



NWWSMS

NorthWest Western Swing Music Society

Preserving, Promoting & Performing America's
Western Swing Music Since 1983
www.nwwsmo.com

PO Box 14003, Mill Creek, WA 98082

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***Preserving the music that is too country for Jazz
and too jazz for Country***

BILLY (CHAMP) RAY CHAMPION - A LIFE WELL-LIVED

Billy Ray Champion was born on May 6, 1928 in Holdenville, Oklahoma, the second of eight children born to Chester and Ada Champion. As music was an important party of Billy's life, he wanted his life honored through the lens of his music career.

In 1935, at seven years old, Billy started playing rhythm guitar and singing with his two brothers, James and Joe. In their hometown of Holdenville, Oklahoma, a local minister heard that the brothers wanted to play music and offered to give them lessons. It wasn't long before they were performing at local lodges, political rallies, and churches. They even entered and won a few amateur contests. About 1938, the brothers played on their first live radio broadcast over KADA in Ada, Oklahoma.

The song, "Texas Plains" was their favorite song and their favorite band was Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys. The brothers, if at all possible, never missed a Bob Wills radio broadcast.

In 1940, Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys came to Holdenville. When he saw the Champion Brothers perform at a town dance, he invited them on stage to perform with his band. This was the greatest thrill of these young musicians' lives.



Billy & his brother, Joe, playing with Sacramento's Dry Creek Band at the 2012 NWWSMS Western Swing Festival.

By the time Billy turned 18, he was a leader and booking agent for a ten-piece dance group. He routinely acted as master of ceremony at regional events, and was an emcee on a live daily radio show for two years.

Billy was also a natural engineer, and this led him to a long career in state and federal governments. He had many notable successes including designing a machine that significantly improved submarine maintenance. He also was a natural at operational efficiency and received numerous awards for his cost saving process improvements. His passion for music also extended to his government career, as he routinely formed bands to entertain co-workers, veterans and numerous audiences in the communities where he lived and worked.

From 1952 to 1954, Billy served in the U.S. Marine Corps in San Diego and Camp Pendleton, California. Following his honorable discharge, he worked at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, and promotional opportunities eventually led to a lengthy executive position within the Veterans Administration.

He spent many years working in Washington D.C., Newark, New Jersey, and Nashville, Tennessee. He received several commendations throughout his career, as well as being honored with the President's Award and Federal Employee of the Year Award. He retired in June of 1983 and was honored with an Outstanding Career Award for 33 years of exceptional government service.



*Billy (Champ) Ray
Champion
1928-2020*

(Continued on Page 5 . . .)



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PO Box 14003, MILL CREEK, WA 98082

A 501(c)(3) NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FORMED IN NOVEMBER 1983 BY A GROUP OF MUSICIANS AND ENTHUSIASTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PRESERVING, PROMOTING & PERFORMING WESTERN SWING MUSIC.

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Full membership (*one couple at one address*):
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Single membership: \$20.00

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Contact the editor,
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PHOTO CREDITS:

House/Festival photos by
Jeanne & Fred Yearian.

MINUTES FROM THE BOARD

AUGUSTS - DECEMBER, 2020

In observance of the State-wide quarantine, the NWWSMS Board did not meet during the months of August through December, 2020.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne Yearian, Secretary



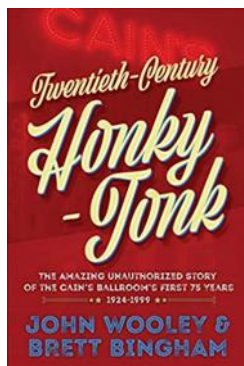
BABY ITS COLD OUTSIDE. TIME TO REFLECT, REMEMBER AND BE INSPIRED

Who doesn't love a good story of determination mixed with adversity and, ultimately, success with a few mind-blowing coincidences thrown in? Makes my blood race a bit faster just thinking about it!

After a year like 2020, maybe we all need a little 'inspiration' to help us see future possibilities. Myself, first I have to look back and remember those life changing moments, when I thought 'it' was over only to be amazed at the doors that opened offering a helping hand, new possibilities, or new opportunities. Sometimes reading about others' experiences kicks things off. Maybe there is one story in particular that inspires you. One of my personal favorites recounts the beginnings of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys and the rise of Western Swing.

So, this winter, while we wait, consider reading this. John Wooley and Brett Bingham recently published a book covering the first 75 years of the Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, OK, *Twentieth Century Honky-Tonk*. We pick up the story on page 42. It's near the end of 1935 and Bob is trying to get established in Oklahoma. (*And I hope to tell you, it's hard to leave out the parts about Pappy O'Daniel chasing Bob out of Texas and beyond, trying to ruin Bob's young life! Good thing Pappy got distracted when he was elected Governor of the State of Texas!*) Here is just a taste of what's inside:

... (p42) Wills and the Playboys, meanwhile, needed a place in Tulsa to have as a base, somewhere in town where they could play regularly. After a few months of broadcasts over KVOO (*Voice Of Oklahoma*), they'd generated plenty of potentially regular patrons for local dances. Now all they needed was a venue where they could go, say once a week, between their out-of-town gigs.



It wasn't the Cain's Ballroom, though. At least, not at first. Instead, it was a second-story dancehall built over a garage at Second Street and Madison Avenue. The place was called the Pla-Mor, and it would later be utilized by steel-guitarist Leon McAuliffe, after he'd left Bob and formed his own band, as well as a number of early Tulsa rock 'n' rollers. About half the size of the Cain's, according to O.W. Mayo (*long-time business manager for Bob and Johnnie Lee Wills and an owner of the Cain's*), it was the Thursday night place to see Wills and the Playboys live for the better part of a year.

Then, along came some nurses, with an offer for a gig in another, bigger hall.

