

# Arts & Entertainment

## Campbellville woman toured with Canadian Idol finalist Billy Klippert to write biography



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Tami-Anne Dams, who's writing a book about former Canadian Idol hopeful Billy Klippert, shows off his guitar as well as some memorabilia from a recent one-week tour she tagged along for. Ms Dams said she hopes to have the book finished by this summer. Although Mr. Klippert's days on the popular show are now just a memory, Ms Dams said the musician's debut CD is selling well as he makes his way in the music industry.

By **STEPHANIE THIESSEN**  
*The Champion*

If there's one thing Tami-Anne Dams has learned in the past month, it's that she never wants to be famous.

With shrieking fans, food that's always eaten on the run, and privacy that's constantly invaded, Ms Dams said she's perfectly content being the one in the background taking notes and simply observing fame from a distance.

At the beginning of February, the Campbellville resident had a unique opportunity to hang out with Billy Klippert — who just narrowly missed being named Canadian Idol in the first season of the show about a year-and-a-half ago — for a week as he toured Alberta.

She had a unique, birds-eye view of just how much work dreams sometimes involve. Who knew being a rock star could be so difficult? She hopes that by the end of the year, people will have a chance to read about her whirlwind week with Mr. Klippert in the biography she's writing.

"There were two reasons for me to go on tour," Ms Dams explained. "It was a good opportunity to get material for the book,

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Tickets cost \$30 for adults, and \$24 for students and seniors. For more information, call (905) 878-4732.

and Billy needed a driver."

Ms Dams said she still chuckles over the circumstances surrounding her first encounter with the fledgling star.

She was on a plane flight from Calgary, where her husband works, and was sitting beside a talkative young man. Some extra attention from the flight attendant and numerous inquisitive looks from the other passengers convinced Ms Dams there was something unusual about this man.

When she asked him what he did for a living, he told her he worked on a TV show.

"Are you a cameraman?" she asked him.

Hardly. He was Billy Klippert, a top-10 contestant on Canadian Idol, and was flying to Toronto to record a song on the Canadian Idol CD. He'd eventually become the third-last contestant to be voted off — with Ryan Malcolm claiming the title — and release a self-titled debut album with Orange record label.

Ms Dams said she felt bad admitting she'd never watched the show, but the pair continued chatting easily. He gave her his e-mail address, and they began to correspond.

He gave Ms Dams and her 19-year-old daughter tickets to each of the Toronto Canadian Idol shows from then on, and she became one of his most ardent fans.

"I found myself supporting him not only because I'd met him, but because musically he was very talented," she said.

When he called her asking if she wanted to be his driver, he knew she was writing a book about him, and the pair decided it would be a win-win situation.

She met Mr. Klippert at the Calgary airport January 30, and the next few days consisted of traveling to Banff, Lethbridge and Red Deer, and helping organize the shows. When she had a spare moment — which wasn't often — she took notes for her book.

"For a full week it was non-stop go," Ms Dams said, adding there were many challenges along the way, including getting lost.

Ms Dams said she was surprised to find out just how much it takes for a musician to work his way up.

"I think people glorify the music business," she said, which is something she

hopes to shed some light on in her book.

The biography will hopefully be done in time for the third season of Canadian Idol, which starts in a few months, Ms Dams said, adding her next hurdle is finding a publisher.

"In spending time with him (Mr. Klippert), I see how interesting he is, and it seems to be something people would enjoy (reading about). He's a very lovable sort of guy."

Their meeting and the ensuing book is "one of those things in life that's meant to be," she said.

After she finds a publisher, Ms Dams said she's going to sit back and watch her favourite musician climb the charts — something she has no doubt he'll do. His debut CD sold well, and next month he'll be touring with Soul Decision across Canada. She said she hopes the book will be another boon to his career.

"I'm banking on the idea that people will want to learn more about him."

Ms Dams said she saw time and again throughout that memorable week how fans put the objects of their attention on pedestals — and there's nothing wrong with that, she said.

"I think people need to have idols — those people they idolize, look up to, and imagine have a magical life."

