

The Official Redd Stewart Newsletter

Ambridge Music, Inc. P.O. Box 10708 Norfolk, VA 23513



Traveling The Country Roads CONTEST



For those of you who may not have visited our web site recently, we ran a unique contest for everyone to test their Country music knowledge! We chose our latest contest to be about the different country roads in the United States that some of our legends and pioneers of Traditional & Western Country Music traveled down throughout their musical careers. Our contest revealed a little about where some of these legends and pioneers traveled, performed, and maybe even where some were born. It may have taken a little digging and/or asking around to find the answers to some of our questions, but our grand prize

made it all worth while!

The Contest consisted of six (6) questions pertaining to Country music performers. Our participants simply sent us an e-mail, or mailed us the answers to all six (6) questions, including their full name, mailing address, and a little about themselves. All entries with the correct answers to *all* six questions qualified for our contest drawing. Once we had reached the contest deadline (April 30, 2005), we randomly drew the name of the winner. The winner was then contacted and his/her name was posted on our site!

Contest Date: March 28, 2005 through April 30, 2005

Contest Winner: The winner of our "Traveling the Country Roads Contest" will win a 1-year free subscription to the magazine, **Country Discoveries**.

Country Discoveries is a reader-written magazine, published every other month, that leads you along the byways throughout North America. Their travel-savvy readers pack every issue with tips about the best backroads finds coast to coast, from unusual museums to quirky festivals to stunning scenery to mom-and-pop diners with delicious down-home cooking. But Country Discoveries isn't just a magazine for viewing—it's also designed for doing! Each issue's dozens of destinations are organized into color-coded geographic regions, making it easy to find what you're looking for, and every story offers the important details you need before you visit. Their web site,

www.countrydiscoveries.com, Their web site, www.countrydiscoveries.com, supplements each issue with even more information on various destinations. Whether you're planning a quick weekend getaway or a leisurely cross-continental journey, you'll find **Country Discoveries** a helpful travel companion!

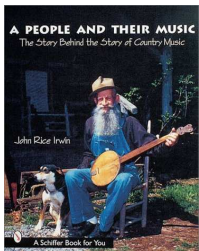
(We want to thank Country Discoveries for their generous offer of a 1-year free subscription to their magazine for our contest winner!)



Along with the 1-year subscription to **Country Discoveries** the winner received our latest release of Redd's solo CD titled, "I Remember," a copy of our first edition cookbook titled, "Tennessee Waltzing in the Kitchen," and an 8x10 glossy photo of Redd Stewart— lead singer/songwriter with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys.

***Traveling The Country Roads Contest can be found on our web site. Winner will be posted May 9th!**

American Country Music Book



"A People And Their Music" by John Rice Irwin

For those of you whom love old-time, Traditional Country music, and want to learn more about the pioneers who started this music, this book is for you! The story behind the story of American country music goes back to Appalachian roots and the people who sang for local audiences and early radios in the early 20th century. No matter what you call the songs now--country, folk, traditional, old-time, hillbilly, and bluegrass--it is the music of a special breed of talented people who were part of one of the most interesting musical and entertain-

ment stories in America's history. In their own words and those of family members, these tales relate the hard work, luck, and do-it-yourself independence of the pioneers of this music. Some became household names while others were important but remained almost totally unknown to the general public. Here you meet the Carter family, Jack Jackson, Bob Douglas, Grandpa Jones, Bashful Brother Oswald, Mac Wiseman, Earl Scruggs, Raymond Fairchild, Redd Stewart and other greats of the field. Their touching personal stories and 190 photographs showing the artists with their instruments, families, and audiences, bring this musical heritage to life for modern listeners. You can purchase this book at:

www.amazon.com (\$29.95).... well worth

the money!

Food For Thought . . .

Here is something to make you think a little!

If you went out to the pet store today, bought a new parrot and brought it back to your house, what is the first thing the parrot would learn to say?

In our house, I'm sure it would be **"TENNESSEE WALTZ!"**



A New Friend . . .



Sharon, Nice to meet you! I think it's a wonderful thing you are doing to get Redd into the Hall of Fame. I grew up listening to all the songs of the 50's. My parents had a western swing band for over 50 years and I began singing "Tennessee Waltz" at the early age of 10. It was one of my mom's favorite songs to play on the piano.

