

# 3<sup>rd</sup> COAST MUSIC

**BILL NEELY**

**#60/149  
JANUARY 2002**



**CHARLES EARLE's B Sides  
JOHN THE REVEALATOR  
FAR & Away: The Best of 2001  
FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #29  
ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS  
REVIEWS (\*\*\*\*\* or not)**

**ACCORDION DREAMS • GURF MORLIX • JOHN LILLY  
BILL NEELY • TEXAS RENEGADE RADIO Vol 3**



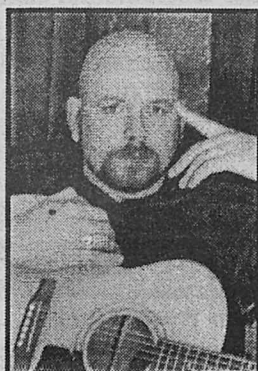


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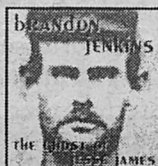


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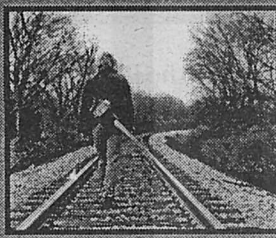
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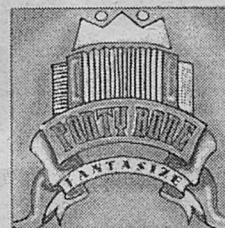
conway's corner

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## FAR & AWAY: THE BEST OF 2001

### #1 ROGER WALLACE: THAT KIND OF LONELY

(Texas Roundup) \*AB/\*JHo/\*JZ/\*MA/\*PP

- 2 ---- Alejandro Escovedo: *A Man Under The Influence* (Bloodshot) \*DN/\*JSp/\*TA/\*TJ/\*TW
- 3 ---- Rodney Crowell: *The Houston Kid* (Sugar Hill) \*BF/\*BR/\*LW/\*R&HL/\*TF
- 4 ---- Shaver: *The Earth Rolls On* (New West) \*CM/\*DN/\*JE/\*PD
- 5 ---- Buddy & Julie Miller (Hightone) \*LH/\*MP/\*VP
- 6 ---- Tom Russell: *Borderland* (Hightone) \*MM/\*MR
- 7 ---- Ray Wylie Hubbard: *Eternal And Lowdown* (Philo) \*DA/\*DY/\*TG
- 8 ---- Bob Dylan: *Love And Theft* (Columbia) \*DJ/\*JSc
- 9 ---- Merle Haggard: *Roots Volume I* (Anti) \*RH
- 10 -- Wayne Hancock: *A-Town Blues* (Bloodshot) \*BL/\*GS
- 11 -- Thad Cockrell & The Starlite Country Band: *Stack Of Dreams* (Miles Of Music) \*DF/\*JC/\*KC
- 12 -- VA: *Oh Brother Where Art Thou?* (Mercury) \*JR/\*SH/\*ST
- 13 -- Libbi Bosworth: *Libbiville* (Ramble) \*BC/\*SJa
- Drive By Truckers: *Southern Rock Opera* (Soul Dump) \*RD
- 14 -- Scott Miller & The Commonwealth: *Thus Always To Tyrants* (Sugar Hill) \*RC
- 15 -- Here Come The Derailers (Lucky Dog) \*KF
- Jim Lauderdale: *The Other Sessions* (Dualtone) \*SS&DD
- Delbert McClinton: *Nothing Personal* (New West) \*KR
- 16 -- Kelly Hogan: *Because It Feel Good* (Bloodshot) \*CW
- Patty Loveless: *Mountain Soul* (Epic) \*KL
- 17 -- Gillian Welch: *Time [The Revelator]* (Acony)
- VA: *The Gals Of The Big D Jamboree* (Dragon Street)
- 18 VA: *Roadside Attractions: More Songs Of Route 66* (Lazy SOB) \*RT
- 19 Audrey: *The Fallen* (Reckless) \*JHa
- 20 Oh Susanna: *Sleepy Little Sailor* (Catamount) \*AL/\*SG
- 21 Chip Taylor: *Black & Blue America* (Train Wreck) \*RJ
- Dallas Wayne: *Here I Am In Dallas* (Hightone) \*EW
- 22 Justin Treviño: *Travellin' Singin' Man* (Lone Star) \*WH
- 23 Greg Trooper: *Straight Down Rain* (Eminent) \*TO
- 24 Michael Fracasso: *Back To Oklahoma* (India) \*GJ
- Frog Holler: *Idiots* (Record Cellar) \*GW
- Pat Haney: *Ghosts Of Things To Come* (Freefalls) \*EB
- Wayfaring Strangers: *Shifting Sands Of Time* (Rounder) \*JW
- 25 Jesse Dayton: *Hey Nashvegas!* (Stag)
- 26 Bill Kirchen: *Tied To the Wheel* (Hightone) \*TS
- Split Lip Rayfield: *Never Make It Home* (Bloodshot) \*JSm
- 27 The Bellfuries: *Just Plain Lonesome* (Allied Sound Productions) \*MTr
- Don Edwards: *Kin To The Wind* (Shanachie) \*CrL
- Tommy Morrell & The Time Warp Tophands: *Stylin'* (WR) \*DC
- 28 Marcia Ball: *Presumed Innocent* (Alligator) \*RCS
- Continental Drifters: *Better Day* (Razor & Tie) \*MTa
- Mark Eitzel: *The Invisible Man* (Matador) \*CZ
- Erika Lockett: *My Little Crime* (Birdfish) \*SM
- Terrance Simien: *The Tribute Sessions* (AIM) \*JBe
- Darrin Stout & the Starlighters (Stout) \*LG
- Keith Sykes: *Don't Count Us Out* (Syren) \*NA

## BEST SONGWRITER

### #1 RAY WYLIE HUBBARD

- 2 Tom Russell 3 Alejandro Escovedo  
4 Thad Cockrell • Billy Joe Shaver

## BEST FEMALE ARTIST

### #1 GILLIAN WELCH

- 2 Libbi Bosworth 3 Kelly Hogan 4 Terri Hendrix • Audrey

## BEST MALE ARTIST

### #1 ROGER WALLACE

- 2 Merle Haggard 3 Alejandro Escovedo  
4 Rodney Crowell • Buddy Miller 5 Thad Cockrell

## BEST IN THE INDUSTRY

### #1 HIGHTONE RECORDS

- 2 Texas Music Round-Up  
3 Rounder Records • Village Records

## JOHN LILLY • BROKEN MOON

(self-released \*\*\*\*1/2)

