

THE WESTERN WAY

The Official Publication of the International Western Music Association



LeeLee Robert

What do you get when you combine sophisticated colors and sounds of jazz and blues music with the stories and lyrics of the west? You have Cowgirl Jazz! You have LeeLee!

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ON THE
ROAD WITH
IWMA

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OLD WEST
Pianists-
NO RESPECT

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From The President...



MARVIN O'DELL
IWMA President

My First Introduction to Cowboyin'

I have to admit that my first introduction to cowboyin' came through the silver screen cowboy movies I watched when I was a kid. I'm pretty much a city boy. I never rode a horse until I was an adult. Although my father grew up on a farm, he moved to the city before I was born; consequently, my only exposure to farm life was when we would visit my grandparents' farm a couple of times a year. And then all I did there was play outside games with my cousins who would be visiting at the same time. I never rode a tractor or played in the hayloft or even fished in a pond.

So – all of my knowledge of cowboy life came from the likes of Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Ken Maynard, and the rest of the cowboys I watched in the movies made primarily in the 1930's, '40's, and '50's. Imagine my shock and despair when I learned upon growing up that those scenes and events depicted in those western movies gave me no knowledge whatsoever of what real cowboy life was like! I can't tell you how disappointed I was to learn that Gene Autry oftentimes had to be tied on his horse to keep from falling off! WHAT?!? Or that Ken Maynard died an alcoholic. Huh? I thought he only drank milk and sarsaparilla!

Well, somehow I worked through all of that. And, of course, I grew to understand that the life of a real cowboy has nothing to do with chasing outlaws who just robbed a bank or ferreting out who the crooked land grabber is or kissing horses instead of girls. And now I watch those old movies with a renewed view. However – I have to admit that I still enjoy watching a genuine, shoot-em-up, black and white B-western now and then. There's something about those old oaters, as they were often called, that is so nostalgic you can't resist them. And even if it wasn't always a real cowboy who was the hero (actually a few of them were: Bob Baker, Fred Scott, Tom Mix), if they could sing, I liked them even better.

It was the songs that seemed to excite me the most. And still today, no matter how poorly produced and preserved the recordings might be, I love to listen to them. A handful of Ken Maynard recordings were released a few years ago, all scratchy and distorted. And while he may go down as the worst singer who ever worked his way through a cowboy song in a western movie,

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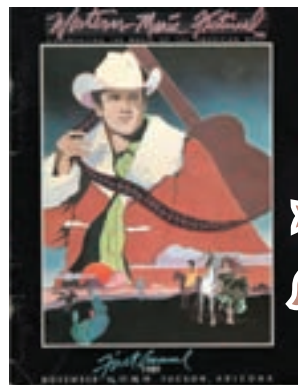
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ON THE COVER...

LeeLee has created a unique niche for herself in the style dubbed "Cowgirl Jazz." As a professional public speaker she provides a smooth blend of music with the spoken message. As a polished singer/songwriter she is inspired by the Western landscape and feels no boundaries in her stylistic jazz-to-western crossover. LeeLee may just be one of a kind.
(Image courtesy Photographbyneets)

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 West

Since 1978 we have made our home in the West and Southwest. Unfortunately, it hasn't been on a rolling ranch laden with horses or cattle. I haven't had the privilege of the "wide open spaces." But I have enjoyed a life of the most beautiful sunsets – first

watching the sun fall between coastal mountain peaks before setting in the Pacific Ocean. I even found beauty in the foggy mornings as the ocean gave up the mist to the morning sun rise.

Now living in the desert, it is such a different beauty that I enjoy. The Arizona skies and sunsets – nothing like it! I had to learn to appreciate the rare and captivating scenes of a landscape dotted with aged saguaros reaching their many arms toward heaven, indigenous shrubs and succulents growing out of the sandy soil, and the big and small rocks that jut upward to add their own majesty to the desert scene. But it's a beauty all its own.

The allure of the West was made more real as we recently took a 4-week driving trip that took us through western and southwestern states that included New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Colorado, and back to Arizona. Marvin or I would say "Oh, look at those rock formations." Or "Those golden plains stretch all the way to the horizon!" or "Those mountains touch Heaven and paint a beautiful picture with the creek winding in-and-out below." We were never bored with the scenery.

I could not help but think (and even wish) that if I was only a poet or songwriter I would capture the beauty of the West so people everywhere would feel its inspiration. One songwriter has done an exemplary job. Joyce Woodson in her song "If I hadn't seen the West" best encapsulates what I'm feeling with lines like "If I hadn't seen a crimson red sunset send the world through a shimmering dream...", "...Wide open spaces fill me up and leave me feelin' blessed...", "...There's nothing quite like a desert night with the sound of those Spanish

guitars...", and many other sentiments. Joyce wraps it up with "I could've lived any place in the world, if I hadn't seen the West." What a great line!

Maybe, and it's my humble opinion, that the appeal of the songsters and poets of this Organization is found in the lyrics they feel compelled to pen. Humorous compositions are entertaining; the deviations from lyrics purely about the West might be needed to lend variety to an album; or a "pop" tune played with orchestral accompaniment adds a touch more culture, but for this listener I say keep writing about the canyons and rivers, the trails and cattle drives, the campfires and campfire songs and always the mountains, valleys and sunsets. Let

it inspire you. Those are sights from the West – I saw them all with my own eyes as we drove down the highways and some back roads and it was both enchanting and thrilling. I never tired of the scenery nor bored with the drive.

I believe our listeners will never tire of the songs and poems that paint the portrait of the West. Let your inspiration continue to be all that is beautiful in your eyes in the West.



From The Executive Director...



Marsha Short
Executive Director

It's that time of year when we had April showers that brought May flowers but no Pilgrims (a Dad joke...ask an old person). What May brought was more rain, hail, flooding, tornadoes, and even snow for some of you. Thank

goodness that's over. Now we can look forward to a hotter, cooler, wetter, drier Summer...pick one. Any guess is as good as the next one!

The other thing that this time of year brings is the IWMA Songwriting Contest, nominations for the 2024 IWMA Awards of Excellence, and the Annual Convention in Albuquerque!

This year's Convention promises to bring together a lot of old friends as well as new friends. Cowboy Music and Western Poetry from names you know well and some names you're only just now hearing but will hear a lot more from in the future.

From the opening luncheon on Wednesday with the legendary Washtub Jerry as our speaker, to the last song on Sunday's Gospel Concert, every minute is filled. Also on Wednesday is the Swing Dance with Syd Masters & The Swing Riders, Thursday's Benefit Dinner Concert will feature the Kristyn Harris Band, and of course, there's the Friday Night Opry and Saturday Night Awards Show, and everything in between... you'll get up early and stay up late, so you don't miss one minute! You can buy your tickets online at iwesternmusic.org or by calling the IWMA office at 505-563.0673.

Remember to send your Songwriting Contest entries by July 31 and your Awards Nominations Form by September 5. If you need either form, just send an email to marsha@westernmusic.org, and we'll get one emailed right back to you.

Have a great Summer!

Marsha



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- Stockyards Museum – Ft. Worth, TX
- Tigard Public Library, Tigard, OR
- Rex Allen Arizona Cowboy Museum – Willcox, AZ
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FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Continued from page 2

I still enjoy listening to those old recordings. My wife says there's something wrong with me. She's probably right, but I don't know how to get over it. I just love it.

Although I prefer the crooners like Jack Randall and Rex Allen, Roy Rogers and Jimmy Wakely and the like, I also am fascinated by George Houston and the way he would ride down the trail singing in an operatic style. James Newill's style was very similar. And how could you not like the singing style of Tex Ritter? (I have to tell you that my wife, Theresa, can't stand to listen to Tex sing – upon which I tell her there's something wrong with HER!)

Many of the B-western cowboy singers were already moving forward with singing careers before getting into films. Cowboy stars like John "Dusty" King, Eddie Dean, Art Davis, and Gene Autry were well on their way toward solid careers as singers when invited to make western movies. And then later, many went on to successful music careers outside of film, e.g., Gene, Roy, Tex, Rex Allen, Jimmy Wakely, Eddie Dean and Herb Jeffries.

Interestingly enough, some of the most talented musicians in the B-Westerns were sidekicks. Lee "Lasses" White, Smiley Burnette, Fuzzy Knight, Bob Wills – these sidekicks oftentimes played very important roles when it came to producing the musical interludes of the westerns in which they were participating.

I heard a young baseball player say recently that he thought it was important for today's young players to study baseball history. He was saddened that most of today's young players didn't know who Mickey Mantle was. Or Warren Spahn. He thought it was important for these players to read up and study the lives of those who came along and laid the groundwork for their present-day success. I believe the same thing is true for today's young musicians. It's actually quite amazing to see what musicians in any form of music accomplished in the early days of the past century as they paved the way with none of today's technology. Many of them learned to be proficient with their instruments with no teachers; they just simply learned by ear and with lots of practice. We should never forget them or relegate them to dusty books on shelves somewhere.

I gotta go – there's a Smith Ballew movie starting. And Lou Gehrig co-stars in this film. It's an opportunity to learn something about singing cowboys and baseball players at the same time.

MARVIN O'DELL
President IWMA



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In the **CROSSHAIRS**



LeeLee Robert

“Unless we have goals that are bigger than ourselves life’s challenges can beat us down. This is important to me because I no longer consider my music just entertainment. I consider it a ministry of touching people and lifting them up.”

LeeLee Robert

BY TOM SWEARINGEN

It should come as no surprise that award-winning entertainer and songwriter LeeLee Robert grew up surrounded by music. What might surprise is the path she took to her “Cowgirl Jazz” style.

One of five children, Lee Robert (later taking on the affectionate nickname her family gave her) recalls there always being music in their Phoenix, AZ home. Her attorney father and homemaker mother filled the home with a variety of music from Broadway show tunes to the popular crooners of the time. And they encouraged the kids to sing. With her oldest siblings grown and out of the house, four year old LeeLee and twin sister and older brother were the featured entertainers at the family’s annual Christmas Eve program, singing three-part harmony holiday tunes. LeeLee got the bug, recalling the responsibility and excitement of performing for an audience. It wasn’t long before the kids were entertaining at the parent’s other social gatherings and churches. At 12 years old LeeLee picked up the guitar (to impress a boy... but that’s a story for another time). Armed with



Lee and Lyn with big brother Bill.

some chords her brother taught her, LeeLee began performing solo at the coffee houses with a folk repertoire of tunes by Peter Paul and Mary, The Kingston Trio, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell and others. Writing her first song at 14, by the time she was 16 she was singing professionally in coffee houses and at folk hootenannies. At about the same time she heard Bonnie Raitt. With that, her folk tastes expanded and shifted to a deep appreciation of the blues and jazz. Winning first place in the Arizona Teenage Fair Competition, complete with a cash prize and LA recording contract offer, it would seem her singing career was off and running. Except another form of the arts put that on hold.

LeeLee's love of ballet inspired a serious study of dance. Following high school she began studying dance at Arizona State University (winning the prestigious Wanda Turk Award for choreography). With the opportunity to study at the Martha Graham School of Modern Dance (The Place) it was off to London, England where in addition to dance LeeLee performed music and followed the folk scene there. She also had the opportunity to spend a summer in New York City taking classes at The Martha Graham School and observing classes of the top dance companies.



Lee, 14, at school talent show. North High School Phoenix, AZ



Lee and her band, Country Wave

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IN THE CROSSHAIRS

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In the beginning, a first professional headshot.

LeeLee returned to America and continued at Arizona State University majoring in dance while playing music in clubs and restaurants in the Phoenix Metro area. It was about this time she started dating Gene Hensley, an old friend from high school. He was a stained glass artist and they encouraged each other's art and dreams throughout the college years. LeeLee graduated with a teaching degree in dance and eventually they were married and moved to northern California where she began teaching at College of the Redwoods. Teaching dance in the early part of the day and performing music as a solo artist and with her own band in the evenings for several years gave her music career a "leg up" with her eventually working her way up to singing with a 13-piece orchestra at the renowned Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco. In addition, she worked with a Bay Area agent that booked her several nights a week as a solo act, with a three or five piece band, and with a big band of 13-pieces at the finer Nob Hill hotels and society events.

In 1985 LeeLee observed a professional speaker use her guitar and singing combined with public speaking and storytelling. Impressed, LeeLee saw that as a way to expand her own revenue stream.

Moving back to Arizona and joining her father in his public speaking business: Cavett Robert, Inc., as Sales and Marketing Director and aspiring public speaker. Cavett Robert had founded the National Speakers Association in 1972, and after retiring from his law practice, became a well-known platform speaker in the early days of the meetings industry.

LeeLee had the privilege of learning from many of public speaking's greats and created a niche in the speaking industry herself by combining public speaking with original music, performing across the U.S., England, Finland, Germany, and New Zealand for audiences as large as 25,000. Her public speaking career also led to the writing of two books—a biography of her father titled *Cavett Robert: Leaving a Lasting Legacy*, and the co-authored Prentice Hall business book, *Gendersell: How to Sell to the Opposite Sex*.

It was around this same time period that her husband Gene started experiencing symptoms that were eventually diagnosed as Huntington's Chorea – a degenerative neurological disease for which



One of Lee's many public speaking engagements



LeeLee singing with The Jazz Foundation of Jackson Hole Big Band at the iconic Wort Silver Dollar Showroom, Jackson Hole, WY 2018.

there is no cure. For a challenging ten-year period LeeLee learned to navigate the health care system and eventually became the sole provider and caretaker for Gene and herself. In 1997 LeeLee and Gene decided he needed more support than she could provide as the disease took away his ability to walk and talk. Gene moved into a supervisory facility with the two divorcing but remaining good friends until his passing two decades later.

In 1999 Rick Flory sat down next to LeeLee in a church he happened to be visiting. They chatted and discovered they both liked thin crust pizza. Their relationship turned out to be way more than thin crust, however! After a few months Rick asked her if she would consider being the Executive Director of his philanthropic organization: Earth Friends Conservation Fund. LeeLee agreed to volunteer first as she and Rick got to know each other. Eventually she joined the organization and they were married.

That was 25 years ago and now Rick and LeeLee split their time between Jackson Hole, WY and Paradise Valley, AZ. With their business backgrounds, (Rick led an organization of 1800 employees and had the second largest Domino's Pizza Franchise company in the U. S.), they were asked to serve on the boards of several National Park and Conservation Foundations.

In 2010 while Rick continued with his philanthropic activities, LeeLee's attention turned back to her music, particularly writing songs about experiences and memories from visits to the West's



Lee and twin, Lyn Robert, in the year 2005 at the National Speakers Association annual "Cavett Awards" banquet.