I am having great success with my "Songs of Patsy Cline" CD in Europe. In fact a month ago "Tennessee Waltz" was listed for future Chart Action on the

EMCA. Two weeks ago I was listed in the Top 100 Chart for "Crazy". With this success I am planning another Country CD and I am looking at "You Belong To Me" for the song list. I will let you know as we get closer to recording. I believe great music will be appreciated by any age group and deserves to be heard. "Tennessee Waltz" is one of those great songs. It certainly is the most well received country waltz of our generation. My best to you and your family..... Laini

Laini's Story

You know from the first note that Laini Risto is at home with swing tunes and ballads. She sings them like they're old, comfy friends. And there's good reason for that - she's been belting out these songs since the age of five, when she started singing with her

family's '40s dance band, the RistoKats. There was always a crooner or torch singer on the record player at home. Her idols and first music teachers growing up were artists like Patsy Cline, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, Rosemary Clooney, Patti Page and Doris Day.

After several years of classical voice training in college and soloing in the Pacific Northwest and Europe, she returned to her roots. For several years, she has dazzled audiences singing with swing bands and charming crowds at fairs, festivals and jazz clubs in Washington, Oregon, California and Texas.

www.performancehosting.net/~lainiristo/index.php

Joe Penny . . . One of Hank Williams' Drifting Cowboys



Little Jimmy Dickens Opry Tour-1952
L. to R.: Joe Pennington, Little Jimmy Dickens, Billy Stewart (Redd's brother) (fiddle), Autry Inman (bass), and Thumbs Carlisle (lead guitar).

Joe Penny would play with several bands over the years, not knowing the effect that

some of them would have on his life for years to come. He met up with a guy named Clyde Chriswell in Tampa who hooked Joe up with Hank Williams. **He joined Hank Williams' Drifting Cowboys for \$7 a show, while living at the boarding house Hank's mother Lilly Stone owned in Montgomery.**

Joe is now retired and lives with his 44 year old wife Frankie in Plant City, Fla. He still provides songs and music for a number of churches, an occasional nursing home, and even stage concerts.

He was inducted in the Rockabilly Hall Of Fame in 2001. Joe has released a cassette tape titled **"A Tribute To Hank Williams"**, all of the songs are written and performed by Joe Pennington in the sound of the Hank tradition. He has also written a book titled **"Lookin' Back On Hank"** that describes his time with Hank Williams and the other Country music greats that he has performed with.

picasongjoepenny@webtv.net
<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/joepenny>

A Note From Billy . . .



The other night I was in my home studio listening to some old demo recordings dad had done at a Nashville studio. While listening to the music, I was

amazed at how simple it was compared to what is being recorded today. In my studio I am surrounded by loads of high-tech gear that my father never even saw in his lifetime, and the technology we musicians have today is something my father could only dream about! But even with all this wonderful technology at our finger tips, we don't seem to capture in today's music, the *magic* that was created by the founding musicians of Country music. We spend thousands of dollars in state-of-the-art studios with the finest engineers money can buy, only to produce a product that is here today and gone tomorrow. Very few songs written today have any staying power. Try to hear today's number one hit on the radio five years from now. Good Luck! Perhaps it's because we have so much more music to

listen to these days, or maybe it's because this new generation of listeners get bored easily, or maybe we could blame it on the radio stations. But if you ask my opinion, I think it's because we have lost the *magic*! We are so busy trying to write the next million-seller song that we have forgotten what makes a great song to begin with. Rather than following the newest formula for writing hits, which produces the cookie cutter effect, the writers of my father's era wrote from their own life's experiences.

Case in point: In the song, "Tennessee Waltz", my mother was the darlin' and my father was the one who stole her away. Get the picture! My father wrote about his own life experience. When you write from your heart there is emotions in the words not found in a lot of music today. A lot of writers today are creating fictional stories that they themselves did not take part in. Where is the emotion in that? It has become more about the money than the music, and that is sad. Now don't get me wrong, not everything that is coming out of Nashville and the music industry in general is bad. But let's face it, it's getting pretty sterile!

The founding fathers of Country music were not trying to be the next superstar, and with what they got paid to play it sure wasn't about the money. They were simply sharing with you a little peek into their own lives through the gift that God had given them. That gift we know as music.

