

Making A Joyful Noise

Local Trio To Release Christmas Album Just In Time For Holidays

BY LYNN CARLSON

During several hot days this summer, three local men were filled with the holiday spirit and making a joyful noise in a Tabor City music studio.

The result, due locally in early November, is "A Brunswick County Christmas," an album of traditional and original Christmas songs paying homage to the local love of gospel music and the memory of a murdered teenager.

By day they're a sales representative, a grocery worker and a surveyor, but on their own time Jim Cox, Mark Christy and Chris Stanley—like hundreds of other talented Brunswick Countians—are committed to a ministry in music.

"It was a small idea," explains Cox, who used to sing in barrooms but now promotes Christian music. His Brunswick Christian Publications was formed to protect "the many talented writers and singers in this area from rip-off song sharks who ask them to put up their own money to publish their songs."

It was through an area talent show sponsored by his company and a local radio station that Cox met Mark Christy, a grocery worker and former Calabash Volunteer Emergency Medical Services chief.

"We were fifth and six in line and hadn't known each other before," Cox said. I asked him if he'd be interested in doing a Christmas album, and he was.

Later, Cox learned that Chris Stanley, a fellow member of Shallotte First Baptist Church, was a singer, too. The album trio was born. "A Brunswick County Christmas," which will be released on cassette tape, ended up as a collection of traditional Christmas songs and original songs by Cox and Christy.

They decided to dedicate their effort to the memory of Amy Frink, a Shallotte teenager who was murdered in June and to whose family all three had ties. The album package includes a poem Christy penned about the still-unsolved murder.

Though their release will be a joyful one—with such favorites as "O Holy Night," "Silent Night" and "Away in a Manger"—the work of all three has been tinged



LOCAL MUSICIANS (from left) Mark Christy, Chris Stanley and Jim Cox record "A Brunswick County Christmas" at a Tabor City studio.

with other personal tragedy. Stanley saw Brunswick Countians rally around him several months ago during his treatment for cancer. Christy's "What's Christmas

Like in Heaven?" was written after his mother's death three years ago. Cox's "One Special Candle," co-written by Charlie Johnson of Holden Beach, was in memory of

Cox's brother, who died last month, and for Amy Frink, whose loss rocked the entire community. All say their lives and their music are in the hands of a higher power.

"It comes from the Lord," Cox said. "He just lets us put it on paper."

Christy agrees. "The idea for 'What's Christmas Like in Heaven?' came to me while I was putting up bread" while working at the Seaside Food Lion. About the loss of a loved one, he says, "You think you might know what it would be like until it really hits you."

On the album, Stanley sings "O Holy Night;" Christy, "Silent Night," "What Child is This?" and "What's Christmas Like in Heaven?"; and Cox, "Away in a Manger," "One Special Candle" and his own "Salvation Comes from Jesus, Not From Santa Claus." Together, they performed "Beautiful Star of Bethlehem."

The tapes, which will carry a suggested retail price of \$7.99, will be available through churches, fire and rescue squads and fundraisers, some of the proceeds contributed to their churches and charities.

"Half my royalties will go back to my church, Bonaparte Baptist," Christy said. "I've done my best work in my church. It's a small group and they've kept abreast of what's been going on and have helped me along every step of the way."

Christy was organizer of a talent contest last year in Calabash to raise funds for Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective David Crocker, who at the time was undergoing treatment for a malignant abdominal tumor. "I was overwhelmed by the love in this community and the talent of those 19 contestants," he said.

The three plan community performances throughout the holiday season to promote their album and spread their spiritual messages.

Have An Idea?

Your suggestions for "under the sun" features are welcome. Call Lynn Carlson, editor, at 754-6890 if you have an idea.

CLUB, CHURCH HELP WITH PROJECT

Garden Will Honor Teen's Memory

BY SUSAN USHER

After the brutal June 24 slaying of her daughter Amy, Shallotte resident Birdie Frink asked two fellow members of the Long Bay Garden Club to help her create a garden honoring Amy's memory.

Little did she know that this request murmured to friends would result in a club effort that will be shared and enjoyed by others.

By spring at the latest, a back corner of Camp United Methodist Church's property on Main Street, Shallotte, will be transformed from a clump of boxwoods and a utility pole into a tranquil garden overlooking the Shallotte River.

"Anything our club can do to make it easier for Birdie," said club president Deloris Evans of Ocean Isle Beach. Mrs. Frink is a long-time member of the club, having served two terms as its president, and is a

devoted member of Camp Church, whose leadership readily agreed to support the project.

"She had always given, given and given. She never said no," said Evans. "This is our opportunity to say 'we care'."

The Amy Caroline Frink Memorial Garden will be placed in a spot chosen by Mrs. Frink, where Amy once played as a child. "She said she could still see Amy playing there," said Evans.

Club plans are in keeping with Mrs. Frink's desire for the garden to be "simple and serene." Members plan to hire a mason to install an openwork brick retaining wall contoured to the land. Against that backdrop will go a fountain with the figure of a young girl, blooming shrubs and a small grassed lawn. Beds of annuals that will change with the seasons will accent the fountain.

