

THE WESTERN WAY

The Official Publication of the
International Western Music Association

IN THE CROSSHAIRS:

*Belinda
Gail*

AMERICA'S
WESTERN
SWEETHEART

NEW FEATURE, STORIES AND TALL TALES, PAGE 25

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Gary McMahan
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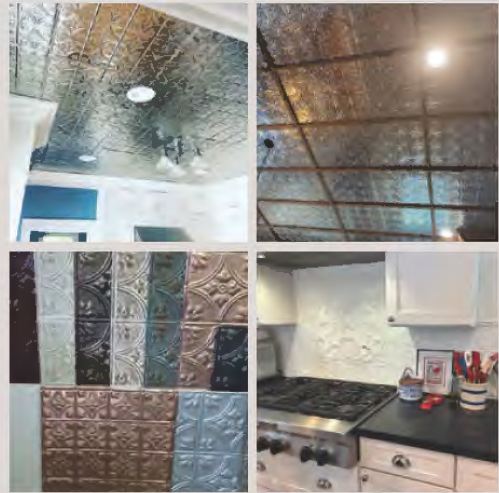


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From The President...



MARVIN O'DELL
IWMA President

Questions Asked Regarding IWMA Policies and Practices

It's only right that folks can ask questions. We wouldn't have much of a free-speech society if we couldn't inquire about and question matters that concern us.

A lot of questions have floated around recently about the IWMA policies and practices as well as why the Board of Directors operates as it does. All are fair questions. Most are asked, not to be malicious, critical, or argumentative, but due to a lack of information or understanding. So – as best I can, I am going to try to answer some of the questions that I've seen battled around out there, mostly by IWMA members. I will do this with the understanding that oftentimes answers to questions prompt more questions. However, not knowing what those questions might be, I will only address the initial questions. At least the ones that I can remember being asked.

One question I have heard from more than one individual is: why isn't the IWMA Board of Directors more transparent? This is hard to answer because I don't know what the board could do to be more transparent. I do know from working with the current board that this board is willing to be as transparent as possible; however, we would need some suggestions as to how we could be more transparent. Every board meeting is open to the IWMA membership. All one has to do is let Marsha Short know you would like to be in attendance at the next board meeting, and she will tell you how to join the Zoom meetings. There are no secrets or private matters discussed in board meetings, so any member is welcome to attend. Any member can request a copy of board meeting minutes. Our annual membership meeting in November is open to all members, and any questions may be asked from the floor. So, if transparency is really a problem, the Board of Directors welcomes any suggestions as to how to remedy that.

A big question being asked is: why are the jury members (or judges) for the music awards kept anonymous? The simple answer to that is: we wouldn't be able to get anyone to agree to judge if their names were made public. You can imagine how much criticism they would have to deal with on a personal level if their names were known: "Did you vote for me; why not?" "Why was the winner so much better than mine?", etc. Each year there are six or seven judges for each category. Each one of these judges is involved in the music industry extensively as either a producer, songwriter, DJ, or some other capacity. They are the folks who are involved enough with the IWMA to have heard every bit of music that is eligible for an award during the past two years. The judging is done in a very professional manner, much like the country music, bluegrass, folk, and other music awards are handled.

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ON THE COVER...

Belinda Gail – wife, mother, musician, IWMA Board Member and everybody's friend. Her journey is one of faith, family and music wrapped up and sealed with her trademark smile. She is the complete package, tied with a bow and labeled, rightly so, as America's Western Sweetheart.

Cover image courtesy Photography by Neets



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Editor's Insight



Theresa O'Dell
Editor

I am thankful for...

Fall is here. Well, almost. And in some parts of the country (some more than others), Fall can be felt in the brisk air and seen in the turning of the

leaves. We here in Arizona miss out on some of those welcomed sights, but we still appreciate the Fall Season, nonetheless.

It seems like each Fall we focus on thankfulness and thanksgiving. It only makes sense since next month there is a day set aside to do just that. As I sat at the computer and wondered just what I want to share in this column, I got a little nostalgic and sentimental, so bear with me. May I share some of my thankful thoughts with you?

I am thankful for...

...My new first great-grandchild, Owen, born this year, healthy and oh so handsome!

...My husband who is probably the kindest human on the planet; who knows how to love people even with their warts and idiosyncrasies; who loves God, family and country. He is a leader but has learned to do so with a "velvet hammer."

...The many opportunities I have been afforded during my lifetime to expand intellectually and to develop new skill sets, and then doors that have opened to use them. How fun it has been!

...The privilege that has been mine to be a part of the IWMA, even though I am not a performer – just someone who has always loved the old cowboy songs and poetry of the West. The organization has opened my ears to new songs and singers and poets who paint beautiful pictures of the West through words and music.

...The added opportunity for me to sit on the IWMA board for over 11 years and contribute to the governing, expanding and furthering of the organization in ways that will hopefully solidify it far into the future. To work with the many different individuals who currently

serve or have served on the board in the past has been a wonderful learning experience and given me enormous insight into other perspectives and ideas. In honesty I can proudly say, current and past board members have shown a sincere love for the betterment of the IWMA and have served sacrificially many times.

...The highest privilege has been mine to serve as the Editor of the *Western Way* magazine and to contribute ideas that have hopefully made it an even better marketing tool to strengthen the legacy of the International Western Music Association for years to come. One day, I will be honored to turn over these reins to someone new who in turn can build on its foundation and make it better for the good of the IWMA and its members.

Thank you for allowing me to share. May your Fall find you enjoying contentment and many thankful moments, as do I.

Theresa

The album cover features a woman in a cowboy hat standing in a field, looking out over a landscape with a covered wagon in the distance under a dramatic, cloudy sky. The title 'THE REAL WEST' is at the top, and 'PATTY CLAYTON' is at the bottom.

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From The Executive Director...



Marsha Short
Executive Director

Here it is technically Fall already, although it's going to be 106 in the shade today in Texas. Not exactly crisp football weather! It may be the heat (I hope so), but lately I've found myself turning into a bit of a curmudgeon. I haven't yelled at kids to "get off my lawn," but I'm worried that will be next.

I've been dealing with medical insurance, our internet provider (or non-provider most of the time), the electric company, and the bank. Have you noticed that there aren't any more real people at these places anymore? I've been lost in a maze of pressing phone buttons and talking to virtual assistants who can answer simple questions. Really? My simple question just leads to more button pressing. And if FINALLY I make them understand I want to talk to a person, I go into a holding pattern until I can't stand the Muzak another second. I'd like to slam down the phone, but it's not nearly as satisfying with a cell phone.

Remember the old days when you could actually talk to a person? Sometimes you could call back a couple of months later and talk to the same person. Those days are long gone. Technology is changing so fast, it's almost impossible to keep up. I've just gotten comfortable with my smart phone and suddenly flip phones are back. I long for the good old days...my parents longed for the good old days...my grandparents longed for the good days. Someday, these will be the "good old days" for our children and grandchildren.

We remember the good old days of Western Music with the Silver Screen cowboys and the Sons of the Pioneers. But we're planning THE future (not FOR the future). Our young talent is incredible, but we need more. If you have a talented child or grandchild, let us know. If you're a music teacher and have students that might be interested in Western Music, let us know. If your chapter sponsors a poetry contest, let us know. Let's "rope in" a whole new batch of young talent! They'll all be getting together in Albuquerque for workshops and the Youth Showcase...plan to be there and support this important entity within our organization. They are THE future! Let's plan for it.

Marsha



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- Stockyards Museum – Ft. Worth, TX
- Tigard Public Library, Tigard, OR
- Rex Allen Arizona Cowboy Museum – Willcox, AZ
- IWMA Chapters at Local Gatherings and Festivals
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FOR MORE INFORMATION: 505-563-0673

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

WESTERN EVENTS CALENDAR

FOR DETAILS GO TO
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2023

**OLD WEST DAYS & NEBRASKA
COWBOY POETRY GATHERING**
OCT 13-14 – VALENTINE, NE

**COWBOY POETRY GATHERING &
WESTERN ART & GEAR SHOW**
OCT 13-14 – LAKEVIEW, OR

WEATHERFORD GOES RED
OCT 24 – WEATHERFORD, TX

RED STEAGALL COWBOY GATHERING
OCT 27-29 – FT. WORTH STOCKYARDS, TX

**TEXAS HILL COUNTRY COWBOY
GATHERING**
NOV 2-4 – FREDERICKSBURG, TX

WESTERN SLOPE COWBOY GATHERING
NOV 3-4 – GRAND JUNCTION, CO

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NOV 8-12 – ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Continued from page 2

Another question: are the judges biased? I will answer that by saying, "Probably." However, when each category is sent to the judges, it is accompanied with a statement like this: "Please, for the legitimacy and credibility of our awards, do NOT give any extra consideration to friends, family members, or chapter members. Please judge each item based solely on your belief that it is worthy of an award when weighed against the other nominees." Does this guarantee there will be no bias? No – but we can only do what we can do. As I have seen the results of the judging, it appears to me that there is no apparent bias. And if it ever does appear that way, that judge will no longer be asked to participate.

Someone asked: why don't we use judges from outside of our music and/or poetry? Well, actually that was tried once, and the results were, shall we say, less than satisfactory. There was a deluge of criticism from our members when the results were announced – and rightly so. It was actually embarrassing. Folks outside our music and poetry don't always understand our music and are not able to judge it fairly.

This is also asked: what are the criteria for awarding an album? Basically, it is the quality of the music, songs, and performance of the artist. Does airplay factor in? Yes, but it is not the only consideration. We have seen albums nominated for an award that have never been sent to western music radio for airplay. There is no way to evaluate what kind of an impact that album has made in the western music arena. You would never see an album win an award from any other music organization that was recorded but never released to the outlets that play the music. If an artist releases an album with characteristics that limit its airplay (poor quality, poor mastering, poor mix, poor performance, etc.), that album is not likely to win an award.

One performer asked, "Why hasn't my music been embraced by the IWMA?" In answer to that, I must first say that the IWMA "embraces" no one's music or poetry. That's not its purpose or mission. The organization functions to promote the music and poetry, not performers. It does this by putting together a program that includes things that every performer can take advantage of

to advance their own mission as a performer. That's why there is an annual opportunity for performers to convene and showcase their talent – where performers can attend workshops held to disseminate information useful to a performer. Where performers can meet talent buyers and fans. Where performers can market themselves and their music. Where songwriters can share their songs. Where poets can display their work. The Board of Directors works all year to provide for the performers, in the best way they can, a vehicle that will help them be as successful as they can possibly be. The IWMA does not book performers or sell their music and poetry; it simply provides a stage for the performer to use to their own advantage. A performer told me recently that he had become a non-performer until attending his first IWMA convention. Now he is so busy he has had to give up his other job in order to handle all his bookings.

I have only attempted to answer a few questions here. I know there are many more being asked. But to wrap this up, I will say this about the IWMA Board of Directors. Each member of the board gives up a LOT of personal time to support the mission of the organization. If you are an IWMA member, they work for YOU. And it is oftentimes at their own expense. Once a month, the board meets to discuss issues that they feel need to be discussed for the betterment of the IWMA members. We will never really know how many hours Marsha Short puts in each day on behalf of the IWMA and its members. Theresa O'Dell's work on The Western Way magazine takes countless hours – about a month's work of eight-hour days each quarter – to provide you with a magazine that informs readers of what is going on in your performance lives. Diana Raven spends many hours making sure that our organization's financials are kept in order and will meet any IRS scrutiny. Each board member plays a significant role in assuring that you have a wonderful and secure experience at the annual convention. Being a board member is a labor of love and often a thankless job.

Thank you for asking the questions. I hope they will continue to be asked in the spirit of The Cowboy Way. 🐾

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In the CROSSHAIRS



Belinda Gail performing

Belinda Gail

BY TOM SWEARINGEN

Spend any time at all with Belinda Gail and you'll quickly discover that there's really no question of whether she carries a "glass half empty" or "glass half full" attitude and outlook on life. The answer is neither. She's more of a "three quarters full and maybe even more" type of person.

Born in California and raised in Nevada's Carson Valley through her pre-teens where her father drove truck, managed a mill, did day-work on ranches in the area, and raised cattle and horses on his own small ranch, she learned early the value of hard work and a "can-do" positive attitude. It was here that the foundation for her appreciation for the beauty and challenges of rural life was set.

The woman who raised her father had a much larger ranch in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains at 4,000' outside Sequoia National Park that she homesteaded herself at the turn of the century. When she was no longer able to take care of the ranch Belinda's father moved the family to run it for her. At this point Belinda, the oldest of four children at the age of twelve learned the hard work of being a hand on a going concern ranch...helping with round ups, brandings, and all that it took to keep the fireplace and cook stove supplied with split wood. Not to mention getting up at four to feed cattle before heading for the school bus by seven. Belinda reflects that despite the hard work and challenges, the three years on this ranch were the happiest of her

*Entertaining is fun. Singing is fun.
But the bottom line for me is
the people. I want people to know
they are valued. To feel worth.
To feel a bit better because of
my music. That's my "real job."*

~ BELINDA GAIL



Belinda learns from Patsy Montana

childhood. There's no doubt that these years shaped her connection to the land and how important it is to take care of it. With town and the nearest neighbor eight miles away, she also learned reliance on family. When her grandmother became ill the family moved to town to help her and even though the family was no longer ranching themselves, they kept connection to surrounding ranching families, often helping with their works.

Growing up Belinda was surrounded by music, whether that be the family singing in the car, entertaining themselves at home, or mom playing a big stack of records (everything from classical to rock, pop, what her mom called "good music," country, and 40's standards), music was the fabric of her early years. Belinda also enjoys a wide variety of genres to this day. Ask what radio station format is on her car radio and the answer could be classical guitar, 90's country, 60s and 70s rock, Southern gospel, old country, western, or other style depending on what pushes her button at the time.

Liking to sing but not thinking of herself as a singer, her best friend, a girl that had invited her to church when she was 17, spurred her into joining her in the church choir where the choir director soon had her being featured in solos. Not



Belinda and Bob



Gals having too much fun (LtoR) Belinda, Kristyn Harris, Teresa Burleson, Devon Dawson, Hailey Sandoz.

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IN THE CROSSHAIRS

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Belinda and long-time singing partner, mentor and friend, the late Curly Musgraves.

really intending to “be” a singer, she found herself being asked to sing at weddings and other events around town. In short order she was invited to join a local band and performed with them for several years entertaining at parties, reunions, holiday celebrations, and so on. Her future husband Frederic saw her singing with that band, setting the stage for their eventual marriage. Each coming from earlier marriages they became a family of five, with her daughter and his two sons. A couple of years later Frederic took her to a dance club where she discovered he had entered her into a talent show without her knowledge. As you might expect, Belinda won. The result was an invitation to join the dance club band which she did leading to wider exposure and connection to a talent agent with connections in Nashville, large clubs, and a 10-year plan for her. But with three four- to six-year-old children at home she understandably passed on the idea of hitting the road to instead follow her heart’s desire to be with family and stick close to home. Her “day job” during these years was working as a travel agent, eventually owning her own agency.

