



PARTNERS IN PALO DURO CANYON FOUNDATION

On the Edge!

Welcome

Nobody minds the rain

Here in Palo Duro Canyon this year, while those areas of Texas normally wet and humid during the year have suffered drought and dustiness, we have been blessed with rainfall, moisture, dew and precipitation at above normal levels. That has resulted in a wide spectrum of flowers all summer, and a lush green that the canyon hasn't seen for a long time. At times, the rains have caused our road's river crossings to swell and become impassable, but they always subside and leave our guests with an exciting adventure tale to tell their friends and family about their vacation in Palo Duro Canyon.



Randy Ferris
Park Superintendent

The Park celebrated its 75th birthday this year, and based on our attendance figures and revenue numbers, we had a welcome increase in our attendance and revenues to match the increased rainfall.

"TEXAS", the musical drama presented each summer in our Pioneer Amphitheatre, saw a boost in ticket sales, hosting more than 64,000 guests at the play this year. Our annual burn ban, restricting campfires in the park, has been non-

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Pottery at Canyon Gallery Gift Shop affordable, unique

The Canyon Gallery Gift Shop located in the El Coronado Lodge at Palo Duro Canyon State Park has a unique collection of hand-etched horse hair pottery direct from artist Tom Vail in New Mexico.

Horse hair mane or tail burns when it touches the hot pottery leaving a light stain cooked into it making each a one-of-kind piece.

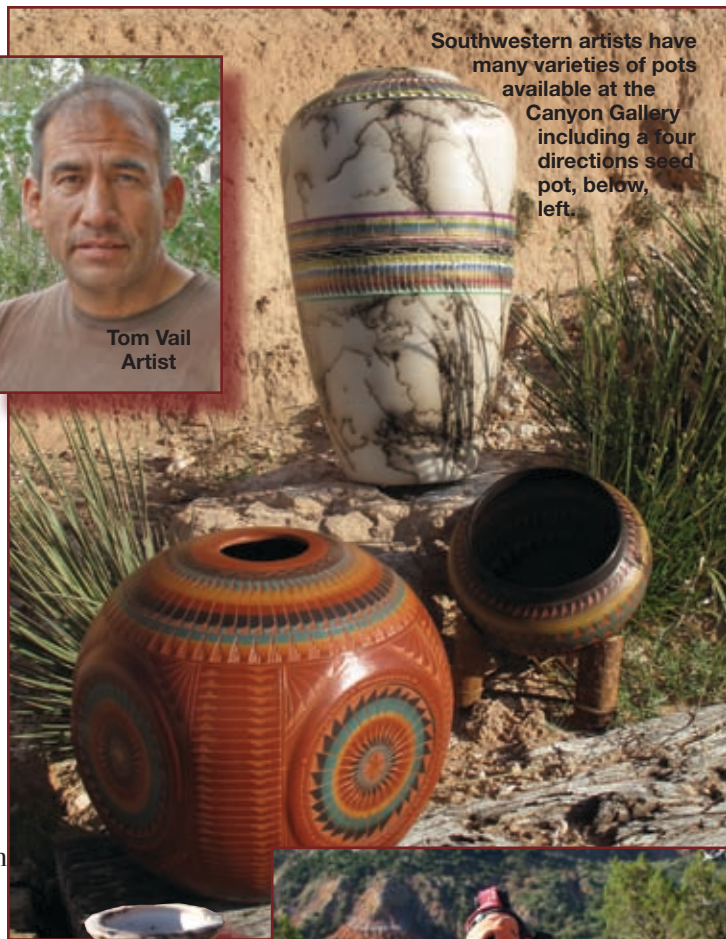
Juan Sandoval of Colorado has created whimsical clay sculptures including several, such as the one below right, holding the Palo Duro Canyon State Park Lighthouse formation.

Prices range from economical to more costly.



Tom Vail
Artist

Southwestern artists have many varieties of pots available at the Canyon Gallery including a four directions seed pot, below, left.



Horsehair pottery
by Tom Vail

Whimsical clay sculptures
by Juan Sandoval



Partners remember friend and colleague, Fred Rathjen, Ph.D.

By Eric W. Miller

I was a newcomer: new to Amarillo, new to my job and new to Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation.

At my first board meeting a gentleman came up to introduce himself. Tall, soft-spoken, thoughtful eyes, warm voice, strong handshake. It was Fred Rathjen. And, it was like I had been here for years.

From that very first meeting in the fall of 1997, Fred was one of my "go to" people when I had a question about the canyon. I called him frequently and asked for his help when I brought visitors or media to the state park.

"Eric, I don't know what I can add, but I'll be there," was always his response.

Without fail during the visit I would glance over and he was deep in conversation with a guest, giving them the benefit of his love for the canyon and knowledge of the Panhandle.