Now with all that said, there is a lesson to be learned from all this. As I sat and pondered on this new revelation, I wondered what had brought about this change. Here is my conclusion for what it is worth. We have become a nation that is very much about the money. If you don't believe me just look around. Americans work more hours than any other country in the world. In our quest to have it all and have it now, we have become workaholics. In exchange for stuff, we have given up our lives. Our lives have become sterile. In other words, we have no life other than work and a few insignificant moments that are not what I would call memory makers. So rather than write about the life we have, we write about the life we wish we had. *Where is the emotion in that! I'm moving to Mayberry!*

The Little House Behind The House



Tom Tripp/The Storyteller

One of my bygone recollections,
As I recall the days of yore.
Is the little house, behind the house,
With the crescent over the door.
'Twas a place to sit and ponder
With your head bowed down low;
Knowing that you wouldn't be there,
If you didn't have to go.
Ours was a three-holer,
With a size for every one.
You left there feeling better,
After your usual job was done.
You had to make these frequent trips,
Whether snow, rain, sleet, or fog,
To the little house where you usually
Found the Sears-Roebuck catalog.
Oft times in dead of winter,
The seat was covered with snow.
'Twas then with much reluctance,
To the little house you'd go.
With a swish you'd clear the seat,
Bend low, with dreadful fear.
You'd blink your eyes and grit your teeth
As you settled on your rear.
I recall the day Granddad,
Who stayed with us one summer,
Made a trip to the shanty
Which proved to be a hummer.

'Twas the same day my Dad
Finished painting the kitchen green.
He'd just cleaned up the mess he's made
With rags and gasoline.
He tossed the rags in the shanty hole
And went on his usual way,
Not knowing that by doing so,
He would eventually rue the day.
Now Granddad had an urgent call,
I never will forget!
This trip he made to the little house
Lingers in my memory yet.
He sat down on the shanty seat,
With both feet on the floor.
Then filled his pipe with tobacco
And struck a match on the outhouse door.
After the Tobacco began to glow,
He slowly raised his rear:
Tossed flaming match in the open hole,
With not a sign of fear.
The Blast that followed, I am sure,
Was heard for miles around;
And left poor grandpa
Just sitting on the ground.
The smoldering pipe was still in his mouth,
His suspenders he held tight;
The celebrated three-holer
Was blown clear out of sight.
When we asked him what had happened,
His answer I'll never forget
He thought it must be something
That he had recently et!
Next day we had a new one,
Which my Dad built with ease.
With a sign on the entrance door
Which read: No Smoking, Please!

Now that's the end of the story,
With memories of long ago,
Of the little house behind the house
Where we went when we had to go.

Dick Anderson

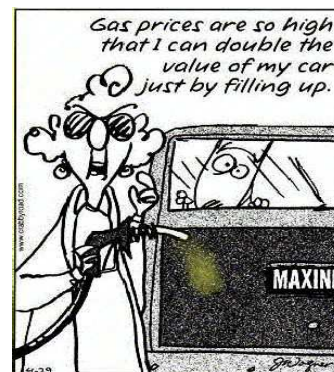
If you'd like to hear some great versions of Country, old standards, Gospel and



Christmas music, please take a minute to visit Dick Anderson's web site... you'll be glad you did! (please drop him a note to

let him know you appreciate his talents and that you stopped by.)

www.dickanderson.us



A Stranger In The House



A few months before I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small Tennessee town.

From the beginning, Dad was fascinated

with this enchanting newcomer and soon invited him to live with our family. The stranger was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later. As I grew up, I never questioned his place in my family. In my young mind, he had a special niche. My parents were complementary instructors: Mom taught me the word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But the stranger? He was our storyteller. He would keep us spellbound for hours on end with adventures, mysteries and comedies. If I wanted to know anything about politics, history or science, he always knew the answers about the past, understood the present and even seemed able to predict the future! He took my family to the first major league ball game. He made me laugh, and he made me cry. The stranger never stopped talking, but Dad didn't seem to mind.

Sometimes Mom would get up quietly while the rest of us were shushing each other to listen to what he had to say, and she would go to her room and read her books. (I wonder now if she ever prayed for the stranger to leave.)

Dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions, but the stranger never felt obligated to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our home .. not from us, our friends or any visitors. Our longtime visitor, however, got away with four-letter words that burned my ears and made my dad squirm and my mother blush. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in the home, not even for cooking. But the stranger encouraged us to try it on a regular basis. He made cigarettes look cool, cigars manly and pipes distinguished. He talked freely (much too freely!) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I now know that my early concepts about relationships were influenced strongly by the stranger. Time after time, he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked ... and NEVER asked to leave.

More than fifty years have passed since the stranger moved in with our family. He has blended right in and is not nearly as fascinating as he was at first. Still, if you were to walk into my parents' den today you would still find him sitting over in his corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name? We just call him...TV.