National Parks, and of course the beauty of living in Wyoming and Arizona. In 2012 she released *Western Stars*, an album featuring her unique "Cowgirl Jazz" style that combines the colors and textures of jazz and blues with the lyric strengths of western music. In 2014 she released her album, *Jewel of the West*, which was voted Western Album of the Year by The Academy of Western Artists.

For her 2016 jazz release, *Let Me Be the One*, the talented guitarist and vocalist dove into her long relationship with vocal jazz history through a 12-song set. Five songs were written by LeeLee alongside three standards and others written by respected jazz songwriters.

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IN THE CROSSHAIRS

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LeeLee on stage doing what she does best.

Her most recent album, *Swing Set*, was named 2018 Western Swing Album of the Year by the Academy of Western Artists. One of the capstones of her career was being named 2019 Songwriter of the Year by The International Western Music Association.

So how did LeeLee get into western music, develop her Cowgirl Jazz, and find her way into the IWMA? She recalls, "I loved the sound of certain artists, like Dave Stamey, Carolyn Martin, Hot Club of Cow Town, and Bruce Foreman and Pinto Patty's Cow Bop. All of them took jazz and combined it with a western sound. It's brilliant, and I wanted to sound like that. So I started becoming much more aware of what I was doing. Before that it was all intuition. When a couple of audience members said they really liked my 'cowgirl jazz' I said I liked the name and would start using it if they didn't mind.

"The wonderful Peggy Malone contacted me through Facebook and asked if I'd ever considered joining the Western Music Association. She said she thought I'd go over real well there. I didn't

think much about it because I didn't consider my sound 'western.' But she said Dave Stamey is a big favorite in the association so that got my attention. Still, I put it off for two or three years. Then Peggy said I really ought to talk to poet and songwriter Les Buffam because we could probably team up and write something wonderful. Les and Peggy and I did get connected and I got to co-write with each. They were constantly twisting my arm trying to get me to go to the convention. After two or three years I finally agreed, and found my sound totally embraced. And I heard people like Dave Stamey, Joyce Woodson, and Carolyn Martin, and I realized this was a place where I could learn a lot. I love the IWMA."



LeeLee performing at the Jackson Hole Hootenanny, Center for the Arts, Jackson Hole, WY, 2023.



Rick Flory and LeeLee Robert in Amy Grant's barn with K-Love Friends Tour, Nashville, TN, 2022.



Hiking in Grand Teton National Park, 2012.

So what can we look forward to from LeeLee? She's been asked often why she doesn't have a Christmas album, especially since those early family holiday performances were her launching pad as a singer, and the first song she ever wrote was a Christmas song. So, she is now planning on recording a Christmas album and making it something special. So look for that in 2025. And, she wants to try her hand at cowboy poetry, which she has a real appreciation for and considers a true brother or sister to western music.

LeeLee adds, "Life is a journey. There are many things going on that we don't understand completely.

There are spiritual aspects. Many 'meant to be's' guided by a higher destiny. I see that in the way I met Rick, my intro to the IWMA, and other aspects and experiences in my life. I think for most of us, if we take our lives seriously we start seeing that we can influence people and make a difference. If we're sensitive we can be guided to a higher purpose, which is a thrilling and satisfying way to live. Unless we have goals that are bigger than ourselves life's challenges can beat us down. This is important to me because I no longer consider my music just entertainment. I consider it a ministry of touching people and lifting them up." 🐾

Tom Swearingen is an Oregon horseman whose original cowboy poetry is often inspired by his own experiences and observations from the saddle. 2022 and 2019 IWMA Male Poet of the Year, Tom brings his stories to life with rhythm and rhyme and a style that makes him a popular performer. Tom's book *Reflection* was named 2020 IWMA Cowboy Poetry Book of the Year. For more on Tom visit oregoncowboypoet.com.



ON THE ROAD WITH IWMA

The **IWMA Black Hills & Beyond Chapter** had a showcase at the **Stampede Saloon & Eatery in Chugwater, WY.**

Phil Wiggins was there manning an IWMA table to spread the word about Western Music & Cowboy Poetry.



Buffalo Bill & Dr. Jo performing at the Black Hills & Beyond Showcase.

IWMA was well-represented at the **Waxahachie (TX) Cowboy Poetry Gathering** and the **Salado (TX) Cowboy Poetry Gathering**. Marsha Short had tables at both gatherings to support the gatherings and the performers.



Grand finale at the Waxahachie Cowboy Poetry Gathering... Happy Trails to You!



Salado Cowboy Poetry Gathering – L-R: Teresa Burleson, Devon Dawson, Chuck Dawson, Marsha Short, Belinda Gail, Charlotte Mahler, Stan Mahler.

The month of May found IWMA President Marvin O'Dell and *Western Way* Editor Theresa O'Dell enjoying great meals and shows while representing IWMA at two of the Chuckwagon Dinner Shows. They visited the **Flying W Wranglers** show opening night of their 2024 Season. They later attended the **Bar D Wranglers** event in their opening week. The Chuckwagons are a vital part of the IWMA and are actively working to preserve the western music and poetry heritage. If traveling through Colorado, you are encouraged to make either (or both) of these events a part of your itinerary. Get more information on their websites.



Flying W Wranglers



Bar D Wranglers

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.



GERIATRIC BRANDING

by Lindy Simmons

Shadows danced around the campfire
'neath the sounds of wildlife
It started at Pete's Coffee Shop,
For older gents a daily stop,
Sipping joe and hashing out old times.
All five were cowmen in their youth.
But now some were quite long of tooth,
Forgetful that they weren't in their primes.

Gilmer was still running cattle
And so he threw into the prattle
That he had a few new calves of age
to brand.
Gilmer said, "There's just a few.
It won't take much time to do,
But I could surely use a helping hand."

"Eh?" says Frank. "You need a hand?
"I can help you catch and brand.
It's been a while and just the thing I need."
And Erv chimed in, "Yah, me too!
I don't have nuthin' else to do."
Then Mike and Thomas happily agreed.

Next morning Gilm was on the ground,
With calves penned up, milling around
But Frank and Erv and Mike and Tom
were late.
The clock said it was nearly ten
When they shuffled in the branding pen
Even though they planned to start at eight.

Now, Gilmer, brooking the delay,
Had dozed there on a bale of hay,
Awakened as the gents arrived on site.
Frank called out to rise and shine.
Gilmer said, "It's about time!
You're late. Grab up the iron. We're
burning light."

"I can't see it," Frank replies.
"It's right before your very eyes -
That new electric iron marks my brand."
"Where'd you put the branding fire?"
And Gilmer showed his rising ire,
"You plug it in. ELECTRIC, understand?"

What they would find as they helped out
There'd been a bit of turn-about.
Technology had come to Gilmer's spread.
There'd been a little baffling change
Since these boys worked the cattle range.
It took a while to get it through their
heads.

Ervin, who had brought his horse
Was planning he would rope, of course
But looked around for bucket, stump,
or stope
'Cuz he could hardly lift his feet
To get up in his saddle seat.
No matter. This day they wouldn't need
a rope.

They'd run the calves with modern tech
Through a squeeze chute quick as heck.
Mike and Tom would herd them through
the line.
Erv could grapple the head gate.
Gilmer would then vaccinate.
Frank fin'ly figured out the branding iron.

Only minutes. Calf was done!
They'd then squeeze in another one.
Two hours and the day's work was
completed.
But the crew had put in quite a day
As they sat down on bales of hay,
Just plumb tired out and energy depleted.

Next day this crew was up at dawn
And down at Pete's and carried on
Of how they branded a whole herd
of stock.
"Just like we did in the old days,
Yep, haven't lost our cowboy ways."
And Gilmer listened calmly to their talk.

The branding wasn't great, he knew,
Using that geriatric crew,
But in the end they finished all their labors.
Who needs young hands with little sense.
You can't discount experience.
It's nice to brand your calves with all
your neighbors.



LINDY SIMMONS and her husband Eldon have ranched in Colorado's Mancos Valley for more than 50 years. The cowboy life provides fodder for some entertaining stories which Lindy turns into poems, some contemporary and humorous, others out of the annals of history. Lindy served a long term professorship at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. She is fluent in Spanish, having run a college program for teacher training in Mexico for many years. She has served on the board of the Durango Cowboy Gathering for more than 20 years and has penned and directed the gathering's Cowboy Theatre, running 16 years in Durango. Lindy won the 2021 poetry contest at IWMA.

In The Spotlight...

by Marvin O'Dell

...**Tom Swearingen** made his sixth appearance as guest host on "Rendezvous with a Writer Outwest", the LA Talk Radio show regularly hosted by **Jim & Bobbi Jean Bell**. His guest was poet and author **Rod Miller**. On another note, the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism featured Tom as their awards dinner entertainment this year. And to top things off, Tom and Carla Swearingen celebrated their 46th Anniversary with an Alaskan cruise.

...**R.J. Vandygriff** joined **Michael Martin Murphy, Lyle Lovett, Ed Montana** and **R W Hampton** for the fire benefit in Amarillo, TX to raise money for victims of the Smokehouse Creek fire that burned over one million, two hundred fifty thousand acres. They had a full house and are so thankful for all those who came out to support them.

...**Kristyn Harris** has begun recording on a new gospel album; look for its release in late summer. After that, she has plans to start work on another western album!

...Inspired by the massive full moon on January 25th of this year, and after doing a little research on the January full moon, **Patty Clayton** penned and recorded a new song titled "Wolf Moon" featuring **Diane Varner** on Native American flute. The song was released as a single in May. Currently, only digital downloads are available. Patty is filling in her spare time between solo shows with a 5-piece Boulder-based bluegrass band playing and singing traditional and original bluegrass music.

...**Merel Bregante** says he is "feeling blessed" with new projects recently recorded and produced for Jim Jones, Joel White, and Sarah Pierce all remaining charted as Top 10 most played singles and/or albums. He is currently working on a new project for **Carol Markstrom**.

...A long-awaited gospel CD from **Miss Devon and The Outlaw** is finally in the finishing stages. Look for *Jumpin' Pews & Shoutin' Hallelujah!* to be available in July.

...**Almeda Bradshaw** is busy gardening and enjoying retirement from the road. She stays in touch with fans across the continent via her Facebook LIVE@FIVE shows using a new multi-camera video setup. A Friday night headline spot in August for "Yeekaw Heekaw Western Days" in downtown Billings, MT is a recognition of her western music work. In June her series of songwriting workshops "For & From the Heart" began at the Billings Public Library.

...**Jan Schiferl** is back in the recording studio working on both a new single and full album. She will also be opening for **R.W. Hampton** in Lewistown, MT in August. Jan and her husband, Greg, will be hosting **Jimmy Fortune** in concert at their ranch in September. The ranch will also be the location of the annual "WJ Ranchfest and Cowboy Church" featuring many western singers and poets that folks know and love.

...Western Swing's **Brazos Valley Boys**, under the direction of Morey Sullivan, will soon release their newest recording titled *Turn Us Loose and Let Us Swing*. The album will be a compilation of western swing standards and original material, including an original western-themed cowboy song. The band recently did a show at the Prairie Rose Chuckwagon Ranch where they had the pleasure of hanging out with their friend **Orin Friesen**.

...In May, **Rik "Yonder" Goodell** released a new cowboy poetry book titled *Yonderin' Tales*. **Peter Bruce** did an hour-long interview with Rik on KAFF (Flagstaff, AZ) in April during which they focused on the book and spun some of the poems while featuring a song by **Kristyn Harris** (who wrote the foreword to the book) and a song by Rik's pard, **Ed Meyer**. Also, in March Rik had the pleasure of performing at Old Tucson, the movie set mecca in Arizona.

...In July, **Steve Cormier** performed at the Wheels Museum in Albuquerque, NM. He will also be performing August 9-11 at the Arizona Cowboy Gathering in Prescott, AZ.

...In June, **E. Joe Brown** attended the Western Writers of America Conference in Tulsa, OK. In July, he was at the Chisolm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan, OK supporting their celebration of "The Day of the Cowboy."

...*Light of the Moon* is the latest release from **Lori Beth Brooke**. The CD features Western and Western Swing music and includes 15 songs, ten that are original, with a mix of humorous and reflective songs. The album also features guest artists **Devon Dawson** and **Kristyn Harris**, each singing a duet with Lori Beth. Filling out the bill is **Carolyn Martin** providing vocal harmonies on the title track and **Dave Martin** as producer, engineer, and bassist

...Poet/Songwriter **Mag Mawhinney** has four co-writes with **Ron Christopher** on his upcoming CD *Dust of Los Angeles*. One collaboration, a song titled "Somewhere Between Living and Dying" was written after Mag's husband passed away last year. Bernadette Ducharme sings beautiful harmony with Ron on that particular song.

...**Dan Canyon** is busy in the studio with his band recording their third album titled *Hombré*. Band members are Pete Frothingham (steel and guitar), Buck Range (guitar), West Eastman (drums/vocals) and Jeff Roberts (bass/vocals). The band continues their sponsorship of Sultan, WA's Little League Baseball program.

...**Vic Anderson** was the guest of Dan Willing on KGNU community radio in Boulder, CO in May. He performed a few of his western songs, poems, and stories, all based upon his years growing up in Montana as a farm and ranch hand, ranch cowboy and rodeo contestant in bareback bronc riding and team roping.

...**Dennis Russell** and **JJ Steele** have wrangled up another great show for the 3rd Annual Day of the Cowboy Celebration, July 27 at the Historic Jones Theater in downtown Westcliffe, CO. The **Thunborg Twins**, **Valerie Beard**, **Doug Figgs**, **Terry Nash** and **Gone with the West** will play followed by a traditional Cowboy Rendezvous at a local bistro. Also, Dennis and Beverly Russell, "**The Russellers**," have recorded and released their new album titled *Trackin' On*.

...**Cisco Jim** and Taza de Mogollon (his Spanish Barb) can be seen serenading fairgoers in the high mountains of the Plumas Sierra County Fair and on the central coast of California at

the Santa Cruz County Fair. Meanwhile, Silverado the Wonder Horse is now officially retired. At 38 years of age, he has earned his pasture time. Jim says, "He's still fast as lightning, bosses all the other horses, and takes lots of naps." Cisco will be performing his stage shows at several venues throughout the greater Monterey Bay Area. He will also be kicking off a new Vaquero Heritage Day event at the Castro Adobe in Watsonville, CA, on August 11.

