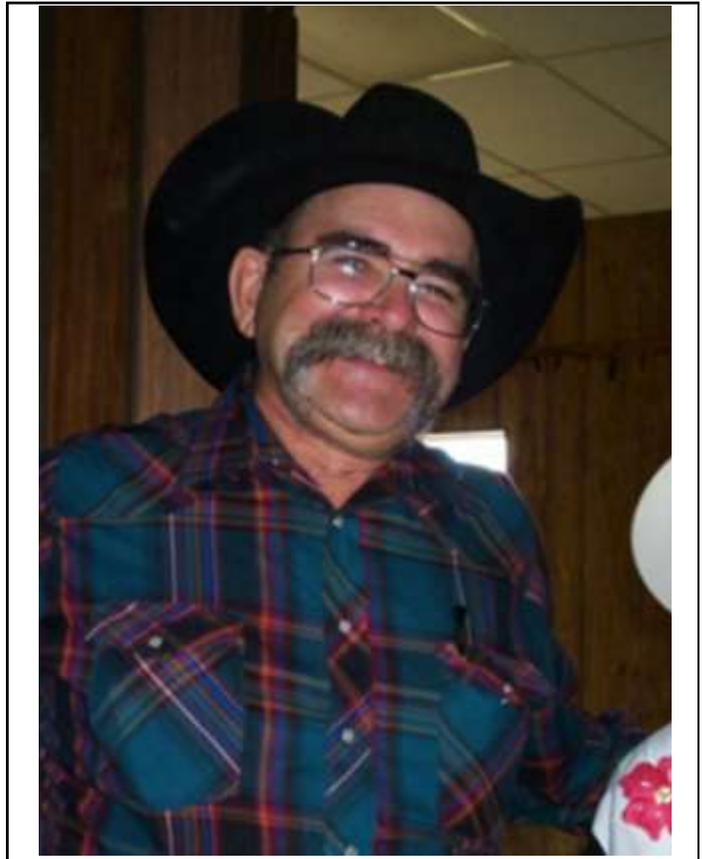




MERLE HAGGARD

Inducted Oct. 7, 1984



CHUCK CUSIMANO

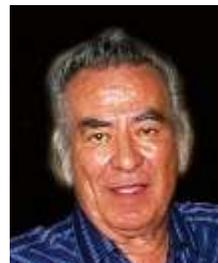
Inducted Oct. 1, 2017

Western Swing Society Hall of Fame Profile ~ Page 5

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GUEST BAND April 1, 2018



Tony Arana & the Jamroom Band

1:00 to 3:00pm

**Followed by The Dry Creek Band
 3:00 to 5:30pm**

The Western Swing Society

PO Box 2474

Carmichael, CA 95609

westernswingsociety.net

Facebook: SacramentoWesternSwingSociety

Founded in 1981 by Loyd and Perry Jones to enable performance, preservation and perpetuation of the unique American art form known as Western Swing Music.

Officers:

President, (Open)

Vice-President, Chuck Webb (916) 689-9546

Treasurer, Edward Burhans (916) 225-3645

Secretary, Olen Dillingham (916) 645-8878

Other Directors:

Tony Arana (775) 971-3070

Rex Barnes (916) 704-1566

Ronnie Elkan (916) 765-4345

Linda Michael (916) 870-7463

Dave Rietz (916) 806-0520

Staff and Committee Chairpersons:

Decorating Chair, Rex Barnes

Equipment and Staging, (open)

Historian, (open)

Jam Room, Tony Arana

Membership Director, Chuck Webb

Music Director, Ronnie Elkan/Doug Weiss

Newsletter Team: Editor, (open)

Layout and Publication: Ronnie and

Shelley Elkan,

Photographer, Donald deMars

Public Relations, Rex Barnes

Raffle, Bob and Virginia Kuykendall

Youth Program, Edward Burhans, Dave

Rietz, Dave Chan

Slide Show, (open)

Sound Engineer, Gary Blodgett

FROM THE EDITOR

March 5, 2018 As a dark cloud flew over our Western Swing Society this sunny afternoon our past president, Bill Enyeart, dedicated this dance to the great “Ambassador of Western Swing”, Dr. Bob. I think we all know that he is losing his long battle with cancer. One of his great abilities is to always greet newcomers to WSS. I made an effort to do that and I ask everyone to keep his tradition going. Reach out and let people know they are welcome. He will be missed!

Anybody who knows Dr. Bob also knows that he wants everyone to get out to the dance and enjoy the folks, the dancing and the great music. I let him know that was exactly what happened.

Our guest band was Michael Ray and The Fortunate Few! What tells me everything about this band is when people come up to me and want to know when we can get this band back and they are still on stage playing.

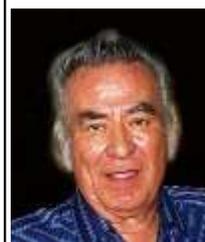


From “Bob Wills Music” to Ernest Tubb, Michael Ray kept the dance floor full. Michael turned this band loose for an instrumental and they “tore it up”! The “very” Fortunate Few were JW Wolfe on guitar, Tom Phelps on pedal steel guitar, Olen Dillingham on fiddle and mando, Fred Nelson Jr on drums and Daniel Enriquez on bass.

Our great sound man, Gary Blodgett worked his butt off for these bands this dance and they appreciated it. This guy “shleps” (hauls or carries)

Continued page 10

JAM ROOM JAMMERS



Jump in and join us! Just let Tony know your there. Hey Folks, “No Room at the Inn” last month. Packed room!

It’s always a highlight for the folks that participate. We’d like to have you write to us about your experience if you play in the jam room or go in to listen. We’ll share your comments here in this column. Just send your thoughts to this email: ronnie.elkan@gmail.com or send us a letter via snail mail. In the meantime we’ll list the players who joined us last month.

