

# THE WESTERN WAY

The Official Publication of the International Western Music Association



**TOM  
SWEARINGEN**  
*The Oracle of Oregon*



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***Riders In The Sky: Romancing the West with Music and Humor***, on the Texas A&M University Press, is now available at **Too Slim's Mercantile**, [ridersinthesky.com](http://ridersinthesky.com).





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## From The President...



MARVIN O'DELL  
IWMA President

## PRACTICE, PRACTICE AND...PRACTICE

I have always loved music – music of all sorts. Of course, I'm talking about that which is truly musical, not that which just makes a lot of noise synthetically while someone does what they call "rapping" in the background. Anyway, although I love music, I have never had the required desire enough to exercise the three P's necessary to become a serious player. Oh, I've learned a few chords on the guitar and enough bass to become the worst bass player in the world. But I've always been too lazy to work hard at those three P's – practice, practice, and practice. And, yes, I call it what it is: laziness.

A man was planning to take in a concert at Carnegie Hall; however, he got lost when attempting to find his way there. Seeing a police officer standing on a street corner, he stopped and asked the policeman, "Sir, how do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The officer replied, "Practice, young man, practice."

I never have learned to love practicing; however, I'll tell you what I have loved doing. I have always enjoyed and found great pleasure in helping and promoting those who have worked hard to become successful at playing an instrument and singing along with it. That's why DJ work has always appealed to me.

Skillful playing of an instrument is a wonderful and beautiful thing. It is fascinating to watch someone like a Tommy Emmanuel or an Ernie Martinez or a Lori Beth Brooke take control of an instrument and get it to project a desired and pleasing sound. There's been no hesitating to put into motion the three P's there. In fact, it looks to me like these folks are exercising four or five or six P's. No doubt when they first took an interest in playing an instrument, there was an exploratory-assertive motivational system at work within. While some people get a charge out of hitting a baseball or a golf ball long distances, accomplished musicians find it thrilling to force a beautiful tune from the wood, steel, keys, ivory, and whatever else of a musical instrument.

I'm convinced that somewhere in the genes of an accomplished musician, there is something that resonates with what they hear coming from the cooperation between their fingers and the instrument(s) which they are playing, whereas my genes seek a place of refuge from what comes from my

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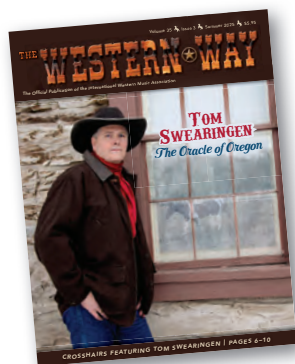


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### ON THE COVER...

Tom Swearingen  
Putting pen to paper prompts a picturesque portrait of the west when cowboy poet Tom Swearingen steps to the microphone. Horses and wide open spaces provide the backdrop and inspiration for award-winning poetry that he delivers through personal performances and on the printed page.

*Photo by Anita Crane*

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



## Editor's Insight



Theresa O'Dell  
Editor

## IN YOUR HANDS OR IN THE CLOUD...OR BOTH?

"I love holding my book, smelling it, and turning the pages." "No e-books for me!"

These are the types of comments I hear often.

Many die-hard readers do not want electronic books downloaded to their device of choice. They want to hold the real deal.

There are certainly pros and cons to both options. It is something even the IWMA for *The Western Way* must evaluate. Let's consider our publication:

A most obvious "pro" to publishing *The Western Way* as an online only publication is cost-savings. It would mean several thousand dollars unencumbered each quarter amounting to significant annual savings. It would be another step in moving the IWMA into the 21st Century without compromising our mission, adding appeal to younger audiences. Some of the notable publications, not only in our genre, have already gone to this medium for distribution, eliminating printing and mailing expenses, oftentimes out of necessity due to continually rising print costs. Another positive, it would get into the hands of readers a little more quickly by avoiding delays in USPS shipping of bulk mail items.

There are "cons" to this scenario as well. Some in our readership do not "do" anything electronic. Others just prefer to hold their publication and peruse its pages at their leisure, returning to it again and again (note: the perusing part can be done online as well). Many of our performers distribute copies of *The Western Way* at their shows and make it a marketing tool for the organization. Still, some want to hand the publication to a friend or neighbor and tell them about the IWMA, our genre, and its wonderful musicians and poets.

The IWMA is always looking for ways to advance its mission and use the organization's funds wisely while still supporting the concerns of its broadest membership base. It is constantly seeking ways to expand our western footprint, knowing that the electronic media has exponential potential.

What do you think? We would like your comments. Visit the IWMA website ([iwesternmusic.org](http://iwesternmusic.org)) and see the changes already made in the presentation of the magazine online. Send your comments to: [editor@iwesternmusic.org](mailto:editor@iwesternmusic.org). Each will be read and considered. The IWMA belongs to all of us, and the organizational goal is to Plan the Future for our western music genre. We invite you to be a part of the plan.

A vintage-style advertisement featuring a large, gold-colored RCA microphone. The microphone has a mesh grille and the RCA logo on the base. To the left of the microphone is a smaller, gold-colored microphone. The background is dark and textured.

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## From The Executive Director...



Marsha Short  
Executive Director

We're up to four dogs and one cat in our family now (all rescues). The City of Lewisville says we can have six pets...stop posting sad-eyed dogs on Facebook who need to be adopted!

Several months ago, my granddaughter and her boyfriend adopted a "puppy." They named him Strudel and the best the shelter knew, he's a cross between a German Shepherd and a Pyrenees. He's now not quite six months old and weighs 40

pounds. He has feet the size of small dinner plates!

Our alpha dog, Cookie Bob, is a deaf mini-Aussie and is 14 years old. He does NOT want to be bothered with a puppy, especially one that's bigger than he is and a lot more enthusiastic. I spend most of my day settling arguments between the two of them. Our middle dog, Zuko, is a lab mix and has a few mobility issues (he's 11 years old). but he at least puts up with Strudel. They'll play for a while and then Zuko needs a nap. Strudel does not. Our little dog, Jojo, is a seven-pound chihuahua, also 11 years old. She's as ferocious as most little dogs but only has half her teeth. She bites Strudel on the ankles, but he apparently thinks that's a cool way to play and tries to play like that with her. I spend a lot of time holding Jojo on my lap. And the cat? Well, I'm sure he's around somewhere watching it all from a very good hiding place.



Strudel looking sad

I know you're thinking that I've finally run out of things to write about, but I have a point.

How are we treating newcomers at chapter meetings, gatherings and the convention? At the Convention we put red number ones on the first-timers' badges. For the past few years, we've had a reception just for them. But every year I hear from someone that talked to a first-timer who said they felt unwelcome or had a hard time breaking into the "clique."

Are we so old and cranky that we can't put up with newcomers? Or do we give them a chance but then go back to our comfort zone? And what about our young members? Do we make them feel like part of the group? Do we welcome them and appreciate their enthusiasm, or do we get tired and move on? I'd like to challenge each of you, the next time you're gathering for whatever reason, reach out to someone you don't know. Introduce them to others in the group. Show them that you're glad they decided to be there and be sure they know about other things going on. And most definitely invite everyone to come to Albuquerque November 12-16, and we'll make them feel like part of the family!

Marsha



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### INCLUDE THE WESTERN WAY IN YOUR MARKETING PLAN

Multiple copies are placed in strategic locations throughout the US and distributed internationally through our broad global membership outreach. As a quarterly publication with a dynamic online digital presence, your ad continues to work for you into the future. The Western Way readership is "mobile and on the go" ... shouldn't they know your business is where they are going to be?

#### Example of Distribution Outlets:

- Arizona Folklore Preserve – Sierra Vista, AZ
- Autry National Center – Los Angeles, CA
- Museum of Western Film History – Lone Pine, CA
- Booth Western Art Museum – Cartersville, GA
- Stockyards Museum – Ft. Worth, TX
- Tigard Public Library, Tigard, OR
- Rex Allen Arizona Cowboy Museum – Willcox, AZ
- IWMA Chapters at Local Gatherings and Festivals
- [iwesternmusic.org](http://iwesternmusic.org)

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# In the CROSSHAIRS



Tom performing at the Elko Gathering in 2019

## TOM SWEARINGEN

By Jon Chandler

*A promise to keep forever  
His memory close at hand,  
To finish things he'd started,  
And live the dreams he'd planned.*

*(Quiet Conversation)*

In the western vernacular, Tom Swearingen is the quintessential long, tall drink of water. The kind of fella who views the world from a few inches above most folks. Not that he'd ever look down on anyone, figuratively or literally, it's just he's a tall man who sports a big hat that houses a noggin full of western sensibilities. His regional awareness results from a lifetime of living and working in the American West, all the while absorbing the big, bold and beautiful ideas inspired by the world's most legendary and popular piece of geography. Tom Swearingen is a cowboy poet, a western man, and a lover of what is arguably America's most unique cultural phenomenon, the concept of the Wild West. He lives and breathes the West, turning its myths, legends, and reality into meaningful and moving chronicles in rhyme. He is very good at what he does.

He approaches his life and work with an elegance that is rare in the genre. Rough edges are written about and appreciated by Swearingen, yet he is anything but rough in his demeanor. Dignified? Sure. Hilarious? Yep. Civil? Absolutely. He doesn't define his work through





Tom's first horse. Little did he know how those early years may have formed who he was to become.

brash themes and raucous recitals. His performances are devoid of exaggerated drawls and theatrics, and his words have little need of *in the weeds* vernacular. Instead, his contemplative style and evocative writing set the stage for communication with his readers and audiences. He connects with them on both artistic and personal levels. They recognize the people who populate his poems as their own. His Wranglers remind them of those they know, and his stories of being horseback or observing sunsets match their own experiences. He validates their western identities through his rare ability to understand and empathize with their lives. No cartoon cowboys here. They're real. You can hear the accents, smell the leather, hold the reins, see the vistas, and share the campfires. Like those who appreciate his work, he is a rider. But he is also a writer. The combination is magic.

*Oregon is a sacred ground*

*Where coiled up thoughts can be unwound,*

*Then strung in lines to then be sung*

*With passionate voice and angel's tongue.*

*(A Few Lines For Oregon From a Grateful Native Son)*

Swearingen didn't just decide he was a cowboy poet. The realization that he could be a writer of things western resulted from a lifetime of exposure to his beloved State of Oregon and its history. He hails from Canby and is an Oregonian by birth and inclination. His saga began when his maternal grandparents made the tough decision to leave the family farm in Nebraska. His grandfather found dock work in Oregon during World War II. They sold out,



Tom and Carla camped with the Pendleton Roundup Wagon Train, 2017.

packed up their four kids and took off for the West Coast. "Grandpa kept thinking they were going back to Nebraska," Swearingen says with a chuckle, "until one day Grandma said, 'Elmer, you can go back if you want, but you're going back alone.'" Decades later their grandson would eloquently present their saga in his poem, *Replanted Roots*.

Swearingen's paternal grandparents were also agrarians, and he credits both sets of grandparents' love of horses with his fascination with the equine world.

His parents met and married when his father was attending the University of Oregon. While at the university, his father interrupted his studies to serve as a cartographer



Tom and Carla at Superstition Mountains, 2018.

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## IN THE CROSSHAIRS

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Tom and Carla celebrate 2019 Male Poet of the Year recognition.

in the Korean War. Little Thomas made his appearance while his father was serving in Asia. "Mom and I lived in grandma and grandpa's house, and I met him when he came back," says Swearingen. He returned to his family, switched his focus to journalism and got a job at an ad agency, setting his longstanding professional life in motion.

"Growing up, I was like everyone my age, I guess," Swearingen says. "I loved Roy and Dale. There were westerns, and there were horses at my grandparents." At a time when American boys wore cap pistols and coonskin caps, Swearingen developed dual appreciations of things western and things literary. His father was a writer, a creative dreamer. He would become one, as well.

Swearingen graduated from Portland State University and became enamored with the broad world of media.

After two years of writing copy and features for a Portland radio station his father asked him to join the Swearingen Advertising Agency in 1977. After 11 years, he left to gain more experience at a larger agency, returning in 1991 as President and beginning the process of buying the agency and "funding my dad's well-deserved retirement."

It was also time to open the most important chapter in his life. In 1976, he met his wife-to-be Carla, and they married in 1978. "Carla and I worked together to run the agency for decades before we retired in 2022," he says.

*To ride the open prairies  
And over mountain trails.  
To love Western heritage  
And all that it entails.*

*(Blessed to be Western)*

Swearingen's introduction to the creative side of cowboy poetry was almost accidental. "I didn't write a poem until 2010 when a cowboy friend died of a heart attack," he says. "I had it in my mind to write a rhymed, rhythmic poem reflecting on his life. I thought it turned out well."

He shared the poem at his friend's service, standing for the first time as a cowboy poet. "I'm shaking. The paper



St. Paul Rodeo 2022 with Joni Harms





Father, kids, grandkids and inlaws

is shaking. It's an anxious moment." Immediately after reading the ode to his pard, he was approached by both friends and strangers. The comments came fast and furious. *What was that? I didn't know you were a poet.*

"I had something to say, and I had some ability, I guess," he says.

He began writing more and shared a poem about a horse wreck with fellow horse people. They encouraged him.

"Over the next three years, I had a handful of poems I liked," he says. "Well, I got a call from a woman at the St. Paul, Oregon, rodeo who had heard some of my poems. She proposed having a stage from 5 to 7 each night before the rodeo and having me be the performer for one of the nights." He was now officially a cowboy poet.

He sets no boundaries while writing, choosing to go with the flow. "My poems tend to be short. As long as they need to be, and as short as they should be. They match my attention span. No restrictions. No real deadlines, except self-imposed deadlines."

At the end of 2013 he produced his first recording.

"Out of the blue, I was informed by IWMA Executive Director Marsha Short that the CD was up for an award," he says. "I didn't know much about the Western Music Association, but I went to the convention in 2014 and began meeting folks and forming wonderful associations."

He also realized he needed to keep learning, and cites his rapport with Margo Metegrano of the late, lamented CowboyPoetry.com.

"Margo said she didn't comment on submissions, but you have storytelling talent," he says. "But your meter needs work. She sent me off on a quest to write better and ended up publishing 20 or so of my poems."