His historian's approach, steady voice and calm hand always reassured me. During my two frenetic years as president (Fred was vice president), Fred's approach reassured many board members as well.

All his board colleagues can remember some meeting when Fred took his time to re-count an issue and line up the pros and cons, helping everyone see with greater clarity. For instance, he was skeptical when we considered the "bold" step of accepting

Important Numbers

Park: (806) 488-2227

Front Gate: (806) 488-2227 x 100

Volunteer: (806) 488-2506

Gift Shop: (806)

488-2507

Reservations
for overnight
camping or
cabins: (512)
389-8900

Partners
Membership:
(806) 355-
4923 or
(806) 488-
2506.

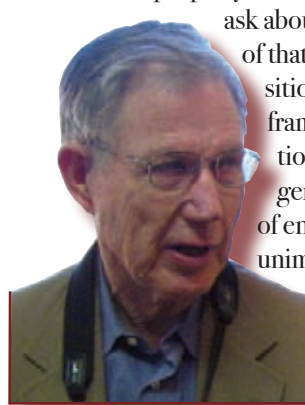


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people volunteer
at the Canyon
Gallery Gift Shop

credit cards in the gift shop. But afterwards, when we all saw the increased revenue, and therefore the increased support Partners could supply the state park, Fred was as pleased as anyone. Because his bottom line always came back to supporting the state park.

Nothing pleased him more than the recent land acquisitions, especially the Fortress Cliff property. It was his habit to



Frederick William Rathjen, Jr.
1929-2009

ask about the status of that land acquisition, always framing his question in the bigger picture, that of ensuring the unimpeded view of that magnificent cliff, both from the rim and the bottom of the canyon. And because of that interest, we knew that Fred had his eyes on the future of Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

But he did not live for our board meetings. He lived for exploring the canyon: for being on the trails, discovering new sights and listening for new sounds. During meetings at the Visitor Center, I often saw him sneak a peek out those large windows, I assume thinking of a new place to explore. Of course, Fred wasn't the only one who glanced out those windows but I suspect he did better than most following-up on those dreams.

I have one great regret for my friendship with Fred. Why did I always forget to bring my copy of *The Texas Panhandle Frontier* to a Partner's meeting so he could sign it? It was one of the first books I read about my new home and I suspect Fred may have been embarrassed by my request. But my regret today greatly outweighs any embarrassment he would have felt years ago.

Whenever I drive through the park's entrance gates to visit the canyon one more time, I always think of the stories about the canyon—Coronado, Goodnight, Mackenzie, Quanah Parker, the CCC, TEXAS, Red Spicer and many others. Now I add Fred's story to the canyon.

Chances are good that historians don't want to be part of history. But without a doubt, Fred W. Rathjen, Jr., is a great addition to the history of Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

— Eric W. Miller is a Partners board member and director of communications for the Amarillo Convention and Visitors Council. www.visitamarillotx.com

Other board members share their thoughts

"I think Fred had a particular talent for conversation. He knew a lot that he was willing to share and he was a great listener. I always enjoyed talking to him." —Ann Coberley

"For all of his accomplishments and honors received, Fred Rathjen was a humble man. While working with him one day in the Canyon Gallery Gift Shop, I remarked that I admired him for having the perseverance to attain his Ph.D. degree. His response was that he had never put much stock in the title which was simply a result of pursuing his principal interest—that of history."

—Carl Fowler, past Partners' president

"Fred was such a kind and caring person who encouraged me to volunteer at Palo Duro Canyon. He always had good things to say about Gene and I and was willing to discuss matters concerning the canyon, church, or any other subject we asked him about. His friendship was truly cherished." —Lea Nelson

"Fred Rathjen was one of my favorite people to talk with. I always looked forward to seeing and talking with him. He had a real knack for simplifying a seemingly difficult question or comment into understandable words that I could understand. He was a really good friend, and was always willing to help out in any way that he could." —Tommy Nisbet

"The area has lost a great historian and we have lost a dedicated board member; a man of integrity, thoughtful judgment and dedicated service, but most of all a dear, dear friend."

—Frannie Nuttall, present Partners' president

"I have known and admired Fred for the 45 years that I have been in the Panhandle. We served together on church boards and committees and shared a strong love for nature and Palo Duro Canyon. He was a personal friend, a great scholar, a man of integrity and dedication and an inspiration to all those who knew him." —Gerald Schultz

Hike GSL trail and learn

Lace up those boots, grab some water bottles and a few snacks and hit the trail at Palo Duro Canyon State Park at 9 a.m. Oct. 3.

Weather permitting, park staff will lead a hike on the Givens, Spicer, Lowry (GSL) trail and provide detailed information about American Indian culture and geology of the canyon.

Make reservations by calling (806) 488-2227.

Join Partners now!

