

# THE WESTERN WAY

The Official Publication of the  
International Western Music Association



**LAST OF AN ERA**  
Sons of the San Joaquin:  
A Musical Legacy

PAGE 6

**TODAY: TRADITION  
AND LEGACY CONTINUE**  
2025 Entertainer of the Year  
Syd Masters

PAGE 22

**FUTURE IS IN THE WEST**  
BIG BIZ  
Goes BIG WEST!  
PAGE 9





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Congratulations to the 2025  
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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*

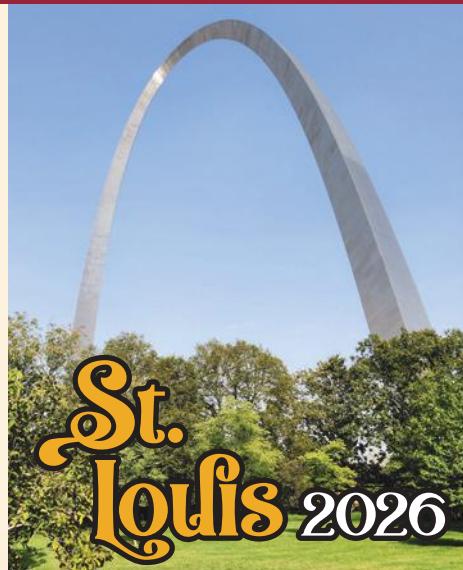
**Finalist: "The Saddle"**  
by Dave Stamey,  
released on Stamey's CD *Porch Music*

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

The award is for original songs  
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**Join Us!**

## From The President...



MARVIN O'DELL  
IWMA President

So, a guitar player and a fan walk into a bar. The guitarist says, "Glad to have you join me." The fan says, "I'm just happy to string along."

O.K., I admit that's really a stupid way to begin this article, but there's a point I want to make and that is this: the members of the IWMA who are fans and the ones who are performers are no different when it comes to joining the IWMA with a desire to help the organization accomplish its stated mission and purpose. Which is? I'm glad you asked. Here it is as stated on our web site: The International

Western Music Association is an organization that encourages and supports the preservation, performance and composition of historic traditional and contemporary music and poetry of The West.

There you have it. Whether you are an entertainer who joins the IWMA or a fan of western music and poetry, that is the main reason for joining the organization. Please note that nothing is said in the mission statement about advancing anyone's career or promotion of anyone's career to help them be more successful or, in fact, that the IWMA will do anything for anyone. It's all about the music and poetry – western music and poetry to be exact. No one should become a member if they think by joining that the organization will "do" something for them.

This means the fans who are IWMA members are on equal ground with the performers. We are all here for the same reason. The IWMA does not exist to help advance the careers of performers. Or to do anything for its members. But...

Does our organization do things to help our members? Or to advance anyone's career? Sure! Through *The Western Way* magazine, through offered workshops at our annual convention, through entertainment opportunities, with our Crisis Fund, putting together the annual convention for all our members to reunite once a year and renew friendships, and so much more.

Twice at the convention in Albuquerque, someone came up to me and said, "I'm just a fan, but..." Whoa! There are no "just fans" in the IWMA. In fact, one might point out that if there were no fans, there would be no performers. Sooooo... on the "importance" scale, fans maybe should rate a few points higher than the musicians and poets.

I know fans don't win awards or get asked for autographs or get audience applause. But those things are not what the IWMA is about. Why does our organization exist? It's in the mission statement above. And when we all gather annually with the goal in mind of accomplishing our mission, the family atmosphere blooms again, egos are left at home, expectations are lowered, and a great time is had by everyone. Just something to keep in mind.

Country music legend, Buck Owens, often closed his show saying "It takes people like you to make people like me." He was absolutely right!

MARVIN O'DELL  
President IWMA



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### STAFF WRITERS

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

### EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Vic Anderson, Johnny D. Boggs,  
Karen Campbell, Susan Ditz

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### MANAGING EDITOR/ADVERTISING

Theresa O'Dell  
editor@westernmusic.org; 805-551-7763

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Kim Tappan/Tappan Design  
tappandesign@gmail.com

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Modern Litho, Jefferson City, MO

### INTERNATIONAL WESTERN MUSIC ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 648, Coppell, TX 75019  
Cell Phone 505-563-0673  
marsha@westernmusic.org  
www.iwesternmusic.org

# CONTENTS

## FEATURES

**6** Sons of the San Joaquin  
**22** 2025 IWMA Convention Awards and Highlights

## ARTICLES, UPDATES & MORE

**2** President's Message  
**4** Editor's Insight  
**5** From the Executive Director  
**9** The Western World Tour – Rick Huff  
**10** Western Events Calendar  
**11** Penned by Lantern Light – Tom Hawk  
**12** In The Spotlight – Marvin O'Dell  
**14** Chapter Updates  
**15** Ride Easy, Pard! – Victor T. Anderson  
**15** Mailbag  
**17** Lifetime Members  
**19** In Memoriam  
**20** A Little Bit of History – Johnny D. Boggs  
**30** O.J. Sikes Musical Note and Reviews  
**32** Huff's Best Of The West Reviews  
**36** Quotable Cowboys – David Sawyer  
**34** Single Releases Reviews – Rick Huff  
**36** Classic Profileless Reviews – Rick Huff  
**42** Book Nook – Karen Campbell  
**44** Western Playlists – Reporters  
**45** Patron Members  
**46** Western Charts  
**47** Convention Vendors



### ON THE COVER...

On the cover are represented three cycles of this western heritage we embrace. The Sons of the San Joaquin demonstrated music harmonies that, along with Sons of the Pioneers, Riders In The Sky, and other giants in western music, laid a solid foundation for the genre. Entertainer of the Year, Syd Masters, epitomizes today's hard-hitting storytelling of the West through ballads and swing that preserves and ensures the continuation of the legacy of the genre. The "Savings Wrangler" and her trusty sidekick "Dusty Pete" the Prairie Dog is one of the many Big Biz marketing strategies bombarding us today that may reestablish our genre and open doors for western music and poetry, whatever that may look like in the future.

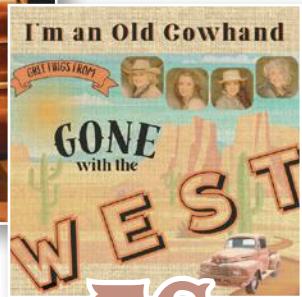
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**6**



**25**



**36**

## REVIEWS – CDS, DVDS & BOOKS

**31** Tompall & The Glaser Brothers  
**32** Brazos Valley Boys  
 Jess Camilla O'Neal  
 Chuck Cusimano  
**33** KC LaCourse  
 Andy Martin  
 Keree J Phillips  
 Phillip Wildman  
**35** Mark Lynn Young  
**40** Dave Alexander  
 Cindy Church  
**43** TK Galarneau (Book)

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

showing smiling faces and great western attire; melancholy because some of the usual faces from years of conventions gone by were missing. For whatever reason, they've chosen to stop supporting the organization that supports them and it dilutes the effectiveness of us all.

Euphoric because everything went as planned – even the behind-the-scenes mess ups were few and far between (and I see behind the scenes!); melancholy because it seems that so few people do so much work and more volunteers are always needed but don't step up.

Euphoric because there were many new first timers there this year from all over; melancholy because we have lost many of our western music and poetry giants and precious fans in death this past year. Who will fill the gap?

Euphoric because I get to keep doing what I do as a board member and editor of this magazine for yet another year; melancholy because it is probably time for younger members to step up and become the next IWMA leaders, but sadly, they don't.

Euphoric because I look around and see the cowboy culture is very popular right now and as a genre we have the

## CATCH THE VISION

As I thought about this issue of the magazine and how it is a snapshot reflection of the recent IWMA convention in Albuquerque, I was torn between feelings of euphoria and melancholy.

Euphoric because I get to review all the wonderful pictures

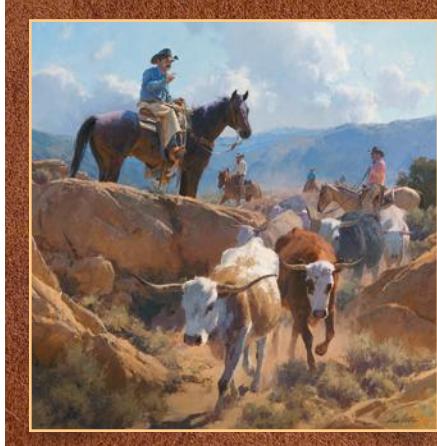
opportunity to strike while the iron is hot and increase awareness of our organization and western music and poetry; melancholy because it seems like we are content with what we are and have today in our own little circle of performing interests...but what about tomorrow?

Euphoric because our organization is truly a family of performers and fans and we have the best time when we come together; melancholy because how long will we be able to come together if we aren't increasing our numbers, getting out the IWMA message, and encouraging others to join the International Western Music Association family?

At the Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday of the convention we were CHALLENGED by Mark Munzert (a board member) to unite and make 2026 the year that every member of the IWMA reaches out to make it a personal mission to sign up one new member before the next convention. The math is simple; our membership would double in one year, quadruple if we kept it going the next year.

Contentment with one's personal life is a good thing and I often encourage people to live a contented life. But contentment for an organization can be a death sentence. We need new bodies, new voices, new ideas and new networks – new life. Build on the foundation of the past (see Crosshairs, page 6) with the building blocks of the present (see Awards, page 20) to lead to a sustainable future (Western World, page 9). I hope you'll catch the vision, dear reader.

*Theresa*



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## From The Executive Director...



Marsha Short  
Executive Director

It hardly seems possible that the Convention, Thanksgiving and Christmas have all come and gone, and it's already 2026. I was just getting comfortable with 2025, too. And speaking of the Convention, it was another great one. Even with the travel issues (remember those?), we still had a good turnout.

There are so many people to thank this year:

**Betty Carter** and her army of volunteers who worked in the Western Boutique.

**Judi Anderson** who organized the vendors AND organized the entire New Mexico Chapter into a force to be dealt with. Next year let's get them more help so they can enjoy the Convention, too.

**Bernard Carr** for helping haul the Convention supplies from storage, taking them back again, and then standing outside the door at every ticketed event taking tickets, He's been doing this for years!

**Fred & Dianne Powell**, who kept the CD Mercantile flowing seamlessly.

**Vivienne VanLandingham & Austin Van** for organizing the IWMA New Mexico Chapter Hosted Jam, providing another opportunity for performers and fans.

**Ed Hughes & Randy Fowler** for being the first point of contact at the registration desk.

**Johnny Boggs** for filling in at the last minute as our luncheon speaker...with just five days' notice, it seemed like he had been rehearsing all year!

**All the Stage Hosts** who kept things running smoothly and on time.

**The Workshop Presenters** for all the information they gathered and shared.

Of course, **Syd Masters, Michael Smith, and Diana Burt** who made everyone sound their very best (and Syd helped everyone dance their very best on Wednesday night).

**To all the Performers** who were not only on stage but in the jams and mentoring others in their free time,

**The IWMA Board of Directors** who worked by my side to be sure the whole thing came together.

And a special THANK YOU to my daughter, **Victoria Osborne** and her daughter (my granddaughter) **Chelsea** who flew down from Vermont to help me with all the running. I guess I've been in a bad mood for the last 19 conventions since I discovered that I didn't yell at anyone this year.

The danger in naming names is that you always forget someone. If I have, it's not because you're not appreciated. Everyone worked together this year to make the Convention a success. Mark November 11-15 on your calendar for this year's Convention at The Hotel Albuquerque!

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)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 505-563-0673

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

# In the CROSSHAIRS



Sons of the San Joaquin, Lonnie Hannah, Jack Hannah and Joe Hannah

## A LASTING MUSICAL LEGACY **SONS OF THE SAN JOAQUIN**

By Susan Ditz

Dale Evans Rogers called the music of the Sons of the San Joaquin “a blessing to everyone.” The signature familial harmony of brothers Jack and Joe Hannah, and Joe’s son Lon made a lasting impression on people all over the world for 30 years. Audiences also connected with the way the trio authentically reflected the colorful heritage of the West, and respectfully honored the contributions, and values of those who had come before them.

Although sadly Jack passed away at 88 in 2022 and Joe at 92 in 2024, the Hannah family musical tradition lives on with Lon still performing and making his mark as a film and television actor.

Jack and Joe were heroes to Lon his whole life. “Fine Christian men, great athletes, teachers and coaches — they were role models for me,” he remembered fondly. “I was incredibly blessed to make music with them for all those years.”

From the beginning, Lon, a former music teacher, said the Hannahs had a distinctive musical style that set them apart. “Jack had a magnificent bass/ baritone voice and a captivating stage presence,” Lon explained. “Dad had a world class baritone/ tenor voice that blended so seamlessly with Jack that people often asked who had the lead part in the trio sections of some our recordings.” Lon’s tenor melded effortlessly with both. “Our blend and Uncle Jack’s songwriting are what set our sound,” he added.



Sons of the San Joaquin with Dale Evans – from left Richard Chon, Jack Hannah, Joe Hannah, Lonnie Hannah, Dennis Mack and seated Dale Evans.

The trio also genuinely loved interacting with fans from around the world.

Growing up in rural Ivanhoe California, family, faith, music and sports were the cornerstones of life for Jack, Joe and their brother Bob. Their mother, Melba, played classical piano, and they all found joy singing together at home and in church. Their dad, Lon Sr. played semi-professional baseball and encouraged his sons to excel as athletes too, which they did. From 1950 to 1962, the Hannah brothers played professional baseball, Joe catching for the Chicago Cubs organization, Jack pitching in the Milwaukee Braves farm system.

In 1933, Lon Sr., discovered the iconic music of the Sons of the Pioneers. A ranch manager, he went about his work singing, and he taught his sons the classic tunes written and performed by the legendary trio made up of Roy Rogers, Tim Spencer and Bob Nolan. "That's where our romance with cowboys and their music began," Jack said.

Lon and his grandfather were the impetus for the Sons of the San Joaquin. At a family gathering for his grandfather's 85th birthday in 1987, they sang "Blue Prairie." Excited by how well they sounded together, Lon convinced his dad and uncle to form a Western music band to test the waters as entertainers. But first, Lon had to master the guitar and Joe, the bass fiddle—Jack had played guitar since he was 13. At the time, Joe was

teaching middle school history and physical education and was also an award-winning choir director. Jack was a high school counselor and winning coach. They'd both studied voice extensively and had performed in local musical theatre, opera and as wedding, funeral and banquet soloists.

Experience made Jack and Joe skeptical that there could be much demand for a fledgling cowboy band, given the changing music scene in the '80s. In 1989, Lon persuaded his dad and uncle to participate in a workshop at iconic Elko, Nevada Cowboy Poetry Gathering. To their amazement, they were a hit and were asked to appear on

the main stage. A bigger surprise came when legendary crossover country artist Michael Martin Murphey asked them to sing on his upcoming "Cowboy Songs" album, where they backed him on the classic "Tumbling Tumbleweeds."

It wasn't long before the Hannahs were in high demand, spending most weekends touring. Ultimately, all three teachers took a leap of faith and retired to focus on this new career.

Over the next three decades they made 14 albums and earned a wagonload of awards

including the Western Music Association Hall of Fame in 2006, and numerous Wrangler awards from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. They performed to sold-out crowds around the world, including Carnegie Hall, played every major rodeo and poetry gathering and were showcased with several symphony orchestras and on television with the Nashville Network, Grand Old Opry and Austin City Limits.

For several years, they also produced the Fandango festival in Clovis, California, a multicultural music and educational event that celebrated the diverse history of the Golden State.

The Sons first four CDs, "Bound for the Rio Grande," 1990, "Great American Cowboy," 1991, "A Cowboy Has to Sing," 1992 and "Songs of the Silver Screen" were largely the Hannah's interpretation of music

*Continued on page 8*

## IN THE CROSSHAIRS

*Continued from page 7*



Jack Hannah, Lonnie Hannah and Joe Hannah

from the Sons of the Pioneers, creatively weaving the vocal nuances that became their signature style.

In 1993 Jack made an impressive debut as a songwriter with the title track on their second CD, which he said was inspired by a conversation with noted Nevada poet, Waddie Mitchell about what life as a working cowboy was really like.

The band expanded in 1994 when Richard Chon, a classical violinist with a deep affection for jazz, Cajun and swing tunes became their fiddler.

Remembering his mentor Joe, who provided him with extensive vocal training, Richard recalled, "the glorious thing about Joe was of course his voice. It was a rich and mellow instrument, as if it had been aged in oaken casks."

A passionate history buff and enthusiastic storyteller, Jack read voraciously. He had a special affinity for the ethos of the cowboy and had been writing songs and poems since childhood. He found inspiration everywhere and often explained, "songs emerge instantly, sometimes in my sleep." The lyrics he wrote were a musical history

lesson — immortalizing the grit and courage of the of men and women who faced adversity traveling across the ocean and the prairie, bringing ethnic traditions into the soul of the Western frontier.

