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# STRAIT TALK

## George Strait A Double Winner At Academy Of Country Music Awards

The 33rd Annual Country Music Awards at the Universal Amphitheater in Hollywood, California certainly had a new look this year as the show went off smoothly without any hiccups for the very first time. While the look and feel of the show was very different, some things stayed just the same as George Strait once again was the big winner. The talented Texas cowboy walked off with two of the

most prestigious awards. He won one of the hat awards for his multi-platinum album "Carrying Your Love With Me" and another for "Male Vocalist of the Year." It was the second consecutive year that Strait has won both trophies.

The awards show appeared to be a showcase for the hugely successful George Strait Country Music Festival tour as tour mates,

Tim McGraw, Faith Hill and Lee Ann Womack also won trophies for their efforts.

In addition to his ACM Awards, Strait was also chosen for four Golden Pick awards by the readers of Country Weekly Magazine. He was chosen for "Favorite Entertainer," "Favorite Male Vocalist," "Favorite Album" and "Favorite Video Entertainer." ❄



## George Strait Team Roping Just Around The Corner

The 16th Annual George Strait Team Roping Classic is rapidly approaching as summer again raises its head. With less than six weeks to go before the 1998 edition gets underway, anticipation is running high.

The 1998 Team Roping Classic will be held on July 10th and 11th at the J.K. Northway Arena in Kingsville, Texas and will once again be co-sponsored by Chevy Trucks and

Bud Light.

An estimated 200 or more teams are expected to face off beginning on Friday morning, July 10th. Each team will pay \$400 in entry money while competing for more than \$100,000 in cash and prizes that will be divided up after the Saturday morning finals. The fastest 25 teams after Friday's first two go-rounds will make up the Saturday con-

tants. In addition to a substantial amount of cash, the winning team will drive away in two brand new Chevy Trucks pulling their new Bruton Trailers.

On Saturday night, following the finals, George Strait and his Ace In The Hole Band will be joined by Asleep At The Wheel in entertaining more than 5,000 ropers and fans. ❄

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# Hotter Than Ever! George Strait's Star-Packed Show Hits The Road

Written by Daniel P. Ray,  
Country Weekly Writer  
Courtesy of Country Weekly Magazine

The George Strait juggernaut is on the road - and heading for a town near you.

The tour, so big that headliners like Tim McGraw, John Michael Montgomery and Faith Hill play supporting roles, is one of the most anticipated events in country music history.

And COUNTRY WEEKLY was at the mammoth how's debut in Tempe, Arizona, to give you a taste of what to expect as the event marches through its 18-city schedule (see panel on page 20 for remaining dates).

Even El Niño couldn't conquer "El Jorge" at Tempe's Sun Devil Stadium in suburban Phoenix. An unexpectedly strong storm dropped temperatures 20 degrees and sent squalls of rain and wind over the audience. But the overwhelming majority of the 65,000 ticket-holders scrambled for temporary cover, not the exits, so they could hear a r'allapalooza of talent.

They were rewarded with 10 hours of great country music on the main stadium stage. Newcomer band Big House was the top attraction at a second stage in Straitland, an area of concession tents, midway rides and tour-sponsor booths.

An exuberant George closed out the show with 19 songs in his first performance of 1998. "We've been off five or six months, and this is our first night back. And this is a great place to start it all off," George told his screaming fans.

Despite the chill, fans in Tempe were the first to confirm that this is country's hot ticket. The weekends-only tour is sold out - or close to it - at every venue where tickets have gone on sale.

The Phoenix area is particularly warm for George - and all of country music. Country radio stations there pull in 18 percent of the area's radio advertising dollars - a larger percentage than any other major market. Last year, rock's U2 and The Rolling Stones both booked the same stadium. Neither band could draw more than 10,000 fans.

Stadium tours are extremely rare in country music, but this one is already meeting with great success. The reasons? A relatively low ticket price that tops out at \$45 (\$47.50 in a few markets), the Straitland area as an extra attraction and country music - lots of it.

The entertainment on the main stage began with Asleep at the Wheel, the venerable western swing band.

"Get yourself comfortable," lead singer Ray Benson told the Sun Devil Stadium crowd. "It's going to be a long day and a long night. You've

got such an unbelievable amount of talent onstage today and we're so glad you showed up on time."

