

# THE WESTERN WAY

The Official Publication of the  
International Western Music Association



IWMA PRESENTS

*Awards of Excellence*  
*Albuquerque, NM*

SEE RESULTS INSIDE PAGE 24



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## From The President...



MARVIN O'DELL  
IWMA President

## What an Outstanding and Rewarding Convention!

It's hard to believe that after taking so long to get here, the annual IWMA Convention came and went in what seemed like just a few seconds! Of course, it's like this every year, but this year, the event seemed to be over almost before we got things started.

Every year we talk about what a great time we had at the convention, but something about this year was special. A big part of it for me was seeing how everyone seemed to be having such a great time. I don't know how many folks came up to me and said how thankful they were that they came and how thankful they were that this event was being held. Many of them had never attended before. Some expressed that they didn't even know there was such a thing as an annual IWMA convention. Some were performers; some were fans. But it seemed to me that there were an extra number of smiles and good word coming from attendees this year.

Another thing that was special for me was how many folks contributed ideas that could make things even better in the future. Some of those ideas came to me personally, some were expressed in our annual business meeting, and some have been sent to me in emails since returning home. And although every idea might not be practical, some are and will be discussed in future board meetings by the IWMA Board of Directors.

I love open discussion. I always have. I have always felt like open, congenial discussion is a learning opportunity. I have found that it's very difficult to have open, honest discussions with those who get angry and don't want to listen to an alternate viewpoint. But when you can meet with folks who have a desire to hear as well as be heard, it can usually be a fruitful time.

We've all heard that there are two things we should never discuss with anyone: politics and religion. Which, in my mind, is a shame. I love discussing those two topics with folks who are open-minded and willing to present their viewpoint while at the same time being willing to consider my viewpoint also. Those are learning opportunities. And who knows? That kind of open-minded pow-wow could lead to me coming

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**STAFF WRITERS**  
Rick Huff, Marvin O'Dell,  
Theresa O'Dell, Marsha Short, O.J. Sikes

**EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS**  
Vic Anderson, Johnny D. Boggs,  
Peter Bruce, Karen Campbell

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**MANAGING EDITOR/ADVERTISING**  
Theresa O'Dell  
wweditor1@gmail.com; 805-551-7763

**GRAPHIC DESIGN**  
Kim Tappan/Tappan Design  
tappandesign@gmail.com

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**INTERNATIONAL WESTERN MUSIC ASSOCIATION**  
P.O. Box 648, Coppell, TX 75019  
Cell Phone 505-563-0673  
marsha@westernmusic.org  
www.westernmusic.org



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### ON THE COVER...

Multi-awarded Doug Figgs is accompanied by his trusty traveling companion as he accepts the 2023 Entertainer of the Year recognition at the IWMA Convention in November. This award, voted on by his peers and fans, is a reflection of respect for Doug's talent and hard work as he hones his craft in the preservation of the western music genre.

Content and opinions expressed in articles and reviews published in *The Western Way* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the IWMA or *The Western Way*.



Theresa O'Dell  
Editor

# The Family Reunion

What do you have when about 400 people converge in Old Town Albuquerque, NM, at the Albuquerque Hotel, wearing boots and hats, carrying musical instruments, unloading boxes of CDs, and unpacking used western-wear

apparel for resale? You have a “family reunion!”

A family reunion is the most accurate way to describe the annual IWMA Convention that happens each year in Albuquerque. It is family time – because that’s what IWMA is, a family! For most business convention events like this in the corporate world it means boring daytime meetings and late-night partying. I’ve had to attend a few of those in my working days. It wasn’t necessarily an anticipated use of my time.

For the IWMA Convention, there’s nothing “boring” to be had. Oh yes, there are “workshops” throughout the day, but they are fun, informative and exciting. And for those who don’t attend, there is music and poetry going on nonstop on various stages. There are vendors in the hallways with beautiful western wares for sale; a CD room with endless choices of great

western music and poetry; and a Western Wear Boutique with bargains galore for shopping. From 7:00am to midnight and sometimes even later, there is something for everyone going on someplace in the Albuquerque Hotel.

Now to be sure, we have our share of late-night partying, but it isn’t exactly what you might think. These parties are groups of musicians and poets coming together to song-share, jam, recite and collaborate on new projects. Faithful fans gather there to listen just for the love of the music because they don’t get their fill during the day shows. They can’t get enough! These “parties” start after the last formal event of the evening and continue (sometimes) into the very wee hours of the morning.

I can’t find enough adjectives to describe the attitude of excitement and comradery that filled the halls of the Albuquerque Hotel this past November. I can only tell you what I felt and saw and encourage you to make the 2024 IWMA Convention your destination place November 13-17, 2024. Reserve those dates on your calendar NOW and come see for yourself what all the buzz is about. After just one trip to the event, you may find you have been lassoed and roped-in to this family reunion for years to come.

*Theresa*

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Thank you  
so much to IWMA  
for all the wonderful  
things you do to  
help Western Music  
and Cowboy Poetry.  
I was deeply surprised  
to receive the  
Curly Musgrave Spirit  
of the Cowboy Buckle  
and will cherish  
it always.





## From The Executive Director...



Marsha Short  
Executive Director

Here it is again...another new year. I wasn't quite finished with the old one yet and I hate to toss it away before it's completely used up. So, working backwards, let's think about 2023.

The Convention in November was a tremendous success. Everyone who was there commented on the

friendly, relaxed atmosphere. There were old friends and new friends. And all that talent gathered in one place! Of course, it couldn't happen without so many people working in the background to make it all run smoothly. THANK YOU to Judi Anderson and her army of volunteers from the IWMA New Mexico Chapter who ran the Western Boutique and organized the vendor area. And THANK YOU to the vendors who often say that they don't sell a lot but have so much fun they keep coming back!

THANK YOU to Diana Raven who not only took the CD Mercantile to the next level this year, but also headed up the committee for the Awards Show. Everything ran smoothly in spite of my best efforts to throw another "by the way" into the mix.

And could we do registration without Ed Hughes and Randy Fowler? They sit at the desk for hours every day, greeting members and answering questions from people passing by. To give them a break, we force them into a showcase to perform!

After Hours Music & Poetry was a great success this year. THANK YOU to the chapters from New Mexico, Colorado and Tennessee for sponsoring rooms, and to 3 Trails West for continuing the tradition of the Fireplace Jam. Do they ever sleep?

2023 also saw the introduction of our new theme, **Get Roped Into Western Music & Cowboy Poetry**. Our membership is finally back in a growth pattern after losing so many in 2020. You'll see IWMA at more gatherings...watch for us and stop by to say hello. "Rope in" a friend. Let them know about IWMA and how they can be a part of something bigger than one gathering or one house concert.

*Continued on page 7*



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- Tigard Public Library, Tigard, OR
- Rex Allen Arizona Cowboy Museum – Willcox, AZ
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**FOR MORE INFORMATION: 505-563-0673**

*The Western Way is the official magazine of the International Western Music Association, a non-profit 501(c)3 Corporation, and is supported through paid advertising.*

# WESTERN EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR DETAILS GO TO  
[IWESTERNMUSIC.ORG/EVENTS](http://IWESTERNMUSIC.ORG/EVENTS)

## 2024

### WESTERN MUSIC SONGWRITER SERIES

JAN. 27 – TOOEELE, UT

### NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

JAN. 29 – FEB. 3 – ELKO, NV

### CACHE VALLEY COWBOY RENDEZVOUS

MARCH 15-17 – LOGAN, UT

### JUAB COWBOY POETRY & MUSIC GATHERING

MARCH 22-23 – NEPHL, UT

### WAXAHACHIE COWBOY GATHERING

APRIL 13 – WAXAHACHIE, TX

### SANTA CLARITA COWBOY FESTIVAL

APRIL 20-21 – SANTA CLARITA, CA

### SALADO COWBOY POETRY & MUSICGATHING

MAY 3-5 – SALADO, TX

### WESTERN HERITAGE CLASSIC

MAY 9-12 – ABILENE, TX

### PICKIN' ON THE PLAINS

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### 2024 IWMA CONVENTION

NOV. 13-17 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT...

*Continued from page 2*

to see how my viewpoint is wrong! It wouldn't be the first time. (Don't tell my wife I ever said that!)

With that said, I want to thank all of our members for their understanding and cooperative attitudes this year. And I want to thank all of those who volunteered in one capacity or another. It takes a lot of hard work to put this convention together and a lot more hard work to get it through the week with a minimum of breakdowns. Many attendees will never know what goes on behind the scenes – things that were they not going on would greatly cripple the entire event.

Finally, I want to thank Bobbi Jean Bell for her work and input as a member of the Board of Directors over the past few years. She retired from the board at the end of 2023. Bobbi Jean has been a positive contributor who brought fresh and insightful ideas to every board meeting. At the same time, I want to welcome Mark Munzert to the board after his year of serving as an intern and Dan McCorison as our 2024 intern. We look forward to working with these gentlemen as we strive to make the IWMA better and stronger in the years to come.

Even though you will get this magazine in February, I will go ahead and wish each member and reader a very Happy and Prosperous 2024.

MARVIN O'DELL  
*President IWMA*

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

*Continued from page 5*

Thanks to the efforts of KC LaCourse, Cowboy Poetry is now a category in the Red Carpet Awards. This show is in The Netherlands every year, and several of our members have participated and received awards. THANK YOU, KC, for helping to put the "I" in IWMA!

THANK YOU to the many volunteers who are IWMA Chapter Officers and Directors. They are where the "rubber meets the road" in taking Western Music and Cowboy Poetry to the public.

And a personal THANK YOU to the IWMA Board of Directors. Without these people, there would be no IWMA. They give up their time (and sometimes their talent and money) to make sure that IWMA is a premier organization. They meet by Zoom the second Tuesday of every month to review every aspect of IWMA. They get a long list of "assignments" at the Convention, and you see them taking tickets, helping out in the Mercantile and Boutique, and in general "mingling." Not a one of them ever says no...it's always "what can I do to help?"

As we move into this new year, I hope you've made achievable resolutions. Mine is to try to be a little nicer, do a better job of staying in touch with family and friends, and call someone just to say "hi." Have a great year, and we'll see you down the trail!

*Marsha*

# SAVE THE DATE ~ AUGUST 8, 9 & 10, 2024




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## Coffee AND CONVERSATION BY PETER BRUCE



W

ith another fantastic IWMA gathering in the books, now is the time to reflect on past success and focus on the future. For many attendees, the aim of meeting in Albuquerque every year is to simply enjoy and absorb all the music and spoken word. However, for a lot of the membership, the intent is to present and perform. With that in mind, I have some ideas for musicians on how to get their songs and stories heard.

As someone who has spent his career in radio, I've seen huge paradigm shifts over the past several years. In days gone by, it was pretty simple: CDs were sent by mail from artists (or their producers) to radio stations. While that's still the case, it can be a lot more complicated. There are so many options for individuals and bands to consider. A key element for anyone to contemplate is this: "What's your goal?" Within that consideration are multiple other questions: Who do I want to share my music with? How do I get my song on the radio, or YouTube, or satellite? How much am I willing to spend? Can I realistically expect any return on my investment? Do I need a producer/engineer? How about a marketing professional? Who is my audience? Do I want to produce a single or a whole album? And do I want to create a physical copy or make a digital version?

There are so many options: Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon, Sound Cloud, CD Baby; as well as Airplay Direct and Drop Box. Which leads back to the original question: "Why are you doing this and what's the goal?" As a radio presenter, I love to have a CD in my hands. Hopefully it has liner notes, musician and songwriter credits, art, lyrics, photography and insight on how the project came to fruition. But that's just my personal perspective. A lot of artists, poets and musicians don't have the time, energy, money or inclination to do all that. Which is fine. It just leads to another question: "How do you want to capture your performance and then convey it to others?" If you are serious about furthering your career, I recommend the services of an engineer/producer to achieve what you're after. Professional guidance is key to getting what you want out of any given recording project. I know I've asked a lot of questions in this space. I don't claim to have any answers. It's a constantly shifting world of music out there. Yet it's sure fun to be part of it. And I couldn't be prouder to be associated with such a talented group of individuals.

Questions, criticism and comments are always welcome: [peter.bruce@kaff.com](mailto:peter.bruce@kaff.com). And if you're ever in Flagstaff, please reach out so I can record an Under Western Skies program with you!

**PETER BRUCE** is an announcer, producer, engineer and emcee with 40 years of experience in broadcasting, music and radio. In addition to his love of music, Peter is an avid outdoorsman. His hobbies include cycling, skiing, kayaking, hiking and swimming. Arizona is home most of the time when he's not roaming the planet.

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#### KZNQ, Santa Clarita, CA

##### **The Country Campfire**

W 10 pm – 11 pm

##### **Around the Campfire**

TU 10 pm – 11 pm

TH 10 pm – 11 pm



**TIMES ARE CST AND AIRTIME MAY VARY**



# *Penned by Lantern Light*

This column will spotlight members of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the International Western Music Association. It will highlight an invited poet guest with possible short biographical information of his/her works. If a member of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter and if interested in submitting one piece of original work for publication, please contact the Western Wordsmiths chapter president.



---

## DON'T TELL ME TO COWBOY UP!

*by Floyd Beard*

---

*Watch out what you're saying,  
I told the kid a' standing there.  
I might just grab a handful  
Of your pretty, curly hair.*

*I might jerk you into next week,  
Yank your hair out by the roots.  
But don't you tell me to cowboy up,  
'Til you've walked a mile in my boots.*

*I've ridden from can't to can't,  
I've roped and dragged to the fire.  
I've mugged, I've branded, I've doctored.  
Don't you call me a liar.*

*And to tell it to you straight,  
I don't feel I have to explain,  
How I had a little mishap,  
deep down in my brain.*

*How it caused me to get dizzy,  
Made me spit, and cough and choke.  
How the Good Lord and doctors saved me,  
But damn, I had a stroke!*

*And you're right son, I can't drop my coils,  
And take my dallies too,  
'Cuz my arm and my hand don't work,  
Just like they us'ta do.*

*So now I have to sit and watch the work,  
Just recall how I us'ta work and play.  
But I still tell my stories,  
And pray I'll work again someday.*

*You just keep on talking!  
'Cuz here I hope to shou.,  
You may find this old cowboy,  
Is far from down and out.*

*I still work hard on my ranch.  
I still care for my stock.  
Though I need a little stick,  
To steady me when I walk.*

*You just keep on a strutting,  
Like some turkey gobbler in the rut,  
'Cuz this cobbled up old cowboy's  
Fixen' to whip your sorry butt.*



**FLOYD BEARD** and wife, Valerie, ranch in the canyons near Kim, Colorado where they run a cow/calf operation. A good day involves getting up before the sun is "pinking up the east", riding, working cattle, and settling down on the porch to watch the sunset. Floyd who has a gift to put words together that build a vivid picture in the reader/listeners' minds has been writing and rhyming for over 40 years and is the 2016, 2017, 2021, and 2023 International Music Association's Male Poet of the Year. His most recent CD, "Horse Tales and Cow Trails" won the IWMA's 2021 Cowboy Poetry CD of the Year. Most of his original poetry is written about his observations while working on the ranch, interwoven with stories from the old timers and a lifetime of living and studying the western lifestyle. For more information go to: [www.floydbeardcowboy.com](http://www.floydbeardcowboy.com) or email him at [febeard@yahoo.com](mailto:febeard@yahoo.com).