Bobby Giasson and Terry Crouson on lead guitar and vocals; Lenny Serdahl and Nick Dennis on lead guitar and vocals; Tom Gunterman on fiddle and vocals, Dave Rietz on fiddle, mandolin and vocals; Chuck Webb on bass guitar; Bill Enyeart on bass and vocals; Grace Clark, on rhythm guitar and vocals; Nancy Long, Roy Nall and Eddie Burr on vocals. Bill Cornett on drums and vocals. Jimmy Spero on rhythm guitar and vocals.

Thanks gang. It was great!!!!!!

Until Next Time, See Ya!

Tony Arana, Jam Room Host

Western Swing Society Music News

is published monthly by the Western Swing Society

Views and opinions expressed by contributing authors are not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Society.

Submitted articles, publicity notices and letters not relating directly to the Society or its members may be published at the discretion of the Editor, as space permits. The staff reserves the right to edit any and all items submitted for publication.

Deadline for Submittals:

All items, photographs, articles, and ad’s are due to the Editor no later than the 10th of the month.



HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS

THE TIMING

January 1—May 31st: Submissions of nominees for consideration accepted from a member in good standing

June: Hall of Fame Selection Committee reviews and chooses 12 nominees to be inducted in the Hall of Fame. Nominations must adhere to the rules and be complete in order to be considered. Any submissions not chosen roll forward to the next year for consideration

July: Board signs off on the chosen inductees. Inductees are notified and told about our Hall of Fame Event details

August: List of inductees first appear in the newsletter

September: Photos of inductees appear in newsletter. List of HOF bands in newsletter

October: The three day celebration, culminating in the Induction Ceremony on Sunday

HOW TO AND THE RULES

Let's have another inspiring set of inductees for the Western Swing Society Hall of Fame event, October 5-7, 2018. ***The closing date for submission of nominations is May 31, 2018. Start NOW. Time FLIES!***

Any member in good standing may make 2 nominations, by either postal or email.

An 8 x 10 hard copy photo or a digital jpeg (res. 300 dpi) is required at the time of nomination.

The nomination should contain sufficient biographical information to enable the committee to evaluate the nominee's qualifications.

Nominations must include the name (as they wish it to appear in our Hall of Fame registry), address, phone numbers and email addresses (if available) for the nominee **and** the person submitting them. If the nominee is deceased, please include the name of a person who may be able to accept the award.

Mail to: Western Swing Nominations Committee,
P. O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609

It's Easy!

Nominate a musician or exceptional **volunteer for this year's Hall of Fame**

Time is running out. May 31st is the last date to submit your nominations for our Hall of Fame celebration! Your editors, Shelley and Ronnie Elkan, are here to help you!

If you or your nominee are not comfortable writing a bio, then use the following starter questions. Once you have the answers, send the Q&A, along with the other information detailed on this page and we will help you craft the bio! Deadline to have all info to us in order to receive our help is **May 7th**.

Being inducted into the Hall of Fame is a BIG HONOR, so submit a nomination and make someone's day!

1. Name, address, phone and email of member who is submitting the nomination
2. Name, address, phone and email of the nominee
3. Name as Nominee wants it shown in bio and on HOF registry
4. When and where were you born?
5. At what age did you start participating in music? How? Singing, playing what instrument?
6. Who were your early inspirations?
7. Where and how old were you when you played your first public or paying gig?
8. List your musical history, including names of bands, and locations you played.
 1. List any awards you received.
 2. List any famous or noteworthy musicians you played with or opened for.
 3. Why do believe in and support Western Swing music?

See the instructions in the previous column and email or mail your completed nomination information so that it is received by WSS no later than May 7th. Your editors will take your information and create a bio for the nominee.

DON'T FORGET to include *your* phone, email and the *nominee's* phone, email and mailing address so that we can contact you both for review!

Your Editors, *Ronnie and Shelley Elkan*

WESTERN SWING SOCIETY YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP SPRING DANCE FUNDRAISER



**Grace Clark
and Swingitude**



**Mateo Verdugo
13 Year-Old
Cowboy Poet**

THURSDAY, May 10, 2018

- >> 4:00 Cocktails, No Host Bar
- >> 5:00 Dinner
- >> 6 - 6:45 Grace Clark & Swingitude
- >> 6:45 - 7:00 Mateo Verdugo, Youth Cowboy Poet
- >> 7:15 - 9:30 Robby James

Machinist's Hall

2749 Sunrise Blvd.
Rancho Cordova, CA

Tickets:

Purchase Tickets at Eventbrite.com
(Search "Western Swing")

\$40 Per Person in Advance
plus \$2.63 processing



Mike Gross Top 10

"Swingin' West"- Mike Gross
KSEY-FM, Seymour, TX
April 1, 2018

Songs

- 1 One Fiddle, Two Fiddles- Bret Raper
- 2 Let Me Off in Texas- Chuck Cusimano (Cusimusic)
- 3 Headed to the Barn- Hot Texas Swing Band
- 4 Swing Me Back to Texas- 3 Trails West
- 5 Love is Just a Two Step Away- Jean Stafford (Australian)
- 6 Too in Love- The Farmer & Adele
- 7 We're the Time Jumpers-** The Time Jumpers (Rounder)
- 8 More West Than Texas- Notable Exceptions (Santa Rita)
- 9 Too Bad This Town Ain't in Texas-** Carol Markstrom (Desert Rose)
- 10 Road to Narvacan- Wylie & The Wild West (Hi-Line)

Albums

- 1 Somewhere Near Austin- Bret Raper
- 2 Time Changes Everything- Leon Rausch
- 3 Off the Beaten Trail- Hot Texas Swing Band
- 4 Kid Sister- The Time Jumpers (Rounder)
- 5 Big Hat, No Cattle- Big Hat, No Cattle
- 6 I Hear You Talkin'-** Lake Travis Fiddlers
- 7 Paul Schlesinger & his Knights of Western Swing- Paul Schlesinger
- 8 Green Mountain Standard Time- Rick & The Ramblers (Airflyte)
- 9 Recollections in Swing- Uptown Drifters
- 10 Live at Barbes- The Brain Cloud

R.I.P. "Dr. Bob" Myers

By Bill Seabridge



You have got to admire a man who has such a lust for life that he throws a party as one of his final acts. A man who has the audacity to tell terminal cancer to back off for five years simply because he's not done living yet. A man who in the autumn of his years has the courage to change the circumstances of his life to pursue true love and then take her on a beautiful fif-

teen year journey across the dance floors of the Southwest. A man who is so genuine and easy to like that he has more friends than anybody else you know. A man whose career allows his welcoming smile to be the first thing seen by 10,000 newborns as they enter this world. A man who lives his life with uncompromised dignity and dies the same way. On March 8th, our Dr. Bob called it final and left us all broken-hearted, but not without fond memories of the many good times we had together.

