

THE OUTLAWS ECHO PRESENTS....

# WESTERNER

THE NUMBER ONE WESTERN CULTURE MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2017

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

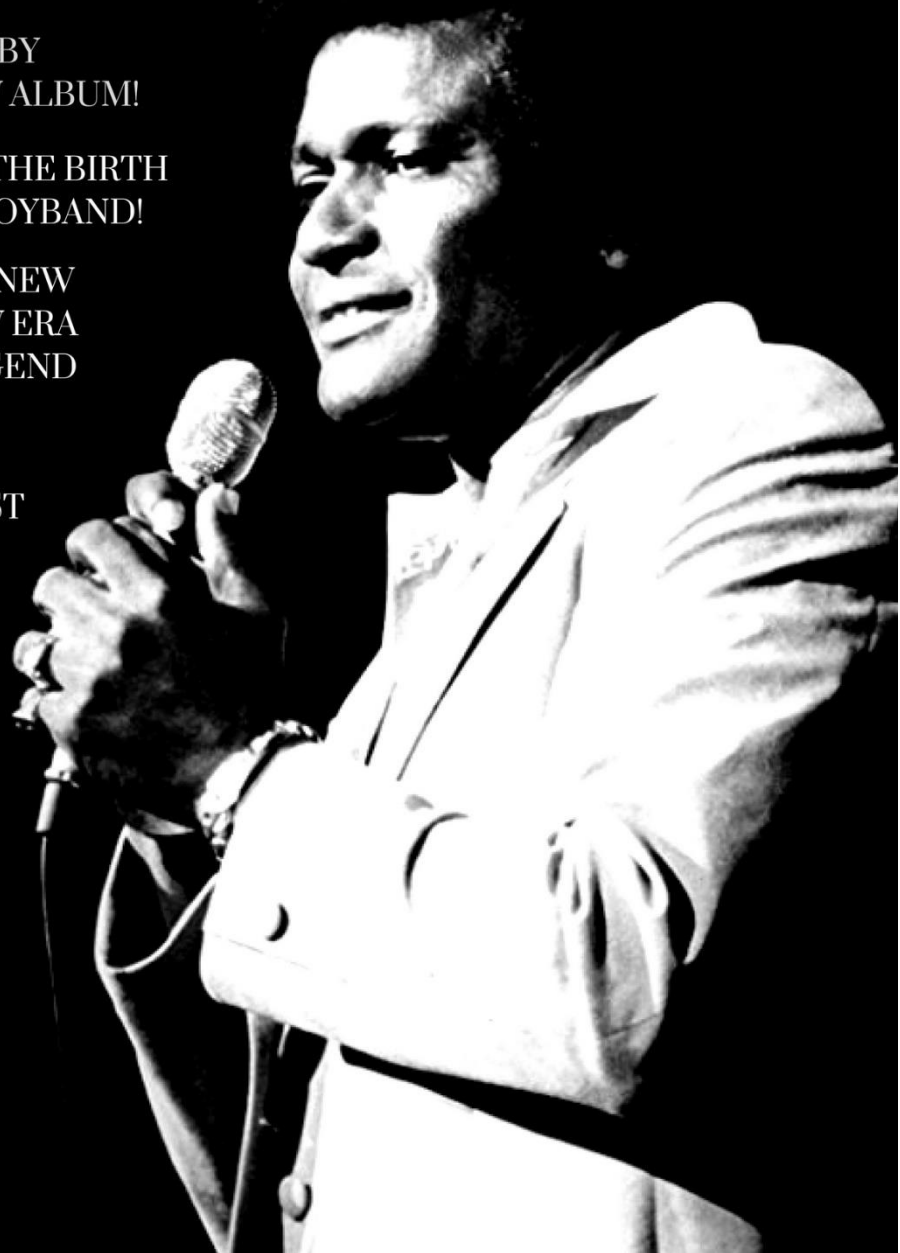
BIG & RICH STOP BY  
WITH THEIR NEW ALBUM!

CON, DEC AND THE BIRTH  
OF THE IRISH BOYBAND!

A NEW ALBUM, A NEW  
TOUR AND A NEW ERA  
OF COUNTRY LEGEND  
CHARLEY PRIDE...

AND THE LATEST  
NEWS AND  
REVIEWS  
FROM  
THE WESTERN  
WORLD...

AND MUCH,  
MUCH,  
MORE....



# THE WESTERNER©

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KEEP THE WESTERNER© FREE FOR OUR READERS.



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



Dear Westerner© Readers:

The Westerner© Magazine begins its fall season with a visit with one of country music's legends. Charley Pride began his music career in the late 1950s when he recorded a few songs at Sun Studios.

Charley didn't start out with the goal to be a country music star. His dream was to be a baseball player; and that dream came true, in the early fifties, when he played ball in the Negro leagues. Though he experienced the pall of discrimination, he rose above the Zeitgeist of the times.

By the late 1960s, Charley was one of the most recognizable country performers worldwide. With songs such as *Just Between You and Me*, *I'm Just Me*, and *Kiss an Angel Good Mornin'*, he became one of the popular performers of the late sixties.

Our own David Watts caught up with Charley to discuss new projects and reminisce about his successful career. I think you'll find the interview to be refreshing and filled with informational tidbits that help to bring the true personality of this great country star to life.

Continuing with a country music theme, we had a great conversation with the successful duo Big and Rich. These great singers combine good music with good fun for just the right entertainment mix. Find out about their new album and plans for the future. A great article and a lot of fun.

We have the most diversified lineup of material of any Westerner© issue to date. You'll find out how to get off the tourist trail in Costa Rica in our first travel article, catch up with Irish recording artists The Bachelors, find a great new piece by Fred Staff, venture into the fascinating world

of the supernatural with Gary Vasey, and more!

As promised, we print our first Westerner© top ten in this issue. Thanks for reading the Westerner© magazine, and please contact us about how we're doing. We love to hear from readers.

Once again, we hope you like this issue. Please write us at [dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com](mailto:dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com) with your comments and opinions.

BB

**INSIDE THIS EDITION OF THE WESTERNER©:**

**From the Editor**

**Inside This Edition of the Westerner**

**News of the Book World**

**Special Featured Article:**

**Charley Pride**

*What is country music hall of fame legend Charley Pride up to these days? A brand-new album, a new tour and a sensational interview with Westerner.*

**William Vlach**

*How psychiatrist turned bestselling author William Vlach made music from words with his latest book "Fr. Coffee."*

**Big & Rich**

*Two of country music's greatest exports profiled by Westerner when Big Kenny drops by for a chat with our interviewer.*

**Special Feature Article:**

**Travel in Costa Rica**

*Dennis Hambricht starts our journey through Costa Rica in this issue. If you love the exotic, you will love discovering about one of the most beautiful places on Earth.*

**Feature:**

**Undefeated**

*A new inside look at one of the new releases from Bruce G. Bennett. Have you discovered the perfect read for fall?*

**The Biggest Irish Export Since Guinness...**

## Con & Dec – The Bachelors

*Westerner sits down to discover the hit-laden world of Con and Dec— the founding members of one of the greatest musical pop groups of the 1960s.*

### Review Corner

*Lon Hamilton takes a look at this month's top releases. Which book will you devour first?*

### The Movie Man

*Our regular columnist Mark Baugher explains how he turned his Western novel into a movie spectacular!*

### Feature:

#### Judy Mastrangelo

*The Magical Illustration of Judy Mastrangelo*

### Chuck Wagon Recipes

*Resident chef Lurlene Bowden shares some of her precious cooking recipes.*

### History Corner

*Resident Westerner historian Fred Staff looks at House of Ill Shame and a Visit with Ray Shelley.*

### The Westerner Top Ten

*Which great book will be number one this week?*

### Feature:

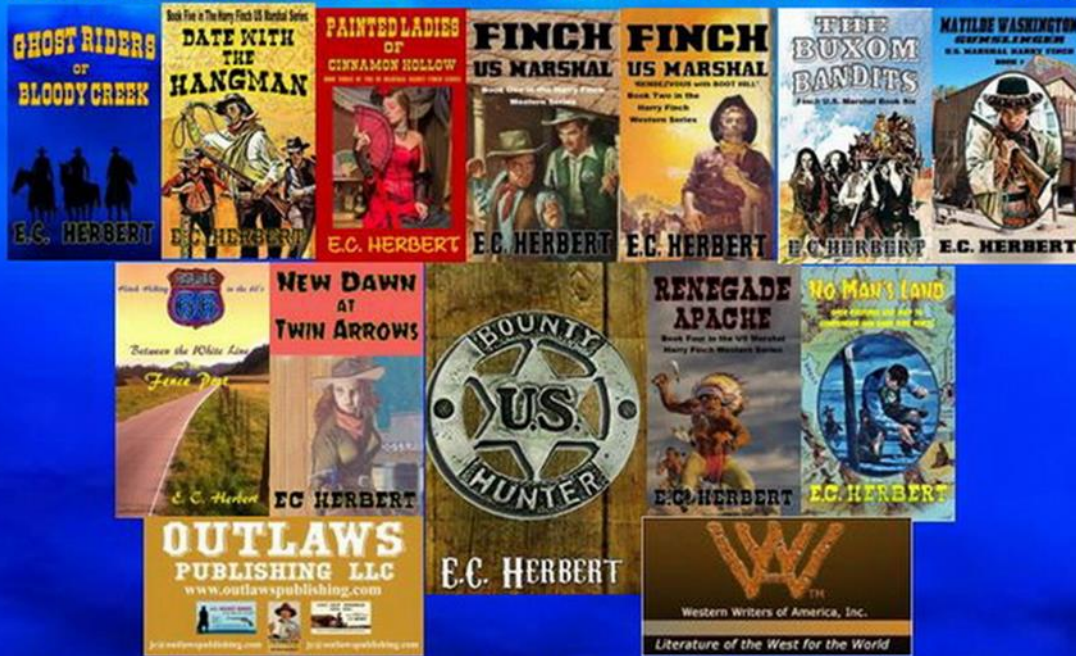
#### G. Michael Vasey

*The Paranormal Corner*

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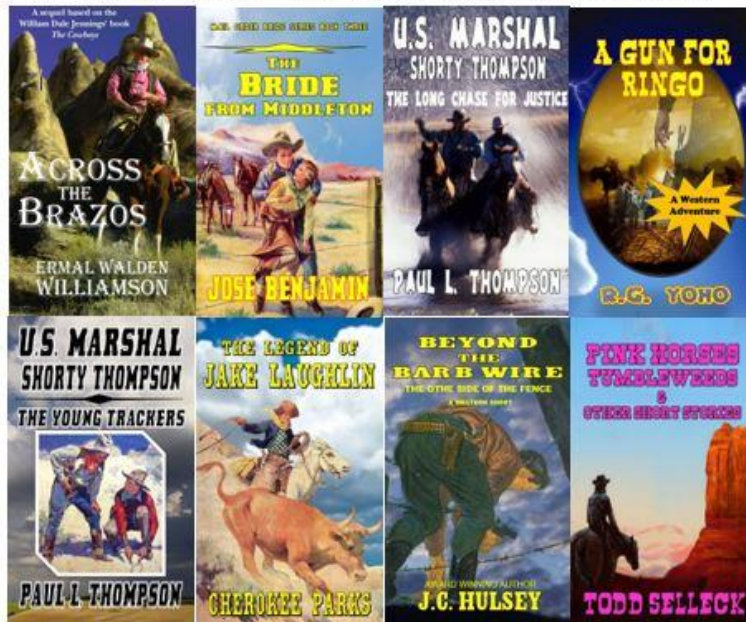
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**OUTLAWS' NEW RELEASES FOR OCTOBER 2017**



# NEWS OF THE BOOK WORLD



**WITH JOHN WALT HOLMES**

The latest news from the Western book world delivered directly to you via Westerner.

## **New Cord Novel on the Horizon?**

Dusty Saddle Publishing let slip late last month that a new Alex Cord novel would be released in the near future. Apparently, the “Airwolf” star has been working on something special for the last few months. No other details are known—but if it’s anything like “A Feather in the Rain,” it’ll be a huge success. That book is still raking in the reviews and sales years after its initial release.

## **The Fred Staff Affair...**

Bestselling Western author Fred Staff is rumored to be working on a series of books derived from scripts left behind by one of the most successful TV Western stars of all time. “I can’t tell you anything about it,” Staff commented earlier this month. “But it is exciting—I hope my publicist can pull it off and make it happen. I’d love to work on his project.”

## **Hitmaker Hanlon Hospitalized?**

Robert Hanlon was hospitalized during August. The “Guns of Clint Cain” author is said to have been suffering breathing problems. “I’m fine,” he told Westerner via phone. “Just a few problems with my medication—the new book will be out next month just as planned. Nothing will stop me pleasing my readers.”

## **Watts Million-Selling Surprise TV Rumor!**

David Watts was shocked to find out his latest book, “The Long Ride,” had become a bestseller. Apparently, the literary author had no notion that readers would take to his



books as they seem to have done. "I didn't expect the book to become such a monster," Watts explained. "Now there's talk of a movie, a TV series and an audiobook of that particular book. Who could have guessed?" David Watts will be releasing a new novel towards the end of 2017. "A traditional Western I know my readers will love," he explained last week.

### **Outlaws Publishing Grabs the Duke**

The Outlaws Publishing publicity department let slip last week that they had signed highly-successful John Wayne impersonator Ermal Walden Williamson to an exclusive publishing contract. Outlaws chairman J.C. Hulse explained that "John Wayne is still the boss—and we are happy to have our very own John Wayne at Outlaws Publishing." Ermal Williamson has already completed three books and will be releasing his first through the company in October 2017.

### **Say It Isn't So, Dusty Rhodes??**

Rumors abound that the next Dusty Rhodes release will be a departure from his successful "Seth Forster: Special U.S. Marshal" series. "I am just running out of things for that old boy to do," Dusty told me over the phone last week. "I can't think of any more towns for him to destroy. I'd like to write something about the Alamo. It's my dream to write about one of the most crucial events in our country's history."