*So while I don't give myself the moniker,  
I understand why some folks do.  
So if you want to call me cowboy,  
I'll leave that up to you.*

*(I Don't Call Myself a Cowboy)*

In a world of cowboys both real and faux, Swearingen is an anomaly, a guy who could have been a cowboy, but who chose to be a bard. His preferred vehicle is the written word, with an emphasis on the rhyming kind. And though he captures the life of the cowboy, he has never practiced the profession. "I've only cowboied on occasion to help rancher friends, but I don't claim to be



Tom says he always appreciates it when Dave Stamey closes for him.

a cowboy," he says. "I've certainly never put down 'cowboy' as an occupation on my tax returns. I try to write about what I know and not claim to be an expert in things I don't. What I do know is writing, and the power of observation. Landscapes, relationships, social behavior, emotions, joy, wisdom are all important to what I write.

"I often write autobiographically, based on my own experiences and observations, sometimes exactly as it happened," he says. He continues with a wry chuckle, "It may not have rhymed in real life, but that's how it happened."

Cowboy or not, his poems allow readers and audiences to enter a world of horses and hard work, far horizons and close calls, cowboys who would be poets and poets who would be cowboys. It is western word art at its finest.

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## IN THE CROSSHAIRS

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With Columbia Chapter youth poetry contest winner Thomas Fitzgerald.

*And there's Carla's gold-maned sorrel.  
Strong, sweet, and real cow smart.  
Disagree, you'll get a quarrel,  
'Cause she's got Carla's heart.*

*(Still Some Sun to Catch)*

Tom and Carla. Carla and Tom. You can see them strolling through the streets of Durango and Elko and Prescott. They are always with each other, a unit welded together by respect, love, and marriage. A fine writer in her own right, she is an accomplished children's book author. Over their 47 years of marriage they've built a lovely family, with daughter Nichole and husband Adrian blessing them with little Flora, and son Scott and his wife Mandee adding Scarlett to the mix. "We're all within a half-hour of each other. We're very blessed to spend time with them."

These days Swearingen walks in tall cotton. The years have brought awards and accolades, including IWMA's Male Poet of the Year in 2019 and 2022. His book *Reflection* was a co-winner of IWMA's Best Cowboy Poetry Book in 2020. He has met and befriended those poets who influenced and encouraged him. He has performed with his heroes and has become a hero himself.

There is always surprise, there is always wonder. "I got a call from a musician doing jazz interpretations of original folk and cowboy music," he says. "Cowboy Jazz asked me to send them poems and they composed music for six of them on their last project."

A new Cowboy Jazz project has Swearingen writing ten poems of the West to be interpreted in jazz fashion.

Helping younger artists and poets is foremost among his current endeavors. "I encourage young people to write about the West. I'm pleased to help organize the Columbia Chapter's Youth Cowboy Poetry Contest and amazed at the talent I see."



Puerto Vallarta, 2024

In pleasant interviews with the writer, Swearingen talks about friends, family, performance, and process. At day's end, what he conveys is that he is a man of the West. His work is steeped in its lore and its beauty. The writer tells him he hopes to express that love of the land in the article.

"Well," he says dryly, "If it lives up to my expectations, we can still be friends."

*The silence gives direction  
Sometimes better than what's planned.  
And so we leave the talking  
To the language of the land.*

*(The Language of the Land) 🐾*



## FROM THE PRESIDENT...


*Continued from page 2*

efforts. And although I'm sure the brain has a lot to do with it, that resonance spoken of above might be what makes the three P's a lot more palatable to some than others. (Or maybe I'm just making excuses here.)


I also believe there is an ideal that floats beneath the surface of musical success like a fish floats just under the surface of a river – the same ideal that leads us to believe that that big mouth bass is within our grasp. That if Roger Maris can make it into baseball's Hall of Fame primarily on the success he realized in one outstanding season of hitting baseballs, I can, with the help of the three P's, reach a great level of success at playing music.

By hanging around successful musicians, I have learned one thing for sure: the pleasure of playing a tune on a musical instrument never fades, whether the players are five-years old or 95-years old. Have you ever noticed how, when players are jamming, they almost collectively laugh when finishing a song they've played together? "Yeah," you say. "I've always wondered what is so funny." It's not that something is funny; it's simply joy being expressed over the satisfaction they feel resulting from paying attention years ago to the necessity and importance of those three P's.

MARVIN O'DELL  
*President IWMA*



**NEW SINGLE BY PATTY CLAYTON**  
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# 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.



## Spring is Right Around The Corner

by Terry Nash

He was up to his elbow in the backside of a cow  
'Cause this labor was takin' too long  
It was mid-February and colder than...wow!  
And this calvin' was startin' out wrong.

His ears were frosted, his feet were numb  
And he'd druther been anywhere.  
"If you stick in this business yer just plain dumb",  
And his language colored the air.

He worked till he got the calf turned 'round  
Then let mother nature take hold.  
The heifer soon had her calf on the ground  
And worked against shiverin' cold.

With that light in the window, his wife'd be up;  
She knows he's on heifer watch.  
So takin' time out for just one warmin' cup,  
He clattered on into the porch.

He glanced at the wall where the calendar hung  
And willed the days to speed up.  
"Springs 'round the corner", she merrily sung  
When she brought him in his first cup.

He grinned at her optimistic ways  
And warmed a little inside.  
They'll see a change in a matter of days-  
He turned back to the heifers outside.

The days grow longer this time of year  
But the weather can still treat you rough.  
Spring's 'round the corner, and dang near here  
But it can't get here quick enough.

She stared out the window above the sink  
And noticed some signs out there  
The elms were buddin' and it made her think  
Of Robins and warm spring air.

She sat at the table where today's mail lay  
And picked up a seed magazine  
She dreamed of the garden she'd plant some day  
And pictured it thriving and green.

But beets and spinach, Romas and corn  
Need warm soil to be planted in.  
She'd have to be patient till some spring morn  
Before the work outside could begin.

The days grow longer this time of year  
And we just have to try to hang tough.  
Spring's 'round the corner, and dang near here  
But it can't get here quick enough.

The old bay gelding stood in his pen  
And watched while hay machine worked.  
It pumped out bale and bale again  
As the Ferguson torqued and jerked.

Another cold winter has finally flown  
And he's lookin' good today  
Though his teeth are 'most completely wore down  
He survived on second cut hay.

He leaned on the gate and longingly gazed  
At the green grass out in the field,  
Recalled other springs when he finally grazed  
And wished the durn gate would yield.

Thirty two winters have taken their toll  
And gray hair highlights his face.  
First thing he'll do is have a good roll  
Then throw in with the mares for a race.

The days grow longer this time of year  
And we just have to try to hang tough.  
Spring's 'round the corner, and dang near here  
But it can't get here soon enough.



Western CO beef producer **TERRY NASH** knows how to draw you into his poetry. His tales are of the West not seen from the highway or rodeo bleachers. Nash lives the life he writes about and he's a master at showing it to you.

International Western Music awards include 2018 Male Poet of the year, 2018 Cowboy Poetry CD of the year and 2021 "Special Achievement" award.



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# In The Spotlight...

by Marvin O'Dell

...A western song swap has been organized by **Sarah Pierce** at an Austin, TX venue and also at the historic Gruene Hall. **Joel Alden White** has come along for all the dates through the end of the year. **Lori Beth Brooke** joined a few weeks ago for a really fun show and is scheduled for a few more. **Jim Jones** and **Randy Palmer** are also scheduled. If any western singer/songwriter or poet is coming through the area on tour and wants to join in, you should email Sarah at [sarahpiercemusic@aol.com](mailto:sarahpiercemusic@aol.com), and she will try to make it work for you. Also, Sarah, Randy Palmer, and **Merel Bregante** were winners of the 2025 Western Writers of America award for Song of the Year.

...Western Music Hall of Fame member **Michael Martin Murphey** has released his latest studio album as part of a compilation project with Texas poets **Karla K. Morton** and **Alan Birkelbach** along with artist **Bob Boze Bell**. The poetry book, *Santa Fe Trail: Chasing the Big West*, includes a CD with nine new Murphey songs based on poems by Morton and Birkelbach. The album was recorded at Geneva Sky Studios near Benton, KS which is owned and operated by **Jesse Friesen** and **Orin Friesen** of the **Diamond W Wranglers**. The studio specializes in cowboy/western music. Find out more at [www.gsrecording.com](http://www.gsrecording.com).

...**Patty Clayton** has released a new single, co-written with Utah Cowgirl poet **Sam DeLeeuw**, titled "So Many Cowboys." Patty submitted the tune to the IWMA general songwriting contest last year, and she and Sam were delighted to be recognized with an honorable mention among other finalists. The song is now available on her website as a digital download. Patty is also excited to be involved in the Teddy Roosevelt Medora Foundation's music program for two weeks in August in Medora, ND.

...The debut album from **Dave Edwards**, *I'll Always Love This Place*, was recently released for download on [i2irecords.com](http://i2irecords.com). Recorded on the Matador Legacy Records label, single song downloads are available for three songs as well.

...**KC LaCourse** will be traveling to Australia to perform at the Mildura Wentworth Country Music Festival in September. She will be hosting the event and sharing her love of Cowboy Poetry. She is grateful for the opportunity to Joystar Events and Mark Eckel of Oz Country Music Radio streaming on Facebook.

..."Roads & Barbwire" is the latest release from **Joel Alden White**. Produced by **Merel Bregante** and released in May, the new album project includes eleven original songs and two covers.

...**Tom Poley**, part of the western music trio Way Out West from Tucson, AZ, has released a new CD of poetry titled *Cowboy Poetry from Baja Arizona*. The album is a collection of ten poems he's written over the past 20 years as the trio traveled about entertaining in the Southwest and abroad. More information is available at [bbhikku@msn.com](mailto:bbhikku@msn.com).

...It's going to be a very busy and hectic summer for **John Lowell** and his wife, **Joanne Gardner Lowell**. John has filled the summer with performances at a couple of songwriter festivals, teaching songwriting and guitar at a couple of music camps, a tour in England in August, a European tour in October, all in addition to dozens of regional shows with Joanne.

...In April, **Ron Secoy**, from the Western Wordsmiths and Oklahoma Chapters, took the Reserve Champion Buckle in the Shootout division of the poetry competition at the Crossroads Poetry Gatherin' in Depew, OK with his poem "Thanksgiving on the Prairie." He also took home 4th places trophies for the Cow Boss and Classic Divisions with his poem "Credentials" and Larry McWhorter's "Waitin' on the Drive."



...**Peggy Malone** informs the Spotlight that **Dave Stamey** and **Trinity Seely** will be the headliners at the 10th Western Slope Cowboy Gathering this year, October 31 & November 1. She would also like to remind us that her daughter, Beth, was hired by **Dolly Parton** to play Dolly's best friend in her upcoming Broadway play, *Dolly*, which will premier in Nashville all summer.

...**Phoebe White** performed at Churchill Downs this spring, celebrating the 151st running of The Kentucky Derby.

...**Randy Huston** is the special guest with **Hudson James** and **Joni Harms** on the podcast "Stories Round the Table with Hudson and Joni." Randy's interview with Hudson and Joni can be heard on the show's website [www.storiesroundthetablewithhudsonandjoni.com](http://www.storiesroundthetablewithhudsonandjoni.com) as well as Spotify, YouTube, iHeart and other social media sites. He talks with Hudson and Joni about the western country music he sings and how important it is to be living the lifestyle that he writes about.

...The quartet **Cowboy Jazz** continues to collaborate with cowboy poet **Tom Swearingen**. The Portland, OR newspaper *Willamette Week* named the group one of the Top 5 New Bands of 2025. The group has a new album titled *Postcards from Oregon* in the works, featuring ten new compositions incorporating Tom's poems.

...Now in their 5th year of "Circuit Rider Roundup with Allen & Jill" on American Cowboy Radio, **Allen and Jill Kirkham** along with **Ben Parks**, are excited to announce that both Circuit Rider Roundup and American Cowboy Radio have a new national sponsor, Arbuckles Coffee, cowboy coffee since 1858! You can check them out at [Arbucklecoffee.com](http://Arbucklecoffee.com) with code CRR15.

...**Grace Clark** was inducted into the Western Swing Society Hall Fame in Sacramento, CA in October of last year.

...*Country Music News* has written a nice article on **Ashley Westcott**. Read it in its entirety at [countrymusicnewsinternational.com/ashley-westcott-dont-fall-in-love-with-a-cowboy](http://countrymusicnewsinternational.com/ashley-westcott-dont-fall-in-love-with-a-cowboy).

...**Kristyn Harris** is starring in a new indie musical film being shot in Tuscarora and Elko, NV titled *A Ranch Musical*. The film is a fictional modern-day ranching story based loosely around Kristyn's real personality and including five of her songs throughout the film. **Hailey Sandoz** and **Matthew Walton**, as her band, will also make appearances in the film.

...**Dave Volk** will soon be releasing some Western Swing recordings titled *End of the Trail*. There will be eight songs with a full band including steel guitar, fiddle, electric mandolin, guest lead guitarist, piano, drums and beautiful harmony vocals by some of Los Angeles' most talented musicians. Dave sings and plays rhythm and some lead guitars. The songs are all Western Swing standards in the authentic style with modern tweaks.

...16-year-old Clarksville Creative Sound artist **Sienna Rose** is set to release her new single, "When Will I Ever Learn," this June. It will be accompanied by her debut music video produced by Tame Rabbit.

...**Gary and Louanne Kirkman** are proud to announce that they have two grandsons who graduated from high school in May. They also have a 16-year-old granddaughter who has begun singing and playing at different venues around northern Arizona

...**Ranelle Dietrich** of The Arizona Wildflowers is a 10-time Old-Time Fiddle Arizona State Champion in her age group and last year won the Open Division, as well. She is currently the 2024 National Fiddle Youth Champion and National Twin Fiddle Champion. In the Western Youth Rodeo Association 2024-2025 Finals, Ranelle won the Overall Pole-Bending Championship.

*Continued on page 17*



## -YOUTH OUTREACH-

By Rick Heldmann



# Two Arizona Wildflowers

## OFF TO JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

When I first interviewed and wrote about The Arizona Wildflowers, I stated that, "they are the real deal." They live on a horse and cattle ranch in Arizona, ride and train horses daily, and compete in fiddle contests in addition to having a successful bluegrass, gospel, western swing, and Americana band. All of the Dietrich siblings are representative of that concept, however this story is about 13-year-old Aspen Dietrich and 15-year-old Brie Dietrich.

Aspen, lead fiddle and vocals for The Arizona Wildflowers, is and has been a champion old time fiddle player in state and regional contests, including Arizona, Nevada, Minnesota, Kentucky, Florida, The Twin Lakes National Championship, and The Four Corners Fiddle Championship. Aspen has been playing the fiddle since she was 3 years old.

