

Buckskin Bulletin

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A Trip to the Westerners World

*By Kelsi Craig
West Elk Wranglers
Western State
Colorado University*

On the first weekend of April, starting from Gunnison bright and early on a Friday morning, six members of the **West Elk Wranglers** started on an exciting trip down to Oklahoma City. Members included **Matt Martinez, Eric Martinez, Evan Soderstrom, Wesley Baer, Julia Organik** and **Kelsi Craig**. The goal of this trip was to familiarize ourselves with Westerners International and to meet the people at the Home Ranch.

The members of the West Elk Wranglers arrived that evening just in time to meet several of the members and to attend a meeting of the Indian Territory Posse and engage in conversation over a deliciously put together meal. After the meal was done our small group was invited to attend the meeting of the Posse and were able to learn the ways of this group and were honored to be able to sit in on the meeting discussions and business.

After the meeting was over we were able to meet up with **Rodney Goddard**, (WI President) a good friend and mentor to the Gunnison West Elk Wranglers. We spent the rest of the evening with him

and his wife, **Patsy**, exchanging stories and enjoying the conversation. The next day was welcomed with breakfast with Rodney; a good kick-off for the day!

The group was privileged to receive admission to the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Center [where the **Home Ranch** is located] and spent a good portion of the morning on into the afternoon touring the museum and learning about the many
(Continued on Page 2)



Gary Lower, member of the Indian Territory Posse and a museum docent, explains an exhibit to the Students. (Photos by Jim Argo)



WI President Rodney Goddard, center, poses outside the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum with, left to right, Julia Organek, Matt Martinez, Corral Sheriff; Wesley Baer, Eric Martinez, Kelsi Craig and Evan Soderstrom, all members of the West Elk Wranglers Corral, Western Colorado State University, Gunnison. More photos on WI Extra.

University Corral Pays a Visit to Home Ranch

Story by
Kelsi
Craig



(Continued from Page 1)

wonders of the Western US. I think the guns and rodeo exhibits immediately grabbed the attention of the group. After this the Gunnison group parted ways with the members of WI to make way for home. They stopped to have some fun for the evening starting with some mini-golf and racing go-karts then finishing the night with some country swing dancing before starting the long trek home the next morning.

The West Elk Wranglers would like to thank everyone in the WI group who helped make this trip possible. Between the planning of the trip and the hospitality that was offered so generously, it was a great trip where great memories were made! The Wranglers thank all of you for being a part of their weekend and hope you know they plan on making another trip in the future.



Kent McInnis, chairman of the Executive Board of Westerners International, explains the workings of the Home Ranch office to members of the West Elk Wranglers. (Photo by Jim Argo)

A Note From the Chairman

(Editor's Note: *The West Elk Wranglers is the first WI group organized at a college or university, due mostly to the idea and work of **Rodney Goddard** with assistance from **Kent McInnis** (column at right). We already have a second such group with the possibility of two more being formed. To make this trip as successful as possible both the **Indian Territory Posse** and the **Chisholm Trail Corral** voted to chip in some financial support to the group for some meals and lodging. We all remember how it was as a college student when your funds are mostly slim.*

It was shred day at our house last week. I was at home going through my packed file cabinets to cull decades of useless paper. It was also like Christmas. I found lots of surprises—gems I lost years ago. One was in a fat folder titled “WI Executive Board.” The contents hinted at how much WI has changed since I joined in 1980. It contained a suggestion for recruiting new members. The promotional piece read like a one-liner from humorist, Jeff Foxworthy. “You might be a Westerner, if—--.” The idea to promote Westerners

to every diverse interest was cloaked in humor with a laidback manner. What is it **Ray Billington** said? Westerners share a dislike for stuffed-shirtism?

The enjoyable visit to our Home Ranch by students from the **West Elk Wranglers** was a lesson for us. We can be a little stuffy, if we are not careful. By contrast college students know how to have fun. It's a lesson we need to learn from each new generation. Westerners are supposed to have fun. Let's encourage these students to show us how.

Kent McInnis

Corral Picnics, Tours Historic Farm

(Tip of the hat to Joan Day for sharing this story!)

By Joan Day

Fort Collins Corral

Rose and Jim Brinks

were the gracious hosts to the annual picnic of the **Ft. Collins Corral** of Westerners and led the Posse on a tour of their historic farm and log cabin where John Provost homesteaded in 1858. This property is rich with western history including the headgates of both the New Mercer and Larimer County #2 Ditches, remnants of the tracks of the trains that hauled the sandstone from the town of Stout, which is now under the waters of Horsetooth Reservoir.