In 1995, their fifth CD, "From Whence Came the Cowboy," put a bright spotlight on Jack's artistry as a songwriter but also demonstrated the trio's precise and carefully honed performing skills. The CD was a big success and as the accolades poured in, the Hannahs were quick to credit the extensive guidance and support from other artists. They were also deeply appreciated for their willingness to "pay it forward" by helping new performers just getting started like Belinda Gail and Juni Fisher.

Songwriter/musician/actor Bill Thornberry joined the sons after a 20-year career as a choral director. Frequently teaming up with Lon now, he was grateful to appear with the Sons for over 200 performances. What made a huge impression on him was how the Hannah's, Joe especially, "gave back" to others, particularly young people. Bill explained that teaching middle schoolers can be trying, but he was fascinated by how they connected with Joe. He used athletics to recruit boys to the chorus by challenging them in basketball—when he won, they joined the choir. "Joe proved that singing was very cool and fun."

Although they flourished as popular performers, the Hannahs never strayed far from their roots as educators. Jack was particularly proud of the series of interactive books and CDs called Read 'Rite and Recite & The Value Mountain Trail, he wrote with the late Fresno State professor Gary Sells, which was integrated into the curriculum throughout Fresno County, and they frequently appeared in classrooms. The series earned a coveted Wrangler award from the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

From their earliest days, the Sons of the San Joaquin focused on preserving America's vibrant history by celebrating every aspect of the Western lifestyle through iconic music. And boy howdy, did they ever! ⚡



**Susan Ditz** of Minden, NV has been a journalist and public relations consultant for more than three decades. She has been a huge fan of Western music and cowboy culture since childhood.

# 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.

For the “Tour” this time we offer you not only a western sighting but an entire proposed cowboy universe, thanks to the prescription savings specialist GoodRx. It comes in the person of “The Savings Wrangler,” who is not only a cowgirl but a range riding, guitar picking one at that! And she comes with a deep-voiced prairie dog sidekick named “Dusty Pete” riding on her shoulder!!

According to the press release put out with the commercial’s August 30th debut, the campaign’s setting of The Wild West was chosen to represent the untamed and unpredictable nature of navigating pharmaceutical pricing.

“We’re introducing a heroine who brings our brand mission to life in a bold new way,” writes Ryan Sullivan, Chief Marketing Officer at the company. The release goes on to describe the character as being a “lasso-wielding, lovable (and) fiercely dedicated cowgirl who’s on a mission to tame the Wild West of prescription pricing.” It’s interesting to note that this Western idea didn’t come from a sober and staid ad agency. It was developed in-house by the GoodRx folks themselves because, as they say, they want to be “riding into new creative territory (with) a groundbreaking brand campaign” designed to “deepen cultural relevance!”

“New creative territory!” Since everything old is new again, we say “Yes!! Of course!” And they intend to venture further into the prairie dog hole to “deepen cultural relevance.” The Savings Wrangler’s petite buddy Dusty Pete is going to be a singing sidekick!! So exactly how much closer does the outside world have to get to convince us NOW IS THE TIME to advance Western Music?? In one of their introductory commercials the lusty-voiced Dusty (who at least sounds a good deal like Trace Adkins) sings about savings to the tune of “Home On The Range!”

“We went back and forth on whether Dusty Pete should speak,” Ryan Sullivan tells us. “Ultimately, we decided that giving him a voice and a guitar would unlock a whole new avenue of storytelling, especially on social media. His ballads turn real savings stories into earworms, which is a powerful recall device in a largely visual media landscape. The ballads also gave us a mechanism for sharing stories about real people using GoodRx in an entertaining and memorable way.”

Their initial concept was for the creation of what they termed a “fearless ally” to help people with prescription madness. Sullivan recalls the process. “We explored a lot of territories before landing in the West. Early boards ranged from ‘helpful neighbor’ vignettes to more abstract, utility-driven concepts. They were fine, but they didn’t give us a world to live in. The Wild West metaphor kept winning in research. It also gave us a cinematic playground where we could showcase grit and heart in our world-building.”

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)

On September 22 The Savings Wrangler essentially performed a takeover of Times Square to make her point! Certainly her presence is keenly felt there and in other public areas in the form of posters, stickers and other collateral materials. The vivid visuals for the ads are being rendered by some of the leading specialists in the business to give the campaign maximum impact through TV, display items, radio ads, paid social media and other outlets. A sponsored appearance on ABC’s Good Morning America found the Wrangler sitting in the studio guest chair being interviewed and fielding questions



Image used by permission. GoodRx™

from ‘concerned prescription victims.’ However, there was one moment in the segment that should have been an “ouchy” one for us. The network lady posing the questions referred to the Wranglers’ classic Western attire as being “outfitted in full Country garb.” And there’s the barb. Once again the daunting disconnect haunts us. And since it has been entrenched for....oh shall we say half a freakin’ century....it’s not going to go away overnight. But “go away” it must, if we are ever to make true progress in re-establishing our genre.

As is evidenced by recent ads for companies and products like GoodRx, Xfinity, Tubi, Progressive, Glad Bags, Volkswagen, GMC, Salesforce AI, Sling, PayPal, Frito-Lay, Benchmade, Nissan, Ancestry.com and dozens more, part of the public awareness work is being done for us through the repeated use of Western imagery in popular media. But what will we choose to do or not do with it? Will we build in its wake or miss another opportunity? Played intelligently, this could wind up being the fresh making of Western Music. ⚡

# WESTERN EVENTS CALENDAR

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

## 2026

### COLORADO COWBOY GATHERING

JANUARY 30 – 31  
GOLDEN, CO

### COCHISE COWBOY GATHERING

FEBRUARY 6 – 7  
HUACHUCA CITY, AZ

### NATIONAL DAY OF THE COWBOY

JULY 25

### ARIZONA COWBOY POETS GATHERING

AUGUST 6 – 8  
PRESCOTT, AZ

### MONTANA COWBOY POETRY GATHERING & WESTERN MUSIC RENDEZVOUS

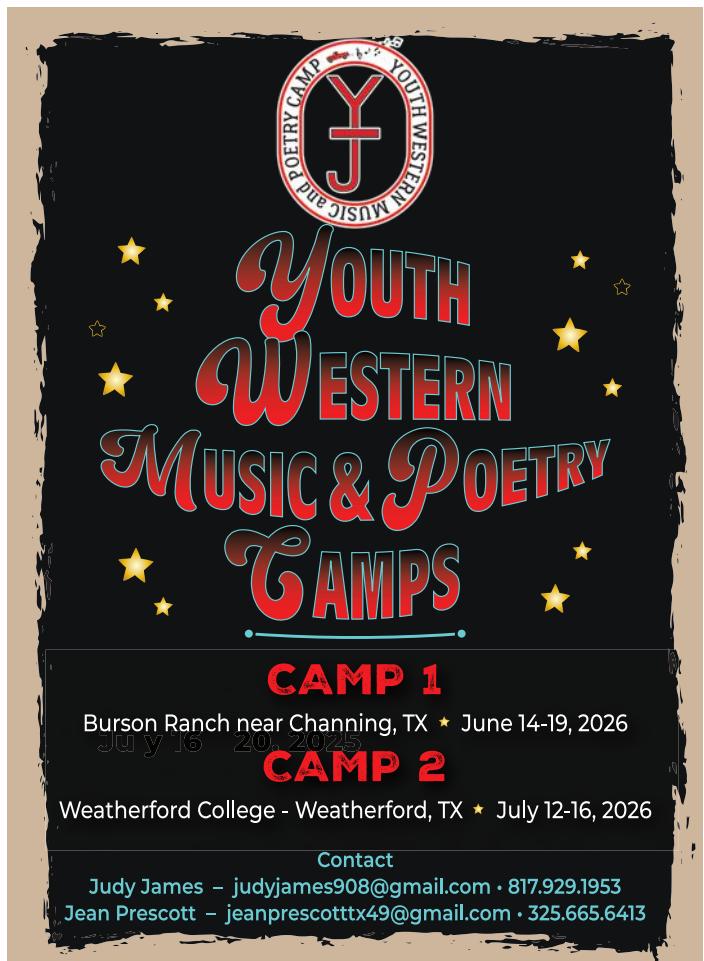
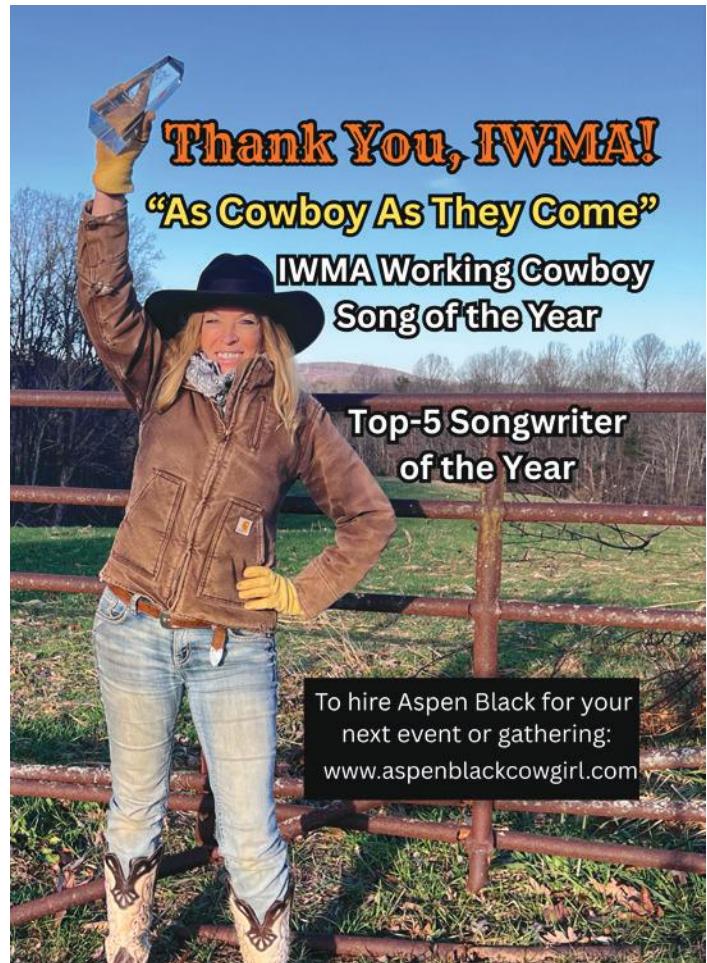
AUGUST 6 – 9  
LEWISTOWN, MT

### WESTERN SLOPE COWBOY GATHERING

NOVEMBER 6 – 7  
GRAND JUNCTION, CO

### IWMA 2026 CONVENTION

NOVEMBER 11 – 15  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM



# 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.



## Thin, Clean Air

by Danny McCurry

If you can use your imagination,  
I want you to come along with me,  
And I'll paint you a picture of a Cowboy  
That most folks never see.

But I seen him ridin' hard,  
Watched him fall and drag,  
Bouncin' off them rocks  
Like a worn-out, old dish rag.

When the stirrup leathers broke  
And left him there for dead,  
He told me, "Fetch my hat son,  
I don't wanna burn my head."

He's tougher than the mountain,  
Wilder than a bear!  
Eatin' steak for breakfast,  
And breathin' thin, clean air.

He lives all by himself  
Out at the Widder's Camp,  
Choppin' fire wood for the stove  
And burnin' coal oil in his lamp.

He packs salt out for the cows,  
He's lovin' every day.  
Loads a Henry rifle to  
Keep the wolves away.

He didn't care too much for school.  
He quit to live this life.  
But he ain't nobodys fool,  
He's sharp as a Moore Maker knife.

He don't know about this global warming,  
Snow still blows through the cracks.  
Baby calves freeze to death.  
Now, that's the straight up truth and facts.

His hat and Blutcher boots are tattered.  
He had 'em both handmade.  
But he's worn 'em twenty years now,  
So they's worth every dime he paid.

He never won a trophy buckle,  
Just couldn't afford the price to play.  
But you can bet he was a top hand  
Back in his younger day.

He could set a saddle bronc so pretty  
And scratch him all the way  
Just like he did 'ole Luther,  
Cause boys he'd buck every day.

He never gets too lonely.  
Don't intend to settle down.  
Checks his mail twice a year  
When he rides off into town.

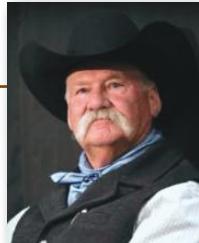
His hair is growin' thin.  
A mustache droops and hides his lips.  
His hands are kind of gnarly.  
And he's got arthritis in both his hips.

His eyes, they're gettin' dim,  
Old age is all he fears!  
He's lived this way since before  
They quit the catalog at Sears.

They'll have to close that Widder's camp  
The day they lay him in the ground,  
'Cause he's the last of his kind,  
There's not another one around.

Like the end of a good novel  
Readin' the last page.  
His youth is all spent now,  
And he's in the final stage.

But he's tougher than the mountain!  
Wilder than a bear!  
Eatin' steak for breakfast.  
AND BREATHIN' THIN, CLEAN AIR!



**Danny McCurry** is a day working cowboy and rancher. He has been writing and performing cowboy poetry for several years and travels with the RFD TV Show, "Best of America by Horseback," where he and Del Shields entertain Friday and Saturday nights and looks forward to being invited to perform at cowboy poetry gatherings across the USA.

# In The Spotlight...

by Marvin O'Dell

...The Spotlight congratulates several western musicians and poets who recently accepted awards from the Will Rogers Medallion Awards — an organization that recognizes writing, music, and film that preserves and promotes the western culture in honor and in the spirit of Will Rogers. **KC LaCourse** won Gold for Western Recorded Poetry, **Rik "Yonder" Goodell** won Gold for both Cowboy Written Poetry and Cowboy Recorded Poetry, **Miska Paget** won Silver for Cowboy Written Poetry, **Marci Broyhill** won Gold for Western Written Poetry, **Jim Jones** and **Deanna McCall** won Gold for Cowboy Songwriting, **Jon Chandler** won Silver for Cowboy Songwriting, **Jim Jones** won Gold for Western Fiction Short Stories, and **Carol Markstrom** received Gold, Silver, and Bronze medallions for Western Songwriting, Western Documentary Short Film, and writing contributions in Cowboy Written Poetry along with members of the Cochise County Corral of the Westerners.

...“As Cowboy as They Come”, the latest release written and recorded by **Aspen Black**, has gotten the attention of Big Machine Label Group in Nashville. She and her management team are currently in talks with them about coming aboard as an artist and/or writer.

...In November, **Jon Chandler** performed before several thousand attendees in the courtyard of the Historic Hotel Colorado in Glenwood Springs, CO, for the hotel's 37th Annual Lighting Ceremony. Jon is working on a new recorded collection of stories and songs for the Hotel. **The Rocky Mountain Stocking Stuffers**, a holiday bluegrass orchestra featuring Jon, **Ernie Martinez**, and six of their pickin' pals, played three sold-out shows in December at the iconic Lakewood Cultural Center in Lakewood, CO. His novel (based on his song), *He Was No Hero*, is nearing 2026 publication.

...Oregon poet **Tom Swearingen** performed and served as MC at the Lakeview, OR Cowboy Gathering this year. Tom's collaboration with the quartet **Cowboy Jazz** continues with work on a new album that will feature 10 Swearingen poems. They have also been invited to perform and give a clinic to music students at Mt. Hood Community College. A poem Tom wrote about a Joseph, OR, historical incident is included in a new book titled *Songs, Poems, and Stories of the Hells Canyon Region*.

...The IWMA was well-represented at the Tecumseh, OK, annual Frontier Days this year as the audiences listened to cowboy poet **Ron Secoy** from Duncan, **Jerome Campbell** from Strang, and cowboy poet **Francine Roark Robison**, a Tecumseh native.

...**Juni Fisher** may have retired from touring but not from the spotlight. In October, she won the Amateur division buckle and prize money in Ogden, UT, the Utah Cutting Horses Classic (5/6 year old horses), on her horse Johnny Cash and the next weekend was in Lincoln, CA for the NCHA Redwood Circuit finals to win both the 5K and 25K Non pro division buckles and prize money on her horse Diamond. Those wins also secured her two top five buckles for the National Cutting Horse Association Circuit high point standings and an invitation to attend the National Finals in Fort Worth, TX next spring.

...**The Arizona Wildflowers** reported that they had a wonderful time in Albuquerque seeing old friends and making new ones! From there they were off to compete in the Jr NFR in Las Vegas, NV!

...*A Ranch Musical*, the film starring **Kristyn Harris**, will be doing its first test screening during the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, NV. Also, be watching for a new gospel album from Kristyn to be released in January 2026, titled *Give Me Jesus*.

...**Ron Secoy** (Western Wordsmith Chapter) has released his new CD titled *Return to the Manger*. Ron says it is “a Christmas album *sans* Santa and the commercial trappings.” His next project for release in late Spring will carry the title, *Outlaw*.

