

ACM Awards – 2011 Edition

Was it really 11 years ago already that we got to attend the 2000 Academy of Country Music Awards in Los Angeles? Newcomer Brad Paisley won that year for Best New Male Vocalist, and he's now a country music veteran who took the Top Male Vocalist prize in 2011. Someday, I'd like to attend the recording of another live awards show. Nothing beats the excitement in the air and participating in a live tv show taping where anything goes. And never in one place will you see so many super performances by a variety of outstanding performers – both from country music and also outside the genre. But my 4.5 kids keep me grounded, and I don't travel as much as I would or as much as I used to. So until the day when I can get back to a live country music awards show taping (and I will be in no hurry to go to the ACMs until they move it out of Vegas!), I will enjoy watching and voting along at home.

This year was a super show; I had a nice time watching it last night. And a surprise awaited me at the end...

Some highlights:

– Brad Paisley opens with a performance, and then he's joined by none other than – ALABAMA!! They were so awesome; this number really got my country blood pumping!

– Some unlikely duos performing this year:

Unlikely duet #1 – Jennifer Nettles from Sugarland and pop star Rihanna. Their duet made for an interesting performance. Not my favorite kind of music, but they sounded good.

Unlikely duet #2 – Country music sweetheart Carrie Underwood screaming alongside Aerosmith frontman turned American Idol judge Steven Tyler. The first song wasn't great; it was more for Tyler than Underwood, in fact, I thought it a waste of her

lovely voice. But their "Walk This Way" duet was toe-tappin' fun!

Unlikely duet #3 – Zac Brown Band and James Taylor. I'm really starting to enjoy the harmonies of the Zac Brown Band, and their performance with James Taylor tonight was thoroughly enjoyable!

– Probably the first time I've cried while watching the ACM awards – Darius Rucker's song backed by a chorus from the Lifting Lives music camp was incredibly uplifting and awe-inspiring! I loved every minute of it!

Overall, a wonderful show! Except one thing – where the heck was Rascal Flatts?!

And oh yeah, that surprise at the end – Taylor Swift won Entertainer of the Year. No surprise there; if I had paid attention when I filled out my fan ballot and realized that the Entertainer award was fan-chosen, I would have picked Swift in a heartbeat. But I spaced and chose Miranda Lambert (still beat Hubby on the ballot 7-3, just sayin') for some reason. The real surprise came when they announced the nominees for Entertainer of the Year, and I actually found myself rooting for Taylor Swift – what was going on? I've never been a fan of Swift's music, and I hadn't voted for her, so what gives? My 6-year-old daughter was enjoying the show with me, and every time Taylor Swift came on or her name was mentioned, Sammie got SO excited. So I told her I would let her know when "the big award" was coming on, and you should have seen her face when Taylor Swift won – she cheered! It was adorable, and I cried. I cried at the ACM awards twice last night, what is wrong with me? Oh yeah – pregnancy will do that to you. Probably a good thing that I was watching from the safety of my own home.

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, Rascal 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 Rascal Flatts, and can’t bear to vote against them. I’m not trying to get 2 votes in – officially, my pick is Rascal 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!

Country's Biggest Night!

After my extremely busy weekend (more about that in my next post!), I'm just not up to the task of doing a live blog about the Academy of Country Music Awards like I did last year. I had a lot of fun doing it at that time, but this year we were lucky enough to share our awards experience with friends at our house, and I want to be a good host (well, as good as I can be with both eyes and ears on the awards show!). It's bad enough that I had to practically kick out people who were here for our voluntary monthly organizational meetings so I could watch the awards show when it started at 8 – hehe. I was accused of “chomping at the bit”, to get to the awards show – but then again, I did sacrifice and miss the entire red carpet coverage... so I guess a point was made – I WAS chomping at the bit, so to speak!

Watch the show we did, and it was great – although I didn't win the tally for the most awards guessed ahead of time. My picks for winners of the most popular categories are following in **blue** with the winners in **bold** (the ones I got right are in **bold blue** and my commentary is in *italics*. I'll let you know how our guests and I did at the end:

Entertainer of the Year

- [Kenny Chesney](#)
- Brad Paisley
- George Strait
- **Carrie Underwood**
- Keith Urban

Big shocker here, for real. Kenny has won this one for the past 4 years straight, so you can't blame me for voting the way I did – SHOCKER he didn't win tonight!