### **Cowboy Writer Bennett Bouncing Back with Vigor**

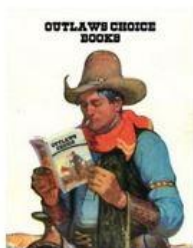
With the success of "Abilene Junction," it seems that Bruce G. Bennett is back to stay. A Dusty Saddle Publishing spokesman explained that the super-selling cowboy has been working on two action packed novels for release before Christmas. No other details are known, but it's good to see Bennett back at the top of the charts.

### **Baughner Brings Home the Bacon with a Hit Novel, Hit Movie and Now a New Release.**

Mark Baughner seems to have it all at the moment. A successful book in "C-Bar," a movie adaptation, and now he's poised to release a new book. Details are scarce, but there's rumor around the barn that his new book will have the title "Widowmaker." Ol' Johnny here will keep you informed when we find out more.

### **Something New from Burroughs?**

There are stirrings from the Dusty Saddle Publishing camp that P.W. Burroughs will be releasing a new Western soon. "All I can say," a Dusty Saddle Spokesman said, "is that Burroughs has been working on something new—and it is a Western."



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**Presents Best Selling Author**  
**Jose Benjamin**



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# JUST BETWEEN US: THE GREAT CHARLEY PRIDE



*This week, David Watts caught up with Country and Western superstar Charley Pride. When it comes to a singer like Pride, you really don't know where to start? To begin with, there's the hits... "The Snakes Crawl at Night," "You're My Jamaica," "She's Just An Old Love Turned Memory," "Happiness of Having You," and "Hope You're Feeling Me" are just a sampling of the great smash sellers this fella has turned out.*

*Then there's the albums—boy, the albums! Charley has been a consistent album seller throughout the years. There's his fantastic success as a touring attraction, his membership of the Grand Ole Opry and his distinction of having been the second biggest selling artist on RCA records after Elvis Presley. Let's find out what Charley has in mind for Westerner magazine's very own David Watts...*

**Mr. Charley Pride?**

Yes! That's me.

**Thank you for taking the time to visit with us.**

I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.

**Let me start by asking you how old were you when you discovered you liked country music?**

My daddy had an old radio, and we listened to the Grand Ole Opry. My mother used to write off for pictures of the groups who were playing on the Opry. I remember just this year a man called Michael Manning was interviewing me. We were talking about those group pictures from the Opry. His eyes lit up like a Christmas tree—"I got some of those and I'm gonna let you have one." He bought me one of the pictures in a folder to give me.

**You purchased your first guitar...**

At fourteen.

**And taught yourself to play...**

I played just open bar chords. I didn't know how to tune it conventionally until I started recording with Jack Clement in the '60s. I remember I would chord it with my two inside fingers. I still don't know how to read music.

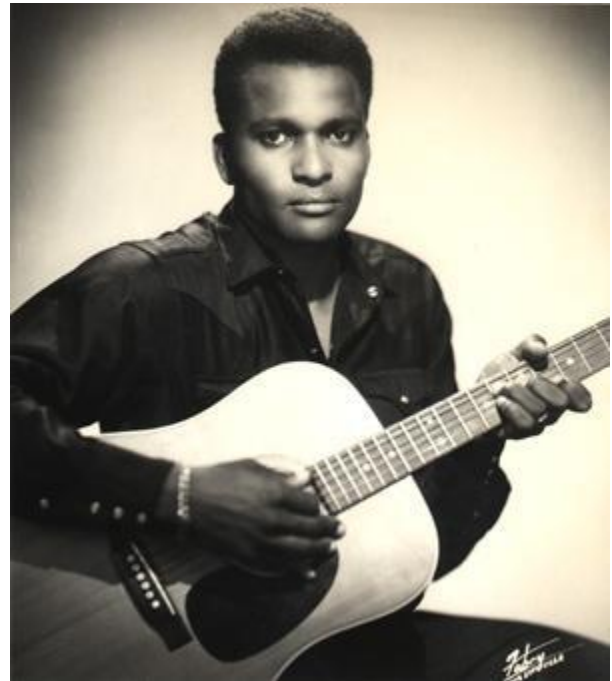
**But you enjoyed yourself?**

Oh, yes! The main thing I did wrong when I got the guitar was that I sat out in the wagon near the hogs and left the guitar in the rain that night. I could never keep the guitar in tune.

**You started your career in baseball and then something happened in 1963—something that changed your life's direction. Can you tell us about that?**

I moved to Montana to play in the Pioneer League. You see, baseball plays quite a part in my life. Red Sovine and Red Foley came up to do a show in the capital... Helena. I paid my money and went to see them. The deejay said to me, "All right, I'm going to give you a signal at the intermission. I want you to come backstage and we will talk to the guys." The thing is... if he gave a signal, I didn't get it. His name was Piny Stokes. I just got up and went backstage and met the guys and started singing. The promoter asked me if I'd like to do a song or two on the show. I did "Heartaches By The Number" and one of Elvis' songs, maybe "Let Me Be Your Teddy Bear." Afterwards, Red Sovine and Red Foley looked at each other and said, "I ain't never seen anything like this before. You ought to go to Nashville," and that's how it came

about. That's how I left baseball and moved into the music business.



**You did well with the baseball too, though, didn't you?**

Oh, yeah! I made it to majors. I was in the Angels in 1961, but I didn't stay. I gotta tell you something too about making it with the Angels in '61. Gene Autry was sitting, eating a sandwich, and I said, "Sir, don't let them send me away. I'm on a trial basis..." he looked up and said, "I own the club, but I don't run it. You'll have to talk to the manager, Bill Rigney." They sent me packing; but I had a chance to go to the Mets the following year, but they ran over my ankle and broke it in '62. But I still went down there but they wouldn't look at me. So, I went back to Nashville, and I went to where Red Sovine told me to go—Cedarwood Publishing—and I met Jack Johnson, and from there I met my one and only first manager who took me to

Jack Clement and we did "The Snakes Crawl at Night," which Chet Atkins took to Monterey, California. And the rest is history now.

**Do you think a higher power was in control of your life at that time?**

Oh, there's no thinking. There still is. Here's what happened. The first time we stopped sharecropping, this old colored fella, Mr. Alan Putnam, he had one hundred and twenty acres. My dad rented some acres, and we had the best year of our life farming. I signed with the Yankees in 1953, so they sent me out to California and I came back, and Putnam said to me, "Son, have you ever thought that no matter how much you love baseball, you ain't on this planet to play baseball. You're here to sing." Now, I could hit, I had a great curveball, and I wasn't no slowy—I wondered what he was talking about. Before he died, I went to see him and asked him why he said that. He said, "Son, I could hear you out there singing. I could pick you right out."

**Now, you became what some people say is an "overnight" success in the '60s. You won so many awards. Out of all of them, is there one that's more special to you than the others?**

They are all special to me. They really are. But the Country Music Hall of Fame award is at the top. I just got one this year. It's called "The Lifetime Achievement Award" from New York.

**I'd say country music has been pretty good to you... (laughs)**

You'd be right! (laughs)

**You were a late joiner of the Grand Ole Opry. How come you didn't join until the '90s?**

Why didn't I join the Opry until 1993? I had a standing invitation since the first time Ernest Tubb brought me on stage to sing on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1967. My one and only manager Jack Johnson said, "Now, Charley... now I want you to join the Opry. But they got a criteria here, man. They want twenty-six Saturdays out of the year. You don't get but eight bucks when you play the Opry. It's a good, prestigious thing, but twenty-six Saturdays is when you make a lot of your money." I didn't argue at all. So, in 1993, my manager said, "There ain't no criteria now. You should join the Opry." So... I did.

**(laughs) Did they pay you more than eight dollars by 1993?**

I think by that time it was a little more. (laughs)

**Did you ever sing at the Crystal Chandelier or the Panther Hall in Texas?**

Oh, yes! Both of them. I cut the live album "In Person" at the Panther Hall. That's where they got the single of "Kaw-Liga."

**Couple of hot spots back in the day, right?**

Yes, a lot of people thought that because I had the song "Crystal Chandelier," I owned the "Crystal Chandelier." (laughs)

**Let me ask you this. What was that special something that Charley Pride had that a singer like Stoney Edwards didn't have?**

Well, they liked my voice.

**It really does just come down to having that magic ingredient called talent.**

Yes!

**You were drafted in 1956. How was military life? How were you treated?**

Well I got out in '58. It was pretty good.

**You met your wife before you went into the military, right?**

Yes.

**How many years have you been married, Charley?**

Ten years and a half century.

**What's your secret to such a successful, long marriage?**

She put up with me. That's it. In all honesty, we didn't try to change each other. We let one each other breathe. You know?



**Has there been one single individual who has influenced your life and career more than anyone else?**

I don't think it's been just one person. It's been a lot of different people. I've recorded all kinds of writers like Ben Peters.

**How many songs have you written?**

About two probably. I wrote a song for my Christmas album called "Santa and the Kids." I only did the one Christmas album. I have one I never finished called "What Is Wrong with My America," and I don't know where it is now because Lawrence Welk bought my publishing company and then someone else bought it, so I don't know where it is.

**You've just released a new album called "Music in My Heart" Your first for a few years. Was there a reason for the break between this album and your last one?**

Well, we just didn't record is all I can say. We ain't planning on letting that happen again. We already have three or four albums just ready to go. I hope to do a duet album. I've lost so many of my peers like George, Tammy, Conway and John. We just lost Glen Campbell. I would like to get some duets with some of them before we all leave here.

**And you're still touring?**

Yeah, I leave tomorrow for Ireland.

**That's a long way from Texas.**

You're right!

**Have you ever considered retiring?**

No, I don't think so. It's been mentioned to me, but I don't see any reason right now, the way I'm still wanted out there. We were in

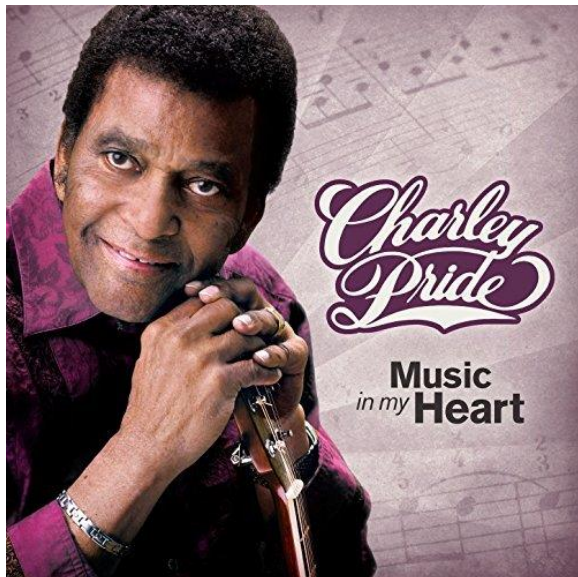
Bayfield, Wisconsin and it was sold out, and I hadn't been that far in a long time.

Well, I have to say, Charley, that I hope you keep on going and recording great albums like this new one. It's been a thrill talking to you.

Well, thank you. I appreciate it.

You have a great day.

You too.



*The latest Charley Pride disc is a winner! Thirteen songs all ringed with pure gold and waiting for your home stereo! Catch your copy today from Amazon by clicking [here!](#)*

# WILLIAM VLACH IS TETHERED TO SUCCESS



By the Westerner's© Bruce Bennett

**Bruce:** Thank you for spending some time with me. This is the day after Hurricane Irma hit Florida and it seems like the weather is going crazy. Especially following what happened in Houston.

**Bill:** I've got some family in Cuba who sent me a picture of men playing dominos. They love dominos down there. There are four guys and the water is up to their knees. They have the table in the water and they're playing dominos. "We're just going to play dominos. I don't care if it's flooding."

[We share a good laugh!]

**Bruce:** I guess there are perils to living anywhere. San Francisco is a great place to live, but I remember that series with Oakland and the Giants when that big earthquake hit.

**Bill:** I was out at Candlestick and it shook. I never felt anything like that in all my life. The concrete was like rubber. We're up in the upper stadium and thought it was just another earthquake. We wondered why they weren't starting the game and someone said, "The bridge fell down."

**Bruce:** You're a trained psychiatrist?

**Bill:** I'm a clinical psychologist.

**Bruce:** What's your area of expertise?

**Bill:** Police psychology. That's the main thing I'm doing right now. I work with first responders: Police and fire – but mainly with the police.

**Bruce:** What got you started in writing?

**Bill:** The first novel I put out was *Golden Chalice of Hunahpu*. It was about the Spanish attack on the Maya.

That's when I really began getting interested in writing. I'd been excited about writing before, but that's what really got me started. My wife is an anthropologist, and we made a trip to Guatemala, and I really became interested in what's happening down there and discovering the culture.

I decided to do the historical novel from different viewpoints. One viewpoint was from the Maya, one from the wife of a conquistador, and one was from a wacked



out priest. That gave me the idea for a next novel.

A little more of my background: I grew up on a ranch in Northern California. I was into the whole atmosphere of horses, cows, chickens, and getting up early in the morning. I loved it. When my father died, when I was thirteen, we moved out.

Years later there was a historical society meeting about the area. The area had become very suburban, and I decided to go. The historical meeting took a look at what the place was like fifty to sixty years previous. It was a wonderful experience.

It was held in a little school and, when I walked in the door, I found pictures on the wall. There were pictures of my grandmother, grandfather, our horses – it brought back such great memories. I went home and started writing using my memories of the ranch, those times, and the small town down the hill from us.

The stories were very personal, but I didn't think they had a narrative direction. I'd add some more a few months later and so on. About fifteen months went by, and I decided to have some fun with the stories. That's when I added Father Coffee, the priest.

Every story comes from my own experience, but I added the possibility of what a crazy priest might do in that environment. The priest involves "trickster" stories that affect the village. Those stories come from all over the world. I took all of these "trickster" stories and integrated them into my book on what it

was like to grow up on the ranch. That's how we got there.

**Bruce:** The new book is called?

**Bill:** *The Gospel According to Father Coffee*. That's the new book. *The Golden Chalice of Huhahpu* was published a couple years ago, and that's how I got into writing.

**Bruce:** You're an academic. I would correlate that to being used to writing, but what got you into fiction?

**Bill:** When I was in high school and college, I wrote poetry and fiction. I realized I wouldn't make a living at it.

I fell in love with psychology and, after graduate school, I really put that kind of writing away. Then, after a few years when I had a little more time, I decided to get back into poetry and fiction. The Huhahpu story came out of that desire. Then I decided to have some real fun with it and incorporate my own stories.