Farmer John's prediction for early 2002 is that if you listen to pretty much any of the FAR reporters' radio shows, you're going to be hearing a lot of this record in the months to come. Though Lilly, a West Virginia-based singer, performer (guitar, mandolin, bass), songwriter, preservationist and historian of old-time and early country music for more than 25 years, put it out over a year ago, his acoustic country debut got brushed off by both Bluegrass and Americana radio. Then, late last year, he gave a copy to FARster Kay Clements (KWMR, Point Reyes, CA), who promptly, and in no uncertain manner, rattled my cage about it, because this is pure 3CM/FAR-style gold—if you can imagine what Jimmie Dale Gilmore might sound like if he'd been born and raised in Appalachia, you'll have an approximation of Lilly's soulful mountain sound and emotional impact. Though the bulk of the album consists of traditional material (*I've Always Been A Rambler*, *Sweet Sunny South*, the instrumental *Poca River Blues* and the acapella *Beset By Snares*) and dusted off gems from Jimmie Rodgers (*In The Hills Of Tennessee*), Hank Williams (*Thy Burdens Are Greater Than Mine*) and The Louvin Brothers (*You'll Be Rewarded Over There*), the standout is the original title track, which opens the album and, right there, will grab you by the throat. As an antidote to arena country, Lilly with minimal assistance (Ginny Hawker sings harmony on four tracks), demonstrates just how much more less can be. Come to think, that prediction is a real no-brainer. JC

## GURF MORLIX • FISHIN' IN THE MUDDY

(Catamount \*\*\*\*)

You have to sympathize with the impulse, gig after gig thinking "how hard can singer-songwriting be if this dork can do it?" but the fact is that sidemen rarely make a successful move to center stage. However, after many years accompanying Blaze Foley and Lucinda Williams, one can safely assume that when Gurf Morlix set up shop with *Toad Of Titicaca* (3CM cover story #39/128), he had no illusions about the difference between journeyman competence and masterful expertise. In any case, the album instantly put this late bloomer in the front ranks of Austin singer-songwriters, and the follow-up, proof that he hadn't simply blown a lifetime's hoard on one album, cements his position with 12 more tremendous originals, though I have to admit that I'm not real comfortable with *Let The Rhythm Rule*, a eulogy to the late Donald Lindley that Morlix freely admits doesn't fit and is there for personal reasons. However, the other songs, from the existential *Center Of The Universe* (is it or isn't it about Lucinda? Morlix is evasive) to the absurdist *There Goes The Bone*, pose no problems. Not just a virtuoso guitarist, Morlix is also an outstanding producer, especially of other singer-songwriters (Hubbard, Cleaves, Gauthier), so he brings not just one but three well-honed talents to bear on his record-making. JC

## ACCORDION DREAMS

(Hacienda \*\*\*\*)

Dropped into the PBS schedule last summer with little, if any, fanfare, Hector Galán's splendid documentary on the history of the accordion from a South Texas perspective was, in some ways, an updating of Les Blank's 1976 classic *Chulas Fronteras*. Hacienda's companion CD, though not a soundtrack album, rather a compilation of representative tracks by artists featured in the film, is equally an updated snapshot of the state of Tejano music, and if it's limited to the label's roster, Hacienda is preeminent in its field. With a 60 year age range, from the legendary Valerio Longoria, represented by his Spanish version of *As Time Goes By*, who died soon after the documentary was made, to the precociously talented 16-year old Victoria Galvan, the lineup includes the great Mingo Saldivar, pioneer female Conjunto accordionist Eva Ybarra, Los Laytons, Albert Zamora, Tony De La Rosa, Flaco Jimenez, Los Dos Gilbertos, Los Chacos, Santiago Jimenez Jr and Tropo F/Los Hermanos Farias. One welcome development this solid collection reveals is that outside influences, such as rock and rap, on the younger players are far better integrated than they used to be. JC

## TEXAS RENEGADE RADIO VOLUME 3: TEXAS DANCEHALL PARTY

(KNON \*\*\*\*)

Been way too many lists in this issue, but there's no getting round this one: Dale Watson, Clay Blaker, Roger Wallace, Hank Stone, Johnny Bush, Craig Chambers, Kevin Fowler, Libbi Bosworth, Davin James, Susanna Van Tassel, Justin Treviño, Eleven Hundred Springs, Rosie Flores, Ted Roddy, Chris Wall, Lucky Pierres, Hollisters, Karen Poston, Don Walser and Wayne Hancock. All of them contributed album tracks to this \$8.93 fundraiser for Dallas community station KNON, which, if not for the inclusion of Fowler, could be taken as an anti-frat manifesto. Only 2000 copies have been pressed. Try CD World (Dallas), Forever Young (Grand Prairie) or Record Town (Ft Worth). JC



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### Rocket Drivin' Daddy

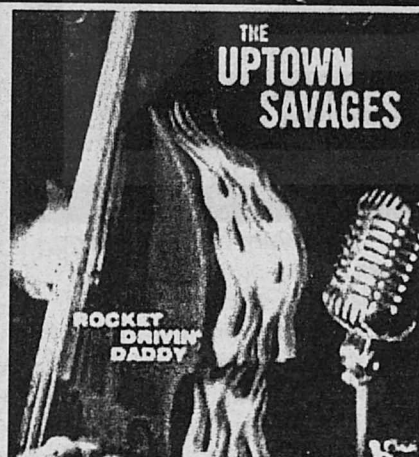
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*My Country WHGL*

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Rheta Grimsley Johnson,  
*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

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### CAROLINE HERRING



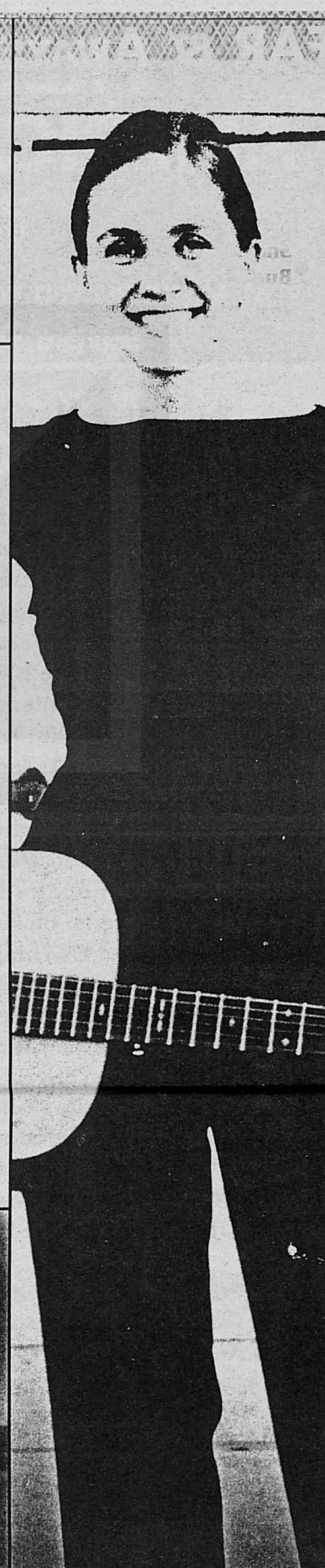
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# FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #29