"It was New Year's night, nineteen-hundred-and-thirty-five," Mayo told John Wooley for a March 5, 1993 *Tulsa World* story. It was a benefit for the nurses of Morningside Hospital, which is now Hillcrest. We were playing down at the Pla-Mor on Second Street, and they came to us to ask us to play their dance. They sold the tickets and everything, and we told them that under the circumstances, we wanted to chip in too, so we played it for \$100."



Jeanne Yearian

(Continued on page 3)



We'll be back once the dust settles, but, until we understand the new 'normal' stay safe and let's take care of each other.

Remember: Find ways to support your favorite musicians.

Around the NorthWest Support Live, Local Music

For regular appearances at a particular venue to be included in the newsletter, contact the editor. Contact information for a member band is always welcome.

3rd Sunday Western Swing Jam, Enumclaw Music, 1515 Cole St, from 2 to 5! Due to State mandate, cancelled until further notice. Jeanne Yearian & Toby Hanson hosting.

Call 425-432-7888 for additional information.

Steel Country. For bookings or schedule updates call Duane at (425) 870-7311 or Pat at (425) 745-3798.

The Barn Door Slammers. For information on upcoming play dates, check their website at: www.barndoorslammers.com.

Mike Faast and Jangles. For information on upcoming play dates, check their website at: www.janglesband.com

Sharyn Lee and the Sundowners. Dance Hall Music by **The Sundowners.** Visit their website for information on additional play dates: www.thesundownersband.com

JC McCormick & the Cherokee Band. For booking information or a schedule of upcoming play dates, call JC at: 253-268-2314.

(Continued from Page 2, excerpt from Twentieth Century Honky-Tonk . . .)

(Madison, a.k.a. 'Daddy') Cain had suffered his debilitating stroke a year earlier, so he wasn't on the premises. But Howard Turner was, and he either saw for himself or heard about the crowd that Wills and the Playboys drew – which Mayo noted, “opened his eyes about the possibilities.” After that successful engagement, Mayo made a deal with Cain’s management – probably Turner and Alice Cain, Madison’s wife – to move the band’s base from the Pla-Mor to Daddy Cain’s place for the regular dances.

“We started playing a Thursday night dance there, on a percentage,” recalled Mayo in the 1993 interview. “We got 65 percent and they took 35. . .

. . . the move was a good one for a number of reasons. Of course, the musicians were happy about not having to lug their instruments up a flight of stairs. But, more important, the Cain’s was twice as big as their former venue, and therefore able to accommodate far larger crowds.

“We was putting 1800, 2000, sometimes 2200 people in the place,” (Bob) Wills told his interviewer . . . “Mayo liked to have fainted. He was used to us playing that little Pla-Mor, you know, with a fourth of them (the crowd) being able to get in.”

The once-a-week job became a twice-weekly event, and the noontime radio broadcasts, which had begun at the KVOO studios, were moved to the Cain’s, where hundreds of enthusiastic fans, admitted free, greeted each show.

Meanwhile, ballroom-dancing lessons continued at the Cain’s with Alice Cain insisting that the crowd maintain decorum according to the rules put in place by her husband – and not only during the instruction sessions, but at the evening dances as well. It was only natural that the worlds of ballroom dancing and Will’s more earthy approach would collide, and they did.

Here’s how Wills himself remembered it in the recorded interview, recalling that the cost to get in was 40 cents a person, with Alice Cain in charge of the room:

“She’s standing on the sidelines one night, and I keep seeing her pluck couples off the floor and the law take ‘em out. So finally I called one of the laws over – that was old Briggs, who worked with me years later, for years – and I said, “What in the world’s happening to these people here? They’re dancing and you’re taking them out.”

He said, “They don’t have a tie on and they’ve got their sleeves rolled up, and she wants them with a tie and coat on.”

Here we are up there with our sleeves rolled up and no ties on, and the sweat pouring down us – it wasn’t air conditioned. So I just got down and went and talked to her.

She said, “Well, they can go home and put on

a tie and a coat and get back in.”

“I’m sorry, Miz Cain, but that won’t work,” I said – we started this off, this so-called Ford idea – “We’re Fords, not Cadillacs. We’re charging a Ford price, and you cannot afford to run these boys out of here because they haven’t got a tie and coat. If they’re dancing with me, they’re gonna dance like they are or there won’t be any dance here next Saturday night. Now that’s the way it is. Just stop it tonight. No more going out the door.”

We had quite a wrangle there, but didn’t no more go out the door.

After that, as Wills remembered it, he told Mayo,

“You get out there Monday and make some kind of deal with her, or I’m not touching the place anymore.”

I said, “I mean it. You’re not going to treat them people that way.” She’s here with just a piano player, playing to 15, 20 people (on the dance nights the Playboys weren’t there) and lucky if they had that many, then all of a sudden she’s running them out that door.

So he went out there and, luckily, he bought it from her.

And, of course we went on running the dance the way I figured it should have been run. My goodness. Those kids, some of them, didn’t even have a coat or a tie. It was Depression days then. Throwin’ ‘em out was ridiculous to me.”

So, according to Mayo’s 1986 interview, he and Bob got a bank loan and took over the place. “In 1937,” he said, “we bought Daddy Cain’s lease out. We leased it from the (Tate) Brady estate through an insurance company that had a loan against it and was doing all the collecting. When we leased it, we put this (drop) ceiling in, and we put in an air-conditioner – it was washed air, water circulation.” . . .

. . . the Cain’s Ballroom was far better known for the music played by its famed inhabitants, Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, than for the ballroom-dance training that had begun in the ‘20s.

Its fame wasn’t just local, or even regional. Thanks to a pairing of the hall with a radio station that reached into most of America, people all over the country knew the name of the Cain’s Ballroom. Bob and his Playboys, KVOO, and the Cain’s formed a powerful three-strand rope that lassoed in millions of listeners, and it’s time now to take a closer look at that partnership, and how it got going . . .