Robert George Myers and Will Rogers had one thing in common: They never met a man they didn't like. Bob had a rare gift of being able to see the good in everybody and it seems that the good side in everybody came out when Bob was around. He had a congenial respect for everyone he met and simply saw no need to judge others. He was easy to be with, easy to talk to and easy to love, which is the reason it took him forever to cross the room at Western Swing. He was not only generous with a compliment, handshake or a hug, but also with his wallet, donating thousands of dollars to our dance over the years, while demanding we not mention it in our newsletter. In October at our Youth Band Fundraiser he purchased multiple tables to support the cause and then told us to give a seat to anyone who might not be able to afford it otherwise. In medical terms, Dr. Bob had an "enlarged heart".

Bob Myers was probably the most avid follower of "The Golden Rule"



Continued on page 9



ALBUM REVIEW with MIKE GROSS



Album: I Hear You Talkin'
 Artist: Lake Travis Fiddlers
 This is a wonderful new CD of 15 tunes by 20 talented young musicians and vocalists. They are also joined by quite a few

Austin, Texas musical legends as guests. It was produced by Vance Cone and Anna Macias. Anna is also heard on harmony vocals and as one of the many wonderful fiddle players. Among the legendary guests on the album Ray Benson is the lead vocalist on Bill Haley's *Crazy Man Crazy*, Floyd Domino plays piano on six of the cuts, Eddie Rivers plays steel guitar on five of the cuts and Elizabeth McQueen is the harmony vocalist on two cuts.

The album opens with three pop music standards, Irving Berlin's *Blue Skies*, Jimmy McHugh and Dorothy Fields' *Exactly Like You* and Peggy Lee and Dave Barbour's *It's a Good Day*. There are also so many recreations from the Bob Wills songbook which include Cindy Walker's *I Hear You Talkin'* and the 1930s memories, *I da Red* and *Yearning*. Also borrowed from Wills and the following decade are *My Confession*, Fred Rose's *Roly Poly* and Bob Wills and Tommy Duncan's *Take Me Back to Tulsa*. There is also Buck Owens and the Buckaroos' *Cajun Fiddle*, *I Wonder* from Asleep at the Wheel and from both Roy Rogers and the Crosby/Andrews Sisters team is borrowed *Along the Navajo Trail*. There is also the mariachi *Los Laureles* and the album closes and changes moods completely with the Stevie Wonder memory *Sir Duke*.



Continued next column

Mike Gross continued

The CD can be purchased from CD Baby or at <http://laketravisorchestra.org/shop-lt-fiddler-store/> or by mail by check or money order for \$17. from LTOP Booster Club, 12400 Highway 71 W., Ste. 350-363, Austin, TX 78738. Checks should be made out to LTOP.

Mike Gross, KSEY-FM, Seymour, TX & KTNK-AM, Lompoc, CA & www.swinginwest.com





*We buy, sell, & trade new & used gear!
 -- Free appraisals --
 Serving the Western Swing Society for
 over 45 years!*

Elk Grove (916) 686 - 5666 www.skipsmusic.com	2740 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95821 (916) 484 - 7575
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MEMBERSHIP

Any Changes? Keep us up to date on any changes in your membership information, especially email addresses. We can't get your newsletter to you unless we have your current information.

You can mail changes in your information to the Society at P.O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA; phone it to (916) 689-9546; or email it to membership@westernswingsociety.net. Thanks!

Keep on Western Swingin'

MERLE HAGGARD

April 6, 1937 - April 6, 2016

Inducted October 7, 1984

As a performer and a songwriter, Merle Haggard was the most important country artist to emerge in the 1960s, and he became one of the leading figures of the Bakersfield country scene. While his music remained hardcore country, he pushed the boundaries of the music quite far. Like his idol, Bob Wills, his music was a melting pot that drew from all forms of traditional American music -- country, jazz, blues, and folk -- and in the process, developed a distinctive style of his own. As a performer, singer, and musician, he was one of the best, influencing countless other artists. Not coincidentally, he was the best singer/songwriter in country music since Hank Williams, writing a body of songs that became classics. Throughout his career, Haggard was a champion of the working man, largely due to his rough-and-tumble history.

It's impossible to separate Haggard's music from his life. He was born to James and Flossie Haggard on April 6, 1937. His parents moved from Oklahoma to California during the Great Depression, converting an old boxcar into a home. Before their marriage, James played fiddle in local honky tonk bars. Flossie was a member of the Church of Christ, which led to her forcing her husband to stop playing the honky tonks. James died from a brain tumor when Merle was nine years old. After his father's death, Merle became rebellious. In an attempt to straighten her son out, his mother put him in several juvenile detention centers, but it had little effect on Merle's behavior. As a teenager, he fell in love with country music, particularly Bob Wills, Lefty Frizzell, and Hank Williams. When he was 12 years old, Haggard was given his first guitar by his older brother; Merle taught himself how to play by listening to records that were lying around the house.