It was a full-circle day for Asleep at the Wheel. Two decades ago, the band hired an unknown young Texan - George Strait - to open for them. George, who always includes some swing songs in his live shows, is now returning the favor on his stadium tour.

The band played a quick chorus of "It Ain't Gonna Rain No Mo'" when the first sprinkles fell. "Don't worry about it if it comes," Ray said. "It's just like taking a shower. We'll pass out some soap later."

The longest-running act on the bill was succeeded by the youngest, 16-year-old Lila McCann, whose performance included her latest hit "I Wanna Fall in Love."

If fans needed a break, the Straitland amusement area was a short walk away, set up in a parking lot outside the stadium walls. Concession booths offered a variety of food and drink. Country radio stations ran drawings for a chance to meet George backstage. Undiscovered singers could sing country karaoke - and buy a videotape of the performance for \$10. There were also plenty of booths set up by the tour's sponsors - as you might expect from a festival whose official name is *Nokia Presents the George Strait Chevy Truck Country Music Festival brought to you by Wrangler*. One of the most popular booths gave away rain ponchos. They went fast.

The rain started falling full force during Lee Ann Womack's performance.

After thrilling the crowd with "Never Again, Again," and "You've Got To Talk To Me," she confessed backstage, "I had a new fiddle player who hadn't rehearsed with us, so I was anxious to get one under our belt."

She also had something in common with the fans - she got wet. Lee Ann performed on a partially covered stage, and "every time I tried to back up out of the rain, the monitor would start feeding back. So the band got to stand back there but I had to stand in the rain!"

It was worth it, she said. "I always dreamed of playing with George Strait. Always. I grew up in Texas worshiping George, so it's a milestone for me."

Before her turn to take the stage, Faith Hill was thinking about her long layoff from performing, dictated by the time off she had to take care of Gracie Katherine, the 11-month-old first child for Faith and her husband, Tim McGraw. She's now pregnant with their second.

"I've done three shows since I've been off for a year and a half," she said. "I'm very excited and very honored to be doing this."

As soon as she took the stage, huge ovation went up, showing that fans had not forgotten her. "Lord, I have got the best fans in the world, I tell you what," she told the crowd. "It's freezing cold, it's raining and I love you. I'm so happy. I know it's wet and rainy out there, but who cares? I'm getting wet with you, I'm losing my pants and my hair is falling flat."

"I just want to say thank you so much for just roughing out this weather. You are the best!"

John Michael Montgomery's hit-filled set was played during the height of the storm, but that didn't dampen his enthusiasm. In fact, he played with the rain-slicked stage, taking a running start and skimming across it on his boots. "Just having some fun up here," he said.

Tim McGraw drew the biggest pre-George cheers with two songs. On "It's Your Love," Faith returned onstage in a dry, orange outfit to sing her part of the duet.

On Tim's "Don't Take the Girl," he fell silent during parts of the song and let the crowd fill in the words. "There's nothing like 60,000 people singing the words to your songs, I tell you that," he said afterward. "I love my job."

Then it was George's turn. From the moment he started with "Take Me Back to Tulsa," he had the audience standing. On this night, at least, George broke free from the "just stand there and sing" school of performing to which he is often said to belong. He roamed the stage freely, saluted all corners of the stadium with smiles and waves, and clearly relished the moment.

"I love to play big audiences," he has said. "It really gets your adrenaline pumping. You are under a lot of pressure, but at the same time, the pressure makes you work harder. It's a great feeling."

He even added a new skill to his resume - matchmaker. Between songs, he grabbed a piece of paper offered up by an audience member and puzzled over it for a few moments.

"Is this for real?" George asked. He read the note aloud: "She won't marry me unless you ask for me. Jamie and Debby."

"Well, Debby?" George said, looking at the stunned woman in the crowd. "Are you going to marry this guy?"

She nodded. George smiled. The audience roared.

"That's a first for me," he confessed. "I always heard that a captain of a ship could marry people. I don't know if it applies to stage-type situations."