In 1995 for an appearance with the band (Belinda not yet playing the guitar herself) she learned “I

Want to be a Cowgirl Sweetheart” off a Suzy Bogguss CD just intending for it to be something different to add to her repertoire. Belinda shares that following the performance two men complimented her on

the song and asked if she knew who wrote it, which she didn’t. With that they dialed Patsy Montana telling her, “Here’s a girl who knows your song,” and handed the phone to Belinda and said, “Sing.” After the song Patsy told Belinda she needed to sing western music. Not really knowing what that was or the difference between western and country music (thinking it was all one thing) she asked, and Patsy told her... and offered to help her.

From her travel agent work Belinda knew Lonnie Hannah and that he had something to do with western music (an understatement to say the least... Lonnie being one third of the Sons of the San Joaquin along with father Joe and uncle Jack). Lonnie and Patsy oriented her to the music and encouraged her. She ultimately decided western music was where her heart was. It brought up the good feelings and memories of her years



Judge Jeannine Pirro after a performance.

on ranches. Telling her manager of her decision he warned her there was no money in western compared to country and resigned. Belinda laughs at that and says, "He was right...but I don't care. I discovered a passion for western music." With her manager resigning, husband Frederic took over.

Lonnie and Patsy suggested Belinda join the Western Music Association (prior to the name change adding "International." Hereafter in this article referred to as IWMA) and attend its annual convention scheduled for just a few months later. Belinda submitted to perform and to her surprise was accepted. With only a week before the start of the convention she sought the advice of Lonnie to help her hone her yodel, leading to an introduction to his dad Joe. Joe played "Prairie Girl" off their From Whence Came the Cowboy album which had just been recorded and was going to be released at their performance at the convention. Recorded as a duet with Molly O'Brien, Joe invited Belinda to sing her part at their performance if she could learn it by the next weekend. "Sure!"

Walking out onstage Belinda felt as if the whole place was saying, "What is SHE doing with the Sons?" But it went over like gangbusters, and she found people very welcoming. Lonnie called after



Mother from the heart, Marilyn Tuttle

and invited her to join them whenever she was near their performances. Realizing the opportunity before her to learn she asked if she could tag along unpaid to be mentored for six or seven months of western US performances. There she learned how to interact with stagehands, audiences, and promoters. For a year and half or more she interspersed her own gigs with her band with appearances with the Sons. Being on stage with the Sons springboarded her career and led to her first big solo gig at the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival. And what a celebrated career it's been and continues to be. Named one of the Top-50 Country & Western Entertainers by American Cowboy Magazine, seven-time IWMA Female Performer of the Year, appearances at major festivals and events throughout the US, Canada and Europe, and several acclaimed albums including Granite Mountain which was named IWMA Traditional Album of the Year in 2014.

Her career also included a dynamic duo with Curly Musgrave who she credits with helping her improve her guitar playing and develop as a songwriter. With the 1999 Monterey Cowboy Festival as their first big billing as a duo they worked together for ten years and recorded three acclaimed albums and were named



Will the Rodeo Clown had just presented Belinda with a hat.

Continued on page 12

IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Continued from page 11

IWMA Duo or Group of the Year three times before his illness and untimely passing in 2009. Eighteen months before Curly's death her husband of twenty-five years died. Grieving both and finding herself in a challenging financial and emotional place, Belinda credits her IWMA family with helping her get back on her feet.

Reflecting on her journey she thinks of those who came alongside her in her early years of involvement in the IWMA, particularly Jill Jones, Jean Prescott, and the late Liz Masterson who went out of their way to welcome her, make introductions, mentor her, and most importantly become friends. Because that was so appreciated and impactful at that time in her life, she strives to do the same. "We who are more seasoned, more experienced performers have a responsibility to come alongside new performers. I think most of the IWMA performers do and it's a big part of the fabric and family we belong to."

Belinda shares, "I have met some of the most important people in my life through western music and the IWMA in particular." For example, "Diane Tribett (now Scott) who as a fellow widow at the time and I formed a supportive bond that included combining her poetry with my music and performing and recording for a time as Cowgirl True." Their friendship also resulted in the creation of a fun women's retreat called Cowgirl True Girlfriend Getaway Weekend held annually at Rancho de la Osa outside of Tucson. Celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2021, it's still going.

It was also through the IWMA that Belinda met 1997 Hall of Fame inductee Wes Tuttle and his wife and harmony partner Marilyn Tuttle. Singing together informally when together and growing closer in friendship Belinda included them on a song for her gospel album recorded just months before Wes' death. With her friendship with Marilyn deepening Belinda confided that she had a difficult relationship with her mom. "This is



Belinda performs with Johnny Neil, Jon Chandler and Ernie Martinez.

why the Lord put us together. I can fill in for your mom," was Marilyn's reply. And she has ever since, referring to Belinda and her own two foster girls as, "daughters of the heart." Belinda credits Marilyn's stepping in with taking the pressure off her relationship with her mother, allowing it to improve so that when her mom passed years later, they were on great terms.

Many in the IWMA know Belinda's husband Robert Lorbeer, IWMA board member and past President, who she married in 2010. You may know him as a graduate of West Point, an Airborne Army Ranger with two purple hearts, a retired full bird colonel, holder of three degrees (engineering from West Point, MBA from Tulane, and Doctorate in law from Santa Clara) or accomplished equestrian



Christmas with Bob's sister and family.

and horse show judge. But you may not know that western music royalty is responsible for he and Belinda meeting. It's a story involving Roy Roger and Dale Evan's family and Marilyn Tuttle orchestrating seating arrangements and other "God thing" circumstances to bring them together. Within three and half months they knew they would be married. "When you know you know," says Belinda. Setting a fall date, they thought that since it was 2010, 10/10/10 would make a fun and easy way to remember their anniversary date. It turned out Belinda was booked to perform that day at a festival in Ruidoso, NM. No problem for these two problem solvers. Belinda performed that morning, and they were married that afternoon at a little cowboy church in the area. "And we've been happy as little larks ever since," Belinda beams. Between Belinda and Bob their lives are blessed with four children and ten grandchildren. "They are a huge part of my life, such an important part of who I am."



Belinda and Bob



With grandson Garrett at Army graduation.



Family time with sons Erik and Ryan, wives and grandkids.

Regarding the "God thing" Belinda often refers to, she explains, "I know not everyone shares my faith in God but that is a huge part of my life and a big part of the motivation of why I do anything that I do. I believe God gave me the singing career. Of course, I worked hard, but the opportunities were God's orchestration. He used music to allow me to love on people and shower them with kindness on His behalf. Entertaining is fun. Singing is fun. But the bottom line for me is the people. I want people to know they are valued. To feel worth. To feel a bit better because of my music. That's my "real job." 🐾



Coffee AND CONVERSATION BY PETER BRUCE



As members and followers of IWMA, our common bond is the love of music. It's a thread that connects all of mankind. It's why we gather every November for a unique celebration of Western word and song. As evidenced by recent technology, the ways we enjoy music has shifted. How many of us still have turntables to spin vinyl records? How many folks have purchased a newer vehicle only to find there's no capability to play a CD within that new car or a truck? And don't get me started on music cassettes, which I still have plenty of, with no way to play them. Okay, back to vinyl/LPs/records. It's a way many of us grew up, playing music with a phonograph and a stylus/needle. Is it a valid way to listen? Sure! I've got hundreds of albums. I recently bought a high-tech turntable and accompanying sound system. Nostalgic? Yes. Practical? Maybe not. So, for

the musicians on the Western scene, producing a vinyl record is probably not a wise decision. However, for music lovers and audiophiles I'm still on board for playing records. What to do with all those old records? My best advice is to recycle them if they're not getting played. Give them to those who would appreciate the history and artwork. Or sell them. Records are making a big comeback. Funny circumstance: last year, for the first time ever, sales of vinyl records exceeded purchases of CDs. Here is my insider's take on all that; buy and (if you're a musician) produce CDs. For the Western artists and musicians reading this, here's why: familiarity and facility of distribution are key. Keep it within an easy format until the next new big thing comes along. Next time, CDs versus digital downloads. With a salute to the past and an eye on the future, keeping it Western, one song and poem at a time. 🐾

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

MAILBAG

I make a point of reading anything you put in Western Way. That goes for Theresa and Marsha as well. But in response to your article, I do not fear the end of western music and culture is upon us. Not as long as there are those who keep it alive. For some of us, that is our purpose. While I'm at it, I was most pleased to see our young members on the cover of Western Way. One of the first things I tell folks concerning the IWMA is their impressive youth program and the fruits that have sprouted from this worthy endeavor. ~ R. Rideout

I like the current [Summer 2023] Western Way's focus on youth. As the organization that gave a platform to Nickel Creek and Kacey Musgraves, in their early years, I think it's in the interest of the IWMA to make sure youngsters find a "home" with us, whether they stick with Western music as they grow older or branch out into other genres. Hopefully, wherever their careers take them, they won't forget Western music or lose interest in it! ~ O.J. Sikes

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.



COYOTE CHOIR PRACTICE

by Ron Wilson, Poet Lariat

*There's something you hear when darkness comes near,
In a western country twilight,
Which will not be found in the urban sound
Of some big city's night.*

*This sound will come soon when an alabaster moon
Rises above the grassy hills.
The critters are fed, we're headed for bed,
And the ranch is quiet and still.*

*At the end of the day, from miles away,
We begin to hear a faint sound.
It starts tiny, then fills; it jumps from the hills,
And it grows with a leap and a bound.*

*It begins with a yip, for a second will skip,
And resumes with a yelp and some more.
Then it grows again as the coyotes join in
Like a tidal wave pounding a shore.*

*Through the night comes to me a cacophony
Of sound rising up to the skies.
The coyote howl and shriek will ascend to a peak
In a crescendo of blood-curdling cries.*

*My heart somehow thrills to the sound in the hills,
As the coyotes sing in the moonlight.
Then the awesome sound begins to die down,
And gives way to the still of the night.*

*The darkness moves in and the night once again
Is placid, quiet and clear.
The stillness grows but the sound's echoes
Still ring in my heart and ear.*

*Through the years it's a battle protectin' the cattle.
The coyote preys on the weak and the lame.
He's my sworn enemy, but without him, you see,
The night sounds would not be the same.*

*Oh, the coyote's cry to the late night sky
Is a defiant call of zest.
So I lay down my head, secure in my bed,
And know I'm at home in the west.*



RON WILSON Among many accolades and achievements, Ron has served as "a 4-H member, FFA officer, farm radio broadcaster, college lecturer, Congressional staffer, association executive, rural development director, corporate vice-president, small business co-founder, rodeo ticket-taker, Sunday School teacher, diaper changer, bottle washer, tractor driver, post hole digger, thistle chopper, hay bale stacker, fence fixer, calf holder, manure scooper, and tail twister." Ron is a very large part of the Kansas Cowboy Poetry Contest and serves as Secretary for the IWMA Western Wordsmiths.

In The Spotlight...

by Marvin O'Dell

...**Red and Gail Steagall** have donated Red's priceless collection of Western artifacts capturing stories of the American West to the National Ranching Heritage Center (NRHC) at Texas Tech University. Included in this collection are his song and poetry manuscripts as well as radio and television shows he has produced over his 45-year career in Western entertainment. In addition to his popular Texas swing dance music and poems about life on a ranch, his collection includes more than 30 years of his popular syndicated radio show "Cowboy Corner" and more than 20 years of his RFD-TV shows "In the Bunkhouse with Red Steagall" and "Red Steagall is Somewhere West of Wall Street." Recordings of these radio and television shows span the gamut of Western lifestyle, including interviews with notable country-western artists such as **Reba McEntire**, **Charlie Daniels**, and **Baxter Black** to conversations between Steagall and notable ranchers and cowboys swapping stories about the life of the American cowboy. Steagall's love of ranching heritage, Western values and working cowboy traditions has led him to dedicate more than 20 years of service to the NRHC. This includes his work to bring the life-size bronze "On the Banks of the Bosque" by Cowboy Artist Bruce Green to stand proudly near the NRHC entrance. In 2018, Steagall was honored with the National Golden Spur Award, recognizing his contributions to preserving and honoring the Western and ranching lifestyles.

..."It was a dream come true, and I hope I get to do it again," said **Phoebe White** after making her first appearance on the Grand Ole Opry with **Riders In The Sky** on August 2. Following that historic night, Phoebe unveiled her honorary exhibit at the Kentucky Music Hall of Fame on August 12. Since then, she has been busy with performing, television appearances, and interviews across the country including "Coffee, Country, & Cody" in Nashville and NPR radio. Phoebe enjoyed a writing session with Nashville songwriter Corey Lee Barker and is looking forward to recording & releasing some of her original songs soon. She recently performed at the 40th Annual Roy Rogers festival and shared the stage with **Kristyn Harris** on "Woodsongs Old Time Radio Hour" in late September.

...**Washtub Jerry** taught his ukulele course during the Kerrville Folk Festival in May. Jerry also is teaching ukulele to 8 patient-students in Fort Davis. All have been good learners according to Jerry.

...Western songwriter **Bob Thomas** released his tenth CD *The Moon* in August. The CD features eight original songs and two cover songs. Highlights are the title song "The Moon" and an inspirational song titled "Pay It Forward."

...**Duane Nelson** has released his third CD, *The Girl in the Yellow Checked Dress*. The CD contains 15 tracks, 14 of them written by Duane and one by **TJ Casey**.

...Cowboy poet **Tom Swearingen** recited several of his poems and discussed traditional and contemporary cowboy poetry on an episode of Oregon Public Broadcasting's *Think Out Loud* program covering culture and the arts. *Willamette Week Newspaper* featured an article on Tom in their "Best of 2023" issue. Tom's tribute poem to the St. Paul Rodeo was recited in the rodeo's induction into the ProRodeo Hall of Fame which was broadcast live on the Cowboy Channel.

...**Lindy Simmons** presented Cowboy Poetry writing workshops in Trinidad, CO for the Literary Society in September. Elementary students and adults both got the chance to become cowboy poets. Lindy will return to Trinidad for the "Colexico Experience: Spaghetti and Westerns Fest" October 20-21.

...**Allen and Jill Kirkham** are pleased to announce that they are expecting their 6th grandchild due on Valentines Day 2024 in the Utica, New York area! Meanwhile, Allen and Jill have retired from their Diamond Tours Supper Show to have more time to travel to see family and to focus on their "Circuit Rider Roundup with Allen&Jill" radio show.

