

## **Barbara Mandrell - determined to re-establish herself and her career after near fatal auto crash!**

By David P. McGrath

Barbara Mandrell is still haunted by the memory—and the persistent pain—of the car accident which nearly took her life last year in Nashville.

"I will never forget that day," the feisty, blonde country singer star said in a recent HAPPENINGS MAGAZINE phone interview, "and my doctors say that I will always have pain the leg where the steel rod was inserted."

Mandrell has decided to pick up the career that came to a shattering halt when her car was rammed by another which has run through a stop sign. Mandrell and her young child were hurt, she severely, the driver of the other car fatally. The career which was soaring—crashed. (Apologies for the bad metaphors).

Currently busy promoting her greatest hits album and working on another album and TV show, Mandrell, who is also pregnant, talks about the dark days immediately after the accident with a certain degree of casual-ness which belies the serious effects it had on her life.

We had to cancel everything that had been so carefully planned for almost 6 months after the accident," she recalled. "I know I let a lot of people down. People who had bought concert tickets, etc. I really felt bad about that.

"I'm sure most people didn't understand how seriously I had been hurt. As a matter of fact, it took almost a month for that to sink in with me. Then when I realized that I had almost been killed, I became even more scared and more depressed than I was just from the mere shock of what I had been through. When it hit me that I had come within an eyelash of dying, I just wanted to hide—go somewhere and hide and be safe. I was ready

to retire; quit and just stay home and be safe with my family. The thought of losing my career was bad, but losing my family—that's what really shook me up."

Her father, who also happens to be her manager, Irby Mandrell, was there to comfort, console and care for his daughter/ client. He was also there to reassure her everything was "gonna be alright" and she could take as much time as she needed to "get it all back together."

"After we realized that she was gonna make it," Irby recalled, "the next step was to make sure that Barbara got all the love and attention we could all put together. The doctors told us that there would be some depression caused by the accident—plus the tremendous pain—so we decided that someone would always be with her, or nearby, to talk to her, listen to her,

laugh with her and cry with her. We didn't want her to ever feel alone."

Even in the darkest days following the accident, Mandrell though depressed and scared, knew deep down she'd eventually be back in the recording studio and on stage.

"My family and my career are my life," she said. "I need both of them to keep me going.

"Performing charges me up to do all the other things in life that I love to do. Being a mother and wife makes all those things worthwhile because I have someone to share the fun and the successes with. I'd be awfully, awfully alone if my life was void of either my family and/or my career."

Slowly, very slowly, she is rebuilding the career that had taken her soaring to the top of

the country music world.

"We did the one TV special and went ahead with the greatest hits album," she mentioned, "and now I'm in the studio working on new material. Plus, we're starting to look seriously at the concert offers that are coming in.

"The doctors keep warning me to take it easy and pace myself. They would prefer that I not go on the road 'til next year so if something goes wrong physically it'll be at home where they can deal with it instead of somewhere out on the road with strangers.

"I owe something to my fans, but, I owe more to my family. I think somewhere there is a compromise we can make. Maybe take a doctor or two with us. We'll see. I am anxious to get restarted."