Even though he had begun to pursue music, Haggard continued to rebel, running away with his friend Bob Teague to Texas when he was 14 years old. A few months later, the pair returned to California, where they were arrested as robbery suspects. After the real thieves were caught, Haggard was sent back to juvenile hall, but he and Teague took off to Modesto, California. For a brief time, he did manual labor, was a short-order cook, drove a truck,

*Continued On Page 10***CHUCK CUSIMANO**

Inducted October 1, 2017

Chuck Cusimano was born to a Working Cowboy Father, Louie, and it is said that his Mother, Judy, in her younger years, could "Cowboy" as good as most men. The Cusimano's are from the Trinidad, Colorado area and have worked on various Ranches in Southeastern Colorado and Northeastern New Mexico.

Chuck and his Brother, Jay mostly grew up on the Box Ranch North of Branson Colorado. The "Box's" ran close to 100,000 acres and had from 900 to 1,200 Mother cows, depending on the condition of the water and Grass, a direct result of what kind of a yearly rainfall the range had received. The boys just naturally followed in their Dad's footsteps and were soon in demand on various Ranches as "Day Help".

Besides Cowboying for a living, Chuck's dad, Louie headed up a Western Swing dance band in the area and played music, usually, three nights a week for many years. It was natural for the music to become a part of Chuck's makeup.

At the age of Fourteen, Chuck had taken an interest in playing the guitar as he sat and watched his dad give guitar lessons to a teenage neighbor. The guitar really intrigued young Cusimano and as he says, "In 1963, I heard Buck Owens sing a song about a guy in the Movies, (Act Naturally) and when I heard that Electric Guitar, I knew I wanted to do that every day for the rest of my life!"

Chuck entered the U.S. Navy in 1968 and spent four years active duty doing four Vietnam Cruises. It was during this time that a friend aboard the ship convinced Chuck that he should sing. "I was too timid or embarrassed to try to sing where somebody could hear me at the time but, my friend from Arkansas thought I sounded good and since he didn't know any of the songs I liked to sing, I started singing".

When the Ship was in Long Beach, California for some repairs in 1969, Chuck found out about a Country bar called the "Foothill's Club" and went to visit and listen to the Country music. Cusimano met the Bandleader, Billy Mize who took a shine to Chuck after hearing him sing and after hearing some

Continued on Page 11

HELP! Here is a way that everyone can help. Let's do a better job of clearing the tables before we leave. It makes it so much easier for the clean-up crew. Thank You.



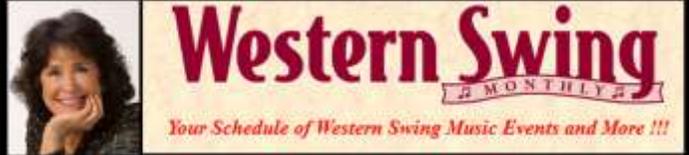
JOIN THE JAM-A-RANA

The Jam Room is proving to be a great success and a lot of fun. Time often runs out on the main stage for guest performers but that doesn't mean you can't strut your stuff. Come on back to the JR where Board member, **Tony 'Jammin' Arana** is in charge. Bring your instrument, voice, fans, or whatever and share your talent. We'd love to hear you.

UPCOMING BANDS

- April** Tony Arana & The Jam Room Band
- May** Geoff Miller & The Sactown Playboys
- June** Shelley Elkan & Bite the Bullet
- July** Bob Woods & the Dusty Rustlers
- August** Lincoln Highway
- September** Robby James & Streets of Bakersfield
- October** Hall of Fame (10/5 to 10/7/2018)
- November** Eddie Burr & The Western Swingers
- December** Grace Clark & Swingitude

Check out Barbara Martin's



<http://www.wsmoonthly.com/subscribe.html>

THANK YOU, TYPISTS!

Big thanks go out to our volunteers: Claudia Ezzell, Olen Dillingham, Edd Burhans, Ronnie and Shelley Elkan, for helping to digitize historical biographies so they can be added to our website by Dave Rietz. Dave is doing a "bang up" job of modernizing our website! [Check it out!](#)

BIG REQUEST!

Please assist the ladies at the door by having your **RED MEMBERSHIP CARD** in your hand as you enter the Hall. Thank you for your cooperation.



LOST AND FOUND
Did you leave these behind last month? They will be at the front desk.

APPLYING FOR MEMBERSHIP AND NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION

Submit the following information in a note with your check to:
The Western Swing Society, P.O. Box 2474, Carmichael, CA 95609:

Name(s), mailing address, email address, and telephone number.

Fees (make check payable to Western Swing Society)

Individual Membership, \$15 per year.

Couples Membership, \$20 per year. (one address only).

Dues renew every July.

If you join during any other month, your membership fee will be prorated to align with the July renewal.

You will receive a color version of our newsletter via email. Paid membership also includes reduced admission fee at Society music functions, and the right to vote in Society elections and on proposed By-Law changes.

Sunday, April 1, 2018 ~ 1:00 pm-3:00 pm
Tony Arana & the JamRoom band
 FOR YOUR ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING PLEASURE

Western Swing Society Board Meeting Minutes

March 4, 2018 10:35 AM

Roll Call: Board members present: Ronnie, Rex, Chuck, Edd, Linda, Dave, Olen, Tony

Guests: Don deMars

Approval of Minutes: Minutes approved

President's Report: None

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer reported that we have a positive reserve, and continue to be at or near the break-even point for monthly dances

Public Relations: We will move forward with our mid-year fundraiser; and confirm the date of May 10th. The Scheduled bands are Streets of Bakersfield and Swingatude.

Newsletter: None

Youth Band: Edd reported that progress is being made with recruitment and on the fake book.

Music Director's Report: We are booked through the year. Input on future bands is welcome.

Web Master: The newsletter is now linked to our web site the May 10th event will be linked also.

Old Business: The board and all present discussed the need for a person to take on the role of president.

New Business: A motion was made and approved by the board to have Ronnie Elkan replace Bill Seabridge as signatory on our bank accounts.