Top Male Vocalist

- Kenny Chesney
- Toby Keith
- [Brad Paisley](#)
- George Strait
- Keith Urban

Top Female Vocalist

- Miranda Lambert
- Heidi Newfield
- Taylor Swift
- [Carrie Underwood](#)
- Lee Ann Womack

Top Vocal Group

- Lady Antebellum
- Little Big Town
- [Rascal Flatts](#)
- Randy Rogers Band
- The Lost Trailers

A given – Rascal Flatts has a ton of talent and are one of my favorite bands!

Top Vocal Duo

- Big & Rich
- Brooks & Dunn
- Joey + Rory

- Montgomery Gentry
- **Sugarland**

Album of the Year

- Carnival Ride – Carrie Underwood
- Back When I Knew It All – Montgomery Gentry
- **Fearless – Taylor Swift**
- That Lonesome Song – Jamey Johnson
- Troubadour – George Strait

So there you have it. I didn't do so well, compared to past my past performances guessing on country music awards shows – I got 4/10 correct. But we had a great time watching... some highlights include Trace Adkins' performance with the West Point Glee Club, very moving, especially because the performance was introduced by a young veteran in a wheelchair. Another highlight, Carrie Underwood's humongous dress during her resurrection of Randy Travis' "I Told You So". (notice they didn't show her getting on or off stage in that dress – think she was "snapped" into it? That thing was HUGE!!!)... But I guess I'm a country fan-child of the 80's and 90's, sigh. The awards shows during that time period were so much more exciting to me because of the awesome music that was performed, unlike tonight. Just another sign that I'm getting old, I guess, since I much preferred our friends' conversation tonight to the live performances... just nothing special on the modern country artists' part, I guess...

But congrats to those who won, and it was a great show to watch and predict, even if I didn't do so well. Until the CMA's in the fall – maybe I will do a LIVE broadcast for that one – we'll see!

CMA Awards – LIVE Blogging!

Many of you have read a live blog before; ie people posting comments while an awards show is airing on tv. But have you ever read a live blog that is being composed within the vicinity of 4 crazy kids? The following represents my best shot at attempting the previous description:

PRESHOW

7:30 pm – It's Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban on the red carpet. They're a cute coupl... wait a minute, they look weird together. Well, actually, just Nicole Kidman looks strange. Kinda like Janice from the Muppets meets the thin spaced-out version of Anna Nicole Smith. It's mean to be critical of people based on their appearances, but in this case, I suspect a nasty mistake in the plastic surgeon's office. Since she did it to herself (and spent thousand\$ to do so), no holds barred – I can joke all I want! And Nicole doesn't seem very comfortable with playing second fiddle (it's a country music awards show – appreciate the fiddle joke!) on the red carpet. I give this marriage 3 years, 4 tops.

7:35pm – Jack Ingram? Who IS that? If you read my previous blog post about the awards, then you know that I don't get to listen to that much radio lately, and I don't have the slightest idea who this is!

7:37 – Fans overwhelmingly choose Carrie Underwood to take Female Vocalist – both hubby and I agree. That reminds me, it will be a tight race in our household tonight – my husband and I only have 3 votes different from each other! And a reader / fellow blogger asked in a comment what the winner gets... we will have to choose our stakes before show time...

7:38 – So THAT'S the other half of Sugarland

7:38 – Julianne Hough from Dancing With The Stars? Didn't she just have her appendix out? She's hosting the pre-show with

Craig Morgan? Isn't THIS the pre-show?

7:45 – Awww – Alan Jackson has a cute family. One of his 3 girls is off at college this year though. What is with male country superstars having 3 girls? Alan Jackson, Garth Brooks, Tim McGraw all have 3 daughters each, to name a few...

7:46 – Every time I see her, Reba looks younger. Glad to see she can afford a better plastic surgeon than Nicole Kidman. Reba better watch out though – any more nose jobs and she'll end up with a nose (or lack thereof) like Michael Jackson's.

7:53 – Charlie Daniels – that's my guess when Kid Rock (my new favorite artist – kidding) says he's going to have a very special guest guitarist.

7:56 – Taylor Swift is growing up... after the things I've read about her since her breakup with the Jonas Brother, she might make a creepy adult.

7:58 – Ew, I can't stand Reese Witherspoon. What's she doing here? Oh, she grew up in Nashville and is promoting a movie.

7:59 – My husband leans over and says, "Reese Witherspoon? I can't stand her."

7:59 – Time to switch to the network for the real show!

