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On Tuesday, September 28, 2010, hearts from all over the world were broken as gospel singer Tony Greene breathed his last on this earth.

So much could and has been said about Tony – the singer he was, the friend he was, the man he was, but even to a casual observer, the evidence points to the family man he was, so adored by his wife TaRanda – who donated her kidney to him just over a year ago, prolonging his life – and with whom he had two precious daughters, “Bella” and “Josie.”

During this time of mourning, we at *SGN Scoops* can only say that our family is praying for all those who love Tony, that we mourn him with you, and that the thought of Heaven grows ever more precious as we contemplate the reunions there waiting for us.

*“If we have the faith that’s measured by
the smallest mustard seed
Our mountains will be mastered by the
Master of our needs
If we have a child-like trust He says He’ll
do the greatest things
He’ll heal the sick and raise the dead
And be a miracle in me.”*

~ from “Miracle in Me,” as sung by The Greenes



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*** Christian Fitness & New Music will
return in November**

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

the dreams we are given

One of my best lifelong friends has a dad who was a garbage collector.

He worked five to six days a week, early mornings, for years. He did it cheerfully. He has raised two daughters with his wife, volunteered on the fire department, is a beacon of generosity and hospitality to his family and friends, and now enjoys watching his beloved Chicago Bears from their little weekend cabin in Michigan.

In the long run, it doesn't matter that he collected garbage. It matters that he did it well, honored his family, worked passionately, and has enjoyed his life.

I doubt that it was his dream to pick up our trash—I imagine he might have wanted to be an NFL quarterback or maybe a crooner like Frank Sinatra, but as we all know, sometimes dreams don't quite work out the way we plan.

What was your childhood dream? - I had several. At times I contemplated being an Olympic cyclist and an Oscar-winning screenwriter. I dreamed of being a teacher (done...for about 18 months). I dreamed of being a mommy – thank you Lord for that answered prayer. And I dreamed of being a published writer...which, though it has happened in ways differently from what I envisioned, has been fulfilled.

I am finding as I go through life that often, God's version of our dreams coming true is so very different than the

ones we created for ourselves. BUT – when He births dreams in our hearts, they are more magnificent than the ones we conjure while watching football games or concerts or movies.

This issue of *SGN Scoops* was put together while I was at two very different places, each filled with dreams. The first: National Quartet Convention, a place where many people have hopes of gaining, developing, meeting, learning, breaking through. The second – Disney World – where children like mine dream of a more magical world, one where our most whimsical, colorful, beautiful wishes are capable of becoming reality.

At NQC, we talked to people like Ernie

When we dream the impossible, God dreams the miraculous.

Haase and Signature Sound, who are living dreams that are mergers of those they grew up with and those God gave to them, harmonies of the calling God gives and the work they do. We talked to Sheri Easter, who persevered in her dreams through incredibly trying times, and to Sue Dodge, who has given her dreams to the Lord and is living with happy results. (Incidentally, we talked to a lot of other great dreamers and doers, who will be gracing these pages in the coming months).

We also see dreams being pieced back together – as the Gaylord Opryland Hotel prepares to reopen after the catastrophic flooding in Nashville, Tennessee this past spring. And sadly, we bid farewell to Tony Greene and pray for new dreams for the precious family he leaves behind.

I jokingly call two important men in my life my "dream givers." The first is my husband Rod, who has given me a fairy-tale of a life out of some chaos, two miraculous daughters, two great bonus kids, and one adventure after another. The second is the publisher at *SGN Scoops*, Rob Patz, who has given me the chance to carry out a creative vision and be a writer!

The ultimate Dream Giver, though, is our Lord Jesus. When we dream big, He dreams grand. When we dream the impossible, He dreams the miraculous. And when our dreams go wayward or in some cases, are shattered, He doesn't just pick up the pieces and put them back together...He makes something even more beautiful out of them!

We hope the dreams you read about this month inspire you to chase the dreams God has in store for you!



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Photo By
Denise
Salchow

Love, Life, & Legends with Ms. Lou: Hall of Fame Moments



Greetings to the ever-increasing number of readers of Scoops Digital. At the National Quartet Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, the magazine was well represented. Our time with Kelly and Rod Burton was sweet, and we always enjoy seeing Rob Patz. Meeting Rhonda Frye was a pleasure. God is blessing our efforts!

Howard and I were showered with love and affection from so many precious people. I am humbled by the "Lifetime Achievement Award" presented by the Southern Gospel Music Guild. Judy Nelon also received this honor, adding to my pleasure. The VIP room at Freedom Hall was filled with treasured friends who felt the presence of the Holy Spirit as the Nelons sang the opening prayer. After reading a greeting of congratulations from Bill and Gloria Gaither, Mark Lowry spoke with gracious, loving comments and his usual great humor. Aaron Crisler presented red roses to Judy and me. Our hearts were warmed by beautiful comments by Beckie Simmons Bates, Clarke Beasley, Jerry Goff, Sue Dodge, Fay Shedd, Lisa Abraham, Kelly Nelon Clark, Jimmy Blackwood, and Eddie DeGarmo.

When Judy Nelon, President of the SGM Guild, spoke, she encouraged us all to use the media to get the message of Southern Gospel music to the masses. I am in total agreement and was gratified to see



Top: Mark Lowry, Lou Hildreth, Judy Nelon, Beckie Simmons Bates at the SGM Guild "Lifetime Achievement Awards" for Lou and Judy; Center: Jeff & Sheri Easter with Diana Thomas, Mary Fay Jackson, and Lou, for Family Friendly Entertainment TV; Bottom: Lou interviewing The Hoppers for FFE TV

Photos by Howard Hildreth



Rob Patz, Coastal Media, also Mary Fay, Diana, and Dorothy Jones, Family Friendly Entertainment TV Network, Paul Heil,

[It was a]
monumental
National
Quartet
Convention!
To God
be the glory!

Gospel Greats, and others. The event was taped for television by Family Friendly Entertainment.

As I began my acceptance speech, a surprise telephone call came from Larry Gatlin. The audience listened as we bantered about which Gatlin Brother is my favorite before I thanked him for the fabulous things he had to

say. Emotion was at a high level as I closed my remarks with encouragement to all of us who are spending our lives in gospel music with a verse from II Corinthians 1:7 "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." Heartfelt thanks to the Guild for this awesome honor, and to the multitude of friends who have expressed their love and congratulations.

Howard and I enjoyed hanging out at the Family Friendly Entertainment booth during the week. Mary Fay, and Diana did excellent interviews with the artists, and were joined by their mother, Dorothy Jones, on many of them. My interviews included the Hoppers, Three Bridges, Josh Garner and John Rulapaugh (Freedom) Jimmy Blackwood, Joel and La-

Breeska Hemphill, Candy Christmas, Men Of Music, Sharron Kay King, Heirline, Edward Eyestone, Marcelle Slaughter, Kirk Sullivan, Glen Bates, Phil Cross, Jeff & Sheri Easter, Dove Brothers, Ernie Hasse & Signature Sound, and Classic Sound Quartet.

It is always a privilege to stop by Gospel Music Today and be interviewed by Ken and Jean Grady. The link for the show is on my website.

Being onstage with Bill and Gloria Gaither and the Homecoming Friends on Friday made the week complete at the monumental National Quartet Convention! To God be the glory! 🇺🇸

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Since October is traditionally considered a spooky month, it seemed appropriate to use the column space this month to talk about the appropriate and inappropriate uses of horror on film and TV.

One might ask if there are, in fact, any appropriate uses of horror. It's a legitimate question. Most of the time, horror movies exist only to glorify the evil presented within, whether the evil is supernatural or a "normal" mass murderer. In junior high, I started to hear friends talk about their favorite cinematic serial killers, comparing body counts and arguing over which one was the more efficient killer, as though they were talking about their favorite baseball players.

One of the most unintentionally hilarious conversations I ever heard was when a friend defended Jason Voorhees, the killer of the *Friday the 13th* movies. Apparently, one of those films contained a scene in which Jason deliberately avoided killing a small child. "See?" announced my friend triumphantly. "That's why Jason is awesome. He won't kill a kid! That's because he remembers how tough it was when he was a kid."

Oh, joy. A serial killer with a few tiny scruples. Let's all celebrate the guy and throw him a parade, because he massacres adults and teenagers with gleeful abandon, but leaves the occasional child alone.

Several years ago, while I worked at a movie theater, a man came in with his son, who looked to be roughly six or seven years old. The son wanted to see a G-rated cartoon that was playing at the time. The father saw that a film called *Bordello of Blood* was also playing. The father actually begged the son to go see the latter film instead! Finally, the son caved. Legally, I could do nothing to prevent them from attending that show – an R-rated movie is for audience members 17 and over except with adult supervision, after all. But I wanted

HORROR:

THE HAUNTING MOMENTS THAT STAY WITH US, FOR GOOD OR ILL



to yell at the father: "Which part of the title – 'Bordello' or 'Blood' – makes you think this is appropriate for your 7-year-old?"

More recently, I learned that a friend's nieces are both allowed to watch cable unrestricted throughout all the hours of night. The 8-year-old has seen more horror movies than I have at almost 36 years old. She kept reporting her nightmares to us for a while, and we tried to explain the logical connection between her viewing and her dreams.

She doesn't talk about nightmares anymore, but it's unclear if she's actually stopped watching or if she's just avoiding a lecture from us. Heaven knows she won't get that guidance from her parents.

And horror has only gotten worse over the years, as people have become more desensitized to "the last thing." After all, the latest subgenre has come to be known as "torture porn." *Saw* and its like-minded films don't just have a killer on the loose; the "fun" of these movies is in all the different ways that people can cause horrific pain to each other before the brutal end.