REAL MUSIC PLAYED FOR REAL PEOPLE BY REAL DJs  
DURING DECEMBER 2001

## #1 MERLE HAGGARD: ROOTS VOLUME 1

(Anti/Epitaph) \*BL/\*JHa/\*JZ/\*LH/\*MT/\*RH/\*SS&DD

- 2 ---- Johnny Bush: Green Snakes (Lone Star) \*AB/\*SH/\*WH
- 3 ---- Keith Sykes: Don't Count Us Out (Syren) \*NA/\*RJ
- 4 ---- Wayne Hancock: A-Town Blues (Bloodshot)
- 5 ---- The Shiners: Bonnie Blue (Planetary) \*CZ/\*RD/\*TW
- 6 ---- Buddy & Julie Miller (Hightone) \*MM/\*MP/\*TO
- 7 ---- Hadacol: All In Your Head (Slewfoot) \*DY/\*SJa/\*RC
- 8 ---- Kelly Hogan: Because It Feel Good (Bloodshot) \*TJ
- 9 ---- Here Come The Derailers (Sony) \*KF
- 10 -- Robbie Fulks: 13 Hillbilly Giants (Bloodshot) \*CM
- 11 -- Rice, Rice, Hillman & Pedersen: Running Wild (Rounder) \*BR
- 12 -- Bob & Wendy: Behind The Blue (Self) \*GW/\*KC
- 13 -- Drive-By Truckers: Southern Rock Opera (Soul Dump)
- 14 -- Bob Dylan: Love And Theft (Columbia) \*JSc
- 15 -- Bruce Robison: Country Sunshine (Boar's Nest)
- 16 -- The Stumbleweeds: Pickin' & Sinnin' (Rawk)
- 17 -- Pat Haney: Ghost Of Things To Come (Freefalls) \*EB
- The Paladins: Palvoline No7 (Ruf) \*LG
- 18 -- Libbi Bosworth: Libbiville (Ramble) \*BC
- Ginny Hawker: Letters From My Father (Rounder) \*JR
- 19 -- Slaid Cleaves: Holiday Sampler (Rounder) \*JHo
- 20 -- Katy Moffatt: Cowboy Girl (Western Jubilee) \*Crl
- 21 -- Robert McCreedy: Streamline (Safe House) \*DF
- 22 -- Jesse Winchester: Live From Mountain Stage (Blue Plate) \*MR
- 23 -- Tom Adler & Friends: Sweet Nell (Coal Holler) \*ST
- Chris Thomas King: The Legend Of Tommy Johnson  
(Valley Entertainment) \*PD
- 24 -- Catherine Britt: Dusty Smiles & Heartache Cures (self) \*PP
- Tom House: Jesus Doesn't Live Here Anymore (Catamount) \*SG
- Kris Kehr & Stone Poets (Woobie Cat) \*TF

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- 25 -- Chris Richards: Jam The Breeze (Ten High Ranch)
- 26 -- Sean Ardoin & Zydekool: Pullin' (Tomorrow) \*RCS
- Vince Bell: Live In Texas (self) \*DJ
- Black Hills Country Band: We (TE) \*RW
- Stephanie Corby: Fireworks In March (Steam Heat) \*SM
- Simon Crashly & The Roadmasters: Roadhouse Rock  
(Enviken) \*RT
- Wayne Hancock: South Austin Sessions (Bloodshot) \*JE
- Cindy Kallet: Cindy Kallet 2 (Folk-Legacy) \*SJe
- Last Train Home: Holiday Limited (Adult Swim) \*MTa
- Lori McKenna: Pieces Of Me (Catalyst) \*DA
- Tommy Morrell & The Time Warp Tophands: Stylin' (WR) \*DC
- Joe Paul Nichols: The Way It Was (Custom) \*GS
- Troy Olson: Living In Your World (Honky Tonk Hacienda) \*MA
- One Fell Swoop: Crazy Time (Magoo) \*CW
- Calvin Russell: Rebel Radio (Dixie Frog) \*JSp
- David Sammarco: Unless It's You (self) \*RP
- Shaver: the Earth Rolls On (New West) \*DN
- VA: Americana Motel (Bay Gumbo) \*TS
- Rhonda Vincent: The Storm Still Rages (Rounder) \*VP

\*xx = that DJ's Album of the Month

[Starting next month, FAR reporters' initials will still appear by their Albums of the Month, but, to save space, the list of reporters will be dropped, so you'll have to go to [www.accd.edu/tcmn/far/](http://www.accd.edu/tcmn/far/) to cross-reference. The FAR mailing list is available on request to indie labels and self-releasing artists by email ing 3rdcoast@sbcglobal.net]



# CASBEER'S

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Wed 2nd • True Stories  
 Thu 3rd • The Bellfuries  
 Fri 4th • Dirk Hamilton  
 Sat 5th • Slobberbone + Jimmy James  
 Tue 8th • Acoustic Jam with guest host  
 Mitch Webb (The Swindles)  
 Wed 9th • The Infidels  
 Thu 10th • Lady Jane Grey  
 Fri 11th • Adam Carroll  
 Sat 12th • Beaver Nelson + Eric Hisaw  
 Tue 15th • Acoustic Jam with guest host  
 Dennis Fallon (Two Tons Of Steel)

Wed 16th • Brian Parton  
 & The Nashville Rebels  
 Thu 17th • Jon Dee Graham (CD release)  
 Fri 18th • West Kings Highway  
 (CD release)  
 Sat 19th • Terri Hendrix  
 (w/Lloyd Maines)  
 Tue 22nd • Acoustic Jam with guest host  
 Russell Clepper  
 Wed 23rd • Joe Paquin  
 Thu 24th • The Swindles  
 Fri 25th • The Lost Trailers  
 Sat 26th • Wayne Hancock  
 + The Weary Boys  
 Tue 29th • Acoustic Jam with guest host  
 Eddie Polanco  
 Wed 30th • The Countdown Quartet  
 Thu 31st • Eleven Hundred Springs

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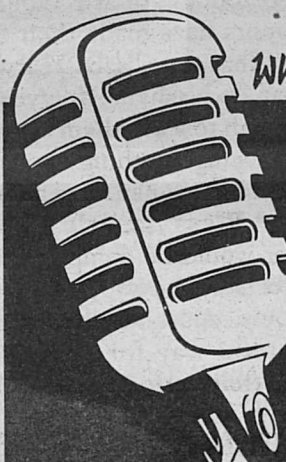
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# CHARLES EARLE'S B-Sides

## NASHVILLE 2001: THE YEAR IN COUNTRY MUSIC

It was supposed to get better this year. The recent struggles of the country music industry have been well documented, but the mouthpieces at the major record labels all said last year that 2001 would be when things turned around in Nashville. They pointed to the moderate levels of success achieved by mediocre talents like Jo Dee Messina and Kenny Chesney during 2000 and said that many more artists were destined for breakout success in 2001.

