



# PONY TRACKS

Newsletter of the Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners

Vol. 9, No. 1

Kalispell, Montana

February 14, 2022

Richard A. Hull, Ye Editor, e-mail: [richardahull@charter.net](mailto:richardahull@charter.net)

## FEBRUARY MEETING

Monday, February 21, 2022

**Topic:** “Preserving Our Historic Forest Fire Lookouts”

**Presenter:** Kyle Stetler, Bigfork, Montana

**Where:** Flathead Electric Cooperative Community Room, north end of the FEC Administration Building 2520 Hwy. 2 East, Kalispell, MT

**Time:** 5:15 pm Grab 'n' Greet  
6:00 pm - Dinner (includes the presentation)  
7:00 pm - Presentation

**Dinner:** A buffet table will offer an entree consisting of a variety of submarine sandwiches, side dishes, beverages and dessert. \$15 payable at the door.

**Dinner Reservations:** Call (406) 752-9642 (leave message with names and phone number); or send email to [kbrittonrn@gmail.com](mailto:kbrittonrn@gmail.com) with the same information.

**Reservation Deadline:** Feb. 20th at 9 pm

Posse members may join the program through Zoom at the following address:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86326288698?pwd=clhWV1lQaVgwVkFRNHBIbE1Tc0ZjUT09>

Meeting ID: 863 2628 8698

Email [tim.chris@yahoo.com](mailto:tim.chris@yahoo.com) for more help.

## ABOUT THE PRESENTATION



Photo: Joe Osborn  
Hungry Horse News

We still see them on the horizon but what do we know of the historic function and role of forest fire lookouts and the larger context that they played in northwest Montana history. After working on several local Forest Service restoration projects on historic lookouts, a small group of preservation minded individuals got together and formed the

Northwest Montana Lookout Association in 2013. The Northwest Montana Lookout Association (NMLA) is dedicated to the restoration and maintenance of fire lookouts and other structures on public lands throughout our area are also part of the larger Forest Fire Lookout Association founded in 1992. This program will explore many of NMLA's past and ongoing projects including several on the Kootenai and Flathead National Forests, Montana DNRC lands, and Glacier National Park.

This summer, for example, restoration and assessment work will focus on Northwest Peak, Meadow Peak, Mount Wam, McGuire Mountain, Big Creek Baldy, and Robinson Peak lookouts.

**Presenter, Kyle Stetler**, in addition to being a Posse member, is also a member of the NMLA

Visit our website: [northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com](http://northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com)

and the Bigfork Art and Culture Center (BACC), which includes the Bigfork History Project (BHP). As part of his efforts with the BHP, he has authored several articles pertaining to the development of Bigfork. Professionally, Kyle is an environmental planner for the Forest Service and works for the Swan Lake Ranger District.

## FROM YE EDITOR'S DESK

By Rick Hull



The Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners is facing a number of changes in the new year.

Covid has been a continuing problem. Monthly sessions were canceled in early 2020 and there was another round of cancellations in the fall of 2021. The Posse has not met since August.

About the same time the Red Lion Inn changed its arrangement for the meeting room and dinner costs, and the organization had to find new facilities. The Flathead Electric Cooperative stepped up and offered its meeting room in the Evergreen headquarters. The group met there for the first time last August.

Then Posse Sheriff Ron Beard had his own run in with Covid. At the insistence of his children, he moved back to Maryland and resigned as Sheriff in December. Ron is continuing as Deputy Sheriff for Programs, and has already arranged for 2022 topics and speakers.

As a result, the board and members will be circling the wagons and sending out scouts.

A membership powwow has been proposed to deal with these issues and more.

The annual membership renewal will be especially important this year, along with corralling new members. New leaders need to be recruited for key committees, including the Board of Directors and a new Sheriff.

Keep an eye on the horizon for the advance party and what it reports back about the trail ahead.

## GENERAL MEETING INFORMATION

**NMPW's** meetings are held on the 3rd Monday of the month, except the months of December and January, at the Flathead Electric Cooperative Community Room at 2520 Hwy. 2 East.

