

SOUTHERN GOSPEL Weekend

OXFORD ALABAMA MARCH 23 - 25 TH



March 2017

The Connells

Scoops: For each member: What is your favorite song to perform live and why?

Chris: A song that has made a strong impact on our ministry is "It Is Well." The last seventeen years have been a challenge for The Connells. We have walked through the loss of a baby, the death of my parents, the development of my cancer and the redevelopment two years later. I have also had to deal with kidney failure and our most recent journey has been Karen's liver transplant. Through it all we have been able to say "It Is Well," because of the sweet peace that only a relationship with Christ can bring. I have learned through this journey that my joy is not determined by my circumstance, but my joy is in Christ Jesus who abides in me.

Karen: Probably "His Life for Mine." First of all, I just absolutely love watching Hannah and Heather carry this song. It thrills me to no end that they sing with passion and KNOW who they are singing about. Secondly, the song has touched me on a very personal level since I first heard it. How in the world is it possible? Why in the world would He trade his life for mine? All I know is He did and I am grateful.



Hannah: "When God Has Another Plan," is my favorite song to sing. I like to sing this song because it helps people going through a hard time. So many times we think we have life figured out, but many times God has a bigger and better plan for us. It reminds



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me to trust God with things going on in my life and it will work out better.

Heather: “Did I Mention,” because it’s a song of thankfulness to God for remaining faithful to His children. It has become my anthem of praise to God because I have seen His faithfulness time and time again.

Scoops: For each member: What is your favorite activity when you are off the road?

Chris: I enjoy camping and spending some quality time with my family. I have also enjoyed preaching and sharing the gospel over the last thirty-two years.

Karen: Reading, Facebook (keeping in touch with family and friends old and new.) I enjoy watching the Food Network, but it hasn’t helped my efforts in the kitchen yet; some sketching, and I’d like to learn more about photography.

Hannah: I like to read, shop, and go on adventures with my family.

Heather: I love to watch old Hollywood movies.

Scoops: For each of you: Please tell us one personal and spiritual goal you have for this year.

Chris: My personal and spiritual goals are one goal. I have been trying to keep a spiritual journal of the time God speaks and what He shares with me during my prayer time and bible study. This helps me to know His direction and to reflect on the blessings He has so richly provided.

Karen: While recovering from my recent transplant, I feel like I learned a lot things and benefitted from it for more than just a new liver. I gained a whole new appreciation for those around me from family to the medical experts including all those in between. I learned that God is always speaking to us if we’ll just listen and realize that He can use an older hospital janitor to deliver a message to you (true story!) as well as He can use a mega church pastor. Sometimes not even a “body” at all. You just KNOW if you’re listening for him. Another thing I learned is compassion. I always thought I was compassionate before, but beyond the “I’ll be praying,” to “God be with Joe;” that was about it. Throughout my illness, surgery, and recovery so many people have reached out to us, putting feet on their prayers. I’ve been humbled at the generosity and sincerity of so many. My prayer is that I would be SINCERELY compassionate and do more than recite a small prayer out of duty. My personal goal is to live a healthier lifestyle, take the best care possible of my liver, to be able to actually enjoy being active with my family, to cherish these remaining years my girls are at home, and to eventually see sons-in-law, grandbabies, and Disney World a few more times.

Hannah: This year my goal is to get even closer to God and have the boldness to share my family’s testimony of God’s faithfulness to us.

Heather: To have continual encounters with God and to share our testimony.

Scoops: Can each of you tell us who your favorite artists are currently and whose music has been the greatest influence on your singing?

Chris: I enjoy the solid quartet sound of the Kingdom Heirs, Mark Trammell Quartet and Triumphant. The greatest musical influence in my life has been Leroy Abernathy. I was blessed to be a vocal student of Leroy’s for three and a half years. He taught this shy and backwards young man the importance of being more than you think you can be. He taught me to give all that I have to every note, remember to keep the tone placement, and knowing the importance of every lyric you sing.

Karen: There are really too many to name, but I seem to be drawn to the songs of Brian Free and Assurance. I will always love the Cathedrals. Most influential would have to be the Nelons. Growing up our family would always listen to them. I would always listen for Kelly’s voice learning to sing harmony somewhere along the way. Now my girls are enjoying her influence with their own vocal pursuits.

Hannah: Some of my favorite singers are Melissa Brady, Karen Peck, and Kelly Nelon. There have been many groups out there that have influenced my singing. I have always wanted to sing, and have wanted to sing Southern Gospel, my whole life. The Hoppers were probably my first influence because when I was little I would sing along with their music putting on a little concert for my parents. Some of my favorites Heather and I would always do was “Shoutin’ Time,” and “Yes I Am.”

