River. I look forward to hearing the next male vocalist who comes on board with the uber-popular, award-winning trio, and I also look forward to seeing if the group can come close to producing a project that I dig as much as the Wayne Haun-produced "Hope For All Nations"

("Victory is Mine" and "I Know I'll Be There" are simply top-notch).

There's so many "good guys" in the Southern gospel industry, including Brian Lester, Susan Whisnant and Karen Peck Gooch to name just a few. Count Gary Casto among that contingent. Tribute Quartet's manager and lead singer seems to be one of the hardest-working individuals in Southern gospel music as he's involved in many different facets of the industry. With hard work comes reward, such as the group's 2017 Dove Award nominations for Album of the Year ("Here for You," produced by Haun) and Southern Gospel Recorded Song of the Year ("Never Forsaken"). What type of blessings does 2018 hold in store for a group that has risen to a point of being considered one of the top male quartet's in Southern gospel music? I can't wait to find out.



Speaking of personnel changes, I was listening to a Southern gospel radio station earlier in 2017 and heard a ballad that featured a voice that I was certain I recognized. It had to be Chris Jenkins. Well, it was. The Anchormen's "I

Heard About a Man" had recently been released to radio and has since been spun many more times on the airwaves. Well, Jenkins recently returned to the Kingsmen. His strong, consistent tenor vocals are an asset to any group. It's sure to be a nice reunion for a group that has experienced significant success at radio with "Here I Stand Amazed" and "They Don't Know." Lot of fans will be looking forward to hearing Jenkins reunited with the rest of the Kingsmen.



Joseph Habedank has the ball rolling. After winning a Dove Award for Best Southern Gospel Album ("Resurrection," also produced by Haun) in October, Habedank has now been nominated for a GRAMMY Award for Best Gospel Roots Album. He's

performed with Country Music icon Reba McEntire at the Dove Awards and is one of the few soloists

selected to appear on the main stage at the National Quartet Convention. "Here He Comes" and "Just When You Thought" have been well-received releases from "Resurrection," following hit songs such as "Welcome Home," "Never No Never" and "Beauty of the Blood" off of his "Welcome Home" project. Can Habedank's impressive ascension continue at the same pace in 2018? (*Side note ... Who knows what Haun – who is up for three GRAMMY Awards – will produce this year*).



The Nelons continue to see doors open for their ministry,

recently being invited to perform in front of the Supreme Court of the United States at the live nativity and then attending the White House Christmas Party in Washington, D.C. Two months earlier, the group won a 2017 Dove Award for Bluegrass/Country/Roots Recorded Song of the Year ("When Grandpa Sang Amazing Grace"). They've recently released an Americana project, "The Americana Sessions". I look forward to seeing how another year affects Autumn Nelon Clark, who has recently blossomed vocally and enhanced the Nelons' overall sound.



Can anybody deliver a ballad quite like the Collingsworth Family? They're class personified, and it just seems to be one hit after another ... "When He Carries Me Away," "Gotta Get to Jesus," "You're About to Climb," "It Matters to the Master," "At Calvary," "Fear Not Tomorrow" ... and a couple of my personal favorites in "Tell the Mountain" and "I Found It All." What's the next big showstopper?



Jason Crabb has a huge fan base. He also has a huge talent, being an elite vocalist and having developed into a great communicator of a lyric. Now, he's deeply delving into songwriting. Given Gerald Crabb's immense success as a writer, does

the apple fall far from the tree? We'll get a glimpse over the next few months as some of his efforts will likely be unveiled.



The Guardians are a picture of consistency with Dean Hickman and Neil Uhrig, who were original members when the group formed in 1988. John Darin Rowsey joined the group in 2012, and now, the group

has experienced great success in recent years, on the radio charts and on stages that the male trio has been invited to perform upon. I first heard their latest radio hit – "Present in the Presence of the King" – at Jackson Sings the Gospel last July in Jackson, Tenn., and immediately fell in love with it. It's no surprise that it was released to radio and has rapidly climbed up the charts. "Packin' Up," "It Ain't Gonna Worry Me Long," "Somebody Prays," "Shoutin' Sounds" and "Let the Healing Begin" are all popular requests for the Guardians. What's next for those guys? Stay tuned.



Southern gospel music fans adore the Mark Trammell Quartet, Greater Vision and Pat Barker. How then could they not love it when Greater Vision's Gerald Wolfe, Rodney Griffin and Chris Allman

teamed up with Trammell and Barker to form the Second Half Quartet. The response they receive is always overwhelming. Surely, there has to be something new – well, possibly a new version of something old – coming from that ensemble soon, right? I won't be the only one looking forward to seeing what it will be.



And there's lots of groups that we're all constantly keeping an eye on. I'll look forward to

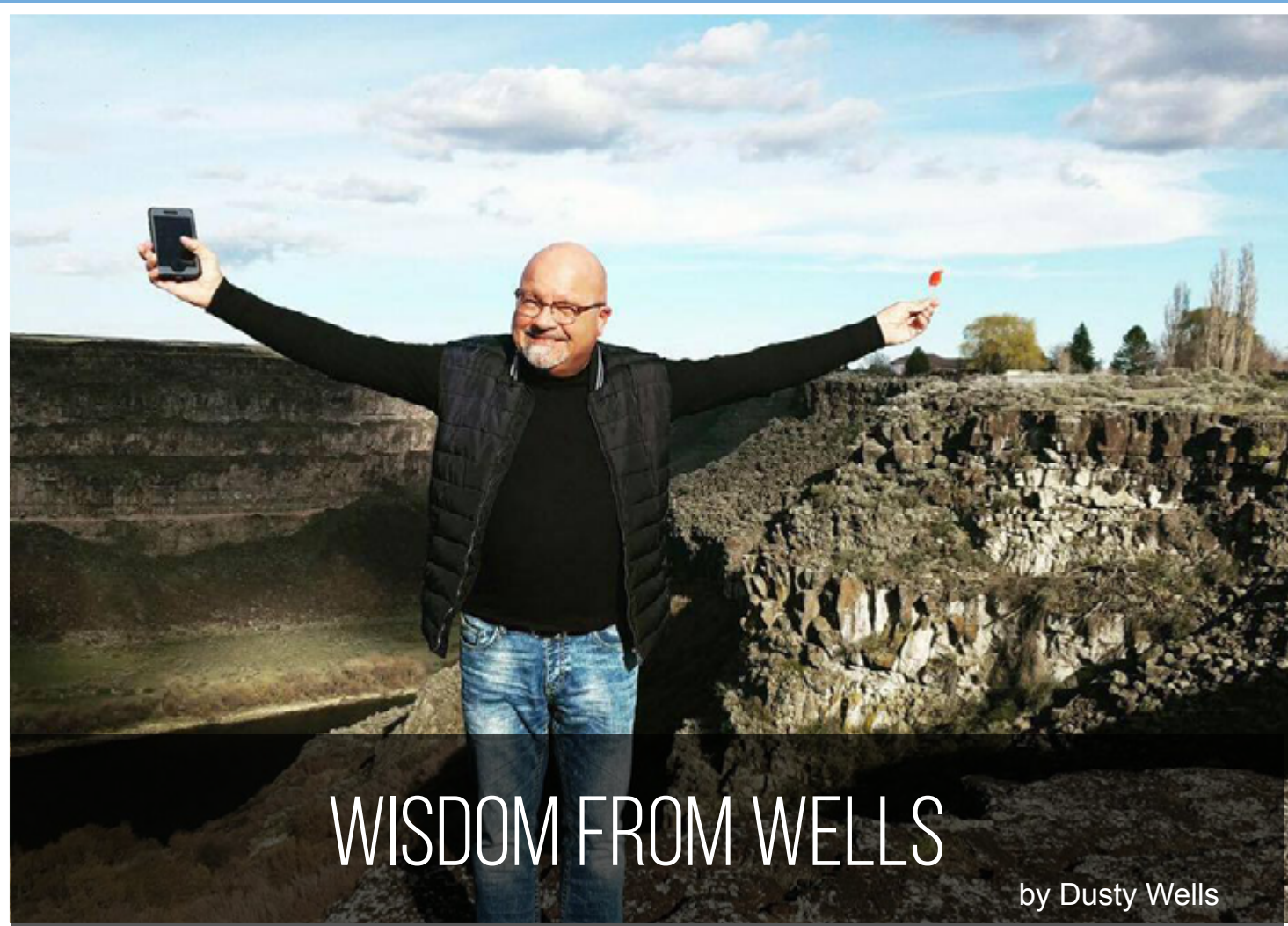
seeing what Legacy Five, Goodman Revival, the Jim Brady Trio, Gold City, the Booth Brothers, Triumphant, Jeff and Sheri Easter, the Whisnants, Greater Vision, the Mark Trammell Trio and many others have in store this year. They're some of your favorites ... and mine too.



Here's to lots of great music and many memorable moments over these last 11 months of 2018.

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WISDOM FROM WELLS

by Dusty Wells

Are you listening?

I've always prided myself on listening. I absolutely love and crave to listen to the many different sounds of life ... children laughing, a precious saint praying, ocean waves splashing, people sharing heart, birds chirping, wind blowing, rain falling, anointed music that moves me, those treasured loved ones expressing love, care, challenge and concern while talking ... and my list could go on and on. There is nothing like just sitting still and listening, capturing all that is around you,

both good and bad. Listening is a treasured gift, and I take it very seriously.

This last year has been a year of difficult change for me, a change of seasons and scenery in so many ways, and yet, I have done

my very best to embrace it because I do know the importance and value of change in our lives. We can either decide to grab hold of change, or we can let change grab on to us. I know for a fact that it is so much better to go ahead and grasp it and walk alongside of it. We don't have to like it at times, but for me, I want to learn and grow with it.

During this time of change in my life, I have cried over and over to God, "Yes, Lord, I am listening. I really am listening for You." And my friends, do you know what? I did feel like He was always speaking to me ever so gently and calmly, "Dusty, just be still and know that I am God, and I have got it all in control. I've assured you over and over again. I will never leave you nor forsake you. I never have, and I never will."

Oh, those words and that feeling would last for a few hours, and then again, I would start into my pity party again and cry out to Him, "God, I am listening ... I am ... speak to me." Again, I would hear His sweet calming voice and that same assurance that He has given me since I was a young teen, when I first came to know Him.

I cannot even tell you how many times that He and I have had this "listening" conversation. In fact, I am fairly certain



that we had it again this morning on my drive in. It is the beautiful truth of us hearing Him in all we are going through and walking through.



Let me assure you, I am not unhappy with where I am in life right now. I'm really not. I've learned to make good where we are and with all that we are entrusted with, as long as we are seeking more of Him and wanting to live a life that will honor Him and help others.

And my friends, let me assure you, I am in that place of desperately crying out to Him, "More of You, Jesus, and less of me." I want to make certain I am listening, so I keep reminding myself over and over again as I pray and talk to Him.

Listening is never easy, but as I have journeyed with Him now for nearly 45 years, I have found that true, intimate listening is the only way to have that peace, strength and assurance that only He can bring. Yes, it's tough to listen, but it's the only way for not only me, but you as well.

Where are you in life today? What part of the journey are you on? What are you hearing from Him? What answers are you needing? Are you willing to sit still and listen ... no, I mean really being still?

Are you being quiet? Are you off of the phone? Are you taking time to get alone with Him?

I think you get what I am saying. There will be such a sweet peace that will pass all understanding, when we all take time to "Be still, listen and know He is God." (Psalm 46:10, Abridged)

Friends, He is with us, and He is ready to listen to everything and anything we may want to talk to Him about.

So once again, I am reminding my precious Jesus, "Here I am. I am listening ... I am really listening."

Dusty Wells is the director of sales at New Day Christian Distribution. He can be reached via e-mail at dusty.wells@newdaychristian.com.



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Morgan Easter Smith & Landan Smith

Best Friends Forever

By Lorraine Walker

Morgan Easter Smith is a product of a Bluegrass gospel legacy.

When her dad, Jeff Easter, married her mom, Sheri Lewis, it was a union of two families known for their musical excellence. As Jeff and Sheri Easter, they expanded their audience exponentially, and thousands have watched as Morgan matured into one of the best young female singers in gospel music.

And Landan Smith ... he's not only been around gospel music for a decade and played drums with the Easters' band for five years, he's ... well, he's Morgan's best friend. And on Oct. 25, they declared to their family and friends that they will be best friends for a lifetime: BFFs.

First impressions are not always perfect, and they were not prophetic for this couple either.

"I met Landan and his family about 10 years ago," says

Morgan. "When I first met him, I honestly couldn't wait to get away from him."

She laughs and adds, "He asked so many questions and would not stop talking."

Landan confides, "I never thought I'd marry her."

Even Sheri's mother's intuition was caught off guard.

"My favorite story to tell ... a lady came up to me in concert shortly after we hired Landan, and she said, 'My granddaughter thinks your drummer is cute,'" Sheri recalls. "I immediately told her, 'Well, whoever gets this kid for a son-in-law will be one blessed woman.' I had no idea it would be me.

"To be honest, none of us saw it coming, including the two of them."



However, they were an inseparable duo from the start.

“Landan traveled with us for five years and was my best friend,” Morgan explains. “We did absolutely everything together and spent 99 percent of our time together even when we weren’t on the road.”

Landan adds, “We were just best friends, and it never crossed my mind we could be more.”

Landan began playing drums full-time for Jeff and Sheri Easter in 2010, and so the friendship began, as they grew in their relationship with each other and even found potential partners for each other.



“Landan had actually set me up, and I had set him up, with some people,” Morgan shares. “I kept dating and never realized I just needed to sit back and let God do His will. I always heard

(the saying), ‘Fall in love with your best friend.’ I never considered that I could fall for Landan, but it was absolutely the greatest decision I ever made and I thank God every day for him. So, it’s true, y’all. Fall in love with your best friend.”

Sometimes, it truly takes an absence to make the heart grow fonder.

“He left for a year to take a break from traveling and when he came back, something just hit me,” confides Morgan. “I had been looking for something that was always right in front of me.”

Landan adds, “I took about a year off and when I came back I started seeing her differently. (I) never thought she’d feel the same about me, but luckily, she did.”

Landan admits that Morgan was the first one to voice what they were both feeling.

“I never even considered she would have feelings for me, so when she came to me and told me how she felt, it was definitely unexpected,” Landan says.

The proposal was well-planned and well-executed as Morgan was genuinely surprised.



“My dad was in on it and asked me to go down the Lewis Family homeplace to pick something up for him,” Morgan shares. “So, I walked in to get it and noticed a light was on. I brushed it off as, ‘Oh, Little Roy must’ve left a light on’, but when I turned the corner, Landan sat in the living room waiting for me. I’ve never been so scared, but so excited in my entire life.”

Landan was confident.

“I knew she’d say yes,” he says.

The big day was beautiful and memorable, as all weddings should be.



“Our wedding was more than I could’ve ever dreamed,” Morgan emphasizes. “We got married at the Lewis

Family homeplace on Oct. 25, 2017.