For membership in Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, call Tommy Nisbet at (806) 355-4923 or Maggie Johnson at (806) 488-2506.

New family joins

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation recently received a new membership from the G. Michael Goodwin family of Clint, Tex.

Memberships are currently due and a remittance envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Family membership is \$35; single, \$25; and seniors over age 65, \$10.

HORSIN' AROUND
— Amanda Fairhurst, an Old West Stables employee, prepares to lead an unidentified group of horseback riders through the floor of Palo Duro Canyon State Park during the July 4th weekend.

Admission to the park was free and, according to Randy Ferris, park superintendent, more than 7,500 people took advantage of the free weekend.

Bryan Frazier, public affairs and marketing for Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW), took this photo during his visit to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Frazier has been with TPW more than eight years with more than five of those being in the state park division.



The President's Perspective

Wow, what a busy time of year for everyone! School has started, tourism season has slowed somewhat, the leaves are changing and the cool crispness of the air is in full swing.

Our board of advisors are starting to plan our spring fundraiser.

Additionally, many of our board members were involved with the filming of "The Natural Wonder of Texas: Palo Duro Canyon," a documentary produced by KACV-TV, the Panhandle's Public Broadcasting Station. Partners and the Bivins Foundation funded the hour-long show that will air at 7 p.m. Sept. 22 on KACV-TV. Producer Marcie Robinson said the film focuses on the history of Palo Duro Canyon.

What an honor for our organization to be one of the sources KACV approached when they began working on this project. We are so lucky to have many board members recognized as experts in the many areas of interest in the Palo Duro Canyon's development, geology, wildlife, history, natural resources and of course

preservation.

I am so proud to be a part of this far reaching group of preservationists.

How lucky we are to truly be a partnership of great diversity of human kind. To give of our gifts of education, heritage and wealth we pave the pathway for future generations to enjoy what we have also enjoyed.

Service is a gift that we truly cherish. We all feel like our time is so short and there is so much to be accomplished. Partners in Palo Duro Canyon is so successful because of the service and gifts of our members. Trails must be developed for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. Campgrounds must be maintained to give visitors a nice place to stay and enjoy the park. Educational programs are always needed to expand what the park currently offers.

The fall is also the time of membership renewal for Partners in Palo Duro Canyon. You will receive shortly a membership renewal asking you for a commitment of service to the park. I hope you will take some time and explore your gifts and give your time to our organization.

Let's continue our successes for the future of Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

—FN



Frannie Nuttall
Partners in Palo Duro
Canyon President

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For submissions, questions or address changes, call (806) 681-7441.



2-4
times a month
volunteers work in
the Canyon Gallery
Gift Shop

The full moon lures hikers to Palo Duro Canyon State Park

Who would have dreamed that night hikes in the canyon would become so popular? That has been case this summer. Full moon hikes brought out more people than we could have imagined or anticipated.

With the help of two volunteers and Mark Hassell, trails and resource manager, we served more than 280 people on three hikes.

The July 7 hike was the biggest surprise of all. Since the hike was scheduled on a Tuesday night we did not anticipate a very large crowd but due to the moon being full on that date, we decided to see what kind of participation we would have.

Hikers began to arrive around 8:30 p.m. and continued coming even after we began the hike. Trying to provide a quality hike for 140 plus people was a challenge, but we did the best we could and as it turned out, everyone had a great time.

That turn-out told us we needed to do something a little differently for August. The decision was made to limit the number to 40 hikers, do it two nights in a row and require reservations that had a deadline of two days before the hikes. Even though there was a deadline, calls continued to come in.

Regretfully, I had to turn people away. That hike drew two groups who drove more than 250 miles to make it and one couple drove from Lubbock after getting off work.

The success of the hikes has made us re-think our programming for the upcoming months and for the first time we will be doing Polar Bear Hikes in November, December,

January and February.

They will begin at 5 p.m. and last about an hour, weather permitting.

There have to be diehards out there who will want to hike, no matter what the weather is.

A limit of 40 with reservation required will continue. Mark and I will be conducting these also.

We are already thinking of the spring and plan to have evening hikes as well as the full moon hikes.

A calendar with dates and details can be found at www.palodurocanyon.com. Join us on one of these hikes and discover that Life's Better Outside. -BB



Bernice Blasingame
Education Director/
Park Interpreter

**Next meeting of Partners
in Palo Duro Canyon
Foundation
is 7 p.m., Thursday,
Oct. 19, in the Texas Room
of Happy State Bank, Canyon**

Palo Duro Canyon State Park one of 10 places to pitch in

In a recent issue of USA TODAY's Travel section, Will Rogers, president of the Trust for Public Land, shared his list of parks to enjoy and enrich along with Kathy Baruffi for USA TODAY.