Most of us in town knew that what we were hearing was the party line. Only a very few label execs have had the guts to address the embarrassingly bad records that have come from Music Row in recent years, so it was easy to figure that the optimistic statements were little more than wishful thinking. But in the end, 2001 turned out to be a mixed bag for the industry. There were a few bright spots. However, there were a great many reasons for folks in the business to start polishing up their resumes. Here is a review of the top stories and trends from country music over the last 12 months:

**O Brother Where Art Thou?** This record's success was the best news to come out of Nashville in 2001. A movie soundtrack full of bluegrass and gospel music topped the country charts for 24 weeks and won two CMA Awards. This all happened with little radio support and a movie that didn't do overwhelming business at the box office. But will this financial windfall for Mercury stimulate a traditional country music boom? Will bluegrass become a sales force to be reckoned with? We can only hope so, but my optimism is tempered by the fact that Warner Brothers Nashville recently signed a 13-year-old girl brought to them by one of Celine Dion's producers. Still, I can say that the success of Nickel Creek and the sales for more traditional records released by Ricky Scaggs and Patty Loveless were a good sign. It should also be noted that indie labels got a couple of hit records onto the country charts during 2001. That hasn't happened in years.

**Clean Out Your Desk** It was a bad year to work at the smaller major label imprints here in town, if you like a steady paycheck that is. Labels dropped like flies in 2001. Asylum, Giant, Atlantic and Virgin Records all closing their doors. Warner Brothers and Sony trimmed a number of staff positions, as well. The MTV networks, the folks responsible for making CMT simply unbearable instead of just bad, shit-canned 125 workers last January. Indeed, lots of folks working in country music were shown the door in 2001. Perhaps they'll move to Miami and try to cash in on the Latin music boom.

**On The Road Again (sort of)** 2001 wasn't a particularly good year for country music tours either. Only Tim McGraw's efforts managed to crack the top 20 grossing road shows list for this past year in *Amusement Business* magazine, and he finished a not very impressive 17th. Brooks & Dunn had to take out major opening acts such as Toby Keith, Keith Urban and Montgomery Gentry in order to come in at the #25 spot on the list. No other country tours were mentioned.

**Breakthroughs?** When speaking to a group of business students this past fall at Vanderbilt University, MCA Nashville bigwig Tony Brown blamed the recent financial problems in the industry

on two things—internet piracy and the lack of any recent breakthrough artists. Though I hate Napster with a passion, I think Brown is full of crap about the piracy issue. I don't think for a minute that the hayseeds that had formerly listened to Music Row's musical excrement have stopped buying the records because they are stealing them off the net. The most obvious explanation is that they just lost interest. But I do think Brown is right about the lack of any breakthroughs. Nashville simply isn't manufacturing any superstars lately. Of course, part of that is the fact that the audiences for country radio and CMT have decreased to the point that only an artist who crosses over to pop can sell enough to qualify as a superstar. But it's also worth mentioning that playlists have tightened so much that few artists are breaking within the genre itself. We've had artists nominated for the Horizon Award at the CMA's in recent years who have had marginal success at best up to that point. And consider that not one of this year's Horizon nominees spent a single week atop the country album sales chart. But since Tim McGraw or the **Oh Brother** soundtrack held the top spot for 39 of the last 52 weeks, I suppose they didn't have much chance.

**You'll Be Hearing From My Attorney** Folks were suing each other's butts off in Nashville this past year. Sony and the Dixie Chicks have gone to war over money that the Chicks feel Sony has bilked them out of in recent years. The Chicks say that their label has used some creative accounting principals to withhold about four million bucks of their income. Sony says the Chicks should bow and scrape, and please hurry up and make another damn record before we have to turn in our leased luxury cars in favor of Fords or Chevys. Personally, I don't think this one will ever see the inside of a courtroom. No label wants to have to open their books. Those greedy sons of bitches stand to lose a pile of money if the courts decide how they do their business. This one will settle quietly.

Kenny Rogers sued his manager. Trisha Yearwood sued a guy for creating an unauthorized duet after he recorded his voice onto one of her songs and put it out on the Net. One of the girls from SHeDAISY sued somebody about something involving karaoke, though I did my best to ignore that one. Seems like the only person who wasn't suing somebody was LeAnn Rimes, who apparently needed a break after suing her father and her record label in 2000.

**Garth** It's always big news in Nashville when the ego that ate Capitol Records puts out an album. Indeed, Mr Brooks has already moved three million units of **Scarecrow**. But his Christmas album flopped, reaching only #8 on the country chart. He's also fodder for the tabloids these days now that rumors have made their way out of Nashville that he's shagging Trisha Yearwood. We've known about that in Nashville for years and have been polite enough to leave them alone. And shame on you guys for saying anything about Trisha's weight. She is a stunning woman in person at any size.

**God Bless America** No column about this past year would be complete without a mention of the affects of the September 11 events. Country music mourned just like the rest of the world, only in a less tasteful way for the most part. Alan Jackson's heartfelt performance of *Where Were You (When the World Stopped Turning)* was the highlight of a surprisingly good CMA Awards show this year. But whenever I hear Aaron Tippin's *Where the Stars and*

*Stripes and the Eagle Fly*, I feel like I'm listening to a guy trying to revive a mediocre career by wrapping himself in the flag. I also have little tolerance for Charlie Daniels' blatantly anti-Muslim *This Ain't No Rag, It's a Flag*. Let's not even get into *Osama-Yo Mama* and *All I Want For Christmas is Bin Laden On A Stick*.

**Saying Goodbye** Nashville lost a few of our best this year. Chet Atkins passed away in June at the age of 77. Former Grand Ole Opry Star Johnny Russell, the man responsible for the genuine classic *Rednecks, White Sox and Blue Ribbon Beer*, died in July. Singer and banjo picker extraordinaire John Hartford succumbed to non-Hodgkins lymphoma last summer. Grady Martin, a sideman praised by Willie Nelson as one of the greats, died last month. Van Stephenson, a former pop singer who joined the country group Blackhawk for a few successful years, passed away in April.

**Hallowed Hall** The Country Music Hall of Fame moved from some rather unimpressive digs on Music Row to a gorgeous new structure downtown this past year. The museum is modern, stylish and very interactive. There is even some pretty darn good food served there. This is a first rate attraction that any music fan visiting the area should be certain to visit.

**Fan Fair On The Move** For the first time ever, Nashville's Fan Fair was held in the downtown area. Formerly hosted at the state fairgrounds, a fairly remote location that kept the bumpkins out of our hair, Fan Fair is now going to clog up our streets with tourists every summer. Organizers say that this move helped to improve sagging attendance figures. However, many in town dispute that claim.