“Our bridal party consisted of (Landan’s) brothers – Logan and Jordan Smith – my brother and sister – Madison and Maura Easter – my sister-in-law and his sister-in-law – Shannon Easter and Savannah Smith



— our nephews — Miles and Carter — Matthew and Kari Gooch (Karen Peck Gooch’s kids), Joseph Jackson (Susan Peck Jackson’s son), Levi Bowman (Becky Isaacs Bowman’s son), Jared Stuffle (Tracy and Libbi Stuffle’s son), Maggie and Callie Phelps (David Phelps’ daughters), Christian Booth (Michael Booth’s son), Bryce Free (Brian Free’s son), Maddie Rose Taff (Russ Taff’s daughter), Kris Erwin (of the Erwins), and three of my friends from preschool — Kathryn Poss Bergeron, Hannah Bryant, and Sadie Partridge.”

There were lots of special guests.

“Landan’s father, Ken Smith, is a pastor, and he officiated the wedding, and I was very blessed to be able to have my grandfather, James Easter, come up and say the closing prayer,” Morgan shares. “My favorite guests that came were Greg and Charlotte Ritchie. They are like family to me, and to know they took time to drive from Nashville to make it on my special day meant the world to me.

“It was also an honor to have Tim Lovelace come. He and Miss Mary Alice are some of our dearest friends, and it was so special they were there along with many other Southern gospel friends.

The honeymoon came in a familiar location.

“We honeymooned in Pigeon Forge after our annual show in Dollywood,” Morgan points out. “We stayed at Kathy Crabb’s beautiful cabin, Sweet Slice of Heaven, and that it was. It was all just so much more special than I could’ve imagined.”

How did the mother of the bride handle the wedding of her oldest daughter?

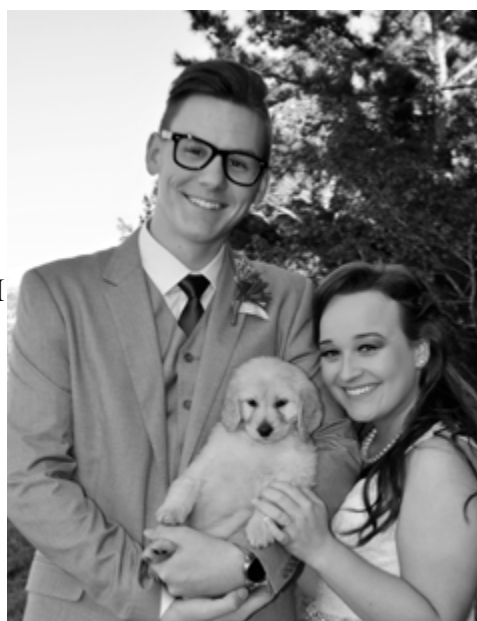


“I cried,” admits Sheri. “Every young girl deserves to marry her best friend, and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that was what she was doing.”

Sheri’s advice for the marrying couple was something that she and Jeff have always tried to do.

“Always treat one another with respect and communicate everything,” Sheri says. “Also, treasure the friendship as the gift it is.”

There haven’t been too many surprises for the couple.



I

“We knew just about everything about each other because we’ve traveled together for years, but don’t think he was quite prepared for just how easily distracted I can be and how scattered I am,” Morgan says laughing. “I am my father’s

child.”

Although Landan had been living with his parents until

their marriage, Morgan had been on her own, between tours.



“I owned a house (for) about three years before Landan and I got married,” Morgan points out. “It’s only about four miles from mom and dad, and it was a fixer-upper after years of renters. It was built in the early 1900s, and it’s an absolute dream home. I love it, and thankfully, so does Landan. He’s been helping

me finish renovating, and we’ve been making it less of my house and more of our house. It’s been such a fun project.”

The couple shares a deep, abiding faith in God.

“I was always told, ‘Put God in the center of your relationship,’ in every relationship I had been in,” Morgan shares. “I could never figure out how to do that. I always over-thought it.

“When Landan and I started dating, I noticed just how easy it was to talk about God, (and) the bible, and how easy it was to pray together. I realized that was how to keep Him in the center, by keeping Him in the center of our topics of conversation and never feeling ashamed to talk about God’s love. We love doing devotions together, encouraging one another and worshipping Him together.”

Landan adds, “We have a Casting Crowns devotional that we love to do together.”

Learning to worship together is a special part of a Christian couple’s relationship. Growing closer also depends on how a husband and wife treat each other, says Sheri. For 30 years, she and Jeff have learned lessons that they have passed along to the new couple.

“We communicate,” Sheri says. “We treat each other with respect, and we are each other’s best friends. That doesn’t mean there’s never a squabble, but when there

is, we try to make our points without disrespecting one another.”

Morgan talks glowingly about her new husband.

“I love his heart,” Morgan emphasizes. “I was raised with the greatest man on earth as my father. I know no one who has a heart like my dad. He would give the shirt off his back to a complete stranger, and I always wanted someone with a heart like my father. Landan has the same heart. He’d do whatever he could to help someone and encourage someone, and I just absolutely love his heart.”

Landan is just as in love with Morgan.

“I love her heart for others,” Landan points out. “She cares so much for people, and that’s what I love most about her.”

Landan’s brother Logan is close with the couple.

“Morgan and Landan have been great friends for years,” begins Logan.

“I don’t really think any of us expected the two to even date. When Landan came to us and told us they were dating, the first time I saw them together, I knew it would be just a matter of time.”

Logan is thrilled with his brother’s choice. “I couldn’t hand pick anyone better than Morgan to be a part of our family. I wish nothing but happiness for them. I’m excited to see what God has in store for Landan and Morgan.”

Did Logan have any meaningful words before the couple tied the knot?

“I honestly didn’t give him any advice except make sure you treat her right. I’ve known Morgan since I was 10 years old and I would hurt him, if he ever hurt her,” laughs Logan.

“Morgan has a huge heart and it shows. Landan definitely has a gem,” Logan concludes.

What does the mother of the bride think of their relationship now?

“They were best friends who traveled and worked together for four years before they ever even considered dating one another,” says Sheri. “I think they’re perfectly suited for one another, and as a mother, that makes me very happy.”



Day To Day

Love

By Selena Day

Song of Songs 2:11-13 (TPT) reads, “The season has changed, the bondage of your barren winter has ended, and the season of hiding is over and gone. The rains have soaked the earth and left it bright with blossoming flowers. The season for singing and pruning the vines has arrived. I hear the cooing of doves in our land, filling the air with songs to awaken you and guide you forth. Can you not discern this new day of destiny breaking forth around you? The early signs of my purposes and plans are bursting forth. The budding vines of new life are now blooming everywhere. The fragrance of their flowers whispers, ‘There is change in the air.’ Arise, my love, my beautiful companion, and run with me to the higher place. For now is the time to arise and come away with me.”

My mom has carried on an eccentricity that my grandmother had, and to be honest, it’s one I’m very serious about beginning myself. Instead of planting flowers that fade and die, they put out fake flowers in their flowerpots and gardens so they can enjoy them all year long. I’ve never had a green thumb, so this appeals to me.



Have you ever been somewhere and seen flowers so beauti-

ful and lifelike that you had to stop and touch them?

I think people are becoming this way in life, beautiful on the outside, but not much depth on the inside.

When you plant a garden of flowers it takes more than just a seed for it to grow; it takes time, and patience, watching over it for it to grow and mature.

On our first trip to Thailand, we decided to visit an orchid farm one day and the fragrance and beauty were mesmerizing. The colors and varieties of orchids were astonishing to a novice like me.

For some reason, I can grow roses. People tell me that roses are usually a difficult flower to grow, but for some reason, they seem to like me.

Our lives are a garden in which the Master has planted His seed of truth, and we are the soil in which the seeds can grow. He is the master gardener, and when we allow Him full control, our garden and our lives become a vibrant and fragrant existence ... an existence we can enjoy, one that provides sustenance for us and for those that He brings into our path.

I believe that we are entering a new season, a season for great breakthrough. Those dreams that have been brewing on the backburner of your brain are about to boil over and you are going to see the manifestation of those dreams into your life.

All the prayers that you have prayed and the hopes you have held on to, God has carefully watched them and held them close and is about to put into action bringing them

into your life. But with the breaking forth of a new season comes the pruning process of getting rid of the junk that has built up out of our lives.

While studying the scripture of the Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs), in chapter 2:12, I discovered that the Hebrew word for pruning is a homonym that can also mean singing. I love this because it gave me a beautiful visual of Him singing love songs to me, and as He sings over me, dirt and decay begin to fall off and what remains is beautiful fragrant blooms bursting forth all around me.

If I listen to the resonance in His voice, it will lead me to my purpose, and guide me to His perfect plans for my life. It shows me that I am not alone and that He surrounds me daily in all my hopes and dreams.

I am so thankful that we serve a God that loves us so deeply. I am so thankful that we have a savior that longs for relationship with each and every one of us. I am so thankful that the creator of the universe cares about me – little ole' me and all my flaws and quirks – and that He not only just cares, but He delights in who I am and how I was designed by Him.

If you are struggling today with knowing you are loved, close your eyes and just see God, whatever the version of what God looks like to you. Maybe He's a white-haired, white bearded figure, or maybe you see Jesus from the famous portraits painted of Him? However you see Him, just get a picture of Him in your mind. Now, see Him smiling at you. See Him singing over you.

As you sit with Papa God and see Him smiling at you, ask Him to speak to you in your very own unique way, maybe through a song, a word, a picture, or maybe through a scripture.

God loves you so much and wants to lavish you with His love every day. It is my prayer that as you enter into your new season that you will know, without a shadow of doubt, that no matter what is going on around you, that the love of our Father for you is great, and you can trust Him with your heart, soul and mind.

Selena Day is a motivational speaker and is available to speak at your conference or event. She can be contacted by e-mailing selenaday@me.com, by visiting www.queenliving.org, or at www.facebook.com/queenismsbyselenaday.

Photos courtesy of Selena Day.

A promotional image for Debbie Seagraves Ministries. It features a woman with blonde hair, wearing a black top and a patterned cardigan, standing in front of a stage with lights. The text on the image reads: "DEBBIE SEAGRAVES MINISTRIES", "2016 FEMALE VOCALIST OF THE YEAR WITH LGMA", "2016 FEMALE VOCALIST & ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR WITH GGCBA", "AVAILABLE FOR SPEAKING/SINGING", "WWW.DEBBIESEAGRAVESMUSIC.COM", and "PHONE: 706-338-4652".

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A promotional image for KJIC 90.5 Christian Music Radio. It features the station's logo at the top, followed by the text "Houston's Southern Gospel Station". Below this, it says "Available on the App Store" with an Apple logo, and "kjic.org" in large red letters. At the bottom, it says "ANDROID APP ON Google play" with the Google Play logo.

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Be sure to visit our website at KKGMAM.com to keep up with what is happening with Gospel music and local church events in the DFW area.





This chart was compiled from a list of reporting stations. Each month we will be adding more stations.

1. The Hyssongs - I Tell Them Jesus
2. The Steeles - Prodigals
3. The Kingdom Heirs - The Last Big Thing
4. Karen Peck and New River - Hope For All Nations
5. The Guardians - Present In The Presence Of The King
6. Gold City - I Will Stand
7. The Perrys - Moses And Elijah
8. The Kingsmen - Hear The Word Of The Lord
9. Tim Livingston - I Can't Erase The Message
10. Triumphant Quartet - Thankful, So Thankful
11. Brian Free and Assurance - He Can Take It
12. Jason Crabb - Mysterious Ways
13. The Mylon Hayes Family - The Coming Of The Lord
14. The Wisecarvers - Plain And Simple
15. The Collingsworth Family - You're About To Climb
16. Susan Whisnant - I Prayed Through It
17. The Isaacs - If That's What It Takes
18. The Wilbanks - When I Speak Your Name
19. The Hoppers - Song Of Moses
20. The Old Paths - Tangled In The Middle
21. 11th Hour - Doin' What's Right
22. The Second Half Quartet - During The Rapture
23. Greater Vision - Still
24. Debra Perry and Jaidyn's Call - Somebody Pray
25. The Whisnants - He's Never Moved
26. Sunday Drive - 11:59

27. High Road - Somewhere I'm Going
28. Joseph Habedank - Just When You Thought
29. The Talleys - This Thing Called Grace
30. The Gaither Vocal Band - Hallelujah Band
31. Mercy's Well - When We Make It To The Other Side
32. The Pruitt Family - Bless His Name
33. Wilburn and Wilburn - Prayer Is All I Need
34. Day Three - Might Go Home Today
35. The Mark Trammell Quartet - My Faith Still Holds
36. New Ground - Make It
37. The Bates Family - You Are
38. Akins - Dying To Be With You
39. Billy Huddleston - Freedom, Oh What A Word
40. Battle Cry - You're All I Need
41. Old Time Preachers Quartet - I'll Ride This Ship To The Shore
42. The Greenes - Send A Little Rain
43. Josh and Ashley Franks - While My Tears Are Falling
44. Mark209 - I Can Call Jesus
45. Zane and Donna King - Hallelujah And Amen
46. The New Dove Brothers - No Back Door To Heaven
47. Shellem Cline - Getting In The Word Of God
48. Allison Speer - Out Of Here
49. The Music City Quartet - I Wanna Be Somebody
50. The Jay Stone Singers - I Won't Turn Back
51. The Mckameys - Living For Eternity



52. The Bowling Family - I Believe He's Alive
53. The Walkers - Holy Spirit Flow Through Me
54. Hazel Stanley - People Get Ready
55. Dean - Talk The Talk, Walk The Walk
56. Jason Davidson - He Stood Up
57. The Troy Burns Family - When He Laid His Hammer Down
58. The Pine Ridge Boys - Sail On Over
59. Bloodbought - In The Eyes Of Man
60. The Coffmans - Know So
61. Summit Trace - What Grace Looks Like
62. Eagle's Wings - A Rugged Cross And An Empty Grave
63. The Nelons - You Can't Make Old Friends
64. Exodus - Behold The Lamb
65. Covered By Love - I'll Lay My Crown
66. The Kendricks - Old Piece Of Clay
67. The Griffith Family - That's Who He Is
68. Ivan Parker - A Little More Like You
69. Psalm 101 - Don't Let Me Miss The Glory
70. Three Bridges - Jesus Saves
71. The Chandlers - He Does
72. The Ferguson Family - Living For The Call
73. The Lear Family - Too Far From Home
74. Abby Paskvan - Anchor To The Power Of The Cross
75. The Drummond Family - Just Let Me Fall
76. The Tribute Quartet - When The Prodigal Comes Home
77. The Lore Family - Asking, Seeking, Knocking
78. Tim Lovelace - Living In A Coffee World
79. Lakeside - Come On Home
80. Chris Hester - Miracle In Reach
81. The Page Trio - God Will Fight The Battle
82. Michael Wayne Smith - Lead Me Lord
83. Sacred Harmony - Grave Robber
84. C. T. and Becky Townsend - My God Delivered Me

85. Channing Eleton - Bring To Me Isaac
86. The Inspirations - We Are Christians
87. The Redeemed Quartet - Is That Footsteps That I Hear
88. Michael Combs - How Do They Make It
89. Steve Ladd - Since I Laid My Burdens Down
90. The Taylors - For What I Don't Know
91. Guy Penrod - Singing With The Saints
92. Steve Warren - Forever Kind Of Love
93. Christian Davis - He Can't Stop Loving You
94. The Encouragers - Royal Blood
95. The Rick Webb Family - Jesus, Only Jesus
96. Chris Golden - Less Of Me
97. Southern Raised - Instead
98. The Master's Voice - Where My Savior Is
99. The Murphys - My God Can Move Any Mountain
100. Misty Freeman - When God Speaks

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Extraordinary Poet Voices

Return to Gospel Music

By Justin Gilmore

Phil Cross is a name with which most Southern gospel music fans should be familiar. Cross is known for penning some of Southern gospel's most beloved songs, including "Wedding Music," "Champion of Love," "I Am Redeemed," "One Holy Lamb," and several others.