Why am I talking about all of this? I'm writing for a Christian audience, so I'm preaching to the choir, right? No one reading this would ever think about letting their kids see such garbage, correct? I can only say that I deeply hope so. The school that I attended and heard my fellow 11-year-olds comparing their favorite serial killers was a Christian private school. I also have a friend (whom I met through church) who at age 14, told me that *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* was his favorite movie, and he had seen it multiple times by that point.

Thankfully, no friends of mine have gone on to be serial killers themselves. Naturally, most people won't. But isn't it enough that some people do, to think twice about what one puts into the heads of their family members? No one ever expects it when their relative snaps, anyway. Also, those who don't go



on to be serial killers often

No one reading this would ever think about letting their kids see such garbage, correct?

He tells his brother: "We are alone

seem to have a considerable lack of empathy for their fellow man. The friends I know (whom I care about deeply) who watch the most ultra-violent material also watch the most reality shows, and laugh the hardest when real people have their lives emotionally shattered in front of millions. One friend recently said that anyone who auditions for *American Idol* who isn't talented enough is such a worthless human being that they ought to just kill her-or-himself.

Depressed enough? I am. Let's switch gears and talk about a few positive examples of horror in the mainstream media.

M. Night Shalayaman's brilliant 2002 film *Signs* is a perfect example of horror used properly and effectively (though of course there's a sci-fi element to the story as well). **[Plot spoilers ahead in the next three paragraphs.]** On the surface, the horror is about extraterrestrial invasion. But the deeper fear at play is any kind of attack on our soil. Released almost a year after 9/11 (but in production before then), the sights of the ships attacking on the TV news (within the movie) were terrifying to American viewers in part because they felt all too familiar.

But the title doesn't just refer to the "signs" of the crop circles. It refers to positive "signs" from heaven about the meaning of our suffering, and what happens when that suffering appears to lose meaning. Mel Gibson plays a priest who lost his faith after his wife dies in a car accident. When the alien attacks start happening, Gibson can't believe that God is in control or that anyone has any reason for hope.

in this." Ultimately, Gibson's character learns that Providence was ready to work in many unexpected ways for the safety of his family, including through his wife's death, his brother's baseball injury, and his son's asthma.

In the end, evil doesn't win. The story is not about a massive body count. The story is about regaining (or keeping) one's faith during the most troubling times. The faith of Gibson's character is restored, and he returns to being a priest, because he saw God in the midst of the horror.

Shalayman's career has taken a tumble, and Gibson is a deeply troubled individual, but they made a masterpiece together with this film.

Though space considerations prevent me from going into this other example in too much detail, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* are both shows where the horror is simply a metaphor for the horrors of growing up and dealing with life. As such, the heroes usually triumph over evil. While I'm not making a blanket recommendation of all the content in those shows, a main theme of both programs is that there's a wider world out there than we can see or hear, and that standing up against the forces of darkness, and giving of oneself sacrificially, is far more important than our own selfish concerns. You won't get that kind of message from, say, an episode of *Friends*.

I hope to delve more into the subject of *Buffy* and *Angel* in a future column. For now, be blessed, and guard your hearts and minds (and those of whom you care about) in Christ Jesus. 🇺🇸

Carol Sanguinette-How

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It is good to praise the
Lord and make music.
- Psalm 92:1

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Meeting God... at the zoo

"The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display His craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak: night after night they make Him known. They speak without a sound or word: their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth and their words to the entire world."- Psalm 19:1-4

This past summer our family vacationed with close friends that happened to bring along their grandchild. One year old "Colt" had been difficult to keep entertained at the beach and the decision was made to visit the local zoo. Honestly, I wasn't thrilled with the idea- my children are teenagers and I have paid my dues at the zoo! Even so, I plastered the fake smile on my face and decided to be a good sport. Much to my surprise, the smelly zoo became Holy Ground- for I caught a glimpse of God's glory there!

As we entered the gate, we were entertained by a monkey that had just given birth the night before. With impressive agility, she leaped all over her cage plummeting from top to bottom, side to side never dropping the newborn on back! Around the corner was the kangaroo. I've never seen kangaroos up close and personal, but found myself captivated as I watched them walk. Their feet resembled the bottom of rocking chairs and they used their tails for balance. I was surprised when I learned kangaroos can't walk backwards and was astounded when I learned the birth weight of a infant kangaroo! A "joey" weighs about 1 gram and is 2 cm long and makes its way to its mother's pouch all by himself! I looked at the size of the kangaroo and thought about my last baby weighing 9 lbs, 5 ounces, 23 ½ inches long and said out loud- "Really God?"

Next exhibit, I came face to serious face with an ostrich. "My goodness, what long eyelashes you have. Well, I guess God knew your eyes would need protection too," I thought. Moving a long, a loud "Ssh!" interrupted my thoughts as we nearly stumbled on a "mommy- to- be duck" sitting on her nest in the bushes. "Now just how does she know

I was expecting, I didn't know what to do therefore I read books AND took classes- just look at her!" To the left I noticed an odd looking animal and thought,



"What were you thinking, God?" as I examined- from a distance- the sharp quills on a porcupine. My attention was quickly diverted when I heard the familiar sound of "Mom!" A cougar! WOW! His eyes were pure gold! As my eyes left his to check out the rest of his body, his eyes never left mine. We eventually had a stare down contest and he won! "Thank you, God for this fence" I whispered! Next was the lion and lioness sprawled out in the grass. I noticed the coarseness of his hair and watch a tiny fly dance on her nose.

Once again my thoughts were interrupted, but this time it wasn't from the voice of my children. This bass voice was so low it rumbled like a sub-wolfer. Curious, I followed the sound until I came upon a spotted leopard. Immediately I

God is the ultimate creator & He longs for us to enjoy His creation

to sit
there,
God?
When

thought about the saying "leopards don't change their spots", but walked away smiling remembering that Jesus can!

By this time, it was nearly 100 degrees, I was growing weary but my family was going strong. We decided to make our way over to the petting zoo and then on our way. As we walked we saw a snake shedding its skin and took in the deeply brilliant colors of exotic birds. As everyone else continued on, I found a shady spot to rest. Behind me was a chicken leading her chicks to a fenced area containing goats. The babies stood still as Mom Chick flew over the fence. After she checked for safety, the chicks followed her. Totally captivated, I watched her dig a hole, then dig for insects to feed her young. "God! That's amazing!" I whispered. A turkey across the way caught my eye and I simply couldn't believe how beautiful and detailed its feathers were.

At this point, my mind began to race back through the zoo to every animal I had studied. Created by God himself, every animal was uniquely different, created for purpose and with provision for survival. Needless to say, I started to feel overwhelmed. "But

God, there's more!" My mind leaped across the street to the ocean a few blocks away and thought about the creatures of the sea. I lifted my head to whisper "thank you" but the clouds caught my eye and I remembered reading about astronomers estimating there are two billion galaxies within two billion light years of the sun and about how the earth whirls around the sun at eighteen ½ miles per second. I remembered that scientist say it would take a steel bar 5,000 miles in diameter to resist the force of the world's weight but yet God spreads out the Northern skies over empty space and the earth over nothing (Job 26:7) Those thoughts caused me to drop my head to bow, but my eye noticed my skin, bones, veins, muscles and I pondered the complexity of the human body. The thoughts in my head could no longer be contained as I blurted - "GOD YOU ARE SO... Then the tears lying dormant in my eyes could no longer be contained either as I tried to think of a word to describe God's intelligence and wisdom. As childish as it was- I blurted out.. "GOD YOU ARE SO SMART AND I AM SO IMPRESSED WITH YOU!" My heart was flooded with scripture that speaks of how the whole earth is filled with His glory. ***"God this zoo isn't declaring your glory- It's SCREAMING of your glory!"***

Perhaps you're wondering why in the world I would write a story about a zoo trip in a Southern Gospel Music Magazine. I am a song-writer and there is nothing in the world like cherishing a new piece of musical art! When I create a song, I certainly enjoy playing or listening to it all by myself, but I get so much more joy when the room is filled with others to experience my creation with me and I dare say most song-writers agree. God is the same way! He is the ultimate creator and He longs for us to enjoy His creation- yet we zoom by taking it for granted every single day! God has been creating new things from the beginning and will finish when He creates the new heaven and earth- but until then He longs for us to experience His glory- right here right now! Summer has come to an end and all is in the air making it the perfect time to get outside and experience the glory of God. Take a stroll! Enjoy the leaves changing colors and relish in the crisp cooler air! Remember God created even the ground you stand on and therefore it too declares His glory! Whatever you do- Don't miss it! 🇺🇸



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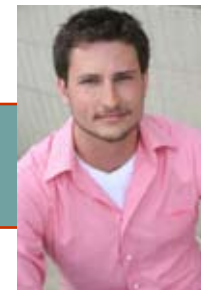
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Through a series of events, **JEFF HAWES** has moved from the classroom where he taught high school English in Jackson County, Alabama to the tour bus of gospel great Karen Peck & New River. Jeff chronicles the fulfillment of his gospel music dreams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



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Congratulations to our staff member **Stepahie Kelley & her husband Dennis** on the birth of sweet Lily Lea! She joins big brother Chase and big sister Chloe, and will be available for meet-and-greets at the 2011 NQC.

God bless you & your family, Lily!



As a busy ventriloquist and comedian performing throughout North America and beyond, guest columnist **RYAN BOMGARDNER's** mission is to provide clean entertainment for all ages and reach people who wouldn't normally go to church or get to hear the gospel message. He resides in Pennsylvania with his wife and online at ryanandfriends.com



SG enthusiast **D. ANN BAILEY** has written for a number of industry publications. Currently she works as a senior manager and is part of a four generation household. She also serves on the advisory board of Harvest Hope Food Bank., allowing her to reach out to the community showing God's love not only in spiritual ways but helping to meet the physical needs as well. twitter.com/DeeAnnBailey

ernie haase & signature sound



called



to sing





EHSS makes a splash at this summer's Stamps-Baxter School of Music.

