

Buckskin Bulletin

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Check WI web-site to read the Bulletin on-line

WHAT IS A WESTERNER?

**By Shebby Lee
Black Hills Corral
(Reprinted from her Trail Talk)**

I am a Westerner in more ways than one. I live in the West and am devoted to its history. But I also belong to an organization called Westerners International, a foundation to stimulate interest and research in frontier history, according to its web-site.

This is a club like no other that I know of. Instead of chapters we have "corrals" or "posses"; there are no presidents or other such officers. The designated leader of each corral is the

"Sheriff" and the other officers are "Deputy Sheriff," "Keeper of the Chips," "Recorder of the Marks and Brands," and so on. We begin each gathering with a ritual salute: "Hello Joe, you old buffalo!" addressed to some depiction of a buffalo skull (ours is painted on a leather scroll), the origin of which is lost to the mists of time.

You may have guessed by now that the organization was started by a few homesick souls from the western part of the country who found themselves, for various reasons, stranded on the shores of Lake Michigan, in

decidedly mid-western Chicago, and wanting to maintain their birthright, founded the club in 1946 on a lark. Two of these, **Leland**

Case and **Troy Parker**, had roots in South Dakota. And it wasn't long before groups around the country started asking permission to establish their own corrals. Corral Number 8, (founded in 1953) is the Black Hills Corral which I have belonged to since the mid-seventies, even serving a stint as the
(Continued on Page 3)



Pictured are members of the **Palo Duro Corral**, Amarillo, Texas, during their fall cookout at the ranch of member Jack Williams located on the edge of Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Pictured, l to r, are Sheriff **Kenneth Pirtle**, **Rodney Lauhban**, **Joe Faulkenberry**, **Greg Bynum**, **Jim Jennings**, Keeper of the Chips; **J. Blair Rhodes**, Deputy Sheriff; **Alvin Lynn**, **Garry Nall**, **Dwight Huber**, **Dr. J. Paul Matney**, **Ed Benz**, **Jack Williams**, **Jeff Williams** and **Dr. Bill Sansing**. The name of one of these men seems to be missing from the list sent. Charter member Nall gave the program, a history of the corral including memories and stories of the group's past 40 years. (Photo provided)

From the Chairman ~ Kent McInnis

"It's too bad we didn't write her up as a Living Legend."

I hear that a lot. A posse or corral member passes away, a stellar example of a great Westerner, but no one took the initiative to write up the story of the man or woman held in high esteem.

I was reminded of that this month after three Westerners of my acquaintance recently passed away.

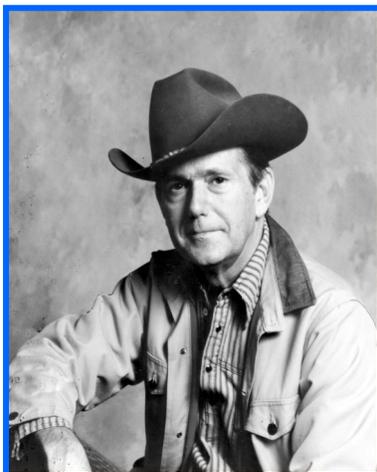
From the Editor

The photograph below is of **Fred Egloff**, a former Westerners International president. Why are we running his picture? Here at the **Home Ranch** we have a great many old photos just as many of us have in our own homes. Some are black and white, others in color. They are stuffed here and there—in files, in drawers, a few in actual small photo albums—you know, just like in our houses.

So a member volunteered to sort them and try to get them in some kind of order as they are a part of the WI Archives and history and need to be preserved. Many have some information on the back—some do not. We decided to start a new feature called "**The WI Family Album**" and will be running these pictures a few at a time on one of our WI Extra Pages which can only be seen at the end of our on-line posting of the **Buckskin Bulletin**. We will write the information just as it is on the back of the pictures. If we have something wrong or no info at all, please let us know if you can supply the facts.