..."Poems Used to Rhyme", a piece from the pen of **Doc Mehl**, will be published this coming September in the eclectic, ad-free, all-poetry journal *Rattle*. When not busy writing "west-lectic" poetry, Doc is now bringing his cello to the new Alberta, Canada band, The Relics.

...On Memorial Day, **Larry Wilder** had the honor and fun of playing for and singing with the residents at the Oregon Veterans Home in The Dalles, OR. He states that he enjoyed talking with the veterans very much and that patriotic observances have deep meaning to us all. He also mentions that all the men, women, and kids performing songs and poems in the IWMA make up a powerful potential for non-political advocacy and enjoyment of the USA.

...J. Michael Mullins and Geary Parsons, aka **The Timberline Cowboys**, have released their third studio album titled *The Old Ways*. The guys also just finished a big fundraiser for the Durango Cowboy Gathering and followed that with an appearance at their favorite venue, the Arizona Folklore Preserve in Sierra Vista, AZ, taking along special guest **Lindy Simmons**.

...Graduating from the University of North Texas in December is the oldest son of **Lori Beth Brooke**, Carson. He will be pursuing a career in music education and jazz piano in the Austin, TX area. Her youngest son, Connor, has completed his second year at the University of Houston. He is a Music Ed major with a focus on bassoon. He is spending his summer in Drum Corp International with the group, The Cavaliers, based out of Rosemont, IL. He will be playing the Euphonium. 🐎



Coffee AND CONVERSATION

BY PETER BRUCE



When was the last time you deliberately tuned into an AM radio station? Personally, I do it every day for two main reasons: 1) To check and see if ‘my’ station (the one that I work at) is on the air, and 2) To enjoy the music I love. A clarification is in order here. The Legend, formerly Kaff Country Legends, formerly KAFF-AM, is also on the FM band through technology known as a translator. It’s also on the internet at thelegendaz.com. For many of us, it’s automatic. We get into our vehicles and instantly turn on the radio. For those who grew up in the middle part of the 20th Century, AM was the only option. Whether at a restaurant, store, at home or in the car, radio was everywhere. It wasn’t until the advent of FM in the late 50s and early 60s, did the competition begin: AM (amplitude modulation) versus FM (frequency modulation). Since then, radio faces stiff competition from other media platforms. Lots of folks don’t listen to radio at all anymore, preferring personalized playlists, I-Tunes, Spotify, satellite and other choices. AM however, is still going strong. Local, as well as national stations provide public service in a huge number of ways. A great example is the Emergency Alert

System (EAS). The network is critically important in severe weather situations and is an essential component of national security. AM stations have been celebrating 100-year anniversaries across the country for quite a while now. Since regulation began in 1934, the federal government has designated clear channel stations that cover huge expanses of the nation, especially at night. Think KOA, Denver; KNX, Los Angeles; KOMA, Oklahoma City. It’s sad that some vehicle manufacturers (Porsche, Mercedes Benz) are no longer offering AM in their dashboard infotainment centers. However, Ford and GM have both re-committed to keeping AM in their trucks and cars. This dovetails with the dilemma of Western artists trying to get exposure and airplay. Back in the day, Country Western was (and to a degree, still is) a genre to contend with. But, as we all know, Country anymore is primarily Pop music. Back to Western: Is there an opportunity for your music or poetry to get aired on an AM radio station? It’s worth looking

into. In this day of digital downloads and computerized playlists, ‘back to the basics’ may be a strategy to utilize. Do an active search of the AM band in your region, state or city. You might be surprised at what you’ll find.



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. Favored activities include hunting, cycling, swimming, hiking and exploring the great American Southwest.

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

If online visibility is the big deal everyone seems to believe it is, I'd better alert the "Western World" of our quarterly "Tour" here that the online category "Western Music" appears to have been hijacked out from under us.

For column ideas often I start with a basic search of some kind. Generally it bears fruit. This time searching "Western Music" was bittersweet. Maybe more of the "bitter." Of course albums for sale on Ebay come up. Mostly Country, not Western.

A few predominantly vintage Western albums appear. On Wikipedia the IWMA is brought up in a scholarly history entitled "Western Music [North America]" and the "Top 100 Western Songs" (mostly vintage). But clicking on a couple of the leading items in the search list... "Epic Wild Western Music" and the companion "Cowboy Wild West Music"... brought a discovery. Laudatory comments from fans around the world stating how much they appreciated discovering Western Music! Great!! Only the "Western Music" they'd heard is synthesized "elevator music" (if anyone remembers the implication of that term). You find multiple "albums" for download of more of that same style of electronic big west mood music. In fact, from these sources come dozens of other genre categories from which to choose. What didn't appear anywhere on the early pages of our 'Western Music' category search was a listing for the International Western Music Association itself. Finally it showed up half way down on Page Four,



too deeply buried to turn up in anything but the most diligent search. Googling the exact subject repeatedly can help to prioritize it, but who thinks to do that? Those who search for Western Music face enough blockades already. "Western Music" is also the musicologists' designation for ALL music originating in the Western hemisphere! There mandolins may give way to lyres and fiddles become pinky-up viols! And, oh yes. Then searchers

face the constant misapplication of our genre's name by the Country crowd.

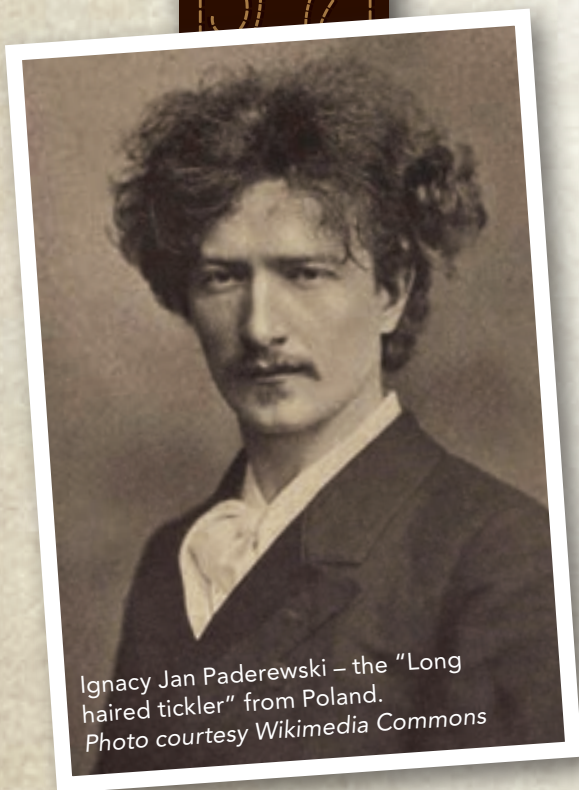
Creators of synthesized music have every right to make and market their takes on Western. Their success at it is noteworthy. Maybe I should cover them! In no way am I trying to campaign here for exclusive IWMA ownership of the "Cowboy" Western Music genre (although worse things could happen)! But isn't this organization's charter supposed to be to represent The Right Stuff? That means letting people know "The Right Stuff" is *still being created!!!* Do we have to count on others to do our promoting? Judging by just the comments on the deedle-deedle music sites, many believe Western Music isn't being made any more. There is an audience for music that reflects the romance of the West. Why can't we make it be the real music of the real West that they find first?! The stuff we hear on our stages! The stuff I review every quarter?? Where exactly is the representation for the people who deserve it?? Today's actual Western artists!!!

Continued on page 23

PIANOS, PIANISTS, COWBOYS AND A COWBOY PIANIST

A LITTLE BIT of HISTORY

By Johnny D. Boggs



Ignacy Jan Paderewski – the “Long haired tickler” from Poland.
Photo courtesy Wikimedia Commons

Why don't Old West pianists get more respect? Western films and TV shows often portray them as key-bangers on those black-and-whites, but, historically, some pianists were more interesting than lawmen, trail bosses or outlaws.

Take one pianist at the Bella Union in Deadwood, Dakota Territory, in 1876. In *Entertainment in the Old West: Theater, Music, Circuses, Medicine Shows, Prizefighting and Other Popular Amusements*, Jeremy Agnew cites this story of a gunfighting pianist in which:

“... a stranger walked in and watched a woman singing, accompanied by a man on a piano. After the song was over, the man shot at both of them, but missed. The piano player shot back and mortally wounded the man, who turned out to be the woman's husband. The dying man made witnesses to the shooting promise that they would make the piano player marry the woman as soon as he was dead.”

Dance halls in the 1800s often advertised orchestras, but those usually weren't the London Philharmonic. “An ‘orchestra’ in the Old West,” Agnew writes in *The Old West in Fact and Fiction: History Versus Hollywood*, “more likely ranged in size from an accordion and banjo to a small group that might include a cornet, drums, fiddle, and piano.”

But sometimes Westerners got a real treat.

That happened in Texline, Texas, in 1908, when a burned bridge delayed Ignacy Jan Paderewski's trip to El Paso. The Polish pianist (1860-1941) was traveling with his wife, butler, valet, advertising manager and, according to the *El Paso Herald*, “a number of flunkies.”

Paderewski, who would become Poland's prime minister and minister of foreign affairs in 1919 and sign the Treaty of Versailles, composed *Minuet in G* and the opera *Manru*. Stranded in Texline, “The long haired ivory tickler ... unlocked his piano, which he carries on board his car, dusted the alkali off the keys and played about \$500 worth of music – according to his regular scale of prices – for the benefit of the passengers in a space of an hour.”

There was a request for an encore of *Love Me and the World is Mine*, the newspaper reported, but Paderewski declined as he didn't have the music on hand.

Years earlier, however, a “Cowboy Pianist” from Texas entertained crowds in the East.

“The most extraordinary musical event of the past week has been the sudden descent upon the town of a person

calling himself the 'cowboy pianist,'" *The Buffalo Express* reported in 1886. "I cannot remember when I struck another such phenomenon. ... He calls his instrument a 'pi-anner' ..."

The Cowboy Pianist called himself Babel.

Babel said his father bought an old Chickering piano from emigrants for twelve bushels of corn. "He thought it would be handy for mother to iron on," Babel said, adding that "when she wasn't using it, it was covered with old harness and potatoes." But he learned to play, he said, practically instantly. A miracle. A gift from the heavens.

"He is the typical 'guy hooter' in appearance," *The Buffalo Express* reported. "Long, coarse black hair, broad-brimmed slouched hat, and blue shirt with open collar, showing his brawny neck. He is about 23, and he has come here to challenge the world of pianists."

But New Yorkers quickly grew suspicious. *The New York Times* said the cowboy was in fact "a graduate of some German conservatory who has turned 'cowboy' for a while." *The American Musical Journal* published a letter from a Temple, Texas, resident who called Babel "a fraud," saying "he is a professional pianist, and his father was a first-class teacher of music. ... The last time I saw him he was travelling for a music house at B[r]enham, Texas. He played in J.S. Wheeler's beer saloon here for more than a year."

Babel's manager offered to pay \$500 to anyone who could prove that the pianist wasn't a native Texas, took music lessons or played piano before he turned 20. But Babel's star quickly faded.

Buffalo's International Gazette said Babel "does not know B flat from a bull[']s foot." Quipped *The Buffalo Daily Republic*: "And now they say the cowboy pianist isn't a cowboy at all but a dance house piano banger who got lost on the prairies on purpose."

Roughly a year later, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported, the cowboy pianist was playing six hours a day in a Bowery museum for \$25 a week. But that was still better than a working cowboy's pay, which hadn't risen from the \$30 to \$40 a month back in the 1800s. 🐾



Shelley Winters at the piano in 1950's Winchester '73. Courtesy Library of Congress



Theatrical and Circus Life, 1893 illustration. Courtesy Library of Congress



Piano at the historic Governor Sealy Mansion in Kingfisher, Oklahoma. 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.



Chapter Update

ARIZONA CHAPTER

President Gary Kirkman
eskirkman@hotmail.com

The summer season is heating up and many of our members are busy performing at different venues. Our 2nd Annual White Mountain gathering was held June 29. Performers included Ashley Westcott, Doug Figgs, Monk and Wanda Maxwell Janice Deardorf, Mike Dunn and Gary Kirkman. It was held at the Arts alliance center in Show Low, AZ. Also, our 23rd Annual Cowboy Poetry and Music night was Friday, July 5 in Taylor, AZ. This was held in conjunction with Taylor's 4th of July night rodeo which was the next day. Last year there were around 12,000 in attendance. Prescott's Cowboy Poetry and Music Gathering is coming up in August. Many of our members will be performing there. These are just some of what is happening with our chapter I'm sure there is much more. Many thanks to all our members for their contributions to our chapter.

BLACK HILLS & BEYOND CHAPTER

President Brad Exton
ramblinrangers@yahoo.com

Summer may be coming on for most of the rest of the chapters, but we're still feeling remnants of late winter and early spring here in the northern tier. That doesn't mean that our members have been hibernating though. Most of our folks are keeping plenty busy with performances and CD projects. Rik "Yonder" Godell just released



Ramblin Rangers at Stampede Saloon.

his new book of poetry, "Yonderin' Tales", with a forward by Kristyn Harris to 5-star reviews. Sales have been brisk so far. In addition, he was interviewed by Peter Bruce for "Under Western Skies" on KAFF and will be hosting and performing in a "yard concert" at his residence along with Chapter member, Miss Devon and the Outlaw, and our good friend from Texas, Ed Meyer. Dean Bruce has been tuning his craft by attending and reciting poetry at showcases and gatherings such as The Stampede Saloon and the Medora Cowboy Gathering in North Dakota. We'll also plan on seeing Dean in Lewistown, MT in August. Our Chapter member from California, Scott T, performed a western music show recently in the Philippines, where he was visiting his wife's family. His latest, exciting news is that he will be playing lead guitar for Carlos Washington and



Dean Bruce at Stampede Saloon.

the Steel Horse Swing Band. Way to go Scott. Our other international traveler, John Lowell, just returned from England where he performed at the Crossover Festival in Nottingham. When he returned home, he found his new recording "Snow on the Wineglass" waiting for him. Can't wait to hear it. John has a busy summer of performances and will be returning to Europe for a 2-week tour in the fall. Bodhi Linde has a full summer of performances this summer, highlighted by a trip to Arizona in June for the Youth Showcase. He is currently working on Volume 2 of "Tales From Dakota" and getting ready for a busy fall season of touring. Saddle Tramps (Paula and Terry Rekow) have been getting ready for their busy summer and will be playing at the Kara Creek Saloon and at the Kara Creek Ranch. Paula returned from playing at Queens Creek, AZ. The Ramblin Rangers (Brad and Bonnie Jo Exton) have returned from their winter gig in southern NM, back to South Dakota. The spring and summer schedule is filling up with performances in SD, WY, MT, NE, and maybe a few other places that they might ramble to. They are also starting to organize material for two new CD projects and will be looking for a studio and players to make that happen. Their new pup, "Lakota" has not learned to sing with them yet. Our Chapter continues to grow, with almost 60 members now, and we try to have a presence for promoting IWMA at most shows where our members are involved. If you want to hear some of our members perform, check out the BH&B Facebook page. I think you'll enjoy what you see and hear.