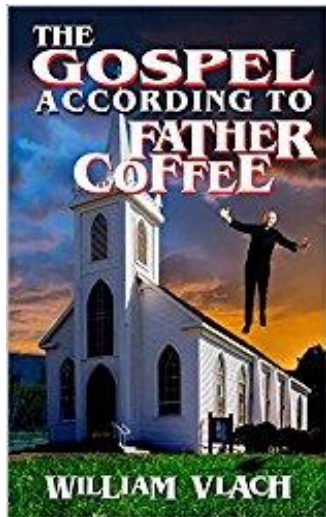
**Bruce:** Many writers draw from their own experiences. How do you use your experiences to build a story?

**Bill:** I remember walking to school and coming to a stop sign. I remember thinking to myself how many infinite stories there could be about one stop sign. That was the origin of the idea of stories.

**Bruce:** Are there other areas of fiction you'd like to explore?

**Bill:** My first novel, the historical fiction, had to do with my love for my wife. Father Coffee

has to do with growing up rural. It has to do with real struggles of growing up on a ranch. I plan to write more along those lines.



Memoirs don't seem to have the bang to them that can be crafted in fiction. An example is that I've made Father Coffee magical – he flies. He can also become invisible, all to trick people. I tie the real stories and feeling of earth, the ranch, and growing up, to something magical.

The other part is the fun I have with it. The end of each story has a "kick" to it. Each one of the stories is interesting because they're pulled from different sources throughout the world. I want my ongoing work to combine memory and humor.

**Bruce:** Do you use what you've learned professionally in your stories?

**Bill:** When you use the type of analysis employed in my profession in fiction, it flattens out the characters. I realized that I was getting very involved in the intense stories I heard each day, in the office, and was losing my own story. That's one of the

reasons behind the writing, so that I can have my own story.

**Bruce:** Why the written word over other outlets?

**Bill:** I enjoyed photography, for a while, because I'm a very visually oriented person. But with writing, images, music, all resonate at a profound level. If you're moved by your own writing, then it's possible to have the same effect on another.

**Bruce:** Have you copied your style from authors you like, or have you built your own style?

**Bill:** I built my style from trial and error. In the beginning, I loved Mark Twain who combined humor in his writing. Then the American writers, such as Hemingway and Faulkner. Later on, I discovered a more international flavor with writers such as Garcia Marquez.

But if you imitate, you die. You've got to move past that and find your own voice. Father Coffee, more than anything I've written, contains my own voice. I've set the novel up in vignettes. It's not a straight-through read.

It's a classical, spiritual, approach taken from previous writings like the Coyote stories. They can be one or two pages long, which stylistically felt right to me. The magic felt right to me and integrating the village felt right to me.

It became an amalgamation of all these things.

In the book, the priest has an affair. The father of the boy leaves the woman who later dies. That leaves the priest with three wards. The way the mother dies is that she was at the opera house, got real excited during one of the songs and fell off the balcony. [Bruce laughs}

So he's thinking, "What am I going to do with these three kids?"

The kids come home and they're wild. The priest has a housekeeper by the name of Mrs. O'Hanrahan. She's got the job of keeping on top of the kids. But the kids got on top of the church and they tied a rope around their ankles and jump off. They swing around the church like boy tetherballs.

I comment in the book that this is from La Danza Voladores, which is done in Vera Cruz by Mexico's indigenous people. They get on top of this pole and tie their feet and they swing around. So I use that in the book.

So these boys are swinging around the church and the house lady, Mrs. O'Hanrahan, hits them with a broom. That makes them swing the other way. So they swing around the church until they crash into one of the stained glass windows.

The house lady gets upset and she stops and walks off. But following all of these incidences, the priest gives a little sermon. What that does—on one hand it helps me to open up. To the reader, it creates a paradox. When you shift the paradigms, it gives the reader a chance to look at the world a little differently.

When a woman's husband dies, she comes to the priest and asks him about the afterlife. He replies, "I've never been there." That's borrowed from an old Zen story.

**Bruce:** Is there a *War and Peace* in your future plans?

**Bill:** Yep.

**Bruce:** You've got something that you want to write?

**Bill:** Two books have been written, after Father Coffee, and are being edited. My problem is that I'm fairly good at writing and a horribly slow rewriter.

**Bruce:** It's been a pleasure to spend some time with you. Thank you for taking the time.

**Bill:** It was cool. I had fun. Thank you.

# BIG & RICH TURN GREAT MUSIC AND A SENSE OF HUMOR INTO COUNTRY SUCCESS



*A few years ago now, a new musical sensation hit the country and western market. This new sensation has continued to grow—their name is Big & Rich. These guys have sold a ton of records, hit the top of the charts, toured around the world and now they're sitting down with Westerner for an interview. The new album is coming out on*

*September 15<sup>th</sup>. The new single is out now and climbing the country charts—and we are ready to meet Big Kenny! Let's go!*

**Great to meet you, Big Kenny!**

Hey there! This is Big Kenny—how are you doing?

I'm doing pretty good, but it sounds like you and your partner are doing a whole lot better than me right now.

We are definitely doing all right, man. Thank you very much.

**What's this "Big Kenny"? That can't be the name your mamma gave you?**

How did that name come about? Well, when I first came to Nashville, for some reason my friends started calling me "Big," "El Grande," "Sir Bigness," and things like that. It just had to do with the fact that when I showed up any place, I just wanted people to have an enjoyable time. Maybe they thought that I brought the "big" to the today? One thing led to another, and I couldn't get away from that name. When John and I first started writing songs, my publisher would pitch us as "Big and Rich" as an abbreviation, and it took off. It's one of those things that got put out into the world and the world ran with it.

**How old are you, Big Kenny?**

This year I turned fifty-three years old. Unlike a lot of people I've met in the music industry, I was a late bloomer. I grew up in a world where you can become a farmer, or making

something, or producing something for a living. In small towns, it's not often that you're encouraged to be a creator like writing a book or writing a song and make a living doing that.

### **How did you get your break?**

One thing led to another. I was on a job site one day when a carpenter looked over to me and said, "You sing pretty good—you ought to go to Nashville. I hear that people make a living singing songs down there." I looked over at him and said, "You've got to be kidding me! You think people get paid to do this?" He was right, and I ended up down in Nashville. The whole construction economy around that time had crashed in the United States so the timing was good. I ended up in Nashville at thirty years of age.

### **Had you been performing before that time?**

The crazy thing was a week after that carpenter said that to me—me and the boys stopped at a roadside juke joint to grab some food. In the midst of that there was a guy playing songs with a guitar. He wanted to take a break and he asked if anyone would like to sing. My buddies put me on the spot so I sang a song. When I sat down, someone tapped me on the shoulder and asked me if I wanted to join a band. I was playing in that band for a year before I ended up in Nashville.

### **What happened when you arrived in Nashville?**

When I came to Nashville, I jumped into it full time. I got up early in the morning and would

write songs all day. The way you get good at something is by doing a lot of it. I went at it with a vengeance. Three months later, I had a band and I was booked at a venue in Nashville for four nights a week. Lo and behold, here we are today with the sixth "Big and Rich" studio album called "Did It For The Party," which will be released on the 15<sup>th</sup> September, and our new single "California," which is blazing up the charts.

### **Your partner's name is John Rich—how did you hook up?**

We were introduced by mutual friends—a girl named Cindy Simmons who is a radio host down in Atlanta now, but back in the late '90s she worked for the Fender guitar. She helped me and my band out with some guitars and also worked with John. She knew us both individually and was great friends with John's girlfriend. She came to me and said, "Do you know John Rich? You ought to get together and write!" Well, she brought him to one of my shows, and we got on so well and started writing together. It seemed like, by the end of our first year, we had written a hundred songs. It seemed like it was meant to be.

### **Where did the title "Did It For The Party" come from?**

Well, it's another song on the album that will be a single later on—and it's John and I looking back over the time we've known each other. All the great things that have happened to us came down to two guys getting together and having a good time. Good things came from the songs we've

written to the music mafia coming together. Every show that we do brings more fans, and it seems like it just keeps growing and getting better. The bridge of that song goes, *"Looking back, there's no regrets, and memories I won't forget, laughing, loving, living loud. Ain't that what it's all about? Maybe we had it all figured out, when we did it for the party."*



*Are you looking for a great time? Why don't you pick up the new "Big & Rich" album today by clicking [here!](#)*

# GETTING OFF THE TOURIST TRAIL

## BEING A TRAVELER IN SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

BY DENNIS HAMBRIGHT

There are a lot of ways to describe the differences between a tourist and a traveler, but after years of traveling around the world, and living in Costa Rica for the last five years, from my perspective, it's a pretty simple distinction between the two.

A tourist knows what's going to happen. He usually has a plan already laid out for what he's going to do during his trip, and generally sticks to some sort of daily itinerary.

For a traveler, every day is a new adventure, and he really doesn't have a clue

what that adventure is going to be until he walks out the door and finds it.

There's nothing wrong with being a tourist. In fact, that's the way most people go about their vacations. But if adventure is what you want, then being a traveler is the way to go, and one of the first rules toward accomplishing that goal is to get off the beaten tourist path.

Even if it's just crossing over the fringes to the life of the locals at first, until you feel secure on your *traveler's feet*, if you really want to experience what life is like in a different country, then you have to find a way to immerse yourself in the real local culture.

Costa Rica is one of the most popular travel destinations in the world. Their economy is based on tourism, so there are definitely lots of touristy things to do. You'll leave with memories for a lifetime, and have great stories to tell all your friends and family back home. But if you ask me, anything that can be classified as touristy, leaves a lot to be desired for a real traveler.

Just like I write about in my Amazon #1 Best Seller, *Day by Day in San José*, when most people think about Costa Rica, the first thing that comes to mind are lush jungles,



treetops filled with monkeys and toucans, miles and miles of pristine beaches, and volcanoes on the horizon. But what many tourists miss out on, is that the capitol city of San José is an incredibly interesting and exciting venue for learning what life in Costa Rica is really all about.

If you want to soak up some of the real local culture of Costa Rica, then San José is the perfect place to get started. Here are a few things you can do that will quickly get you immersed in the true ways that the locals go about their daily lives. Try a few of these and you'll have stories to share with friends and family that will have them saying, "I never saw that in my travel guide." (*Unless they read Day by Day in San José.*)

### **Café Chorreado - The Coffee Condom**

The first thing a Costa Rican generally does every morning is have a steaming cup of Costa Rican coffee. It's one of the

cornerstones of his heritage. In fact, the economic foundation of Costa Rica as it's known today was built on coffee. Coffee exports are what economically spurred Costa Rica forward in the late 1800s from a small, relatively unknown little Central American country to what it's become today. I guess you could say that fine coffees are like precious diamonds in the historical jewelry of Costa Rica. Long before visitors shot down through roaring rapids, or zip-lined through the treetops, or surfed along its beaches, coffee was what made Costa Rica famous. Needless to say, Costa Ricans are very serious about their coffee, and just as serious about how they prepare it. That's why I think a hot mug of morning coffee belongs on the top of the list of things you should do to 'live like a local' and experience the real Costa Rican way of life.

Now, if you want to drink coffee like a local, then café *chorreado* is the way you do it. Find yourself a little local's café, like *Tortillería y Café*, over on Avenida 1 and near the famous Central Post Office building, and order up your own café *chorreado*.

Café *chorreado* is made by setting your mug under a small wooden stand (about 6"-8" tall), and making sure the elongated



cotton pouch is situated to drip into your cup. The pouch is filled with fresh ground coffee, and then you pour hot water through the opening at the top. I get some grief (especially from my wife) for calling it 'The Coffee Condom,' but once you see your own little *chorreado* set-up, tell me that's not exactly what it looks like.

### Local Street Art



After enjoying your morning mug of café *chorreado*, just like a local, you might want to take a little unplanned stroll around town. Once again, keeping off the 'tourist trail,' why not enjoy some of the fascinating local street art? Wander on over to Avenida 3, and between Calle 11 & 15 you'll get your first sense of how truly incredible some of the local talent really is. Whether it's painted on sheets of corrugated tin used to wall-off a construction site, the side of a building, or

even on the concrete supports of a railroad overpass, you'll be amazed at what these local artisans can accomplish.

### *La Biblioteca Nacional* - The National Library of Costa Rica

Since you're already over on Avenida 3 enjoying all that local street art, here's a suggestion - Why don't you visit the library? I bet that's not something you'd expect to



hear when looking for suggestions about what to do in Costa Rica, right? Well remember, you're 'living like a local,' and the locals know how great this place really is. (And the chances of running into a group of tourists is pretty slim.)

Not only is *La Biblioteca Nacional* an amazing place full of stacks and stacks of literary tomes, but it also has regularly changing art and cultural exhibits that most tourists simply miss out on. But not us

travelers. This is exactly the kind of place where you can snap a few pics to show the folks back home, and they will be absolutely amazed that you were able to ferret-out this seldom seen cultural icon in San José.

### How about a *Soda* for Lunch?

When it's time for lunch, how about a soda? And no, I don't mean one of those fizzing, carbonated ones. Comparable to little Mom & Pop diners like you might find in any small town back home, a soda is the Costa Rican version of a traditional local diner. They're usually family owned and run and you'll find them all around town. They generally offer *casados*, which is a local dish consisting of a piece of meat (fish, beef, pork, or chicken), some salad, rice, a few slices of fried plantain,



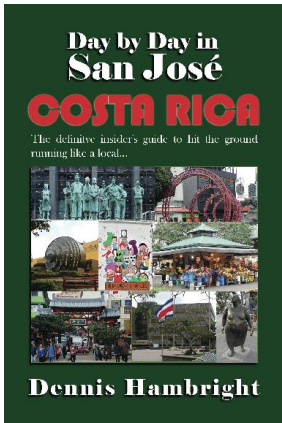
and a drink (like sweet tea or fresh fruit juice). *Casados* are famous for large portions for the working man, and best of all, they are almost

always the least expensive option on the menu. Now for me, one of my favorite sodas is *Chelles*, the oldest soda in San José, with a history stretching back over one hundred years. It's located on Avenida Central and Calle 9, and if you want some real, no-frills local dining, then this is where you want to go. Once again, soaking up some of that real local culture! Also, sodas are a great option for dinner - they are economical, there's one on almost every street, and every one has its own unique character.