Northern Colorado is filled with a variety of historical sites from pre-historic to relics of the West's more modern times. Both the early French Canadian fur trappers and the immigrants from the Overland Trail made significant impact on this area and left tangible reminders of the milestones and the tragedies of the everyday lives of those individuals. The **Bingham Hill Cemetery**, nestled just below the entrance to the beautiful Pleasant Valley, is one of the reminders of the pioneer families.

Although Native Americans, mostly Ute and Arapahoe, were known to have roamed this area, no Native American burials have been found in this area. The oldest known gravestone in Larimer County, and the first confirmed 1862 burial at the Bingham Hill Cemetery, belongs to 9-month-old Bazille Provost, son of Jean Baptise Provost and his Oglala Sioux wife, White

Owl, who also was known as Mary. The knoll, south of the Provost home where he was born, was a lovely and logical place for a burial. Since that time more than 200 burials have taken place at the Bingham Hill Cemetery. The most recent full interment was in 1985 but only 130 have proper grave markers.

It was most fortuitous that Westerners members Rose and Jim Brinks purchased this plot of farm land in 1977, with its plethora of historic sites, including the cemetery. When the Provosts "squatted" on this land in 1858, they just knew that it was located at a prime location where the Overland Stage Road crossed the Cache la Poudre River. Since that time the land was owned by several different individuals and with the record keeping over time, or lack thereof, the exact ownership of the original two acre cemetery land has become cloudy. Now, most appropriately, Rose insists that the land "belongs to the dead."

Along with this orphaned status, the land became overgrown with cacti, brush and grass and the monuments were either vandalized or badly worn by weather and time. With little more than strong will and determination, Rose gathered the troops, be they Boy Scouts, 4-H Clubs, friends, family, mortuaries or community members, and assumed the responsibility and challenge of clearing the land and replacing or refurbishing the monuments in order to hon-

or those interred there.

Not one to leave a project incomplete, and with her customary persistence, Rose painstakingly researched every known burial and compiled the information on their lives and deaths into a booklet, "Bingham Hill Cemetery: Laporte & Bellvue, Colorado."

The Fort Collins Westerners Corral #60 is honored to support the efforts of local historical projects in our area and it gave the corral great pleasure to provide financial assistance toward erecting a monument at the Bingham Hill cemetery that pays tribute to the historic and rugged individuals buried there.

San Francisco Unit Has Outing

How many know you can spend the day touring Rosie the Riveter sites? Members of the **San Francisco Corral** do after their May outing.

The group gathered at the Rosie the Riveter Visitor Education Center in Richmond, California, to see two films on women ship builders during World War II. After touring the exhibits the group had lunch, then moved on to the Red Oak Victory Ship or the Rosie the Riveter Memorial.

During WW II Richmond increased its 20,000 population to over 100,000 in three years and more than 747 ships were built in the four Richmond Kaiser Shipyards. The nearby Ford carplant was retooled to build combat vehicles.

Life and Death of a Jewish Gunfighter

**By Abraham Hoffman
Los Angeles Corral**

Wild Bill Hickok, John Wesley Hardin, Doc Holliday, Billy the Kid—all notorious and well-known gunmen. But

Jim Levy? Whoever heard of an Irish Jewish gunfighter?

Jim Levy qualified on all three counts. Born in 1842 in Ireland into a Jewish family living in a predominantly Catholic country, Jim Levy leaves no record of observ-

ing the rituals of his religion. He came to the United States as a young boy.

While working as a miner in Pioche, Nevada, he witnessed a gunfight. Michael Casey, the winner, insisted the killing was in self-defense, but Levy said he had seen Casey shoot first. On May 30, 1871, Casey challenged Levy to a gunfight, but Levy was unarmed.

Levy went and got a pistol and shot Casey. Then, for good measure, he clubbed Casey on the head with his pistol. A friend of Casey then shot and wounded Levy. Casey died, but Levy recovered from his wound and won an acquittal of the charge of murder.

Levy was 29 years old at the time. In the years that followed, he became a gambler, merchant, and gunman, drifting from one Western town to another, including Cheyenne, Deadwood, Tombstone, and Tucson. He was involved in at least 16 gunfights.

On June 5, 1882, Levy was in Tucson, where he got into an argument with John Murphy. Neither man was armed at the time. Murphy left to get a gun; Levy didn't. Murphy returned and shot Levy dead.

