

**ED
TECH**

BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

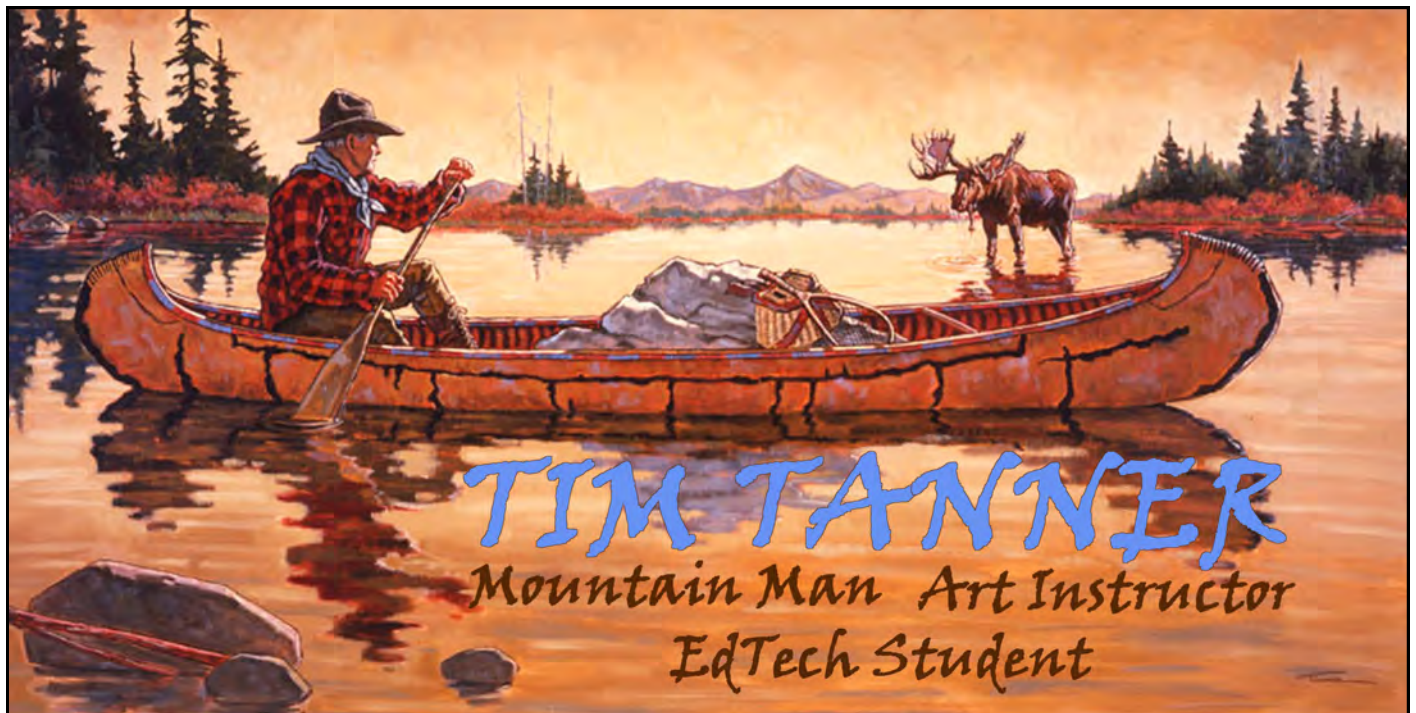
Faces

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In this issue:

***EdTech student & online art instructor
Tim Tanner!***





EASY BOY. JUST PASSING THROUGH—Tim Tanner's rustic art celebrates the glory days of illustration.

JERRY FOSTER

Tim Tanner has one foot in the future and the other in the past, but the remarkable reality is how comfortable he feels in both.

Twenty-first century Tim Tanner is an online art instructor and curriculum developer at Brigham Young University-Idaho and a part-time graduate student in Boise State University's online master's program in educational technology. In the EdTech program, Tanner focuses on becoming a more effective online teacher and in doing so contributes to his employer's mission to reach more students and provide more curricular options without building more classrooms.

The nineteenth century Tanner is a fur-clad mountain man re-enactor who hunts elk and buffalo with a 58-caliber flintlock rifle and cooks beaver meat (it's ghastly greasy) over a campfire because it is authentic. Even the modern Tanner, the computer-age learner and teacher, is remarkably retro. Thematically, his art focuses on outdoor ad-

venture, fishing mostly, in the lakes and streams of the northern Rockies—though the scenes could easily depict the wilderness and wildlife of Maine, Minnesota or northern Michigan. The period is always the past or a primitive present, in which canoes are always paddled, never propelled by trolling motors. A Model-A Ford pick-up in the background of one painting is as modern as he gets.

Stylistically, Tanner's art is reminiscent of the glory days of illustration (circa 1900-1940) when artists like Phillip Goodwin, Oliver Kemp, and others, painted calendar art, tin signs, and pictures commissioned for advertising Winchester and Remington arms and ammunition. Tanner's art capitalizes on peoples' love of roughing it in the back country, much as James Oliver Curwood's Canadian-adventure-romance novels did in the same period.

