

Indiana Hoedown IH008  
Traditional Music from the Hoosier State

INTERVIEW WITH SNORTY BULTEMEIER

PT This is snorty Bultemeier I'm talking to, he's known as the Polka King around here.

SB Well I guess some of 'em call me that, right. I've had a polka show on WAPM in Decatur ~~in~~ since April 1976.

PT How often is the show on? Daily?

SB Its on daily. Monday thru Friday from 11:05 until 12:00.

In the evenings, Monday thru Saturday from 5:35 to 6:30.

On Saturday morning, I'm not on in the morning its from 1:05 to 2:00. So a total of 12 hours a week, ah, 12 hours a week.

PT. How did you get started doing a Polka show on the radio?

SB well. We had a new general manager at that time, and he said we gotta do something different. Everybody has got the same format in the area. And I said, I got a real good idea. And he said what's that. I said polka music. Because this area, in the general, is German and Swiss and Polish in Fort Wayne and what have you. I said, I'm sure it will go. He said okay, we'll try it for a half hour, 11:30 until 12, for 3 months. And it took exactly 3 months till we went to an hour show and a year later we went to the 2 hour show, an hour in the morning, and an hour in the evening. So it's went over real good and, well, when I go to festivals, when I go around the area, we know for a fact that people are listening, 'cause that's all they talk about.

PT. Yea. I can tell it's a real popular thing.

SB Snorty, how did you come to start this Oktoberfest in Hoagland?

SS well actually, that started before my polka fest did. I made a little investment 5 years ago. It will be 5 years in November, in fact November the 4th, when I built a cheese house, The 'Deusthe Ecke' cheese House, Its located north of Decatur. I had intentions of having an Oktoberfest along with the opening of the Cheese House, but it got too late before the construction was done, so we left it go for that year, and the following year, I said, if we got a German name cheese house we're going to have an Oktoberfest.

So the first year of what is now called the Hoagland Oktoberfest was out at the cheese House, out in an open field which is located out in the country. And that's how it got



started.

PT And this is the 5th year?

SB The 5th year. The 4th year that's its located here in Hoagland. When the 1st year at the cheese house I had on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Just like it is this year. The 1st year up here there was a little resentment on having something like this on Sunday. And so we just had it on Friday and Saturday. A lot of people in the area that that possibly ~~it~~ it was not rel... you know... it wasn't all that good relations. And they saw what happened on Friday and Saturday and most of the people decided, hey, there's nothing wrong with it, you know, it's just happiness and good fellowship.

PT Yea. wholesome atmosphere here.

SB Yea. It's grown from one year to another. It's not growing as fast here as it has in other areas of the country, but it's growing, and ah, this year the advancement took it over by themselves for the first time. And sad to say, from my part, it'll be the way it looks right now, it's going to be the most profiteering year of em all, and I won't be in on it.

Actually, my intentions was to get it started and then to turn it over to an organization. And it took 4 years to have the people of this area to realize that it could be a good thing. And they've taken it over, and ah, there again, I'm sorry to say I believe they've done a better job ~~than~~ than I did in the first four years. A lot of people will never agree with that, but I do. They've done a real good job this year, and I'm just tickled to death that the crowds that we've had that have gone along with it, it's just been terrific.

PT It's a real good thing for Hoagland.

SB Oh definitely. It's... this is one thing that has always been said, from people that don't know. They call it a beer fest, sure there's beer. There's a beer truck over there. People drink beer, I drink beer. Everybody drinks



beer. But occasionally you will see somebody that will overindulge. But 9 out of 10 of em, no I'll go more'n <sup>use</sup> that. I'll go 999 out of a 1000. If somebody overindulges, it's somebody that has never been to an Oktoberfest and doesn't realize, doesn't go out and dance, doesn't do... you know, really get involved. Ah, it's just fun, happiness and ah fellowship, and it's just great.

I've met people this weekend from California, from Minnesota, Pennsylvania and there was a couple here from Florida, a young man from Germany, ~~was~~ was here and hey, people just mingle. There's no strangers. It's just great. It's not a beer fest. Sure there's beer here. But there's beer everywhere else. Beer is available anyplace you want to go. So it's not what you call a beer fest.

Q1. Right. Well I think it's a wonderful event, and I look forward to it every year.

A1. It's gonna grow. It's gonna grow, and each year more people come out. And I'll tell you exactly what I hope. And I'll give it 3 years to succeed. And that is, 3 years from now, the tents, the floor, the chairs and tables will stay for 2 weekends. It will not run ~~ding~~ through the week, because at this time of the year because kids in school, just too many complications. But, ah, fact there was a clergyman in the area. He's been here quite a few years and he was the first one. I had this in the back of my mind, of doing this. Last year he was the first one to mention that to me. A clergyman. And he said, do you know what you ought to think about Snorty, and that is to make it 2 weekends because every weekend something is going on and somebody can't make it. He says, you've got the investment why not go 2 weekends? And ah, that's the next shot that we're looking for.

Q1. How many people come through the gate?

A1. I'm not sure of that. Because... This year I can't tell you. Last year I could've because I was in charge of admission ~~and that~~ <sup>and that</sup>. Ah, there was better than 400



on Friday night. And roughly speaking, talking to the guy who is in charge of the treasury of the Association, the money wise that he was talking about, roughly on the 15 to 16 hundred people last night. Today, it's hard to tell because from 2 to 10 you have people come and you have people go. Ah not too many of us stay for the full 8 hours. When I go to one of the other festivals around, I don't stay for the full 8 hours. That's a long time. Here I stay, you know. But people come and go. I would. I don't believe I'm stretching it when I say there's been 800 people here today.

PT. It's probably a good estimate.

SB. Right.

PT. Well, thank you Snonty, for bringing these polka festivals to Hoagland.

SB. Hey. It's been a pleasure. It's one of those little warm feelings down inside that you have yourself, without anybody telling you. But ah, a lot of people tell me. and that just makes it that much of a warmer spot.

PT. Well thank you.