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Carrie Makes History

Carrie Underwood's debut album, *Some Hearts*, has created music history as being the fastest selling debut country album in the history of Nielsen SoundScan, the company that tracks music sales. The CD has been certified double platinum, signifying shipments of two million copies, with more than 400,000 copies selling during the week leading up to Christmas. *Some Hearts* has also become the fastest-selling *American Idol* project to date. 1/14

People's Choice Award Winners

The 32nd Annual People's Choice Awards were handed out Tuesday night from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. Tim McGraw was awarded Favorite Male Performer over Toby Keith and Usher, while Faith Hill won for Best Hair, beating out Jennifer Garner and Nicole Kidman. 1/14

2006 Tours

Tim McGraw and Faith Hill will tour again this year in their "Soul II Soul" tour. The co-headlining arena tour will begin April 21 and will run through Labor Day, with a total of about 70 dates in the works. The stage will be designed for in-the-round performances, and there will not be any opening acts. The last time the couple toured together was in 2000. On February 2, Rascal Flatts will launch its 2006 tour, the "Me and My Gang" tour. The 21-city tour, which covers the eastern U.S., will conclude March 25. Blake Shelton will hold the opening slot during the middle of the tour, and Keith Anderson and Jason Aldean will alternate as opening acts on selected dates. The tour will employ nearly 90 people, nine buses, and nine semis, with the state-of-the-art set designed by Bruce Rogers, who has designed sets for Madonna, Sting, and the Dave Matthews Band. And Keith Urban's "Alive in '05" tour has been extended to '06, with 16 more cities added. The "Still Alive In '06" arena tour, which kicks off February 1 in Evansville, Indiana, will also make stops in Chicago, Orlando, Charlotte, Knoxville, and San Antonio, among other cities. Pat Green will open most of the dates. 1/14

Kenny's Cruise

Dierks Bentley and Little Big Town have been added as acts scheduled to perform for fans during Kenny Chesney's upcoming cruise to the Bahamas. Blue County, Catherine Britt, and Hot Apple Pie will also be on board for the cruise, which departs Miami on February 27 and returns March 3. The voyage, which is being promoted by Chesney's fan club, includes a private concert by Chesney on an undisclosed island in the Bahamas. 1/14

Merle, Owen Honored By Recording Academy

Merle Haggard and the late Owen Bradley will be presented with awards by the Recording Academy. Haggard will receive the lifetime achievement award in Los Angeles on February 7 and will be acknowledged the following day during the 48th annual Grammy Awards ceremony. David Bowie, Cream, the Weavers, opera singer Jessye Norman, and the late Richard Pryor and Robert Johnson will also be honored. Haggard is nominated for a Grammy for "Politically Uncorrect," his duet with Gretchen Wilson. The Academy is also honoring the late Owen Bradley, selecting him as one of this year's recipients of its Trustees' Award. A Nashville recording pioneer, Bradley produced classic recordings by Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, and many others. He also served for many years as head of Decca Records'

Nashville office. 1/14

Gretchen, Carrie Perform With Heart

Gretchen Wilson and Carrie Underwood will be among Heart's special guests at Ann & Nancy Wilson's concert at Atlantic City's Trump Taj Mahal on March 10. A special to be produced for VH1 Classic's *Decades Rock Live* show will also feature stars via satellite reworking Heart's most famous tunes. 1/14

Garth And Trisha Duet

The next Garth Brooks single will be a duet with his new wife, Trisha Yearwood, called "Love Will Always Win," which is being released to radio next Tuesday. Yearwood's latest album, *Jasper County*, will be re-released on February 7 with the additional track. The song will also be included on Garth's *Lost Sessions*, exclusive to Wal-Mart. 1/14

Houston Rodeo Lineup

The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo will be held February 28-March 19. George Strait will open the event's concert series on February 28, and Gretchen Wilson will close it on March 19. Other country artists scheduled to perform throughout the 20-day event include Brooks & Dunn, Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, Martina McBride, Lonestar, LeAnn Rimes, Lee Ann Womack, Trisha Yearwood, Cross Canadian Ragweed, Pat Green, Robert Earl Keen, Larry the Cable Guy, Clay Walker, and Cory Morrow. 1/14

John Celebrates Birthday

Big & Rich's John Rich celebrated his 32nd birthday January 7, but several of his friends gathered the night before for a private party at Bluesboro, a Nashville nightclub. With a Rat Pack theme, the music was provided by a swing band, although many of the artists performed themselves, including Brian McKnight, who sang his 1999 pop hit, "Back at One." Others who performed were Martina McBride, Kix Brooks, Hank Williams Jr., Kid Rock, and John Anderson. Blake Shelton, Billy Joe Shaver, Tanya Tucker, and Keith Anderson were other artists attending the party. Decorations included a naked lady covered in fruit on the buffet table and an ice sculpture of a naked bunny. Playboy bunnies were also flown in from Texas for the event. 1/14

Judds, John Inductees Into Kentucky Hall of Fame

Wynonna and Naomi Judd and John Conlee are three of the nine inductees announced for the "Class Of 2006" at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame. Lily Tomlin will present the awards on February 23 at the Lexington Center Bluegrass Ballroom. 1/14

Garth Films Commercials for OSU

Garth Brooks has been named spokesman for his college alma mater, Oklahoma State University. Brooks recently filmed a 30-second TV commercial touting OSU as "The State's University." Brooks attended OSU on a track and field scholarship and graduated in 1984. He recorded the commercials for the university at no charge, and two more commercials featuring Garth will air in the coming months. 1/14

LeAnn Appears In New Series

LeAnn Rimes is among the musical acts scheduled to appear in the new CBS series *Love Monkey*, debuting January 17. Look for LeAnn in the second episode. 1/14

Kenny Officially Single

Kenny Chesney's four-month marriage to Renée Zellweger was officially annulled December 20 in a Los Angeles court. 1/08

Barry Gibb Buys Cash Home

Barry Gibb of the Bee Gees has purchased Johnny and June Carter Cash's former home in Hendersonville, Tennessee. The 13,880-square-foot home was officially purchased by Balinda LLC, a Florida company wholly owned by Gibb and his wife, Linda. The couple plan to restore the home to its original condition and use it as retreat for songwriting. The house on Old Hickory Lake served as the Cash home for 35 years. The property, which includes a 4.6-acre lakefront lot, was placed on the market in June 2005 with an asking price of \$2.9 million, but reportedly sold for \$2.3 million. When it was listed, it was advertised to be sold "as is," with seven pieces of antique furniture, including the couple's bed. Built in 1968, the house includes seven bedrooms, five full baths and an outdoor swimming pool. 1/08

Cash Broadway Musical

A new Broadway production entitled *Ring of Fire: The Johnny Cash Musical Show* will open March 12 at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York. There is no storyline in the production, but it does include 38 of Cash's best-known

songs. The cast includes country singer Lari White, as well as Tony winner Jarrod Emick. 1/08

Ryman Concerts

Lynyrd Skynyrd & Friends will play an acoustic show at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville on February 9. All proceeds will benefit the John Hiatt Fund at Cumberland Heights, a local foundation for the treatment of chemical dependency. Tickets are \$39.50 and \$49.50. Then on February 19, Gretchen Wilson and Big & Rich will play a benefit show to help the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum's All for the Hall campaign. The show will also include Cowboy Troy, Jon Nicholson and James Otto. Depending on the package, tickets will be auctioned beginning at standard reserved seat prices (\$35 and \$50), moving up to a \$10,000 ultimate package for two, including hotel, airfare, a pre-concert private dinner at the Plowboy Mansion with an opportunity to meet the headliners, a pre-concert reception with the performers and much more. Other upcoming concerts at the Ryman include Kris Kristofferson (March 19), Merle Haggard (March 29) and Martina McBride (April 17-18). 1/08