The popularity of George hometown festival at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas, persuaded Pace and George's staff that a series of country festivals could fill stadiums. They were right. 🌟

# Fest Served Strait Shot Of Country

*Written by Jim Harrington of the Times Correspondent*

Anyone who doesn't believe that country music has gone as commercial and endorsement-happy as professional sports obviously didn't attend - now get this - the 'Nokia Presents the George Strait Chevy Truck Country Music Festival Brought to You by Wrangler' music festival Sunday at Oakland Stadium.

And, for the most part, the performers on the bill did their part to provide the target market with easily digestible product. The music was clean, professional, amazingly similar and generally well received. It was also sometimes a tad tedious. Although artists such as Faith Hill, John Michael Montgomery and Lee Ann Womack clearly belong to the upper tier of this genre, and each are talented and have plenty to offer, one still gets the feeling that they came out of the same new country cookie cutter.

Of course, the same can't be said of the King.

No, not Elvis. We're talking the King of Country, which, as the 60,000 plus that filled the house that Al Davis wrecked Sunday will tell you, is George Strait. And it's hard to argue with that. Strait is the only country artist besides Garth Brooks who can sell out stadiums - and Brooks hasn't got anywhere near the longevity. Strait has been a constant presence on the country charts since the release of his 1981 debut "Strait Country," racking up 36 No. 1 singles and 18 platinum albums along the way.

Strait isn't country music's best singer, nor does he represent its best body of work. Nobody could call this Texan an exuberant stage performer, and his guitar playing is fairly average. What he has is an overwhelming sense of integrity and honesty, which allows him to get away with singing lyrics that from a lesser talent would sound hokey at best. But Sunday's crowd had no problem biting on the lyric "Sing a song about the heartland/Sing a song about my life" (from "Heartland," on the "Pure Country" album).

As the sun was setting on the other side of the Bay, Strait took the stage to deliver a 24-song main course (plus encore) to an audience that was so psyched, it had moments earlier done the wave in an exuberant fashion that would impress even Crazy George.

Strait has too many hits and well-loved songs to play at one concert, so, no doubt, many people left wishing he had gotten around to playing this particular one or that particular one. But the hits he did play well helped to showcase his versatility.

His classic rodeo song, "Amarillo by Morning," was as good as the first time I heard it, while "The Chair" can still break hearts with its hopeful message about two loners finding common ground for an evening and maybe longer. He finished his main set with a peppy "Unwound" and left little guesswork as to whether the fans would call him back out again.

The Texas troubadour also drew heavily from 1997's "Carrying Your Love With Me" as well as his latest, "One Step At A Time." "I Just Want To Dance With You," "One Step At A Time" and, especially, "Maria" were all winners - and all from

the new release. Strait rounded out the set paying homage to two giants of country music: Conway Twitty and Merle Haggard. His version of Haggard's "Mama Tried" was dead-on.

In comparison to Strait, the rest of this concert seemed trivial. Tim McGraw is an excellent entertainer who has obviously been to the Garth Brooks school of how to work a crowd. On a rock band-style stage, complete with ramps and a raised drum set, McGraw paced the stage and won the crowd mostly with up-tempo tunes like "Indian Outlaw," "All I Want Is A Life" and the ultracatchy "Down On The Farm."

On his fine ballad "Don't Take The Girl," one of the sweetest country songs to be released in the last five years, the singer brought out his infant daughter to face the crowd while daddy sang the last

*(Continued on following page)*

## Country Fans Hear Stars Play All Day

*Written by Curtis Ross of the Tampa Tribune*

*Submitted by Bill Siebold - Gibsonton, FL*

Superstar George Strait led a country music caravan into Houlihan's Stadium on Saturday, drawing a reported crowd of 53,589.

The crowd was on its feet when Strait and his Ace in the Hole Band took the stage at 8:45 p.m. - pretty amazing considering some people had been there since the gates opened at noon.

But Strait is a consistent hitmaker who inspires that sort of adulation. So consistent, in fact, that even Saturday's 30-song, hour-and-45 minute set couldn't include all of his hits.

With the exception of video screens and a hyperkinetic light show, Strait made no concessions to the stadium setting: no theatrics, no rick-inspired bombast.

The Texan's music still nods in the direction of Western swing. A slow, slinky version of "Milk Cow Blues" illustrated just how much Strait cares about country music and its history.

It also gave the Ace in the Hole Band a showcase for some excellent solo and

ensemble work.