OK, what do you think? Ready to read John Wooley’s *Twentieth Century Honky-Tonk* this winter? If you do, please let me know how you like it. JY



Cherishing the Memories



Barbara Martin
1947-2020

Barbara Sharon Martin, born July 13, 1947, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, died on September 20, 2020 in Austin, Texas.

Barbara, the eldest of three daughters, spent her early life in northern California.

She attended Cupertino High School and U.C. Berkeley, where she earned her B.A. Barbara later owned a travel agency in Danville, California. In the 90's a client brought a CD to her office to use for the telephone's "HOLD" music: that was Asleep at the Wheel's first Tribute to Bob Wills album, and that was all it took to launch a lifelong avocation and serious study of this true American art form called Western Swing. She fell in love with Western Swing music and got to Texas as soon as she could so that she could follow the Western Swing bands throughout the region. Barbara started writing and publishing the Western Swing Monthly newsletter in November of 1998 and kept it up for twenty years. Western Swing Monthly remained the only regular current events periodical of its type. Barbara attended many Western Swing events throughout Texas and the Southwest.

Barbara is a member in good standing of the following organizations: Cowtown Society of Western Music, Sacramento Western Swing Society, Texas Western Swing Society, Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest, Northwest Western Swing Music Society, Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame, Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame, inducted 2001. She also received the Academy of Western Artists Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. Barbara had a big impact on the Western Swing music community and will be missed by many dear friends.



Western Swing Forum Keep your letters and e-mails coming!

As some of you know, I started this crazy year in the hospital. I was supposed to be playing music for a New Year's Eve gig, but like I said, I was in the hospital. I thought that things would only get better once I was home. Little did I know.....



Steve Carter

This has been a very hard year with way too many losses. I am so glad that the Old Stokers Band decided to suspend our Monday night jams at the Club 170 when we did. I can't even think of how awful it could have been if we had continued.

The last date that we played was March 2nd. That was the last night that I got to play with Gene Burbank. Because of the subsequent quarantine and lock down, it was also the last time that than any of us got to see Gene Burbank as well. Gene was a friend and great musician, with a style that was all his own. I will miss him like a Brother.

The other huge loss to me was the passing of Ed Bischoff. I met Ed about 9 years ago. He was a kind soul and all-around good guy. Ed had lived in Oregon in the 1950's and I learned early on that he had been around where I grew up and followed the Western Swing music that my father had also followed. Ed knew the big ballroom dance halls and all the bands that played them. We became instant friends.

I found that Ed had a sweet tooth, so whenever I knew that I would be seeing him, I'd bring him some candy. A little jar of M&M's or some skittles, etc. I'll never forget that smile and Ed's telling me "You gotta quit this now." Of course, he always ate the candy. Every few month's he'd be sure to return our little candy jars and then the whole thing would start all over again...

I became Ed's assistant. He was the official roady for any Western Swing events where equipment was needed for a long time and I was happy to help him. Ed was such a good guy when it came to helping with whatever needed doing. I will surely miss Mr. Ed.

Moving forward, this crazy time we're living in now will end. Sooner, if everyone will follow the scientific and medical advice of the experts. Later (and with fewer of us) if we don't.

Please mask and social distance, if not for yourself, for your loved ones, as well as mine. Hopefully in 2021, We will play music, and dance, and party again.

Stay safe and take care of you.
Peace and love.

(We received this great news from Doug Carter, Albuquerque, NM, earlier this week.)

Latest update on my cancer: I have just seen my oncologist. He informs me that I have Stage IV Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer. He has identified the genetic marker for the tumor. There is a drug that attacks this type of tumor effectively, so my chemotherapy will be oral and should slow or stop its growth. It is not curable but treatable so I'm looking at some years of survival not months as I feared. All in all, this is as good news as could reasonably be expected. MORE BOB WILLS!!!



Doug Carter
HOF 2016

Hi Jeanne,

Hope all is well with you and Fred.

I'm so sorry to hear about Ed. Marlene was only asking about him yesterday when I was making a start on the Christmas card list. Ed seemed to have gone downhill fast over the past 6-12 months.

We are still having changes to our Virus regulations. Change again this Wednesday and other changes to the restrictions are to be sorted out for people to meet around Christmas, could be a 5-day reduction in regulations.

Look after yourselves.....Regards...Graham



Graham Lees
HOF 2017

Thoughts from Behind my Bass

by Phil Mitchell

Where to start -

There have been so many alterations to our lives this year, and putting it to paper has to be a challenge to everyone, but I will have a go at it. First and FOREMOST, I hope that all of you, my fellow musicians, have prevailed through this pandemic, and are staying positive, healthy, and careful. We want to come through this and return to what we all love, our music.

As for us: my wife, Jeanne, myself and our family are doing well. I occasionally dust off the bass and re-acquaint myself with where the calluses used to be on my fingers. I and my friend and other half of **The Good Intentions, Walt Greenwood**, were starting to do some rehearsing in his garage before the "second wave" hit, so that put things on hold....again. **The Old Stokers Jam Band**, consisting of **Shelley McNaughton, Steve Carter, Neal Jeans, Randy Miskulin** and myself, continue to stay in touch and are just chompin' at the bit to do our thing. On a personal note: I recently acquired an electric upright bass (Palatino) and am itchin' to work it into the band..... ANY band.

I will note here, with great sadness, that we have lost one of our group's co-founders, **Geno Burbank**. He was, besides a fantastic musician, our dear friend. Our hearts go out to **Barb Riley**, his soulmate who loved and cared for him for years. We love you, Barb.

I'll bet there has been more yardwork happening this year than any other time in my memory. Jeanne and I are no exception; our little corner was in the best shape it had been in years. Bet we're in good company there, right?

The Mitchells wish all of you the very best as we continue to "keep on keepin' on" and stay positive.