We hope you enjoy seeing some of these scenes and people from the past. Our website address is listed at the top of the first page of the bulletin. Check it out each time.

Burnis Argo



Gordon Morris Baaken of the **Los Angeles Corral** died late last year after a too short battle with cancer. Young, energetic, Gordon always seemed to have an entourage of students following behind him wherever he walked during the annual WHA conference. A professor of history at Cal State, Fullerton, he was always ready to talk history, especially if it involved the military. He should have been a Living Legend, but he was young. One does not need to be old to be a Living Legend.

Pendleton Woods of **Indian Territory Posse**, Oklahoma City was a prolific writer, organizer, reporter, and collector of everything historical. Whether it was establishing a county museum, writing about Oklahoma history, preserving the local documents that are so often discarded, or talking to children about Oklahoma, Pen was a man of unbounded energy. His obituary read like a book of, well, historic proportions. He was 90 when the Indian Territory Posse discussed who should write up a Living Legend piece for Pen. It was not the first time someone had volunteered. This one was the last. Sometimes the subject is uncooperative. Certainly, no one is to blame. We are all busy.

Joe Rosa, former president of **Westerners International**, and member of the **English Westerners Society**, passed away late last year after a lifetime of accomplishments. Fortunately Joe was written up as a Living Legend in 1977.

Oddly though, our co-founder **Leland Case** was not designated a Living Legend until eight years later. The selection order of Living Legends is obviously unpredictable.

My point is this. The time to write to the Home Ranch about a Living Legend in your Westerner group is now. The age of this man or woman is immaterial. In fact, we hope the person is around long enough to savor the recognition. We all know someone we are proud to call great. There are many Westerners who deserve such recognition. Let's write about them. Send it in today.

Kent McInnis



Westerners Explained



(Continued from Page 1)

Deputy Sheriff which inevitably led to Sheriff (although I never did receive my past-Sheriff's badge and frankly, I'm still a little sore about it).

Nevertheless, I've enjoyed the monthly get-togethers to learn about various—and often obscure—aspects of western history. I have even, on occasion, visited other corrals during my travels when their meeting time happens to coincide with my visit and I am always welcomed with typical western hospitality.

Some corrals have websites, some even publish, but most are much more informal. The **Black Hills Corral** videotapes every historic presentation. These are then archived at the **Leland D. Case Library** at Black Hills State University. Ironically some of the largest and most active corrals are located outside of the United States.

Westerners International enjoys a symbiotic relationship with the Western History Association, a much more conventional organization of professional historians which sponsors a fairly substantial annual history conference at rotating locations

throughout the West. The Westerners traditionally sponsor a gathering, once a breakfast, now a reception, at the conference where members from across the country get a chance to salute Old Joe together and compare notes. This tradition has carried over to other, more regional history conferences, including our own West River History Conference in Rapid City, SD.

Eventually the founding fathers scattered and the headquarters landed in Tucson, where Leland Case had retired, for many years. Today it is headquartered—appropriately—in the **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City.

In 1983 South Dakota celebrated a year-long commemoration of the 100th birthday of its first poet laureate

Badger Clark—a Westerner himself [and a great uncle of Shebby Lee]. I wrote what I titled “a personal reminiscence,” presented it as part of my contribution to the occasion, and somehow it was entered in the annual WI awards competition, winning the Philip A. Danielson award for best program of the year. It remains my only national award, and I've been feasting on it ever since!

But back to Westerners. If you are interested in perpetuating both the myth and reality of the Old West you may want to locate a corral near you and join up. There is very little demanded of members other than extremely modest annual dues and the obligation to participate occasionally in the western hospitality of monthly meetings where you are sure to know more after than you did going in.

It also just might whet your appetite for traveling the Great American West, where history happened.

(Editor's Note: Shebby Lee is the owner and operator of Shebby Lee Tours in Rapid City and writes a monthly internet newsletter titled *Trail Talk*. We thank her for letting us reprint the latest one in our Bulletin for all to enjoy, especially new members.)



