(an often-seen Western Oklahoma entertainment area)

All That Glitters...

— by Donita Lucas Shields

Validity of the old adage, “All that glitters is not gold,” might well be questioned by those living and working in Deep Anadarko Basin. Gas, not gold, creates this region of booming economy, but the end product of the great Gas Rush is gold, a golden payroll of wealth never before known in Western Oklahoma.

As for glitter, the most glittering place in Deep Basin is Schreck’s Western Ballroom at I-40’s Foss Junction. Beneath gleaming lights surrounding Schreck’s are acres of asphalt surface covered with shining Continentals, Cadillacs, and other top lines of chrome on wheels. Seldom do more than a few economy-minded vehicles mar the brilliance of the hillside parking area.

Upon entering Schreck’s, the kings and queens of this Prairie Kingdom transform the Ballroom into an indigo sea of Levi’s, bedecked with Western regalia of satins.

here, Trina. Marry one. So I did after two years.”

. . . Trina remembered Jacob’s striken eyes as she watched him waltzing now with her daughter-in-law. It would be nice if his son could have been here to dance with me — the son in California whose voice sounds now like Jacob’s did — even so, he gave his blessing. Yes, this wedding, she thought, is much better . . .


“After the wedding Papa took me to the library — I thought he would give me money. He gave me your letters. He said he’d done it for my own good — so I’d stay in Germany.”

“Oh, Trina, Trina, my little gazelle,” Jacob had said. He remembered! . . .

Trina looked around the parlor bright with flowers and music and love. She remembered her father’s library — heavy, dark, musty with his leather-bound books. Always more the professor than the father. He had taken the letters from a copy of ANNA KARENINA. What if I’d ever decided to read it? What if? But if I had, there wouldn’t be Helen and Arnold . . .

Jacob stopped beside her. “I was wondering, Mrs. Gottfried, if I might have this dance?”

Trina danced away with him, supremely happy.
leathers, cowboy boots, and handtooled belts sculptored with gold and silver der­
ricks. Rising above all, crowns of fea­
thered Stetsons ebb and flow
through rushing tides of humanity.
Consistent with regal tastes in auto­
mobiles and clothing, the Prairie's royalty
demands nothing but the finest, the top of
the line in Country and Western music.
On a typical evening, 2,000 Urban Cow­
boys with their girls, both spectators and
dancers, surge through the Ballroom
doors, if they are fortunate in acquiring
the necessary passes before they are all
sold.
No tickets are available at the door on
the evening of big-name performers. Vis­
itors arrive early to await the arrival
of the royal court jesters, which include
renowned entertainers such as Hank Wil­
liams, Jr., his troupe of five musicians,
and 25 body guards.
Prior to Williams' arrival, his advance

guard began in early morning preparing
the stage with powerful sound equip­
ment, carefully shipped by truck to
Schreck's backstage door. Because sound
is the name of Hank's game, the Ball­
room's electrical system receives a com­
plete renovation of the usually adequate
facilities.
Hank's musicians require 20,000 am­
perage in order to carry the band's pene­
trating sound without blowing fuses. The
normal amperage is 5,000 units, but Wil­
liams provides renditions which per­
meate every cell of the human body. His
audience expects to breathe the tones
rejecting from the multitude of mammoth
amplifiers circling the Ballroom stage.
Waiting fans anticipate volumes of

tonal qualities while both listening and
dancing. Hank Jr. admirers do not arrive
to visit or talk among themselves. Coun­
try and western audiences demand escape
from the maddening gas boom world to
relax a few short hours in the land of
sparkle and fantasy.
The Western star makes his grand
entry into the Prairie Kingdom late in the
evening via arrival of his private helicop­
ter which gently places him upon the con­
secrated landing pad behind the Ball­
room. At least it is said the chopper is his
mode of transportation. No one could pos­
cibly hear the whirring beaters or power­
ful engine above the blasting beat of the
orchestra.
Hank Jr. materializes onstage from
somewhere for his two-hour appearance
and pours his golden voice through the
booming sound system. He re-creates the
romantic Old West through his ballads of
the gallant cowboy and his revered lady.
Fans sweep around the dance floor and
stand upon tables and chairs for one brief
glimpse of his famous bewhiskered face
through tidal waves of gaudy hats,
plumes, dancers, and Hank's mighty pro­
tectors. He provides the audience with
top-of-the-line favorites and then bids
goodnight and disappears through his
private exit as quickly as he had entered.
His musicians continue their throbbing
beats until the evening draws to a close.
The ruling king of Schreck's Ballroom
is none other than Lynn Schreck, a farm
boy with a dream. His dream became a
reality with first-class Western entertain­
ment in a place that is clean, well-re­
gulated, and law-abiding. His famed pal­
ace is anything but elaborate. It is func­
tional and comfortable, if it is possible to
provide comfort for squeezed and tramp­
led humanity.
Typical of gas boom architecture, the
building is no more than steel beams, roof­
ing, siding, and insulation constructed
upon an enormous concrete slab. It is a
metallic and plastic version of early-day
barn dances, minus hay loft balconies,
where pioneer fun seekers blazed the trail
for today's electronic festivities.
Hundreds of rows of steel tables and
chairs surround the half-acre dance floor
centered in front of the uncurtained stage.
Concession and souvenir areas located at the spacious entry way con­
tribute to the Ballroom's booming busi­
ness. Money flows as freely as do dancers
and spectators.
In contrast, the padded dais containing
the Mechanical Bull appears abandoned
during the evening of Hank Williams, Jr.
Possibly its neglect is because of Hank
and His Band's amazing popularity, or
perhaps it is because of the Bull's loss of
the same.
Lynn Schreck held his opening night on
New Year's Eve with Mickey Gilley as
premier guest. Lynn's reign began almost
simultaneously with Deep Anadarko Bas­
in excitement, and the Ballroom flour­
ishes with Western Oklahoma economy.
Prairie music lovers return again and
again to enjoy famed Western talent
while hundreds of newcomers join them
to participate in the best of Country
Music culture. Schreck's Ballroom will
likely continue as the favorite, No. 1
nightspot, where "All that glitters IS
gold," as long as the great Gas Rush
booms.