

# 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!

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## On This Night Of A Thousand Stars

Last night was the [theatre's](#) (check out the new and improved website) annual awards night and it was filled with comedy, excitement, and a few tears. The group lost a great asset this year and there was a fine tribute given in her honor by the interim president... very few dry eyes remained after that. Conveniently, our fantastic host chose this moment to have an intermission. I think it was a fantastic touch to honor a lady who along with her husband have added so much to our group.

One of the highlights of the evening was a skit showcasing some of the characters from the past season as well as inserting themes from a 2002 production of A Christmas Carol which I was not a part of but have heard a great deal about. This was also written by the talented MC who also provided a series of Jib-Jab videos on the projection screen for even more hilarity.

Another bit of humor was provided by the adorable couple who entertained with a parody of the song "One Day More" from the musical *Les Miserables*.

Overall, each of the awards were very well received. However, I must say that i am biased when it comes to the special

awards given out. [Justj](#) and Carol each continue to go totally above and beyond. J has been our unofficial videographer for several productions and single-handedly repaired the large, leaky roof which was so prominent during our summer production.

I would say that Carol is one of several ladies who act as honorary mothers to the group. I had the profound honor of working with her backstage during The Nerd in September. She was a great help in bringing the food used on stage, cleaning up cottage cheese, and helping keep a certain young boy under control backstage. Both of these honorees exemplify the hard work and dedication necessary to keep a small community theatre afloat.

This brings me to daughter of one of these award winners (and she knows this is coming). The director of the upcoming production of Over the Tavern is looking for someone to fill the role of the 16 year-old daughter, Annie. Megan is about to turn 21; however, those around her and especially myself (as she will attest) feel that she would be wonderfully cast. She agreed to read the script but made sure to voice her concern that she has at least one evening class during the week. I proceeded to remind her that she bailed on our trip to Florida in October but the play is right in town and I'm sure the director would work around her if she fit the part. Megan has constantly said that she has wanted to get back on stage and this would be a fine opportunity □ Ok... i think that is enough prodding. Anyone else care to join in? Maybe this will encourage her to comment.

Finally, the evening wrapped up after a group of us again congregated at the host's home. I have not laughed and had such a good time in awhile. i also got to see many friends I have not seen in quite a while including a former co-worker whom I have not seen since last New Years.

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# Theater award night...

An annual event for our [little community theater](#) is our award banquet. Fun time with good food, fun skits, and of course, awards for the actors and shows.

It is always fun to be involved in a show. At the time it is a lot of work and it takes up quite a bit of time. But when the show is over, there is always a let down of sorts. For me, this award show brings back all the good memories of the shows, but the time and work involved is a lot less (unless you are setting up the show).

I won't go into all the awards won. My memory of who won what and what show it was for, and how to spell the names is lacking at this hour of the evening. Even with that, I would ask them first before putting their names in my blog.

Me, I wasn't in any shows this year. I didn't design any sets. I wasn't a director on any show. I wasn't expecting to win any award. I did!! Shock of shocks. It was an award that is decided on by the president of the playhouse trustees. Big honor I will have to say.

Winning this award got me thinking. I have strange thoughts all the time, so this was no exception. After the show was over, everyone was congratulating everyone with an award. The common phrase heard was: "You deserved it." Of course most if not all were well meant. But in common, polite society would we ever say anything else? Would you say: 'Why the heck did they give that award to you? So and so did much better, they should have won.' (of course behind the scenes, they are saying those words to so and so.) No, polite society will generally refrain from those remarks, until enough booze is

swallowed. □ Polite society will refrain from making comments other than the 'congratulations' if they feel the award was not deserved, or they won't say anything.

Why did I think of this, well I got a large number of those "You deserved it." comments. Being the humble person I am (no that isn't meant to be a joke), I was caught off guard again. Then again, thanks to the training my wife gave me, I can read body language very well (my secret is out now, oops). The language of the bodies, and the words said were matching up. The people saying the words, meant the words. Wow again, I was humbled.

Over the years people have done more for the theater than I've ever done. This year there were people that did more than me. But the big thing for me is this one little fact. The theater has done more for me than I've ever done for the theater. Little things here and there, now and then, have kept this old soul in good health. The people in the theater were there at my darkest moments. Outside of my daughters and others in my family, the theater was an anchor to sanity. For me, that was better than any award they can give. I cannot say thank you enough for that.

All this from one little theater group. Wonderful therapy for a grieving widower, and good shows too. Is it any wonder I keep going back?

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## **Graduation      part      2½      as promised**

Okay, now that I'm back I will finish up the rest of yesterday. I mentioned that they had gone through one time

practicing picking up diplomas (at least eight Patels by the way ☐ ). Once finished, they all had to stand up one last time ("and now presenting the class of 2008") and then practice filing out and back in again. By now, we were getting hungry so he finally dismissed us, but not without having a little fun with it. They had to practice standing and turning in unison as their rows were called at random. Those that did it well got to go. Those who didn't had to sit back down and wait to try again. About half made it out the first time. The first row took about four tries to get it right. As staff, we of course had to wait until the end, but I didn't mind. We got a free lunch out of it too, all students and staff. Not a very nutritious one mind you (pizza or hot dog, chips, ice cream) but still- free is free. We then had about 45 minutes to eat. Everyone ate outside, though I did go to the lounge for a short time to supplement my free lunch with something I had brought.