Adjourn: 11:10 AM

Board Meeting Invitation

You can attend the Society's monthly Board meetings; first Sunday of each month starting at 10:30 a.m. in the Machinists Hall in Rancho Cordova.

PICTURES NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

Pictures are now available online. A link will be available for each month's dance pictures in the newsletter and on our website

<http://westernswingsociety.net/>.

3-4-2018 Monthly Dance pictures

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/OqWpswM1wzSudGgJ3>

Dr. Bob continued from page 5

since Jesus walked the earth. His first thought was always for someone else's welfare. One of the dearest examples of Bob's concern for others was recently relayed to me by Ronnie Elkan. Ronnie was visiting Bob just before he died. Bob was bedridden, extremely weak and his weight just dropped below 100 pounds. These two old friends smiled as they discussed good times for the last time. When it was time to go, Ronnie bent over to hug Bob goodbye and as he arose Bob noticed Ronnie shedding an unpreventable tear. Bob reached out, grabbed Ronnie's hand and asked "Are you going to be Okay?" The irony brings a gentle smile to a beautiful melancholy because you know that is the kind of man Bob was, even in his final moments he is more concerned about how his death was going to affect someone else than it was going to affect him!

I believe I speak for all of us when I say it was an honor to be a friend of Bob Myers. I hope we speak his name often as Western Swing goes on and that his spirit and those of many others who have left us over time see fit to remain in our hearts as the music plays on.



R.I.P. Tex Hatcher December 19, 1928—March 20, 2018 Inducted October 10, 2004

Tex was born Elbert Milburn Hatcher on December 19, 1928 in Cotton County, Oklahoma. Tex's family moved to California in 1941 when Tex was 13. By 16, Tex started playing dances and radio shows with Al Coker, father of the Coker Family band.

Tex was in high demand for his guitar work on recording sessions and laid down many a track until November 1950 when he was drafted into the Army and sent to Japan. While in Japan, Tex joined a group called "Sgt. Helesly and the Iwo Jima Ridgerunners".

Friend, Bill Carter, fondly remembers what a great friend Tex was and is proud to have recorded a CD with Tex, Bobby Thompson, and Smokey Silver. All four of them hall of famers.

Tex passed away in Olivehurst, CA on March 20, 2018 and will be missed by his WSS family. Keep on pickin' up there!

Merle Haggard Continued from Page 7

and committed a series of small crimes. Soon after he moved to Modesto, Haggard made his performing debut with Teague at a bar named the Fun Center; the two were paid five dollars and given all the beer that they could drink.

By the end of 1951, Haggard had returned home and he was again arrested for truancy, as well as petty larceny. In the beginning of 1952, he was sent to Fred C. Nelles School for Boys in Whittier, California; again, he ran away. This time, the courts decided he was incorrigible and sent him to the high-security Preston School of Industry; he was released after 15 months. Shortly after his release, he and a boy he met at PSI beat up a local boy during an attempted robbery, and Haggard was sent back to PSI.

After getting out of PSI for the second time, Haggard had the first major event in his musical career. He went with Teague to see Lefty Frizzell in concert in Bakersfield. Before the show, he went backstage with several friends and he sang a couple songs for Frizzell. Lefty was so impressed he refused to go on-stage until Haggard was allowed to sing a song. Merle went out and sang a few songs to an enthusiastic response from the audience.

The reception persuaded Haggard to actively pursue a musical career. While he was working during the day in oil fields and farms, he performed at local Bakersfield clubs. His performances led to a spot on a local television show, Chuck Wagon. In 1956, he married Leona Hobbs; the couple moved into his family's old converted boxcar. Throughout 1957, Haggard was plagued by financial problems, which made him turn to robbery. At the end of the year, he attempted to rob a restaurant along with two other burglars; the three were drunk at the time. Believing it was three o'clock in the morning, the trio tried to open up the back door of the restaurant. However, it was 10:30 and the establishment was still open. Although the trio fled the scene, Haggard was arrested that day. The following day, he escaped from prison in order to make peace with his wife and family; later that day, he was recaptured. Haggard was sentenced to a 15-year term and sent to San Quentin prison.

Prison didn't immediately lead Merle into rehabilita-

Continued on page 11

Editor's letter continued from page 2

his sound equipment in, sets it all up and runs it for our dance. Then he gets to tear it all down and put it away. He is another example of the great volunteers that make the dance happen.

Bill Enyeart and Dry Creek, our house band hit the stage after our raffle. Since Ralph Chase was absent, Bill played both his guitar and keyboard. Bill is always a crowd pleaser. On stage with Bill was Lenny Serdahl Sr. on guitar, Billy Smith on bass, Tom Phelps on pedal steel guitar, Jimmy Baughman sporting his Stratocaster guitar, Bill Cornett on drums, Linda Baughman on vocals and yours truly on fiddle.

UPDATE: I started this article right after visiting Dr. Bob. It was heartwarming to see how many of our western swing folks were there by his side visiting after the dance. I know the whole place would have loved to see him one more time. He passed away at home on the morning of March 8, 2018. Like I said, "He will be missed".

Ronnie Elkan Co-editor

Special Thank You

Thank You to Candy Galassi as once again she made a generous donation to the WSS youth program in Dr. Bob's name.

Also a beautiful pair of stage monitors was purchased in Dr. Bob's name.

Thank You Again from WSS

SPECIAL EASTER SUNDAY MEAL

Our great chefs from American Legion Post #9 are going to prepare a special meal for us on April 1st

It will include: Ham Dinner, Baked Potato, Vegetable, Salad and Dinner Roll.