# A LITTLE BIT of HISTORY

By Johnny D. Boggs

In *Red River*, director Howard Hawks's 1948 Western film starring John Wayne and Montgomery Clift, a Texas cattle rancher sets out in 1865 to deliver 10,000 Texas longhorns to Sedalia, Missouri, in a win-or-bust gamble to save his ranch and legacy. Along the way, rancher Tom Dunson turns into an obsessed, uncompromising and murderous Captain Bligh – the film is often called a *Western Mutiny on the Bounty* – who refuses to believe that there's a safer, shorter and easier market to be found in Abilene, Kansas.

Which is why we don't get our history from movies.

Ten thousand cattle? That might make a good song (believed by some to have been written by The Virginian's Owen Wister), but roughly 2,500 was the maximum number of steers (typically – mixed herds being harder to handle) a trail boss would want to push north to the railheads for delivery to packing houses in Chicago, Kansas City or New York City.

Before the Chisholm Trail, herds had been driven along the Shawnee Trail to Sedalia, Missouri, and later Baxter Springs, Kansas, but those markets dried up when local farmers complained (such protests date to at least the 1840s) that Texas longhorns were killing local farmers' domestic cattle with Texas/Spanish/Mexican Fever. Actually, the disease was spread by ticks, a disease to which the Texas cattle were immune. By 1867, Kansas had enacted quarantine laws, prohibiting the transportation of Texas cattle in selected areas. That line moved west over the years.

To avoid the quarantine lines, the trails also moved west. The Sedalia Trail made way for the Chisholm Trail and its end-of-trail (and often bloody) cow towns, including Abilene, Newton, Ellsworth, Caldwell and Dodge City. That trail was blazed not by a cattleman but a trader named Jesse Chisholm. Living in what became Wichita, Kansas, Chisholm and a partner brought a wagon train of merchandise to stock a trading post on the North Canadian River near present-day Oklahoma City. Chisholm's trail never entered Texas, but over the years, his name became associated with the cattle trail from southern Texas to various Kansas cow towns. But first, it went by names like McCoy's Trail, the Abilene Trail, the Great Texas Cattle Trail, the Eastern Trail, the Kansas Trail or, simply, the Trail.

Abilene, on the other hand, might never have made history if not for an enterprising Illinoisian named Joseph G. McCoy, who had a vision to link Texas beef to northern cities. McCoy wanted to build shipping pens and stockyards along what would become the Kansas Pacific Railway. Junction City, Solomon City and Salina passed. But Abilene, "a very small, dead place, consisting



Photo still from the movie "Red River."  
Photo courtesy of United Artists

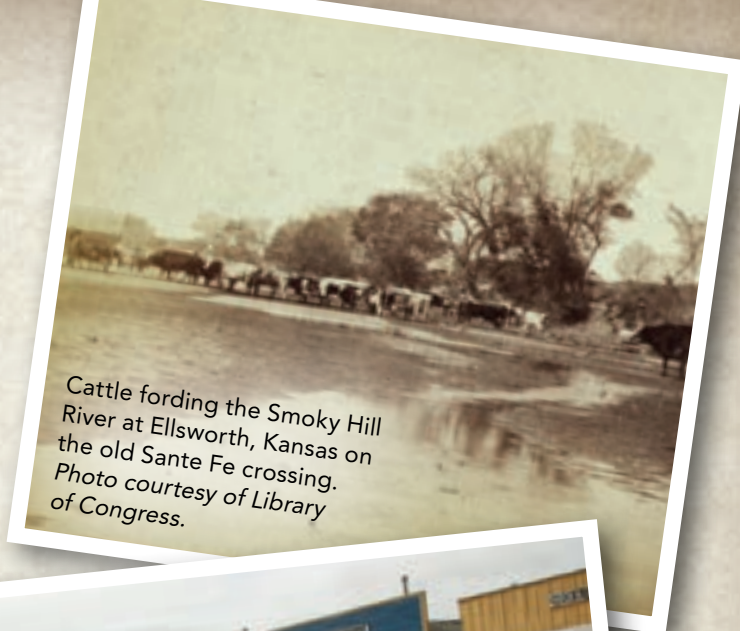


of about a dozen log huts” and where “A plank on a sawhorse served as a railroad station until about 1868,” was game. McCoy even persuaded Kansas Governor Samuel Crawford to ignore the fact that Abilene was inside the Texas cattle quarantine line, but only after some Texas cattlemen okayed a \$50,000 bond to cover livestock losses caused by Texas Fever. McCoy also invested \$18,000 in what became the Drovers Cottage, a fancy hotel serving oysters (I wouldn’t eat oysters in Kansas today!), Kentucky bourbon and French brandies to attract cattle drovers and cattle buyers.

As the quarantine line moved, the Western Trail would retire the Chisholm Trail as a cattle trail and ship more cattle (6-7 million compared to the Chisholm’s roughly 5 million) before Kansas banned Texas cattle from entering the entire state in 1885. But more people remember the Chisholm Trail.

Back to Red River. Dunson’s adopted son, Matt Garth, takes the herd away from Dunson, and delivers the beef to Abilene on August 14, 1865, then gets into a savage fistfight with the vengeful Dunson.

The historical problem? Well, Garth would have a long wait to sell those cattle in Abilene, which didn’t ship Texas cattle east by rail until September 5, 1867. Those cowboys should have listened to Dunson and taken his longhorns to Sedalia.



Cattle fording the Smoky Hill River at Ellsworth, Kansas on the old Sante Fe crossing.  
Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.



Old Abilene Town in Abilene, Kansas.  
Photo by Johnny D. Boggs.

## RECOMMENDED READING

David Dary. *Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries*. New York: Avon Books, 1982.

Robert R. Dykstra. *The Cattle Towns*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.

Wayne Gard. *The Chisholm Trail*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.

Joseph G. McCoy. *Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1985.

Don Worcester. *The Chisholm Trail: High Road of the Cattle Kingdom*. New York: Indian Head Books, 1994.



Jesse Chisholm’s grave marker.  
Photo by Johnny D. Boggs



**JOHNNY D. BOGGS**, a native of South Carolina and former newspaper journalist, is a Western novelist/historian, film scholar, photographer and sometimes lyricist who lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico. He has won a record nine Spur Awards from Western Writers of America for his fiction and writes for several magazines. His website is [www.JohnnyDBoggs.com](http://www.JohnnyDBoggs.com).



# In The Spotlight...

by Marvin O'Dell

...**Buffalo Bryan Marr** writes: Western music legend, lifetime member of the IWMA, working cowboy, and accomplished horse trainer **Rusty Richards** was memorialized during services held at the Circle S Ranch in Silverado Canyon in November. 400-plus friends and family attended. The many speakers reflected on Rusty's embodiment of living the "Cowboy Way", his gentle nature, his 70-plus year career performing and writing of western music, and his unmistakable voice. He was the real deal and will be sorely missed. Godspeed, Rusty!

...**Tom Swearingen** has again been featured on Oregon Public Broadcasting's NPR station. The University of Oregon selected Tom to perform his poetry and discuss the history of cowboy poetry for their lifelong learning program. One of Tom's sessions from the 2020 National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko was featured by the Western Folklife Center's online video series. At the invitation of a professional jazz quartet, Tom joined them in the studio for the recording of jazz interpretations of his poetry and classic cowboy songs.

...**The Diamond W Wranglers** played a series of Christmas shows at the Prairie Rose Ranch in December. Opening night was also a CD Release Party for their new album *Exploring Our Country Side*. Their first new album in six years features the Wranglers' take on some country music standards as well as a few original songs. Also included are three western songs, two of which were written by lead singer Stu Stuart. This is the first album with Jesse Friesen, former Flying W Wrangler, who replaced the late Jim Farrell. Jesse, who also produced and engineered the album, is featured singing lead on three songs.

...**The Panhandle Cowboys** are finishing up their fifth CD which is scheduled for release in early spring. They will be laying down the last two tracks in January at Track 7 Studio in Jerome, ID.

...With new members David Flood and John Pumphrey along with Stephen Harrington, the **Mountain Saddle Band** has released its first new single since 2013, "Homestead that my Grandpa used to Own." It is the first of many on their new album *Arizona Skies* scheduled to be released in the spring. MSB performed with **Barry Ward** in December for a Christmas Concert in Show Low, AZ.

...**Almeda Bradshaw** is wintering well with writing projects, keeping the hearth fire burning, and savoring the serenity staying home affords.

...**Jim Jones** has finished recording his upcoming album, *Storyteller: Tales From the West*, with ten original songs recorded at Cribworks Studio and produced by Merel Bregante. The album should be released in early 2024.

...**Merel Bregante** is also announcing the wrapping up of Jim Jones' new album. He is also mixing the new **Sarah Pierce** recording *I Want To Go Home* and just beginning two new **Carol Markstrom** projects. **Joel White** will be in to record two singles in early January.

...The special guest presenter for the Billy W. Sills Lecture Series January 20 in Fort Worth, TX is cowboy poet **David Smith**. His topic is "History of Cowboy Poetry from the Cattle Drive era 1866 to 1902." He will also be reciting some of his original poems.

...On June 1 in Yuma, CO, a Chuckwagon cook off will be held along with a western/cowboy songwriting contest. The entertainment will be by **Jim Reader and TJ Casey**. For more info, contact TJ Casey.

...Since the passing of her dear husband, Billy, earlier in the year, **Peggy Malone** has been working on a new album. She hopes to have it out to the DJs soon.

...**The Dan Canyon Band** is meeting every week where the floodgates of creativity are being swung wide open. New songs are shaping up nicely, and the band plans to begin recording soon with an eye on a late spring or summer release of their third album which is tentatively titled "Hombre."

...**Glenn Moreland** received the first Cliff Teinert Cash Award at the 2023 Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering. This award was given for Glenn's perseverance in keeping the western heritage alive through his chuck wagon cooking, chuck wagon building, and cowboy music.



...**Phoebe White** is back in the studio recording her next album set to be released in the spring. This project contains several original compositions as well as some traditional songs and features an award winning cast sure to make you holler "yee haw!"

...The **Hot Texas Swing Band** has finished recording their sixth album, including 13 originals by bandleader **Alex Dormont** and Johnny Gimble's iconic fiddle instrumental "Gardenia Waltz." Alex was inspired to write by his journey of recovery and learning to walk again after surgery to remove a benign brain tumor. The new album, *Gotta Move*, will be released soon.

...During the weekend of the Caroline (Alberta) Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering, **Doc Mehl, Doris Daley, Ed Peekeekoot, Ed Brown, BJ Smith** and other Canadian poets and musicians were models for a Parisian fashion shoot organized by *Le Journal Du Dimanche* (JDD). The JDD fashion crew flew to Alberta from France with seven big trunks of Parisian "western" duds and decked out the cowboy crew in Christian Dior boots, Versace earrings, Armani vests, etc., etc. The magazine is out and taking the French fashion scene by storm.

...This fall, **Claudia Nygaard** saw the premiere of her new children's musical! A modern slant on the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*, a theater in Massachusetts presented the production and included a full cast performing the songs and acting out the roles with Claudia narrating. After 12 states in six weeks, she is now back in Nashville recording her next album titled *To Race The Wind*. For 2024 she will be offering cowboy gatherings both a show that includes songs from the new album, and for the smaller cowpokes a solo storytelling version of her musical.

...For their live work in the UK during 2023, **Clint Bradley** and his band received the CCN HORIZON ACT OF THE YEAR award. Clint reports that "It's been gratifying to be able to introduce people to Western music from a slightly different angle." The band will be touring again in 2024 with gigs already booked in Switzerland, Holland, Scotland, Ireland, and, of course, more UK shows. Clint's last single had some great airplay including more daytime BBC coverage.

...**Dave Munsick** and his sons just found out they are in the running for The Governor's Arts Award for their home state of Wyoming. Also, oldest son Tris just had his first baby and is just finishing up a CD recorded in San Antonio with the great Tommy Detamore; middle son Sam just started running the U T ranch out on the Powder River; and youngest son Ian was recently featured on the CBS Good Morning Show. Daddy Dave continues to be one of their hired gun fiddlers and is booked to do a few of his "Songteller" shows through the winter.

...Jessie Robertson, aka The Outlaw Jessie Del of **Miss Devon & The Outlaw**, took a turn at acting when cast in a comedic musical western murder mystery play during three weekends in December. The feature was called *Big Mess in The Wild West* by Evan Beggs and Evans Theater Co. near Weatherford, TX. Outlaw was perfectly cast as the mean sheriff in the production! Also, Miss Devon & The Outlaw were honored to be featured performers debuting at the 2024 Colorado Cowboy Gathering in Golden, CO in mid-January.

...In February, **Rusted Spurs West** will be headlining at the Wuertz Farm Running of the Gourds festival held annually at the Pinal County Fairgrounds in Casa Grande, AZ. They will be promoting the IWMA and performing songs from their IWMA 2023 Western Swing Album of the Year, *Arizona Stars*. The group also performed at two Veterans fundraising concerts in Tucson in January. Tex and Slim are both veterans, and along with Ms Patti, they volunteer their time for the concerts.

...**Floyd Beard** has been writing a monthly cowboy poetry and western interest column since January 2023. His column, "Short Grass Philosopher" is syndicated in numerous newspapers and magazines around Colorado and surrounding states and has a readership of an estimated 1.2 million plus.

...**Gary and Louanne Kirkman** just received their 10th great-grandchild, a daughter, Oakly Ervien. Gary and **Ashley Westcott** performed in December in Snowflake AZ for the charity The Giving Machine. 🐾

# ON THE ROAD WITH **IWMA**

## THE DURANGO GATHERING

By Diana Raven

The Durango Cowboy Gathering was held September 28 – October 1. Diana Raven was at the IWMA table just outside the CD room representing IWMA. She talked with 10-15 non-members, and three have already joined. The Durango Gathering is a member of IWMA.