### Getting Into the Nightlife



As we've discussed, there is a long list of touristy things to do at night around San José, but once again, if you want to escape the throngs of tourists, there is also a great selections of places to go where you'll be hanging out with the locals, and having an



even better time than you would with people who are more like your next door neighbors back home. So here's a few nightlife suggestions, my adventurous travelers:

### Live Theaters

San José is packed with great little local theaters that put on some fabulous productions of both drama and comedy. My favorite is *Teatro Urbano*, a fantastic little comedy theater that's well known for its home-grown actors and productions. And here's a little *Insider's Tip*: The productions are in Spanish, but even if you don't speak the language, you can still enjoy the show. The comedy is so physical and engaging, even if you don't understand everything they're saying, you'll still have a great time. If you'll check out *Day by Day in San José*, you can find a great selection of other local

theaters and entertainment venues to check out.



### Live Music

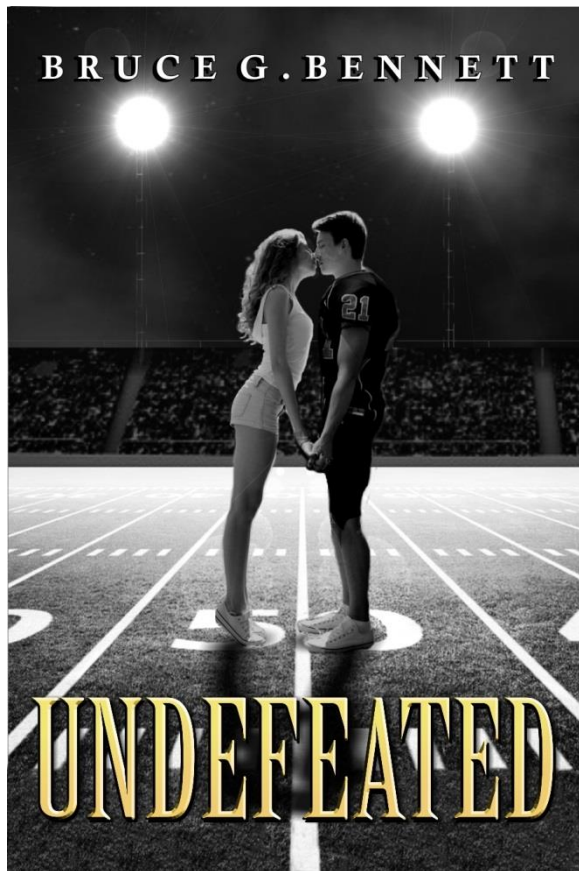
If you're lucky when you're visiting San José, there might be one of the many street festivals going on that almost always include live concerts. But even if you can catch one of those, I still highly recommend my favorite local music venue, Jazz Café San Pedro. This is an incredible little treasure located near the University of Costa Rica in San Pedro, and only about a 5-minute taxi ride from anywhere around downtown San José. It's cozy, inexpensive, and Monday-Saturday nights they offer all kinds of music. Some nights it's jazz, other nights it might be rock, flamenco, folk, or even stand-up comedy. The show starts at around 10:00PM, and lasts until a little after midnight. They've also got a great selection of food and drinks, and it is

a fantastic way to enjoy an evening with the locals. For a schedule of who's performing, you can check out their website at [www.jazzcafecostarica.com](http://www.jazzcafecostarica.com)

Bottom line: If you want to be a real traveler, and not just another tourist, then San José, Costa Rica has myriad options for you to enjoy. As they say in Costa Rica, *Pura Vida*, which means 'Pure Life,' or enjoy the moment. So, *Pura Vida* my fellow travelers. Enjoy the adventure!

*Dennis Hambright has written the definitive insider's guide to hit the ground running like a local in San José, Costa Rica. With his Amazon #1 Best Selling, [Day by Day in San José](#), Hambright proves that he isn't just another wannabe who declared himself a local expert. He lives there, works there, speaks the language, and understands the culture and the people. He digs into all the nooks and crannies when it comes to getting around town like a local, and on how to get the best bang for your buck. Hambright peels back the puffy veneer that most travel writers hide behind and exposes the city like none other, covering everything from where to eat, play, workout, shop, and even where to wash your undies. Whether you're there for a day, a week, a month, or fall in love with*

*the place and decide to stay, this is definitely the guide you don't want to be without.*



By Bruce Bennett

I wanted to write a story about an anti-hero who emerges from his shell to find the world to be different from the one he imagines. To do that, I set my story in an American high school of the 1970s.

The seventies are becoming very popular, vintage, and interesting to people of all ages. With that goal, I wrote the book to resound with everyone. Though people who went through their teens in the 1970s will thoroughly enjoy *Undeclared*, it will also interest young people facing the difficult problems of growing up in the twenty-first century.

At the base of *Undeclared* is a boy-meets-girl story that rings as true today as it did in the timeframe represented by the book. The difficulties the main character encounters in finding his way through the tough pathways of first time love will endear him to most readers.

The book is also about football. Anyone who's ever played high school football, or wants to remember what the game was like in its heyday, will love the detailed descriptions of game day action. But ladies, don't let that put you off reading. Women, who've read and reviewed the book, love the action and adventure as well as the romance.

I make the statement that each one of us can find ourselves in the hallways of the mythical high school portrayed in *Undeclared*. I feel very strongly that this book is the best I've written.

Pick up a copy of *Undeclared* on Kindle or Paperback and decide for yourself. I think that adventure is waiting for you.

BB

# THE BIGGEST IRISH EXPORT SINCE GUINNESS!

## AN INTERVIEW WITH LEGENDARY SINGERS CON AND DEC: THE BACHELORS



*Back in the early 1960s, there were many groups. There were many new sounds, and there were many new singers—but The Bachelors, three boys from Ireland, became superstars with their beautiful harmonies, original interpretations, Dec's ability to*

*produce and create great music, and Con's ability to milk every bit of emotion out of a song. These guys were known to be "sincere," and it has served them well, as they are still working and racking up the successes.*

*"I Believe," "Diane," "Ramona," "I Wouldn't Trade You For The World," "Charmaine," and "The Sound of Silence" were all major hits. The album sales flowed and even today they can still break the top ten—their latest greatest hits album was a major success. The world still wants to hear the sound of the ever-popular Bachelors...*

*Let's meet 'em. They're nice guys, I'm telling ya!*

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you for agreeing to this interview, guys.

Dec: It's a pleasure.

Con: Thank you for asking us.

**So where did it all begin for you guys?**

Dec: Tell it again? It's all over the internet—I thought you were going to ask different kinds of questions. Con—you tell him.

Con: *(laughs)* Well, it all started in 1957 when Dec, I and another guy formed our first band together. That group was called "The Harmonichords," a classically styled instrumental harmonica act. As The Harmonichords, we appeared on Hughie Green's 'Opportunity Knocks' on Radio Luxembourg. We also played background music and featured pieces in a 25-week radio

comedy series called 'Odd Noises' on Radio Éireann featuring Eamonn Andrews. The one that stands out to me most was "*The Legend of the Glass Mountain*."

Dec: I remember that.

Con: But we all had jobs in Ireland. Both Dec and I were university graduates. The opportunity came up for us to go on a five-week tour. We took the opportunity—my boss tried to talk me out of it—and we headed over to England for the tour. We were supposed to have a booking in Manchester, and when we arrived, I called up our agent and asked for more details. She told me it wasn't going to start for months. I asked her what we should do, and she suggested we go home.

Dec: Our third member went home as he was a carpenter—he could always find work—and we stayed on. We found out that the landlady of our digs knew a guy called Frank White. You won't believe this—he just happened to be a relation of our father. One phone call: "Leave it with me for an hour." Sure enough, we got to see him, and we were up and running. We had three shows for that weekend. Our first call was to our mother as we needed our guitars, and our second call was to our third member to get him back.

Con: You should remember that there were over three hundred nightclubs in Manchester at that time. You could work the clubs every day of the year.

**I didn't know that. So how did you end up recording for Decca?**

Dec: Our manager, Dorothy Solomon, called Dick Rowe to come and see our act while we were in playing Scotland. He liked us and wanted us to record a vocal version of "Charmaine," which had been a huge hit for Mantovani.

**This raises an interesting question. Obviously, he knew there was a market for a vocal version of "Charmaine." How do record companies actually promote a record to make it a hit?**

Dec: Well, what happened in our case was that back then you could buy an ad on the front of the *New Musical Express* for two hundred and fifty pounds. If you purchased the ad, then they would put you in at number thirteen on the hit parade. We had a record called "Diane" that Dick Rowe was fanatical about. Decca purchased the advertising for it, and the record went into the charts at number thirteen.

Con: The next week, it dropped. But Dick Rowe believed in it so much, he purchased another ad a few weeks later.

Dec: We had released "I Believe" by then, too.

Con: The second time the ad was purchased, we went in at number thirteen and the record started to move. "Diane" became a hit. Back then, the hit parade was compiled using the number of records pressed in the factory. I called them up and asked them how many copies of "Diane" had been pressed. They told me it was over 90,000. I thought they were talking about the whole month, but it turned out that was just the number that day.

Dec: "I Believe" went to number two and "Diane" actually went all the way to number one.

Con: The record companies used all kinds of techniques. Each record company had thirteen minutes of time on Radio Luxembourg to play their latest releases. They would play the intro and around thirty seconds of the song. That really helped promote the records.

**Did you find that TV exposure helped you?**

Con: When we appeared on "*Ready, Steady Go!*" it helped us tremendously. That show was ground-breaking, as it was the first time you could see the camera operators on screen. We performed on the show, and it helped push our records on the charts.



**How did you pick the songs you recorded?**

Dec: Well, they were usually covers. We rarely wrote our own songs because Dick Rowe used to tell us to do the singing and let writers do the writing. He said the same to Mick Jagger one day at Top of the Pops. We were chatting in our dressing room. Dick went out to see Mick Jagger who had just

turned up. He said, "Do what The Bachelors do—just sing covers." Mick's reply? "F\*\*\* \*ff, Dick." My wife just walked in and heard me say that. She's disgusted now. We did write some "B" sides, but normally we would get a selection of songs from publishing companies and would pick from those.

**Do you wish you'd written more songs?**

Dec: Yes.

**You really broke into the United States market, in a big way, didn't you?**

Con: Yes. We had several hits over there and a number one album.

**Let me ask you this: How would you go about recording a song?**

Dec: Early on, we knew that it all came down to the first few seconds of a record. That's what counts. If you listen to all the openings of our records, you'll hear that we tried to catch the listeners' attention straight away. *(sings)* "Waiting just for you..."

Con: *(Joins in)* "Waiting just for you..."

Dec: It's funny how we just knew this stuff even then. It just came naturally for us to try and make the opening as memorable as possible. That's a huge part of making a hit record.





**Dec, it seems to me that you are the boss of the outfit?**

Dec: Well, the responsibility of getting things done was always placed on me. Con was the one with the voice; I was the one with the ideas! I remember one time we had a session player during a recording session. He wasn't cutting it, but nobody wanted to fire him. I ended up having to go out there and tell him that he wasn't what we were looking for. He packed up his guitar, and he walked out. I've always had to take control and figure things out.

**Like with the "Live Album" you guys made at the Talk of the Town?**

Dec: The live album was a disaster.

Con: Absolute disaster.

Dec: What happened is that we were the first ones to ever use multiple radio mics. When they recorded the show and listened back, someone had left one of the mics on.

**Sounds like a complete mess to me.**

It was. The noise was on the complete vocal track. The album is hilarious because everything was post-synched. Think about

that. You could hear the sound from the fold back and main PA in the Talk of the Town. We had to synch with that sound. I don't know how we did it but we did it.

**I haven't heard it, but the idea of a live album sounds like a complete winner.**

It's a great album but you'd never guess it was all post-synched. It's like the Shea Stadium album with the Beatles. That was completely post-synched. The guy who did it got in touch with me. Think about it—in those days they didn't have the recording equipment, and when the Beatles walked on stage you could only hear the audience noise.

**Con, I have to ask you, or my mother would never forgive me... Where did you learn to do that thing you do with your hands when you sing?**

Dec: He'll tell you!

Con: Well, it came from watching Dusty Springfield perform.

Dec: See, that's the key to being a success—watching and learning from others.

Con: I still listen to Dusty today. She was great. She made some fabulous records. Apparently, she did it because she had the words to her songs written on the back of her hands.

**How about the recording of that great album you did with singer Patricia Cahill?**

Con: That's a story. I'll tell you this... that was the most expensive record we ever made—and it was a near flop.

Dec: You mean it was a complete flop...

Con: Well, yes! It was some of our best work, though.

Dec: What happened there was that we recorded the album—it was a huge affair. A huge band. But Patricia had to go away with her husband as soon as we had completed the album. It was never promoted and did nothing. The lack of success that album had may have been one of our biggest disappointments.



How about your Irish album, *Under and Over*?

Dec: There's another album that we had a wonderful time making, but the TV show was a disappointment.

Con: It was all set to go out at the same time as "The Persuaders" with Roger Moore and

Tony Curtis. The album was meant to coincide with the show, but "The Persuaders" sucked up all the ratings.

Dec: On the recording side, when we recorded the album, the engineer told me that we had only recorded thirteen minutes of music— after we'd recorded a dozen or so songs I was shocked.

Con: We didn't realize that those Irish folk songs were so short.

Dec: So, we added in some talking segments to fill it out.

Con: When we filmed the TV show, we used the music throughout the series. Whenever there was a fight breaking out, someone in the show would call for a song to calm everyone down.

**It was a great album.**

Con: Yes, it was. It turned out very well.

**Where did your record "The Unicorn" come from?**

Dec: That one must have come from a music publisher. It had been a hit in the United States for "The Irish Rovers," and it was sent to us.

**That might be one of your best-known records. When you left Decca you joined Phillips. How did you enjoy your time there? How would you rate their recording facilities in comparison to Decca?**

Dec: No comparison. Decca was absolutely superior. I seem to remember we spent a lot

of our time during the Phillips years recording at the Decca studios. We recorded an album like those Max Bygraves was having great success doing. "Singalong Bachelors." In fact, did you know I influenced a "Moody Blues" album?