All photos by Aaron Crisler, GospelMusicUpdate.com/The Judy Nelson Group. Used with permission.

A few times during the week of National Quartet Convention, there is a buzz in the exhibit hall during the time when it's normally quiet – prime time on the main stage. The buzz might be made by a certain meet-and-greet, or perhaps by someone particularly in love with his funnel cake, but most often, it's a buzz marked by the shuffle of many feet to the nearest television, to see what it happening inside Freedom Hall.

One such buzz was obvious on Friday night, and I looked across the booth where I was standing to see Ernie Haase and Signature Sound, heads bowed on stage. I knew what was coming next, because I had talked to them about it the day before. And now, in front of the thousands present at Freedom Hall, the group was being joined by Glenn Payne and George Younce on a song The Cathedral Quartet made legendary, "We Shall See Jesus."

It's a personal moment for the audience, many who think of their favorite singers as friends or family and grieve those departed. It's also a personal moment for the group: Ernie got his start with The Cathedral Quartet and married George's daughter, Lisa, in 1990. The rest of the group members – Devin McGlamery, Doug Anderson, and Tim Duncan - grew up singing their songs.

It's also a dramatic moment, the kind of across-the-heavens musical merger previously used by Natalie Cole and her late father Nat "King" Cole and Celine Dion with Frank Sinatra.

So how, then, does a gospel group keep that carefully planned moment... spiritual?

IT'S ALL ABOUT KEEPING YOUR HEART

RIGHT> "That's what I pray about," Ernie says. He gestures to the dining table on the bus, where he sits every morning for a time of reading, meditating, and studying. "We sing a song, '(God Give This Child) A Good Heart' that conveys the message. If your spirit is right, I think you'll always be sensitive to His spirit."

Ernie recounts the previous night's concert, when the planned program indeed took a change. "After 'We Shall See Jesus,' we planned to end the concert with 'This Old House,' and leave 'em hap-

py... But a holy hush fell over that place. We ended up singing a hymn, 'His Name is Wonderful.' George used to say, 'Ernie – plan, but don't overplan, because you might plan God right out of it.'"

Known for his business savvy as much as his tenor vocals, Ernie believes It's his job as a manager to be sensitive to the spirit, or as he says, God's spirit and Tim's and Doug's and Devin's spirit, not to monitor them and keep them down, but to know how they are feeling and when they might be having one of "those days."

By Kelly Capriotti Burton



Can you minister and wear trendy suits? Can you catch the heart of God if you know when in a song you should be bowing your head? Ernie's answer is irrevocably: **Yes.**

"And that's what I want when I walk into a building," Ernie explains. "That's why it's hard to sing some places, even if the money's great...if my heart is squelched and I can't feel it... I'm not that good; I cannot call a program." Thoughtfully, Ernie segues into another sensitive topic: "If there's ought against my brother or against another group that's sitting in the wings.. I don't know how other people do it. I can only say for myself: my heart and spirit have to be right. I've done it the other way and it just doesn't work."

The program, which for Ernie Haase and Signature Sound now includes specific lighting, video, choreography, and a certain wardrobe. It's an aspect of EHSS that is as talked about as their music. Can you minister and wear trendy suits? Can you catch the heart of God if you know when in a song you should be bowing your head? Ernie's answer is irrevocably: yes.

"I have walked on stage with my heart and spirit right, and I have nothing," he recalls. "[And I wonder] How am I going to do it tonight? But God just does it. Maybe someone will share a prayer request, or Devin will say something, or Tim sings a line he sings every night, but something will break through and God just connects."

Devin, the group's newest addition (but no stranger to gospel music, having previously sung with Dixie Melody Boys and Karen Peck and New River), contrib-

utes a simple adage: "A friend of mine told me: I'd rather follow my heart if I feel that's the way the Lord's leading and miss it, than to not follow my heart." That sums the issue up for him.

Watching YouTube footage of The Cathedral Quartet – one of the most universally revered groups in Southern Gospel's 100 year history – as the inspiration for EHSS's signature flavor is evident. Also evident is the heart to both glorify God and testify to His greatness that George and Glen carried. Is EHSS the natural progression, embodying the same ideals? Their new project, A Tribute to The Cathedral Quartet, is itself the answer.

THE RIGHT TIME FOR A TRIBUTE

"We wanted to lay a foundation for Signature Sound first," Ernie explains. Having garnered Grammy nominations and Dove Awards, having topped the Billboard Magazine Video Charts, having appeared in front of Gaither Homecoming and NASCAR crowds, it seems that was finally accomplished. So, "We prayed about it, talked to family (including the Younces and Paynes), talked to colleagues about it. We wanted to keep it true to The Cathedral Quartet, but not overdo it," Ernie says.

When the circumstances began to line up, the CD recording was made, about a year ago. When Devin joined the group in late 2009, his vocals were added. Then the Gaither organization worked on finding the right venue for the DVD recording. Originally, the taping was scheduled for the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville, but that was before it was flooded in early May. (It was relocated to

Reardon Auditorium in Anderson, Indiana). And this month, both the CD and DVD will be released, and EHSS will embark upon a worldwide, multi-year "Cathedral Tribute" tour.



Rehearsal.

"More for George & Glen's sake than anything, I hope it comes on like gangbusters and introduces The Cathedral Quartet music to a whole new generation," Ernie says. "These songs are new to [young people], and the times we've shared them, they've loved them."

So why now? Because the time...seems right.

Mickey Bell, host of This Week in Gospel Music, weighs in: ""By going back and honoring the Cathedral music, Ernie and the guys are showing the world they have not or will not forget their roots. They continue to use the heritage of quartet music and display it with the class and enthusiasm that is needed to present a first class production that will put people in the seats."

Indeed, it seems that while they continue to showcase traditional quartet music with their own unique style, the group has also been charged with leading Southern Gospel into a new age, one that will be listened to on a tiny digital music players rather than on tapes and CDs, one that will be captured on Twitter and countless blogs, and one that must be relevant to a digital culture.

Devin believes strongly that Southern Gospel should and is drawing young people to listen. He says that EHSS will do their part by "staying relevant to what is going on and still honoring and respecting what we grew up on."

At age 28, he has already been a full time singer with some of the industry's biggest names, but still has a youthful identity that relates to a younger audience. "I can still remember looking at it from the other side, as a fan, and what drew me into it," he says. "And that's why I love what we do. We stay relevant and modern and bring new ideas to the table, but it's still the same music."

Detractors might mistake stylishness for worldliness, but Ernie sees it as another outreach of a gospel ministry.

"There is an entertainment side of it too," he says readily. "We work on that. We can't walk on water, raise the dead, cause blinded eyes to see to get people's attention... We can shake a leg, make fun of ourselves, wear nice clothes, and make sure we present ourselves in a Godly fashion."

Joe Bonsall, from another group of Gospel mavericks, the Oak Ridge Boys, has been a friend of Ernie's since his days with the Cathedrals, and sees EHSS as a new link in a chain of artists who shook up the status quo.

"They're stylish," Joe says. "I spent a lot of time laughing at their half ties. But I love those guys and I'm proud of what they're doing. Cutting edge groups – like Andrae Crouch and The Disciples and The Imperials...people didn't quite understand them, but they bring gospel music to more mass appeal. Ernie has strong desire to bring more young people to the shows. The worship crowd attracts young people...why not southern gospel?"

Mickey sees detraction as a distraction. "Some other artists don't care for what Signature Sound does and that is fine. That is why they are sing-

#S

'We weren't called to sing to NUMBERS; we were just called to SING.'



Young fans with Devin and Ernie in Santa Ana.

We're still building our crowd, we're only 8 years old.

Earlier this summer, Ernie Haase and Signature Sound sang to an audience of hundreds of thousands – when they performed their rendition of The Star-Spangled banner at the Atlanta Motor Speedway at a NASCAR event broadcast live on ESPN.

"We don't take lightly and that's not something we can make happen," Ernie says. "Some little lady liked us and handed a CD to the president of the speedway. We sang to more people in those three-and-a-half minutes than we will ever sing to!"

While Ernie will say his calling has not to do with numbers, Signature Sound certainly appeals to large audiences. The Cathedral Tribute tour will lead the group to South Africa, Australia, the United Kingdom, all of Europe, and likely to India and Brazil. Another stop is being negotiated as well: An armed forces Major is work-

'The worship crowd attracts young people... why not southern gospel?'

~Joe Bonsall, Oak Ridge Boys

sidebar continues>>

In Santa Ana.



File photo: Ernie with Scott Fowler, Glen Payne, George Younce, and Roger Bennett: The Cathedral Quartet

ing to 100 people while Signature Sound is singing to thousands each night. Don't hate- just appreciate that a group of guys are giving the fans exactly what they want."

And exactly what the fans turning out in thousands to see EHSS seem to want is a blend – of sincere ministry and true artistry.

"You've got to have a trail-

blazer, someone out there who is like a magnet to draw people," Ernie says, and he has clearly studied the topic from a business perspective. "When Michael Jordan retired, the economy in Chicago suffered, the NBA suffered. You've got to have someone who is a trailblazer, and I... we didn't ask for that, but it seems like that's what's happening, and that's what The Cathedral Quartet had. Maybe that's the mantle more than the music that George and Glen handed to us: it's being able to go out and introduce this music to a whole new world."

The new world is expanding geographically (see sidebar) as well as generationally. When the group was last in Europe, 90 percent of a typical 8000-person audience was below the age of 30. Children of pre-school age turn up at concerts, singing along to "Get Away Jordan" and enjoying Tim's booming bass inflections.

Tim declares, "We see young people, even little kids five and six years old, and they love the music. Southern gospel music and quartet music

ing on a stop in Afghanistan for the group so that they can sing for the troops.