"Always...Patsy Cline"

June 24 - September 4
Yoder Barn (Newport News, Virginia)

Returning by popular demand! This toe-tappin', belly laughin', sell-out hit is a tribute to the beloved super-star of country music as seen through the eyes of her biggest fan and close friend, zany Louise Segar. Complete with a live band and brimming with humor, emotion and audience participation, the show features some of Patsy's biggest hits, including Walkin' After Midnight, I Fall to Pieces, You Belong To Me, and Crazy. After a highly successful run in 2004, Gary Spell and Yoder Barn bring this amazing production back to the peninsula area. **Don't miss it!**



If You Are A SAX FAN, Then You Know The SAX MAN!



MR. SAX
BOOTS RANDOLPH

When Boots Randolph starts "tootin' his horn", he does more than just play the saxophone. . .his saxophone sounds like it can sing...can talk, can almost speak to deaf ears! His

ability is awesome. His versatile style has no equal. And he's been bringing audiences to their feet ever since the early sixties, when his signature song-- "Yakety Sax" -- first hit the airwaves. It took off like gangbusters and turned the young musician into a celebrity, probably before some of his friends in the hills of Kentucky could have even spelled it! A native of Paducah, Kentucky, Boots...whose real name is Homer Louis Randolph grew up in the rural community to Cadiz. His father also had the name of Homer, and obviously it created confusion 'round

home! As a result, young Homer was tagged with the nickname "Boots"...by his brother, Bob...without dreaming it would one day be that of an International Star! The Randolph's were always a creative clan...rich in musical talent...and their family band initially provided Boots with the first of his opportunities on stage. He learned to play a variety of instruments, but settled on the sax, at age 16. Years later, he was to make it his career choice. In 1961 he moved to Music City--on the heels of his successful trademark tune--or, as he tells it, "that song (Yakety Sax) is what took me out of the hills of Kentucky and put me in the hills of Tennessee!" The song served a multitude of purposes in kicking off his early career, not only by giving him the prestige of being a hit artist, but also by opening a lot of doors to other performers. Almost instantly, the Sax Man was seriously being sought after as a studio musician, and he was soon "picking saxophone on recording sessions for numerous stars.

Boots Randolph was the first to ever play sax on recordings with Elvis, and the only one to ever play solo with him, in addition to recording on the soundtracks for 8 of his movies. Boots also played on such diverse recordings as Roy Orbison's "Oh, Pretty Woman", Al Hirt's "Java", REO Speedwagon's "Little Queenie", and Brenda Lee's "Rockin' 'Round The Christmas Tree". In fact, he has a 30-year history of playing on records with her, including "I Want To Be Wanted" and "I'm Sorry". An array of other artists who have added the Yakety Sax touch to their recordings include Chet Atkins, Buddy Holly, Floyd Cramer, Alabama, Johnny Cash, Richie Cole, Pete Fountain, Tommy Newsom and Doc Severinsen. His unique style of sax...coupled with tremendous popularity on Music City sessions in the sixties...automatically made Randolph a major player in creating the now-famous "Nashville Sound".

***Listen to Boots version of "Tennessee Waltz" on our web site!**

What Others Are Saying

Dear Sharon and all concerned. Thanks for this wonderful web site. I became a big fan of Mr. Redd Stewart in the late fortys with the likes of Tennessee Waltz and Bonaparte's Retreat. If at all possible I'd like to purchase a song book with words and music to the great songs that were sung by the late Mr. Redd Stewart, and the Late Mr. Pee Wee King's band. Also, a picture of Redd holding his fiddle. And also the CD titled "I Remember."

**Very Respectfully, Charles R. Ward
Hudgins VA**

I teach guitar around Chicago and, on Monday, I was in a class trying to discuss what waltz time is. When I do this I normally discover how old I am because nobody remembers any of the songs that I use as examples. I brought up "Tennessee Waltz" and sang the first few words of the song when one of my students, who is a middle-schooler and a rocker, joined in. Turns out he knew the tune better than I did! So, your dad's music made an impression to, at least, one kid up this way. **Steve**

Bill and Sharon Stewart. Received the beautiful cookbook. It is the most elegant, informative, put together cookbook I have in my collection! Both of my children collect cookbooks also, and were very impressed with it. Enclosed is a check for two cookbooks. It will be their birthday gift, as that is what they wanted most! **Enjoying.... Mary Seay**

Well done Sharon. I thoroughly enjoyed reading your newsletter. A fantastic effort

for preserving traditional country music talent while keeping Redd's spirit alive. It was great to see my father in the "press" again! I also truly appreciate the link with Redd's website...Donn would be proud of the association. Please don't forget me should you encounter any media reference to my father in your research!... I shall do the same. Keep in touch!