All for \$9.50



Merle Haggard Continued from page 10

tion. He was fired from a series of prison jobs and planned an escape from the jail, but was talked out of it by fellow inmates. Nearly two years into his sentence, Haggard discovered that his wife was pregnant with another man's child. The news sent Haggard over the edge. Soon, he and his cellmate began a gambling racket and brewing beer in their cell. Before long, Haggard was caught drunk and was placed in isolation for a week. During his time in isolation, he had several conversations with Caryl Chessman, an author and a member of death row. The conversations and the time in isolation convinced Haggard to turn his life around. After he left isolation, he began working in the prison's textile plant and took some high-school equivalency courses; he was also allowed to play in the prison's country band. At his second parole hearing in 1960, Haggard was given a five-year sentence -- two years and nine months in jail, two years and three months on parole; he left prison 90 days later.

Merle moved back in with Leona and returned to manual labor. In the meantime, he sang at local clubs at night. After taking second place at a local talent contest, Haggard was asked to become a relief singer for a band led by Johnny Barnett at one of the most popular Bakersfield clubs, Lucky Spot. Soon, Merle was making enough money playing music that he could quit his ditch-digging job. While singing with Barnett, he gained the attention of Fuzzy Owen, who owned the small record label Tally Records. Owen and his cousin Lewis Talley were instrumental in establishing Haggard's musical career. Owen made the first recording of Haggard, cutting a demo version of one of the singer's first songs, "Skid Row." Shortly after the recording, Haggard called Talley, who had praised him earlier in his career. Talley was able to land Haggard a job at Paul's Cocktail Lounge, which led to a slot on a local music television show.

During this time, Bakersfield country was beginning to become a national scene, largely due to the hit singles of Buck Owens. At a time when mainstream country was dominated by the lush, smooth country-politain sound of Nashville, Bakersfield country grew out of hardcore honky tonk, adding elements of Western swing. Bakersfield country also relied on

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Chuck Cusimano continued from page 7

of the songs that Cusimano had been writing, declared that Chuck could do something in the Music business.

Chuck got out of the Navy in 1972 and went back to Colorado to work on a ranch for about a year and then decided if he was going to try the music business he better get started. By May of 1973, Chuck was working six nights a week with Merle David and his band in Odessa, Texas. Then onto Lubbock where Cusimano put his first band together. Bandmembers came and went. Night Clubs came and went. Chuck did almost a year on the road with a band out of Nashville, Tenn. and also with a band out of Detroit Mich., eventually coming back to Lubbock for a few years and then to a Ranch job in New Mexico where he also played music four nights a week.

Chuck Cusimano recently turned 65 years old and for the last ten years, now lives in the Fort Worth, Texas area. He has a Springtown, Texas address.

Chuck plays guitar in four Country bands in the Fort Worth area, writes, records, and publishes Country music through his "Cusimusico" BMI publishing company.

Chuck, at one time an avid Team Roper and horse trainer, doesn't ride or rope any more because; "My music keeps me too busy. The Good Ropin's are done on the weekend, and in the music business, the weekends are your bread and butter".

Cusimano has written hundreds of songs and has had many of his compositions recorded by other artists. Chuck has six CDs currently and is working on future projects.

Besides playing Country/Western Swing music three or four nights a week, Cusimano still attends some of the good Cowboy gatherings. He said he feels that he needs to stay close to his own bed and coffee pot as much as possible. "Nobody's bed or coffee quite measures up to my own."



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electric instruments and amplification more than other subgenres of country, giving the music a hard, driving, edgy flavor. During the late '50s, Tommy Collins and Wynn Stewart were two of the Bakersfield artists to have hits, and both were influential on Haggard's career, musically as well as professionally. Haggard had admired Stewart's vocal style, and it helped shape his phrasing.

Early in 1962, Haggard traveled to Las Vegas to see Wynn Stewart's club show. Stewart was not at the club, having left to find a replacement bass player. During the show, one of Stewart's guitarists remembered Haggard and invited him to sing a couple of songs on-stage. Stewart walked in while Haggard was singing and was impressed, asking him to join his band as a bassist. For six months in 1962 and 1963, Merle performed with Stewart's band. During this time, Haggard heard Wynn's song "Sing a Sad Song" and asked the star if he could record it. Stewart gave him the song and Merle recorded it for Tally Records in 1963. Although Tally had minimal distribution, the record became a national hit, climbing to number 19 on the country charts early in 1964.

"Sam Hill," Haggard's second single, wasn't as successful, but a duet with Bonnie Owens, the former wife of Buck Owens, called "Just Between the Two of Us," broke into the Top 40. The next year, his version of Liz Anderson's "(My Friends Are Gonna Be) Strangers" broke him into the Top Ten and established him as a budding star. Capitol Records bought out his contract with Tally and Merle released "I'm Gonna Break Every Heart I Can," his first single for Capitol, in the fall of 1965. The single wasn't a success, scratching into the Top 50, but his next single, "Swinging Doors," was a smash hit, rocketing to number five in the spring of 1966. Late in 1965, Haggard began recruiting a backing band and named them the Strangers.

Haggard became a genuine country superstar in 1966, with three Top Ten hits, including "Swinging Doors." "The Bottle Let Me Down" climbed to number three and "The Fugitive" (later retitled "I'm a Lonesome Fugitive") became his first number one. He was voted the Top Male Vocalist by the Academy of Country Music Awards, while he and Bonnie

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Merle Haggard continued

were named the Top Vocal Group for the second year in a row.

Haggard's songwriting was beginning to blossom and audiences embraced his music, sending his "I Threw Away the Rose" to number three early in 1967, beginning a remarkable streak of 37 straight Top Ten hits, including 23 number one singles. "I Threw Away the Rose" was followed by four straight number one hits -- "Branded Man," "Sing Me Back Home," "The Legend of Bonnie and Clyde," and "Mama Tried," which was heard in Killers Three, a movie that featured Haggard's debut as an actor. With the exception of "Bonnie and Clyde," the songs represented a change in Haggard's songwriting, as he began to directly address his troubled history. By 1970, he was talking about his time in San Quentin in the press, yet these songs represented the first time he had mentioned his past directly. Each single was a bigger hit than the previous song, which encouraged Haggard to continue writing in a more personal style.