Merry Christmas and God Bless all!
Phil and Jeanne Mitchell



Cherishing the Memories



**Gene Burbank
1947-2020**

(Our thanks to Shelley McNaughton for providing the following. Please visit her Facebook page to read it in its entirety.)

After a very long battle with illness, Gene (Geno) Burbank died peacefully at 12:25AM on October 20th, 2020, at Providence Hospital-Colby Campus, in Everett Washington. His life partner,

Barbara Riley was by his side and lovingly held his hand as he passed. The angels claimed a special soul in Gene, as well as a wonderful new lead guitar player for the heavenly band.

Gene was Born "Eugene Charles Burbank", to Charles and Dorothy Burbank in Kansas City, Kansas, on August 18th, 1947. He was the youngest of 10 children. Gene was raised in a very musical family. His father had been a professional opera singer and his mother was a classical pianist.

In the early 1970's Gene made his way to Washington State. It wasn't long before he had immersed himself in the local music scene and became known as a first-class player, becoming a fixture with many local bands and a favorite guest at all of the local Jam sessions.

In the late 80's Gene became the guitar player for a little local band called **Carrie and Company**. After the band had run its' course, in 1990, Gene and Steve Key, the bass player from Carrie and Company, decided to start a new band... **Southern Comfort**. **Southern Comfort** has always had great high energy instrumentation and top-notch vocals and vocal harmonies. Although the players have come and gone over the years, Geno has been there from the start. Much because of Gene, **Southern Comfort** has been a first-class band, in all of its' forms, for all of its' 30 years.

In the last 10 years, Gene became the founding member of another little jam band born of a Tuesday night jam session at the Old Stokers motorcycle gear shop and Café in Everett. This little jam session band, has played all over Everett, from Old Stokers to the Club Broadway, to the Rockin' M BBQ until it closed, and had been the Monday night jam at the Club 170 until Covid 19 closed all the bars down. More than just a little Jam band, these guys were best friends.

Geno was a good friend to everyone he knew and is greatly missed.

(Continued from Page 1, Billy Champion)

As a retiree, he proudly became "Mr. Mom" to his three young daughters, while his wife, Sherry, carried on a demanding medical career. He was able to foster his daughters' love of music and performed with them at events throughout the region. As his daughters grew up, he became involved with several regional Western Swing Societies to preserve and promote Western Swing music. Billy played guitar and bass throughout his career, but he began performing routinely on his tenor banjo all along the West Coast, from Seattle down to San Diego. He eventually formed his own Western Swing band called **Billy Champion and the Champs of Western Swing**, and opened for **Asleep at the Wheel** on several occasions.



Billy and his brothers received numerous awards for the music career over the years. They were recognized as Pioneers of Western Swing by the Seattle Western Swing Music Society in 1999. Billy was inducted into the Western Swing Hall of Fame by several societies around the nation including Sacramento Western Swing Society, Oregon Western Swing Association, and Western Swing Society of the Southwest in Yukon, Oklahoma. In 2012, Billy received the Heroes of Western Swing award from the Cowtown Society of Western Music in Mineral Wells, Texas. In his later years, he focused on supporting his music community by recognizing and honoring musicians that worked to preserve the legacy of the music he loved.

Billy moved to Tacoma, Washington in 2018 where he routinely spent quality time with his daughters, son-in-law and granddaughters in a home full of love, laughter and music.

Our sincere thanks to Robert Huston for capturing this interview during Bob Wills Days at Turkey Texas in 2017.



(Editor's Note: This article first appeared in the December 2015 issue of the NWWSMS newsletter. Last month, while returning a repaired amp to a friend, Fred was asked to repair another. Fred's first thought was to decline until he looked more closely - to his surprise, (and unknown to its owner) it was a 'death amp' and is now waiting for safety repairs in Fred's shop. More on recognizing and repairing these in the next issue.



Fred Yearian
Sound Engineer for the
NWWSMS Annual
Festivals
2012-2019

STAGE SAFETY

When anticipating playing music one can become complacent at the hazards, especially at an unfamiliar venue. No musician wants to learn to "play the harp" before their time.

There can be several classification of hazards including amenities at a venue, equipment brought by the band and, finally, lurking electrical problems. Several celebrity performers have fallen from stages. One doesn't have to fall very far to have injuries that can be life threatening. Some stages have steps

that are far from meeting building code or are portable and may shift or have uneven riser heights. On stage, unorganized cables present a tripping hazard as do some mic stands, guitar stands, etc. Real tragedies have occurred where pyro-techniques have been used. Western swing doesn't need fireworks to be exciting.

Over the years, many amplifiers have come through my shop for repairs. As an electrical engineer, I will mention some of the hidden electrical hazards I have fixed that can be lethal as well as destroy equipment.

All of us have probably felt at some point a "buzz" when the back of our hand has brushed a metal object. This is a warning that there is an alternating current voltage between us and the object. It is fairly safe on stage to use the back of the hand as a preliminary test for stray voltage since if real shock occurs the muscles will naturally retract away from the energized item. ANY time one senses such stray voltage, the source needs to be found and eliminated.

There are many sneak sources of stray voltage that can bite us. All equipment should have three-wire cords with a few exceptions of devices powered by "wall-wart" transformers and modern double insulated devices. ANY device on which a grounding pin has been cut or is missing from the cord plug should be quarantined immediately for repair.

Some musicians have OLD guitar amps or will be receiving them this holiday season that have two wire cords and a very deadly thing - a polarity switch that is intended to be used to reduce hum. These are deadly and here is why: The switch connects a capacitor between one of the two power wires and the chassis and usually the ground side of

the guitar connectors. That capacitor separates whichever side of the power line and the chassis AND you by a thin sheet of waxed paper or plastic. Any of several scenarios can puncture this sheet leaving death trap for the user. Look over your older equipment and have a three wire cord installed if needed and remove that capacitor. It is unlikely that this old wiring scheme could receive UL approval today.