Levy's short life—dead at age 40—had come full circle. Ironically, his first and last gunfights were against other Irishmen. Unarmed for his first confrontation, he got a gun. Unarmed for his last, he neglected to do so, and thus was ended the career of an Irish Jewish Gunfighter.



Pictured above are the Westerners International supplies which are available to members and Corrals/Posses. Prices include the cost of mailing.

Old Joe Bolas with leather tie—\$15 each

Old Joe lapel pins (gold color)—\$7.50

Past Sheriffs lapel pin or tie tack (see below)—\$6

Square Lucite paperweight etched with Old Joe—\$8

Round speaker's gift with Old Joe—\$10

Wood speakers gift or past Sheriff trophy—\$15

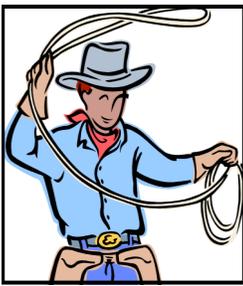
Westerners International logo decals—10 for \$1.50

Westerners International bookplates—25 for \$1

WI membership cards—Free

Informational brochures—Free





Corral Roundup

It is always interesting to read the meeting notices sent in to the **WI Home Ranch** each month. And we find so many programs we wish we could attend.

Case in point: the May meeting of the **John G. Neihardt Corral**, Columbia, MO, was "A City Family Goes Motor Camping on Western Trails: 1922" by member **Emily Bonwich**. The program described the adventures of a family of eight with two Cadillac touring cars and trailers as they traveled to the west coast and back from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—under very primitive road conditions.

>>>>>

Another intriguing program was given at the December meeting of the **Denver Posse** And was titled "Coloroddities: Strangest Things About the Highest State" by **Tom Noel**. Any WI member on the subscription list for Denver's "Roundup" or has access to the March-April issue can find out what this is all about as the program is the featured article.

>>>>>

Anyone planning to attend a meeting of the **Pahaska Corral** should remember a warning that always appears in that group's newsletter: "You should wear your western duds and refrain from cussin', or be subject to a fine." We always wonder how much the corral coffers expand each month.

>>>>>

The **Huntington Corral** is one of the few that has a High Noon Luncheon rather than a dinner meeting and it meets on Saturday. At the April meeting the group was able to take a power point trip back to the Los Angeles of the latter half of the 19th century to see how the city has changed between then and now.

Can you imagine Los Angeles with dusty streets, women in full-length dresses, men in bowler hats and the kind of buildings that passed as "office towers" in the late 1800s? Giving this interesting program was **Greg Fischer**.



(Photo by Fred Marvel)

From the Editor

What's going on in the picture above? It is an attempt to get more people to participate in submitting pictures and articles to the *Buckskin Bulletin*. Actually there are many suggestions in this bulletin to, hopefully, prime the pump of the WI membership creativity. Pictured is **Trammel Rushing**, a certified chuck wagon cook and member of the **Chisholm Trail Corral** in Oklahoma City. Each spring he and his wife, **Susan**, do a cook-out for Corral members. There are more pictures on one of the WI Extra pages posted on-line: **www.westerners-international.org** The pages follow this bulletin posted there. Many of you have special activities in the spring and summer—a couple are even included in this bulletin. We wish we had pictures to go with them, though, so be sure to take along a camera to your event for the bulletin. You can e-mail them or let the US Postal Service deliver.

Many of our member groups send us their meeting notices each month so be sure to do that, too. The bulletin is for all of us and we want to feature as many corrals and posses as possible.

We are always glad to get nominations for our "Living Legends" series and the "What's in Your Backyard" or information about a favorite place to visit. When you visit our website check out the back issues of the *Buckskin Bulletin* for ideas.

Burnis Argo

Editor's Note: Do you want your corral or posse to be included in the Roundup? Mail or e-mail meeting notices to the Home Ranch.
PICTURES TOO!



"A Journey Through California's History on El Camino Real" was the topic for the April meeting of the **Santa Barbara Corral**. Speaker **Tom Zimmerman** based his talk on his book *El Camino Real: The Route of the Daylight* in which he connected the trail followed by Spanish soldiers and padres with the later construction of the route of the famous Daylight trains and the Golden State's scenic Highway 101.

Another program with a focus on railroads was the March meeting of the **Central New Mexico Corral**. The title of the talk was *The Influence of Railroads on New Mexico's Transition from Territory to Statehood*. Speaker was **Fred Friedman**, who worked for many years as head of the NM Railroad Bureau and then for Law firms investigating railroad accidents and causes throughout the west.