...IWMA members receiving awards from The Red Carpet Award Show in Holland which occurred in August are: **Carol Markstrom** for Country Rock Cover Female for "Long, Long Time," **Kristyn Harris** for Americana Original Female for "Place to Land," and **Andrew Dean** for Fair Play in Music Business which recognizes his success in the business. Finalists were from 41 different countries and submissions underwent a rigorous juried process by a team of international judges.

...**Kristyn Harris** is a final nominee for "Traditional Country Female Vocalist" at The Josie Awards in Nashville TN. The awards show will be held on October 22 at the historic Grand

Ole Opry House. Kristyn and **Hailey Sandoz** will open for the **Oak Ridge Boys** for the second time in October. Later in October, they will be performing on the same stage and billing as **Ricky Skaggs** and **Suzy Boggus**. Kristyn was chosen to be in a special feature in *Fort Worth Magazine's* September issue also featuring **Red Steagall** and several Fort Worth area celebrities.

...*Dust of Los Angeles* is the title of the next album coming from **Ron Christopher** in January. The project will contain four cover songs, three co-writes with **Mag Mawhinney** and seven originals.

...**Chris Mortensen** recently completed an album of cowboy poetry titled *Upon My Horse's Back*. Long or short, humorous or serious, these poems reflect an eclectic variety of life experiences.

...**Rosy Nolan** was signed to the Blackbird Record Label in November of 2022. Singles will drop in the fall with the album in the new year. She will be appearing at several upcoming festivals and events in the near future.

...Singer/songwriter **Paul Kelly** from Santa Fe, NM has been selected to perform in the Songwriter's Spotlight at the IBMA's (International Bluegrass Music Association) World of Bluegrass Convention in Raleigh, NC in September. It's the third consecutive year he was chosen and the fourth time overall.

...Monthly performances have been arranged by **Tony Duarte** at Teofilos Restaurant in Los Lunas, NM. The "Rio Abajo House Concert Benefit Series" is held on the first Tuesday of every month. **The Peralta Playboys** (Tony and **Chuck Roberts**) are the host performers, and they invite a special guest performer(s) from NMIWMA. All tips are donated to the Valencia County Blue Star Mothers after the show. The first concert was held in August. **Friends Forever**, a duo comprised of IWMA members Michael and Donna Coy, were our first special guest performers. The premiere performance was attended by approximately 70 people.

...**Hannah (Walters) Seek and Ben Alexander** are still performing weekly at the beautiful and luxurious Rawah Guest Ranch that snuggles right up next to the majestic Rawah Wilderness Area in northern Colorado. They will continue performing each Monday night through September. They have now performed at the guest ranch for 27 consecutive years.

...**Jan Schiferl** and her husband Greg will host a **Jimmy Fortune** concert, a western music and poetry show (WJ Ranchfest), and Cowboy Church at their WJ Ranch in northeast NE during the month of September. Jan is also working on her 3rd album and 4th book.

...Cowboy and western music continues to appear at the Grand Ole Opry. **Andy Hedges** made his debut at the Opry on August 10th with special guests **Brigid Reedy** and **Dom Flemons**. The full performance is available on Andy's YouTube channel.

...**Buddy Greenbloom** performed recently at the Autry Museum of the American West in Southern California and will be performing at TMYFest in Tucson, AZ in October. Southern California members can catch Buddy at his monthly residency at Trip Santa Monica where he hosts Americana Music Night each second Tuesday of the month through the end of the year. Buddy will also release his fifth studio single, "Save Me A Dance" in September.

...Producer **Merel Bregante** reports that **Jim Jones** is almost finished with his new album *Story Teller: Tales From The West*. **Sarah Pierce** is also wrapping up her new project titled *I Want To Go Home*. **Carol Markstrom** and **Bob Marshall** are soon to begin new projects.

...**Larry Wilder** has been involved with several fundraisers for Ukraine. He will be performing for one in October with the theme of "Scary."

...**Rich Price** has a featured appearance singing an original song in the Dwayne Dunham produced movie *The Happy Worker* set for release this year. Rich will also be appearing at the Cowboy Way Jubilee in San Angelo, TX in late September.

..."The Cowboy Way", a song written by **Bobby Marquez**, is the theme song of the Cowboy Way Jubilee, formerly at the Gene Autry Museum, now at Ft. Concho in San Angelo, TX. Bobby will perform at the event along with shows in Branson, MO this fall. Also, watch for Bobby's appearances on RFD-TV's "The Penny Gilley Show" and the faith-based tv show, "Today's Nashville, This is Faith."

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MONTANA COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

The 38th Annual Montana Cowboy Gathering was held August 11-13 in Lewistown, Montana. Diana Raven and Marsha Short were there with *Western Ways*, IWMA membership forms, and convention information. There were 14 IWMA members who performed as well as many “potential” members, fans and performers! Watch for IWMA at a gathering near you. Better yet, volunteer to put up an IWMA table at a gathering. Contact marsha@westernmusic.org for more information.



Pictured (LtoR): Diana Raven, Poppa Mac, Brad Exton, Bonnie Jo Exton, Sherl Cederburg, Richard Cederburg and Marsha Short.



Diana Raven and Marsha Short represent the IWMA with smiles and lots of information.

RED CARPET AWARD SHOW IN HOLLAND

Western culture is universal and that was shown at the recent Red Carpet Award Show in Holland. KC LaCourse and Carol Markstrom were there to perform and spread the word about western music and poetry while promoting IWMA by handing out the *Western Way* to the international performers, awardees, DJs, and industry professionals from across the globe. Three IWMA musicians won Red Carpet awards this year, and the organizers are interested in cowboy poetry as a category in future competitions.



Award-winning duo Studeo (Christine and Jeremy Stork) with IWMA cowboy poet KC LaCourse.



Red Carpet award-winners Windwalker Dorn and Carol Markstrom.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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...Singing the history of the west, Dan Crow and Karla Steen (**Crow & Karla**) performed two concerts for the “Billy the Kid Pageant/Old Lincoln, New Mexico Days” in August and were accompanied all weekend by the great-grandson and great-great-great-grandson of Sheriff Pat Garrett and the great-grandsons of Sheriff William Brady.

...The new CD from the **Fall River Boys** is titled *Just Passin' Thru* and includes Mark E. Seeley poetry and a song written by Mark and **David Andersen** as well as new songs written by Scott Lambertson with a couple of old favorites thrown in. Scott and Mark were joined by Bar J Wrangler alumnus Tim Hodgson on fiddle and the amazing Beth Miller on bass.

...**Pegie Douglas** presented *The Life and Music of Badger Clark: South Dakota's First Poet Laureate* at the South Dakota Hall of Fame in August. She will be presenting her program at the South Dakota Festival of Books September 22. On September 24th, Pegie will be inducted into the Legends of Dakota Country Music Hall of Fame.

...The **Dan Canyon Band** is preparing for their next album. They've decided this time to branch out from recording only original music and put to tape a few classic cowboy songs from the 19th century. The album should be a 50/50 split between cowboy standards and originals. Look for it next spring or summer. Visit www.dancanyon.com for lots of cool stuff.

...**Almeda Bradshaw** has been busy remodeling the M2B Ranch Bunkhouse but found time to write a draft of the first lessons in her Western Music Curriculum. She presented it at the MFPE Educators Conference in Billings (MT) in October in a session titled “Western Music as a Means” for teaching social studies, language arts and music education.

...**Sonja Oliver** directed the melodrama *The Girl of the Golden West* for the Cripple Creek Butte Theater's professional summer season for which she also wrote an original olio. She also directed *In Search of Patsy*, an original play based on the life of Patsy Cline. In addition to directing, Sonja taught a vocal music program for middle and high school students during Cripple Creek (CO) and Victor Schools 2023 spring semester. One of the first songs the students were able to sight read was “Happy Trails.”

...Continuing his travels as an author and singer, **Joe Brown** attended the Western Writers of America Conference in Rapid City, SD in June. He joined several IWMA performers each

night, singing for a receptive crowd. He completed two book tours and wrapped up July by headlining the Day of the Cowboy celebration at the Chisolm Trail Heritage Center in Duncan, OK.

...IWMA members **Gary Kirkman and Ashley Westcott** and band just released a new western swing video and are invited to play for the LDS college of Business in Salt Lake City (UT) in December.

...Geary Parsons and J. Michael Mullins (**The Timberline Cowboys**) have found a new way to add to their already-busy schedule. In addition to numerous performing gigs, the pair was asked to judge the talent contest at the La Plata County Fair. Geary also was a judge for the IWMA Colorado Chapter Talent Contest. While continuing to perform, they are busy preparing for the Durango Cowboy Gathering, as both are members of the gathering's board of directors.

...**Annie Wilson** has begun a newspaper column titled *Songs of the Flint Hills* with her lyrics and poems celebrating the Flint Hills ranching region of Kansas. It is being distributed to 26 newspapers. Each column links to the songs' recording on her Tallgrass Express String Band website.

...**Jim and Bobbi Jean Bell**, hosts of LA Talk Radio's weekly broadcast *Rendezvous With A Writer*, celebrated the show's first anniversary in August. Unlike other author interview shows, Jim and Bobbi read each guest's book and chat live with the author about the book and the creative process. **Henry Parke**, film editor for *True West* magazine, joins them the first Thursday of every month. **Tom Swearingen** is a frequent guest host. Airs on LA Talk Radio's Facebook page Thursdays at 6pm (PST). Applications for 2024 appearances now accepted! Contact Bobbi Jean at bobbijeanbell@gmail.com for more information.

...“Pioneering Women Who Filmed the West”, a story written by **Micki Fuhrman**, was given the 2023 Stirrup Award for best article in the Western Writers of America's *Roundup* magazine. The same story has been named a finalist for the Downing Journalism Award by Women Writing the West, an organization that recognizes western-themed nonfiction articles or essays published in a commercial or literary North American publication. The winner will be announced during a virtual ceremony in October. 🐾



Chapter Update

ARIZONA CHAPTER

President: Gary Kirkman
eskirkman@hotmail.com

The Arizona chapter had a very successful June 17 meeting and jam session with over 30 in attendance. It was held in the Arts Center in Show Low. Thanks to IWMA members Mike Dunn, Mountain Saddle Band, Sherry Walker, John Poulsen, Dan McCorison and Ashley Westcott for their stellar performances. (Forgive me if I left anyone out.) Also, many thanks to all others who attended. Many of our members performed at the Arizona Cowboy Poets Gathering in Prescott, AZ August 10,11,12. It was good to see everyone. Our next meeting and jam session will be in Prescott on Oct.21 with details to follow. We have a great chapter with new members joining regularly.

BLACK HILLS AND BEYOND CHAPTER

President: Brad Exton
ramblinrangers@yahoo.com

It's been a very busy summer season in the northern tier for many of the BH&B Chapter members. Gatherings, museums, state parks, podcasts, history events, and showcases have reaped the benefits from many of our members. It appears that fall will continue to be that busy too.

Greg Hager has been extremely busy with a full performance schedule, along with working on the launch of his tenth CD, "Ain't

God Good". Greg has also finalized plans for his 5th tour in Japan, planned for 2024.

Almeda Bradshaw and husband Merritt have spent much of the summer remodeling the M2B Bunkhouse, but she found enough time to perform in a Chapter Showcase in South Dakota, house concerts in Montana, and then touring North and South Dakota, performing her multimedia program, "Songs From Vintage Poets." October will find her presenting her curriculum concept "Western Music As A Means" to teachers at the MFPE Educator Conference, in addition to performing at the N.I.L.E. (Northern International Livestock Exposition).

Ben Alexander and Hannah Seek continue to bring western enjoyment to the many guests staying at the Rawah Guest Ranch, next to the Rawah Wilderness Area. It doesn't get much better than playing around a crackling campfire with the stars and the Milky Way as a backdrop. Everyone involved takes some unforgettable memories home with them.

Allen and Jill Kirkham have regrettably had to cancel their entire 2023 supper show season due to Allen's unfortunate motorcycle accident and the subsequent surgeries. Allen has been working hard on his physical therapy, which also includes playing Jill one song a day on his guitar. Good luck, Allen. We hope to see you back playing soon.

Kimberly Kaye Bachman has decided to retire from active performing and pursue her writing and spending more time with her family. We may still see her at some jams, after she completes her

scheduled performances for this year. We wish her the best of luck in the future. She will be missed by the Chapter.

New member, RubyAnn Stiegelmeier from North Dakota, has been involved in both musical performances, but also story telling events. We welcome RubyAnn to the BH&B Chapter.

Pegie Douglas is performing her program, "Life and Music of Badger Clark" at numerous locations, including the South Dakota Hall of Fame, Custer State Park, and the SD Festival of Books. We also want to congratulate Pegie for her nomination to be inducted into the Dakota Legends Hall of Fame. Way to go, Pegie!



Tami Hughson, Sherl Cederburg and the Saddle Tramps (Paula and Terry Rekow) after a performance in Belle Fourche, SD.

Sherl Cederburg is logging in the miles, performing her poetry at various events in Kansas, Colorado, South Dakota, and Montana. She is thankful for all of these opportunities and the chance to perform with other IWMA members.

The Ramblin' Rangers continue their busy schedule of performances in venues in Montana, Wyoming, South Dakota, Nebraska, Colorado, and Texas. The miles keep piling up on their truck and camper. The

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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

Transitions. They show up as we go along. They are mile markers of a kind, and many we tend to not want to see.

This summer Rex Allen, Jr. released his final album. He's made that pretty much definite and non-retractable, entitling the collection "For The Last Time." Those of us who were in attendance at the IWMA's 2019 celebration in Albuquerque were privileged to witness his final stage concert (plus-one, counting his dad's 100th birthday tribute held in 2021 delayed by the 2020 shutdown)! The new album is made up of particular songs that he says inspired him along the way. Fifteen tracks including creations of Bob Dylan ("To Make You Feel My Love"), Paul Simon ("Homeward Bound"), Jimmy Buffett ("Come Monday"), Jackson Browne ("The Pretender") and three from McCartney & Lennon ("Help," "Please Please Me" & "In My Life"). He chose to close it out with that one. The notes also include what may be the most complete song crediting yet attempted by humankind, including formalized songwriter credits: "Paul James McCartney," "Robert Dylan," "Robert John Reginald Greenaway" for example! For the European fans, he re-recorded "Together Again." And he tackles surprising stuff, like Trent (9 Inch Nails) Reznor's "Hurt." The mix on the accompaniment of various other CD songs is interesting, tonally a dreamy purr that seems to reach out from another place.