The next electrical hazards we will discuss is those of the venue itself. We have come a long way since the 70's but there are still real hazards out there. These can include broken receptacles, improper wiring (*not everything is caught by electrical inspectors*) and in-house wiring failures to name a few. Often replacement of receptacles are done by inexperienced maintenance people who may make a mistake. One can get a receptacle tester to carry with to verify the correct wiring.

Now lets talk equipment safety. While stray voltage under 50 volts is considered non-life threatening, this level of voltage is often fatal to our solid-state equipment. The RULE is: Any and all INTERCONNECTED electronics should be powered from a single source or receptacle. Powering a mixer board from the back of the room receptacle that is connected to equipment on-stage that is powered from stage receptacle(s) results in exposing the equipment to noise spikes



Example of Receptacle
Tester available at
Guitar Center or your
local hardware store for
under \$6.00



and "ground bounce" that are often around 600 volts within the building wiring. This can destroy the preamps in the equipment AND also cause hum. This is why I power the back of house mixer by an extension cord from the stage receptacle powering the amps.

Electrical shock is nothing to fool with as there is the risk of electrocution but ALSO the accident possibility from involuntary muscle reaction to the shock. Several musicians have met an untimely death when they grabbed the mic stand and were electrocuted by voltage between their guitar and the mic. Remember to "brush" the mic stand with the BACK of your hand while holding the guitar. Play well, but play safe!

Reminder: 'Tis the Season to Check the Wiring of Your Vintage Amplifiers and Guitars!

STAGE SAFETY TIPS TO TAKE AWAY

DO NOT use polarity switches or those ground isolating adapters that lift the ground pin... the pin is there for your safety.

GO WIRELESS if/when possible: Wireless systems as well as GFCI power protectors (now available in extension cords) increase stage safety significantly.



Shelley McNaughton

2020 2021

2020 has been a year of challenges and unknowns, to say the very least. We have lost so many friends and family this year. Some to COVID-19, and some to other causes, but the losses have been devastating.

In the world, there has been so much mixed information coming from all different sources. There has been unbelievable political strife, and overall unrest around the world. This year has been one of turmoil everywhere.

I saw something posted on social media that said something to the effect of; We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same Storm. Some of us have Yachts, some have Dinghy's, and some are Drowning. Be kind and help who you can. I find that notion to be very inspirational.

★ I am grateful and thankful that we have survived this year so far, and I am hopeful that we will still be here when the vaccine is available.

★ I am grateful for Dr. Fauci, who has been a calm voice of reason in the buzzing whirl of misinformation. I know that not everyone shares this opinion, but he has been a source of comfort and wisdom for me.

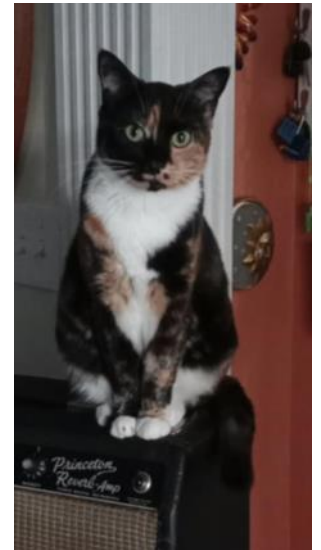
★ I am grateful for the basics. A warm home, the people that I love, Steve, my daughter Lacey, and her man Dan, my Mom and Stepdad, my Brother Brian and Sister Alanna, their children, and the rest of my family who are safe and healthy. For this I am so thankful.

★ I am grateful for the friends and loved ones who have made a point to check in on us, and for being able to check in on them. Phone calls and video chats don't make up for hugs but knowing that we are protecting each other by keeping our distance, makes it worthwhile. Even though we really haven't been able to get together much this year, staying in touch with friends and loved ones has made it bearable.

★ I am grateful for my work and my income. Even though some days it is exasperating and overwhelming, I realize that so many folks are struggling and facing enormous financial hardships. I am so grateful that I have had the ability to help ease some of that in our inner circle.

★ I am grateful for the extra time this year to start a few new hobbies. I have started taking a little time each month to do some painting. Our hallway is my mini art gallery and I have enjoyed it greatly. I have also learned to make every kind of Zucchini, Apple, Banana, Chocolate Nut Bread that there is, and learned to make scratch Cakes, Fruit Crisps, Pies and Rolls. It's been decadent and my waistline shows it.

★ We are grateful for Maggie. In case you don't know, she's our cat. She rules the house and has tolerated us being home every day for the last 10 months of near quarantine.



Maggie, waiting for the music

In 2021 -

★ I am going to be so grateful to be able kiss my Mom and Daughter again. When this nightmare is behind us, I will never, ever again, take for granted, a Hug. I will hug everyone I love, every time I see them. I will hug them hard and hold them close, and have a difficult time letting go of them.

★ I will feel so grateful and thankful to be able to play live music again. 2020 took away the Southern Comfort Band when we lost Gene Burbank.. Gene was the original member and leader of the Southern Comfort band and when he left this earth, Southern Comfort went with him. I do believe that Gene would want us to keep playing and to think of him fondly when we do, so I am sure that music will be made by all of us again. Steve and I, and The Old Stokers (Phil, Neal, and Randy) will be ready to play live as soon as it's safe. The PA is setup in the living room, just waiting for the right time. I try to think about what we will all feel like in 10 years when we look back on this pandemic. I hope that we will still feel blessed, to have survived, and humbled by the incredible losses suffered by so many in 2020 and into 2021. I hope that we never forgot all the people we've lost.

★ I hope that we will be grateful to the scientific community that developed a vaccine as quickly as they did, and for the front line and healthcare workers who sacrificed so much for us.

★ In the aftermath of COVID-19, I hope that we will teach our children and grandchildren about personal responsibility to our fellow human beings as well as their personal rights, and realize that you really can't have one without the other.