Cross is also known for being the founder and lead singer of Poet Voices. Poet Voices started in 1991 as a trio but became a quartet by 1996 and remained as such until 2002.

Now, 15 years later, the group is a quartet once again. Cross is now joined by long-time member Donny Henderson (baritone), Nic Holland (tenor), and newly-added bass singer Brandon Barry. Henderson and Holland joined the group in 1999 and 2000 respectively.

Barry is no stranger to Southern gospel music, hav-

ing served as bass singer for the Old Paths Quartet and the LeFevre Quartet. This exciting lineup will also be joined by a live band on select dates. The talented quartet has returned to spread the extraordinary word of God through song once again.

"Poet Voices was formed in 1991 by myself, Howard Stewart, and Dale Brock," Cross says. "We were signed by Chris White of Sonlite Records, and our first radio release, 'Jesus Built A Bridge,' reached the No. 1 position on major charts."

This was the first of many No. 1 hits for the group, which also included "Wedding Music" and "The Key."

One of the group's most memorable moments was receiving Song of The Year honors for one of their No. 1 songs, "I Am Redeemed."



Cross points to several artists as inspiration for the group's unique sound and style.

"Cathedral Quartet, Oak Ridge Boys, and everyone that's currently honoring God through music," are prime influences on the ministry and sound of the group according to Cross.

One could argue that the inspiration was mutual as many of the songs that Cross has written were recorded by those beloved artists. Regardless, these influences can definitely be heard in the current quartet.

In addition to their vocal parts, each member has other



important positions in the ministry.

Cross serves as songwriter, producer and emcee. Hen-

derson produces and handles everything concerning marketing and sound. Holland manages transportation, and Brandon Barry helps coordinate the schedule.

The group's 2018 is off to a strong start with the group releasing two new recordings, "I Am Redeemed" and "Extraordinary." "I Am Redeemed" features fresh recordings of some of the group's most well-known songs, while "Extraordinary" is a fitting title for the latter record featuring eight classic Poet Voices songs, along with four new tracks.



"'Extraordinary' is a collection of newer songs written by myself and others," Cross points out. "It includes a couple of worship songs, along with songs of proclamation."

The title track is the first radio single from the project.

"'Extraordinary' is an exciting, up-tempo song written by (me)," Cross emphasizes. "It reminds us that everything about Jesus was extraordinary. He didn't do anything average or ordinary."

Both recordings showcase the incredible harmonies of this great quartet as well as the strong, gospel-based lyrics.

According to Cross, the mission of Poet Voices is "to provide authentic Christian encouragement and worship to all generations," which is reflected in their music, their concerts and their daily lives.

"God is on our side," Cross points out. "He cheers us



on. He never gives up on us. He has an extraordinary plan that includes us.”

The music of Poet Voices has made an impact on many people around the world.

“An entire tribe in the Virgin Islands received Christ after a missionary shared ‘Jesus Built A Bridge,’” Cross shares. “Their bridges had been destroyed in a hurricane, so they easily identified and understood the song.”



This has humbled Cross and the members of the quartet. God has blessed them, and through them, He has blessed many others.

“God has impacted our lives, and music is a way for us to express that,” Cross says. “Singing has afforded us the tremendous blessing of meeting wonderful people

and knowing that God touches them through the message we get to share.”

Even with all of their success, the men of Poet Voices are still focused on the true star, Jesus Christ. The group also encourages new artists and those who feel called to sing gospel music.

“Be genuine, real, and do not copy others,” Cross points out. “Remember, we’re not great, but He is. This is not a singing contest.”

The coming days are looking bright for the men of Poet Voices, and they are excited to embark on this new journey together.

“We will be sharing in concert events, churches, and wherever doors open,” Cross says. “We will do it with class, integrity, and purpose, to honor Him.”

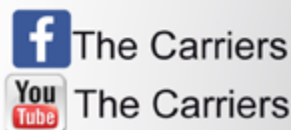
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SOUTHERN GOSPEL WEEKEND

2018 Update

By Lorraine Walker

Can you feel the excitement in the air? Southern Gospel Weekend 2018 in beautiful Oxford, Alabama, is days away.

Hear your favorite groups from Gold City to the Steeles to Mark209 and the Pine Ridge Boys. More than 30 gospel music artists will be appearing from March 1-3 at the Oxford Civic Center.

SGW admission is free, but tickets must be reserved. Call event coordinators Rob Patz at 360-933-0741 or Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892 for tickets, or visit www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend for more information.

Southern Gospel Weekend will begin with the presentation of Faith, Family and Freedom, which will be hosted by Ken Rollins as seen on Veterans Affairs on TV 25. It will be held on Thursday night, March 1 to honor Oxford's heroes. All veterans, military, police

and first responders are specially invited. Events begin at 5 p.m.

Some of the artists appearing at SGW 2018 include the Williamsons, Eagle's Wings, Day Three, Pat Barker, Ava Kasich, Hope's Journey, ClearVision Quartet, Annette Bingaman, David Gresham, the Connells, Appointed Quartet, Harley Madden and Darlene Battles.



Other weekend activities include a large exhibit hall, daytime showcases, and midnight prayer time. A special Red Back Hymn sing will feature a mass choir on Saturday night. Many solo and group artists will be performing during the three-day festival. It will be emceed by the bass singer of the Second Half Quartet, Pat Barker.

Don't miss Pat Barker University

Barker will also be offering classes to assist gospel





music artists on Friday, March 2. From vocal coaching to stage presence, Barker will touch on everything the artist needs to present Christ in the SGW version of the Pat Barker University.

Artists and guests will be allowed to attend on a first-come, first-serve basis for a fee of \$25 per person. Call Easley to reserve your seat today.

VIP ticket are available

SGW will be providing a VIP seating section again this year. For \$25, true Southern gospel fans can purchase a pass that will assure them the best view of all the concerts.



Not only will they have the preferred seating, but VIP pass holders will also receive a special gift at the event, a package worth more than \$60.

Anyone interested in purchasing a VIP pass should contact Patz or Easley.

Waiting to hear from you

Call Easley for more information or if you are an artist



that would like to participate. Vendor booths are also available.

For more information on Southern Gospel Weekend, visit www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend.

Southern Gospel Weekend is presented by WPIL Radio and Coastal Media Group LLC.





Shelly Wilson

Heart of a Servant

Shelly Wilson resides in east Texas, and though she comes from a small town, she's always had big dreams. As a young girl she walked the aisle in a church and professed Christ, yet at 30 she realized she was not born again. She says there was quite a battle for her soul as she began to hear the voice of the Lord clearly for the first time.

Wilson had no idea the Lord would soon call her and fulfill her dreams. In 2002, she gave birth to her son and a few months later began having health problems. She literally lost her mind for a season.

The doctors were unsure why and no one could help her. She was not in church but knew to run to the church. She visited many and the message was the same: "Use your gifts for the Lord."

Wilson suffered terrible panic attacks, nightmares and incredible fear, but in the midst of it all she began to hear clearly the voice of the Lord and surrendered her life to Him. From that moment on, He slowly began to change her desires from partying to reading her Bible. Ephesians 3:20 became her life verse. Wilson understands the verse and says, "I chose you, you didn't choose Me. I'm grateful for a loving Savior. Although valleys come and go, He is always there."

Wilson spent a year learning about the Bible because she knew very little. She began to sing for the Lord but had terrible stage fright. The Lord had to gently show her that He could be trusted each time she stepped onto any platform.

Wilson wasn't writing songs yet and said she honestly never considered it an option because she plays no



instruments, reads no music and harmony is simply not her gifting. Yet one day in her closet the Lord said, “Shelly, you receive not because you ask not,” so with that nudge she asked to become a songwriter.

Soon the Lord woke her up with her first lyrics rolling around in her head and she began to receive full melodies with the lyrics.

In 2013, Shelly entered what she describes as a dark night of the soul and Christ took her into a wilderness valley. There He began giving her not only music but poetry portraying His heart to her. On stage she shares a combination of music, poetry, and the Word.

The Lord has taught her to be transparent with people so they may see His heart. She is very tender to broken hearts and knows Christ longs to heal them through her



ministry.

Today, the writings the Lord gives her are published to show girls the unique gifts and talents they too might use for the Kingdom. Wilson’s writings are published in a magazine entitled “Drama Queen Magazine,” that raises funds for safe homes for girls rescued from human sex trafficking. This is one way she’s been called to help set the captives free.



One of the highlights of her ministry is a cherished song called “Hush Little Baby,” a song the Lord gave her during her deepest valley. It was chosen as an award-winning song by CWIMA, (Christian Women in Media Association) a few years ago. GO BE LOVE International, a ministry that visits orphans all across the world has also used the song.

Last year Wilson partnered with Refuge of Light creating a music video for “Hush Little Baby,” featuring their safe home and girls being restored from child sex trafficking. She says the Lord has taken her most difficult season and birthed a song of healing that He’s used to touch many broken hearts.

Another song, “Power in the Blood,” off her first album, was used on David Wilkerson’s 50-year documentary video. On a plane trip from Dallas to Tyler, Texas she met the company preparing the video and they needed directions to Rosewood Studios, the very recording studio she used. She said she had no idea her producer and



the team at Rosewood was good friends with the Wilkerson family. David had always been a major influence in her life and she says this was a blessing from Heaven, a surprise no one else could orchestrate but the Lord.

“With the many challenges in ministry today, darkness is creeping into every facet of our world. The more we come against the enemy, the fiercer the battle is becoming. There is a need for prayer covering as well as provision to do the work we are called to do.



“Often I’m a missionary in places of great need where I freely give albums, publications, and ministry. I never allow finances to keep people from receiving what they need. I rarely release radio songs due to ministry needs, and I feel my accomplishments are simply that God has taken me from glory to glory and taught me His ways.

“I’ve learned His voice and been taught much through a school of suffering. Through these times, I have found

the very Savior that carried the cross before He also hung on it, and for Him I will do the same daily,” she states.

Much of Shelly’s time is spent penning messages and traveling. She has launched 320 Publishing, the arm of her ministry, which contains her catalog of original music, as well as various publications. “From My Closet to Yours” is a publication of poetry and devotionals. “The Little Girl Jesus Loves” is a book for little girls who have never understood life’s trials and how Christ has always been watching for them to recognize His hand in their life. Her latest book, “Rebuild the Ruins-The Baptism of the Holy Spirit” was just made available on Kindle, IBook and paperback on her website. To date she has released six publications, four magazine publications, three albums and five music singles.



She now producing a single, “Where My Heart Leaps” and DQK Club Toolkits. Drama Queens for the King Clubs is a ministry where Shelly spends countless hours loving on girls for Christ at Nascar racetracks, neighborhood block parties and club settings. She is now launching DQK club toolkits with “Drama Queen Magazine” and activities that will serve as curriculum for teaching girls how to share Christ. Using these toolkits will help girls become Freedom Fighters and help support a safe home for girls in east Texas.

In closing, Shelly says her mission is to meet each heart in their greatest need. If you spend a night of ministry with her you will hear her share through music, poetry, and God’s Word. “We are called to help the broken heal so they can be all Christ intended them to be and all hands are needed on deck for this battle.”

BRUCE HEDRICK†



CONTACT RICHARD MABRY

hismusicministries@gmail.com
or 903-262-8280

WWW.BRUCEHEDRICKMUSIC.COM

Jamie Lynn FLANAKIN

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A photograph of Chuck Day performing on stage. He is wearing a black cowboy hat, a dark brown blazer over a light blue patterned shirt, and blue jeans. He is playing an acoustic guitar and singing into a microphone. His right arm is raised in the air. In the background, there is a drum set and other stage equipment.

Chuck Day

Celebrates 50 years of Music

By Hannah Day

When most people consider visiting their parent's workplaces, they remember outdated computers, well-worn desks, and the smell of stale coffee. They remember dad coming home late from the office to provide for their family and going out together on the weekends.

When I think of visiting my father's workplace, it's altogether different. It's backstage, or sitting at the record tables, and memorizing the words to the "Midnight Cry."

I can't say the same for everyone, but I had the pleasure of growing up watching my dad do his dream job. Chuck Day is celebrating 50 years in the ministry, and 50 years in the music business.

Chuck was born into the ministry. His mother, Grace Day, was a Church of God preacher, and his father was

an Air Force mechanic. Everywhere their family was stationed, Grace preached, as she had been preaching since she was 16 years old. This was the foundation Chuck had to launch into the ministry, though it wasn't his original plan.

Somewhere along the line, being a submarine captain was exchanged for being a guitar player, and at age 10, Chuck, his mother, father, and younger brother Greg founded the Day Family Band. This instilled a love for music in Chuck at a young age.

Grace was a songwriter and taught both of her sons the fundamentals of writing songs that touch the spirit. He was inspired by men such as Rusty Goodman and Kenny Hinson. He always shares a story of how Goodman spent time with him helping him sing his part on his family's album, during the season when Dad's voice



was changing into the deep sound he has now.

At age 18, Chuck left his family and joined Wendy Johnson and the Messengers Quartet as their guitar player. This was the first time that Chuck was out on his own, away from his family band and the rules that kept him close to a Christian walk all his life. Those of you who have had the pleasure to hear Chuck minister have heard the story of him leaving home and, without a real relationship with God, beginning a downward path that lead him to battle with drugs, and alcohol, squandering the gift that God had given him.

However, no matter how far Chuck ran from God, God tracked him down.

At one of Chuck's lowest points, he received a phone call while setting up to play in a bar in Brewton, Ala., from a pastor he'd known almost all his life, Paul Ward.



It was Ward's influence reminding Chuck of the love of God that eventually helped Chuck find his way back to his heritage, a heritage of music in the service of Christ. But most importantly, it

brought him into a deeper relationship with Christ that wasn't about rules but was instead about the love that Christ has for us all.