**Cheers, Scott Reynolds
www.donnreynolds.com**

Sharon.... thanks for the hook up.. will check it out.. By the way.. mom LOVED her cookbook and has tried several of the yummy recipes! Thank you for including us... we feel like celebrities! **Gracie**

Now, in looking over the pictures, the one of Redd with his pipe brought to mind a funny story that you may enjoy: Redd was quite a pipe smoker, and was very proud of his collection of pipes. As you may or may not know, it takes quite a bit of smoking to "break in" a new pipe. One that is properly broken in will have a fairly thick crust of that "nasty" residue left in the bowl from the burning tobacco. One day Redd got home from one of those weeks-long road trips and Jean, not understanding how guys liked their pipes broken in and cruddy, had a surprise for him: She had "cleaned" that crud out of all of his well-broken-in pipes -- thinking she was doing something great for Redd. Of course, Redd then had to go through the process of "breaking in" all of his pipes again. He apparently wasn't upset with her, as he laughed about it when he told the guys in the band. Incidentally,

Jean was a great lady herself. She and my first wife, Shirley, (deceased in 1988) were good friends and visited a lot when we were on the road. **Your friend, Roy Ayres**

Hi Billy,
I am glad to see you following in Redd's footsteps and keeping the Stewart name out there for the people. Don't be intimidated, not many, if any, could carry Redd's boots. He was a consummate showman and entertainer. I'm sure he would be proud of you for carrying on. I've spent over 40 years in country music and haven't regretted one minute of it. It is never too late to get going. Boxcar Willy was 65 before he was ever known about! Just go for it. I would love to turn my TV on some night and see you on the Grand Ole' Opry doing your own thing. I am glad you didn't already have a copy of the album I sent as not to duplicate something you already have. I will keep my eyes open for anything else I think you would like. I heard Redd singing the "Tennessee Waltz" on Dish Network Sirius radio channel 951 classic country. I ran down the stairs to hear it. Nobody could sing it like Redd. You guys take care and maybe we can meet up sometime. **Jimmy Williams**



Former Ernest Tubb Steel Guitarist . . .



**New CD Release:
"Steelin'... A Tribute
To Ernest Tubb"**

At the tail end of a long and legendary career country music hall of fame icon Ernest Tubb (ET) still had one of the top bands that could be heard anywhere. The steel guitarist of that band, Lynn Owsley, just completed a tribute album to his former boss. Texas Troubadour band mates, guests and stu-

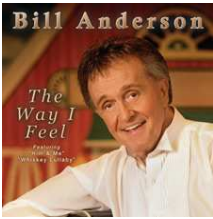
dio musicians joined Lynn and his steel guitar on this classic tribute CD. The album includes Lynn's band mates, bass player Ronnie Dale (who along with Lynn arranged the album) and guitarist Pete Mitchell. A former Texas Troubadour drummer and now also a country music legend, **Jack Greene does the vocal on Redd Stewart's Soldier's Last Letter**, a World War II hit for ET. Steel guitarists Ron Elliott and Don Helms also are here as guests on the album and the great Johnny Bush comes by to sing on *There's*

A Little Bit Of Everything In Texas and *Walking The Floor Over You*. The album opens with a Lynn Owsley introduction and Lynn playing the Buddy Charleton/ Leon Rhodes masterpiece *ET Blues* in the background.

The album can be obtained for \$15 plus \$3 S&H from Lynn Owsley, 182 Gatone Dr., Hendersonville, TN 37075 or from E.T. Record Shop.

***Special thanks to Mike Gross, WVOF-FM, Fairfield, CT and www.swinginwest.com for the CD review.**

9th Annual City Lights Festival—Commerce, Georgia



Bill Anderson, a member of the Country Music Hall of Fame and the Country Music Songwriters Hall of Fame, as well as the Grand

Ole Opry, will return to his adopted hometown of Commerce, Georgia for the **2005 City Lights Festival** to be held June 16th through June 18th, 2005. (Commerce, Georgia is about an hour's drive northeast of Atlanta on I-85.)