**Frightening Rumor for 2002** A source of mine with strong ties to the Grand Ole Opry just told me something that doesn't bode well for country music in the coming year. According to my guy, Gaylord Entertainment is going to sever the ties between the Opry and WSM. This is enormously significant because WSM has been involved with the Opry for all 76 years that it has existed. Every Saturday night for more than seven decades, country music fans all over the South have tuned in to the powerful station and heard their favorites. Now, the program will apparently be available as a syndicated show for stations to purchase. Considering how few stations play classic country music, you have to wonder if enough markets will purchase the show to even keep it viable. As I said this is the work of the Gaylord Corporation, the folks who plowed under a theme park in Nashville to build a shopping mall, only to see local tourist dollars drop significantly afterwards. Lots of folks are very concerned about this news. Country music traditionalists will be outraged. However, Gaylord is focused on the hotel business these days and has little concern for tradition.

**Elizabeth Cook Update** If you read **3CM** on a regular basis, you've probably heard about Elizabeth Cook, the Nashville singer-songwriter. Cook has the voice of an angel and writes songs that sound like old-fashioned classics. She is a Grand Ole Opry regular and has quite a buzz surrounding her. Unfortunately, however, she was just finishing up her major label debut album when Atlantic Records closed down in Nashville last April. But the folks at Warner Brothers Nashville retained the rights to Cook's work, and they decided to let her finish the project. Richard Dodd, a Grammy winner for Tom Petty's **Wildflowers** album handled production. The record is now finished and in the hands of Warner Brothers. They will decide in the next few months if they think a traditionalist like Cook has a shot at radio airplay. Here's hoping that she gets that full backing of her label. Nashville needs for this woman to succeed.



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# JOHN THE REVEALATOR

**F**irst time for everything. Since I started giving out flowers (while they're living), I've had occasional second thoughts, wondering if I might ought to have rated an album a tad higher or lower, but up to now I've always figured, hell, close enough, what the fuck, and let it go. However, I feel impelled to backpedal on the five flowers I gave **Merle Haggard's Roots Volume One** last issue. Even if the 64 year old is physically past his prime and no longer has as much fire in his belly, he's *still* better than most singers half his age, but I really should have factored in the trite original *More Than This Old Guitar* and docked him at least half a flower. Maybe even a whole one, it's that useless.

♦ Clarifying rather than backpedaling, my endorsement of **Darryl Slusher** and **Jackie Goodman's** reelection petition drive in last month's editorial was based entirely on their proven record of consistent support for Austin music. This is, after all, a music mag.

♦ Flipping the coin on last month's criticism of various Americana artists bottling out of their European gigs, another British subscriber feels that **Jimmy LaFave** and **Dale Watson** should also be recognized for honoring their commitments, both having played in England since 9/11. So too did **The Paladins**, though for reasons nobody seems clear about, the British leg of a recent European tour was cancelled while they were in Holland, though not by them. However, being Over There qualifies them for a Golden Flightcase. Nominations for this award, or for the Brown Trouser Hall of Shame, are still open.

♦ The social event of the year was **Don & Pat Walser's** 50th wedding anniversary at Jovita's, which brought out a slew of old friends, including people I hadn't seen since Henry's closed. I'd lying if I said Don was in really good shape, but he has started losing weight and already looks better. Bill Groll has a massive pictorial spread on display at <http://photos.austinamericana.com/>, which, among scores of pics of the Walsers, their guests and the musicians who played in their honor, features a snap of myself and Eddie Wilson. For those of you who don't know what either of us look like, he's the handsome devil with the buzz cut, I'm the one in the Texas tuxedo.

♦ Having decided that a list of the artists he played and recorded with would make a fitting memorial for Grady Martin, I'm kinda screwed in talking about the biggest rockabilly festival ever, because the crux is a list of just about every active rockabilly act on the face of the planet, from Golden Age legends to teenagers. **Oneida Casino's 2002 Rockin' 50s Rockabilly Festival**, put together by rockabilly booker Marc Mencher (brother of Sean) is being held July 8th-13th, 2002, at the Oneida Casino, Green Bay, WI. Almost unbelievably, admission is absolutely free, though hotel rooms, especially at the Casino itself, sure aren't. You can check out the complete, mindboggling list of performers at [www.rockabillyhall.com/oneidashow.html](http://www.rockabillyhall.com/oneidashow.html), which also has contact info for hotels, but let's see if I can hold it down to a Must See Top 10: Big Al Downing, The Collins Kids, Glen Glenn, Dale Hawkins, Sid King & The Five Strings, Janis Martin, Marvin Rainwater, Billy Lee Riley, Jack Scott, Gene Summers, The Treniers, whoops, that's eleven.

♦ Here's one to store away for future reference, should you ever want to illustrate the expression "damning with faint praise," or top somebody else's favorite example. Mine used to be, "All her tattoos are spelled right," overheard in a Dallas club, but I

find it hard to imagine that praise could possibly get any fainter than this: "**Red Room** proves once again that **Gordon Stone** is one of the most impressive musicians ever to come out of northern Vermont." This came from something called *Seven Days*, and, rather amazingly, is prominently quoted in Stone's press kit. I ran this one past Charlie Hunter, who lives in Vermont, and his response was, "It's something in the water up there. Lubbock has nothing on St Johnsbury."

♦ Factoid of last month: on December 24th, 1906, Canadian physicist **Reginald A Fessenden** became the first person to broadcast a music program over radio, from Brant Rock, MA.

♦ Normally round this time of the year, I have a go at the useless idiots who run the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame**, though last year they messed up one of my perennial gripes by finally inducting Ritchie Valens. Still, the HoFsters can always be relied on for a display of crass stupidity, and this year, though they did induct **Brenda Lee**, **Gene Pitney** and **Isaac Hayes**, they hit new lows by passing over **Gram Parsons** while honoring **The Ramones**. As he is himself a member of the nominating committee, I'll turn this over to **Dave Marsh**: "Even as someone who thought that **David Byrne** was full of crap from the beginning, I voted to induct **Talking Heads**, because, to start with, they had one of the greatest rhythm sections of their era and the only funky one amongst all the punk and new wave bands. But despite the black leather jackets and a clever first album, The Ramones were a musical void. That static vision of rock'n'roll isn't even a spectacular dead-end like the ones that the nominated but spurned **Sex Pistols** and the unnominated **Stooges** made an art of smashing into. OK, Joey Ramone died. Fred Smith and Rob Tyner dying didn't get **MC5**, who were 100 times as great a band, into the Hall. It's even more ridiculous that The Ramones come into the Hall at the expense of twice-un-elected **Patti Smith**, the most important New York punk artist. This is not just nit-picking or a case of de gustibus, either. Would The Ramones have had a slot on the ballot, let alone been inducted right away, if Joey Ramone were today surviving on kidney dialysis? Of course not."

♦ Thinking of HoFs, the old Country Music Hall of Fame building is being torn down to make a parking lot for BMI. Strike a match on that.