Keith Brings Top Dollars At Auction

Keith Urban was the top draw during the recent Country Radio Broadcasters Auction to benefit the Country Music DJ Hall of Fame. Three sets of tickets to meet Keith at the annual Country Radio Seminar in Nashville brought in a total of more than \$13,000. The first pair alone went for nearly \$4,900. Urban also helped bring in more money when he autographed a guitar that sold for over \$1,200. Other items bringing in big bucks were a Kenny Chesney signed acoustic guitar, a Gary Allan autographed cowboy hat, and a trip to see Gretchen Wilson and Van Zant in concert. 1/08

Carrie To Perform For NASCAR Benefit

Carrie Underwood is scheduled to perform at the "Winter Wonderland Gala with Jeff Gordon & Friends" on January 14 in Portland, Maine. With a sold-out dinner and highly coveted auction items, the event is set to raise over \$500,000 dollars for The Jeff Gordon Foundation charities. 1/08

Gretchen Headlines St. Louis Benefit

Gretchen Wilson is scheduled to headline a January 15 charity concert to raise money for St. Louis Cardinals manager Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation. The event at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis will also feature Tony Orlando, trumpeter Chris Botti, comic Elayne Boosler and Journey keyboardist Jonathan Cain. The nonprofit foundation was founded in 1991 to aid and find homes for abandoned and homeless animals. 1/08

Phoenix and Witherspoon Nominated for SAG

Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon have earned nominations from the Screen Actors Guild for their roles as Johnny and June Carter Cash in the film Walk the Line. The awards will be presented in Los Angeles on January 29. The nominations are tallied from the votes of 4,200 randomly chosen members of the Guild's 98,000 members. 1/08

Tim Busy in February

Tim McGraw will be featured in the February 2006 issue of InStyle magazine in the article "Man of Style." The issue hits stands January 29. McGraw's Greatest Hits Volume 11 will be released February 7, and word is his TV special will also air in early February. 1/08

Lee Ann In Texas Campaign

Lee Ann Womack is taking part in the celebrity-packed "Don't Mess with Texas" 20th Anniversary TV campaign. The campaign, put together by the Texas Department of Transportation, is helping to combat littering in the state. Other celebrities taking part include Lance Armstrong, Erykah Badu, Ray Benson, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Matthew McConaughey, Chuck Norris, Janine Turner, and Owen Wilson. Also, Lee Ann has the honor of being included in the Top 10 albums of 2005 (all genres) in both Entertainment Weekly and the New York Times. 1/08

David Calls It Quits

David Kersh, who had several Top 10 hits in the late '90s, says he is "closing the book on my singing career," according to his monthly letter on his official Web site. In part, the letter reads, "My heart is just not in the music business anymore. I can't deal with all of the B.S. that goes on in this industry now. Nothing is in my control anymore, and it all just makes me a miserable person." Kersh's hits include "Goodnight Sweetheart," "Another You" and "If I Never Stop Loving You." 1/08

On the Tube/New Releases

Martina McBride will appear on ABC's Extreme Home Makeover this Sunday, January 8. Then next Thursday, January 12, tune in to see Sugarland perform their current single "Just Might (Make Me Believe)" on The Tonight Show With Jay Leno. On January 10, Jack Ingram will release a new live album titled Live - Wherever You Are and the honky-tonk band BR549 will release Dog Days. BR549 has made several personnel changes and now includes singer-guitarist Chuck Mead, multi-instrumentalist Don Herron, drummer-vocalist Shaw Wilson and new bassist Mark Miller. 1/08

Dierks Weds High School Sweetheart

Dierks Bentley eloped to Mexico over the weekend of December 17-18 and wed his longtime girlfriend, Cassidy. Dierks and Cassidy are both natives of Phoenix, Arizona, where they were high school sweethearts. After the wedding, the couple returned to Nashville and had dinner with Make-a-Wish Foundation staffers. Then the couple and their families spent the holidays together in Colorado. Bentley will travel to the United Kingdom in January for three shows which are a part of the Country Music Association's New From Nashville concert series. 12/30

Walk the Line to Be Screened at Folsom Prison

Walk the Line, the Johnny Cash biographical film, will be screened at Folsom Prison on January 3. Joaquin Phoenix, who portrayed Cash in the movie, is scheduled to attend the premiere. Cash recorded one of his most famous albums there in 1968, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*. 12/30

People's Choice Award Nominations

Faith Hill, Tim McGraw, and Toby Keith are the only country nominees for *The 32nd Annual People's Choice Awards*. Faith is up for Favorite Female Performer, along with Kelly Clarkson and Gwen Stefani. Faith will also compete against actresses Jennifer Garner and Nicole Kidman in the Nice 'N Easy Fans Favorite Hair category. Tim and Toby are up against Usher for Favorite Male Performer. The show will air January 10 on CBS. 12/30

Sound and Speed Event in Nashville

The first annual Sound and Speed event will be held January 13-14 at the Gaylord Entertainment Center in Nashville. Sound and Speed brings together country artists and NASCAR drivers to raise money for the Victory Junction Gang Camp (for children with chronic or life-threatening diseases) and the Country Music Hall of Fame. Vince Gill is the co-chairman for the event and will participate along with Trisha Yearwood, Trace Adkins, Jo Dee Messina, Diamond Rio, George Jones, Kenny Rogers, and Chely Wright. Montgomery Gentry will perform Saturday, January 14, along with LeAnn Rimes and Keith Anderson. Drivers participating in the event are Dale Earnhardt Jr., Richard Petty, Kyle Petty, Tony Stewart, Ernie Irvan, Jeff Green, Ryan Newman, Michael Waltrip, Sterling Marlin, Wayne Taylor, and Max Angelelli. In addition to musical performances and driver and artist autograph sessions, event highlights will include a display of 2006 Nextel Cup Series and Grand-Am cars, an exhibit of vintage cars, a music and racing memorabilia auction, and interviews with NASCAR and country stars. Tickets to the festival are \$20, with separate concert tickets priced at \$30. For up-to-date information on the Sound and Speed event, log on to www.soundandspeed2006.com. 12/30

Ferlin Has Heart Surgery

Country singer Ferlin Husky underwent heart surgery Tuesday, December 27, at a Springfield, Missouri hospital. He is expected to be released from the hospital this week after having stents placed in two of his arteries. Husky scored his first #1 single in 1953 with "A Dear John Letter," a duet with Jean Shepard. As a solo artist, his #1 hits include 1957's "Gone" and 1960's "Wings of a Dove." Husky is now 80 years old and is scheduled to return to the studio in January to begin working on a new album. 12/30

Brad's #1 in Rolling Stone

In *Rolling Stone* Magazine's year-end issue, Brad Paisley's "Alcohol" was listed as the #1 pick in the Top 10 list of country singles. 12/30

Radio Music Award Winners

Keith Urban was named Country Artist of the year at the Radio Music Awards, December 19 in Las Vegas. Country Song of the year honors went to Rascal Flatts for their recording of "Bless the Broken Road," written by Marcus Hummon, Bobby Boyd, and Jeff Hanna. 12/23.