Continued on page 24

WESTERN WORLD TOUR

Continued from page 19

The IWMA has had its ups and downs with site management, but the website isn't the issue. *Finding it IS!!* Having a team established specifically to ensure the genre's visibility in electronic media *IS!!!* So, I consulted a guy in-the-know I know. Drew Riedle has written software and performed miracles for major clients including international corporations. Now basically retired, he still consults, assists and calms flailing fellow humans on computer burps of all kinds. In that capacity for more than thirty years Drew has been my own personal problem solver, and I take this contemporary Western Music visibility problem personally.

Drew writes: "My advice is based on users using Google to search for websites, but it probably pertains to other search tools. Google ranks as the number one search engine. LSI keywords are an advanced on-page SEO tactic. SEO is Search Engine Optimization. LSI (latent semantic indexing) keywords are **words or phrases that are conceptually related to a target keyword**...the topic of your page (backlinko.com/rank-high-on-google#add-lsi-keywords). So if you wanted your page to rank for "credit cards," then LSI keywords would be "money," "credit score," and "interest rate." However, it's more accurate to refer to these as semantic keywords. They are currently working great using Google's search engine. Here is a tool for generating keywords – lsigraph.com/

It's all about learning how to be creative using the keywords and how they are placed on your website. If I had to improve my website ranking, I would use what I have mentioned plus the keyword generator tool. Update the website with the changes and do a search on the website. See if the ranking improves. It's an iterative process. Keep adding keywords and changing the arrangement and you should move up in the Ranking. Remember it's all about catering to Google's search engine algorithm. Google keeps updating their algorithms so periodically you may need to add / subtract and rearrange the keywords."

So what do we learn? That I'm not the guy to solve the problem. But it needs to be solved. Meanwhile, the IWMA's Western Music presence risks languishing behind non-Western listings, including the band CDZA's viral video entitled "What Is Western Music [In 16 Genres]," where they play bits of the Pop standard "What A Wonderful World" in styles from Gregorian Chant to Punk. 🐾



WESTERN EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR DETAILS GO TO
WESTERNMUSIC.ORG/EVENTS

2024

**IWMA 3RD ANNUAL SONGWRITING
CONTEST ENDS**

(SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 27)

JULY 31

**MONTANA COWBOY POETRY
GATHERING & WESTERN MUSIC**

AUGUST 8-11 – LEWISTON, TX

**WESTERN LEGENDS HERITAGE &
MUSIC FESTIVAL**

AUGUST 22-24 – KANAB, UT

SAN ANGELO COWBOY GATHERING

SEPTEMBER 13-14 – SAN ANGELO, TX

LOST N LAVA COWBOY GATHERING

SEPTEMBER 20-21 – SHOSHONE, ID

**WINNSBORO COWBOY MUSIC &
POETRY GATHERING**

SEPTEMBER 27-28 – WINNSBORO, TX

DURANGO COWBOY GATHERING

OCTOBER 3-6 – DURANGO, CO

WESTERN SLOPE COWBOY GATHERING

NOVEMBER 1-2 – GRAND JUNCTION, CO

IWMA CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 13-17 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Chapter Update

Continued from page 22

COLORADO CHAPTER
President Geary Parsons
gearyparsons@outlook.com

Colorado Chapter members are out and about working on appearances across the country. The Durango Cowboy Gathering presented a fundraiser featuring the Timberline Cowboys (aka yours truly and Mike Mullins) and Lindy Simmons April 21 at the Destination Ranch. The event was called Nacho Average Barn Concert as it was held in a barn. It was a lot of fun!! Patty Clayton, Valerie Beard, Floyd Beard, Lindy Simmons, and Susie Knight represented Colorado in Valentine at the Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering April 25-27 in their own "Colorado" set. Susie was the MC. Other Colorado folks performing at the gathering were George Russell



Doug Figgs, Valerie and Floyd Beard, Dennis and Beverly Russell (The Russellers)

and Bruce Johnson. Bernard Carr of the New Mexico IWMA Chapter welcomed Lindy Simmons of the Colorado Chapter to the April open mic at the Hops and Dough Restaurant in Albuquerque. A dozen poets and musicians showed up for the fun-filled evening. The IWMA Colorado Chapter hosted a Talent Roundup again this year in Florissant, CO, at the Florissant Grange Hall in June. Dennis Russell and his crew did a showcase at Alamosa Society Hall Saturday, May 25 presenting a Roundup of Cowboy Poetry featuring Doug

Figgs, Floyd & Valerie Beard, and Dennis & Beverly, aka The Russellers. Randy Hoyt is put on a show at the Eagle Historical Society Cowboy Poetry Gathering May 11, Eagle Ranch, in which Floyd & Valerie Beard, Susie Knight, Randy Hoyt, Tony & Carol Messerly were featured. The Durango Cowboy Gathering will be held Oct. 2 – 6. durangocowboygathering.org/ Headliners are 10-2 Bar-D Wranglers, 10- 3 Kristyn Harris and Hailey Sandoz, 10-4 Doris Daley, Al "Doc" Mehl, 10-5 Gone With the West.

Continued on page 28

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CLAY BERRY RESTAURANT



RIDE EASY, PARD!

STORIES AND TALL TALES

BY VICTOR T. ANDERSON

SLING SHOT

Lad moved some yearlings to a new pasture and on his way back, rode through the two year old bulls that had been getting out of their pasture. He got a rough count and figured they were all there. He checked the fence where they got out in the past and gassed up the generator keeping the electric fence charged. He noticed one of the bulls had a swollen foot but wasn't limping badly. It was a job for two, so he got the number and noted the markings of the bull. When he got back to the ranch he told Jim, the cow foreman, what he found.

Jim and I saddled up after we finished up in the corral and headed for the bull pasture. It was 4 sections of pasture with a creek running through it. The creek had a lot of willows and underbrush. It was about 3:00, the afternoon was cooling off and we expected the bulls would be out on the mountain side grazing. We found the bull with the swollen foot just as he and another were squaring off in a fight. As we got close, the two of them took off, bucking, kicking and snorting, straight to the willows. He was limping, but not a lot.

The willows followed the meandering river and the two of them went into the thickest part. There was the occasional small open space, where we hoped one or the other could get a decent throw at him. Jim was

a very good roper. He made a perfect throw and caught the bull around one horn and the neck. We liked to catch that way, as it gives you a little leverage on the head and is less likely to choke.

I maneuvered behind the bull just as it swung around and his hind legs were in the fringes of the willows. I couldn't get a throw.

Jim hollered, "I'll run him to the next opening. Be ready." Away they went with the bull leading the way. I bailed in behind Jim, so when he got the bull swung around, I'd get a throw. As they passed a big, old, gnarly, willow, a thick branch swayed back and as I got there, the Y at the end of the branch slid between my saddle and my thigh, grasping my right thigh. It bent back...back...back, then straightened out, slinging me off over the tail of my horse. Just as Jim got the bull stopped in the next opening. I heard, "where the Hell are you," as I hit the ground.

My horse stopped. I untangled my rope from the willows and roots, mounted up, made a good throw and caught both hind feet. We got the foul foot doctored and turned loose.

My ego and inner thigh were bruised, but the bull's foot got cured.

RIDE EASY PARD....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.

In Memoriam

FRED WOEHL (1953 – 2024)



Fred Woehl, 70, a resident of Harrison, AR, a loving husband, father, brother, and grandfather, passed away on Monday, May 27, 2024, at Cox South Medical Center in Springfield, Missouri.

He was born on November 12, 1953, in Kansas City, Missouri to Fred Hamilton Woehl Sr. and Opal Mae Wallis Woehl. He married Miss Carolyn Sue Gore on December 29, 1973, in Mountain Home. Fred served his country in the United States Army during the Vietnam War. He was with the Provisional Reconstruction Team assigned to Jordan where he advised management officials of Petra Archeological Park on horse issues where he also served as Senior Agricultural Advisor for the state department from 2008-2009 in Iraq, participating in over 200 missions. Fred retired in 2010 with 34 years tenure, with 25 years being in the Boone County Office as a Supervisory Agricultural Management Specialist, Farm Loan Manager for the United States Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency. He was once responsible for a loan portfolio of over 76 million dollars, covering 5 counties. Fred spent his later years in life traveling the world with his wife Carolyn. They had always loved to adventure together where he loved to capture their memories with his camera. Fred was deeply devoted to God and the church community. There wasn't a Sunday that you wouldn't find Fred at church. Fred was the definition of a true family man. He loved having his kids and grandkids all in one place. Fred volunteered for many different things that represented what he stood for. He volunteered for over 20 years with the National Park Service at the Buffalo National River. He volunteered for 13 years with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) with the Wild Horse and Burro Program conducting demonstrations and assisting

with adoptions, compliance reviews and public relations. He was a CASA volunteer and a volunteer instructor for 11 years at the University of Arkansas' Equine Center in Fayetteville. He was also a Hunter Education Instructor for the Arkansas Game and Fish commission for 30 years. He had many dogs throughout his life that quickly became his best friend, his current best friend being his dog, Tang. They would start the morning together and end the day together. He spent many of his years training, loving, and advocating for mustangs. Blue quickly became his star pupil and was Fred's pride and joy up until the day he died. He created "Farmer Fred" day to introduce 1st graders to the farm and share the farm experience with over a thousand kids in the course of 15 years. Fred was a proud member of the Harrison Noon Lions Club. He was a recipient of many awards throughout his life. One of his proud moments was earning the JPH Man of Distinction award in 2022. He spent many years of his life in Silver Dollar City demonstrating the versatility of the wild horse at the Salute to the Great American Cowboy Festival. He would regularly recruit his grandkids or anyone that wanted to help as his assistant for the show. Throughout these years at Silver Dollar City he made lifelong friendships with many of his coworkers and attendees. He loved to read books and write poems. There were many quotes that he regularly used when talking to the people around him. One of them being this: "Don't be afraid of failing. The only people who don't fail are those who never do anything." Fred is survived by his wife of 50 years, Carolyn Woehl of Harrison; a son, Jeremiah Woehl (Trish Bartley) of St. Joe; a daughter, Stephanie McCullough of Farmington; his siblings, Jack Woehl of Springfield, Missouri, LaTina Worley of Lead Hill, Debera Lutton of South Greenfield, Missouri, and John Woehl of Dennard; his grandchildren, Deakon and Denver Woehl, Lillyan and Lucas McCullough, and Bryton and Breccan Bartley; and other relatives and friends. His Celebration of Life service was held June 7 at Harrison Faith Church, Harrison, AR.

GET YOUR BOOK REVIEWED!

Western Fiction, Nonfiction or Poetry

SEND TO:

KAREN CAMPBELL | 1762 COUNTY RD. 121 | GAINSVILLE, TX 76240

(SEE PAGE 42)

IWMA 2024 SONGWRITING CONTEST!

The third IWMA Songwriting Contest begins May 1. Anyone who writes songs is encouraged to enter. There is a nominal entry fee shown below in the rules and rewards section. Let's make this another great event for the IWMA this year. We hope you will get excited and will enter a song from your own pen.

1. There will only be one category this year since there were not enough entries into the gospel category last year. The category is: cowboy/western song.
2. Fee is \$25 a song or three (3) songs for \$50.
3. There can be more than one songwriter for a song, the prize to be divided between them as they see fit.
4. A lyric sheet must be provided for each song.
5. Judges will be music business professionals.
6. Grand prize will be \$1000 and a Silver Spur package for this year's convention.
7. Grand prize winner will get to perform the song on this year's Saturday night Awards Show in a featured slot where the \$1,000 prize will be presented.
8. Second Place prize is \$300 and an opportunity to perform the song on this year's Friday Night Opry and the prize will be presented during the Saturday night Awards Show.
9. Third Place prize is \$150. The prize will be presented during the Saturday night Awards Show.
10. Contest dates are May 1-July 31. Entries may be received before this window but not later than July 31. Send to: IWMA Songwriting Contest, P.O. Box 648, Coppel, TX 75019
11. Winner will be announced in *The Western Way* magazine and will be notified ahead of time but will not receive his/her award until the convention.
12. Songs must be ones that have not been previously released in a recording.
13. Songs must fall lyrically into the cowboy/western genre. *Song may be written to fit any musical style – rock 'n' roll, folk, Celtic, easy listening, etc. – but must speak to the life, work, nature, history, landscape, romance, etc., of life in the west past or present or to life lived in the west outside the city.*
14. Songs must be submitted by mp3 or on CD disc ONLY. *Songs do not have to be recorded in a professional studio. Song may be simply performed and recorded with a home device.*
15. Songs must be submitted with no more than two (2) instruments. *Judges will be considering lyrics and melodies, not performance of the song.*
16. Each entrant must be submitted with the full name(s) of each songwriter.

For more information contact:
marsha@westernmusic.org

SONGWRITING CONTEST 2024 ENTRY FORM

Name _____

Phone Number () _____ Email _____

Song Title(s) _____

Payment Information Check/Money Order enclosed Credit Card Visa
 MasterCard American Express Discover
(\$25 per song entry/\$50 for 3 songs)

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Name on Credit Card _____

Billing Address _____

INFO CONTACT: Marsha (505) 563-0673 | marsha@westernmusic.org

Chapter Update

Continued from page 24



Patty Clayton, Valerie and Floyd Beard, Lindy Simmons and Susie Knight.



Timberline Cowboys (Geary Parsons and Mike Mullins) with Lindy Simmons.

It was fun to be included in the very first 'Pickin' Of The Rockies' which featured both Bluegrass and Country Music on May 26. I made sure to throw in some well-known Western Classics, and some of my own! The 9th Annual WESTERN SLOPE COWBOY GATHERING, November 1 – 2, is shaping up to be a real humdinger event! Our Friday night super duo stars are Kristyn Harris and Hailey Sandoz. Saturday

night's stage will be graced with Jon Chandler and Ernie Martinez!! Sounds like fun! Daytime is free! Night shows are very affordable! Western Colorado is Alive and Well!! Worth a trip to check 'er out!!