2008 CMA AWARDS!

8:00 – We are off! Brad Paisley and Keith open the show with their much hyped collaboration. I like the blue glitter guitar. The song is nothing special. I dig the duel guitar solo at the end.

8:06 – Our hosts for the night – Brad Paisley and Carrie Underwood (from American Idol to HOSTING the CMAS? Whatever...) She looks like a Barbie.

8:07 – Brad makes a "boots to fill" joke involving Dolly Parton – he did say *boots*. Hahaha – that's the joke. Country music stars are creative song-writers... we never promised

anything about their comedy skills. But I liked the joke, because the country music awards show I saw live (it was an ACM awards show though) was hosted by Dolly Parton.

8:10 – What are Hollywood A-listers doing here to present the first award? Oh wait, Nicole Kidman is married to a country music superstar. So what is with the random Hugh Jackman appearance though?

8:11 – Strait wins the first award of the evening for Single of the Year. 0/1 are we since we both guessed Sugarland. But who was that man George Strait kissed before his acceptance speech?

8:17 – Is it Kellie Pickler or a bad Madonna impersonator who sound like Belinda Carlisle? I don't like it.

8:18 – My husband leans over and says, " This is like an American Idol performance." Ironic, because he relies on me for pop culture info and therefore did not know that this is Kellie Pickler who IS from American Idol! Glad to see she got herself out of the dress she said it took her hours to get into before she had a bathroom emergency.

8:20 – Alan Jackson – probably my favorite country artist of all time, ever since Garth Brooks sold out. Not sure what I think of his new song Good Time, though... It seems like a run-of-the-mill Alan Jackson song, which isn't a bad thing, just heard before. My husband feels badly for Kellie Pickler whose awfulness had to be followed by Alan Jackson's legendary stage presence.

8:23 – What the heck is with the college-age line dancers lining the aisles – that's stupid. Are they trying to make a new linedance? This one looks just like the electric slide with a little wiggle thrown in... dumb. Alan Jackson squints into the camera – he's getting old.

8:25 – the Cyruses, yuck. Saw Billy Ray live in 2002 when he

was still a has-been playing town festivals. He ignored the ~~legions~~ dozens of fans trying to slap him five on his way to the stage. At least my daughter is a big fan of Miley's – that makes this tolerable.

8:26 – Stay wins Song of the Year, and I'm 0/2, possibly my worst ever. Husband is up and I have only 2 more chances to catch up... mood turning sour... at least it's a good song.

8:32 – Miranda Lambert performs. I like her. And I like these simple performances of songwriter sings simple song with guitar – songs like these are building blocks of country music.

8:35 – Reese Witherspoon is *crying* about Miranda Lambert's performance? Really? Or is she acting? What is she doing here again?

8:36 – Oh good, Lady Antebellum. I was wondering who they are and what they sing. They sound just like a '90's band – I can't think of who right now! Any ideas, please comment – it'll come to me! Hubby says the lead singer looks like Lance Bass. At any rate, they're nothing to write home about. Can't see them having staying power – not country enough. 2/3 of the group too replaceable, remaining 1/3 not that noteworthy.

8:40 – getting a little greedy with the commercials – here's yet another.

8:43 – Martina McBride is introduced by Brad Paisley, who could use some acting lessons from his actress wife; his script-reading is terrible. Martina is one of my favorite singers

8:44 – and she's singing a VERY ordinary song. See my plea in a previous post – Martina and Alan Jackson NEED to seriously come out with some good stuff and soon!

8:48 – Rodney Atkins – HELP! This is the guy who sings about kids eating nuggets in the car and other mundane every day tasks... He is the kind of singer country music bashers use to make fun of the genre! AND HE'S OFF-KEY!

8:51 – Heidi who? Someone should pass her a cover-up in case her dress finishes falling down.

8:53 – PUT ME ON THE BOARD WITH MY FIRST CORRECT PICK FOR RASCAL FLATTS – VOCAL DUO! I really enjoy their music... please tell me they're performing later! I hear that Kid Rock will be performing "the song we've been singing 'All Summer Long'". I love that song, however upset I was to learn it was Kid Rock's music I was enjoying... Opening another window to download a sample of 'Werewolves in London'.

8:59 – Taylor Swift performs. I love the stage, the costumed dancers, the dancing... the song sucks though.