This deeper relationship with God has been a gift that my father, Chuck, has given to everyone he meets. It's been rooted deep in his music. This grace message has been the real secret behind Chuck's multiple No. 1 successes. It also opened the door for Chuck, with his brother in the band the Days, to be an influencer in many genres of music.



My dad was a charter member of the Christian Country Music Association (now called Inspirational Country Music Association), became president and is currently a board member for the International Country Gospel Music Association (ICGMA), and was a regular on the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN) in the early to mid-1990s. He has also won many awards for the songs he has written over the years. As his career and the accolades continued, he has displayed an amazing humility, focusing more on his ministry rather than playing the politics of the industry.

It is evident to see how God has blessed him through his 50-year career. His talent has not faded over the decades, yet his influence has increased and grown, not only in the music industry but as a pastor of a small but faithful church, Family Ministries.



Chuck and Selena Day have opened their home to a congregation since 2001. God's amazing faithfulness has been on this home church as both Chuck and Selena have taught from their own experiences in ministry. They have shared their ever-evolving faith and trust in God's completed work, encouraging their group to share the Christ inside of them. After all, as Paul said, it is "Christ in you the hope of glory."

Chuck and Selena's ministry in their church and in their travels opened the door for them to become coaches for Adventures in Missions' extreme mission trip, the World Race. Chuck, Selena and a handful of others were among the first coaches to support more than 200 young people in their missions to 11 countries over 11 months. Those trips overseas opened Chuck's heart up to the many people in the world starving, not only for food and water but also for the love of God.

Through the World Race, Chuck and Selena have traveled to more than 37 countries. They've touched the lives of orphans in the Philippines, gypsies in Romania and Latvia, and women sold into sex trafficking in Thailand. Their hearts have been poured out across the globe as they have loved on missionaries, and locals alike. Chuck and Selena continue to support missions, by sitting on the board of organizations such as Beacon Missions and His Boats Ministry.

Recently, my father has asked me to come alongside him and his brother to reform their original group, the Days. Growing up backstage, or watching from the record table as my dad was on stage, I never imagined how honored it would make me feel to be asked to join

him or how much it would open my eyes to the depth of my father's love for others in Christ.

Most fathers instill a love of God in their children. They instill a hard work ethic and many other great lessons. I have the honor to not only have all these gifts but many more. Chuck has been an excellent teacher. Although he's never sat me down to give me a lesson, he's shown the strength and dedication to follow your dreams no matter what advice you might get to give up. He's shown me that when you follow God, you never know where you'll end up, whether it is in Thailand ministering to girls sold into prostitution or standing on stage singing to thousands.

The most important thing that Chuck has taught me and countless others that he's been around is to have the grace of God pour out of you. As the Father first loved us, we should love each other.

Congratulations, Dad, on 50 years of music and ministry. I can't wait to see where God is going to take you in this new season of your life and career.



SGN SCOOPS

.....MAGAZINE

TOP 40

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY SONGS

SGNScoops Christian Country Top 40 January 2018

1. Kevin Rowe - Heaven Above
2. High Road - Somewhere I'm Going
3. Christian Davis - Just Show Up
4. Johnny Rowlett - Where I'm Going
5. Mike Manuel - The Country Side Of The Cross
6. James Payne - The Flag
7. Chuck Hancock - Mustard Seed Faith
8. The Drummond Family - Just Let Me Fall
9. Michael Lee - Ain't That Just Like Jesus
10. McKay Project - Taking Me Home
11. Chris Golden - Less Of Me
12. Ava Kasich - The River Runs Red
13. Bloodbought - In The Eyes Of Man
14. Jim Sheldon - Old School
15. Lisa Daggs - Love Found Me
16. Steve Bridgmon - Joyride
17. Ronnie Horton - Unclouded Day
18. Jordan's Crossing - He Will Come
19. Sherry Damron - You Ain't Devil Enough
20. The Arenos - Back To My Senses
21. Jerry Branscomb - Hammer Down
22. Shellem Cline - Getting In The Word Of God
23. Back Home - Your Son
24. Appointed 2 - Up To You And I

25. Cami Shrock - My God Will Always Be Enough
26. Charlie Griffin - Cast The First Stone
27. Caleb's Crossing - Someday
28. Tommy Smith - Let's March On
29. Gail Cogburn - I've Got A Bottle
30. Wyatt Nations - Getting Back To Our Roots
31. Robert Stowell - I'd Die For You
32. Kolt Barber - Another Day
33. White River - Pardon Me
34. Amy McAllister - Shoot For The Moon
35. Corey Farlow - If Jesus Sang Country Songs
36. Tina Wakefield - Over and Over
37. Charlie Griffin - Jesus Take A Hold
38. John Penny - When The Thunder Rolls
39. Bradley Walker - Sinners Only
40. Buddy Jewel - I'm There

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Step By Step

By Joan Walker

We're almost halfway through January already, and if it's cold where you are, like it's cold here, you're looking for hot soup, hot coffee or tea ... or anything hot.

And ... it's almost two weeks since New Year's Day. That makes me think of Rob Patz's Publishers Point for January – A New Year, A New You. I'm sure we've all thought of changes we can make in our life. Just to introduce myself, I am a copy editor for SGNscoops. I reside in Ontario, Canada, am single (but may get a cat in the spring), and am looking to get healthy.

I've dieted all my life. Unfortunately, I've never arrived at what a BMI (body mass index) table or doctor's chart says is my ideal weight. I've struggled with body image and self esteem as well, knowing these issues can all go hand in hand.

A couple of years ago, my hair stylist talked about how she was losing weight. Amy inspired me to step out of my comfort zone and try a new plan. It's not totally new to me, but there were updates. For me, I needed the "new." That's probably something I need to dig into a little, how I need the "new." But that's for another article.

So, take it from a chronic dieter ... the new year always seems to be the best time to start something. I am currently on a plan that seems to be working for me, even over the Christmas holidays. Over the next few months, I want to share with you what is happening with my health plan.

Do you find that when you begin to take care of your

body by watching what goes into it, other parts of your life are suddenly under the spotlight? I see my spiritual life and health for what it currently is, good or bad. If I stop watching what I eat, the lack of discipline in that area may lead me to feel defeated in my spiritual walk, causing me to put aside my Bible, stop praying, or even staying home from church. Is it possible that we feel guilty when one part of our health isn't up to par, so we draw away from God?

I am a Christ follower. I've been one since my early teens, and as we all know, there are bumps along the way as we allow life to affect how close or how far away from God we are. One big bump happened last year when I found myself suddenly restructured out of a company I had worked at for over 10 years. Wow, that's a big bump that caused doubt, anger, and many tears. As a stress/emotional eater, this threw my eating-healthy plan for a loop.

With this feature, I want to focus on what and how I'm doing with this food plan, in order to encourage you if you are also trying to get healthy. Also, I will fill you in on my spiritual walk, and maybe my journey can resonate with some of you and help you in some way. I do not have all the answers, and it is attempt 10,002 for getting healthy at least, both physically and spiritually ... but perhaps we can go through this walk together.

This is really pushing me out of my comfort zone, but I think there is someone out there who is fighting a battle with their weight, or in their walk with God. Perhaps we can grow together. If you want to respond to me directly about what I've written, you can reach me at

joan@sgnscoops.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Please note, I am not a paid spokesperson for any specific plan, and as this is a plan that is working for me, I won't focus on the name of the weight-loss plan. If you want to know the details, please feel free to contact me, but remember to get the approval of your doctor before you start on any food/exercise plan.

Editor's Note: Joan Walker, copywriter for SGNScoops Magazine, joins us this month to begin a look into her life as she follows a path to improve her health, both physically and spiritually. Please watch for Step by Step every month and write to Joan at joan@sgnscoops.com.



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Joyful Noise

By Charlie Griffin

Bill And Marilyn Flurry's Joyful Noise Christian Supper Club: Just Be Available

In the mind of Bill and Marilyn Flurry, a dream took hold and blossomed. In 1974, the first large-scale Christian supper club began.

The Joyful Noise was like no other place for gospel music fans in the four-state region of Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina and Tennessee ... and it all started with a dream.

The Joyful Noise was not the first choice for Bill Flurry. Flurry signed with the St. Louis Cardinals, playing in the minor leagues. He also played baseball for the Army during his military career.

Bill Flurry and his wife moved a few times but wound up in Birmingham, Ala., where he continued his business career selling insurance. That business career was fruitful. Marilyn Flurry points out that selling insurance made them financially comfortable, but Bill was discontent.

While in Birmingham, the Flurrys had their first exposure to Southern gospel concerts at Boutwell Auditorium and in the church.

"Now, we watched the Gospel Singing Jubilee, but the concerts were exciting and so uplifting," Marilyn Flurry says.

It was after a concert and while watching the Jubilee that

Bill felt led to open a Christian supper club.

"Bill said Christians needed a place where we could go without alcohol and such, a place where we could just relax and enjoy gospel music and get to know other Christians" Marilyn Flurry recalls.

That dream that started in Birmingham needed a larger city to make it work. That is when the move to Atlanta's suburb community of East Point occurred.

"Bill resigned his job to work on his calling," Marilyn Flurry explains. "He knew some folks in the Atlanta area, so he started going over there talking to pastors, gospel DJs and local people. They were not so encouraging. But our dream, our calling, did not die."

Little by little, they sold stock in their fledgling company, created to build their dream. When they got enough money, they took an abandoned A&P Grocery Store and renovated it with their special touch. That dream began to grow and make a huge impact in gospel music. The Joyful Noise Supper Club was born.

With the opening of the Joyful Noise, the Flurrys introduced gospel singers and featured established Christian acts all served up with a 30-foot buffet bar and no alcohol.

"People told us it would never work if we did not sell alcohol, that that's where the profit was," Marilyn Flurry explains. "Later, they said they were glad we didn't



listen to them. Christian people just came together, and groups loved to perform there."

The Joyful Noise was truly a family affair, not only for the families that worked and attended, and they were many, but for the Flurry family as well. Their son, Jason, was an integral part in his formative years.

"He was almost four years old when we opened, and he had finished college when we closed," Marilyn Flurry says. "He grew up at the club, started singing with us when he was six years old and worked there from the time he was 12."

Bill was an off-again, on-again, gospel singer. He and his wife performed as the Flurrys. They opened the concerts with a song, and Bill emceed the program.

The 450-seat facility hosted a night of supper, gospel performances, a moment of devotional prayer, then balloons and horns and jubilation at midnight, followed by a buffet breakfast. They were noted for a tremendous New Year's Eve extravaganza, so reservations were made and kept one year in advance.

Tour operators made the Joyful Noise a mystery tour with shopping and other Atlanta highlights. They contracted the facility for their get-acquainted parties, while organizations clamored for other weekday and evening uses of the popular family gospel music venue.

In the 20-year period, there were four locations for the Joyful Noise. East Point (the flagship club), Rome, Hawaii, and a second Atlanta-area location in Suwanee, Ga.

"The locals really came out to enjoy the new concept in

supper clubs there (in Honolulu)," Marilyn Flurry notes. "One night, a patron told her he got 'chicken skin.' I was not sure what that meant, so I asked a local what 'chicken skin' meant. That lady told me the music moved the listener to the point that their skin had little bumps, like chicken skin. To me, that is just God giving a blessing. Now, I will never forget that when the concert was over, they really did not want to leave. They loved the music so much."

The Flurrys hosted more than 5,000 shows, performing as both singers and emcees. Their performances ranged from Southern gospel to love ballads to music from the Roaring Twenties.

The Flurrys opened their venue to not only the most successful Southern gospel performers of the day, but they also hosted many legendary icons with their old timers nights and various other themed gospel music events. Legendary artists such as the Sunshine Boys, Eva Mae LeFevre, Governor Jimmie Davis, the Harmonizers, Deep South Quartet, Lee Roy Abernathy, Homeland Harmony Quartet, Cotton and Jane Carrier, and Jimmy Jones and the Heralds performed there several times each year.



The Rex Nelon Singers, Wendy Bagwell and the Sun-liters, and the Cathedrals were constant draws at this most noted Christian supper club. The Inspirations and Gold City were two groups that always had fans drive great distances.

"Many times, we would book three nights with the Cathedrals," Marilyn Flurry says. "Each night was full, and we had a waiting list wanting to get in."

Bill Flurry closed the doors in 1994 after a 20-year run

for the club that many predicted would never succeed. After the Joyful Noise closed its doors in 1994, the Flurrys performed across the Southeast at clubs, retirement homes, churches, civic organizations, and high-school reunions, averaging more than 130 dates per year.

Bill Flurry passed away on May 19, 2008, following a courageous battle with cancer. He was 75 years old.

Bill also authored several songs such as "Read the Book," "Oh What A Change In Me," and most notably, "I'm Not the Man I Used to Be," which was recorded by the Cathedral Quartet and the Booth Brothers.

Marilyn Flurry, 78, lives in Cummings, Ga., surrounded by family and friends. Today, she is actively involved with the senior citizens group at First Redeemer Church.

"When Bill knew he was not going to be here, he asked me to keep the senior group ministry going, and I have," Marilyn Flurry shares. "We have as many as 50 church groups represented from across North Georgia. It has been a good journey."

The excitement in Marilyn Flurry's voice is still contagious today. Her passion for music and ministry is dynamic.

"When the Lord calls, He is interested in your availability, not your ability," Marilyn Flurry explains. "Look at what Bill and I did with Joyful Noise. We knew nothing about food service or running a restaurant. But God knew exactly what we needed. He supplied a chef, the staff and truly helped us keep it open. Just be available ... that's the point."

The Joyful Noise legacy lives in the memories made and shared around the supper table in a place that presented the best of gospel music. Bill Flurry may have been the emcee, but the Joyful Noise was a big family, including staff, patrons and the Flurrys.

More than 20 years after the Joyful Noise closed, Marilyn Flurry continues serving with enthusiasm, but she will always be remembered as a constant guiding hand in the Joyful Noise history. The Joyful Noise memory lives on.



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DAY THREE

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Rev. Mike Sanders

Hope Worth Having

By Tom Coccagna

CHAMBERSBURG, Pa. – Hundreds of books populate the shelves in the office of Rev. Mike Sanders, senior pastor of the Open Door Church. One book, however, sits squarely in the middle of his desk, and it also occupies the preeminent position in his life.

That book, of course, is the Bible, and it has been the beacon in Sanders' life since he was a teenager searching for direction.

"When I was 16 years old, our church hosted a revival meeting," Sanders recalls. "A preacher from Kansas came and challenged our congregation to surrender everything to the Lord, and he said he believed God was calling someone to full-time ministry."

Sanders rose from his seat and resolutely strode toward the altar, prepared to surrender himself to

God's call.

"I have to honestly say I've never resisted the call," he says. "It seems so unusual, but ever since I knew God called me, I have been passionate for Him and His work."

Today, Sanders pastors a church that regularly draws around 500 worshippers to its Sunday morning services in this town of approximately 20,000 in rural south central Pennsylvania. But no matter whether he's preaching on Sunday morning or at the lesser attended evening services on Sunday and Wednesday, the message remains the same.