COLUMBIA CHAPTER President Tom Swearingen tomswearingen@gmail.com

Langley, BC and surrounding communities enjoyed the talents of several Columbia Chapter performers in two well-attended shows in early May at the George Preston Event Center, a beautiful civic facility. Organized by residents Diane and Ed Wahl, matinee and evening shows featured Ed's duo "Border Crossing" with bassist Mike Dygert, Barbara Nelson, Rik "Yonder" Goodell, Duane Nelson, Larry Wilder, Tom Swearingen, and Judy Coder and Jennifer Epp's duo "Notable Exceptions." In addition to the scheduled shows a highlight of the weekend was gathering for dinner and spontaneous guitar and poem circle at the Wahl's Friday



Border Crossing



Tom Swearingen



Barbara Nelson



Rik Goodell



Notable Exceptions

night. This summer the chapter will host a western music and cowboy poetry open mic at Prineville, OR's Crooked River Roundup PRCA Rodeo. Tom Swearingen will act as MC with other chapter members likely to participate. Also on the schedule is Columbia Chapter's annual meeting and concert set for September 21. We'll be returning to the historic Granada Theatre in The Dalles, OR where



WESTERN POETRY FROM A COWBOY HEART

Yonderin' Tales is a 160-page collection of 54 poems; rhyming stories from award-winning Cowboy Poet, Rik "Yonder" Goodell. Each poem is accompanied by a stunning, full color western painting done by well-known, highly-acclaimed cowboy artists whose names you will recognize.

Available now on Amazon or, if you want it autographed, at www.yonderintales.com/product/yonderin-tales-book/



Duane Nelson



Larry Wilder



Cast closing with Happy Trails

we enjoyed good audiences last year. At that show we also hope to feature our chapter's Youth Cowboy Poetry Contest winners. Open to 3-12 grade students in OR, WA, ID, BC, entries are being taken online through Sept. 1. Details at iwmacolumbia.org.

**EAST COAST CHAPTER
President Aspen Black
Aspenblackcowgirl.com**

IWMAECC president Aspen Black performed 48 shows over June and July, on tour in the Midwest as well as some in her home state of VA. "The Singing Cowgirl" is her fun, interactive show for kids and families about life in the west, historical to present. Her new themed concert,

"American Journeys" is a travelogue set to original music with slideshows of photos she has taken over 30 years of performing, with many unique perspectives of western land, lifestyle, and culture. Aspen's song, "Born to be a Cowgirl" is a finalist for the 2024 WWA Best Western Song of the Year and her album of the same name is an ISSA finalist for 2024 Female Album of the Year (award given in August). Grombacher & Black, the duo of award-winning performers Kerry Grombacher and Aspen Black, will be performing in Indianapolis, Indiana over the third weekend of July. A concert for Indy Folk, the prestigious concert society, on Friday, July 19, is paired with a concert on Saturday, July 20, and a creative writing workshop on Sunday, July 21, at the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art. Grombacher had begun talking about booking at the Folk Alliance Regional-Midwest (FARM) conference in 2019 but talks stalled due to COVID. A new plan was finalized with the museum in late 2023. It will be exciting to bring western and cowboy songs to Indiana, and to the Eiteljorg Museum.

**KANSAS CHAPTER
President Martha Farrell
marthasfarrell@gmail.com**

Can the birth of a new Western Music group change your life? Yes! This summer the Diamond W Wranglers (nee the Prairie Rose

Wranglers) celebrate 25 years as a band. To be honest, in 1999 I was pretty oblivious to the genre. But I took notice when the Prairie Rose Wranglers became statewide news, building the Prairie Rose Chuckwagon into the fastest growing tourism attraction in Kansas. In the years that followed they led a troupe of western entertainers to Carnegie Hall (twice); headlined half a dozen cowboy cruises in the Caribbean; helped introduce cowboy music to China; and served as musical ambassadors for Kansas in a tourism mission to Germany. I got to travel along, and experienced firsthand how Western Music (with capital letters, my late husband Jim Farrell always insisted) was an international delight. Today the Diamond W have returned to their original roots as a western trio, with Orin Friesen and Stu Stuart still on bass and lead guitar, and Orin's son Jesse ably stepping in for Jim on rhythm guitar. They will be celebrating those 25 years at the Prairie Rose Ranch in Benton, KS in June, singing both the classic western tunes that they cherish and the New West music they've composed over the decades. The Diamond W Wranglers have created thousands of happy memories for people, and it's a delight to see that they still are. This spring our Kansas Chapter hosted two qualifying rounds for the Kansas

Continued on page 32

SEPTEMBER 27 & 28 - WINNSBORO, TEXAS




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JOEL NELSON
TERESA BURLESON
JAY SNIDER
MIKE BLAKELY
MISS DEVON AND THE OUTLAW

WCA WINNSBORO CENTER FOR THE ARTS



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 ojsikes@gmail.com

1989: New Western Music Association Hosts 1st Festival in Tucson, AZ

In the Spring issue we remembered the get-together in Las Vegas in 1988, where the idea of forming an Association took root. This time, we'd like to focus on the very first "Western Music Festival," held in Tucson, Nov. 16, 17, 18 & 19, 1989, as well as a few incidents from subsequent, early conventions. The challenge in writing about these events is to avoid turning the page into a list of names, and the stories must be kept short. So forgive me if important names are omitted. And if your favorite story isn't here, *please* write it up and send it to the editor!

My favorite story was about a surprise visit from **Roy & Dale**, but you can find it on p. 32 of the Spring 2023 issue of the *Western Way*. There are others from different years, especially involving attendees who were "there" when Western music could be heard on the silver screen. **Terry Scott**, secretary to **Bob Nolan** and **Tim Spencer**, told me about the day when Tim came into her office and asked her opinion about the title he was considering for his latest composition. "What does the phrase, 'Room Full of Roses' bring to mind?" he asked. "Well," Terry replied, "it makes me think of a funeral parlor!" Fortunately, Tim didn't always take Terry's advice.

One year, Tim's son Hal introduced me to "**Snuff**" **Garrett**, who was about to re-issue his 50 Guitars of Tommy Garrett albums on CD. After visiting the convention, "Snuff" decided to concentrate on the Western



titles! Later, Hal commented to some participants that he was sorry one of his favorite songs from among his dad's compositions had been "lost." It was "A Two-seated Saddle and a One-gaited Horse." Shortly, **Fred Goodwin** found a pristine copy of Dale Evans' recording of it and issued it on a collection of Dale's music! Fred was a fixture in those early years, selling memorabilia with help from **Jerry & Diane West**, and inviting special guests like **Gretchen Carson** (Ken's widow), **Tommy Doss**, **Ronny Robbins** (Marty's son) and **Billy Walker** to the conventions.

It was always great fun to meet the folks from the glory days of Western music, and to listen as they reminisced. For example, I was having breakfast in the hotel dining room with **Wes & Marilyn Tuttle** the year Wes was inducted into the Hall of Fame. **Rose Lee Maphis** had come to Tucson for the event, and she was seated with us.

Right in the middle of breakfast, the three started singing one of the old songs they had sung so many times on their **Ranch Party** tv show in the '50s!

On the occasion of the **Sons of the Pioneers'** anniversary celebration, after the big concert, "everybody" was gathered in the hotel lobby. As I walked in with **Dick Goodman** (of the **Reinsmen**), he spotted **Dale Warren** talking with friends. As we were congratulating Dale on the evening's performance, Dick saw **Rusty Richards** walking by. Dale and Rusty hadn't seen each other for years, so Dick called Rusty over and, although the noise level was through the proverbial roof, Dick suggested that the three of them harmonize on a few bars of "Trail Dust." Now, in my opinion, that song is extremely difficult to sing, but if *any* 3 guys could do it, *these* were the guys! Because of the surrounding noise, they had to stand very close together in order to hear each other. And instead of pushing me away, I became the 4th participant, *not singing*, but *listening* to the *amazing* harmony! Talk about highlights! Wow!

Of course, it was always fun for attendees to have breakfast with **Riders in the Sky** or **Liz & Casey Anderson**, who later brought their daughter, **Lynn**, to the conventions, and she attended as often as possible thereafter. And there were so many more names you may recognize, like **Hi Busse** and **Michael Martin Murphey**, and those who may have been less widely-known, but who played an important role early on, like

Dick "Hoppy" Cassidy, who brought his video camera from Missouri and filmed the events for the archives, at his expense, for as long as his health permitted.

In 1989, at the first event in Tucson, the workshops and showcases were held during the day at Old Tucson movie studios, in the desert, where so many films, e.g. **Clayton Moore's** "The Lone Ranger and the Lost City of Gold" and **Gene Autry's** "The Last Round-up" were made. Workshops and individual performances were offered by **Liz Masterson & Sean Blackburn, Sons of the San Joaquin, Flying W Wranglers, Jim Easterbrook, Val Geissler, Ernie Sites, Roy Lanham, Jim Bob Tinsley, Bill Ganz, Muzzie Braun & family, Dean Armstrong & the Arizona Ranch Hands, Gary McMahan, Roz Brown, Chuck & Mae Camp, Mike Mahaney, Lobo Rangers, Katie Lee, Singin' Sam Agins, Flying J Wranglers, Bar D Wranglers, Marshal Jack Alan, Ken Griffis, Joyce Woodson, Igor Glenn, Ranger Doug, Dick Goodman, Rockin' R Wranglers, OK Chorale & New Pioneer Trio.** As each day drew to a close and the desert sun was setting, we would return to town and the Tucson Convention Center Music Hall for the evening shows, headlined by **Rex Allen, the Reinsmen, Sons of the Pioneers, Patsy Montana, Riders In The Sky & Don Edwards.**

Tom Chambers was the organization's first president, and he and his wife **Becky** shared their music and made sure the operations went smoothly, as did **Ray Kraft**, the new organization's vice president and legal counsel who established our non-profit status. **Mary Ann Ruelas** came from the **Autry Museum** and served as a Board member, and **Peggy Collins** was the "Festival Director." The list is long, and I'm sure some names were inadvertently omitted, so please accept my apologies. But you probably got the message: 1) we had a ball in 1989, surrounded by top-flight entertainers, and 2) the tradition has continued. It's now 2024 and we're still goin' strong!

MOON MULLICAN

"A Million Regrets, Vol. 2"

BACMCDD719



Moon Mullican lived in Beaumont, Texas near the end of his life (you may recall that the Nallies

were also from Beaumont). He was a piano player in the Western swing tradition, having worked with Cliff Bruner's Texas Wanderers, and his style in the early 50s influenced rock n roll artists like Jerry Lee Lewis. I hadn't heard a lot of Mullican's music until I played this new disc. But when I heard the first track, "All I Need is You" (from 1954), I became a fan on the spot! My favorites are the up-tempo tunes, some better-known than others, with sessions ranging between 1948 - 56. The title song was one of Moon's originals, and there are many other originals or co-writes here, too, but I also especially enjoyed one composed by Boudeleau Bryant, "Sugar Beet."

Mullican may have also had an influence on Little Richard (his enjoyable record of "Good Deal, Lucille" is included in this 26 song collection). And legend has it that he co-wrote "Jambalaya" with Hank Williams, but I don't know if he recorded it; it's not on this disc. It doesn't need to be. There's plenty to enjoy among these 26 tracks! Available from your regular source or the British Archive of Country Music website.



SONS OF THE PIONEERS

"Campfire Spirituals"

2024



This year, the Sons of the Pioneers are celebrating their 90th birthday! They decided

to begin the year by releasing an album of 12 newly recorded songs they term "campfire spirituals." The album's first track is a beautifully interpreted version of "The Place Where I Worship." It's not a song Nolan &/or Spencer composed but, in my view, it's a very appropriate introduction to this project.

And you'll find other Western inspirational gems among the contents, like "Will There be Sagebrush in Heaven," "Land Beyond the Sun" (with a great bass line recited by Chuck Ervin), and Bob Nolan's "The Mystery of His Way," with Tommy Nallie taking the solos, "The King's Highway," featuring John Fullerton and "The Boss is Hanging Out a Rainbow," with a double-trio vocal. Tim Spencer's only composition on this disc is "Read the Bible Every Day." But in the '50s, Tim's son Hal heard "How Great Thou Art" and arranged for the composer to meet Tim, resulting in the addition of that classic song to Spencer's Manna Music catalog. It became an important song for the Pioneers, so it, too, is here, and it features Ken Lattimore.

Four well-known hymns and gospel songs, all of which were also recorded by the Pioneers between the 1930s and 60s, round out this new album. You're sure to want to add it to your CD collection! Available from www.sonsofthepioneers.org

Continued on page 33

Chapter Update

Continued from page 29

Cowboy Poetry Contest. With one in Fredonia (SE Kansas) and one in Hays (NW Kansas) we attracted contestants from four states. The finalists will be competing to win the State contest in June at the Flint Hills Discovery Center in Manhattan, KS. Our thanks to Ron Wilson for heading up the project, along with his committee Jeff Davidson, Brad Hamilton, Martha Farrell and Orin Friesen. 3 Trails West will be regaling audiences in the Kansas area many times this summer, and at the end of July Leo & Roger Eilts (also known as "The Derrieres") are heading to New Braunsfels, TX to join accordionist Lori Beth Brooke in

concert. But wait, there's more! In August The Derrieres are traveling to the Ligurian Riviera in the town of Santa Margherita Ligure, near Genoa Italy. The great guitarist Beppe Gambetta will be their special guest as they share Western Music with new audiences there. Bon Voyage, Derrieres!

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER President David Nidel David.nidel@gmail.com

The New Mexico chapter continues its monthly Song and Poetry Corral. On the first Monday of the month you can tune in virtually at 7:00p.m. MT on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/WesternMusicAssociationNM. Our live Song and Poetry Corral has

moved to the third Wednesday of the month at 7:00p.m. MT at the Hops & Dough Taproom located at 6361 Riverside Plaza Ln. in Albuquerque, NM. We are grateful to Dave Levenson for continuing to organize and set up these monthly events. We have two huge events planned for July. Sunday July 21, we are hosting a Youth Concert featuring Cowboy Poet Jack George and Musicians Kasey and Jenna Thunborg. The concert will take place at 5:00p.m. MT following our general membership meeting and potluck dinner at The Vineyard 55 Plus Community Clubhouse 6118 Edith Blvd. NE Albuquerque, NM. On Saturday July 27 from 11:00a.m. – 5:00p.m. MT the NM Chapter and Sandoval County are hosting the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of National Day of the Cowboy taking place at the El Zocalo Plaza Event Center located at 624 S. Camino Del Pueblo in the Town of Bernalillo, NM. This daylong community event will showcase vendors, food trucks and great entertainment! The list of entertainers includes Carlos Washington and Steel Horse Swing featuring fellow IWMA musicians Ernie Martinez and Scott Tonelson. Special musical guests include The Curio Cowboys, The Peralta Playboys, and Michael Coy along with cowboy poets Bernard Carr and Dr. Ted Coffman. Volunteers contribute to the success of our chapter. I want to acknowledge



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



More than 40 poets, storytellers & musicians convene at this annual event to help preserve the culture & traditions of cowboy poetry.