Brooks & Dunn To Open for Rolling Stones

Brooks & Dunn will open for the Rolling Stones in Omaha, Nebraska on January 29. The Stones have recently begun choosing artists from a variety of genres to open their shows. 12/23

Golden Globe Nominations

Reese Witherspoon and Joaquin Phoenix received Golden Globe nominations Tuesday for their roles in the Johnny Cash film *Walk The Line*. Witherspoon and Phoenix are nominated for Actress and Actor in a Musical or Comedy. The film itself is nominated in the "Picture, Musical or Comedy" category. Also, Dolly Parton's "Travelin' Thru," a song she wrote for the movie *Transamerica*, has been nominated for Best Original Song in a Motion Picture. The Golden Globes are presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and the awards ceremony will take place March 5 in Hollywood. 12/23

Lonestar in Disney's Christmas Parade

Lonestar has joined with Walt Disney World for the 22nd annual *Christmas Day Parade*, airing on ABC Christmas morning. The guys taped a performance in the Magic Kingdom December 4 in front of an audience that included several hundred service men and women. Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa will host the two-hour parade special. 12/23

Aaron Assists Carpenters On Trading Spaces

Aaron Tippin recently flew to the McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey for a special taping of TLC's *Trading Spaces*, "Operation Home Base," where he assisted carpenters Amy Wynn and Carter, Hildi, and Genevieve to redecorate and create a new look for the top gun home owners. Following the carpentry work, everyone joined Tippin at his show to celebrate the completion of the project. Broadcast dates should be announced soon. 12/23

Sawyer Brown's Bus in Fatal Accident

On Saturday, December 10, the tour bus of Sawyer Brown was involved in a fatal vehicular accident near Holton, Kansas. Investigators said a 24-year-old woman, Jessica Mossman, was not wearing a seat belt and failed to yield as she entered the interstate. Her car was struck by the northbound tour bus, and both vehicles caught on fire. Sawyer Brown lead vocalist Mark Miller, bassist Jim Scholten, and keyboardist Gregg "Hobie" Hubbard were aboard the bus but were not injured. The band shares, "The accident was a horrible tragedy, and our hearts and prayers go out to the family of Jessica A. Mossman." 12/23

Montgomery Gentry Appear In Talent Search

On January 26, Montgomery Gentry will star in "America's Largest Talent Search," hosted by Kassie DePaiva of ABC's *One Life To Live*. *The 24th Annual Colgate Country Showdown National Finals* will be held January 26 at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. For the first time, five young women make up the cast of regional winners who will compete for the national title and \$100,000 grand prize. 12/23

Toby Coaches Son's Football Team

Toby Keith took a break from touring this fall to coach his son Stelen's football team, helping them to an undefeated season and the championship in their 15-team league. The Mud Dogs didn't allow their opponents any points during the entire post season. Stelen played center and nose guard for the team and served as team captain, though injuries kept him sidelined over the last month of the season. 12/23

Trick Pony Presents Check to Red Cross

Trick Pony recently presented the American Red Cross a check for over \$88,000 to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The band raised money by contributing ticket proceeds and by taking donations from fans at Graham Central Station clubs across the U.S. 12/23

Faith Graces Good Housekeeping Cover

Faith Hill is on cover of the January 2006 issue of *Good Housekeeping*, on sale now. 12/23

Kasey Marries

Australian country star Kasey Chambers married singer-songwriter Shane Nicholson on December 17 during a private ceremony at their home on Australia's central coast. In inviting some 20 close friends, the couple told them they were having an engagement party but surprised them with the wedding after they arrived. 12/23

Emerson Drive Inks New Deal

Emerson Drive has signed with Midas Records Nashville and is working on an album with Alabama bassist Teddy Gentry. The CD is slated for a summer release, with a first single due out in February. 12/23

Ty Releases New Single

Ty England, who scored a hit in 1995 with "Should've Asked Her Faster," has released a new single, "Redneck Anthem," on Oklahoma-based Triple T Records. Formerly Garth Brooks' college roommate and tour guitarist, England has lately been active on the USO circuit. 12/23

Garth and Trisha Wed

Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood were married on Saturday, December 10, in a private ceremony at their home in Claremore, Oklahoma. The couple filed for a marriage license Friday in Rogers County, Oklahoma. Garth and Trisha exchanged vows before family members, and their publicist said, "They said it is the perfect Christmas gift to each other and they couldn't be happier." 12/16

Radio Music Awards

The 7th Annual Radio Music Awards will be televised live on NBC from the Aladdin Resort and Casino in Las Vegas on Monday, December 19. Rascal Flatts, Keith Urban, and Sugarland are scheduled to perform. The Radio Music Awards recognize musicians, artists, and air personalities in the hottest radio formats. It is a true testament to the powerful impact radio airplay has on an artist's success and is one of the ultimate public accolades from listeners across America. Nominations are based on the amount of radio airplay as determined by Mediabase, the medium's leading source for tracking airplay. In the country radio category the nominees are: ARTIST OF THE YEAR: Brooks & Dunn, Kenny Chesney, Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, Tim McGraw, George Strait, and Keith Urban; SONG OF THE YEAR: "Nothin' To Lose," Josh Gracin; "Mr. Mom," Lonestar; "That's What I Love About Sunday," Craig Morgan; "Mud On The Tires," Brad Paisley; "Bless The Broken Road," Rascal Flatts; "Some Beach," Blake Shelton; and "Baby Girl," Sugarland. Tim McGraw grabbed an additional nomination in the Mainstream Hit Radio category with "Over and Over" (with Nelly), scoring a Song of the Year nod. 12/16

Grammy Nominations

Big & Rich were in New York City last week to help announce the nominations for *The 48th Grammy Awards*. Gretchen Wilson has the most nominations for a female country artist (4) and is tied with Brad Paisley for the most nominations in the country music categories. Several artists received nominations in categories which encompass all genres of music: Rascal Flatts' "Bless The Broken Road" for Song of the Year, Sugarland for Best New Artist, and Martina McBride for Best Short Form Video for "God's Will." The Grammy awards will take place at the Staples Center in Los Angeles on February 8, 2006 and will air live on CBS. 12/16

Nominations in the "country" category are:

BEST FEMALE COUNTRY VOCAL PERFORMANCE: "The Connection," Emmylou Harris; "Mississippi Girl," Faith Hill; "All Jacked Up," Gretchen Wilson; "I May Hate Myself In The Morning," Lee Ann Womack; "Georgia Rain," Trisha Yearwood

BEST MALE COUNTRY VOCAL PERFORMANCE: "Funny How Time Slips Away," George Jones; "As Good As I Once Was," Toby Keith; "Midnight Communion," Delbert McClinton; "Good Ol' Boys," Willie Nelson; "Alcohol," Brad Paisley; "You'll Think Of Me," Keith Urban

BEST COUNTRY PERFORMANCE BY A DUO OR GROUP WITH VOCAL: "Comin' To Your City," Big & Rich; "Play Something Country," Brooks & Dunn; "I Hope," Dixie Chicks; "Restless," Alison Krauss And Union Station; "Bless The Broken Road," Rascal Flatts

BEST COUNTRY SONG (award to songwriter): "Alcohol," Brad Paisley (songwriter: Brad Paisley); "All Jacked Up," Gretchen Wilson (songwriters: Vicky McGehee, John Rich & Gretchen Wilson); "Bless The Broken Road," Rascal Flatts (songwriters: Bobby Boyd, Jeff Hanna & Marcus Hummon); "I Hope," Dixie Chicks (songwriters: Keb Mo, The Dixie Chicks); "I May Hate Myself In The Morning," Lee Ann Womack (songwriter: O. Blackmon)

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM: *Fireflies*, Faith Hill; *Lonely Runs Both Ways*; Alison Krauss And Union Station; *Time Well Wasted*, Brad Paisley; *All Jacked Up*, Gretchen Wilson; *Jasper County*, Trisha Yearwood

BEST COUNTRY COLLABORATION WITH VOCALS: "Building Bridges," Brooks & Dunn, Sheryl Crow & Vince Gill; "Shelter From The Storm," Rodney Crowell & Emmylou Harris; "Like We Never Loved At All," Faith Hill & Tim McGraw; "Dreams Come True," Willie Nelson & Norah Jones; "Politically Uncorrect," Gretchen Wilson & Merle Haggard

