

ARTS

Brooke eagerly awaits release of second CD

Local country singer seeking line dancers for her new video

By Stephanie Thiessen
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It's been a whirlwind year for local singer and songwriter Alysha Brooke.

Tours, concerts, records and fans are all part of her still fairly new life as she continues her foray into the country music business. And she wouldn't trade any of it — except maybe the lack of sleep, she told The Champion good-naturedly.

Ever since the 19-year-old rural Milton resident released her first CD, *Nuthin' but a Chevy*, in 2004, there's been no turning back.

Now she's gearing up for the release of her second CD, *I Talk Country*, and is particularly excited about the release party April 1 at Hot Rods on Chisholm Drive.

Not only will fans be treated to a concert backed by Brooke's own band, they'll have a chance to appear in an upcoming music video. Scouts will be watching the dance floor for 20 to 25 line dancers to be featured in a music video to be shot in early May.

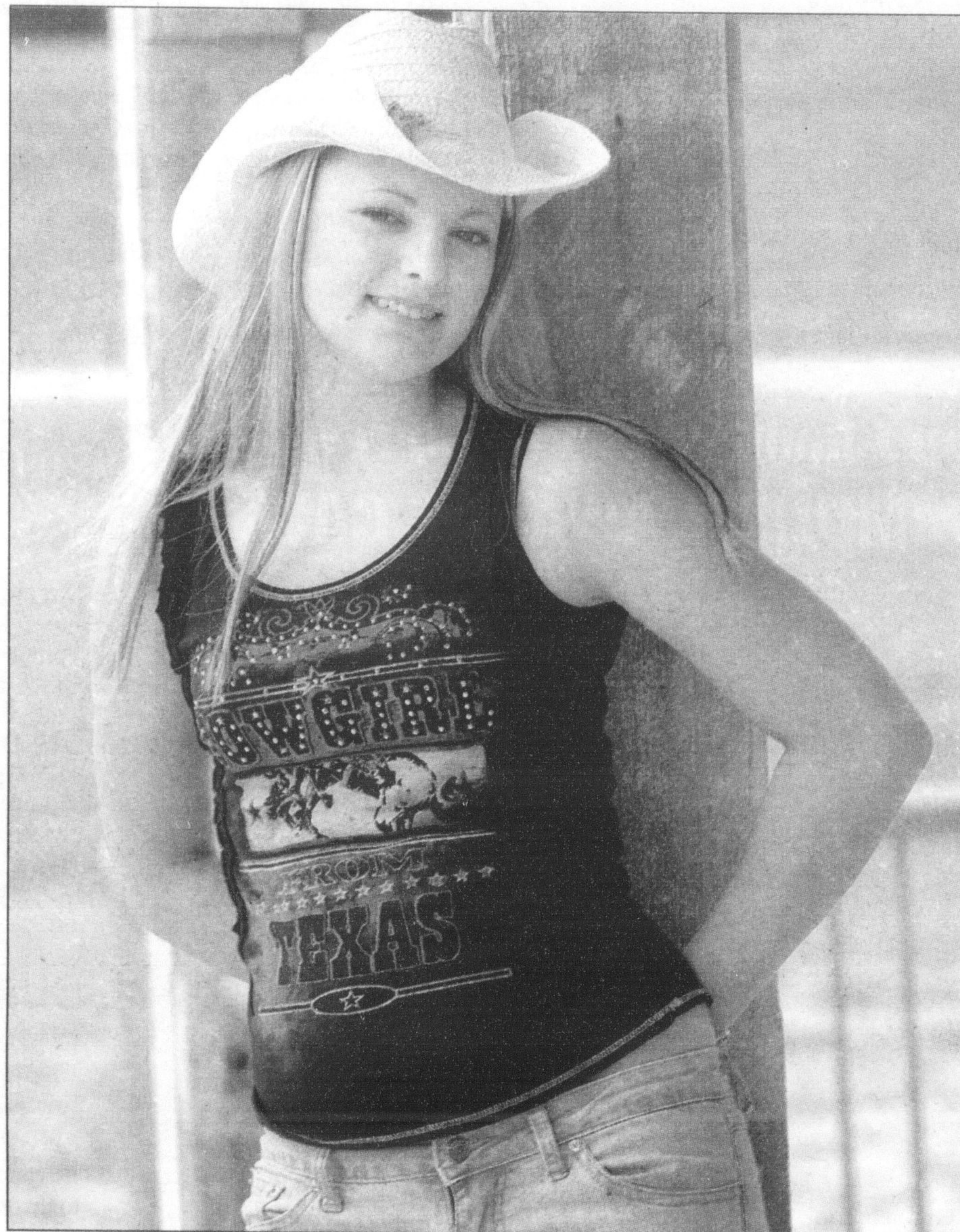
"If you want a chance to get out there, it's a time to get noticed," Brooke said, adding, "I'd love to have all local people in the video."