...**Carol Markstrom** performed and accepted a Best Album award for her latest album *Seekers* from the Fair Play Country Music Red Carpet Award Show in Europe held in the Netherlands last fall. She then brought her style of western music to the Country Messe in Erfurt, Germany, the largest country music festival in Europe, where she performed, networked, and was interviewed by several European radio programs.

..."Wolf Moon", a composition written and recorded by **Patty Clayton**, took top honors at the Fair Play Country Music Red Carpet Awards in Europe for best Native American Style by a Female last fall. The Academy of Western Artists has also nominated the song for Best Western/Country Song, and Patty is nominated for Western/Cowboy Female Vocalist of the Year.

...**Merel Bregante** is working on some new music from **Randy Palmer** and **Sarah Pierce** as well as mixing a beautiful **John Lowell** song while wishing all a blessed New Year "filled with western dreams come true!"

...Cowboy poet **Rik "Yonder" Goodell** had his busiest fall performing season ever, appearing in Cowboy Poetry gatherings in Oregon, Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. He accolades this year were an amazing surprise, too, winning two first-place buckles at The Chisholm Trail Festival in Yukon, OK, three first place gold Will Rogers Medallion Awards in Tulsa, OK and Cowboy Poetry Album of the Year in Albuquerque, NM. What a year!

...After a 10-year hiatus, **T.J. Casey** is working on a new project that his producer promises will be "out of site." T.J. says he is "ready to Go, Go, Gooo" with this one!

...The IWMA convention workshop on teaching youth to write cowboy poetry, presented by **Lindy Simmons**, created some interest among chapters. She suggested each chapter have a youth liaison, and some have already signed up. Meanwhile, Lindy has been presenting some new poems at "Cowboy Tuesdays" at the Durango (CO) Diamond Belle Saloon.

...No snow during the Holiday Season in southern Arizona? "No snow! And that's just the way we like it," says award-winning songwriter **LeeLee Robert**. The title cut for her new release, *Arizona Christmas*, with desert critters celebrating a square dance while Santa drives a stagecoach and helpers are wearing sombreros, is part of a 14-song collection in a recording of holiday favorites as well as originals. The album is available on world-wide streaming platforms.

...Geary Parsons and J. Michael Mullins (**The Timberline Cowboys**) are set to begin pre-production on their next album. The coming year is shaping up to be a busy one as they have signed to be a regular act at Durango's (CO) Cowboy Tuesdays, taking place every third Tuesday of the month at the Diamond Belle Saloon in the Historic Strater Hotel. They're already booked for several out-of-town gigs, so 2026 should be quite the year. Geary is entering his final year as president of the Colorado chapter of the IWMA.

...**Claudia Nygaard** has just finished mixing her new album *To Race the Wind* with grammy winning mix engineer Mike Poole. Mike was the mix engineer on all the music for the popular TV show *Nashville*, in addition to albums by Americana legend Buddy Miller and folk/Americana artist Patty Griffin. In addition to finishing up the new album, Claudia has been busy this fall showcasing music conferences in both Chicago and New York.

...The Spotlight is pleased to pass on this announcement from the Hampton family: **R.W. Hampton** seems to be fully recovered from the unexpected open-heart surgery he had in early July. He will be performing for the Western Folklife Center in Las Vegas at the NFR, and has his first single in over a decade along with its accompanying music video set to release on December 10, both from his upcoming album *My Country* which has been evolving over the past decade since the project started. Look for more singles and the full album over the coming months as well as other new merchandise and tour dates on his website, [www.rwhampton.com](http://www.rwhampton.com).

...Besides songwriting and performing his original songs, **Mark Lynn Young** was also shooting footage with his full band this fall at his farm in Lebanon, TN, for his "Ride It Out" video – the second single from his *A Cowboy by Choice* album. In February, Mark and his wife, Kaysie, will be helping with the judging of the Tennessee Songwriters Week 2026 – the annual statewide celebration of the songwriters and the craft that shaped Tennessee's rich musical history. The finale will be held in March (at the world-famous Bluebird Cafe in Nashville). 



# Chapter Updates

## ARIZONA CHAPTER

**President: Dan McCorison**  
**danmccorison@icloud.com**

The Arizona chapter has a new set of officers. They are: President, Dan McCorison; Secretary, Happy Anderson-Leask; and Treasurer, Lori Rutherford. Current chapter members are encouraged to watch for an email advising of the first meeting in 2026 somewhere in the general area of Phoenix. I know, that's about the size of Connecticut! Please plan to attend and be ready to share your ideas for the chapter moving forward! We want to set our sights on ways to reach out to schools, libraries and wherever we can to present programs detailing the rich history of western music and poetry with a special nod to the great artists and poets that have not only come out of the Copper State but reside here and are still busily preserving the culture of the West through music and poetry. Contact us for more information and be sure that you are a member of the AZ chapter.

## BLACK HILLS & BEYOND CHAPTER

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

As I sit here compiling the Chapter update, I look out on a landscape of snow and frigid temperatures here in South Dakota. What a difference from the warm, sunny weather in Albuquerque two weeks ago. This is the time of the year when many of our entertainers take a break before schedules start getting filled. A few folks do have some things scheduled though. Paul Larson keeps a busy schedule going through the holiday

season with several Christmas shows in Hot Springs, Lemmon, and Spearfish. Paul is always in demand in South Dakota and nearby states. John and Joanne Lowell are looking forward to spending time in Texas in February and March with performances at the Lone Star Cowboy Gathering and then several shows in the Austin/Fredricksburg area. Later in the year, they will travel to the Walnut Valley Festival. Rik "Yonder" Goodell is attending the AWA Convention in Ft. Worth where he is nominated for Poem of the Year and Poetry Book of the Year. Good Luck Rik. Mike Linderman continues to work on his songwriting skills, completing a new one every 2-3 weeks. Rumor has it that some of his tunes may be used in an upcoming documentary highlighting the life of runner and promoter, Jerry Dunn. Supporter extraordinaire, Phil Willig continues to promote IWMA and the BH&B Chapter wherever he goes. He hauled his chuck wagon to the Sidney, NE Christmas Festival for three weekends where he handed out WWs and informed attendees about our organization. He'll then head to NM where he'll continue to promote IWMA. The Ramblin' Rangers performed a couple of small Christmas programs before heading south to New Mexico for their twelfth season of performances in NM and AZ. It'll be nice to get out of the snow. The BH&B Chapter would like to wish all of you a very happy and blessed holiday season and New Year.

## CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

**President: Scott Tonelson**  
**Scott.tonelson@gmail.com**

Welcome new 2025 members Ernie Neagle, Peter Homer Martin, and Fiddlin' Pete Watercott. We had a great show for the Death Valley 49ers Encampment at Stovepipe Wells



*Buffalo Bryan Marr*



*Greg Khougaz, ScottT, Fiddlin' Pete Watercott & Ernie Neagle*

October 31 through November 2. Chapter members Alan Chenworth, Buffalo Bryan Marr, Greg Khougaz, Ernie Neagle, Fiddlin' Pete Watercott, and ScottT provided several great shows throughout the weekend and have been invited back for the 2026 Encampment event. Chapter members have been invited to the Empty Saddle Club Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Rolling Hills, Saturday, January 31, 2026.

## COLORADO CHAPTER

**President: Geary Parsons**  
**gearyparsons@outlook.com**

Since our chapter members are widespread, we will continue holding our quarterly meetings via Zoom. I'd like to extend a sincere thank-you to Steve Jones and Patty Clayton for hosting the Colorado Chapter Jam at the 2025 Convention. As a reminder, I am beginning my third year as Colorado Chapter President, which will also be my final year in this role. I encourage everyone to start thinking about serving as an officer for our chapter. Floyd Beard is

*Continued on page 16*



# RIDE EASY, PARD!

## STORIES AND TALL TALES

BY VIC ANDERSON

### LEON'S NORTHERN LIGHTS

**L**eon was the keyboardist and vocalist who worked in the same band as I for about 12 years doing one nighters to 5-6 nights/week. He held a Doctorate in Music and retired from a Montana college. Raised In Hawaii, he'd never seen the Northern lights.

After loading the band trailer following a gig at a Montana lakeside resort, he rode to town with me. As we drove along a mountain road, he kept looking at a glow over the mountains. He thought it was a forest fire. The Northern lights were dancing. They were so bright we could easily see the road with no headlights.

Leon kept banging and banging his head against the windshield as he looked. He finally mentioned he'd never seen them before. I was afraid he was going to either break the windshield or knock himself out.

I pulled over at a wide spot in the road where Leon, my wife and I, watched while the lights put on a powerful exhibition.

The next night as we set up for another gig, I noticed Leon had a couple bruises on his forehead.

RIDE EASY PARD.....Vic

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

### MAILBAG

I've been traveling so I'd not seen the latest Western Way until tonight. Here's a quick note to thank you for your "From The President" column [Fall 2025]. I agree wholeheartedly with every point. That must have taken no small dose of courage, but yes indeed, "... somebody needs to say it."

- R. Goodell, MT

[This says so much...reprinted by permission]

#### Congratulations!

International Western Music Association Convention 2025 was a well-organized event! So many wonderful workshops, so many talented entertainers, so many friendly people striving to support each other.

The hotel layout is conducive to the many aspects of the event: the vendors, the mercantile, the showcases, the workshops, restaurant, the round-robbins, banquets and the dancing.

The evening dancing was an aspect of the event that truly impressed me, made me smile. During the dinner and concert on Thursday, November 13th, I sat by a lady named Faye. She and her husband are not members of IWMA but attend the evenings that include dancing. (Ticket Sales!) Later that evening, I saw young people having fun dancing in the lobby to music of the "Jammers!"

Wishing I knew how to dance, I suggest that you offer a workshop of dance

instruction, maybe early in the morning on two of the days. I met and talked to Donna Howell. She is delightful and a western dance enthusiast. I wonder if she or someone else could provide those of us, wanting to know how to dance, with an opportunity to learn. Afterall, western musicians are gratified when people step up and dance to their music.

I am proud to be a member of International Western Music Association, an organization preserving and promoting an important aspect of the history and culture of our nation.

- Marci Broyhill, Prairie Poet & Storyteller

# Chapter Update

Continued from page 14



Patty Clayton, Lindy Simmons, Susie Knight and Vic Anderson at showcase in Golden, CO. Bill Patterson photography



Performers at the Western Slope Cowboy Gathering

currently developing his fifth poetry CD and working on two books he hopes to publish within the year. He also continues to write his monthly column promoting the western way of life and cowboy poetry, featured in numerous newspapers and magazines across Colorado. Patty Clayton, Lindy Simmons, Susie Knight, and Vic Anderson recently performed at a showcase in Golden, Colorado, with Bill Patterson capturing the event through his photography. At the 10th Annual Western Slope Cowboy Gathering, Susie Knight served as MC and did an outstanding job. It was a fantastic event, with Saturday night completely sold out. The Timberline Cowboys performed at the 2025 Durango Cowboy Gathering and are currently hosting Cowboy Tuesdays at the Diamond Belle Saloon in the Strater Hotel in Durango, Colorado, continuing through September 2026. Have a pleasant winter and I'll see you in the spring.

## COLUMBIA CHAPTER

**President: Tom Swearingen**

[toms swearingen@gmail.com](mailto:toms swearingen@gmail.com)

A successful annual showcase concert was held at the Bowman Museum in Prineville, OR with a standing-room only crowd enjoying Thomas Fitzgerald, Rik Goodell, Kathy Moss, Barbara Nelson, Duane Nelson, Sydney Pierce, Tom Swearingen, Larry Wilder, Ned Bodie, Judi Seger, and Ted Hunt. A highlight was our 2025 Columbia Chapter Youth Poetry Contest winners sharing their winning poems, and receiving custom trophy buckles, \$250 cash, and IWMA memberships. Grade school, middle school, and high school winners were all from the



Kathy Moss



Larry Wilder



Floyd Beard



Duane Nelson

same talented family. Congratulations Josie, Larry, and Thomas Fitzgerald! This was the fifth win for Thomas and the first time entering for his younger siblings. A community open mic following the concert brought several other performers to the stage. Prior to



Barbara Nelson



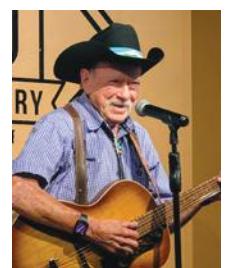
Ned Bodie



Sarah Pierce and brother Carter



Rik Goodell



Ted Hunt



Annual meeting cast and crew



Judi Seger



Tom Swearingen



Youth poetry contest winners Thomas, Larry, and Josie Fitzgerald. Talented family!

# IWMA LIFETIME MEMBERS

Frank & Linda Achary	Metairie, LA	Charles Jennings	Rockville, MD
Lonesome Ron Affolter	Mankato, MN	Emma F. Kaenzig	Walzenhausen Switzerland
Nolan Bruce Allen	Grand Island, NY	Paul Kelly	Santa Fe, NM
Rex Allen, Jr.	Nashville, TN	Karen L. Killion	Forney, TX
Judi Anderson	Albuquerque, NM	Ray Kraft	Loomis, CA
Cindy Argyle	Hooper, UT	Fred LaLabour	Ashland City, TN
Cowboy Joe Babcock	Franklin, TN	Jane Leche	Westcliffe, CO
Cheryl Barnett	St. George, UT	Paul Lohr	Nashville, TN
Troy Bateson	Vilonia, AR	Cindy Longoria	Virginia City, NV
Floyd Beard	Kim, CO	Clyde Lucas	Sylmar, CA
George & Doris Bensmiller	Armstrong, BC Canada	Mike Mahaney	Burbank, CA
John Bergstrom	Atascocita, TX	Michael P. McAleenan	Piedmont, OK
Carol Bobroff	San Diego, CA	Janet McBride	Rockwall, TX
Ned Bodie (Robin Freerks)	Goldendale, WA	Steven "Mac" McCartney	Aurora, CO
Sherry Bond	Nashville, TN	Tracy McHenry	Tucson, AZ
Ken Bucy	Mesa, AZ	Gary McMahan	Laporte, CO
Brandt Buffham	Saugus, CA	Al "Doc" Mehl	Turner Valley, AB Canada
Stephen S. Burnette	Brownsville, TN	Tree Menane	Taos, NM
Robert Maxwell Case	Slick, OK	Kathy Messenger	Sierra Vista, AZ
Susan Booth Case	Slick, OK	Jon Messenger	Sierra Vista, AZ
TJ Casey	Riverton, WY	Joseph Miskulin	Kirtland, OH
Alan Chenworth	Edwards, CA	Michael Martin Murphey	Nashville, TN
Woody Paul Chrisman	Nashville, TN	Marvin O'Dell	Sun City, AZ
Patty Clayton	Edgewater, CO	Theresa O'Dell	Sun City, AZ
Karen Cloutier	Conyngham, PA	Tom O'Malley	Harvard, ID
Peggy Collins	Livermore, CA	Darren Oliver	Castle Rock, CO
Henry "Steve" Conroy	Sierra Vista, AZ	Sara Lou Oliver	Castle Rock, CO
Polly Cooke	Wickenburg, AZ	Billy Pitts	Kansas City, MO
Jan Michael Corey	Mesa, AZ	Pamela Plaskitt	Waterloo, IA
Stan Corliss	Hillsboro, OR	Jeff Pundt	Lakeside, AZ
William Crowe	Van Horn, TX	Diana Raven	Lakewood, CO
Don Cusic	Nashville, TN	Herb Remington	Ruidoso, NM
Mark & Marlene Davis	Chatsworth, CA	Steven Rhodes	Foosland, IL
David DeBolt	Nolensville, TN	Victoria Rhodes	Foosland, IL
Rich Dollarhide	Sierra Vista, AZ	Don Richardson	Upland, CA
Dave Eaton	Scottsdale, AZ	Barbara Richhart	Mancos, CO
Arlys Eaton	Scottsdale, AZ	LeeLee Robert	Paradise Valley, AZ
Fred Engel	Kimball Junction, UT	Jessie D. Robertson	Fort Worth, TX
Bonnie Exton	Hot Springs, SD	Roy "Dusty" Rogers, Jr.	Reeds Spring, MO
Brad Exton	Hot Springs, SD	Elizabeth Rukavina	Arleta, CA
Robert E. Fee, Esq.	Tucson, AZ	Mike Rutherford	Sierra Vista, AZ
Juni Fisher	Wilton, CA	Lori Rutherford	Sierra Vista, AZ
Rick Flory	Paradise Valley, AZ	Yvonne Ryan	San Jose, CA
David A. Fulfs	Moscow, ID	Ray Ryan	San Jose, CA
Belinda Gail	Magnolia, TX	Mary M. Ryland	Albuquerque, NM
Norbert Gauch	Walzenhausen Switzerland	Suzanne Samelson	Thermopolis, WY
Dixie Goodman	Sun City West, AZ	Rudolf P. Schai	Bernhardzell Switzerland
Douglas B. Green	Brentwood, TN	O.J. Sikes	Ridgewood, NJ
Chris Guenther	Chehalis, WA	Lindy Simmons	Mancos, CO
Betsy Bell Hagar	Mill Valley, CA	Julie Spencer	Pacific City, OR
Jerry Hall	Porterville, CA	Dave Stamey	Orange Cove, CA
Patti Hamel	Tucson, AZ	Cheryl Stanley	Roswell, NM
Tex Hamel	Tucson, AZ	Red Steagall	Fort Worth, TX
Les Hamilton	Dubois, WY	Terri Taylor	Roy, UT
RW Hampton	Amarillo, TX	Steve Taylor	Roy, UT
Lisa Hampton	Amarillo, TX	Bob Taylor	El Cajon, CA
Calvin Danner Hampton	Amarillo, TX	J. R. (Ray) Threatt	Oklahoma City, OK
Lon Hannah	Visalia, CA	Harvey Walker	Anaheim, CA
Joni Harms	Canby, OR	Carlos Washington	Youngsville, NM
Eddy Harrison	Las Cruces, NM	Washtub Jerry	Fort Davis, TX
Tom & Jane Hilderbrand	Little River, SC	Leonard Werner	Flemington, NJ
Randy A. Hoyt	Clifton, CO	Johnny Western	Mesa, AZ
Rick Huff	Albuquerque, NM	Paula Erlene Williamson	Branson, MO
Voleta Hummel	Sierra Vista, AZ	Norman Winter	Mills, WY
Elana James	Austin, TX	Joyce Woodson	San Juan Capistrano, CA

# Chapter Update

Continued from page 16

the concert our annual meeting saw the reelection of Carla Swearingen and Duane Nelson, and the addition of Rik Goodell to the board. 2026 officers elected are Tom Swearingen, President, John Seger, VP, Nels Nelson, Treasurer, Carla Swearingen, Sec. with Ned Bodie, Duane Nelson, and Rik Goodell members at large. The chapter presented an open mic stage at the Lakeview, OR, Cowboy Gathering with Tom Swearingen, Duane Nelson, and Kathy Moss supporting.

