



# Expressing Montana

## Expressing Montana

EXPRESSING  
MONTANA  
(/EXPRESSING-  
MONTANA)

SINGER,  
SONGWRITERS  
(/SINGER-  
SONGWRITERS)

VISUAL ARTISTS  
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POETS (/POETS)

FOLKLORISTS,  
MUSICIANS &  
ACTIVISTS  
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## Poets



### Victor Charlo of Dixon, Montana/ Salish Tribal Chief and Poet

Victor A. Charlo is Bitterroot Salish, a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, and through his lineage, is recognized as a spiritual leader of his tribe. His

brother was killed in battle at Iwo Jima during World War II, and that loss has always affected him deeply. Vic has led a varied life. He entered the seminary and studied to be a Jesuit for seven years, then became passionately involved in Native and social justice causes, most notably *The Poor People's Campaign*. He is best known as a poet and playwright.



How do you view patriotism today?  
Victor Charlo



Poem: Agnes  
Victor Charlo



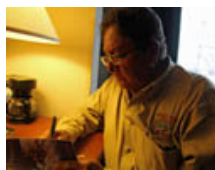
**Greg Keeler of Bozeman, Montana/ Poet, Singer/Songwriter, and Teacher**

Greg Keeler is a poet, painter, songwriter, and humorist. Born a flatlander from Oklahoma, he was teaching at Louisiana when he saw a temporary teaching position in the English Department at Montana State. That was 35 years ago. In his first years in Montana it was hard to get by on an English profs' salary so he got summer jobs buckin' bales. Through that work he began meeting people from the countryside and started writing satirical songs from the hay fields. He says, "sometimes they'd piss 'em off, and sometimes they'd really like 'em." An avid fisherman and lover of mountains, Greg feels he ended up in the right place.



Seems like rage is all the rage, any thoughts?  
Greg Keeler

"Expressing Montana - "Duct Tape Psalm" by G...



**Henry Real Bird of Garryowen, Montana/ Crow Poet and Montana Poet Laureate**

Henry Real Bird, a Crow Indian, grew up at the very place General George Custer lost the Battle of Little Big Horn. He and his brother were raised with horses and rodeo, and still today raise buckin' horses for stock contractors. Henry is also the current Poet Laureate of Montana. Last spring he rode his horse 400 miles across the Highline of

of Montana. Last spring he rode his horse 400 miles across the highline of Montana, through the northeast corner of the state, handing out poetry books along the way.



What did you take on when they made you poet laureate for Montana?  
Henry Real Bird

Expressing Montana - "Robin" by Henry Real Bird



Jessica Brandi-Lifland

**Paul Zarzyski, Great Falls, Montana/ Rodeo Poet**

**Wallace McRae, Forsyth, Montana/ Rancher, Poet and Writer**

We interviewed Paul Zarzyski and Wallace McRae together so they are listed in tandem even though they come from very different backgrounds and live in very different parts of Montana. Paul and Wallace have both been honored with a Governor's Award in the Arts They are close friends and we consider them both as friends too. Also, we empathize with Paul and all those whose last names come at the end of the alphabet and had to be last in line throughout school.

Wallace McRae is a third generation rancher and runs, with his son, the Rocker Six Cattle Company in Rosebud County. He's been reciting poetry since he was 4 and as an adult, his original poetry has been an advocate and voice for ranching in the struggle with extractive resource development in his part of the country. Wallace has served on the National Council of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Paul Zarzyski was born in Hurley, Wisconsin, to parents whose ethnic background was Polish and Italian. From childhood Paul was drawn to the Wild West. In college, he was beguiled by rodeo and started traveling the circuit competing. While in graduate school, studying poetry with the legendary Richard Hugo, Paul began writing about his passion for buckin' broncs. He travels all over the country performing poetry, has published several books and recordings, and is a songwriter who collaborates with some of the finest contemporary cowboy singers.

Unlike many cowboy poets who invoke the nostalgia of the old West, these two get to the heart of a poetry of activism. Visit [www.cowboypoetry.com](http://www.cowboypoetry.com) (<http://www.cowboypoetry.com>) to read more about Wallace McRae. Visit [www.paulzarzyski.com](http://www.paulzarzyski.com) (<http://www.paulzarzyski.com>) online.



What makes Montana folks individualists?  
Paul Zarzyski and Wallace McRae



Things of Intrinsic Worth  
Wallace McRae



Wolf Tracks on the Welcome Mat  
Paul Zarzyski

Western Folklife Center • 501 Railroad Street, Elko Nevada 89801 • 775-738-7508

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