♦ You know you're out of touch when you scan the birthdays in the paper and towards the bottom of the list, ie the youngsters, are people described as 'singer' or 'musician,' whose names don't ring even the faintest of bells. The best bit is that the paper obviously realizes that nobody who can actually read knows who the hell these people are, so in brackets they give the name of the group to which the 'singer' or 'musician' belongs—and you've never heard of the group either. Mind you, I just came across an entire music news story on which I drew a complete blank. OK, it was in the *San Antonio Express-News's* 'Really Trivial Shit' section, but, under the headline 'Pop group breaks up,' I learnt that "after five years of chart-topping success and more than 12 million records sold, the British pop group **Steps** is breaking up." Steps? Whodafuck are they? Did I miss something here?

♦ Mid-December, Craig Havighurst reported in *The Tennessean's* Business section that Bob Heatherly, whose Music City Records put out the first US copy-protected CD, Charley Pride's **A Tribute To Jim Reeves**, last spring, recently discovered he can't play

while driving around in his new Lincoln SUV (no mention of whether Pride got one too). Though this may be good for a laugh, it does, as Havighurst goes on to explain, illustrate a real problem: not all CDs and CD players are compatible anymore. Heatherley's SUV has a CD-ROM unit, which can't play so-called 'pirate-proof' CDs, which means you won't be able to play them on your computer. Labels are blaming the worldwide downturn in sales on bootlegging and file-swapping, rather than crappy music, so copy protection seems like the answer to their prayers, even though it merely poses a technical problem which professional pirates will eventually solve, if they haven't already. With cartel lawyers denying that consumers have any legal right to make copies for personal use of CDs they've paid inflated prices for, downloading them to their hard drives for instance, a view already being disputed in British courts, it looks like we'll all have to have two CD players, one just for copy-protected albums. Or just not mess with the bastards—there's already a website, [www.fatchucks.com](http://www.fatchucks.com), that keeps track of what it calls "Corrupt CDs." Bill Miller, of *The Blue Chip Report*, comments, "Kinda makes you long for the good ol' days when the Mafia ran the music business," the point being, of course, that old-fashioned crooks like Morris Levy didn't give a rat's ass what you did with their records after they'd got your money. And they put out better music.

## † GRADY MARTIN

**B**orn January 17th, 1929 in Chapel Hill, TN. Died December 3rd, 2001. In between, played and recorded with (and I don't guarantee this is a complete list): Eric Anderson, Eddy Arnold, Joan Baez, Bobby Bare, Boston Pops Orchestra, The Browns, Johnny Burnette's Rock & Roll Trio, JJ Cale, Henson Cargill, Sara & Maybelle Carter, Johnny Cash, Jack Clement, Patsy Cline, Rosemary Clooney, The Collins Kids, Tommy Collins, Billy 'Crash' Craddock, Bing Crosby, Jimmy Dean, Little Jimmy Dickens, Huellyn Duvall, The Echoes, Don Everly, Richard & Mimi Fariña, Flatt & Scruggs, Red Foley, The Four Freshmen, Curly Fox & Texas Ruby, Lefty Frizzell, Don Gibson, Steve Goodman, Arlo Guthrie, Woody Guthrie, Merle Haggard, Linda Hargrove, Hawkshaw Hawkins, Ronnie Hawkins, Bobby Helms, Buddy Holly, Homer & Jethro, Johnny Horton, Burl Ives, Wanda Jackson, Jim & Jesse, Johnnie & Jack, Kalin Twins, Claude King, Kris Kristofferson, Sleepy LaBeef, Brenda Lee, Jerry Lee Lewis, Gordon Lightfoot, Hank Locklin, Jimmie Logsdon, John D Loudermilk, Loretta Lynn, Henry Mancini, Janis Martin, Jimmy Martin, Country Joe McDonald, Skeets McDonald, Ronnie Milsap, Bill Monroe, Montana Slim, George Morgan, Moon Mullican, Willie Nelson, Roy Orbison, Osborne Brothers, Dolly Parton, Carl Perkins, Webb Pierce, Elvis Presley, Ray Price, John Prine, Marvin Rainwater, Jerry Reed, Jim Reeves, Marty Robbins, Leon Russell, Buffy Sainte-Marie, San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus, Ronnie Self, Jean Shepard, Carl Smith, Margo Smith, Sammi Smith, Hank Snow, Buddy Spicher, Ray Stevens, Johnny Tillotson, Ernest Tubb, Conway Twitty, Porter Wagoner, Billy Walker, Doc Watson, Kitty Wells, Dottie West, Hank Williams, Mac Wiseman, Jimmy Work and Faron Young.

## † RUFUS THOMAS

**B**est known for *Walking The Dog* and *Do The Funky Chicken* on Stax, the R&B singer/songwriter and longtime WDIA, Memphis, TN, air personality's first hit, *Bear Cat*, an answer to *Hound Dog*, was also Sun Records' first hit. Thomas died on December 15th, age 84.

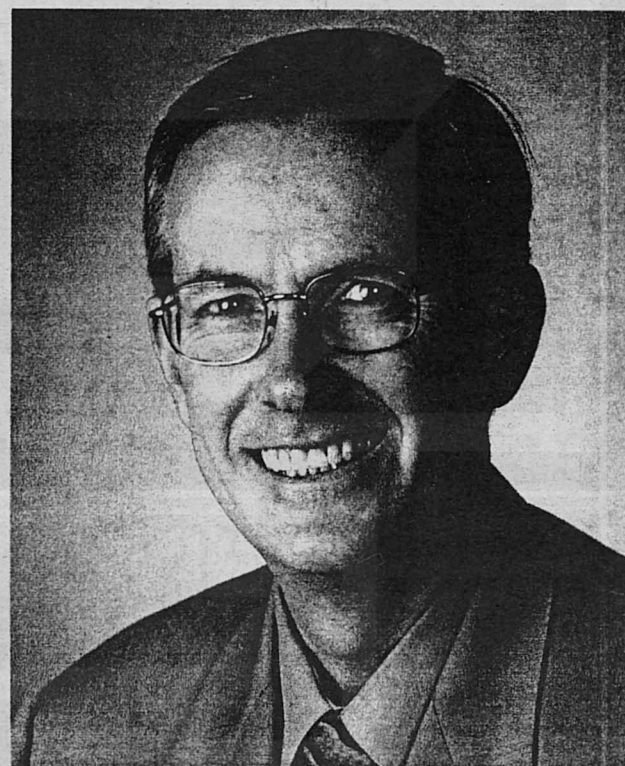


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\*\*\*\*\* Essential \*\*\*\*\* Damn good  
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Any pretence at fairness, objectivity, balance  
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However, every effort will be made to ensure that each  
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## KEEPING IT IN PERSPECTIVE

ate last year, just a few days apart, two guitarists died. One was a versatile utility player, the other was a giant among giants of the instrument. One was a member of the most publicized group of all time, the other was a sideman known only to other musicians, music writers and aficionados of album credits. The passing of one was an international news event, marked by countless cover stories, radio marathons and TV specials, that of the other went all but unnoticed. The former was, of course, George Harrison, but if you know the other was Grady Martin, good for you. If it was about music, the difference between the coverage given the two men would be a travesty. Giving him plenty of the best of it, Harrison was never more than a B+ guitarist, whereas Martin was one of the greatest pickers of all time.