## KANSAS CHAPTER

**President: Martha Farrell**  
**marthafarrell@gmail.com**

It was great to see the good turnout of Kansas members at the IWMA convention! 3 Trails West, Jeff Davidson, Ron Wilson and Jim Mathis all performed, and Jim and Louise Mathis



KS chapter president Martha Farrell & chapter secretary Jim Mathis at IWMA table

created a great table for our Kansas Chapter. Congratulations to Ron Wilson, Orin Friesen and Morey Sullivan for the recognition they received last fall. Ron Wilson was awarded a lifetime achievement award from the Historic Cattle Trails Consortium for his long-term efforts to promote the historic cattle trails and the heritage of the American cowboy. Orin Friesen and his bandmates in the Diamond W Wranglers were inducted into the Kansas Cowboy Hall of Fame in Dodge City. They were honored for their



Ron Wilson with Lifetime Achievement Award



DIAMOND W Wranglers Jesse Friesen with original members Stu Stuart and Orin Friesen

historic concerts around the world, and through writing and recording a large body of original music that contribute to the legacy of cowboy music in Kansas.

*Continued on page 29*

A flyer for the Arizona Folklore Preserve. It features a map of Arizona on the left and a large image of a guitar on the right. The text includes:

**ARIZONA FOLKLORE PRESERVE**

The BEST Western and Acoustic Entertainment Center in the Southwest!

**SHOWS ON SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS**  
2 pm Throughout the Year  
(Doors Open at 1 pm)

**FOR RESERVATIONS**  
ArizonaFolklore.com  
Ticket price \$20 for adults and \$10 for 17 and up

56 East Folklore Trail  
Hereford, AZ  
In Ramsey Canyon –  
Just 6 miles south of Sierra Vista  
(Highway 90 & 92 intersection)

**ARTIST CONTACT:**  
Mike Rutherford  
Mike@rdiinc.us

**Arizona Folklore Preserve**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA SOUTH

A promotional image for the song "Wolf Moon" by Patty Clayton. It features a large full moon in the background, a teepee in the foreground, and four dogs howling. The text includes:

**WOLF MOON**  
PATTY CLAYTON

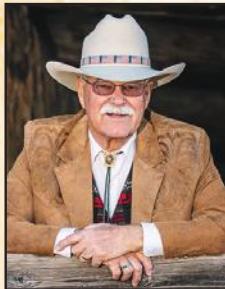
IMAGE AI GENERATED WITH CANVA

**WOLF MOON**  
WINNER OF THE 2025  
RED CARPET AWARD FROM  
EUROPE FOR BEST NATIVE  
AMERICAN STYLE SINGLE  
BY PATTY CLAYTON

AVAILABLE ONLY BY DIGITAL  
DOWNLOAD AT  
[WWW.PATTYCLAYTON.COM](http://WWW.PATTYCLAYTON.COM)

# In Memoriam

## SANFORD "MARK" KELLEY (1948 – 2025)



Sanford "Mark" Kelley, age 77, of Grand Haven, Michigan and Tucson, Arizona, passed away on Sunday, August 10, 2025, at home, surrounded by his family. He was born in Grand Haven, Michigan to Charles and Ethel (Borchers) Kelley.

Mark was a wanna-be cowboy, a fan of Western music, an avid sailor, and enjoyed skiing. He was a founding member of Folds of Honor Michigan Chapter and an advocate for fellow veterans. Having proudly served his country in the US Army in Vietnam, he was awarded the Purple Heart. Mark enjoyed success as an entrepreneur, having built his own communications technology firm.

He is survived by his wife of almost 43 years, Kristine; son, Jeffrey (Laurie) Kelley; grandsons: Matthew and Jonathan; siblings: Craig (Dawn) Kelley and Diane (Mark) Donselar. He was preceded in death by his parents, Charles and Ethel; brothers Rodney and Mikel Kelley.

## RICHARD "RICH" PRICE ( – 2025)



Rich Price was a proud ambassador for cowboy and western music, upholding the values of the west through his music and way of life. His passion and deep knowledge of the genre began at an early age listening to Eddy Arnold and Gene Autry on the radio to admiring Hank Snow for incorporating

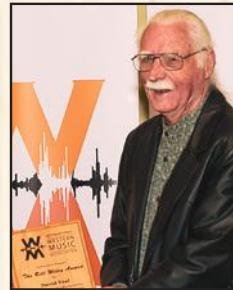
horsemanship into his live tours along with his unique vocal stylings. Rich later became friends with The Singing Ranger Hank Snow and modeled his career after him, becoming known as The Singing Sierran (a nod to his home at the foothills of the mountain range across Yosemite National Park).

Rich Price led trail rides through that land he loved so much and sang by campfire at night, yodeling and storytelling. From performing in China to opening a show for George Strait, Price always appeared in style with his Manuel created suits with symbols of the west and America, just as Roy Rogers had fashioned before him.

Rich Price was in millions of households each week as the co-host of the music tv show, Cheyenne Country. His recordings with Nashville's A-Team session musicians and Riders in the Sky's Joey Miskulin, earned him an Academy of Western Artists nomination and consideration at the

IWMA awards in 2018 for Cowboy's Cowboy for WMA Song of the Year and WMA Album of the Year, as well as WMA Male Artist and Songwriter of the Year. Rich was a lifetime member of the International Western Music Association. Rich is survived by his wife, Diane, children and grandchildren plus many fans.

## DAVID DEAN VEAL (1938 – 2025)



On December 14, 1938, David Dean Veal was born to Leroy and Theo Veal in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Veal family relocated to California where David attended Inglewood High School. At the age of 19, he became a sergeant in the United States Air Force (1957-1961). After his honorable discharge from the service, David took his savings and opened a pharmacy and restaurant at Warner Bros. Studios. There he served many Hollywood celebrities and producers. It was there that David also met his wife, Peggy. The two were wed in Las Vegas, NV (1967) and later purchased their home in Saugus, CA, in 1980.

In retirement, David and Peggy enjoyed traveling throughout the United States in their RV. Peggy was an artist, and the couple became active members of the Santa Clarita Artists' Association. In 1998, David became the group's first Lifetime Membership recipient for his commitment, dedication, and volunteer service.

In 2009, David's beloved Peggy passed away. David immersed himself in supporting and promoting visual and performing artists. IWMA members, Jim and Bobbi Jean Bell vividly recall the day he walked into their new OutWest store located in Old Town Newhall. From that moment on they became fast friends and worked closely together on OutWest's many live programs including their author series "Rendezvous With A Writer" and the "Buckaroo Book Shop" held during the annual Santa Clarita Cowboy Festival and the monthly "SCVTW Presents The OutWest Concert Series." Jim Bell recalls, "When David entered a room he brought with him a smile, an exuberance, an "I can do that" attitude, and a sense of humor that was contagious." Bobbi adds, "... His enthusiasm, creativity, and passion for life touched us all."

David became an indelible force promoting civic arts groups including the International Western Music Association California Chapter and other Santa Clarita organizations. During the IWMA Annual Conference David volunteered to organize and run the "Mercantile" selling and promoting the CDs, books, and other merchandise performers made available. He was honored by IWMA with the 2018 Bill Wiley Award.

# THE 1871 KIOWA TRIAL IN JACKSBORO, TEXAS

## A LITTLE BIT of HISTORY

By Johnny D. Boggs

In the spring of 1871, Henry Warren led ten mule-pulled wagons, loaded with 550 bushels of corn, out of Weatherford, Texas, bound for Fort Griffin and into history.

That's because on the reservation near Fort Sill in what's now Oklahoma, a medicine man named Maman-ti talked an estimated 150 Indians, mostly Kiowas, into following him on a raid in Texas.

At Salt Creek Prairie, Maman-ti and his followers waited to spring an ambush.

Maman-ti refused to attack a military ambulance escorted by mounted soldiers, saying his vision revealed that the second party would provide more spoils. Thus a passenger in the ambulance, William T. Sherman, arrived safely at Fort Richardson near Jacksboro.

When Warren's train came through the next day, May 18, Maman-ti ordered the attack. Seven teamsters were killed, and 40 mules and a horse were stolen.

Wounded teamster Thomas Brazeal and a colleague walked 20 wet, stormy miles to Fort Richardson. Hearing Brazeal's story – and understanding how close he came to death – Sherman vowed to bring the Kiowas to justice.

After ordering Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie to pursue the band, Sherman set out to Fort Sill. There, Sherman had three Kiowas arrested – the bragging Satanta, young Big Tree and fierce old Satank.

Maman-ti wasn't charged.

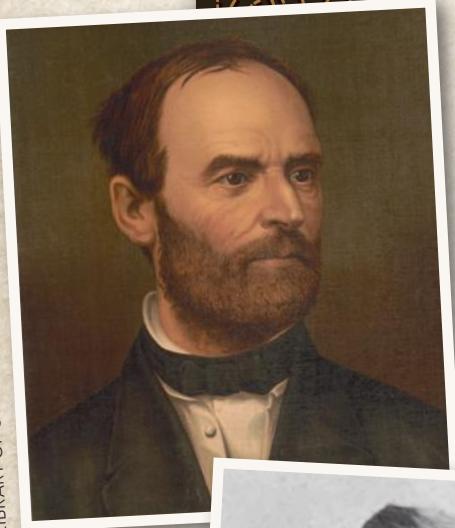
Arriving at Fort Sill on June 4, Mackenzie was ordered to deliver the prisoners to Jacksboro to stand trial for murder.

Satank had other plans. Described in the Army and Navy Journal as "a hoary-headed old sinner sixty years of age or thereabout, grown gray in iniquity and deeds of blood," Satank slipped free of his manacles, wounded a guard and grabbed a carbine before being shot dead.

On June 15, Mackenzie delivered the two remaining prisoners to Jacksboro. Judge Charles Soward granted a motion by the appointed defense attorneys, Thomas Ball and Joseph A. Woolfolk, to have separate trials for the defendants. First up was Big Tree, whose trial began July 5 in a stifling second-story courtroom. Samuel W.T. Lanham led the prosecution. Fort Sill's Horace Jones served as interpreter.

To no avail, Woolfolk and Ball argued that the defendants weren't subject to state law, should be treated as prisoners of war and deserved diplomatic considerations.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



William T.  
Sherman  
portrait

Ranald S.  
Mackenzie  
Civil War  
photo



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The trials got national media attention. Not all of it was accurate. Quoting Fort Smith, Arkansas's Era, The New York Times reported, that "Satanta and Big Tree ... released themselves from their shackles by gnawing the flesh from their hands and feet, but were discovered and shot dead."

On the other hand, the Dallas Herald reported that Ball's "speeches were at some points most eloquent, and displayed ... a thorough knowledge of the Indian character."

The jury needed just 30 minutes to find Big Tree guilty.

The next day, Satanta warned those in the courtroom that "If you let me live, I feel my ability to control my people. If I die it will be like a match put to the prairie. No power can stop it."

Lanham – a future Texas governor – labeled Satanta as "the arch of fiend of treachery and blood" and Big Tree a "tiger-demon who has tasted blood and loves it as his food ...."

Neither Ball nor Woolfolk called witnesses for the defense.

The Texans found Satanta guilty, too, and both Kiowas were sentenced to hang.

But Soward asked Governor Edmund J. Davis to commute the sentences to life imprisonment. Davis agreed, and on October 16, Satanta and Big Tree were sent to the state penitentiary in Huntsville.

Sherman wasn't happy, and even madder in 1873 after Davis paroled the two Kiowas. In a letter to the governor, Sherman said he hoped "if [Satanta and Big Tree] are to have scalps that yours is the first that should be taken."

Big Tree would help establish the Rainy Mountain Indian Mission, serving as a deacon until his death in 1929. But Satanta's participation in the Red River War of 1874-75 got him sent back to Huntsville, where he committed suicide in 1878.

There's a sidenote to this trial. But that'll have to wait till next time. 

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

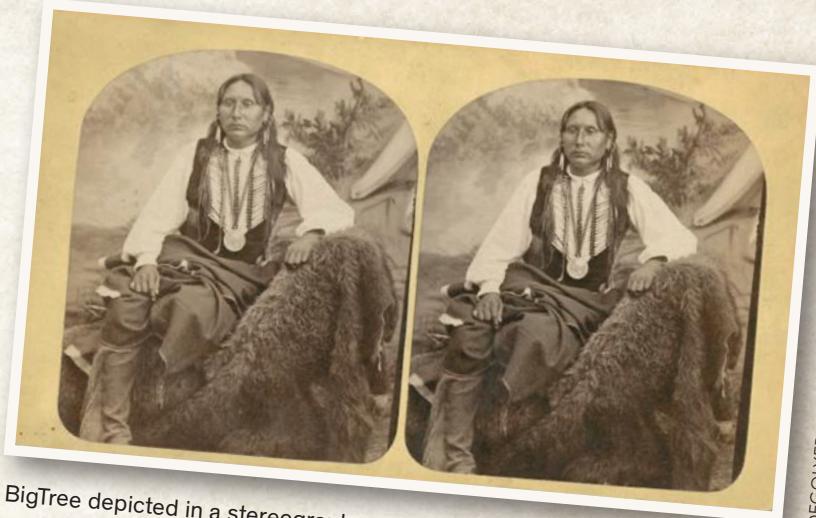


Santank



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Satanta



DEGOLYER LIBRARY, SOUTHERN  
METHODIST UNIVERSITY

BigTree depicted in a stereograph



**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).

Photographs courtesy of Lee Peters, Jim Mathis and Bill Lindsey

# IWMA 2025 MUSIC AWARDS



**WESTERN ALBUM  
OF THE YEAR**  
On the Trail With the  
Lonesome Pines  
Hilary Gardner



**WESTERN SWING ALBUM  
OF THE YEAR**  
From the Saddle to  
Symphony Hall  
Dave Alexander



**ENTERTAINER  
OF THE YEAR**  
Syd Masters



**SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR**  
Chris Guenther  
with Presenter John Lowell



**MALE PERFORMER  
OF THE YEAR**  
Jon Chandler



**FEMALE PERFORMER  
OF THE YEAR**  
Kristyn Harris



**SONG OF THE YEAR**  
Blessed by the West  
Merel Bregante,  
Sarah Pierce, Randy Palmer



**INSTRUMENTALIST  
OF THE YEAR**  
Ernie Martinez



**GROUP OF THE YEAR**  
Gone With The West

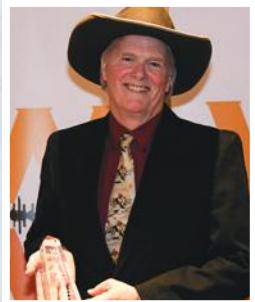


**WORKING COWBOY SONG  
OF THE YEAR**  
As Cowboy As They Come  
Aspen Black



**HARMONY CONTEST AWARD**  
Gone With The West  
Micki Fuhrman, Tecia McKenna,  
Myrna Lewis, Mary Kaye Holt

# IWMA 2025 POETRY AWARDS



MALE POET OF THE YEAR  
Tom Swearingen



FEMALE POET OF THE YEAR  
Sherl Cederburg



COWBOY POETRY ALBUM  
OF THE YEAR  
Cowboyin' With God  
Rik "Yonder" Goodell  
with Presenter Dan McCorison