BEST COUNTRY INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMANCE: "I'll Fly Away," Charlie Daniels; "Who's Your Uncle?," Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush & Béla Feck; "Unionhouse Branch," Alison Krauss And Union Station; "Scotch & Chocolate," Nickel Creek; "Time Warp," Brad Paisley

BEST BLUEGRASS ALBUM: *Marbletown*, Blue Highway; *Cherryholmes*, Cherryholmes; *The Grascals*, The Grascals; *The Company We Keep*, The Del McCoury Band; *Ragin' Live*, Rhonda Vincent And The Rage

Nashville Star

Wynonna Judd and Cowboy Troy will replace Leann Rimes as hosts of the fourth season of *Nashville Star*. Phil Vassar and music executive Anastasia Brown are slated to provide their feedback and commentary during each of the live episodes. A rotating special celebrity guest judge will join them each week throughout the season. The new season of *Nashville Star* will debut Tuesday, March 7, on USA Network. 12/16

Cracker Barrel Sells Sara Compilation

Feels Like Home, a Sara Evans compilation CD, is now available exclusively at Cracker Barrel locations and online at crackerbarrel.com. The collection features 12 songs, including two previously unreleased versions of some of Sara's hits: an acoustic version of "No Place That Far" and a live version of "Born To Fly." 12/16

Celebrities Decorate Ornaments For Charity

Keith Urban, LeAnn Rimes, Carrie Underwood, and Wynonna were among the celebrities who personally decorated and signed Christmas tree decorations for an online auction to benefit Toys For Tots. Their efforts are being used to specifically improve the holidays for the young victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes. All 41 celebrity ornaments were sold to the highest bidder on eBay, along with a seven-foot artificial tree that's currently on display in Disneyland in Anaheim. Other celebrities that were involved in the project include Donald Trump, William Shatner, and Susan Sarandon. 12/16

Lee Ann Performs For Hurricane Benefit

On December 18, Lee Ann Womack will perform at a benefit in Tunica, Mississippi for firefighters and police officers who were first responders after Hurricane Katrina struck Mississippi. 12/16

Gulf Coast Concert DVD

Shelter From the Storm: A Concert for the Gulf Coast is available now on DVD. Performers include Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood singing "Who'll Stop the Rain," plus Mariah Carey, Sheryl Crow, Rod Stewart, Alicia Keys and more. A minimum of \$5 from the sale of each DVD will go to the Red Cross and Salvation Army to benefit the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The performances were part of a one-hour TV special on six networks earlier this fall to support the survivors of the Gulf Coast disaster. 12/16

USO Hope And Freedom Tour

Craig Morgan and Mark Wills are among the celebrities who are heading to the Persian Gulf region as part of the *USO Hope and Freedom Tour 2005*. During the trip, the crew will perform shows, visit with troops, sign autographs, and tour military facilities at a number of locations. Other celebrities on the tour will include comedian Al Franken, the Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders, and Keni Thomas. 12/16

Neal Becomes Wrangler Spokesperson for Cancer

Neal McCoy has been chosen by Wrangler as spokesperson for its *Tough Enough to Wear Pink* initiative to support the battle against breast cancer. Wrangler's special-edition shirts for men and women are available now, with part of the proceeds going to breast cancer research. A redesigned Wrangler rope emblem in the shape of the renowned breast cancer ribbon signifies the parallels between the cowboys who won the West and the brave women and men who are determined to win the battle against breast cancer. 12/16

Brad Continues Tour Into 2006

Brad Paisley announced Friday that he will continue his *Time Well Wasted* tour into 2006 with only one change in the show's lineup, as Billy Currington will replace Sugarland as the third act (Sara Evans will remain as part of the tour). The winter leg of his current tour includes a string of shows in Canada, with Terri Clark opening the Canadian shows. 12/16

New Years Appearances

Sugarland will appear on *Dick Clark's New Year's Rockin' Eve* special December 31 on NBC. They will perform their hit "Something More" and the rockin' tune "Down in Mississippi (Up To No Good)," both off their Platinum-selling debut album, *Twice The Speed of Life*. LeAnn Rimes has been invited to perform in Pasadena's *Tournament of Roses Parade*, airing January 2 on NBC. And Big & Rich and Cowboy Troy will perform during halftime at the Rose Bowl championship football game on January 4. 12/16

Billboard Music Award Winners

The 2005 *Billboard* Music Awards were handed out Tuesday night in Las Vegas. Toby Keith won both awards for which he was nominated, Country Artist of the Year and Country Albums Artist of the Year. Keith also performed "Let's Get Drunk and Be Somebody" with the help of a fourteen-piece band, including a horn section. And Carrie

Underwood picked up three awards: Country Single Sales Artist of the Year, Top Selling Hot 100 Song of the Year, and Top Selling Country Single of the Year for "Inside Your Heaven/Independence Day." Underwood performed "Some Hearts," the title track from her newly released debut album. 12/09

Garth Makes Wal-Mart History

Wal-Mart announced that *Garth Brooks: The Limited Series* boxed set became the top selling music item in the company's history after only three days of availability in stores. The boxed set achieved Wal-Mart's highest volume of sales ever for the first day of any musical release, achieving Gold status, (more than half a million copies sold), on the first day it was available for purchase at Wal-Mart and Sam's Club locations. Preorders on Walmart.com reached record-breaking results prior to the launch in stores, rumored to have been 250,000 copies. 12/09

Official Engagement/ People's Sexiest Poll

Entertainment Tonight reports that Keith Urban and Nicole Kidman are officially engaged. *People* magazine did a poll which shows that 47 percent think Keith and Nicole are a good match, but 53 percent disagree. In another recent *People* poll, Keith was voted the third sexiest country star, with 24 percent of the vote. Tim McGraw came in second with 34 percent and Kenny Chesney topped the sexiest country star list with 42 percent. 12/09

Lila Marries

Lila McCann married her boyfriend of three years, Mike Wolofsky, at the Hermitage Hotel in Nashville on November 20. McCann joined Jim Brickman on the road in late November and continues throughout December, performing "I'm Amazed" as part of Jim Brickman & Friends-The Holiday Tour 2005. Lila recently performed the song for a PBS concert special, *Jim Brickman at the Magic Kingdom: The Disney Songbook*, that began airing over Thanksgiving weekend and will continue through December. The PBS special was taped in Orlando, Florida and includes additional performances by Michael Bolton, Linda Eder, and Wayne Brady. 12/09

Reba News

Reba McEntire took home the Family Television Award for Best Actress in a comedy for her role on the WB sitcom *REBA*. Tune in to see her host the show and win on December 11 on WB. In other news, Reba has put the jacket she wore on *Good Morning America* up for auction on eBay to benefit the Salvation Army. And Reba will perform a concert series at the Las Vegas Hilton, entitled "Key to the Heart," beginning May 2006 and running through the end of August. Reba will perform Wednesdays through Sundays in the Hilton Theater, and proceeds will benefit Habitat for Humanity. 12/09

Garth's Foundation Fundraiser

Garth Brooks' Teammates for Kids Foundation, which is the official children's charity of the National Hockey League and the National Hockey League Player's Association, kicked off an online jersey auction in mid-November, and Garth pledged that his foundation would match every dollar raised. The auction, which closed last Wednesday, raised over \$530,000, so with Garth's matching pledge over \$1 Million will go to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina. 12/09

Alan Teams Up With Red Cross

Alan Jackson will be lending his voice for PSAs for the American Red Cross for radio stations across the country, and also will be the face and voice of the "Thanks, Nashville" campaign to thank donors and volunteers for their extraordinary generosity throughout 2005. The campaign will include 52 billboards around Nashville, print ads, and radio announcements. 12/09