Heather: My favorite singers are Karen Peck, Karen Wheaton, George Younce, and Vestal Goodman. Kelly Nelon has been one of the biggest influences in my life whether it has been with words

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of encouragement or through her music. Being her vocal student, I have learned so much from her and found confidence in my singing because of her. I will always be thankful for the influence she has on my life.

Scoops: *For each member: What is a song that you wish you had written?*

Chris: Many times, I have found myself singing the lyrics to Leroy Abernathy’s classic song “Prayer Is the Key To Heaven.” This is one of those songs that drives home the simple but profound truth that prayer must be coupled with faith if the doors of Heaven are to be opened. I have long admired those who can help us to see the simplicity of faith in a profound way.

Karen: Oh my. Where to start? I’m not sure there’s any that I wish I had written, but there are several that are very meaningful to me. Most recently: “Say Amen,” by Brian Free and Assurance and “God’s Been Good,” by Legacy Five. I LOVE both of those as they fit me and my story. One other that truly speaks to me and has for years is Don Moens’ “I Will Sing.” Many times this song has spoken to my heart.

Hannah: I wish I would have written “Four Days Late,” because it is such a powerful and touching song.

Heather: I wish I had written “It Is Well.”

The Connells will be appearing at Southern Gospel Weekend. Find them on Facebook at The Connells - Southern Gospel.



Hazel Sain



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Southern Gospel Weekend Is Here!



By Lorraine Walker

It's finally here. Southern Gospel Weekend (SGW) arrives in Oxford, Alabama for its third year of music and merriment. March 23rd through 25th, the Oxford Civic Center will be filled with artists and fans to enjoy Gospel songs and fellowship with each other. As in the last two years, admission to Southern Gospel Weekend is free but must be reserved. Visit www.Southern-GospelWeekend.com for more information. Be sure to contact head of Lodging and Tours, Salina Clay, for more information at hotels@sgnscoops.com.

"I have to say, more people in this past year have asked me about Oxford, Alabama and Southern Gospel Weekend, than about any other event I have been a part of. The industry as a whole is excited to see the growth of this event. The community as a whole has also embraced this event," said Rob Patz, President of Coastal Media. "There's just a feeling of excitement about these three days of music. Besides the nightly concerts, this year there will be showcases and a special breakfast on Saturday morning that will feature several artists. I can't wait!"

Artist Lineup

Evening concerts begin at 5:00pm with the Five O'Clock Band. Some of the artists appearing at SGW 2017 include: Mark209, Pat Barker, Matt Felts, Hope's Journey, The Williamsons, The Sharps Quartet, Day 3, Eagle's Wings, Charlie Sexton, Linda Foster, Mercy's Rain, The Dodrill Family, Rhonda Wooten, The Camerons, Hazel Sain, The Riders, Tina Wakefield, Broken Vessels, Surrendered, Inheritance, Debbie Seagraves, The Chandlers, The Singing Epps Family, The Pine Ridge Boys, Kristen Stanton, Ava Kasich, Shane Cruse, The Connells, ClearVision



Special guest Pat Barker will also be offering classes to assist Gospel music artists. From vocal coaching to stage presence, Barker will touch on everything the artist needs to present Christ, in the SGW version of the Pat Barker University. Contact Vonda Easley for more information.

As in the last two years, admission to Southern Gospel Weekend is free but must be reserved. Visit www.SouthernGospel-Weekend.com for more information. Be sure to contact head of Lodging and Tours, Salina Clay, for more information at hotels@sgnscoops.com.

“If the last years’ attendance is any indication, this year’s event should be well attended and well accepted, not only by the Oxford community, but by the Southern Gospel music family. Not only did the crowd enjoy the music, but lasting friendships were built,” said Rob Patz, one of the founders of the event. “And although we love that our guests enjoyed their time at the event, we are most excited about those who accepted our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, at the altar call,” Patz continued. Patz is the CEO of Coastal Media.

Like other conventions, attendees are allowed ample time to stroll through vendor booths. This provides guests with the perfect opportunity to get to know their favorite artists and chat with old friends. The merchandise tables display the newest projects available for preview and purchase. In the past there have even been some spontaneous concerts and intercession happening in the halls of the Civic Center. “Nothing bonds people together better than good friends, good food and good music,” Patz said. Vendors selling snacks will also be on hand.