Durango Gathering

## OLD WEST DAYS

By Brad Exton

Twelve members of the Black Hills & Beyond Chapter attended what was rumored to be the last Old West Days in Valentine, NE. The gathering has been going on for 32 years, but because of problems with their venue location and lack of help, it appears that the gathering will not continue in its current location and format. Hopefully someone will take it over and breathe life into it. The BH&B Chapter had a table in the vendor area and was able to make contact with the many of the 200+ people that attended the event. IWMA was of interest to many folks there, as was evidenced by the full box of Western Ways and applications that were given out. Hopefully we'll see some new members come out of the weekend.

## THE CHAUTAUQUA COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

The Chautauqua Cowboy Poetry Gathering was held in Waxahachie, TX., September 30. IWMA was well represented on the program, and Marsha Short was at the table for IWMA.



Chautauqua ad in program



Jake Riley



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who donated 15% of their sales to IWMA.**

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# Chapter Update

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## ARIZONA CHAPTER

**President: Gary Kirkman**  
**eskirkman@hotmail.com**

First of all, congrats to all the different category winners this year. It was good to see everyone at ABQ and listen to their performances. Thanks to Jim and Barb Buchanan and crew we had a very successful meeting and jam session Oct 21 in Prescott, with many members and nonmembers in attendance. Gary asked for nominations for chapter officers for 2024 and Mike Dunn nominated Gary Kirkman and Ashley Westcott to remain as President and Sec./Treas. It was seconded and passed by the membership in attendance. Those members not in attendance may nominate someone of their choice if they care to and we will vote via email. We want everyone to have a voice. Many of our members are performing around the country and doing a great job promoting cowboy poetry and music. Keep up the good work. I hope everyone took time to give thanks during this Thanksgiving season for the many blessings we enjoy, and may we each have a wonderful Christmas and a busy and prosperous year ahead.

## BLACK HILLS & BEYOND CHAPTER

**President: Brad Exton**  
**ramblinrangers@yahoo.com**

Even though things slowed down a little this fall for many of our members, many were busy getting ready for the annual Convention in Albuquerque. We had a table there

along with quite a few members attending the activities. Some of our members won awards, so please read the WW to see who that was. In the meantime, the following members reported some of their performances through the end of the year and on into next year. Sherl Cederburg got "roped" into the action of the Will Rogers Medallion Awards Ceremony in Ft. Worth, in October. She brought home the Gold in Recorded Poetry. Fellow



*Sherl Cederberg being roped in*

Chapter member, John Nesbitt brought home the Bronze medallion. Congrats to both of you. Congratulations to member Pegie Douglas, as she was inducted into the Legends of Dakota Country Music Hall of Fame in September in Rapid City, SD. She performed there with her band, the Badger Sett Band. RubyAnn Stieglemeier has had a pretty quiet fall musically but has been working hard on a new children's book that will be out around the holidays. John and Joanne (Gardner) Lowell will be heading to Ireland in January to attend and participate in the second annual Celtic and Folk Music Conference called "Your Roots Are Showing." John will perform with his European trio (German and Italian).

Joanne will be a panelist, showing a documentary film she filmed and directed about the making of "Will the Circle Be Unbroken 2." After that, a trip to Florida to perform in Key West. February and March will be spent in Fredericksburg, Texas to work on a new recording of cowboy and western songs. We'll be looking forward to the new recording. The Ramblin' Rangers were busy on the road before the Convention, traveling and playing in Arkansas and Texas, before heading back to South Dakota. After attending the Convention, they headed north again to play a few more gigs in SD before heading south to New Mexico for the winter, to perform at Hidden Valley Ranch outside Deming. As always, we hope that everyone has a very blessed and safe holiday season and a great New Year

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

**President: Greg Khougaz**  
**gregkhougaz@earthlink.net**

If it's Winter, we had another great time at the IWMA Convention in Albuquerque. First, the sad news: Western music legend, cowboy and accomplished horse trainer, Rusty Richards, was memorialized at services held at the Circle S Ranch in Silverado Canyon on November 11. 400+ attended. Rusty's was the embodiment of the "Cowboy Way" with a gentle nature and, 70+ year career performing and writing western music. He will be sorely missed. God's speed Rusty!" Marilyn Tuttle, our favorite nonagenarian still highlights our quarterly, Western Music Showcases at the Wells Fargo Theater in the Autry Museum of the West. She has helped make the

*Continued on page 18*



## MAILBAG

I think you may have heard what I've been keeping under my hat. Badger Clark: Poet Among the Pines aired on PBS October 5. This has been long in coming and was spearheaded by Brad Dumke through South Dakota Public Broadcasting...Below is a link to the film on PBS.org.

**[www.pbs.org/video/badger-clark-poet-among-the-pines-zbop2h/](http://www.pbs.org/video/badger-clark-poet-among-the-pines-zbop2h/)**

...if it wasn't for the fine article we put in Western Way, these folks would never have heard of me and would never have thought to ask me to contribute to this monumental film. It's a testament to the power of the printed word. Thank you, Theresa.

~ R. Rideout, CO

On behalf of Prairie Moon, I wanted to take a moment and express my appreciation for the IWMA, both its leadership/board and whole organization. I know it takes a lot of planning and work every year to have such a big event. The move from the Marriott to Hotel Albuquerque a few years back was a stroke of genius as the setting and atmosphere there are so nice.

But besides the great western music and poetry, which sets this organization apart from all others, it's the people, rather it's that feeling of family and all of the friendly folks that make this annual conference such a delight to attend. It

is always so good to see old friends as well as new performers at this annual gathering. I thought this year's event was very well done, and one of the best ever.

It was quite an honor for Prairie Moon to sing a tribute song, written by Rusty Richards at the Awards Show, especially having met and jammed with Rusty a couple of times in the past at the IWMA.

So, thank you from all of us and here's wishing you a very safe and happy holiday time this year. Please let me know how we may better support the organization in the coming years.

~ Michael Callaway (Prairie Moon), TX

Over the years the WMA magazine has offered some great cover photos. I recall the fine ones featuring Rex, Jr., my good friend O.J. Sikes and Ian Tyson, for example. But the most recent photo is in a league of its own! (Sorry, fellows!) The photo of Belinda Gail is just gorgeous! I confess I don't know much of her music but her exuberant look, her beautiful classic western attire and her proud hug of her guitar make this photo irresistible! She, indeed, symbolizes the great western sweethearts, then and now. I will surely read the tribute article with interest. Kindly thank Ms. O'Dell for this great cover and if you do speak to Ms. Gail please tell her that an Arizona reader just loves her style!

~ Bob Serky, AZ

# Chapter Update

*Continued from page 16*

shows so successful that for 2024, we will appear bi-monthly on the third Sunday starting February 18. April 20-21 will see the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival so that Autry Show will be on the 28th. If you're going to be in town and would like to participate, give us a holler! Speaking of the Santa Clarita Festival we hope to have a presence as we did pre Covid. Scott T, CA Chapter VP has formed a western swing and americana band, the Southwest Zephyrs, with Shelah Spiegel on fiddle and Earnie Neagle on bass. The band is in rehearsal and planning a CD release for 2024. Ron Christopher will soon release a new album, Dust of Los Angeles. All in all, we are looking forward to a Western Musical 2024.



*Rusty Richards*



*Scott T and Earnie Neagle*



*Scott, Greg, Marilyn and Earnie at the Autry*



*Buddy Greenbloom and the Grandsons of the Pioneers*

## COLORADO CHAPTER President: Sonja Oliver [psalmgarden@icloud.com](mailto:psalmgarden@icloud.com)

The Colorado Chapter returned to the Florissant Grange for a Showcase in August. Performers were The Russellers, Sherl Cederburg, Dennis Knill (joined by his wife, Carilyn), and Sonja Oliver. In September we had a last-minute IWMA-CO Showcase in Bailey with performers Patty Clayton, Kathy Hanna, Becky Murr, and Susie Knight. The Colorado Cowboy Gathering takes place January 11-14, 2024, at the Buffalo Rose Event Center in Golden, CO. Visit [www.coloradocowboygathering.org](http://www.coloradocowboygathering.org) for info. Thank you to our benevolent photographer and Chapter Member, Bill Patterson, for following western entertainment all around Colorado taking fantastic photos and sharing them with us. Finally, congratulations to ALL the winners at the 2023 IWMA Convention. So many are residents of COLORADO. Having bred and raised horses on our ranch in Arkansas, I had the privilege and freedom to live and love the Western culture that makes our country so unique. I joined the IWMA family to assist with the mission to share and retain our western heritage through Western Music and Cowboy Poetry. Serving as IWMA Colorado Chapter President for the past two years has been an honor, and I will continue to support our mission. Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity.



*Kathy Hanna on keyboard*



*Patty Clayton*



*IWMA Showcase Florissant Group*



*2023 WSCG Group*

## COLUMBIA CHAPTER President: Tom Swearingen [tomswearengen@gmail.com](mailto:tomswearengen@gmail.com)

The Columbia Chapter was well represented in Albuquerque with several member nominees, performers, and workshop presenters. On the heels of our well-attended annual fall concert in Oregon's Columbia Gorge, groundwork is being laid for additional regional concerts.

*Continued on page 20*



# The Western World Tour



by Rick Huff

**Western Music** is most often acoustic in its core instrumentation. Its lyrics are typically about the lives, loves, lore, locales, legends and legacy of the old and new West, its peoples or Cowboying worldwide.

Tips? Comments? Ideas for the column, send to:  
Rick Huff, P.O. Box 8442, Albuquerque, NM 87198-8442  
or [bestofthewest@swcp.com](mailto:bestofthewest@swcp.com)

It's not breaking news to state that anniversaries can sneak up on us. Just ask anyone who has faced that scowl from a calendar-watching mate. It occurred to me this past year that I was approaching this, the twentieth anniversary of having created this column for The Western Way. I missed my own tenth anniversary, only realizing the fact somewhere during my twelfth year of writing it! Even my fortieth anniversary of involvement with Western Music went by unobserved sometime in 2023, even though I have often thought back to the day in 1983 when Hi Busse unexpectedly walked through the front door of my commercial recording studio seeking help in promoting the genre. As if sent from "on Hi" to celebrate it, new information arrived in August (his birth month) about Hi's pre-Frontiersmen days in the mid-1930s recording and appearing with The Saddle Tramps, thanks to O.J. Sikes and one of his Canadian listeners. The "Tramps" were popular contemporaries of Stuart Hamblen & His Lucky Stars, The Beverly Hillbillies and the Sons Of The Pioneers, frequently competing with them and others as part of west coast promoter Larry Sunbrock's new entertainment invention The Battle Of The Bands!! Much more on all that to come in a future write-up.

Columnists are a curious lot. Not just curious about their subjects. Apparently most of us are content to raise, feed and nurture our works and then launch our little birds out into the wild with no idea where they wind up. Hopefully I have informed, amused, diverted or maybe even disturbed people along the way. Any or all of that is valid but, for the most part, we really have no idea what effect we are having. While I have occasionally ventured a toe into hot water I haven't been dismissed yet from my pro bono position, so I guess that's something.

Along the line we....that "we" meaning you, Western Way editors Don Cusic, later Theresa O'Dell and I.... have had the opportunity to dive into wildly divergent currents and tributaries in the winding Western river. The column was originally called "Western Air," a double take on "Westernaire" and Western [music-deejays-broadcasting-over-the] Air. It resulted from my walking past then-Western Way editor Don

Cusic in the hallway at Sam's Town Las Vegas during the then-WMA event of November 2003. I briefly asked Don if he'd be interested in such a column and he said "Yes. Give me a sample" And we were off and running. For twenty years. But it didn't take too long to realize that the valiant hosts of Western shows basically had the same recurring story. A fight to get it on and a fight to keep it on past reluctant radio program directors and consultants. Although we have continued to feature hosts and shows periodically, the focus broadened to what you have found here since. The column renaming and "Western World Tour" logo resulted in 2017 from the stage show I put together for the soon-to-be "IWMA" to conclusively prove the "I" portion of the "W." Cowboy songs exist in countries and cultures worldwide and a slew of them were translated and performed for an enthusiastic audience. I took great pride in that one, along with some other contributions that have managed to track. Helping to bring the Youth Chapter on board with Donna & Tom Hatton, campaigning to bring current Western artists onto the covers of the *Western Way* and the home page of the IWMA website, helping to officially give Cowboy Poets their deserved recognition over some objections at the time ("this is a music organization"), co-founding and naming the Pioneer Trail Award...and helping to bring the IWMA to Albuquerque in 2005 and, eventually, founding its New Mexico Chapter with Joe Brown and Ray Rutherford. Did I mention the amazing feeling of having O.J. Sikes entrust me with the Contemporary Western reviews? Or being invited to participate on the Hall Of Fame Committee?? Enough, Huff! End of self-interview!

Hopefully all of this yak about myself has come off as being less of a bragfest and more its intended purpose of simply arranging candles on a figurative anniversary cake. I assure you I am not blowing any noisemakers here at the computer and confetti would only jam up the keyboard. So, a simple but huge THANK YOU from me to all the hosts, writers, singers, poets, creators, creations and characters who have peopled my pages and those who will show up in the future. I do love riding the river with you!! 🐾

## Chapter Update

*Continued from page 18*

One in SW British Columbia and another in Central Oregon look like good possibilities for next spring and summer with a couple of others also being discussed. The annual meeting concert just mentioned saw the re-election of Tom Swearingen, President, John Seger, VP, Nels Nelson, Treasurer, and Carla Swearingen, Secretary. Board members at large continuing or re-elected are Mike Dygert, Ed Wahl, Ned Bodie, and Duane Nelson. Youth poetry contest winners announced at the concert were Erin Grace Grinwis, Sydney Pierce, and Thomas Fitzgerald. Each recited their winning poems to a large appreciative Granada Theatre crowd and received cash and trophy buckle prizes. Three-time

winner Thomas Fitzgerald shared the stage with Tom Swearingen at a benefit concert for HORSES on the Ranch, an Oregon equine assisted mental health therapy program. The Lakeview, OR Cowboy Gathering saw Kathy Moss and Duane Nelson serving as emcees with Joni Harms, Tom Swearingen, and Dave Stamey performing. Our 2024 youth poetry contest is taking entries online at [iwmacolumbia.org](http://iwmacolumbia.org).



3-time youth poetry contest winner Thomas Fitzgerald.



Erin Grace Grinwis recites winning poem.



Joni Harms, Kathy Moss, Tom Swearingen and Lakeview, OR Gathering FFA ushers.

*Continued on page 23*

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## STORIES AND TALL TALES

BY VICTOR T. ANDERSON

### GATHERING THE WILD ONES

**D**riving into my hometown of White Sulphur Springs, MT, always sets off a lot of memories. Seeing the mountains around the town, where I worked and played make me pretty nostalgic.

