

## REMEMBERING MY FRIEND ANDY COWIE (1942-2016) by Ernie Bies

Unfortunately my own health issues prevented me from attending Andy's funeral but I was thinking of him at the moment of his service up in Hearst on May 30, 2016. Although he lost his long battle with Parkinson's and the cancer that robbed him off his singing voice we will always remember his talent and colourful history.

Born to Fred and Marie Cowie in 1942, Andy was raised along with his siblings, Ken, Rose Marie, Donna Lee and Marvin in the rustic log cabin at Valentine Creek, just west of Hearst.

Fred was a well know hunting, fishing and tourist guide and we all remember the moose that stood in front of their home. We all knew they were stuffed but some American hunters didn't and occasionally shots rang out



as they stood on the highway and filled the stubborn moose with lead, marvelling at how many shots it was taking. (Cowie family and moose photos borrowed from Alan Jansson's Old Hearst Facebook site with thanks)

May 1952 Grades 1 and 2, Hearst Public School



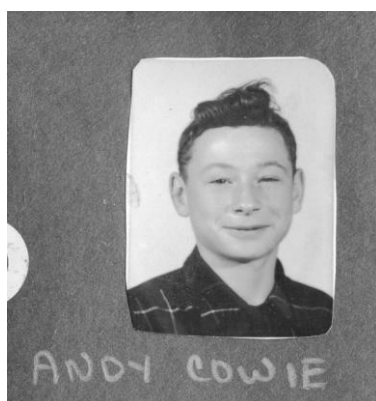
back: Geneva Malette, Miss Ellen Niskanen (*teacher*), Annie Horchak, Lorraine Kurki, Billy Koivisto , Gary Girard  
 4th row: **Andy Cowie**, Jonathan Turner, Billy Greeley, \_\_, Bobby Hosfeld, Mary Horchak, Robert Martin  
 3rd row: Dorothy Rosevear, Gary Mitchell, Walter Waugh, Gordie Lussier, Sue Anne Wade, Victor Taylor, Harold Geno  
 2nd row: Alan Koski , Linda Sicotte , Marcel Shador , Ernie Bies , Lois Weller , George Bosnick , Helen Koskinen  
 front: Betty Sloan, Gerald Bolduc, Laila Paasila, Henry Paradis, Miriam Rasinpera, Marlaine Doran, Myrna Doran, Lana Rosebush



## June 1953 Grades 3 and 4, Hearst Public School



back: Walter Waugh , Bruce Pellow , Joe Roy , Billy Hendrickson , Gary Mitchell , Bobby Hosfeld , Billy Greeley , Gordon Lussier , **Andy Cowie** , \_\_ , Ernie Bies , George Bosnick  
 middle: David Hendrickson , Ida Russell , Mary Horchak , Jean Mitchell , Jean Martin , Virginia Coulam , Marilyn Menard , Gail Bolton , Anne Johnson , Eddie Rosevear  
 front: Jonathan Turner , Selma Koivisto , Dorothy Rosevear , Necia Coulam , Sally Spennato , Mrs Katy (Terefenko) Larouche (*teacher*) , Geneva Malette , Cecile Roy , Judy Gelineau , Viola Waugh , Alan Achilles , Brian Egan .



(School photos courtesy Ernie Bies and Miriam Rasinpera Oben)

Andy's singing talent soon became evident and he scored high marks at the Kiwanis Music Festivals in Cochrane. The photo below, circa 1956, courtesy Gordon Lussier shows Freda Lussier, Joe Roy, George Bosnick, Andy Cowie, Gordie Lussier and Ernie Bies.



A few years later Andy's singing and Guitar skills were noticed by the American Country and Western Star Ernie Lindell (Shown here in a photo circa 1962, courtesy of the Saskatoon Public Library before Andy joined his band).

Ernie is the guy in the white hat and his wife Candy is the pretty lead singer in front.



I remember how excited Andy was to get this break as he sat in a room at the Queen's Hotel with a small record player and a stack of 45s that Lindell had given him to learn the guitar chords and accompanying music. In recent emails Andy provided some of the history and photos of his early music career. He played for three months with the Ernie Lindell Show on CFCL in Timmins in 1962, and then another three months on CKVR in Barrie before the band moved to CKOS TV in Yorkton Sask. In addition to band leader Lindell and his wife Candy the other band members were Charlie Leblanc on stand up base, fiddle player Harold Pilgrim, singer Cy Anders whose dad owned a TV station in Barrie and a steel guitar player named Danny Lahaie who also sang Elvis songs and of course Andy.



The band played their one hour TV show at noon and then would cram all their equipment into a big Chrysler and play a two hour show in some town sometimes a couple hundred miles from Yorkton, five days a week. They sold pictures of themselves for 25 cents each to supplement their income.





In 1964 Andy came back to Hearst and joined the Peanuts Joanis band where he stayed for the next seven years.



Andy had to get a real job when he settled down and married Yolande and they were soon raising their two sons Michel and Patrick, a superb singer himself. Andy spent a long career as Parts Man for Jean's Diesel but was always ready to break out his guitar and sing for any occasion, be it a house party or on stage at the arena or at

the Northway. I remember how impressed my son was when Andy took the stage at the Hearst High School reunion concert in 1992 and belted out a perfect rendition of Elvis's "All Shook Up". Well known Canadian Country singer, Irvin Blais, who performed in Hearst in 2010 paid tribute to Andy saying he had the talent to be a country superstar. (Above photo courtesy Irvin Blais' Facebook Page)

Andy also had a long career as a member of the Royal Canadian Legion where he served as President from 1985-87. He was also the recipient of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal for his volunteer service. Fittingly the Legion provided an Honour Guard at his funeral where his son brought tears to the eyes of the mourners with his rendition of "On Silver Wings"



May 28 at 4:06pm · FROM THE HEARST LEGION FACEBOOK PAGE

It is with great sadness to announce that our dear comrade Andy Cowie has passed this Thursday May 26th, 2016 at approximately 1:30pm.

Comrade Andy was a past President of the Hearst Legion Branch 173 from 1985 to 1987, he has held numerous chairman positions in the branch and was a Zone Secretary and then later on a Zone Deputy Commander. Andy was very dedicated to the Legion, his family and the community as a whole, he spent many years as the Support Committee chairman for the local Army Cadets.

Andy believed in good values and was a man of integrity; everyone who knew Andy got to like him for his sense of humour and caring. He was also a very good singer in his younger days and sounded exactly like Elvis Presley; he used to love playing guitar and singing to entertain people and everyone loved it.

He will be missed greatly as he was a true humanitarian in the true sense of the word. We at the Hearst Legion have come to know and love him dearly. Take care our friend, and you will forever be in our thoughts.

We miss you!!!!

You may give your respects at the Lafrance Funeral home at 7:00pm Sunday night, May 29th, 2016 and join us as at the Paroisse Notre-Dame de Hearst Parish at 10:30am, Monday May 30th, 2016.