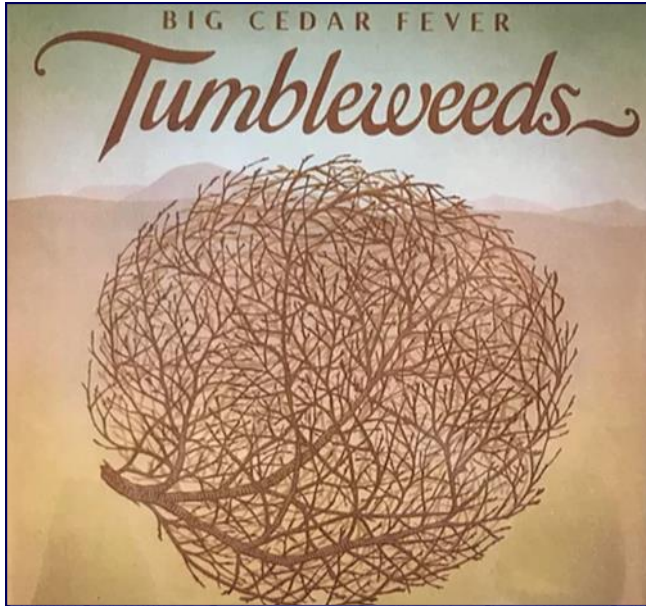
In 2021 -

★ I am looking forward to being able to stand in line closer than 6 feet away from another person, and I am looking forward to being able to smile at grocery store checker, without a mask.

★ I'm looking forward to being on a bandstand with all of my pals, crammed together like sardines, making great music, just like the good ol' days, last year.

★ I'm looking forward to doing group activities... any kind of "Group" activities!

★ I am looking forward to having company come for dinner. I'll try to cook something nice.... I might have mentioned... I learned to bake this year.



Album Reviews

by DJ Mike Gross



Mike Gross

Tumbleweeds, an album by a new Texas western swing oriented trio is a very interesting and enjoyable CD. Georgia Parker is heard on guitar and vocals, Ian Lee, on fiddle, guitar and vocals and Nick Lochman on upright bass and vocals. J.D. Pendley joins them with guitar on the western classic *Carry Me Back to the Lone Prairie* and the ballad *Moon Song*.

The album opens up with the very enjoyable big band standard, *Honeysuckle Rose* and then goes on to *Easy Come Easy Go*. Other enjoyable tunes are *Boy in Texas*, *Looking Over My Shoulder* and the wonderful cut *Dancin' All Alone*. They also bring back so many other pleasant musical memories like the swinging *Red Hot Gal O' Mine*, *Across the Alley the Alamo* from the Mills Brothers and from Johnnie Lee Wills, *Sweet Jennie Lee*. There is the swinging *Gazing through the*

Redbuds and the remaining two cuts, the western *Tumbleweeds* and the pretty country oriented, *A Simple Thing*.

This album is available as a CD for \$20.00 from Georgia Parker, 107 River Ranch Road, Boerne, TX 78006.

Mike Gross, August 30, 2020

BIG CEDAR FEVER AMERIPOLITAN AWARD WINNING WESTERN SWING BAND 2019

NWWSMS Application for Membership

Date Rec'd: _____ Rec'd by: _____

NAME: _____ NEW MEMBER RENEWAL

ADDRESS: _____ INDIVIDUAL, \$20.00 COUPLE, \$25.00

_____ DANCER SUPPORTER

CITY: _____ PERFORMER VOCALIST BAND LEADER

STATE / ZIP: _____ BAND: _____

PHONE: _____ INSTRUMENT(S): _____

E-MAIL: _____

I have enclosed an additional \$ _____ donation to the NWWSMS workshop/scholarship fund

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

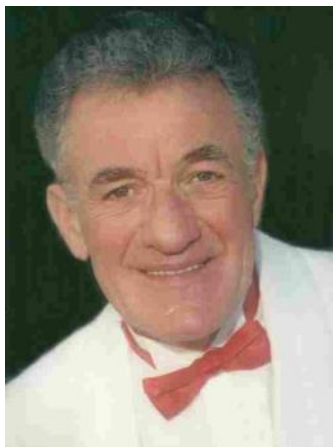
- Use the E-mail provided above to send newsletters and other NWWSMS news
- Please have someone send me a paper newsletter
(Note: the NWWSMS does not mail out paper newsletters)
- I'd be happy to print and mail _____ extra newsletters to those without e-mail access
- Please DO NOT include me in the Membership Roster.



Visit us on the web at: www.nwwsms.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

Cherishing the Memories



**Edwin 'Ed' F. Bischoff
1930-2020**

Ed Bischoff was born in Rugby, North Dakota, and moved to Portland, Oregon, when he was 18. Ed joined the Army when he was 20 and served three years, receiving two Purple Hearts, from the Korean War conflict.

Through it all, he was a consummate music lover and attended all of the dances, shows and concerts when they came to town. He had taken an early interest in Western Swing history and loved to gather historical background information about the performers and their recordings. He and his friends would travel all over the countryside

to see such greats as Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys, Billy Jack Wills, T. Texas Tyler, Hank Thompson and Kitty Wells, as well as any other band performing in the region.

Ed moved to Seattle in 1960 and continued to attend music venues throughout the Pacific Northwest and increase his knowledge of Western Swing. He became a regular attendee of the Seattle Western Swing Music Society's (now known as the Northwest Western Swing Music Society's) monthly showcases.

