

Bored With The Afghans

My cousin and her small family moved to Alaska last November. Alaska?! Who goes to Alaska! (HEHE... small inside joke). Char's husband was stationed there after his training in the U.S. Army. In March, Rich was deployed to Afghanistan but he is allowed to communicate via phone or computer from time to time. He will be able to return for a week or so for the arrival of their second child (reportedly another little girl). I chatted with him a few weeks ago to discover that he is stationed in a relatively safe zone... in fact, he was bored. I think I would rather be bored in Afghanistan than being in the heat of battle somewhere else..

My sister got a phone call this afternoon from Alaska. It seems that Rich helped set up for a concert that will be taking place featuring a famous country star. Both Char and Christi were upset that they could not be there, too because Rich got to meet him and got his autograph. I told them... if you wanted to meet him so badly, you could both enlist and join him. Don't suppose that is very likely in their familial circumstances. But I believe that they were both promised autographs. Hopefully, some pictures as well.

I wonder what Christi would have done if instead of Toby Keith there were stars of the WWF or WWE or whatever the so called "professional wrestling" group calls themselves. I believe it has been downgraded to "sports entertainment." Honestly, it reminds me of a soap opera with all the convoluted story lines and obviously staged matches. .. good for a laugh. However, somehow there is a number of members in my family who enjoy it. I still remember running outside on Saturday mornings when dad turned it on. To each his own, I guess. I would much rather see Toby Keith in person. Of course, there are other celebrities I would like to meet.

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!

Please Come Home For Christmas

It's my favorite contemporary classic Christmas tune, yet I can't find the original version that made me fall in love with the song, "Please Come Home for Christmas". I spent much of yesterday evening downloading different samples of the song; it seems every famous recording artist from the past few decades covered it. The musical acts that were sampled were very diverse: Aaron Neville, Sawyer Brown, Bon Jovi, Vonda

Sheperd, Gary Allan, the Drifters, Lonestar, Toby Keith...

Twenty renditions later and I still haven't found the original version I heard – my favorite one to date. I heard it in the 80's or early 90's, and it was the most popular version they would play all the time on the radio; country and easy listening / rock. It's sung by a male artist or group... if anyone has any suggestions of who it might be, I might be up to fishing through a few more versions of the song. That is, unless any of them are as bad as Toby Keith's. And this is coming from a country music fan!