Montgomery Gentry News

Eddie Montgomery was in a Lexington, Kentucky hospital this weekend with pneumonia and a strain of the flu. He is resting at home this week but promises "the show will go on" when they hit the road again this weekend. Montgomery Gentry, Van Zant, and Miranda Lambert will be winding down 2005 together this weekend when they perform at the WQIK Winter Wonder Jam at Metropolitan Park in Jacksonville, Florida. It will be the first time Van Zant fans in their hometown get to see the duo perform live. 12/09

Tim Gets Food Poisoning

Tim McGraw performed for sell-out crowds this past weekend in Uncasville, Connecticut. McGraw took the stage a little behind schedule Sunday night after fighting off food poisoning. Several songs into the set he had to take a break, but managed to return and complete the full set. And Tim will be filming a new TV special this week during two shows at Club Avalon in New York City. The special will most likely air on NBC in February. 12/09

Josh Tapes Christmas Special

Josh Turner is returning to his alma-mater, Belmont University in Nashville, to tape a concert special, *Christmas at Belmont*. Look for the special to air on some PBS affiliates. The follow-up to Josh's platinum-selling debut album is entitled *Your Man* and will hit stores January 24. 12/09

Artists Offer Up Items to Auction

Country music artists and other well-known celebrities are cleaning out their closets and gathering treasures to support Celebrity Rags 4 Charity Riches, with the proceeds going to the Animal Hurricane Fund. Faith Hill, Martina McBride, Alan Jackson, Montgomery Gentry, Joe Nichols, Tracy Lawrence and many others are donating items to be auctioned off on eBay now through December 10. Autographed guitars were donated by Kenny Chesney and Brooks & Dunn; Gretchen Wilson offered a pair of her signature blue jeans; and Jamie O'Neal has donated an incredible pair of hand-painted boots. 12/09

Rhonda and Others Perform for Holiday on Ice

Rhonda Vincent & the Rage will perform two songs for a TV special featuring holiday music and professional ice skaters. They are the first bluegrass band to take part in the annual Capital One Holiday Celebration on Ice, which was filmed this week in Richmond, Virginia. Airing on NBC on Christmas Day, other artists on the special include Josh Gracin, Bruce Hornsby, and SHeDAISY. 12/09

Pat's New Album Features Chet Performance

Pat Boone will release an album early next year containing what is believed to be Chet Atkins' last recorded performance. "Waltz for the Lonely," co-written by Boone and Atkins, will be featured on the album, *Hopeless Romantic*. Atkins died in 2001. LeAnn Rimes and Kenny Rogers are among the stars who have recorded with Boone for albums released to coincide with the singer's 50th year in the entertainment business. Rimes, Rogers, Michael McDonald, and U2's Bono make appearances on "Thank You, Billy Graham," a track from Boone's recently released gospel album, *Glory Train: The Lost Tapes*. And *We Are Family*, an album of R&B duets, is also set for release early next year. The project includes Boone's collaborations with Smokey Robinson and Kool Moe Dee, along with a new version of "Papa's Got a Brand New Bag" with James Brown. 12/09

American Music Awards Winners

Tim McGraw took home two trophies at the American Music Awards last week in Los Angeles, winning Favorite Male Artist in the Country Music category and Favorite Country Album for *Live Like You Were Dying*. Gretchen Wilson picked up the Favorite Female Artist award and Brooks & Dunn won for Favorite Band, Duo, or Group. Sugarland took home the award for Breakthrough Favorite New Artist, which encompasses all genres of music. 12/01

ACM's 40th Anniversary

George Strait, Garth Brooks, Reba McEntire, Brooks & Dunn, and Kenny Chesney are among the stars featured on the *Academy of Country Music's 40th Anniversary Celebration*, airing this Saturday on CBS. Also appearing on the show are Rascal Flatts, Alan Jackson, Montgomery Gentry, Trisha Yearwood, Lee Ann Womack, Alabama, Mickey Gilley, Merle Haggard, and Barbara Mandrell. The special was taped May 18 at the Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino in Las Vegas and honors artists who have achieved ACM-recognized milestones in their careers. 12/01

Artists Participate In Cancer Benefit

On Friday, December 2, Travis Tritt, Tanya Tucker, and Tracy Byrd will be part of the Cutting Benefit in Texas at the Will Rogers Stadium. The benefit and celebrity concert will raise funds for the Careity Foundation, which helps cancer patients and their families. The event features national celebrities riding the most athletic horses in the world. 12/01

Celebrities Team With Amazon.com For Hurricane Victims

Celebrities including Tim McGraw, Faith Hill, Paul McCartney, Trisha Yearwood, and former president Bill Clinton have teamed with Amazon.com to raise awareness and funds for non-profit groups helping victims of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The program began on Amazon.com this week with an exclusive premiere of a recently recorded, unreleased song by Tim McGraw entitled "Louisiana" and will continue every weekday through December 20 with a daily celebrity partner's gift of exclusive content. McGraw visited the St. Bernard Parish City Hall near New Orleans this week to kick off the project and meet with hurricane victims. 12/01

Female Artists Perform For Charity

Martina McBride, LeAnn Rimes, and *American Idol* winner Carrie Underwood will perform together at a holiday show in Auburn Hills, Michigan on December 8. Proceeds will benefit Habitat for Humanity's work to repair damage from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. 12/01

Keith and Nicole Update

Reports are that Keith Urban and Nicole Kidman celebrated a very American Thanksgiving holiday at Urban's house in Nashville last week, with both his and her parents joining in the feast. Also, apparently Urban has written a song inspired by Kidman and two other songs inspired by her children. 12/01

New Releases

Before Universal South tapped him as their new rising star, leading to his two multi-week Number One singles and four Grammy nominations, Joe Nichols recorded his freshman CD, entitled *Joe Nichols*. Aspiron Records is proud to announce the release of those early songs in a new CD/DVD combination, *Joe Nichols: The Early Years*. The package includes a CD of those original ten songs and a DVD of four music videos, none of which have ever before been for sale to the public. The album is now available in stores nationwide. Also, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* DVD was released this week, featuring Martina McBride singing "When Love Is Gone." 12/01

Keith's Engagement Rumor

Backstage in the press room at the CMA Awards, Keith Urban dismissed a question regarding his relationship with actress Nicole Kidman. When asked by a reporter what he had to say about rumors that he was engaged, Urban politely replied, "Well, I say that I'm very grateful for this award, and I'd hate to use up such valuable time discussing my personal life." *People* Magazine has published pictures of the couple walking arm-in-arm on the streets of Boston, and one picture shows that Nicole had a ring on her wedding finger. The magazine also says that Kidman has been a fixture on Urban's tour and the couple have been "inseparable." Urban made *People's* "Sexiest Man Alive" list, coming in at #9. 11/25

George's Hall of Fame Exhibit

A new exhibit, *The Grand Tour: George Jones Country*, is set to open at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum in Nashville on December 2. The exhibit will include a 14" x 20" black and white photograph of 12-year-old Jones on the streets of Beaumont, Texas, Jones' "White Lightning" black wool Nudie suit, and a George Jones model Martin D-41 guitar with mother-of-pearl "GJ" inlay. The exhibit will run through May 2006. 11/25

Shania Receives Canada's Highest Honor

Shania Twain was in Ottawa Canada on November 18 to accept the Order of Canada, that nation's highest honor for lifetime achievement. The ceremony recognized a lifetime of outstanding achievement and service to the nation. 11/25

Aaron Is Spokesperson for YMCA Armed Services

Aaron Tippin has been named a national spokesperson for the Armed Services YMCA, an organization that funds essential programs to junior enlisted personnel and their families, such as childcare, hospital assistance, spouse support services, food services, computer training classes, health and wellness services, and holiday meals. Tippin is spending the Thanksgiving holiday with U.S. troops overseas. 11/25