COWBOY POETRY BOOK  
OF THE YEAR  
Pensive 'n' Playful  
Mark Munzert



POETRY CONTEST  
Danny McCurry  
with Presenter  
Mark Munzert

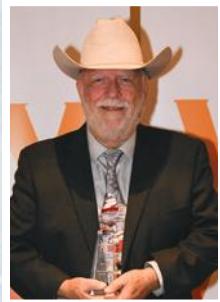
# IWMA 2025 SPECIAL RECOGNITION



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES  
L-R Belinda Gail, Badger Clark (Presenters Rex Rideout and Pegie Douglas) and Hot Club of Cowtown (Presenter Marvin O'Dell)



PRESIDENTS AWARD  
L-R Ed Hughes and Randy Fowler



CURLY MUSGRAVE  
COWBOY SPIRIT AWARD  
Jerry Hall  
with Presenter Belinda Gail



TEAM PENNING AWARD  
Marci Broyhill and  
Teresa Kay Orr



RADIO DJ/PROGRAM  
OF THE YEAR  
Cowboy Radio Ride  
Kevin "Tuck" Tuckfield

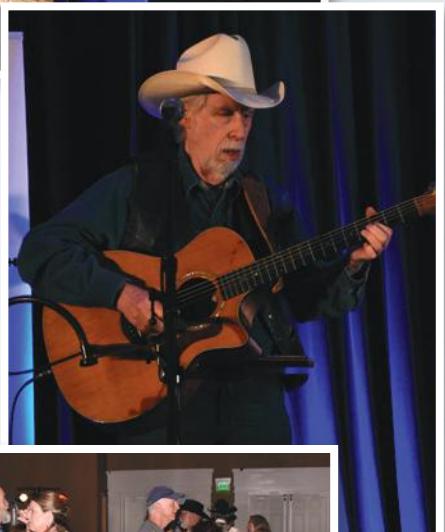


LIZ MASTERSON CRESCENDO AWARD  
The Arizona Wildflowers

# WEDNESDAY

Registration | Opening Day Luncheon with historian/writer Johnny Boggs  
Swing Dance with Syd Masters and the Swing Riders

“Doors are open, registration begins; hallways filled with chatter.  
Greet old friends, make new friends; IWMA family matters.”



# THURSDAY

Vendors | Workshops | Showcases  
Cowboy Crisis Fundraiser with Hot Club of Cowtown

"Hallway vendors and a boutique with treasures, so much to see and touch  
Hot Club of Cowtown entertains; IWMA did induct."



# FRIDAY

More of the same plus Youth Workshops and The Opry Experience

“Another busy day, performances everywhere.

More workshops to sharpen our skills; Opry anticipation fills the air.”



# SATURDAY

Veterans Breakfast | Annual Membership Meeting | Youth Showcase | Awards Show

"First honor our heroes who gave so much; then tend to business at hand  
Fill the room to support our youth performers, such a talented band  
Anticipate the night to come, who will win the prize, but wait,  
Everyone wins, there's support for our friends, and gratitude fills our eyes."



# SUNDAY

Sunday Gospel Sing featuring a variety of singers and poets.

“Doors are closing, halls are empty;  
it’s time for all to scatter.  
Back to homes; traveling for gigs;  
pursuing what really matters.  
Once a year we come together,  
a diverse family for sure,  
We leave to pursue our dreams,  
the IWMA mission will endure.”



# Chapter Updates

Continued from page 18



Hank Thompson's Brazos Valley Boys  
(Morey Sullivan, 1st row center)

Hank Thompson's Brazos Valley Boys, directed by Morey Sullivan, celebrated Hank's 100th Birthday in style at the Pawhuska Western Swing Festival in Oklahoma in November. They received official congratulations from the State of Oklahoma, signed by the Governor. We're proud of our Kansas members. We're not a large chapter, but we're making a difference in our corner of the world.

## NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

**President: Judi Anderson**

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

The vice president and co-secretary's 2-year term were up this year. Our current Vice President, Scott Wilson and co-secretary's, Lee Peters and Bonnie Rutherford agreed to run for another 2 years! Having no opponents, they won! On December 14, we hosted our annual holiday concert with Syd Masters. This is always a fun event and this year was no exception. Our pre-convention event on Tuesday, November 11, was a huge success! It was hosted by the New Mexico Chapter and the Black Hills and Beyond Chapter. Performers were: Ramblin' Rangers, Patty Clayton, Pegie Douglas, Paul "PJ" Ross, Grace Clark, Michael Coy, Kerry Grombacher, and Thomas Hawke. Emcee's were David Nidel and Brad & Bonnie Exton. We are looking forward to 2026 being a great year of more western music, poetry and stories of the west!

## OKLAHOMA CHAPTER

**President: Leigh Ann Matthews**

[info@matthews-music.com](mailto:info@matthews-music.com)

Some members of The Oklahoma Chapter have performed in a variety of events throughout 2025, with hopes of more in 2026. The Tecumseh, OK, Frontier Days Celebration was held in September and the Dewey, OK, Western Heritage Celebration was held in October. Longtime member musician/poet Robert Beene released a new recording of original poetry along with some covers and offers it in electronic format, available on major streaming sites. Scott and Leigh Ann Matthews have a brief appearance performing in the bonfire scene of the recently released movie, Wildfire: The Cherokee Ghost Horse. Directed by Eric Parkinson. some scenes were filmed in and around Tahlequah, OK. The movie is family friendly with a storyline inspired by Michael Martin Murphy's song Wildfire. Filming began in 2019 but was plagued by a variety of delays, including the Covid pandemic, but was finally released in select theaters in October. It is now available on Fandango with plans to be released on other major streaming platforms by mid-December. The cast includes Chevel Shepherd, Major Dodge, Jr., Mo Brings Plenty, Adrian Paul, Michael Martin Murphey, Cara Jade Myers, Olivia Slatton-Fite and more, and was the last film for the late Ann Heche.

## TENNESSEE CHAPTER

**President: Aspen Black**

[aspen@aspenblackcowgirl.com](mailto:aspen@aspenblackcowgirl.com)



Mark Lynn Young with full band at Ride It Out video shoot photo

Claudia Nygaard has just mixed her new album, "To Race the Wind," and she's finishing the album artwork. Claudia is planning the 2026 release and booking the supporting tour. Johan Smits (our new member from Germany) was at the Red Carpet Show in Europe where he received an award for his recording of the song "Loving You Makes Me a Better Man" a Hal Ketchum cover. Johan has nominations for the upcoming Elite Music Awards, and he'll appear on a German Country Christmas show on December 14. In early 2026, Johan will be recording new songs. Mark Lynn Young has been shooting footage with his full band this fall at his farm in Lebanon, Tennessee for his "Ride It Out" video – the second single from his "A Cowboy By Choice" album. In November, after attending the IWMA Convention and Awards Show, Mark released his song and video of "This Close to Christmas." Mark and his wife Kaysie (also his co-writer and co-producer) have both been asked to judge Tennessee Songwriters Week 2026 – the annual statewide celebration of the songwriters and the craft that shaped Tennessee's rich musical history. The finale will be held in March at the world-famous Bluebird Cafe in Nashville. Cowboy Joe Babcock is recording new songs, and his tune, "God Does Not Change," is in the Top Ten on the Gospel Chart. Returning home after the IWMA, Kerry Grombacher finished a successful concert tour that had begun with



~A MUSICAL NOTE AND~

# REVIEWS

FROM O.J. SIKES

To submit your CD for review, send to: O.J. Sikes, 681 Ellington Road, Ridgewood, NJ 07450

Required: Album cost, S&H cost, Address, Phone Number | Questions? You can email O.J. at ojsikes@gmail.com

## What Happened to the Music after the Movies?

**R**ex Allen made the last of the singing cowboy movies (*The Phantom Stallion*) for Republic Studios in 1954, with **Koko** and his trusty sidekick, **Slim Pickens**. A couple of months later, Rex would record the soundtrack (theme) for Universal-International's color feature, *Rails into Laramie*, but the days of the singing cowboy hero on the silver screen were over. So what happened next?

Well, talented devotees of the music were determined to keep it from disappearing. The music was just too good to let it die. Early on, **Roy & Gene** had weekly TV shows, and Roy's closing theme song, composed specifically for the show by **Dale Evans**, became almost universally recognized. But, while Roy's music in the series was limited to the theme song, Gene &/or the **Cass County Boys** sang one or more songs in every *Gene Autry Show* TV episode, continuing the singing cowboy image. TV Westerns and their theme songs were very popular (who doesn't remember the exciting themes from **The Lone Ranger** and **The Cisco Kid?**). But that was in the early 1950s! Then what?

While Roy, Dale and Gene continued to give the music national

exposure via tv, a group of Western musicians calling themselves **The Wagonmasters**, started providing music for visitors to the Western-themed park, Knott's Berry Farm, in California. The Wagonmasters inspired **The Reinsmen** and later, **The Lobo Rangers**, performing the songs of yesteryear, along with new compositions intended to continue the tradition.

One of the youngsters in the Knott's audience was later to become **Ranger Doug**, of **Riders in the Sky**. Around this time, a series of *Chuckwagon Supper* venues were opened across the West, offering beans and "live" Western music to tourists.

A few years later, Rex, Sr. toured coast-to-coast with his fiddler, **Wade Ray**, and comedian **Pedro Gonzales Gonzales**, and he worked with Disney in Hollywood, while **Rex Allen, Jr.** was becoming a popular tv & recording star in Nashville. And in the early 1970s, Rex, Jr. was inspired to write and record a song that was to speak to all of us who had grown-up with Western music, "Can You Hear those Pioneers?"

By the time the 1980s had rolled around, Ranger Doug had joined **Too Slim & Woody Paul** to form Riders in the Sky, with **Joey "the Cowpolka**

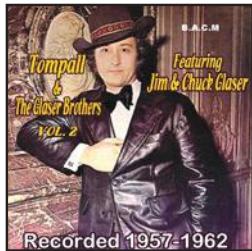
**King**" signing on later, and they were becoming widely known across the nation. In 1985, the Western Folklife Center in Elko, Nevada launched an annual Cowboy Poetry festival with a strong music component, and later in that decade, musicians and fans would form the Western Music Association, now the IWMA. Canadian **Ian Tyson** moved from folk to Western music, and **Michael Martin Murphey** built an exciting and successful series of Western music events, welcoming newcomers like the **Sons of the San Joaquin** who would become so popular that they would eventually join Murphey, **Don Edwards, R.W. Hampton, Red Steagall, Ian Tyson, Rich O'Brien** and others as members of the Western Music Hall of Fame!

In the '90s, **Bobby Newton** formed the Academy of Western Artists in Gene Autry, OK, eventually emphasizing Western Swing as well as other aspects of Western life.

All this time, the **Sons of the Pioneers** have kept performing, recently celebrating their 90th anniversary. And, perhaps in spite of changing times, the ranks of Western music performers and fans have continued to grow, well into the 21st century.

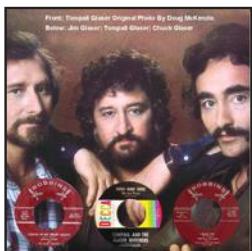
## TOMPALL & THE GLASER BROTHERS, VOL. 2

BACM745



Tompall & the Glaser Brothers (Tompall's actual siblings)

were Midwesterners who moved to Nashville and made it big, as a trio and backing Marty Robbins in the 1960s, and then playing an important role in the "outlaw" movement with Waylon & Willie. Since it's part 2 of a series, this CD includes some of their lesser-known recordings, mostly from their country work, but there are also some tracks that will have



Back Cover

broader appeal, e.g. "Mule Skinner Blues," "The Dying Hobo" (featuring Jim Glaser), "Boll Weevil," and "South of the Border." But my favorite track on the CD is one the Sons of the Pioneers used to sing as a kind of signature song, "My Best to You." The Glasers' rendition will knock your hat in the proverbial creek!

The B.A.C.M. website is set-up to allow interested browsers to listen to a few introductory bars of each selection on every new CD they offer, to give prospective customers an idea of what the product sounds like.

The online address is: country-music-archive.com

**Editor's Note:** Here's a short commentary of interest submitted quite some time ago from an IWMA fan who has now passed. I know he would be pleased to have it find its way into an issue of the Western Way. Read and enjoy his perspective. Here's to you, David.

## I'M SO PREDICTABLE, ARE YOU?

By David Veal

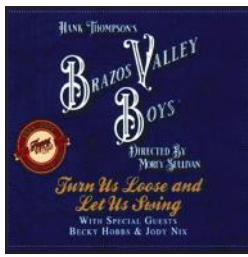
The other day I ran out of deodorant and it never occurred to me to try another brand. My favorite is Gillette Right Guard Aerosol™. Upon entering the store, it stuck me that, yes indeed, I use the same items all the time. I like Colgate™ toothpaste original, not any gel, baking soda, or flavored for me. Having been in retail, selling these products, I have been given new products to try but I didn't care for them. The same with my shave cream, thank you but it's Barbasol Original Foam™ and English Leather After Shave™ not cologne. I do recall about 15 years ago I received as a Christmas gift of cologne made by the manufacturer of an electric razor that was pleasant and the only one that women responded to, ladies where I worked, and strangers would comment. They came right up to me and would say how much they enjoyed the fragrance, and what was its name and where could they buy it. Unfortunately, the company stopped making it because of lack of sales. My days as the center of attention were over and I went back to my old favorite, English Leather™. What does all this mean? Who knows but I'm sure somewhere someone knows in a marketing department of a company. They know that I prefer the right side of the bed, don't like fried chicken, wear long pants and shirts, don't wear a cap, like mystery stories and funny movies, country music and the band music from the 30s and 40s, fascinated with odd facts, prefer boots, want to see what's over the next mountain, must have my cup of coffee and read the newspaper every morning. Can't miss "60 Minutes" on Sunday night, miss Charles Kuralt, like Andy Rooney. I'm not particularly adventurous in the food department. Most of my diet changes have come from my Doctor's orders. I would prefer a hamburger or steak with potatoes, fried or mashed, but I do like Chinese, Pizza, country fried steaks, fish and chips, corn on the cob, rice and beans. I love BBQ, my favorite is Powdrell's BBQ in Albuquerque. Peggy, my wife, and the doctor say more vegetables, fruits and grains. Have a heart, you've already taken my almonds away from me. What's next my Hershey™ bar? Give me a cool day anytime to hot ones of 90 and over. This leaves me out of living in Las Vegas, Palm Springs or most of Arizona. I leave this puzzle to others...are you predictable? Maybe I can change but I don't want to.



## RICK HUFF'S BEST OF THE WEST REVIEWS

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.

### BRAZOS VALLEY BOYS "Turn Us Loose and Let Us Swing"



Sometimes just the name of a band can serve as the review of its product. "Hank Thompson's Brazos Valley

Boys." It can't be anything but great!

The legendary pillar of Western Swing Hank Thompson founded the Brazos Valley Boys, the band that backed him for half a century. And current music director Morey Sullivan has been there for much of it. For this project he invited luminaries Becky Hobbs and Jody Nix to participate as well....Hobbs on a special medley using Thompson's hit "Wild Side Of Life" melded with its answer song "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels." Then Nix ably handles vocal duties on the Swing standard "Misery."

Attempting to name "picks" here would be futile. But in keeping with their founders' intention for them, the Brazos Valley Boys move forward here with four new songs among the classics. Notable are "Saturday Night In Tulsa," "King Of Western Swing" (no surprise the Boys say it ain't Wills) and "End Of Day," an out-n-out cowboy song dedicated to Sullivan's dad.

With intimate, expressive performances that celebrate the

Thompson philosophy of music-making, the collection was released to commemorate his 100th birthday. May these candles never be blown out! Fifteen tracks, very highly recommended.



### JESS CAMILLA O'NEAL "Campfire Sessions"



She writes that this release is the result of her healing process following a cancer diagnosis. Jess Camilla O'Neal has brought forth an effort where no expense was spared in production and no detail was left to chance. It is nothing short of fabulous.

