

Marsing was launching pad for fantastic life, career

Writer, entrepreneur Rico Austin still embraces his hometown

Through 10 books and a newly launched tequila brand, it has always come back to Marsing for Rico (Richard) Austin.

The oldest of five boys, he was born in Payette and raised around Southwest Idaho.

The Austin family lived in Marsing for about one-half of the school year when Rico was in fourth grade before moving to Meridian.

In fall of 1972, the family returned to Marsing, purchased a mobile home from Roger and Jody Sevy, and set it upon Canal Street on a small lot that Rico's parents Tommie and Nina were buying from his grandmother Nina Devel Morris.

Rico was in seventh grade, and the school year had started about a month prior to arrival. One of the greatest things he recalls about living in Marsing is that he never had to move again or start fresh at making new friends like he had when enrolled at seven different schools in Boise, Meridian, Marsing, Eagle and Eugene, Ore.

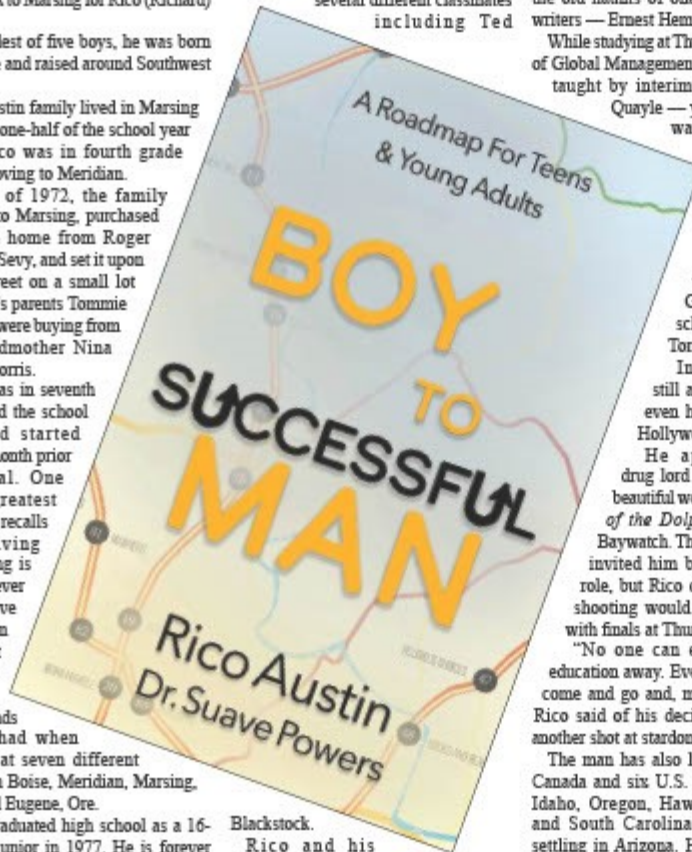
Rico graduated high school as a 16-year-old junior in 1977. He is forever grateful to his parents for settling down in the small town next to the Snake River.

Rico still has many ties to the area. His mother Nina Austin Hayes and his brother David Austin live in Marsing, and his brother Michael lives in Homedale. Another brother, Samuel, lives in Florida.

Their youngest brother Steven passed away at home on Canal Street in Marsing on Feb. 28, 1978.

Rico returns to Marsing at least twice a year to visit family and friends, including with two of his best friends — Craig Clapier and Kenny Sevy. Rico was in Cabo San Lucas when Sevy

passed away on Feb. 6, but he flew in to Idaho to attend Sevy's funeral and saw several different classmates including Ted



Blackstock.

Rico and his wife Connie have lived in Scottsdale, Ariz., for the past 21 years.

Rico has authored 10 books, including his best-selling debut *My Bad Tequila*, and now is in a partnership with two friends marketing a tequila brand, BAJARRIBA.

Even as a young boy, Rico seemed destined to becoming an entrepreneur and writer as he grew up in an area ripe with endless adventures for him, his younger brothers and numerous cousins.