9:03 – Is Taylor Swift lip-syncing? Why are the dancers suddenly surrounding her, do they know she gets off sync in that part of the song? Unless... COSTUME CHANGE! I was SO right! Called it seconds before it happened! Bool-yah!

9:04 – My new favorite song – All Summer Long – is cool as a live performance. But where is the guest guitarist we were promised? Was it someone I didn't recognize? And Kid Rock probably smokes too many cigarettes, judging by his singing voice.

9:13 – Carrie Underwood has found herself a sarapi. Isn't that what that type of dress is called? I don't know how to spell it, can't find it on a search...

9:14 – I like George Strait's new song more than I've liked most of the other live performances. But why do country stars keep attempting to emulate Jimmy Buffett's laid back beach style? It's been done, and done very well, I might add! Let's stick to country – especially you George Strait!

9:17 – Jason Aldean – one of those newcomers I’m not quite familiar with. Ah, I see he’s of the bad-a** variety style of country... I’m familiar with it. As a person who vents anger by performing 80’s and 90’s raps in the solitary confinement of my car, I appreciate the wailing guitars and the bad-a** attitudes that are breaking onto today’s country music scene.

9:21 – Best New Artist – goes to Lady Antebellum. Darnit, I really thought we had a shot for this one. We picked Kellie Pickler, and she is a good friend of presenter Taylor Swift and everything! Dang nabbit – I didn’t even like the sound of Lady Antebellum. Well, eat it up kids – you won’t last in Nashville.

9:28 – God bless the late great Jerry Reid – I’m sorry and ashamed to say that I’ve never heard of him.

9:30 – an enjoyable performance of “Cowgirls Don’t Cry” by Brooks and Dunn and Reba. And I like what these entities do together. We saw them perform in concert together twice – awesome both times. Too bad Reba’s plastic surgery doesn’t look as good as Nicole Kidman’s under the stage lights. They seem to have opposite effects – Reba’s new face looked great on the red carpet, Nicole’s was horrifying. Reba’s was nothing short of freaky on stage, whereas Nicole’s looked almost humanesque. You could have convinced me that Brooks and Dunn had a Reba animontronic made for this performance. Anyway, enough about the obvious plastic surgery plaguing us tonight... I should save that sort of commentary for the Oscars since there’s always plenty of fodder there...

9:35 – We both get another point since Sugarland wins Vocal Duo – BOOLYAH

9:40 – Darius Rucker – yes, he was in Hootie and the Blowfish and they were good. So what brings him to country music? I like him better as a blowfish. Wait a minute... when I heard this song he’s performing on the radio, I always thought it

was Daryl Worley, who sings these types of songs. You mean to tell me the whole time that it was the work of a blowfish? A fish out of water, I would say – HA. He looks as out of place as he feels, and Alan Jackson squints up at the stage again – this time because he can't believe there was actually an African-American on stage at the Country Music Association's awards.

9:45 – Brad Paisley performs a mediocre tune

9:48 – LeeAnn Womack and Josh Turner show up to present the award for Album of the Year – one of the few categories where hubby and I differ. Good to see that Ms. Womack has tamed her bee-hive hairdo. YEE HAW!!!! I am back in the saddle with my George Strait pick; we are tied! Although it was announced that we both lost out on Video of the Year... shucks. I am not doing so well but still tied with hubby.

9:56 – A thought that crossed my mind as Brad Paisley introduced Keith Urban's live performance – is it just me, or is Brad Paisley doing a lot more hosting than ~~Barbie~~ Carrie Underwood? I wonder about the politics involved in the decision to let those two be the hosts...

9:58 – Keith Urban's performance, like so many before him, is mediocre at best. Thank goodness he's an awesome guitarist. And they still use his song, "Somebody Like You" in my favorite dinner show at Arabian Nights in Orlando Florida – that's what sold me on the show in the first place!

10:00 – Is it just me or are they giving everyone a standing ovation, as seen after Keith Urban's performance?

10:01 – A woman talks about her husband who was killed in battle. She gets a standing ovation. Sadly though, at the beginning of her speech, people didn't know who she was or what she was doing, so they kind of chuckled, thinking she was joking because they didn't know who she was. A silent moment to reflect upon loved one's lives lost and those who fight and

fought for our country...

10:08 – I missed the second half of Carrie Underwood's performance and whatever followed that because of a kid "emergency". But now I see Vince Gill hands an award to...

10:09 – Carrie Underwood. As predicted by both of us in this house. And conveniently, she was waiting in the stage wings after performing, seemingly in position to rush on stage to accept her award. Curious...

