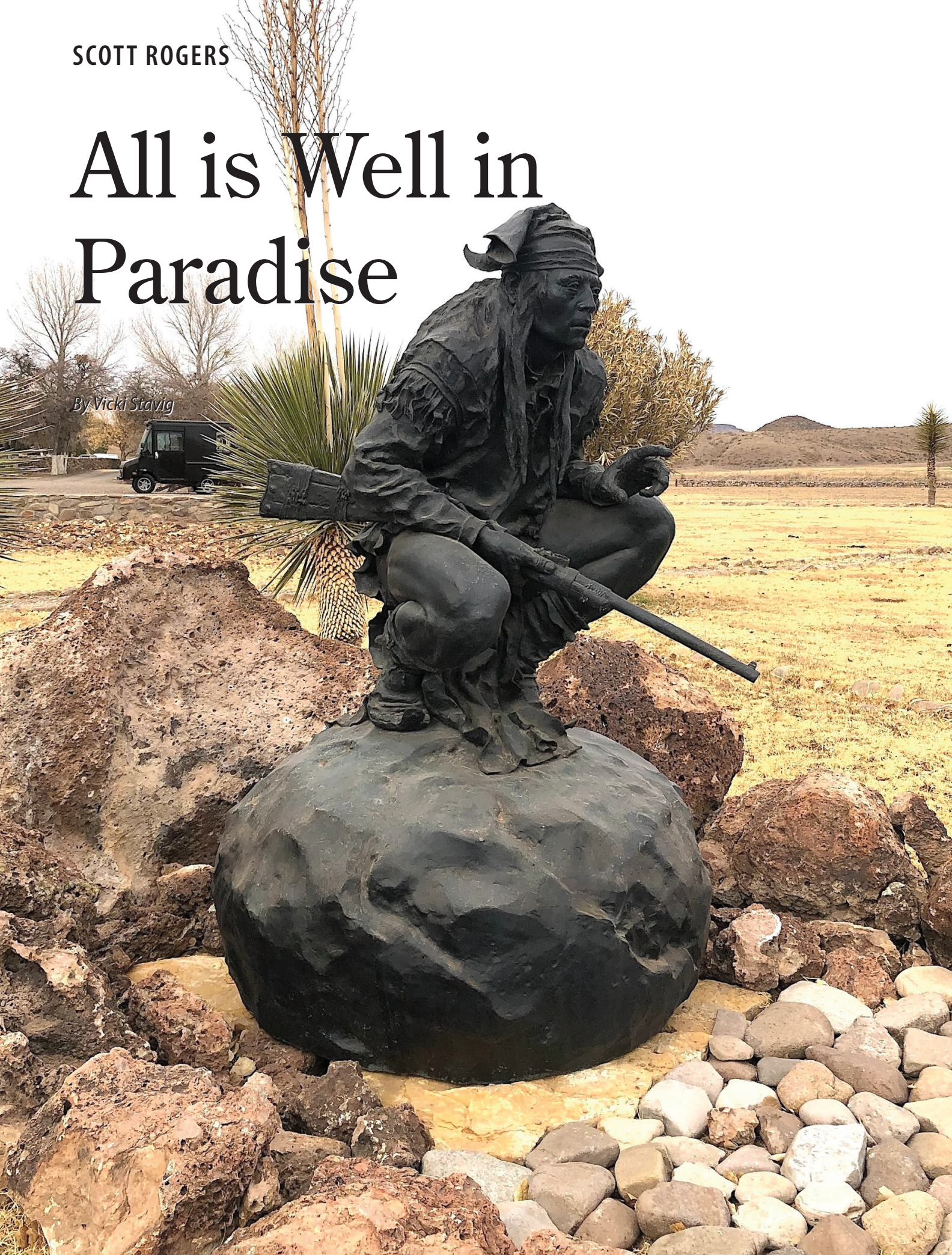


SCOTT ROGERS

All is Well in Paradise

By Vicki Stavig





Off the Mogollon Rim, bronze, 18.5" by 36" by 6"

"In Northern Arizona, there is an area called the Mogollon Rim. It is famous for its beauty and ruggedness. It is the same area where Zane Grey, the Western writer, had a cabin, received inspiration, and authored a number of novels. About 20 years ago, I was invited to participate in a roundup in this area. That experience inspired this piece. Note: My family roots go back 150 years in Arizona; they were some of the first to settle that country. I've only heard them pronounce Mogollon as 'muggy-own.'"

Scott Rogers has heard "the voice" speak to him twice. Both times it changed his life.

The first time came about after he had purchased a sculpture created by his uncle, Grant Speed. He had seen the sculpture, entitled *Rough String*, in 1982 and knew he had to have it but, being a college student, he couldn't afford it.