Photography was the topic of the February meeting of the **South Canadian Cross-Timbers Corral**, Norman, Oklahoma. Speaker was **Chester R. Cowen**, former photo archivist for the Oklahoma Historical Society and the title of his talk was "Photography in Central Oklahoma, 1868-1899."

Many of our corrals and posses have a special oath of office for swearing in the

new officers each year. Here is the oath the **Fort Abraham Lincoln Corral**, Bismarck-Mandan, North Dakota, officers took this year...*"to do their best to help preserve Western traditions, Western history and to promote scholarship related to the American Frontier West. They pledged to foster a spirit of fun and camaraderie and discourage stuffed-shirtism, over seriousness, shiftless thinking, and above all, ignorance."*

Does your group have a special oath or procedure for installing new officers each year? If so, let the Home Ranch know about it.

Have you ever wondered how to make a hat out of an animal pelt? Members of the **Pine Ridge Corral**, Chadron, Nebraska, learned about this subject at their March meeting. Speaker was **Cooper Cogdill**, a senior at Chadron High School who presented a program about his hobby of animal trapping and making hats from the pelts.

The **Llano Estacado Corral**, Lubbock, Texas, sent in an account of the group's January meeting:

"During our annual banquet we heard Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist **Glenn Frankel** speak on his new book *The Searchers: The Making of an American Leg-*

end. The nearly 60 people in attendance listened as Frankel spoke vividly about Alan Lemay's original novel, about Cynthia Ann Parker and her son Quanah who inspired the novel and about John Ford, John Wayne and the making of the 1950s movie in Arizona's Monument Valley.

Frankel sold and autographed books afterwards, many members brought the copies they already had to be signed. It was another grand evening for the corral with plenty of hardy talk, refreshing cocktails, good food and lively discussion."

In March the **San Dimas Corral** held a joint meeting with the **Old Spanish Trail Association** to hear a special program titled "Rancho San Jose: The Survey says?"

Eric Simison explained to the gathering how he took original drawings of Rancho San Jose, plotted them onto a Google map, used CAD (computer-aided-design) technology to locate where the actual rancho boundaries should have been, and calculate an accurate acreage.

The 1858 Hancock Survey of Southern California ranchos showed Rancho San Jose to be only 22,340 acres, causing the then owners to claim they had been robbed.

Were they right? Simison shows its actual size at 47,136 acres!

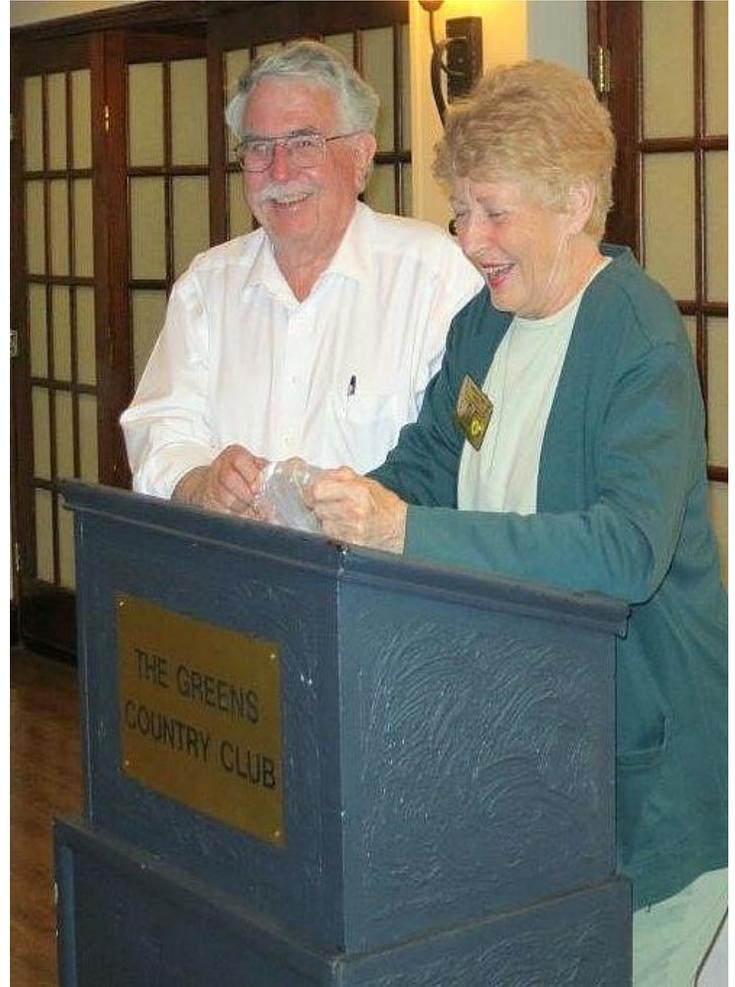
Members of the Old Spanish Trail group were especially interested as they are also using GPS mapping techniques to plot the old trail.