So far, my husband and I are tied at 5/8 – not bad. Our personal tie-breaker will come down to Musical Event of the Year – a category that I joked existed only to flaunt the compromising of the big-name record labels. We both guess Kenny Chesney. But my guess is his collaboration with George Strait, and hubby's guess is his Reba duet – Stay tuned to see the winner!

10:18 – Sugarland's performance has been wailing on my tv in the background while I typed some other stuff. Not very impressive. I'm beginning to wonder if it's me or if all the performances tonight have been somewhat lackluster. Not only that, but the songs being performed aren't that great to begin with.

10:20 – Just Got Started Lovin You is one of my favorite new songs! And James Otto is milking his big performance. Otto's range in the song reminds me of Josh Turner, but I don't give him credit for staying power. It's a good song, but he doesn't have the best stage presence.

10:29 – Whoa, my channel cut off Carrie Underwood. Anyone else's? Kenny Chesney is performing his Jimmy Buffett knock-off routine with the beach combing sh*t. Sorry for the language. I need to see a really GOOD musical performance. This sounds like a callypso version of an elementary school chorus concert.

10:32 – My husband leans over and says, "Does this guy have

eyes?" – referring to Kenny's accomplice. I don't think he likes the beachcomber crap any more than I do.

10:33 – Strangely, the intro to Trace Adkin's performance sounds like a Carrie Underwood single, "Jesus Take the Wheel". Subliminal marketing maybe. Conspiracy theories abound, the more tired I get...

10:37 – Another standing ovation? This time for Trace Atkins... ok, whatever.

10:37 – Reese Witherspoon – I can't stand her.

10:38 – Reese Witherspoon gushes, "I am SOOOO glad to be here!" My husband leans over and says, "I can't stand her."

10:39 – Brad Paisley wins Male Vocalist of the Year. We are now tied at 5/9 since we had Keith Urban.

10:41 – Ooh – more hints about the surprise person. Evidently, they are going to present the Entertainer of the Year award. This marketing ploy has intrigued me, although you know that the astonished faces reacting to the surprise guest they show in the commercials have nothing to do with who it is – this is a live show!

10:44 – Ooh – Lost premiere January 21. Wait, do I still watch that show? It's been so long, I forget.

10:48 – mediocre Eagles performance. What is with their new tidy look? What is with me and thinking all the performances are mediocre? Is it just me? Not in this instance – the Eagles in their suits suck – they look old and tired. Good music from a great group, they just need a smart manager – oh, big surprise, ANOTHER standing ovation. Is that just what you do nowadays, the stand'n'clap?

10:54 – The best selling female country recording artist of all time is Shania Twain? YUCK! Another standing ovation! And they haven't even given out the award yet!

10:56 – And now they have... Entertainer of the Year goes to Kenny Chesney, yuck! But at least we both got it right!

10:59 – “The votes in tonight’s award show were cast by the six thousand members of the Country Music Association”... kinda like our local theater group, the WCCT.

But what the heck? Seems we are missing a category detrimental to our outcome? Does anyone have the results for Musical Event of the Year?!? That was our tie-breaker, and evidently we missed it, so break the tie for us!

Ok – Krauss and Plant won for Vocal Event – neither of us had them chosen. So, it ended in a tie. Overall, an entertaining show, as always. I really could have used some more good musical performances, however... Good night!

And as a final footnote – I got my sample of ‘Werewolves in London’. The melody is obviously borrowed for ‘All Summer Long’, but I do like the new Kid Rock song much better. Who knew that plagiarizing two popular songs and then splicing them together would earn critical acclaim instead of a lawsuit?

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 Nettles Mercury 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!

Academy of Country Music Awards Night!

Awards time was upon us again last night! Overall, I had a good time during the Academy of Country Music Awards, not as much fun as actually being there like I was in 2000, but a good time! There were some disappointments for me though, as you will read in my play-by-play of the awards below:

Carrie Underwood opened the show – I like Carrie Underwood; even though she's a country crossover, I think she has an amazing voice. By the way, very early in her season of American Idol – when I still watched it – I predicted that she would win and also that she would be a very good country singer. Just had to get that in there to boost myself after I did so horribly at predicting this year's ACM awards. But her new song isn't country enough for me, and it made it seem like she is trying to cross back over into pop or rock. Was not a big fan of her performance.