Mine Hill, behind what used to be called Manger's home ranch, was where my brothers and I often rode. The Meagher Country Rodeo Club used to run wild horses off that hill and the surrounding mountains. These were the offspring of horses that were turned loose into those hills after tractors took over. There were two or three hundred head there in the sixties. They seldom saw a man, horseback or afoot, unless it was a sheepherder, or the occasional hunter, except when the rodeo club started rounding them up in late August so we could use them in the Labor Day Rodeo. I don't know if I've had as much fun as when we'd gather them up.

There were a lot of studs when we started, but we cut a lot of them after we used them at the rodeo performances. We selected one or two of the better-looking horses that were kept as studs. We branded the colts and any unbranded horses that had escaped branding in the past. We selected mature geldings, mares with no colts, and all the grown studs for our bucking stock. The rest we turned back into the mountains where they would remain untouched until we gathered the next year.

We'd all chased horses before, and we knew the country. Six or eight riders in pairs would travel to the back of the pasture. I'm not sure how many sections were included, but it was about five or six miles of either up or down to get to the back end. We would hit all the known places where the herds had a tendency to spend most of their time. The rest of the riders would be in draws and creek bottoms where they could turn the bunches toward the flats. They'd gather up the small bunches into a big herd and when all the cowboys were out, we'd head them the three miles into the corrals. Picking up the small bunches from their usual haunts was probably the most dangerous, and the most fun. I rode a mare then that wasn't very fast for the first couple of years. She could run all day, and I was one of the riders that went to the back of the pasture. Riding her across a level pasture was scarier than when we ran in the mountains. I think she just paid more attention, because she never made a bad step when we were on steep slopes at a run.

On one occasion, we slid a good twenty feet on a bare rock outcropping, with sparks shooting from her shoes, but when we hit the other side, she never wavered, just poured on all the steam she had and we turned the bunch.

**RIDE EASY PARDS.....Vic**

**VIC ANDERSON** of Estes Park, CO, is a Singer/Songwriter, 3-time IWMA champion yodeler, virtuoso melodic whistler, poet, author, columnist and voice over narrator. As Vice-president of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter of the IWMA, Vic has long been an advocate for writing short stories as another way of presenting tales of the West.

## **RICHARD "RICH" O'BRIEN (1954 – 2023)**



Richard 'Rich' E. O'Brien passed away at his home near Afton, Oklahoma on October 2, 2023 at the age of 69. Rich was born in Anderson, Missouri on July 12, 1954, one of 10 children born to Tom and Gracie

(Armstrong) O'Brien. He graduated from McDonald County High School in Anderson and then attended Texas Christian University in Ft Worth, majoring in Western American History.

Rich began playing the guitar when he was 6 years old. He was an artist of extraordinary versatility. His mother Gracie was a Carter Family style guitar player herself and fostered his love of music. His ability to use the entire fretboard of the guitar was a gift from his brother Paul, whom Rich once described as 'the best guitar player in the family.'

Leaving home with less than ten dollars in his pocket and a vague promise of a prison guard job, Rich headed for Texas. There, he quickly fit in with the local music scene, playing with the likes of Red Steagall and touring with other country stars such as Moe Bandy, Gene Watson and Ray Price.

He was inducted into the Western Swing Society's Hall of Fame, and his song writing won him the Wrangler Award 14 times from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. He was also recognized by the Academy Awards of Western Music. Over the span of his music career, he received numerous distinguished recognitions and awards.

Rich might have been best described as a great American guitarist. His playing spanned a variety of influences, from swing and jazz, to Tejano, traditional, and classical. Rich quickly found that Western music's blend of traditional American folk and swing styles and Old West subject matter fit his style of playing and love of history. It proved to be the genre in which he would make his biggest mark. His talents twice led to White House performances

for former President George Bush. He was a notable force in Western music.

Not only was Rich a talented musician and producer, he was a kind man that touched many lives with his shining personality and sincere interest in people. He was witty, intelligent with a sweet soul who impacted every person that he came in contact with. He will be dearly missed but his legacy will live on in the rich musical history that he had left behind.

Rich was preceded in death by his parents, five brothers, Jim, Pat, John, Paul and Jerry, and one sister, Francis. Left to cherish his memory are siblings, Ruby Hansen of Albert Lean, Minnesota, Michael 'Mick' (Carol) of Cleburne, Texas, and Janice Roberts of Grove, Oklahoma; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, friends and acquaintances from all over the country.

A Celebration of Rich's life was held on Monday, October 16, 2023, at Bible Baptist Church in Grove, OK.

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## **LES THOMPSON (1939 – 2023)**



Les Thompson, Timnath, Colorado, was born in North Dakota on May 21, 1939, and he passed away on September 8, 2023. He was an avid fan of western music and cowboy poetry. He wrote several cowboy

poems in his lifetime. Les braved his inhibitions and began to perform in Open Mic settings in his Golden Years. He joined the IWMA and Colorado Chapter when he competed in the Talent Roundup in June 2023.



## Chapter Update

Continued from page 20



Youth poetry contest winner Sydney Pierce accompanies Larry Wilder.



Sam Mattise leads several cast members in *You are My Sunshine* to close out annual concert.



Tom Swearingen and Thomas Fitzgerald perform benefit concert.

### KANSAS CHAPTER President: Orin Friesen [orin@rbanjoranch.com](mailto:orin@rbanjoranch.com)

After seven years as president of the Kansas Chapter, Orin Friesen has decided to step down. Election of officers took place at our October meeting. Martha Farrell was elected to be the new president. Her previous position of vice-president will now be filled by Roger Eilts. Sharon Chesmore and Annie Wilson will continue as secretary and treasurer, respectively. New Kansas Chapter president, Martha Farrell has a long history with the IWMA. She produced *Kansas: Home on the Range*, our chapter's concert and audiovisual salute to the Kansas Sesquicentennial in 2011. She is co-owner, with Western Music Hall of Fame member, Rex Allen Jr, of Truckers Radio USA, an Internet radio station that features traditional country, western, bluegrass, and Americana music. As wife of former IWMA-KS vice-president, Jim Farrell, Martha has traveled, since 2003, with the Diamond W Wranglers, the group she currently manages. New Kansas Chapter vice-president, Roger Eilts is a founding member of the award-winning band, 3 Trails West. He is also a member of the IWMA Board



The late Jim Farrell, Martha Farrell, Rex Allen, Jr.

of Directors. Our quarterly Kansas Chapter meetings always start with a "Lunch & Learn" program. Those programs provide some in-depth education and discussion, often with guest presenters, such as our recent online visit by Almeda Bradshaw. At our January meeting, we will have a discussion about how performers are distributing music these days. Our chapter meetings are done with Zoom, which allows members to join us, no matter where they are located. Doing our meetings by Zoom has also improved our attendance. As we enter 2024, we have formed a committee to explore developing a program of mini-grants that would help bring cowboy music and poetry to Kansas venues. We have another committee that is exploring what it would take to produce a book and audio book of our Kansas cowboy poets.

Continued on page 32

waxahachievb.com/events/2024/cowboy-poetry-and-music

# WAXAHACHIE COWBOY GATHERING

APRIL 13TH, 2024  
WAXAHACHIE, TEXAS  
469-309-4040

**THE REAL WEST**  
Patty Clayton

Prarie Penitents  
Long Gone That West Blues  
A Gull For Brides  
This Flat Land  
Roll Buffalo  
Prairie Dog Blues  
Wagonwheel  
One Love More  
The Lones & The Rivers  
Buffalo Gipsy  
Before the Prairie Met the Plains

Thank you DJ's, for keeping this wagon rolling along in the top 10 Western Albums from the Summer of 2022 through the Summer of 2023! What a ride it has been!!

Purchase your CD or digital download now from [www.pattyclayton.com](http://www.pattyclayton.com)

W

elcome to a lens-eye view of the 2023 IWMA event. Special thanks to our contributing photographers: Lee Peters, Gary Penington, Pat Smith, Jim Mathis, and Johnny D. Boggs. All pictures were submitted and used by permission.

We wish space would allow for many more pictures – we literally have hundreds! But as you peruse these, we hope they make you smile as you remember your visit to Albuquerque. Or if you weren't there, hopefully the smiling faces on performers and fans will make you run to your calendar and mark off the dates to jump into this Western foray next year, November 13-17, 2024!

2023 successful and fun. But don't take my word for it. Read the intermingled comments that were heard in the halls, showcase rooms, banquet hall and restaurant. Get roped into Western Music and Cowboy Poetry – join the IWMA now and join US in Albuquerque in 2024.

## IWMA 2023 MUSIC AWARDS



**WESTERN ALBUM OF THE YEAR**  
*Roll On, Cowboys*  
Andy Hedges



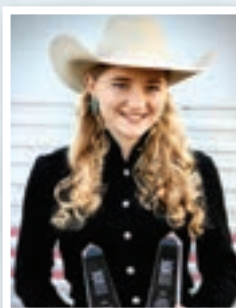
**COWBOY SWING ALBUM OF THE YEAR**  
*Arizona Stars*  
Rusted Spurs West



**ENTERTAINER OF THE YEAR**  
Doug Figgs



**MALE PERFORMER OF THE YEAR**  
Jon Chandler



**FEMALE PERFORMER OF THE YEAR**  
Kristyn Harris



**SONG OF THE YEAR**  
*Cowboy 'Til I Die*  
Ed Meyer



**SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR**  
R.J. Vandygriff



**INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR**  
Hailey Sandoz



**GROUP OF THE YEAR**  
*The Cowboy Way*  
Doug Figgs, Jim Jones,  
Mariam Funke (Not Pictured)



**WORKING COWBOY SONG OF THE YEAR**  
*Never Cuss the Rain*  
Darrell Arnold &  
Tom Hiatt (Not Pictured)



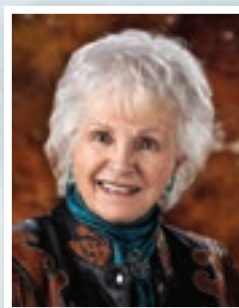
# IVMA 2023 POETRY AWARDS



**MALE POET OF THE YEAR**  
Floyd Beard

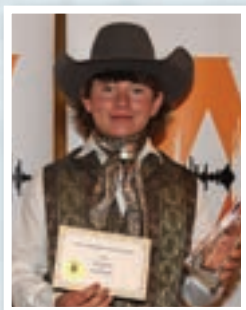


**FEMALE POET OF THE YEAR**  
**COWBOY POETRY CD OF THE YEAR**  
*No Better Life*  
Valerie Beard



**COWBOY POETRY**  
**BOOK OF THE YEAR**  
*Windmills on the Prairie*  
Yvonne Hollenbeck

## IVMA 2023 SPECIAL RECOGNITION



**LIZ MASTERSON CRESCENDO AWARD (Tie)**  
Jack George & Phoebe White



**BILL WILEY AWARD**  
Jane Leche



**PIONEER TRAIL AWARD**  
Baxter Black



**CURLY MUSGRAVE**  
**SILVER BUCKLE AWARD**  
Ernie Martinez



**TEAM PENNING AWARD**  
Floyd Beard & Doug Figgs



**RADIO DJ/PROGRAM**  
**OF THE YEAR**  
Allen & Jill Kirkham  
*Circuit Rider Roundup*



**POETRY CONTEST AWARD**  
Floyd Beard



# IWMA 2023 IN REVIEW



*"This was our first year attending. We learned about the IWMA at the Gene Autry Museum of Western Heritage (CA) showcase and decided we needed to try this. We didn't know there was such a thing. We will be back!"*





# IWMA 2023 IN REVIEW



"Each year this event gets better and better. How do you do that?"



"This is a well-kept secret! It is our first year, but we have put it on the calendar for next year."



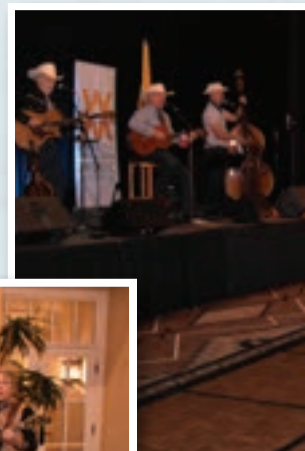


# IWMA 2023 IN REVIEW

"I LOVE THIS CONVENTION.  
I WOULDN'T MISS IT!"



"As new attendees this year,  
we felt very welcomed and  
included. So many greeted  
us in the hallways and the  
newcomer's reception was  
icing on the cake. Can't wait  
until next year."





# IWMA 2023 IN REVIEW



"I think this was one of the best conventions ever. (I may say that each year!) Kudos to Marsha and the Board. You do fantastic work."



"Loved everything about this year's Convention!"







## A MUSICAL NOTE AND **REVIEWS** FROM O.J. SIKES

**To submit your CD for review, send to:** O.J. Sikes, 681 Ellington Road, Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
**Required:** Album cost, S&H cost, Address, Phone Number | **Questions?** You can email O.J. at [ojisikes@gmail.com](mailto:ojisikes@gmail.com)

### Attitudes and Demonstrations of Fairness, Politeness, Honesty and Respect, Usually Win the Day

**W**hen I was 10 or 11 years old, B-Western movies at the local theater gave way to cowboy shows on TV. The cowboy heroes that could, made the transition to the small screen medium, and those that couldn't, faded away. But around that time, I started reading books about American Indians, and I became fascinated with the subject. My dad had had similar interests when he was a boy, so he encouraged me. And when my parents learned that a famous Sioux Indian ("Red Dawn") from SD, was to be on the staff of a summer camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains, they talked to me about it and signed me up! I was the youngest camper who was interested in the Indian lore program, and, because of my age, the program staff didn't want me to participate. I was devastated, and word got to "Red Dawn." He sent for me and insisted to the camp staff that, if I was really interested, he would tutor me. He was quite a bit older than I, but I was an enthusiastic learner and we became good friends, meeting again the following summer for more lessons on Indigenous cultures, folklore, crafts and dances, and corresponding for a number of years (remember hand-written letters?).



Red Dawn

Over the intervening years, I became very active in the Boy Scouts. I worked on the BSA Camp staff near my home each summer and I taught older scouts how to make costumes and perform dances for campers and parents who came to campfire shows each week during the summer camp season. But the summer before I was to begin my junior year of high school, after our scout camp season had

ended, I got a phone call from "Red Dawn," inviting me to join him and other members of his show troupe on a tour of private camps in the Midwest and Northeast, doing evening shows for campers and teaching them crafts, etc. The fact that the camps happened to be girls' camps, was an added incentive! To this day, I still can't believe that my parents agreed, but I hopped on an overnight bus to New York City where I joined the troupe. From there, we piled into an old wood paneled station wagon and headed to Chicago and on to Wisconsin before coming back to the Northeast.