Throughout 1968, Haggard's star continued to rise, with two number one hits ("Bonnie and Clyde," "Mama Tried") and the number three "I Take a Lot of Pride in What I Am," as well as four albums. Later that year, he recorded his first conceptual album, Same Train, Different Time. Released in early 1969, the record was not only an affectionate salute to one of Haggard's heroes, it reflected a fascination with American history and a desire to expand his music by adding stronger elements of Western swing, jazz, and blues.

Merle released three singles in 1969 -- "Hungry Eyes," "Workin' Man Blues," and "Okie from Muskogee" -- and all three reached number one. In particular, "Okie from Muskogee" sparked a tremendous amount of attention. An attack on the liberal hippies who represented American pop culture in the late '60s, the song struck a chord in audiences across the country, just missing the pop Top 40. Because of the song, Haggard was asked to endorse George Wallace, but he refused. "Okie from Muskogee" cemented the singer's stardom, and he won a large amount of awards in 1969 and 1970. In both years, he was named the Top Male Vocalist by the ACM and the Strangers were voted the best band, while the

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new Country Music Association voted him Entertainer of the Year and Top Male Vocalist in 1970.

Haggard released a sequel to "Okie" called "The Fightin' Side of Me" at the beginning of 1970, and it also shot to number one. That year, he released A Tribute to the Best Damn Fiddle Player in the World (Or My Salute to Bob Wills), which helped spark a revival of Western swing in the '70s. Throughout 1971 and 1972, the hits kept coming, including "Soldier's Last Letter," "Someday We'll Look Back," "Daddy Frank (The Guitar Man)," "Carolyn," "Grandma Harp," "It's Not Love (But It's Not Bad)," and "I Wonder If They Ever Think of Me." In 1972, the governor of California, Ronald Reagan, granted Haggard a full pardon. The following year, his hit streak continued, and he scored his biggest hit, "If We Make It Through December," which peaked at number 28 on the pop charts. As his reign on the top of the country charts continued in 1974, he played on Bob Wills' last album, For the Last Time. Wills died in 1975, leaving Merle his fiddle.

Haggard stayed with Capitol Records until 1977, and never once did his grip on the American audience slip during his tenure there. During his time on MCA afterward, he continued to have a number of hits, but his work was becoming slightly inconsistent. His first two singles for the record label, "If We're Not Back in Love by Monday" and "Ramblin' Fever," hit number two and he continued to have hits with the label throughout the end of the decade and the first part of the '80s. "I'm Always on a Mountain When I Fall" and "It's Been a Great Afternoon" were number two hits in 1978. In 1979, he only had two hits, while in 1980, two selections from the Clint Eastwood movie Bronco Billy reached the Top Three, "The Way I Am" and "Misery and Gin"; Haggard also appeared in the film. The two hits paved the way for his two biggest singles with MCA, the number one duet with Eastwood "Bar Room Buddies" and the number one "I Think I'll Just Stay Here and Drink." Early in 1981, Haggard had a Top Ten hit with "Leonard," a tribute to his old friend Tommy Collins.

Later that year, Haggard published his autobiography, Sing Me Back Home; he also left MCA and signed with Epic Records. Once at Epic, he began

Merle Haggard continued

producing his own records, which gave the music a leaner sound. His first two singles for the label, "My Favorite Memory" and "Big City," were number one hits. The following year, he released a duet album with George Jones called A Taste of Yesterday's Wine, which featured the number one single "Yesterday's Wine" and the Top Ten "C.C. Waterback." From 1983 until the beginning of 1985, Haggard continued to score number one hits, including the number one duet with Willie Nelson "Pancho and Lefty."

Merle's chart fortunes began to change in 1985 as a new breed of singers began to dominate the chart. Nearly every one of the artists, from George Strait to Randy Travis, was greatly influenced by Haggard, but their idol's new singles now had a tough time reaching the top of the charts. He had two Top Ten hits in 1986, and 1987's Chill Factor was a success, spawning the Top Ten title track and "Twinkle, Twinkle Lucky Star," which would prove to be his last number one hit. In 1990, he signed with Curb Records, but he continued to have trouble reaching the charts; 1994 spawned his last modest hit, "In My Next Life," which reached the Top 60.

When his contract with Curb ran out, Haggard, hoping for better promotion and greater artistic freedom, signed with Anti, a subsidiary of the Epitaph punk-pop label. His first effort for Anti was released in late 2000; titled If I Could Only Fly, the gentle acoustic album was greeted with strong reviews. Haggard released one more album for Anti, 2001's Roots, Vol. 1, before departing. After 2003's Like Never Before, Haggard returned to his old home, EMI, the following year, releasing a collection of American pop standards called Unforgettable at the end of that year. Chicago Wind appeared in the summer of 2005. Haggard then turned to bluegrass, releasing the appropriately titled The Bluegrass Sessions, which featured appearances by Marty Stuart, Aubrey Haynie, and Alison Krauss (among others) in 2007. In 2008 he got the Bear Family treatment with the release of the multi-disc box sets Hag: The Studio Recordings 1969-1976 and Hag: Concepts, Live & the Strangers: The Capitol Recordings 1968-1976. I Am What I Am, an album of new songs, appeared from Vanguard Records in 2010. A second Vanguard album, Working in Tennessee, co-

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produced by Haggard with Lou Bradley at Haggard's own northern California studio, appeared the following year in 2011. Four years later, Haggard teamed up with his old friend Willie Nelson for Django and Jimmie, their first collaboration in 20 years. Preceded by the single "It's All Going to Pot," the album debuted at number one on the Billboard country chart upon its June 2015 release. Less than a year later, exactly on his 79th birthday (April 6, 2016), Haggard died of complications from pneumonia at his home in Palo Cedro, California.