2024 FEATURED ENTERTAINERS

Dave Stamey · Mike Dunn · Kristyn Harris & Hailey Sandoz



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members of the chapter who helped with setting up and staffing the chapter information table at the Rio Grande Valley Celtic Festival on May 4 and 5. They include Lee Peters, Betty Jo Carter, Jenna Thunborg, Rubin Duran, Chuck Roberts, Tony Duarte, Bernard Carr, Michael Coy, and Donna Coy. The chapter aims to participate at this event as well as the Albuquerque Folk Festival in the fall to promote the IWMA, chapter events, and especially the IWMA Convention in November. On behalf of the chapter, I want to wish everyone a safe and healthy summer!

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER
President Robert Maxwell Case
robert@robertmaxwellcase.com

Pawhuska, OK's Ben Johnson Museum hosted the 2024 Ben Johnson Days June 12-16. Held annually on Father's Day weekend, it included a two-day WRCA Ranch Rodeo, a Jr. Ranch Rodeo, the WRRR Women's Ranch Rodeo, The John Israel Cowboy Trade Show, a Rodeo Concert featuring Jake Hooker & The Outsiders, and the 70th Annual Ben Johnson Memorial Steer Roping. (www.benjohnsoncowboymuseum.com/) Tulsa, OK hosted the Western Writers of America's 71st Annual Convention June 19-22 at the Hyatt Regency Downtown. Hundreds of members, agents, publishers, editors, and more gathered together to talk shop, learn, teach, make connections, renew friendships, and listen to music. Featured western music and poetry performers this year included Jon Chandler, Jim Jones, and Randy Huston. (<https://westernwriters.org/>) We are sorry to lose secretary-treasurer Danny Williams from our chapter board of directors. He and his wife Jean have relocated to Texas to be

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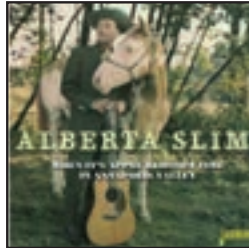
O.J. SIKES REVIEWS

Continued from page 31

ALBERTA SLIM

"When It's Apple Blossom Time in Annapolis Valley"

JASMCD3802



Noted radio host Paul Hazel wrote the detailed liner notes for this CD, tracing Slim's

fascinating history from start, in England in 1910, to finish, in British Columbia in 2005, where he died at the age of 95. Slim, whose legal name was Eric Charles Edwards, had a unique "sound," but one which, for some listeners, may conjure up images of Wilf Carter, one of his contemporaries. Still, Slim was his own man, as you'll hear in these 29 selections, some of which are quite rare but nicely restored by Jasmine.

What impressed me most about this compilation was that the large majority of the selections were self-penned. The most notable of these is the title song, but those he didn't compose, like "Yellow Rose of Texas" and Johnny Bond's "I Wonder Where You Are Tonight," add variety. And the recording dates range from 1940 ("The Song of Smokey Smith" and "I Want to Ride, Ride, Ride") to 1961 ("Queen of the Calgary Stampede," "My Nova Scotia Home" and "There's No Need for Tears in Your Eyes"). This is the most comprehensive collection of Alberta Slim's work I've seen. Available from your usual Jasmine CD sources.

THE SUNSHINE BOYS

"Gonna Get Tight"

BACMCDD715



If you're from Texas and if you have any interest in Western Swing and its history,

you've heard of The Shelton Bros. Actually, you don't have to be from Texas (but they say it helps). The performers on this CD are members of the band that backed the Shelton Brothers, so you know right off the bat that you're in for some good, old-time Western swing!

The tracks on this disc were recorded in 1940-42, except for the last two tracks, which came from 1946. For those last tracks, the band used the name "Louisiana Haymakers." For the 2 tracks cut in 1942, they called themselves Slim Harbert's Okeh Boys. Those 2 recordings, "Brown Bottle Blues" and "Fruit Wagon Blues," are real "finds" because they were "unissued."

Kevin Coffey, one of the most knowledgeable Western swing historians around, wrote detailed and very informative liner notes for this project, offering insight into record label personnel, e.g. Uncle Art Satherley, and band personnel as it changed over time, emphasizing the importance of fiddler Jimmy Thomason and vocalist Slim Harbert. Available from your usual source for BACM product or via the British Archive of Country Music's new website: country-music-archive.com/ 🐎



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

RICK HUFF'S
BEST OF THE WEST REVIEWS

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.

ASPEN BLACK

“Born To Be A Cowgirl”



This release contains the Spur-nominated Aspen Black title track “Born

To Be A Cowgirl.” Likely there are additional works in the collection that will be picked up by others. The songs she writes are definitely a strength, which makes one wish her good words were reproduced in the liner notes. What is offered there are the inspirations for the songs stemming from key moments, occurrences and people in her life which certainly helps to provide perspective.

Picks include “Born To Be A Cowgirl,” “Where Cowboys Ride,” “She Rides” (inspired by a vision of Judy James honoring the late Pam Tarpley), “Blue Eyes,” “Rolling Back” (an artful paean to renewal), “Dreams And Lies And Love” and duets with frequent touring partner and collaborator Kerry Grombacher “I Remember Loving You”(adapted by Black and attributed to Utah Phillips) and “Montana” (about the horrific 1886-87 winter known as the ‘Great Die-Up’).

This is arguably Aspen Black’s best effort to date, particularly from a production and writing standpoint. Fans of her unique delivery will be pleased. Ten tracks, recommended.



HILARY GARDNER (WITH THE LONESOME PINES)

“On The Trail”



This remarkable release from Jazz singer Hilary Gardner has garnered high critical praise

online, but one word used repeatedly in the critiques is “new.” “Rediscovered” it is. “New” it is not. Either some don’t recall or they never knew of the Big Band Jazz singer Frances Octavia Smith. Back in the 1940s she brought that styling to her performing tasks at Republic Pictures when she became “Dale Evans – Queen of the West!!” I even detect a bit of the early Evans effect in Hilary Gardner’s voice, although she names Patsy Cline as a prime influence.

Make no mistake, this is a superb creation. Gardner seems to convey genuine affection for the vintage Western material she has chosen.

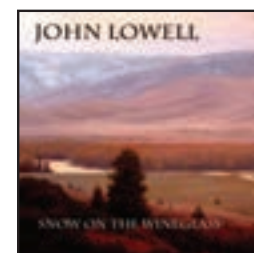
In other words, she “sells” it all well. There is a sultry appropriateness overlaid for Club Jazz and yet some Country sensibilities appear! “Cow Cow Boogie” is a natural, of course. But other picks include “Under Fiesta Stars” (with a Latin dance rhythm and accordion), an interesting more uptempo mounting of “Song Of The Sierras” than is usually found, “Lights Of Old Santa Fe,” “Twilight On The Trail” (which inspired the name her session folks adopted for the project) and Rich Hall’s seldom covered “A Cowboy Serenade (While I’m Rollin’ My Last Cigarette).”

There is a skilled artistry demonstrated by all involved, and so we’ll very highly recommend it to you. Twelve tracks total.



JOHN LOWELL

“Snow On The Wineglass”



Here is the second recorded release from Montana’s talented John Lowell. We’ll get right to

the point. It is exceptional. Literate lyrics, intriguing arrangements, spot-on performances shepherded by Lowell’s warm, melodic vocals. Exceptional!

"Snow On The Wineglass" refers to the white stuff gracing a mountain visible from Lowell's Montana home. This all-acoustic gem features original period saga songs from Lowell and co-writes with Joe Newberry, Tim Stafford, Thomm Jutz and Jim Shultz, all four of whom perform on their separate tracks. The eleven-song CD has eleven "picks" from which to pick! But particular picks we'll name are the spirited "A Wandering Stray," the novel "Ain't Done Nothing Lately," the collection's title track and the cover of "Step It Out Nancy," a song originally released by folk singers Robin & Linda Williams and featuring their strong harmonies on Lowell's version.

"Snow On The Wineglass" is a grand example of the sort of release we want to be able to point to and say "THIS is 'Western'!" Sometimes superlatives fail, and this could be one of those times. I can't recommend this one strongly enough, but let's at least try plying "very" and "highly" to the task!



ANDY MARTIN

"Pure Country Vol. 2"



For nearly four decades Switzerland's Andy Martin has brought the beloved sound of American

Country, Western and Western Swing to the welcoming hearts, ears and feet of Europeans. Performing his own songs and classics, he represents those genres with class. This collection, however, happens to be one of solid covers including Pop cross-overs.

Despite recording this album in Tennessee, Martin's charming

accent does pop though revealing he ain't from around these parts. But his veneration for the material is obvious. Picks include "Corinne Corinna" (dating from 1928 but swung first by Milton Brown & later Cliff Bruner) & the Brooks & Dunn Western locale song "Tequila Town" along with flat-out Western Swingers like Jessie Colter's "Storms Never Last," Vince Gill's hit "This New Heartache" and the frequently heard "Honky Tonk Heart." Country covers include Merle Haggard's "Mirrors Don't Lie," Waylon's "You Asked Me To," Buck Owens & Red Simpson's "Heart Of Glass," Hank Cochran & Moreen Carpenter's "A Way To Survive" and the Thompson Twins' Pop crossover "Hold Me Now."

Andy Martin is one of the noted artists from across the pond who help to bring a unifying 'note' to an otherwise divided world. Recommended, ten tracks.



THE PANHANDLE COWBOYS

"Jukebox & Blue Jeans"



In our changing world, fans of Idaho's Panhandle Cowboys might take comfort in

knowing at least this senior duo doesn't!

Smoky-voiced singer/songwriter/musician 'Farmer Dave' Fulfs and smoky-voiced poet/lyricist JB Barber once again present their cozy vintage sound in their newest release. Lest their folks worry over the album's title implying the pair has converted to Teen Rock, we can affirm it ain't so! The girl of the title track is scoping out the cowboys in

their buckles and jeans for a 'move' across the floor. You can fill in any further blanks!

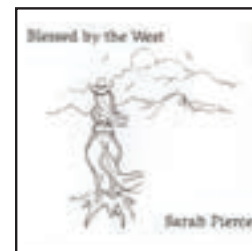
I've always felt this team is at its best on tracks that combine Dave's singing and JB's recitation. There is only one example of that this time around ("A Place Called Idaho"). Other picks include "Rodeo Queen" and "Cowboy Two-Step," JB's poetic offerings "The Winter of '98" and "The Big Sale" (nice payoff). Overall the collection makes for an innocent little offering (Gord Colliar's "Itchy Dink" being a bit less so....it's about a dog so relax!)

Basically the new offering is folksy, down-home, front-porch and PC (Panhandle Cowboys). Thirteen tracks total.



SARAH PIERCE

"Blessed By The West"



Across the course of at least her last four albums, Texas-raised singer-songwriter Sarah Pierce

seems to have grown increasingly confident and comfortable with employing full-out Western songwriting to tell the story the way she wants. Rest assured we are definitely the beneficiaries of that transition.

Pierce's newest release shows off her skills to good advantage in a mix of originals and co-writes, musically acoustic-based but unafraid to use whatever elements add the right punch. She benefits from the co-production presence in the studio of hubby Merel Brigante. By subject the songs range from sweetly languid ("Ropin' In The

Continued on page 36

RICK HUFF'S REVIEWS

Continued from page 35

Wind") and ruggedly historic ("Rough Stock") to tough as nails ("White Dog Revenge") and beyond! Other picks include title track "Blessed By The West," "I Wanna Go Home," "The Cowboy Way (Tied To The Ride)" and a co-write with Jim Jones that definitely travels a less-riden trail called "The Librarian."

In the past Sarah Pierce has enjoyed multiple appearances on various music charts in the Country, Americana and Pop genres. There's every reason to expect some of these new ones to show up as well. Highly recommended, thirteen tracks total.

THE TIMBERLINE COWBOYS

"The Old Ways"



'Nowadays' can make you fervently wish for 'them days.' That's at least part of the idea espoused

in The Timberline Cowboy's CD title track "The Old Ways." For me it brings to mind a line that was originally delivered tongue-in-cheek in an episode of a certain 60s TV Western: "Onward, upward and backward to progress!" The cowboy in the song is saying the tried and true stuff suits him and likely needs to suit others just fine.

This Colorado duo is made up of guitarist Geary Parsons and guitarist/vocalist/songwriter J. Michael Mullins. Their effect on this release is homespun and home-done, nothing glossy or overly processed, as they take us through

their collection of original saga songs and ballads. Pick examples of their effect are the title track, "The Higher Trail," a song that at least sounds like it's rooted in history "Twenty Crosses," "These Trails" (the figurative paths of life we can choose) and one that isn't specifically Western but could certainly show up at an IWMA Veteran's Breakfast "Legacy."

"The Old Ways" is a CD that almost certainly represents the live sound of its artists, so it will be most appreciated by those who prefer their Western Music 'shipped direct.' Twelve tracks total.

THE WESTERN SWING AUTHORITY

"12 To 6 Central"



Particularly strong duets from Western Swing Authority leaders Shane & Stacey Lee Guse

and superb, attuned musicianship on this release from all concerned mark the success of this Canadian assemblage.

I may face resistance, but I maintain Western Swing vocalists, more often than not, seem to serve more as instruments than they do sellers of songs. I include legends like Tommy Duncan and Spade Cooley in that assessment. But here each track has its own musical and vocal investment within the Western Swing framework. Stylistically the Western Swing Authority states its authority. Examples include a strikingly expansive cover of James 'Kokomo' Arnold's usually staid "Milk Cow Blues" and an

artfully fearless plunge into Paul & Linda McCartney's "Heart Of The Country." Both are collection "picks." Others include original co-writes "New Favorite Whiskey Song" and "Bottom Of This Glass," along with covers of Jason McCoy's frisky novelty "Happy Chickens," fiddler/vocalist Dan Howlett's instrumental "I'm Dreaming," Albert King's swinger "Let's Have A Natural Ball" and Leroy Preston & Jeanine Smith's "Full Moon Full Of Love" (popularized by fellow Canadian k.d. lang & the recliners).