Ed and Lou were married in 1996. This was the beginning of Ed's direct involvement of Event staging. Ed assisted Lou with her duties in the Seattle Society in addition to taking on responsibilities of his own. Ed was a walking Encyclopedia of Western Swing knowledge and experiences. He was elected to the governing Board and appointed as Historian due to his extensive knowledge of Western Swing and his vast collection of materials related to Bob Wills and other Western Swing luminaries. Ed worked behind the scenes, without fanfare, to keep things running smoothly at the Society's events. Ed gave tirelessly to support the music he loves so dearly, from opening up his home for an annual Western Swing picnic every summer, to being actively involved in organizing, setting up and breaking down after the monthly showcases as well as the annual Western Swing festival and Hall of Fame. In addition, Ed strove to make all of the musical participants in Western Swing feel welcome and appreciated. There was always a compliment on a performance well done with a handshake or hug to express his appreciation.

Recognized for his passion for the music called Western Swing, hard work and diligence to the Society, Ed was inducted into the Sacramento and Kansas Western Swing Music Societies in 2005. He finally allowed his NWWSMS family to induct him into the NWWSMS Hall of Fame in 2014.

Ed traveled extensively throughout the United States and Canada to attend Western Swing events, embracing diverse communities of performers, fans and societies across the country. He helped to ensure Western Swing music remains alive and well for future generations.

Ed will be laid to rest in the Tahoma National Military Cemetery, located in Kent, WA. Donations, expressing sympathy, may be made to your local Humane Society or the NorthWest Western Swing Music Society.

Kalee Smyth

December 11, 2020

Grandpa Ed made my Grandma Lou happy, so I loved him. He was lovable - caring, kind, and generous. I remember sitting downstairs in the basement with him at their first house watching old westerns. I was always fascinated by all the paraphernalia he had around his man-cave. I will also never forget driving around Orlando with Ed, Grandma, and my sister, Micah, as we made our way to Disney World, and to Sarasota to visit Ed's daughter, Kathy. Anyone who knew Grandma and Ed can imagine my sister and me in the backseat trying not to laugh as Grandma gave Ed driving directions. Ed was a good man, the best to my Grandma. We will miss him.

CHRISTINA MCDONALD

December 10, 2020

Ed treated our mother like a queen. He was the most kind, gentle and caring man ever. Unfortunately he came into my life after I was an adult and not living close by. It would have been wonderful to have been able to spend more time with him.

After hearing the news of his passing on Thanksgiving weekend, I was pretty upset. However, my husband made me smile by saying "I wonder if your mom has him at a Western Swing dance yet". Rest in Peace Ed.

Connie Faast

December 9, 2020

Wonderful husband to our Mom for 23 years. He was the best. Kind, patient, and considerate.



Bob Richards
YouTube: radiobob805

(Editor's Note: Did Ed's granddaughter, Kalee, mention Ed's love of old westerns? Here is one given new life on YouTube by Bob Richards. And with some great western swing added in by none other than Bob Wills.)

Most of the Bob Wills band is here with some great songs. *Blazing The Western Trail*. They do a hot version of *Ida Red*, and *Time Changes Everything*.



Charles Starrett, Durango Kid & Bob Wills movie, Blazing the Western Trail 1945 HD

Cherishing the Memories

Odie (Odis) was born on March 7, 1946, in Altus, OK. He grew up listening to his dad and, later, playing the music that changed many people's lives – the great sounds of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. Odie's father, Jimmy, was a great fiddler and big influence on the music Odie would play and come to love so much.

Odie began playing the bass guitar in a rock and roll band while he was attending high school in Altus. The band played for school dances and in clubs around southwestern OK. In 1964 he moved to Clovis, NM, where he graduated from high school. He played bass in a number of bands in the Clovis area and was playing bass for his dad – until the drummer didn't show up – and that was the beginning of his career as a drummer. As always, "dad knew best," and what a great decision dad made when he told Odie he was now the drummer. Odie has been a drummer ever since, and a very talented one at that.

Odie has worked on stage, backing up some great artists, such as Wynn Stewart, Billy Walker, Jimmy Wakely, Sheb Wooley and Wanda Jackson. He worked in several bands with the late, great guitarist, Tag Lambert.

Western Swing was really the music he wanted to play. True satisfaction came from his music after he began playing Western Swing with band leaders like Jimmy James, Truman Welch, Tex Williams, Dick Bills, Lou Walker and Bobby Wynne. Odie traveled the Southwest, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Oklahoma and Kansas, playing clubs and rodeos with various bands. As did many musicians, Odie refused to play the 'new' music called 'Country,' and eventually retired from playing in 1975 so he could be involved in his young son, Robbie's, sports activities. Although retired, his desire for the greatest music to be played or heard never became less and, occasionally, he would go to jam sessions or play for various charitable events when the music was Western Swing, big band or jazz.

Odie was inducted as a Pioneer of Western Swing into the NWWSSMS Hall of Fame (Seattle, WA) in 1999, the Western Swing Society Hall of Fame (Sacramento, CA) in 2002, and, as a Hero of Western Swing in the Cowtown Society of Western Music (Mineral Wells, TX) in 2018.


By 2000 Odie had come home to the music he loved and once again enjoyed playing. He gave many hours freely to the Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest. He was a charter member, served as the Director over the West Texas region of the Society and was the Vice President at the time of his death. Wintering in South Texas, for many years Odie played in Bob Dolle's Hall of Fame Variety Band, entertaining folks in the Rio Grande Valley from January through March


November 13, 2020 Thanks to everyone that prayed for our dear friend Odis James. Odie passed away this morning from Covid. He was for many years a dear friend and a great drummer. I have known Odie most of my life and he was one of the finest men you would ever want to know. Please pray for Annette and the family during this sad time. Anyone who knew him loved him as Hollie and I and Cory did

Gary & Hollie Williams



Odis (Odie) James
November 13, 2020



Merry Christmas!
 FROM
RICK AND THE ALL-STAR RAMBLERS
Western Swing Band
 And A Very Healthy New Year, Rambler Pals!



Five Brand New Rick & The All-Star Ramblers Songs!

RICK AND THE RAMBLERS
Western Swing Band

GOD BLESS THE MIGHTY PICKLE!