Strait also performed George Jones' "Love Bug" and Merle Haggard's "Mama Tried" in addition to hits from his own catalog, such as the classic country weeper "When Did You Stop Loving Me" and the Cajun-inflected "Adalida."

"I Cross My Heart" featured some thick-as-taffy pedal steel guitar, while a new song from the singer's upcoming album was delivered with a rockabilly hiccup in the vocal.

Strait's no-nonsense set couldn't have been more different from Tim McGraw's, which was reminiscent of '80s arena rock with its screaming guitar solos, histrionics and flashy stage set.

McGraw's spouse, Faith Hill, preceded McGraw's set. She reappeared toward the end of his set to join him on their hit duet, "It's Your Love."

Aaron Tippin spiked his show with props and corn-pone humor.

Promising newcomer Lee Ann Womack beat the heat of her 3 p.m. slot with a set that included her hit "You've Got To Talk To Me" and a lovely version of Patsy Cline's "Crazy." 🌟

# Strait's Indelible Stamp Clear On "One Step At A Time"

Written by Carole L. Philipps of the Cincinnati Post

With a minimum of hoopla and hand-wringing, country music's reigning traditional practitioner delivered his 23rd album to stores Tuesday.

Its arrival raises an interesting question: Are George Strait's songs George Strait songs before he sings them, or could he take any old tune and make it sound like a George Strait song?

Whatever the answer, once Strait sings a song, it is his for all time, and that is the case with the 10 songs on "One Step At A Time."

Strait, perhaps the most dependable recording star in the Nashville firmament, delivers 10 new songs about once a year, usually in the spring. For his 1998 contribution, he has assembled a shade over 38 minutes of material that includes good traditional country songs as well as some with a Tex-Mex flavor. But, lest we become complacent, Strait has tossed us a singer.

"We Really Shouldn't Be Doing This" is a wavy-rockin'-retro song that takes Strait's baritone vice deep into Big Bopper territory. The song, by edge-of-country writer/performer Jim Lauderdale, is a whale of a good time and nicely placed as a change of tempo between a pair of ballads.

Supporting Strait's vocals throughout are a sterling set of musicians. As is his practice, Strait used studio musicians, not his touring group Ace in the Hole Band, for the recordings. And behind him are some of Nashville's most talented session players, including guitarist extraordinaire Brent Mason, award-winning fiddler Stuart Duncan and background singer Liana Manis.

Strait opens with a sweet little south-of-the-border tune with a cha-cha beat, "I Just Want to Dance With You," by John Prine. Next comes the title song, a honky-tonker, "One Step At A Time," which lets Strait apply his vocal precision to a song about a true country topic: the vagaries of love. (More on this topic later).

"Maria," penned by fellow Texas Robert Earl Keen Jr., is about a border romance. It has nice acoustic touches and vaguely titillating lyrics.

"Remember the Alamo," another heartache song, gives the old Texas battle cry a twist.

"That's the Breaks" takes a collection of clichés and turns them into a melancholy country ballad with contemporary edges.

And "Neon Row" is another take on the seamy side of love, as Strait sings of "lonely high-heeled ladies" and the "one-night stands and all-night blues" they encounter. In the end, Strait sings, if the man can't keep his wife at home, he'll have to meet her "down on Neon

Row."

Every song on "One Step At A Time" is pure George Strait. He knows how to pick them. And he has known how to sing them since his debut in 1981. 🌟

## Fans Turn Big George's Musicfest Into Lovefest

Written by Mary Colurso of the Birmingham News

With a knife-sharp crease in his jeans, a jewel-green shirt and a black cowboy hat clamped firmly on his head, George Strait cut a natty figure Sunday night at Birmingham's Legion Field.

But the hurricane of applause that greeted Strait as he strode on stage at 8:55 p.m. wasn't directed at his outfit; it was a happy, noisy tribute from more than 50,000 fans who revere Strait's legendary craftsmanship in country music.

That's why all these people fought traffic, struggled through crowds and bought pricey tickets for the Alabama stop of the 18-city George Strait Country Music Festival. The atmosphere at the all-day event transformed from a freewheeling concert/party into an intense love affair when the sun went down and Strait showed up.