This release is a sterling example of the way it should...or, could...be done! Twelve tracks total, highly recommended.

"RETURN OF THE AMAZING BUCKEROOS" (Showtrack Album)



They're "Amazing." They're "Buckeroos" (spelling intentional). They're also figments of

some fevered imaginations! If you buy into the straight-faced CD liner notes from author John Vornholt (billed as "President, Amazing Buckeroos Fan Club"), by the time you detect a light tug of your leg being pulled you'll have already been dragged over the rise!

"Return of The Amazing Buckeroos" is actually a comic Western murder mystery musical scripted by Vornholt with original songs by Mark Browning Milner (as "Julius Embree"). Portraying The Buckeroos to create the faux band's reunion album complete with faux-crediting and with

tongues so deeply in cheek it's a wonder the lyrics are intelligible, the multi-tracked Milner and Gina Hanzlik offer such "hits" of the group as "Hoe-Down In The Bunkhouse" (NOT the "hoe" you think), "Saddle Tramps" (not the "tramps" you think either!), "Last Train To Wilcox" (two versions), "Gooseberry Roan" and "Damned Vultures In The Sky." Parodying Western songs and with modulations and vocal ranges ridden by the likes of Manhattan Transfer & Pentatonix, the mostly acoustic collection also has humorous vocal and instrumental elements (fuzz guitar for "I'm A Young Cowpunk [Whoop-Ti-Do]"). It's a sophisticated yet naughty gut-bucket mix which we'll highly recommend, but watch out!!! Thirteen tracks total.

CD: Available through markbrowningmilner.wixsite.com/amazingbuckeroos/history.

MARCI BROYHILL

"Tangled Trails – Family, Friends & Folly" (Book)

ISBN 978-1-7333876-4-4



Poetic introspection, reportage and portraiture. If those make for tangled trails, at least Marci Broyhill is able to escort you through.

In her new published collection "Tangled Trails – Family Friends & Folly" the works are grouped into the sections "Families & Friends," "Chickens Trees & Weeds," "Holiday Blessings," "Pushing Your Leg," "Reflections" and a sixth "Bibliography." If that last one suggests to you her works are historically based and life-inspired, you are up to speed.

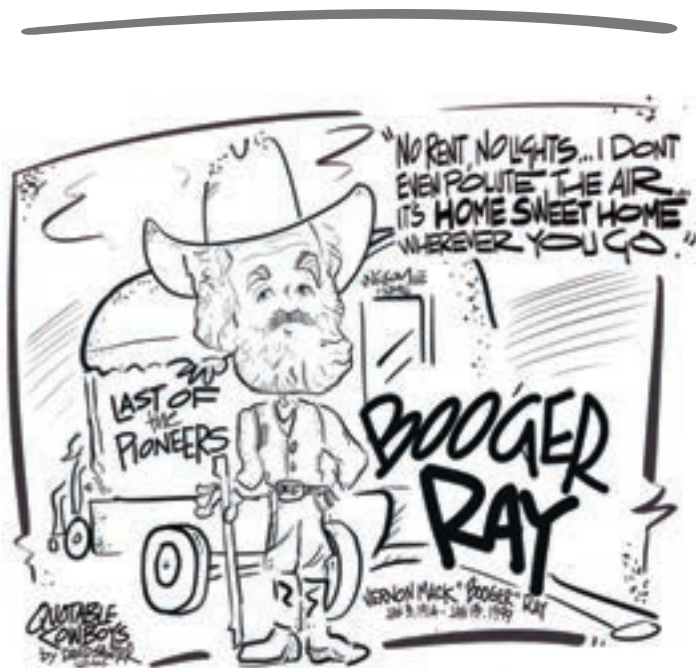
She's not afraid to tackle complex multi-page biographical epics,

such as those of early Nebraskan John Jackson Cozad and his son, the renowned artist/teacher Robert Henri who we learn adopted that variant on his name by necessity. At her best, Broyhill can take your heart on some really tough rides as in picks "A Father's Conversation With His Daughter," "The Bachelor's Blessing" and "A Mom's Christmas List." But the message of "Gallus, Gallus Domesticus Simpleton Or Hero" ain't chicken feed, either! Additional picks include "Mulberry Tree" (for my mom it was a Missouri catalpa), "The Wind Witch" (Mariah whistled through it as Bob Nolan sang about it), "Missing" (just read it) and "Mending Fence" (a dream motivated make-it-right).

Marci Broyhill is a poet worth your time. It's recommended you spend some time with her in this one.

Illustrated with 179 pages.

Book: Available through marcibroyhill.com – hardbound \$25 + \$4 s/h, softbound \$15 + \$4 s/h. 🐾



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Sampling The Singles

BY RICK HUFF

Galloping in this time is **Chris Mortenson**, making a tall promise to somebody in *I'll Rope You The Sunset*. It's a gentle swinger, primarily acoustic, without pretense or fuss. The romantic meaning of the lyric line might be that the cowboy has a heart as big as the sky. The literal would likely say he has an enlarged heart. I say sentimentality is one of the major food groups, so hush and be nourished.

Our **Peggy Malone** and her ol' Gibson have released a single honoring **Cowboy Charlie Glass**, a part-Black part-Cherokee cowboy who died under somewhat questionable circumstances. The ranch he worked for erected the stone that marks his grave. I think Charlie might have been nudging Peggy from the other side to tell his story. He is interred right next door to her home spread in Colorado!!

Patty Clayton plays all guitars with Diane Varner contributing Indian flute on a chilling new single called **Wolf Moon**. Patty tells us "the origin of the name stems from the Sioux language, which describes this moon as 'wolves run together.'" The lyrics equate the pack grouping and families clustering to seek lunar spiritual warming, then real wolves provide the climactic vocal backup! Brr.

It's been prescribed by artists before, but **Carlos Washington & Steel Horse Swing** are the latest to say **Put Some Western Back Into Country**. The new single begins as a tutorial on the difference as Carlos says "I'm Western & Country all day long," then turns on a dime to recommend putting Western values back into our country. It's a valiant attempt to suggest a tried and true way to curtail acrimony.

Lilting Irish Country singer **Eimear Furlong** affirms as soon as she heard the Vince Gill song **Don't Come Crying To Me** she knew she had to record it to add her own swinging touches. The result is a mellow, embracing Western Swinger with all the trimmings. The artful steel guitar and twin fiddle work make it stand up perfectly with any product issued out of native Western Swing country (Texas).

Irish Diesel fitter **Alistair Fingleton** has always had music as a side hustle. Having appeared this season on an Emerald Isle version of "The Voice" called "Glór Tíre"

seen on TG4, here he contributes **Tossing and Turning** to the Country/Swing catalog. It's not your classic fiddle-to-steel ratio, but both instruments are present. So is the requisite personal relationship angst!

Three more Irishmen (Joe Cooney, Camillus Egerton & Marty Monaghan) have packaged themselves as **The Bandits 3** and released Jimmy Webb's famous **Highwayman**, which itself launched the packaging of Waylon, Willie, Johnny & Kris as "The Highwaymen" in the '80s. If ever there were a case of "what-goes-around!!" Great new version of a great old warhorse.

Oh Bob, busy Bob! Four more from **Bob Marshall!!** With **Father's Day** he delivers a sweet narrative poem set to guitar about setting his aged father a horse once more, issued with R.W. Hampton's song **Cowboy Blessing**. These after he'd shooed the Cowboy out and ushered in the Jazz cats for swinging covers of two standards...**Fly Me To The Moon** and **I Left My Heart In San Francisco!** Busy boy!

A Frown Upside Down may grace your face as you dance to a new honky tonk swinger from **Marty Howard Chambers** that goes by that name! Let the steel guitar and fiddles be your guides as you sashay across the dance floor. The producers employed a heavier afterbeat than most Western Swing releases utilize, but the Swing point is made. It's another solid release from the Clarksville folks!

A romping new song bearing a familiar title **Ride Cowboy Ride** has shown up on the otherwise Country album "Cold & Lonely" from **Vernon Huskey**. She'll rope 'n' tie you and "you won't be singing 'Happy Trails,'" he warns. The song has a lot going for it with a nicely infectious chorus and good harmony work. Note to the label: Consider sending this one out to the Western-friendly DJs!!

"They sang about 'The Yellow Rose of Texas' (and) the 'Rose of San Antone,'" sings Cowboy crooner **Harley Dale Brown** in **Bluebonnets**, giving that flower equal time. "In prairie winds they wave" and "I want them on my grave!" He yodels it, too. It's an all-acoustic departure from the norm of most Texas music being released. 'Pretty gutsy move, considering the amplified orientation of the crowd!

Chapter Update

Continued from page 33



Danny Williams

closer to children and grandchildren in the Abilene area. Thanks, Danny, for your years of service to our chapter. We'll miss you. This year's Oklahoma chapter Annual Get-Together is tentatively scheduled for late September in the Bristow, OK area mid-way between Tulsa and OKC. Open nominations for our board will be voted on and lots of great cowboy music and networking is planned.

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

President Gary Holt
Gih50@live.com

Greeting from Nashville, TN! The Tennessee Chapter has had another busy 2nd Quarter with Awards, Performances, Touring, New Music and Award Nominations plus Giving Back to the Community! First Up the National Cowboy & Western



National Cowboy and Western Heritage Awards in Oklahoma City.



Josie Awards at the Opry House

Heritage Awards in Oklahoma City. Multiple Wrangler Award Winner Mary Kaye Holt was again a celebrity presenter and, as expected, IWMA stars shone brightly! IWMA Hall of Fame member Ranger Doug Green of Riders In The Sky took Song of the Year with his beautiful wife Desi present! IWMA's Dave Alexander was honored with Album of the Year! Accompanying Mary Kaye was 2023 Album of the Year

winner Micki Fuhrman. The following amazing singer/songwriters wowed the audiences at top tier Writers Rounds in Music City: Leah Sawyer, Claudia Nygaard, Grace Adele, Mary Kaye Holt, Chris & Jen Harris, Tecia McKenna, Bobby Marquez and Micki Fuhrman! The Josie Awards are celebrating their 10th year back again at the world famous Grand Ole Opry House in Nashville. IWMA-TN is proud of these two nominees for Video of the Year in separate categories: Shantell Ogden for Female Video of the Year and Dorris Merritt and the Girls Next Door for Social Impact Music Video of the Year! IWMA-TN's Bobby Marquez and Jennifer Herron produced and presented their 10th Annual COUNTRY WITH HEART Benefit for St Jude's Children's Hospital with an all star lineup that included IWMA Hall of Fame member Rex Allen Jr. New albums are being released

Continued on page 40

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ARTIST CONTACT:
Mike Rutherford
Mike@rdiinc.us



Chapter Update

Continued from page 39



Participants in Writer's Rounds in Music City.



More Participants in Writer's Rounds in Music City.



Poster for Country with Heart event.

by members Phoebe White and Surrender Hill! You can also watch for new albums and singles to be released soon by other chapter members and follow us on Social Media to find out where members will be touring near you for the balance of 2024! Happy to have y'all along on this ride!!! Saddle up!!!

TEXAS CHAPTER President Cary Wiseman wisemanranch71@gmail.com

Hello Y'all, I hope that everyone is having an amazing year and have made some fun plans for this summer. I wanted to give a shout out to the Y Bar J Youth Western Music and Poetry Camp that is put on by Judy James and Jean Prescott. They planned an amazing camp for this summer so be on the lookout to see what all went on at that camp and go find the camp's Facebook if you know anyone who would be interested in going to this camp next summer!! With fall just around the corner the Texas Chapter is looking at hosting an event in the fall so be on the lookout for dates and details in the future! Thank y'all so much for all of the support and we sure do love our members. God Bless and Happy Trails!

UTAH CHAPTER President Dale Major cvcowboyrendezvous@gmail.com

The Utah Chapter is currently in a rebuild, refresh, and refurbish phase after a series of unfortunate events that set the Chapter back on its heels for a while. With membership spread from Idaho to Nevada and Arizona, it can be hard to get together. A recent chapter meeting included a robust discussion of ways that we could increase our visibility as well as availability to Western music and Cowboy poetry patrons. In spite of the fact that our chapter sponsored events are currently small in number, our members continue to perform and produce programs to the delight of patrons attending. Notably, Tyler Guy will be hosting a 'summer' version of his Western Songwriting Series with Saddle Strings warming up the audience for Kevin Davis. Chris Mortensen, Dale Major, and Zach Martinez will present a program of Western music and Cowboy poetry to some of the 1200 or so summer citizens that

move to Logan to enjoy the cooler temperatures. Kristyn Harris will be performing a Concert in the Park in Paradise on her way to Idaho to perform. Summer performance opportunities abound with local Food Truck Fridays, County Fairs, local gardener's markets, and house concerts. As we restore our membership, we hope to have more to report on.

WESTERN WORDSMITHS CHAPTER President Mark Munzert Markmunzert@gmail.com

Vic Anderson recently spent an evening in Boulder, CO, singing, telling stories, whistling, yodeling and reciting poems on Radio Station KGNU. Host Dan Willging, also a Colorado Cowboy Gathering volunteer, dug into Vic's background in western music, growing up in a small Montana town, being a rodeo contestant, and a working cowboy. Valerie and Floyd Beard were invited to perform cowboy poems between orchestrated musical compositions at the High Plains Musical Ensemble in Bennett, CO in March. A "Cowboy" theme that included western themed songs accompanied their poetic presentations. Wordsmith Betty Burlingham returned from Hays, KS, and the Kansas Cowboy Poetry Contest, with a 1st place in serious bracket and 2nd place in the humorous bracket in the first round of the competition with finals proceeding in June. Sherl Cederburg was the featured speaker at the Hot Springs Maker's Market in June. Micki Fuhrman has two short stories in the newly released



Betty Burlingham

Harpeth River Writers anthology, *In Tangled Lives*. Both stories are set in a contemporary small-town in Nebraska. Micki's short fiction, written as Vonn McKee, has twice been recognized as a Spur finalist (Western Writers of America) and she was named winner of the 2023 Peacemaker Award by Western Fictioneers. Rik 'Yonder' Goodell is opening his Whitefish MT lawn to welcome Miss Devon & The Outlaw and Ed Meyer performing for a free lawn concert July 12. Nebraska cowboy poet Carson Houser was featured on BEK TV's *Dakota Cowboy* in February and more recently entertained at the Stanley, ND, FFA Banquet. He will be taking the stage again for National Day of the Cowboy at the North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame. Further NDOC, Mark Munzert is teamed with Jeff Mamett & Ernie Sites for a return engagement to upstate NY's Little Theater on the Farm. A couple of weeks deeper into the summer, the trio performs at The Classic at Twin Birch – International Haflinger Horse Show. Mark and Ernie were featured in the Nationally Broadcast PBS AHA! A House for Arts program. Both, pleased with the result and effort to preserve & promote the western arts. Further performance teaming for Munzert happens with: IWMA newcomer songwriter Aaron Hahn; Del Shields for a Best of America by Horseback endeavor in Maine; with Danny McCurry and DJ, songwriter, Kevin 'Tuck' Tuckfield at Tuck's produced



Miska Paget



Back CD cover for *The Russellers'* new album.

