

PAUL ZARZYSKI BIO

Paul Zarzyski, the recipient of the 2005 Governor's Arts Award for Literature, has been spurring the words wild across the open range of the page and calling it *Poetry* for 37 years. In the early '70s, he heeded Horace Greeley's *go west young man, go west* advice and received his Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing from The University of Montana, where he studied with esteemed American poet Richard Hugo. In the same breath, he took up a second *lucrative* vocation—bareback bronc riding. He rode both the amateur and the ProRodeo circuits, hung his hooks up in his late 30s, then cracked back out, after turning 40, for a couple more years on the senior circuit. Today Paul makes his living, his *life*, as a poet*writing, teaching, lecturing, performing.

Paul has been featured at the Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering for the past 23 years, has toured Australia and England, and has recited at the National Book, Folk, and Storytelling Festivals, The Santa Clarita and Monterey Cowboy Poetry and Music Festivals, The ProRodeo Hall of Fame, The Library of Congress, The Kennedy Center, and with The Reno Philharmonic Orchestra. He also appeared in 1999 on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, aired from The Mother Lode Theater in Butte, Montana.

His recent publications include *WOLF TRACKS ON THE WELCOME MAT* (OreanaBooks, 2003), winner of The Spur Award from the Western Writers of America, *BLUE-COLLAR LIGHT* (Red Wing Press, 1998) and *ALL THIS WAY FOR THE SHORT RIDE* (Museum of New Mexico Press, 1996), which received The Western Heritage Award for Poetry from The National Cowboy Hall of Fame in Oklahoma City. Two recordings—*WORDS GROWING WILD* (1998) and *THE GLORIOUS COMMOTION OF IT ALL* (2004)—both produced by Jim Rooney in Nashville, offer poems with accompaniment by Duane Eddy, John Hartford, Rich O'Brien, and other fine musicians.

His latest (2007) brace of spoken-word CDs, *ROCK 'n' ROWEL* and *COLLISIONS OF RECKLESS LOVE*—produced by Open Path Music of San Jose, CA—are further imbued with Paul's belief that *poetry recited will, at times, blossom into song lyric sung*. Accordingly, Paul has co-written lyrics with Ian Tyson (**Jerry Ambler, Rodeo Road and Whispering Hope**), Tom Russell (**Bucking Horse Moon, All This Way For The Short Ride, and Heart Of A Bucking Horse**), Dave Wilkie of Cowboy Celtic (**Black Upon Tan and Flying, Not Falling, In Love With You**), Don Edwards (**West Of The Round Corral**), and Betsy Hagar (**Hope Chest, The Christmas Saguaro Soiree, Star Light Star Bright, and others**).

In November of 2008, Paul collaborated with renowned musician Wylie Gustafson and producer John Carter Cash at the Cash Cabin Studio in Nashville, where they recorded *HANG-n-RATTLE!*, a CD which includes seven co-written songs (**Grace, A Pony Called Love, Riding Double Wild, Crying Hole Blues**, etc.) as well as a bonus spoken-word track (**Bob Dylan Bronc Song**). In his *American Cowboy Magazine* review of this album, Mark Bedor writes, *It's like Lennon and McCartney in cowboy hats*.

Paul's forthcoming collection* **51: 30 POEMS, 20 SONGS & 1 SELF-INTERVIEW*** is scheduled for publication in the Spring of 2010. Born and raised in Hurley, Wisconsin, he has called Montana *home* since 1973.