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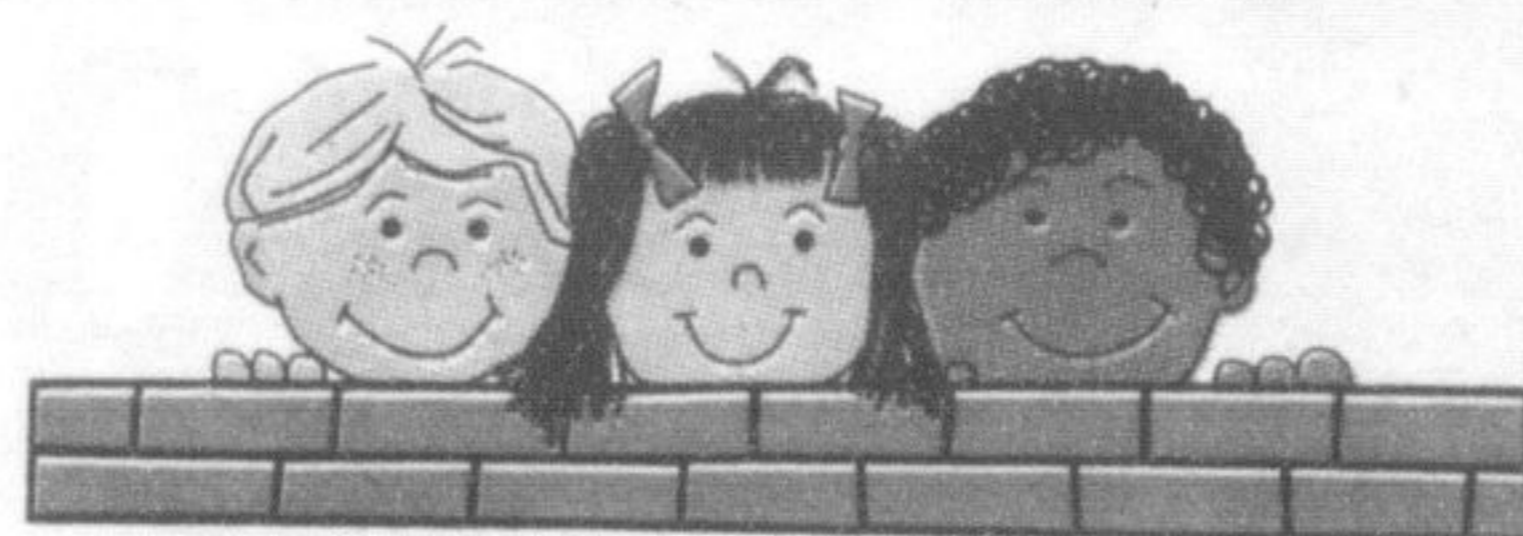
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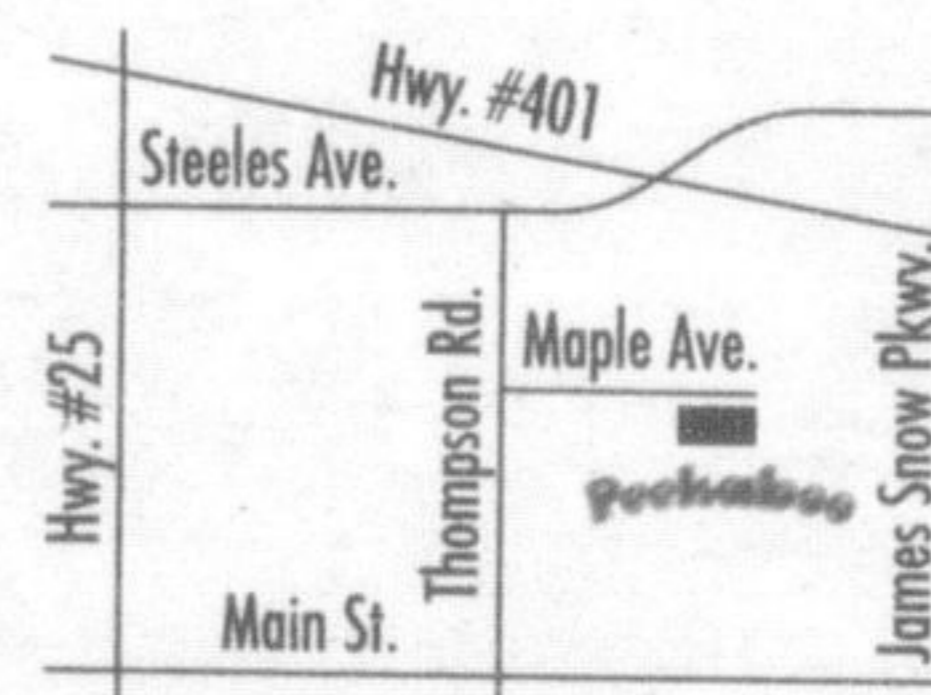
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