1st Annual Glenn Ohrlin Memorial Cowboy Poetry Show in Ohrlin's hometown of Mountain View, Arkansas on September 21. Terry Nash recently took up painting, creating beautiful images, err, walls. This feller's to-do list is long: irrigating; branding; pasture moves; haying; and even being banned from his own home...until the floor guys finish. Terry is looking forward to the Grand Encampment Gathering in July followed closely by a NDOC event in Westcliffe CO and a fall full of poetry. Miska Paget – Poems recorded, edited, arranged. Photography completed. Artwork final. Second album, *Real Hands and Treasured Friends*, in production. Miska is thrilled about this collection of poetry that centers around the bond developed with our animal friends and ranch partners. 'Dennis & the Saw Lady' aka Dennis Russell 'n' Beverly Gray Russell, aka 'the Russellers', will have their "Trackin' On" album available on both CD and Thumb Drive. This is their first CD together and a real treat for its makers. Tom Swearingen presented a ninety minute cowboy poetry program for a K-12 school assembly followed by a writing workshop for the upper grades. The



Mark Munzert and Ernie Sites

Oregon Library Association invited Tom to present during their annual conference. Scott 'T' Tonelson put the 'International' in Western Music during his Philippine sojourn and concert in Bamban, Tarlac. Scott T will also be joining forces and puttin' his fingers to Swing with Carlos Washington's Steel Horse Swing. Have a safe and enjoyable summer.

YOUTH CHAPTER

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The IWMA Youth Chapter held their second Zoom Workshop on May 13. Belinda Gail hosted LeeLee Robert ("Find Your Style"), Devon Dawson ("Find Your Look"), and Tom Swearingen ("Find Your Patter"), to help the Chapter members work on their branding and stage skills. The next workshop will be in August featuring LeeLee Robert speaking on "Songwriting 101." The IWMA Youth Showcase was June 22-23 at the Arizona Folklore Preserve in Sierra Vista, AZ. Featured performers were Jack George, Bodhi Linde, Kacey & Jenna Thunborg and Venessa Carpenter. The Youth Chapter will also hold their annual meeting and workshop during the IWMA Convention in Albuquerque. This year's workshop will be presented by Kerry Grombacher on "Stagecraft." Kerry will talk about the stage, checking sound, tuning or switching instruments, and, most importantly, how to introduce a song or poem. Remember, it doesn't cost Youth Chapter members anything to attend the Convention so we're hoping to see everyone there. We're also still looking for more members in our chapter and are encouraging all chapters to reach out to young performers and fans in their areas. 🐾



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.

The Riming of Rhymes

Rime is a word that means a couple things. It is an old-fashioned way to reference rhyming pairs of words as well as a way to reference frost or ice. I think both possible meanings reflect what is going on with rhyme in cowboy writing, which has become a bit frozen and less flexible in some instances than it historically has been.

Rhyme itself has a varied history, appearing as early as 1000 BCE in Chinese poetry and in Western/European literature around 400-500 CE through Hebrew and Early Church Latin poetry, and then among the Irish (using mostly internal rhyme) around 600-700 CE. Rhyme did not commonly appear in English poetry though until after the Norman Conquest of 1066. The Riming Poem in Old English is one of the earliest recorded rhyming poems from the tenth century, and it uses couplets (two lines with end rhymes—aa bb cc). The Father of English Poetry, Geoffrey Chaucer, also used couplets in his *Canterbury Tales* from around 1385. Other more complex rhymed poetic forms include the limerick, the sonnet (popularized by Shakespeare), the ballade, and Alexandrine from later centuries.

However, rhyme schemes are not always quite as richly varied in some cowboy writing, particularly some poetry. By far the most common forms of rhyme scheme in modern cowboy writing is the traditional quatrain (4-line stanza) of abcb (see S. Omar Barker's "Purt Near Perkins") or alternate rhyme of abab (see Henry Herbert Knibbs' poem "Make Me No Grave"). Occasionally one will see couplets (Gail Gardner's "Tyin Knots in the Devil's Tail") or triplets. Many modern cowboy writers will insist that rhymes in

these schemes must be 'perfect' end rhyme as well, condemning attempts at half rhyme or slant rhyme.

Yet, many classic cowboy writers, like Knibbs, used other rhyme schemes besides the quatrain forms and half rhyme when appropriate too. Consider "Where the Ponies Come to Drink" where Knibbs uses octaves (8-line stanzas) with a rhyme scheme of abcdebfd. Or consider Bruce Kiskaddon's "When They've Finished Shipping Cattle in the Fall" with a rhyme scheme of aab ccb ddg eeg. Look at Badger Clark's poem "Riding" where he uses eye rhymes (but not sound rhymes) like "wind" with "find," or Buck Ramsey's poem "Anthem" where he half rhymes "riding" with "quieting" and "blessing" with "nesting." "Anthem" has an interesting rhyme scheme of ababccddeffegg too. Often the strength of rhymed writing rests on unique forms like these and the willingness not to be locked into perfect rhymes or tight rhyme schemes, which sometimes sound 'forced' or unnatural.

The issue with primarily writing traditional quatrains as well as using only 'perfect' rhymes is that a good bit of this kind of writing can become something known as 'doggerel' (derived from the pace of a dog) with a monotonous, often sing-songy rhythm and easy rhymes used more for children's poetry. Deeper and more meaningful writing generally avoids this form and will have multisyllabic or half rhymes when they work better. So how does one avoid writing 'doggerel' poetry (unless one is actually writing for children)?

Maybe try a sonnet (ababdcdefefgg) or perhaps go back to Chaucer. He used another recognizable rhyme scheme in his poetry called Rime Royale (seven 10

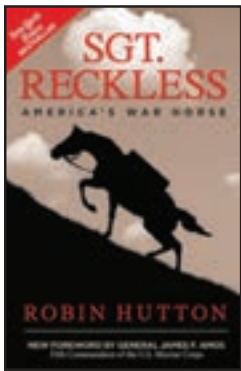
syllable lines rhyming ababbcc). Many historic ballads use a similar form. Perhaps consider a chain rhyme form like Dante's terza rima, similar to Kiskaddon's rhyme scheme above, where one rhyme from a previous stanza is repeated in the next stanza. Instead of rhyming aab ccb like Kiskaddon, terza rima rhymes aba bcb cdc. Another option is mono rhyme where all the lines rhyme in one form like aaaa. This form might be easier to adopt than more complicated forms like the sonnet or rime royale. Or make up your own rhyme scheme like Knibbs did in "Where the Ponies Come to Drink." And don't be scared of half rhyme or multisyllabic rhymes when they work better than forcing a perfect rhyme. Sometimes the 'right

sounding' word is as important as 'the rhyming word' (this is particularly important when writing music too where the chords or notes may be more important to the sound or beauty of a piece than the rhyme). The Rhyme Zone app or website may help in your experiments as it contains many perfect rhymes, multisyllabic rhymes, and half or slant rhymes.

So, if you've found that you've allowed the same rhyme schemes and rhymes to sort of freeze your writing, it's time to 'unrime' your rhymes. Heat them up, hammer them out, and shift things around. You might be surprised how well the water flows and how deep it goes once you cut a hole in the ice.

ROBIN HUTTON

"SGT Reckless: America's War Horse," 2015



Robin Hutton's memorable nonfiction retelling of the little mare who was also a Marine, Sgt Reckless: America's War Horse,

will win your admiration and your tears. It is a moving story of a little horse that could. From her humble beginnings as a Korean racehorse, to her purchase by American Marines in Korea to help them haul heavy ammunition up the hills to their large guns, to her acceptance as a full Private and her positive effect on morale for the troops, to her eventual

trip to America and retirement at Camp Pendleton, you cannot but fail to be impressed by Hutton's prose and Reckless' spirit.

Hutton tells a moving story where readers will be delighted with the humorous details. According to Hutton's description this little mare liked to share bacon and pancakes with the Marines in the morning. Readers will also be impressed by the bravery and loyalty of this little mare who managed to haul 386 rounds of ammunition to 51 gun sites traveling over 35 miles in one day by herself while injured during a heated gun fight with over 900 rounds screaming over her head. She often hauled wounded soldiers back down the hills where they would load her pack again with five more big gun shells to haul back up. Readers will be moved again hearing how she suffered shell shock herself, just like her comrades, at the end of the war

and retirement at Camp Pendleton. Hutton's retelling proves that Reckless demonstrates what 'a horse with heart' can accomplish.

The book itself is available in multiple affordable formats from ebook to paperback to hard copy, including images of Reckless and her marine pals.

A wide range of readers will revel in this book, from those who enjoy military stories, to those who like horses, to those who simply like nonfiction/true history stories. It is an appropriate tale for young adults and older adults as some younger readers may find the details of battle disturbing (see Patricia McCormick and Iacopo Bruno's version Sergeant Reckless: The True Story of the Little Horse who Became a Hero for younger readers).

Regnery History, Reprint Edition. \$9.99 ebook on Amazon, \$12.29 paperback, 368 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.

Western Playlists – Reporters

Here are the DJs who submitted their playlists this quarter:

Joe Angel

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

Marshal Allen Bailey

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

Bobbi Jean Bell

"OutWest Hour"
7819 Chaco Mesa Loop NW
Albuquerque NM 87114
818-384-4315
bobbijeanbell@gmail.com
KUPR 99.9 FM
Low Power Community Radio
www.KUPR.org
Placitas, New Mexico
Follow on Mixcloud:
www.mixcloud.com/DJBobbiJeanBell
Plays Western, Western Swing,
Cowboy Country, Poetry, and
whatever strikes her fancy!

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
www.kpov.org
kpov.od.streamguys.us/
calling_all_cowboys_new_56k.mp3
Email: callingallcowboys@hotmail.com
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roger@thederrrieres.com
816-769-4041
leo@thederrrieres.com
913-226-3637
www.thederrieres.com

Doug Figgs

P. O. Box 3, Lemitar, NM 87823
505-440-0979
www.dougfiggs.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
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KirkhamMusic@icloud.com
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Susie Knight

"The Western Way Hour"
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PO Box 76, Conifer, CO 80433
(303) 495-4869

Jarle Kvale

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

Eddy Leverett

c/o Campfire Productions
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kudzu cowboy@outlook.com

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Earsradio.com

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McLennan Ranch

2520 Hvas Lake Rd.

Pinantan, BC, Canada VOE 3E1

hugh_McLennan@telus.net

www.CowboyLife.com

Marvin O'Dell*"Around the Campfire"*

KKRN, Redding, CA

KZNQ, Santa Clarita, CA

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

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

Kevin Tuckfield

PO Box 10217, Russellville, AR 72812

Arkansas Cowboy Radio Ride

KWMV 88.5 FM

Mountain View, AR

kevintuckfield@gmail.com

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. Nebraska – Cowboy Joe Babcock
2. Gotta Move – The Hot Texas Swing Band
3. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
4. Throw a Saddle on a Star – Riders In The Sky
5. Storyteller: Tales of the West – Jim Jones
6. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
7. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
8. One More Ride – Doug Figgs
9. Snow on the Wineglass – John Lowell
10. Roll On, Cowboys – Andy Hedges
11. We Were Cowboys – R.J. Vandygriff
12. Ranchfolk at Large – Ryan Fritz
13. Cabin Songs – Syd Masters
14. This Ol' Guitar and Me – Peggy Malone
15. Cowgirls Ride – Sarah Pierce
16. Way Out West – Mark Kerr
17. Blessed by the West – Sarah Pierce
18. Born to be a Cowgirl – Aspen Black
19. Times Like These – Randy Huston
20. The Real West – Patty Clayton
21. 5 From the Heart of a Cowboy – Tom Hiatt
22. Just Passin' Through – The Fall River Boys
23. On the Trail With the Lonesome Pines – Hilary Gardner
24. Saturday Matinee – KG & the Ranger
25. On the Draw – The Carolyn Sills Combo
26. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
27. Westbound – Micki Fuhrman
28. American Outlaw II – Chris Guenther
29. Me and Les – Dan McCorison
30. Cowboy Serenade – Ed Meyer

10 MOST PLAYED WESTERN SWING ALBUMS

1. Gotta Move – The Hot Texas Swing Band
2. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
3. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
4. 12 To 6 Central – The Western Swing Authority
5. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
6. Texas Star – Lori Beth Brooke
7. On the Draw – The Carolyn Sills Combo
8. Arizona Stars – Rusted Spurs West
9. Little Bit of Texas – Carlos Washington
10. Billy Mata's Timeless Treasures – Billy Mata

12 MOST PLAYED SONGS BY WESTERN MUSIC DJs

1. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
2. A Wandering Stray – John Lowell
3. Got to See the West – Carlos Washington
4. Up in Cherry County – Cowboy Joe Babcock
Tex-Mex – The Hot Texas Swing Band
6. Last of the Four Sixes Cowboys – Joel White
7. Cowboy Heart – Jim Jones
One Way to Swing – Carlos Washington
9. Don't Fence Me In – Dave Alexander
10. Full Moon, Full Heart, and a Song –
The Hot Texas Swing Band
Rio Grande – The Hot Texas Swing Band
12. Nebraska – Cowboy Joe Babcock

12 MOST PLAYED COWBOY POETRY ALBUMS

1. Four Aces and a Queen – Dennis Russell,
Terry Nash, Valerie Beard, Floyd Beard &
Dale Page
2. Traveling Through Time – K.C. LaCourse
3. The Girl in the Yellow Checked Dress – Duane Nelson
4. New Mexico Stray – Dennis Russell
5. No Better Life – Valerie Beard
Born to Ponder – Sherl Cederburg
Provin' Up Wise – Rik "Yonder" Goodell
8. Between the Sun and the Moon – Teresa Burleson
Wisdom in the Wind – Sherl Cederburg
Once Upon the West – Doris Daley & Eli Barsi
Pensive 'n' Playful – Mark Munzert
12. Come Sit a Spell – Woody Woodruff

***A MISSING NUMBER IN THE LIST
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