Reward Your Members

Does your corral or posse reward speakers or members who do a little (or big) something extra? We know some groups give their speakers one of our Old Joe plaques suitably engraved. Others hand out one of our Old Joe round or square paperweights (see Page 4). It isn't so much the size or cost of the "gift." Just the recognition of a job well-done is probably most important.

Several members of the **Chishom Trail Corral**, Oklahoma City, were honored at a meeting recently for their contributions. Receiving a round paperweight, photo at right, from Burnis Argo is **Bobby Weaver** who undertook the herculean task of organizing the library at the WI Office, (with some assistance by his wife **Dianna Everest**) which houses books and other writings by members of our organization. Others honored the same evening were **Fred Marvel, Jim Argo** and **Cheryl McInnis** for taking pictures and **Fred and Mary Marvel** and **Sandra** and **Dennis Noble** for the hours they spent in cleaning out and organizing WI office files.

Tell us what you do to honor your members and what they are honored for. A picture or two is always welcome.



(Photo by Cheryl McInnis)

About Corrals New and Old

Word has been received at the Home Ranch about our latest forming group. According to **Douglas Cubbison** of the Wyoming Veterans Memorial Museum, Casper, Wyoming, an organizational meeting has been set in June at the museum with the purpose of organizing a new **Casper Posse**. Anyone living in that area might want to get in contact with Mr. Cubbison at the museum: douglas.cubbison@wyo.gov

>>>>>

Members of the **Kansas Corral** have set up their meetings for the next several months. This is not an easy task since they meet all over the state. Among the towns

they will visit are Topeka, Fort Riley, Emporia and Florence.

>>>>>

Members of the **Utah Westerners** have announced plans for their annual summer field trip.

This year the group will be headed for the Powder River Country in eastern Wyoming to visit sites of the two major phases in the Plains Indian Wars.

In addition, during the three-day trip they will visit a number of museums and historic sites including Fort Caspar, Tongue River Battle site, Jim Gatchell Museum and Independence Rock State Historic Site.

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Kent & Cheryl McInnis, Don Reeves, Rodney Goddard, Fred & Mary Marvel, Ed Kelsay, David & Shirley Carter, Bill Deupree, John & Melvena Heisch, Jim & Burnis Argo, Sandra & Dennis Noble, John Marshall.

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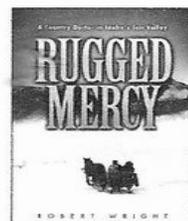
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Photos by Jim Argo

Students Visit

The recent visit of some members of one of our student corrals was very special. Their tour of the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum began at *The End of the Trail* statue in the museum's entrance. Artist James Earle Fraser sculpted this plaster piece for the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco. The museum acquired the piece in 1968.

Our Visitors and Their Colorado Hometowns



Kelsi Craig
Flagler



Eric Martinez
Pueblo



Wesley Baer
Monte Vista



Matt Martinez
Pueblo



Evan Soderstrom
Golden



Julia Organek
Gunnison



Members of the West Elk Wranglers all wear these special corral jackets.



The sheriff and his missus, Don & Sally Farrell, above, enjoy the nice May evening while the cooks, Susan & Trammel Rushing, below, enjoy a cup of coffee from the back of their authentic 1889 chuck wagon.



After the stampede to the serving table to fill plates a time or two the corral members (upper right photo) relax and enjoy a beautiful Oklahoma evening. Filling their plates, right, are Dianna Everest and Sandi and Dennis Noble followed by a long line of eager eaters.

Chuckwagon Time

Each spring members of the Chisholm Trail Corral drive out to the country home of Vi & Will Jones to enjoy a barbeque meal prepared by corral members Susan & Trammel Rushing. Does your group have a special spring or summer event? If so, take some pictures and send them to the Home Ranch for use in a future bulletin. Addresses, mail and e-mail, are on page 7 of this bulletin.



**Photos by: Fred Marvel
and Cheryl McInnis**