(Left) Chiricahua Apache, bronze, 6'11" by 4'2" by 4'2"

"Famed for their fierceness in battle and resourcefulness in evading capture, the Chiricahua Apache dwelt among the Sierra Madre Mountains in southeast Arizona. In describing the military's efforts, one soldier said, 'We chase the wind and shoot at shadows.' Led by chief Naiche, and medicine man, Geronimo, the Chiricahua were one of the last Indian tribes to lay down their weapons of war."

"In 1990, when I had a little money, I called uncle Grant and said I wanted to buy it," Rogers says. It had sold out, but Speed, through an art gallery, was able to locate one that would soon become available during an estate sale. Rogers was able to purchase it for \$10,000.

"I was a collector before I was a sculptor," he says, adding that he was so excited that he laid a sleeping bag by the sculpture on the floor and slept by it. "Every time I woke up, I turned it in the moonlight. Six months later—October 4, 1990—I came home from a long day at work. I opened the door, looked to my left, saw that sculpture, and heard an audible voice say, 'I can do that.' I got back into my car, drove to Westgate Shopping Center, went into the Ben Frank-

lin craft store, and bought all the clay they had on the shelf. I started sculpting that night. I've done more than 350 pieces since then."

Sculpting, Rogers says, is a healing process for him. "About 15 years ago, I realized that a part of me healed with every piece I created," he says. That realization came when he was driving down a road, with the radio playing, and heard Cher singing "Gypsies, Tramps and Thieves."

"All of a sudden, I heard it with my heart for the first time," Rogers says. "I felt the pain of a young girl watching her mother dance for money. I started to cry; I connected with the pain of that. It came to me that I had to sculpt that. I came home, sculpted the pain of a woman dancing in dire circumstance, and titled it *For Thrown*

"I'm leaving part of my soul inside the sculpture."



Trail Boss, bronze, 68" by 58" by 28"

"Rifle out and at the ready! You might say it's his 'welcome mat' to the group of men approaching on horseback. It's amazing how a loaded rifle keeps things honest. This might be trouble—it might be nothing, but, he hasn't taken three herds up North being stupid and unawares. T'wouldn't be new to bury those who thought they could take his herd. He's been stampeded, fought Injun's, weathered freak snow storms and seen the blue lightning on the backs of steers in a storm. He knows the taste on the inside of a man that comes when trouble ain't asked for. He can't remember when it happened—he just feels right at home when he's up against it. He rides for the brand; his loyalty is unquestioned. His men love him – for he plays with a square deck. With him, "Ya know where ya stand."

Money. It's clay and is still in my studio. I haven't cast it yet and don't know if I ever will. I've wondered if this piece was only for me to sculpt and release and connect with its message."

Rogers cites another example of a piece that deeply affected him. When he was 16, he won the Dallas Golden Gloves Heavyweight Cham-

ptionship. Years later, he sculpted *Never Bested*, which is based on boxers of the past who would travel and fight local "tough guys" in the ring. "When I sculpted that piece," Rogers says, "I got rid of a little of the fight in me; I became kinder. When I'm truly being an artist, I leave part of my soul inside the sculpture. Sculpting has been a vehicle that

has assisted me to heal, to change."

Along the way, he has discovered that his art also helps others heal. Several years ago, he was at an art show in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and one of the pieces he had on display was *Not a Sparrow Falls*, which features a passed-out drunk with an empty bottle.

"A mountain of a man, a biker,



Football, circa 1890, bronze, 7'6" by 11'6" by 4'

"Joseph Campbell once said, 'Study history for gratitude.' For me, 'looking into the past' assists my outlook on how I live today. Perhaps that's why I'm drawn to creating sculptures that delve into bygone eras.

came in, stood in front of my booth, looked at it, and read the description I had written," Rogers says. "He started to tremble and then shake violently, stopped, gathered himself together, turned to me, and held out his hands like waffle irons. I put my hand in his, and he said, 'Thank you,' and left. That is one of the most powerful pieces I've done."

Rogers was born in Mesa, Arizona, and, by the time he was in the eighth grade, his family had moved approximately 28 times—to various places in Texas, Nevada, Arizona,

Utah, and California. Those moves were the result of his father's work in various sales jobs, the last one landing him in the oil and gas industry, raising venture capital. The moves finally took a toll on Rogers' mother. "We're not moving again," she said, and the family moved into an 1890's Sears mail-order farmhouse on a couple acres outside McKinney, Texas.

"I had an amazing childhood," Rogers says. "I was always curious about everything, and I always felt things deeply." He also discovered

he had an artistic eye and, at the age of 7, would take photos of his family, after first directing them on where and how to stand. Little did he know at the time how important people and compositions would become in his life.

