

# Billie Jo Spears

Billie Jo Spears, consistent female country music hit-makers in the 1970s, recently died in Texas at age 74.

She was famous for her 1975 hit **“Blanket on the Ground,”** as well as for working-girl anthems and for songs that fused country and disco.

Born in 1937 in the shipyard city of Beaumont, Texas, she was the daughter of a truck-driver father. Her mother was a welder in the shipyards, as well as a guitarist in the Light Crust Doughboys western-swing band.

Billie Jo Spears began singing professionally at age 13. She first recorded in Houston at that age and also appeared on the Louisiana Hayride in Shreveport, La.

After working as a drive-in restaurant carhop and as a secretary, she moved from Texas to Nashville in 1964. Signing with Capitol Records, she first hit the top-10 on the country charts with 1969’s **“Mr. Walker It’s All Over,”** the saga of a downtrodden secretary. She followed it with **“Pittsburgh General,”** which stood up for nurses.

Other early singles included **“Stepchild”** (1969), in which a boy kills his abusive stepfather, and **“Marty Gray”** (1970), which dealt with teen pregnancy.

She faded from the hit parade and underwent vocal-cord surgery, then scored a huge comeback on United Artists Records with the toe-tapping **“Blanket on the Ground.”** It became her first and only No. 1 hit, both in the U.S. and abroad.

She fused country songs with danceable pop rhythms in such big hits as 1976’s **“What I’ve Got in Mind,”** 1977’s **“If You Want Me,”** 1978’s **“57 Chevrolet”** and 1979’s remake of Gloria Gaynor’s disco classic **“I Will Survive.”**

Billie Jo was also distinctive in that she rarely recorded female “victim” material. Almost all of her hit ballads are about women asserting themselves.

She had 22 British shows booked for 2012 at the time of her death.



## Adam and Jade

2011 was a year of cooking, cuddles and celebrities for Perth-raised country music artist **Adam Brand** and his wife **Jade**.

The couple who won the ninth season of Dancing with the Stars in 2009 - returned home to Australia for the summer, less than a month after **Adam** performed as a special guest artist on the final leg of **Taylor Swift's** world tour.

"It was just mind blowing. I did about three weeks of touring and finished in **Madison Square Garden**.

"You always hear about it and everyone goes on about it and you think 'Oh yeah, it must be good', but it's kind of

just got a special energy. I walked on stage and said 'G'day New York', and the place just went nuts."

**Adam** was picked by the 22-year-old singer **Taylor Swift** as one of five artists to support her during her tour. "She's so huge now there's a lot of demands on her time but we caught up a couple of times,"

Despite their hectic schedule, Jade and Adam managed to find time to collate a cookbook, **Life, Love and Cooking**. They spent more than 12 months compiling recipes which tell their tale of falling in love.

"We're not trained chefs, we're not technical, we're just big foodies. We love cooking, cooking for each other and we love eating,"

"There's stories about how food fits into our history, our daily lives and into our love story...Really - it's kind of our story set to the backdrop of food." Adam returns home to Perth this month.



## Just a Thought From Bill Northcott!

Last week Peter, at the Gawler CMC show, turns to Ken, and asks him for a cigarette.

'I thought you made a New Year's resolution to quit smoking!'

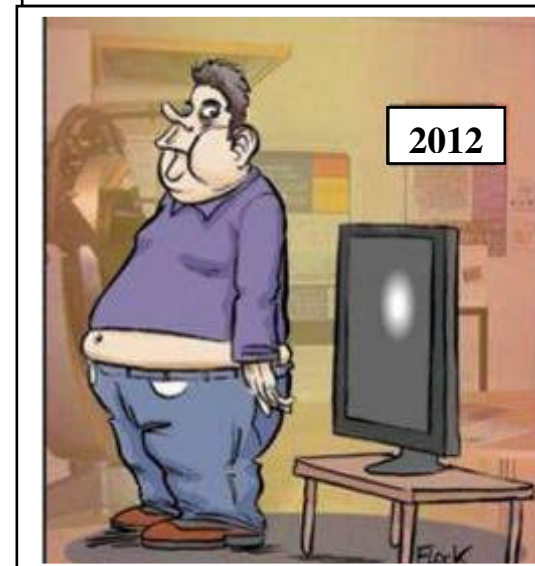
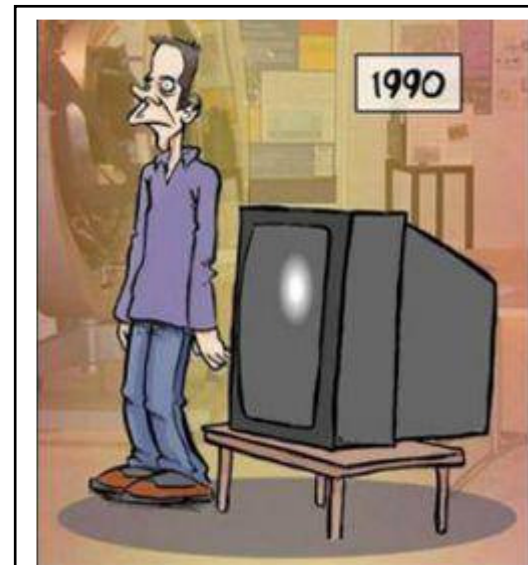
'I'm in the process of quitting,' replies Peter with a grin. 'Right now, I am in the middle of phase one.'

'Phase one?' asked Ken.

'Yeah,' laughs Peter, 'I've quit buying.'

If you know Peter folks...be prepared!

Good to hear you're on the mend Bill, and your back on track with your telephone connection.



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