"I feel very honored to be able to share God's truth with His people," says Sanders, who holds a bachelor of arts degree in pastoral theology and a masters in



Biblical studies. "I think it's important for a pastor to walk through the valleys and enjoy the triumphs of God's people as he continues to minister to them and help them on the journey of faith."

Sanders' journey led him from Connersville, Ind., to Chambersburg 13 years ago. Not only did he take on the position of senior pastor, but he also became president of the church's ministry of Cumberland Valley Christian School, which has a current enrollment of approximately 440 students.

He and his wife Terri live a few miles outside of town and have seen their three children graduate from the school. Their oldest child, Austin, teaches physical education and is the boys basketball coach at the school. Austin and his wife Danielle have made Mike and Terri proud grandparents of two boys, Nolan and Collin.



The middle child, Joshua, recently concluded his studies at Davis College in Johnson City, N.Y., and their daughter Loryn is currently a sophomore at Da-

vis, where Sanders serves as chairman of the trustee board.

But no matter which shoes he is wearing, Sanders realizes he is ministering to a broken world. The best tonic he sees for the world's maladies is the gospel, which he shares in other outlets besides the pulpit.

His television program "Hope Worth Having" airs on three networks, including one in Chambersburg, one in Atlanta, and another through Dish Network's Sky Angel. The radio version of "Hope Worth Having" is broadcast in many areas throughout Pennsylvania and in Maryland.



"We live in a complex world with complex problems," Sanders says. "It is important that we take the gospel to the hearts of men and women who need to understand their need of a savior, who is Jesus Christ. We do

not need to be ashamed of the gospel. In our efforts to share the gospel, we should be bold and courageous, and God will do His work through His word, and His spirit will draw men and women to Christ. I am afraid that many ministries have abandoned the power of God's word and the power of His spirit, which I am convinced is more than sufficient to meet the challenges of today's society."

Every occupation brings setbacks, of course, and the ministry often seems to draw more than its share of critics.

"Every pastor wants to be liked and feel like he's making an impact, but it is always hard to take criticism from your people and others who are dissatisfied with the ministry," says Sanders.

But those moments are easily displaced by occasions that contain eternal significance. Sanders remembers one time when his secretary interrupted him – a no-no under normal circumstances, but this was no ordinary event. An entire family showed up at the



church and asked to be led to Christ.

"I was so exhilarated," he says. "The whole family gathered around my table in my office, and I was able to share the gospel with them. I'm thrilled to share with you that today every one of them is still involved. I had the privilege of baptizing them, and they are all serving in the local church.

"When I think about what and why I do what I do, that sums it up right there."





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Donna Sparks

“Story of Grace”

By Fayth Lore

The story of Donna Sparks is one that most of us can relate to. Her life reflects that of a woman who longed for peace and fulfillment. She searched and looked in all of the wrong places, but one day, everything changed.

She now has a story of grace

“I was raised in church all of my life,” says Donna. “My parents always made sure that my brother and I were in church every time the doors were opened.”

Donna has precious memories of her mother praying

with her daily and teaching Donna the word of God. But somewhere, between her childhood and adult life, Donna drifted from her walk with Christ. By the age of 23, Donna had already gone through two divorces. She felt as though her life was a mess and that what had happened to her was simply not fair. She became mad at God, blaming Him for her hardship and decided to try to do things her own way for a while.

“That was a very bad decision,” explains Donna. “I stepped into a life of drugs and alcohol, becoming addicted to alcohol. My life was just spiraling out of control. I was depressed. I didn’t realize clinical depres-



sion ran in my family, so this was really compounding that. I just continued to drink more and more, and it was a nightmare.”

During this time of Donna’s life, she met a man at work. After just two months, the couple became married. Her new husband, Brian, claimed to be agnostic. He had never been to church in his life. Donna said that the first few years of their marriage were terrible.

“I was just really depressed, and he didn’t know how to help,” Donna recalls. “He didn’t know what to do. We both wanted to have kids, but we soon found out that we wouldn’t be able to. This added to the depression. I thought he would leave me, just like everyone else did, because I couldn’t give him kids. Everything weighed on me, and I became so deep in depression that I attempted suicide. Luckily, God spared me.”

Not long after this dark time in the newlyweds’ relationship, they found out she was pregnant. This brought a season of excitement. It was in these moments of anticipation that God began to work once more in Donna’s heart. Donna began to reflect on her mother’s lifestyle and compared it to her own.

“I looked at my own life and said, ‘this is a mess ... this is a disaster and I know better,’” Donna explains. “The Holy Spirit continued to deal with me. I wanted to be the kind of mother that leads my child in that way.”

She wanted to do that in the same way that her mother had once shown her.

“I wanted my daughter to know that no matter what happened in her life, that there was always a place she could turn to,” Donna points out. “She could always go to God. He was always going to be there. He always has His arms wide open, ready to receive us.”

The next day, Donna told her husband that she was thinking about going to church the next day and asked him if he would go with her. To her surprise, he said yes.

Sitting in her seat during the sermon, Donna felt as if the preacher was speaking directly to her. At the altar call, Donna ran to the altar. That day, Donna repented for her own sins, and her husband found Christ as his savior for the first time.

Donna said that while her temptations were still there for the substance of alcohol, she no longer had felt the cravings. So, God helped bring deliverance into her life.

Two years later, Donna and her husband found themselves pregnant with their second daughter.

Five years later, they felt pressed to move to Iowa, abandoning the comfort of their home church. Donna felt out of place this time. She didn’t understand why she had been put in this cornfield “desert.”

It was during this period of time that God began calling Donna to more. The Sparks family found a church and decided to dig in. Eventually, an evangelist came to their church. He asked those in the congregation to



come forward to pray, and Donna went forward.

While praying, the evangelist stopped and looked at Donna. He looked at her and said that God was calling her to be an evangelist. Out of her own fears, she dismissed the thought, until she met the evangelist once more in the church parking lot.

He told her, "Ma'am, I know that you just blew off everything that I said to you in that service, but I want you to know that I know what God showed me."

Donna explained to the man that he had no idea what kind of past she had. And he said, "And you don't know my past. God is more concerned with what you are going to do now. You can't put God in a box. If you put Him in a box now, He will blow that thing open every time."



A couple of years later, Donna attended a women's retreat with 500-600 other women. It was there that she again felt God asking her to do something more with her life. Inspired by a song, she prayed, telling God of how she had messed up her life. She promised Him that if there was anything He could do with her life, she would give herself completely and totally to His purpose.

After the prayer, Donna said, "It was like heaven flooded down. It was amazing. I had never felt so loved in all of my life. I was happy".

The next day, during the last session, the speaker told the audience that she felt led to pray over a couple of people, and she pointed right at Donna. When Donna reached this speaker, the woman spoke words to Donna that could have only been revealed through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"She said things that only I knew," said Donna.



The retreat speaker went on to say, "God has called you to do amazing things, but you still doubt yourself. God says it's time for you to stop that. He's not concerned with who you have been. God is not mad at you."

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Donna said it was like God himself was standing there talking to her. After this experience, Donna wondered if women's ministry was where she belonged. Shortly after, her pastor asked Donna to help in their women's ministry at the church. Donna quickly agreed to do so.

After accepting this new position, Donna decided to return to school to further her Biblical knowledge. It was just a matter of time before God started opening doors for Donna to take her story to places around the country.

Donna now travels all over the United States. Her testimony has been featured on the 700 Club in Canada and is also told in her new book, "Story of Grace."

Her book tells part of her life story, as well as lessons

she has learned. It also touches on topics such as things to look for when being called into ministry, and how to respond when God takes you through new doors. Donna also has a women's jail ministry called Embrace Sisterhood, where she has witnessed many women dedicate their



lives to Jesus Christ.

She is doing things now that she would have never dreamed of doing.

Donna said that her most important message for those she comes into contact with is that God forgives. "He is far more concerned with what we do with our future than what we did with our past," Donna shares.



"So many times, we feel stuck in what we have done and how we have messed up. But God is in the present and the future. He wants us to step into the calling He has for us. When we fully surrender to Him, we can step into the calling He has for us. He has plans for all of us."

John 1:16 reads, "For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace."

Therefore, everyone is able to receive the abundance of grace that God has for them. Men and women can give Him their lives and watch as He writes their personal story of grace.

To order Donna Sparks's book, "Beauty from Ashes-My Story of Grace," visit her website at www.story-of-grace.com. It can also be found at many online book distributors as well as most bookstores.

To book Donna for a speaking engagement, she can be contacted by calling 319-541-1385, or by emailing Donna@story-of-grace.com.

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YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE

Amber Eppinette

BY ERIN STEVENS

A word from Erin Stevens...

This month, it's time for you to meet the founding member of one of the newer groups in gospel music. Amber Eppinette of 11th Hour so graciously stopped by to let us get to know her sweet self a little better. So, without further ado ...

Erin Stevens: Though many would know you formed 11th Hour when you were just 16 years old, let's go back a little farther, shall we? Where did your musical journey begin?

Amber Eppinette: I actually began singing before I ever talked. A chicken commercial song came on TV, and I picked it up. My very first words were to the tune, "I feel like chicken tonight." I tell people that's where I got my love for music and for chicken early on. My family also played and sang music. I grew up with it all around me.

Stevens: What was the inspiration behind choosing the name 11th Hour?

Eppinette: In the book of Matthew, the laborers at the 11th hour were standing in the vineyard not doing anything. Christ approached them to say, "There is still work to be done in the 11th hour." The purpose for the name is to ensure that there is still a work to be done before we reach the midnight cry.

Stevens: Who were some of the people that were most encouraging to you when you started in gospel music?

Eppinette: There were quite a few, but my parents for sure, my church family, and artists like Joyce Martin and Karen Peck encouraged me at a young age.

Stevens: What is a song that you currently share in your concerts that is really connecting with people?

Eppinette: "Power in Prayer." It is off of our latest project, "Silence the Stones." People can testify that prayer still

works.

Stevens: If you're on a desert island and you can only have five CDs, what would they be? (Any genre).

Eppinette: Marc Broussard (soul album), the Temptations, Etta James, the Kingdom Heirs and the Original Hinsons.

Stevens: Congrats on your co-write with Kenna Turner West and Jason Cox that went No. 4 overall for your group last year. Can you tell us about the inspiration behind "He Welcomes the Beggar?"

Eppinette: Thank you so much. That was the very first song I ever wrote with Kenna and Jason. They have now become some of my best friends, and we write all of the time together. The story is a sweet reminder that no matter where we are in life ... rich, poor, black, white ... when we are lost, we are all beggars and in need of the Savior. I'm thankful He welcomes all of us beggars.





Stevens: Chinese food or Mexican? Theatre or Netflix? Zaxby's or Bojangles? Curler or straightener? Dogs or cats?

Eppinette: Mexican, theatre, Zaxby's, straightener, dogs.

Stevens: What is one of the most recent books you've read that had an impact on your life?

Eppinette: "Fervent" by Priscilla Shirer.

Stevens: Share with the readers about how the Lord is revealing Himself to you in new ways so far in this new year.

Eppinette: He has shown me that He loves all of me, even the hidden parts that I often try to hide whether from embarrassment or pride. He breaks it all into humility and allows me to testify and reach out on a new level for His glory.

You know those hidden closets and cabinets in the corners of

our hearts? Yes, God sees those too. Every nook, every cranny, He is there. Sure, we may sometimes feel embarrassed, just as Eppinette shared, but that doesn't keep Him from loving us. Isn't that an amazing thought? The spotless Lamb loves us in spite of ourselves. The good, bad and even the ugly, He knows every detail. Nothing is going to take Him by surprise. Allow Him into your dark corners today and let the Light of the world shine brightly ... from the inside out.

And that's my take on it.

Until next month, Scoops fans.

Connect with Erin on Twitter at @photosforkeeps and on Instagram at @photos_for_keeps.

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Beginning the New Year with Mercy Rain



By Rob Patz

As I closed down 2017, a year filled with travel and many incredible opportunities that God has laid in front of me, it was only apropos that I spent it emceeing a concert featuring Southern gospel music in Lexington, S.C., at the Mercy Rain 14th annual New Year's Eve Celebration.

The evening was filled with wonderful music and fun fellowship. The concert began with Jordan Clayton, who was formerly with the group Oasis. He debuted his solo ministry that evening.

Then, we enjoyed a group that I had the opportunity to meet for the first time this year at Creekside, a family group called the Bunkleys. This trio did a fantastic job and allowed us the chance to hear some of their original material written by Rick and Peggy Bunkley's son, Dwayne.

The host group, Mercy Rain, then stepped on the stage and did a fantastic job. It was awesome to hear LaVerne

Sanders, Angela Parker and Rick Brock share their testimony and tell how God had used their ministry throughout this past year. I've known this family for a long time, and I'm always blessed to be in concert with them.

"Mercy Rain has held the New Year's Eve events for 14 years, and this year was the best yet," says Sanders. "We had awesome groups and a soloist, as well as an awesome emcee. But most important is (that) God's presence was felt before, during, and after the event. We are excited to see what God can do with each year."

We closed out the early part of the evening with a performance by the Chordsmen Quartet out of Greenville, S.C. If you love true, good, quartet music, may I encourage you to see the Chordsmen in concert. They did a fantastic job of not only mixing in some classic quartet songs, but some new tunes from their upcoming album as well.



It was then time for fellowship and great food. I especially liked the chili. It was fantastic. After a break for dinner, we reconvened back in the sanctuary to ring in the new year with the best music in the world, Southern gospel.

“There will never be anything as amazing as ringing in the new year with prayer and praise at the altar,” says Parker. “That’s exactly what we did. The sick were prayed for, and we worshipped the Lord. The songs and

testimony were second to none. The talent was phenomenal. This event was one of the best New Year’s Eve celebrations I’ve ever been a part of. I’m so blessed to know that the Lord loves me enough to allow me to be a part of something so awesome.”



I encourage you to make plans to be a part of Mercy Rain’s 15th anniversary New Year’s Concert next year in South Carolina. They do a wonderful job of singing and ministering, which I truly believe is the best way to ring in a new year.



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By Lorraine Walker



Do you know that the Creekside Gospel Music Convention is only nine months away? In this Valentine month, why not give the Southern gospel music lover in your circle two tickets to this great event in Pigeon Forge, Tenn., and be sure to include this convention in your own vacation plans for this year. Creekside runs from Oct. 28 through Nov. 2 at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center in the heart of Pigeon Forge.

How much do you love your pastor? We have a lot of pastors who plan on attending this year. Event coordinator Rob Patz has asked if your congregation would consider using Creekside as your retreat this year and bring your pastor. Guest pastors will be speaking each night along with music by spotlight artists. Any leader would benefit from a week of music, speakers and fellowship with other Christians. Contact Patz at 360-933-0741 for more information.