The threads of Rex Jr.'s and my Western lives have intertwined in unusual ways. He was inspired to write his famous song "Can You Hear Those Pioneers" after hearing an all-night DJ comment that "they should put Western back in the Country sound." Little did I dream back in 1976, as I sat hosting my own all-night Albuquerque radio show on KDEF-1150 AM playing Rex Jr.'s soon-to-be hit, that I would eventually lay-in atmospheric Foley sound effects for his all-night Range Radio show (pouring coffee, boots on gravel walking out into the Western night, opening the barn door



to check on the nickering horses and the like)! Rex began performing Western partly to carry on the legacy of his famous dad. Western Music entered my life when his dad's friend and frequent bandleader, the future IWMA Hall of Famer Hi Busse, entered my commercial recording studio one day in 1983 seeking help in promoting the genre. Stories he told over the ensuing 15 years included his time spent with Rex Allen. Hi led the band onstage and

lent a hand backstage, helping to "babysit" Chico, the young Rex Jr., just as he did for Tex Ritter and his future comic actor son John. It made Hi particularly proud that he and his Frontiersmen & Joanie premiered the first live performance of "Can You Hear Those Pioneers" with Rex Jr.!

I've been recalling chats with Rex on various porches and verandas. Often as not they came while I was taking a break and he was having a cigarette. Sometimes we talked about dreams and how they collide with realities. At various times we each were enthusiastic over major opportunities we had separately set up designed to benefit the cause of Western music and, by extension, the IWMA. Opportunities we believed were on the road to being a lock. Both of us were undermined by internal disruptive sources in those futile efforts. A litany of bankers who blew it, lawyers who blew it, partners who blew it, advisors who...you get the pattern. Somehow we've kept at it. He as President of and participant in the Western-friendly internationally heard format TruckersRadioUSA and me through my writings and reviews to honor my promise to Hi Busse. But a nagging thought showed up with this CD release. To me it's significant that Rex Jr.'s recorded "final bow" contains no Western. The album is memorable and wistfully meaningful on several levels. Those who look between layers may find a subtle resignation in the proceedings. Things are as they are and...barring a miracle...are destined to remain that way. 🐾

Chapter Update

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Montana Cowboy Gathering was especially rewarding this year because IWMA had a table in the vendor/CD sales area. Marsha Short and Diana Raven did a great job of getting the word out to both the entertainers and also to all the folks attending the gathering.

Well, the next big event on the calendar is the "IWMA Convention in November. BH&B will have a table there, so please stop by and find out more about our new Chapter (how about becoming a member too). See you there.

COLORADO CHAPTER

President: Sonja Oliver
psalmgarden@icloud.com

The 2023 IWMA Colorado Talent Roundup winners were: In 1st Place, \$150.00 + trophy buckle—Yampa Valley Steve (Steamboat Springs, CO) vocals w/guitar; in 2nd Place, \$100.00 – Vic Anderson (Estes Park, CO) vocals w/guitar; and in 3rd Place, \$50.00 – Beverly Russell (Redwing, CO) instrumental (saw). The contest



IWMA-CO Talent Roundup Contestants, Judges and Volunteers.



IWMA-CO Talent Roundup Contestants



Steve Jones 1st Place Winner.



Beverly Gray Russell (3rd Place Winner), Vic Anderson (2nd Place Winner), Steve Jones (1st Place Winner).

had 13 contestants with 6 being members of the IWMA-CO Chapter. The Florissant Grange audience was filled up to capacity. The contest even brought in a new Chapter Member! Welcome, Les Thompson!

There was one more Showcase at the Florissant Grange on Sunday, September 10, featuring "The Russellers" (Dennis & Bev, Redwing, CO), "Quickdraw" (Dennis Knill, Lamar, CO), Sherl Cederburg (Hot Springs, SD), and Sonja Oliver (Cripple Creek, CO).

A Business Member of the IWMA-CO is the Durango Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Dates were September 28 – October 1. Our members performing this year included: RW Hampton, Floyd Beard, Jon Chandler, Yampa Valley Steve, Jo Lynne Kirkwood, Dennis Knill, Lindy Simmons, The Timberline Cowboys, and Scott Tonelson. www.durangocowboygathering.org Another Business Member of the IWMA-CO is the Western Slope Cowboy Gathering. The dates are November 3 – November 4. Chapter Members performing this year are The Russellers, Paul

Larson, Dale Page, Terry Nash, Floyd Beard, Valerie Beard, Peggy Malone, and Susie Knight. westernslopecowboygathering.com Business Member, Colorado Cowboy Gathering, hosts their event January 11-14, 2024. Members performing this year are Miss Devon & The Outlaw, Dale Page, Vic Anderson, Duane Nelson, Jeneve Rose Mitchell, Lindy Simmons, Paul Larson, Sherl Cederburg, and Yampa Valley Steve. coloradocowboygathering.org

COLUMBIA CHAPTER

President: Tom Swearingen
tomswearingen@gmail.com

An August ranch concert near Moscow, ID benefiting the Columbia Chapter's youth program featured chapter members Venessa Carpenter, Bodie Dominguez, Tom Swearingen, Joni Harms, and guest poet Jerry Laskoty. Columbia Chapter members Duane Nelson, Ed Wahl, Mike Dygert, Kathy Moss, Barbara Nelson, Veronica Manis, Joe McCutcheon, Thomas Fitzgerald, Dale Rollins, Ned Bodie, Larry Wilder, Sam Mattise, Ted Hunt, and



3rd Annual Columbia Chapter Youth Cowboy Poetry Contest.



Venessa Carpenter

Continued on page 24

Congratulations to the IWMA 2023 Songwriting Contest Winners

COWBOY/WESTERN CATEGORY

1ST PLACE: Tecia McKenna

New Someday

2ND PLACE: John Lowell

Old Pard

GOSPEL CATEGORY:

1ST PLACE: Aspen Black

What If There's a Heaven

2ND PLACE: Devon Dawson

Teresa Burleson

Belinda Gail

Cleanin' Out My Stable

You will hear these songs performed
at the 2023 IWMA Convention in
Albuquerque, November 8 – 12.

Barbara Nelson



*"A new collection of songs
that are my personal favorites."*

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nnelson@wtechlink.us | barbaranelsonmusic.com



*"Thank you for this award.
I accept it, not simply for
myself, but also for the cast
and crew who enabled the
screenplay to come to life.
This award puts us in
association with the name
of Will Rogers, which is
a signal honor, given his
history in the entertainment
field and his contribution to
the history of the West."*

Walter Hill, Will Rogers Gold Medallion
Award Winning Screenwriter
of the Film *Dead for a Dollar*

Now accepting entries for the 2024 Will Rogers Medallion Awards

View guidelines and
submission deadlines at
www.willrogersmedallionaward.net

Chapter Update

Continued from page 22

Tom Swearingen took to the stage in matinee and evening shows at The Granada Theater in The Dalles, OR in September. Duane Nelson and Kathy Moss will MC the Lakeview, OR Cowboy Gathering in October featuring Dave Stamey, Joni Harms, and Tom Swearingen. Winners of the chapter's 2023 youth cowboy poetry contest will be announced



Joni Harms and Tom Swearingen



Tom Swearingen, Joni Harms, Bodie Dominguez, Venessa Carpenter, Jerry Laskody.

soon with custom trophy buckles and cash going to grade level champions. The winners will also be invited to perform their works at upcoming chapter concerts. The contest will take place in 2024 also, and welcomes entries from 3-12 grade students in OR, WA, ID, and BC, with full details and online entry at iwmacolumbia.org. With chapter members in several NW states and provinces (plus



Bodie Dominguez

more far afield locations) we look forward to scheduling other regional opportunities for our members to socialize and perform live.

EAST COAST CHAPTER

President: Aspen Black

Aspenblackcowgirl.com

IWMAEC Chapter President, Aspen Black, and IWMAECC Vice-President, Kerry Grombacher, performed a special invitational concert for the IWMANM Chapter

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Make plans to attend the **WWA CONVENTION**

June 19-24, 2024 | Tulsa, Oklahoma

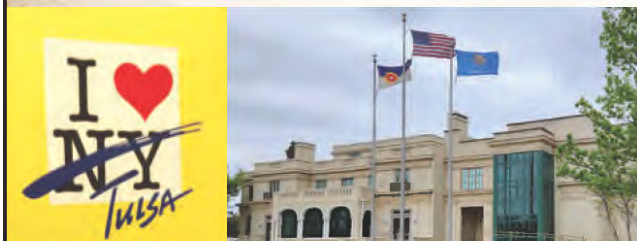
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Western Writers of America was founded in 1953 to promote the literature of the American West and bestow Spur Awards for distinguished writing in the Western field.

Today, WWA has more than 700 members worldwide – writers and editors of fiction, nonfiction, songs, poems and screenplays.



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STORIES AND TALL TALES

BY VICTOR T. ANDERSON

SKUNKED

When my family moved to the 160 acres on the edge of White Sulphur Springs, one of my jobs was to keep the skunk population down. We hadn't seen a skunk for quite a while. Until one day when up in the hayloft, I looked down and saw a skunk eating an egg. I ran inside for the rifle and started my hunt.

It wasn't in the barn, not in the pig pen nor the chicken coop. While sneaking around, I saw it run into the end of a 20 foot very bent culvert in the barnyard. "Ah ha," I said to myself as I started toward the skunks hiding place. I got to the culvert and realized I couldn't use the rifle. Shooting from one end put neighboring homes directly in the line of sight. From the other end, our house was in danger.

My folks gave me a bow and arrow for Christmas when I was eight and after making a lucky shot and harvesting a pigeon in flight, I felt like I was pretty accurate with a bow. My friends and I cooked and ate the pigeon. It was terrible, awfully tough and tasted awful, even discounting the ash. My first arrow wounded the skunk. He sprayed. If I looked in to take a shot from one end of the culvert, he moved to the other side of the bend. When I moved to the other end, it moved again. Soon, all my arrows were lying in the culvert. The skunk was still wounded, and I had a problem. It is and has always been a basic rule that you don't let any animal suffer.

I didn't know what to do. I called my friend Ken. He came right over and gave me the same lecture about not causing an animal any suffering. We banged on the culvert hoping the skunk would come out where we could end his suffering. It didn't work. We found some very long and very thin trimmings from some boards. We found a gunny sack and tied it to one end. We located a jug of kerosene and soaked the gunny sack with it. Ken moved to the other end of the culvert so he could see where the skunk would run to after I chased it out with the flaming torch.

I looked in to see where the skunk was located and realized all the skunk spray had formed a thick fog inside the culvert...

I lit the gunny sack..... Did you know that skunk spray aerosol is explosive? WWWHHHMMMPP. Flame shot out of the culvert..... both ends. Startled, I kicked over the kerosene jug and fire started on the ground by my feet. My pants were lit. I sat up and rubbed the flame out. Which caught my hair afire. Ken came over and helped me slap the fire in my hair out. We looked in and found the skunk had died in the explosion. Ken threw dirt on the still flaming gunny sack. He said; "that sounded like a jet taking off."

Just as my Dad drove in through the gate.

RIDE EASY PARDS.....Vic

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

In Memoriam

LESLIE "LES" THEODORE BUFFHAM (1942 – 2023)



Leslie "Les" Theodore Buffham unexpectedly passed away on June 15, 2023, at his home in Sierra Vista, Arizona. He was 80 years old.

Les was born on October 9, 1942, in Craig, Colorado to Reginald Theodore and Laura Floy (Walker) Buffham. Les was

lovingly called "Butch" by his older siblings, Alberta Lucille Pearce, Georgia "Gabby" McIntyre, Ruby Floy Burdick, and younger brother Patrick Hal Buffham.

The Buffham family grew up on the Western slope of Colorado from Maybell to Montrose, herding cattle, homesteading, living, and learning the traditional cowboy ways. Les served in the Army and trained as an X-ray technician. Upon discharge, Les went to auctioneer school in Laurel, Montana, a building block of the many talents we would later benefit from. He then became a welder who provided training to misguided youth via a job core program, a job he loved. Les drove truck from Colorado to California between ranching jobs. He met and married Phyllis Rozalie Kalland and they had three children, Brandt C. Buffham, Raquel Anne Buffham, and Cody Lin Buffham. Les and Phyllis settled back in Montrose, Colorado, and continued the tradition of the cowboy ways.

Throughout his life, Les's true passion was storytelling, writing his first poem at the young age of 13. It seems he was born with a story in his heart that he had to tell and he used songs and poetry as a way to entertain others. The accolades are too many to mention, ultimately being inducted into the Western Music Hall of Fame in 2021. Les lived his life with a faithful heart, with his priorities being God, Family, and the Cowboy way.

Les was preceded in death by his parents, sisters, "Ruby" and Pat, and is lovingly survived, by his sisters, "Gabby" (Sam) and Lucy, his son Brandt (Debbie), daughter Raquel, and youngest son Cody (Ilene), grandchildren Laurel (Broady), Amy (Kyle), Scott, Sarah (Kyle), Skyler and great-grandchildren Sophia, Ella Jane, Rhaenyra and many other nieces, nephews and friends he called family. His loving spirit, kind nature, and infectious laugh are greatly missed. Rest in Peace Butch. We love you.

ROGER L. RINGER (1955 – 2023)



Roger L. Ringer, 68, passed away Sunday, July 9, 2023 at Via Christi St. Francis in Wichita. He was born on March 29, 1955 in Wichita to Ronald L. and Charlotte (Becker) Ringer.

Roger graduated from Goddard High School in 1973. He worked as a firefighter for Sedgwick County Fire Department. He was a member of Holy Rosary Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus 2224 in Sharon, Life Sponsor of Ducks Unlimited, Kansas Chapter of IWMA, Cowboy Storytellers Association of the Western Plains and Kansas Authors. He enjoyed farming, ranching, welding, heavy equipment operation, township maintenance, firefighting, emergency medical technician services, being a commissioned deputy sheriff, being a private detective, township trustee, poet, vocalist, freelance writing of "View From The Hill" for the Gyp Hill Premiere, Pratt Tribune and Rural Messenger, retail business owner and hunting and fishing with family and friends.

He is survived by his mother, Charlotte (Becker) Ringer; brother, Rodney L Ringer both of Medicine Lodge; uncle, Charles Becker of Wichita; aunts, Gladys Kerschen of Wellington and Shirley Hoppock of Salina; cousins, Carla (Joe) Whaley, Cheryl (Mark) Bethel, Kurt (Brandi) Kerschen, Sheila (Bill) Roepke, Mark Davis, Marilyn (Ralph) Snook, Royce (Penny) Elliott, Jill (Jeff) Foster, Sue Miller, Mike (Polly) Hoppock and Doug (Nancy) Hoppock; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Roger is preceded in death by his father, Ronald Lloyd Ringer.

