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Local Buckaroo Completes Novel

Mackey Hedges, a buckaroo on the “K” Ranch in Buena Vista Valley announced last week that his new novel entitled Shadow of The Wind is now available.

This is Hedges second book. His first novel, Last Buckaroo, won several writing awards and is considered a classic in Western literary circles. Last year Western historian Bill Reynolds wrote an article for Western Horseman Magazine in which he named what he considered to be the top twenty five best western books ever written. Last Buckaroo was number three on the list.

Shadow of The Wind, like Last Buckaroo is the story of two modern day, wild, wooly Nevada buckaroos and their adventures as they drift around the west working on various ranches, feedlots and pack stations. Even though both stories have to be classified as fiction, the ranches where the two main characters work are based on actual cattle operations, just as the fictional characters are built around the personalities of men that Hedges worked with on these ranches.

The language is a little rough in places and a few of the adventures of the heroes are sometimes “off color” but both fall easily into the acceptable PG 13 category. The heroes do not wear white hats and the villains often show a soft, human side. The main characters that you come to like and associate yourself with are just as apt, after doing some kind or heroic deed to go on a weeklong, drunk or end up broke in a local brothel. These are the stories of real people with real strengths and real flaws in their character.

The movie rights to Last Buckaroo were sold twice but never made it to the big screen. Shadow of The Wind has not been out long enough to generate much interest from Hollywood. However, Doug Metzger, co-director of Dances With Wolves called shortly after it came out in print and asked for a copy. He said that the state of Montana where he resides had received some stimulus money to rebuild its’ sagging movie industry and he was looking for a suitable western to film within the state.

Robert Sigman, former President of Republic Pictures and financial partner with Hedges on both stories, said that the re-making of True Grit has generated an unexpected interest in the west and has caused a rebirth of interest in western movies. He said that although he has not had any serious offers, he has received a few exploratory phone calls.

It was Sigman who brought Last Buckaroo back into print after Gibbs Smith Publishing dropped their option in 2000. He redesigned the cover and used the artwork of the late

western artist Joelle Smith through out. He used her work once more in Shadow of The Wind.

Hedges wrote his first novel while healing up from a broken back that he got while working on the Howard Ranch in northern Elko County. Here in Winnemucca, while getting over a broken leg that he got while working for the Bare Ranch north of Gerlach, he wrote the second book. He said he hopes Shadow of the Wind is his last book, that he does not feel like his body “can take much more prosperity”.

Something of a drifter and modern day saddle tramp himself, Mackey has worked on ranches in Nevada, California, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska and Utah. In our area he has worked on the Soldier Meadows Ranch, north of Gerlach, the Nevada Nile Feedlot in Lovelock and the Coyote Creek and “K” ranches in the Buena Vista Valley.

His wife Candace has a home on the Grass Valley Road where she cares for her 94-year-old mother Lorain Kidd and Mackey’s mother Doris Hedges. Candi also drives a bus for the Humboldt School District. The Hedges have three boys. Buck, the oldest has an alfalfa farm in southern Idaho and works at a phosphate plant. Jed lives here in Winnemucca, day-works for local ranches and drives truck at the Barrick Mine. Sam is a buckaroo on the Tree Top Ranch near Burns, Oregon.

Shadow of The Wind and Last Buckaroo can be purchased locally at Tips Western Store and Ron’s Seed and Supply. They can be bought on the Internet at Amazon.com, LastBuckaroo.com and CowboyBooksandMusic.com

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