**No...**

Dec: I had a special foot pedal designed for use on records, and the engineer left it in one of the studios. He called me and I went down to collect it. When I arrived, the Moody Blues were recording an album—guess what sound ended up on that album?

**Don't tell me... They used your foot pedal?**

Dec: Yes... the foot pedal created a *whooshing* sound, and it was all the way through their album. In fact, talking about guitars—Brian Epstein got John Lennon the J-160E Gibson. They sent me the first one.

**Really?**

Yeah! They used to send us all kinds of stuff.

Con: Gannex. They sent us piles and piles of Gannex. I still have some of it. You know? The coats Prime Minister Harold Wilson made fashionable? It was a tan coloured rainproof material with Scottish plaid inside used for overcoats, luggage. Company owned by Lord Kagan. The honour bestowed by Harold Wilson which caused such controversy.

Dec: Baby clothes too. We used to get all kinds of products.

Con: Barrels of Guinness...

Dec: I remember that.

**Being a success has its perks... But what do you think about showbusiness? What makes someone successful?**

Dec: You have to aim for the top. We always aimed to be the best. There's no "good enough" or "second best." You have to be the best. It's no good aiming for "showbusiness in the dark." That's what a lot of people do now. Showbusiness should be loud.

**Interesting. Now, you also made movies, too, didn't you?**

Dec: Yes—"It's All Over Town" with Frankie Vaughan and "I've Gotta Horse" with Billy Fury. We had to be flown in every day to do that one.

Con: Well, I'd been appearing in movies for years, actually. I was used as an extra in a lot of movies.

Dec: That's right!

Con: I remember they told me you get paid extra if you fire a gun—so I'd always try to get hold of a gun for the extra money.

*(both laugh)*



Con: It's been a pleasure.

**Boy, you guys have done just about everything!**

Dec: It certainly seems that way. We've recorded 78 albums. Our latest might be the most exciting one we've done yet. It's called **"The Bachelors: Stripped Down"** and we play every instrument on the album. Everything on there is us. Con and I enjoyed making it.

**I'm sure it'll be a very popular album—and you are still touring?**

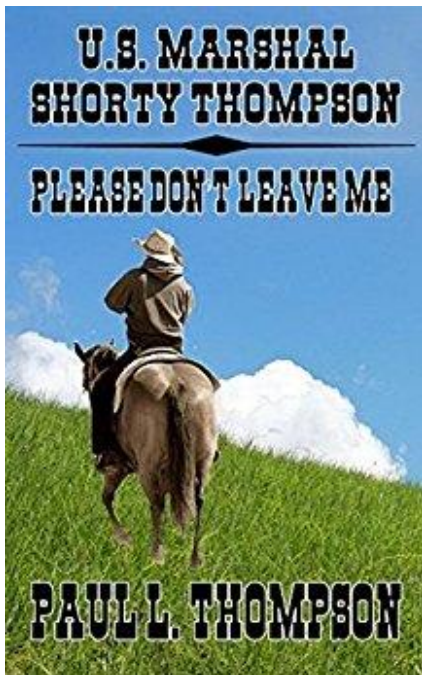
Dec: Yes. We are still very busy. We do shows all over the place. There's still a lot to be done, and we're doing it.

**Well, thank you for your time. I truly appreciate you spending this time with me talking about your great success.**

Dec: Thank you for asking us.

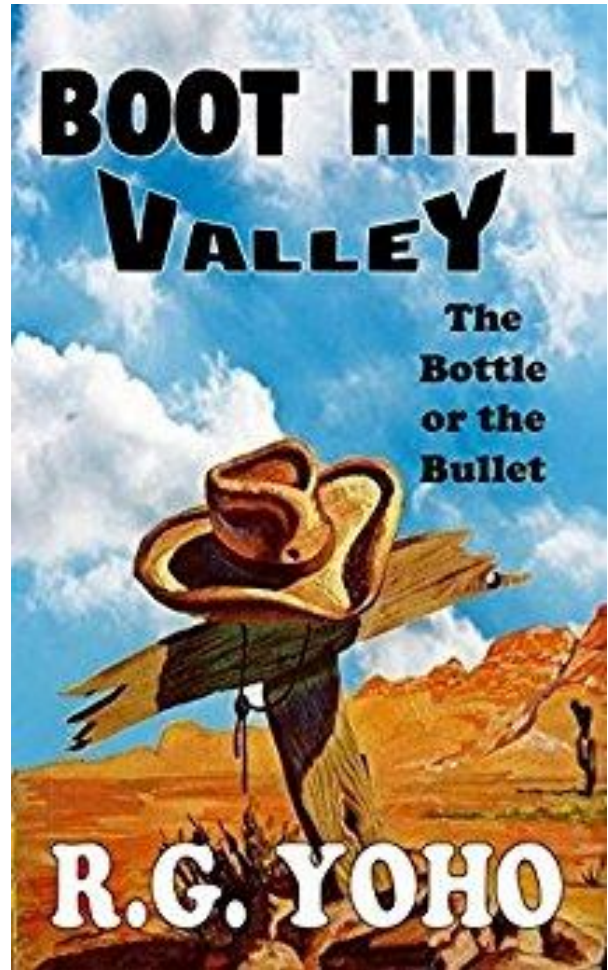
# REVIEW CORNER

WITH LON HAMILTON



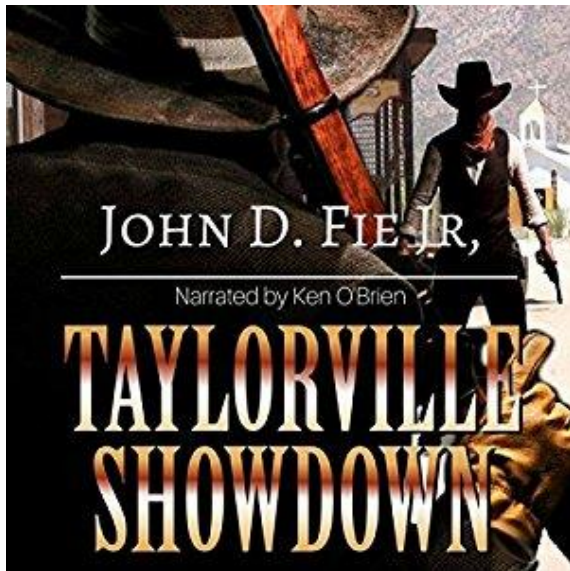
**"U.S. Marshal Shorty Thompson: Please Don't Leave Me" – Robert Hanlon**

The latest Western from Paul L. Thompson is one of his finest. It's filled with the action, adventure and pulsating drama of Thompson at his best. Will readers ever tire of Shorty Thompson? It's doubtful with suspenseful Western tales like this. I hope Outlaws Publishing has a stockpile of his books. There's going to be a lot of upset people if they run out! Westerner magazine rates "[U.S. Marshal Shorty Thompson: Please Don't Leave Me](#)" as a five-star read.



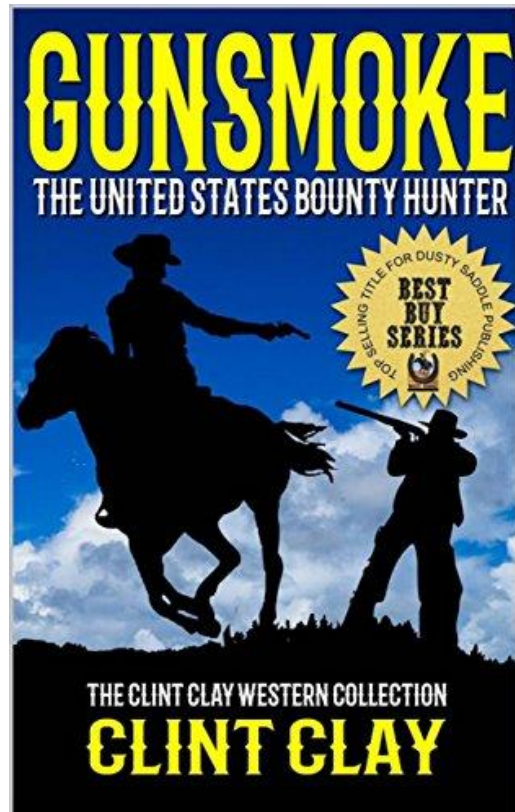
**"Boot Hill Valley" – R.G. Yoho**

New to the scene, R.G. Yoho has a strange way of drawing in the reader with his understated prose. Greed, gluttony and ranching are all tied together in his first release, "Boot Hill Valley," and many readers will be eager for the second book upon completion. Westerner magazine rates "[Boot Hill Valley](#)" as a four-star read.



**"Taylorville Showdown (audio)" – John D. Fie, Jr. and Ken O'Brien**

The latest audiobook from John D. Fie, Jr. is "Taylorville Showdown," which was one of his most successful commercial releases of 2017. With a delicate, if a little boring, narration from Ken O'Brien, this one should please many of his fans. But will the narration win him any new followers? Hard to tell. Fie is a solid seller and his reputation as a solid seller may save this release. Westerner rates ["Taylorville Showdown \(audio\)"](#) as a three-star listen.

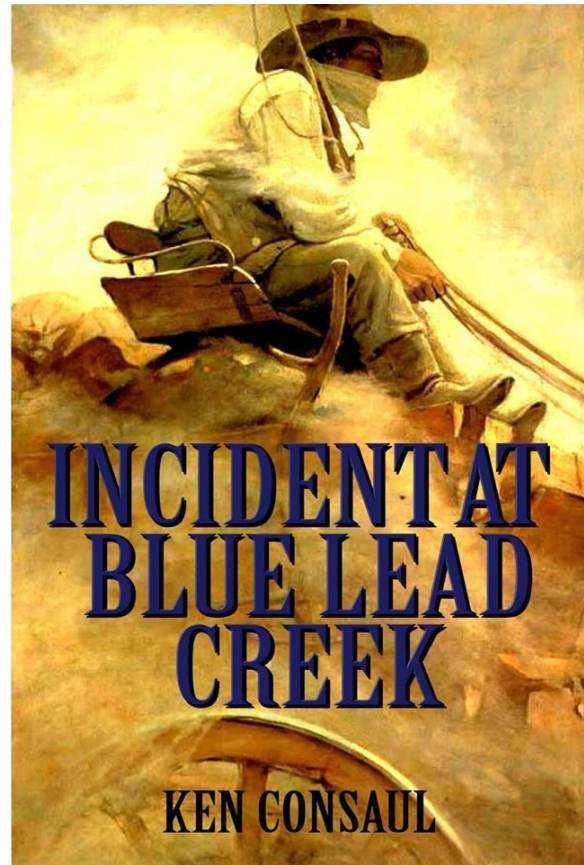
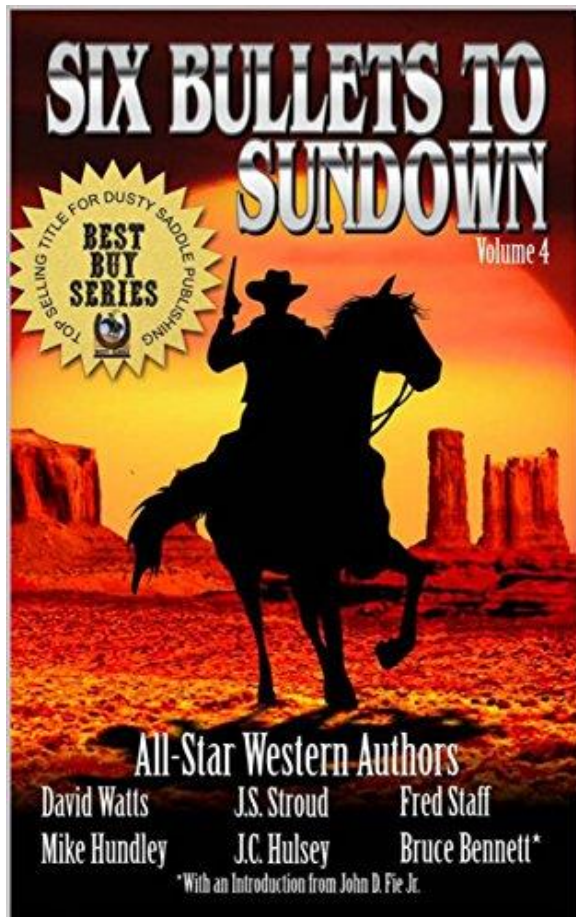


**"Gunsmoke: The United States Bounty Hunter" - Clint Clay (Box Set)**

A major seller on the market already—Clint Clay has finally gotten around to releasing his first four blockbuster novels in one easy-to-download volume. Filled with action, adventure and primed for Western readers to pump, this set should have you excited for the two new Clint Clay releases coming up in October. Westerner rates ["Gunsmoke: The United States Bounty Hunter \(box set\)"](#) as a four-star read.

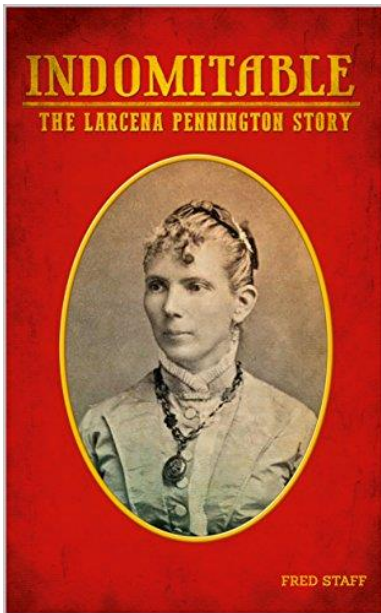
## Six Bullets to Sundown: Volume Four – Various

The fourth collection in this very, very popular series showcases some of the major sellers on the Western market of today. Of major note is the new story from super-seller David Watts. "Picaro" is a diamond that should keep those who are going through a Watts withdrawal after reading "The Long Ride" happy. J.C. Hulsey has pulled together a great story of note, Bruce Bennett has turned in one of his finest Western stories of 2017, and Mike Hundley has surpassed even the great work he did on "Gunsight Justice." Westerner rates "[Six Bullets to Sundown](#)" a five-star read.