Tanner's brush strokes the psyche of wilderness sentiment, where it is always late afternoon, always autumn, and the man clad in red-and-black plaid is

RESOURCES

Tanner's gallery of outdoors art— <http://www.wix.com/ttanner1768/timtannerstudios1>

Pictures in Tanner's book, Early American Country Homes—

<https://picasaweb.google.com/104050004556095551444/EarlyAmericanCountryHomesSamples>

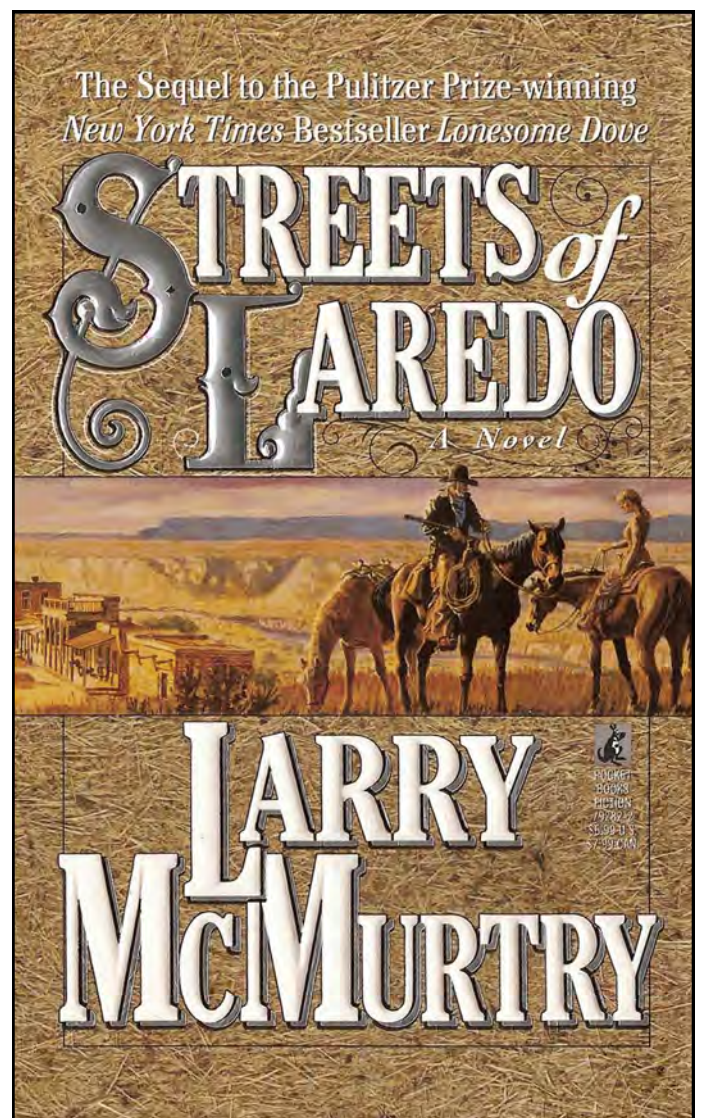
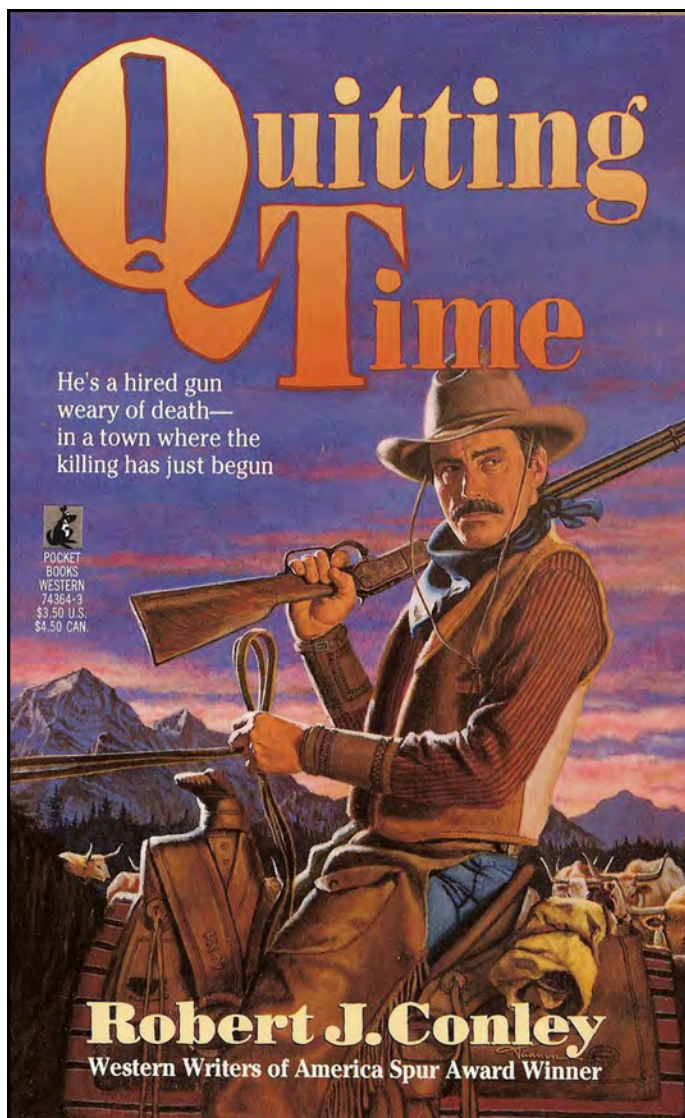
almost always alone—all metaphors for the end of something. Loss is a key element in literature and music, as well as the wilderness art genre of the 1920s, which reflected America's loss of the wilderness experience in an increasingly urban and industrial era.