RUSTY RICHARDS (1933 – 2023)



IWMA Hall of Fame Member Rusty Richards passed away August 5 from health complications. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Amy, four children,

eight grandchildren, and six great grandchildren. You can read more about the life of this music legend in the archived **Western Way Fall 2019** issue by visiting the IWMA website, iwesternmusic.org, where Rusty was featured. He will be missed by the western music world but his legacy lives on.

Chapter Update

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Kerry and Aspen with David Nidel. Photo courtesy of Pete Lee.

in July as part of their mid-summer tour in NM and CO. Now in their ninth year as working as duo, they presented original story songs of the west, from outlaws and historical figures to the joys and struggles of modern-day working cowboys, cowgirls, and western-dwellers. Kerry and Aspen's fall tours, both solo and together, include dates in Washington, Oregon, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, New Mexico, Nebraska, and Missouri.

KANSAS CHAPTER President: Orin Friesen orin@rbanjoranch.com

The city of Andover, Kansas will soon be home to a 100-acre master-planned community, called The Heritage, that will feature residential neighborhoods and engaging commercial development. A six-story resort-style apartment building is currently under construction.



The Heritage 2023

On September 28, a western themed event will showcase The Heritage to the public. The first of what is planned to be an annual event will feature IWMA cowboy poets, Ron Wilson and Scott

Wiswell, plus music by the Diamond W Wranglers. Group members include IWMA Kansas Chapter president, Orin Friesen, his son, Jesse, and Stu Stuart. Event planner, Sharon VanHorn, is shown near the center of the photo. Orin Friesen is right behind her.

Among the other Kansas events this fall that will feature IWMA performers are the Chase County Courthouse 150th Anniversary Celebration in Cottonwood Falls on October 7, and the International Chisholm Trail Association Conference in Ellsworth, October 19-22.

Greetings all, from the IWMA Tennessee Chapter!!! Hoooooweee! It's been a ride!!! A jam packed summer to say the least!

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

The New Mexico Chapter continues to be very active with our Song & Poetry Corral Nights, online the first Monday of the month and live at the Hops & Dough Tap Room on the third Monday of the month. Dave Levenson does such a great

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A MUSICAL NOTE AND REVIEWS FROM O.J. SIKES

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

From Listening to Announcing – It's Always Been About the Music

Often, I'm asked how I got into radio (probably because my career, largely overseas, appeared to be so far removed from it). So I figured it might be a good topic for this issue's column. Probably, my interest started in the early 1940s. I remember, as a preschooler, putting our family radio in the front bedroom window, tuned to the local music station, so passers-by could enjoy the music I loved listening to.

For some reason, I didn't pursue that interest, unlike one of my little classmates at school, who loved to pretend on the playground that he was a sports announcer. I still remember him calling imaginary games, hands cupped over imaginary headphones. Years later, in "real life," he became the "Voice of the UNC Tarheels," i.e. famous for his broadcasts of ballgames for the university teams in Chapel Hill. But I couldn't see that far into the future, and had no idea what I wanted to be. I just enjoyed listening.

Gene Autry's *Melody Ranch*, 78rpm records and music on the soundtracks of movies starring **Roy, Gene** and **Rex** surely must have had an influence on my future. And when I

first heard the **Sons of the Pioneers** "in person" in an out-of-doors concert in the Summer of 1960, I knew I had found *my* music! But that was still for fun, not something I could build a career around. Then I took a detour.

From an early age, I had been at least as interested in American Indians as I was in cowboys, and this led to university studies in Anthropology, which led to a stint in the newly-formed US Peace Corps, high in the Andes of Peru (birthplace of the Inca civilization). That experience (observing first-hand the need for health education) led me back to school for a degree in Health Behavior. My first opportunity to work in this field led to the development of new approaches to education about population change and reproductive health. And with rapid population growth threatening development around the world at the time, the UN was looking for new ways to deal with the issue. Work experience in Peru and NC, plus the newly acquired ability to speak Spanish, led me to a job with the UN, first with UNESCO in Paris, and then with UNFPA, based in NY,

working in some 55 countries, for over 40 fascinating years.

While my family and I were living in Paris in the early '70s, a college roommate wrote to say that he had been on a trail ride with **Rusty Richards** and, with his letter, he sent me a copy of the Griffis book on the **Sons of the Pioneers**. Somehow, **Ken Griffis** learned that I had a copy of his book, and we started to correspond, and he did the same with other readers. When the Walkman was invented, I could listen to my Western music collection on the commuter bus and on long flights, and as correspondence with Griffis and others who shared our interest continued, I learned that **Riders in the Sky** had been formed, the **Reinsmen** were recording new material, and companies were re-issuing classic Western recordings. Western Film Fairs were being held to celebrate the old movies, and movie magazines were being published with behind-the-scenes accounts, etc., but few readers seemed to know what was happening to Western music. So I volunteered to review Western

music releases in exchange for a copy of the magazine that published the reviews. It was, after all, a hobby – and it still is.

One of the movie magazines that published my reviews was *Western Clippings*, and one of the contributors to that magazine was **Will Hutchins**, the star of the *Sugarfoot* tv series. In 2001, I reached the UN's mandatory retirement age and I had no idea what I would do next. Sitting still was not my cup of tea. But Will sent me a note suggesting that I do a radio show on a new internet radio station. I realized that I lacked experience but Will insisted.

I happened to mention Will's suggestion to a new acquaintance at a backyard get-together that weekend, and the new acquaintance turned out to be a song-writer and producer who volunteered his home studio and technical assistance if I wanted to do a demo tape. With my professional career ending in a few weeks, using this fellow's recording equipment, I made a demo tape and sent it to the station owner, who called back with an offer. He said "I like it, but more importantly, my *mother* likes it!" That was in the Summer of 2001. Early on, friend **Rick Huff**, a *real* pro, offered tips to get me started.

The show's still being carried on numerous stations around the world, e.g. KKRN.org, and the audience includes grandparents listening with grandchildren, wranglers in the bunkhouse or at their favorite «watering hole," truckers driving through the Rockies, and during the Iraq War, I heard from a squadron of older pilots who piped the show into their barracks, called themselves the Ghost Riders in the Sky and painted Western images on their aircraft. Retire? I'm having way too much fun! 🐾

REX ALLEN, JR.

"For the Last Time"

CRR-229



Rex Allen, Jr.'s love for music has not limited itself to one

genre. Early on, he reached the top of the Country charts, and with songs like "The Last of the Silver Screen Cowboys" and "Ride, Cowboy, Ride," he soon rose to the top of the Western genre as well. But, as had been the case with his famous dad, his love for music wasn't limited by categories or charts.

Rex decided, some time ago, that this would be his last album. For it, he's recorded 15 songs other artists have made popular over the years, from genres Rex enjoys, outside of those he's usually associated with. Tom T. Hall once wrote a line that goes, "I love music, when it's good," and that would certainly apply to the song selection here. Those featured here include some made famous by The Beatles, The Statler Brothers, and others you may recognize, like Paul Simon, but Rex makes them his own, and many may become your favorite versions. Available by mail order (check your favorite mail-order catalog) or online from your preferred sources.

GENE AUTRY

"The Singing Cowboy – All the Hits and More 1933-52"

(2-CD Set)

ADDCD3477



It's mind-boggling to me, to see that 90 years after his first "hit" record, Gene Autry has a new

CD. That original "hit," and several other duets with his early singing partner, Jimmy Long, are part of this new 2-CD package on the Acrobat label, along with many other great recordings from Gene's long recording career – 53 tracks in all.

The original versions of the big ones are here, and there are some rarities as well, like "Little Sir Echo," "When I'm Gone You'll Soon Forget," "Mary Dear," "Were You Sincere" and the beautiful "I'm Beginning to Care." Of course, as you might expect from "The Christmas Cowboy," the set includes 5 holiday songs, some of which can still be heard on the radio around Christmastime.

Importantly, there are tracks here that are not easy to find anymore. Because of their age and the fact that the original recording company, Columbia, didn't take steps to preserve some of the originals, audio quality may be less than optimal in some instances. But omitting them from this collection might have meant losing them forever. Check the Acrobat website (<http://acrobatmusic.net/>) or www.trapezemusic.com for a complete track list and ordering information (orders may be placed directly with the company, or the website may be able to help you find a local source).

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**UNCLE JIMMY THOMSON,
UNCLE ECK DUNFORD,
UNCLE DAVE MACON, ETC.**
"Country Music Uncles"

BACMCDD702



There was a time, long ago, when the term "Uncle" was applied to many of the early

performers of Mountain Music, Hillbilly Music, Old-Tyme Country Music, or whatever it was called in your neck of the woods. That era pre-dates most of us, but those Uncles were quite popular back then, and the tracks on this CD will help the listener understand why.

I was impressed with the quality of the audio on these ancient tracks, and even today, the old-fashioned humor of some of the performers comes through as they introduce the songs. The performance dates range from 1926 to 1930, and names of performers not mentioned above include Uncle Bunt Stephens, Uncle Bud Landress and Uncle Joe Shipee, and among the 20 tracks, titles include "Left in the Dark Blues," "Old Shoes and Leggings," and "Candy Pulling at Moonshine Hollow."

Available from your usual sources for BACM product or directly from their website.

**THE DE ZURIK SISTERS,
AKA THE CACKLE SISTERS**

"78's and Transcriptions"

BACMCDD700



I don't remember where I first heard of the DeZurik Sisters, but it was probably

from Janet McBride. Janet knew so many great yodelers from the good old days, and this sister duo made a few waves back then, even though they only recorded 6 tracks (for the Vocallion label in 1938). Their fame spread via their regular appearances on WLS in Chicago, where, you will recall, Gene Autry, Patsy Montana & the Prairie Ramblers, Rex Allen and others earned national recognition. They also sang regularly on Purina Mills' Checkerboard Time, which was where they were given the name, "The Cackle Sisters." That name came about due to their frequent bird and chicken imitations when they yodeled. It was quite a novelty, and it caught on with audiences.

One of the sisters married Rusty Gill, a popular soloist with the Prairie Ramblers, and the act continued, changing configurations in 1949 as they moved from WLS to Cincinnati. The sisters' six commercial sides are the first tracks on this CD, and the remainder of the tracks come from radio transcriptions. Detailed liner notes were prepared by DJ and noted music historian, Paul Hazell.

Available from the British Archive of Country Music website, or from your regular source.

RIDERS IN THE SKY

"Throw a Saddle on a Star"

RRR1005



Taking the title from Any Parker's beautiful composition, Riders in the Sky have released their

"forty-somethingth" album, and it's a real winner! Three of Ranger Doug's recent compositions are here, and, while all are very enjoyable, two really knocked me out! One, "Golden Lockets," is a powerful ballad about the time when the blue-coats rode West to battle the native tribes, with the composer taking the story from the pages of history books and presenting it through the eyes of young folks who experienced this tragic chapter in history. The second, "The Shelter of the Wildwood," is an upbeat tune you'll love at first listening. And yodel fans will be delighted with the album's opener, "The Happy Yodeler."

Two Slim is featured on three excellent entries, but my favorite is "Old Rivers." In my view, Slim's reading of this classic is more appealing than the original! And that's saying quite a bit!

Woody Paul's new instrumental, "Getaway Gallop" is probably the best new instrumental - of any kind - I've heard in years! And Joey Miskulin, whose production of the album should win an award, excels as accordion soloist on Woody's piece. Joey also delivers a beautiful vocal on "The Colorado Trail." Great solos, great harmony, great song selection. Be sure to buy a copy of this one! Contact Ridersinthesky.com

**VARIOUS (TEX WILLIAMS,
JOHNNY BOND, SHORTY
LONG, TEXAS JIM
ROBERTSON, LES
ANDERSON, REED
STEWART, KARL & HARTY,
GRANDPA JONES, CECIL
CAMPBELL, ETC.)**

"Love 'Em Country Style"

BACMCDD704



This new release of vintage material, recorded between 1938 and 1954, focusses on

country rather than Western music. But, as you can see from the partial list of contributors, quite a bit of it features Western and Western swing performers. Some names may be more familiar than others. For example, the mid-western duo, Karl & Harty, were extremely popular as radio performers, composers and on record, with several originals that became "classics" and some that were "covers" of songs made famous by others. Les Anderson was Bob Wills' steel guitarist for a time, before going out on his own. Steel guitarist Cecil Campbell and his band appeared in movies with Gene Autry and Tex Ritter. Redd Stewart was a prominent member of Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys and co-composer of "Tennessee Waltz."

The songs here are not exactly love ballads. Instead, along with a little Western swing and old country tunes, there are plenty of novelties, perhaps out-of-date in today's environment, but many listeners will still find them amusing. And the audio quality is quite good. Available from your usual sources or online from country-music-archive.com. 🐾

Chapter Update

Continued from page 27

job of organizing these monthly events. Additionally, we have scheduled other wonderful events. July was a great month for Western music and spoken word events. Following our monthly membership meeting, Kerry Grombacher and Aspen Black performed a chapter sponsored House Concert. They did an excellent job and were very well received. We hosted a fantastic memorable Day of the Cowboy event [See From the Trail in this issue]! In August, many of our chapter members took part in the Prescott Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Taking the stage included Kacey and Jenna Thunborg, The Russellers, The Cowboy Way, as well as Floyd and Valerie Beard. Shifting focus to Fall and Winter events, our Western Heritage Shows are taking Center Stage - one at the NM State Fair September 14, another October 21, in Old Town Plaza. Our lineup for the NM State Fair featured Poets Jack George and Linda Simmons and Musicians Don Crowder with The Tumbleweeds, The Peralta Playboys (Tony Duarte & Chuck Roberts), Friends Forever (Michael & Donna Coy), Independence Creek (Louis Blackwell & Sally Wisely), The Russellers (Dennis & Beverly Russell), and Carol Markstrom. For our 2nd year Reese Janca was our Master of Ceremonies as well as organized the live video recording and streaming of our NM State Fair Event. We are looking forward to this year's International Convention, including hosting the pre-convention reception at the Best Western-Rio Grande Hotel on November 7 and the NM Chapter after hours Jam nights. The city of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture has blacked out the dates of the convention to allow only our artists to perform in Old Town. This includes all the designated merchant

patio areas and the gazebo in Old Town Plaza. We are also working on obtaining additional indoor venues in Old Town as well as those in the Sawmill District just a few blocks East of Hotel Albuquerque. Please contact Betty Jo Carter at bettymaes@hotmail.com for more details and scheduling your performance during the convention week. Last but not least, in December, we are excited to welcome Buffalo Boycott and Dr. Jo in a special Christmas Concert on December 21, at the South Broadway Cultural Center in Albuquerque. I want to thank Tony Duarte and Chuck Roberts for their help on the Entertainment Committee.

OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

President: Robert Maxwell Case
robert@robertmaxwellcase.com

We are sad to announce that Donnie Poindexter has resigned as vice president as of January 1, 2024. It's hard to imagine a member of the IWMA who embodies more of the aims of our organization than Donnie. We wish him all the best in the future as he continues his endeavors in the field of western art. We understand that he will be staying on as a member, but he will be greatly missed from our board. Oklahoma City's National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum celebrated the 2023 Day of the Cowboy with an appearance by the all-star Flying T Wranglers (Bob & Johnie Terry, Curtis Krigbaum, Miss Devon & The Outlaw, Harmonica



Donnie Poindexter

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To submit items for review, send to: Rick Huff, P.O. Box 8442, Albuquerque, NM 87198-8442. Include: Album cost, S&H cost, Address, Phone Number. We also recommend you furnish a land source (Address or PO Box) as well as Online sources for obtaining product. 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.

MIKE BLAKELY

"Gemstone"



Singer/songwriter/novelist Mike Blakely asserts there is only one "Western" track on this

release. I say much of it is done from a cowboy perspective, so in my book that qualifies! But you judge!

In addition to its galloping mythic West tempo, in Blakely's song "The Twist" (written with Richard Dobson & Damon Rogers) the protagonist sings "my aim was true but somehow I missed." In another song "Mother Nature Father Time" (written with and featuring Annie Blakely), lots of outdoor (arguably Western) imagery lives... "sleep in my arms under Orion, "wake with the sunrise," "oak from an acorn, buck from a fawn." In "Rough Around The Edges" the singer says "I've been a bronco bustin' smoke jumpin' fool" who in some prior life "must've been some kind of drifter livin' by the gun or knife" but is "still howlin' at the moon" and "singing to the stars." And, oh yes, there is that "one" Western track!! A fine one called "Up On The Trail" concerning features along his and yours.

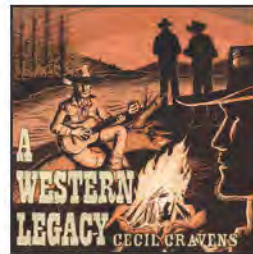
Whether he specifically intends it or not, in songwriting or novel writing Mike Blakely is a skilled Western storyteller and we are the beneficiaries. Since it's always worth giving him a listen, you'll likely like the rest of it as well! Fifteen tracks, highly recommended.

CD: Available through www.mikeblakely.com.



CECIL CRAVENS

"A Western Legacy"



Version #1 of this collection was first issued in the late 90s, according to its creator Cecil Cravens.

He sings all the parts (save for one track) and he was the fellow predominantly responsible for the full-harmony assemblage called the OK Chorale. In short, Western harmony has been a big part of his life.

In the new reissue he has trimmed back some content and fleshed-out some guitar work. It's a mix of classics and originals, including some parodies with clever lyrics. At least one of them "Has Anybody Seen My Cow"

(Gal) dates from the OK Chorale days, "Low Little Dogies" sends up "Glowworm" and he's put lyrics to "Panhandle Rag!!" Other picks among the originals include "Pushin' Horns To Kansas," "One More Day," "Sing Me A Story" (w/Christy Little's harmony work) and the yodel-inspired "She's A Lady Too." As cover picks we'll name "Hold That Critter Down," "Running Gun," "Prairie Echoes," "Blue Prairie" and "Ridin' Home."

All considered this is a big, mellow ride with a Western sound that isn't heard as often these days as it once was. You might consider signing on! Twenty tracks, highly recommended.

CD: Contact Cecil Cravens through cecilcravens@yahoo.com.



ERIC DIAMOND

"All of Me"



Premiered on KSSL in Lubbock, this one has gone on to worldwide airplay. And why not?

Sweet combo Western Swing will find its audience, and its audience will be happily on its feet!

Eric Diamond is a seasoned swing vocalist with a list of credentials dating back into the last century. They include playing the Bob Wills Fest in Turkey, Texas. Not just anyone can (or should) claim that! As a vocalist he brings that classic swooping grit most find very genuine and roadhouse reminiscent. The single released from Diamond's newest CD is "Strike That Match." Okay, "Diamond" and "Match." Coincidence??? I think not! Other picks include covers of "Oklahoma Bound," "'I've Got A New Heartache," "I Don't Care If The Sun Don't Shine" and "Lt's Chase Each Other 'Round The Room Tonight."

The demo album was furnished with no performance or production credits. I would have happily singled out the musicians here as they did an exemplary job. Regardless, it's highly recommended. Twelve tracks total.



DOUG FIGGS

"One More Ride"



Doug Figgs' aptly named song "One More Ride" serves to descriptively host eleven

previously recorded fan favorites in shiny new covers. His subjects come from personal experience and personal knowledge making for guaranteed authenticity.

Much-awarded as a solo performer and as one-third of The Cowboy Way, Figgs is a working farrier and cowboy who has spent a life at gut level with the trade. He crafts strong songs. In fact I believe he is the only Western songwriter to have received three awards from three separate organizations

for three different songs in one year, netting him a fourth award for the accomplishment: (I)WMA Songwriter of the Year! Those songs ("Socios" co-written w/Ethan Smith, "Charlie & Evangeline" co-written w/Todd Carter and "Running With The Wind" co-written w/bandmate Mariam Funke) are present here. Nominated songs "Alchesay" and "Old New Mexico Moon" made the cut as did some nice treats, like "Ten Below Zero" with Trintiy Seely (vocals) and the legend Charlie McCoy (harmonica)! Just two of the stellar crew assembled by CD producer Butch Hause.

Obviously there is much to recommend, so we'll recommend it "much!" Very highly, in fact! Eleven tracks, fully annotated.

CD: Available through
dougfiggsmusic.com.



MARY KAYE

"Frontier"



Actually recorded in 2020 but released later, in our reviewing process this one got

missed. It shouldn't be missed here or anywhere else! In this one Mary Kaye's voice and songwriting chops are strong as ever, but the production values are the finishing touch.

Original picks include the title track "Frontier" with Mark Stephenson's appropriately majestic (if electronic) orchestration, a nudge-nudge wink-wink Gypsy mystical treatment of "The Star" (the club under the bright red neon one in Elko!), a co-write with Ellen Walker "We Dream Of Horses," the gutty

"A Horse Called Freedom," the up swinger "Scenic Highway" and the sweet personal commitment song "The Ride." All three covers are picks due to treatments that give the old warhorses a new kick: "Roundup In The Spring," "Cielito Lindo" and S. Omar Barker's "Tall Men Riding" done as a duet with daughter Millie Kaye.

Musically Mary Kaye has the seasoned instinct of knowing when to go big, when to go acoustic, when to be expansive and when to bring it down to a gentle coo in the ear. All of it is here. Twelve tracks, very highly recommended.

NOTE: Be careful in seeking out this artist online or you'll get forever lost in cosmetic country!

CD: Available through
MaryKayeHolt.com.



BARBARA NELSON

"Pick Of The Litter"



For her eleventh release the snazzy, Jazzy Ms. Nelson has lifted "The Pick Of The Litter"

from her first ten but, of course, there's not a dog among them. ' Could NOT resist that one!

While Nelson's smooth, Big Band style of delivery is always enjoyable, these particular songs are among her favorites to perform. One suspects that adds a certain extra twinkle to her enthusiasm. If you have somehow missed getting with the program regarding this artist, here's your Whitman's Sampler of the best. Western Swing, Jazz and 'Torchy' Blues are her principle focus which allows for some outright Western to be present as well.

RICK HUFF'S REVIEWS

Continued from page 33

"Miles and Miles of Texas," "The Gift," "Colorado Trail," "They Call The Wind Mariah," "Cow Cow Boogie" and "Along The Santa Fe Trail" nestle in comfortably with standards like "Crazy," "Moon River," "Georgia" and eight others.

For older folks there is sweet nostalgia. For the younger set there is surprising discovery. You can rightly assume that assessment means I'm going to highly recommend it! Fifteen tracks total.

CD: \$15 + \$3 s/h from Barbara Nelson, 72521 Tutuilla Creek Rd., Pendleton, OR 97801, through barbaranelsonmusic.com and cdbaby.com



MYRA PEARCE

"The Ghosts Of Yellowstone"



CD co-producer Royal Wade Kimes seems to remain dedicated to having a Western

presence in his projects. This one for the talented singer Myra Pearce is no exception. From the content to the classic cover art images, much of the release shows Cowboy & Indian roots.

Pearce is a particularly flexible artist, full well able to handle the sass of Dolly or Reba and the heartfelt depth and wail of Tammy or Trisha. She is shown to good advantage in songs like "The Journey" ("father of the wilderness...angel of the free...I need to hear your healing voice whispering through the trees"), the

Country-funk title track "Ghosts of Yellowstone" wherein Red Star and Buffalo Bill return nightly to haunt the lobby of the Irma Hotel and "I've Got Montana" with its deep surprise reveal. Western Swing is present, and even in some of the straight Country songs a bit of Western rides in ("Goodbye, Adios" and "Oops There Goes Another Man," where one of the guys "had a Porsche and a cuttin' horse")!

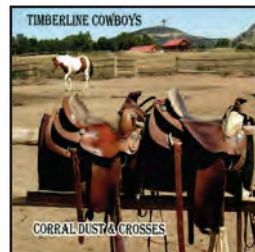
The contemporary arrangements are inspired and full. Curiously there are no composer credits, but one suspects at least a couple of these are Kimes creations. If this release gets the proper placement and distribution for visibility, there is no earthly reason it shouldn't score well on Indy charts in particular. Ten tracks, very highly recommended.

CD: Google by artist.



TIMBERLINE COWBOYS

"Corral Dust & Crosses"



Barely two years old, this team has just issued its second album! The Timberline Cowboys

consist of songwriter/vocalist/lead & rhythm guitarist J. Michael Mullins and rhythm/lead & bass guitarist Geary Parsons. The songs from this duo basically ride familiar terrain of cowboy lore, romance and doings, but it's an honest presentation you get and their sound "fills the frame," as they say. They have guested on the Bar D Chuckwagon stage in their home court of Durango, so the stamp of authenticity has been applied!

Pick tracks include "Back With You Again," one cowboy's last push north "Drivin' This Herd To The Rail," "Black Lizard Boots" (will surely give the cowboy a chance with the girl), the novelty portrait "Old Cowhand's Waltz," "The Lesson" (passed from generation to generation) and a goofy little novelty called "Writers' Block" (yes you can write a cowboy song about nothing in particular)!

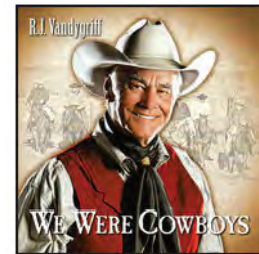
While I'm not not sold on the vocal coupling/filtering used on some of the tracks, still Mullins' delivery is melodic and honest. Fans of a more traditional kind of Western material and presentation should be satisfied with the newest release from these Colorado musicians. Twelve tracks, recommended.

CD: Available through thetimberlinecowboys.com.



R. J. VANDYGRIFF

"We Were Cowboys"



It's been a spell comin', but by gawd there's a new one in from R. J. Vandygriff!

The star of the one-

man show "The Cowboy Ain't Dead Yet," as 'Joe Cowboy' Vandygriff has entertained and spread the good Western word across the country after an onstage residency with it in Branson a ways back. Here he and twenty-five contributors to various tracks have wrangled another solid Western winner in a mix of original songs and covers. As a songwriter, R.J. understands how to mix Cowboy with universal human messages of feelings and interactions. Believe it or not, that seems to be a rare attribute.

Picks among the originals include "Montana Cowboy," "A Cowboy's

Promise," "Friend" and "Keep The Campfire a'Burnin'." From the covers we'll name Roy Robinson's modern classic "A Cowboy's Song," the title track "We Were Cowboys" by Chuck Cusimano and a particularly nice take of Alex ("Delta Dawn") Harvey & Tim Ryan Roullier's "Goodbye To Montana." It's arguably the best since Tim Ryan's initial release of it. Twelve tracks, highly recommended.

CD: Available through
cowboyaintdeadyetmusic.com.



CARLOS WASHINGTON'S STEEL HORSE SWING

"A Little Western A Little Swing"
(5-Song EP)



As anticipated, here is the five-song EP with those single releases we've seen trickling in

from this pristine band for more than a year. Carlos Washington confirms the plan was to give individual songs a fair shot at airplay, and apparently it worked well enough!

Included here are his personal assessment song "Little Bit of Western Little Bit of Swing" (in his case those "little bits" really should be "lots"), "Got to See the West" (before it's gone), Dennis Anderson & David Sexton's "One Way to Swing" (heel to toe vs. heading and heeling), "Party on Piedre Lumbre" (the critters git after it after dark) and Toy Caldwell's easy swinger "Desert Skies." Prominent guests include Ernie Martinez, Hailey Sandoz and others who nicely compliment the mellow proceedings.

The effect of Carlos Washington's Steel Horse Swing isn't that of what

you might call a "blow the roof off" show band. The members are beautifully attuned to the mission: keep 'em happy and keep 'em moving. You should find this collection works nicely in both departments. Highly recommended.

EP: Available through
steelhorseswing.com.



JOEL WHITE

"Once I Was A Cowboy"
(6-Song EP)



Despite Joel White's admission of creative embellishment, truth blows through these songs

with a whistle and grit. The lyrics of all six are wistfully ironic and deal with times past and choices made.

Joel White is a former cowboy and an accomplished vocalist/guitarist who represents his songs with style. Producer Merel Brigante knows how to issue a top product and, importantly, for whom to issue them. He has assembled a fine cadre of session players including himself (drums, percussion & background vocals); Cody Braun (fiddle, mandolin & harmonica); Michael Dorrien (acoustic, electric & baritone guitars); Mark Epstein (bass guitar); Pete Wasner (Steinway Piano, Fender Rhodes, Hammond B3 & Accordion) and Sarah Pierce (background vocals).

As picks we'll name title track "Once I Was A Cowboy" and White's co-write with Allan Chapman "The Last of the Three Sixes Cowboys," but any of this EP's six songs could be considerations for airplay. One tech note for those

looking to cover them: Song lyrics in the enclosed pamphlet don't precisely jibe with those of the finished product, but you'll figure it out! Highly recommended.

EP: Available through
joelwhitemusic.com.