### Incident At Blue Lead Creek – Ken Consaul

This new release from Ken Consaul brings him into familiar and exciting territory. This is the Gold Rush of the 1800s written in such a way that you will find yourself sucked into the very fabric of the story. Consaul writes well. He should have no trouble getting this book into the upper echelons of Amazon, especially with readers who are looking for a different kind of Western. Westerner rates "Incident at Blue Lead Creek" as a five-star read and our pick of the week.



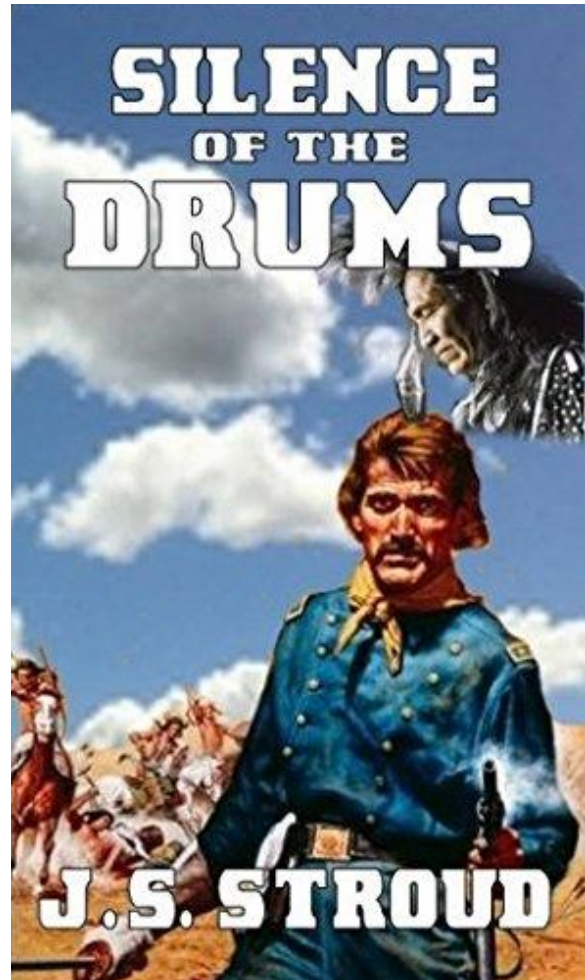
### Indomitable: The Larcena Pennington Story – Fred Staff

Hot on the heels of his last bestseller, we have “Indomitable” from the mighty Fred Staff. This is not his usual kind of book at all. If Staff has a definite style, it has been completely rewritten and restructured for this novel of struggle and strife in the Old West. It takes a different kind of reader to groove to this great tale, but once you do, you will find it to be one of the most rewarding books in the Staff catalog. Westerner rates [“Indomitable: The Larcena Pennington Story”](#) four and a half stars.

### Silence of the Drums- J.S. Stroud

The latest release from J.S. Stroud is a book filled to the brim with the things Western readers want to read the most. This is a high-octane, action-packed, cerebral Western novel that has all the hallmarks of becoming one of those very famous movies. The wonderful thing is that there are a host of

Stroud books coming onto the market so you won't be stuck without the next book when you've finished devouring this one. If you like straightforward Western fun from a clean, wholesome writer, you will want to give this one a chance. Westerner rates “Silence of the Drums” as a four-star read.



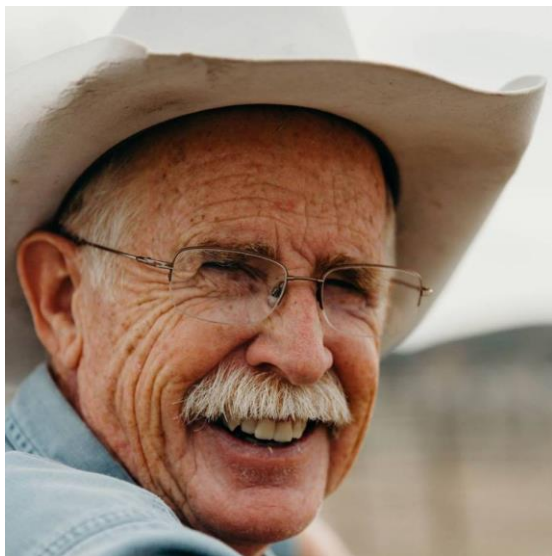
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To request a book review, or to have your book featured in an upcoming issue of Westerner, please email our friendly team of booklovers directly at [dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com](mailto:dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com)



# THE MOVIE MAN!

WITH MARK BAUGHER



People have been asking me just how in the world did you get a movie made from your novel? I think the real truth is that I didn't know it was hard to make a movie happen, so I just started doing it. No one told me it was impossible. After it was finished and doing well, an old movie director called, asking me how it came to be. He then went on to tell me it was almost impossible to get a movie from script to finished product, and it was entirely impossible to make a good movie. He spent forty years in Hollywood and only made one good movie. He asked me how many movies I had made, and I told him I had been in the movie world one year and made one movie. I think he wanted to be

mad about what I had done. He ranted, and I stuffed my amusement. If there is a lesson here, I don't know, but I will start in with my story.

I told you last month how unlikely I was to write anything, let alone a novel people liked and would buy. All I can say is that it was done for the pure joy of doing it. No expectations and no deadlines. I had no idea what a writer is supposed to do, so there were no ideas in my head about the right and wrong things to do in writing a novel. Same goes for a movie.

When the young director Patrick Ball called me with my novel in his hand and wanting to make a movie, I was very interested. We met in Sedona for lunch. A few minutes into the meeting, we were old friends. So few times in my life have I found friendship immediately. It usually takes some time to grow but not this time. I was sixty-two at that time and he was twenty-five. A lot of years separated us, but how we looked at the world matched up perfectly. After that meeting, I asked my wife what she thought of Patrick. She just laughed and told me he is a throwback to me at that age, and if he wanted to get a good look at himself down the road, all he had to do was look at me. This young man is talented far beyond his years. Some day I will sit on the nursing home porch and brag about making a movie with Patrick Ball.

Want to hear a big secret? Success comes to those who surround themselves with the right people. That is just what I did. Patrick had a crew of five more people. Sound engineer, editor, camera assistant, acting coach and the man who owned all the camera equipment. They all believed in the project. They were all fans of my novel, and the biggest and most important aspect of it all was that they trusted me. They knew that their best interest was my first interest. When a group of talented and creative people have

one goal, it's contagious. What about the actors? Same story, really. They came, and the last count was one hundred people in all. Our main location was Pioneer Living History Museum. Without them, the movie would have been much less. I went to talk with the director. I gave her my novel. We visited for an hour. She needed time to think it over so I left and went back a week later. She liked the novel and seemed to like me. She asked me how many days we would need the village. Since I had absolutely no idea, I blurted out seven days. She agreed. The funny story here is that we ended up filming for twenty-one days. The energy and excitement was so high that she never complained.

Now, let's talk actors. No one in the one hundred was an actor. I got some advice from an old Hollywood actor named Matt Clark. He said never let the audience catch you acting. With that advice, I decided that acting was not going to be allowed. Everyone was to be just what they were. They knew the parts and scenes. If they were going to be mad or sad, they had to be mad or sad like they normally would. This worked beautifully. People have asked me where we got all the actors. Truth is we didn't have any. We just had interesting people to start with. I have great affection for them all.

Next month I will talk about the big question: money. However, you have a homework assignment. C-Bar the movie is on Amazon. If you have an Amazon Prime account, you can watch for free. If not, I think it's \$2.99. Watch the movie and make a guess as to the cost of the production. See you next month.

If you would like to see my movie... just click the cover.



# INSIDE ILLUSTRATIONS WITH ARTIST JUDY MASTRANGELO

## INSPIRATION PART 2

This is my second article about INSPIRATION as part of the creation process.

All artists throughout time have developed their own personal method of creating their masterpieces. I know of two famous artists who had interesting methods of "Capturing a Vision" to paint.

Pablo Picasso was known to paint in a trance-like state.

Salvador Dali, the famous surrealist artist, would do the following: Sitting in a chair, he would hold a metal spoon, with a metal pan under it, next to his chair. When he would finally fall asleep, his hand would drop the spoon, and it would hit the pan with a loud clatter. That would wake him with a start, and he would be inspired to paint the dream images he was having before he awoke.

You too can develop your own process of inspiration for your art.

It's a very interesting and exciting thing. Let me also add that there are a lot of wonderful computer programs which artists sometimes use when they create a painting. But I'm not discussing this type of thing, even though they are great tools to have and to become

proficient in. I've learned to paint in the classical way, which is still very important to know, even if you create digital art on your computer.

All of us artists, including yourself, are unique. We strive to develop an individual style and look that people will appreciate.

It takes a lot of practice to become a good artist. It all depends on how much effort you want to devote to your art.

You can study on your own by practicing, reading, going to art museums, etc. You might also want to take art classes with an art instructor. Perhaps you have dreams of becoming a professional artist, or doing it only as a hobby. Either path you take will be a delight, I promise you.

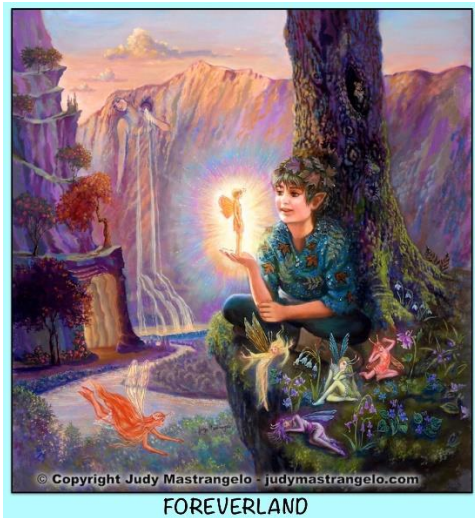
## **Inspiration from other artists**

I love the art of many of today's talented artists. My greatest teachers were the Master Artists of the past. I'm sure many contemporary artists feel the same way, and you can see the influences in their work of these great artists.

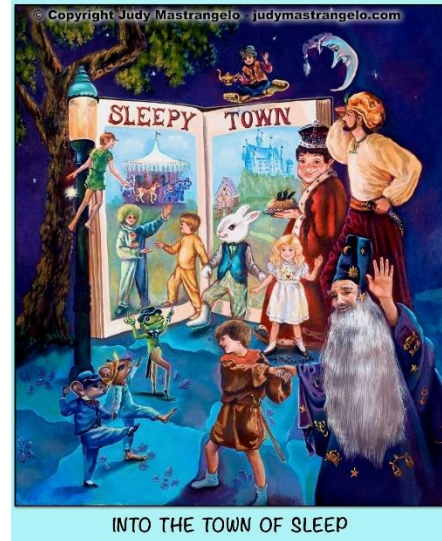
I have studied painting techniques from my "Hero Artists of Long Ago," ever since I was young. This has always been such a thrill for me. I love going to an art museum and standing in front of an original painting. There is nothing like marveling at every brush stroke of a Great Master!

I collect art books, calendars, prints, and greeting cards of my favorite artists. I put their art on my walls, and carry small postcards and prints of their work with me so

I can glance at them in my free time when I'm away from home. I steep myself with their brilliance, and they inspire me all the time. I am always learning from my Artist Friends of the Past. If I'm stuck with a painting problem, I just go to them for advice. My questions are often answered by looking at their wonderful work.



In this first pictured painting, entitled "FOREVERLAND," you can see how I am influenced by classic literature. In this picture, inspired by the story of "PETER PAN" by James Barrie, the viewer can enjoy finding hidden pictures by looking closely within all the intricate details.



This painting, "INTO THE TOWN OF SLEEP," is an illustration from the poem "YOUNG NIGHT THOUGHT" by Robert Louis Stevenson. Look closely and you will see several familiar fairytale characters in the fanciful parade.

My painting "FLYING SHIP" is an imaginary "Dream Ship" that I saw in my mind's eye while delving into my imagination in a dream-like state.



In this painting of “THE THREE GRACES,” you will see how I was obviously inspired by the great Renaissance artist Sandro Botticelli, in depicting the delightful Greek myth.



I'm excited to tell you that my newly released Inspirational Card Deck from U.S. Games Systems, Inc, is now available for purchase. I have created the artwork for it, and have partnered with my friend Frances Munro, who provided the inspirational text. Shown here is the cover of our new deck.



<https://judymastrangelo.com/portfolio/shop/>

<https://judymastrangelo.com/news-2/>

<https://www.usgamesinc.com/Joyful-Inspirations/>

This card deck is intended to appeal to all ages - from children to adults. It is a 45-card gift deck with a 52-page inspirational booklet. Each card carries its own message in the guidebook that accompanies the deck, as well as an exercise, a prayer, or an affirmation for you to do.

The previous deck that Frances and I collaborated on is entitled “INSPIRATIONAL WISDOM FROM ANGELS AND FAIRIES.”

You can find out more about it by visiting this link:

<https://judymastrangelo.com/2015/09/20/inspirational-wisdom-from-angels-fairies/>

I know the realm of Fantasy Art gives me great pleasure, and I hope it will do the same for others. May you find your road to painting happiness also. Enjoy!

I speak about my painting techniques in my book “PAINTING FAIRIES AND OTHER FANTASIES.” I think you will find it interesting. In it there are also some downloadable tutorials that are very helpful.

