

Making Up To The Boss

By Kate Gilderdale
Stouffville Free Press



Glenn Jackson shows off some of his huge collection of Springsteen memorabilia spanning more than two decades, including two beautiful, hand-painted sets of Russian dolls celebrating the singer and his backup musicians, the E Street Band.

Stouffville resident Glenn Jackson is an easy-going, well-turned out guy. He's also proud to call himself a tramp.

For the uninitiated, Bruce's Tramps is an insider term for avid Springsteen fans, and Glenn can certainly lay claim to being one of The Boss's most ardent supporters. His passion for Springsteen's music dates back to 1984, when Glenn was in Grade 7 and the album *Born In The USA* was released to huge critical acclaim.

"Kids at school were getting into it, and I got the album on cassette for Christmas. I couldn't stop listening to it," he recalled. "The following summer my sister and I went to Florida with my dad for a two week vacation. The day we left, tickets were going on sale for the CNE stadium concert on Aug. 26, 1985."

Fortunately some friends lined up for tickets and Glenn and his mother went to the concert. "Sixty thousand people were there and I could barely see Bruce, but for me that was it. We were on the floor level, standing on our seats, and he played for four hours."

That fall, said Glenn, on the first day back at school "everybody was wearing Bruce Springsteen shirts and it snowballed from there." While Springsteen's popularity declined to some extent over the next couple of years, "I stuck with him, and his next album, *Tunnel Of Love*, was even better."

One thing Glenn admires about his hero is his ability to successfully encompass a variety of musical styles, from acoustic

folk to full-blown rock and roll. "Last year he released an album called *We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions* which consisted of all Pete Seeger songs."

He also admires the singer's intelligence, social conscience, down to earth personality and determination to follow his own path without worrying about what people think of him. "One thing he does very well is pay attention to fans. Early in his career, up until 1981, before every concert he would walk around the entire arena and make sure the sound was as good in every seat. He's a perfectionist."

Glenn has been to 32 Springsteen concerts and has so far attended three venues on the current tour, including Ottawa and Toronto. He also plans to visit Cleveland, Detroit and Albany to round out a record fall fix of six live shows. During his journey he will hook up with other fans who have become close and enduring friends through their shared passion. "We stay together, get tickets for each other, drive together and share stories."

Seven or eight years ago, Glenn was one of the youngest fans on the Springsteen circuit. "The age range spanned from late 20s to people in their 40s or 50s. Today I'm finding an increase in younger fans; we're even seeing some teenagers."

Last December he went to a concert in New Jersey where Springsteen, who lives in the area, was rumoured to be appearing as a guest performer. The next day, Glenn and his fellow Tramps decided to drive past The Boss's home on their way back to Toronto. They were waiting at an intersection when Glenn glanced in the rearview mirror.

"Bruce was right behind us in his Range Rover." The singer looked at Glenn's custom licence plate cover which reads, 'The only boss I listen to is Bruce Springsteen.' "He read it and started laughing his head off," said Glenn.

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*** These statistics are compiled by IMS, an Independent Research Company using Toronto Real Estate Board Data ***

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