



ARTIST · AUTHOR · HUMORIST · SINGER/SONGWRITER · SURFER · COWBOY

★ ★ ★ LORE ORION ★ ★ ★

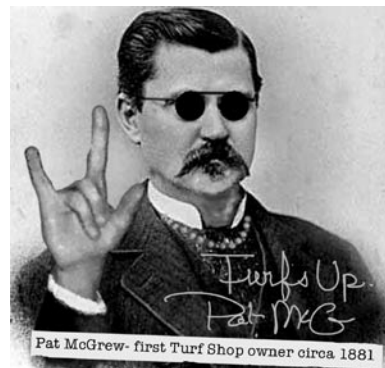
by Susan Shanaberger

How does a surfer from San Diego wind up a horse wrangler in Texas, leaving in his wake careers as an artist, author, and hit country music songwriter? A circuitous route.

His name is Lore Orion. Born in La Jolla as Lawrence Shoberg, he would eventually change his name legally to Lore Orion. "Lore" is a nickname, and he took "Orion" from the constellation from which he has always felt an affinity. He also feels a great affinity for Monument Valley, Utah, but when he went to change his name, "Lore Orion" seemed to roll off the tongue with greater facility than "Lore Monument Valley".

Orion was only two years-old when his mother was killed in an auto accident, and his father disowned him—a tragic start for a child. Fortunately he was taken in by his grandmother and grandfather on a cattle ranch outside of Ramona. His grandfather taught him to ride horses, and infused in him a love of The West.

"It's funny, man. I've always had a penchant for Texas, the West, and John Wayne. When I was a kid, my heroes were Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, and those cats."



When Orion was nine years of age, his father resurfaced, taking him off the cattle ranch and back to San Diego to live and work in a very abusive home situation. "My only

solace was in drawing pictures, and later on, riding waves at La Jolla Shores.

"In my surf days in La Jolla, I would draw pictures of "Murphy" from *Surfer Magazine*. Rick Griffin was my hero. He was Mr. Pen and Ink."

In 1965 the world was changing dramatically. The whole mind-set went from football to Love-Ins. People who were playing piano, painting, and writing poetry were no longer the geeks...they were now the "cool" ones.

"I was already playing guitar, writing poetry, and doing my artwork," Orion said. "I formed my first band in high school called the Flying Circus. We played surf music, Rolling Stones, Beatles, stuff like that. I also began writing and playing my own music, though it sucked terribly."

The day Orion graduated from Hoover High School, he packed his duffle bag, stashed his guitar and surfboard at a friend's house, and went seek his fortune. At the time, the most likely place to realize one's dreams was The Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco. Orion had been performing a few gigs and attending Love-Ins in San Diego, so heading north seemed like the natural thing to do. The renaissance of the 60s was in high gear.



The multi-talented Lore Orion

Shortly after arriving in San Francisco, Orion discovered a group of young people, like himself, who really loved each other and shared everything: food, clothing, money—everything. He thought he had found his own Nirvana. He soon hooked up with some surfers he had known in San Diego and immediately started creating posters for the Straight Theatre on Haight Street.

"The Straight Theatre used to be a movie house," Orion said, "but they took out all the seats and started having rock concerts there...Janis Joplin and the Holding Company, The Grateful Dead, The Sons of Champlin, Dan Hicks and his Hot Licks, were a few of the groups playing my own music, though it sucked terribly."

Orion worked through the Summer of Love, living across the street from The Grateful Dead, enjoying a freedom of thought and action he never thought could exist. But that fall and winter something happened.

"The free love movement wasn't about free drugs, sex, and rock 'n roll," Orion said emphatically. "The Summer of Love was about sharing. We gave each other food, money, clothes, and most importantly, loved one another."

"Then all of a sudden, people began perverting this 'Hipster' social movement into a political movement. It was the college students that destroyed the Hipster movement. They are the ones who convoluted this great social movement in a political one. None of the hipsters I knew in San Francisco had a political statement or agenda."

With the new influx of political activists, dangerous street drugs, cops, and general over-all lunatics in San Francisco, Orion knew the utopian hippie movement was over.

"I was 20 years-old, and I was ambitious. What I really wanted to do was write and illustrate children's books. So I made a clean break, and headed for New York."