Charlie Launches Operation Heartstrings

Charlie Daniels has launched Operation Heartstrings, a plea to corporate America to help our troops overseas combat the loneliness of service in the War on Terror by providing them with various types of portable entertainment. On a recent visit, Charlie learned that many of our service men and women play musical instruments of one kind or another, but the number of instruments available to them is extremely limited. Some of the items donated so far include amps and guitars, keyboards, microphones, laptop computers, DVDs, and CDs. Tax deductible donations can be made through starsandstripes.com. 11/25

Garth's Charity Aligns With NHL

Garth Brooks' Teammates for Kids Foundation has been selected as the official children's charity of the National Hockey League and National Hockey League Players Association. The partnership, involving players from all thirty NHL clubs, will focus on Top Shelf Teammates, a program in which players make a pre-determined financial contribution based on selected performance categories during games. The program contributes financial resources to nonprofit organizations that benefit children's health, education, and inner-city services. 11/25

Tim's Concert for Nashville Kats

Tim McGraw, co-owner of the Nashville Kats Arena Football League franchise, will kick off the Kats' 2006 season with an exclusive concert for season ticket holders and partners. The concert, "Tim McGraw & Friends," will take place January 20 in Nashville at the Gaylord Entertainment Center. This year's show will feature several surprise guests. Fans purchasing season tickets will be assigned the same seats for the concert. The Nashville Kats kick off

the 2006 season with a game at New York on January 28. 11/25

Collin Supports Fruit of the Loom

It has been three years since Collin Raye has had a new song on country radio, but you might have recently heard his voice dramatically singing "You Can't Over Love (Your Underwear)" in a hilarious series of TV and radio spots for Fruit of the Loom. Raye, a top country hit maker in the '90s, admits he was hesitant about being the voice of an underwear company, but the campaign's goofy humor won him over. The campaign has been so successful that he is hoping to turn the relationship with the manufacturer into tour support. 11/25

Opry Cruise

Pam Tillis, Charley Pride, and Roy Clark will take part in the next Grand Ole Opry Caribbean Cruise, scheduled for January 22-29, 2006. Nashville's WSM-AM host Eddie Stubbs will also be aboard. Departing from Tampa, the cruise will visit Grand Cayman Island, Costa Maya, Cozumel, and Belize. 11/25

Reba's New Releases

Reba McEntire's new CD, *REBA #1's*, hit stores this week. The disc contains thirty three of her chart-topping hits and two new songs, including "You're Gonna Be." And coming to stores December 13 is *Reba: The Complete Second Season DVD Collection*, which features all twenty four episodes of the WB sitcom, *Reba*, in a three-disc set with additional bonus features. Reba will appear on *Good Morning America* on November 28 and *The View* on November 29. You can also catch her December 3 on the *Academy of Country Music's 40th Anniversary Special* on CBS. 11/25

CMA Awards Winners

The 39th Annual CMA Awards were handed out Tuesday night from Madison Square Garden in New York City. Keith Urban picked up the prestigious final award of the night, Entertainer of the Year, along with Male Vocalist of the Year. Lee Ann Womack was the big winner of the night, garnering three awards: Single of the Year for "I May Hate Myself In The Morning," Album of the Year for *There's More Where That Came From*, and Musical Event of the Year for her duet with George Strait on "Good News, Bad News." Female Vocalist of the Year went to Gretchen Wilson, Rascal Flatts was named Vocal Group of the Year, and the Horizon award winner was Dierks Bentley. Brooks & Dunn were once again named Vocal Duo of the Year, while Toby Keith won Video of the Year for "As Good As I Once Was." And the Song of the Year was "Whiskey Lullaby," an award presented to songwriters Bill Anderson and Jon Randall. The CMA Awards will return to Nashville in 2006. 11/17

Inspirational Awards

Craig Morgan garnered two awards at the 11th Annual Inspirational Country Music Awards Show. Morgan received trophies for both Mainstream Country Artist and Video of the Year for "That's What I Love About Sunday." The Tim McGraw hit "Live Like You Were Dying," written by Tim Nichols and Craig Wiseman, was named top song. Also of note, Morgan, who recently celebrated his second #1 hit single with "Redneck Yacht Club" (his fastest rising single to date), on the heels of "... Sunday," is one of only three acts to have back-to-back #1 hit singles this year. The others are Rascal Flatts with "Bless The Broken Road" and "Fast Cars and Freedom" and Brooks & Dunn with "It's Getting Better All The Time" and "Play Something Country." 11/17

Keith Wins International Award

Keith Urban was surprised recently during a reception at the Australian Consulate General in New York City with the Association's International Artist Achievement Award, which recognizes outstanding achievement by an artist who contributes to the awareness and development of Country Music outside North America. Previous winners include Dolly Parton, the Dixie Chicks, Reba McEntire, Shania Twain, and Trisha Yearwood. 11/17

American Music Awards

Kenny Chesney, Tim McGraw, Keith Urban, and Rascal Flatts will perform at the American Music Awards on ABC, November 22. Brooks & Dunn and Lee Ann Womack have been added to the list of presenters. 11/17

Garth's Exclusive Box Set

Garth Brooks' much-anticipated box set will hit Wal-Mart on Friday, November 25, the day after Thanksgiving. However, online customers can get a head start and purchase it two days before the release. The *Limited Series 6-Disc Boxed Set* is exclusive to Wal-Mart and will include an all access DVD featuring never-before-seen footage, *The Last Sessions* CD of previously unreleased songs, three classic Garth albums (*Sevens*, *Scarecrow* and the two-CD *Double Live* set), plus a 68-page full-color booklet with lyrics, photos, and more. Garth will be promoting the upcoming release with appearance this week on *Good Morning America*. 11/17

Artists Continue To Support Hurricane Victims

Keith Anderson, Little Big Town, and Chely Wright are among the country artists performing at a fundraiser in Nashville for animals affected by Hurricane Katrina. The event takes place on November 21, with all proceeds benefiting the Animal Hurricane Fund. Other participating performers include Radney Foster, the Kinleys, and Michael Peterson. The evening will include a cocktail buffet, cash bar, and silent auction. The auction includes a Brooks & Dunn autographed jacket and guitar, a one-week stay at a Destin condo, attendance at a Jamie O'Neal recording session, a pair of autographed Gretchen Wilson jeans, and more. Faith Hill's rendition of the gospel song, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," will appear on the two-CD package, *Hurricane Relief: Come Together Now*, which will be released November 22. The multi-genre project also includes contributions from Wynonna and Clint Black, as well as Coldplay, Norah Jones, and Elton John, among others. Sales of the benefit album will aid Gulf Coast victims devastated by the recent hurricanes in the region. And Travis Tritt donated \$15,000 from recent shows in Louisiana to the Louisiana National Guard 256th Brigade Combat Team that was affected during hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Travis also gave \$10,000 from a recent show in Choctaw, Mississippi to the American Red Cross. 11/17

Christmas For Kids Benefit

Charlie Daniels and friends Phil Vassar and Lonestar will offer their time and talents to perform at the 9th Annual Christmas For Kids Benefit Concert on November 21 at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. The charity event raises money for the Christmas For Kids organization, which has been in existence for over 20 years providing special children the opportunity to celebrate the holiday season. The Christmas For Kids organization will also host a Tour Bus Tour. Then children from 25 different schools will be chauffeured from their schools aboard a country music star's luxury tour bus to a local Wal-Mart for their very own Christmas shopping spree. On the return trip home, the children will participate in a Christmas carol sing-along. All proceeds from the events will be donated toward the children's Christmas shopping. 11/17