Even when success eluded him, Merle Haggard's music remained some of the most consistently interesting and inventive in country music. Not only have his recordings remained fresh, but each subsequent generation of country singers shows a great debt to his work. That fact stands as a testament to his great talent even more than his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Artist Biography by Stephen Thomas Erlewine

Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest

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Thursday, April 12th, 10:45 am to 11:00 pm: All Day Jam Bands (no cover)

Friday, April 13th, 10:45 am to 11:00 pm: Scheduled Bands and Jam Sessions

Saturday, April 14th 10:45 am to 11:00 pm: Scheduled Bands and Jam Sessions

For Information Contact: Walter Laymon @ 402-841-8061

Western Swing Society Youth Band Monthly Report – March 2018

Youth Band Director's Main Goal of the Month:
Work on repertoire for first performance!

This month the director continued to pursue building relationships with other youth band directors, teachers and parents in an effort to recruit more members. It has been challenging to accomplish this, with most students that do show an interest being reluctant to join because of their already full schedule. However, we managed to have 4 students now that are willing to give this endeavor a try. The make-up at this point is as follows, listed by main instrument: vocalist, clarinetist, saxophonist (baritone, as bass), guitarist, and the director sitting in as drummer.

We still have a few weeks to add to our roster, and we certainly hope to do so. As of the second week in March, we have had sectional rehearsals, and will be holding full band rehearsals as schedules are adjusted to accommodate this.

We are still in need of an electric bass. For the time being, the baritone sax is our bass, which works but is not ideal to use for an entire performance. Thanks to all who have been looking into this!

Our first performance is scheduled for the May 6th meeting.

Dave Chan, Youth Band Director

Electric Bass Update: Great news! After the submission of this Youth Band update, a Board member secured an electric bass for use by the Youth Band.



FRIENDS AND FAMILY



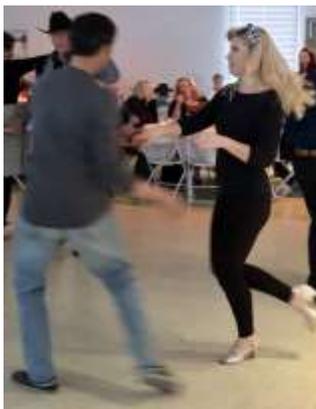
DANCE SEQUENCES - FREEZE FRAME



TIMES FOR THE MEMORY BOOK



TIMES FOR THE MEMORY BOOK



Jammin'



WINNERS

Thank You Volunteers!

CELEBRATE!

GUEST BAND ~ MICHAEL RAY & THE FORTUNATE FEW



HOUSE BAND ~ THE DRY CREEK BAND



OTHER WESTERN SWING MUSIC ORGANIZATIONS/MUSIC HAPPENINGS

Western Swing Music and Straw Hat Pizza, 2929 Mather Field Road, near Folsom Blvd. is starting monthly concerts of Western Swing and Country music every fourth Thursday from 6:30 thru 8:30 pm. Contact Edd Burhans for more information: (916) 225-3645

Bakersfield Country Music Museum, P.O. Box 81623, Bakersfield CA 93380-1623. Call 661-366-6003 24/7 for more information.

Buck Ford & Pure Country Band: Check Website for schedule, <http://www.buckford.com/calendar/>

Canadian Western Swing Music Society, Contact: John York, 3565 Cambridge St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V5K 1M3. Phone 604-299-2301.

CA Old Time Fiddlers Association, Meets 2nd Sunday. Orangevale Grange on Walnut Avenue in Orangevale, CA. [www.cbaontheweb.org/region_details.asp? Region 2](http://www.cbaontheweb.org/region_details.asp?Region%202)

Cowtown Society of Western Music, Contact: Joe Baker, Membership Director, 940-452-6300, 4361 F.M. 1195, Mineral Springs, TX 76067

Greater Arizona Country/Western Swing Association and Hall of Fame, Inc. PO Box 953, Dewey, AZ 86326. Contact Jim Gamble at 928-458-0714.

Lincoln Highway Band, 4th Sunday of the month, 1-4pm, VFW POST 4647, 3300 U Street, North Highlands, \$5.00 cover charge. For more information call (916) 580-7390.

Northwest Western Swing Music Society, Contact: Jeannie Yearian, President, 425-432-7888, or cell 206-271-2295, Lynnwood Eagles, 19223 Hwy. 99, Lynnwood, WA. **Meets 2nd Sunday** www.nwwsms.com

Western Swing Music Society of the Southwest, PO Box 644, Shattuck, OK 73858. **Meets quarterly.** Go to website at: www.wsmss.com.



WEB PAGE REPORT



If you see this guy, Dave Rietz, please thank him for the incredible work he is doing on our website: (westernswingsociety.net).

If you haven't had a chance to visit it you're missing out!

Dave is entering a complete list of Hall of Fame members going all the way back to 1981 when our organization was founded. It is a huge task that takes up many hours of Dave's time. Part of what he is doing is retyping biographies so that they can be put into the web page.

If you have typing skills and would like to help out we could use all the help we can get. You can do as much or as little as you would like and it would be a great help. Contact Dave Rietz or Ronnie Elkan, Thanks

MONTHLY MUSIC SESSIONS

The Western Swing Society holds a music and dance session on the first Sunday of each month, featuring guest bands and artists and jam sets.

1:00 pm to 5:30 pm at The Machinists Hall
2749 Sunrise Blvd., Rancho Cordova, CA*

Donation: \$5 for Members; \$8 for Non-Members
For information, browse to www.westernswingsociety.net

*The address is Sunrise, but the driveway is on Citrus.



Driving Instructions to MACHINISTS HALL: From Hwy 50, take the Sunrise Blvd. South exit and cross two lights (Folsom Blvd. and Trade Center Drive). After crossing Trade Center, be in the left lane and take the next left turn which is Citrus Road. You will see an Enterprise Car Rental lot in front of you. Turn right into the driveway just past Enterprise. You'll see our sign, and you are there. Park, come in and join the fun.