Next Reba McEntire made a funny joke in a beautiful blue dress with a classy fit. The joke was about 1986, and she said, "Back then, Roger Clemens wasn't even interested in country music!" The audience oohed and ahed, I guess it was kinda controversial, but I liked it. The joke was in reference to the affair that took place years ago and just now came to light between a married and much older Roger Clemens and a teenage up and coming country star named Mindy McCready, who unfortunately is better known these days for controversy than for country music. Reba's jokes were actually pretty funny tonight, I liked the Kenny Chesney song reference: "she thinks my *fracture* is sexy" and also when Reba was talking about the correlation between #1 hits and birthdays, she said, "I have 33". Her delivery made that joke pretty funny, and I do like her as a host.

Next up was a live performance from Toby off-Keyth. To his

credit, many of the performers seemed off pitch tonight, could there have been some issue with the sound system? That aside, his new song is simply awful. Quite possibly the worst country song ever. The lyrics are terrible, and hearing it off-key was even worse.

Time for the first award! SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR – I guessed Don't Blink by Kenney Chesney, and hubby guessed Stay by Sugarland. Other nominees were Miranda Lambert, Big and Rich, and Gary Allan -Slow start – hubby is one up on me already since the winner is Stay. Gotta give him some credit, it's a nice song.

Next is a live performance from Brad Paisley – his new song is ok, I like it, but he seems off key too. Hubby says, Brad Paisley? He's always off key on the live shows. I don't remember this being the case, Is he?

Next, Taylor Swift wins TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST – no surprise there – hubby is 2 for 2, and I am on the board with 1.

Miranda Lambert's live performance – alright.

Now the award for NEW DUO/VOCAL GROUP – Never even heard of any of the nominees since I listen to Kidsongs in the car now; I no longer get to listen to country radio, so all the new stuff on the awards show tonight was truly news to me. Quiz me on Kidsongs episodes though, and I'd win every time!

Rodney Atkins gives an off key live performance. Not that this song about kids swearing sounds that great on the radio either. It's an ok song, but he has a crackly country voice, and live singing just makes it worse.

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST – Hubby guesses Luke Bryan I guess Jake Owen, and the nominee not chosen by either of us wins – Jack Ingram.

Live performance from Kenny Chesney – I'm never a huge fan of

Chesney, but he wasn't off-key, so I won't complain.

Live performance by Geroge Strait – I was not crazy about his new song but at least he wasn't off key either. Live performance duet – Kenny Chesney and George Strait – Chesney went a little off key, but I don't like this song Shiftwork anyway.

Next was a world premiere of Sugarlands new single, which I really liked! The woo-oohs were a little corny, but the song reminds me of 80's country and it was a very catchy tune.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR was won by Miranda Lambert – and nobody in our household guesses this category correctly.

Live performance by Brooks and Dunn – not off key

SONG OF THE YEAR – I guessed Kenny Chesney, hoping he would win this instead of Entertainer of the Year, but I was disappointed because Hubby guessed Sugarland's Stay would get this award.

Taylor Swift gave a live performance – a little off key until it started raining on her on stage. That was pretty cool, but did they turn off her mic and let her lip sync? Would the mic even work in the rain? She got pretty wet and was suddenly on key, so I wonder...

TOP VOCAL DUO – Brooks and Dunn – We both guessed this one correctly – EVERYONE WINS!

Trace Atkins live performance – pitch problems

I have to comment on the baby puking commercial that aired here. I believe it originally aired during the Superbowl. But it shows a baby talked into a webcam, and all of a sudden, he spits up. I just love the irony of the baby talking like a normal adult, then all of a sudden spitting up like a baby. You have to see it and probably have kids to appreciate it.

Now finally, after stringing us along all night, it was time for the Garth Brooks tribute. Garth used to be my favorite country singer, way back when, until he sold out, retired a few times, became Chris Gaines, etc etc. But he still has some great music in his library, some of which he treated us to tonight in a live performance. Reminded me of the 3 times I got to see him in concert. He was a GREAT performer, and even though he has aged a little, he can still give a good concert. I loved how when he went off key, he covered by pretending he was just having fun with the song and meant to have pitch problems – yeah right! And he did mess up the words in The Thunder Rolls – he came in too early. But a good concert by him overall, even if he was a bit rusty. He also included the following songs in his montage: Callin Baton Rouge, Friends in Low Places, We Shall Be Free, The Dance, Just Ledoux, In Another's Eyes (special guest duet with wife Tricia Yearwood. Not to be rude, but I was POSITIVE Garth was going to be announcing some baby news – Tricia looked extra puffy. He didn't say anything though, so I guess I'm just a jerk for noticing and saying so. Being in the public eye must suck!), More Than a Memory, Rodeo, and the finale Ain't Goin Down Til the Sun Comes Up. Then, Garth was given the Crystal Milestone Award of which he is deserving, despite all the selling out he's done. And when he called Reba Ms. Yearwood, it was hilarious, but since it was followed by "I love her", I can see why he mixed up the names to say that about his wife – aw!