All meetings begin with a Grab 'n' Greet for a chance to get acquainted, followed by the evening meal, and a presentation pertaining to Western history.

Covid-19 precautions continue, with maximum social distancing both at the tables and in the general seating, and other safeguards. In addition, all meetings will be broadcast on-line via Zoom for our out-of-County Corresponding and Brigade members and the members who cannot physically or choose not to attend the meetings.

Evening meals are open to both members and non-members. Dinners require advance reservations. Pay for the meals at the door upon arrival.

Walk-in seating will be available free to all Posse members and youths 16 and under and \$5 each for all non-members.

There will be our usual raffle for door prizes. Local history authors will sign books.

## FUTURE PROGRAMS

**March:** Monday, March 21, 2022  
"History of Libby Dam"  
by Posse member **Jeff Gruber**

**April:** Monday, April 18, 2022  
"Glacier Lake Missoula"  
by Jim Sheldon.  
(Part 3 of a Series)

**May:** Monday, May 16, 2022  
"Western Montana in Time-Lapse  
Photography" by Doug Ammons

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Members aware of events not listed here are encouraged to contact Ye Editor with the particulars at [richardahull@charter.net](mailto:richardahull@charter.net)

- **March 3:** History Book Club. The Slaish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition. 2 p.m. at the Northwest Montana History Museum.
- **March 6:** A presentation on "The Bootleg Lady of Glacier Park" by author **John Fraley** will be at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Northwest Montana History Museum. Admission \$10.



## TRIVIA QUESTION

It has been August since the last Pony Tracks newsletter and the last Trivia Question. In an effort to evade Google, the question was: How did Political Hill on the south edge of Lakeside get its name.?

The story is a bordering landowner had erected a sign facing the highway that complained about the high property taxes on the parcel.

### *This Month's Question*

This month's question is - How did Kalispell get its name? Pioneers struggled for years to spell out the tribe's name, with Kullyspell being one version.

The official tribal name is now Kalispel. So where did the city's extra "l" come from?

Submit your answer to Ye Editor at [richardahull@charter.net](mailto:richardahull@charter.net) and we will print the names of all those who get it right.

## POSSE NEWS

Three local authors and Posse members have been in the news recently.



**Michael Ober**, summer ranger in Glacier National Park and former head of the Flathead Valley Community College Library, has released his book

entitled *Montana Historic Places*.

There are more than a thousand buildings and places in Montana on the National Register of Historic Places. Ober has pared that down to 50 carefully selected sites. These include log cabin homesteads, railroad depots, school houses, fire lookouts and bridges. Each description is accompanied by color photos.

Cost is \$20, and it is published by Mountain Press in Missoula.

Local author and Posse member **John Fraley** has been recognized for his latest book by the Posse's parent organization.

Fraley won third place for *Heroes of the Bob Marshall Wilderness* from Westerners International.



**John Fraley with award.**

The book covers the lives and times of old timers like Joe Murphy, to Smoke Elser, and more modern characters. Also covered are a moose-lassoing rodeo, and a

rooster named Bob Marshall. The book has a four-and-half star rating on Amazon, and is available at local bookstores.

Fraley was formerly public information officer for the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks in northwest Montana. He is author of four other books of local history, including *Wild River Pioneers* and *A Woman's Way West*.

Westerners International is based at the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum in Canyon, Texas. It has over 60 chapters nationally and 20 abroad.



Libby native **Jeff Gruber** has completed his long-awaited book, "Out Hometown, A Pictorial History of Libby, Montana." It is the first history of Libby published in nearly a century. The 258-page book

chronicles Libby's development from the arrival of the railroad in the early 1900s to the construction of Libby Dam in the 1970s. Included are scenes and stories describing Libby's schools, sports, churches, fraternal and service groups, and businesses.

Gruber uses hundreds of photographs, along with anecdotes and narratives to tell the story of this unique town. A sampling was the subject of his presentation to the Posse in April of 2021.

Gruber taught high school for 29 years before retiring in 2018. He is an active community volunteer and now operates a small sawmill businesses.

The book is available through his website at [www.grubersawmill.com](http://www.grubersawmill.com) for \$50, plus \$10 shipping.