HANK WILLIAMS IV

"Honky Tonk Habit"
(5-Song EP)



Jordan Stern's Lone Star Reserve Records has released an EP from Hank Williams IV (aka Ricky

Fitzgerald, HW Sr.'s great grandson) called "Honky Tonk Habit." The label's mission is the celebration of "traditional Country & Western." With that in mind, Fitzgerald's title song (produced with bar crowd effects and released as a single) includes "a cowgirl cutie feeding (him) tequila and limes" and "living out cowboy dreams" to a Western Swing beat, so there! Another 'Swinger' from this artist is drawn from Hank Sr.'s dad who once claimed he was "Workin' From Can Til Cain't!" The singer's voice does evoke elements of his Great Gramps & Gramps on those songs and the remaining ones "Wrong Side Of Town," "Leave Her Alone" and "Hank Williams' Ghost."

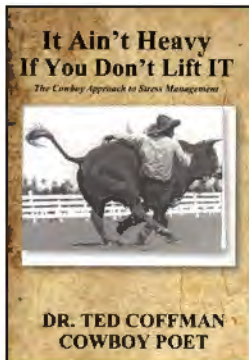
Labelmeister Stern is a talented multi-instrumentalist and singer who provides vocal harmony; rhythm, steel & lap steel guitars; electric & upright bass and drum support of Fitzgerald/Williams IV's lead vocal and guitar along with session engineer Brandon Padier (vocal harmony & lead guitar) and Richard Helsley (fiddle). Five tracks total, recommended.

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DR. TED COFFMAN

"It Ain't Heavy If You Don't Lift It"

(CD & Book ISBN 978-1-970003-9)



Well, I'm tempted to say now I've seen everything. But I wouldn't count on it!!

In this CD you have a hosted, self-help course done Cowboy Poet style. In the book from which the CD's poems are drawn, you

have the words for example, demonstration and consideration. And, it should be noted, fifty poems and essays await you there. A couple of songs are present on the CD: "Song Of The Nightherd Cowboy" from Lee Alexander and a bonus Country track from Tiffany Sevieri "My Night At Home."

Cowboy Poet & professional Success Coach Dr. Ted Coffman draws from his own cowboy experience to prove his point that "Cowboy" is not only a job, but rather a state of being. In a Western framework come object lessons and life examples that could provide answers for how to relate to and treat our fellow cowfolk. Simply, it's a molecular, cell-by-cell examination of The Cowboy Code, and it's arrived

at a time plenty of people could stand to hear it. Some religious bits waft in, but whether you buy into them or not, there are fewer "thou shalt's" than solid cowboy values shown by example. Some picks: "The Blizzard" (an old story with a new twist), "Sundae School" (about beautiful selflessness), "Stagecoach Bill" (a break-the-fourth-wall look at the poetic process), "What Kind Of Difference We'd Make (it sums it up) and I wish I had more room for this!

An additional book available ("The Crystal Star Ranch") pursues the therapy aspect more completely. Highly recommended.

CD & Book: Available through drted.trainer@gmail.com or SuccessTheCowboyWay.com. 🐾

Chapter Update

Continued from page 31

Chuck, Johnny Washboard, Norm Abbott, and Greg Burgess). Our Oklahoma chapter annual get-together was held Saturday afternoon September 16, 2023 in Rush Springs at our secretary-treasurer Danny Williams' barn. We enjoyed a spaghetti lunch along with plenty of performances by our cowboy musicians and poets as well as our usual great camaraderie and fellowship.

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

President: Gary Holt

Gih50@live.com

Greetings all, from the IWMA Tennessee Chapter!!! Hoooooweee! It's been a ride!!! A jam packed summer to say the least! We kicked off the season with "Extreme"



Musical Performances for the Mustang Heritage Foundation's EXTREME Mustang Makeover! Phoebe White, (who sang an extraordinary version of the National Anthem for the finals event,) Mary Kaye Holt, Merna Lewis and Tecia McKenna brought the West to Middle Tennessee with their brand of heartfelt tails of Cowboy and Cowgirl life infused with humor and sass!!! They were joined by

MHF's Vice Chairman and IWMA TN President Gary Holt. Mary Kaye Holt went on to put the Western Back in the Country when she visited WSM Radio, home of the Grand Ole Opry, as the featured guest on Bill Cody's COFFEE, COUNTRY & CODY! July saw "The Maiden Tour" of GONE WITH THE WEST, the all girl group



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Sampling The Singles

There may be an appetite for “the right” Western material in the Indy/Hot Country market! As an example, take the **Darrin Morris Band**’s mellow single **“God Made Me A Cowboy.”** Here we find verses that are solidly Cowboy including the subjects roping, ranching, riding the land, wide open sky, cattle, fences, and boots. Then the chorus says “I love it” but “God Made Me A Cowboy to hold a cowgirl like you all night long” fulfilling the Country prerequisite.

Premiering in June at a respectable #29 on the American Country Chart Top 100 (tracking radio airplay) was **Chaser Crouch**’s self-released Hot Country-styled **“Born To Ride.”** The Western lyrics cover a cowboy’s chase after his rodeo-competing cowgirl who drives to all sides of Texas to indulge her passion because (ready for it?) she was “born to ride!” Conversely, consider Country Rock artist **Jordan Rainer** and her romping, rowdy song **“Straight Shot.”** Other than its double entendre title, there’s not a Western image or element in sight...unless you count its video, with its old Wild West town setting and Spaghetti Western characters!! For the monitoring week of July 21st through 27th that same chart featured as its “Song Of The Week” **Ty Smith’s “Rocky Mountain Pines.”** It’s a contemporary spin on the old “forsake city life for the cowboy line shack” theme. Here it’s the peace of a high mountain cabin over frustration & pills in a “one horse town”....a Western theme in a slow Country Rock ballad. Interesting!

The Bob Marshall Band continues its grand plan of single releases with **“Wishbone Backbone.”** Broadcasters who pick it up will find a Cowboy mindset in Country clothing (“never grow a

wishbone where your backbone oughta be”). Paul Brinegar played “Wishbone” on Rawhide but that’s another story!

Actual TV Western history has shown up in the song **“Flatonia,Tx.”** from **David Paul Nowlin**, wherein he’s “wonderin’ where his ‘ex’ is” while “watchin’ Gunsmoke and laughin’ at Festus!” Oh well, it’s as reasonable a pair of rhymes with “Texas” as will likely come along, save for ‘hair done at Nexxus and driving a Lexus’)!

On his new CD “Radio Friend” **Richard Lynch**, the Country singer/songwriter who created the main title track for the film “Kim Kahana: The Man Who Changed Hollywood,” saw fit to include a nice Western Swing song called **“Glad Our Bridges Burned”** so those dancers have something to do.

The 19-year old fiddler/singer **Mackynsie McKedy** is the third member of her family to record for Clarksville Creative Sound’s Curt Ryle. One of her songs is a Honky Tonk Swinger called **“Honky Tonk In Paris.”** Cute lyrics tell us the place has “barstools made from Western saddles,” its patrons “drink champagne from Western boots” and wear “jeans and Stetsons.” Of course, ‘turns out it’s “Paris, Texas USA!” (Champagne??)

It’s not a Western song, but many Western artists include **“Amazing Grace”** in their repertoires. A most unusual new version out from growly-voiced **Doc Holiday & Darlene Luckie** sets its words to the melody of “House Of The Rising Sun!!” With huge production, a ghostly choir, wailing guitars and a snarling Hammond organ, it’s just about guaranteed to put the fear of *something* in you!! 🐾

Chapter Update

Continued from page 36



of award winning performers, comprised of IWMA TN's Tecia McKenna, Mary Kaye Holt, Micki Fuhrman and Merna Lewis! Kicking off the tour in Tennessee the girls headed West, making stops in Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, two stops in Colorado, looping around and having their final performance in Missouri. When all was "sung" and done, this group's music left audiences with visions of the Wild West, sprinkled with a little bling and a lot of lace!!! To add to the accolades of this beautiful, young, talented yodeling girl, IWMA TN's Phoebe White, also made her Grand Ole Opry debut this summer with IWMA Hall of Fame and Opry members Riders in the Sky, and was a special guest on WSM's Coffee, Country & Cody! The World Famous



Bluebird Cafe welcomed IWMA TN Hall of Fame Members, Rex Allen Jr and Ranger Doug Green, and IWMA TN members, Juni Fisher and Bobby Marquez. Hosting the evening was IWMA TN President Gary Holt. It was a great night of Western Music in Music City! Yessiree, it's been a busy summer, and we are excitingly anticipating a packed season of touring and performances this Fall! We look forward to seeing y'all in Albuquerque in November! Saddle up!!!

WESTERN WORDSMITHS CHAPTER

President: Mark Munzert
markmunzert@gmail.com

As of this writing there are thirteen contestants lined-out for the IWMA Cowboy Poetry Contest to be held on 'Convention Saturday' Nov. 11, also Veterans Day. It promises to be great! Jeff Davidson reports his National Day of the Cowboy gig at the Pioneer Bluffs Ranching Heritage Center coincided with the 100th anniversary of the railroad reaching Matfield Green, KS. For the occasion, the Chisholm Trail Division of the National Model RR association was on hand with a great model train set up. Supper and home made ice cream were served. Jeff sang some songs based on both the railroad and cattle industries and Annie Wilson sang some of her good Flint Hill songs. In the 'receiving accolades'

category, "All About the Song" written by Mag Mawhinney and Ron Christopher is the great story of all the country music greats who have gone beyond with one outlaw, Willie, left standing. George Ray Russell, Rustler of Rhymes, spent a July Sunday afternoon at the Grange and pulled two 45 minute sessions saying 'if Willie can do it at age 90 I can do it at 83'. Rik 'Yonder' Goodell says 'As anybody knows, half of the fun of any gathering is catching up with old friends and making new ones'. Rik reports "the 38th annual Montana Cowboy Poetry Gathering and Western Music Rendezvous was all of that in spades. After missing the pandemic years, the Canadians were back! We had three fine days of fellowship, poetry and song." Western Wordsmiths performing included Vic Anderson, Mike Booth, Sheryl Cederburg, Rik 'Yonder' Goodell and Poppa Mac (aka Geoff Mackay). Almeda Bradshaw was in attendance lending her savvy to the youth performers. IWMA Executive Director Marsha Short and Board Member/Treasurer Diana Raven were on-hand, 'wo-manning' a booth to attract new members to the IWMA. And, the Wordsmith's were well represented at the Arizona Cowboy Poets Gathering too: Valerie Beard; Floyd Beard; Devon Dawson; Gary Kirkman; Jo Lynn Kirkwood; Miska Paget; Dennis Russell (and Beverly) joined many others to packed sessions and full to the brim auditoriums. Yours truly, Mark Munzert, along with Jeff Mammet, and Ernie Sites raised the roof at the Little Theater on the Farm in the southern Adirondack Mountains of, yep, New York. The trio brought many laughs, tears, and applause as they brought 'the Western Revue east' to folks that, though east, appreciate the open spaces, the smell of horse flesh and leather, a warm campfire on a cold night, and trails that lead to freedom. 🐾

CLASSIC PROFILES

SOUNDS FROM THE PAST

(Recordings From Our Great Western Treasury That Deserve a New Spin)

BY RICK HUFF

We're proud to say that more artists are creating and performing Western Music these days than at any time in its long, illustrious history. Its legacy includes others who have helped to fortify the trail that Western artists of today continue to ride. The work of these trailblazers should continue to be celebrated, heard and enjoyed.

LIZ MASTERSON & SEAN BLACKBURN *"Swing With The Music"* (1991)



This was a very good year for the team of Masterson & Blackburn. Not only did we find this

tribute to the great Western Swing vocalists and broadcasts, two of their earlier fine albums were released in 1991 under the banner "Double Feature!" But we're using this one to represent the exalted duo for an additional reason. It also offers what is perhaps the only photographs of Sean without his trademark black Stetson!

Beyond being technically excellent, Liz Masterson & Sean Blackburn understood how to convey that important key to being true entertainers. They conveyed a sense of fun to help you achieve a healthy abandonment of your woes for a bit as they swung their way through this roster of 20s, 30s and

40s songs. When they announced a project, support players would clamor to join in. On this release, the Queen City Jazz Band added Dixie and Blues elements as well.

We lost Sean many years back. Our dear Liz was with us long enough to see herself honored with the renaming of the IWMA's top new artist recognition, to become the "Liz Masterson Crescendo Award."

Watch for aftermarket opportunities to acquire and download their music. You won't regret it.

THE PFEIFFER BROTHERS *"By Request"* (1994)



Everyone around The Pfeiffer Brothers predicted big things waited in the wings

for them. In the early 90s they blazed onto the fledgling Western Music revival scene – so talented,

so upbeat, so polished and... suddenly...so gone!!

David Earl and Wiley Jim Pfeiffer were based in Colorado, had Arizona representation, recorded in Texas and had an even father flung following! But, fiery though their performing persona was, it seems some manner of internal combustion managed to burn them out. Some years later, Wiley Jim (using only that name) surfaced in New Mexico and could be found entertaining appreciative audiences at various events and venues, but you still hear the brothers mentioned fondly to this day in conversations among the long-timers.

"By Request" was an apt title for the collection. Their showstopping "Sioux City Sue" is here, as are "Saddle The Sun," "The Trail Rider's Call," "Gal In Callico" and some of their yodeling harmony wonders like Doug Green's "That's How The Yodel Was Born" and "Rocky Mountain Yodeler."

This CD shows The Pfeiffers at their best, and it simply doesn't get better. 🐾

Reed's Reading

Recommendations & Book Reviews



Ollie Reed, Jr.

To have your book reviewed by Ollie,
send a copy to: Ollie Reed, Jr.,
P.O. Box 2381, Corrales, N.M. 87048
or contact him at: olreed.com@gmail.com

Two things the novels reviewed in this issue's column have in common is that both are mysteries and both chalked up honors in the Western Writers of America's 2023 Spur Awards competition.

One is based on a true and complex story and the other, the latest in a series of historical mysteries, challenges my way of thinking about traditional Westerns.

Another thing these novels have in common is that they are the last books that will be reviewed in Reed's Reading. It has been my privilege to write this column for more than six years, and I thank Western Way editor, Theresa O'Dell, for the opportunity to do that.

But there have been some changes in my life recently, and I find it necessary to set aside some things, including this column, so I can focus on new developments.

Happy reading, friends.

WAYNE PURCELL

Justice for All: The Search for Big Poker Tom, a Historical Novel



Purcell's book earned finalist honors in the historical novel category of WWA's Spur Awards contest. The most incredible thing about this compelling and unsettling book is that it's based on a true story.

On his website – waynepurcellauthor.com – Purcell

writes how he read Sally Zanjani's article "Paiute Revenge" in a 1984 issue of American West magazine and was so struck by the story's intense drama he was unable to get it out of his head. Purcell thought something more should be done with the account, so, 20 years after reading the article, he launched the research which resulted in "Justice for All."