Annual Creekside events include the Sunday night kickoff service, the Dr. Jerry Goff Honors on Monday night, the Red Back Hymnal choir, artist breakfast, chapel services, Smoky Mountain Gospel Showcase, midnight prayer and more.

The Diamond Awards, which honor the best in gospel music, take place on Tuesday night with many special guests and are hosted by Dr. Jerry and Jan Goff. The nominations for the Diamond Awards are on now, and fans are encouraged to visit sgnscoops.com for more details. Anyone may nominate all their favorite artists in each category. The field of nominees will then be narrowed to 10, voted on by fans once more and then narrowed to five. This final list of five will be voted on by fans to find the one winner for each award.

For the real gospel music fan, a \$25 VIP pass is a must. This pass provides the bearer with the best seats, best giveaways and best surprises that Creekside has to offer. To obtain a \$25 VIP ticket, call Patz.

For more information on Creekside, including ticket information, click on creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com or





visit the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Creekside-gospelmusicconvention. Artists interested in being a part of Creekside 2018, please contact Patz at rob@sgnscoops.com or at the number above.



Coming up ... Christian Country Expo 2018

The Christian Country Expo returns in 2018 to showcase the great talent in Christian country music. For those who like their Gospel with a twang, Christian Country Expo '18 will be held in Cookeville, Tenn., from May 3-5.

Daily showcases and evening concerts with special guests will highlight some of the best artists in Christian country music. If you enjoy Creekside and you like country-style gospel, you will love Christian Country Expo.

Find out more on Facebook at www.facebook.com/christiancountryexpo. Lodging and ticket reservation information will be forthcoming. For more information, call Patz.

A promotional poster for The Pathfinders' 25th Silver Anniversary CD. The top half features three people: a man in a suit, a woman in a red dress, and a man in a suit. Below them, the text reads "The Pathfinders" in a large, elegant script. Underneath that, it says "LISTEN FOR OUR LATEST PROJECT: Back Then" in a smaller, serif font. To the right of this text is a small image of a church building with the text "The Pathfinders IN CONCERT" below it. At the bottom, it says "RELEASING 25TH SILVER ANNIVERSARY CD IN NOVEMBER 2018". The bottom section of the poster contains contact information: "Contact: 704.572.0692 | thepathfinders@thepathfinders.com" and "FACEBOOK: THE PATHFINDERS MT HOLLY" with a Facebook logo. The website "WWW.THEPATHFINDERS.COM" is also listed.



The Herb Henry Family

California's First Family of Gospel Music

By Derek Simonis

Family harmony is an integral part of gospel music, and Southern gospel music owes much of its storied legacy to family groups.

Artists such as the Speers, the LeFevres, the Happy Goodmans and the Lesters were foundational and vital elements of the industry. Our beloved music would certainly not be where it is today without the tremendous contributions of these and many other family group icons.

Today, family harmony continues to inspire, bless and encourage fans across the Southern gospel spectrum, and for the last 31 years, the Herb Henry Family has joyfully carried on presenting the gospel in song. The family has come to be recognized as California's First Family of Gospel Music, and it is a title that is well-deserved.

Ministering across several western states, the Herb

Henry Family's personal appearances have taken them from small country churches to large arenas and concert halls. However, over the past decade, they have limited their concert schedule to faithfully be in attendance at their home church every Sunday.

Family patriarch, Herb Henry, hails from Riverbank, Calif., and he began singing and playing in Southern gospel music for the Premiers from 1965-1973. Herb married Nancy in 1972, and she continues to remain an integral part of the ministry in all aspects.

Herb served as a minister of music in churches in California and Texas, and in 1986, he became the pastor of Richland Faith Assembly of God. That same year, he established the Herb Henry Family as a singing group.

Herb has faithfully pastored Richland Faith since 1986 and carried on the family ministry. In February of 1989, he established Richland Ministries to promote Southern



gospel music through concerts and radio.

In 2010, Herb received the Southern Gospel Promoter of the Year award. Currently, Herb serves as president of the Western States Gospel Music Association. He helped form the WSGMA in 1990, which has done much to perpetuate Southern gospel music in California.

He also serves as the vice president of the Southern Gospel Promoters Association. Southern gospel lovers in the western United States and across the country owe much to this faithful promoter and champion of gospel music.

Chris Henry has been a part of the family for more than three decades now, and as he humorously states, he “has the gray hair to prove it.” In June of 2002, he increased the size of the Henry family when he married Beverly Adams, his college sweetheart. They have three children, Melody, Liam, and Trinity, who are also very musically talented.

A graduate of California State University, Chris currently works full-time in medical sales and devotes much of his free time to the Henry Family in concerts and their weekly radio program.

In 2017, he was ordained in the Assemblies of God. He stays busy with church as an associate pastor, piano player and song leader. His wife, Beverly, also works in the church as children’s church coordinator.

Some of Chris’s favorite things to do are spending time with his wife and kids, landscaping his yard, barbecuing, and taking long vacations. Where does he prefer to

go ... Walt Disney World, of course. Another interesting fact about Chris is that he has his own YouTube channel promoting gardening and Southern gospel.

Chris has his list of musical influences and favorites, including Roger Bennett, Dean Hopper, J.D. Sumner, Scott Fowler, Gerald Wolfe, Mark Trammell, Jason Crabb, and of course, Herb Henry. When it comes to stage presence and enthusiasm, you will be challenged to find a minister and singer more dynamic and anointed than Chris.

Enthusiasm and spirit run in the Henry family, and group soprano, Amanda Henry, is no exception. Amanda’s main joy comes from singing with her family and finding any service for the Lord she can do. Her time singing with her family began after her mother became ill in 1993. Amanda had big shoes to fill, and the Lord enabled her to pick up and carry the torch for her mother in a powerful way.



Along with singing, Amanda works for the Stanislaus County Child and Family Services in the adoptions field. Graduating from Modesto Junior College with a degree in interior design, she does that in her free time, as well as serves in various areas within the church.

Amanda’s favorite thing to do is to spoil her nieces and nephews along with her little labrador, Lizzy. Her goal in life is to continue developing to present the gospel of Christ in song and in every aspect of life. Recently, she has been venturing out with solo concerts, going across the United States, Canada, and of course at home in California. Amanda is another integral part of this incredible family unit.

Rounding out the group is Richie Hartsfield, a California native with a love for God and gospel music. Richie was born into a large Christian family that emphasized



music. His family began attending the church where Herb Henry pastored in 1987, and two years later – when J.D. Sumner and the Stamps came to sing – Richie was hooked on gospel music. Richie is married to the love of his life, Cortney, and they have two beautiful children, Hannah and Lawton.

Richie sang with a few groups, but he is most remembered for the eight years he spent with the Richland Trio. He still attends Richland Faith, serving as one of the associate pastors as well as working in the children's department. He enjoys the time he spends with his wife and children the most, and considers his grandfather to be the greatest man he's ever known.



Richie is a big baseball fan and loves presidential history, but his first love is gospel music. His favorite singers are Gerald Wolfe, Vestal Goodman, Mark Trammell, J.D. Sumner, Chris Allman, and his dad. He counts it a blessing to sing for the Lord and plans to continue to do so as long as the Lord allows him.

The most recent release from the Herb Henry Family, "Worship the Name of the Lord," is an incredible project that will minister to any follower of gospel music. The title cut is a soul-stirring melody that encourages the heartfelt listener to simply worship in the presence of the King.

Gospel fans will remember the catchy tune of "God Can Save Anybody, Anywhere, Anytime," and the Herb Henry Family delivers this classic with style. A personal favorite is a song included on this project that was written by Joseph Habedank, "Whenever I Hear His Name." Former group member, Angela (Henry) Cowell, returned to sing this powerful song, and listeners will be blessed by the anointed performance of this ballad.

To put it simply, "Worship the Name of the Lord," is a recording that belongs in the music library of every Southern gospel music fan.



With all of their church and singing ministries, Herb and Chris make time for other ministry opportunities as well. One of these is their weekly radio program on KCBC AM 770, which airs Sunday afternoons.

It is simply another extension of their calling, and they love being able to minister in this way. If you would like to tune via the internet, their program can be heard on www.770kcbc.com every Sunday at 2 p.m. (PST).

If you would like to check out Chris's YouTube channel, simply go to YouTube and search for the Southern Gospel Gardener.

If you attend the Great Western Fan Festival in Visalia, Calif., this coming May, the Herb Henry Family will be one of the artists performing there as well.

For a full list of their concerts as well as other information about this wonderful family, visit www.HerbHenryFamily.com.

The love of ministering for the Lord is clearly evident any time one is privileged to be in attendance at a Herb Henry Family concert. The family harmony is tremendous, and the excellence of their musical talent is incredible. First and foremost, however, the Herb Henry Family has dedicated their lives and their ministry to the glory of God and the spreading of the gospel. That is what family should be all about.



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Mercy Road Minute

Striving

By Roger Barkley Jr.



By now, there are thousands – if not millions – asking for forgiveness for breaking their New Year’s resolution. Thankfully, we serve a God of second and even third chances.

While talking over the holidays with a close friend of mine, he had a quote that I had heard him say before, but it still rings true for such an occasion ... if we strive for perfection, we will reach excellence. If we strive for mediocrity, we will achieve the average. I may be paraphrasing, but the gist of the conversation remains the same. When he sees this article he may want credit or a byline.

I know while we are in this world, but not this world, we will never be perfect. But, just as Paul said in Philippians 3, we must strive towards the mark. This is a mark of excellence in everything we do from morning until night, striving to do the little things that make the bigger things even greater and not just okay to the regular world.

When the world looks and sees us putting forth little effort to do such an average job, why would they want to be a part of a collective of people that do the same thing? Why would they want what the world is giving them already? Why would they want to serve a higher power when His followers put forth such half-hearted effort? Why would they want what you got?

When we humble ourselves before God, repent (a



military term meaning to turn and go the other way,) and truly serve Him, there is nothing this world or the enemy can do to hold us back. Will there be obstacles? Yes, but with His help, we and the world will see them fade away and crumble. They will be in awe of what our God can do.

So, no matter if you set a new resolution, goal, or whatever, press the restart button now and get ready for what He has in store for you. Then, the world will want what you have.

Contact Roger Barkley, Jr., at www.facebook.com/roger.j.barkley.3.



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Randall Reviews It - February 2018

by Randall Hamm

This month, I bring you a Best Of Randall Reviews It. These I albums I first reviewed in August of 2017. Since these reviews, Karen Peck and New River have a top 10 with their single "Hope For All Nations" and are looking to release a second single. Also, Ricky Braddy has left Karen Peck and New River. He has taken a job as Worship Leader at Cross Roads Church in Nashville and Karen is searching for a new male vocalist.

The Inspirations have been successful with their latest lineup and are now on their second single release from "The One in the Water," entitled "We Are Christians." The McGuires continue to get more airplay and more fans with their brand of Southern Gospel. If you haven't picked up copies of these releases, why haven't you?

As always, if you enjoy my reviews, get the music wherever you get good Gospel music.
Randall

Please send your latest releases for review to Randall Hamm, c/o Q-100 WFLQ-FM, P.O. Box 100, French Lick, IN 47432.



Inspirations

"The One in the Water"

Producer: Jeff Collins

2017 Horizon Records

Songs:

The One In The Water (Kyla Rowland); I Want To Be Like My Lord (Jimmy Jones); I Know Him (Gary Epperson); When Jesus Turns My Prison Into My Shouting Ground (Leonard Fletcher); Shall Not Be Moved (Public Domain, arr. Inspirations); Teaching Me To Fly (Karen A. Dyess); I Am So Blessed (Matthew Browder, Tommy Browder); We Are Christians (Tracy L. Jones); Thank God For Preachers (Larry Whitehead); Jesus, They're Offended At Your Name (James M. Jones)

Imagine if you jumped in a time machine and vaulted yourself from 1972 to 2017. If you're an Inspirations fan, you'd think that nothing's changed. Well, there are no time machines, and there have been changes in the Inspirations from 1972 to now; but if you loved the

1972 lineup of the Inspirations, you'll love this CD, "The One In The Water."

Earlier this year, Martin Cook retired from the group and sold the Inspirations to longtime former member and tenor Archie Watkins. Also, bass singer Joe Brown left the group as well. Archie had been touring with other former Inspirations as "Smokey Mountain Reunion," and those members have now rejoined the Inspirations.

The Inspirations are: Matt Dibler on lead and the only holdover from the last lineup, Archie Watkins on tenor, Eddie Deitz on baritone and Marlin Schubert on bass. The only missing piece from the 1972 lineup is Ron Hutchins at lead, but he still works for the Inspirations as their webmaster. I was curious about how this new lineup would sound, but I needn't have worried. Their mountain sound is still there and even a few songs that are a little different for the Inspirations in sound, actually are quite good.

The lead-off single is the title track "The One In The Water," with strong vocals from Archie and that familiar Inspirations sound making you feel like you're there at the baptism of Jesus. Marlin Schubert has never sounded better and is featured on the classic "I Want To Be Like My Lord."

The song "Teaching Me To Fly" I hope will be a single release. This song features Archie at his best on this story song of God watching us mature. One of my favorite baritones over the years has been Eddie Deitz and he's featured on "Thank God For Preachers." Eddie has always had a familiar voice I could pick out anywhere and here he really sings his heart out.

For us Inspirations fans, this is a dream come true of the reunion of the classic Inspirations.

Also returning from the last lineup is Roland Kesterson who has shifted to the band and does occasional specials and is featured on the song "When Jesus Turns My Prison Into My Shouting Ground." Also Lucas Vaught remains as piano player.

Overall, this CD lives up to how I thought it would sound. Deitz, Schubert and Watkins still have it and I can't wait to hear more from this lineup.

Visit the Inspirations here www.facebook.com/

groups/333076353490571/ and get a copy of the new cd here www.theinspirations.com/Prod_Insp_cds.htm.

Strongest songs: "The One On The Water," "He's Teaching Me To Fly," "I Want To Be Like My Lord"



Karen Peck and New River
"Hope For All Nations"
Producer: Wayne Haun
2017 Daywind Records

Songs:

Love Will Never Give Up (Jeff Bumgardner, Karen Peck Gooch, Joel Lindsey); Hope For All Nations (Lee Black, Karen Peck Gooch, Benji Cowart); Who He Is, What He Does (Lee Black, Jason Cox, Kenna West); The Reason (Lee Black, Karen Peck Gooch, Wayne Haun); Gotta Be Saved (Karen Peck Gooch, Joseph Habedank, Wayne Haun); I'll Keep On Praying (Karen Peck Gooch, Daniel Doss, Wayne Haun, Kenna West); The River (Dave Clark, Karen Peck Gooch, Michael Farren); Victory Is Mine (Lee Black, Gerald Crabb, Karen Peck Gooch); God's Got A Blessing (Lee Black, Wayne Haun); All You Need (Tim Lovelace, Nathan Woodard); I'll Know I'll Be There (Dave Clark, Karen Peck Gooch, Wayne Haun); I'm Gonna Love My Neighbor (Karen Peck Gooch, Rodney Griffin) ft. the Isaacs, Triumphant (StowTown Records), Greater Vision, Jeff and Sheri Easter, the Bowling Family, and the Whisnants

Karen Peck and New River releases a new CD every two years, like clockwork. Since 2015 and the "Pray Now" CD, Jeff Hawes has left and new male vocalist Ricky Braddy has joined. Every time when the male vocalist leaves New River, I always say, Karen will never find anyone as good as the last one.