Southern Gospel Weekend also hosts a VIP seating section. For \$25, true Southern Gospel fans can purchase a pass that will assure them the best view of all the concerts for the entire event. Not only will they have the preferred seating, but also VIP pass holders will receive a special surprise at the event. Anyone interested in purchasing a VIP pass for the Oxford event should contact Vonda Easley of Hey Y’all Media at 256-310-7892.

“The growth of the franchise is, of course, exciting,” said Rob Patz, “but seeing people’s lives touched and changed through the music that I believe so strongly in, is the most fulfilling aspect of what I do.” For more information visit: www.SouthernGospel-Weekend.com or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend>.

Call Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892 for tickets. Contact Salina Clay for hotel reservations at hotels@sgnscoops.com or call her at 256-239-7716.

Photographs courtesy of Southern Gospel Weekend, Vonda Easley, Michelle Drummond.



Mark209

By Robert York

A little over five years ago at the 2011 National Quartet Convention, a new group was introduced by the name of Mark 209. A reference to mile marker 209 in Nashville, Tennessee, the location of Music Row, the group's sound is straight from the Heart of Nashville.

Mark 209 has a style of music of its own. Audiences like the four-part harmony reflective of Southern Gospel, but this group also adds a Country touch with their music, using lyrics that reflect everyday life.

Jym Howe, lead singer, says, "We just wanted to do something different. Our vocal arrangements are a combination of each of our separate backgrounds, from hip-hop, to barbershop, musical theater and country, to classical. We combine these with our love for Southern Gospel to create our unique sound."

Tenor Nathaniel Justice, who previously sang with Mike LeFevre, says: "Looking back I loved Mike and the guys there, but coming to Mark 209, we have a much more mainstream Country sound. It allows us to not only minister in churches but also fairs, casinos, prisons, youth rallies and much more."

Ray Woconish has a deep, smooth bass voice and works to ensure the audience will understand each word. Ray previously sang with South Point Quartet and Southern Grace. He is also a great sports fan and gets very excited about his favorite teams. "I am very animated and like to yell when things go good or bad," says Ray. "One time on the bus, I was watching Ohio State against Michigan State, and Ohio State had the ball. Twice on the same possession of the ball Ohio State dropped a pass and without any warning I yelled. It startled the driver and did not go over very well. Later in the drive, Ohio State scored a touchdown. Being the fan I am, I yelled again. Needless to say I was banned from the front and now have to ride in the back of the bus when watching sports."

Jimmy Reno, baritone for the group, was in law enforcement for 10 years. If he wasn't singing he would go back to law enforcement. Jimmy has been married for 22 years to Christa and they have three children and one granddaughter. He is an original member of Mark 209 but due to a family illness he left the group for a while. He said, "I'm very excited to be back. Prior to returning to Mark 209 I was with the Florida Boys."




Mark 209 has had many memorable experiences in their short history. The first year they sang at Graceland for Elvis Week 35. They opened their set with one of their most popular songs, "Graceland." This was Ray's first event with the group. They have also sung for both Presidents Bush (41 and 43) at their home in Kennebunkport.

Stop-by their booth to say hello and make plans to see them live at Southern Gospel Weekend.



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Southern Gospel Weekend 2017

Artists & Happenings

Thursday

March 23

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Midnight Prayer - Comfort Suites, Oxford

Friday

March 24

9:00 AM - FREE! Showcases

2:00 PM - Pat Barker University

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5:00 PM - FREE! Concerts

Midnight Prayer - Comfort Suites, Oxford

Saturday

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The Chandlers: Living a Life of Surrender

By Sarah Murray

The Chandlers are one of the up-and-coming family groups in Southern Gospel music. In the last two years alone they have accomplished great things. In 2015, they were a NQC showcase winner. In 2016, during the Diamond Awards, they received the Sunrise Award. They also reached the Top 80 Songs list for The Singing News chart in 2016. To follow along with these accomplishments, they have also had the honor of singing at NQC and Dollywood, and have even begun their own television show titled, “It’s Your Time, with the Chandlers.” Their group consists of Tim Chandler, and his wife Lana, and their two daughters, Tiffany and Lyndsey.

While awards and chart hitting is a dream of many Southern Gospel artists, one major accomplishment the Chandlers have been proud of this year, is a type of ceremony they have included in their scheduled performances. They label this special time as “The Dump.”

