

# Features

Dolly's singing earns \$666 a minute

## Country music pioneers get big bucks

**United Press International**  
NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Country music's pioneers used to think making it big meant getting a regular job. The biggest accomplishment they could achieve was becoming a member of the Grand Ole Opry.

Since country has gone uptown, and everybody from President Reagan to the city slicker is donning cowboy clothes, the stakes for country entertainers have skyrocketed.

Dolly Parton was born in the rugged mountain country of East Tennessee but since leaving home, she has broken

the industry wide open. She became one of the first entertainers to have repeated success on the more lucrative pop charts, performs for audiences in Las Vegas and already has won praise for her acting roles.

For her average 90-minute concert, Parton earns about \$666 a minute, or \$60,000. She will get more than \$1 million for the soon-to-be shot "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" film, and was earning \$350,000 a week for her engagements at a Las Vegas hotel until she had to cancel due to laryngitis.

Behind Parton is Kenny Rogers, a husky singer-

songwriter who changed careers in midlife to become the heartthrob of female country fans. He first gained notoriety in the 1960s with rock 'n' roll's "The First Edition," then shelved that career for country.

Rogers earns \$50,000 for a 90-minute concert.

Willie Nelson, whose ponytails make him appear more like a freaky rocker than a country performer, has stuck with his progressive "outlaw" music throughout his 20-year-plus career. He now earns \$50,000 per concert.

His "outlaw" partner in the old days, Waylon Jennings gets \$25,000.

## Mouth-birth frog seen ulcer cure

**United Press International**  
SYDNEY, Australia — Researchers are studying a small Australian frog that gives birth to its young through its mouth.

When *Rheobatrachus Silus*, was discovered by Australian scientists in Queensland forest in 1973, nobody believed it.

Now an herpetologist at Adelaide University has succeeded in feeding the frog — just over 2 inches long — in captivity and turning the birth regurgitations on film.

Michael Taylor, a senior lecturer at Adelaide University, said the time he tried to film the frog it spewed four young up to three feet from the room and the ejection rate was too fast to be picked up by a synchronized camera shooting six frames per second.

The second time she held her mouth incredibly wide — it was wide open — and waited for the babies to just step out," Taylor said.

Taylor has a \$22,500 grant for further research on the frog. Hope is that understanding of how the female frog switches off its gastric secretions during pregnancy, may have important applications in treating stomach ulcers in humans or at least explaining why humans get them.

The female gastric frog swallows its fertilized eggs and incubates them inside her stomach for up to eight weeks. During this time she eats nothing and her young survive and grow on food contained in a yolk sac.

Taylor said the Queensland frog probably was the most genetically advanced in the world.

## Western styles in wherever you live

**United Press International**  
NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Cowboy boots, once seen only on the western range, have walked across America from top corporate board rooms to swank afterhours nightclubs.

Nowadays, if it's cowboy, it's in — in a big way.

Mechanical bulls, an onslaught of country artists on television, more than 2,900 radio stations programming country music (up 21 percent from last year alone) and a country clothing craze have served notice on the fashion industry: Go western!

Today, women in silk shirts with designer jeans neatly tucked into western boots are as much at home — and in style — as they once were in evening gowns and designer gowns.

Men's boots range from work styles to dress boots of antelope and lizard. Colors range from earth tones blues and even flashy silver.

Jet setters attend fashion shows featuring creations by famous designers.

Now country fashion shows are popping up in

such cities as Nashville, New York, Cincinnati, Phoenix, Buffalo and New Orleans.

Hay bales, three empty whiskey kegs, and a dry milk can added some flavor to the stage of Nashville's first western boot show. Laredo Western Boots was showing off its new all-leather Silver Collection, including "nine high-fashion styles suited for demanding women."

"We're really proud of what we're about to show you now, 'cause for the first time in history, America, and especially the comfortable, easy pace of the Southwestern United States, is setting the mood and the style for the whole world," the commentator said.

A five-member band with a conductor and a Grand Ole Opry guitarist set the mood for the models and audience of reporters, boot distributors and corporate officials.

Waitresses in high skirts, boots and cowboy hats served beer, whiskey and cocktails to guests seated in folding metal chairs waiting for their first look at the \$60 to \$125 boots.

## Pets better than medicines for reducing human stress

**United Press International**  
ATLANTA — There's a simple way to cope with your stress, low blood pressure, help your recovery from a heart attack or mental illness, avoid loneliness even live longer — get yourself a pet.

Alan Beck, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for the Interaction of Animals and Society, says studies show that animals play a role in the handling of human stress, recovery from disease, and coping with physical and mental illness.

Good results have also been achieved by placing pets with autistic children and even with the criminally insane. Among the latter, Beck said, the addition of pets "brought about a tremendous reduction in the number of fights among the inmates."

Animals in therapy must be used with common sense, he said. "Researchers are now developing criteria to help match pets to peo-

ple. This research is even trying to determine specific breeds for specific purposes."

Beck said the information gained from studies on the interactions of people and pets was not new: "We're just trying to document it."

Pets might not fit in some situations, such as some nursing homes where they might be stumbled over or cause other accidents, he said.

Several issues are raised by the findings that pets play a role in handling human stress, disease, loneliness, mental illness and even the human life span raises. One is that veterinarians must be considered part of the human public health team.

"It also raises the issue that animals, like their livestock brethren, are not simply luxuries or an artifact of cultural development, but are very much a part of survival."

cats and birds in old age homes. You put a cat in an old age home and you get people to smiling."

Even the level of care seems to improve, Beck said.

Beck said research with psychiatric out-patients suffering from depression showed a pet gave a patient an improvement in morale, a decrease in the feeling of hopelessness and isolation, a feeling of security, a feeling of being needed, a source of companionship during illness, distraction from problems and stimulation to be more physically active.

Beck told a recent meeting of the American Animal Hospital Association.

"We are only now beginning to appreciate the nature and scope of companionship as a major role of animals in our society," he said. "Americans spend over \$3.9 billion a year on their pets, or nearly \$19 billion every person in the country.

"Pets definitely have an effect on longevity," said Beck, quoting a study of heart attack patients.

The study showed 94 percent who owned pets survived, while of those who did not only 62 percent survived.

Beck said everyone talks about the loneliness of the elderly "and then they exclude pets from households for the elderly. Loneliness itself is a contributing factor in human mortality; lonely people experience greater rates of disease in all categories."

There are reports of people who become seriously depressed, or committed suicide when they were separated from their pets, he said. "This is alarming when one considers that over 12 percent of former dog owners are forced to surrender their pets because they are no longer permitted to keep them in new housing projects for the elderly."

He said the ban on pets in nursing homes for the aged is beginning to change because of the growing amount of evidence of pets' tremendous therapeutic value to lonely older people.

Lots of places are putting dogs,

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