Along the way, we met some fascinating folks, e.g., champion hoop dancer **Tony White Cloud**, basket weavers and other master craftsmen. Only later did I learn that Tony and his family were the troupe that toured England with **Gene Autry** after appearing in movies with him!

The reason for this lengthy essay is that it offers some background for today's concerns about which descriptive terms are appropriate and which are offensive, when referring to American Indians. It's a complicated topic because, in our case (music), we are dealing with songs that were



composed and recorded in another time, when views about what was appropriate or offensive were different from what we see today. Still, it is incumbent upon us to avoid offending people. Most of us learned that from our parents! It's still a good rule!

Our genre includes a number of songs from long ago, that contain words that are now considered offensive. They may or may not have been considered offensive at the time they were composed, but they are now! And that's the point! Titles that come to mind include "Pecos Bill," "Silent Trails," "The Covered Wagon Rolled Right Along," "Old Chisholm Trail," and there are others.

A few years ago, soon after my show was picked up by a small radio station, I played one of these songs without thinking about the lyrics, and a local listener voiced a complaint. It took me by surprise because, with my background, the last thing I wanted to do was offend. Frankly, views among Native Americans as to what is offensive and what is not, are far from unanimous. But I prefer not to offend anyone. In this instance, I was able to edit out the offensive terms from the music, with little or no noticeable interruption or damage to the song(s), and I continue to do that, to this day.

The incident led me to look back at recordings and broadcasts of some of these songs, e.g., "Hold That Critter Down," over time, to see at what point artists discovered that certain lyrics had become offensive. From that point, they changed them in their recorded performances. So, the phenomenon is not a new one.

The treatment of Indigenous Peoples, from the time of the arrival of the first European and African settlers, is an issue that has been dealt with superficially, for the most part, and compounded



Tony White Cloud

by the misrepresentations of the film industry. The cultures in the Americas at the time the European explorers arrived, were very diverse, with multiple spoken languages, different forms of government, diverse architecture, beliefs and lifestyles. Some were hunters, gatherers and fishermen. Some were nomadic, while others were sedentary farmers. Women governed in some cultures but not in others. Today, a lot of

diversity still exists among American Indian populations, including what some see as offensive, while others don't share that view. There is no "one size fits all," but attitudes and demonstrations of fairness, politeness, honesty and respect, usually win the day.

I should add that I usually use the term, "American Indian," because it's the term used by the Smithsonian's Museum of the American Indian. All of us know about the successful campaigns to change the names of certain professional sports teams, even though some of those names are still used enthusiastically for mascots representing schools in American Indian districts across Western states. What a pity that the considerable energy expended to bring about such changes was not focused, instead, on improving the health and well-being of the peoples who were the intended beneficiaries of these changes.

The point of my column today is that all of us should try to be alert to sensitive issues and the need to avoid offending American Indians, while recognizing 1) their diversity (and differences of opinion regarding what is offensive) and 2) our moral obligation to promote their well-being in the context of history.

*Continued on page 33*



# Chapter Update

*Continued from page 23*

## NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

**President: David Nidel**

**David.nidel@gmail.com**

This last quarter of the year has been an active one for the New Mexico Chapter. October 21, we sponsored a well-received Western Heritage Show in Albuquerque's Old Town Plaza. The event kicked off with returning members John Feldman and the Curio Cowboys Western Swing band, followed by Michael & Donna Coy (Friends Forever), Don Crowder & The Tumbleweeds, Dennis & Beverly Russell (The Russellers), Independence Creek, and Annie Benjamin. Bernard Carr and Dr. Ted Coffman were our MCs for the event. Dave Levenson continues to do a great job on our monthly virtual and live Song & Poetry Corral. In November we had a wonderful annual IWMA Convention at Hotel Albuquerque. Special thanks go out to Executive Director Marsha Short and the IWMA Executive Board for making the convention a huge success! There were many highlights for this year's event including the

Veteran's Day Breakfast, Opry Night, and the IWMA Awards Night. We are proud of all of the award nominees and winners, especially those who are members of our chapter. Some of the best events hosted by the NM chapter include the after hours Showcases and the Saturday evening Song Circle. I want to thank all of our members who volunteered countless hours prior to the convention, at the convention, breaking down the convention, as well as picking up the pieces to get everything settled and back to normal. Judi Anderson worked very hard on managing the Consignment Shop and organizing the vendors; Bobbi Jean Bell and Jim Bell, Jim Jones, Betty Jo Carter, Joe Brown, Dennis and Beverly Russell for all the work for the After Hours events (see attached photos courtesy of Betty Jo Carter). Many members helped staff the chapter table, worked in the Consignment Shop or the

Multimedia Retail Store. We are so blessed to have all of your energy and talent. Wrapping up the end of the year, we have the final live Song & Poetry Corral at the Hops & Dough Restaurant and Tap Room on December 18. On December 21, the NM Chapter is hosting Buffalo Bill's & Dr. Jo's Holiday Roundup Concert at the Clubhouse at The Vineyard 55 Plus Community. Then we're on to a new year of great events in 2024. I want to take this opportunity to wish all of our IWMA family a joyous, healthy, and safe Holiday Season!

## OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

**President: Robert Maxwell Case**

**robert@robertmaxwellcase.com**

Happy 2024! We still are enjoying the happy memories of our annual get-together this past Fall. Secretary-treasurer Danny Williams' barn in Rush Springs was a great venue and his family's hospitality

*Continued on page 33*



*After hours showcase at IWMA Convention*



*After hours Song Circle at the Convention sponsored by NM Chapter.*





**LIGHT CRUST DOUGHBOYS,  
PAT O 'DANIELS'  
HILLBILLY BOYS,  
SHORTY & HIS CRAZY  
HILLBILLIES, ROY ACUFF**

***"Old Time Country Radio: Radio Shows from the 1930s & 40s"***

BACMCDD707



As a preschooler back during WWII, I used to wander across the road to visit an elderly

neighbor who fascinated me with her ability to cook on a wood stove, churn butter while seated on her side porch, and wash clothes in a big black pot over a fire in her back yard. But nothing was more fascinating than her choice of

music on her radio. Actually, I must confess that her ability to spit tobacco juice through two fingers held close to her lips, was something I greatly admired, at the time, but I never learned to do it. Dave Stamey's lyrics to "Used Rough" explain why. Anyhow, I learned to enjoy old time country music during the early visits with my favorite neighbor, so I was eager to hear this new BACM release.

The disc contains 5 radio shows, mostly from the 1930s, but one show, Roy Acuff's, is from 1949. They don't sound like transcriptions. They appear to have been broadcast "live," fluffed lines and all. Much of the music is vintage hillbilly and the audio quality is excellent. That being said, a good amount of the music is early Western Swing, with the Hillbilly Boys and the Light Crust

Doughboys sharing some of the same personnel. The CD's liner contains a photo of Leon Huff, one of early Western Swing's greatest vocalists, and it appears that he sings on the CD's first track. Bert Dodson, the great tenor singer and bassist who later became a member of the Cass County Boys, sings a couple of duets with Dick Reinhardt, as members of the Light Crust Doughboys. And you may recognize the Doughboys' theme as virtually the same as the theme used later by Bob Wills.

There are also a couple of commercial tracks (4 fiddle tunes) from 1934, recorded by the Crazy Hillbillies, to round out the package. If you enjoy the genre, you'll find that this release is fun!

Available from your usual source for BACM product or via the British Archive of Country Music's new website, [country-music-archive.com/](http://country-music-archive.com/) 🐕

## Chapter Update

*Continued from page 32*

went above and beyond. A special thanks to all of our attendees and performers including Francine Roark Robison, Robert Maxwell Case, Danny Williams, Leigh Ann and Scott Matthews, Curtis Krigbaum, and Miss Devon and The Outlaw with Harmonica Chuck. Sunday, December 3, 2023, the Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western

Heritage Museum hosted the 28th annual Express Employment Professionals' Cowboy Christmas Ball featuring Michael Martin Murphey.



*Francine Roark Robison*



*Leigh Ann and Scott Matthews*



*The Venue*

## TENNESSEE CHAPTER

**President: Gary Holt  
Gih50@live.com**

Greetings from Tennessee!!!

It's been a busy 4th Quarter for The IWMA Tennessee Chapter! Members have been touring, attending gatherings and performing at various locations around the country. One of the highlights of the quarter was our Fall Potluck N Pickin' get together hosted by Mike and Micki Fuhrman Milom. Always a lot of good food, fellowship and of course great music! We were thrilled to have several of our out of state members attend this fall event...Doris Merritt-Oklahoma, Aspen Black-Virginia, Phoebe White-Kentucky and Diana Raven & Ernie Martinez-Colorado! It's

*Continued on page 39*



To submit items for review, send to: Rick Huff, P.O. Box 8442, Albuquerque, NM 87198-8442.  
 Submitting a CD or Book for review does not guarantee that it will be reviewed or that a review will be published.  
 Finalized CD or book cover art must accompany the work and be unsigned.

## DAVE ALEXANDER

### *"From The Saddle To Symphony Hall"*



Upon learning Dave Alexander's ancestry included the classical composer Franz Schubert,

backstage at an AWA Awards show in Ft. Worth years ago we suggested he should finish the maestro's famous "Unfinished Symphony" and do it in Western Swing. It looks like he's inching closer to it!

Make no mistake, Dave Alexander is one of the greatest performers of Western Swing.... ever!! His talent, skill and showmanship are nothing short of staggering. His decision to tour the genre to Classical audiences is tremendously exciting. The classic Western genre has been offered symphonically in the past by such greats as the Flying W Wranglers, R.W. Hampton, Michael Martin Murphey with Scott O'Malley's Western Jubilee stable of artists and others. This may mark a first for Western Swing, and no one is more qualified to do it.

Some songs you'd expect are arranged in medleys ("Big

Balls In Cowtown/Take Me Back To Tulsa," "Deep In The Heart/ Oklahoma Hills," "Don't Fence Me In/Hills Of Old Wyoming") plus the swinging "When The Bloom Is On The Sage." Three Cindy Walkers made the cut ("Fort Worth Texas," "Oklahoma Waltz" & "You Don't Know Me" written with Eddy Arnold). But check out the three Alexander originals ("Every Setting Sun," "Hold You In My Heart" & "Western Boogie"). It all fairly crackles! It's extraordinary! A don't miss!! Very highly recommended!



## JOHNNY ANGEL & HELLDORADO

### *"Long Days, Short Pay"*



This collection's principal creator fronted "Johnny Angel & The Swingin'

Demons," a 17-piece band in New Orleans whose booking opportunities there were blown away in Hurricane Katrina. Then a Country CD was readied for release only to face the COVID disruption! Subsequently Angel's Western

Swing and Country efforts have been recognized (and awarded) by the Academy of Western Artists. And he has now moved into its Western category.

This collection ranks as one of the more unusual assemblages yet encountered. Most tracks are big production numbers, including sound texturing under what Angel calls "short stories." I'd use "brief essays." Three of the ten tracks are narrations, including a promotional piece for Traditional Country as a genre and the recording studio itself! "Cattle Drive [Helldorado]" is a spoken paeon to the trail drive cowboys of yesteryear, delivered by singer/songwriter & cowboy Chuck Cusimano. The narration of "Stampede" is performed by Bryan Stinson over strong effects and scoring illustrating the hell of that situation. The title "Long Days, Short Pay" says it all for that harmonized clip-clop song (the last track is a thirty second reprise of it). And some Country and Gospel-ish songs have come along for the ride.

By strict content, I'd position the release more as an atmospheric EP than an album. Overall we'll brand this an interesting indication of potential things to come. Fair enough?



## JOE DIAMOND

### *"I Start All Over"*

[A Tribute To His Days With Johnny Paycheck]



We'll say three Western Swing tracks and two marginally Western songs

qualify this one for review here. Joe Diamond is a veteran performer who still has it together vocally, residing solidly with the Paycheck/Buck Owens school of performers. The swinging medium tempo title track "I Start All Over" comes from Cheryl Durham Owens, the uptempo entry from Charlie & Ira Louvin is "Are You Teasing Me" and the slower one is Diamond's original "My Angel's Gone To Hell," so we've got the Western Swing dancers covered!

The one Johnny Paycheck-penned entry in the collection definitely does not subscribe to the old saying "the older the fiddle the sweeter the tune!" Paycheck's "Old Violin" demands equal time on that claim, dourly equating the instrument's fate to being put away and forgotten. A second Joe Diamond original in this collection extols the healing properties of returning to the "Corpus Christi Sun." The remainder of the release is Country in the more Classic mold all the way and should be welcomed and championed by those who decry that Country ain't "Country" anymore. Recommended for them, ten tracks total.

## RIK "YONDER" GOODELL

### *"Provin' Up Wise"*



Preferring the Cowboy handle of "Yonder," this skilled Montana Cowboy Poet draws

from his personal experiences on a cow-calf operation and horse ranch and, of course, an abiding love and respect for all things Cowboy. He is also an actor, so once again his very real conversational delivery carries the day. Few if any reciters handle that task any better! He's more concerned with "speaking it" rather than demonstrating where the rhymes fall.

There are gemstones to be found throughout, but particular picks in the collection include a campfire life portrait "Chuckwagon Home," the self-assessing "I'm Just Not Sure," an account based on the Irish immigrant experience in the West "Mellowed By Time," the memory of "My First Horse," then the first horse most of us really had "Ol' Sticky," the reflectively panoramic "Seein' Gratitude" and Cowboy proposal jitters not faced down in "Wastin' A Worry."

In historically focused Cowboy verse its nice to have the "period" but it's even nicer to have a point. You get both from "Yonder." Sixteen tracks, highly recommended.

## GRAVEYARD PETE & THE NEW APPALACHIAN SOUND

### *"Sunbury Underground"*

(5-Song EP)



Frequently derivative cultural salutes come from outside of those cultures. It nearly did in this case!

Its the edge of Appalachia Ohio-based Americana/Roots (and more) band Graveyard Pete & The New Appalachian Sound. Their name says it, but there is more in this 5-song demonstration of their art. It's a hint of what might be done with Western... its origins also having come from Appalachian, Scottish, Irish, Blues and other influences. But with this EP you can cast out the window any preconceived notions of what "makes" Appalachian.

One attempted Western Music derivative was that of the band Cowboy Nation. Despite Scott O'Malley's (and my) faith in them, their effect was met with mixed reviews from purists. Time will tell what happens this time.

The effect here is different from anything we've yet encountered. What may appear to be a "folksy" little song will contain intelligently complex intricacies in the structure, accompaniment and lyrics. Leader Aaron DeYarmon and his band obviously have a targeted purpose in their creations and don't seek to be a reproduction of anything, vintage or otherwise. His songs "Castles In The Sand," "Cross The Ravenswood Bridge," "Rotten Wood," "Hey Anna" and "Canadian Whiskey" have a character and a reason for being what they are. From a number of different standpoints this mixed acoustic-plus project deserves a close look and studious listen!

