



Western Writers of America Announces 2024 Spur Award winners and finalists

Longmire author Craig Johnson, documentarian Dayton Duncan among winners

TUCSON, ARIZONA, UNITED STATES, March 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Bestselling novelist Craig Johnson and Dayton Duncan, documentarian Ken Burns's longtime scriptwriter, are among this year's Spur Award winners from [Western Writers of America](#).

Winners and finalists were announced Saturday, March 9, at the [Tucson Festival of Books](#). The Longmire Defense (Viking), Johnson's 19th installment of his Walt Longmire mystery series, won for Best Contemporary Western Novel.

Duncan won for Burns's The American Buffalo (PBS) as Best Western Documentary Script.

Since 1953, Western Writers of America (WesternWriters.org) has promoted and honored the best in Western literature with the annual Spur Awards, selected by panels of judges. Awards, for material published during the previous year, are given for works whose inspiration, image and literary excellence best represent the reality and spirit of the American West.

Presentations to winners and finalists are scheduled during WWA's convention June 19-22 in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Other winners:

Biography: Sacajawea: Mystery, Myth, and Legend by Candy Moulton (South Dakota Historical Society Press).

Children's Picture Book: Grandma's Tipi: A Present-Day Lakota Story by author/illustrator S.D. Nelson (Abrams Books for Young Readers).

Contemporary Nonfiction Book: The Lost Cowboy by J.B. Zielke (independently published).

First Nonfiction Book: The Lost Cowboy by J.B. Zielke (independently published).

First Novel: The Last Man: A Novel of the 1927 Santa Claus Bank Robbery by Thomas Goodman (Mainsail Media).

Historical Nonfiction Book: Continental Reckoning: The American West in the Age of Expansion

by Elliott West (University of Nebraska Press).

Historical Novel: *Death in the Tallgrass: A Young Man's Journey Through the Western Frontier* by Donald Willerton (independently published)

Juvenile Nonfiction Book: *Bass Reeves: Legendary Lawman of the Wild West* by Billie Holladay Skelley (Crossing Time Press).

Juvenile Novel: *A Sky Full of Song* by Susan Lynn Meyer (Union Square Kids).

Original Mass-Market Paperback Novel: *Gunmetal Mountain* by John Shirley (Pinnacle Books/Kensington Publishing).

Poem: "Counting Cattle with the Fathers" by Shelley Armitage, published in *A Habit of Landscape* (Finishing Line Press).

Romance Novel: (Tie) *The Heart Beneath the Badge* by George T. Arnold (Speaking Volumes) and *Love on Target* by Shanna Hatfield (Wholesome Hearts Publishing).

Short Fiction: "Bad Choices: A Wyoming Chronicles Story" by W. Michael Gear, published in *Ridin' with the Pack: A Western Short Story Collection* (Wolfpack Publishing).

Short Nonfiction: "'Those invaluable but greatly abused members of the community': Dogs and the Difference on the Great Plains in the Fur Trade Era" by David C. Beyreis, published in the Spring 2023 issue of *South Dakota History*.

Song: "High Country Trail" by Syd Masters, released on the CD *Cabin Songs* (Deer Pine).

Traditional Novel: *Aesop's Travels: A Crackerjack Tale of the Old West* by Daniel Boyd (Montag Press).

Finalists:

Biography: *Oracle of Lost Causes: John Newman Edwards and His Never-Ending Civil War* by Matthew Christopher Hulbert (Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press); *Unrepentant Dakota Woman: Angeliqe Renville and the Struggle for Indigenous Identity, 1845-1876* by Linda M. Clemmons (South Dakota Historical Society Press).

Children's Picture Book: *Romeo and Emilia: How One Brave Girl Rose Up from a Wheelchair onto the Back of a Horse* by author Roni McFadden and image processor Melissa Fischbach (The Biscuit Press); *Wild Bill and the Pirates!* by author Thadd Turner and illustrator Jeanne Conway (Old West Alive! Publishing).

Contemporary Nonfiction Book: *The Last Lookout on Dunn Peak: Fire Spotting in Idaho's St. Joe National Forest* by Nancy Sule Hammond (Basalt Books/Washington State University Press); This

is Wildfire: How to Protect Yourself, Your Home, and Your Community in the Age of Heat by Nick Mott and Justin Angle (Bloomsbury Publishing).

Contemporary Novel: Calico by Lee Goldberg (Severn House); Standing Dead: A Timber Creek K-9 Mystery by Margaret Mizushima (Crooked Lane Books).

Documentary Script: The Sad Life and Tragic End of Superstar Alan Ladd by Rob Word (A Word on Westerns, YouTube); On the California Trail: Preserving Gravelly Ford by Travis Boley, Kevin Marcus and Roy Wicks (Knowledge Tree Films/Nevada Gold Mines/Oregon-California Trails Association/Bureau of Land Management).

Historical Nonfiction Book: The First Migrants: How Black Homesteaders' Quest for Land and Freedom Heralded America's Great Migration by Richard Edwards and Jacob K. Friefeld (Bison Books/University of Nebraska Press); Fortune's Frenzy: A California Gold Rush Odyssey by Eilene Lyon (TwoDot).

Historical Novel: The Redemption of Mattie Silks by Kimberly Burns (Thomas Bard Publishing); Golddigger: The Legendary Nellie Cashman by Kathleen Morris (Dunraven Press).

Juvenile Nonfiction Book: More Cat Tales of the Old West by Preston Lewis (Bariso Press).

Juvenile Novel: Tales of Tom Mix: The Wild West Christmas by Bob Madison, writing as Scott McCrea (DS Publishing); The Worst Enemy: Rebels Along the Rio Grande: Book 2 by Jennifer Bohnhoff (Kinkajou Press).

Original Mass-Market Paperback Novel: To Hell and Gone by Charles G. West (Pinnacle Books/Kensington Publishing); A Short Rope for a Tall Man by Victor Gischler, writing as Nate Morgan (Pinnacle Books/Kensington Publishing).

Poem: "Even the Birds" by Rod S. Miller, published in The Dog's Pancake (High Plains Press); "La Jicarita Mountain" by Jenifer Fox, published in My West (Quillkeepers Press).

Romance Novel: Chase Cooper by Lynn Eldridge (Wolfpack Publishing); The Bundling Year by Anne Schroeder (CKN Christian Publishing/Wolfpack Publishing).

Short Fiction: "The Desert Jewel" by Leah Angstman, published in Shoot the Horses First (Kernpunkt Press); "Hair of the Dog" by Peter Brandvold, published in Ridin' with the Pack: A Western Short Story Collection (Wolfpack Publishing).

Short Nonfiction: "A House-Party on an Old Frontier Ranch': How Arizona Became the Dude Ranch Capital of the World" by Lynn Downey, published in the Winter 2023 issue of Journal of Arizona History; "Passenger Side: Lessons from riding along in Montana" by Eric Howard Heidle, published in the Fall 2023 issue of Montana Quarterly.

Song: "Cowboy Afterlife" by Syd Masters, released on the CD Cabin Songs (Deer Pine); "Born to Be a Cowgirl" by Aspen Black, released on the CD Born to Be a Cowgirl (Aspen Taylor Black Publishing).

Traditional Novel: Grizzly Moon by Patrick Dearen (Five Star Publishing); Jane Fury by James Robert Daniels (Cutting Edge Books).

No awards were presented for Best Western Drama Script.

Johnny D. Boggs
Western Writers of America
+1 505-920-4113
roundupwwa@aol.com
Visit us on social media:
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