Meanwhile, United States territory offers opportunities for the group to reach new audiences as well. When I mentioned a lack of southern gospel in my own hometown – metropolitan Chicago, Ernie had a lot to say:

"You can't change other people's business models. The Cathedrals used to go to Friday night sings in Chicago at Moody Church. We'd pack the place. But the [Moody] radio station would never play our music, because it was southern gospel. There's a little bit of stereotyping. In Chicago, you all think we're a bunch of hillbillies....bluegrass or country. Part of the thing we want to do is change that [perception]. And it's happening, slowly but surely."

It would seem that with reaching the iPod generation, one which listens to a greater variety of music than their parents and grandparents and downloads it song-by-song, a foray into more urban settings will follow suit.

"Only the Lord knows," Ernie says, "We're not called to sing to numbers; we're just called to sing, but we want to reach as many as we can.

"And some people are going to like it and some people won't. I would love to reach a more urban audience, but I don't want to alienate my crowd." Ernie's eyes light up a bit. "I would love to do collaboration with Tobey Mac... I have an idea..."

Of course he does!



will never die. It's evident because of all the people who are fans right now."

"Our concerts are full of young people because they like the art form," Ernie adds. "You don't have to sing a pop song to draw a crowd. We have some great heritage – older than even pop and rock and roll. It's been around 100 years!"

Sarah Sowash, an 18 year-old from Dyer, Indiana, considers herself the group's biggest fan: I like their songs and the moves that they have - that's cool," she laughs, before adding, "And they all are good Christian people, they all love the Lord...and I like their clothes and hair."

In attracting younger audiences – and larger audiences – than many in Southern Gospel music have been able to reach, there seems to be no desire in Ernie and the group to brag or rest on their laurels, but rather, they strive to keep improving what they bring to the platform...and to humbly work while waiting for new dynamic groups to emerge.

"Ernie Haase and Signature Sound, without being way outlandish and turning everyone off, have a desire to take gospel music to a new level," Joe Bonsall says. "They are good men, believers; they walk the walk, and there is no fooling around with them."

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

At an the SGN Music Festival in Smyrna, Tennessee this July, where groups such as The Freemans, God City, and LeFevre Quartet were singing, there was also a buzz in the audience about a simultaneous event. At the Stamps-Baxter School of Music, just across town, students were treated to a full, mid-week concert from Ernie Haase and Signature Sound, with all the equipment and theatrics that they'd bring to a theater on the weekends.

"When we were there," Tim recalls, "so many young people there who were so into what we're doing. My mind went back to when I was their age and I loved quartet music."

Ernie looks at that night as preparation for the future. "Everyone is so busy trying to survive and make a buck in this economy (not SG, everybody), they lose sight of investment. You've got to invest. So for us, to go to Stamps-Baxter School of Music....we could have rolled up in a van, sang with 2 mics and a piano. But we treated it like any other concert...lights, sound, poppin' suits, and brought it. It cost us – everyone had to get paid, even though we didn't get paid. That's an investment in the future."


The future in which Ernie is investing is one in which he sits back, hopefully still singing tenor in 20 years, but maybe a little less often. He pictures himself at age 65:

"I hope some quartets come along that just blow me away," he says. "Ones that live righteously, do it right, pay their bills, get along, not nitpick on the small stuff, and get on the stage and take it to a level we never did. And I'm going to sit back and say, 'Maybe we had just a little bit to do with that.'"

Devin sees a growth for Southern Gospel ahead, believing that people fall in love with it as an art form. "I think it's just a matter of time," he says.

Ernie adds, "And it's a matter of God's time. I would like to be like George and Glen, and have my last days be my best days. All I know to do is: be faithful, keep making great music, and doors will open." 🇺🇸

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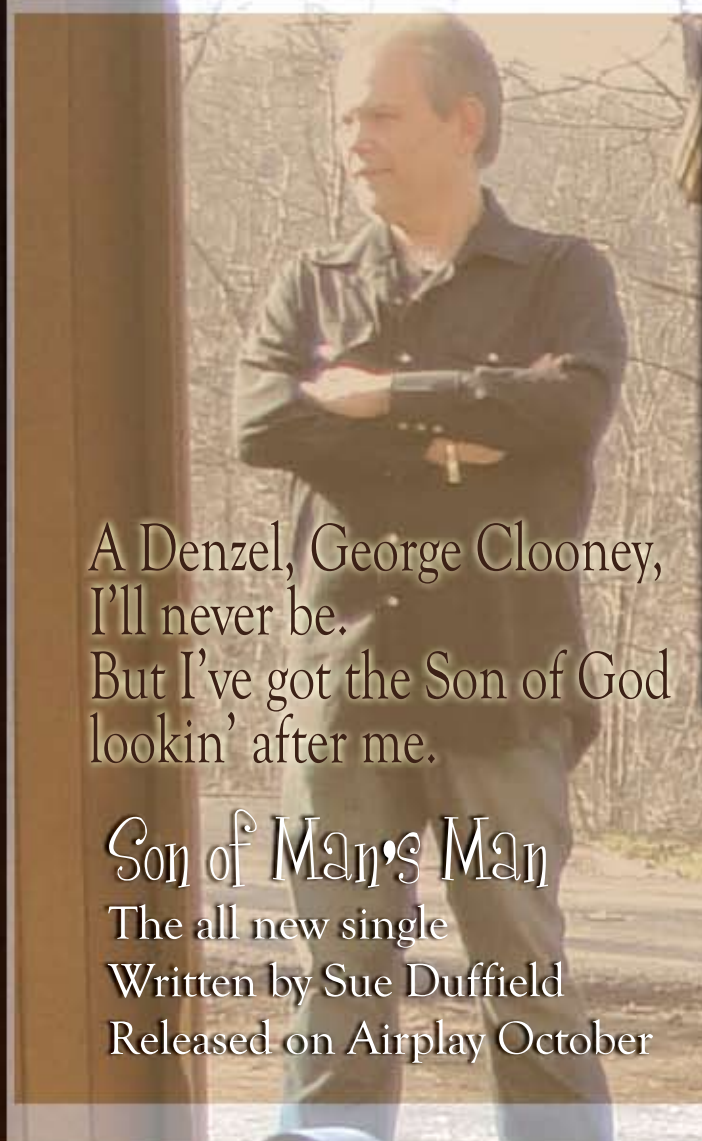
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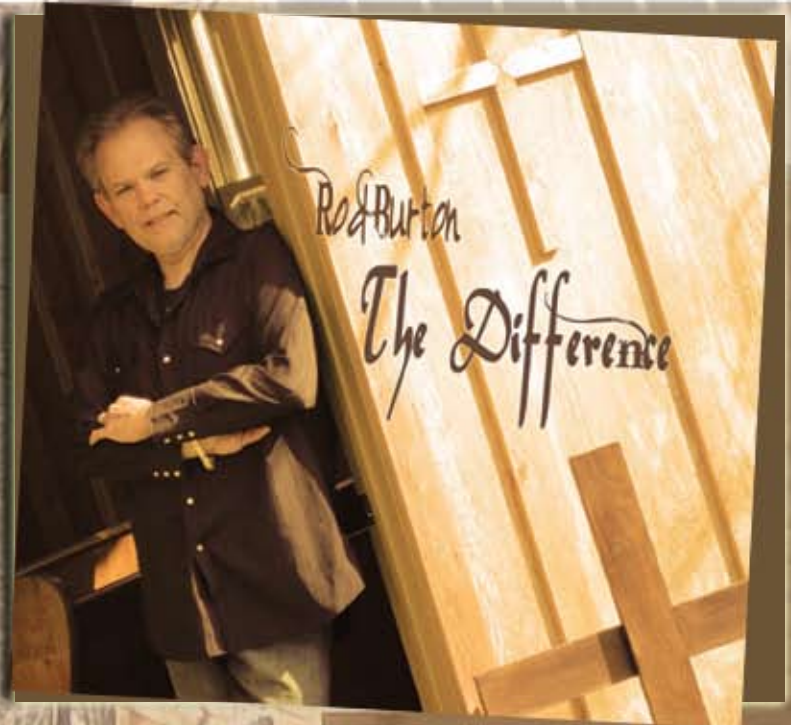
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NQC★2010

DeeAnn Bailey asks fans: WHY are you here?

Whether it is your first trip or your 40th trip, one thing is for sure the National Quartet Convention is an event that most Southern Gospel fans want to attend. For some like Carla Winn, this is their first year and for others like Rosa Davies, you have been coming most of your life.

Rosa says. "We meet up with a number of friends here each year and have been doing so for over 40 years. The group that used to meet up has gotten smaller as some of us aren't here anymore but the neat thing about NQC is we have made other friends to fall into those places." Asked who her favorite groups are Rosa replies, "They are way too many to list but the Perrys, Whisnants and Gold City are at the top of the list. Love the new Gold City! Bruce is very talented and Josh Cobb is tremendous!"

Carla is just learning her way around and spent a lot of her time with a group she did know well, Gold City, as well as the friends who convinced her to come. "I've had a lot fun; people watching is part of the fun. I've seen some very different folks here. I haven't been following SGM as long as many people here but that doesn't keep me from enjoying the music."

Another fan from Texas, Robin Waites, says, "This is my third or fourth time and it gets better every time. I'm a Hoppers fan, but I love all the music. Kim Hopper is just the best. Of course her sister-in-law

TaRanda[Greene] isn't too bad either."

When asked why she comes to NQC, Shelby Stephan says, "I grew up on this music and then my kids grew up on it. This is what we know and love and having the chance to not only hear the music but talk to the artists is great. There are a few folks here that think they are stars but the majority are everyday people that really put themselves out there."