No credits were furnished with the YouTube link, so I'm not sure if the album pick songs "Campfire," "Wyoming Whiskey" and "Cowboy Kind" are originals. Most tracks are covers. Some are gender-adapted such as "This Cowgirl's In Love With You" and "She Rides Wild Horses." There's a really nice brassy-sassy big band take of the standard "Cow Cow Boogie." For "My Rifle My Pony & Me" she and her arranger have managed to mask the repetitive melody with an inspired treatment. Her "Cool Water"

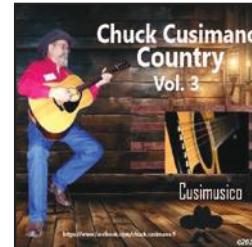
gets a full choral presentation. From the performance and variety of sound to the occasional use of subtle effects as intros, this one is superior in all respects. The final three songs in the collection certainly reflect her personal situation.

This is the kind of album you want to point to and say "see what Western can be???" So I will! Thirteen tracks, very highly recommended.



### CHUCK CUSIMANO

"Chuck Cusimano Country Vol. 3"



Possibly the number of artists who could legitimately be considered unique in their expression,

both vocally and in their writing, would still make up a mere handful or two. There aren't that many of 'em. Chuck Cusimano's easy voice might remind you of another artist or it may just be because it's perfectly suited to Country, to Western and to Western Swing. All three genres show up in this grouping.

Nine of the tracks are Western Swingers in various tempos. One of the standouts is a duet done with Dee Gee Overbey "I Meant Everything I Said" (make that "almost said to you"). Other

picks include "For Better Or Fort Worth" ("where Bob Wills and Milton Brown gave Western Swing its birth"), "Loving You Blind" (a slow Swinger), medium easy Swingers "She Said," "I Know A Lie" and "Fall The Other Way," a chugging one "I'm Not That Good Anymore" and a jazzy one "I'm In A Good Mood." The one Western track is "What Kind Of Horses," a part poem-part song done in tribute to a fallen cowboy.

As ol' Coosie might sing out, "dive into the Chuck!" It's a tasty treat. Twenty-four tracks, highly recommended.



## KC LACOURSE

*"Dime Store Cowgirl"*



The intention of the prolific Cowboy Poet KC LaCourse seems to be 'a quick hit and git!' Once again from her

comes a massive collection of brief works mounted with expressive fiddle intros from Jess Meador.

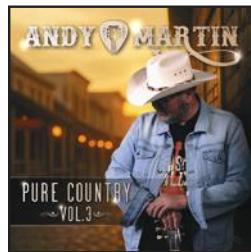
The title poem is a self-portrait done in a curious third-person style ("she is a friend of mine," she says). That 'friend' is also the subject of "Ride Tall Cowgirl," a work of encouragement for anyone else facing a cancer diagnosis.

The subjects are wide-ranging (pun intended). Those ranges include trips across the Australian outback ("The Magic Of The Murray," "Colorado Holden In Oz") and a trek along the Oregon Trail ("One By One"). Historical profiles are here, too, including CD picks "Stagecoach Mary Fields" and New Mexico outlaw "Jack Burns." Other picks that typify the LaCourse approach are "Dave's Coat" (a jacket with a history), "The Lone Cowboy" (ridin' hidin' his pain), a mail order bride tale "Waltz Across Time" and "Buckle Up" (it's a cinch)!

The album is available in both CD and thumb drive formats. Twenty tracks total, recommended.

## ANDY MARTIN

*"Pure Country Vol. 3"*



If my addition is correct, this release marks Andy Martin's 18th studio album. He has long been

recognized as one of Europe's leading emissaries for Country and Swing. His point of origin might be Switzerland, but his effect is straight out of Cain's Ballroom. Martin no longer tours with his band of 2000 shows and 36 years standing but (happily) he has not been silenced after stepping off the bus.

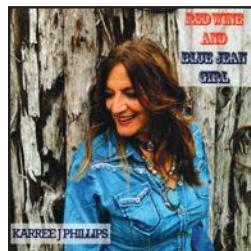
Although the name of this collection defines its contents as being "Pure Country," at least four of the ten tracks here are purest Western Swing. Three of those songs are uptempo. They include "Writing On The Wall," "Two Empty Glasses" and "I'm Blue I'm Lonesome." For the fourth ("Then We Can All Go") Martin lets you slow down the heart rate...just a bit.

Vocally Andy Martin is somewhat of a cross between Buck Owens and Freddy Fender but he is a copy of neither. His legion of fans will surely find this newest compendium to be a cozy, comforting one and it's very danceable, of course! Recommended.



## KAREE J PHILLIPS

*"Red Wine and Blue Jean Girl"*



With Bonnie Tyler-style vocal sand, from the album's start singer/songwriter Karee J Phillips stomps in

and takes no prisoners. Let's be clear here. This review is being written from the perspective of a Western guy who can and does appreciate the beat-

driven Rockin' Country effect when it's done well. This CD is done very well! Now, that having been said, it's not all Rockin' Country. These originals move comfortably in and out of various rock, Pop and Country musical genres. Phillips handles the easier ballad style as skillfully as she does the hotter stuff.

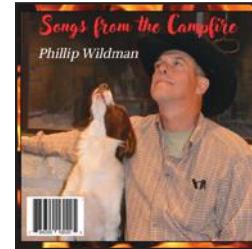
The opening track here romps and affirms "It Ain't Easy Bein' Country," but says it with solid Western imagery ("the rule on the ranch is the critters come first," "feed the chickens and saddle my horse," "check the cattle and mend the fence" and more). Another track that arguably can be considered Western is "Peace River Home."

Frisky tracks like "Zip Zang," "Honky Tonk Holler" and the title track "Red Wine and Blue Jean Girl" are fun but, of course, not Western. It will be interesting to see what her fresh contact with The Western World at IWMA 2025 might produce. Recommended, thirteen tracks total.



## PHILLIP WILDMAN

*"Songs From The Campfire"*



Anyone familiar with the acoustic Western "combo" sound of Riders In The Sky will instantly recognize that

effect in the superb work of the support musicians on this collection. Except for no trio harmony, the RITS style is perfectly rendered by the essentially anonymous players. Each periodically gets a verbal nod of name recognition from the title artist Phillip Wildman.

This is a rare and superior release. The aforementioned 'Riders' are about the only ones offering the sound these days. We're provided with a tasty mix of nice Wildman originals and covers. Cute lyrics that aren't cloying are found in his "Caught Holding" (....me "on a Texas Saturday night"), "Someday Isle" and the uptempo "Fortunate To Be Portchan It" (his spelling there, done in

# Chapter Updates

Continued from page 29



*Kerry Grombacher & Aspen Black (The Western Troubadours) at a South Dakota concert*

a September recording session in Santa Fe for two new songs that will be released in 2026: "Cowboy Heart," a tribute to his friend, South Dakota horseman and outfitter Bob Lantis, who died in February at age 90, and "Vigilante," Kerry's take on an origin story for the television character Paladin. Kerry did a week and a half of solo shows in Minnesota and then was joined by Aspen Black for a two-week Western Troubadours tour in South Dakota. In late October, Kerry attended FARM, the Folk Alliance Regional-Midwest booking and professional development conference in Lisle IL, where he attended workshops and performed in showcase sessions. The last concert on his schedule was at Albuquerque's Wheels Museum on the Saturday before the IWMA conference began. Aspen Black has been watching her IWMA award-winning song, "As Cowboy as They Come," climb the Indie Country Chart, a rare crossover of a western song to a mainstream country market. Aspen is nominated for Association of Western Artists awards (Western Country Female Vocalist and Western Country Song of the Year), and she plans to record and release new songs in 2026 to capitalize on her crossover success. In addition to maintaining a steady schedule of music performances, Aspen continues to produce four internet radio shows every week that feature new releases of western songs and poems.

## UTAH CHAPTER

**President: Dale Major**

**cvcowboyrendezvous@gmail.com**

The Utah Chapter of IWMA, in conjunction with Cowboy Poets of Utah, is busy with several events in the works, including a concert with The Petersons we'll be hosting December 11 in Logan (more info at CVcowboy.org) and our annual Symposium and Veteran's Concert on January 17 (cowboypoetsofutah.org). Many of our members have private shows and events, and information about some of those schedules can also be found on the cowboypoetsofutah.org site. The westernsong.net event will continue in Tooele on January 24, with a trio of incredible songwriters, so look into that as well! All of us here in Utah are looking forward to a fun and festive holiday season! Our best to everyone, from the REAL heart of the west, Utah!

## WESTERN WORDSMITHS CHAPTER

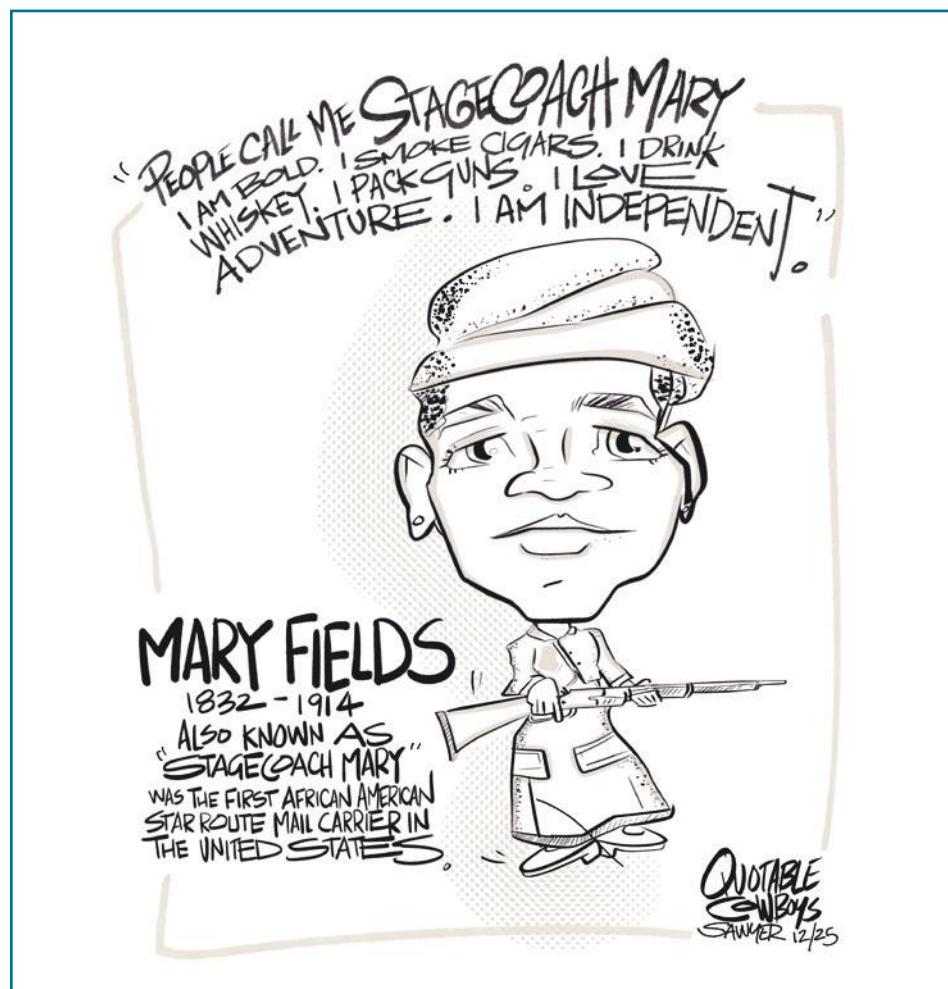
**President: Ron Wilson**

**ron@ronscowboypoetry.com**

What a terrific IWMA convention it was for members of Western Wordsmiths! Our theme of "The Power of Words: Heritage, Creativity, Service" was on full display as members claimed multiple awards. Rik "Yonder" Goodell won



*Western Wordsmiths officers (l to r) Ron Wilson, Jeff Davidson, Mark Munzert, Tom Hawk*





Floyd and Valerie Beard sponsor poetry contest buckle



Mark Munzert as Stumpy helps Lindy Simmons with Youth Workshop

poetry album of the year, Mark Munzert won poetry book of the year, Aspen Black won working cowboy song of the year, Sherl Cederburg won female poet of the year, and Tom Swearingen won male poet of the year. Special thanks to Floyd and Valerie Beard for sponsoring the beautiful trophy buckle which went to the winner of the cowboy poetry contest, Danny McCurry. Also competing in the contest were Wordsmiths members Ned Bodie; Mike Booth; Marci Broyhill; Sherl Cederburg; Jeff Davidson; Rik "Yonder" Goodell; KC LaCourse; Miska Paget; George Ray Russell; Lindy Simmons; and Dusty West. Thanks to the contest judges who included Wordsmiths Aspen Black; Micki Fuhrman; Connie Harrell; and Tom Swearingen. The Western Wordsmiths officers were pleased with the attendance at the convention workshop about the Cattle Trails. In another contest apart from IWMA, Scott Wiswell was awarded a trophy buckle for his champion winning poem at the Chisholm Trail Festival at Yukon, Oklahoma. The chapter plans to continue conducting quarterly zoom meetings for Western Wordsmiths members in 2026.

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

The Youth Chapter was well represented at the Convention in Albuquerque with 19 Chapter Members attending. They spent Friday in workshops with presentations by Marvin O'Dell explaining what IWMA is and what it does for members, and another presentation by Theresa O'Dell about how Chapter Members could contribute to *The Western Way*. LeeLee Robert talked about PR and Marketing strategies. The morning concluded with a panel discussion with Jon Chandler, Devon Dawson, and Mark Munzert talking about how they got to where they are today. After lunch, Kristyn Harris and Hailey Sandoz worked with the group on the number they were going to perform with Belinda Gail during her induction into the IWMA Hall of Fame on Saturday night. IWMA Youth Chapters are performing all over the country. Many of them have *The Western Way* and IWMA membership forms on their merchandise tables and are encouraging younger people to get involved. With 50 Youth Chapter members, the future of Western Music and Cowboy Poetry looks bright!



Moriah Owenby at her merch table in Georgia

## RICK HUFF'S REVIEWS

*Continued from page 33*

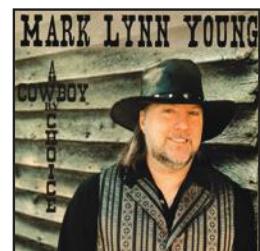
tribute to front porch jamming). Among covers such as "Sugar Moon," "Ain't Misbehavin,'" and a frisky take of "Back In The Saddle Again" are Cowboy Joe Babcock's "Doggone Cowboy" and a fine treatment of the seldom-heard Robert Wagoner classic "High Country."

Here's a winner to warm your Winter! Twelve tracks, very highly recommended.



## MARK LYNN YOUNG

*"A Cowboy By Choice"*



This EP of solid Western songs written by the husband/wife team of Kaysie P. Young and Mark Lynn

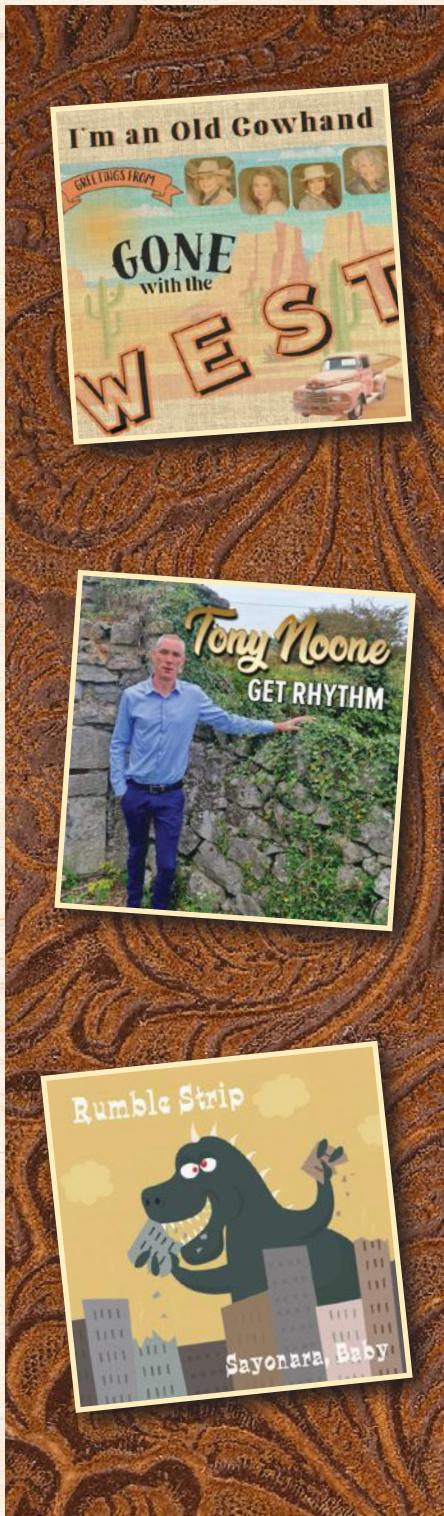
Young is performed in an expressive baritone by Young. The collection launches with pick track "Denim," offered in praise of the flexible blue fabric that first drew its name from d'Nimmes (of France) allowed the creation of the 'Francey pants' of the West. The backup featured on this one and another CD pick "Ride It Out" includes definite acoustic Folk Rock nods. The title track "A Cowboy By Choice" is a nice waltz with a nice message about the freedom to be. Artful lyrics grace "Grit and Grace" ("have patience and hope like wildflowers waiting under a blanket of winter snow") and "The Long Way" shows there are benefits to slowin' it down ("makin' it back from how far off track I've been"). The sixth song, one of those designated "Bonus Tracks" you encounter, is religious.