This group shot from 2001 shows Shebby Lee, second from left, leading her first Lewis & Clark Trail tour. Statue is of Sakakawea. (Photo Provided)

Chicago Corral Report

By Burnis Argo, Editor

Westerners International has a lot of writers in the membership. But did you know we have a number of artists and photographers, too? Because of our awards program for books, monographs, articles and poems, the writers seem to get all the publicity. Words are nice but so are illustrations.

The **WI Home Ranch** office has a number of paintings by members in its collection. Occasionally you readers get a glimpse of some of them when pictures taken in the office are shown.

Recently a member of the **Chicago Corral** sent us a chatty letter about his group and included a number of his drawings. Lucky **Chicago Corral** as he often donates his work to the group to "help our cause in keeping the spirit of the Old West alive."

Carl J. Tocwish was an artist for the *Chicago Sun-Times* newspaper, retiring in 2000. He worked in the ad-

vertising art department at the paper for 26 years.

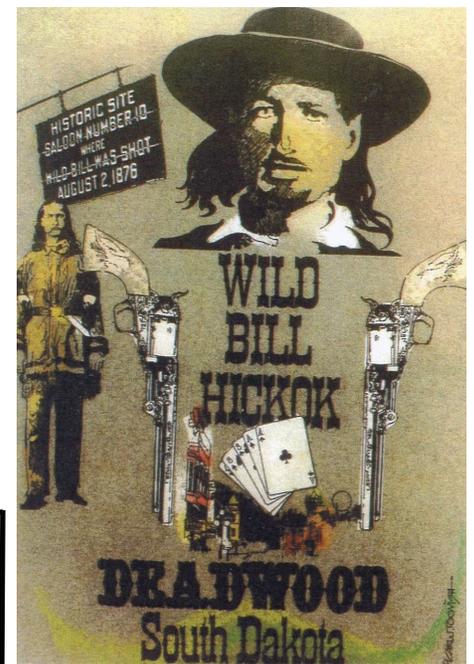
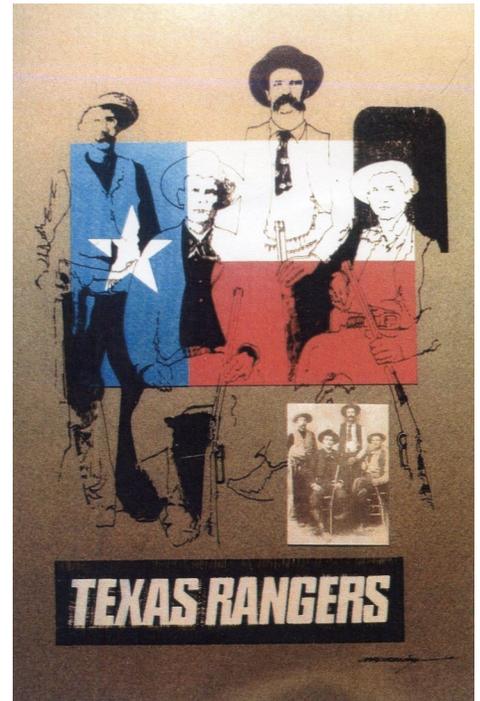
"I kept up my artwork in drawing Old West and Civil War illustrations," he wrote of the miniatures shown here and on one of the WI Extra Pages, which can be seen on the WI website, following this bulletin. As a bonus, the online version is in living color!

"Our Corral [which is No. 1 for those who don't know] meets the last Tuesday of each month, except June, July, August and December, at the Sawa's Old Warsaw Restaurant in Broadview, IL."

"We are a close knit group of people who love the history of the Old West and our presenters are most informative and well versed in their presentations," he added.

The miniatures Tocwish sent along are approximately 5 1/2 by 3 3/4 inches. The originals are 8 by 10 inches.

We thank him for sending these to the Home Ranch and helping to remind us of all the artists and photographers we have in our membership, too.