Brie, guitar and vocals for The Arizona Wildflowers, began playing the fiddle when she was 3 years old and became a National Old Time Fiddle Champion by age 8. Brie also won multiple state and regional fiddle

championships. Currently, her musical focus is on Bluegrass and Western Swing Guitar. In addition, singing low harmony with the Band.

All of the Dietrich siblings also compete in multiple events in several rodeo associations. This past weekend, Aspen qualified for the Junior World Championships in Barrel Racing. She and her horse, Drifter, raced against 75 other girls ages 13-19 for a chance to compete in Las Vegas, Nevada in conjunction with the National Finals Rodeo (NFR) in December. Just one day after her younger sister qualified for the Junior World Championships in Barrel Racing, Brie qualified in her favorite Rodeo event, Breakaway Roping! In December, Brie will be up against the best 15 & Under breakaway ropers in the country, when she heads to Las Vegas for National Finals Rodeo week.

Brie and Aspen love playing music, singing, and riding, and they both hope to spend their futures doing all three. They have dreams of playing on the Grand Ole Opry and riding at the NFR. It looks like they're halfway there!

*"I'm thrilled to be heading to Vegas in December to compete in my favorite event! I'll be practicing daily from now until then, whenever we aren't on the road with the Band. I am so thankful that God has blessed me with a good horse, a loving family, and a support system that helps me pursue my dream."*

*Brie*



*"I owe this all to my horse, Drifter, who is phenomenal. I got her when I was nine years old. I was able to buy her and train her for barrel racing, pole bending, and goat tying. She's smaller than most of the winning horses, but she has more heart and she loves to run. I am so excited for December!"*

*Aspen*



## IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Continued from page 15*

...**Lori Beth Brooke** performed in the Georgetown Palace *Fiddler on the Roof* production as their accordionist in Georgetown, TX from June 6 through July 5. She also attended Bob Wills Day in Turkey, TX at the end of April for the first time. She had the honor of performing with **Miss Devon and The Outlaw** at the Church of Western Swing for three nights during the event as well as a Friday afternoon concert at the historical Phillips 66 Station. On Saturday night, Lori Beth was invited up to perform a couple of songs with the headlining COWS Band. In September, she will perform with **3 Trails West** at the Walnut Valley Festival in Winfield, KS.

...*To Race the Wind* is the title of the new album from **Claudia Nygaard**. Musicians on the project are a “who’s who” of Nashville session players, Claudia decided to produce this one herself, and says she could not be happier with the result. In fact, she feels it is her best album yet. The next step is to get the album mixed and mastered for a fall release.

...*Hombré*, the new album by **Dan Canyon**, is now accessible to all interested DJs at [NDXpress.com](http://NDXpress.com).

# Durango Cowboy Gathering

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- Four Days of Western Community Events
- Poets and Musicians from around the Country
- Special Events all day on Saturday!

Tickets and information at [DurangoCowboyGathering.org](http://DurangoCowboyGathering.org)

Congratulations to the 2025 Spur Award winner and finalists for Best Western Song.

**Winner: “Blessed by the West”**  
by Sarah Pierce and Randy Palmer,  
released on Pierce’s CD  
*Blessed by the West*

**Finalist: “Mustanger”**  
by Jim Jones and Mariam Funke,  
released on Jones’s CD  
*Storyteller: Tales from the West*

**Finalist: “The Saddle”**  
by Dave Stamey,  
released on Stamey’s CD *Porch Music*

2026 Spur Awards submissions are available at [WesternWriters.org](http://WesternWriters.org) after August 1, 2025.

The award is for original songs released for the first time in 2025.



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# Join Us!





# Chapter Update

## ARIZONA CHAPTER UPDATE

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

To all Arizona chapter members, thank you for your patience this past quarter as I have had some surgery and have been out of it so to speak. I know many of you have been busy performing, recording and promoting our music and poetry, that is great. The Arizona Chapter had a vibrant start to April with two exciting music releases: Ashley Wescott of Snowflake debuted her heartfelt single "Don't Fall in Love with a Cowboy," while Buddy



Ashley Wescott and Buddy Greenbloom perform live on CBS5 Good Morning Arizona.

Greenbloom of Tempe released his sixth radio single, "Highs and Lows," which he performed live on Good Morning Arizona accompanied by Arizona Peaches members Ashley Wescott (dobro) and Lindsey Merrill (fiddle). The momentum continued as the Arizona Peaches took the big stage in Florence on April 5 for the final round of The Road to Country Thunder, followed by a joint performance with



The Arizona Peaches perform at the Road to Country Thunder in Florence, Arizona.

Greenbloom at the Maricopa County Fair on April 6. The Arizona chapter's **3rd Annual 1-Day White Mountain Gathering** took place on June 21 in Show Low. The **2025 Arizona Cowboy Poets Gathering** is coming up fast! Tickets for the evening performances are available at [azcowboypoets.org](http://azcowboypoets.org). I encourage you to let Ashley or myself

*Continued on page 24*







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# RIDE EASY, PARD!

## STORIES AND TALL TALES

BY VIC ANDERSON

### CHARLIE RUSSELL TALE

Here is a story that was told by Charlie Russell, the great Western Artist and storyteller. I was fortunate that my grandmother knew Charlie and his wife, and I happened to meet a couple of old timers who rode with, probably drank with and told stories with/of Charlie. If you knew where to look, you might find them in one of his paintings or another.

**H**ere is a Charlie M. Russell tale which is included in one or more of his books.

"Charlie Brewster and I rode together many miles. He was a bronc rider of some note around the Missouri River breaks. While riding along one day, he realized he hadn't had a smoke since the last time the horse acted snake bit. Straddling a bronc on only its second ride, he was careful rollin' his smoke. He poured the T'baccy carefully in the trough of the paper, rolled it up the front of his shirt and got 'er licked good. Pulling a Sulfer stick from his vest pocket, he struck it on his saddle horn.

That 4 year old knot headed brute musta' heard the snap a the match and smelled the sulfur. He took into bucking like he was leavin' hell. Charlie got his reins all gathered up just about the time the bronc bucked off the edge of a cutbank. Charlie and the bronco ended up just sitting there,

nothing below them but 15 foot of air and a few cottonwood limbs. Charlie's companions saw the ruckus and come bustin' after him. They pulled up at the edge of the bank expectin' to find a dead horse and busted bronc stomper."

Charlie Brewster looked up and asked, "anybody got a match? Mine got blew out."

#### RIDE EASY PARD.....Vic

This story is the kind I heard much of my life at ranches, rodeos, campfires, bars or wherever there was someone to tell a tale and someone to listen and answer back with another tale. I never heard a cowboy poem other than a couple of Robert Service poems, until I found the IWMA. This is why I keep pounding on including short, usually humorous stories at cowboy gatherings.

**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.



# THE CIVIL WAR IN THE WEST

## A LITTLE BIT *of* HISTORY

By Johnny D. Boggs



Confederate  
General  
Henry Hopkins  
Sibley



The Valverde battlefield site in New Mexico south of Socorro.

I'm walking around Arizona's Picacho Peak with a friend, soaking in saguaros, other desert fauna and vistas, and thinking – as I often do – about movies.

After all, Picacho is the site of the westernmost Civil War battle that's often called the Battle of Picacho Pass.

Battle? We'll get to that in a jiffy.

Hollywood has gotten a kick out of bringing the Civil War to the American West. And not the Kansas West, which certainly saw the beginnings of the war that was to come, but Arizona and New Mexico's Civil War West.

Take director Robert Wise's *Two Flags West* (1950), John Sturges's *Escape from Fort Bravo* (1953), Sam Peckinpah's *Major Dundee* (1965), for instance. All movies with great casts and fine directors. All depicting Confederate prisoners of war joining up with Union soldiers to defeat Indians. Which never happened.

The biggest prisoner-of-war camp west of the Mississippi was Camp Ford, a former training camp turned into a prison compound in 1863 near Tyler, Texas (much closer to Louisiana than New Mexico). Camp Ford held more than 5,300 Union POWs in 1864 after the Union's badly managed Red River campaign. There are no reports of Camp Ford prisoners and guards pursuing Native Americans, but there are stories that guards played prisoners in a baseball game or two.

So much for any historical accuracy in those Hollywood movies.

But New Mexico (which then included Arizona) was invaded when Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley's Texas army entered the territory with plans to secure gold and recruits for the Confederacy. Sibley thought New Mexicans would gladly support the Rebel cause, failing to recall that

Texans had attempted to conquer and claim New Mexico in the 1840s and that New Mexicans have long memories.

Sibley and his "liberators" sought to take Santa Fe and control of the western terminus of the Santa Fe Trail, then march up to Colorado and get all that Pikes Peak gold for the Confederacy. He earned a modest victory February 21 at Valverde, took Albuquerque, then Santa Fe before meeting his Waterloo March 26-28 at Glorieta Pass – which also claims rights to the westernmost Civil War battle – and limping back to Texas.

Valverde casualties were estimated at 263 Union, 187 Confederate; Glorieta: 147 Union, 222 Confederate.



Not quite the 23,000 combined casualties to come at Shiloh on April 6-7.

Glorieta could make a pretty good movie, too, except that one of the “heroes” of the Union victory was a Colorado officer named John Chivington, a Methodist minister who earned damnation two years later when he led the massacre of mostly Cheyenne women, children and elderly at Colorado’s Sand Creek.

But before turning north in southern New Mexico, Sibley had sent roughly 200 soldiers, commanded by Captain Sherrod Hunter, west, and Hunter’s force arrived in Tucson on February 28. Union Colonel James Henry Carleton, meanwhile, was marching his roughly 1,800 California Volunteers east.

Hunter’s reason for leaving Tucson with his force isn’t known, but he moved west. When Carleton was informed of a Confederate patrol near Picacho, he sent Lieutenant James Barrett and a small force to capture the Rebs.

They clashed on April 15, 1862, at the rise of volcanic remnants about 50 miles northwest of Tucson.

Battle? It was barely a skirmish, involving a couple of dozen soldiers total. By most reports, Barrett and two California privates were killed, three Confederates were captured, and perhaps a handful on both sides were wounded. The Confederates claimed victory, but facing Carleton’s overwhelming force, withdrew.

All the way back to Texas.

So did Sibley’s force.

Sibley’s invasion did accomplish something, though.

On March 12, 1862, James M. Ashley, an Ohio Republican, introduced H.R. 357 into the House of Representatives, seeking to divide New Mexico Territory into two territories. The bill passed the House, 72-52, on May 8, 1862. Getting through the Senate wasn’t as easy, but on February 20, 1863, the Arizona Organic Act passed, 25-12. Four days later President Abraham Lincoln signed the law that created the Territory of Arizona, making “slavery or involuntary servitude ... hereby forever prohibited in all Territories now organized ....”

So we can thank Sibley’s Rebs for giving us Arizona and New Mexico if not historically accurate Western oaters. 🐾

JOHNNY D. BOGGS



Reenactment of the battle at Glorieta Pass held at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas, a living history museum in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS



A marker honoring the Confederate soldiers killed at the battle of Glorieta Pass in 1862, located between Santa Fe and Pecos, New Mexico.

JOHNNY D. BOGGS



Picacho Peak is a state park in Pinal County, Arizona.



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



# WESTERN EVENTS CALENDAR

## 2025

### DAY OF THE COWBOY

July 26 | Westcliffe, CO

### WORLD YODEL DAY

August 8

### 37TH ARIZONA COWBOY POETS GATHERING

August 7 – 9 | Prescott, AZ

### 4C COWBOY POETRY & MUSIC GATHERING

August 16 | Lawton, OK

### WINNSBORO COWBOY GATHERING

September 26 – 27 | Winnsboro, TX

### DURANGO COWBOY GATHERING

October 2 – 5 | Durango, CO

### WESTERN SLOPE COWBOY GATHERING

October 31 – November 1 | Grand Junction, CO

### IWMA 2025 CONVENTION

November 12 – 16 | Albuquerque, NM

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**marsha@westernmusic.org** to be  
included in the Western Events Calendar

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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](mailto:bestofthewest@swcp.com)

**W** report 'Western sightings' for one reason only. The world keeps focusing on cowboys for some [good] reason. Take the case of a non-Western single from The Cumberland River Project [from *Germany!*] called "Bitcoins & Tesla Shares." Google it! The song's lyric line points out that real richness is in the smile of your child, the warmth of an embrace and you know the rest. But the publicity on it?! All Cowboys! Cattle! Cowdogs!! Horses!!! Nowhere in the lyrics is such a scene mentioned. They use Western imagery to communicate core values present in their non-Western song!!

During the Superbowl broadcast, the online service Tubi made wild use of Cowboy awareness. In their hugely expensive TV ad, they set out to show "whatever is in your head is in ours too." So they created people with Stetson-shaped skulls! And they reinforced the idea with additional Western visuals. One ad for a prescription med suggested we might even comfortably perform roping and riding activities if we pop their pills. A newer ad for a telephone video game shows Jimmy Fallon with various alter egos. Its capper is an "emotional support cowboy!" Glad Bags' ad uses a Cowboy trick roper! And Flo and her crew from Progressive Insurance corraled vehicles they insure around "them-those-there-here parts." Obviously TV series such as "Yellowstone" and its spinoffs have ginned up The Cowboy. A recent series is called "Ransom Canyon." In an interview promoting it, actor James Brolin stated "my happy place is playing a cowboy" and as a kid he "used to dress up as Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Hoppy." Why are such contemporary Western series pitched to and accepted by ratings-&-money-focused networks in the first place? Because the public knows The Cowboy. They can be made to know Cowboy Music! But there we encounter a separate challenge. It threatens to snuff out any chance of pushing real awareness.

Before we've re-established ours as a distinct genre, some folks are only too willing to wimp out and allow Western to be grouped with others under the generic heading of "Folk" or worse...."Americana." True, there's resistance to this clustering movement. Traditional Country performer Tyler Childers voiced strong concern about it in his acceptance speech as "Emerging Artist of the Year" back in 2018. As he put it, "I feel Americana ain't no part of nothing and is a distraction

from the issues that we're facing on a bigger level as Country Music singers. It kind of feels like Purgatory." He said it at the Americana Music Awards ceremony!!