◆ However, mourning Harrison has little to do with music, much to do with boomer narcissism. For the vast majority of the record buying public, ie the young, Wings, let alone The Beatles, are ancient history. The Fab Four may be remembered, if at all, as a group that influenced bands that influenced Oasis. Far more important, Harrison was part of the soundtrack to the youth of people who now call the shots in the media. Even if it was derivative crap that none of them have actually listened to in decades, they're not going to let anybody forget what it once meant to them. I remarked to a colleague that the media would have a real coverage problem next time someone truly important died, but he set me right: "For the boomers, *nobody* is more important than a Beatle."

◆ Getting back from pop culture to actual music, Martin's legacy is obscured by the fact that he never gave interviews, which not only kept him low profile, but allowed others, notably Paul Burlison, to claim credit for some of his work. The Martin/Burlison issue, which could, as in the similar case of James Burton and Roy Nichols, have been resolved had Grady ever said his piece, is endlessly debated in rockabilly and guitarist Internet discussion groups. Who played what on which album may seem like trivial nitpicking, but, inflating or deflating reputations affects the lucrative market for instructional videos.

◆ Similarly, Martin's 'invention' of fuzz-tone is still chewed over. The legend is that in 1962, while recording Marty Robbins' *Don't Worry*, he plugged into a tube console with a faulty channel. Or a studio amp with a blown speaker. Or there was a defective preamp in the control board. One way or another, his name was linked to the famous effect. The problem here is that Sam Phillips created the first true fuzz-tone back in 1951, on Jackie Brenston's *Rocket 88*, by stuffing paper round a rip in guitarist Willy Kizart's speaker. If you want to get away from accidents, Link Wray deliberately loosened tubes in his amp to create fuzz-tone on his 50s hits. So the whole legend is cock from the getgo.

◆ What Martin himself thought about any of this we'll never know, but it's all beside the point. As long as there are guitar players and people who listen to music rather than nostalgia, there will always be an audience for the incredible playing he contributed to scores of albums (see *John The Revealator*). JC

## BILL NEELY • TEXAS LAW & JUSTICE

(Arhoolie \*\*\*\*\*)

Sometime in the winter of 1989/90, Sean Mencher of High Noon called to tell me that Bill Neely was to be the special guest performer at The Austin Outhouse's weekly open mike night. We'd both seen Neely from time to time on Wednesday nights at Threadgill's, but at 74, he didn't get out that much anymore, so one didn't lightly pass up a chance to see him. With no premonition that I know of, we met up, had a couple three beers, listened to and visited with Neely, then went home. All in all, just another cool evening in Austin round that time. Sadly, it turned out that we'd been blessed to be present at Neely's very last public appearance. He died of leukemia on March 22nd, 1990.

◆ Born in 1916, the son of dirt poor sharecroppers in Collin County, north of Dallas, Neely "quitted" school in the 8th grade and, at the height of the Great Depression, started working when he was 15, first picking cotton, then trekking round the country on one of FDR's Civilian Conservation Corps crews. He enlisted in the Army in 1939 and served until 1943, when he settled in Arizona. Six years later, after marrying Bobbie Hamilton, he moved to Austin to work for his wife's uncle, and, apart from another Army stint in Korea and a few years in Dallas, lived there for the rest of his life.

◆ One of the defining moments in Neely's life was, at 13, meeting country superstar Jimmie Rodgers and getting a music lesson from him, an experience wonderfully chronicled by *On A Blackland Farm* ("He learned me a C chord I never have forgotten"). Neely began playing music and writing songs in the Army but, supporting his family as a carpenter, truckdriver, chef and restaurateur, only started making a name for himself in the 60s when Kenneth Threadgill booked him to play on Wednesday nights, the tradition later carried on by Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Champ Hood. Though Neely was to perform at the Smithsonian Institution in DC and La Maison des Cultures du Monde in Paris, France, he only ever made one album, **Black Land Farmboy**, released on LP in 1974 and long out of print.

◆ Retitled, and with nine extra tracks, that album is finally back, and can only be described as 'Essential.' Despite very uncharacteristic vagueness—six of the 20 tracks are identified as having been recorded by Chris Strachwitz at Neely's home in 1973, while "all other selections were recorded on previous occasions and supplied to Arhoolie Records by Henry Carr, Houston White and Terry [sic, they mean Tary] Owens"—the 20 tracks sound as if they were recorded round the same time, and, from down home country, country gospel, country blues and even rockabilly, they're uniformly marvellous.

◆ Though such accomplished Neely originals as *Big Yellow Moon Over Texas*, *Crying The Blues Over You*, *On A Blackland Farm*, *A Soldier's Thoughts*, *No Pockets In A Shroud*, *Rock & Roll Baby*, *Skid Row*, *Don't Waste Your Tears Over Me* and *Never Left The Lone Star State* are as fine a body of work as that of most commercially successful songwriters, it has to be said that the single most effective song on the album is one of the two covers (*Deep Ellum Blues* is the other). The quite extraordinarily powerful *Texas Law & Justice* was written in 1930 by Ira McKee, brother of Neely's aunt Eulah McKee, while he was on Death Row awaiting execution for a murder of which he was eventually exonerated, the kind of lethal fuck-up that bothers Texas governors, judges, lawyers and general public as little now, perhaps even less, than it did 70 years ago.

◆ While much of the charm of Neely's work comes from his home spun words and delivery, there's one dimension that is beyond cool and sophisticated. Quite how he got his spinetingling guitar sound is something I can't even guess at, and Sean Mencher is no help: "If I remember correctly, Bill just used a Fender amp. I don't remember the model, just a regular amp. I believe Bill's sound came from the energy and love that emanated from his soul, and out his fingertips into our ears and down to our hearts! Anyway, I heard Bill pick different guitars and he always had his signature tone." However Neely did it, a really proficient guitarist in a state of the art studio might just possibly be able to reproduce his sound, though I'd be willing to give plenty of eight to five against. The album is worth having simply for the senses-ravishing quality of the guitar picking.

◆ A couple three weeks ago, I sent in my nominations for the *Austin American-Statesman's* annual Austin Music Pundit (AMP) awards, which will appear sometime in January. I have absolutely no qualms about telling you that I chose tactics over principle and voted Roger Wallace's **That Kind Of Lonely** as my #1 Austin album of the year. Wallace has a burgeoning career and if my vote gets his name more prominently mentioned, so much the better. For much the same reason, in the annual FAR & Away poll, the only time I get a say in Freeform American Roots, I went for Thad Cockrell's **Stack Of Dreams** as my album of the year. With any luck, it'll help give them a little something for their press kit, and, as indie artists, they can sure use all the help they can get.