Snail Mail vs. email

The price of stamps keeps going up so how is everyone continuing to conduct corral and posse business? Here at the Home Ranch we have noticed a lot more groups are sending in their meeting notices by email: **Omaha Corral**, **Kansas City Posse**, **Utah Westerners**, **Chicago Corral**, **Central New Mexico Corral**, to name a few. Both the **Durango Corral** and the **Denver Posse** send out postcards. Denver includes both a phone number and email address for replies while the folks in Durango apparently use only the telephone. Your editor's corral, **Chisholm Trail**, communicates by email but we notice the **John G. Neidhardt Corral**, Columbia, MO, is offering a choice to members in the way each wants to get the meeting notice. Are there others who mail and email? Do any of you use the post office only? Both are welcome at the Home Ranch. Your choice.

Memorials

There are two empty spots around the campfire of the **Fort Abraham Lincoln Corral**, Bismarck-Mandan, ND:
Arnie Sakshaug
Hollis Napen

Missing from the **Boulder Corral**, CO, campfire ring:
Neil King

Members of the **John G. Neihardt Corral** enjoyed a program by **David Sapp** at their March meeting. His topic was the Boonslick Trail, the first road from St. Charles to [Old] Franklin and it ended where the Santa Fe Trail began. Says the meeting notice, "the trail took its name from the salt spring or 'lick' in western Howard County Missouri first settled by Daniel Boone's sons Nathan and Daniel.

>>>>

San Francisco Corral met in December for the intriguing program "Shock Waves of the San Francisco Beer-Quake, or The Curious 150 Year Cycle of Brewing in San Francisco." Speaker was **John Freeman**.

This corral, by the way, goes all-out on their meeting notices which are in the form of a 5 1/2" by 8 1/2" 8-page bulletin. Always very interesting and nicely done.

>>>>

George Ritzlin gave the program at the January meeting of the **Chicago Corral**. His topic was Maps of the Old West. Says the meeting notice, "George believes that at their finest, maps can be an almost magical combination of history, art and geography."

>>>>

Speaker at the March meeting of the **Central New Mexico Corral** was **Anne Hillerman**. Her subject was "History's tempting dis-



tractions—and how a novelist succumbed (A look at the way research on fictional detectives, the history of Chaco Canyon and the legacy of movies in Monument Valley led to a mystery series.)"

If you are wondering, yes she is the daughter of the late author **Tony Hillerman** and she is continuing her father's Joe Leaphorn/Jim Chee mystery series.

>>>>

In March the **Los Angeles Corral** enjoyed the true story of **Alice Chong**, who courageously operated behind enemy lines in war torn China, 1937-1945. Speaker was **Brian Dervin Dillon** whose wife is the niece of Chong.

Dillon himself is the son of **Richard Dillon** whose book reviews are enjoyed by so many of us.

This corral is very up-to-date. Members can pay for their meals ahead of time on the computer through Pay Pal.

>>>>

It was all about "Bighorn Sheep" at the February meeting of the **San Dimas Corral**. Speaker was **Steve Segreto**, who is retired from the U.S Forest Service. He first told the group about the various species of bighorn sheep

breeds of bighorn sheep in this country. Then he focused on the Nelson's bighorn sheep which reside in the San Gabriel Mountains.

During his career he worked for the Department of Fish and Game, Angeles National Forest and Mt. Baldy Education Center.

>>>>

Huntington Westerners took a trip back in time at their February meeting.

Ken Veronda was the speaker, leading the group back to 1915 Pasadena and the Gibson Girls, aroma of orange blossoms throughout the San Gabriel Valley, cars with steam, gas and electric power and the excitement of motion pictures.

>>>>

Durango Corral met in February at the historic Strater Hotel for a program by **John Kessell**, "Whither the Waters: Mapping the Great Basin from Miera (1776) to Fremont (1845)."