The subject of promotion came up during a recent meeting of our state IWMA chapter. It took me three tries to get that chapter started before it finally caught hold. I don't know how many times I've pitched creating a comprehensive, focused, directed, integral, flexible, multi-faceted-you-fill-in-the-blank campaign to reinsert Western Music into the public awareness, and *not* as "Americana." To my way of thinking, such a master plan needs to be made up of several components, including the following: First, how 'bout officially adopting the *clear definition* of Western Music that has appeared at the top of these Western World Tour columns for several years now? *Read it!* Worded through contributions from fifteen to twenty devotees, it was designed to encompass the genre and quickly explain its character to any who ask. Next, we need a Committee To Encourage Placement of Western In Popular Media. In our chapter meeting it was reported some new people at the IWMA November event seemed to think Western is all trail songs and they don't relate to it. While we want to acknowledge and celebrate our heritage, it might not be smart to lead with vintage subject material in promoting Western to new audiences, at least until they are properly immersed. It might also prove daunting to try to gain placement for trail songs in episodes of "NCIS" or whoever else might use our music to illuminate scenes. Then, we start a Committee of Computer Savvy People To Watch For Opportunities To Link & Insert Western. It will likely be the younger folks and we do have a Youth Chapter, don't we?! And let's create our own Award That Is Sufficiently Showy Or Richly Framed Making It Desirable To Display – designed to honor ad agencies, clients, TV or film producers or whoever who uses genuine Western imagery in a positive light, presented by the International Western Music Association in recognition of their efforts. And issue press releases when it's been presented! It lets people in prominent places know there is a such a genre and a supporting organization for it. Finally, a good ole By All Means Plug In More Thoughts On The Subject division. Think about it. Then, once and for all, let's get it done. 🐾



## Chapter Update

*Continued from page 18*

know of any events or news from your neck-of-the-woods so we can report it. I hope this finds everyone healthy and happy. Lastly, I will be retiring as chapter president the end of the year—any member interested in serving as the next president is encouraged to contact Ashley Wescott (current secretary) or Marsha Short.

### **BLACK HILLS AND BEYOND CHAPTER**

**President: Brad Exton**

**Ramblinrangers@yahoo.com**

Summer is upon us and with it is a busy time for all of our entertainers and our supporting members. Western music and poetry are finding new venues and audiences in the states that our chapter covers. John Lowell has a busy summer planned, teaching songwriting and guitar at music camps, a couple of songwriter festivals, a tour of England and Europe, in addition to several concerts and shows around the western U.S. KC LaCourse, poet and host of Hearts of the West video showcase is recording her fifth CD of original poetry. She recently received two belt buckles for first place win and reserve win at the 9th annual Crossroads Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Oklahoma. In September, KC will travel to Australia for the Wentworth Country Music Festival to share her love of the spoken word to those from “down under”. Congrats on the buckles, KC. Hearts of the Hills, Sherl Cederburg and Pegie Douglas are having a busy summer playing shows at the 1880 Town in Midland, SD, Custer State Park, and the KOA in Hot Springs. Sherl also played at the Sidney, NE Gold Rush Days and the State Vets Home in Hot Springs. Dean Bruce is getting the poetry word out this summer in venues in Valentine, NE, Medora, ND, Lewistown, MT, and the WJ Ranch in Fordyce NE. Harland Allen will be busy playing all summer at the Kara Creek Saloon but is finding time to participate in the Sidney Gold Rush Days and the Hot Springs Arts Festival. The Carr Family

Band will be one of the headliners at the Sidney Gold Rush Days show. The Ramblin’ Rangers are living up to their name. After rambling to several performances in Texas, they are now performing in places such as Medora, ND, Chugwater, WY, Lewistown, MT and other points in between. A couple of highlights coming up for them is that they will be the opening act for Kristyn Harris on the Saturday night show at the Montana Cowboy Gathering in August. They also received word that they are being inducted into the Legends of Dakota Country Music Hall of Fame in September in Mitchell, SD. The BH&B Chapter will be hosting the Tuesday night showcase at the Convention in ABQ. We hope to see many of you there.

### **CALIFORNIA CHAPTER**

**President: Scott Tonelson**

**Scott.tonelson@gmail.com**



*Cast at the Main Theater show at the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival 2025.*

We have had a successful return to the Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival 2025, giving a show at the Main Theater. We have more exciting shows and events planned: Vasquez Rocks Park, Placerita Canyon Nature Center, Santa Ynez Valley Historical Museum in August, National Day of the Cowboy and Cowgirl at the Autry Museum July 26, and the Death Valley 49ers Encampment Oct 31 – Nov 2. Attached is a cast picture from our show at the Main Theater. Cast included Buffalo Bryan Marr, Joe Lima, Sharone Rosen & Mark Hochberg, Alan and Tanya Chenworth, Greg Khougaz, ScottT & Earnie Neagle. Our chapter president ScottT will be performing at the Durango Cowboy Gathering in October.

### **COLORADO CHAPTER**

**President: Geary Parsons**

**gearyparsons@outlook.com**

Summer is just around the corner—and by the time you read this, it may already be here. As for me, I recently took part in the Old West Days & Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering, held April 24–27. I performed a few songs, recited a couple of poems, and had the pleasure of being accompanied by Sam Noble on his tub bass. Lindy Simmons recently released a poetry CD entitled “Range Rhymes,” crediting Geary Parsons and Mike Mullins for exceptional engineering and guitar work. Lindy was a headliner at the Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering in April. Lindy’s current project is converting her children’s booklets on writing cowboy poetry to teaching charts that can be easily transported to classrooms. She will be presenting the booklets and charts at a workshop at IWMA’s convention this fall. Poppa Mac has published his latest book. “Pasture Pastor, Riding the Range in Faith”. Patty Clayton has released a



*Geary Parsons at Old West Days and Nebraska Cowboy Gathering.*



*Lindy Simmons at Nebraska Cowboy Poetry Gathering.*

*Continued on page 26*



# ON THE ROAD WITH IWMA

The IWMA continues to be represented at many events, festivals and gatherings. **Phil Willig** is definitely the “ambassador at large”, taking IWMA materials and banners to as many gatherings as possible. He was recently seen at the **Old West Days in Valentine, NE**. **Brad Exton** set up shop at the **Stampede Saloon and Eatery in Chugwater, WY**. **George Russell** and **Bruce Johnson** played at the **Dakota Cowboy Gathering in Medora, ND**. IWMA President **Marvin O'Dell** and his wife, Western Way Editor **Theresa**, could be seen in **Nashville, TN** at **11th Country with Heart benefit for St Jude's Children's Hospital** organized by IWMA members **Bobby Marquez** and **Jennifer Herron** of the **IWMA-TN chapter**. Representing the organization whenever and wherever there are people is one way we will keep the IWMA growing.



Phil Willig at Old West Days-Valentine, NE.



Brad Exton set up at Stampede Saloon & Eatery, Chugwater, WY IWMA Table.



George Russell and Bruce Johnson playing at the Dakota Cowboy Gathering, Medora, ND.

## 11TH COUNTRY WITH HEART BENEFIT FOR ST JUDE'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



Marvin, Theresa, Bobby Marquez and Jennifer Herron at the 11th Country with Heart benefit for St Jude's Children's Hospital, Nashville, TN



Rex Allen Jr. playing at the 11th Country with Heart benefit for St Jude's Children's Hospital.



Sign showing all of the talent that performed at the 11th Country with Heart benefit for St Jude's Children's Hospital.



# Chapter Update

Continued from page 24



Sam Noble with his tub bass



Timberline Cowboys

new single! It's a swingin' little number co-written with Utah Cowgal poet Sam DeLeeuw titled 'So Many Cowboys!' Patty submitted this song to the IWMA Annual Songwriting Contest last year and she and Sam were delighted to be recognized with an Honorable Mention among other finalists. The Timberline Cowboys performed at the Arizona Folklore Preserve on June 7-8, with special guest Lindy Simmons joining them. JJ Steele presented his documentary video on the Greeley Trail Dusters at the Cowgirls of the West Museum in Cheyenne in April. It was the official release date of his new cowboy poetry CD "Just Passin' Thru". Dennis Russell and JJ Steele did a

poetry recitation for Poetry Month at the West Custer County Library in April. The Russellers, Patty Clayton, and JJ Steele put together a Spring Roundup for the Bell Tower in Florence. Dennis and JJ are busy putting together the 4th Annual Day of the Cowboy Celebration on July 26 in Westcliffe featuring Jon Chandler and Ernie Martinez, Dale Page, Doug Figgs, Jenna and Kasey Thunborg, The Russellers, JJ Steele and Terry Nash as MC. Our Inaugural America's Mountain Festival was held in July in Woodland Park, CO. Performers included Curtis Grimes, Michael Martin Murphey, an IMWA artist, Jon Wolfe and headliner Ned LeDoux, son of the great Chris LeDoux. Dan McCorison traveled to Pagosa Springs for a private house concert plus appeared with other artists at the Liberty Theater there in June. Floyd Beard Cowboy Poet from Kim, CO, was honored to be the guest speaker at the South Routt County High School Annual FFA Banquet in Oak Creek, CO where Floyd was the Agriculture Education teacher and FFA Adviser 48 years ago. The capacity crowd enjoyed Floyd's Cowboy Poetry and the retelling of stories from the 1970's. Floyd even had a couple of his students from 1977-78 come back to eat and visit with him and Valerie.

## COLUMBIA CHAPTER

**President: Tom Swearingen**

**tomswearingen@gmail.com**



Larry Wilder with WWII Vet Bill.  
100 years young!

In June we hosted another successful open mic at the Bowman Museum in Prineville, OR. The museum will also be the location of our annual meeting and concert in the fall. Our youth cowboy poetry contest is taking entries through



Western Swing Society Hall of Famer Grace Clark



Cowboy Jazz with Tom Swearingen

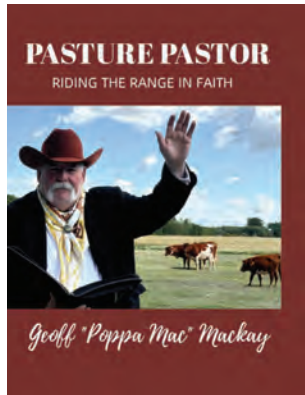
Sept. 1 at iwmacolumbia.org. In the meantime, individual performing members are out and about. So far in '25 Larry Wilder has been before 129 audiences. Working primarily with elders and veterans, Larry reminds us that western music is a vital avenue to appreciation of America and our musical heritage. Oregon poet Duane Nelson has released a new CD titled *Cowcamp Serenade*. Grace Clark was inducted into the Western Swing Society Hall of Fame, Sacramento, CA. Tom Swearingen's collaboration with the quartet *Cowboy Jazz* continues. Portland newspaper *Willamette Week* named the group one of the Top 5 New Bands of 2025. The group has



Dan Canyon



a new album titled *Postcards from Oregon* in the works featuring 10 new compositions incorporating Tom's poems. Dan Canyon has been busy putting the final touches to his 3rd album, *Dan Canyon's Hombré*. Watch for the video of the lead-off single, *Home on the Range*. And Poppa Mac has published a collection of original Christian cowboy poetry.



Poppa Mac's newest book

# KANSAS CHAPTER President: Martha Farrell marthasfarrell@gmail.com

Hello friends – We'd like to give a shoutout to our longtime members Ron Wilson and Jeff Davidson, who are the new President and Secretary of the Western Wordsmiths Chapter. We're proud of these guys. They are the key organizers of our Kansas Cowboy Poetry Contest which is in full swing right now. Preliminary rounds were



3 Trails West Roger Eilts, Jim Winters, Leo Eilts



Kansas Cowboy Poets Scott Wiswell, Mary Powell and Ron Wilson performed at EquiFest, a large gathering of horse enthusiasts.

held in two regions of the state in May and June, and the finals are coming up at the end of July in conjunction with National Day of the Cowboy activities. Jim Winters of 3 Trails West has been staging a series of concerts this year in Ottawa, Kansas. The event scheduled on the National Day of the Cowboy will of course feature 3 Trails West, along with cowboy poet Danny McCurry. Leo

*Continued on page 28*

## CONGRATULATIONS TO IWMA HALL OF FAMERS, TENNESSEE'S RIDERS IN THE SKY!

MAY 9TH AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY  
MARKED THE RIDERS  
**8,000th** APPEARANCE!!

Too Slim says "I've always thought of Riders' shows as a limited edition, and it's fitting that they're numbered. Statistically we've appeared every other day for almost 47 years. Whew!"

*Thanks to Ranger Doug for keeping track of it all the way back to #0001.*



After celebrating **8,000th** performances, this was the scene in Nashville's famed Parnassus Bookstore when the Riders celebrated Bobbie and Bill Malone's wonderful biography, *Riders In The Sky: Romancing the West with Music and Humor*.

**PICK UP YOUR COPY!**



# MARVIN O'DELL

First Studio Solo Recording  
Since 2006

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## Chapter Update

*Continued from page 27*



Tallgrass Express String Band – Derrick Doty, Annie Wilson, Carl Reed

and Roger Eilts report that they all have a busy summer ahead with 3 Trails West. Annie Wilson of Tallgrass Express String Band has a heart for teaching. She has recently developed children's programming featuring a slideshow and singalongs about cowboys, ranching, and ecology of the tallgrass prairie. Her bookings this year include a science education center, library, and the Pioneer Bluffs Ranching Heritage Center. Our Kansas Chapter bought 3 IWMA banners this year and have been putting them to good use around the state. They are a great focal point at events large and small.

### NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

**President: Judi Anderson**

**[judianderson@comcast.net](mailto:judianderson@comcast.net)**

The New Mexico chapter continues to have great attendance at our monthly open mics at The Best Western Rio Grande the 4th Monday of each month. It is open to members and non-members. Our MC's change each month. A huge shout out to Dave Levenson for setting up and managing our sound! We had a great turn out for our Afternoon Tea in March. Thirty-six people came and enjoyed some great tea, food and conversation. Thank you to our NM Board members for all their hard work. We hope this will become a yearly event! We are working on our National Day of the Cowboy event. Our planning committee consists of Tony Duarte, Scott Wilson, Bonnie Rutherford and Bernard Carr. This year





Jack George graduates as salutatorian of his high school class.

it will be held at The Best Western Rio Grande at 1015 Rio Grande Blvd NW in Albuquerque on Saturday July 26. We will have music, poetry, western authors and a western photographer! Details will be revealed on our Facebook page. We congratulate Kaelan Dryer who received his certificate in Entrepreneurship from CNM, and Member and Cowboy Poet Jack George graduated Quemado High School as Salutatorian for his class! Way to go Jack and Kaelan! Syd Masters has two nominations at this year's New Mexico Music Awards! Patty Clayton has a new single co-written with Utah Cowgal poet Sam DeLeeuw, titled 'So Many Cowboys!' Patty will be performing in Medora, ND for 2 weeks in August for the Teddy Roosevelt Medora Foundation's summer music program. Independence Creek (Louis Blackwell, Sally Wisely and Tim Hankins) had a two-day performance at the Arizona Folklore Preserve in Sierra Vista, AZ and also performed in the Albuquerque Central Library Music Events series in April. They played at the Capitol Bar in Socorro in May. E. Joe Brown was an exhibiting writer at the Tombstone Festival of Western Books and the Tucson Festival of Books. He will be hosting a panel at the Western Writers of America Conference in Amarillo. He will be a featured contributor at the Chisolm Trail Heritage Center for their Day of the Cowboy Celebration. His third novel in the Kelly Can Saga Series launches in August. He now is a member of the Editorial Staff for Roundup Magazine, the official publication of Western Writers of America. Chapter member, Barbara Alt, has released a new children's chapter

book entitled "Dreamland". While not a western book *per se*, there are a couple chapters with western themes and also a few nods to some of our western performers and authors. Buy her book and see if you can pick identify any of them!! This book is a collection of short stories for ages 6+ based on a game she and her friends played in her yard in Butte, Montana growing up. Each chapter is a short story describing a different experience in Dreamland. There are threads that tie them together, and at the end she includes an Epilogue with a poem she wrote called "Colors". This was a special and unique collaboration between Barb and her illustrator, who both grew up (at different times) in the same house/yard, which inspired this book. More about Dreamland and other children's picture books Barb has published can be found at her website, [www.Bar-blyn.net](http://www.Bar-blyn.net). The Arizona Wildflowers spent the month of May playing in Branson, Missouri. They are excited to perform at the Arizona Gathering in Prescott in August and the Durango Gathering in October!

#### OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

**President: Robert Maxwell Case**  
**[robert@robertmaxwellcase.com](mailto:robert@robertmaxwellcase.com)**

Prairie Haven event center in Guthrie, OK, presented An Evening with Michael Martin Murphey on June 17 for a celebration of over 50 years of Wildfire and his career. Leigh Ann and Scott Matthews performed at the Bass Reeves Western History Conference in Muskogee, OK, on June 28. Chapter member Ron Secoy has announced the 4C Cowboy Music and Poetry Gathering on August 16 at the Cache Creek Cowboy Church in Lawton, OK.



Ron Secoy



Susie & Robert Maxwell, A Little Farther West

The first ever free event (planned to be annual) will feature award winning and noted cowboy singers and poets from Oklahoma and neighboring states, including Oklahoma Cowboy Poet Laureates Jay Snider and Francine Roark Robison. Additional performers will include Dove and Mike Schmidt, Ed Meyer, Glenn Murray, Randy Lynn Shelley, William (Dub) Loyd, Therron Michael Carlson, Curtis Krigbaum, Robert Beene, Kenney Fields, Dan Hutchins, Smokey Culver, Billy Tumbleweed, Aspen Black, Devon Dawson, Teresa Burleson, Amiilya Lee, Danny Carl Williams, Terry Brown, Don Williams, Lily Anderson, Jay Snider, and the 4C Worship Team. For more information, contact Ron at 580-606-9574 or [secoyron818@gmail.com](mailto:secoyron818@gmail.com). After more than 10 years on the Oklahoma chapter's executive board, Robert Maxwell Case is stepping down due to his wife Susie's ongoing medical issues. Consequently, their group A Little Farther West is on hiatus although they plan to remain avid members of the IWMA going forward. Vice president Leigh Ann Matthews has graciously accepted the position of interim chapter president pending a new election.

#### TENNESSEE CHAPTER

**President: Mary Kaye Holt**  
**[Marykayeholt@yahoo.com](mailto:Marykayeholt@yahoo.com)**

The 2nd Quarter of 2025 has been a productive one for the Tennessee Chapter! Appearing on Nationally acclaimed Song of the Mountains and airing on NPT was IWMA Hall of Fame and TN chapter members Michael Martin Murphey and Phoebe White along with Folk Legends The Kingston Trio! The

*Continued on page 31*





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

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

## Where Can I Find...

It used to be that there were so many sources for classic Western recordings, finding them was not an issue. But in recent years, locating CDs other than the latest releases has become increasingly difficult. So this quarter's column will focus on how to find the older material *before it's all gone!*

By chance, I just received a catalog from an outfit called *Bargain Books* in today's mail, so that may be a good place to start. They specialize in print material rather than CDs, but they do have a few discs in their inventory, and this particular catalogue has the 2-CD set of **Sons of the Pioneers** recordings from 1934-49, released by the Acrobat label. To be fair, I haven't heard this set, so cannot vouch for the audio fidelity. But it's listed for \$12.95, so, if the audio isn't flawed, it looks like a good buy. The title is **Tumbling Tumbleweeds**. And the same catalog has the Enlightenment label's **Marty Robbins: The Complete Recordings 1952-60**. It includes Marty's LPs, **Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs** and **More Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs** (\$11.95). The mailing address for these and other discounted items is: Edward R. Hamilton *Bookseller* Co., PO Box 15, Falls Village, CT 06031-0015. You get the best deals, i.e. \$4 postage and handling per order, from the catalog, but they also have a website: [www.HamiltonBook.com](http://www.HamiltonBook.com).

There's another CD I haven't heard, but a couple of people I know have bought it and they endorse it, in part because it includes tracks from several eras. It's:



### 75 Greatest Hits of The Sons of The Pioneers

This 3 CD set is available via Amazon. Two outstanding CDs of The Sons of the Pioneers' Orthacoustic transcriptions, *The Essential Collection* and *Symphonies of the Sage*, are also still available on Amazon as of this writing.

The Jasmine label in England has cut back on issuing new releases of old material, but they still have a website full of outstanding old recordings you may want to check out if you missed them when they came out earlier. Their website is: [jasmine-records.co.uk](http://jasmine-records.co.uk). They have excellent CDs by **Rex Allen**, **Sons of the Pioneers**, **Elton Britt**, **Slim Clark** and others, and the audio is "like new."

The GeneAutry.com website still has a few copies of his CDs, but most titles are sold out. However, in some instances, the site has links to video clips of Gene singing the songs on the CDs!

A couple of decades ago, a couple of gentlemen in England started a company whose aim was to preserve the old country and Western recordings that had begun to disappear. They

called their company The British Archive of Country Music, but they included hard-to-find Western material in their listings, especially **Monte Hale**, **The Sons of the Pioneers** (rare transcriptions), **Carson J. Robison**, **Ozie Waters**, **Andy Parker & the Plainsmen**, **Rex Allen** and **Gene Autry**. In the early years, their audio was not always as clean as it became later. Modern technology has permitted them to "clean-up" the old original discs, and today's customers who purchase the most recent releases, will benefit from that technology. In addition, their website offers the prospective customer the opportunity to hear brief samples of the audio of each track on the disc they may want to purchase! Their website is: [country-music-archive.com](http://country-music-archive.com)

The Nashville-based *Country Rewind* label collaborated with **Rex Allen, Jr.** a few years ago, to issue one of his CDs as well as CDs of previously unreleased material recorded by his dad, the **Sons of the Pioneers**, **Tex Ritter**, **Tex Williams**, **Merle Travis**, etc. Their address is: [www.countryrewindrecords.com](http://www.countryrewindrecords.com).

Of course, there's always Amazon, which may still have, among other things, a few of the outstanding releases put out by Germany's Bear Family label long ago. And Bear Family, itself, may still have a few items (including their own LPs) at [www.bear-family.com/country/western-music/western-music](http://www.bear-family.com/country/western-music/western-music).

The Western Jubilee label still has some of the CDs recorded by Don Edwards, Waddie Mitchell, Rich O'Brien, Red Steagall and the Sons of the San Joaquin, at [folkways.si.edu/search?query=Western%20Jubilee%20Recording%20](http://folkways.si.edu/search?query=Western%20Jubilee%20Recording%20).



## GENE AUTRY, CASS COUNTY BOYS, PAT BUTTRAM

### "Gene Autry: Melody Ranch Radio Shows"

BACM736



For it's 12th Gene Autry release, the British Archive of Country Music has chosen 27 selections,

many with Gene's spoken introduction, from Gene Autry's Melody Ranch radio show. To me, the immensely popular, long-running show from the 1940s-50s is especially significant because it served as my introduction to Gene Autry in the 1940s, long before I was old enough to see him on-screen. I literally remember lying on the floor in my living room every Sunday evening, listening to the weekly show on the family radio. It was broadcast "live", coast-to-coast.

The selections on this new disc typically include spoken intros by Gene, himself, and you can hear audience approval in many instances. This release will appeal to the causal listener who is interested in getting a taste of what the show was like in the days before tv, as well as the dyed-in-the-wool fan who is looking for "everything Gene." The selections range from old cowboy tunes like "Utah Trail" and "When the Bloom is on the Sage" to popular songs of the day like "Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain" and rarities, "Empty Heart" and "Longing."

The BACM website has clips of each track for you to preview, and orders can be placed on the site. This CD will appeal to long-time Gene Autry fans as well as those who have only heard "Rudolph" and want to hear some of the Western and Country music (as well as his radio style) that made him one of America's most popular entertainers for decades. Available online from country-music-archive.com. 🐾

## Chapter Update

Continued from page 29



11th Country with Heart benefit for St. Jude's Children's Hospital poster.

super talented ladies of Gone With the West completed their highly successful TUMBLEWEED TOUR traveling through Tennessee, New Mexico, Colorado and Texas delighting audiences and making new fans of Western Music! Watch for new music coming soon. Bobby Marquez concluded his 11th Country with Heart benefit for St. Jude's Children's Hospital with an All Star Lineup including IWMA member and Hall of Famer, Rex Allen, Jr. Bobby and wife Jennifer continue to change lives through the magic of music! THE 43rd SUNDAY MORNING COUNTRY wrapped up a busy week for CMA Music Festival! IWMA-TN and IWMA Hall of Fame member Cowboy Joe Babcock is one of the founders. One of the sweetest photos from the 2024 Sunday Mornin' Country Moments...



Cowboy Joe Babcock with his late wife, Carol, at the 43rd Sunday Morning Country sing.



Michael Martin Murphey, Phoebe Ann White and the legendary Kingston Trio appear on Song of the Mountains airing on NPT

After singing, "Until Then" Cowboy Joe Babcock gently kisses his wife, the late Carol Babcock, while his daughter Lorrie stands by. From the beginning, Joe, Carol, and Lorrie have been with the Music City Christian Fellowship, the producers of Sunday Morinin' Country. Watch for more news to come as our members are in the studios creating new music and on the road spreading the story of Western Music and the Western Lifestyle! Please visit our Facebook page, International Western Music Association-Tennessee Chapter to keep updated on all our happenings.



Gone with The West

### TEXAS CHAPTER

**President: Cary Wiseman**

**Wisemanranch71@gmail.com**

Summer is here and music camps are in full swing in Texas. Y Bar J Youth Western Music and Poetry Camp has added some amazing things to camp this year and we can't wait to show y'all pictures once the camp finishes. Texas members watch your emails for more information on upcoming events that we are currently planning and convention in Albuquerque is only a few short months away!! God Bless and Happy Trails!

Continued on page 34

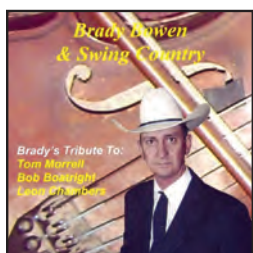




Submit CDs (preferred) to Rick Huff, PO Box 8442, Albuquerque, NM, 87198-8442 or DOWNLOADS to [bestofthewest@swcp.com](mailto:bestofthewest@swcp.com). Submitting a CD for review does not guarantee that it will be reviewed or that a review will be published. Finalized CD cover art must accompany the work and be unsigned.

## BRADY BOWEN AND COUNTRY SWING

*"Volume 9: Tribute to Tom Morrell, Bob Boatright & Leon Chambers"*



How trippingly that title flows off the tongue! Happily the Western Swing

flows sublimely in the title legends' hands and those of the collection's other master players....including some more we've lost who could be honored. Sitting in on various tracks "as part of" Brady Bowen and Country Swing, the Playboys' great vocalist Leon Rausch (2019) shines again as do Curtis Potter and Durwood Strube (both 2016), Gil Prather (2022) and Mark Abbott (2020). But then that title would need to be continued in the next issue!

Some of the tracks could have come from Tom Morrell's Time Warp Tophands days, or at least much of the personnel does. Crowdpleasers such as "San Antonio Rose," "Sugar

Moon" and "Westphalia Waltz" must be present in such a tribute, of course. But some Brady originals and some less frequently heard classics will please you as well.

"I'll Break Out Again Tonight," "Heart Over Mind," "I've Got A New Heartache" and "Still A Lot Of Love In San Antone" are a few of them.

Other skilled players present with the ol' team roper Brady Bowen include Jody Nix, Jess Meador, C.B. Sutton and Greg Gibbs. These are landmark releases, in both their intent and their quality. Highly recommended, nineteen tracks including intros.



## HELENE CRONIN

*"Maybe New Mexico"*



Word of warning: This is a review of an album that isn't specifically Western, but

its songs manage to embody many of the key Western tenets and

ideals in highly artful lyrics. Its messages are strikingly clear and memorable in that they lock and load in the first pass through.

The arrangements of these songs are lovely and languid. In hearing this material, I was struck by the parallels to Western themes. For example, "Ain't That Just Like A Man" exhibits cowboy honesty without being Cowboy. "Visitors" is imbued with the Western drifter's spirit. "Makers Mark" demonstrates a more fleshed-out depiction of The Cowboy Code. "Dear Life" exemplifies the encouragement to 'cowboy up.' And the title track "Maybe New Mexico" says perhaps it's the healing place, but such a nurturing land will surely be found somewhere in the West. All in a pleasing, easily listenable package.

We keep saying that Western themes are universal. To my way of thinking we should recognize and salute them as they appear, even when they're not specifically 'out on the trail.' Twelve tracks, highly recommended for those who courageously listen to other stuff too!