EP: \$6 available through [graveyardpete.com](http://graveyardpete.com)

*Continued on page 36*

## HADACOL TREMBLERS

*"Pills & Powder"*



For delivering sheer fun one would be hard pressed to cite many recent albums any more

effective than this release, and it comes from an unusual source. Here you have a vintage-style Western Swing/string band...vocals, fiddle, acoustic guitar, banjo, mando, double bass and lap steel...from Belgium! In case you're wondering, "Hadacol" was an actual highly spiked snake oil elixir from the bad ol' days! The "Tremblers" part could easily be the delirium tremens brought on from its extended use!!

Leader Steve Hollanders says the idea was to recapture the sound of those early 30s and 40s purveyors of Western Swing. His four-man band accomplished it by retreating into their Antwerp studio and, after a span of two years, they've got a product indistinguishable from those of the period they sought to salute....including what could easily be contemporary references in their originals (title track "Pills & Powder," for example).

Skillful covers of period favorites like "Take Me Back To Tulsa," "Chinatown" and "Shine On Harvest Moon" should establish the idea for you if the sound doesn't. Famed songs and lesser known works from Bob Wills, Milton Brown, the Farris, Merle Travis and others get the right treatment from these dedicated European roots musicians. Twelve tracks, highly recommended.

CD (& a fun video):  
hadacoltremblers.com

## KC LACOURSE

*"Traveling Through Time"*



Cowboy Poet KC LaCourse says what she does amounts to painting with words.

An apt description. We do spot definite Impressionism at work in her latest offerings.

In her direct and forthright style of delivery, LaCourse lets the words land and stand. Whether the focus is a portrait in some of the poems or a moment in others, by content her collection's title "Travelin' Through Time" alludes to both the action and the manner of passage through it. And some pack a lot of baggage on the journey. For "Pioneer Prayer," "Margot" (in which we get an interesting spin on common threads of humanity) and "The Longest Ride" (a Pony Express rider's 390-mile endurance test) we go back in time. Also there's "Elusive Cowboy," in which there is no rescue for a broken man. "Stands Alone" and "Side By Side" both deal with life and loss. And there is a small flicker of comfort in "Candles At Night."

La Course is a working poet and host who is becoming a noted pen and voice. This collection helps to prove the point, Eighteen tracks and two bonus tracks. Recommended.

## MERNA LEWIS

*"Fiddlin' Favorites – Re-release"*



This one was actually recorded back in 2020 when Merna Lewis was only twelve. Its re-release

is being done with a purpose: crowdfunding the new project!

The CD proves Ms. Lewis to have already been an accomplished double hokum fiddler. Happily she and her family band chose to step before the microphones of Don Richmond's Howlin' Dog Studios in Alamosa, Colorado. They benefited from his savvy production which captured the best of what they had to offer. And there's nothing cliché about the collection of tunes assembled. Some you might expect ("Westphalia Waltz," "Redwing," "Orange Blossom Special" and so on) are here, to be sure.

But there are nice discoveries to be made, including "Pig Ankle Rag," "Cincinatti Rag/Ostinelli Hornpipe," "Star Of The County Down" and others. It's all geared to get feet moving and faces smiling.

There are some wonderful young fiddlers in the IWMA's Youth Chapter. If you pick this one up, you'll have one in your hands! Eleven tracks, highly recommended.

### MYRA PIERCE DISCLAIMER

In the Summer Issue we reviewed Myra Pierce's album "Ghosts of Yellowstone" assuming it to be a new release. Kansas radio host Orin Freisen kindly alerted us that he had played the album as early as 2009. The CD was issued electronically for fresh airplay through an online distribution service. It came without credits and with a press kit that didn't mention its original date of release. What we said of it in the review can stand, but you'll need to pretend you saw it in the Classic Profiles section!!



## OUTLAW BODHI LINDE

*"Songs From Dakota"*

(8-Song EP)



Fourteen years old and already a recognized multi-instrumentalist! That's the raw

talent package we find in South Dakota's 'Outlaw' Bodhi Linde. In his bio we're told his genre comfort zone is expansive. He takes in Western, Country, Delta Blues and even some Punk.

Linde's guitar acumen is years ahead of his years, but he also plays keyboards, clarinet and cello along with banjo, mandolin and bass gaining him that "prodigy" label. Furthermore his original songs (yes, that too!) show sophistication and his singing is coming along (the vocal on the 'Miss Molly' style Swing track "South Dakota Me Oh My" pulls off key a tad, but we know what was intended). Hearing Linde's youthful voice singing badman lyrics could leave you feeling you're listening to Billy The Kid deliver them...if Billy were a guitar phenom, of course. (Author Melody Groves reports Billy did play piano, though)!

Picks on Linde's eight song EP include the instrumental "Can't Catch The Outlaw," "Last One In Dakota" and "I Need To Know."

It's a heck of a start and he's a member of IWMA's Youth Chapter, so he seems to be where we can keep an eye on him!!

## SYD MASTERS

*"Cabin Songs"*



Once again Syd Masters has gone about proving some things. Things like "practice pays." And

forced meditative exile is productively healthy. And you can actually forge a career in Western Music if you are your own storefront.

As a songwriter, Syd has a valuable ability to create immediately engaging works that also contain creative intricacies that help keep them fresh. For this collection he retreated to an isolated northern New Mexico cabin and...wait for it...came up with "Cabin Songs!" Nine of 'em! Fine ones!! Picks among them include "High Country Trail," the swinging "That's The Country Life," the wild parody of tall tales "Bobcat To Cimarron," a hilariously frank mutual appraisal song "The Things We Overlook For Love" (with former 'Buckarette' Katie Gill) and "The Old Log Cabin" (although it's pretty close to Gary McMahan's "Old Double Diamond" in construction). Cover picks from his CD's "Campfire" section: "Running Gun," "Navajo Trail" and "Goin' Back To Texas."

Syd's backup includes members of his rotating Swing Riders cast. A very enjoyable collection of fourteen tracks. Highly recommended.

## MAE MCCOY & HER NEON STARS

(3-Song EP)



Mae McCoy's 'Andrews' or 'Maguire' style of close harmony (with Lisa Layne

Stewart) over her Western Swing sextet's performances is appropriate and dead-on authentic. Since their founding in Sacramento back in 2008, they have pretty much been West Coast luminaries in the Swing genre's resurgence.

On their EP this group's high level of musicianship is on grand display. Their members are recognized contemporary Swing aristocracy, including such names as Emily (Asleep At The Wheel) Gimble, Jess (Jake Hooker) Meador and Jim (Ray Price) Loessberg. Dancers couldn't wish for more! Ms. McCoy is also Vice President of the Western Swing Society & Hall of Fame so she is in the catbird's seat to watch for top players.

The songs chosen to provide a taste of their forthcoming CD are "One More Time," "At Sundown" and "Detour" (first made famous by Wesley Tuttle). While I do find McCoy's pronunciation "de-tore" a bit distracting, the talent and the enthusiasm here are unarguable. Highly recommended, and definitely we are eager for the album release.

EP: Available through  
MAEMCCOYMUSIC.com

*Continued on page 38*

## RICK & THE ALL STAR RAMBLERS WESTERN SWING BAND

### "God Bless The Mighty Pickle"



Finally (as of November) the album we began reviewing tracks from months ago has arrived,

which may be "God Bless The Mighty Pickle" if we are to believe its cover art. It's promotions company seems to feel it's "Rick Norcross & The All Star Ramblers feat. Marty Stuart." Whatever it's named, it's definitely called "Western Swing." From Vermont! Marty Stuart phoned in his part. Not a criticism. His part is a couple of spoken messages.

You may recall The Pickle was the much-loved Ramblers tour bus taken in and refurbished by Marty Stuart for his museum. The title track is Norcross' love song to it. More picks of his include "They Go Faster" (driving woes...whoa!), "Have A Heart" ("hearts make neighbors into friends"), the very Vermont-centric "My Kissing Days Are Over" (ever since Gov. Scott's mask order), and his and Dan Linders' bluesy boogie swinger "Out In The Cold." Covers of Spade Cooley's "Shame On You" (with Taryn Noelle) and Coco Kallis' "New England Song" are also winners.

The whole thing has that comfortable feel of old swing pros doing what they do and having fun at it. That's why it's recommended. Ten music tracks and two Marty Stuart messages.

CD: Information through [rickandtheallstarramblers.com](http://rickandtheallstarramblers.com)

## GEORGE RAY RUSSELL

### "Wrangler Of Rhymes Vol. Two"



In a melodic and smoky tenor voice with guitar, harmonica and bass accompani-

ment George Ray Russell sings and recites his sequel for us and introduces tracks much like a live set might run. As with his first release, some of his poems are pretty lengthy to have been set to music. Three have five minute-plus timings. One is over ten! In assessing the success of the musical works, certain distinctions should be made.

Several of these are poems sung as opposed to being "songs." Song structure has come to require a specific verse/refrain pattern. In those instances what Russell offers equates back to works of the Jack Thorps, 'Kid' O'Malleys and Curley Fletchers of our history, with stories sung in rhyme until done. Poets and lyricists are not the same animal, and the acceptance of the George Ray Russell effect may depend on listener expectations of it.

Picks include a wonderful character piece called "The Funeral," the novelties "No Matter How You Spin It" and "Kate & Edith," and the recited poems "Whiskey Bill," "Free Verse" and "White Mule."

And Russell explains himself squarely in "Wrangler Of Rhymes." He does "Cowboygerel," not "doggerel." Fifteen tracks total.

## BOB THOMAS

### "The Moon"



He's baaaack, with Release #10 if my count is correct. Rustic-voiced Bob Thomas has

put together another collection of originals and a couple of covers. Like Thomas' CD title, his original lyrics once again physically describe their titular subjects, come to the end of what he wants to say about them and stop...pretty much that abruptly, occasionally seeming like it's done in mid-sentence. Over the years it's become a hallmark of his efforts.

Joining Thomas (vocals & rhythm guitar) this time around are daughter Erinn Rachelle (duets) and Gawain Matthews (lead guitar, bass, dobro & mandolin). As picks among the originals, we'll name "The Girl" (about a girl) and "The Cowboy Code" (about guess what). Both covers are CD picks: Chris Smithers' "Leave The Light On" and Dorsey Burnette's "One X One." Each brings an interesting Dylanesque poetic mystery to the proceedings.

Bob Thomas has been at it quite a few years now, certainly long enough to have developed a cadre of followers. hey should find this CD a fitting addition to their Thomas collection. Ten tracks total.

CD: Available through [bobthomasmusic.com](http://bobthomasmusic.com)



## Chapter Update

*Continued from page 33*

always an honor to have IWMA Hall of Fame members Cowboy Joe Babcock and Ranger Doug Green with us! November was highlighted by the IWMA Annual Convention, as always, jam packed with showcases, workshops, concerts, and everyone's favorite, the Fireplace nightly jams!!! It truly is a Family reunion!!! Awards night was extraordinary! What a thrill it was to have so many of our members nominated in virtually every category! Congratulations to all the Award winners!!!! It was



*Chapter members gathering*



*Chapter members gathering*

a special treat to see Tennessee's own *Gone With the West* as the opening performance for the Award's Show! We are very pleased and honored to have closed out our second year as a Chapter of the IWMA, and look forward to a tremendous 2024! Saddle up!!!



*Gone with the West*



*Chapter members gather for a photo moment.*

### TEXAS CHAPTER

**President: Cary Wiseman**  
**Wisemanranch71@gmail.com**

Hello Y'all, I hope everyone had an amazing Thanksgiving with their family and friends. 2024 is right around the corner which brings me joy to announce that the Texas Chapter will be at the Jasper County Cowboy Church in Jasper Texas to host the Piney Woods Cowboy Gathering & Cast Iron Cookoff!! This is our second year to host an event at the cowboy church and we are

very thankful for their support. We hope that y'all will come and enjoy this wonderful event with us. We have a great lineup of musicians and poets being put together as we speak. If you want to find out more information you can look up the event or the Texas Chapter on Facebook where there is more information provided about the event. I hope y'all have a Merry Christmas and hope to see y'all soon. God Bless and Happy Trails!

### UTAH CHAPTER

**President: Dale Major**  
**cvcowboyrendezvous@gmail.com**

The Utah Chapter of International Western Music Association is Back in the Saddle! We've had serious health issues with some of our key leadership members, but we're happy to announce that both (our unnamed here but much loved!) friends are recovering, and even taking gigs again. Thanks to all our members who've kept the faith and continued membership through our hard times. Some of our Board members are yet to be assigned, but Dale Major (Cache Valley Cowboy Rendezvous) is our new President, Carol Messerly (Many Strings) our Vice President, Sam DeLeeuw (Poet) will continue as Treasurer, and Jo Kirkwood (Poet) is Secretary. A major resolve for our reorganization is that our scheduled jams and meetings will take place in locations throughout the state, to allow more of our members to join in the collaboration and fun. With that in mind, our first "official" get-together after the reformation will be January 20, in Payson. Looking into the future, we'll give some hints and spread some rumors that Utah is exploring some exciting new possibilities in terms of Gatherings! We'll keep IWMA informed as that breaking news develops.

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## **MIKE BOOTH**

### ***A Cowboy Remembers* (Audio Book – 2 CD set)**



Cowboy Poet (and singer) Mike Booth does indeed have a lot to remember. In the past he has owned horses, cowboyed, ranched, auctioneered, rodeoed and been a TV pitchman for Native

American jewelry! There sure oughta be a memory or two!!

This is the expressively rendered audio version of Booth's published book of the same title. It is a word-for-word lift. Even Dennis Ashley, writer of the book's Forward, came aboard to read it here! Stylistically it can be argued whether or not the flow of the piece is broken up somewhat by reading titles ahead of both the intros and poems along with "by Mike Booth" each time. What is not arguable is the cumulative Cowboying, ranching and rodeo education that comes

across by the end. The Western part predominates out of the billed "Western, Religious & Patriotic Poetry."