Rico's love of reading, exploring and traveling allured him to many parts of the world.

He taught English and capitalism in Lithuania.

He played American football for the Staffordshire Stallions in the United Kingdom.

He traveled to Cuba to fish and wander the old haunts of one of his favorite writers — Ernest Hemingway.

While studying at Thunderbird School of Global Management, he took a class taught by interim professor Dan Quayle — yes, the guy who was George H. W.

Bush's vice president.

Rico caught the writing bug again while working for the Glendale, Ariz., school's paper *Das Tor*.

In 1997, while still at the college, he even had a brush with Hollywood.

He appeared as a drug lord on a yacht with beautiful women in the *Night of the Dolphin* episode of *Baywatch*. The casting director invited him back for another role, but Rico declined because shooting would have conflicted with finals at Thunderbird.

"No one can ever take your education away. Everything else can come and go and, most likely will," Rico said of his decision to pass up another shot at stardom.

The man has also lived in Mexico, Canada and six U.S. states including Idaho, Oregon, Hawaii, California, and South Carolina before finally settling in Arizona. His work travels have taken him to Spain, France, Hong Kong, Canada, Iceland, Germany, the Bahamas, Puerto Rico, England and, of course, Mexico.

Rico credits the different roles and jobs during 50-plus years of working for some of his success and business acumen. He claims he has worked for some of the smartest women and men and was able to take something away in knowledge from every teacher and employer he has studied or worked for. From mowing lawns, selling garden seeds and greeting cards door-to-door, milking cows, feeding beef, changing sprinkler pipes, plowing fields, framing houses, plumbing, picking fruit, detasseling



corn, sacking potatoes, outdoor theatre, sorting pop bottles, box boy, assistant store manager, retail, waiter, meat processor, microchip inspector, mobile home assembly line, computer sales, janitor, steel erection, author, real estate, land developer, black jack gambler, restaurant owner, airline reservations, construction cleanup, marketing manager, manufacturer representative for three different international tire companies, and now co-founder and managing partner of an international tequila brand — BAJARRIBA, which loosely translates to "Bottoms Up."

Rico has written and had published 10 books. His first, *My Bad Tequila*, a fiction memoir, became a best-selling novel and has won more than 15 national and international awards.

His latest book, *Boy to Successful Man, a Roadmap for Teens & Young Adults*, was published last year and dedicated to two mentors, including Marsing's own Pete (P. T.) Rathbone, who was Rico's 4-H leader of the Eager Beavers.

"P. T. was one of the most giving men with his volunteerism and helping girls and boys to grow into responsible women and men," Rico said.

Thanks to Rathbone, Rico's latest book is making its way into Marsing, Homedale and Rimrock high schools.

Austin also earned recognition from the Arizona Authors Association in its 2021 literary awards, including first prize in short story for *Dog* and honorable mention in the juvenile/young adult novel category for *Boy to Successful Man*.

— Next week: Rico Austin's formal education is just as vast as what he has learned traveling the world. And, he even has a Ph. D. in tequila.

GV rubber duck race winners

The Grand View Days rubber duck race was held Saturday in the city canal. Prizes were awarded to the owners of the first three ducks across the finish line:

1. Scott Orthell, fishing set
2. Brandon Wolfe, barbecue pack
3. Joe Rodriguez, movie snacks

UI Extension plans canning workshop

A fruit canning workshop is planned for Marsing on Wednesday, June 22.

The University of Idaho Owyhee County Extension will play host to the Fruit Frenzy canning workshop from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Extension office, 238 8th Ave. W.

Recipes to be featured include

- Berry sauce
- Peach Melba freezer jam
- Fruit cobbler jam with cherries

To register, email owyhee@uidaho.edu or call (208) 896-4104.

Homedale Lions Club Annual

DEMOLITION DERBY

MONDAY, JULY 4, 2022

TICKETS AVAILABLE on Homedale Lions Club Facebook

MANDATORY DRIVERS MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22 • 7PM • HOMEDALE BOWLING ALLEY