

# Local/State

## Dalton reaches small crowd

By DEBBIE NELSON  
Battalion Staff

The press release called Lacy J. Dalton "the Janis Joplin of Country."

Well, maybe. She's not bad. A mop of curly blond hair, seething energy and a gravel-edged husky voice that switches from country to blues to boogie in nothing flat makes Dalton deserve a Joplin comparison.

Lots of good music, a sparse crowd, and an audience-artist closeness best describe the Lacy J. Dalton concert Tuesday night in Rudder Auditorium.

From her cowboy-hatted entrance to the audience's standing ovation at the end, Lacy J. and the Aggies shared the concert. "You know what?" she said, "The Oak Ridge Boys told me you were the best audience in the whole world and I believe it was the truth."

Dalton, the Academy of Country Music's Top New Female Artist, wasn't bothered by the small audience. From "Crazy Blue Eyes" to "Hard Times," both she and the audience had a good time.

She related. Her dimples had the crowd smiling. She posed and flirted with an actresses ease.

Such as when she introduced her first country hit, "Crazy Blue Eyes." Dalton had sung a song dedicated to Waylon Jennings, when she said, "Now that I know you're friends, I can relax."

Sitting down on the edge of the stage and leaning forward to the audience, she asked, "You know what?"

"What?" replied the crowd. "Wherever you find Aggies and armadillo-loving Texans and cowboys, you'll find bad girls."

Whoops and hisses from the audience. "I know most of you out there are good girls," Dalton said, "but for those one or two of you out there who might have slipped, I'd like to sing the 'Bad Girl National Anthem.'"

The small crowd (who had declined an Aggie basketball game, an orchestra concert and studying for finals in favor of the concert) moved closer to the front of the auditorium during the show, giving Rudder more of a small club atmosphere than of a looming empty space.

Well worth mentioning is Don King, the singer-guitarist who opened the show. King had more than one Aggie sighing with his "Here Comes That Feeling Again," about that-someone-you-just-can't-forget. And more than one Aggie laughed at "Amarillo Jack."

If you were in the crowd, count yourself lucky.



Staff photo by Greg Gammon

Lacy J. Dalton and the Dalton Gang played to a small-but-appreciative audience Tuesday night in Rudder Auditorium. Dalton, winner of a 1980 People's Choice Award and known for the country hit "Crazy Blue Eyes," Dalton highlighted her new single, "Hard Times."

## Police shoot distraught father

### Man kills family, offers aid

DALLAS — Moments before police killed the distraught father who had systematically gunned down his wife and four children, the man begged the television reporter to whom he was spilling his tale to "help people with mental problems like me."

In a telephone conversation, Tom Ray Walker Jr., who police said killed his family one at a time Monday, told KDFW-TV reporter Tom Steyer he had \$700 in his pocket he wanted used to establish a fund to help people overcome by personal problems.

"I want you to promise me to get that money to be used as a fund to help people with mental problems like me," Steyer quoted Walker as saying. "Write a book about this. I want my story told. I don't want this to happen to other people."

Steyer heard Walker's story unfold through seven telephone calls, but it wasn't until the third or fourth call that he began to believe Walker might be telling the truth.

Police confronted Walker at the phone booth during his last call to Steyer, and when he challenged them to kill him and he reached for his gun, officers opened fire.

In his first calls, Walker, a self-employed painting contractor having business problems, only said he had committed a terrible crime and needed to talk with someone about it.

"Throughout the evening his conversation was coherent and logical," Steyer said. "Every once in a while he'd break down and cry and talk about the terrible things he'd done. Finally I said, let's play a game. I'm going to guess you shot your wife."

Walker quickly hung up the phone, but called back a short time later and admitted Steyer's guess was right.

However, Steyer, who said he'd handled numerous calls of this type, was still unconvinced Walker was telling the truth. It wasn't until Walker began to describe — in vivid detail — the deaths of his wife, Linda Jo, 35, and children Traci Rochelle, 14, Tammi Renee,

11, Tommy Joe, 9, and Nicholas Ray, 7, that he alerted police.

Police, having listened to tapes of the entire conversation, then tried to trace the calls as Walker talked, then hung up. The last time he called, he managed to trace his location.

"He was telling me he'd been an unloved person his life," Steyer said. "He told me he had trouble with his jobs. He told me his family meant everything to him. How they'd been to every park and museum in Dallas and Fort Worth, how he'd sometimes skip work to be with his family."

"He sounded intelligent. He said he was smarter than most people realized and I think he was. He had dropped out of school in the ninth grade, but he was a mind of a gifted child who'd dropped out because of boredom. He had a vocabulary that was impressive for a dropout."

"While he was talking I could tell he was keeping his eye out (for police). Finally he paused. I could see police in the background asking him to put his hands up and not to do anything. I don't think he dropped the phone till he was shot. He yelled, 'Shoot me, shoot me.' He literally forced them to commit suicide."

"He didn't have the courage to kill himself. He'd tried to commit suicide before and failed. He didn't think his family could survive his suicide."

An unarmed policeman walked up to Walker's hands above his head, trying to persuade him to surrender. But when Walker went for his gun, the partners opened fire. Walker died about an hour later.

In his pockets police found \$605 of the \$700 he told Steyer he wanted used to help the mental problems of people like Walker. Steyer said police told him the courts would decide what would happen to the money, whether the death wish would be kept or whether the funds would be used to help defray the cost of six burials.

## Wyoming notables recall snubbed madam

LUSK, Wyo. — Dell Burke was snubbed by polite society but the last of Wyoming's old-time madams performed services beyond the walls of her infamous Lusk brothel.

Burke, believed to be over 90, died last month and her body was cremated. There was no memorial service and no one sent flowers. But in a column this week by Denver Post writer Red Fenwick, several notable Wyoming residents remembered her.

Burke became a prostitute in Juneau, Alaska, at age 16, Fenwick said, and came to Casper in the oil-boom days. She moved to Lusk in 1919, where a similar boom was underway and the town's population was 10,000. She went into business as a madam with other girls working for her. In 1929, when the city built an electric power plant, she bought all of the bonds. Years later, when a concerted effort was made to shut her business, she threatened to "take my money out of the bank and turn off the town's lights."

She became a member of the chamber of commerce and was active in charity campaigns. During the Depression, she lent money to the city so it could maintain services.

State Auditor Jim Griffith, former editor and publisher of the Lusk Herald, estimated her fortune at "probably more than \$1 million." He said she invested heavily in oil stocks and other blue chips. She owned a 40-acre ranch east of town.

"On the streets of Lusk, where she lived 60 years, she was snubbed by polite society," Fenwick said. "She never spoke to anyone in public until she had been addressed first. Her place was most popular during the hunting season when visitors come from surrounding states. Summers were good, too, she said, because of

working cowboys and shepherders."

Fenwick once autographed a book for her, writing, "To a lovely little lady in red velvet who perhaps more eloquently than any other woman, can testify to the masculinity of a truly masculine state, Wyoming."

She said she had to "watch my tongue" because she knew "too much about too many prominent people in Wyoming, including politicians, public officials, businessmen and the like."

Casper lawyer Tom Fagan said Burke was one of his greatest friends. In the bootleg era, he and other youngsters in Lusk received 5 cents

each from her for all of the one-pint whiskey bottles he lectured, he said.

She also helped him and other young men financially when they went to college, and once Fenwick said Judge Paul Lianos of the state wanted to leave much of his estate to charities.

"By long-accepted custom," Fenwick said, "other secrets about Dell Burke rest secure forever in the purple velvet shadows of her Gay Nineties private parties."

one seen only by close friends such as cowpokes and newspapermen."

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