◆ Wallace and Cockrell are both perfectly valid candidates in those contexts. However, when I put all other considerations aside, my album of the year is by a man who hasn't needed any mortal support for over ten years. Bill Neely was a wonderful man, and a great musician who deserves to be remembered. JC



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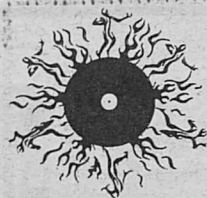
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## ROY HEINRICH & THE PICK-UPS

### January Dance Calendar

Friday 11th Chaparral Lounge

Saturday 12th, Texicalli Grille, 1pm

Sunday 13th, Ego's, 8.30-10.30

Sunday 20th, KUT Live Set, 8pm

Wednesday 23rd, The Broken Spoke

Saturday 26th, Little Longhorn

**royheinrich@aol.com**





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## JANUARY ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

1st -- David Rodriguez • 1952 • Houston, TX  
 ----- Hank Williams † 1953  
 ----- Townes Van Zandt † 1997  
 2nd -- Roger Miller • 1936 • Fort Worth, TX  
 ----- Speckled Red † 1973  
 ----- Tex Ritter † 1974  
 3rd -- Leon McAuliffe • 1917 • Houston, TX  
 ----- Gene Summers • 1939 • Dallas, TX  
 ----- Amos Milburn † 1980  
 5th -- David Halley • 1950 • Oklahoma City, OK  
 ----- Iris Dement • 1961 • Paragould, AR  
 6th -- Earl Scruggs • 1924 • Cleveland Co, NC  
 ----- Sandy Denny • 1941 • London, UK  
 ----- Johnny Moore † 1969  
 7th -- Jack Greene • 1930 • Maryville, TX  
 ----- Gene Terry • 1940 • Lafayette, LA  
 ----- Carl White † 1980  
 ----- Larry Williams † 1980  
 8th -- Leon 'Pappy' Selph † 1999  
 9th -- Lavada Durst • 1913 • Austin, TX  
 ----- Jimmy Day • 1934 • Tuscaloosa, AL  
 ----- Buck Ramsey • 1938 • Lubbock Co, TX  
 ----- Katie Webster • 1939 • Houston, TX  
 ----- Roy Head • 1943 • Three Rivers, TX  
 10th -- Ronnie Hawkins • 1935 • Huntsville, AR  
 ----- Cyril Neville • 1948 • New Orleans, LA  
 ----- Alejandro Escovedo • 1951 • San Antonio, TX  
 ----- Ernie Cacaes † 1971  
 ----- Howlin' Wolf † 1976  
 ----- Zeb Turner † 1978  
 11th -- Tommy Duncan • 1911 • Hillsboro, TX  
 ----- Slim Harpo • 1924 • Baton Rouge, LA  
 ----- Goldie Hill • 1933 • Karnes Co, TX  
 ----- Robert Earl Keen • 1956 • Houston, TX  
 12th -- Fred McDowell • 1904 • Rossville, TN  
 ----- Tex Ritter • 1905 • Murvaul, TX  
 ----- Ray Price • 1926 • Perryville, TX  
 13th -- Rick Broussard • 1962 • Seguin, TX  
 14th -- Billy Walker • 1929 • Ralls, TX  
 ----- Allen Toussaint • 1938 • New Orleans, LA  
 ----- T-Bone Burnett • 1948 • St Louis, MO  
 15th -- Alan Lomax • 1915 • Austin, TX  
 ----- Queen Ida • 1930 • Lake Charles, LA  
 ----- Earl Hooker • 1930 • Clarksdale, MS  
 ----- Don Van Vliet • 1941 • Glendale, CA  
 16th -- GT Hogan • 1929 • Galveston, TX  
 ----- Mac Curtis • 1939 • Fort Worth, TX  
 ----- Barbara Lynn • 1942 • Beaumont, TX  
 17th -- Grady Martin • 1929 • Chapel Hill, TN  
 ----- Steve Earle • 1955 • Fort Monroe, VA  
 18th -- Hosea Hargrove • 1929 • Bastrop Co, TX  
 19th -- Leo Soileau • 1904 • Ville Platte, LA  
 ----- Sleepy Hoffpauir • 1931 • Crowley, LA  
 ----- Charlie Waller • 1935 • Hendersonville, TX  
 ----- Phil Everly • 1939 • Brownie, KY  
 ----- Janis Joplin • 1943 • Port Arthur, TX

20th -- Leadbelly • 1889 • Mooringsport, LA  
 21st -- Smith Ballew • 1902 • Palestine, TX  
 ----- Wolfman Jack • 1939 • Brooklyn, NY  
 ----- Jackie Wilson † 1984  
 ----- Charles Brown † 1999  
 22nd -- Sam Cooke • 1935 • Chicago, IL  
 ----- Jimmy Day † 1999  
 23rd -- Django Reinhardt • 1910 • Liverchies, Belgium  
 ----- Tom Wildcat Courtney • 1929 • Waco, TX  
 ----- Lisa Pankratz • 1968 • Austin, TX  
 ----- Paul Robeson † 1976  
 24th -- Tuts Washington • 1907 • New Orleans, LA  
 ----- Jack Scott • 1936 • Windsor, Canada  
 ----- Doug Kershaw • 1936 • Tiel Ridge, LA  
 ----- Aaron Neville • 1941 • New Orleans, LA  
 ----- Tex Thomas • 1951 • Littlefield, TX  
 25th -- Jimmy Wyble • 1922 • Port Arthur, TX  
 ----- Speedy West • 1924 • Springfield, MO  
 ----- Etta James • 1938 • Los Angeles, CA  
 ----- Laura Lee McBride † 1989  
 26th -- Dennis McGee • 1893 • Bayou Marron, LA  
 ----- Claude Gray • 1932 • Henderson, TX  
 ----- Huey 'Piano' Smith • 1934 • New Orleans, LA  
 ----- Lucinda Williams • 1953 • Lake Charles, LA  
 ----- D'Jalma Garnier • 1954 • St Paul, MN  
 27th -- Joe Shelton • 1911 • Hopkins Co, TX  
 ----- Elmore James • 1918 • Richland, MS  
 ----- Moon Mullican † 1967  
 ----- Mahalia Jackson † 1972  
 28th -- Carl White • 1932 • Dallas, TX  
 ----- Carolyn Hester • 1938 • Waco, TX  
 ----- Mary Cutrufello • 1970 • Meriden, CT  
 ----- T Texas Tyler † 1972  
 ----- Al Dexter † 1984  
 29th -- Al Stricklin • 1908 • Antioch, TX  
 30th -- Ruth Brown • 1928 • Portsmouth, VA  
 ----- Mance Lipscomb † 1976  
 ----- Professor Longhair † 1980  
 ----- Warren Smith † 1980  
 ----- Lightnin' Hopkins † 1982  
 31st -- Chuck Willis • 1928 • Atlanta, GA  
 ----- Slim Harpo † 1970

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