

# Tim McGraw and John Meacham at RM Writers Fest

**Story and Photos by Pat Krause**

The Rancho Mirage Writers Fest was held from Jan 29 to Jan 31. The diversity of Authors was impressive as almost every topic was covered in today's society. These are famous authors who sometimes make several appearances and do a book signing after their event. Valet parking went very smoothly for the number of cars attending. Moving from room to room was also done quickly, and it seemed no one was without a seat or a viewing on a TV screen. Each author and moderator spoke for 45 minutes. Topics included Catastrophic events, politics, aging, business,

women, racism, foreign policy, health, economy, education, former presidents, wars, writers, newspapers, White House, fiction and non-fiction, American west, crime, sports, autobiographies, historians, the media, Middle East, our turbulent times and more.

On the first day, one of the speakers was the well-known country singer, Tim McGraw, who wrote a book with John Meacham about music. The room was filled with music and McGraw Fans. The book, *Songs of America*, deals with Patriotism, Protest, and the music that made a nation. The



Continues on Page 9 *John Meacham and Tim McGraw. Photo by Pat Krause*

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event was held in the massive London room. Some of these sessions were simulcast in other rooms, so all could see and hear.

John Meacham is a historian of note, and most music fans know Tim McGraw. John Meacham asked Tim the questions to keep the conversation moving. Throughout history, music has played a big part in each moment in that period, from slavery to wars to protests and patriotism. Sounds are important as they signify what we are hearing like the sound of the surf, a baby crying, sadness, death, fears, happiness, divorce, wars, and more. Music defines the times and what the people are thinking. Songs tell a story about life and struggles. McGraw noted the Star-Spangled Banner as a religious song.

McGraw grew up with music when he said his mother was a waitress and put his playpen near the Juke Box. He grew up near cotton fields, and when he hears Dixie, it brings back memories. Some of the songs from the past have a totally different meaning than

what they were intended at the time. One song was about a black-faced person in NY, and he wondered how you could sing some of these songs without offending someone. He mentioned GOD Bless America and This Land is Your Land. He worried about this and did a tour of three songs that would complement each other instead of offending anyone.

The Green Beret song was Number 1 for weeks, but a couple years later would not have been released because of the times. McGraw said Merle Haggard was one of his favorite musicians. He told the story about Bruce Springstein, where he was asked to sing along and do the second verse along with him, and he didn't know the words. He was embarrassed and said he would never sing a Springstein song after that. They talked about Lee Greenwood and other musicians and songwriters and the impact they made with the songs they sang. He said as an artist, he wants to move people in his Louisiana Style with emotions that will bring back a memory and be relevant in the current times.



*RN Writers Fest supporting "Angels," Donna MacMillan, Nancy Stone, Jan Salta, Lori Serfling, and Shellie Reade. Photo by Pat Krause.*