The afternoon started with- drum roll please- awards. Yep, third time now. Fortunately it was just 8th grade this time, and fewer categories than the last 7th/8th grade one. Then a few students performed songs. I wonder if they did that at the actual ceremony? Finally, we returned to practicing-filing out and in one last time then going through one by one with the diploma practice. They were actually handed something this time- a folder that turned out to have some instructions for the night in it. It went faster this time, but there were still a few name mispronunciations. They of course promised it would be slower during the actual ceremony, which I am glad I did not have to attend. Can you imagine the sub note? "Must return at 7:30 to the graduation ceremony-half-day pay provided."

Well, that was pretty much it. They were able to go home then for the final time- the 8th grade was done in that building. Coming up in a few hours (hopefully)- a post about today. Not too exciting, so I may just skip it. We'll see.



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# What? Again?

If one awards ceremony wasn't enough, the school I was at today had its own awards show. Knowing that elementary students are far more impatient than older ones, this ceremony was much shorter fortunately. **And** I got to sit down... Actually, the entire thing was one hour, but the presentations were only about 20 minutes. The rest of the time was raffling off various prizes. The entire event was based on reading. The class I subbed for, a fifth grade class, actually came out on top with more than 1600 books read. At least I *think* it was the number of books. But they also mentioned last month, and that is a huge number for just one month, even among 25 students. If it was for the entire year, then yes, 1600+ books. Anyway, the kids also received raffle tickets based on the number of "miles" they went. Come to think of it, it would have to be books, and therefore over the entire year. Or, if in a month, then I would guess a book carries a certain number of points like in the accelerated reader program found at many schools. Yes, that could be it. Anyway, each student in my class had anywhere from 50 to over a hundred of these miles, earning them two to four tickets. There were a lot of prizes, so that means a lot of chances to win. Some kids won more than once. I was holding a ticket for an absent student. Unfortunately, she didn't win at all.

After the assembly, the weather which had been rainy with a tornado watch all day had cleared up and the sun came out and dried the blacktop, so there was a 5th grade versus teachers kickball game. Yes, I got to play... ☐ After missing an easy catch, I did manage to score a few runs on our turns up to bat. So, it was a fun end of the day.

What? You want to know about the rest of the day, before the

awards? Well, it was supposed to be a field day, meaning play time outside with special events. Remember the weather I mentioned above? Yeah, no field day. ☐ So, they did PE and music at the start of the day (yes! breaktime...) followed by some writing, and finally math games in the computer lab. I got a chance to try a game they loved called Lemonade Stand. I used to play a game by this name back when I was in school, only that game was for the Apple ][ instead of Java in the web browser. Oops, did I just date myself? ☐ So, after that came lunch and free pizza. Not the best, but I doubt the kids cared. ☐ Yes, I had some too. This was supposed to be a part of the field day, but unlike field day they couldn't postpone the pizzas, so when they have their field day next Monday they will have to do their lunches the ordinary way.

Crazy days at the end of the year, I'll tell ya. If I manage to find work next week I'm sure I'll have some more interesting tales.

EDIT: Why don't all the smileys/emoticons render? Oh, well. Editing once got **one** of the four to work in any event.

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## Assembly may be required

What a snooze... No, not me last night which was anything but- I think I may have gotten about five hours of sleep if I'm lucky. I'm referring of course to the assemblies that happen sometimes at schools. Especially those that totally mess up the schedule. For me, it was pretty much irrelevant too. Not to the kids or staff, just to me and any other sub that might have been there. You see, it was an awards ceremony. For the entire school. All, or at least many, sports and academic

clubs. As a sub I knew pretty much zero of the names, hence why it was kind of a snooze to me. It was a snooze to probably nearly all the students as well because it lasted for more. Than. Two. Hours... For nearly all of the awards, they handed out certificates to every student involved, name by name, and then gave awards to high achievers. I would guess well over 300 names were read over those 2 hours 20 minutes. There was one sport I couldn't believe they had, let alone the number of students involved. Bocce-Ball. I kid you not. Nearly a hundred kids involved too by my estimate. Wow. Only track compared to that with four teams, 7th and 8th grades, boys and girls. There were probably 60-80 students involved there. The only other sport I remember was girls volleyball- I'm guessing there was no boys volleyball team because one of the students was a boy. The teacher was careful to not refer to that particular team (7th or 8th, I don't remember) as "the girls."

The academic teams and clubs consisted of a math team, geography team, and science olympiad. Probably more- I don't remember. Interesting to note the math team was entirely Indian (or similar) or East Asian. Hmm. Perhaps our schools really are failing the children in the math field. Band, orchestra, and drama were part of the other extracurricular activities. And finally, there were also service clubs. One club helped the mentally-challenged kids, and another- well club doesn't really apply here (you'll see why in a sec)- recognized students who did some sort of community work. Thankfully they did not recognize these students individually as a good 90% of the students raised their hands when the principal asked who has done some community work or project! Was this part of a class assignment or were they really this outward-thinking?

Well, after some 25 teams, clubs, and organizations they wrapped up, had a drawing for some Pepsi T-shirts, and then were dismissed. The scheduled ending time was 9:45. The

actual ending time was 10:35. Oops. Reminds me of television networks and sports for some reason...

So, we skipped two of the periods and I went on break. Finally I could get off my feet. Oh, did I mention that I had to stand for the entire assembly because there were no chairs provided for the teachers? Some plopped down with the students, other stood right along beside me. Now, I have an injured foot so I did a lot of leaning, walking, and a little bit of sitting on the floor in addition to the standing. So, all good and well now. Unfortunately I had about twenty minutes and I had to start eating my lunch as the teacher I was in for had no scheduled lunch. Instead, she had a study hall period. So, I had a panini during 4th period, an orange and a Mountain Dew 6th during study hall, and the rest of my lunch last period. Well, an interesting day for sure.