As a former dancer, Brooke said she knows there are plenty of talented performers in Milton, as well as people who just line dance for fun. Party-goers must be 19 or older.

Newcomer Jamie Thorne will open for Brooke and fiddler Scott Woods will be accompanying her. Sam Cook from Country 95.3 will also be on hand. Doors will open at 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$15.

I Talk Country is Brooke's first CD on her current label, Cedar Trail Records, to which she was signed last year. The new CD will have something for every country music lover, Brooke said, from old country to new country, rockin' country to ballad country. "It's still very traditional country, with a couple with a good southern rock feel," she said.

It's a more mature sound that listeners will hear on the new CD, Brooke said, owing much of that to her vocal coach who's been with her each step of the way. Naturally, the



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COUNTRY GIRL: At the young age of 19, Alysha Brooke is already making a name for herself on the country music scene.

lyrics are also more mature, she said.

"As I get older, the songs grow with me."

Brooke wrote two of the songs herself, and wrote the lyrics to two more. She co-wrote some of the others with Mike Belobradic, president of Cedar Trail Music.

Brooke said she makes her songs personal in an attempt to draw her audiences in.

"A lot of life experience is written into the songs. It's good because people can

relate to them. That's why I love country (music) — almost every country song has a story I can relate to at some point in my life."

Her outlook on the music business has changed somewhat over the past year, she said, as reality sets in about just how difficult it is to get her foot in the door.

The fact she's a Canadian musician trying to make it in Canada only makes it

harder. "It's easier to get your music played in Canada if you're from the States," she said. "It's almost impossible to get on Canadian radio."

But already her resumé is impressive.

One of the singles off her first CD reached number one on a Canadian on-line radio station, and in the States the title song off that CD reached fourth place on an unsigned artist radio show. In fact, 78 radio stations were playing Brooke's music in the States. Soon, HMV and Sunrise Records will be selling Brooke's CD in their stores.

"That'll be weird, to go into a store and have my own CD sitting on the shelf," she said.

Brooke recently performed on CHTV on Smith 'n Hayes, promoting the upcoming release party. It was just one of the appearances that keep her so busy. This summer, Brooke will be performing for the first time in the U.S. at a country music benefit in Pennsylvania for cancer research.

Her favourite part of the music scene has to be the fans, young and old, Brooke said. She has some who show up at almost every performance. "Without the fans, there's no point in having music," she said simply.

Since she first began performing, Brooke has expressed her love of children and singing for them. That hasn't changed a bit. One of her most memorable performances to date was at Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. "To go and have a day to help cheer the children... that's more meaningful than anything," she said.

Some of her fans are as young as five years old, and Brooke's Web site is full of admiring letters from little girls — several of them excitedly telling her they share the same first name.

Since the upcoming release party is limited to those 19 and older, Brooke has arranged for children to be able to come out to Hot Rods in the afternoon April 1 to watch the sound check and rehearsal, and to visit with her afterward.

As for the future, Brooke said she dreams of performing with one of her favourite singers. "I'd love to play with Reba (McEntire)," she said wistfully.

Tickets to the CD release party are available at Hot Rods, ProClips in Campbellville or at royalacresmusic@hotmail.com.

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If you received a blood transfusion or blood product before 1992, you may have been infected with hepatitis C.

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