This thoughtfully put-together little sampler from Mark Lynn Young certainly portends good things to come. We'll be eagerly awaiting their arrival! Highly recommended.

# REVIEWS: SINGLE RELEASES

## Sampling The Singles

BY RICK HUFF



One of the awarded songs from the IWMA's 2024 Songwriting Competition was this frisky one, using the words of poet/author/editor Darrell Arnold set to music by **Tom Hiatt**. It's dedicated to Red Wolverton, who cowboysed from the mid 40s to late 50s and daily had to battle **The Half Broke Cavvy Of The ZX Range**. We all win here!!

An amazing power group has emerged in **Gone With The West**. The quartet of ladies is made up of solo artists who found each other in the practice of the performing arts. Without Album #1 even issued yet, they've landed the IWMA award for Western Swing Group Of The Year! Their take of **I'm An Old Cowhand** will begin to show you why.

**The Arizona Wildflowers** have added a single to their previous EP. **My Good Horse** is an original and certainly shows the group should create more. Savvy horse owners know such an animal will have near psychic abilities to empathize. This song profiles one that has been there through it all. It's strong enough to be 'ridden' by others, too.

Those **Ghost Riders In The Sky** get another run across it thanks to Irish balladeer **Alastair Spence**. The arrangement is reverential and big, albeit with synthesized brass. Hey, it's all good. Spence's Johnny Cashian voice evokes memories of Cash's own take of the Stan Jones classic, but many have sung it. There's 'Ghosts' enough for everybody.

There seems to be a resurgence of interest in covering Johnny Cash material. One of the latest to do it is Ireland's **Tony Noone**, who has released a faithful treatment of **Get Rhythm**. Like "Across The Alley From The Alamo" the lyrics may be less than PC these days, but Cash's 'Rhythm' still swings the same today. Just let your boots shine.

The acoustic Americana group **Rumble Strip** gives us a new **South Of The Border**. In this one the heroine "carries a torch for a desperate man, languishing somewhere in the Yucatan." They wind up before a firing squad. The title? The song says "south of the border she has a tattoo," so this 'south of the border' kinda means 'down Mexico way!!'

Here a lady equates trying to tame a **Wild Mustang** with hobbling an equally untamed man. Singer **Abby Laine** (no, Oldtimer, *not* Xavier Cugat's vocalist) doesn't want to break her stud's spirit, but it would be nice if he'd let her ride now and then! This one trots along nicely. Laine's voice sort of lives in Dolly's corral, so it's familiar territory.

The prolific **Bob Marshall** scores again with a look at the innermost cowboy. **He Talks To God** is an artful and highly poetic waltz with lines like “he knows that he’s answered when a horse breath blows white clouds soft on his face.” Still it’s not *in* your face with its subject. Just a nice little profile of private moments that work for one cowboy.

Racing in from County Tyrone, Northern Ireland, **Lauren Eva Rose** returns with a ferociously-paced cover of the Taylor Ware showpiece **Whatever Happened To The Yodelin’ Cowgirls**. The song states there must be at least one of ‘em left, but until she’s located its singer must demonstrate her own epiglottal skills. She proceeds to do so.

“Pickin’ fights like *tumbleweeds*?” “On the fence?” “A barbed wire question?” “A love that’s *fools gold*?” How many terms does it take to grant a Country song Western status? That’s the tough spot I’m in with **Rough Spot**. I do see **Tristan Roberson** wore a cowboy shirt and Stetson for the promo photo, so it seems I’ve given it the “aye”.

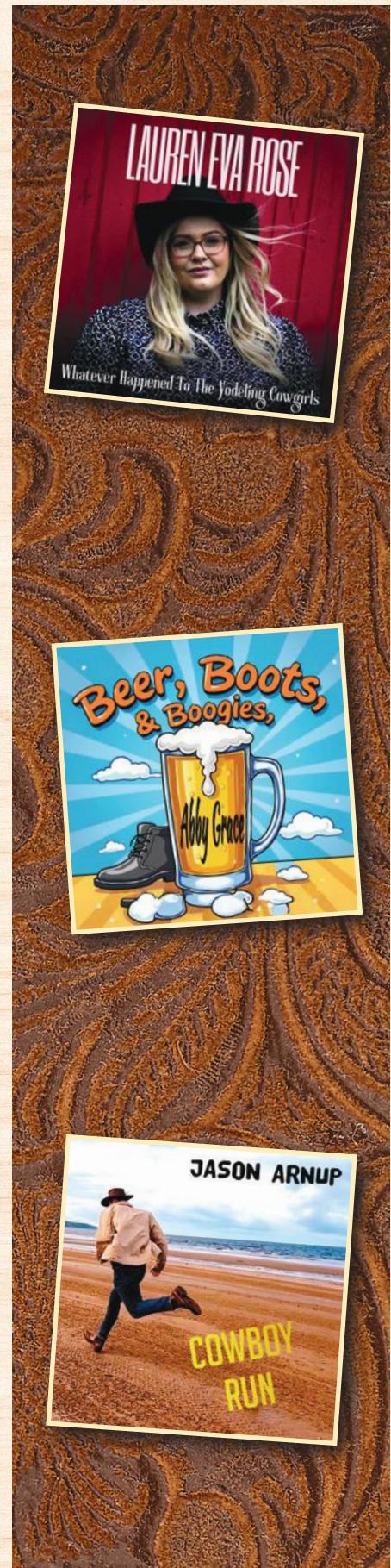
And then there’s the Texas Folk/Americana artist **CJ Hooper** and his enigmatic gallop called **Yonderer**. Its words say “looky over yonder -- the stranger he rides out beyond the road over the horizon where Paradise grows.” With the drifter’s spirit at the reins, “he’ll forever seek lost cities of gold.” The thing rubs noses with Western all the way.

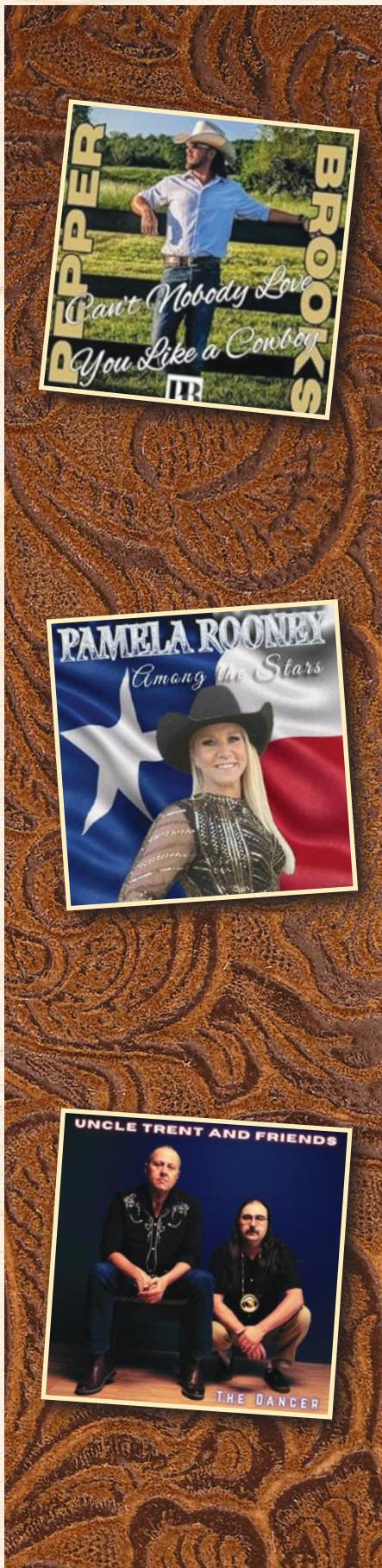
Canada’s **Abby Grace** sends us **Beer, Boots & Boogie**, a hot combo Swing offering with retro leanings. The harmony evokes 50s girl groups and the bopping backing is straight from that decade. Its lyrics offer a palatable report on what “cowgirls” and “cowboys” can do (and are already doing) “on a Friday night.” Saturday’s on its own.

“Where is **Country Music??**” An old question is posed anew in this Western Swinger from **Dave Edwards**. A radio DJ claims he just played a new ‘Country’ song. No way, says Dave. “It sounds like 80s Rock,” he says. “The guitar sounds foolish,” he says. “The fiddles and the steel guitar are gone,” he says. They’ve taken refuge *here*, though!

From the rocking, growly guitar camp of “Country” comes **Cowboy Run**, a strongly worded advisory from British singer/songwriter **Jason Arnup** directed toward a certain guitar pickin’ troublemaker. “I won’t need to shoot you down, somebody else will,” he assures the rowdy dude. Before that day comes, the scamp had better start scampering.

Well, it starts off with “he.” Then it adds “she.” It winds up as “they,” but Calgary Alberta songwriter **Lorn Doiron** still titles it **She’s A Cowboy**. Inhabiting a driving rockabilly bed (musically speaking) two ‘cowboys’ seek to make it work although it’s a rough ride in every respect. Influences here include Elvis, JJ Cale, Cash and rodeoing.





Americana rocker **Deborah Crooks** gives us a tough-minded reality check in **The Department of the West**. A man's descendants sit before a burning log, a tree he had planted. He'd said the land was never really theirs and admitted their Irish & Cherokee blood. "There's two sides in every war," the lyrics say. Here it's just 'right' and 'wrong.'

Alabama-raised songwriter **Pepper Brooks** tells us his single **Can't Nobody Love You Like A Cowboy** was inspired by the characters of Rip and Beth on the contemporary Western series "Yellowstone." Had the song come first, it easily could have underscored one of that couple's original scenes together. But wait! They say a spinoff's coming!

One of Britain's prominent songwriters Seamus Fitzsimmons has given singer **Michelle Murphey** one he wrote in tribute to his late dad. **My Best Friend (Is Waiting For Me)** features an arrangement element new to me. The 3-note twin fiddle step-up that often kicks off Swing songs falls after the beat is established. A point of interest on the tour....

A serviceable new take of **The Master's Call** has shown up. Unfortunately its singer **John Haverly** credits its authorship to somebody named "Brent Borman!" Although I've never considered the song to be one of Marty's best, its credit and royalties belong to the estate of the iconic Mr. Robbins, of course. But I wish "Brent Borman" well.

"Does Heaven have a jukebox in the corner?" Is there "a band of angels playing Western Swing?" If so, 'bet you could name 'em! "If Heaven is anything like Texas, with fiddles and a cryin' steel guitar..." sings **Pamela Rooney**, then she'll "wanta be up there **Among The Stars**." This one has the moxie to be a Swinger and a Hit!

Country Rocker **Leo Bawdry** "experiments" with the nether regions of Western. His feisty single **Slap That A\*\*** could mean assaulting a mule, y'know! The lady sees you can ride bulls and broncs, Cowboy. Her order for you is direct. Pull your skivvies on, make your jeans tight, tip your hat down, move those boots and....'assault your mule!'

No doubt about this one! **The Dancer** is a flat-out, on-your-feet, knock-it-out-of-the- park Western Swinger from Canadian First Nations group **Uncle Trent & Friends**. Trent Agecoutay is a second generation performer of the Country Western arts. He seeks to honor his late father Jim through his efforts and we are the beneficiaries.

Oh, **Brian Moon**, you cool Western Swinger you! Your new one called **Should I Be Doing This** is 100% guaranteed to have the people on their feet and their feet making them happy. And, by any chance, if your title is really pulling double duty and posing the question 'should I be doing this' music, we'll say the emphatic answer is YES!

Drawing on early 1800s Aussie folklore, **Brendan McMahon** sings about the **Wild Colonial Boys** in a colonially rustic waltz. The bushrangers rode and robbed the rich on behalf of the poor (or so the legend goes). The 'Boys' were led by young, real-life Robin Hood John O'Donohoe, aka "Jack Doolan," He met the same end as Billy The Kid.

From the Department of Songs You Never Expected To Hear In A Swing Arrangement, try this. Eddie Cochran's 60s Rocker **Summertime Blues!** You can thank Irish Country Swinger **John Mullan** for it. With steel guitar and fiddles in tow, he proceeds to make a believer of us. We might even believe it should have been handled this way all along!

'The Voice' finalist Emily Ann Roberts did it in 2024. Two of its writers released theirs in early 2025. It's been sort of a mad dash to record versions of **You Can't Hide Country**. You sure can't hide it in the country of Ireland, where **Molly O'Connell** (who performs as "Molly Dolly") offers that declaration with unabashed Country Swing flair.

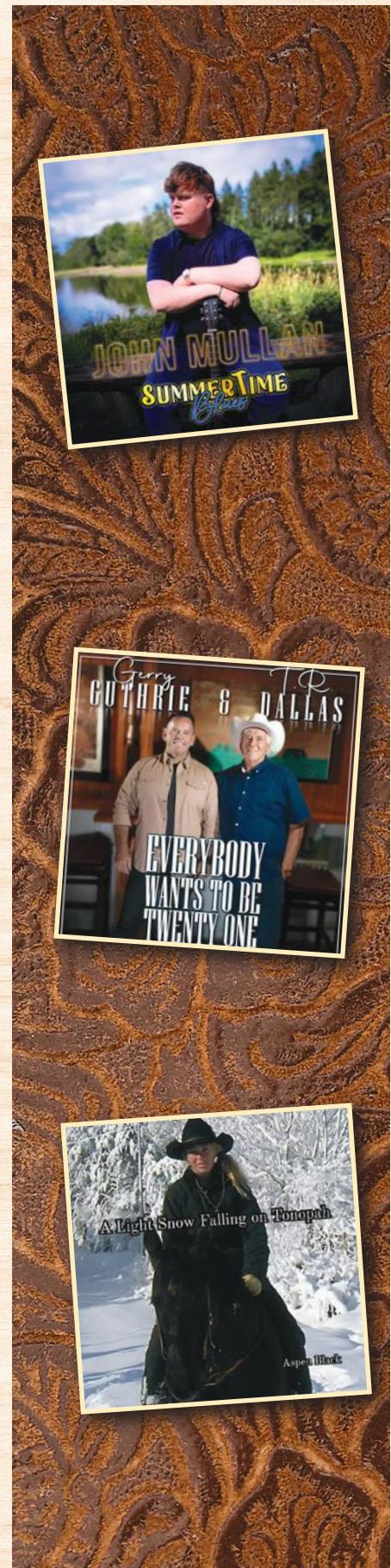
Way back in 2000 **Martin Cuffe** opened for Charlie Pride on the Irish leg of Pride's big European tour. And today Cuffe sounds a bit like the late singer on his newest release **Arms To Hold Me Tight**. It's Country Swing all the way which means you can two-step or swing to it or whatever that shuffling weirdness is that certain cowboys do!

Early in one 'Whispering' Bill Anderson song comes the lyric "my imagination's running wild, catching bad guys, saving ladies, like a cowboy does, if only I were older than I was." Now Ireland's well-known Country artists **Gerry Guthrie & TR Dallas** team up on that very song **Everybody Wants To Be Twenty One**. Ah, if wishes were horses....

Ireland's **Sharon Whitcroft** chose Janet McBride's **The Santa Claus Yodeling Song** to show off her own skills at it. The novelty Western Swinger says St. Nick once opted for yodeling in the night over ho-ho-hoing. That year children weren't awakened "when up on the rooftop there arose such a clatter." Depends on your definition of 'yodel!'

In **Gong Show Christmas** Shane Guse's **Western Swing Authority** refers to the notorious '70s no-talent show. They say instead of the gentle jingle of bells, some gatherings deserve more of a Chuck Barris gong. The fine performance here doesn't earn one but maybe the arrival time does. We're post-Xmas now. Store it for next year.

A pair of holiday releases from **Aspen Black** changed the map. In **A Light Snow Falling In Tonopah** the Bethlehem story moves to Nevada. In another **The North Pole** comes to "a 2<sup>nd</sup> Street doorway" in Casper. These are two of her better offerings. Both deserve to be held onto for future Yules. At this point we only have Xmas In July sales! ⚡



# CLASSIC PROFILES

## SOUNDS FROM THE PAST

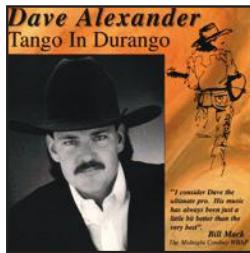
(Recordings From Our Great Western Treasury That Deserve a New Spin)

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.

### DAVE ALEXANDER

*"Tango In Durango"*  
(1997)



In researching "Dave Alexander" online you may create more than the usual amount

of confusion for yourself! Bearing that name you will also find a deceased rocker, a Blues singer and a balladeer who uses "David." Once you locate the "Dave Alexander" we mean, there will be no doubt in your mind.