"They understand the message is what is important," says Scott Jordan. "I know some are here just to sing and no one is 100% 'on' all the time but in recent years I've heard more and more about reaching people, making sure that the gospel is shared."

"Michael Booth last year challenged promoters and groups to not let a concert go by without sharing the gospel. It seems a number of them have taken the challenge. For those that only want music, I'm sure that is a bummer, but for those of us [who] want to see souls saved and Christians encouraged, this is an exciting time." said Toby Garrett. "We are beginning to see promoters schedule a time for a true gospel message to be brought. We are seeing more groups says 'Can I give an invitation?' We are seeing more people who are taking Michael's challenge. The Booths are one of my favorite groups and that is one of the reasons."

Debbie Corn says "I'm an Ernie Haase fan; I know many don't like him but I do. I'm glad to see him and the Gaither Vocal band back here."

Bryan Walker, former American Idol contestant and former main stage performer says, "These are my roots, whether I'm singing on the major stage or just being a part of the cheering section, this is the music I love. I'd like to be back with a group and on the main stage but that's in God's timing."

Pat Joseph says, "This is addicting, every year I say I'm not coming back. There are years the drama is intense. Just like your biological family, this family has its faults and failures; sometimes they are way too close to the surface for comfort. But just like with your real family you love them warts and all."



Sheep A. Sheep:
Another loyal NQC fan.



Mary Campbell has a very unusual way to spend her NQC time; she schedules and gives foot massages to the artists and staff that often are on their feet 8-10 hours at a time. "I've been coming for a lot of years; my memories include many of the artists that are gone on. I love it! Even though I miss a lot of the concerts to do what I do, I can't imagine anything else."

Sarah Roberts says, "I remember when Elvis came to the NQC... man, talk about divisive! Some thought it as the greatest thing since peanut butter and others thought we were going straight to hell. Almost everyone had an opinion. But we weathered that storm and so many more and are still here today. This year the storms are the [absence of the] Fan Awards and



The writer's daughter Alicia with Bryan Walker.

the people chosen to do the tribute music Saturday. We'll weather those storms too. We will weather them because that is what families do and we ARE a family. God made us one and no amount of men's goof-ups can change that!"

"I'm a little jaded today because I've been reading the blogger that everyone loves to hate; I refuse to give him any more 'space' than that," Pat Joseph adds. "I appreciate the musical crafting and a good song hook reaches out to me every time. I do think that we should strive to be the best we can be not just 'making a joyful noise' with no concern for doing things right. However, God often corrects that side of me with a good dose of reality as He will use a group whose

"I remember when Elvis came to the NQC... man, talk about divisive!"
- fan Sarah Roberts

style I don't like or one that isn't particularly talented to reach me. I'm reminded then that it

is NOT about us, it is about HIM! He chooses to move in mysterious ways."

I think Pat and Sarah have captured what many of us feel but often can't express. There are years I think the person doing the scheduling each night is just throwing darts at a dart board when deciding who will sing when. There are days that I look at who is on main stage versus who isn't and I'm convinced it is all political. But even with those times I keep coming back because Pat is right, it is addictive. 🇺🇸

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NQC★2010

100 Years of Gospel Music Celebration

When I first read about the 100th Anniversary Celebration, I thought 'That will be good' but I didn't give it a lot of thought after that. That is until I got to NQC and began talking to folks. They were EXCITED about it! The excitement was contagious!

On Friday night I was talking with Mike Leferve and he was telling me about the new Traveling Caravan with The LeFevre Quartet, The Blackwood Brothers and The Chuck Wagon Gang and again, I thought it was a great idea but I was not prepared for the song when they stepped out on the stage. WOW, the harmony of the 3 groups together was amazing and I was quickly transported back to my youth! Any concert that can make me feel young again- hey, I'm buying a ticket whenever they are close!

Each group scheduled to sing in the Traveling Caravan has a heritage with the group name. Shay is the granddaughter of Anna in the Chuck

Wagon Gang, Mike is the nephew of Urais and Alf Leferve and even sang with Alf for a while and two of James Blackwood's sons are in the Blackwood Brothers Quartet. They are not strangers to this 100 year heritage and they proudly carry the banner that has been passed to them.

I will tell you that some of this may be out of order because often I was so caught up in the moment I wasn't thinking about reporting. These are the groups I grew up with and in other cases spend my young adulthood listening too!

I'm not sure the significance of having Lulu Roman appear was but she came out and did one song early in the performance. I heard more folks questioning her being there than appreciating her appearance. I just wonder if her special friendship with Dottie Rambo was the reason.

The Rambos set was a great musical tribute to one of our greatest songwriters, Dottie Rambo and the Rambos. Reba, Destiny & Dony at times sounded identical to the old Rambo recordings. Despite all the reasons listed in various blogs, forums, etc for why Reba and Dony should not appear to do this tribute, musically no one could have done it better. Personal opinions aside, Dottie's songs were done exactly the way they were done when she was singing them. That is a fitting tribute, and a 100 year celebration without recognizing her would have been lacking. Buck's one song with them, "He Looked Beyond My Fault," was also a reminder of the times and music we loved so well.

For me one of the highlights was seeing Todd Nelon back on the bass guitar. It's funny, the 'stage bass player' was sitting down but when the Nelons came up, I told the person beside me, "No way

Todd's sitting down, I really don't know if he can play the bass sitting down." And he proved me right. Seeing so many former Nelons on stage was awesome but at the same time I admit that I longed to see some that were missing as well. A well known fact hit me as I watched the Nelons perform, the group was built by Kelly's dad, Rex and he sang bass for years, later it was Jason's dad that filled that bass part, the family tradition carried on. But Todd, Kelly, Amber, Jason, along with Katy, Melody, Paul, Karen on stage together was a treat. As they did one of their many fun songs "I'm Gonna Wear A Crown" each of the sopranos got a chance to step up with a lead part and it was neat to see them each there. I would have loved to have seen Charlotte and Janet up there as well but I understand that schedules often don't permit. Paul Lancaster did a great job but I also missed seeing Rodney Swain who held that place so long. As the group closed their set with "Oh, For A Thousand Tongues" I reflected on the many times I'd heard the song and the fact that the message never grows old.

One side bar note, I was talking to Todd Nelon on Friday and he was telling me about a lady who came to the Nelon table. Jason, Kelly & Amber were not around. A lady looked at him and then at the back drop and said "You sure don't look like a Nelon." I was rolling as he told me because he is for sure the spitting image of his dad, Rex, the original Nelon with the group. Todd laughingly told her, 'That is one thing I have NEVER heard before.'

The Downings set also brought back a lot of memories, yet it seemed somewhat disjointed. Seeing Joy, Dony, & Ann back on stage without Paul only made me realize how much he added to

A personal review by
Dee Ann Bailey



the group.

The Speers had a stage full of people and did some of the signature Speer songs. I must admit though that I was sidetracked by the actions of Sue Dodge. Clearly not used to be somewhere other than front and center with mic in hand during a 'sing-a-long' she took matters into her own hands and strode across

the back of the stage, got one mic and then as an afterthought took the mic that Bob Johnson was holding away from him and quickly moved back around the stage and out front. In a day where everyone seemed to be putting others first, this action stuck out like a sore thumb. Now she did do an outstanding job on "I Never Shall Forget The Day" but it was lost on me as well as several folks around me that had watched her actions.

The Hinson set was so Hin-

son! WOW! That was all the folks around me kept saying, over and over. WOW! And I agree with them; they may not have been the most musically correct or talented, yet they commanded a stage then and were still able to do that for this celebration. More than one person commented their pay to see a full reunion concert. (So guys, are you listening?

Jeff & Sheri joined the Lewis Tradition with a tribute to both the Lewis and Easter families that was very enjoyable. It is good to see yet more family heritage being honored.

Now as the groups move on and each group comes out, the anticipation keeps building so when Gold City hit the stage, the crowd loved every minute of it and stayed on their feet the entire first song! These guys didn't even practice before coming on stage, as Ivan wasn't there on Friday night for the rehearsal. Nineteen years since they had stood on a stage together and sung but they still did a great job. Now it helps that all of the them (Brian Free & Assurance, The LeFevre Qt and Ivan



A Hinsons reunion: Bo, Chris Freeman, Larry, and Ronnie.

© Aaron Crisler / The Judy Nelson Group

Parker) still do Gold City material with their current programs. And being a Mike LeFevre fan it was nice to see him on stage with them as well as the Traveling Caravan.

I have to admit just as with the Nelons, I would have loved to have seen other segments of this group on stage as well. David Hill, Mark Trammell, Jay Parrack and Jonathan Wilburn, adding them would have brought this up to an even higher level but that's just my opinion. As with the Hinsons I know there are a LOT of people that would pay well to see a full Gold City Reunion.

When the guys doing the Cathedral Tribute came out, Danny, Mark, Scott F, Dustin and Gerald, they did exactly what George and





Photo © Aaron Crisler / The Judy Nelson Group

Glen taught them. George often said, *Don't ever try to top a group that has had folks hanging from the rafters, slow things down and build in your own program.* That's exactly what they did; they opened with "Something About that Name" and moved through Cathedral material ending with their own high note on "Champion of Love." Gerald related how George would always sit back and watch the groups and the crowd and you never knew until you walked on stage what songs he would choose. When you thought this can't be topped, the Singing Americans walked out on the stage and once again we were transported back in time through music we all loved. Marshall Hall introduced this segment and referred to "Black &

White" and "Live & Alive" and every Singing American fan in the building knew exactly what he was referring to. I had the privilege of attending the taping of the live project referred to and it has always been one of my top choices. Michael English was a favorite then and still is. Rick Strickland showed he can still sing tenor and Ed Hill and Dwayne Burke rounded out this talented group. After a couple of songs, Michael explained how the surgery had taken some of his range but he had someone more than capable to come out and help them finish the set. He brought out Clayton Inman who helped when the notes were stretching his current range.