Auction To Benefit St. Jude's

Several artists have donated items for the Country Cares auction on eBay to benefit St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Guitars autographed by Keith Urban, Big & Rich, and Gretchen Wilson are among the items available, as well as Alan Jackson's signed jeans and lunch for four with Van Zant. 11/17

Montgomery Gentry News

Both Eddie and Troy of Montgomery Gentry will be having surgeries next month. Back in April, Eddie Montgomery broke his left wrist in a concert accident, and Troy Gentry broke his left ankle and tore ligaments in his left knee in a horse-riding accident in July. They've been unable to heal due to several months on the road. Montgomery Gentry recently presented representatives of Rescue 4/FDNY with a check for \$10,000 to support the Terry Farrell Firefighters Scholarship Fund. The donation will directly support educational aid for children of all active, retired, disabled and deceased FDNY members or volunteer fire department members residing in the four Long Island counties. Also, Eddie and Troy have autographed a pair of jeans to be auctioned off during the National Hemophilia Foundation's Annual Celebrity Blue Jeans for Genes Auction on eBay, which will take place from November 19-29. 11/17

Brooks & Dunn New Year's Eve Blast

Brooks & Dunn will be ringing in the New Year in Nashville with their annual New Year's Eve Blast at Gaylord Entertainment Center! Word is there will be some special guests. Tickets are on sale now through Ticketmaster. 11/17

New Releases

Big & Rich released their sophomore effort, *Comin' To Your City*, while Carrie Underwood released her debut album, *Some Hearts*. Also, Carrie will perform her new single, "Jesus, Take The Wheel" on *Opry At The Ryman* this Saturday. Her performance will be featured during the televised portion of the Opry on GAC. Also hitting the stores this week was the *Walk The Line Soundtrack*. The movie, *Walk The Line*, will be released nationally on Friday. Watch for a new CD release from Reba next week! 11/17

New York Hosts CMA Awards Next Week

"The 39th Annual CMA Awards" airs live on CBS next Tuesday, November 15, from Madison Square Garden in New York City. Brooks & Dunn will host the show for the second year in a row. Opening the three-hour gala will be the reigning CMA Entertainer of the Year, Kenny Chesney, who will perform "Living In Fast Forward," a song from his new album, *The Road and the Radio*, which was released November 8. Special collaborations include Dolly Parton and Elton John performing together for the first time ever, Bon Jovi performing with Jennifer Nettles of Sugarland,

and Willie Nelson and Paul Simon performing together and presenting the CMA Song of the Year. Garth Brooks will pay tribute to his dear friend, Chris LeDoux, with "Good Ride, Cowboy." Vince Gill will present the 2005 Country Music Hall of Fame inductees Alabama, Glen Campbell, and the late Deford Bailey. Current "American Idol" Carrie Underwood will debut her first single, "Jesus Take The Wheel" and then present a CMA Award. Other performers include Dierks Bentley, Big & Rich, Brooks & Dunn, Sara Evans, Faith Hill, Alan Jackson, Alison Krauss and Union Station, Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Brad Paisley, Rascal Flatts, Julie Roberts, George Strait, Sugarland, Keith Urban, Gretchen Wilson, and Lee Ann Womack. Presenters include Trace Adkins, Cowboy Troy, James Gandolfini, Billy Joel, Kris Kristofferson, Montgomery Gentry, Olivia Newton-John, Joe Nichols, LeAnn Rimes, Shania Twain, Trisha Yearwood, Wynonna, Reese Witherspoon, and Joaquin Phoenix. Of note, Toby Keith will not be attending the CMA Awards, despite the fact he has four nominations, including Entertainer of the Year. Toby's publicist and the CMA have stated that it has nothing to do with Toby's feelings toward the CMA or its voters, which, before this year, have nominated him for 23 trophies but awarded him only one. Toby is in Atlanta filming a movie entitled *Angel From Montgomery*, and they say he's just too busy with the film to attend the awards. 11/12

New York Events Surrounding CMAs

Brooks & Dunn performed at Irving Plaza in the Big Apple on November 10. The Broadway Meets Country concert is set for November 12 at New York's Lincoln Center, where country artists will be performing Broadway songs and Broadway stars will be interpreting country songs. Billy Currington will sing "On the Street Where You Live" from *My Fair Lady*, and famed film and stage performer Ben Vereen will offer Roger Miller's "King of the Road." Trisha Yearwood and Idina Menzel will sing "For Good" from the musical *Wicked*, and Glen Campbell will perform "You'll Never Walk Alone" from *Carousel*. Other country artists performing include Raul Malo, Neal McCoy, Jamie O'Neal, Julie Roberts, Carrie Underwood, and Lonestar's Richie McDonald. The event will be co-hosted by Lee Ann Womack and Tony award winner Brian Stokes Mitchell and will serve as a fundraiser for the Actors' Fund of America and the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund. Charlie Daniels, Darryl Worley, Mark Wills, and Keni Thomas observed Veteran's Day in New York during the American Freedom Festival, raising money and awareness for the veterans of America's armed forces and their families whose lives have been affected by Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. And Craig Morgan and Neal McCoy will join up with Jack Daniel's for a special USO "Toast to the Troops" benefit concert in New York on November 12, with all net proceeds going to the USO. 11/12

Johnny Cash TV Special and Movie

I Walk the Line: A Night for Johnny Cash will air next Wednesday, November 16, on CBS. Classic Cash songs will be performed by Jerry Lee Lewis, Kris Kristofferson, Martina McBride, Dwight Yoakam, Sheryl Crow, Alison Krauss, Brad Paisley, Norah Jones, Shooter Jennings, Jessi Colter, Kid Rock, Montgomery Gentry, and rockers U2 and Foo Fighters. Joaquin Phoenix and Reese Witherspoon will host the TV show, with actors Andy Garcia and Dennis Quaid also helping to introduce the performers. The special coincides with the November 18 national release of *Walk the Line*, the Cash biopic starring Joaquin Phoenix as Johnny Cash and Reese Witherspoon as June Carter Cash. Shooter Jennings also appears in the movie, portraying his dad, Waylon. 11/12

Big Kenny Becomes A Daddy

Congratulations to Kenny Alphin, otherwise known as Big Kenny of the duo Big & Rich, and his wife Christiev on the birth of a baby boy, November 2. Lincoln William Holiday Alphin weighed in at six pounds, eleven ounces. 11/12

Artists Lose Record Deals

In the wake of mergers and roster reductions, a number of country artists have left their record labels. Following Universal's acquisition of DreamWorks Nashville, three of its artists -- Jessica Andrews, Jimmy Wayne, and Darryl Worley -- were not absorbed into either MCA Nashville or Mercury Nashville. In addition, Tracy Byrd, Carolyn Dawn Johnson, Bobby Pinson, and Rachel Proctor are also no longer affiliated with the RCA Label Group. 11/12

Billboard's Touring Awards

Kenny Chesney was recently named winner of Billboard's touring award for top package, while Rascal Flatts took the breakthrough artist award over Coldplay, the only other act nominated. 11/12

