

CMA Time Already!!

It's that time of year again! Dust off your cowboy hat, put it on, and get ready for a rootin' tootin' time watching the 44th annual Country Music Association Awards!!



I'm going to try something different this year – I'm not going to watch it.

Not that I don't want to, because I really do, especially when I [go to the website](#) and see all the stuff about live streaming comments and things like that. It wasn't too many years ago when I made my own blog of live streaming comments, and I had fun doing it. But I won't be able to watch the CMAs this year because I have something much more important to do: I lead a small group of 6th grade girls at our church's youth group on Wednesday nights. I'm not about to put a tv show above those girls, and I certainly wouldn't be prepared to tell them the reason for my absence was because of the CMA awards – that would not be acceptable. If one of my own kids was sick and I stayed home for that reason (as it happened last year on CMA night), that would be a different story, but it's a great thing that everyone is healthy enough for me to have to miss one of my two most favorite tv events of the year (not including a year the Chicago Cubs would make it into MLB playoffs, but that hasn't been anything I need to concern myself with in quite some time, Grrrr – my other favorite tv event is the other big country music awards show, the ACMs in the spring).

If you watch the CMA awards, HAVE FUN!! I'm hoping that whatever recording device my husband has in mind to record these will work – we often have bad luck with recording devices. Part of me will miss being a part of the event, reading the live commentary and providing my own, and part of me was ready to move on anyway – seems I've become increasingly disconnected with today's country music scene (now I just sound old). I'll still give my picks, but they are guesses at best because I really haven't been following the genre lately. I didn't even know until I looked last night to find out what time the awards came on that Gwyneth Paltrow, the movie star, has a hit song on country radio right now. I'm actually more into Christian music than ever before; there is some pretty good stuff out there. And listening to Christian music gives me a chance to practice my dances I have on Sunday mornings with the 1st graders ☐ But all of that leaves less time to listen and keep up with country music.

But what the hey, I've had fun trying to pick the winners every year so here goes. My picks are in **green** with random thoughts in *itallics*:

◆◆**Entertainer of the Year – Brad Paisley**, Lady Antebellum, Keith Urban, Miranda Lambert, Zac Brown Band (*What?!? No Kenny Chesney?? That's great news for those of us who aren't big fans... now, who to choose to take his place?*)

Female Vocalist – Miranda Lambert, Martina McBride, Reba McEntire, **Taylor Swift**, Carrie Underwood (*So great to see 2 of my favorites (Martina and Reba) back in the game! I don't think Martina will win, but I SO WANTED to choose her!! Carrie Underwood is great too – I'm not a big fan of Taylor Swift, but unfortunately, I think she will win this one*)

◆◆**Male Vocalist** – Dierks Bentley, Brad Paisley, **Blake Shelton**, George Strait, Keith Urban

New Artist – Luke Bryan, **Easton Corbin**, Jerrod Nieman, Chris

Young, **Zac Brown Band** (*Explain to me how Zac Brown Band is still considered “new”? They have some great music and have proven themselves, as I would think being a nominee for Entertainer of the Year would prove!*)

Vocal Group – **Lady Antebellum**, Little Big Town, **Rascall Flatts**, The Band Perry, Zac Brown Band (*Let’s be honest, I think Lady Antebellum will take it. But I just love the music of Rascall Flatts, and can’t bear to vote against them. I’m not trying to get 2 votes in – officially, my pick is Rascall Flatts*)

Vocal Duo – **Brooks and Dunn**, Joey + Rory, Montgomery Gentry, Steel Magnolia, **Sugarland** (*The last year for Brooks and Dunn, and I don’t think they’ll pull a GARTH Brooks and pull out of retirement, so this powerful duo gets my vote – they are so talented, so they deserve it anyway. I was lucky enough to see them in concert 3 times, and they did not disappoint once!*)

♦♦**Single** – A Little More Country Than That by Easton Corbin, Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton featuring Trace Adkins, **Need You Now** by **Lady Antebellum**, The House That Built Me by Miranda Lambert, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

♦♦**Song** – A Little More Country Than That, Need You Now, **The House That Built Me**, Toes, White Liar

♦♦**Musical Event** – Bad Angel by Dierks Bentley feat. Miranda Lambert & Jamey Johnson, Can’t You See by Zac Brown Band feat. Kid Rock, **Hillbilly Bone** by **Blake Shelton** feat. **Trace Adkins**, I’m Alive by Kenny Chesney with Dave Matthews, Till The End by Alan Jackson with Lee Ann Womack

Music Video – Hillbilly Bone by Blake Shelton feat. Trace Adkins, Need You Now Lady Antebellum, **The House That Built Me** by **Miranda Lambert**, **Water** by **Brad Paisley**, White Liar by Miranda Lambert

Musician – Paul Franklin – Steel Guitar, Dann Huff – Guitar, Brent Mason – Guitar, **Mac McAnally** – Guitar, **Randy Scruggs** – Guitar

Hmm, 5 correct of the 11 I guessed... not too great. Oh well, it was a good show and fun to watch!