The headline act this year will be **Diamond Rio**, and the big outdoor concert will be on Thursday night June 16th at the local high school football stadium. Their annual golf tournament will be held on Friday morning, June 17th at

the Sandy Creek Golf Course, and their "Dinner With The Stars" on Friday night, which will be held at the Commerce Civic Center. Further information for this event can be obtained by calling 1-877-826-8482 and/or by visiting Bill's web site at : www.billanderson.com (See attached sheet!)



Alice C. Bateman

From poetry and song lyrics to opinion columns, from short stories to novels, Alice C. Bateman is a prolific and accomplished writer who is already enjoyed from around the globe through the magic of the Internet. Alice shares her

memories, stories and poems on her beautifully designed web site that you can visit at:

[www.angelfire.com/realm3/](http://www.angelfire.com/realm3/alice_c_bateman/)

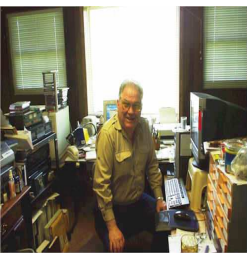
alice_c_bateman/

Alice has already written two books and her third book is due out this summer. You can find both of Alice's books at www.amazon.com I hope everyone here will take a few minutes to visit her site and say hello....you'll be glad you did!



*Redd,
Perry Como,
Pee Wee King*

Spirit of Lost Bird Became a Part of Me



You can get so close to an animal that it becomes a part of you. It takes on some of your traits and you take on some of its. That's the

way it has been with Long John Cardinal. . . .

One morning in 1983 I saw this male cardinal trying to hang onto a feeder but constantly falling off. I got my binoculars and saw he had lost a leg. The stump looked real pink, indicating he had lost it recently. Since he couldn't hang onto my feeders, I laid a line of sunflower seeds atop a fence on my patio and he hunkered down and ate them. Morning and night, I would put his seeds atop that fence. When I had to go out of town, my wonderful next-door neighbor, police-woman Janet Crumley, would feed him.

Cardinals may be the most skittish of all birds but Long John got so tame he would come in as I was putting out his seeds. I would talk to him and he would chirp to me in soft tones. Knowing that cardinals only live 8 years I often said to him, "If you die, don't go off in the woods and make me worry about what happened to you. Die right here on my

patio and I will give you a decent burial."

Seventeen years ago today, I went out one rainy morning and he was dead at the bottom of that fence. I buried him under the pine tree where he sat every morning waiting for me to lay out his seeds. I don't mind telling you I cried. For five years he had been my daily companion. I had seen him raise many broods and feed them right there on my patio. It definitely increased my belief in cross-species communication when he died right where I asked him to die. If you've ever had a pet that became a constant companion for many years you will not have any difficulty accepting my belief that we can actually communicate with other species.

Long John imparted some of his very being to me. The day he died, I wrote in my journal, "Long John was drawn to me by more than his need for food. He wanted someone who could see through his one-leggedness to his spirit." That spirit became a part of my spirit. Often when I felt a lack of courage to deal with something, I would think of him and be energized. His courage became my courage.

He wasn't my only experience in cross-species communication. One morning my wife brought me some ice water and

apple cider while I was working in the garden. She said, "There's a beautiful butterfly on your sun hat." I told her that butterfly had been right with me all morning. It would get still and when I started telling it how beautiful it was it would turn around like a beauty queen as I talked and praised it. Later in the day I asked, "Do you want some cider?" and poured a few drops on my arm. It came and drank the cider. When I backed down the long driveway at the end of the day, it flew in place right in front of my windshield until I reached the road. I am telling you, I have always had this thing with butterflies.

Long John still costs me a lot of money. I have bird feeders designed to keep starlings out. One day I realized cardinals couldn't access a single feeder. So I bought a big one just for cardinals. I got to thinking that I might be depriving one of Long John's children or grandchildren with my feeding program. The blackbirds get most of the seed I put in that big feeder but Long John's kids get some, too. Isn't it beautiful for God to use a little crippled cardinal to civilize and humanize an old hairy-legged guitar picker from downtown Watering Trough?