The calm, smiling headliner roped 'em in easily with his rock-solid show, which lasted about

90 minutes and included Strait classics such as "Easy, Come, Easy Go," "Lovebug," "When Did You Stop Loving Me," "Heartland," "The Chair," "Adalida" and "I Can Still Make Cheyenne."

Ticketholders whistled, cheered, danced and sang along for the entire length of Strait's set, which also featured a few tunes from his new album, "One Step At A Time."

Strait was ably supported by his tight, nine-member Ace In The Hole Band. The team operates as a smoothly functioning unit, probably because these men know each other well and have been running through selections from Strait's extensive catalog for a long time.

Big George comes from the traditional school of country music, which means he straps on a guitar, stands and sings. He doesn't move around much, except to wave at fans or point for emphasis. He doesn't chat with the audience much either, preferring to let his tunes do the talking. In that respect, however, Strait's concert was highly eloquent. 🌟

## Fest Served Strait Shot Of Country (continued)

few lines. Still, sophomoric lyrics such as "I like it/I love it/I want some more of it," from "You guessed it - "I Like It, I Love," brought his performance down a notch or two.

McGraw's lovely wife, Faith Hill, is also a member of this corporate concert tour. She wowed the audience during her set with a fine rendition of Janis Joplin's "Piece Of My Heart," which mainly served as a testament to how fine Hill's voice is and how weak some of her regular material is.

John Michael Montgomery is the best balladeer out of these touring cowboys, and he was greatly appreciated by the crowd for such slow and semi-slow number as "I Swear,"

"Angel In My Eyes" and, especially, "Life's a Dance."

Lee Ann Womack played "The Fool" and "Buckaroo" from her 1997 self-titled debut and had some luck conjuring up the spirit of Patsy Cline with "Crazy."

Still, it was rightfully George Strait that people were talking about when they left the concert to get into their Chevys and drive home. As one man said as he was trying to explain the real appeal of the ultimate Texan to his female companion:

"George Strait is George Strait and he always will be." 🌟

# Fan Collectable Column

## June / July 1998

San Antonio Express-News - 4-22-98. Story, section G pg. 1 and S.A. Life pg. 2, San Antonio, TX.  
 Lebanon Daily News - TSC Flyer - 4-3-98. Photo (Tractor Supply Co.) - Myerstown, PA.  
 Birmingham Weekly - City News, Views and Entertainment - April 9-16, 1998. Photo and story pgs. 5-6. Birmingham, AL.  
 Florida Sun-Sentinel - 4-23-98. Story pg. 16A. Fort Lauderdale, FL.  
 Kingsport Times-News - April 23, 1998. Story p. 2A. Kingsport, TN.  
 San Antonio Express-News - 4-21-98. Section 1E and 10E, issue #202 - music review. San Antonio, TX.  
 Victoria Advocate - 4-23-98. Page 9A - story. Victoria, TX.  
 The Telegraph - 4-23-98. Page B-4 - story. Entertainment sect. Vol. 163, No. 99. Alton, IL.  
 Houston Chronicle - 4-18-98. Story - photo, page 14D. Home Garden & Entertainment - Section D. Houston, TX.  
 Country Weekly - 4-14-98. Cover and story w/photos. Pgs. 4, 17, 18-23 and page 54. Nashville, TN.  
 Commercial News - 4-19-98. Photo ad on "Cellular One," page 6D. Danville, IL.  
 The Oakland Press - 4-17-98. Photo and story, p. E16 & 17. Oakland, Mich.  
 St. Louis Post - Dispatch - 4-19-98. Story, p.D-3. St. Louis, MO.  
 The Seattle Times - Music Section - 4-19-98. P. L4 Story. Seattle, WA.

- Country Weekly - 5-12-98. P. 17 G.S. Advertisement for "One Step at a Time" (color copy) mentioned pg. 6, pgs. 68-72 dates, p. 78 singles & LP's. Nashville, TN.
- Star Tribune - 5-3-98. Pg. 72 Entertainment Section - Review of G.S. new album "One Step at a Time." Minneapolis, MN.
- Yest Magazine - Houston Chronicle - 5-3-98. Sunday Edition. Article "One Step at a Time," pg. 6 cont. on 36. Houston, TX.
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- Chicago Sun Times - May 5, 1998. P. 33. Photo and story and Review of New LP. Chicago, IL.
- The Wichita Eagle - May 1, 1998. P. 2B mentioned top LP, Top Country Singles and Article. Wichita, KS.
- The Cleveland Plain Dealer - Arts & Entertainment Section - 5-3-98. Pg. 2-I. Cleveland, OH. Review of LP.
- Country Weekly Magazine - 5-5-98. Pgs. 6, 8, 28, 29, 40, 45-47, 49, 53-54. Review, mentioned, photo. Nashville, TN.
- U.S. 101 Air Force Flyer - Spring, 1998. Vol. 1 #3, pg. 7 - Calendar of Events, p. 26 ad for Atlanta, GA Festival. Atlanta, GA.