Wanted:

Pictures of Corral & Posse **Activities for Bulletin and on our web page. Best are 4x6 or 5x7 color photos.**

**1700 NE 63,
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
wihomeranch@gmail.com**

Include names of people and places and that of the photographer.



El Paso Corral Honors Speakers a Special Way

By Prestene Dehrkoop

"Thank you **Bob Sproull!**" How many times have you said Thank You, really meant it and then later the moment is gone?

The **El Paso, Texas, Corral** of Westerners has a member that is a true treasure, received many Thank You's and that moment will live on forever. Bob Sproull, or "**Doc**" Sproull to us, has brought smiles and thanks from so many in the past years.

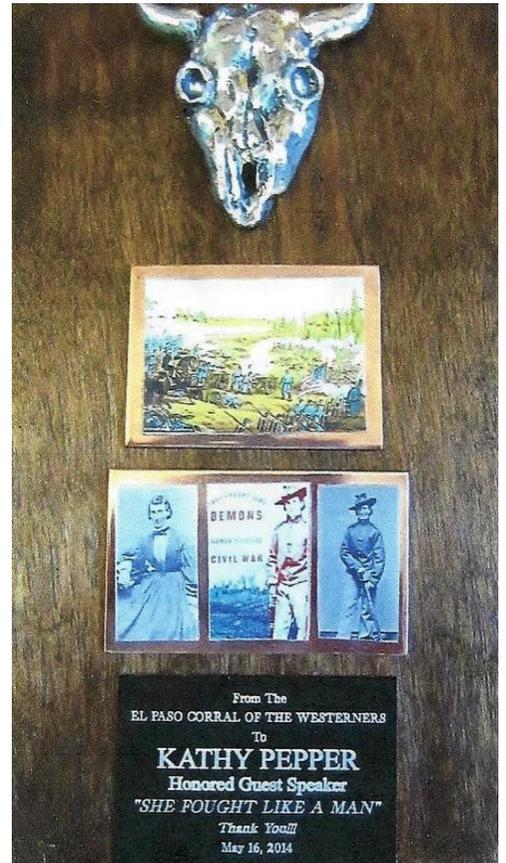
Trying to get speakers is sometimes very difficult but not for us. The word is out that the gift they receive, after their presentation, is quite unique and a keepsake.

Having been a dentist in the military, Bob loves to work with his hands and volunteered to do the plaques for the Corral. He loves researching each speaker and starts working to produce a one of a kind art piece just for a presenter.

Buying a piece of lumber, 10 by 12 feet long, which will make several plaques, Bob starts cutting, sanding, staining, collecting objects, producing photos and metal pieces for engraving, and the gift starts to take shape.

Bob's wife Peggy says, "Bob's hobby keeps him out of trouble."

He stays busy with other passions, too. He is editor of the Prespectors Club of El Paso Newsletter, joining the group's treasure hunts to



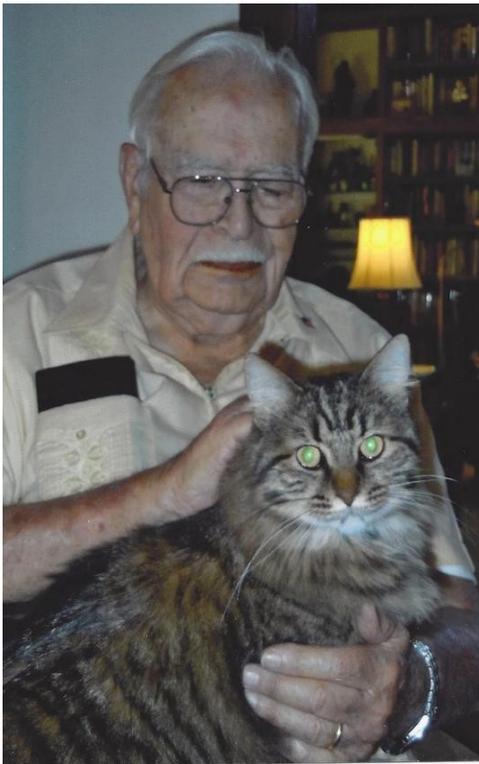
Pictured is one of Bob Sproull's one of a kind speaker's gifts. To see more examples go to the WI Extra pages, which can only be seen on the WI website. (Photos by Prestene Dehrkoop)

find objects of the past. He also loves to read.