Well, Karen's done it again with Braddy and with the stepping up of Kari Gooch her daughter, Karen and New River have stepped it up a notch. "Hope For All Nations," is by far the best CD Karen and the group have recorded in 26 years. I must say the wait between "Pray Now" and "Hope For All Nations" was worth it.

The first single "Hope For All Nations," is already getting many spins on Gospel radio and many views for the concept video as well. The only hope we know is Jesus and He is the "Hope For All Nations".

One of my favorite songs on the CD features Kari and Ricky ("I'll Keep On Praying") on a 50s flavored song about faithfulness. The swamp guitar from "Revival" is back on "Gotta Be Saved" and this could be a single release.

Closing out the CD is a guest-filled song, "Gonna Love My Neighbor," with many special guests. This also has single written all over it.

Karen, Kari, Ricky and Susan have crafted a great CD from beginning to end. Not one bad cut on this one and no need to fast forward to the next song; the true mark of a great CD. Another Dove winning effort and another possible Grammy nomination for this CD. It can't get any better - or can it?

Visit Karen Peck and New River here www.facebook.com/KarenPeckNR/ and get a copy of the new CD here www.karenpeckandnewriver.com/catalog/.

Strongest songs: "Hope For All Nations," "Gonna Love My Neighbor," "Gotta Be Saved"



The McGuires
"Travelin' On"

Producer: Shane Roark
2017 Upper Room/Chapel Valley

Songs:

Red Hot Desire (Carroll McGruder); Baptism of Jesse Taylor (Dallas Frazier/Sanger Shafer); Family Bible (Walter Breeland/Paul Buskirk/Claude Gray); I'll Stand For Jesus (Don H Johnson); Secret Place (Steve Chapman); Traveling On (William Hunter); Address Change (Michael Wilson); It Won't Be Today (Shane Roark); Sometimes It Takes A Mountain (Gloria Gaither/Mark Mathes); It Came To Pass (Todd McGuire/Penny McGuire)

The McGuires, TD and his wife Penny, hail from Perth, New Brunswick, Canada. I first met them a few years ago at Chapel Valley's "Christmas In the Smokies." With the release of this album "Travelin' On", all the fine things that Canada has given us, has increased by one.

Although an album of standards, there is one new song written by TD and Penny, "It Came To Pass." As with all Chapel Valley recordings, the Chapel Valley Band and Shane Roark as producer, do their fine jobs. If you love Southern Gospel on the country side and laid back, this CD is for you. Plenty of steel guitar, fiddle and relaxed vocals make this CD a treat to listen to.

From the McGuires' cover of "Red Hot Desire," to their original song "It Came To Pass," DJ's and listeners will not hear a bad cut. I must say though, if you close your eyes, you just might think it's Tim McGraw on vocals and that's not a bad thing.

One of the standouts is a re-working of the Michael Booth classic "Secret Room." It's given the country treatment and with a little rephrasing gives it a fresh new interpretation. Did I mention he (TD) sounds like Tim McGraw or possibly John Michael Montgomery?

Anyway you slice it, DJ's and fans looking for something new to listen to, or to spin on your station, give the McGuires a listen. You won't be sorry you did, nor will your listeners.

Visit the McGuires at www.facebook.com/themcguiresmusic1996/ and get a copy of the CD here www.mcguires.ca/music.


Strongest songs: "It Came To Pass," "Secret Room," "Family Bible"



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DJ SPOTLIGHT

Tom Rusk



By Vonda Easley

This month we shine the DJ Spotlight on Tom Rusk of 101.7FM WGOG in Walhalla, South Carolina. WGOG has a 6,000-watt FM stereo signal that touches three states: Georgia, North and South Carolina, with Country music every day and Gospel music on Sunday, courtesy of Rusk and “Golden Corner Gospel.”

Vonda: What age did you know you would work in radio?

Rusk: My first taste of announcing came when I was in high school in Illinois where I grew up. I was asked to announce the starting line-ups for the basketball home games. It was not until four years after I graduated I got my first break in radio at WARU in Peru, IN. I began as the evening DJ, but within six months I was the oldest staff member there and instantly became the program director and morning man. Talk about “putting my feet to the fire”, wow!

After a 14 year stint at WARU, I moved to Central FL and began a seven year career in broadcast sales. In 1987, I had the opportunity to manage and program a non-commercial FM Southern Gospel station in Haines City, FL. When the station was sold in late 1990, I was called to active duty with my Army Reserve Unit. I was asked to head up family support and public affairs during Desert Shield/Desert Storm.



After a 10 month active duty tour, I went to work at Walt Disney World in Transportation (Bus Operations). I had a great career at Disney which included not only driving a bus, but facilitating guest seminars all over property. I retired from the Army Reserves in 2004, on my 60th birthday having served a total of 24 years. I was privileged to serve my last 10 years in the Chaplaincy as a chaplain assistant.

In 2006 I retired from Disney. My wife, Kathy, and I sold our home and retired to the Upstate of South Carolina near Clemson University (2016 Natl Football Champs).

In April of 2007, an announcer at the local Country station (WGOG) asked me if I’d be interested in co-hosting a Sunday morning Southern Gospel show. Of course I jumped at the opportunity.



Due to health issues my friend and fellow broadcaster, Wayne Morton, had to step down from co-hosting in 2013. I

recently celebrated my 10th anniversary on April 9th with a big Collingsworth Family concert at my home church, Utica Baptist, in Seneca SC I select all the music and programming for the Sunday morning program.

We are a reporting station for both Singing News and SGN Scoops. We currently do not stream any of our programming live. I communicate with my listeners during the week through social media namely Facebook at Golden Corner Gospel - 101.7 WGOG.

Vonda: What is your favorite vacation place?

Rusk: Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg

Vonda: Will you tell us about your family?

Rusk: Married to Kathy Ferguson in 1988; two children: daughter-Toma, 44; son-Sebastian, 38; granddaughter-Kayla Marie, 16; mother-Alfreda Rusk, 96; sister-Nancy, 75; brother-Dan, deceased.



Vonda: How did you come to know Jesus?

Rusk: My testimony: I grew up in the church, which was not very evangelistic, but fortunately began attending a Bible believing, Bible preaching church in the late 60's in Indiana. I made Jesus my Savior and was baptized, by immersion, in November of 1969. But it wasn't until I moved to Florida in late 1980 that I totally surrendered to Christ and made Him Lord of my life. I've been very active in church since that time leading several men's ministries in different churches. Trained in both Evangelism Explosion and F.A.I.T.H. on how to properly share your faith and lead others to the Lord. I sing in the choir, drive the church bus for youth and senior outings and handle publicity at Utica Baptist.


Our thanks to Tom Rusk for this look into his life and career as a Gospel music DJ. Look up Tom on Face-

book at www.facebook.com/Golden-Corner-Gospel-1017-WGOG-575137259167504 and be sure to tune into 101.7FM WGOG when you are driving through his area.



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The Editor's Last Word

By Lorraine Walker

Have you enjoyed this issue of SGNscoops Magazine? The closer we get to spring weather, the happier I am. I can't wait until the flowers start blooming and the birds start building nests. It makes me think of new life and warm sunshine.

Resurrection Sunday is also on its way, occurring earlier this year. That means, of course, that Ash Wednesday is earlier this month, on Feb. 14.

For those that observe the season of Lent, this is the beginning of letting go of something in order to draw nearer to Christ. I would never suggest that giving up chocolate is in any way the same as what our Lord experienced on the cross. But if every time I reach for that candy, I stop and think about why I am not indulging and what this season is really about, that means I will be thinking about Jesus more than I do now. That has to be a good result.

Also, as it is the February issue, we thought we would bring you the delightful love story of Landan Smith and Morgan Easter Smith. This couple is beginning a new life with a great foundation of love.

As you look on your own relationships, do you see friendship and respect at the heart of them? Happy Valentine's Day.

As I think about how much time and energy I put into earthly relationships, I wonder how that compares with the amount of time I put into my heavenly relationship.

I am often in contact with them and don't like it when I am without my cell phone.

Contacting Jesus is much easier. I don't need to text Him or leave a voicemail. I don't have to message Him on Facebook or like His pictures on Instagram. To talk to my best friend, I just have to pray.

Do you know my best friend? Is Jesus the first one you run to in time of trouble? This Ash Wednesday, will you pause to ponder if there is anything in your life that perhaps means more to you than your relationship with Jesus? And on Valentine's Day, will you consider whether Jesus is your best friend and whether you treat those closest to you with love and respect?

Happy February. If you have a talent for writing and a love for gospel music, please contact me at lorraine@sgnscoops.com. I'd love to hear from you.



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Rob Patz is the President and CEO of Coastal Media Group. Rob has an 18 year history in radio hosting the nationally syndicated radio show, "The Southern Styles Show" since its beginning in 1993. Rob is also the owner of the internet's #1 Southern Gospel station, SGMRadio.com. In 2009, Rob Patz acquired SGNScoops.com, including the all- digital Scoops Magazine and the Diamond Awards. Rob has taken part in several Christian television projects working in front of the camera and also has helped create several syndicated television programs as well. Rob does voice work for various outlets including fortune 500 companies as well as emceeing concerts and special events. Email Rob at rob@sgnscoops.com.



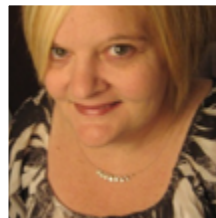
Stephanie Kelley is a public speaker and owner of Queen-O-Q, a blog featuring coupon match-ups, freebies, samples and information on frugal living. She is married, has three children and lives in Washington State. Queenoq.blogspot.com



Canadian-born Lorraine Walker has a love for Jesus Christ, music and writing. The combination of these passions has produced artist features and monthly columns for Southern Gospel publications including SGM Radio website and SGN Scoops Digital magazine. Lorraine desires that the power of the written word will glorify her Lord and bring readers closer to the love, peace and majesty of the Almighty. Email Lorraine at lorraine@sgnscoops.com



Jennifer Campbell is a singer, songwriter, musician, and middle school English teacher from McAlpin, Florida. Along with her passion for teaching, she has an even greater passion for ministering to others, sharing her testimony of how she was born lifeless and how Jesus raised her up to live for Him. Jennifer is a member of the Florida Worship Choir and Orchestra and has performed with them at Brooklyn Tabernacle, Carnegie Hall, Central Park, and Times Square. She serves as a group leader for Women of Faith, designs websites, and writes an inspirational blog at <http://jennifercampbell.net/blog.htm> and a food and travel blog at <http://jennifersjourneys.net>. Learn more about Jennifer at <http://jennifercampbell.net> and www.christwillreturn.org.



Joan Walker grew up with music in the house and first heard Southern Gospel in her early teens. With almost a quirky (some may say 'weird') need to make sure words are spelled correctly and the apostrophes are in the right place, she enjoys proofreading the articles for the SGN Scoops magazine each month...and looks beyond the letters and commas to the wonderful words each writer has written. Joan counts it as a blessing in her life to be part of SGN Scoops!



Justin Gilmore, 22, a resident of San Diego, California, graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University with a B.A. in History in June of 2014. Passionate about Southern Gospel music and its history, he decided to venture into the blog world in January starting Southern Gospel Spotlight in order to share his love of this great style of music.

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Dusty Wells is a man of many talents and multiple skills, from his speaking engagements across the country, to traveling and encouraging various artists in the Christian music genres. Dusty has a passion that is evident from the moment you meet him.

Dusty is a man who remains passionate and secure in the calling and destiny upon his life. He has come to realize the importance of finding purpose and clear direction for not only his life, but also the lives of those he comes in contact with, no matter what stage of life they may be in. Growing up in a very dysfunctional home, surrounded by all types of abuse, Dusty had every excuse to be a failure in life. He grew up on welfare, having to steal his daily necessities of life at times, being surrounded by drugs, alcohol and pornography. He was raised by a mother who was married multiple times, living in a housing project on the wrong side of town. But in the midst of what seemed to be complete devastation, God had different plans of success for Dusty. At the age of 14, a precious couple took time out of their own lives to invest in Dusty...thus leading Him to the Lord. His life is a testimony of God's relentless love and deliverance, and is one of the most triumphant stories told in modern Christianity. Dusty is confident in the fact that if God can do it for him, He can do it for anyone, no matter the situation.

Dusty and his wife of 33 years have four children, and two grandbabies with one more on the way. They make their home in Nashville, Tn.



Justin McLeod is the founder of the Justin's World of Softball website, a site that he has built into one of the premier news outlets in the sport. Justin is a longtime Gospel music fan and enjoys researching the history of the genre, attending concerts, and review-

ing recordings whenever possible. The son of a Southern Baptist pastor, he also works for a law firm as a legal secretary and is active in his local church. Justin is a native of Memphis and now resides in Northeast Louisiana.



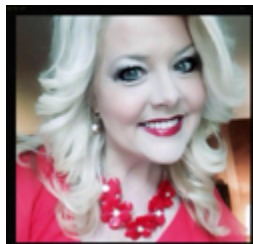
Pete Schwager is a web developer and graphic designer with a passion for Christ. He was born in Santa Rosa, California and moved to Oregon where he spent most of his life. He now lives in the quiet town of Ringgold, Georgia and enjoys living in the country with his family.

You can find him online at <http://peteschwager.com>



Staci Schwager helps with marketing and communication with her husband's web design company, Cre8able Media. Together they make a great team! Staci being the "talkative" one, loves being able to communicate one on one with clients and organizing

ideas. While Pete on the other hand is diving into the design and coding aspects to make the real masterpiece! Most of Staci's days are filled with preparing homeschool lessons for her kids, couponing, gardening, tending to her chicken flock and spending as much time on the beautiful, country land God has blessed them with.



Vonda Easley is the Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Vonda draws on a vast knowledge of Southern Gospel Music for her expertise in the field. In addition to her many personal friendships within the industry she also hosts a weekly radio show which keeps

her in touch with many of Southern Gospel's leading executives and artists. It also allows her a fresh view of new music and the latest happenings inside the industry. Vonda is also a group owner and manager as well! A self starter Vonda has started and managed several "new" events in Southern as well as "Country Gospel" Music. These events are fast becoming trend setters within the industry. She is a graduate of The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

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Robert York- During my childhood days my parents took me to the Atlanta City Auditorium for concerts hosted by Warren Roberts. That was the beginning of my love for Southern Gospel music. After 35 years I retired from USPS, during which time I got married. My wife and

I often went to The Joyful Noise for dinner and concerts. Every known name in Gospel Music sang there at one time or another. After I retired, we decided to start promoting concerts. Our goal was not only to promote our concerts, but also to promote any Gospel concerts in our area and attend as many as we possibly could. I came to a crossroads in December 2013 when my wife graduated to heaven, not knowing what to do. After much prayer God led me to continue promoting concerts. Have promoted around 100 concerts and can't tell you how many I attended. I still enjoy going to concerts and writing a little about the groups.