<https://judymastrangelo.com/books-2/painting-fairies-other-fantasies/>

Please check out the first of my series “ART PRINTS AND OTHER PRODUCTS by Judy Mastrangelo.” This first one is about products with “ELVES AND FAIRIES”

themes. The second will be about my “FANTASY” artwork products. <https://judymastrangelo.com/2017/09/11/art-prints-and-other-products-by-judy-mastrangelo-1-elves-and-fairies/>

My books are going to be published by DSP very soon, under the new imprint title of “IMAGINATION BOOKS.” They will include many exciting titles in several formats, including AUDIO BOOKS, EBOOKS, HARDCOVER FANTASY, and fun-filled ACTIVITY books for the entire family. I’m also now developing a wonderful series of creative COLORING BOOKS for both adults and children. They will have themes such as: FANTASY, ELVES and FAIRIES, ANGELS, FAIRY TALES, LANDSCAPES and FLOWERS, and WHIMSICAL ANIMALS. You can get an idea of my current books in print on my website book page:

<https://judymastrangelo.com/portfolio/books/>

To find out more about my artwork please visit my website at: [www.judymastrangelo.com](http://www.judymastrangelo.com)

While you’re there, please sign up for my newsletter to discover what’s happening in my Magical world:

<http://judymastrangelo.com/newsletter/>

# CHUCK WAGON RECIPES

WITH LURLENE BOWDEN



*This week, we have a host of recipes from a grandmother, a mother, a wife and a bestselling cookbook queen called Lurlene Bowden. Lurlene, a charming lady, has made it her life's passion to create great recipes for everyone. She will be submitting a monthly column for Westerner... and we can't wait to see what kind of culinary delicacies she comes up with!*

**JACKRABBIT STEW:** (1) Rabbit; (1) sliced Onion; (1) Teaspoon Whole Peppers; (12) Whole Cloves; (2) Bay Leaves; (1) Teaspoon Parsley; (¼) cup White Wine Vinegar; (4) Tablespoons Butter; (2) cups Beef Broth; and (2) Tablespoons Flour. Place Rabbit Pieces in

an earthen dish. Add marinade ingredients: Onion, Lemon, Pepper, Bay Leaves, Cloves, Parsley, and Salt. Add Wine Vinegar, enough to cover Rabbit Pieces, and let stand in a COOL place for (24) hours. After this, place Rabbit into a pot. Add (2) Tablespoons of Butter and Beef Broth, cover, put on the fire, and let simmer until SOFT. In another pot or pan, add (2) Tablespoons Butter, sprinkle in Flour, and simmer until *GOLDEN BROWN*. Then add this mixture while stirring the Rabbit and pour **ALL** into the pot.

**CHUCKWAGON STEW:** This recipe was never made the same way twice. On the open range, you cooked what was on hand/leftover: (1) cup chopped Onion; (1) Clove Garlic, minced; (2) Tablespoons Bacon Drippings; (½) cup Flour; Salt and Pepper, to taste; (2½) cups Beef Stock; (1) Teaspoon Salt; (1) Tablespoon Worcestershire Sauce; (6) peeled Small Carrots; (4) Medium-Sized Potatoes; (1) Tablespoon Flour, and (¼) cup Water. In a Large pot, sauté Onion and Garlic in Bacon Drippings. Dredge Beef Cubes in (½) cup Flour Seasoned with Salt and Pepper and *Brown* with Onions and Garlic. Add Stock, (1) Teaspoon Salt, (½) Teaspoon Pepper, and Worcestershire Sauce. Bring to a Boil. Cover pot and simmer for (1) hour. Cut Carrots into (½) inch Slices and Cube Potatoes. Add to Beef Mixture and simmer for (80) minutes or until the Vegetables are **TENDER**. Combine: (1) Tablespoon Flour with (¼) cup Water to make a Paste. **GRADUALLY** stir into Stew and cook until the Sauce is Thickened.

**TEXAS GUMBO:** (1) Fat Hen; (2) Irish Potatoes, diced; (1) Small Onion; (1) Slice Bacon; (1) Heaping Tablespoon Rice; (12) Sticks Macaroni; (1) Pod Red Pepper; (1) can Tomatoes; (1) can Okra or better still, an equal amount of Fresh Okra and Tomatoes. Cut the Fowl in Portions and fry a *GOLDEN BROWN*. Remove to the Soup pot with (1) Gallon of COLD Water. Boil **GENTLY** for (½) hour. Take out the Chicken, chop the Meat **FINE**, and return to the Soup pot. Fry the Slice of Bacon with the Onion, chopped **FINE**. Add the Onion, Bacon, and Drippings to the pot. Add the other Ingredients, breaking the Macaroni into (1) inch Lengths. Season, to taste and simmer **SLOWLY** for (1) hour. (2) Rabbits or (2) Squirrels may be used in place of the Chicken. This amount will serve (10) people.

**HOW TO COOK EVERY VEGETABLE THAT GROWS:** If it grows beneath the ground, (Root Vegetables), it grows covered in the COLD Earth. Then start it in COLD Water and cover the pot with a lid. If it grows above the ground, (*Green* Vegetables), it grows uncovered in the HOT sun. Then start it in Boiling Water and leave the pot uncovered (NO lid). Cook them exactly as they grew. Cook them until they are **TENDER**.

**ROOTIN' TOOTIN' FRUIT DIP:** (8) ozs. Cream Cheese; (1) (7) ozs. jar Marshmallow Crème, (1) Tablespoon Orange Juice; (1) Teaspoon grated Orange Rind; (1) Tablespoon Grand Marnier; and (1) Teaspoon Peppermint Extract. Thoroughly mix Cream Cheese and Marshmallow Crème. Add the remaining

Flavors. Use as a Dip for Fresh Fruit or chopped Nuts.





# HOUSE OF ILL FAME AND A VISIT WITH RAY SHELLEY

By Fred Staff

We all know that there were very few women in the early days of the Old West, except for wives of the early settlers and the famous school teachers. There were also some nuns and women who worked for other religious missions.

There is little doubt that the men who were coming into the area were generally young and seeking adventure, fortunes, or were hard-working cowpunchers.

This solution to an obvious problem was the establishment of Houses of Ill Fame. I am therefore going to tell you two stories of the many thousand.

We know that both Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday had boardwalk stewardesses as companions, and I am sure that story after story could be told of the famous and infamous men who were involved in similar ways.

My first story is a very strange one. It seems that the Mormons were so set on practicing polygamy that they established several Houses of Pleasure in Salt Lake City. The purpose of these was to entice high ranking political and business men and, yes, women into using the services provided.

The houses were constructed so that each and every room that was used for any sort of lewd act against morality or chastity could be observed by off-duty policemen. The observer took notes on any and all activity. Over a period of time, a very large amount of information of embarrassing facts were compiled.

The Mormons intent was to release this information and cause such a commotion that it would distract from all the efforts that were being made to eliminate the drive to abolish polygamy.

The women who worked there were paid unbelievable sums, for those days, if they could get the goods on high ranking officials. They wrote personal letters to those they wanted to entrap and invited them to come and talk about important matters. An example of this is the fact that one lady was offered one thousand dollars if she could get the governor of the state to fall into this trap. Note that, in those times, if a person made over fifty dollars a month, they were doing extremely well.

After a period of time, the compiled information was used to charge a large number of those entrapped with crimes and a grand jury was impounded. The houses were closed and the women were hustled out of town before the acts were exposed.

The scheme totally failed, as the ruling was that the commission of a crime to cause a crime was not acceptable under state law. It is of little doubt that the many exposed suffered great embarrassment.

The next story is one that I truly enjoy talking about. In Fort Smith, Arkansas is an establishment called Miss Laura's. I totally enjoy Fort Smith and encourage any Western fan to try to make a trip there. This city was the hub of so many stories connected to the overseeing of the development of Indian Territory and eventually the making of the state of Oklahoma. It is also the site of the construction of the future U.S. Marshal's Museum. Of course, I love it because that is where so many of my books' histories either

began or ended. The famous court of Judge Parker and the statue of Bass Reeves are a great beginning to a visit. There are also reenactments of so many historical people taking place in several parts of the city, but most of them are in easy walking distance to the subject of this story.

Miss Laura's is now the tourist center for the city, but in its heyday was the most elite House of Ill Fame in the area. The tours there are as interesting as any museum I have ever visited.

I would like to take this time to thank Ray Shelley, a volunteer at the place for a number of years. He will give you a quick tale of what the place was like and how it got started. This is in no way comparable to a visit.

The building was built in 1898 and was originally known as the Riverfront Commercial Hotel. Laura Ziegler moved to Fort Smith in 1896 from Vermont. In 1903, Laura borrowed 3000 dollars and purchased the building, and turned it into a "house of ill repute." She paid back the loan in the first year of operation.

Miss Laura's was one of seven such houses in the "Red Light District," known as "The Row." It might be of interest to the readers to know why we always call this type of area a "Red Light District." It seems that the general location of these places were near the railroad track. The men who worked on the railroads used red lanterns to signal trains. It is assumed that after work, many took their pleasure in these houses and hung their red lanterns on the outside.

The going rate at Laura's was three dollars. This price was nearly twice the rate of other houses. You could get a deal for a full night's stay for five dollars. Many a traveling salesman took the five dollar deal, because they could then get reimbursed as a nightly expense.

Let's talk a little about the ladies of the house. Most of the ladies were farm girls and a lot of them came from Kansas. Being farm girls, when they arrived, they showed the effect of the hard life needed to survive on the marginal subsistence farms. They had worked hard and were, generally, darkened by the sun. It is reported that light skinned women were the preference. Belladonna (Beautiful Lady, in Italian) was a drug that was used to get the girls over their monthly challenges and it made their pupils narrow as well as lightened their skin. Both of these effects made them more attractive to the customers. Miss Laura groomed the girls in proper manners and even took them to the opera house. She also had a hairdresser on call who kept the girls primped and looking enticing. If you go to the house you will notice a red felt wallpaper. The girls would rub their fingers over the felt and a small amount of the red would be deposited on their fingers. They would then rub it on their cheeks to give them rose coloring.

The girls made a considerable amount of money in comparison to any other job that either man or women had in the times. They usually worked for a few years and then returned home with money in their purse and married into an ordinary life.

The design of the house is also of interest. Miss Laura's room was in the northeast corner of the house, and the front door was on the east. There was a door on the north, next to Laura's room, that customers of higher social standing used and could enter her room without anyone else knowing it. Across the hall to the south of her room were two rooms where gambling and dancing took place. These rooms were divided by an accordion door. The reason for that was that the tax collector collected taxes on the number of rooms in the house and when he came, the separation door was opened and now there was only one room.

Pearl Starr, daughter of outlaw queen Belle Starr, owned one of the houses on the Row. In her window, she had a lighted star with a lighted string of pearls surrounding the star. In my research on Bass Reeves, I found that Belle hated her son, because he was constantly in trouble and she felt that Pearl became a madam to help pay for all the expenses it took to keep him out of jail.

Laura sold the house to one of her girls in 1911, Bertha Dean, for 47,000 dollars. Bertha owned the house until her death in 1948. She is buried in the National Cemetery there in Fort Smith. One would ask why a madam was buried in such a place, and the answer is that she was married to a veteran and was buried next to him.

In 1963, Don Reynolds of Donrey Media bought the building to save it from demolition. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973,

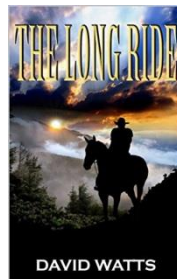
the first bordello to ever be listed on the Register. Miss Laura's was restored in 1983. It has been the official Fort Smith Visitors Center since 1992.



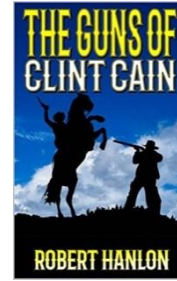
# THE WESTERN® TOP TEN FOR SEPTEMBER

Book sales take a back seat to our concern for our neighbors in Houston and Florida. Our thoughts go out to these great people who have suffered before, during, and after the natural disasters of hurricanes Harvey and Irma. We want to wish those folks the best in their recovery from these terrible events.

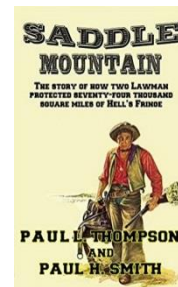
Here are the Western top ten as voted by you, our readers:



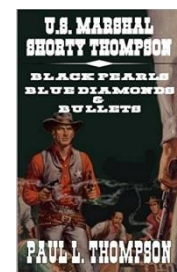
1. Author David Watts scores big with his second best-selling Western, *The Long Ride*. Watts has been a host on National Public Radio and is also a celebrated poet. His first novel, *The Guns of Pecos County*, was widely received by Western readers who pushed it to the #1 position on Amazon's Kindle in the Western genre.



2. Robert Hanlon has become very popular with Western readers and is one of the most prolific Western authors writing today. His highly successful *Guns of Clint Cain* has been a reader favorite for the past two months and continues to climb the charts.

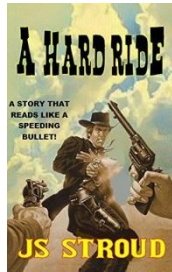


3. Paul Thompson, what else needs to be said? This highly successful author has produced a string of successful Westerns that have made him the favorite of Western readers. *Saddle Mountain* is another great in a line of winners.



4. Another great story from author Paul Thompson. This book features his highly acclaimed character, Shorty Thompson. Once

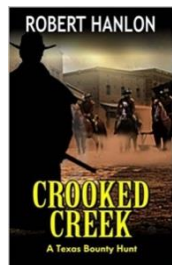
more, it seems that whatever this author writes turns to gold.



5. Author J.S. Stroud brings us the fast moving page-turner *A Hard Ride*. Readers remark that the style and skill of this author make *A Hard Ride* a must-read for Western lovers. We expect the book to continue to climb the charts.

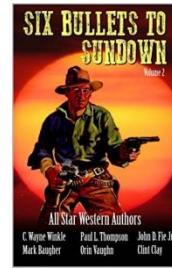


6. Author John D. Fie, Jr. has been featured in an interview in the *Westerner*©. One of our favorite writers, Fie brings an energy and enthusiasm to his work that virtually jumps from the page.

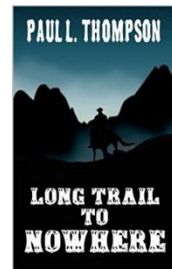


7. Another great one from author Robert Hanlon, *Crooked Creek* is an action-packed adventure that will be hard to put down.

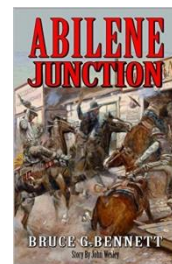
Since *Texas Bounty Hunter*, readers have put this excellent writer's books in high demand.



8. It's easy to see why this compilation makes the cut. With great stories by Paul L. Thompson, John D. Fie, and Clint Clay, this is a must read for Western genre enthusiasts. The format is short stories and the buzz from readers is great!



9. With number nine best-seller, *Long Trail to Nowhere*, Paul L. Thompson completes this month's domination of the Western top ten. Another get book from this terrific Western author, and a must-read for all Western readers.



10. *Abilene Junction* is the highly criticized new entry by author John Wesley, based on the Gabriel Torrent series by Bruce G.