He is a true history buff and one could spend days talking with him. Visiting with Peggy and Bob was a special treat and to see their wonderful home filled with thousands of books and artifacts was a privilege.

Unfortunately, we will be saying good-bye and good luck to this couple as they are moving to Boerne, Texas, to be close to family.

You will both be missed but thanks for the memories.



Bob Sproull and WatchCatII

Member Honored

David A. Rennie, member of the **Indian Territory Posse**, has been named grand marshal of this year's '89er Day Parade in Norman, OK., April 18, honoring the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889. Rennie's grandfather, Albert Rennie, was an early day Indian Territory attorney who drew up townsite papers for Norman.

"This is an honor that connects me with the community where I received most of my nurturing as a young man and also connects me to my heritage," said Rennie, a civil engineer and former Norman City Engineer and Public Works Director.



(Photo courtesy of the Norman Transcript)

Posse Has Special Guest

The **Kansas City Posse** had an honored guest at their December meeting. It was Elizabeth Bacon Custer, wife of George Armstrong Custer. Well—not the real Mrs. Custer but **Deborah Buckner**, a posse member, who enjoys her 40-year obsession with Gen. and Mrs. Custer so much she even portrays the general's lady whenever she gets a chance.



Deborah Buckner portrays Elizabeth Bacon Custer. (Photo by Chip Buckner)

At this meeting she shared stories of "Christmas on the Plains" telling of the work and fun as the frontier Army wives planned to celebrate the holiday. "Mrs. Custer" has visited the group in the past with stories of "The Custers in Kansas" and "Winter on the Plains."

What a special holiday treat!

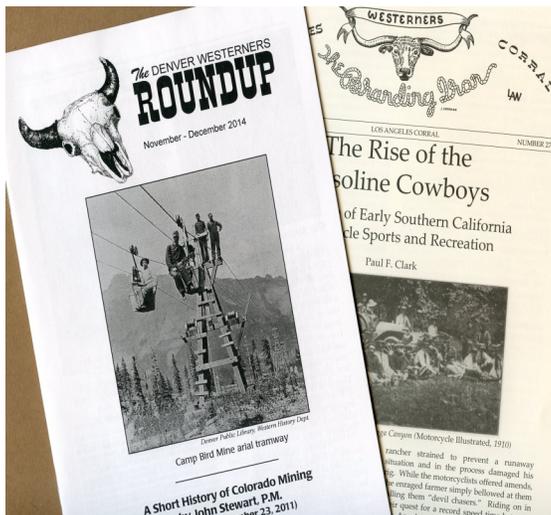
WI Mercantile



Good News! Bola Ties are back. We have a new supply ready to send out. Each is \$15. Contact the Home Ranch office and we will get one or more in the mail along with a statement. Snail mail and email addresses are listed below. Shipping and handling included in the price.

Corrals Publishing

There are a number of Westerners groups that publish more than just a meeting notice. Once, twice, sometimes more times a year they put out a small magazine of some very interesting reading material and illustrations. The November-December **Denver Westerners Roundup**, pictured below, featured an article titled "A Short History of Colorado Mining" which was given as a program by **John Stewart** in 2011. A nice number of illustrations were included with the article. The Summer



2014 issue of the **Los Angeles Corral's The Branding Iron**, shown left, led with a story named "The Rise of the Gasoline Cowboys" which was about early southern California motorcycle sports and recreation by **Paul F. Clark**. Also in this issue was an article by **Glenna Dunning** called "California Steaboats 'Round the Bend!"