Rogers also camped, canoed, hiked, boxed, rode horses and bulls, and played several sports. "There is something about sports that pulls out my passion," he says. "Sculpting has done the same thing for me."

He went on to earn a degree in finance and accounting from Brigham



Young University, got married, and worked for a time in the insurance industry before joining his father in selling oil and gas wells to investors. He also began to sculpt and went on to take workshops conducted by some of the greats: Fritz White, Mehl Lawson, Herb Mignery, Ken Riley, Fred Fellows, and his uncle, Grant Speed. In 1991, he took one of his pieces to a gallery, and it sold the first day. He was on his way.

In 1994, Rogers and his wife divorced, and he remained single for the following 15 years, until he heard “that voice” speak to him again on February 23, 2008 while he was attending a life training workshop in Bluffdale, Utah, and noticed an attractive young lady. “Write her a note,” the voice said, so he did, asking if she were married or seriously seeing anyone.

That woman’s name was Janette, and she and Rogers have now been married for more than 16 years. Today, they live in Logan, Utah, about 30 miles from the Idaho border, and Rogers works in a studio in Paradise, a small town about 10 miles from his home. “It’s beautiful,” he says, adding that it sits on two acres of land. “It’s a healing place.” He and Janette often share his studio, with Janette and her friends quilting on the second floor and Rogers sculpting on the main level.

“The big thing I’ve tapped into is that sculpting assists me in healing parts of myself that I didn’t know could use healing,” Rogers says. “Realizing that makes me trust my



The Wrangler, bronze, 65" by 34" by 34"

“This cowhand is in the corral, eyeing the horses. He has his eye on a particular mount he knows will work for what he has in mind for the day. With a quick ‘hoolihan’ (backward – clockwise throw) he’ll cull him out of the bunch, saddle him up, and get to work.”

heart more and to carefully choose what I’ll spend time with while sitting in front of the clay. It’s the whispers of energies rising, of love, patriotism, desperation, having limits tested, camaraderie, and plain old hurting of the soul—all worthy subjects.”

Although Rogers often sculpts monumental pieces, he also sees the power of working small. “It doesn’t have to be big,” he says. “Take, for example, *Blizzard* by Solon Borglum. It’s about a man and a horse

in a blizzard. There’s nowhere to go; they’re going to die, and they have laid down together. The piece is so small you can hold it in your hand. It’s a perfect example that the size of a piece can be small—yet as powerful as any monument.”

Rogers’ commissioned pieces have found homes at several prestigious locations throughout the country. They include the Chisholm Trail Heritage Museum in Cuero, Texas; the Newell B. Sargent Foundation in Worland, Wyoming; the



Roundup, bronze, 6'10" by 7' by 4'

"With the one word—roundup—so many images of personal experience come to mind. Getting up at 4 a.m. Hot breakfast that stays with you all day. Not much talk of a morning. Saddling horses. Knowing that my trick right knee is going to hurt about the third hour of being in the saddle. Riding where I never thought a horse could go. Chasing fast steers through pine trees. The lazy talk of a rider beside me. Hollering at the cattle. So many close calls; ya-know what I mean! Branding. Chutes. Wire loops to dig out the ticks and spraying for ticks. Doctoring wounds, castrating, dehorning. Pulling a wet saddle blanket off a tired horse. Always taking care of the animals first. Horse hair on everything I've worn that day. Feeling a unique historical connection to the men, women and children who took part. Sleeping as if I were dead—and not regretting a second of it."

Top of the Rock Museum in Ozarks Heritage, Arkansas; and the cities of Holbrook, Arizona; Payson, Arizona; and Springville, Utah.


Rogers doesn't quite know why he gravitated toward sculpting multi-figure pieces, but he did, and he loves it. "I come up with a concept, like a jury," he says. "It has 12 men, but I sculpt 16 and play musical chairs with them for about two weeks. I put them where they seem comfortable."

He also puts them where they will have the most impact. That includes putting in place several art

principles he's learned over the years. "I don't have eyes on the same level; it creates a stale and static feel," he says. "The piece also has to balance from front to back and side to side. To make a piece feel like it's moving, I stay away from horizontal, vertical, and 45-degree lines."

Rogers has earned a myriad of awards for his work, which is featured in galleries throughout the country and in museum shows such as *Quest for the West* at the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the Buffalo Bill Art Auction in Cody, Wyoming. While the awards

and sales are wonderful, what he most savors are the connections he forms with the people he meets.

"Art should be about a relationship," he says. "I transfer an idea into clay, and buyers have a relationship with it and—through that—with me." 

Vicki Stavig is editor of Art of the West.