## GARY KIRKMAN

### *"True Stories of Life On The Ranch Vol. 1"*



He's a working cowboy and current President of the IWMA's Arizona Chapter. Poet Gary Kirkman offers thoughts

in rhyme over a guitar backing...some done with effects as well. These "true stories" are given just enough cowboy embellishment to make them especially "true," of course. Okay, a couple are pretty liberally embellished! Some reasoning behind that can be found in "Cowboy's Clock," an album pick that pictures a new and unexpected benefit of creative yarn spinnin'!

Other picks include "This Old Guitar," "Watch What You Wish For" (definitely one for the 'ages'), "Legend Of Sam Foster" (caught with his pants down, so to speak), "Jed Flake & His Bear Tag" (there's just a right way to do things) and "Ivermectin" (medical advice I wouldn't take if I were you). Kirkman also gives a track over to his talented daughter Ashley Westcott and her song "A Cowboy's Heart" which I named as a pick elsewhere in this column...but I'll name it one again!

Thirteen tracks total, it's a pleasant ride all around. Recommended.



## DUANE NELSON

### *"Cowcamp Serenade"*



The man's card says he's a "Cowboy and Poet." Important distinction, that. The classic advice to

would-be authors is "write about what you know." This is just that!

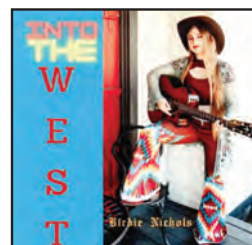
You'll know the real cowboy life a bit better and, through Nelson's superior delivery, enjoy getting there all the more with the CD picks "Alkali Lake Cowcamp 7B Ranch," "Bull Power," "Rules For Gunsel" and "No Complaints." Other picks include "Hey Babe I Found Us A Place" (the cowboy's idea of perfection so you can just about predict where it goes), "Cowboy Certification" (what it takes to get there), title track "Cowcamp Serenade" (the natural night music on each side of a cowboy's day) and "Requiem" (for the horse he'd cuss daily...until the end, of course). Most are original works, but Nelson also offers covers of "The Shepherd's Lament" from Curley Fletcher and one from the late Dennis Gaines that may hold the title for title length "The Undisputed Heavyweight Grand Champeen Calf Rasser Of The World."

On the technical side, I have to level a criticism I've lobbed before. The tracks are too tightly packed with each other to allow for proper consideration and reflection on each. Almost no pause! What the heck's the hurry??? But it's a great set of works and definitely worth your time. Eighteen tracks, including Intro and Epilog, recommended.



## BIRDIE NICHOLS

### *"Into The West" (EP)*



So what have we here?! An Arizona-bred singer/songwriter working in Nashville who opts to lead

with Western! Birdie Nichols calls herself a "Western Country artist." [Helluva good idea there...using the terms "Western & Country" and "W & C"!! Whatcha think?? People already know what that "W" stands for in "C

& W!" Anyway, back to Birdie]. Her promo material is Cowboy as the sky is wide! It describes her writing with phrases like "true cowgirl at heart," "authentic spirit of the West" and "sharing the beauty of the American West with the world!" Go, (cow) girl!

Titles (and picks) include "Into The West," "No Cattle Kind Of Cowboy" (a poke at faux-pokes), "Desert Lilies Blooming," "The Dutchman's Mine," and "Golden Fields." Pretty much by necessity if you're pursuing chart action, the arrangements around her acoustic guitar are Contemporary Country. But the lyrics contain enough poetic mystery to have people discussing them.

Nichols has mounted YouTube videos for each of the songs in this EP, so she is definitely serious about the thing. Plenty has been launched to draw attention to this release. Let's draw some more! Eight songs total, recommended.



## JAMES MALTESE, TREY HENSLEY, LEYTON ROBINSON

### *"The Painted Lady Of The Plains" (Concept Album)*



"Twelve songs, one story!" That's a phrase from the promotional material accompanying this release.

The songs are written by James Maltese and performed well by Trey Hensley. The singing voice of the title lady is ably provided by Leyton Robinson.

In construction and execution the songs are solid ones. Some end rather abruptly, but the listener needs to remember that the story line continues.

*Continued on page 35*



# Chapter Update

*Continued from page 31*

## UTAH CHAPTER

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

Greetings from the Beehive State. Our Chapter is alive, well and productive as we look forward to a busy summer doling out Western Style Entertainment. Right away we're anticipating our Utah Chapter second quarter get-together, which will be held in the "Far North" of our state in Logan. Along with any business we need to take care of we'll have a dinner, then we'll present a Showcase of our talented members for Logan's "Summer People", who gather in the area each year to escape the hotter temperatures down south. Featured in this program will be members **Dale Major, Chris Mortensen, Many Strings (Tony and Carol Messerly), Brian Arnold, and Jo Kirkwood**. Looking in the rear view mirror, our chapter has been involved in a number of gatherings that have enriched and entertained the lives of our communities. Payson City recently hosted our annual Heritage Dinner, which is a time each year during Cowboy Poetry Week when we celebrate someone who has made an exceptional contribution to the Cowboy and Pioneer Heritage of Utah. Past Utah IWMA recipients include **Sam DeLeeuw, Brian Arnold, Jo Kirkwood, and Paul Bliss**. Looking forward, our members will be entertaining at county fairs, community events, senior centers, and family reunions, including a "Private Showing" for community members at our Summer Party in Sevier County. Most information about Utah's future and past events can be found on a website that the Utah Chapter shares with the Cowboy Poets of Utah, [www.cowboypoetsofutah.org](http://www.cowboypoetsofutah.org). All members of the Utah Chapter are welcome to submit their bio information to this website as well as information about upcoming events. Here's hoping everyone has a successful summer pickin' and rhyming.

## WESTERN WORDSMITHS CHAPTER

**President: Ron Wilson**  
**ron@ronscowboypoetry.com**

IWMA Vice President (and Western Wordsmiths member) Tom Swearingen honored us as the featured speaker on our May Western Wordsmiths' zoom, part of our new initiative to conduct an open zoom meeting for Wordsmiths chapter members each quarter. We were pleased to hear Tom's comments about IWMA moving to juried award selections. Tom is doing innovative work in partnering with jazz musicians to incorporate western culture with jazz performance. His poetry was featured on the opening concert of a recent jazz festival in the northwest. The Portland newspaper named Cowboy Jazz as one of the best new bands of 2025. Past President Mark Munzert reports that he has been busy performing at senior centers and suggests those could be excellent venues for appreciative audiences. Terry Nash and Doug Figgs will be joining Wyoming singer Jimmy Cantwell for the inaugural Laramie Peak Cowboy Poetry Gathering, July 20 at Wheatland WY. This event is the brainchild of Amy Lesatz, long-time follower of regional cowboy gatherings such as the Western Slope Cowboy Gathering, the Durango Cowboy Poetry Gathering and the Colorado Cowboy Gathering in Golden to name a few. Lesatz hopes to make the LPCPG an annual event. Western Wordsmiths members will be involved with the first-ever National Cattle Trails Conference to be conducted in Cleburne, Texas on October 24-25. By fortunate happenstance, that will take place on the same weekend as the Red Steagall Cowboy Gathering in the Fort Worth Stockyards so participants can attend both. Another part of our Western Wordsmiths chapter program of work for 2025 is the goal of an improved web presence. The domain name [westernwordsmiths.org](http://westernwordsmiths.org) has now been purchased. That will eventually become a new website for the chapter.

## YOUTH CHAPTER

**Committee**  
**Belinda Gail**  
**belindagail@protonmail.com**  
**LeeLee Robert**  
**lee@leeleemusic.com**  
**Marsha Short**  
**marsha@westernmusic.org**



*Pictured are participants from the 2024 Showcase at AZ Folklore Preserve, Bodhi Linde, Jack George, Venessa Carpenter, and Jenna and Kayce Thunborg. (archived photo) Photo from 2025 Showcase not available.*

It's been a busy summer for the IWMA Youth Chapter! Mackynsie & Austin McKedy, Bridger Burrus, Sienna Yetter, and Cataleya & Koda Pagitt all attended the BAM Music Camp in Turkey, TX. Devon Dawson taught a class on Swing Guitar. Ella Broussard attended the Elmore Fiddle Camp in Bowie, TX and Tenley Boyd and Amiiyla Sky Lee attended the YBarJ Camp. Chapter Members were recipients of IWMA Scholarships. In the ten years since IWMA established the fund, over \$42,000 in scholarships have been awarded. June 21-22 was the IWMA Youth Showcase at the Arizona Folklore Preserve. This year Jack George, Birdie Nichols, Kailer Hedden, and Venessa Carpenter were showcased. A big thank you to Mike Rutherford for continuing to focus this weekend on our talented youth and the Arizona Folklore Preserve for being a huge supporter of the Scholarship Fund. Two of our new youth chapter members, Aspen and Brie Dietrich (*Arizona Wildflowers*) were busy with rodeo competitions and have found themselves headed to the Junior World Championships. (Read more about this in the Youth Outreach feature, page 16.) 🐾



## RICK HUFF'S REVIEWS

*Continued from page 33*

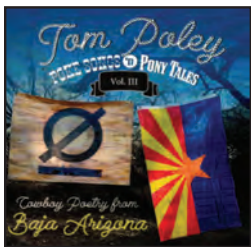
As it meanders along a cowboy charms a lady, she has dreams and makes plans but they are for naught. The cowboy leaves although he intends to return. What does show up is a letter from him she can't bear to open, feeling the dream is still alive as long as she doesn't know what he wrote. In truth he has fallen victim to a desert tornado. To find him she rides off into the desert and legend. Hope that wasn't a spoiler!

Possible stand-alone picks include "Bootleggin'" (a dance), "Neath Those Western Stars" (a duet), the Leyton Robinson solo "Moonlight On My Love," "Devils Pass" (one of the abrupt ending songs), the melancholy "Letter From Lubbock" and "Legend Of The Lady."

Hensley's delivery reminds me of a particular Country singer but I can't put my finger on which one. Maybe you'll know when you hear him. Twelve tracks, recommended.

## TOM POLEY

*"Poke Songs 'n Pony Tales III"*



First of all, Tom Poley (of the Arizona trio Way Out West) is an excellent interpreter of words. And since these

are his own words, he can give them the delivery they deserve.

By the way, this is the first "roundup" of his verse.

Some of the works here are tall tales...and we mean about as tall as it gets! There's a life lesson or two, but don't let that scare you off. And there's one song ("A Night Ride"), religious in character, but also a

decent argument for leaving the guns on the bed (period). Picks include "Gone Posthole" (get it?) with an even more 'painful' pun ending, "Hindsight" (definitely a view from the other side), one of the poems done to guitar accompaniment "The Double" (a new take on an old Western movie job) and "The Dharmapoke" (East meets West kinda goes south...you might plug in politics to get the direction).

Poley's takes on things through his "Cowboy poetry from Baja Arizona" are unique, interesting and certainly worth considering. Ten tracks total, recommended.

## JJ STEELE

*"Just Passin' Thru"*



Colorado native JJ Steele currently lives in the Sangre de Cristos near Westcliffe. Lucky dog! He is one

of The Western Way Magazine's regular reporting radio show hosts ("Cowboy Corral" on KLZR). He is also a longtime creator of poems and songs but, he indicates, a shorter-time performer of them. It's fortunate he finally became one. He ranks among the very best, to my way of thinking. His delivery is natural and engaging, so the collection comes off as a warmly conversational visit with a neighbor. And tale spinning was the origin of Cowboy Poetry, right? To be sure, there's great tale spinnin' here!

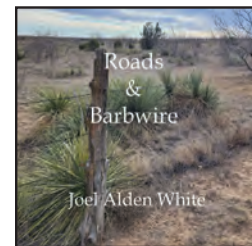
Many of the poems included have been published earlier, but all are excellent and display real heart. There's "Buddies" (about his and Gary McMahan's teen rodeoing years), good horse tales like "Lil Joe 70" and "Mr. Bud Pie," salutes to the cowboying

arts ("The Yard"), lyrics ("Boot Hill Rag") and thoughtful character studies ("Earl," "Ol' Cedar Post" and title track "Just Passin' Thru [Lettin' Go]").

For those who perform, for the price of a CD you have a home study course on how it's most effectively done. Don't let this one be "Just Passin' Thru" without snagging a copy for yourself! Sixteen tracks, very highly recommended.

## JOEL ALDEN WHITE

*"Roads & Barbwire"*



Okay, let's get technical. In his notes Joel Alden White says he didn't misspell it, writing "I

never in my life called it 'barbed wire!'" Its makers do, however! Of course nicknames are legal. Cowboys all over use "barb" and what about Southern and Southwestern folks who say "bob?" So I guess he's right. Technically. Now go write the twisted (wired?) song called "Ballad Of Barb & Bob!"

Speaking of songs, White has some new ones for you. In this collection we find a mix of Western and non-Western subject matter, but all are bolstered considerably by expert, intimate production and arrangements from producer and participant Merel Brigante. Picks are the title track "Roads & Barbwire," a song about listening to old timers "When The Grass Was Still Deep," a horse tribute "Doc N Doll" (not to be confused with 'Rock 'n' Roll') and a nice duet done with 'Mrs.' Brigante Sarah Pierce called "Already Gone." The title track is offered both with and without a spoken intro.

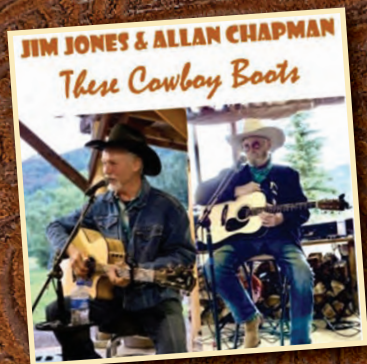
White sings his songs with a comfortable baritone-bass voice finishing off a musically pleasing effect. Fourteen tracks, recommended. 🐾



# REVIEWS: SINGLE RELEASES

## Sampling The Singles

BY RICK HUFF



In celebration of a song co-writers **Jim Jones & Allan Chapman** co-released on separate albums back in 2006, they are “dueting” on a new recording of it! **These Cowboy Boots** proved to be a much-requested song in the repertoires of both performers, so it only makes sense (and a dollar or two?) to team rope on it this way.

One of Western’s great singer/songwriter/producers is ‘dueting’ things his way! **Brenn Hill & Kristyn Harris** sing **Busted Up Ol’ Cowboy**, which could’ve been what Tyson watched when he asked “what does she see in that old cowboy?”! Then **Brenn Hill & Andy Hedges** went a ‘Russelling with Tom’s **The Sky Above The Mud Below**!!

