



WI Home Ranch Seeks New Pastures

By Our Chairman

Years ago one of my history professors shared an anecdote about Western American artist Frederick Remington. Also known for his considerable girth, Remington stated that the saddest day of his life was the day his horse of many years collapsed under him and died. It forced him to look for a replacement, and fast. We at the Home Ranch have ridden the horse at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum for 29 good years. Sadly, our horse has collapsed and we find ourselves looking for a replacement, and fast.

We have been the very grateful guests of this world class National Cowboy Museum since 1988, when fellow Westerner and then museum president **Byron Price** invited the Westerners Home Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, to relocate to Oklahoma City. The story has been told in the *Buckskin Bulletin* many times. Of the several sponsors from the **Indian Territory Posse** of Oklahoma Westerners involved in the move back then was **Don Reeves**, who has been our secretary since day one. Still employed at the National Cowboy Museum, we will always be grateful to Don for his liaison work, both to connect the Home Ranch to the past and to bring continuity to our relationship with our hosts at the museum.

Over the years we have enjoyed office and executive board support, not only from our original sponsor Indian Ter-



ritory Posse, but from the **Chisholm Trail Corral** in Oklahoma City, the **South Canadian Cross-Timbers Corral** in Norman, Oklahoma, and from the **Fort Smith Corral** in Arkansas. This is a testament to their active interests in, not only Western history, but in the Westerners organization itself. There are too many men and women to thank in this column, but you will find their names when you read past issues of *Buckskin Bulletin*.

For now, our staff is a small group. That is good. Our temporary offices at the museum are not adequate. Besides Secretary Don Reeves, we have Treasurer **Mary Marvel**, who always brings her husband **Fred**. Likewise, *Buckskin Bulletin* editor **Burnis Argo** brings her husband **Jim** to work. It has at all times been a good team, but to get even four in our current space at one time is a challenge. We have resorted to going to the office on different days. In the long run, that is simply not workable. And the museum wants our space.

For 29 years we have worked in close association with "our" museum. Every member

of the museum staff, including volunteers, knows us. It is evident that they are sad to see us leave. Often when I depart after my usual Tuesday work day, I chat with the security team as I sign out, then chew the fat with the grounds crew as I go to my car. Frequently, a docent will come by to visit our office, because someone else has bragged on us. At evening events I often get the privilege of talking to staff members in a manner that says, I belong here. We have felt like we were part of the fabric of the museum and helped to make it the great institution it is. We are sad to leave such supportive friends.

The future appears to mimic our own American history of westward movement. We, too, are heading west, perhaps to Arizona. Negotiations continue, but the Home Ranch is definitely leaving Oklahoma. Your current Home Ranch crew can assure our future hosts that the organization is fiscally sound, well organized, and primed for meeting the changes that all organizations face over time. Just as your chairman has always been pleased with the dedication of our many volunteers at the Home Ranch, I know that Westerners will always be in good hands wherever we land this year. Westerners International is ready for its next generation of leaders to innovate, reinvent, and motivate our 5000 plus international membership on into its second 100 years.

Kent McAnnis



Volunteers Backbone of Westerners

Volunteer: *one who gives willingly of time and talents to a charitable, educational or other worthwhile activities, especially in one's community.*

By Our President

Nearly every museum, historical site and historical society lives and dies by the strength and enthusiasm of its volunteers. The same is true of groups like Westerners – our organization's existence is entirely dependent on the good will of folks contributing a little of their time for the greater good, asking nothing in return except an occasional wry reference in the *Buckskin Bulletin*.

Back in October, our **Old Hay's City Corral's** first sheriff, *Will Johnson*, resigned and moved to Texas for cancer treatments. We learned recent-

ly that he finally lost his battle with the disease on March 15, and the world lost one of its great volunteers. Will was a force of nature and will be sorely missed for himself and the many things he accomplished.

His day job was as a pastor for a local church, but he spent the rest of his time volunteering in one capacity or another at our local historical society's museum. He served on the board of trustees, demonstrated leatherworking in the Harness Shop, and made countless presentations to the public on firearms, lawmen, and "wild women of the West." Will also single-handedly rounded up big prizes for semi-annual drawings to benefit the museum, bringing in thousands of dollars to support the mission. You couldn't ask for a better one-man-band to toot our horn.

In Oklahoma City *Mary* and *Fred Marvel*, *Burnis* and *Jim Argo*, *Kent McInnis*, *Don Reeves*, ably assisted by other local Westerners willing to stop by to lend an occasional hand, deserve a Conestoga load of gratitude for keeping the Westerners herd so smoothly on the trail despite some rough weather and dry times these past 29 years.

However, while our corrals have been diligently studying, presenting, and discussing Western History in all of its glory and wonder, the world around us has changed. If we want Westerners to survive and thrive beyond our own time, we'll need

to change, too. New ideas, fresh perspective and an abundance of enthusiasm should see us well on the way to the next waterhole. I know the present Home Ranch denizens are looking forward to handing over the reins to those of the future.

Juti Winchester

EDITOR'S NOTE

In her column about Volunteers, our president left out two who are very important to the Home Ranch—herself and *Cheryl McInnis*, wife of our chairman Kent McInnis.

Juti Winchester quickly volunteered to take on the job of president of Westerners at a time we suddenly needed one. She is very willing to give of her time to answers questions, offer suggestions and worry along with us at the Home Ranch—long distance—when problems occur. She has been a member of three corrals, **Garden of the Sun**, **Pahaska** and **Old Hays City** having started the latter two.

Cheryl willingly attends the annual WHA meetings each year manning the WI Booth and in her spare time, taking pictures for the bulletin which she also does at the **Chisholm Trail Corral**. When she can she comes to the office with Kent, gladly pitching in with office jobs and offering ideas.

Our very special thanks to them both!

