

Young musician, old-time music

Malpass sings songs of legendary Hank Williams ... and does so with member of Williams' original band

Story and photo by
MATTHEW MITCHELL

At age 20 Chris Malpass is creating a name for himself playing traditional country music.

The former Wayne Community College student spends his weekends playing lead guitar and singing lead vocals with one of his heroes, steel guitarist Don Helms.

Mr. Helms, 79, played with the legendary Hank Williams.

In an interview with the *Campus Voice*, Chris says that he and Mr. Helms play together on weekends and travel out of state to places like Nashville, Tenn., and St. Louis, Mo., at least once or twice a month.

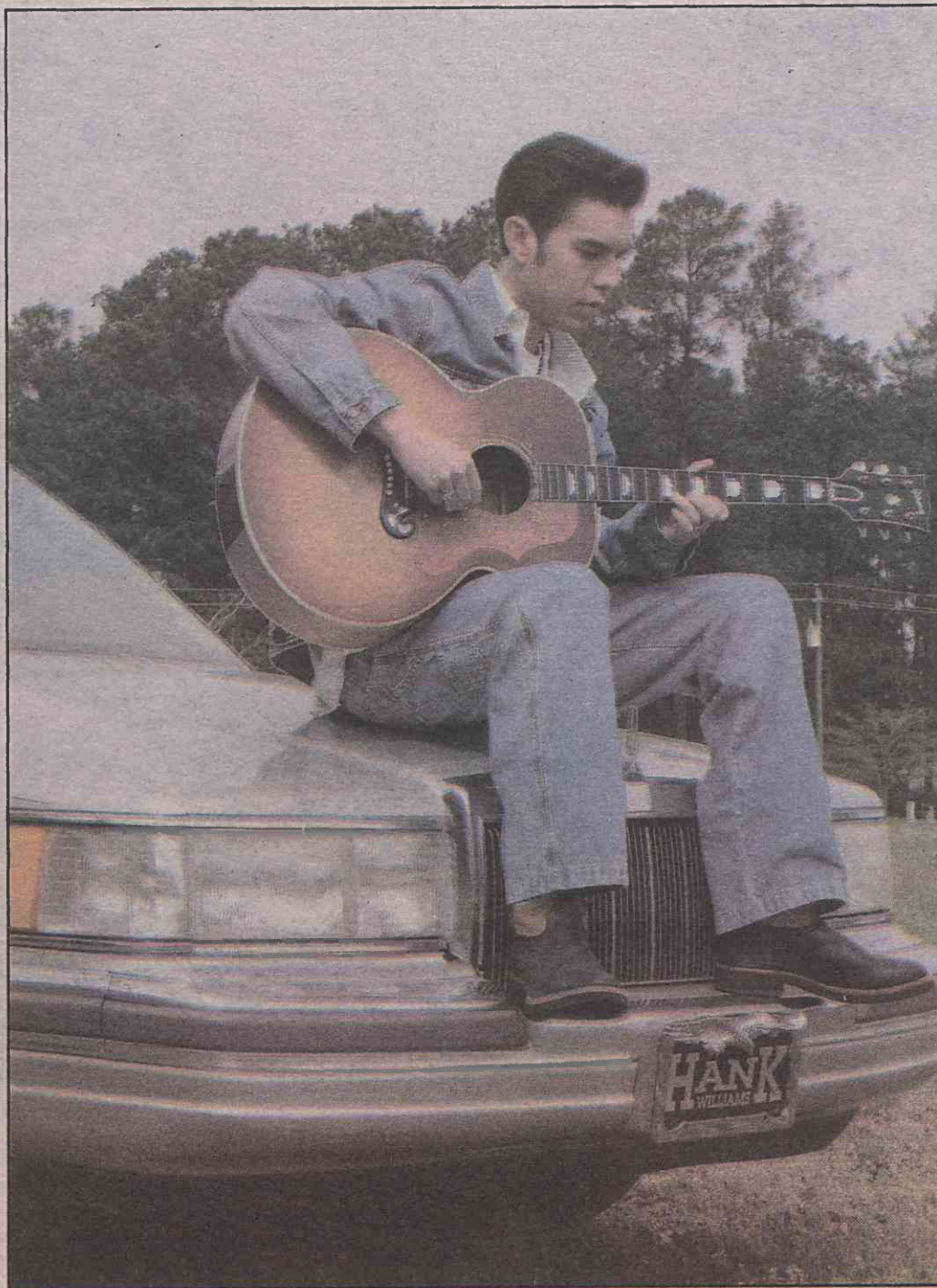
He says that traveling is the most challenging part of playing music with Mr. Helms. Constantly on the road, Chris says he misses his family and his girlfriend, but mostly his girlfriend.

Chris's passion for traditional country music stems from childhood. Visits to his grandparents' house exposed him to old country records.

He started playing music with his family, and together they formed their own band. Chris plays lead guitar and sings; his dad, Chris Malpass Sr., plays bass; his 16-year-old brother, Taylor, plays guitar and mandolin; and his mom, Andrea, handles the booking and business end of Malpass Family Music.

His family is joined by Clyde Mattocks, who plays electric guitar.

Chris is not impressed with



Former WCC student Chris Malpass spends time with three of his favorite things: his Lincoln Town Car, guitar and music.

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traditional style of country

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He believes that his

music makes him a more

Chris Malpass is not impressed with modern country music. "The new stuff is not country," he says.

memorable performer. He often plays music with gentlemen old enough to be his grandfather, but says that everyone is so into the songs that age doesn't matter.

A few semesters ago, Chris was enrolled in the Auto Body program at Wayne Community College. His performing schedule became so hectic that he left Auto Body to pursue music.

Chris hopes to maintain a career performing traditional style country music and one day appear on The Grand Ole Opry. If not, Auto Body is an option.

When away from the stage, he finds time to work on old cars and his Lincoln. However, Chris says, he would "rather be singing than banging dents."

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