

By KEVIN DOLL  
Of the Star-Herald

DENVER, Colo. — "Randy looks real tired today — that road work looks hard," said Herman Meisner of Gering as he sat about 10 yards from a towering, temporary stage where singer Linda Ronstadt had the attentions and affections of many of the 45,000 young concert goers who blanketed the field and stands of Denver's Mile High Stadium.

A retired farmer who worked land near Scottsbluff for 27 years, Herman, his wife and much of the Meisner clan were there, 200 miles from home at a mass "rock concert," as guests of his son — Randy Meisner, an Eagle.

EAGLES SOAR and fly above the land, defiantly free. "The Eagles" sing and play country rock like the stars they have become, perpetuating a musical state of mind perfected by Buffalo Springfield and the Byrds.

# A mile high With the Eagles

Each of their five albums on Asylum Records (including a greatest hits collection) has attained the one-million-sold level since they soared from obscurity to prominence in 1971 with the single, "Take It Easy."

Their performance, like the dusk, was approaching, following almost five hours of music by Pure Prairie League, Andrew Gold and Ronstadt in the open air, sunshine and some rain.

"I don't see him very often," the senior Meisner said of his 30-year-old son whose group was this day finishing a busy 15-concert U.S. tour which began in July.

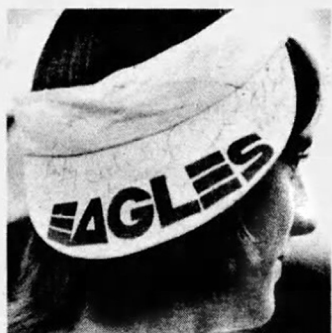
Mrs. Meisner, who sat beside her husband, said Randy had purchased a house in Hollywood Hills formerly owned by Rick Nelson although he, his wife Jennifer and their three children still make their home in a refurbished house at Mitchell, equipped with a soundproof studio in the basement.

A LOUD roar went up from the crowd as Ronstadt sang her last song and was called back for an encore, originally timed into the rigidly organized concert.

Speaking over the music, Randy's father said, "Music's always been his life," as Herman and his wife traced their son's career from playing the guitar at family picnics to his first public performances at age 14 with The Dynamics of Scottsbluff.

After high school came years of

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MEISNER'S nephew Doug Dattel got his Eagles visor autographed by the groups members.

THE CROWDED infield at Denver's Mile High Stadium was scene the of blanket tossing and pyramid building before the start of the concert.



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frustration in California for Randy with The Poor, Poco and as a backup musician for Rick Nelson and others.

Finally the Scottsbluff bass player met up with piano and guitar player Glenn Frey, drummer Don Henley and guitar and banjo picker Bernie Leadon — and the foursome went from backing up Ronstadt to being the star attraction of this day's concert.

Guitarist Don Felder has since joined the group, along with Joe Walsh, while Leadon has departed.

Everyone sings. "We were just a little leerie for a while," Mrs. Meisner said of her son's chosen career. As recently as six years ago he returned to Scottsbluff and worked as a parts manager for Frank Implement Co.

And while the years since have brought Randy fame and fortune, his mother believes, "He's still the same kid — he hasn't changed at all. I'm real happy he is that way."

How about the attention and publicity that goes with such success?

"He doesn't go too much for that," Herman said, explaining that Randy has always been quiet and soft spoken.

To Mrs. Meisner, her son's success has meant being referred to as "Randy Meisner's mother" and, on this day, a trip in a limousine from the hotel to the concert.

THE STAGE was in transition now after the departure of Ronstadt, with the supporting cast of The Eagles preparing for their group's performance. The crowd listened to a recording of "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" for the second time that day.

It was after 7 p.m. now and Randy's parents had moved to the other side of the stage where Jennifer and the three Meisner children were standing with relatives, friends and other Eagles.

Randy appeared on the scene briefly but was soon called away on a matter concerning the upcoming show.

Joe Walsh, the newest Eagle whose distinctive vocals, writing and style made him somewhat of a living legend with the James Gang and on his own, handed Herman a beer and drew the response, "Thanks Joe."

Jennifer, who had arranged for a sizable number of guest passes for family and friends, said she had been with her husband on tour for the past two weeks and had gone with the group earlier this year on the concert trail leading through Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii.

The Denver crowd was a lot different than those on the East Coast, she said. In Foxboro, Mass., the crowd broke through a wall and she and Randy had to flee from their car and climb a fence to where a helicopter was waiting.

Pittsburgh greeted the Eagles with a "hard rock" audience, Jennifer said, and the group had to drop several mellow numbers because the crowd was "too wild."

The Denver crowd, personified by the masses which packed the playing field used by the National Football League Denver Broncos, had warmed up for the concert by tossing frisbees, beach balls, each other (using blankets) — and even attempted several human pyramids.

IN ADDITION, there was smoking, drinking, card-playing, homemade signs and conversation.

One thing the crowds on the tour did have in common was an overwhelming ovation for "Take It to the Limit," largely the product of Randy's writing and soul-touching vocal work.

The single from the Eagles' fourth album which has earned a special plaque on the basis of sales, has brought Randy far more attention in the press than ever before, Jennifer said, something he didn't miss while in the shadow of more outspoken group members.

Randy has also written "Is It True?" "Too Many Hands," and collaborated with other group members on "Certain Kind of Fool" and "Saturday Night" from the Eagles' lone concert album to date, "Desperado."

Being the wife of an Eagle entails



THE OPEN CLINIC run by 35 volunteers provided first aid for the 45,000 persons at the concert. Tracy Saunders of Crawford, a Denver University student, right, treats a scratch for Lilly Miller of Golden, Colo.

## Family and friends crowd backstage



RELATIVES AND FRIENDS of the Meisners paste on the guest passes to get on the stage.



randymeisnerheartsonfire.com

"TAKE IT TO THE LIMIT," written by Meisner, always brings a strong response from the audience.

meeting famous celebrities, something Jennifer delights in.

JACK NICHOLSON and Dennis Weaver are among the well-known Eagle fans she has met.

As for Randy, well, "nothing affects him," Jennifer remarked.

At a birthday party for Elton John's song writer, she said Randy shook hands with "The Fonz" (Henry Winkler of television's "Happy Days") who said, "Hi, I'm Henry." Her husband responded simply, "Hi, I'm Randy."

Jennifer said the Eagles find concert tours boring as well as exhausting, not having time to see much more than hotel rooms and the inside of their private plane.

As a result, she explained, Randy plays a lot of poker and along with others in the Eagles' entourage, clips pictures from magazines and sticks them on the interior of the plane, adding their own text.

"Randy likes to have fun," Jennifer said, and, when teamed with "Rubber Nose" Walsh, the Eagles have their own comedy team.

Both do impersonations of "The Duke" (John Wayne) and have also been known to satirize the term "rock star" by doing their own rendition of talking rocks.

BUT THE EAGLES have their problems, she admitted, referring to tension and personality conflicts between some members of the group which is preparing its sixth album, "Hotel California," for release before the end of the year.

Looking to the future, Jennifer said Randy has aspirations to do some producing and possibly a solo album.

It was shortly after 8 p.m. — the equipment was ready and the massive array of lights were in position as the last traces of dusk left the western sky.

The Eagles, who had been absent from the backstage gathering for a time, suddenly emerged from a trailer and were escorted along a path to the stairs leading to the back of the six-foot high stage.

As they vanished behind walls of equipment blocking them from view from the backstage area, the crowd erupted in welcome in seeing The Eagles at the front of the stage — making it quite clear why they had come.