Some of the picks include "A Day At The Blacksmith's Shop," "Ride Against The Clock," "The Ride For The Money," "Yesteryear," "A Ranger's Life," "My First Gunfight," "The Final Check," "Trains Help Settle The West," "A Bull's Point Of View," "Close To The Vest" and "Majesty." 'Buncha picks! 'Buncha poems!! Seventy-six tracks including intros (thirty-seven poems) and we'll recommend it! 🐾

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## **Chapter Update**

*Continued from page 39*

### **WESTERN WORDSMITHS CHAPTER President: Mark Munzert markmunsert@gmail.com**

It would be remiss if I were to not note the IWMA Convention as well done, immensely enjoyable, worthwhile, inspiring, and encouraging. The Cowboy Poetry Contest saw nine Western Wordsmith Chapter Members in the fray including Floyd Beard; Mike Booth; Jeff Davidson; Rik "Yonder" Goodell; Dale Page; Miska Paget; Dennis Russell; George Ray Russell; and Ron Wilson. Also vying for the buckle were: Dr. Ted Coffman; Lindy Simmons; David Smith; and JJ Steele. The unenviable task of judging was ably performed by: Vic Anderson; Sherl Cederburg; Jo Lynn Kirkwood; Tom Swearingen; and, Carol Markstrom. Thanks also to the contest '23 emcee Smokey Culver. The buckle went to Floyd Beard with a stirringly appropriate themed poem, a timely, measured, and powerful delivery to a moved

and appreciative audience. Name dropping continued: IWMA Western Wordsmiths took home the honors at the Will Rogers Medallion Award Ceremony in Ft. Worth in October. Place winners in Recorded Poetry were Gold-Sherl Cederburg, and Silver-Valerie Beard. Poet Tom Swearingen has been featured for the second time this year on Oregon Public Broadcasting's NPR station. Tom is also enjoying his time as guest host of Jim and Bobbi Jean Bell's weekly LA Talk Radio program Rendezvous With a Writer Outwest, and Micki Furhman is on deck as Tom's guest. Mr Terry Nash reports "The 8th annual Western Slope Cowboy Gathering, held November 3rd and 4th, was a great success! It was WSCG's most successful year. Cowboy Poetry and Western Music are alive and well in Grand Junction CO! We're already planning gathering #9 for Nov 1-2." Yours truly gearing up for a Christmas show, some Colorado magic, the Campfire Cowboys, and an exciting recording project. Looking forward to making 2024 a year of growth for Western Wordsmiths.

### **YOUTH CHAPTER Board Committee**

**Belinda Gail**  
[belindagail@protonmail.com](mailto:belindagail@protonmail.com)  
**LeeLee Robert**  
[lee@leeleemusic.com](mailto:lee@leeleemusic.com)  
**Marsha Short**  
[marsha@westernmusic.org](mailto:marsha@westernmusic.org)

Seven members of the IWMA Youth Chapter attended the IWMA Convention this year: Alice Black, Indiana Ford, Jack George, Bodhi Linde, Kacey Thunborg, Jenna Thunborg and Phoebe White. They attended workshops and showcased their talents on Saturday afternoon. During the salute to Hall of Fame members who passed away this year, they performed a medley of Ian Tyson songs. Congratulations to Jack George and Phoebe White for receiving the 2023 IWMA Crescendo Award! Quarterly Zoom workshops are being planned for 2024; the first one will on "Jamming Etiquette." All chapters are asked to be on the lookout for new, young talent to help plan the future of Western Music and Cowboy Poetry. 🐾



## Sampling The Singles

BY RICK HUFF

Pay attention to Wyoming native **Ian Munsick**! CBS's Morning Show sure did!! Son of IWMA artist Dave Munsick, this guy has vowed to bring Western back to Country! Google him! His single **White Buffalo** is from his new album, which follows his debut CD "Coyote Cry." From his lyrics to images in his videos, he could provide a Western breakthrough. He's Country to boot! It can still be done!

**Bob Marshall** has arrived right on cue with yet another single. Called **Real Cowboy**, this one is Western all the way. If you couldn't spot its pedigree by the title, its first lines are "Chris LeDoux plays in my truck, the carpet smells like horse!" Whether or not he invites a girl in there with him, he admits "I dance holdin' my partner" and "I ride for the brand." Both are examples of Western horsin' around!

Over the years Australians and New Zealanders have contributed regularly to the international library of Western Music. Now NZ's multi-award winning singer/songwriter and broadcaster **Joy Adams** is helping to make sure Western Swing is also well represented with **Point Of No Return**. Very traditionally styled, the track is a sweet dancer that will fit into any Western-friendly playlist.

From across the other pond in conjunction with his 80th birthday, **Johnny Carroll** brings us **Don't Play A Sad Song After Midnight**. Billed in his publicity as "the only artist in Ireland who has never taken a break" in his 66 years of entertaining, this single is *highly* entertaining. It employs instrumentation normally associated with Irish jigs and plies them to Western Swing! And a good time was had by all!

Ireland's **Kevin Logue** offers **I Wish I Was A Cowboy Again**, perhaps the best "recalling playing Cowboy" song yet!! Perceptive and literate, it could be part of any Western playlist. Logue grew up listening to Kris Kristofferson, John Prine and Guy Clark among others and his vocal tone is reminiscent of them. Google him and download him. You will thank me for that recommendation.



**Hannah Jackson** along with **Megan Hughes** and **Faith Drake** put out **Save Your Drama For Your Mama** in a perfect Western Swing mounting of the Andrews Sisters effect. The period styling provides a terrific good ol' days vehicle for some surprising

contemporary commentary about fear, estrangement from neighbors, locking our cars and getting life directions from viral video influencers! Nifty!!

Could Irish Country Swing be dubbed "Honk O'Tonk??" Famed Irish Country artist **Norman Borland** has chosen the style for **You And Me**, a strong song from the esteemed Jon Philibert. To Borland 'You' means his audience 'and Me' means himself. He feels it could become an anthem of sorts for him. As long as the dancers can keep moving to it, I'm sure they will approve whichever meaning he prefers.

Not done with us yet, Ireland sends us **The Musketeers** with **Outlaws, Sailors & Whiskey**. A medley of three popular ballads, technically the order of events is outlaws, then whiskey and finally sailors! But as they say in the pubs, "who's counting??" Solo artists Billy Morrissey, T. R. Dallas and Mick Foster teamed up and show us clearly one of the points of origin for our beloved Western saga songs.

Brand new inductee into the Kansas Music Hall Of Fame **Sam Bidwell** has dropped a wonderfully hooky/catchy Western Swinger called **Don't Go Blowin' Kisses At Me**. From its first notes it grabs you as being something special. It's the kind of track that could serve as its own study course in what to do to bring a song to life. Of course it helps considerably if the song contains some life to start with!

Clarksville Creative Sound has scored again creatively with the release of a little Western Swing gem for **Cathy Jewell**. The brightly positive lyrics (yes, that IS possible to do) of **A Heart Of Gold** maintain "we'll never own a yacht or buy a mansion on the hill, but my baby's sure got a heart of gold." It's a message about what is important, lasting and meaningful. AND it b'gawd swings!!!

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## RICK HUFF'S SAMPLING THE SINGLES REVIEWS

*Continued from page 41*

Speaking of "hooky," nobody was playing it in the creation of a new Western Swing gem from **Tony Justice!** A winner in all departments, **Truckin' 'Cross Texas** "in a Tennessee state of mind" is feel-good to the max! Big production propels the song perfectly. It's one of those effects that really does leave you wanting more. They may have seen that coming, so for the reason and the season they also gave us an easy loping Swinger called **Merry Trucking Christmas**, a trucker tale about Santa's "rig" breaking down and the drivers delivering children's toys "just in the St. Nick of time!" Ho ho ho!

Another positively-toned Western Swinger is the wonderfully catchy **Do It Right** from NYC-raised but Texas "brazed" singer/songwriter **Frank Martin Gilligan**. He first gained fame as co-founder and leader of the group Mason Dixon. He remains a vibrant elder statesman of the music and his lyrics reflect it. "I'm gonna give it all with all that I've been given...til I ain't got nothin' left." 'Way to go!!

Texan troubadour and club owner **Bobby Mackey** put out one whose quotient of "PC" might be in question, but its Western Swing lineage is unquestionable. **Me Love You Long Time** provides a solid showcase for the talents of its players. The singer met the lady in Japan, can't converse, and wonders if her titular comment means he'll have love for an afternoon or forever. Spoiler alert. It's forever.

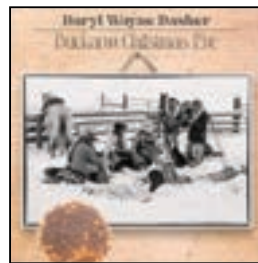
Country Jazz guitarist **Ray Cummins** and singer **Joetta Schmitt** have released a very nice version of Dolly Parton's **Do I Ever Cross Your Mind**. The effect is sort of "Les Paul & Mary Ford meet Chet Atkins & Dolly Parton" for a most satisfying result. The tune swings and it lilts. It's just the sort of difference that deserves to get notice as it flies in the face of commercial wisdom from wagging heads.

Maybe fueled by the response to his 2022 CD and single **Keep Up With A Cowgirl**, Arkansas singer & songwriter **David Adam Byrnes** issued **If I Was Your Cowboy**... ("you wouldn't watch me ride away" "kick the dust off these old boots, hang up my hat and plant some roots"). It followed his earlier **Still Have Some Cowboy Left** ("he's an old fence fixer and campfire picker")! 'Cowboy' rules with him!

The CMA & CCMA-awarded Canadian artist **Gord Bamford** definitely kicked up dust with the release of his romping **Canadian Dirt**. On that stuff, we are told, one finds "mustangs & tractors & rusty barbed wire" and "guitars & cold beers & back 40 fires"...not to mention "cowboys & hippies" who "lay stones, build homes & break bones on it." There's wearable merch with a concert tour on it, too.

Singer/songwriter **Derryl Terry** snagged CMA Texas Song Of The Year honors with **Some Horses**, also enjoying a good ride on the Indie charts...although its subjects "weren't meant to be broke, aren't fit to be rode," and "need places to run" with "their manes a-blowin'!" Using still more mustang imagery he paints his portrait of unbridled males with mellow, largely acoustic musical colors.

For holiday release there came "a fat cowboy in a big red suit!" In **Santa's Cowboy Town** from **Richard Lynch**, Santa 'makes it for 8' on board the rankest bull. "Merry Xmas you all...I came here to rodeo," he shouts. "I'm gonna kick a little dirt around, have a little fun this year in this cowboy town!" To anyone who'd argue that St. Nicolas would be an improbable bull rider, we'll just say "oh chute!"



A marvel of a holiday single release showed up with **Darryl Wayne Dasher's** wonderfully crafted and arranged **Buckaroo Christmas Eve**. Spot-on accurate cowboy camp lyrics and even a nice yodel are featured! Truly you can almost

smell Coosie's supper and the woodsmoke. To its credit the easy waltz's words can work for people of any belief. It could and should become a holiday standard!

Over in Chute #5 **Jesse Blake** sings "I got my **Hooks On My Boots**, 'gonna have a little fun!" Pushed forward by the kind of beat and form found long ago in Bob Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues" the lyrics clearly show this power song was written by a guy who really has loaded onto the bull. The kind of insider details in it can't be faked. And I seriously doubt anything was done virtually here.



On the Indy charts this past Fall songstress **Payton Riley** rode up with **Long Live Cowboys**, which is not the similarly-titled song from 2021 done by Aaron Watson. Her medium slow Country ballad's statement? "Not all boys grow up to be cowboys but he's growin' up to be my kind of man!" Two songs with that title appearing a mere two years apart at least says the sentiment is a popular one!



Another well done single from Nashville's Flaming Tortuga Records, this one a wistful holiday Cowboy saga song! **Wooden Sheriff's Gun** from **Scott Southworth** tells of a sheriff allowing an outlaw one more night with wife and son so

the man can deliver a hand-carved toy in person. Don't expect a magical finale to it, other than a miraculous show of humanity for these inhumane times.

For an interesting "list" to consider, try Horsey Hooves' **30 Best Cowboy Songs That Are Also Country Classics**. Decent justifications for some you might dispute (**Save A Horse Ride A Cowboy**, **Cowgirls Don't Cry**, **Cowboy Take Me Away**, etc.) but plenty of songs over which no argument would ever come. And IWMA alum **Kacey Musgraves** made the cut with **Space Cowboy**, so there!!

And HOW did we miss **Devon Cole** and her song **Hey Cowboy** from about a year ago?? We weren't focusing on singles back then, that's how! If ever there was a track to stimulate the What Is Western talk, that one was it! For the *nonfaint-of-heart*, check out the "Official Video" with its very Western but very double entendre lyrics and (ahem) everything else going on there. Then, talk amongst yourselves! 🐾

## Make plans to attend the **WWA CONVENTION**

**June 19-24, 2024 | Tulsa, Oklahoma**

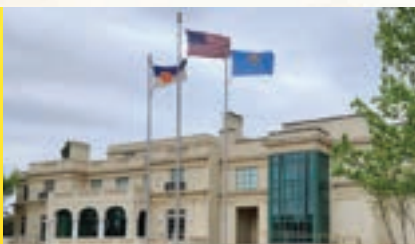
Hyatt Regency Tulsa Downtown

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# Book Nook Reviews & More

BY KAREN CAMPBELL



If you would like to have your western fiction, nonfiction or poetry book reviewed, send a copy to:  
Karen Campbell, 1762 County Road 121, Gainesville, TX 76240. Submissions will not be returned.

## Cowboy Writers are Romantics at Heart

**M**ost cowboy writers you'll meet might admit to being romantics in the sense of appreciating a good love story. But they are "Romantic" in more ways than that. One piece of the heritage of cowboy writing lies with the Romantic writers of the late 1700s and early 1800s. Many people might recognize the names of some of the most well known Romantic writers from a middle school or high school literature class like Percy Shelley, John Keats, William Wordsworth, William Blake, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

So what makes cowboy writers "romantic" if its not lovey-dovey stuff? Romantic writers were known for doing particular things in the pieces they wrote. And cowboy writers do some of those same things. What are some of those things Romantic writers do that cowboy writers also do?

First, the Romantic writers tended to glorify the beauties of nature. Look at these lines from William Wordsworth's well known poem "I wandered lonely as a cloud":

*I wandered lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host, of golden daffodils;  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

Aren't these lines a beautiful and hopeful description of nature and spring, the "clouds" and "hills" and "daffodils" and "trees"? Now look at these lines from Yvonne Hollenbeck and her poem, "Nature's Church":

*Did you ever see the mountains when they're covered up  
with snow  
Or watch an evening sunset leave its purple afterglow?  
You can't climb up in a saddle and ride 'cross prairie sod  
Or see an eagle on the wing and not believe in God.*

While Hollenbeck appears to be describing a more wintry scene than Wordsworth's spring scene, there's no doubt that her poem also appreciates the beauties of nature, the "mountains" and the "sunset" and an "eagle on the wing." Can you see the similarities?