New York was the epicenter of the publishing world, so the decision to move east was a reasonable one—and it turned out to be a fortuitous one as well. While living in Manhattan and pounding the pavement with his self-written and illustrated book, Orion discovered a newly-launched humor magazine called *The National Lampoon*. They hired him



Young Orion picks out a tune

on as a gag writer and artist. He was fortunate enough to work with guys like Doug Kenney and Henry Beard, both introducing him to other folks who helped Orion along at this crucial time in his career. One of them was Joe Orlando at DC Comics—the home of Su-

perman. Orion wrote horror stories, and drew gags for the *House of Mystery* and *House of Secrets* comic book series.

Orion finally landed a deal with McGraw-Hill to publish a children's book, but it wasn't the original one he took in to show them. After seeing a picture in his portfolio the publishers thought was interesting, they asked Orion if he could develop a book based upon that one particular image. Orion did, and it would be the first of three books with McGraw-Hill. It is called *Morgan and Things*. The other two are *Willy!* and *Machine*. They are published under the name Lore Shoberg. Mission accomplished, Orion decided it was time to head back West.

Back in San Francisco, waiting for his first book to be released, Orion went back to doing poster type art for companies that were cashing in on the tail end of the Hippie phenom, and underground magazines. He also created educational art for a text book company. It wasn't until a friend of his who worked at The Record Plant recording studios took some of his artwork and showed it to a band that was cutting an album there. The band was The New Riders of the Purple Sage.

It was then that his career went into high gear. This lucky meeting got him the insert artwork on the NRPS' "Powerglide" album, and led to his doing their next album "Panama Red", and their following album, "Home, Home on the Road".

During this entire time, Orion had been writing and playing his songs. Mostly for friends, and occasionally sitting in with his friends' bands. Spencer Dryden of The New Riders heard some of his music and opined that Orion should be a recording artist as well as a graphic artist. That was all it took. Within 9 months Orion was in Nashville armed with a brand new demo tape and an introduction to Waylon Jennings from his friend Mentor Williams (author of the huge Dobie Gray hit *Drift Away*). On his first day in town one of Orion's songs was picked up by a country mu-

sic super-star and became a hit. The song was *That's What Made Me Love You* recorded by Whispering Bill Anderson. Thus, Orion began his quest to become a country music recording artist.

While waiting for the big record deal, Orion continued his artwork. He did work for Waylon, Willie Nelson, Lonnie Mack, Johnny Rodriguez, and a gang of others. Orion had singles released on small labels, all gaining critical acclaim, but it wasn't until the late 70's that he ultimately got his recording deal. He started a band called *Bandera*, named after a little town in Texas. Heard in Nashville by MCA Records, the band was signed to a record deal.

The band's first—and-only album was titled "Bandera Knights". When the album tanked, or was allowed to tank by MCA, Orion decided to leave Nashville, heading off to Austin, Texas where he could play music, not music business. Along the way, Orion stopped for the weekend at a friend's ranch outside of Bandera, Texas, the town he had named the band after, and, as luck would have it, met a beautiful cowgirl and fell in love. Orion took a job as a horse wrangler to be

near her. Life was idyllic for awhile, whooping and spurring all day, and drinking in the saloons at night with his cowgirl. Then music started to call his name again. Orion put together another band he named "Lore and the Legends". Performing all around south Texas, "Lore and the Legends" also toured extensively in England, ultimately releasing two albums there. 1985-89.

Awhile back, Orion stopped touring, deciding instead to devote his time to writing songs. His efforts were rewarded with album cuts on Chris Ledoux and Tim McGraw. He also has tried his hand at producing. He co-produces KATTL, a concept band based in Nashville, Tennessee. The music has been described as "Cowboy Rock", "KATTL Drive", and "Heavy Leather". It's based on the tenet that if a cowboy in the 1880's was given the choice between an acoustic guitar and an electric one he would choose the latter. And he would plug in, put everything on 10, and boogie till the cows were afraid to come home. Orion is the primary songwriter...but his pet project is a concept album that combines two things he loves—cowboy music and surf music.