**By Dalton Roberts (3-11-05)
Chattanooga Times Free Press
www.daltonroberts.com**

Old-Time Fiddler Remembers The Music That Sustained A Region



The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

May 2, 1999 By: Lee May (Staff Writer)

(left to right: Redd, Redd's father, E.P. (Slim) Stewart (Redd's brother))

The lights are low in the Yellow Jacket restaurant, and E.P. (Slim) Stewart, longtime country musician, is singing passionately, his voice rising and falling in concert with his six-string flattop Gibson, while his son, Larry, backs him with voice and fiddle. *"I was danc-ing with my dar-lin' to the Ten-nes-see Waltz when an old friend I hap-pened to see..."*

The music, an extension of an interview, drifts sweet and sad, a song that grabs you no matter how many times you hear it. Or play it. *"Yes, I lost my lit-tle darling' the night they were play-ing the beau-ti-ful Ten-nes-see Waltz."* With that familiar last line still hanging in the air, Stewart says, softly, seriously: "Occasionally, when I play, I get a little emotional. Some of 'em touch me. I used to do solos, but I don't do that anymore; I don't want to crack up."

To be sure, this song, familiar worldwide as a Patti Page pop hit, a wedding favorite, the state song of Tennessee and a comfortable old country standard, touches untold millions. But for Slim Stewart, 80, it resonates most deeply. He is the brother of Redd Stewart, who co-wrote the song with Pee Wee King. (As the story goes, Redd and Pee Wee were returning to Nashville from Texas in 1947, with the truck radio tuned to the Grand Ole Opry. Hearing "The Kentucky Waltz," Pee Wee joked that Redd ought to pen a song about Tennessee. Redd quickly set in, writing words on a matchbox cover.)

Redd, who is 75 years old, can't sing or play anymore; in 1992 he took a bad fall on the basement steps of his Louisville, Ky., home. Says his wife, Darlene: "He was tired, lost his balance while carrying a sing-along machine" and suffered severe injuries to his head. "His mind's there, but he can't use it," Slim Stewart says sadly.

This reality is far from the one back when they were children in Louisville, when, as Slim recalls, 4-year old Redd "would sit on the front steps and play the banjo, and people would stop and listen to him." And far from those heady days in the 1940's and '50s when Redd and Pee (Redd was vocalist with Pee Wee's Golden West Cowboys) were known in music circles as "the men with the golden pens" because of songs such as, "You Belong to Me," "Bonaparte's Retreat" and "Slow Poke."

Slim Stewart, who has lived in McCaysville, Georgia since 1940, isn't one to talk much about sad times, in fact, he is know around the Copper Basin as a man of few words, a man more likely to let his music do the talking. But on this day, during a two-hour conversation in a wood-paneled back room of the Yellow Jacket, he conducts a conversational, musical tour of old country music and his love for it-and, like others who grew up with the music, praises its powerful influence on life in an Appalachia before television, movies and travel prevailed as entertainment.

Old Is Gold

The effect that old country had on Appalachian people is "inestimable," says John Rice Irwin, founder and director of the Museum of Appalachia in Norris, TN, which exhibits several dozen pieces relating to the Stewart family, including photos and costume items. "The music has had an unbelievably profound effect on people in the region. It sustained them, inspired them, brought tears to their eyes. Fiddlers were heroes of the communities, even though some were so poor they carried their fiddles in a sack because they couldn't afford cases."

Mind you, Irwin is talking about old country, not the rocking-the-jukebox kind ubiquitous on country music charts today. He's talking about the kind of music whose guitars and fiddles and banjos and lilting, moaning voices coax and pull and jerk pain and pleasure from your heart and soul, throw your emotions around a good-time room or onto the floor for the drums to stomp. Irwin compares old country to "vintage furniture, which never goes out of style." He says the museum gets 100,000 visitors a year from all over the world, and the song they request most from the museum is "Tennessee Waltz." I got a letter this morning from someone saying how difficult it is to find the old music anymore," he says.

It'll get easier, says Mike Panter, a financial consultant in Blue Ridge, who also is a music promoter. After listening to 400 singers under age 21 around the South during the past year, he concludes, "Some of the old songs are starting to come back and will be rerecorded by younger artists."

Meanwhile, as new country continues its mainstream course, old country is in some ways a specialty item, found on some radio stations (including "golden oldie" outlets) at special events and select entertainment spots. And, on this day at a Southern-food restaurant in the North Georgia mountains, from the hands and mouths of Slim and Larry Stewart. (Larry works at Opryland Productions in Sevierville, TN, near Pigeon Forge, mainly playing steel guitar, harmonica and banjo. Slim's other son, Bob, who lives in this area, also is an accomplished musician.)