Erin Stevens is a uniquely talented shutterbug, singer, guitar player, writer, blogger, and social networker. She is the owner/operator of Photos For Keeps By Erin. Along with running her own business, she is the official photographer for Abraham Productions (API). You will find her behind the lens at all API events, along with

working behind the scenes on their social media. She also travels full-time on the road with her family's gospel group, The Stevens Family. Photography is her passion and singing for Jesus is her calling. For several years, you have known her as our very own "Younger Perspective" writer. Check out her photography website www.photosforkeepsbyerin.com and her ministry website www.stevensfamilymusic.com.



Vivian is the marketing manager at KKGW in Dallas/Fort Worth Texas, as well as hosting a program on Sundays where she features national, regional as well as local artists. She also brings news of upcoming concert events in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding area. Vivian has promoted various artists in this area for over

10 years beginning with Phil Cross and Poet Voices and later Sharron Kay King and Jerry Bennett to name a few. She has spent the past several years promoting Southern Gospel, Inspirational Country Gospel and Bluegrass in this area in order to preserve this part of our heritage.



Hello, I'm Randall Hamm, Gospel Program Director of WFLQ French Lick Indiana, host of the Sunday Morning Gospel Show for the past 20 years on WFLQ French Lick Indiana and Singing News Top 10 Small Market DJ for the past three years. I now add something new to

my resume! Record Reviewer, ok... CD Reviewer. I'm Old School, having started in the days of LP's, 45's and Reel to Reel along with cassettes as the main form of music played. If you'd like to listen to my program, you can visit <https://www.facebook.com/TheSundayMorningGospelShow> and listen to archived programs, plus I post various Southern Gospel news updates, uplifting music and Gospel-related items. If you're in the six-county area around French Lick Indiana, in the heart of Southern Indiana, tune in every Sunday 6:00am-12:00pm and listen to the Gospel Greats with Paul Heil, 6:00am to 8:00am and the Sunday Morning Gospel Show with Randall Hamm 8:00am to 12:00pm.



After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with a Mass Communication degree, Craig Harris has been in the journalism field for more than 15 years, working daily as both a photographer and writer at one of the largest non-daily publications in the state of Tennessee. He has experience in feature writing, news writing, action

photography, portrait photography, web-site maintenance and layout. Craig has been a part of numerous awards, both collective and individual honors in the journalism field. He has had articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines on a variety of subjects, most notably in the world of sports.

Craig's Southern Gospel interest dates back for approximately the same time span, having closely followed the industry since the later portion of the 1990s. He also performed for seven years with a local trio prior to joining the SGN Scoops staff.

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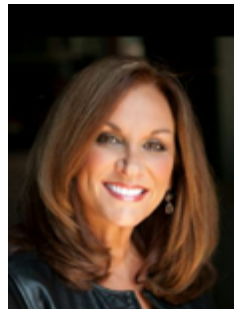
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David's distinctive sound and his ability to blend perfectly with a variety of vocalists has made him a valuable commodity on live events as well as in the studio. His compassionate and gentle spirit makes him more than an artist, it makes him a great friend!

David began singing at age 6 with family. In 1990, he filled in for the Speer Family and later that year he became the lead vocalist for The Trailblazers. In 2002, Staton filled the lead position with Priority. While with Priority, the group was the resident gospel group at the Silver Dollar City theme park in Branson, MO and they performed for over one million people in one year. After the group disbanded in 1995, David continued to write for artists in many different genres of music while occasionally performing solo. It was during this time that his song, "Every Knee Shall Bow", recorded by Dottie Peoples, was nominated for a Grammy Award. His song, "Together We Can" was adopted as the national theme song to bring awareness to violence in schools. The music video (Together We Can) that featured many Atlanta based artists was shown at the 1999 Grammy Awards show, which helped launch the careers of artists like R&B's Jagged Edge, India Arie, and 4.O. In 2004, David partnered with Mike LeFevre to form The LeFevre Quartet. During the seven years that he was the lead vocalist, the group had many hit songs and won many awards. After leaving the LeFevre Quartet in 2011, Staton began working on a solo project and also began singing with Palmetto State Quartet. The group appeared on television and toured with country music superstar, Wynonna Judd while Staton was there.

Through the years, artists like Gold City, Jeff & Sheri Easter, Kingsmen, Singing Americans, Dixie Melody Boys, Imperials, Dottie Peoples, Ball Brothers, LeFevre Quartet, Palmetto State Quartet, Priority, Trailblazers, The Greenes, Ivan Parker, Brian Free and many more have recorded David's music. From 2005 to 2013, Staton was the Executive Vice President for Song Garden Music Group in Nashville, TN. In recent years, the National Quartet Convention has asked David to be a part of an industry advisory panel to help artists who need assistance and training. Not only has David made a mark as an artist, he is passing on his talent and knowledge to new artists, influencing and shaping the future of Gospel music.



Kelly Nelon Clark is the daughter of Gospel Music icon, the late Rex Nelon. As part of her father's group, The Nelons, she blazed a musical trail bringing a fresh new sound to the traditional Gospel quartet style. That sound and style influenced a generation of Gospel music performers and can be heard today in the styling of

groups like the Martins, Point of Grace, The Crabb Family and more.

As The Nelons broke new ground, the Gospel Music industry repeatedly recognized their excellence. The group won four GMA Dove awards as well as multiple awards from readers of Singing News Magazine. Kelly was named female vocalist of the year on four occasions and received favorite alto vocalist award 3 times. At one time, Kelly was the most awarded artists in the history of the Singing News Fan Awards. The music industry at large also recognized The Nelons with 3 Grammy nominations.

Today, Kelly currently performs throughout the United States, Canada and Europe with her husband and two daughters as The Nelons. The group is featured in hundreds of churches and concerts each year. The Nelons have been part of Gaither Homecoming concerts sharing their music with thousands of Gospel Music fans in sold-out arenas across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.kellynelon.com/>.



Paige Givens is a Christ follower, wife, mother of two boys and kindergarten teacher to 18 five-year-olds. She is a writer, reader, singer, studier, and teacher of words. Paige lives in Hayden, Alabama with her husband of 10 years, Chris Givens, and their sons Parker and Peyton. Paige loves to blog about faith, writing, music, and teaching. Her goal is to serve the

Lord by inspiring others to be who He has called them to be. You can listen to her music and read her devotionals at www.paigegivens.com.

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Nathan Kistler was born on the road and was singing at the age of three years old. He has had the opportunity travel with groups like Southern Gospel's beloved trio the Nelons, and most recently for almost two years with America's Favorite family of gospel music The Hoppers. Nathan has had the privilege to be in 49 states and

24 countries singing about the wonderful story of Jesus Christ our Lord. He has also been a part of three crusades on the National Mall in Washington D.C. and while there, he had the privilege of singing in the Pentagon courtyard twice. Through his father's ministry in Washington, Nathan began his work on the Hill as a ministry partner with different Christian organizations like Faith and Action and more. Nathan is a missionary to Washington and continues to work there during the week while singing Gospel music on the weekends around the country and being an artist in residence at the American Mountain Theater in Elkins, West Virginia.



Selena Day is from Atlanta GA. During her twenties she worked in the field of fashion, as both a make-up artist and model. Selena became a Christian in her early 20's and then quickly met her husband, Chuck Day, who is a songwriter and recording artist. Selena and Chuck have been in the ministry for 26 years raising

three daughters and homeschooling them while they traveled together as a family. During this time God taught her how crucial intergenerational ministry is for the furthering of God's kingdom. Selena travels the world speaking at conferences with the emphasis on empowering a multi-generation of women to rise up and become everything that God has called them to. Encouraging the next generation of the church to break the walls of limitations in their mind and rise to their full potential. Selena and her husband are life coaches for The World Race, which is an extreme missions trip for adults 21 through 35. They travel every two months somewhere around the world to mentor these missionaries. She and Chuck have been pastoring a home-church for 14 years where they have experienced God moving in community and seeing the body of Christ in action through each other.



Derek Simonis began singing gospel music at an early age, around the piano with his sister,s at home and in church. His mother, an accomplished pianist and music teacher, was his inspiration to sing. Derek was saved at an early age due to the influence of godly, praying parents and a faithful Sunday School teacher.

Derek formerly served as a Youth Pastor and previously sang with Southern Harmony Quartet. For seven years, Derek also served as a Communications Repair Section Leader for the U.S. Army; he was member of the 1/160th SOAR (A) Night Stalkers and served several deployments overseas. Derek is married to his sweetheart, Jana, and they have two boys, Daniel and Avery. The Simonis family resides in Boise, Idaho, and Derek is the baritone vocalist for Liberty Quartet. His life's verse is Romans 12:1 which says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Derek's ultimate desire is to give his all in the service of the Lord.



Logan Smith is a 20-year-old with a lot of miles behind him. At the age of three, he would stand in his room with a pencil as a microphone and one of his dad's handkerchiefs singing his heart out to one of the Happy Goodman's songs, such as "I Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now." At the age of seven, Logan was asked to

sing at a senior's dinner at his grandparent's church. Logan recorded his first CD, "The Journey Begins," at the age of 10 and his latest release, "Hits Before My Time," at age 19. In October of 2008, Logan was invited to sing with The Gaither Homecoming Tour in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for Gaither Fest. Since that night, he has sung at many different venues with the Homecoming Tour. As of 2017, Logan has toured all across America, Canada, and has headlined two Norwegian tours. Logan is on the road more now than ever spreading the good news and has no plans of slowing down.

Contributors

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Roger Barkley Jr. is an award-winning Christian artist and musical evangelist. With multiple charting songs reaching to the top 10, his goals remain the same: to win souls for Christ, use Gospel Music of any kind to reach the world with the Good News, seeing lives changed and being an encouragement to the saints. When asked about his

ministry, Roger said, "I can remember the first time singing with my dad playing the guitar and standing beside my mom when I was four years old. I have always loved all types of music." His vision is to lead as many people to Christ through preaching, singing, sharing testimony, comedy, drama and technology as possible. Having been labeled a Christian Entertainer, he believes it is possible to minister in an entertaining way, and in over 35 years of ministry has found that he can utilize all different types of music to let people know the love of Jesus Christ. Currently he is Artist-In-Residence with his wife, Dianna, and daughter, Chelsea, at Leestown Gospel Church in Frankfort, KY, and Redemption Road Community Church in Stamping Ground, KY where he leads worship when not spreading the Gospel across America.



Fayth Lore is a young woman from southern Ohio with a love for God and people. Although she enjoys chocolate, oldies music and spending time with friends around the bonfire, her passion is ministry. In January of 2014, after pastoring for 20 years, her family decided to follow God's call into music evangelism. In September 2015, they

launched into full-time ministry. The Lore Family travels the country, spreading the Gospel through songs, sermons and seminars. While Fayth loves to sing, she also has a heart for encouraging young women in Christ. She has spoken at various youth/women's events, as well as hosted her own blog for young ladies. To see more about The Lore Family, visit their website at www.thelorefamilyministries.com. To learn more about Fayth's blog, visit www.truepurposegirls.weebly.com.



Debbie Seagraves is a Gospel music soloist, songwriter and speaker from Hull, Ga. She and her husband, Mike have been married for 21 years and have five grown children, including four sons and one daughter that graduated to Heaven in 2009, as well as nine grandchildren. She loves singing, speaking, and writing her own songs. Debbie is

currently working on her third project. All of the songs on this CD will be songs that she has penned. She is an award winning artist, having won Female Vocalist of the Year with Lighthouse Gospel Music Association, and Female Vocalist and Soloist of the year with the GGCBA (Georgia Gospel Country Bluegrass Association) in 2016. She enjoys speaking at Ladies Events, sharing her testimony of how God spared her life from a near fatal motorcycle accident in 2011, how He brought her out of the depths of severe clinical depression, and through the death of her daughter in 2009. Also, Debbie is an avid Georgia Bulldogs fan and loves to fish, read, and spend time with her children and grandchildren. Debbie says: "No one can come as close as I did to dying and have it not change you. I am forever changed, blessed beyond measure, and just so grateful for every day that the Lord allows me to spend with those I love and to serve Him." She considers Micah 7:8 her life verse as she says that verse has carried her through some of the darkest times in her life. If you would like to have Debbie at your church or venue, you can reach her through her website: debbieseagraves-music.com/, on Facebook, or send her an email at: fully-alive1956@att.net.



Jimmy Reno is from Birmingham, Alabama. He began singing in church at four years of age. Jimmy has sung with various groups over the years, until singing professionally for Mark209 and the Florida Boys. Jimmy is married with three children.

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Sarah Murray sings soprano for the Southern Gospel group Bless'd. The group is from Greenville, Tennessee and has been together for over five years. Sarah was born and raised in Jonesborough, Tennessee, but now resides in Greeneville with her husband, Chase. She has a

bachelor's degree in K-6 Education and a Master's degree in Human Resources Development. Her daytime job is being the Human Resources Director for a small company in Greeneville, Tennessee. Her passion outside of singing, writing, and crafting, is simply God's people. "I love the Lord and truly believe my mission in life is to reach his people, and that's both on and off the stage, behind my desk, and in my community. I just want people to see Jesus in me! I'm so honored to be a part of Bless'd and love our tight knit family group." For more information on Sarah, visit blessdministries.com



Kaleb Powell can be found in the small town of Greeneville, Tennessee. He sings baritone for the Southern Gospel group, Bless'd Ministries. Alongside Southern Gospel Music, Kaleb's passion is playing the piano. He started playing at the young age of 13 and for the majority, is self-taught. His style of piano

playing is inspired by artists such as Kim Collingsworth, Jeff Stice, and Gerald Wolfe. He has been singing and playing for Bless'd Ministries for the last six years.

Kaleb is currently the owner and operator of AKM of Tennessee, Inc., which is an organization that provides services to individuals with developmental disabilities. His life has been surrounded by taking care of others and for living out his passion through music ministry.

"I feel honored that God chose to give me the talent He did in playing the piano. I feel that if I can use this to serve Him more, I will perfect my talent to be used as only a vessel for Him. Being a part of Bless'd and traveling with our group is a lifelong dream of mine that I am forever grateful God saw fit to put together. On and off the stage, I want my talent to be only used for Him and to be a part of seeing souls saved." For more information on Kaleb Powell, visit blessdministries.com.



Charlie Griffin is an avid gospel music fan, soloist, teacher and speaker. He is a staff writer for SGNscoops featuring highlighting Southern Gospel Music history. You can follow Charlie Griffin on Facebook, Twitter or visit him at www.CharlieGriffin.net.