

Traditions of The Westerners

Each Westerner Corral or Posse has its own traditions and its own range rules. When in doubt about how to solve a new challenge, Westerners often start New Traditions – which can easily become fixtures. After all, the West is still young!

“Old Joe”

Soon after the Chicago Corral was organized in 1944, the famous buffalo skull drawing by Charles Russell was adopted as the Westerners’ trademark. Later, the Chicago Corral received a real buffalo skull, and a Westerners tradition developed -- one that has been adopted by many other Corrals and Posses. Chicago Corral meetings open with an enthusiastic and friendly salute to the buffalo skull, as members stand and say “Hello, Joe, you old buffalo!” They end with an “Adios” to Old Joe. A little silly? Sure. But why not? It’s fun. Westerners avoid all forms of stuffed-shirtism and embrace new and old traditions in the Old West.

The Westerners and the Western History Association

In 1961, Westerners played a role in helping to organize the Western History Association. Westerner John A. Carrol, then a professor of history in Arizona, invited fellow members to assemble in Santa Fe, NM. Others, including historian Ray Allen Billington, Chicago newspaperman Don Russell, and historians John Porter Bloom and Robert M. Utley of Washington, D.C., joined in the drive to organize the Western History Association. Westerners and WHA have maintained professional ties since the WHA’s beginnings.

Each year at the fall WHA conference, Westerners present research papers in a scholarly panel; and each year Westerners sponsor and take part in a WHA conference exhibit booth.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Westerners International is to encourage and promote interest and research in the history, literature, and culture of the North American West. In pursuit of this mission, Westerners will:

- Promote Corral/Posse development through opportunities for fellowship and through providing programs and events related to the North American West
- Provide awards and scholarships for writers, artists, and students who strive for excellence in areas related to the study and celebration of the West
- Encourage pride in the American West and its history throughout the Corrals and Posses
- Support and promote members of Westerners in their presentations and activities through the *Buckskin Bulletin*, WI’s online publication
- Support and promote museums and other institutions in their Western programs

For information on joining or starting a Corral or Posse, contact:

Westerners International
Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum
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Email: westerners@mail.wtamu.edu
Website: www.westerners-international.org



Would you like to know more about the American West?

Do you like open spaces and Western landscapes?

Do you enjoy Western history, literature, film, and culture?

Would you like to meet fellow enthusiasts and scholars of the American West?

Then have a look and consider joining us at one of our many “Corral” or “Posse” meetings throughout the United States and abroad!

Come learn about and celebrate the history and traditions of the West



Who is a Westerner?

Anyone interested in the history, literature and culture of the North American West!

What is the purpose of The Westerners?

We promote fun and scholarship related to the American frontier West. As the late and famous Western historian, Ray Allen Billington, once quipped: "Westerners share a dislike for stuffed-shirtism, over-seriousness, shiftless thinking, and, above all, ignorance." If that appeals to your sensibility, you'll enjoy our camaraderie and scholarship.

Who Can Join The Westerners?

Anyone who loves the lore and history of the North American West can join. Members range from local history buffs, readers, and viewers of westerns to professional historians. All are welcome in the conversation.

What is a Corral or Posse?

A Corral or Posse is a name given to a local chapter of Westerners. Corrals and Posses generally meet monthly, although calendars vary. They enjoy lunch or supper together, or perhaps organize a talk or program on a western topic. Some have publications, ranging from full-scale journals to informal newsletters. Each Corral or Posse is an independent group with its own rules and traditions. Each chooses officers from among the following positions:

- Sherriff** - does what a president does
- Deputies** – as many as needed for specific duties
- Ink Slinger or Editor** – Manages publication, if Corral/Posse has one. Manages publicity
- Keeper of the Chips** – does what a treasurer does
- Representative** – works as the representative for contacts with other Corrals, Posses, and the Home Ranch. Works as the main contact for the spring dues cycle



What are the Dues?

The local Corral or Posse sets dues, with \$9.00 per member being sent to the Home Ranch. Dues help fund administrative support, office and library projects, supplies, publication of the *Buckskin Bulletin*, and annual awards and scholarships. Corrals or Posses collect dues by January, with \$5 per member sent to the Home Ranch in March.

What is the History of The Westerners?

Westerners momentum was started in Chicago in 1944 by Leland D. Case, editor of *The Rotarian* magazine, and Elmo Scott Watson, newspaperman and editor. The Denver Posse was organized in 1945, followed by corrals in St. Louis and Los Angeles in 1946; New York City in 1952; Tucson, Laramie, and the Black Hills in 1953. The first overseas corral was formed in England in 1954. In 1955, corrals and posses were established in Spokane and Kansas City, MO. Since then over sixty-five corrals have been established in the U.S. and others have been formed abroad.

Westerners is a non-profit Foundation Inc., formally organized in 1959 to promote communication and cooperation between Corrals and Posses, and to stimulate interest and research in the North American West. The "Home Ranch" is located in the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum on the campus of West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Texas.

ANNUAL AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Each spring, Westerners submit nominations for awards and scholarships, and the awards are given out each fall. We take pride in the activities and scholarship of our members and we love recognizing these efforts! Awards are given for published books, and articles, for Corral/Posse programs, poetry, and for the best Corral or Posse. We also offer two \$1,000 scholarships to promising WI students doing work on the American West.

CORRALS, POSSES, AND MEMBERSHIP

We can help you become a member of a current Corral or Posse, or we can also help you start your own. We publish a Tally Sheet – or list of contact information – on our website. There you can read more about our history and activities, and you can locate a Corral or Posse near you. On the Tally Sheet, we list all currently active Corrals and Posses, along with Sheriff and Representative contact information and information on meeting times and locations.

More than sixty-five corrals are currently located throughout the U.S in the following states:

Arizona	New Mexico
California	North Dakota
Colorado	Oklahoma
Illinois	South Dakota
Kansas	Texas
Missouri	Utah
Montana	Washington
Nebraska	Wyoming

Westerners also has active corrals in England and the Czech Republic

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