Good Times, Bad Times

Born in Ashland City, TN, to musician parents, Eury Pershing Stewart (whom everyone around here knows as E.P. or Slim) and his four brothers and two sisters grew to love music at an early age. At age 10, Stewart and his 13-year-old brother, Al, performed on radio in Depressionera Louisville as the Newsboys Duo, combining their guitar and banjo playing (Slim played banjo then) with

Old-Time Fiddler Remembers The Music That Sustained A Region

delivering The Louisville Courier-Journal. "We performed each Saturday morning for 15 minutes," he says, "and received \$7.00 apiece."

During the next decade or so Slim Stewart toured with various groups, singing and playing "devil's box" (fiddle) and "starvation box" (guitar). Those early touring days had a certain impoverished richness—"the good ol' days when times were bad," Stewart calls them. He tells the story from the late 1930s about when he and Redd were working together in Pennsylvania: "We always had to check around with one guy to see how much money we could spend in the restaurant in the morning. So, chili being rather cheap, we ate a great deal of it. After checking with the treasurer and heading for the restaurant across the street, I said to Redd, "Dad gum, Redd, it's chilly this morning." Redd said, "Hunh. If I know anything, it's chili every morning." The telling, and the memory of that time, brings Stewart a good laugh!

After moving to Georgia, he began a 39-year career as a machinist in the copper and petroleum industries in nearby Copperhill, TN, "playing my music on the side, appearances at schools, dance halls, picnics." He still plays as often as possible at "old-time gatherings. I'll play at the drop of a hat, and I'll bring the hat." For many it has always been that way. Says Larry Stewart: "The music is not pretentious. In good times and bad times, people played. It was a form of release." His father adds: "When I'm having a bad day, I can go pick up my guitar and feel better."

'Music In His Blood'

Indeed, for many mountain people, the music always was the medicine. Ask Dr. Bill Lee. Thirty years ago, he began organizing country music concerts, featuring mostly local players. Held for years at various locations in the area, including a barn, a school and on Main Street in nearby Ducktown, TN, the extraordinarily popular monthly events were called "First Tuesday, Ducktown, U.S.A."

On a recent wet Saturday on Main Street, Lee, 72 and retired for medicine, pointed out a little gray frame building, half of which used to house his general practice office. The other half, outfitted with a potbellied stove and church pews, was home to First Tuesday at one point, with lemonade, coffee and brownies provided by Lee's wife, Hattie Lorraine. Lee called it Circle L. Ranch. "We'd sit around and pick and grin," he recalls, adding that the shows, which drew hundreds of people, grew too large for the building and spilled out onto Main Street—a problem that in 1980 forced the relocation of the concerts to the school, as the street also is Tenn. 68, and authorities didn't want it blocked for five or six hours every month. The concerts lasted about a year after that move (music fan Luneta Hamby likened the change to "when they moved the Grand Ole Opry from Ryman Auditorium to that new thing"), but what great good they did while they lived, says Lee, noting that they offered needed diversion to workers and their families during a bitter strike at the copper company. "We had a blowout for them," he says, "and it helped a lot." Moreover, throughout the lifetime of the concerts, "We realized that by encouraging the musicians, we'd uncover hidden talents and have a good time, too." Speaking of talent, Lee, who admires E.P.'s, says that during his appearances he "would very seldom say anything, but he had music in his blood." Still does.

Music You Don't Leave

"Tennessee Waltz" will always be there, of course, like a family member. Says Stewart: "It gives me a measure of satisfaction to stand up and sing Redd's song. He did a great job on it, and he was proud of it, and I am of him. We were all happy for him."

At the same time, he's still making his own music: "You don't leave the music, and it won't leave you." During the restaurant session, Stewart, his voice ranging from baritone to tenor, sings and plays several songs with his son. The haunting "Amarillo by Morning," as well as "Oh Susanna!" and "Georgia on My Mind," recorded most notably by that soulful country singer, Ray Charles. The Stewarts perform with we-know-each-other's every move assurance and show pleasure without straining, vices and music simple and evocative.

Near the end of our visit, the father and son team up for an especially moving interpretation of "For the Good Times," with Slim starting, "*Don't look so sad; I know it's over. But life goes on; this old world keeps on turning.*" And ending on "*Make believe you love me one more time-for the good times.*" And the old times. Times remembered happy and sad, conjured up by music unafraid to make you cry.

(Left to Right Slim (Redd's brother & his wife, Larry Stewart (Redd's nephew) who performs at ; top row/to the right of the guy in the hat, and Redd in his later years.)

