

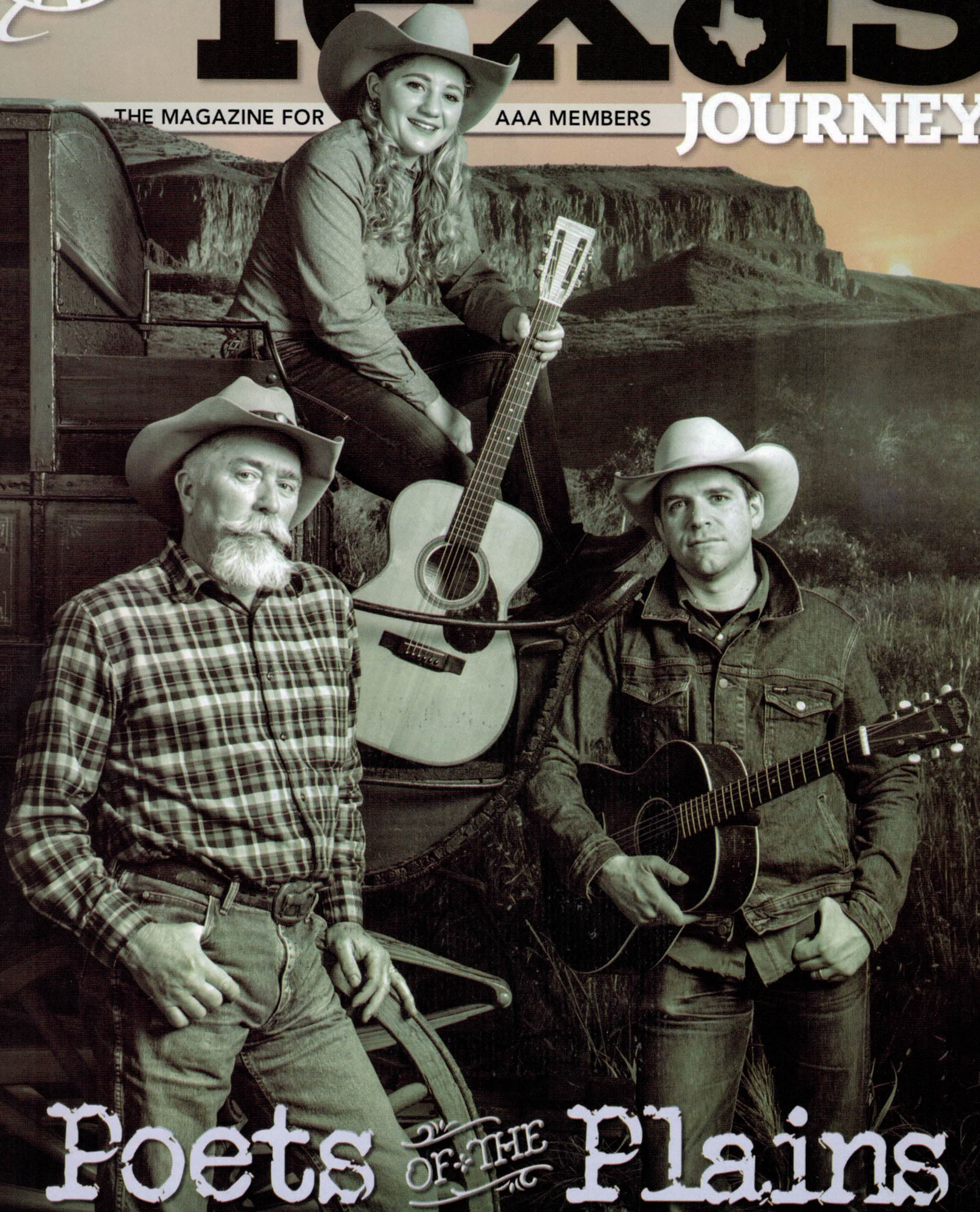


# TEXAS

THE MAGAZINE FOR

AAA MEMBERS

# JOURNEY



# Poets *OF THE* Plains

Texas storytellers and songwriters carry on a beloved cowboy tradition



# ANDY HEDGES

## PODCASTER *OF THE* THE PLAINS

One of several titles embraced by Lubbock native Andy Hedges is "Cowboy Songster." He's a widely in-demand performer at gatherings, which is slightly unusual, because Hedges, 39, does not sing his own songs or recite his own poetry. Rather, Hedges tracks down classic examples of frontier doggerel and Western music, which he brings to the stage in a plainspoken style as part of his effort to ensure that cowboy poetry's pioneers are not forgotten. "I see myself as an interpreter," he says. "When I started listening to Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry, I didn't realize people were still playing these songs, so my approach is that of a folk singer and also a folklorist."

It's a big-tent approach that extends to nine albums that Hedges has recorded, including several spoken-word efforts as well as more musical projects that allow Hedges to show off his love of traditional cowboy poetry, the blues, and folk music.

Despite the fact that he's not acclaimed for his own poetry or lyrical output, with his podcast *Cowboy Crossroads*, Hedges has come up with a contemporary

approach to cowboy culture that has won him listeners across a broad spectrum nationally. Hedges interviews working cowboys, musicians, poets, and historians, creating a convivial space to discuss wide-ranging subjects; there's plenty of talk about the Western world of arts and letters as well. Guests have included cowboy poet and rancher Wally McRae, Grammy-nominated songwriter Michael Martin Murphey, and Americana icon Tom Russell, who shared stories about his encounters with Bob Dylan and The Beatles. "Cowboy poetry is an oral tradition," says Hedges, "and it depends on the spoken word—whether that's on a stage, around a campfire, or in a barroom." [andyhedges.com](http://andyhedges.com)

*Frequent Texas Journey contributor Dan Oko recently wrote about blues music in Houston.*

### THREE PLACES TO SEE COWBOY POETS PERFORM

#### NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY SYMPOSIUM AND CELEBRATION

Lubbock

Sept. 6-8

(806) 798-7825; [cowboy.org](http://cowboy.org)

#### TEXAS HILL COUNTRY COWBOY GATHERING

Fredericksburg

Nov. 8-9

[texashillcountrycowboygathering.com](http://texashillcountrycowboygathering.com)

#### NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

Elko, Nevada

Jan. 27-Feb. 1, 2020

(775) 738-7508;

[nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org](http://nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org)