The Dump is much like an altar call but is so personal and life altering. This is a time where anyone can come to the altar and hold their burdens, insecurities, fears, and their failures in their hands. Tim will pray a special prayer asking God for deliverance. As he prays, he asks that God will take these specific requests and remove them so the person holding them can move past them and further their walk with Christ and no longer be pinned down by these setbacks. As he finishes his prayer, he then counts to three. At the count, everyone then turns their hands and dumps their specific concerns at the altar to be left and not picked up again.

This ceremony was created when Lana Chandler herself was burdened when a loving family member walked out of her life. Lana said she was broken and dealt with emotional stress for 11 months. During this trying time, Lana said she felt like she was having a hard time trying to minister to people, when she was struggling herself.

It was then she realized she was singing to herself and it was time to practice what she preached. Lana describes this moment and the days that were to come as, “worshipping her way to victory.”

In Lana’s own words: “In order to have a burning testimony, ministry, etc., you have to go through the fire.” As Lana dealt with the hurt and burdens from this trial in her life and her family, she focused on her own walk with God and began testifying of how God had delivered her and how she didn’t have to carry this burden anymore.

Tim and Lana both agreed, that although it is very easy to question God, repentance must come first. “In order for God to hear us, we need to make sure we are where we need to be with God,” Tim said.

As the trial seemed to diminish, Tim and Lana utilized this trial and used what God had done for them, to help others find their own deliverance. By creating this dump ceremony in their performances, they started to see change in people and saw God move each time.

Tim preaches using the scripture 1 Corinthians 10:13. He delivers a message that describes the phrase, “God won’t give you more than you can handle,” as being misunderstood. In fact, this verse reads: “that ye may be able to bear it.” This is where Tim eludes that God will never leave or forsake us, but while we will face troubles, we have to find a way of escape. God’s plan is not



or us to stay in that trying time. They also include one of their songs called, “My Last Tear.”

This part of the service has truly proven to be remarkable to the Chandlers. Lana recalls one instance where a woman came to the altar, was prayed over, and dumped her burdens. Lana says she saw the whole demeanor of the woman’s face and countenance changing, and she realized this was truly helping others find deliverance. In one recent service, 12 people were standing at the altar ready to dump their burdens. Lana mentioned that we are all God’s clay and each time someone finds hope in this part of the service, it’s like God putting the clay back on the wheel and saying, “You aren’t going to be that anymore, however I’m going to use you to be something else.”

Since the Chandlers have agreed to make this a part of their service when they feel led and when the Holy Spirit moves, God has also moved for them. The family member in Lana’s life wrote her a letter of apology which began the healing process for Lana. However, the biggest personal move through Christ for Lana was the humbling moment of realizing that because she went through this trial and found deliverance, others will be able to experience the same peace she found in Christ. Lana tells their audiences that, “Life doesn’t stop for our trials and tribulations.” She encourages others to find their hope and rest in Jesus and to give Him their burdens, just like she did.

The Chandlers are still praying for God’s plan and will in their ministry as they continue to travel. They have traveled overseas, to Canada, and all over the United States. They are only a few states shy of covering all 50 states in the U.S. They are even scheduled to sing in Serbia in 2018. They just released their second single, “Somebody Give Him Some Praise,” from their latest CD.

With all the excitement and new beginnings ahead, when you meet a family like the Chandlers you realize their sole purpose in their ministry can be summed up in one word: Jesus. Just as their most requested song is titled, “He Will Come Through,” that is the message behind their music, the purpose behind their special ceremony, and the depiction of who the Chandlers are. A message to everyone that you’ve not gone too far for Jesus, because once you give Him your burdens, He will come through for you.

Photograph courtesy Meagan Pledger.

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Susan Brady: Winning The Battle

In a world where we are bombarded with sin before our eyes everyday, it can be difficult to keep our eyes on the Lord. But God gave us a wonderful example in Exodus 17:8-13 on how to win the battle over our flesh and temptation.

I'm sure you've read this story about Moses and the attack of Amalek on the children of Israel. But have you ever thought of how it applies to your life spiritually?

Exodus 17:8 "Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim."

Amalek is a picture of the flesh. The name Amalek is made by combining two Hebrew words with triliteral roots. The roots mean: iniquity, perverse, mischief or to pinch something off.

The Spirit of God that dwells within us, wants to do the right things. But our flesh does not always agree.

Romans 7:18 "For I know that in me, (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing."

Paul said that we are those that rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ and have no confidence in the flesh. By applying Exodus 17:8-13 spiritually to our lives it helps us understand how to overcome the battles we face.

Exodus 17:9 and 10 "And Moses said unto Joshua, choose us out men and go out, fight with Amalek: tomorrow I will stand at the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand. So Joshua did as Moses had said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill."

