



Performer Profile

Paul Boruff – Born to Sing!



Paul Boruff, a 57-year-old Navy veteran from Salt Lake City, Utah is a natural on stage. He grew up singing and playing musical instruments, talents that have taken him far in life. “I always knew I’d be in the entertainment business,” Boruff says. “I got my first guitar when I was eight or nine years old and I began singing even before that.” In high school, Boruff and a group of five other teenagers formed a band called “The Miscellaneous Assortment,” and he was also in his church choir. When graduation rolled around, Boruff chose to follow his family’s tradition of military service and join the Navy.

Enlisting in 1969, Boruff was trained to be part of an aviation squadron in Albany, Ga. Soon after training, he got the orders sending him to Vietnam. Assigned to the aircraft carriers USS Ranger and USS Saratoga as part of a reconnaissance attack squadron, Boruff saw a great deal of combat. After completing his military duty in 1973, he picked up his musical interests right where he left off.

Taking only his backpack and guitar, he set off looking for places to earn a living as an entertainer. He traveled all over playing in venues that included Officer’s Clubs and National Parks. Making his living this way since 1973, he has been very successful at it. His musical talents have even led him to experience some of life’s other happy moments. In fact, it was while Boruff was working as Yellowstone National Park’s historical theater entertainer in 1992 that he met his wife, Nan Weber.

Paul Boruff was first introduced to the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival by a music therapist at the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System. Encouraged by her and some fellow veterans at the medical center, Boruff entered his first Festival in 2000. He won first place for his own rendition of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” and was invited to attend the Festival that year. He remembers being unexpectedly awed by the talent he saw that first time. “As a professional artist, I wasn’t really sure what to expect of the talent at my first Festival,” Boruff says. “I was extremely impressed and I felt humbled to be a part of something with such a great purpose. I’ve since found camaraderie with the other veterans and if I can be of assistance to any of them, I feel good.”

Boruff says, “I feel good about what I am doing as an entertainer.” He has spent the year touring and entertaining audiences throughout the country. In October, he heads to Riverside, California for this year’s event, after performing at the Fiddle Festival in Trinity Alps and entertaining audiences along the Oregon coast. For him, the Festival has provided another stage on which to perform – and at his age, he laughs, he appreciates all the stages he can find.

This year is Boruff’s eighth performance at the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. He will once again perform “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” the song he entertained the audience with in his first Festival appearance. He jokingly said the only change was asking the orchestra leader to slow it down a bit. He is getting older, after all.