- Modern Screen's Country Music - July 1998, picture on cover, name mentioned on page 6, pictures and cover story, book review pages 16-17, picture and words to song "Round About Way" on page 26, name mentioned page 80.
- Country Music - May/June 1998. Page 4 full page colored picture featuring his new album, "One Step At A Time." Name mentioned page 8, page 14 picture and record review of "One Step At A Time." Page 54 and 58 name mentioned in letters to Editor, page 64 "Round About Way" was #1 on Top 25, page 26 George Strait Live Video updated and back in print, in The Journal insert, December 1997 Poll, it's now ten in a row for King of The Poll, Mr. George Strait - for more than a year and a half, he's been Number One in Member's Choice for both album and single - this time for "Today My World Slipped Away" single and "Carrying Your Love With Me" album. Name also mentioned on page 16 of The Journal insert.
- Star Watch - Memphis Publishing Co. - 5-5-98. P. 8 Memphis, TN. Photo of George Strait and Fan at rehearsal for the ACM Awards.
- Country Weekly - May 26, 1998. G.S. Front Cover Photo. Inside cover - Ad. Pgs. 4 & 8 - mentioned. P. 20 - mentioned. P. 27 - photo - Golden Pick Awards. Pgs. 30-32 - mentioned.

*The following George Strait Fan Club Members submitted to the Collectable Column -*

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# New George Strait Stand Up - Now Available!!

For the first time, The George Strait Fan Club is happy to offer a full life-size tandup of George Strait. The cardboard tandup is in full color and when open tands a good six feet in height. The beautiful four-color piece is a photograph of George leaning on an old weathered wood-d fence. The Stand Up was designed by MCA Records and is the same as will be seen in Record Shops across the country. To order, please use the order form below. If using a MasterCard/Visa, you may order by calling the toll free number -800-338-4732 and ask for item number 245.



#245 - George Strait Stand Up



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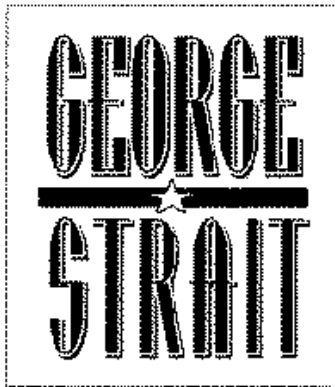
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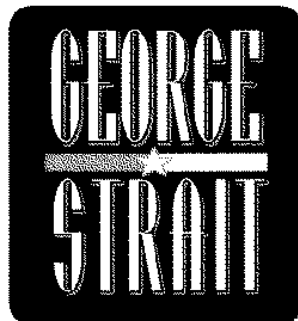
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## Anita's Notes:

I was right, the next few months did pass quickly and here we are again. The hot summer months are approaching and George, like the rest of us, is ready to relax and enjoy it. Our suggestion is, grab your copy of "One Step At A Time" and head for the beach, lake, backyard or somewhere you can enjoy the time with your family.

George Strait has had an incredible spring. The 1998 George Strait Country Music Festival has been hugely successful and we have only a few shows left. The time has passed much too fast.

From the cards, letters, faxes and e-mails it seems that you all have enjoyed the exciting experience. I will be in Houston myself on June 7th to experience it firsthand.

Since we last wrote, George has received several new awards. He walked away with two awards at the recent ACM Awards show for "Best Male Vocalist" and "Album of the Year" and then was honored by Country Weekly Magazine as their readers chose him for four Golden Pick Awards. He was selected for "Favorite Entertainer," "Favorite Male Vocalist," "Favorite Album" and "Favorite Video Entertainer."