Buckskin Bulletin

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email
wihomeranch@gmail.com

Check our web page:

www.westerners-international.org

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Come and View the WI Family Album

We have many old photographs stored away in our office so have decided to begin a **WI Family Album** on the WI Extra pages for all of us to look at and remember.

Some photos have IDs and some do not. We hope someone can give us information on the ones we know nothing about. Some pictures have been in past issues but most have not.

The Extra pages can only be seen on our website: www.westerners-international.org If you have never read our bulletin there you will like it because almost all of the photos and other graphics are in "living color." So try it out and see if you can recognize anyone from your past on the WI Extra pages. Let us know if you enjoy this trip down memory lane.



Who are these ladies? The back of the picture says it was taken at a meeting of the Kansas City Posse, Dec. 8, 1998 and shown are l to r Jane Sellen, WI board member; Elizabeth Marshall Ergovich, incoming Sheriff, and Lenore Carroll, outgoing Sheriff. We do not know who took the photo but probably a member of the posse.



WESTERNERS FAMILY ALBUM



Three young trappers at a Rendezvous in the Czech Republic, 1996, of the **Trappers** and **Indian Corral**.



Our overseas corrals really play the part when they have a Rendezvous. Above are some of the "Indians" who were members of the **Pony Express Corral** of the Czech Republic in 1989. According to the back of the picture, one of these gentlemen goes by "**Bill Wampum.**"

A tough looking bunch from out of the Old West! Actually a tough bunch from Seraing, Belgium, all members of the **Riders Corral** in 1998. From l to r **Claude Boutigny, Moerman, Patrick Soors, Jacque Houge, Boutigny, and Guy Jonft.** We are missing the first names of two of these men.





WESTERNERS FAMILY ALBUM



Above, , Aug. 4, 1995, **Danny Freeman**, right, presents a speaker's plaque to **Budge Ruffman** who spoke at a meeting of the **Prescott Corral**. Also pictured are **Martin Dist** and **Norita Freeman**. At left **Kenichi Koyama**, sheriff of the **Tokyo Corral** receives a plaque from **Revere Young** in 1998 during a visit to the Home Ranch office.



Charles Williams, Dr. Clint Chambers, Dr. Ken Davis, Dr. Weston Pettey and Harry Nichols were on the panel of the 9th National Cowboy Symposium and Celebration. No when, where or what information is included on the back of the photo.



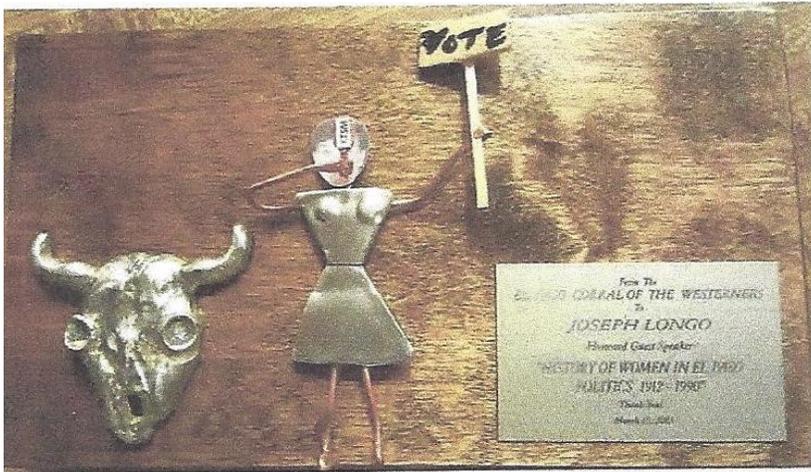
Dressed as a 19th century buffalo Skinner is **T. Lindsay Baker**, a past WI president. He has been a fixture at many WI events at WHA meetings. Tulsa, 1993.



El Paso Corral Speaker Plaques



Here are a few more of the special speaker plaques designed by **El Paso Corral** member **Bob "Doc" Sproull**.



Photos by Prestene Dehrkoop