We know that Joshua is the Old Testament word for Jesus. The name means "Jehovah Saves." Joshua appears here in the role of a military commander, or captain. We know that Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation.

Amalek attacked Israel in the same way that the flesh attacks the Christian. There will be some temptations you will not struggle with, but there will be others you have trouble resisting and try hard to fight.

What did Moses do when Amalek came to fight Israel? He called Joshua to fight the battle. And when the flesh attacks you, you must call on Jesus to do the fighting for you!

Exodus 17:11 and 12: "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed. And when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him. And he sat thereon; and Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side: And his hands were steady until the going down of the sun."

Notice, as long as Moses hands were lifted up, Israel was winning the battle, but as soon as he let them down, Amalek prevailed.

1st Timothy 2:8 says "I will therefore that men pray everywhere lifting up holy hands without wrath, or doubting."

Moses' hands raised are a picture of praying, praising and resting. Moses is sitting; what a beautiful picture of the Christian resting in the Lord, while He fights the battle! Hang on, it's about to get even better!



In v. 13: "And Joshua (Jesus) discomfited (or defeated) Amalek (the flesh) with the edge of the sword (which is the word of God).

Praise the Lord! The Word of God is our weapon against the devil, against temptation and against our flesh. His word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. It's like a hammer that breaks the rock into pieces! It's pure, it's holy and it's sharper than a two edged sword. It endureth forever and it shall stand forever (and that's just to name a few quotes.)

What a comfort to know Jesus loves us. He understands my struggles. He is my victory over the flesh to win the war.

He made a way for us to live a victorious Christian life. Just as Israel overcame Amalek, you can overcome temptation and the flesh, when Jesus is fighting the battle.

I pray this will be a comfort to you today, and for the rest of your life.

Many Blessings,
Susan Brady

Susan Brady is a member of the Southern Gospel Trio, Exodus. Susan comes from Gadsden, AL. She is married to Bill Brady and together they have four children, six grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. They own and operate a small flooring company. They are members of Higher Ground Baptist Church. Susan has been singing and also writing Southern Gospel music for almost 30 years. Five of Susan's songs are debuted on their I've Been Set Free project. Susan has a rich, soulful voice and the touch of the Holy Spirit is clearly heard. She continues to write, serve, and sing using the gifts He has given to encourage and minister the grace of our loving Savior. Visit the Exodus website at exodus-southerngospel.com.

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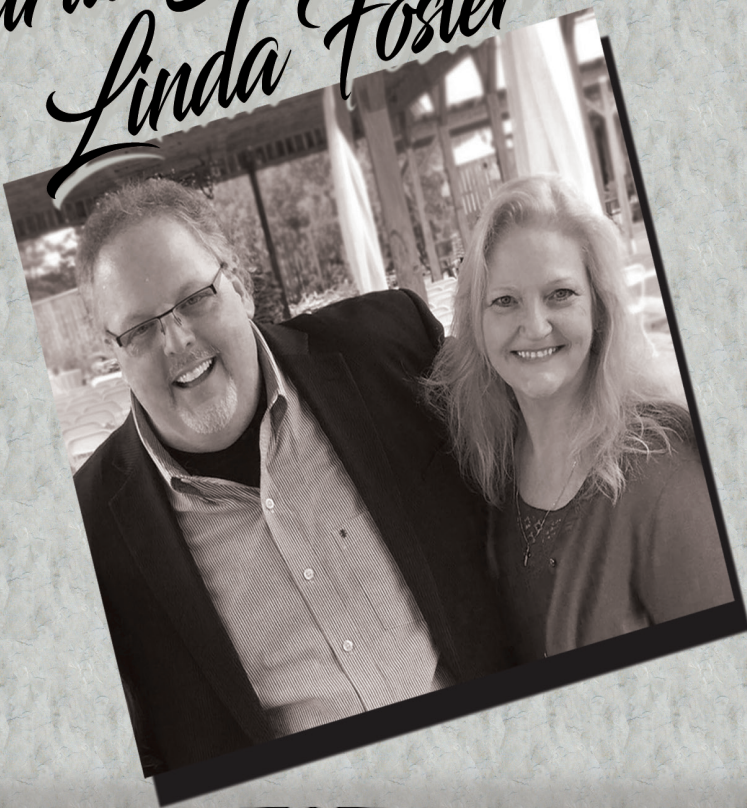
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Reflections from Southern Gospel Weekend 2016