Bennett. Readers will find Abilene Junction to run tangent to most successful Westerns.

Send your favorites and comments to [dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com](mailto:dustysaddlepublishing@gmail.com). We want to hear from our readers.



## GARY VASEY'S WORLD OF THE SUPERNATURAL

The Ouija board is often packaged as a game. You can find them on the same shelf as things like Monopoly, Cluedo, and the like. But don't be fooled. This is not a game, and it is certainly not the sort of thing that you put under the Christmas tree for your kids.

Years ago, I had an interesting experience involving a Ouija board. My friend and I visited the house of a girl I was interested in. We were invited in and found the family busy in the kitchen playing with the board. I excused myself and sat next door watching TV while my friend joined in. The house was a large four-story home in an older part of town. It likely dated back to Victorian times and most certainly had a long history of occupants. The Ouija board was very active. Suddenly and without warning, I was disturbed by my friend running through the

TV room and out into the hall. To my utter surprise, he was sobbing uncontrollably. I watched in growing amazement as several family members ran through the room chasing my friend. They chased him up the stairs and back down again. By this time, I was very confused... What on earth was going on? I was told by one of the family members that they had hooked into a presence on the board and suddenly, Mike, my pal, had become very different. He was possessed by the entity and burst into tears sobbing and screaming as he ran around the house. At that point, Mike came running through and I joined the chase. Being me, when I managed to grab at his ankle, I said, "Come into me and leave him alone." I found myself several minutes later upstairs in a bathroom being held down by four adults and I too was crying and screaming.

It was a very unpleasant experience to say the least and one that I will never forget. It only reinforced my belief that Ouija is not a game and, in fact, is very dangerous indeed. Now some of you may not believe my story. Fine. That is your business. But consider this experience too.

*I live in West Virginia. This is where my experience took place. I am now over fifty years old, but I was just over ten when this happened.*

*My mother bought me a Ouija board, thinking it was a game. One night while my dad was at work, we got out the board, lit a candle and put it in the middle of the table.*



*We placed our fingers lightly on the planchette.*

*Mom asked if there was anyone there that wanted to speak to us. I was giggling. She asked again. The planchette then moved to YES. I told Mom she was moving it and she said she was not. My mother asked, "Who are you?" The planchette then went to each letter and spelled Alberts. We did not know anyone by the name of Alberts, first or last name.*

*Mom then asked, "Are you a good spirit?" The planchette moved to YES and then NO. Mom asked, "How did you die?" The planchette did not move from the middle of the board. I was getting scared at that point. So, Mom said, "Since you are not going to tell us, we are going to say goodbye now." The planchette slid to NO. Mom said, "We have to go." The planchette then went to GOODBYE.*

*We took our fingers off the planchette and it was sitting in the middle of the board. The planchette flew off the board and the round plastic piece where the middle pointer cracked.*

*We put it away and tried to forget about it. We were both a little creeped out by the board.*

*Where we lived, the floor was close to the ground and my room was at the end of the house. And that night there was a growling sound coming up through the floor in the*

*corner of my room. I went and got Mom; she came in and it stopped.*

*The weird thing is that my mother smoked at the time. That night her cigarettes smelled like sulphur—she said they tasted like sulphur as well.*

*My dad could not smell it or taste it. I could smell the sulphur strongly. My mother could too. He thought we were playing a joke on him.*

*Three nights later, the growling started up in the corner of my room. I again went and got my mother. Dad was at home and Mommy told him to get the flashlight and go out and look for anything that could be making the noise. While the growling was happening, Dad came in and said that nothing was under there. My mom proceeded to scream at it and tell it to stop. It got louder and sounded more like a low, deep growl, like it was going to come through the floor after my mommy. It finally stopped that night.*

*The next morning my mother felt ill. We took her temperature and it was over 100. Dad took her to the hospital and they were so worried, they admitted her. She was diagnosed as having an infection. She was in there for a week. The whole time she was in the hospital, my room and the whole house was quiet.*

*My mother and I truly believed the spirit of Alberts died from having an infection in his blood and was never treated for it and died*

*from it. That is my first and last experience with a Ouija board, and I would never use one again.*

Angeline Hoskins, West Virginia

Or how about this one...

*My grandfather passed away when I was twelve and I had to move into his old room – the one where he had passed. A few months later, I had a friend sleep over and we thought it might be fun to play with a witch board. So, we lit some candles and decided to see if we could contact my grandfather. Nothing happened at first and we weren't really taking it too seriously. We stopped touching the board and we blew out all of the candles only to have them all re-light by themselves. The glass continued to move around violently across the board on its own... My friend lost it and asked to go home and she did.*

*Later, I resumed playing with the board myself. My TV was off but it kept turning on and off and my cord-pulled light switch also kept turning on. Meanwhile, the little shot glass I had on the board was still going crazy moving by itself on my board. It didn't spell anything but was just randomly moving around. I tried to get up and all the candles went out and I was left in total darkness. My twin-size bed and box spring were thrown about 10 feet away, blocking the door. All the while my TV and lights were going on and off over and over again. I screamed, and I'm pretty sure that I fainted because when I opened my eyes,*

*my mom and stepdad were freaked out. EVERYTHING in my room was upside down, or sideways, and pictures on the walls were also upside down.*

*That wasn't my grandfather! My parents also witnessed the board moving by itself and my stepdad took it outside and burnt it.*

*I lived there another 7 years, and I always felt something dark around me even 20 years later. When I'm alone, I can still feel it almost behind me.*

Submitted Anonymously

Here is another experience submitted to my website...

*This happened last night but it started a few days ago when my son's friend Facebooked me and asked about a Ouija board they had found in grandma's attic. She had died and they were cleaning out the house. It was just an A4-size Ouija board on hard board with a small planchet still in the envelope it came in.*

*I have been into the occult, ghosts and Ouija boards for many years and I actually have my own board, so he wanted to know what to do with it. I told him that it would be fine so long as she had opened and closed it down properly if she had used it and that it wasn't the board that was dangerous – just what comes through when it's used. I told him I would have it if they wanted rid of it.*

*He dropped it off a few days ago and since then, my salt lamp has been flicking on and off. I just put it down to the bulb, but then yesterday my Kindle wouldn't charge. I had to keep moving the wire around. Again, I put it down to my USB port being faulty, not that it has done this before. Later on the next day, I went upstairs to put the washing away in our bedroom and took my Kindle to play music on. A little way into a song it suddenly stopped. I looked at it and it hadn't stopped or paused, so I pressed play again. It did it again a little more into the song so I pressed play again thinking it must be faulty, then the next song did the same. So I said, "If this is a spirit, stop the song now," and it did; and so I said, "Please stop it, it's annoying." It did it again once and that was it.*

*Later on that night I went to bed. I always sleep on my side. I was at that drifting off, not fully asleep stage when all of a sudden, I can't really explain how or why, but I was on my back and something was on top of me. I couldn't move or speak. I could feel it but not see it. Its hand was gripping my hair at the front, pushing my head down. The only thing I could think to do was say the Lord's Prayer, which was not easy. It took all my strength to say it. Then it was gone. I turned over and chose to ignore it. I wasn't asleep and I wasn't on my back when I turned the light off and it had only been about 15 mins since the light went off. I don't know if this was real or if what's been happening is all coincidence, but my Kindle is working fine today. I'm going to*

*wait and see if anything else happens then decide what to do – very strange.*

Submitted by Greta

By now, you should be getting the picture. Ouija boards are trouble unless you know what you are doing and take adequate protection steps. Avoid them completely, in fact.

I used a Ouija board scene in my recent novel – The Lord of the Elements – I think to good effect. The idea was to introduce a demon called the Lord of the Elements into the story fairly early. I used all of my experiences to develop this little story section that goes like this...

*The Ouija board had seen much better days and the makeshift wine glass that the four of them now touched with their fingers, would have difficulty moving over the deeply cracked and wrinkled surface of the board. Janet had found it in an old cardboard box in the attic and while its provenance could not be readily ascertained, it must surely have once belonged to a student who had also occupied number 61 Drake Lane. Luckily, there were five wine glasses in the house, the sixth, which made up the original set, had been dropped at some time in the past. Four of the glasses had seen some heavy usage during the evening as the friends consumed three bottles of cheap Spanish wine. As the wine had begun to run out, their spirits had increased under the influence of the bubbly cheap alcohol and*

*that was when Janet suddenly remembered the old Ouija board. The four of them now sat hunched around the kitchen table, fingers on the remaining upturned glass, giggling.*

*"Nothing's going to happen," said Billy, who out of the four, was the soberest.*

*"Give it a try, Billy," said Janet, rolling her eyes. "Just give it a try..."*

*The four settled down again, looking intently at the upturned glass in silence. It was at that moment that the back door cracked as the latch was turned and opened. Edward caught a glimpse of the four of them jumping in unison as their fearful expectation of something the Ouija board might do turned into group shock as the door opened.*

*"Bloody hell," shouted Dennis. "You scared the living daylights out of me."*

*"Good God, my heart is pounding," screamed Janet, between howls of relieved laughter.*

*Edward surveyed the scene and immediately determined that this activity was not for him. He muttered an apology and made his way through the petite kitchen to the door of the equally miniscule lounge.*

*"Oh, come on Edward!" said Billy. "Come and join us?"*

*"Yes...." they all said together. "Do," repeated Janet.*

*Edward shook his head. "No, I'm sorry. That's playing with fire, that is. Nope. Enjoy yourselves, but I am not interested," he said firmly.*

*"Awwww, Edward," moaned Janet. "Always so ... so boring."*

*Edward said nothing, but opened the door to the lounge anyway.*

*"Edward, old boy, do you have anything that we can drink?" asked Billy holding out his empty wine glass.*

*"That I can help with," nodded Edward. "I have a bottle of wine left over from Christmas. I shall go and get it."*

*He set off decisively, as if to make amends for his lack of interest in the night's activities. He was back less than five minutes later, brandishing a dark bottle that he held aloft to their multiple cheers. He gave it to Billy with a flourish.*

*"Thanks, Edward."*

*Edward looked a tad embarrassed and was quite relieved to escape the kitchen for the safety of the lounge. He had an interesting book there awaiting him and he would read for a while before going up to bed.*

*In the kitchen, the new bottle was quickly opened and its contents poured into the waiting and empty glasses.*

*"To Edward," said Billy before downing a huge gulp of red wine.*

*"Edward," came back the chorus.*

*"Do you think it would help if we dimmed the lights a bit?" asked Dennis.*

*"Why not?" said Billy.*

*No one objected and so they switched off the lights. It took a while for eyes to accustom themselves to the darkness and refocus on the upturned glass.*

*Time passed. A heavy silence began to hang over the assembled company in the darkness of the kitchen only interrupted by the now incredibly loud ticking of the ugly, cheap clock that hung over the doorway to the lounge.*

*"Is there anybody there?" said Janet after several minutes of total silence.*

*Dennis let out a snigger.*

*"Sorry, it just sounds so ridiculous," he said.*

*"Is there anybody there?" repeated Janet, ignoring Dennis.*

*"Bugger, did you feel that?" asked Billy, as the glass suddenly seemed to lurch sideways.*

*The glass had seemingly moved abruptly from left to right. It had actually skipped over the deep fold and crack in the old board as if hovering a few millimeters above its surface.*

*"Shhhhh," said Janet excitedly.*

*"Come on, stop pushing the bloody thing," said a skeptical Dennis.*

*"I'm not," said Janet.*

*"Me neither," said Billy.*

*"Nor me," said Guy.*

*For a moment, the glass was still. Then, slowly and with definite purpose, it began to move again.*

*"Oh, my God," said Guy. "It is moving."*

*"Problem is we can't see where it is moving to," said Janet.*

*Suddenly, there was a flash of light as Billy flipped his lighter with his spare hand and held it over the table.*

*"Good idea," exclaimed Guy.*

*"Is there anybody here?" asked Janet once more.*

*The glass moved abruptly and effortlessly across the board settling on top of the letters that spelled 'YES'.*

*"Oh, my God," exclaimed Janet. "What is your name?"*

*The glass moved again. It slipped across the board with ease despite the broken surface.*

*"F, I, R, E – Fire?" asked Janet in a low husky voice.*

*The glass began to move again.*

*"A, I, R – Air?" said Janet tracking the glasses progress.*

*"Who is pushing it?" asked Billy.*

*"No one," said Dennis. "It is floating above the board. How is THAT possible?"*

*"Come on, someone is pushing it."*

*"Shhhhh," said Janet. "Who is this?"*

*The glass moved with increased energy.*

*"L, O, R, D – Lord?" said Janet. "Lord who?"*

*With that, the glass somehow hurled itself across the room, smashing on the wall above the kitchen sink. Four people screamed involuntarily in unison.*

*Edward, who was engrossed in his book, only heard muffled screams. Puzzled, he put it down and walked towards the kitchen door. Opening it, he found the room in darkness. He switched on the light. It wasn't so much the four pale and shocked faces peering back at him that attracted his*

*attention as the stacked empty wine glasses perilously sitting atop one another on top of the wine bottle in the middle of the table. Just the slight breeze from pushing open the door was sufficient to send the whole lot crashing to the table in an explosion of broken glass.*

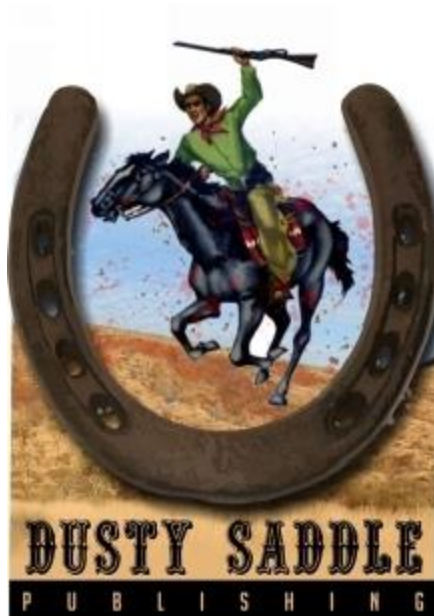
*"Good God," said Janet. "How did that happen?"*

*"There, that should teach the lot of you for playing with fire," said Edward.*

And that is what I feel about this game – you are playing with fire.



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