

Ashley Meets Her Idols

By: Peggy Cooper, Editor

Like millions of other households around the world, Ashley and her mom Jenny anxiously tune in weekly to American Idol where contestants sing their hearts out with the hope of gaining fame, fans and votes to ultimately win the competition and land a contract with a major recording label.

"I've been watching Idol since its first season. I never miss it," said Ashley. She liked Seasons 4 and 8 the best because her favorite performers, Bo Bice [www.bobice.com] and Danny Gokey [www.dannygokey.com] respectively, are from those seasons. Although neither of them won the title, Bice was runner up in 2005 and Gokey took third place in 2009. Both of them have been very successful in their music careers.

Ashley said that Bo has the best stage presence of any contestant ever and she likes Danny because he is so laid back and nice. She never dreamed she would have the opportunity to meet either of them, let alone both of them!

Ashley's first opportunity was in Knoxville when Danny played at Cotton Eyed Joe's. This was Ashley's first bar experience. She easily made friends with the waitress and the bouncers, and talked them into getting her into \$200 front row seating for free!!

Her latest run with a star was getting to attend the Bo's Peeps Fan Club party June 12 during the CMA Festival in Nashville. Ashley and her sister Keri, accompanied by mom Jenny made the trip from Morristown just for the special occasion. Jenny said that Ashley was so excited that she chatted constantly during the drive, speculating what it would be like to be in Nashville and finally get to hear Bo Bice perform live. We all met at the Limelight where the brunch was hosted.

Ashley asked me if she was really going to get to meet Bo. I assured her she was because I was going to introduce her to him. Ashley knew that I was a fan because I had been emailing her pictures of concerts and meetings with him for several months. Last Christmas Bo gave me an autographed T-shirt to give to her. A couple of years ago I

gave him Joshua's Pet Treats for his dogs and he gave me an autographed picture for Joshua.

At the party beautiful lanyards were given to all attendees and a delicious breakfast was served. There was a silent auction of memorabilia and swag for sale. Ashley purchased a T-shirt, an 8x10 glossy, and Bo's latest CD titled "3." A mini concert was included showcasing songs from the new release.

After the concert, the highly anticipated meet and greet was held. Ashley and her entourage were first in line! Bo knelt down and took his time to talk to Ashley, ask her where she was from, and autographed the photo and CD. Their

visit ended with a big long hug! Smiles were shared all around as photographs were snapped with cameras and phones! She was amazed at how friendly he was, and how much time he spent with her. She said he was even cuter in person than he was on television. She loved the great BIG hug!!



Ashley listened to the CD over and over, all the way home, and each time she heard a song he had sung at the party, she reminded Jenny and Keri that he had sung that one, and told what he was doing on stage when he was singing it. Keri videoed some of the concert and has transferred it to Ashley's

computer where she can constantly watch it and sing along. Ashley said Bo should have won American Idol because he is a great singer and performer. She is very excited about the possibility of getting to meet him again.

It was great to see Ashley meet Bo. His genuine friendliness toward her made her day. She was excited to find out that the money made at the party (from fans like her buying things) was donated to MusiCares Nashville Flood Relief and that all of Bo's proceeds from the single "Long Road Back" (Ashley's favorite tune from "3") are being donated to Hands On Nashville Flood Relief. Learning that your favorite performer does nice things for others makes you appreciate him that much more. Ashley is a fan for life!