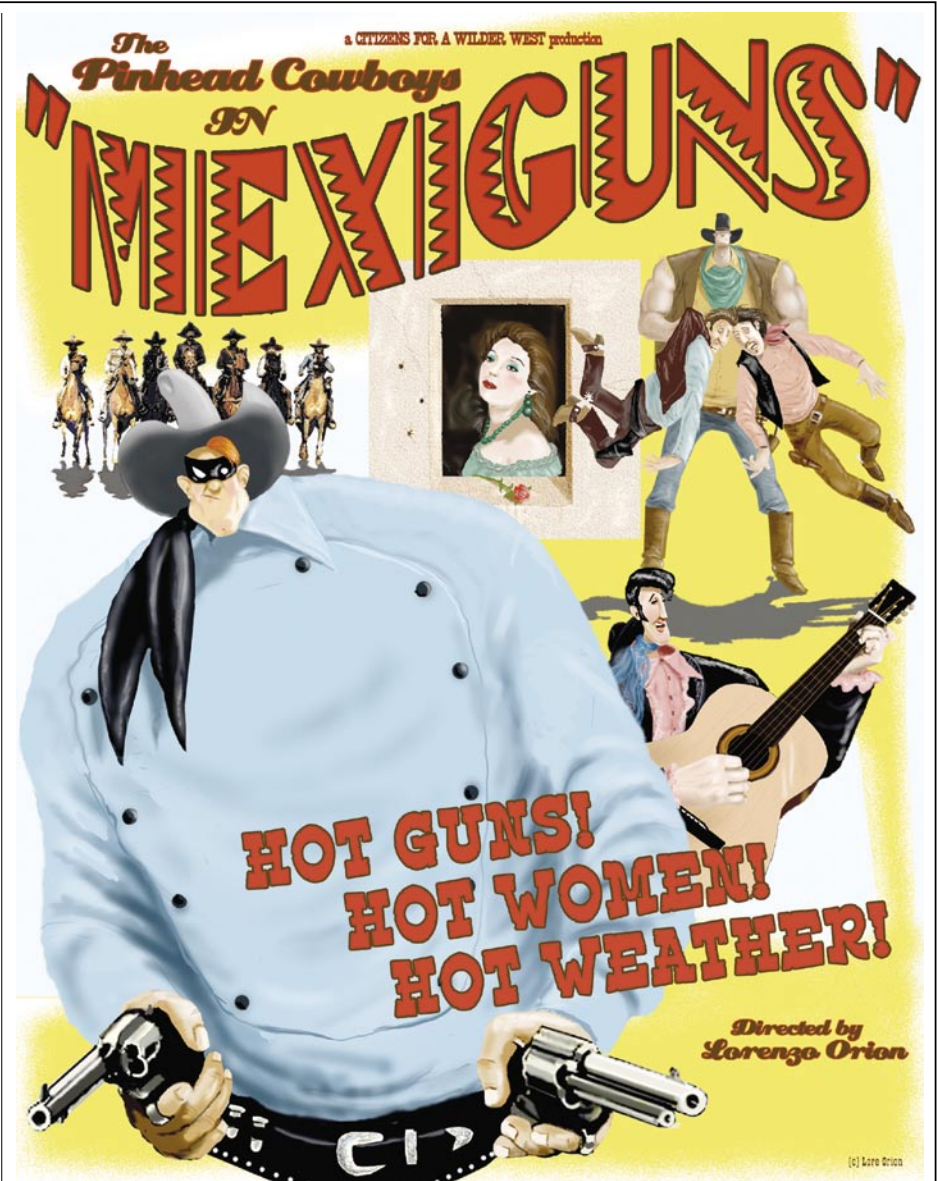
Orion sees surfers and cowboys as one and the same persona—rugged individualists with respect for the environment, and the need to feel one with nature. With this concept in mind, Orion produced an album entitled *Beach Bums and Saddle Tramps*, combining his cowboy songs with classic surf tunes *Wipeout* and *Pipeline*, recorded with some of Nashville's top session pickers.

Currently living in Bandera, Texas, with his Cowgirl and two Adopted Angels, Orion has come full circle.

You may visit him at: citizensforawilderwest.com Or you can check out his surfer/cowboy album *Beach Bums and Saddle Tramps* at: cowhunarecords.com



New Riders of the Purple Sage album cover created by Orion.



The Pinhead Cowboys, above, have been a favorite subject of Orion's art and humor.

KATTL, below, is the band that Orion currently co-produces.

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