Recording Academy Honors Artists

The Recording Academy -- the organization that presents the Grammy awards -- honored the musical achievements of Alison Krauss, Earl Scruggs, Tim McGraw, and BeBe and CeCe Winans in Nashville on November 7. Each honoree chose an artist to perform their music, and Tim McGraw selected his friend Martina McBride to sing his hit "Please Remember Me.": Next to the Grammy, an Honors Award is the highest honor bestowed by the Recording Academy. Proceeds from the event will benefit MusiCares and the Recording Academy's Professional and Educational

programs. 11/12

Tug McGraw Foundation Event and Auction

The Warren Brothers and Hot Apple Pie will join Tim McGraw and his band, the Dancehall Doctors, to provide the music at the inaugural Ya Gotta Believe Gala in New York City. The November 14 event at Gotham Hall will benefit the Tug McGraw Foundation, a nonprofit organization devoted to funding neuro-oncology research to improve the quality of life of those who survive brain tumors. Tug McGraw, the singer's father who died of a brain tumor in 2004, gained fame as a pitcher for the New York Mets and the Philadelphia Phillies. Tim is honorary chairman of the gala and the foundation. Sports analyst and commentator Bob Costas will serve as emcee. The Tug McGraw Foundation has also established an online auction, which features a variety of unique items donated by some of the world's biggest celebrities and athletes. You can bid on premiere concert tickets for Tim McGraw's 2006 tour season, his hat or his belt. Other items up for auction include a Sheryl Crow signed guitar, an autographed Andre Agassi tennis racquet, and a library of Lynyrd Skynyrd t-shirts. The auction, at www.tugmcgraw.com, will remain open through November 30, with new items being added daily. 11/12

Artists Promote Wal-Mart and K-Mart

Garth Brooks and Martina McBride are among the famous faces being featured in Wal-Mart's "Home for the Holidays" campaign that began airing last week. A roster of celebrities will be shown enjoying the holidays at their actual homes, in an ad blitz that will hit all media channels. Also, you may recognize the singing voice in the new K-Mart TV commercials. It's none other than Darryl Worley! 11/12

Clint Black TV Concert Event

Music Choice has announced a concert event featuring Clint Black. The concert, filmed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, showcases Clint's hits including "Killin' Time," "Better Man," and "Nothin' But the Taillights," as well as music from his new album *Drinkin' Songs & Other Logic*. The concert will be available through November 13 to millions of cable subscribers nationwide, and will also air in millions of DIRECTV homes every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday throughout the month of November. 11/12

Louise Leaving Pigeon Forge

Louise Mandrell will leave her Pigeon Forge, Tennessee theater at the end of 2005 following eight years of performances. A series of Christmas shows began November 3, and her last performance at the venue will be held on New Year's Eve. Mandrell plans to return to Nashville to be with her husband, John, who has reflex sympathetic dystrophy. 11/12

New Releases

Kenny Chesney's much-anticipated CD, *The Road and the Radio*, hit stores November 8. The album features his current hit single, "Who You'd Be Today." Montgomery Gentry and Terri Clark released new albums on November 1, *Something To Be Proud Of: The Best of 1999-2005*, and *Life Goes On*, respectively. Capitol Records Nashville released an all female holiday CD entitled *Christmas Angels* that includes new recordings of holiday favorites from Jamie O'Neal, Alison Krauss, Tanya Tucker, Deana Carter, Suzy Bogguss, Jennifer Hanson, Cyndi Thomson, and more. The Charlie Daniels Band's *CDB DVD Live*, the first-ever concert DVD by Charlie and company, is in stores now. The DVD was shot July 4th, 2005 at the Riverfront in Nashville, before a crowd of 100,000-plus American music fans. Three of Rosanne Cash's albums during her tenure with Columbia Records were reissued by Sony Legacy on November 1. The remastered versions of *Seven Year Ache* (1981), *King's Record Shop* (1987), and *Interiors* (1990) also include bonus tracks. Then on November 8, Legacy offered *The Very Best of Rosanne Cash*, with selections from her later Columbia albums, including 1993's *The Wheel*, as well as songs from 2003's *Rules of Travel* on Capitol Records. Her new album, *Black Cadillac*, is scheduled for a January 24 release on Capitol. Next week, Big & Rich release their sophomore CD, *Comin' To Your City*, and Carrie Underwood releases her debut album, *Some Hearts*. 11/04

Songwriter Awards

In recognition of the success of his hit singles "Mud on the Tires" and "Alcohol," Brad Paisley was recently named Songwriter/Artist of the Year by the Nashville Songwriters Association International. Earning honors for Song of the Year was Rascal Flatts' #1 hit "Bless the Broken Road," and Vince Gill was among the new inductees into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame. Kenny Chesney was presented with the ASCAP Voice of Music Award, given to songwriters whose music gives people's lives a voice through song. The prestigious award has only been given to Garth Brooks, George Strait, Amy Grant, and Diane Warren. ASCAP's songwriter of the year was Craig Wiseman. The Tim McGraw smash hit, "Live Like You Were Dying," written by Wiseman and Tim Nichols, won Song of the Year from both ASCAP and BMI. Charlie Daniels was honored by BMI with its prestigious Icon Award at the BMI

Country Awards, with a tribute that featured a musical salute to Charlie by Travis Tritt and Montgomery Gentry. Big & Rich's Big Kenny, Lonestar's Richie McDonald, and three-time Grammy-winning songwriter Harley Allen shared the BMI Songwriter of the Year crown. 11/04

Telethon Of Stars

Billy Dean will headline the oldest locally produced telethon in the United States November 12-13. The 49th Annual Telethon of Stars is a joint project between NBC affiliate WPSD Television in Paducah, Kentucky and Lions Clubs in Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, and Missouri. The Telethon of Stars raises money for physically challenged children and adults in those four states and has raised more than \$18.6 million in the past 48 years. The funds raised in each state go back to centers in those states that provide local client services. Also appearing with Billy Dean will be: the "Yakety Sax Man" Boots Randolph; Ball In The House, an acapella group from Boston; southern gospel's Dixie Melody Boys; Terry Mike Jeffrey; Gary Weaver and the Telethon Band, featuring some of Nashville's finest studio musicians; and a host of great local & regional talent. The fifteen-hour 49th Annual Telethon of Stars offers free admission and will be presented from the EXPO Center adjacent to JR's Executive Inn in downtown Paducah. 11/04

Charity Auction

Faith Hill is taking part in an online charity auction to benefit the New York Restoration Project, which aims to create clean and green neighborhoods. The highest bidder will get to record a Christmas song with Faith on December 10 at a studio in Los Angeles. The bidding is open now and will continue through November 8. Log onto nyrp.charitybuzz.com to make a bid for this celebrity experience with Faith, along with other experiences with stars including Jeff Gordon, Martha Stewart, Elton John, and Robert Deniro. 11/04

Wy, Clint On Hurricane Relief Compilation

Wynonna and Clint Black are among more than 30 artists featured on the upcoming two-CD compilation, *Hurricane Relief: Come Together Now*, raising money for the American Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, and the MusiCares Hurricane Relief Fund. Wynonna teamed with Michael McDonald and Eric Benet to record a new song entitled "Heart of America." Black has included the little-heard track, "The Great Mississippi Flood of '93," which he re-titled "When the Levee Broke." The song was previously only available as a bonus download when purchasing a copy of his CD, *Spend My Time*, at Wal-Mart. All participating artists, publishers, songwriters, and record companies waived their royalties for the charity project. 11/04

Fans To Vote For AMA Award

The 2005 *American Music Awards* is asking the public to cast their votes for the second consecutive year for the "T-Mobile Text In Award" to determine the fans' favorite from a list of top artists from each of the six major musical genres. Results of the voting will be revealed during the live telecast of the 33rd annual awards special, which airs Tuesday, November 22 on ABC. Those vying for the "T-Mobile Text In Award" are: Toby Keith, Mariah Carey, Kelly Clarkson, 50 Cent, Gwen Stefani, and Green Day. Last year, the inaugural winner of this award was reigning Entertainer of the Year Kenny Chesney. 11/04

CMA Donates Footage To Museum

The Country Music Association will donate an archive of the CMA Awards broadcasts to the Museum of Television & Radio on November 9 in New York City. The donation represents the largest single collection of country music-themed footage ever given to the museum. The presentation will include a 90-minute retrospective of the ceremonies, dating back to its first telecast on network television in 1968. The retrospective will be screened at the museum's locations in New York and Los Angeles through December 31. 11/04