The Singing Americans' set and the afternoon ended with Michael's signature song, "I Bowed On My Knees" and there were few dry eyes in the building. I personally believe this two hour segment was worth my entire trip to Kentucky and my hat is off to Norman Holland, Ed Leonard and all others involved in putting it together. Thank you for letting me not just remember but enjoy, see, hear and feel the history! 🇺🇸

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STRONG Sheri

*'I love all
the good
stories.'*

It's a sentiment shared between Sheri Easter, *SGN Scoops*, and Christians worldwide. There is power in the testimony of overcomers, and at National Quartet Convention, Sheri was the picture of strength. In fact, she was aglow, kind of like a new bride or a new mommy...except this vibrant woman has been married to Jeff for 25 years and is the veteran mom of three (to five year-old daughter Maura, 17 year-old daughter Morgan, and 21 year-old son, Madison). She is also one half of one of the most -loved couples in gospel music, singing year round in of one of its most celebrated family groups, and the picture of health and wholeness just two years after her fight against breast cancer. And she is pleasantly open about the weighty, personal topic of her battle.

"Looking at it from here, it just seems like it's not real. There are days I am overwhelmed with how tough that period was in our lives," Sheri reflects. "But it's one of those things... I do talk about it, because I think it's important to remind women that early detection is the key. And I have had many, many ladies... at least 20, 30, maybe even 40, come up to me and say, 'Because you talked about breast cancer, I went to the doctor.' And



By Kelly Capriotti Burton



Sheri Easter - Promotional photo. ©

there have been several of those women who did not have to go through a difficult treatment because they caught it so early."

One of the testimonies Sheri gratefully recollects is a woman who told Sheri she was praying for her, otherwise she never would have been thinking about breast cancer. She felt impressed to visit her doctor, and had a much more serious type, which required a year of chemotherapy. She's doing wonderfully now."

Sheri recalls that when she was in the midst of her cancer treatments, she didn't want to hear that "someone had breast cancer and died; I wanted to hear that someone had breast cancer and overcame it." This, she says, is why she is very quick to offer realistic encouragement to others. "Yes, it was tough, but praise God, I am cancer free, 26 months and counting. I am looking for every year to be added on that that."

Sheri was alone when she got the biopsy alerting her doctor to the diagnosis. Jeff was waiting for her in the car because "We didn't expect bad news" (see their current CD title, Expecting Good Things and note the consistency of that mindset!). She found at four in the afternoon, didn't tell anyone, sang at a concert that night, and saw a doctor the next morning, where the course of action for her treatment was discussed.

But the news would not stay secret for long, mainly because Sheri, a singer in the public eye for three decades, wanted to be in charge of how her condition was presented. Still

"I don't care who you are, even if you just walked off the runway, there is something about yourself you don't like, and you're just going to have to make peace with it."

in the doctor's office, she says, "I looked at Jeff and said, 'We have to get a blog, we have to get something on our website right now because I don't want any miscommunication. I am very strict about letting [news] come from the horse's mouth.'" Over time, Sheri shared every detail she was given, noting the toughness of sharing something so personal, but not wanting to leave anything open-ended.

Another challenge of balancing treatment with public persona was the Easter's travel schedule. Though Sheri only missed one concert weekend due to her breast cancer, she did have to alter her role to accommodate her health, as the post-operative pain she experienced was difficult to shield from crowds.

"For the first time in over 30 years of ministry, I had to stay on the bus when I wasn't singing," she recalls. "It was frustrating every night. I like the response from and interaction with people, and you can't stop being who you are or change who your family is...it is a tough balancing act."

Sheri's own aunt had been through breast cancer twice over 18 years and served as an inspiration to her, having never missed a concert. Sheri herself only missed one concert weekend as well, the one surrounding her surgery. "I sent Jeff," she says. "Those people were waiting for a year for that date. I told him, 'You tell them I love them and I miss seeing them."



Photo © Paul Wharton / Wharton Photo



Morgan, Sheri,
and Jeff Easter
sing at the April
2010 SGMA
Harmony Honors.
Photo by Aaron
Crisler for Gospel-
MusicUpdate.com

Tell them I am fine.” Jeff held the concerts with Morgan and Shannon Norman, Sheri’s assistant and Madison’s fiancé. They were surrounded by the Easter and Lewis families all weekend while Madison attended to Sheri.

The battle with breast cancer – after which Sheri is not surviving but thriving, is just a chapter in the

story that showcases her as a strong and healthy woman. The years of wisdom gleaned from a life on the road as well as the belief she carries in the gospel message she sings resonate when she speaks. “I am an overly optimistic person,” she says simply. “I am always the first to say that God has a plan in something... ‘Maybe God...blah blah blah...’” Her daughter Morgan laughs next to her as she says this, and they agree that it is Moran’s tendency to sometime frame things in a more negative perspective. Sheri is trying to instill the opposite, and on that note... how does a breast cancer survivor teach her daughters, in particular, about feeling healthy and beautiful?



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"I spent some time making peace with this new body of mine..." Sheri says. "I have never loved a perfect body in my life and I probably will never love a perfect body. I don't care who you are, even if you just walked off the runway, there is something about yourself you don't like, and you're just going to have to make peace with it. That's what I tell Morgan all the time: Love yourself, love your body exactly the way you are. And if you don't like something, do what you can to change it or accept it."

Sheri speaks with a confidence that comes with experience and mo-

'Love yourself, love your body exactly the way you are. And if you don't like something, do what you can to change it or accept it.'

tivation that indeed stems from a threat to her health. "I am extremely excited about exercising these days!" she says. "Especially since it's the only thing that substantially reduced the risk or increase of cancer."

With a mischievous look in her eyes, Sheri tells us, "I have discovered the secret to being thin and healthy: it's called diet and exercise!"

After some banter about the best-selling tome that would be, Sheri describes in more detail how she lives "the secret." Especially since being on the road is a lifestyle that can interfere with healthy choices, with its late hours and unpredictability. How does someone keep up with fitness and nutrition this way?

"I've always exercised," she starts. "But now, I try to do things that make it interesting, rather than walking or doing same video every day. And I am so excited: after breast cancer, I can do 50-something push-ups, mountain climbers, plyometrics (Ed note: I had to ask Sheri what this is, then I had to research it, and now, I must try it!), jumping jacks with weights. It's absolutely crazy what I'm doing now."

She continues, "I recently heard that unless you push your body, you're not really changing your body: so I like the fact that I am sweating more these day. [So I suggest] Do something to shake up the mix some!"

During Sheri's description of her regime, Morgan is giggling. She sums her fitness strategy in a few less words: "I just drink a lot of water!" Actually,

after years of dance, gymnastics, cheerleading, and tennis - along with piano - she stopped everything for awhile. "I like watching people exercise," she says unapologetically, as Sheri and I marvel at the metabolism of youth.

At her mom's side, Morgan talks matter-of-factly about how Sheri's breast cancer changed her life, mainly focusing on prevention and early mammograms. Together, they testify to their perspective in the aftermath. *Morgan:* "It opened my eyes that the thing you least suspect can happen."

Sheri: "Every breath is because God has allowed it. It never crossed my mind that I could die."

Morgan: "It never crossed any of our minds."

Sheri: It's because I trusted God implicitly... I never asked for breast cancer, but I wouldn't trade what I learned from it for anything. 🇳🇮

According to reasearch cited on PinkRibbon.org, in 2004, 186,772 women and 1,815 men were diagnosed with The same year, 40,954 women and 362 men died from breast cancer. We believe along with Sheri that God is the Great Physican and that early detection is key in easing treatment. We encourage you to check your risk factors and see your physican. For more information, visit breastcancer.org or cancer.org.

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Whether picking up a Diamond Award, sharing Rob's birthday cake, or stopping for a chat, many of your favorites made themselves at home at our NQC booth or during a visit with Rob, Kelly, or Rhonda! Thanks to Denise Salchow for the photography!



The Faithfulness of Sue Dodge

By Rhonda Frye

NQC★2010



Four time Dove Award winner and Gospel Music Hall of Fame inductee Sue Dodge has been singing the Gospel of Jesus Christ since 1969 sharing the stage with Gospel Music's most legendary veterans.

At the young age of 19, Sue Dodge sang with The Downings for 18 months then was invited to sing with The Speer Family. Singing and touring with the Speer Family was a dream come true. For four & half years she toured the country with one of the most loved Gospel groups of all time and was personally mentored by Brock and Faye Speer. Before long, Sue captured the attention of legendary Bill Gaither and her life was changed forever.

For four decades Sue's Ministry has crossed denominational lines as she's made appearances at churches such as Charles Stanley's First Baptist Church in Atlanta, The

Church on The Way in Los Angeles with Dr. Jack Hayford, The Brooklyn Tabernacle in New York with Pastor Jim Cymbala and Moody Church in Chicago. Her national and international radio and television appearances include *In Touch with Dr. Charles Stanley*, *The 700 Club*, TBN and every week she is on a Gaither Homecoming Series program.

Only her character off stage can match the accomplishments Sue has made from the stage. Her heart for people, love for God, and commitment to her church and family is to what she attributes her "staying power."

Sue Dodge is loved and respected by legends of the past, living legends, and her peers. Accolades from Geron Davis to Vestal Goodman to Russ Taff Listen tell of how the Holy Spirit works through her to communicate with people and the how her vocal gift and passion work

together.

In an exclusive interview with *SGN Scoops* at the National Quartet Convention - 2010, Sue Dodge shared how her commitment to the vision of the local church has kept her grounded. It has been Sue's top priority to support her husband's pastoral ministry. Sue married Amos Dodge 36 years ago and enjoys a rock solid, joyful relationship today.