ADVANCE PRESSING!

Featuring Taryn Noelle & The Blue Gardenias

2020 Be Gone!! WARM REGARDS
 YER MASKED PAL - Rick

AWA **AWARDS.ORG**



Editor's Note: This additional information is from Bobby Newton, President of the AWA:

"These statues (pictured left) are exclusively made for the AWA Awards and all the work is custom, one of a kind by skilled artisans. They are available at no other location in the world and are not for sale to the public. As for the statue, it is a stylized (one of a kind) statue of Will Rogers from the Ziegfeld Follies pose. They are custom-made, pure white marble resin statues on an imported Italian marble base, with an antique bronze raised letter plaque."

24/25th Annual Academy of Western Artists

"Will Rogers Awards"

Rescheduled for March 30, 2021

This will be a VIRTUAL (on-line) Awards Ceremony

Details to come on how and where you can take part.

2019's Award Winners in the Western Swing Categories:

- ★ **WESTERN SWING MALE**
...Johnny Angel
- ★ **WESTERN SWING FEMALE**
...Kristyn Harris
- ★ **WESTERN SWING DUO/GROUP**
...Tommy Thomsen & the
Ambassadors of Western Swing
- ★ **WESTERN SWING ALBUM**
...Hyrarn Posey/Lonnie Spiker - *A Tribute to Bob Wills*
- ★ **WESTERN SWING SONG**
...John Arthur Martinez - *For the Love of Western Swing*
- ★ **INSTRUMENTALIST**
...Mark Abbott

For a complete listing of the Award Recipients and top 5 Nominees for 2019 & 2020, visit the event website at:

awaawards.org

The NWWSSMS sends its congratulations to all of the 2019/20 Nominees and Finalists!

One of the benefits of being part of a 'family' is that it makes your achievements a group experience we can share!



Skeebo Norris

October-December Playlist for "Skeebo's Line Shack Review"

We here at Pickin' On The Oldies want to thank all of our very loyal and "new" listeners to our internet station. One thing we strive for is "Traditional Country and Western Swing," featuring the classic great artists and all of the upcoming new independent artists who are continuing to produce "Dance Music."....plus, we air old radio versions of Gunsmoke on Sundays at 6am and 6pm, along with Luke Clayton's Outdoors Show at 7am-8am on Sunday morn and archived editions of Glory Road, the old Quartet Gospel Music, with the late great Larry Scott as host at 9am-10am also on Sundays ...We'd LOVE to have you join us.... If you like us, please share with your friends who enjoy this music as well at www.sansabaradio.comwe are the Academy of Western Artists, STATION OF THE YEAR FOR 2018.....streaming 24/7.

Tommy Hooker - *Somewhere in Texas*

Lisa Layne - *Pretty Paper*

Bobby Flores - *South of the Border*

Bret Raper - *Texas Swing*

Hailey Sandoz - *You Don't Know Me*

Jason Roberts - *Fiddlin' 'Round*

River Road Boys - *Can't Get Enough of Texas*

Wade Benson Landry - *Let the Four Winds Blow*

Billy Cate - *Rose of San Antone*

Walt Roberts - *Oklahoma Hills*

Artists may send mp3 submissions to

production@sansabaradio.com

and personal messages to skeebo@sansabaradio.com

We are on Facebook as well... Pickin' On The Oldies.

To listen go to our website www.sansabaradio.com



www.westernswingsociety.net

Join the conversation on Facebook:
Sacramento Western Swing Society



Paul Cooper, HOF 2019

"Holding you all close in a thankful heart" These were the closing words of a recent email from Jeanne Yearian our caring and dedicated president. The words are so appropriate for this time of isolation and separation so many are living with these days. Take time to call, text or email someone you know just to see how they are doing. It will make both of you feel better.

So often we do not take the time let our friends, family and associates know how treasured they are. There is no perfect time to do this, so we easily fail to do so. As we endure the surreal limbo in which this quarantine has placed us, I felt compelled to do so here. Sometimes we wait too long. We have lost friends without them knowing just how much we cared about them or how each made some lasting impact upon our lives.

Several years ago surgery to repair damaged vocal chords left me without the ability to sing for some time. It took a lot of trying to regain vocal control. I was about to give up until I was invited to attend the Jam sessions hosted by **The Old Stokers** and **Southern Comfort** bands who consisted of band members Phil Mitchell, Neil Jeans, Randy Miskulin, Geno Burbank, Shelley McNaughton, Robert Van den Akker, Dave DuChane and alternate guitarists Steve Carter and Todd Henderson, and drummer Tommy Christianson. The only ones I knew well then were Geno and Tommy, who I had known from days when I played full-time. **Steel Country**, Big Ed Kastner, Pat Rowe, Dan Lyon and Duane Trueblood were also very supportive.

With all their patience and encouragement, I picked a few old tunes and kept coming back learning to use my new voice. Their support led me to the NWWSMS where I discovered friends old and new and fellow musicians I hadn't seen in years. Being welcomed into the society and being asked to form a band to play the showcases was reward that I can only say was due to the friendship and support of the above-named musicians who all volunteered to create and perform with me as Paul Cooper and Pickin' Coop.

Sadly, it is too late for me to personally express to the late Tommy and Geno my sincere love and admiration not only for their immense talents, but their unwavering support and dedication to their fellow musicians and fans. Geno was the best thing that ever happened to a Telecaster!

A thanks also to the rest of the musicians, officers, members, and dancers of NWWSMS for helping get me back in the game. Until this Pandemic, I had been playing 60 to 70 dates per year. Something I never imagined before the encouragement of your all-important influences upon my life including that of my loving wife Susan and the late Ed and Lou Bischoff.

Borrowing the words of Jeanne Yearian.
"Holding you all close in a thankful heart"
Paul Cooper



Paul & Susan Cooper