By Rob Patz

Southern Gospel Weekend zipped by on March 10-12, 2016 and everyone involved had an absolutely incredible time. Music, fellowship, food, prayer, ministry; it was all there and fully enjoyed by everyone. The attendance was great and the talent was spectacular. We thought you'd like to know what the attendees had to say about Southern Gospel Weekend 2016! Let's listen in as they talk about this annual event:

It's always an honor to get together with so many anointed and talented groups. We had a wonderful time reuniting with old friends and making new ones while worshiping together. We love Midnight Prayer! Thank you for asking us to lead and share one night. It's always a blessing. Excited to see what God has in store for next year! - **Rocky and Gail Smith**

2016 was my first year to be able to be a part of SGW, and what an awesome event it was. Being with Tony Gore and Majesty for five years as well as The Down East Boys for 10, I have had the opportunity to sing on every major event, and work for almost every promoter in the country. I can honestly say that I have never worked for better people than with those associated with SGW.



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Everyone from the Board Members to the groups involved were there to have fun and sing, but first and foremost to minister. They allowed me to share my testimony on Friday night and I gave an altar call. Two people accepted Christ that night, and other lives were touched as well. You'll find NO other event in the country where the groups work together, help each other and cheer each other on the way they did in Oxford, AL. I was honored to be a part and I truly look forward to 2017. - **Jason Runnels, Jason Runnels Ministries**

Recently, I was privileged to help coordinate the afternoon showcases at Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford, Alabama. I was expecting it to be fun - and it was - because the promoters of the event are, well, fun people. What I wasn't ready for, though, was the camaraderie of the talent, and the genuine spirit with which each artist sang. The holy atmosphere that we experienced in the afternoon sessions carried over into the evening services. Yes, I said services. It was MUCH more than a typical Convention or Concert. It was Camp Meeting! I can't wait for the next one. You need to plan to be there! - **Charlie Sexton**

We had a great time at Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford! This was our second year to be a part of the event. SGW was our 2016 kick off event. We loved seeing our fellow artists and friends, as well as making new friends. The talent was amazing and you couldn't have asked for a sweeter, more sincere Spirit of worship and fellowship during those three days. - **Dennis and Leslie McKay (McKay Project, Columbus, MS)**

Southern Gospel Weekend was a great event again this year, great talent of some of the best and anointed artists in Southern Gospel music, plus it's free to the public! The main thing is lives were touched and souls were saved. What an awesome event. Thanks to Rob Patz and all the gang for putting events like this together. - **Mike Watson, Exodus**

Fast becoming a fan favorite, SGW held in Oxford Alabama is now a destination for many Southern Gospel Music lovers. The addition of the Five O'clock Band to kick off each night was amazing; great pickers and great songs and the crowd loved singing along. This was my second time to play there and the Weekend always goes by too quick. Everyone should just plan to stay close by and come in the morning to the showcases, which is code for church, then the main events at night, to going to eat afterwards, then midnight prayer. It's a full day of fun and worship. I love it and by Sunday I'm already looking forward to the next year. It just keeps getting better and better. With the groups and the fans I couldn't think of a better place to be than at Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford, Alabama. Thank you Rob, Vonda, Ava, and Donnie. This is truly one of the best events we attend. Thank you. - **Russell Wise, Surrendered**

We had a great time in Alabama at the SGW event. There was such a sweet, sweet spirit throughout the whole weekend. The Holy Spirit was there. We are looking forward to next year. - **Bev McCann**

What a wonderful time we had at SGW 2016! The combination of the fellowship of other singers, meeting new friends, reacquainting with old friends and feeling the presence of God, made SGW a very memorable weekend in our lives! - **Lana Chandler of The Chandlers**

We (Exodus) were excited again this year to have been a part of the Southern Gospel Weekend. What an awesome event. Rob,

Vonda and all the gang do a tremendous job of putting this event on. It's free to the public, with some of the best and anointed artists in Southern Gospel today. Lives were changed and souls were saved. Praise God for Rob and the gang for such an awesome event. Can't wait till next year! - Exodus

Young People in Southern Gospel Music

It all started when Caleb Lamb, the tenor singer for Majesty 3, walked up to our table in our booth at SGW and introduced himself to us. As we talked, he began to share his interest in Indiana Bible College, where I (Tiffany) attend. We talked about the IBC chorale/choir songs that we liked and decided that it would be fun to try to sing some of them together. We went to the nearby stairwell for some good acoustics. While we were in the middle of a song, in walked the bass singer for Hope's Journey, Jordan Wilson. He joined right in and completed our sound. Here we were singing together like we'd been doing it for a long time and yet we had only met these guys within the last 24 hours! We thought it would be fun to give ourselves a name and came up with, Young Grace, since we were all between the ages of 15 and 21 years old. We were asked to sing during one of the day showcases and made our debut with an a cappella version of "Oh, The Blood." Our respective groups aren't real sure about this, seeing that we would leave four openings to fill, should we decide to hit the road! We have created a sub-group and will sing whenever God brings us together at the same events. - Tiffany Chandler and Lyndsey Chandler of The Chandlers