The secret, she says, is, "Love and listen. Listen with the heart, sometimes we listen with the "head" and it's not the same."

Sue has served in many roles within the church such as leading Women's Ministries, Music Ministries, Bible Studies and more. Although her schedule is hectic, it has been her habit to catch an early flight home so that she can be back on the piano stool by Sunday morning. Sue has the ability to



connect with a wide variety of audiences and has a heart for women's ministries. When Sue isn't singing or serving in her local church, she is leading Women's Retreats.

There are times she leads music in addition to speaking, but her heart is for women to hear the message of hope. With much passion, Sue stated: "We aren't meant to stumble through life, but dance through life!" Women face many challenges that steal hope therefore the theme of many of the retreats is *I hope you dance*.

In four decades of singing, Sue has experienced trials. She transparently spoke of a specific experience of losing her voice for five months. Sue explained the devastation a singer feels at the loss of a voice because often times the singer associates his/her identity with the voice. During this period God comforted Sue

with these words: "I love you on the basis of who you are not what you do." Sue asked: "If my singing were taken away would I still have an identity? Yes. The answer is YES!" Sue has used this experience and God's spoken word to comfort and pray for Gaither Vocal Band's Michael English as he recently experienced a similar situation with losing his voice.

Sue Dodge has released many CDs and those can be purchased from her website, however she is very excited to have added a couple of new products in the recent months. *The Best of Sue Dodge* is Sue's very first video collection from the Gaither Homecoming Series. After many recordings as a soloist and with groups, this DVD brings together Sue's most loved performances from the Gaither Homecoming Series and tells

the heart-warming story of God's amazing plan for this former beauty contestant. Just prior to its release, Bill Gaither stated: "[Sue's] powerful and radiant personality has endeared her to audiences from every walk of life but it's more than her voice and her charisma that have drawn people to the good news for so long. I truly believe it is her heart that has given Sue Dodge staying power. We are honored for this opportunity to get a deeper look into the heart and life of Sue Dodge."

The other new product is *Simply Southern Cookin'* the long awaited collection of family favorite recipes, including Sue's favorite, fresh strawberry cake. Sue can personally vouch for every dish inside, for she has personally made everything found in the cookbook compiled of her very own family's favorites.

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she has accomplished much and has moved and inspired many. After hearing her sing her rendition of "God Bless America," the late President Ronald Reagan with tears in his eyes said, "Young lady, you leave me speechless." Although she has become a legend in her own time, she is an inspiration to all for she has never lost her focus on pleasing God above all else.

In a promotional interview with Bill Gaither, Sue was asked, "What do you want people to say about you when you are gone?"

She didn't mention her Dove awards or other achievements, but replied, "I hope they would remember me as a faithful person. Faithful in my relationships, as a friend, as a mother, as a wife, and as a grandmother. And... faithful to the call that God has put on my life. I don't take it lightly. Ultimately I would

hope that God himself would say "Well done good and faithful servant. That's all I could ever ask for."

As Sue looks to the future, her advice to upcoming artists is offered as well. "Too many people are trying to become what they want to be instead of pursuing what God wants them to be," she says. "Do what God hands you and be faithful to what God gives. Let Him give the assignments and be faithful where God leads. His ways are higher, what He has is better."

Sue at the Gaither Homecoming Singalong during this year NQC.



Photo © Aaron Crisler / The Judy Nelson Group

"Faithfulness" has been the key to the success of Sue Dodge. The world of Gospel Music has watched her be faithful to God and has witnessed God rewarding her for that faithfulness. Only God knows the rewards that lie in the future and beyond what we will see on earth. To God be the glory!

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The Mandrell Family: A Gift for Nashville as Opryland is Reborn

By Rhonda Frye

In May 2010, the city of Nashville was struck with the worst disaster to hit middle Tennessee since the Civil War. From May 1 to May 3, torrential rains descended, relentlessly engulfing much of "Music City." The 2010 Nashville Flood was perhaps the costliest non-hurricane disaster in American history. Residences and businesses as well as historic landmarks were destroyed. Tragically, several lives were literally swept away as some people drowned while sitting still on the interstate.

The 2010 Nashville Flood is also known as "The Disaster You May Have Never Heard About" due to the lack of national media coverage. It appeared Nashville faced their crisis alone as the eyes of the nation were glued on the oil crisis in the gulf. For weeks following the flood, heart-wrenching images surfaced on the internet, with many pictures and videos portray the heroic story of how the city of Nashville pulled together during this disaster. It was truly a time of brother helping brother, for there wasn't an "outbreak" of crimes such as looting which is typically common during a disaster such as this.

Other than the loss of life, perhaps the saddest news piercing the heart of Nashville was the damage reports from Gaylord Opryland Resort and its surrounding campus. Opryland Hotel is the largest non-casino hotel in the world and the largest hotel in the United States outside Las Vegas.

On May 3, 2010 the hotel complex and campus was submerged by 5-10 feet of floodwaters. Pictures from inside the hotel showed Cascades restaurant flooded with debris and water as were the adjacent tropical gardens. It soon became clear the iconic Opryland Hotel and the Grand Ole Opry had suffered extensive damage by the unprecedented floods, shutting down all operations for many months. The city of Nashville was hard-hit

and grief stricken with loss – of property, jobs and in a sense- loss of history.

Since May's flood, the city of Nashville has displayed an incredible resilience and an impressive spirit of volunteerism. Volunteers and crews have labored tirelessly cleaning the flood's aftermath. Every suffering business was anxious to get back into full operation, but perhaps Gaylord Opryland Hotel had a little more motivation to get things cleaned and renovated quickly.

For years, the hotel has bedazzled guests in an effort to create "memories of a life time" during the Christmas season. It has been the tradition to captivate guests with extravagant Christmas decorations, breath taking nativities, exquisite food, and entertainment. The Travel Channel's Extreme Christmas called Opryland Hotel "The Most Christmassy Hotel in the Nation." *Travel & Leisure Magazine* named it as "one of the top ten places to spend Christmas in the world."

Recently, officials from Gaylord Opryland Hotel & Convention Center announced that cleanup and renovations were complete and a "Grand Opening" could be expected in November- just in time to carry on its Christmas tradition! Opryland Hotel will celebrate its grand re-opening with the 27th annual- "A Country Christmas" on November 19th. "A Country Christmas" includes more than two million lights and more than a dozen shows and attractions, including the return (for the third year in a row) of Louise Mandrell's Christmas Dinner & Show opening November 26th.

Many know Louise Mandrell as a multi-talented entertainer that has captivated audiences for more than three decades. She is adored for her ability to pour her heart and soul into every endeavor whether she is performing live on stage, recording in



the studio, writing, speaking or volunteering in the community. It seems Louise has been successful at everything she has touched. She has recorded many albums with hit songs landing in the top 10. Louise sings, dances, amuses AND is a master instrumentalist playing over 13 instruments making her an unforgettable impressive "total package" in the entertainment world. In the late 90s, Louise opened "The Louise Mandrell Theater" in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. During its eight year run, it was one of the most popular tourist attractions of the Great Smokey Mountains and staged the most attended show.

Louise Mandrell's Christmas Dinner show at Gaylord Opryland promises to delight audiences of all ages as it has in years past. Matthew Dudney, Louise's nephew, son of Barbara Mandrell, and former host of Louise Mandrell's Pigeon Forge Theater, will host the show. Matthew's wife, Christian Artist/Songwriter Christy Sutherland, will be starring along with Louise Mandrell & band.

Although Christy Sutherland married into the Mandrell family a few years ago she has made a name for herself all on her own. She is an accomplished vocalist making appearances on shows such as "The 700 Club" and Hour of Power national television shows, Robert Schuler's Crystal Cathedral Christmas and Easter shows and at the late Jerry Falwell's Thomas Road Baptist Church & Liberty University. She has taped her first Gaither Homecoming video and in 2009, she sang at the Southern Gospel Hall of Fame awards. Singing is just one of many talents assigned to Christy, who has also composed country music in years past and more recently Christian Compositions and hit songs claiming numerous Dove and Grammy Award Nominations.

The Mandrell family is very excited about this year's show. In an interview with *SGNScoops*, Louise Mandrell explained how Christmas should be a joyful time of year- especially this year.

"In Nashville, so many things are coming back together. This is *huge*! So many people are getting their jobs back; they're getting to go back to work!"

Though Louise was not in Nashville at the time of the flood, she recalls telephone updates with Matt and Christy. "In country music, we are like one big family... it was just devastating, really unbelievable. I didn't get to see what was going on; national news just didn't cover the story."

Christy shared: "High School aged boys were rescuing people in flat bottom boats picking up people literally stuck on the roof. The scariest pictures were those



Left: Louise Mandrell. Above: Christy Sutherland performs. Below: The tireless rebuilding efforts at Gaylord Opryland Resort.



of the Grand Ole Opry. The tables and chairs in the room where we sang last year were just floating."

None of the buildings on Louise Mandrell's property were flooded, although medical supplies for her husband were flown in by helicopter - orchestrated by friends of Louise. "This community pulled together in an unbelievable way. You just didn't hear anything negative other than about the water. When it was over, you heard story after story of how people helped each other," recalled Louise.

In light of Gaylord Opryland's re-opening, this year's Louise Mandrell Dinner & Show has received a make-over too. There will be new songs, new choreography and maybe a surprise or two. Christy Sutherland will perform her Christmas song "A Cry In The Dark" that was recently picked up by Lifeway, but this year it will be included in a medley. Louise, Christy, and Matt will

play guitars and mandolin together giving the audience a chance to see what it's like hanging out in their living room.

"We are a normal family, Christmas is our favorite holiday. We are celebrating how we normally live our lives, Christ is in our life," says Louise, who amazes audiences as she plays many different instruments.