The 32nd Annual TNN Music City News Awards are scheduled to take place the middle of June and we are keeping our fingers crossed that George might be able to add another trophy to the case. We will give you a full report in the next issue but, if George is a winner, we will add it to the website soon as the awards are handed out.

The 1998 edition of Fan Fair is upon us as it runs from June 15th through the 20th. At last report, about 2,000 tickets were still available for the week long event. This is the first time in recent memory that anyone can remember tickets available at this late date. Our Fan Club booth will be located in the same spot as last year. It is booth #607. Stop by and see us. If you have earned any Strait Cash over the last year, bring it with you and pick out some great items we will have on hand.

For those of you that will be traveling to Kingsville in July, we hope you have a great time. If it is your first trip, we know that you will enjoy it. Send us some great photographs that we can use in the newsletter

and earn yourself some Strait Cash. We will warn you that it gets very hot in Kingsville in the summertime so don't forget to take along your sunscreen. Keep your fingers crossed in hopes that George will make it to the finals this year. He has been roping really well lately.

We have chosen a new User Name and Password for the website. They are:

**User Name: guard**  
**Password: honor**

Please use small letters, no caps, when you enter the User Name and Password in the website. The website is updated on a regular basis so check for any new information there at [www.georgestraitfans.com](http://www.georgestraitfans.com).

We have three winners from the April-May issue of Strait Talk for our puzzle contest.

**First Place**  
**JODY LARNDER**  
**Hilton, NY**  
**(Jacket)**

**Second Place**  
**DEB DEWEY**  
**Duluth, MN**  
**(Sweatshirt)**

**Third Place**  
**DOLORES DEHART**  
**New Orleans, LA**  
**(T-Shirt)**

Congratulations to our winners.

To conclude this issue of Strait Talk, we would like to thank each and every one of you that helped us compile some of the information for this issue. We thank you for the letters, cards and gifts for George and George, Jr. during their May birthdays. They do appreciate them as do we at the fan club. We sincerely appreciate your support.

Til August, stay cool, healthy and Strait.



## Pen Pals

**JUNE/JULY 1998**

(Fans that exchange letters through mail)

Stephanie L. Campbell (26)  
2554 NE Loop 410 #1806  
San Antonio, TX 78217

Mary Ann Anderson (64)  
P.O. Box 334  
Atlantic, IA 50022

Siara Belyeu (32)  
P.O. Box 1377  
Lindale, TX 75771-1377

Martha Medina  
P.O. Box 1545  
Brownfield, TX 79316-1545

Dean Sloan (35)  
321 Frayser Street  
Rock Hill, SC 29730

Sarah Meier (19)  
600 Tele Road  
Little Rock, AR 72211

Mechelle Harrison (26)  
1002 E. Railroad  
Waverly, TN 37185

Mickie Smith (33)  
P.O. Box 6395  
Chico, CA 95927

Michael Goncalves (24)  
2506 Lauelwood Lane  
Valrico, FL 33594

Carolyn Aurandt  
2211 8th Avenue  
Altoona, PA 16602-2206





# From The Mailbox:

Dear GSFC,  
Congratulations George on your two ACM  
wins for Male Vocalist and Album of the Year.  
You truly deserve every honor you receive.  
Your new album "One Step At A Time" is one  
of your best ever!

Your Fan Forever,  
Debbie Kier  
Rochester, NY

---

Dear George,  
My husband and I attended your concert in  
Phoenix, AZ. What an experience!!  
We were able to sit in the Fan Club seating  
which was wonderful - so close! Thank you!  
The rain didn't even dampen our spirits - all  
the stars who performed were great! Straitland  
was lots of fun. We'll never forget this concert!

Thank you for everything,  
Dusty & Cindy Eagar

---

Dear Anita and GSFC,  
Just got home after attending George's  
Festival" in Oakland, CA and I just had to sit  
down and write this note to you.  
The Festival was great! Enjoyed seeing and  
hearing all the performers, but George WAS  
THE MAN people came to hear. He looked and  
acted fabulous as usual - loved the shirt!! He  
performed for one hour and forty-five minutes.  
His voice was as great as ever and his songs  
were wonderful. The Ace in the Hole Band  
always plays so well and they looked really  
great!