In Remembrance

9/11/2001

September 11, 2001 was day we won't forget, a defining time in our nation's history, and the first of its kind for the generations who hadn't been exposed to such feelings of terror nor national vulnerability before that day. This blog post is a day late, but I spent some time yesterday reflecting on the sacrifices made and the lives forever changed on that September day in 2001. Alan Jackson wrote a poignant song about September 11, 2001 that asks, "Where were you when the world stopped turning that September day?", and I think that everyone remembers where they were and what they were doing when they learned that the United States was attacked nine years ago. I remember receiving emails from my friend who was serving in the Air Force at the time:

To All My Friends and Family:

I just wanted everyone to know that I'm okay. We are not going anywhere. Our jets are on standby, but that's it. Also, Jerry made it home okay, for those of you that were worried. I love you all, and I miss you.

Love,

Kel

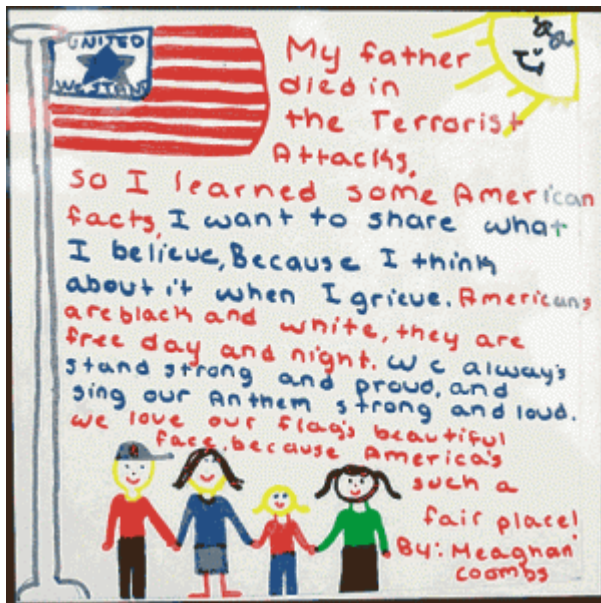
Hi Everyone,

Things are still going as well as can be expected. We are currently working 12 hour shifts, 7 days a week. Please, I'm asking everyone, do not call me during the day, because most of you know that's when I sleep. I'm working 7:00pm to 7:00am. If you absolutely need to get in touch with me, you can call me at home between 5:30pm and 6:00pm, or in an emergency I can be reached at work. (Mom and Dad you can call me anytime, even at work if you want) Also I check my e-mail a few times a night, so I will respond to everyone as quickly as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to ask, but I only have limited info at this time. For everyone wondering, we currently have 1/3 of our jets standing by with a full load of fuel and equiped with armed missles. If anything else happens, the jets will take off and patrol from South Carolina to the Southern tip of Florida (the Keys) They will shoot down anything that comes within that area. They will give the planes one warning and if they don't turn back, our jets will shoot them down without hesitation. We are very tired and will be even more worn down by the time this is all over. Working 12 hours a day, 7 days a week will do that to you. Again, if anyone has any questions, please e-mail me. I love you and miss you all.

Love, Kel

Her emails illustrate the widespread uncertainty coursing throughout the nation at that time as well as the need to keep close contact with friends and family.

One of the most moving experiences I've had was visiting the 9/11 museum in New York city a few years ago. It was a somber experience, and there was scarcely a dry eye left amongst those who came to learn, reflect, and pay tribute to the victims of 9/11. The victims, their families, and those who were affected in other ways by the infamous September 11, 2001 were in my thoughts and prayers yesterday, as well as they are today, and I've included the following video if you'd like to reflect as well. God bless America.



