

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 35 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 Richard Hugo. In the same breath, he took up a second *lucrative* vocation—bareback bronc riding—and rode the amateur, the ProRodeo, and Senior circuits into his early forties.

Paul has been a featured performer at the Elko Cowboy Poetry Gathering for the past 22 years, has toured Australia and England, and has recited at the National Book, Folk, and Storytelling Festivals, The ProRodeo Hall of Fame, The Library of Congress, and with the Reno Philharmonic Orchestra. He was also featured 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, Tom Russell, Wylie Gustafson, Dave Wilkie of Cowboy Celtic, Don Edwards, and Betsy Hagar.

Born and raised in Hurley, Wisconsin, Paul has called Montana *home* since 1973.