Next award – VOCAL GROUP – Rascal Flatts

Keith Urban live performance – liked the song, but what's with the do doo's? This is the second do doo's song tonight!

David Spade's long joke was funny, but I have yet to understand his presence at country music awards?

Rascal Flatts live performance was off key.

Eddy Arnold tribute – Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley sang one of Eddy's songs as a duet, and it sounded magnificent. Awesome tribute.

Kellie Pickler live performance – off pitch, like so many others before her.

Trisha Yearwood comes out to present MALE VOCALIST – kudos on the costume change, shouldn't be any baby rumors due to this dress. I have Kenny Chesney, Hubby has George Strait. Paisley wins.

Lee Ann Rimes – live performance – not off key, but the band is way loud.

Carrie Underwood wins FEMALE VOCALIST and puts me within one point of tying up the contest between my husband and me!

Montgomery Gentry – live performance off key – sounds horrible

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR – Wait, my ballot sheet says we still have Video of the year and Vocal Event of the Year, what happened? Some research on the internet shows I lost both those categories, ugh. I guessed Brad Paisley and Hubby has Keith Urban – Chesney wins AGAIN!!! I should have seen it coming, I was just hoping that with the new voting system this year – they let the fans vote for Entertainer of the Year – I thought the fans would take away Chesney's monopoly on this category. His joke about thanking his parents for doing what they did so many years ago that led to his creation was kinda funny, if a bit unexpected.

So, you can see where my disappointments lie – mainly with the entertainer of the year award, losing to my husband, and not liking many of the new songs that were performed. But like I said, I had fun watching, and now I know I will have to do more research before the next country awards in the fall so I can get more correct guesses. I'll have to find a way to take back control over the car radio for starters!

Spring Ahead... to Country Music Award Time!

Actually, it's time for the Academy of Country Music awards (ACM's), which are totally different than the Country Music Association's awards (CMA's), but somehow *Spring Ahead to the Academy of Country Music Awards* just didn't make such a great blog title. For you country music fans out there, you know that spring and fall are the awesome times of year for country music awards. We get 2 great awards shows, and coming up in May are the ACM awards – the nominations were announced last week, that's why I get to write about this now. I was lucky enough to attend this show live one time in 2000. It was TOTALLY AWESOME – I'd LOVE to go back... something like that (and lots of liquor) just might get me on an airplane again... yeah right. Anyway, Dolly Parton hosted, and Dick Clark ran around the stage during the breaks fretting over this and that and everything in between. Winners' acceptance speeches got cut off, and there was the general glitz and glam of any L.A. awards show – only we were there! And talk about a GREAT concert! Getting to see like, 15 top country music performers LIVE, singing only their hits was unbeatable. And I learned a lot too because I had never been to the taping of a live tv event before. Did you know that they have "stand-ins" ready in case anyone who is seated down in front has to leave for the bathroom or anything else? They pay models to dress up and get ready in case they need to sit in say, Wynonna Judd's seat so it's not empty when they show the audience on tv if Wy needs a potty break (that actually happened!). So anyway, this year I will be watching the ACM's from the comfort of my couch; hopefully without interruptions from kids (should change the name of this post to *Yeah, Right*).

I can't remember if it's the ACM's or the CMA's where they'll have a live performer, and then that person will be nominated for the next award, so after their performance they'll be waiting backstage, and every time they end up winning the award! I wish they'd make it a little less obvious! We like to fill out our own ballots and make a guessing game out of our picks for winners, and this type of format makes that too easy! All you have to do is figure out the order of award presentations, figure out the schedule of performers, and *Viola!* You've won the bet! I'll let you know come CMA awards time which awards show does this, unless they've (hopefully) changed things by now.

Here are the nominees this year, enjoy the show!

ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR

Kenny Chesney

Brad Paisley

Rascal Flatts

George Strait Keith Urban

TOP MALE VOCALIST

Rodney Atkins

Kenny Chesney

Brad Paisley

George Strait

Keith Urban

TOP FEMALE VOCALIST

Miranda Lambert

Martina McBride

LeAnn Rimes

Taylor Swift

Carrie Underwood

TOP VOCAL GROUP

Diamond Rio

Eagles

Emerson Drive

Little Big Town

Rascal Flatts

TOP VOCAL DUO

Big & Rich

Brooks & Dunn

Halfway To Hazard

Montgomery Gentry

Sugarland

TOP NEW MALE VOCALIST

Luke Bryan

Jack Ingram

Jake Owen

TOP NEW FEMALE VOCALIST

Sarah Buxton

Kellie Pickler

Taylor Swift

TOP NEW DUO OR VOCAL GROUP

Carolina Rain

Lady Antebellum

The Wreckers

ALBUM OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

5th Gear – Brad Paisley (Arista Nashville) Produced by Frank Rogers

Crazy Ex-Girlfriend – Miranda Lambert (Columbia) Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke

Just Who I Am: Poets & Pirates – Kenny Chesney (BNA) Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney

If You're Going Through Hell – Rodney Atkins (Curb) Produced by Rodney Atkins, Ted Hewitt

Taylor Swift – Taylor Swift (Big Machine) Produced by Scott Borchetta, Nathan Chapman # 6 Produced by Robert Ellis Orrall

SINGLE RECORD OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record Company]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney, Produced by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Famous In A Small Town – Miranda Lambert, Produced by Frank Liddell, Mike Wrucke Columbia

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich, Produced by Big Kenny, John Rich – Warner Bros/WRN

Stay – Sugarland, Produced by Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore, Jennifer Nettles Mercury

Watching Airplanes – Gary Allan, Produced by Gary Allan , Mark Wright MCA Nashville

SONG OF THE YEAR [Award to Composer(s)/Publisher(s)/Artist(s)]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney – Writers: Casey Beathard, Chris Wallin_Publishers: Lavender Zoo Music (BMI), Mama's Dream Music (ASCAP), Sony/ATV Acuff Rose (BMI), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich – Writers: Keith Anderson, Rodney Clawson, John Rich Publishers: EMI April Music, Inc. (ASCAP), Romeo Cowboy Music (ASCAP), WB MusicCorp. (ASCAP), Warner-Tamerlane Publishing Corp. (BMI), Writer's Extreme Music (BMI)

Moments – Emerson Drive – Writers: Dave Berg, Annie Tate, Sam Tate Publishers: Gravitron (SESAC), WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)

Watching You – Rodney Atkins – Writers: Rodney Atkins, Steve Dean, Brian White Publishers: Bethar Music (BMI), Mike Curb Music (BMI), Multisongs (SESAC), Songs From The White House (SESAC)

Stay – Sugarland – Writer: Jennifer Nettles – Publishers: Jennifer Nettles Publishing (ASCAP)

VIDEO OF THE YEAR [Award to Producer(s)/Director(s)/Artist(s)]

Don't Blink – Kenny Chesney – Producer: Tacklebox Films Director: Shaun Silva

Lost In This Moment – Big & Rich Producer: Big Kenny, Steve Lamar, Marc Oswald Director: Robert Deaton and George Flanigen

Online – Brad Paisley – Producer: Frames Per Second –
Director: Jason Alexander

Stay – Sugarland – Producer: Kristian Bush, Byron Gallimore,
Jennifer Nettles – Director: Shaun Silva

Watching You – Rodney Atkins – Producer: Broken Poet
Production – Director: Eric Welch

VOCAL EVENT OF THE YEAR [Award to Artist(s)/Producer(s)/Record
Company]

Because Of You – Reba McEntire Duet With Kelly Clarkson –
Produced by Tony Brown, Reba McEntire MCA Nashville

Find Out Who Your Friends Are – Tracy Lawrence With Tim McGraw
and Kenny Chesney – Produced by Julian King, Tracy Lawrence –
Rocky Comfort/C05

Shiftwork – Kenny Chesney Duet With George Strait – Produced
by Buddy Cannon, Kenny Chesney BNA

Till We Ain't Strangers Anymore – Bon Jovi Featuring LeAnn
Rimes – Produced by Dann Huff – Mercury

What You Give Away –Vince Gill With Sheryl Crow – Produced by
Vince Gill, John Hobbs, Justin Niebank – MCA Nashville