I Know Who To Blame For This Economy

WAL-MART! I can find many ways to blame Wal-Mart for the way the economy is tanking. Time for my latest beef about the place. We went over there Friday morning because my husband didn't have to work until after lunch, and we need an oil change. So we thought we'd get the oil change done together this time, which made me really happy because normally it's just me and my two children (ages 2 and 7 mos.) who have to kill around 2 hours there every 3 months (or sometimes even more frequently). If you're thinking that spending 2 hours at Wal-Mart with 2 little kids while trying not to spend a lot of money is both exhausting and frustrating, you aren't very far off the mark. So anyway, Friday I thought I had company for the oil change, but even so, who wants to spend hours at Wal-Mart? When we pulled up, I was pleasantly surprised to see that there weren't any cars waiting, so I thought we might actually be out of there in under an hour – WRONG! The wait

time they quoted us was an hour and a half! But we needed the oil change and were kind of trying to kill time until the area restaurants would start serving lunch, so we decided to go for it, especially since they've opened an H & R Block in the Wal-Mart for tax season. Taxes and an oil change – kill two birds with one stone, or so we thought... We get to the other side of the store where the makeshift H & R Block is, and we find out it's not open until 1pm. So we went back to the Automotive Department to sign in our car anyway, and that's when we discover that an oil change at Wal-Mart is now \$30! That is a \$7.50 increase in price over the last 3 months! So no taxes to get done + expensive oil change + long wait = forget it! And I will add the fact that Wal-Mart sucks at oil changes. Almost every time I'd come home with the car, it would act funny or something else would be wrong with it. Once they forgot to put the air filter back in, several times they didn't replace the wiper fluid when it was checked off on the to-do list, and a few times I had to go back and have them re-vacuum the interior of the car because they said they did it but clearly had not. Those were the days when oil changes were still so reasonable in price that we got the full monty of services, including the vacuuming and the refilling of fluids – not anymore!

We called other places around town, and we found that Wal-Mart is now the most expensive AND takes the longest. But at the other places you needed an appointment, so we'll have to wait until next week – no problem if I don't have to go back to Wal-Mart! Plus I'd rather support the little guy anyway (ever hear the country music song "Little Man" by Alan Jackson? It's a good one and I highly recommend listening to it if you're frustrated about Wal-Mart's world take-over). And that brings me to why I'm blaming Wal-Mart for the awful economy...

They're putting all the little guys out of business, so there go the jobs and the competition in the retail world that was keeping product and services prices reasonable. Wal-Mart sets

the pricing trends, unfortunately. Mark my words, as soon as the little guys in town get wind that Wal-Mart upped their oil change prices, they will follow suit and you won't be able to touch an oil change for under \$30. And worse yet, I read in the newspaper just yesterday that Wal-Mart is the only retail place that posted profits for January. In fact, they're doing even better than Wall Street predicted for them, which in this economy, makes them stand alone in that respect.

The state of our economy is so bad right now that I suppose it's not logical to blame just one entity. But moaning about Walmart is a good venting tool, and they p*ss me off!

CMA TIME!

It's fall – time for the CMA Awards already! If you don't know that CMA is short for Country Music Association, then you have my permission to skip this blog post – it will only bore you anyway!

For other country music fans like me, this is one of our two biggest nights of the year – the Superbowl for country fans. I get really excited, and unlike other awards shows like the Oscars, I don't like to ~~tape~~ (I am a child of the '80's) record country music awards, and I especially don't like to miss anything – the live performances are some of the best parts! I always play along and try to choose the winners, but I don't think my picks are going to be that strong this year because I'm listening to country music radio less than ever – I enjoy talking to my kids in the car, or they're watching dvd's. At home I'm usually listening to Dora, the DoodleBops or Noggin. But the CMA Awards show will be a blast to watch, as always, and there are only two nights like this a year –

cross your fingers for me that my kids decide to act like human beings tonight and let me watch the show. My picks for the winners, however uneducated they may be, are made obvious by my *comments in itallics*:

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Kenny Chesney – *ok, so he doesn't dominate this awards show like the ACMs, but I'm going with him anyway – just because he is not one of my favorite singers and I'm not expecting the show to go well for me*

Brad Paisley

Sugarland

George Strait

Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist

Alison Krauss

Miranda Lambert

Martina McBride

Taylor Swift

Carrie Underwood – *I called her from one of her first appearances in American Idol. I said – she's going to win Idol, but she has a voice for country. Now she's established herself as one of the best female country singers out there today.*

Top Male Vocalist

Kenny Chesney

Alan Jackson – *my favorite of those nominated, but what's he done lately?*

Brad Paisley

George Strait

Keith Urban – *my pick to win – tough call between Keith and Brad, but you gotta congratulate a guy for a successful stint in rehab*