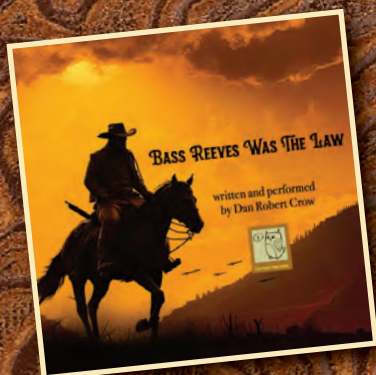
Award-winning **Patty Clayton**, with the words of poet-renowned Sam DeLeeuw, brings us a lighthearted swinger called **So Many Cowboys**. Proof positive that Western Swing can indeed sport Western lyrics! Frankly that and its acoustic properties make it more ‘Cowboy Swing.’ Ernie Martinez is on pedal steel and Vi Wickham supports on fiddle.



“She’s headin’ West,” sings **Jessica Loobey** in her single **Back To Her Roots**. Part of that return includes donning “denim and cowboy boots” and “haulin’ hay ‘til the sun goes down.” “Sunday dinner on the ground” is the rhyming line with that one, which makes it sound like cowfolk don’t use tables! Somehow I doubt that’s what she means.

Curt Ryle’s song **Swing Me Back To Oklahoma** from **Dave Edwards** is actually one of the slow ones they can play between the fast ones to let dancers catch their breath (or anything else they want to catch). The lyrics of its chorus are loaded with Bob Wills references and classic Western Swing song titles, so its ‘citizenship’ isn’t in question.

Maybe it’s for the best to slow things down at this juncture. Toward that end comes a pair of easy-tempo Western Swingers from **Steve Markwardt**. **The Great Divide** refers to a couple who can’t get across it in their wayward relationship. **You Make This House A Home** proves the opposite is possible. There’s a case of ‘divide and multiply!’



They say there’s nothing new. I say this comes close. The song **Bass Reeves Was The Law** from gravel-voiced **Dan Robert Crow** is, as expected, a tribute to the legendary law dog. What isn’t expected is its Jazz Boogie treatment with a chugging bass groove propelling it. “Bass Reeves was the law, put that in your crawl!” Put it in your playlist!



One of those Merel Bregante triumphs comes in the person of **Randy Palmer** and his nice acoustic single **Dance Ponies Dance!** The choreography he refers to is done by a mustang herd as seen in his headlights winding through the trees. I guess ponies do the *four-step*, right? Some cowboys dance like they've got hooves, so turnabout is fair play.

Who would have ever spotted the Honky Tonk Swing potential in the old Boy George Pop hit **Karma Chameleon**? Ireland's **Tomas Jackman**, that's who!! He's set out to give it a fresh and frisky run up the charts and he's one who's been there before. Hey! A chameleon is known for changing its colors, so why should anyone be surprised??

Veteran performer **Lee Sims** has come out with a very nicely done version of the David Stewart/Taylor Corum ballad **Wyoming Wind**. A woman mourns her rodeoing husband who could never resist just one more ride, and it finally killed him. His last words were "scatter my ashes and let the wind do the rest." As she might put it, that really blows!

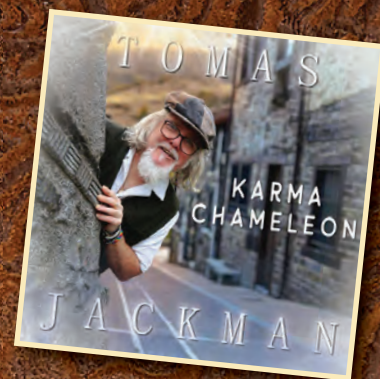
Western songstress **Carol Markstrom** has travelled less-ridden trails before. Her new release **A Better Way** is not Western. It's Human; not necessarily the popular path these days. Presently Prejudice and Intolerance seem to be riding the right hand side of the bus with Love and Kindness forced to sit in the back. May such retro-views soon wane.

In the spirit of following Swing wherever it swings, for this one we're swinging into Irish Cajun (!!!) to find **Lauren McCrory** and her romping single **Good Ole Girls**. It's dedicated to all the ladies headed somewhere musically. That includes one who's "workin' on her banjo" and the girl "sittin' on her front porch rosinin' up her bow!"

"Ain't you lonesome out on that big ol'farm?" asks Country rocker **Gary Pratt**. He'll "park his Silverado in your little **Red Barn**" and even do some chores and pitch some hay. He's pitchin' somethin' alright! The many ranchy references beyond the raunchy ones put this single knockin' and rockin' on Western's door....lyrically speaking, at least.

IWMA singer **Ashley Westcott** warns **Don't Fall In Love With A Cowboy**, but she did and continues to! They'll "love you 'til the cows come home." On a ranch you know how about long that could be! Then, in her ballad **Cowboy's Heart**, she offers equal time for the guy. It covers the virtues of the classic cowboy, the one of myth and legend.

Entering through the same portal used by Kinky Friedman & His Texas Jewboys and, to some extent, Weird Al Jankovic comes **Buddy Greenbloom**. He is certainly an act apart from the norm. His **Gothic Cowboy** comes from an EP of six songs and sorta sums up the total lineage of Western stereotypes in one freaky cowpoke (emphasis on "poke")!







Irish Western Swing is king for **Erin Noone**. You may ***Dance The Night Away*** “after ye’ve had your cup o’tay,” or so she states in the brogue of the land. There’s the only difference in the two Swings. On this side of the pond it might need to be “tay-quila” instead! A familiar Wills-style fiddle intro kicks it off, so it’s true to form after all.

Swing is also in the Irish Country music forecast with **Conor Owens** blowing in! His debut song did well and the follow-up ***Texas Tornado*** will likely follow suit. “She’s a Texas tornado from Laredo” and “everybody calls her ‘Georgia Peach.’” However, he sings, “she finally blew up in my face.” Or at least she messed-up his hair real good!

Then there’s the thirteen-year-old Irish phenom **Caoimhe Murney** (before you try it’s pronounced “Kwee-vuh,” believe it or not)! Country Swing is her genre for ***Scania 164***, a tribute to the Swedish-built truck or, as she calls it, her “Scanny.” The song strongly evokes “Wabash Cannonball.” Whether it be truck or train, there’s power behind it!

The old Fred Rose-Hank Williams hit ***Kaw Liga*** could hardly be less PC these days, but it still ranks as “Western” in the eyes of many. In the well-done new version from Ireland’s **Alastair Spence**, more lyrics flesh out the ill-fated love story of the cigar store Indian and his statuesque ladylove. Spence’s Waylon Jennings-esque voice is a plus.

From Ireland once again comes a full-fledged, ain’t-no-doubt-about-it Cowboy song! Reminiscent of Patsy Montana’s famous theme “Cowboy’s Sweetheart,” ***Western Star*** from singer **Sheila Fitzgerald** delivers the acoustic goods. She does pronounce it “westren” possibly to avoid the syllable “strrrrrn,” but we know the direction it takes.

When the dancers still want to swing but the faster swing’s done been swung, they can turn to a slower one, like ***The Next In Line*** from veteran performer **Al Widmeyer**. Its lyrics contain all the loving-her-from-the-shadows angst you could want as you say to your dance partner “there but for the grace.” And then “wasn’t Grace your name??”

Chart riding Canadian singer **Gord Bamford** has issued one where he extols the virtues of a time “when pickups were horses and ***Cowboys Were Kings***.” The styling is designed to take him for another ride up those charts. It’s Country Rock all the way but the Western references and Cowboy imagery in it are constants. We’ll take it!!

Clarksville artist **Lizzy Beth Goldman** has dug into the Wills treasure chest and brought forward a slow balled treatment of the classic ***Faded Love***. Her leisurely visitation has allowed room for a nice arrangement twist or two that stay true to the swing idea (such as a bluesy slide on the word “still”). Nicely they pump fresh life into the ol’ warhorse.



Another of the Clarksville Creative Sound artists offered up this time around is **Ariel Franz**. Country Swing is her thing in **Heart On Down** which discusses the post-repair job done by her new love. The song's subtitle "Tore Up From The Floor Up" is her pre-renovation situation. Don't overthink the thing. Just be happy and dance to it.

Australia's **Garry Carson Jones** has a nice little Western Swing release done combo-style in **Forbidden Fruit**. Don't be tempted, just leave her on the tree, he warns. This song is the fifth single release from his album "Mogareeka Moon," and he has gained significant attention as a songwriter along the way. His singing should draw some, too!

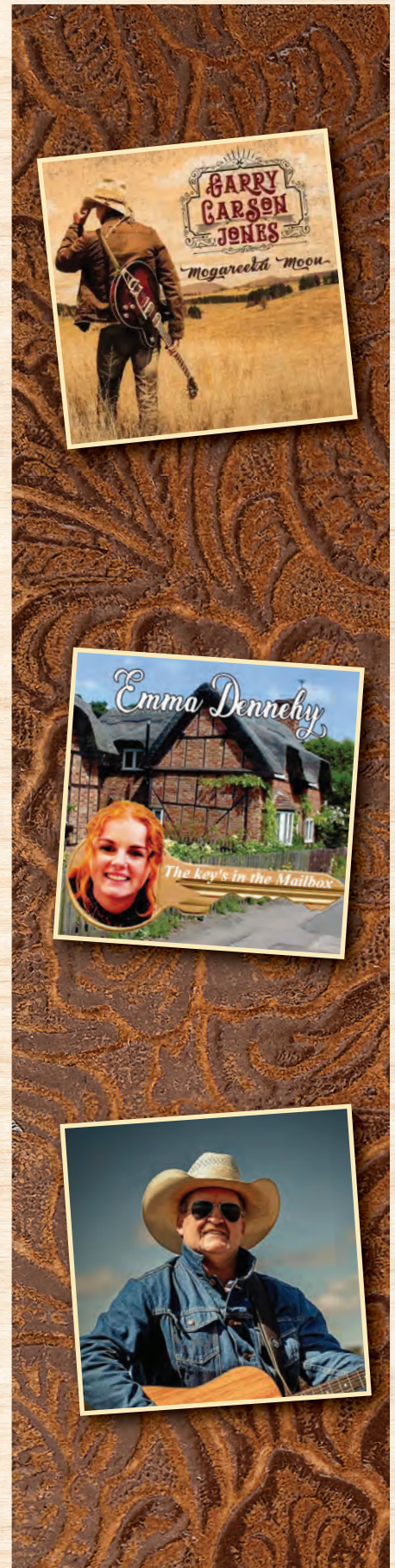
A quick word to call attention to a wonderful indigenous family band **Dakota Beavers & Westernboy**. Great, tight trio harmony over an acoustic funk backing! Papa Lance Beavers has created songs with solid Western imagery. **Tumbleweed**, **Outlaw Lover** and **Western Boy** are some. In "Prey" (2022) Dakota, fluent in Comanche, also acts!

Good ol' twin fiddle & steel Western Swing is the genre chosen by 19-year old **Emma Dennehy** for her debut single **The Key Is In The Mailbox**. She comes from a musical family. She and her sister began performing with dad Finbar's band. Here she proves once again hailing from County Cork doesn't "cork" your love for Western Swing!

She was "a lady bushranger," sings the fine Australian band **Andersonlane**. That's **The Widow Hickman**, and she was a force to be reckoned with, I reckon. Her "neck won't crack on the gallows," the song says. It didn't. Elizabeth Jessie Hickman was the last of a feared breed of Aussie cattle rustlers. She got away with it, dying free in 1936!!

**Lain Tomlinson** has issued a song that is a cousin-once removed to Western! The plot of **Thankin' Strait** (co-written by Wood Newton) has the couple dancing to George's "Amarillo By Morning" (that's the Western first generation part). She 'straightens her thinking' and marries him, so she (and he) are now "thankin' strait." (Get it? Get it?)

From the TCMA's Best Of Texas Vol. 7 collection comes one...one... where the cowboy's "ridin', ropin', wearin' the brand." It's **Larry Cann** with **Cowboy's Hands**. Wow, the whole thing rhymes! The TCMA's annual album showcases what the association deems to be, well, what the title says. Glad ONE Western song made it in! There were others. 🐾





# CLASSIC PROFILES

## SOUNDS FROM THE PAST

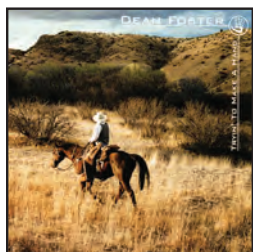
(Recordings From Our Great Western Treasury That Deserve a New Spin)

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.

### DEAN FOSTER

*"Tryin' To Make A Hand"*  
(2000)



One delineation of our music proves a certain performance fact. With Western a

fine, natural singer with just his unplugged acoustic guitar for company can produce a totally satisfying effect. 'Cain't do it with Country! Its fans would be yelling "Hey! Where'd everybody go??!!"

This release proved Dean Foster's songwriting to be real and really fine. Beside being an honest-ta-gawd line riding, line shack-living New Mexico cowboy, he was also a better than average singer and far better than average guitarist. Despite not being plugged in, his performance style was nothing short of electric on his originals, including "Springtime" (from which the CD's title comes)

and "First Morning" (which we included in our two-disc collection "The Best Of New Mexico Western"), and his covers of Walt LaRue's "Pretty Pauline," Brenn Hill's "Rewin The West" and Ken & Coleen Moore's "No Reason Left To Complain."

If this one has lain fallow on your shelf, dust it off and bring it forward into your player. It will provide you with a very worthy ride.



### ERNIE SITES

*"Saddle Bags and Wishes"*  
(1992)



A sense of fun and enthusiasm pervades the works and performances of the veteran entertainer

from Idaho Ernie Sites. He is one of those ultra-polished artists who are

so comfortable and slick they make what they do seem effortless. He's a former rodeo cowboy, a skilled yodeler and songwriter who helped found the WMA. As anyone who has seen him holding after-hours court in Elko's Gold Dust West (or elsewhere) can attest, he's also a ball o' fire! Plus he's an emissary who teaches the Western way to youth.

In this release you will find equal servings of Swing such as the title track "Saddle Bags and Wishes" and "Evening Ride," ballads to include "Trailin' Back To Mexico" and "Moonlight On The Snake," saga songs like "Bandit Joe" or "Survival" and novelties like "Sagebrush Boogie" and "Little Cow Poke." Each is done with professional precision. This album can stand as a stark reminder that there are treasures that should not remain buried in the past. Dig it out and play it again. Performers will also find plenty of material worth covering anew. 🐾





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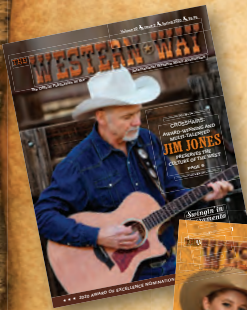


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# Book Nook Reviews & More

BY KAREN CAMPBELL



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

## Pride and Punctuation

**I**t's often easier for writers to become obsessed with the content of what they write that they neglect an important aspect of writing, what their writing looks like and how the appearance of what they write can make it either easier or harder to read, especially for folks with vision problems or learning struggles like dyslexia.