At a very young age, Alexander commanded sufficient respect in the Western Swing arena that he assembled and fronted The Legends Of Western Swing band, made up of just that. Folks like Leon Rausch, Bob Boatright, Johnny Gimble, Eldon Shamblin and other former Bob Wills personnel. His became the house band for the Houston Stock Show for fourteen years.

With plenty of great musical assistance, "Tango In Durango" (the

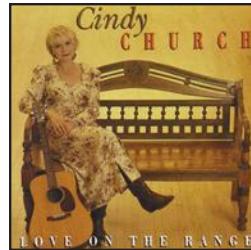
track and the album) showcased the solo talents of its creator and did much to help set him surely onto his award-strewn path. Players on it included Messrs. Gimble and Boatright, Rich O'Brien, Randy Elmore and more Western Swing royalty.

Beyond that rousing title track, their superior takes of such as "Rosetta," "A Maidens Prayer," "Rubber Dolly," "Miles and Miles of Texas" and others are guaranteed to create new believers! Of course having it be heard once again will do even more.



### CINDY CHURCH

*"Love On The Range"*  
(1994)



Famous in her own right in Canada, she will be known to credit readers as the late Ian Tyson's go-to lady for female vocal support. She also performed as part of Canada's

popular harmony group Quartet beside Ian's ex Sylvia Fricker. It's a family affair!

Featured here in twelve tremendous tracks is Church's creamy rich delivery. Her voice smoothly swings with a precision that is nearly hypnotic. Combine that with deeply satisfying harmony work and warmly enveloping arrangements. What results is timeless and breathtaking.

The title track from Cowboy Celtic's Nathan Tinkham is frisky and fun in the hands of Church and team, Cliff & Tex Grimsley's "Walkin' The Dog" features choice steel guitar work, the classic "Old Fashioned Love" is slick and jazzy Western Swing and a Church original "Tonight He's Mine" is a sweet slow two-step. Another track has some history. The saga song "Ride Cowboy Ride" comes from Lee Emerson, former manager of Marty Robbins, who was shot and killed by SSgt Barry Sadler resulting in the latter's conviction. Some of us remember too much.

The CD is available all over the internet. Whatever draws you to play it again, the spin is highly deserved. Make it happen.



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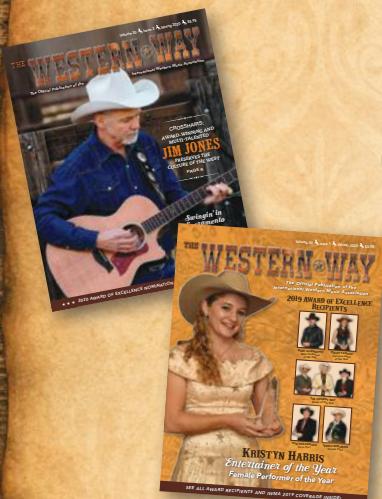
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# Book Nook Reviews & More

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, Gainsville, TX 76240. Submissions will not be returned.

## The Fine Line Between Wit and Grit

**T**one, or mood, is often defined as a writer's attitude toward the subject matter. It influences cowboy writing as strongly as it shapes everyday writing. Whether the work is musical, poetic, or prose, it should carry a clear and authentic feel, and that feel is usually guided by the tone the writer chooses. Cowboy writers have a wide range of moods available, but many pieces fall into two broad categories: sad and serious or playful and humorous. Most of the time, the story itself will suggest which tone best fits the piece.

Many cowboy writers naturally lean toward serious or nostalgic moods. Serious subject matter often includes the loss of a beloved horse or partner, hard lessons learned on the range, memories of people long gone, fading skills, or deep respect for landscapes and mentors. A thoughtful approach to imagery and emotion helps these works resonate, while avoiding melodrama keeps the writing honest and believable. Within the larger category of serious tones, there are many distinct moods a writer may explore. A poem can feel meditative, stoic, reverent, mournful, bittersweet, resigned, or cautionary, depending on the perspective of the narrator and the event being described. Henry Herbert Knibb's poem "Where the Ponies Come to Drink" offers a thoughtful and nostalgic example of a meditative mood, while his poem "Make No Grave for Me" blends reverence with quiet mourning.

Humorous or playful writing can be just as rich and just as difficult to get right. These pieces often draw from familiar Western territory such as mistakes, horseback wrecks, romance gone sideways, or misunderstandings that grow bigger

with each telling. Humor in cowboy poetry often relies on colorful characters, exaggeration, regional slang, unexpected comparisons, and the classic dry or deadpan delivery so familiar in Western storytelling. Many humorous pieces rely on a strong punchline or a sharp twist at the end. When performed, timing is especially important. Just as serious writing contains many varieties of mood, humorous writing can take on several forms. A humorous poem may be self-deprecating, character-based, sarcastic, slapstick or physical, witty, or built on parody or imitation. "The Strawberry Roan" uses physical humor built around the dramatic challenges of riding an outlaw horse. Baxter Black, one of the most beloved cowboy humorists, often wrote parody with a Western twist, as in his well-known "The Vegetarian's Nightmare." Western folk songs such as "Tying Knots in the Devil's Tail" or "The Devil Went Down to Georgia" show how character-based humor has long played a role in stories about outsmarting dark or mischievous forces.

Cowboy writing can also be uplifting or inspiring. These pieces may encourage the listener to rise to a challenge or reconsider personal limits. Some are spiritual in nature, while others celebrate acts of bravery and determination. A well-known example of this heroic tone is Banjo Patterson's "The Man from Snowy River," a poem that has inspired generations of readers and riders with its sense of courage and possibility. This type of tone is less common than the nostalgic or humorous styles in cowboy poetry, but it remains important to the tradition because it speaks to the values that shape Western life.

Choosing the correct tone often begins with identifying the emotional truth behind the story. A

writer may ask whether the memory still stings or whether it brings a smile when retold among friends. A serious story of loss or hardship will naturally lean toward a reflective or somber tone, while a tale about a comical misunderstanding may call for a lighter touch. Considering the narrator's voice can also help. A seasoned hand telling a cautionary tale will sound different from a green kid remembering a first ride, and each voice suggests a different mood. Reading a draft aloud often reveals whether the tone matches the intention of the piece. If a serious poem feels heavy or forced, simplifying the language may help. If a humorous poem falls flat, sharpening the timing or adjusting the punchline can make the difference.

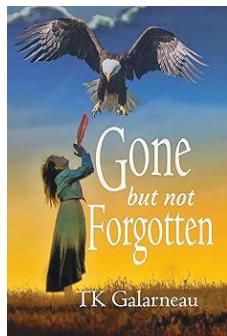
Regardless of the mood a writer chooses, a few common pitfalls remain. Melodramatic writing can weaken a serious

poem by overwhelming the sincerity of the moment. Overly sweet or preachy writing can undermine inspirational or humorous pieces by making them feel artificial. In both cases the work loses the honesty that audiences expect. Cowboy readers and listeners respond strongly to authenticity, so the chosen tone must feel grounded and true to the life being described.

Tone is one of the most important tools a cowboy writer has. When chosen with intention and shaped with care, tone helps the writer steer the audience toward laughter, reflection, or inspiration. Above all, it helps the work feel real, and in cowboy poetry and storytelling, there is no higher praise.

## TK GALARNEAU

*Gone but Not Forgotten* 2023,  
GusGus Press, Fairfield, CA  
\$10.95, paperback, \$5.99 Kindle  
ebook, 74 pgs.



TK  
Galarneau's  
*Gone but Not  
Forgotten* blends  
ten poems of  
varying lengths  
with a single  
short story of  
about thirty-  
five pages.

The poems precede the prose and do not fall into formal categories, but they share strong thematic connections rooted in Native American experiences and concerns. The title poem, along with the piece that follows, "Have You Seen Her," confronts the disappearance and abuse of Native American women, a crisis that remains too often overlooked.

Galarneau occasionally incorporates rhyme and meter, particularly internal rhyme, though content and message clearly take precedence. With the exception of the rhythmically stronger poem "Out Here," the pieces read as free verse enhanced with rhythmic ornament rather than attempts at traditional forms. This approach suits the subject matter. Her poem "A Good Path" reimagines a Native folk story involving Coyote and Creator, while "Circle of Life" and "No Respect" address the ongoing abuse of the natural world. These topics are not traditional cowboy-poetry subjects, but they reflect genuine concerns of Western and Indigenous communities, and the freer poetic style matches the contemporary urgency behind them.

The short story that closes the book, "Why Can't You Hear Us?," centers on violence and kidnapping of Native women. It follows two Blackfoot sisters: Mary, a deputy on her reservation who also breaks horses, and Dani, her younger teenage sister. The narrative

combines action and mystery with the harsh realities the characters face. Some scenes are graphic, and the story is not suited for young readers, though mature older adolescents could handle it with awareness. Galarneau also includes several strong Indigenous male characters who serve as federal marshals investigating disappearances and advocating for Native women, giving the story additional balance and dimension.

Throughout both the poetry and the prose, Galarneau focuses on themes of Indigenous struggle, cultural identity, spirituality, and the stark truths that shape many Native communities. *Gone but Not Forgotten* offers a valuable perspective for readers seeking a wider understanding of the lived realities of Western and Native culture. Though stylistically nontraditional, Galarneau's voice brings needed depth, relevance, and sincerity to contemporary Western literature. It is a strong choice for readers looking to broaden their view of what Western writing can be. 

**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  
jangeldg@arhaven.org

## **Marshal Allen Bailey**

"Trucker's Radio USA"  
909 First St., Windom, KS 67491  
truckersradiousa.com  
Trusa.Martha@gmail.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  
KUPR.org  
Placitas, New Mexico  
Follow on Mixcloud:  
mixcloud.com  
DJBobbiJeanBell  
Plays Western, Western Swing,  
Cowboy Country, Poetry, and  
whatever strikes her fancy!

## **Skip Bessonette & Cowboy Gene Miles**

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

## **Janice Brooks**

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

## **Roger & Leo Eilts**

2821 W 75th Street  
Prairie Village, KS 66208  
"The Americana Road Show"  
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  
dougfiggs.com  
RioGrandeValleyRadio.com  
figgspainthorses2@yahoo.com

## **Nancy Flagg**

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

## **Paul Hazell**

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

## **Judy James**

Cowboy Jubilee with Judy James and  
Western Heritage Radio  
PO Box 953  
Weatherford, Texas 76086  
jspur@sbcglobal.net

## **Allen & Jill Kirkham**

"Circuit Rider Roundup" on  
"American Cowboy Radio"  
KJAG FM 107.7 Guthrie, TX  
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 Drive  
Conifer, CO 80433  
303-495-4869  
lassothecowgirl@yahoo.com  
Follow on:  
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  
wkul.com  
kudzucowboy@outlook.com

## **Butch and Christina Martin**

"Whittler's Corner Show"  
1410 Kubli Road  
Grants Pass, OR 97527  
Earsradio.com  
KSKO Ashland, OR  
KSKQ.org  
The Dalles, OR, Y102  
KKTY, 100.1, Douglas, WY  
KSHD 93.4 Shady Cove, OR  
KORV 93.5 Laderview, OR  
ButchMartinMusic.com  
romancingthewest.org  
whittlerscornershow@gmail.com  
541-218-2477

**Marvin O'Dell**

"Around the Campfire"  
KZNQ, Santa Clarita, CA  
tunein.com/radio/KZNQ-Q-Country-  
1015-s264146/  
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  
ojjsikes@gmail.com  
KKRN, Redding, CA  
Earsradio1.com

**Kevin Tuckfield**

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

**JJ Steele**

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

## International Western Music Association **PATRON\* MEMBERS**

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Richard Heldmann  
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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. Storm on the Mountain – Doug Figgs
2. Back Home in the West – The Arizona Wildflowers
3. Hombre – Dan Canyon
4. Bring on the Pain – Kevin Tuckfield
5. Porch Music – Dave Stamey
6. Roads & Barbwire – Joel Alden White
7. Confessions of a Ghost Town – Kacey & Jenna Thunborg
8. Watercolor Skies – The Timberline Cowboys
9. Just Keepin' it Ranchy – Ryan Fritz
10. A Western Tale to Tell – Marvin O'Dell
11. Dust of Los Angeles – Ron Christopher
12. On the Trail With the Lonesome Pines – Hilary Gardner
13. They Ride – Ed Meyer
14. Twilight Blues – Poi Rogers
15. Blessed by the West – Sarah Pierce
16. Ghost Smoke – Jon Chandler
17. Snow on the Wineglass – John Lowell
18. Turn Us Loose and Let Us Swing – The Brazos Valley Boys
19. End of the Trail – Dave Volk
20. Light of the Moon – Lori Beth Brooke
21. A Cowboy by Choice – Mark Lynn Young
22. Cowgirl's Delight – Phoebe White
23. Big Medicine – Tris Munsick & the Innocents
24. The Texas Trio – The Texas Trio
25. Into the West – Birdie Nichols
26. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
27. Singng to Cows – Chris Guenther
28. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
29. Trackin' On – The Russellers
30. Cowboy Rhythm – Dennis Jay

## **10 MOST PLAYED WESTERN SWING ALBUMS**

1. Back Home in the West – The Arizona Wildflowers
2. A Little Western, A Little Swing – Carlos Washington
3. Twilight Blues – Poi Rogers
4. Light of the Moon – Lori Beth Brooke
5. A Place to Land – Kristyn Harris
6. Turn Us Loose and Let Us Swing – The Brazos Valley Boys
7. From the Saddle to Symphony Hall – Dave Alexander
8. End of the Trail – Dave Volk
9. The Texas Trio – The Texas Trio
10. Traditionally Yours – Dave Edwards

## **12 MOST PLAYED SONGS BY WESTERN MUSIC DJS**

1. As Cowboy as They Come – Aspen Black
2. Dance, Ponies, Dance – Randy Palmer
3. Confessions of a Ghost Town – Kacey & Jenna Thunborg
4. Why He Rides – Kevin Tuckfield
5. Rocky Mountain Steeples – Sarah Pierce
6. So Many Cowboys – Patty Clayton
7. Wild Again – Dave Stamey
8. My Good Horse – The Arizona Wildflowers
9. Cowgirl From Illinois – Doug Figgs
10. Watercolor Skies – The Timberline Cowboys
11. Cowboys on the Trail – Kevin Tuckfield
12. Cowboy's Legacy – Doug Figgs

Half Broke Cavvy of the ZX Range – Tom Hiatt

## **12 MOST PLAYED COWBOY POETRY ALBUMS**

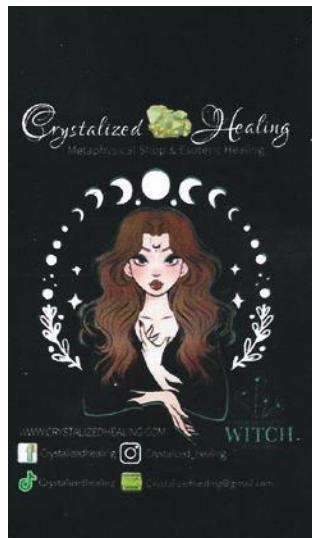
1. Wonder of the West – Sherl Cederburg
2. Dimestore Cowgirl – K.C. LaCourse
3. Thin Clean Air – Danny McCurry
4. Just Passin' Thru – JJ Steele
5. Pensive 'n' Playful – Mark Munzert
6. Cowboyin' With God – Rik "Yonder" Goodell
7. Horse Tales and Cow Trails – Floyd Beard  
No Better Life – Valerie Beard
9. The Last Sunset – K.C. LaCourse
10. Cow Camp Serenade – Duane Nelson
11. Cowboy Psalms – Ron Secoy
12. Ride for His Pay – Robert Beene  
Between the Sun and the Moon – Teresa Burleson  
The Truth – AK Moss  
They Come Prancin' – AK Moss  
Old West Memories – Rocky Sullivan

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

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*Includes sponsorship of the Patron Stage at Convention*
- Business/Gathering Membership.....\$200
- Individual Life Membership.....\$1,500

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- Individual Youth Membership.....\$25  
*(high school graduation thru 21)*
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**It's OK to include my information in the IWMA Membership Directory (printed annually and distributed during the IWMA Annual Meeting).**

Address	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
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**Return application to:**

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P. O. Box 648  
Coppell, TX 75019**

**Who can we thank for referring you to IWMA?**

**For more details or questions**

**Email: [marsha@westernmusic.org](mailto:marsha@westernmusic.org)**

**Phone: 505-563-0673**

**Website: [iwesternmusic.org](http://iwesternmusic.org)**

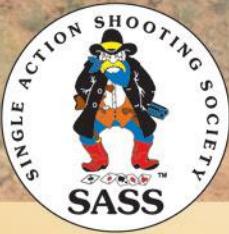
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