Vocal Duo of the Year

Big & Rich

Brooks & Dunn

Montgomery Gentry

Sugarland – *their unique sound will win them many awards – just one question: who else is in Sugarland besides Jennifer Nettles?*

The Wreckers

Vocal Group of the Year

Eagles

Emerson Drive

Lady Antebellum

Little Big Town

Rascal Flatts – *tried and true, these guys have talent. So do Brooks and Dunn, but they haven't come out with anything lately*

New Artist Of The Year

Jason Aldean

Rodney Atkins

Lady Antebellum

James Otto

Kellie Pickler – *another American Idol ~~reject~~ crossover*

Album Of The Year [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Carrie Underwood's Carnival Ride Produced by Mark Bright

Brooks & Dunn's Cowboy Town Produced by Tony Brown, Ronnie Dunn and Kix Brooks

Alan Jackson's Good Time Produced by Keith Stegall

Kenny Chesney's Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates Produced by Buddy Cannon and Kenny Chesney

George Strait's Troubadour Produced by Tony Brown and George Strait – *gotta give him something*

Single Of The Year [Awarded to artist and producer]

"Don't Blink" Kenny Chesney Produced by Buddy Cannon & Kenny Chesney BNA Records

"Gunpowder & Lead" Miranda Lambert Produced by Frank Liddell & Mike Wrucke Columbia Nashville

"I Saw God Today" George Strait Produced by Tony Brown & George Strait MCA Nashville

"Stay" Sugarland Produced by Byron Gallimore, Kristian Bush and Jennifer NettlesMercury Nashville – *not really sure of the*

difference between single and song of the year, but Stay has to win one of these. I'm going with Single, I guess.

"You're Gonna Miss This" Trace Adkins Produced by Frank Rogers
Capitol Nashville

Song Of The Year [Awarded to songwriter and primary publisher]

"Good Time" Alan Jackson EMI-April Music/Tri-Angels Music

"I Saw God Today" Rodney Clawson/Monty Criswell/Wade Kirby Big Red Toe/Extremely Loud Music/Steel Wheels Music/Blind Mule Music – *like I said, I don't think Strait will walk away with nothing tonight – just hope I didn't reverse the single and song of the year!*

"Letter To Me" Brad Paisley EMI-April Music/New Sea Gayle Music

"Stay" Jennifer Nettles Jennifer Nettles Publishing

"You're Gonna Miss This" Lee Thomas Miller/Ashley Gorley EMI Blackwood Music/New Songs of Sea Gayle/Noah's Little Boat Music/Songs of Combustion Music

Musical Event Of The Year [Awarded to each Artist]

"Another Try" – Josh Turner featuring Trisha Yearwood MCA Nashville

"Every Other Weekend" – Reba McEntire and Kenny Chesney MCA Nashville

"Gone Gone Gone" – Robert Plant and Alison Krauss Rounder Records

"Life In A Northern Town" – Sugarland featuring Little Big Town and Jake Owen Mercury Nashville

"Shiftwork" – Kenny Chesney (duet with George Strait) BNA Records – *What does 'vocal event' mean anyway? By the looks of how they wrote the nominees, I guess 'vocal event' means 'when record labels lease their stars'. Chesney always wins big at awards shows, but I personally prefer Jimmy Buffet's beachcomber style over Kenny Chesney's knock-off version. I'm guessing the Country Music Association does not agree.*

Music Video Of The Year [Awarded to artist and director]

Don't Blink Kenny Chesney Directed by Shaun Silva

Good Time Alan Jackson Directed by Trey Fanjoy

Stay Sugarland Directed by Shaun Silva – *everyone knows by now*

that Jennifer Nettles cried real tears during the filming of this video, is it enough to win her the award? My vote is yes, but maybe it's just wishful thinking.

Waitin' On a Woman Brad Paisley Directed by Jim Shea

You're Gonna Miss This Trace Adkins Directed by Peter Zavadil

Musician Of The Year

Jerry Douglas, Dobro – Drums

Paul Franklin – Steel Guitar

Dann Huff – Guitar – *will win. But then again, this is the blind lottery award for viewers. Like I know who any of these people are, so I just picked the name that jumped out at me, and Dan Huff it was.*

Brent Mason – Guitar

Mac McAnally – Guitar

For sure, a great time will be had by all. I might update my blog with winners as I watch tonight. And after reviewing my reasons for my picks for tonight's awards, it needs to be said that it's been way too long since some classic artists (and my personal favorites) came out with anything noteworthy! Alan Jackson ~~Garth Brooks~~ and Martina McBride, you know who you are!