At about the same time, that same frustration with industrialization spurred the popularity of western movies. Now close to a century later, Tanner's art may evoke less loss than a simple snapshot of desire to get away from it all with a fly rod in some postcard pretty place so far out that the phone doesn't ring and you paddle your canoe only

a little faster than gridlock, but somehow you're okay with it. That's what Tanner's art is, a reminder in your office or home that one day you're going to pull the plug on the daily grind and put yourself into the picture.

Whether Tanner's art evokes memories of personal experience or a desire for personal experience, it touches people emotionally and deeply enough to convince them to fork over \$10,000 or more for a single painting.

Early in his career, after graduating from Utah State University with a bachelor of fine arts degree and a minor in history, and after studying at the



COVER ART—Tanner's career as a university art instructor began as an illustrator in the publishing industry, then later evolved into fine art (see examples on pages 1 and 3), and finally to teaching after a successful career as a professional illustrator.



**ON THE HEADWATERS
OF SPANISH RIVER—**

This is the Green River country near present-day Pinedale, Wyoming. The Green River flows southward through eastern Utah before draining into the Colorado River, which fur trappers called the Spanish River because it flowed into what is now the American Southwest, but was Spanish territory in the fur-trapping era, roughly 1800 to 1840.



UNDER CATHEDRAL PEAKS—

This image is iconic of Tanner's genre. The evening sun colors the Grand Tetons, a view he sees from his home. The yellowish water reflecting the late-afternoon sky. The reddish tint on the foreground grass and the brush along the river suggest autumn, the red-and-black plaid shirt, and muted colors are all iconic of the golden age of illustration.

California Art Institute in Los Angeles, Tanner and his wife moved to Connecticut, about an hour from New York City, where a few former Utah State classmates helped him get his foot into the door at major publishing houses. He made some calls with portfolio in hand and within a few weeks started getting commissions to paint book covers. He specialized in cover art for western novels, including a series of 15 or 20 Zane Gray reprint covers and *Streets of Laredo*, Larry McMurry's sequel to *Lonesome Dove*.



TIM TANNER—
In authentic
mountain man garb.

Publishers generally paid about \$2,500-to-\$5,000 for publication rights on book cover paintings, and then Tanner would sell the original painting to someone else and often double his income. “I could make \$100 to \$150 an hour painting, but there were no benefits and no 40-hour weeks,” he says.

Painting cowboys and gunslingers on horses came naturally for a guy who grew up on a horse ranch near a small Utah farming and ranching community. His father owned a saddle and tack shop and liked Charles Russell cowboy art because he was the real deal, a man who lived and worked with ranchers and cowboys, just like he did, and painted them authentically. That was important to Tanner's father. Anything less wasn't honest.

Like Charles Russell, young Tim spent a lot of time on horseback, camping, fishing, hunting—living the life that he would record on canvas throughout his career. But something else pulled him into specializing in western book covers. He

read a lot of westerns as a kid and, like his father, it drove him nuts “to read a story taking place in, say, 1873 and the guy on the cover was carrying a Model '94 Winchester rifle,” which, of course, was not manufactured until 1894.

After five years in the New York City metro area, Tanner moved his family to Teton County, Idaho (population about 6,000), where elk and moose jaywalk through his yard and the evening sun paints every color but drab on the jagged peaks of the Teton Mountains, so dramatically close to

The hiring decision was largely due to his EdTech graduate studies at Boise State

his picture window. In Idaho, Tanner continued to paint book covers and started teaching art part-time at BYU-Idaho, about 40 miles to the west, in Rexburg.

And it was a good thing because the economy in recent years has made the purchase of premium, original oil paintings an even greater luxury than before.

Now, almost two decades after moving to Idaho, he works full-time in BYU-I's Online Instructional Design Department, “a huge blessing” for his career and family. The hiring decision, he says, was largely due to his involvement in Boise State's online graduate program in educational technology.

Though it comes as no surprise to Tanner's Ed-Tech professors at Boise State, whom he has yet to meet in person, some may find it ironic that technology allows him to teach art online to students he himself may never meet and to design cutting-edge interactive online curriculum. Meanwhile, his heart keeps on casting for trout as his canoe drifts on a placid current under a red evening sky.

Jerry Foster is a recruiter and advisor in Boise State's online graduate programs in educational technology. Contact him at jfoster@boisestate.edu.