Romantic poets also liked to write about being alone. We can see in Wordsworth's poem above that he mentions "wandering lonely as a cloud" for instance. See in his poem the combination of appreciation of nature and solitude. Now look at these lines from cowboy poet Henry Herbert Knibbs and his poem "The Walking Man":

*You remember, it was lonely when we used to guard  
the cattle;  
When a man would ride the line for days and camp at  
night alone,  
With nothing much to do but watch the sun rise up  
for battle,  
And not a soul to talk to, or what's even worse—his own.*

Here, the cowboy is alone watching the cattle and the sun rise. The story of Knibb's "Walking Man" poem is that the cowboy relied on his horse for company. The sad story of the poem is that the lonely cowboy has lost his horse tragically, so now he walks alone. Again, see the similarities of being alone and in nature? Hollenbeck's poem seems to also describe a person alone watching nature.

Romantic poets also appreciated the supernatural or paranormal in their poems, such as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge mentioned earlier, including a scene similar to the movie *Pirates of the Caribbean*:

*Beneath the lightning and the Moon  
The dead men gave a groan.*

*They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,  
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;  
It had been strange, even in a dream,  
To have seen those dead men rise.*

*The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;  
Yet never a breeze up-blew;  
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,  
Where they were wont to do;  
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—  
We were a ghastly crew.*



There are similar scenes in cowboy poetry and music. Let's consider a cowboy song here instead, "Ghost Riders in the Sky" by Stan Jones and recorded by many well known artists:

*Their faces gaunt  
Their eyes were blurred  
Their shirts all soaked with sweat  
He's riding hard to catch that herd  
But he ain't caught 'em yet  
'Cause they've got to ride forever  
On that range up in the sky  
On horses snorting fire*

Again, the similarities are pretty clear whether its a ship crew or cowboy crew of spirits. As we can see from these examples, cowboy poets and musicians draw from a rich heritage of beautiful poetry dating back over 200 years.

How might this inform your current writing? It is said frequently that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," meaning of course that we choose to copy the words or style of what we like. Well if you haven't explored some of the Romantic poets, you might find reading some of their poetry (which happens to be available free online) helpful in generating ideas or even a new style. Do you know of a beautiful place in nature you could describe, a place you can go alone? Do you know of any western themed 'ghost stories' told at bedtime that might make an interesting song or poem? Just search out some of the names mentioned in this article and what they wrote. I challenge you to learn more about your heritage and write forward even as you look back.

## SCOTT L. WISWELL

### *Hoot Tales & Assorted Cowboy Poems*



*Hoot Tales & Assorted Cowboy Poems* by Scott L. Wiswell, 2023, Amazon Direct Publishing. \$14.95 on Amazon, hard copy, 99 pgs.

Scott L. Wiswell presents 30 cowboy

poems in his newest publication *Hoot Tales & Assorted Cowboy Poems*. Wiswell bases most of them around a fictional "Everyman" type cowboy he calls Hoot Johnson, meant to play a humorous role in the collection and have readers appreciate the 'lighter side' of the cowboy lifestyle. Wiswell organizes his collection around traditional topics such as Politics and Culture, Faith, Dude Ranchin, and Christmas with brief

introductions (and some historical lore) at the beginning of each section.

Wiswell's poetic style will be familiar to many readers, generally relying on four line stanzas that rhyme every line (aabb). This style will suit those wishing to learn some short and easy to memorize poems. Because of this style and a lack of punctuation, these poems work better read aloud than read in print. The lack of punctuation is not likely to bother listeners but may bother or confuse some readers looking for clear endings to sentences.

As for myself, I found Wiswell's *Hoot poems* cute, eliciting the occasional chuckle the author intends. I enjoyed for instance "Letters" and "Renaissance Man." But the *Hoot poems*, despite being the focus for the title, are not actually the strongest poems in this collection. I was much more moved and impressed when the author wrote from a more serious viewpoint such as in the poems "When the Day's Work's Finally Over,"

"Not Just a Hat," "Kansas" and "The Four Horsemen." In these poems, the meter and rhymes are more even and expressive and the themes more imaginative. The poems "Animation" and "Genetics" also join the stronger poems in this collection (and contain only a very brief mention of Hoot).

The book itself is currently only available in paperback. It is well made for a paperback and the pages are of good quality that will stand up to some use. I recommend the author look into ebook publication as well to broaden his reach and make it easier for potential readers/reciters to quickly reference on a mobile device.

Readers looking for a collection to memorize and present for local gatherings or looking for a fast, easy, traditional and mostly light hearted read will likely appreciate this collection.

**Amazon Direct Publishing. \$14.95 on Amazon, hard copy, 99 pgs. 🐾**

**KAREN GRACE BROWN CAMPBELL** has been writing, reading, and performing primarily western and Christian poetry for over 25 years. She is also a wife and a mother of a wonderful little girl. She breeds horses and runs barrels as well as serving as an Associate Dean and English Professor at Grayson College and has taught at other colleges and universities. She has her PhD from Texas Tech and an MA from Baylor University in Literature, specifically medieval literature (cowboys and knights have a lot in common). You may contact Karen at [CampbellK@grayson.edu](mailto:CampbellK@grayson.edu).

# Western Playlists – Reporters

Here are the DJs who submitted their playlists this quarter:

**Joe Angel**

KEOS  
PO Box 1085  
Del Valle, TX 78617  
jangedj@arhaven.com

**Marshal Allen Bailey**

*"Trucker's Radio USA"*  
909 First St.  
Windom, KS 67491  
www.truckersradiousa.com

**Bobbi Jean Bell**

*"OutWest Hour"*  
KUPR, www.kupr.org  
Out West, 8201 Golf Course Rd NW  
Ste D3, #189  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
*"Campfire Café" & "Saddle Up, America"*  
Equestrian Legacy Radio Network  
Co-host with Gary Holt  
bobbijeanbell@gmail.com  
www.equestrianlegacy.net  
661-714-0045

**Skip Bessonette & His Pard Lucky**

*"Rogue Valley Bound Show"*  
2395 E. McAndrews Rd.  
Medford, Oregon 97504  
541-301-7649  
www.earsradio.com  
New Zealand Public Radio  
KSHD, Shady Cove, OR  
skipbessonette@gmail.com

**Janice Brooks**

*"Bus of Real Country"*  
170 Jodon Ave.  
Pleasant Gap, PA 16823  
Busgaljb@gmail.com

**Peter Bruce**

*"Under Western Skies"*  
KAFF Country Legends  
FM 93.5/AM 930  
1117 W. Route 66  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
928-556-2650  
www.kafflegends.com  
peter.bruce@kaff.com

**Chuckaroo the Buckaroo**

*"Calling All Cowboys Radio"*  
88.9 FM, KPOV High Desert  
Community Radio  
http://www.kpov.org  
http://kpov.od.streamguys.us/  
calling\_all\_cowboys\_new\_56k.mp3  
Email: callingallcowboys@hotmail.com  
Station NFLY – No Fly Internet Radio/  
*"The Flying SL Ranch Radio Show"*  
radio.spalding-labs.com  
22470 Rickard Rd., Bend, OR 97702

**Roger & Leo Eilts**

2821 W 75th Street, Prairie Village, KS 66208  
*"The Americana Road Show"*  
www.truckersradiousa.com  
roger@thederrieres.com  
816-769-4041  
leo@thederrieres.com  
913-226-3637  
www.thederrieres.com

**Doug Figgs**

P. O. Box 3, Lemitar, NM 87823  
505-440-0979  
www.doufiggs.com  
www.RioGrandeValleyRadio.com

**Nancy Flagg**

*"Cowboy Tracks"*  
KDRT 95.7 FM live radio  
and internet streaming (www.kdrt.org)  
1623 Fifth Street  
Davis, CA 95616  
Email: CowboyTracks2@gmail.com  
Website: Facebook.com/cowboytracks

**Paul Hazell**

PH Records  
Royal Mail Building (PO Box 3)  
Brambleside  
Bellbrook Industrial Estate  
Uckfield  
East Sussex  
TN22 1XX United Kingdom  
*"Paul Hazell's World Of Country"*  
Big River FM (NZ) and others and  
several other stations around the world  
Paulhazellsworldofcountry@gmail.com  
Telephone: +44 7775 545 902

**Randy Hill**

*"Western Swing Time Radio Show"*  
5114 Balcones Woods Dr., Suite 307-387  
Austin, TX 78759  
(Plays only western swing)  
westernswingtime@gmail.com  
www.westernswingtime.com

**Gary Holt**

*"Campfire Cafe and Saddle Up America"*  
5005 Sunset Way  
Hermitage, TN 37076  
www.equestrianlegacy.net  
gih50@live.com  
615-478-2138

**Judy James**

*"Cowboy Jubilee with Judy James and  
Western Heritage Radio"*  
PO Box 953, Weatherford, Texas 76086  
judy@judyjames.com

**Allen & Jill Kirkham**

*"Circuit Rider Roundup"* on  
*"American Cowboy Radio"*  
KJAG FM 107.7 Guthrie, TX  
www.americancowboyradio.com  
25353 S. Lightning Creek Road  
Custer, SD 57730  
(Plays Western Gospel music and  
cowboy poetry)  
Sunday 10:00 am & 7:00 pm (CST)  
Monday 8:00 pm (CST)  
KirkhamMusic@icloud.com  
605-440-7338

**Susie Knight**

*"The Western Way Hour"*  
www.mixcloud.com/Lasso22/  
PO Box 76, Conifer, CO 80433  
(303) 495-4869

**Jarle Kvale**

KEYA Public Radio  
PO Box 190, Belcourt, ND 58316  
jkkeya@utma.com

**Eddy Leverett**

c/o Campfire Productions  
1623 Co. Rd. 820, Cullman, AL 35057  
*"Around the Campfire"*  
WKUL  
www.wkul.com  
kudzucowboy@outlook.com



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 www.ButchMartinMusic.com  
 www.romancingthewest.org  
 541-218-2477

**Marvin O'Dell***"Around the Campfire"*

KKRN, Redding, CA  
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 tunein.com/radio/KZNQ-Q-Country-  
 1015-s264146/  
 www.earsradio.com  
 meoteo@aol.com  
 10430 W. Loma Blanca Dr.  
 Sun City, AZ 85351  
 805-551-4649

**Bob O'Donnell**

455 12th Avenue, Apt 130  
 Baldwin WI 54002  
 justbobswesternjukebox@gmail.com

**O.J. Sikes**

681 Ellington Rd., Ridgewood, NJ 07450  
 ojsikes@gmail.com  
 KKRN, Redding, CA  
 www.earsradio1.com

**JJ Steele**

*"Cowboy Corral"*  
 c/o JJ Steele  
 KLZR  
 103 South 2nd Street  
 Westcliffe, Colorado 81252

**Wayne & Kathy**

*"Swing 'n' Country"*  
 KBOO 90.7 FM  
 20 SE 8th Ave., Portland, OR 97214  
 wkjswingandcountry@comcast.net

**Attention DJs!** Your contributions to *The Western Way* charts are welcomed.

Please send your playlist, including the song and the CD on which it appears, to meoteo@aol.com.

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# Western Charts

**Attention Musicians and Poets!** Various DJ friends have reported their playlists for the last quarter, thus helping us compile these charts reflecting which CDs are being played the most on their radio shows. You will find a listing of those reporting DJs in this issue.

## TOP 30 COWBOY / WESTERN ALBUMS

1. Throw a Saddle on a Star – Riders in the Sky
2. 5 From the Heart of a Cowboy – Tom Hiatt
3. Cowgirl's Ride – Sarah Pierce
4. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
5. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
6. One More Ride – Doug Figgs
7. Bunchgrass – Wylie & the Wild West
8. Cabin Songs – Syd Masters
9. Roll On, Cowboys – Andy Hedges
10. We Were Cowboys – R.J. Vandygriff
11. Way Out West – Mark Kerr
12. Just Passin' Through – The Fall River Boys
13. Born to be a Cowgirl – Aspen Black
14. Ranchfolk at Large – Ryan Fritz
15. Cowboy Serenade – Ed Meyer
16. America Outlaw II – Chris Guenther
17. Arizona Stars – Rusted Spurs West
18. Times Like These – Randy Huston
19. Corral Dust and Crosses – The Timberline Cowboys
20. The Real West – Patty Clayton
21. UneXpected – Phoebe White
22. On the Draw – The Carolyn Sills Combo
23. Saturday Matinee – KG & the Ranger
24. Westbound – Micki Fuhrman
25. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
26. Thistles and Thorns – Allan Chapman & Rodeo Kate
27. Pick of the Litter – Barbara Nelson
28. Long Days, Short Pay – Johnny Angel
29. Me and Les – Dan McCorison
30. Purple Sage (And Other Tales From the Plateau) – The Dan Canyon Band

## 10 MOST PLAYED WESTERN SWING ALBUMS

1. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
2. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
3. Billy Mata's Timeless Treasures – Billy Mata
4. Arizona Skies – Rusted Spurs West
5. All of Me – Eric Diamond
6. Pick of the Litter – Barbara Nelson
7. God Bless the Mighty Pickle – Rick & the All-Star Ramblers
8. Texas Star – Lori Beth Brooke  
Yearnin' – Jim Winters
10. Little Bit of Texas – Carlos Washington

## 12 MOST PLAYED SONGS BY WESTERN MUSIC DJS

1. Ian and Charlie – Tom Hiatt
2. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
3. Never Cuss the Rain – Tom Hiatt
4. Little Bit of Western, Little Bit of Rain – Carlos Washington
5. High Country Trail – Syd Masters
6. Sun Going Down – Sarah Pierce
7. Yellowstone – Joni Harms  
Cowboy 'Til I Die – Ed Meyer  
The Shelter of the Wildwood – Riders in the Sky
10. Long Gone Out West Blues – Patty Clayton  
Barbwire and the Rails – Ed Meyer  
Last of the Four Sixes Cowboys – Joel White

## 12 MOST PLAYED COWBOY POETRY ALBUMS

1. Four Aces and a Queen – Dennis Russell,  
Terry Nash, Valerie Beard, Floyd Beard & Dale Page
2. Provin' Up Wise – Rik "Yonder" Goodell
3. No Better Life – Valerie Beard
4. Born to Ponder – Sherl Cederburg
5. Between the Sun and the Moon – Teresa Burleson  
Upon My Horse's Back – Chris Mortenson  
New Mexico Stray – Dennis Russell
8. Once Upon the West – Doris Daley & Eli Barsi  
The Best Horses in Heaven They Have no Tails – Miska Paget
10. Rhyme 'Em, Cowboy – Tom Swearingen
11. Horse Tales and Cow Trails – Floyd Beard  
Wisdom in the Wind – Sherl Cederburg  
The Truth – A.K. Moss  
Day Workin' – Mark Munzert

**\*A MISSING NUMBER IN THE LIST  
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 Fooseland, IL  
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