Louise admitted, "I'm adding a surprise instrument- one I've never played before to this year's show." In addition to the boundless energy of singing and dancing there will be great story telling and lots of comedy.

"This show is family friendly, even young children enjoy it. Aunt Lou holds their attention the whole time," claims Christy.

Louise, Matt, and Christy expressed their admiration for Gaylord Opryland for allowing the show's theme to revolve around the true meaning of Christmas. "We are not ashamed that it is a Christ centered show... and the coolest part- Gaylord allows it without reservation," Matt says. "Gaylord even displays the most beautiful and largest nativities in the world."

"At the beginning (of our show) you feel like you're going to church. There is organ, piano- kind of a big band church sound. It's an amazing thing to get to participate in," Louise adds. "Gaylord has been wonderful especially in this day and age to allow me to put on a show where I can be outspoken about my faith."

"Opening year," Christy recalls, "We prayed over each table that God would bring peace and hope to the people sitting there. It was amazing to see people worshipping God during the show. It's such a neat thing to bring in unbelievers; I know I felt the presence of God."

Although there will be lots of music, fun and entertainment, the theme of this year's show is called "The Gift" and the true meaning of Christmas will be celebrated. "Joy to the world was the theme of our first show because that's what happened! Christ came into the world to

bring joy. I just want to see everyone at Christmas in a joyful place with a joyful spirit," Louise says. T

he audience is bound to feel a sense of joy at the show. There is a contagious spirit of joy flowing naturally from Louise, Christy, and Matt. There is also an obvious unique chemistry and fondness of one another stretching beyond family bonds into the realm of friendship.

Louise Mandrell's *The Gift* has been carefully planned and the cast is rehearsing. "Rehearsal just can't be missed," said Louise- except on church days- Christy makes us go!" The schedule is jammed packed running from November 26- December 25.

Even on Christmas day, when the show is also performed, Louise says, "I take [my family] with me and put them to work."

Just as every detail for the actual show has been planned, details for the dinner have been planned as well. This year's guests will be served a wonderful meal including all the holiday trimmings. Having an exquisite dinner is important to Matt- he was a chef for 17 years. He claims the food "will be impressive ...including the kind of things you would get at your Grandmother's."

Louise, Matt and Christy extend a warm invitation to Louise Mandrell's *The Gift* Dinner & Show this holiday season as they celebrate the reason for the season and the re-opening of Gaylord Opryland.

At the conclusion of the interview, Louise Mandrell had these passionate words to share: "Christmas truly can be an emotional time- it can be a lonely time.

Christmas is a time to be prayerful, to praise and a time to remember. No one should ever be alone at Christmas. If you find yourself alone, get out and volunteer. Maybe you can't get out- then find out if there is something you can do as a volunteer at home... Maybe there is someone you can call. Christmas is a very emotional time, but no one ever needs to be alone."

For more information, visit louisemandrell.com or the official Opryland site.

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A: Admit that you are a sinner.

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

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

Romans 5:8- But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

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

Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him. Your prayer might sound something like this:

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

Please remember that simply saying a prayer doesn't save you. You must believe this in your heart as well.

If you have any questions about salvation, or if you just prayed to receive Christ, please e-mail us at sgnscoops@gmail.com. We'd love to rejoice with you! God bless you!



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just heard that we're no longer in a recession. This is great news... now all we need to do is tell that to my 401k (and the numerous people I know who still need a job)! When bad things happen (like your 401k becoming your 201k), the best thing to do is make lemonade out of lemons... or so I've been told. So, if the economy has still got you down and you're looking for a job, you may want to consider some of these jobs which are really in demand!

Burger Joint Entrepreneur: Ok, I've read that McDonald's is making mullah by the barrel-full because of their \$1 menu. It's our turn America! We can make our own burgers and sell them for \$1 too! Think of it as a 21st century lemonade stand. The only training you'll really need is to figure out how they're able to consistently have the burger sticking out one side of the bun and have no burger whatsoever on the other half of the bun. Also, a small child (3-5 yrs. old) with big, sad, blue eyes selling the burgers will work nicely...plus the labor is cheap.

Road Construction Sign Holder: This is a great job for you if you like to stand. The only other requirement is that you turn the sign every 30-60 seconds... if you forget it's really not a big deal. Should you decide to interview for this job, here's the key to getting the job- look experienced! Slouch a lot, use the sign to hold most of your weight, and nod off between flipping the sign. You're a sure-fire hire! Oh, and on your first day to make a good impression on the guys... take a marker and change the "Men at Work" sign to say "Men NOT at Work." It'll kill! Trust me.

Human Billboard: Don't tell me there isn't a small part of you that's always wanted to be the guy in the middle of the intersection modeling the huge cardboard signs on each side of him. This is especially a good job for tall people. (I believe you get paid depending on your height, because then you can sell more commercial space). If you're short, don't worry, just stack another short friend on your shoulders and you'll be set! Remember, it's your job to get people's attention, so do whatever you need to: the chicken dance, use a smoke machine for accent, stand on your head... anything to get people's attention! Hint: Call in sick on rainy days... Me thinks the job would stink!

IOU Printer: If you didn't hear... last year, California printed taxpayers "IOUs" lieu of their income tax refunds. I see this starting a huge trend for the entire country. everyone will be printing IOUs! Now's the time to



A Humorous Pause BY RYAN BOMGARDNER

step out and be bold! Start your own company that sells IOUs! A printer, paper, ink and you'll be good to go! Don't be dissuaded by the naysayers of this world. They're the same people who scoffed at the invisible pet leash idea, 8 track tapes, the clapper, and chia pets! I just may be your first customer. I'm considering an IOU when I pay my income tax in April.

As for me... I'll stick to this crazy job where I get paid to play with dolls.... It's called ventriloquism! Keep Laughing at Life!

Ryan Bomgardner
(www.ryanandfriends.com)

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P.S. For the record, Ryan has many friends that work in construction and knows that they do much more than hold signs.



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Shakespeare once said "All the world's a stage," but I never imagined that I would be singing on Bill Gaither's stage that is. As fall approach-

es, I remember covering many of Shakespeare's classical plays as I taught high school English. The smell of harvest festivals and the feeling of football game weather dance across my face. I can almost taste the cotton candy and feel the cold Alabama nights as the home team runs across the field. However, this fall I am experiencing all new sights, smells, and sounds.

One year ago I stood in front of a classroom filled with teenagers as I taught them literature and grammar. Today I stand in front of thousands of Southern Gospel music fans, hoping to teach them about what God has done for me. People ask me all the time if I'm glad I don't have to teach anymore. Do I miss grading essay after essay? Absolutely NOT! However, I believe that being a teacher is just as much a ministry as singing is. After teaching for three years, I believe God allowed me to learn assets that I would need not only in the classroom but on stage as well. He taught me to have compassion for people. I'll never forget listening to thousands of stories the kids would tell me of all their adventures on the weekends or how they were struggling with an issue at home. To some people, it would have been a nightmare, but for me, it was like I was getting an inside look at the heart of Jesus. Never did I know, He was preparing me for the thousands of stories I would hear at the New River table, stories of battle, struggle, death, and triumph.

This fall Karen Peck and New River has quite an exciting schedule. We are on the Bill Gaither Homecoming Tour and getting ready to head to the west coast. This is such a dream come true for me. I can remember

heading home early from church on Wednesday nights when I was in fifth grade because I wanted to be right in front of the television screen to watch the Bill Gaither Gospel Hour. I remember hearing the Isaacs sing "The Least I Can Do," and I was instantly hooked. I also remember hearing Candy Christmas sing "I Know the Master of the Wind" and Janet Paschal sing "I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel." It would be these songs that would forever create in me a desire to minister in song.

Another dream of mine was singing

Photo By Dan Newborn



I believe that being a teacher is just as much a ministry as singing is.

on the NQC main stage. Just a year ago, I competed in the talent show at NQC and placed in the top ten. Never in a million years would I have ever thought I would be singing on the main stage one year later.

I am a true testament that God will give you the desires of your heart in His time. How incredible it was for me to sing on stage with groups I have listened to my entire life. One special moment was getting to sing a chorus of "I Am Not Ashamed of the Gospel" and then hearing Janet Paschal sing this very song that inspired me to dream.

Although I do miss challenging the students "To Be or Not to Be," I am thrilled to carry His songs and message to a world that truly needs Jesus. He is "The Master of the Wind," and "The Least I Can Do Is Live for Him." 🇳🇵

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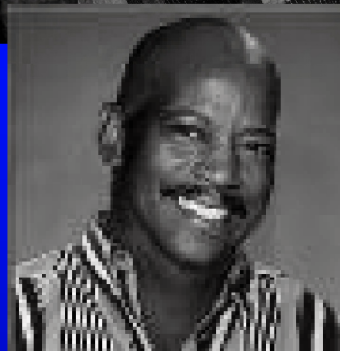
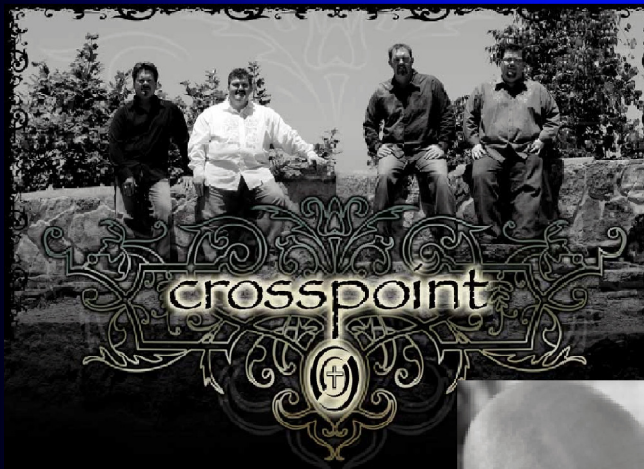
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