**Jeff Gruber**

## DUES REMINDER



It is time for our annual members renewal and new member drive. Statements have been e-mailed to all current members. Please support our organization and its goals by responding as soon as possible.

There are four classes of Posse membership:

- **Active Posse Member:** Active Members are those who reside within Flathead County in Northwest Montana.

- **Corresponding Posse Member:** Corresponding Members are those who primarily reside outside of Northwest Montana and reside only part-time within Flathead County, Montana, or visa versa.

- **Brigade Posse Member:** Brigade members who reside within Northwest Montana but are located outside of Flathead County.

- **Student Posse Member:** Student members are under 24 years of age and are enrolled in a middle school, a high school, or a college/university.

It is the Posse's standard policy that all applications for membership must include payment for the applicable full annual dues. All second year's dues will be adjusted to the first of January of all succeeding years. This adjustment has been made for those who have joined the Posse during 2021.

We ask that your dues be made promptly to the address on the dues statement or brought to the February 21 meeting.

Do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments.

We are also requesting optional donations to the Posse's Equipment Fund for the purchase of upgraded programs, equipment maintenance, and accessories.


This is the Posse's highest priority -- to make our award-winning programs available to all of our members and communities.

## Join the Posse Team

Volunteers are needed to continue the Posse's more than six years of history programs.

- Clerk of the Posse (Secretary-Treasurer)
- Deputy Sheriff for Membership
- Book Wrangler to maintain the Posse library and book raffles
- Assistant Zoom Master to assist and backup the Zoom Master
- Board Members
- Assistant Editor to assist the editor in writing and publicizing Posse newsletters.

Please join our Posse team as we rebuild our organization. Contact Eddy Byrne at 406-871-6001 or [edwardjbyrne860@gmail.com](mailto:edwardjbyrne860@gmail.com) to volunteer.



### PARKLAND BOOKS

GENERAL OUT-OF-PRINT BOOKS  
AND PAPER WITH EMPHASIS  
ON WESTERN AMERICANA &  
NATIONAL PARKS

850 LAKE BLAINE ROAD KALISPELL, MONTANA 59901  
*(One mile east of Junction of Routes 55 & 206)*

Open Noon til 6 PM Friday, Saturday and Sunday  
MARGE & ED ROTHFUSS, OWNERS

Ph. (406) 752-4464      E-mail: [PARKLANDBK@AOL.COM](mailto:PARKLANDBK@AOL.COM)

### Posse Gold Stars

Recognizing those members and friends whose generosity has assisted the Posse in so many ways:


Parkland Books,  
raffle donations

Blacktail Mountain Books,  
raffle donations

Flathead Electric Cooperative,  
meeting room and facilities

**Tim Christenson,**  
Zoom Guy

Posse member donations to the equipment fund and anonymous raffle donations.



### Blacktail Mountain Books

42 First Avenue West  
Kalispell, Montana 59901  
**(406) 257-5573**  
Hours: 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM  
Closed Sundays

*Since 1977*

[www.facebook.com/blacktailbooks](http://www.facebook.com/blacktailbooks)  
[www.blacktailbooks.com](http://www.blacktailbooks.com)

**30,000 books and we trade!**

This issue of Pony Tracks is Volume 9, Number 1

The Pony Tracks is published monthly except December and January by the  
**NORTHWEST MONTANA POSSE OF WESTERNERS**

Authors of articles hold the copyright to their contributions. All other content is ©2022 by Northwest Montana Posse of Westerners  
c/o Clerk of the Posse, P.O. Box 2803, Kalispell, MT 59903

**Notice to Contributors**

Copy intended for this newsletter should be sent to the Editor at the e-mail address below. Copy must be in the Editor's in-box on or before the first of the month in order to make that month's issue. Copy received after that date will be held over until the subsequent issue.

For submissions to the Posse Dispatch, contact the Editor by e-mail first for submission requirements.

The next issue of Pony Tracks will be issued March 14, 2022 (or thereabouts).

[richardahull@charter.net](mailto:richardahull@charter.net)

Visit our website: [northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com](http://northwestmontanaposseofwesterners.wordpress.com)