We had super seats (thanks to Fan Club seat-  
ing)! It really pays off to be a member. I'll be  
there forever!!

Please thank Norma and Bubba for sharing  
time with his millions of fans. Thanks to George  
for bringing his "Festival" to Northern  
California. WE HAVE MISSED HIM!!!

A Strait Fan Forever,  
Pat Nichols  
Roseville, CA

---

Dear Anita & GSFC staff,  
My husband and I attended the Detroit concert  
last weekend and we want to express our sin-  
cere appreciation for the fantastic seats made  
available through the Fan Club. The privilege  
of being that close to the stage and the perfor-  
mances by the six other country artists had  
readily made this concert the best we have ever  
attended.

Very truly yours,  
Sue Wheeler  
Plymouth, MI

---

Dear George,  
Congratulations on winning top Male Vocalist  
and Album of the Year at the 33rd Annual  
Academy of Country Music awards on April  
23, 1998.

I would also like to thank the fan club for the  
seats at the TWA Dome in St. Louis on April  
19, 1998. The show was great and I enjoyed  
visiting Straitland. Also, George, you have  
picked a great bunch of entertainers to tour  
with you this year.

Your Number 1 Fan in  
Carrollton, IL  
Mary Cay Grafford

---

Dear GSFC,  
I attended the April 5 Country Music Festival  
at Legion Field in Birmingham, Alabama. I was  
able to get fan club seating (6th row center  
stage). This is one of the best perks in being a  
member of the fan club. This show was the  
elite of the events that I had attended. I can not  
say enough good things about the organization  
of this concert. I hope Birmingham, Alabama is  
on George's concert location for next year.

Sincerely,  
Karen Cooper

---

Dear GSFC,  
I have just purchased George's latest album,  
and after listening to it, I thought I'd drop you  
a few lines to say, "He's done it again!" He's  
turned out another winner. But!, when it comes  
to George, you expect nothing less.

Fan for Life,  
Mandy Pike  
Valdosta, GA

---

Dear George,  
Congratulations on winning Male Vocalist and  
Album of the Year for "Carrying Your Love  
With Me" last night at the ACM awards. Way  
to go!!

I bought your new album "One Step At A  
Time" the day it came out (April 21st). Thanks  
for putting out another fantastic album!!

A Strait Fan,  
Nancy Fields  
Chesterton, IN

---

GSFC,  
I just returned from the Country Music  
Festival in Pontiac, MI. Only one word comes  
close to describing it. AWESOME!!!

Hurry back to Michigan.  
Judy Black

---

Went to your concert in Anaheim, California. I  
have been to other concerts but not as good as  
this one. It was fabulous.

Thank you for coming to L.A.  
Sharon Knox

---

Dear George,  
Congratulations on 2 more awards! I'm glad  
every time you win! I have your new album  
and like it very much. I watched you sing one  
of the songs on TV last night. It was great!

Keep singing-all of us fans love to hear you!!  
The best to you and Norma & Bubba!

Sincerely,  
Joyce Loper  
Lutherville, MD

---

Dear GSFC,  
On March 28th in Tampa, FL I went and saw  
the performance that beats them all, the George  
Strait Country Music Festival. There is only  
one word to describe George's performance.  
FANTASTIC!!!

Chris Gauthier  
Naples, FL

---

Dear George,  
Congratulations on your ACM Awards, you  
deserve them all. Thank you for remembering  
us fans in all your acceptance speeches. We  
really love to hear it, it means so much!

Your new album "One Step At A Time" is  
another award winning album. Great work  
again.

Sincerely,  
Kathleen Maelik  
Tampa, FL

---

Just a note to say how much my sister and I  
enjoyed the Country Fest on 4/4 in New  
Orleans at the Superdome. SPECTACULAR!!  
Sure hope George comes back to New Orleans  
next year!

Sincerely,  
Ann Klein  
Metairie, LA

---

Dear Anita & George,  
We traveled 8 hours to go to St. Louis to go to  
George Strait Country Music Festival at Trans  
World Dome. George's part of the show was  
worth the ticket alone, but enjoyed all the acts.

Wore jacket I won through fan club and  
received many compliments on it.

Purchased new album "One Step At A Time"  
this morning and have played it several times  
already. They get better all the time.

Audrey Schmitz  
Manitowoc, WI

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