Hi! This is Sadie Renae from Surrendered. I just wanted to take a moment and say how much fun I had at Southern Gospel Weekend a few weeks back, from the showcases in the mornings, to

the awesome concerts at night. I cannot wait until next year. It was awesome getting to see all of our friends and family in Christ. If you did not attend this year, I highly recommend making plans to go next year. You will definitely get a blessing out of it. See you there next year! - Sadie Renae, Surrendered

Hey Y'all this is Pam of The Riders out of Lumberton, MS. I wanted to take a moment to share what I enjoy at Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford, AL. For me, I appreciate the opportunity to fellowship and encourage my fellow Gospel Artists as well as those in the audience. It is humbling to me when people say they were touched by the message in our songs and ask us to remember them in prayer. Folks, that's what ministry is truly about. That's the type of venue Southern Gospel Weekend provides. It also has free admission to the public for all three days. The Riders can't wait until next year's SGW. Be sure to come and prepare yourself for a blessing. - Pam Oxenrider

I absolutely loved Southern Gospel Weekend! Although I have attended many different convention style events, this one is different. The focus really is on Christ. The artists are supportive of each other and are genuinely singing for the right reasons. For me, the impromptu moment in the showcase was something I will never forget: looking up and going from a soloist to being part of a quartet. I am excited to see what God is going to do at the next event! - Kristen Stanton



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This was the first year I was honored to participate in the SGW in Oxford, AL. To say that I felt blessed to take part is an understatement. To work closely for three days and nights with a group of artists and not hear one curse word the entire time, just showed their sincere love for the Lord and dedication to His work. Such a spiritual bond was placed among all of the artists there. I have not participated in an event with such a spiritual group of artists since I first felt this calling on my life two and a half years ago. Thank you to Rob Patz, Vonda Easley, Ava Kasich and Donnie Williamson for including me. I look forward to attending many more of these blessed events. - Annette Bingaman

What a fantastic time we enjoyed at the Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford this year. We met several new friends and reconnected with long-time friends, including artists and SG enthusiasts. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to worship with an array of great artists in our genre. We appreciate [Rob] and Vonda committing so much of your life to keeping Southern Gospel Music alive! We look forward to seeing you again soon! - Adam Dungey, Bros. 4

Comments from the Sponsoring Radio Station
Though I was somewhat tired from the Morning Show I do and then attempting to go to the evening and morning showcases, I would not trade the experience for the world. It was definitely a blessed weekend, with many great performances from people who are doing this for the Lord Jesus. The singing, (I don't like to call them performances), was so anointed that I left the weekend tired but high on the Lord and His Holy Spirit. I made many new friends and reconnected with many others. The Weekend was a blessing to everyone who attended and heard the anointed music praising the Lord Jesus! There was so much in the way of merchandise from the artists that I wasn't sure where to look first.

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They all seemed to be very giving and blessed whatever their personal circumstances. One of the groups had to travel through the part of I20 that was shut down by the DOT in Louisiana, and you could never tell from the way they behaved. - John Abney / WPIL91.7fm Operations manager

**The Board of Southern Gospel Weekend:
Rob Patz, Ava Kasich, Vonda Easley,
Donnie Williamson**

SGW this year was completely over the top! Souls saved, lives changed and hearts touched! What an awesome event to be associated with. The artists this year were right on with the move of God. Can't wait to see what God has in store for next year! - Ava Kasich

We had a great time at Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford, Alabama. On Wednesday night before the event started, many of us met at the Oxford Civic Center Gazebo to bathe the convention in prayer. God truly showed up and showed out during the weekend. I am already looking forward to Southern Gospel Weekend 2017. I hope you will be there! - Vonda Easley

What a great time we had at the 2016 SGW! It was good to see old friends and make some new ones. I believe the stand out event was when two people accepted Jesus Christ into their hearts and lives on Friday night. The moving of the Holy Spirit threw the program off and it ran late. However, the groups who had to be bumped because of it seemed to be more than happy to postpone their singing time so these precious folk could make things right with God. It reminded me of the quality and dedica-

tion of the artists participating in this wonderful weekend. I was told about a similar event where the promoter told the groups, "I want you to sing and not talk. If the Holy Spirit shows up I'll let you know." I'm glad the Holy Spirit is still in control of the Southern Gospel Weekend. He let us know Himself that He decided to show up. - Donnie Williamson, The Williamsons