The article, entitled "10 great places to pitch in at a park," touted Palo Duro Canyon State Park "dazzling, especially the bright, banded cliffs," Rogers says. "Volunteers serve as camp hosts in exchange for an RV site. They also get the pleasure of being in this ecological and historic treasure."



NOBODY MINDS THE RAIN - A late summer shower ends with a rainbow over the "Spanish skirts" in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

NOBODY MINDS from page 1-

existent, allowing our guests to enjoy their hot dog-roasting and s'more-making activities to the maximum. The hiking, biking and equestrian trails are undergoing upgrades and with the installation of trail markers will make for increased user friendliness. Our upcoming park budget includes funding for some much needed capital projects that will upgrade our campground and picnic areas, as well.

We have had a great year at Palo Duro Canyon State Park, and cannot thank those volunteers, supporters and of course the park staff that keep things going for our guests. They all often become spread quite thin through the busy season, and with the upcoming winter, we can slow down a bit, and complete some projects and training that are also necessary to keep the park going. Thank you, our guests, for visiting us at the canyon, and we hope you return many times in the future. -RF



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**volunteers are
needed weekly to
work in the Canyon
Gallery Gift Shop**



EVERYTHING'S BIGGER IN TEXAS – Bryan Frazier, public affairs and marketing for Texas Parks and Wildlife, shot this photo of the musical drama “TEXAS” during the July 4th festivities in Palo Duro Canyon State Park that also coincided with the 75th anniversary of the state park. More than 60,000 people came to Pioneer Amphitheatre located in Palo Duro Canyon State Park to be entertained by the spectacle of both the show and the backdrop against which it is set.

New employee learns at Canyon Gallery



A GEM OF A JOB – Kari Eagleston, right, helps Anne Butler, left, select a bracelet to remember her visit to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. With Butler are her parents, Scott and Susan Butler of Newport News, Va. They were driving their daughter to the University of California-Los Angeles to attend graduate school. She is enrolled in theater and acting. Eagleston joined the Canyon Gallery Gift Shop in mid-August.

When Kari Eagleston read the advertisement in the newspaper regarding the hiring of a sales associate in Palo Duro Canyon State Park at the Canyon Gallery Gift Shop, she thought it would be ideal. “I’ve played in the canyon all my life,” she said. “It’s like a dream. It’s wonderful. It’s an answer to prayer.” She started the job in mid-August.

Out of 45 applicants, Eagleston, 51, stood out. Maggie Johnson, Canyon Gallery Gift Shop manager, said, “She had the right attitude, personality and willingness. She just fit. She was great with the volunteers. She just belongs there.”

Eagleston attended Amarillo College and graduated with a special education degree from West Texas A&M University. She worked for the Amarillo Independent School District two years as a special education teacher.

“I’m here to learn all I can learn and do all I can for Palo Duro Canyon. I love the outdoors and museums and art and a small place where you meet people. I’m happy here. It’s nice,” said Eagleston.

She has three children, Jennifer, Brian and Wolfe all of Amarillo.

Although Eagleston said “I’m not here to take Maggie’s place; she’s a unique person,” Johnson has plans to retire in the spring marking 15 years as the Gallery’s sole proprietor.



SINGIN' THE BLUES – Boz Scaggs, singer, songwriter and guitarist, performs a benefit concert July 5 at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. A portion of the proceeds went to Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation and the Texas Panhandle Heritage Foundation. Photo by Bryan Frazier of Austin.

Saying goodbye is not always easy

I joined the board of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon nearly four years ago and when I came on board I was asked if I would do a newsletter for the state park. After all, I was a graphic artist and writer at Amarillo College for 34 years before retiring. Long story short, I volunteered to do the newsletter these four years.

This is the fifteenth issue of *On the Edge*, a quarterly publication designed to keep you abreast of the activities happening in Palo Duro Canyon State Park as well as highlighting regular columns by Partners in Palo Duro Canyon president, state park superintendent and education director/park interpreter.

It has been a privilege to join the above mentioned and countless others who have contributed to the success of this newsletter.

Most of all, I appreciate the Partners board for letting me have creative license with the publication. Many times, with camera in hand, I chose to spend an hour or a day in the canyon taking pictures, talking with visitors, and allowing the mere presence of the canyon to engulf me in a

private world of chance meetings with nature.

Similarly, creative outlets are meant to be followed and I have chosen to pursue other avenues such as my wheel-thrown pottery, photography, golf and flower



**Leona
Chadwick-Beddow**

gardening. At this point, I don't believe I can do justice to all and have decided to make this my last issue as well as leaving my position on the Board of Advisors at the end of the year.

There are openings on the board. They're a great group with which to work and if you're receiving this newsletter you most likely have an association with or an interest in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Please take the time to consider an appointment and call Frannie Nuttall, current Partners president, and tell her of your interest. Her phone is (806) 355-7315.

**New hours Oct. 1: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday
and 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday.**