On Nov. 19, men from Camp Church plan to underbrush the riverbank down to the edge of the marsh, improving the view of the river and clearing the garden tract.

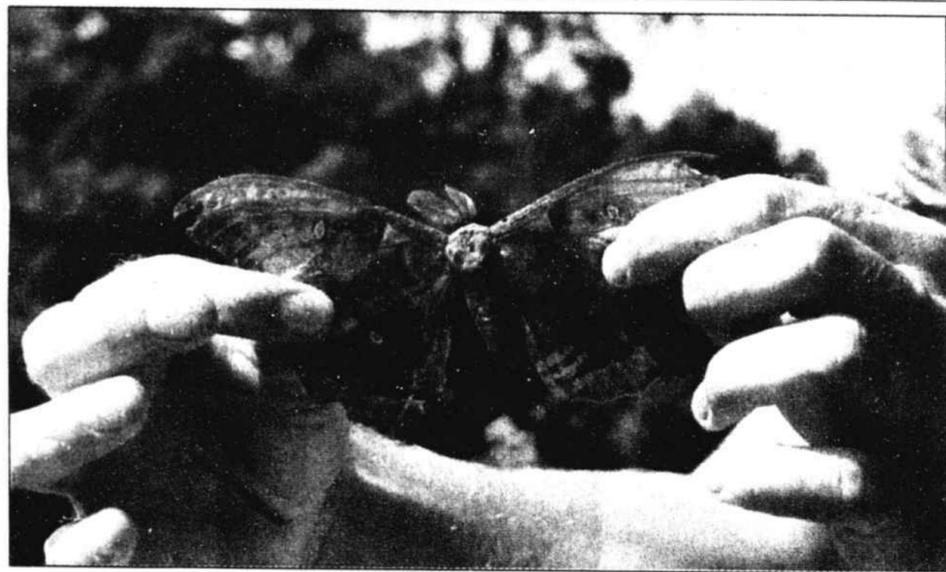
"Until then we really don't know how much space we have to work with," said Evans. "We would like to relocate the utility pole and to add seating. That would be ideal."

"We want to get this completed as soon as possible, by spring at the latest," she said. "You will see garden club members hauling bricks and dirt and doing whatever else needs to be done."

The club also intends to create a miniature version of the garden at the home of Birdie and Barry Frink, for their private use.

Amy Frink left home early June 23 on her way to Cherry Grove, S.C., but never arrived. Her body was found June 24 in the Brooksville, S.C., community just south of the state line. North Carolina and South Carolina law enforcement agencies are involved in the continuing investigation.

Anyone wishing to contribute to the garden project can do so through Camp United Methodist Church, designating funds for the Amy Frink Memorial Garden, P.O. Box 376, Shallotte, N.C. 28459.



Fly Away Home

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

A polyphemus moth, one of the family of giant silkworm moths, was sighted by a subscriber in front of The Brunswick Beacon office at 106 Cheers St., Shallotte. Nature columnist Bill Faver identified the creature as *Antheraea polyphemus*, which in addition to being large and yellowish-brown, has round window-like spots near the center of each wing and a wingspan of about six inches. Faver said the moth probably is male because of the plume-like antennae. His resource manual was "Peterson's Field Guide to Insects of America North of Mexico."

Pokeberries For The Birds



PHOTO BY BILL FAVER

CLUSTERS of purple berries of the pokeberry offer food for many birds.

BY BILL FAVER

We may pay little attention to the small white and purplish flowers on this common weed of roadside and abandoned fields and homesites. Pokeberries, or "poke," or "pokeweed," or "inkberry" are best known for the large purple berries developing in hanging clusters in late summer and early fall.

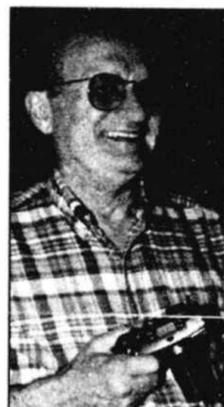
Close observation reveals racemes of white flowers, green berries and mature, purple berries on the same plant. Scientific name of this large perennial plant, which can get as tall as 10 feet, is *Phytolacca Americana*.

The pokeberry is a common plant in the southeastern United States and has spread to many adjacent areas as well. Many older people in rural areas tell of eating "poke salad" made from the tender young leaves of the plant in spring. We are cautioned by the experts that the plant leaves, stem, and berries are poisonous and should not be eaten. Tales of young children dying from eating the colorful berries is enough to alert most of us to the dangers.

Berries are not poisonous to the many bird species who relish the purple fruits in the fall. Mockingbirds, catbirds, thrashers, towhees and many others make regular trips for berries even after they have dried. Bird droppings help spread the small seeds and new plants begin along fences, hedgerows and utility lines.

In colonial times ink and dye were made from the purple berries of the pokeberry. In more recent times, activities from summer campers have sometimes included making ink for letter writing and block prints from the berries. Many a T-shirt has been tie-dyed in the purple squeezings.

Whether or not we want to try "poke salad" or experiment with pokeberry dye, we have to admit this is a most interesting weed. It is an important food plant for birds and some animals and it gives us a colorful reminder of the variety of life around us.



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