I have been looking forward to SGW 2016 ever since I had to miss last year's event because of illness. I thought I knew what to expect, but it exceeded everything I had thought it might be! From the pre-event prayer time in the gazebo, through the evening concerts, midnight prayer, morning showcases and the fellowship times, you could sense the Holy Spirit moving in our midst. Souls were saved and lives were changed, and that's what it is all about. I'm thankful for everyone who was involved and my fellow board members for anticipating what needed to be done, and then doing it. I'm especially thankful to the young artists who attended and showed us what the future of Southern Gospel looks like. I also appreciate the faithfulness of those who have traveled the roads for many years, singing about the love of Jesus. You all are to be commended. Please join us next year. I'm excited already about SGW 2017! - Rob Patz

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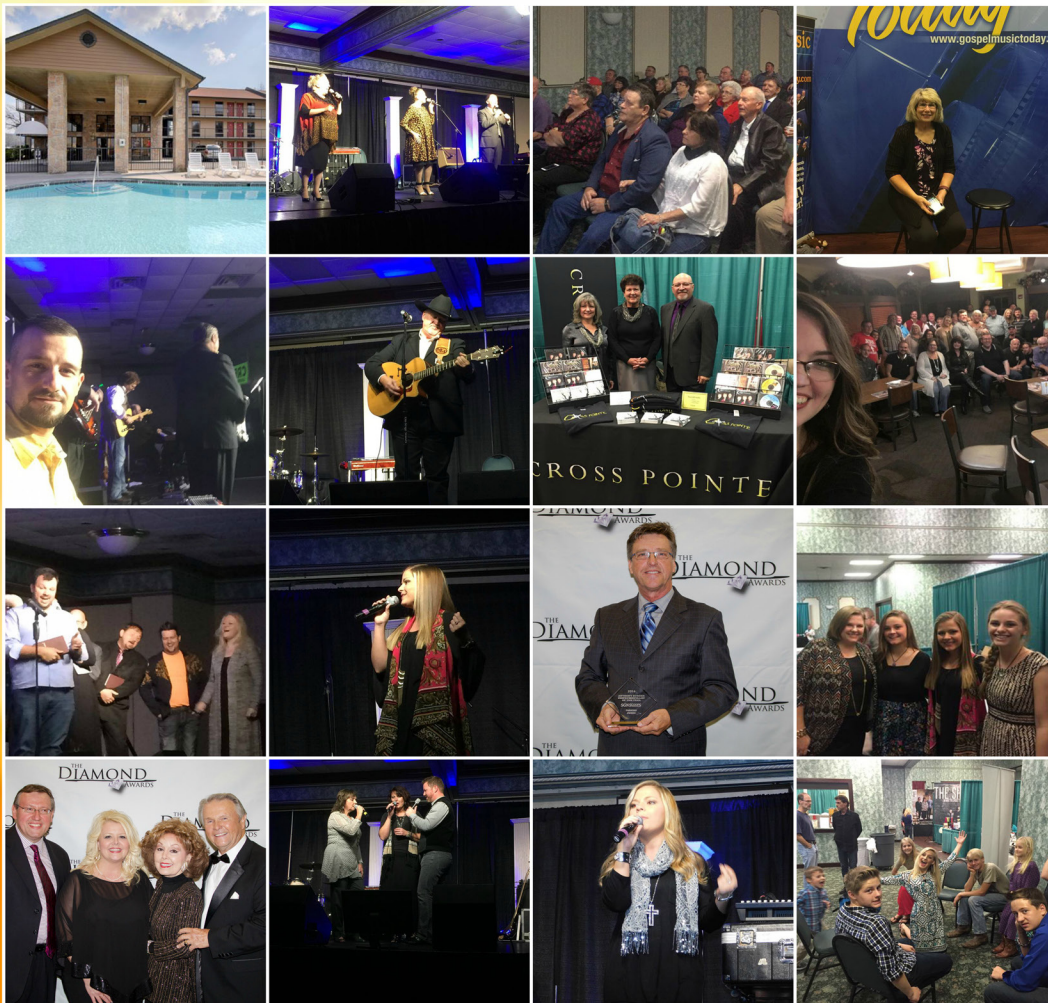
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