

# Jennings women play, sing for God, country

## Musicians work together for many years

By MARY LOU OLSON  
Three Jennings women who have shared their love of music for years recently combined their talents to record their first compact disc, "All Things Work Together for Good, Romans 8:18."

Kay Brown plays the piano, Julie Carter is organist and Vickie Bailey, vocalist for the 16 old and new gospel hymns, as well as several patriotic songs and medleys.

Their musical backgrounds have crossed throughout the years. Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Brown have been organist and pianist, respectively, for many years at the Jennings United Methodist Church, while Mrs. Bailey has sung as a soloist, in the church choir and for countless weddings and funerals.

Mrs. Carter said that when she was 5, her neighbor drew a piano keyboard on cardboard for her and she started learning the notes on it. A neighbor, Cecil LaSalle, started giving her piano lessons when she was around 8.

"When we got my grandmother's piano," she said, "I started piano lessons from Carolyn Higgason, who lived 10 miles south of Clayton. I still remember going through big snowdrifts to get to her house for my lesson."

Her next teacher was Mrs. Brown, who recalled telling her, "'You are the best sight reader I have ever had,' because she often would sight read her lesson instead of preparing for it through practice."

Later, Mrs. Brown taught Julie to play the organ at the United Methodist Church in Clayton. All three are graduates of Jennings High School.

The former Julie Ward, Mrs. Carter married Ken Carter in 1971, and the couple lived in Wyoming for four years where both attended the university in Laramie. After graduating, they moved back to Jennings

in 1975, where her husband farms northeast of town.

Their family includes Jesse Carter and family, Oberlin; Becky Carter, Jennings, and Ann DuBois and family, Salina.

Mrs. Carter took secondary education and has taught social studies and English for 28 years at Jennings. With the closing of Jennings High School, she will teach this fall at Hoxie.

Mrs. Brown, the former Kay Tacha, was born and reared at Jennings and married Doyle Brown in 1958. Their family includes Kent and family, Estes Park, Colo.; Kara Kuntz and family of Hays; Kurt and family, Quinter; and Keli Kleidosty and husband, Wichita.

"When I was 4 years old," she recalled, "my mother said that I would not leave the piano alone, so she finally called Maureen Erhlich and asked if she could give a 4-year-old lessons. Mrs. Erhlich became my first teacher, and I continued piano lessons throughout

college."

Mrs. Brown said that she started accompanying school groups when she was in the eighth grade.

"I thought that was a big deal when I got out of class to do it," she said.

She majored in instrumental music at Fort Hays State, and later taught music at Clayton, Herndon and Jennings schools.

"In fact, I was Julie's fourth-grade teacher at Clayton," Mrs. Brown said. "Music is definitely a part of our family and our oldest son, Kent, has his own band. Her husband enjoys singing and was also a teacher before both retired in 2003.

The former Vickie Dean, Mrs. Bailey was born at Colby, then the family moved to Oberlin, where she attended school for seven years. Later, the Deans moved to Jennings, and she graduated there in 1972. The



TRYING OUT A NEW SELECTION, Julie Carter (left) and Vickie Bailey (standing) sang out the melody with pianist Kay Brown. The three recently taped a Christian and patriotic compact disc.

—Herald photo by Karla Jones



Kay Brown



Julie Carter



Vickie Bailey

same year she married Mike Bailey. They have a daughter, Melissa Amlong and family, Wichita; and two sons, Colin and family, Norton, and Grant, who plans to attend college in Goodland this fall.

"I started taking piano lessons when I was in kindergarten," she said, adding that she later took lessons from Idella Rush and Jay Jolley after moving to Oberlin.

"I sang my first solo in 'The Pied

Piper' during grade school in Oberlin. I also played clarinet, saxophone and drums throughout high school. Naomi Carter was my high school music teacher at Jennings."

After the Baileys were married, they lived at Sharon Springs for seven years, then returned to Jennings in 1979. Mrs. Bailey operated "Clip and Curl Beauty Shop" in her home for 20 years. At that time, she said she started singing soprano in the church choir and also for funerals and weddings.

She purchased Decatur County Title and Abstract at Oberlin in 1996 from Karen Metcalf and commutes to work daily from her home at Jennings.

"The idea for the CD came after many said to us," Mrs. Brown said, "Why don't your tape or make a recording so that others can enjoy it."

Mrs. Brown actually had made a recording for friends and family of her piano music a year before. Mrs. Bailey said she also did one, strictly for family and friends. Mrs. Brown's includes a collection of favorites and Mrs. Bailey's album has all kinds of music, even her grandson singing, "Jesus Loves Me."

Mrs. Brown said she learned of Advantage Studio in Hays through a brochure when she was teaching, so when they decided to make the CD, they contacted Wayne Billinger, the owner. He offered to bring his equipment to Jennings in April so they could record live using the church piano and organ.

The women ordered 100 copies, which they received on May 28, and

the \$15 which they charge all goes to the general fund of the Jennings church. The art work on the cover was done by Mrs. Carter's daughter, Becky.

"Julie and Vickie have enriched my life with their talent and their willingness to share it," Mrs. Brown said. "It has meant so much to me to have these two in my life and enjoy their exceptional quality of music. For them to share the time it has taken means so much."

All three agree they can almost read each other's minds. They feel that it will really be nice to have something through the CD that they can keep forever.

Their families have supported all their efforts, the women said.

Mrs. Bailey said her dad told her, "Now you have some good funeral music," and Mrs. Brown's daughter said, "Even after you're gone, we can still hear you play."

Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Carter agree that without Mrs. Brown, they never would have gotten it done. She took care of the copyright and all the details, they said.

The album features Christian favorites, including "Great is the Lord"; "Give Thanks"; "There's Something About That Name," and "People Need the Lord," along with "America, the Beautiful" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic," in the Sweet Land of Liberty Medley.

Anyone interested in a copy should contact any of the three women, write to Kay Brown, Route 1, Box 12, Jennings, Kan., 67643 or e-mail dkfarms@ruraltel.net.



VOCALIST VICKIE BAILEY rehearsed a song for the wedding of Julie Carter's daughter Ann and Wes DuBois in December 2002. Kay Brown was accompanist.

—Julie Carter photo