During my studies of early literature during college, one of the most interesting things I learned about was how writers and scribes in previous centuries chose to divide up their words through the invention of punctuation. For example, one early punctuation mark in the Middle Ages was called a punctus and was essentially just a dot in the middle of a line on a manuscript page. It acted a lot like a cross between a modern period and comma to break up ideas.

When we look at modern pages, we actually see a lot of advancements in "reading technology" or format, ways to layout a page and the words on it to make it easier to understand and easier on folk's eyes. Good examples of this include paragraphs, line breaks, capital letters, italic letters, and of course a whole range of punctuation marks.

Indeed if you are ever wondering around the internet, you'll frequently see folks complain about "a wall of text" if someone neglects to use paragraphs. Each of these features allow writers and editors to break up words into more manageable chunks that are cleaner and easier to read. So if someone is writing to publish or be read (and not just perform orally), it sure makes readers lives easier to include

some basic capital letters, punctuation, line breaks, and paragraphs or stanzas.

A lot of good poetry doesn't get more complex than just using capital letters for the beginnings of lines or sentences, periods for the end, commas to divide up some of the phrases, and smart line breaks. Apostrophes are also useful if the writer is leaving off letters for a more authentic sound to the language (for instance the g is often left off of -ing words to indicate Southern accent) or indicating ownership (possessive case).

Having said all this, it sometimes surprises me that a lot of the cowboy writing I read doesn't really bother with punctuation. Maybe its because the rules seem too complex or it's just too much trouble. As an English professor, I sure hear many of my students complain about needing to use punctuation or follow some basic grammar rules to write well. They get really obsessed with it and convinced they are bad writers if they haven't mastered the rules perfectly.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret here though, especially in creative writing like poetry or songs, the use of these tools doesn't have to be perfect to make a big difference in how easy something is to read. Often a good faith effort will result in a better version. And leaving these features out of your writing can often confuse readers or make it hard on their eyes. Plus we have so many helpful tools in terms of formatting and punctuation, like Grammarly. You just copy/paste your words in and the tool will do the rest. It's really handy.



Don't feel like you must know all the rules for seldom used punctuation marks like the semicolon, hyphen, or em-dash. Use the basic capital letters, end punctuation (periods, exclamation marks, question marks), commas, apostrophes, and effective line breaks, and you will have achieved significantly higher readability with your writing. Even for those who like to perform orally, end punctuation and commas can be important indications of when to pause and breathe. Or if you want performers to not end each thought at the end of a line, using careful punctuation can indicate where they should speak more like its a story and keep going without pause.

Just like you don't have to be locked into perfect rhymes all the time, absolutely perfect use of punctuation isn't required all the time either. Don't be too proud to punctuate. Your writing is also not more authentically 'cowboy' by leaving punctuation out as many of the classic cowboy writers punctuate as well as they punched cows. At the end of the day, ask yourself if using the marks you chose made your writing easier to understand and easier to read orally, and you will often find yourself saying "Yes!" Trust me, your readers will thank you. Their eyes will too.

## SHERYL CEDERBURG

*"Beauty in Black and White,"* 2024, Kindle Direct Publishing. \$15, paperback, no ebook, 119 pgs.



Sheryl Cederburg's 36 poem collection *Beauty in Black and White* is her third poetry collection. The poems are divided into 3 categories:

Tough Trails and Beautiful Views, Lessons Learned, Those Who Have Gone Before Us. Quotes and color photos are interspersed throughout

the collection as well as a few explanatory notes prior to the poems. The print size is large and fairly easy to read. The cover is attractive with a nice image of a cowgirl on a horse looking at the night sky. This is the subject matter of the title poem "Beauty in Black and White" and the first poem in the collection.

Cederburg's poems are all traditional closed form and consist primarily of quatrains and couplet poems with one quintain poem and two sextets (one of which has a refrain). One of the poems about her home state of Nebraska is noted as being written to be set to music as well. Stand out poems in the collection include: "Nebraska Wind," "Multi-generational Ranchin"

(Parts 1 & 2), "One Really Nice Team," "Sunlight of My Grace," "Ol Pard's," "God Bless America," and "Grandma's Little Dog." Most of the poems reflect family relationships and rural life with a strong emphasis on Christian values.

Readers who would appreciate this collection include those who like traditional form poetry primarily written for oral performance about everyday ranch life, family relationships, and religion. It's a collection that's appropriate for any age of reader with accessible vocabulary and appropriate use of punctuation to make it easier on reader eyes.

Interested readers can purchase a copy on Amazon with Kindle Direct Publishing print on demand for \$15. 🐾

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



# Western Playlists – Reporters

Here are the DJs who submitted their playlists this quarter:

**Joe Angel**

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

**Marshal Allen Bailey**

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

**Bobbi Jean Bell**

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

**Skip Bessonette &  
His Pard Lucky**

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

**Janice Brooks**

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

**Aspen Black**

*"Western Air Waves"*  
6537 Forest View Rd.  
Roanoke, VA 24018  
Broadcast on Mixcloud and  
WROE 97.5 FM.  
Prefers high quality mp3s via email or  
USB drive but will take CDs, too!  
Western Music, Western Swing, &  
Cowboy Poetry

**Chuckaroo the Buckaroo**

*"Calling All Cowboys Radio"*  
88.9 FM, KPOV  
High Desert Community Radio  
www.kpov.org  
kpov.od.streamguys.us/  
calling\_all\_cowboys\_new\_56k.mp3  
Email: callingallcowboys@hotmail.com  
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  
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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

**Allen & Jill Kirkham**

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

**Susie Knight**

*"The Western Way Hour"*  
28751 Doe Valley Dr., Conifer, CO 80433  
303-495-4869  
lassothecowgirl@yahoo.com  
Follow on:  
www.mixcloud.com/SusieKnight

**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  
KKTU, 100.1, Douglas, WY  
KSHD 93.4 Shady Cove, OR  
KORV 93.5 Ladeview, OR  
www.ButchMartinMusic.com  
www.romancingthewest.org  
541-218-2477



**Hugh McLennan**

McLennan Ranch  
2520 Hvas Lake Rd.  
Pinantan, BC, Canada V0E 3E1  
mclennan\_ranch@xplornet.com  
www.hugh-mclennan.com

**Marvin O'Dell**

"Around the Campfire"  
KKRN, Redding, CA  
KZNQ, Santa Clarita, CA  
SCAZRadio.com, Sun City, AZ  
www.earsradio.com, meoteo@aol.com  
10430 W. Loma Blanca Dr.  
Sun City, AZ 85351, 805-551-4649

**O.J. Sikes**

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

**JJ Steele**

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

**Kevin Tuckfield**

PO Box 10217  
Russellville, AR 72812  
"Arkansas Cowboy Radio Ride"  
KWMV 88.5 FM  
Mountain View, AR  
kevintuckfield@gmail.com  
479-264-9281  
www.clearoutwest.com

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

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

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# Western Charts

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

## TOP 30 COWBOY / WESTERN ALBUMS

1. Bring on the Pain – Kevin Tuckfield
2. Porch Songs – Dave Stamey  
Dust of Los Angeles – Ron Christopher
4. Blessed by the West – Sarah Pierce
5. Confessions of a Ghost Town –  
Kacey & Jenna Thunborg
6. A Western Tale to Tell – Marvin O'Dell
7. Snow on the Wineglass – John Lowell
8. Light of the Moon – Lori Beth Brooke
9. On the Trail With the Lonesome Pines –  
Hilary Gardner
10. Cowboy Rhythm – Dennis Jay
11. Cowgirl's Delight – Phoebe White
12. They Ride – Ed Meyer
13. Ghost Smoke – Jon Chandler
14. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
15. Trackin' On – The Russellers
16. A Little Bit Country – The Arizona Wildflowers
17. Big Medicine – Tris Munsick
18. The Texas Trio – The Texas Trio
19. Seekers – Carol Markstrom
20. Maybe New Mexico – Helene Cronin
21. A Little Past Our Prime – Hugh McClennan
22. Into the West – Birdie Nichols
23. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
24. Just Keepin' it Ranchy – Ryan Fritz
25. Singing to Cows – Chris Guenther
26. Taylor, AZ – Ashley Westcott
27. Can't Catch the Outlaw – Bodhi Linde
28. Rough Stock – Ryan Fritz
29. Nebraska – Cowboy Joe Babcock
30. Once I Was a Cowboy – Joel White

## 10 MOST PLAYED WESTERN SWING ALBUMS

1. Light of the Moon – Lori Beth Brooke
2. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
3. The Texas Trio – The Texas Trio
4. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
5. 12-6 Central – The Western Swing Authority
6. Traditionally Yours – Dave Edwards
7. Music Road – Austin Van  
Somewhere North of San Antone – Oklahoma Swing
9. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
10. Little Bit of Texas – Carlos Washington  
Yearnin' – Jim Winters

## 12 MOST PLAYED SONGS BY WESTERN MUSIC DJS

1. Why He Rides – Kevin Tuckfield
2. Cowgirl From Illinois – Doug Figgs
3. A New Someday – Gone With the West
4. As Cowboy as They Come – Aspen Black
5. So Many Cowboys – Patty Clayton
6. The Cows Are Out – Kenny Crider  
Rancher's Prayer – Joel White
8. Water Color Skies – The Timberline Cowboys
9. We Raised Hay – The Arizona Wildflowers  
A Wandering Stray – John Lowell  
Saddle off the Wall – Marvin O'Dell  
Blessed by the West – Sarah Pierce

## 12 MOST PLAYED COWBOY POETRY ALBUMS

1. Cowboyin' With God – Rik "Yonder" Goodell
2. The Last Sunset – K.C. LaCourse  
Pensive 'n' Playful – Mark Munzert
4. Real Hands & Treasured Friends – Miska Paget
5. Between the Sun and the Moon – Teresa Burleson
6. Cowboy Psalms – Ron Secoy
7. Wisdom in the Wind – Sherl Cederburg  
Thin Clean Air – Danny McCurry  
Just Passin' Through – JJ Steele
10. A Cowboy Remembers – Mike Booth  
The Girl in the Yellow Checked Dress – Duane Nelson  
Old West Memories – Rocky Sullivan

**\*A MISSING NUMBER IN THE LIST  
REPRESENTS A TIE FOR THAT SPOT.**



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 Amarillo, TX  
 Amarillo, TX  
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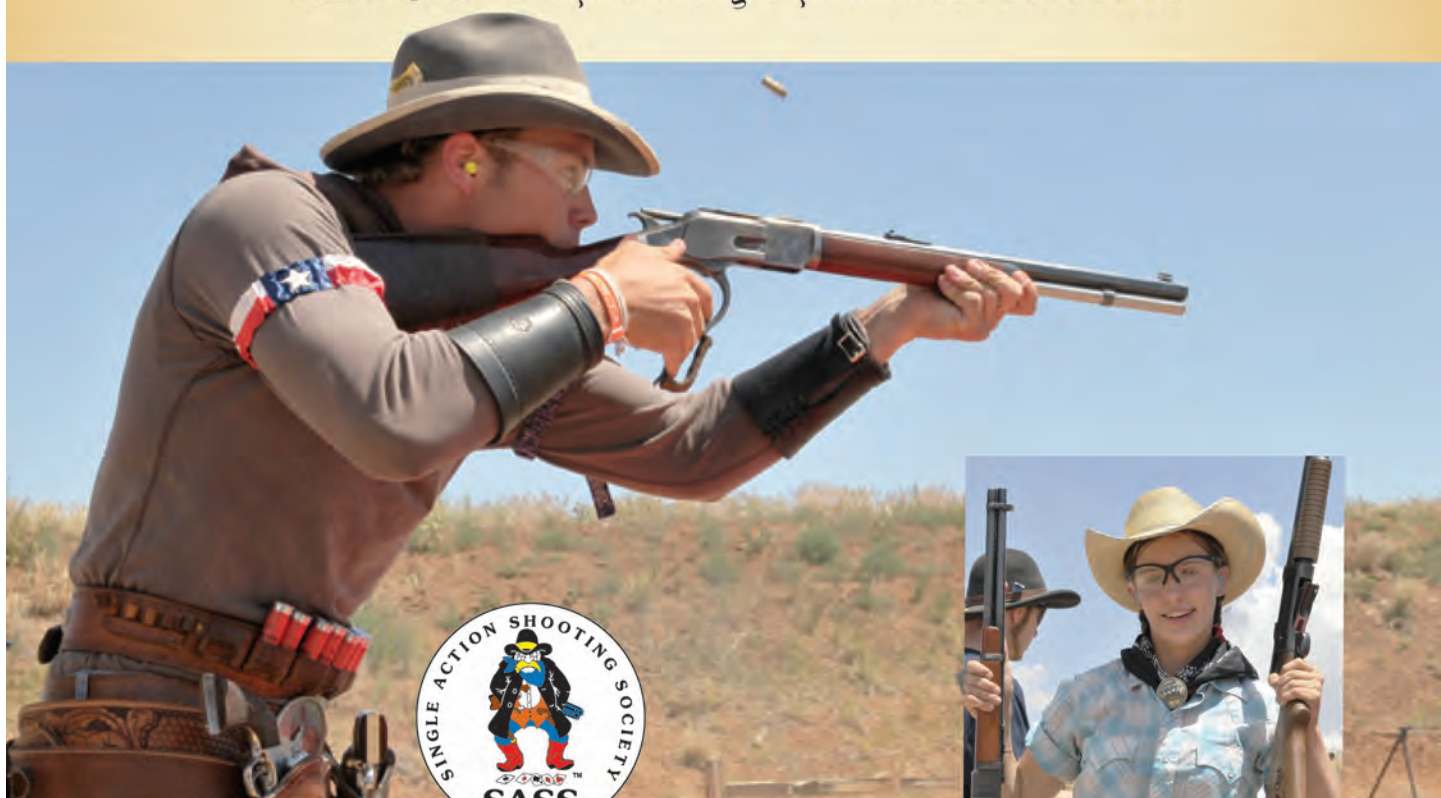
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