The novel, which is peopled mostly by actual persons but also some created by Purcell, attempts to fill in blanks in the historical record. But the bones of the novel, the plot, is factual and supplies the suspense.

In the spring of 1891, Big Poker Tom, a Paiute living on a reservation in Nevada, goes to Bridgeport, a small

California town near the Nevada border, looking for some poker-game action. About six weeks later, his horse returns to the reservation without him.

A band of Paiutes from the Nevada reservation ride to Bridgeport to find out what happened to Tom. They are joined by California Paiutes, and soon the number of well-armed members of the tribe outnumber Bridgeport's population of able-bodied men.

Investigations by the Paiutes and Mono County Sheriff Michael J. Cody, one of the novel's real characters, suggest that Tom may have been killed by Ah Quong Tai, a Chinese man who owns a café and store. And then Tom's coat and parts of what are believed to be his body are pulled from the river.

The tension here is between white and Paiute justice. Paiutes believe Ah Quong Tai to be guilty and that nothing less than his death is a suitable penalty for his crime. They are prepared to carry out that sentence by force and hold Bridgeport, which is isolated from state and federal help, hostage, threatening to burn down the town and kill everyone in it unless the

accused Chinese man is turned over to them.

I am impressed by Purcell's research, not only into the facts related to the investigation, but also into the Paiute culture, which includes a description of Indian Court, the Paiute way of determining guilt or innocence and penalties that fit the crime.

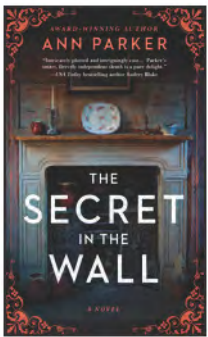
But the town's dilemma is the novel's most enticing element. Prejudice, fear,

self-respect and the instinct for survival are weighed on the scales along with justice as Ah Quong Tai's fate hangs in the balance.

("Justice for All: The Search for Big Poker Tom, a Historical Novel," 9798795838700; paperback, 258 pages, \$18.99; self-published; available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) and [westmont.studentstore.com](https://www.westmont.studentstore.com).)

ANN PARKER

The Secret in the Wall



Parker's novel, set in 1882 San Francisco, won the WWA Spur Award for traditional novel. And that's the only thing about this entertaining novel that gives me pause. Is it a traditional Western?

Personally, I'm willing to give a lot of latitude to that definition, championing twists in characters and plot elements that deviate from what you'd expect to find in Zane Grey's "Riders of the Purple Sage" or Jack Schaefer's "Shane."

But in Parker's Inez Stannert, we have a protagonist who experiences an electrifying buzz "that caused her over-warm heart to pound a little harder" when her fingers brush against those of a dapper male character in the novel.

And before going to dinner at a boarding house, Stannert changes into a "rust-brown outfit of a V-shaped cashmere casaque over a box-pleated underskirt with turned-back linen

cuffs ..." Not exactly chaps and spurs, but I give Stannert credit for slipping her Remington pocket revolver into her wool cloak.

My point is that I don't believe the author's target audience is the one we generally associate with traditional Westerns.

That said, I still found this novel to be intriguing. It's the eighth in a series about Stannert, a woman who shunned a life of privilege with her East Coast family to become a saloon owner and card player in Leadville, Colo.

"A Secret in the Wall" finds her living in San Francisco with Antonia, the 13-year-old girl she took into her care after the child's mother was murdered in Leadville. In Frisco, Stannert owns a store that sells musical instruments and fine things from the Orient, teaches piano lessons, finances women's business interests and, as in previous books in the series, gets involved in murder investigations.

Just a few pages into the book, a skeleton with a glass eye and a bag full of gold falls out of a wall in a house Stannert and another woman, Moira Krause, recently purchased. Not long afterwards, a man is murdered with an

ax outside the house. The game's afoot, Watson.

Parker's done her homework. She puts you right in 1880s San Francisco, walking you intersection by intersection through its streets, noting the seating capacity of the American Dining Room in the Palace Hotel and so on.

But it's the story – family secrets, secret codes, secret passages, – and the colorful characters – old sailors missing an arm or a leg, belligerent cops and obnoxious attorneys – rather than the setting that captured my attention.

My favorite characters are not the old salts or solicitors, however, but teenager Antonia and her 8-year-old friend Charlotte Krause, who become ghosts in the walls to explore the old house at the heart of the mystery in middle of the night. Eat your heart out, Nancy Drew.

"The Secret in the Wall" may not be a traditional Western, but it's a lot of fun.

("The Secret in the Wall," 9781464214943; paperback, 385 pages, \$15.99; Poisoned Pen Press; available at [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](https://www.barnesandnoble.com), [sourcebooks.com](https://www.sourcebooks.com) and [target.com](https://www.target.com).) 🐾

POSTSCRIPT: It is with sadness that we announce this will be the last book review column from Ollie Reed, Jr. He has been a loyal and valuable contributor to the *Western Way* in every issue for six years. Thanks for sharing your insight into many books through the years, Ollie. We sincerely wish you well wherever the trail leads.

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

Skip Bessonette & His Pard Lucky

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

Janice Brooks

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

Peter Bruce

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

Chuckaroo the Buckaroo

"Calling All Cowboys Radio"
88.9 FM, KPOV High Desert
Community Radio
http://www.kpov.org
http://kpov.od.streamguys.us/
calling_all_cowboys_new_56k.mp3
Email: callingallcowboys@hotmail.com
Station NFLY – No Fly Internet Radio/
The Flying SL Ranch Radio Show
radio.spalding-labs.com
22470 Rickard Rd., Bend, OR 97702

Roger & Leo Eilts

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

Doug Figgs

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

Nancy Flagg

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

Paul Hazell

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

Randy Hill

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

Gary Holt

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

Judy James

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

Allen & Jill Kirkham

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

Al Krtil

225 W. 7th St., Ship Bottom, NJ 08008
alkrtil@yahoo.com

Jarle Kvale

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

Eddy Leverett

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

Butch and Christina Martin*"Whittler's Corner Show"*

1410 Kubli Road
 Grants Pass, OR 97527
 Earsradio.com
 KSKO Ashland, OR, www.KSKQ.org
 The Dalles, OR, Y102
 KKTY, 100.1, Douglas, WY
 KSHD 93.4 Shady Cove, OR
 KORV 93.5 Ladeview, OR
 www.ButchMartinMusic.com
 www.romancingthewest.org
 541-218-2477

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

Bob O'Donnell

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

O.J. Sikes

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

Tommy Tucker*"Snake River Radio Roundup"*

93.1 FM/1350 AM KRLC Radio
 805 Stewart Ave., Lewiston, ID 83501
 208-743-1551
 tommy@koze.com
"Keepin' It Western"

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.

International Western Music Association

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Western Charts

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

TOP 30 COWBOY / WESTERN ALBUMS

1. Throw a Saddle on a Star – Riders in the Sky
2. We Were Cowboys – R.J. Vandygriff
3. Bunchgrass – Wylie & the Wild West
4. 5 From the Heart of a Cowboy – Tom Hiatt
5. Born to be a Cowgirl – Aspen Black
6. One More Ride – Doug Figgs
7. Cowgirl's Ride – Sarah Pierce
8. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
9. Roll On, Cowboys – Andy Hedges
10. Arizona Stars – Rusted Spurs West
11. True Blue Cowboy – The Panhandle Cowboys
12. A Little Bit of Western, A Little Bit of Swing – Carlos Washington
13. Thistles & Thorns – Allan Chapman & Rodeo Kate
14. Me and Les – Dan McCorison
15. Cowboy Serenade – Ed Meyer
16. American Outlaw II – Chris Guenther
17. Purple Sage (And Other Tales From the Plateau) – The Dan Canyon Band
18. Times Like These – Randy Huston
19. Way Out West – Mark Kerr
20. The Real West – Patty Clayton
21. UnXpected – Phoebe White
22. Just Passin' Through – The Fall River Boys
23. Saturday Matinee – KG & the Ranger
24. Westbound – Micki Fuhrman
25. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
26. Corral Dust & Crosses – The Timberline Cowboys
27. Good Days Are Comin' – Jim Jones
28. Back Tracks – Dave Munsick
29. Flower Songs in Sagebrush Town – Tracy Morrison
30. Allan Chapman & Rodeo Kate – Travelin' West

10 MOST PLAYED WESTERN SWING ALBUMS

1. All of Me – Eric Diamond
2. Arizona Skies – Rusted Spurs West
3. Billy Mata's Timeless Treasures – Billy Mata
4. A Little Bit of Western, A Little Bit of Swing – Carlos Washington
5. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
6. Pick of the Litter – Barbara Nelson
7. Yearnin' – Jim Winters
8. Texas Star – Lori Beth Brooke
9. This is Swing Country – Steve Markwardt
10. Little Bit of Texas – Carlos Washington

12 MOST PLAYED SONGS BY WESTERN MUSIC DJS

1. Born to be a Cowgirl – Aspen Black
2. Ian and Charlie – Tom Hiatt
3. Yellowstone – Joni Harms
4. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White
5. A Cowboy Like Me – Doug Figgs
6. Ribbon of Darkness – Wylie & the Wild West
7. Never Cuss the Rain – Tom Hiatt
8. Standing Our Sacred Ground – Joni Harms
9. The Legacy of Louis L'Amour – Tom Hiatt
10. Where Cowboys Ride – Aspen Black
11. Cowgirl's Ride – Sarah Pierce
12. Saddle Up – Sarah Pierce
13. Montana Cowboy – R.J. Vandygriff

12 MOST PLAYED COWBOY POETRY ALBUMS

1. The Girl in the Yellow Checked Dress – Duane Nelson
2. Wisdom in the Wind – Sherl Cederburg
3. No Better Life – Valerie Beard
4. Elko: A Cowboy's Gathering – Various Artists
5. Upon My Horse's Back – Chris Mortenson
6. Provin' Up Wise – Rik "Yonder" Goodall
7. New Mexico Stray – Dennis Russell
8. Horse Tails and Cow Trails – Floyd Beard
9. Short Grass Country – Floyd Beard
10. Between the Sun and the Moon – Teresa Burleson
11. A Good Ride – Terry Nash
12. Rhymin' the Range – Tom Swearingen

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REPRESENTS A TIE FOR THAT SPOT.**

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Grand Junction, CO
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Walzenhausen, Switzerland
Santa Fe, NM
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<input type="checkbox"/> Mechanical Music Licenses	# attending _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Recording Workshop	# attending _____		
<input type="checkbox"/> American Involvement in WWI through Songs & Stories	# attending _____		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-purchase tickets for drawing (tickets will be in your packet)	# of premium tickets @ \$10 each/12 for \$100 _____ # of regular tickets @ \$1 each/15 for \$10 _____		

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<input type="checkbox"/> Guitar Workshop	# attending _____		
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<input type="checkbox"/> Veterans Appreciation Breakfast & Program <input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you would like to sponsor a veteran <input type="checkbox"/> Check here if you are a veteran....there's no charge for your ticket!	# of tickets _____ # of tickets _____	\$40/person \$40/person	\$50/person \$50/person
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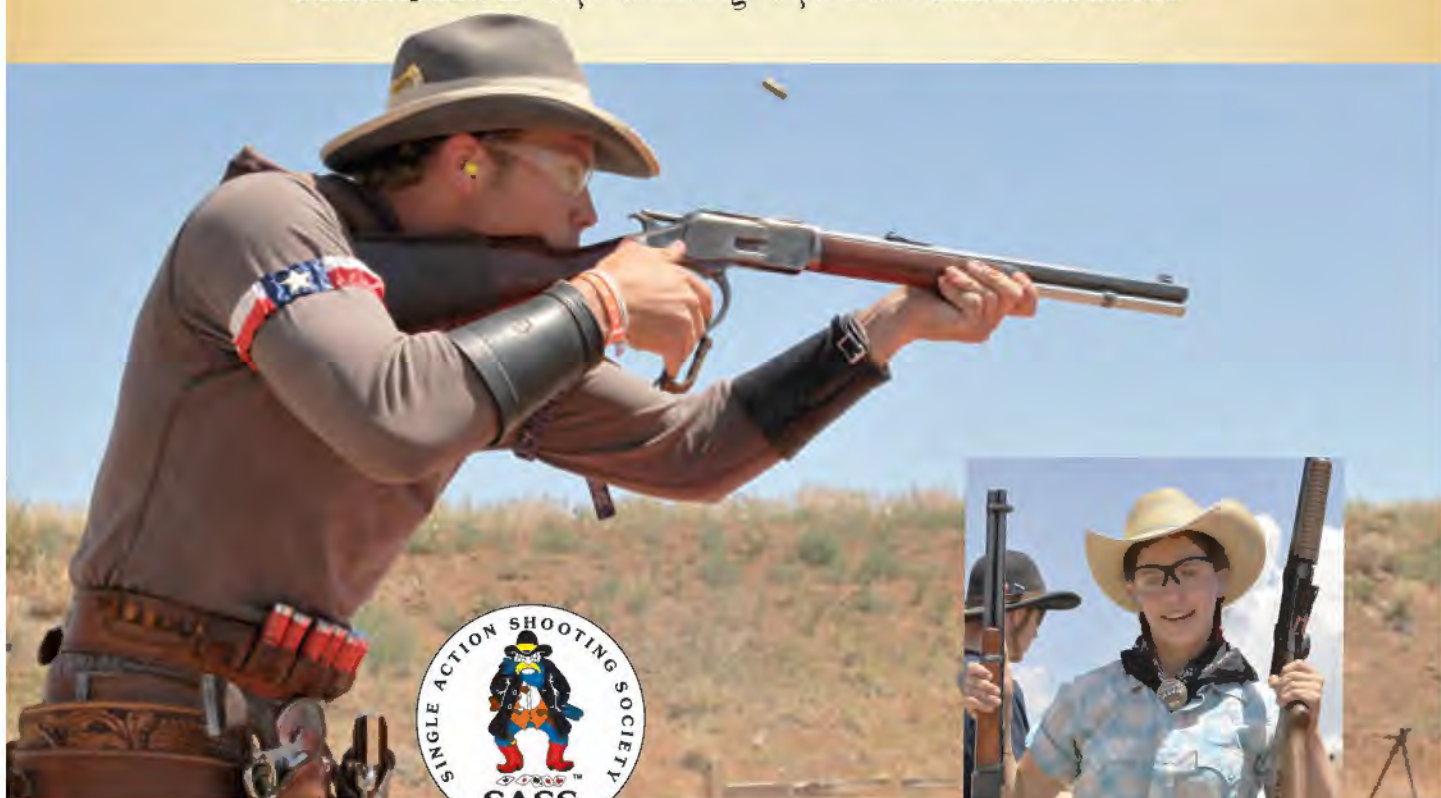
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