

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

On the Edge!



The Golden (Gold-in) Books

There is something about a book. I have a converted bedroom, that I somewhat pompously call an “office,” which contains a bookshelf covering half the wall from ceiling to floor. It is filled with books. Visitors invariably ask, “Have you read all these books?” Each time I am asked this question, I, with some amazement, say, “Yes!” My amazement is not to their question but to the fact that, indeed, I have read all these books—except for a few reference works. And I wonder to myself, “How could I have read all these books?” My answer to myself is, “With pleasure!”

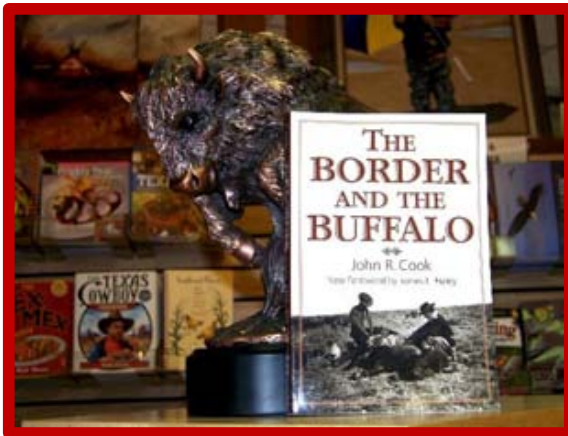
To say that I remember the content of every book I have read is another question. In fact, I can rephrase a comment that Red Segall made when he held a fund raiser for Partners some years ago in the amphitheater: “I am at the age where I can hide my own Easter eggs.” By analogy, I am at the age where I can reread my own books and receive

as much pleasure as I did the first time I read them as if I had never read them before. There are some rewards for accumulated years other than getting fifty cents off a fast-food hamburger.

This introductory preamble leads me to the following: Much pleasure is waiting on the bookshelves in the Partners Gallery Gift Shop in the El Coronado Lodge (Visitor/Interpretive Center).

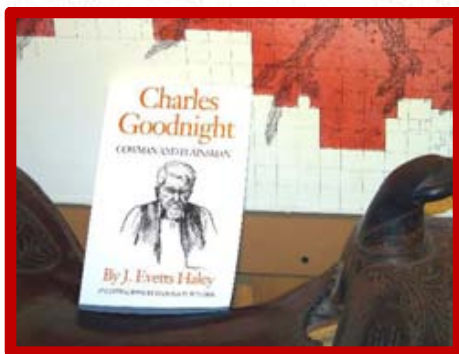
My favorite books are biographies and histories, notwithstanding the fact that I am a retired teacher of English who also enjoys fiction. But, as has been stated many times—truth is indeed stranger than fiction.

When I read an autobiography that is also a historical narrative, such as *The Border and the Buffalo* by John Cook, who was a buffalo hunter on the Panhandle plains in the nineteenth century, I am enchanted. “*You can’t make that up!*”



A first-hand account of a historical era that cannot be replicated by writers who did not experience first-hand the actual event is a treasure beyond taxes and fraud and much more rewarding than found by those children of Coronado (J. Frank Dobie's *Coronado's Children*) who seek but never find hidden and lost treasures, just as Coronado never found the Seven Cities of Cibola, a treasure that never existed.

The Gift Shop contains a number of similar autobiographical/historical books which are difficult to find as well as biographical works, such as J. Evetts Haley's *Charles Goodnight*, perhaps the most authoritative account of the famous Texas Ranger who established the first ranch in the Panhandle in Palo Duro Canyon and who is a central figure in Texas and Panhandle lore and legend, as well as in historical deeds.



Even though I often hear, "I can't stand history" from those folks who truly can't stand history, usually from the fact that they simply don't like to read or they remember their school days when they had to memorize dates or had to read about events and facts which occurred a world away and a time beyond memory, I wonder why they are not curious about who they are.

How can people "find" themselves if they don't know where they came from? If one's only historical experience is that found on "Facebook" in which one learns that one's cousin fed a doggie biscuit to a Cocker Spaniel, I don't wonder that one is lost. (Forgive the stilted term "one." It's much easier than to remember the political correct and cumbersome, "he or she" and "him and her.")

George Santayana famously said, "Those who cannot remember their past are condemned to repeat it." I doubt that if you don't read *The Border and the Buffalo* that you will take off looking for a buffalo to kill, because you don't know that the buffalo are gone, or, at least, most of them. (My apologies to Caprock Canyons State Park with their Texas State *Bison* Herd.) On the other hand, wouldn't you like to know why the buffalo are gone?

I could say much more, but I guess I'd better stop. Less is more.

But there is more.





David Townsend and Erika McGee Examine the Books in the Gift Shop

Many books in the Gift Shop relate the history of Native Americans. The plains Indians, the Comanche, the Cheyenne, the Kiowa—their exploits and histories are well represented on the book shelves as well as the Navajo, Hopi, and Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and the Four Corners country.

Children's books, books on the flora and fauna of Texas and the Panhandle, travel books on the "Mother Road," Route 66 (I-40) and Texas books highlighting the roads, byways, and historical, bizarre, and scenic sights are also available.

I must mention further some special books written by members of the Board of Advisors of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon

Foundation. *The Texas Frontier* by Dr. Frederick W. Rathjen (deceased), professor of history and Professor Emeritus, West Texas State University (now West Texas A&M University). *Meditations on Palo Duro Canyon*, a book of poetry by Dr. Ann Coberley who teaches anthropology at Amarillo College, and a small book by (ahem) yours truly, *These Old Heavenly Houses*. David Townsend and Erika McGee, along with the volunteers, welcome you to lives of adventure and wonder in the Canyon Gallery and Gift Shop.





Bernice Blasingame Park Interpreter

Why does a park need an Interpreter? Some people would answer that an Interpreter is not really important to a state park, because visitors come to have fun. When you visit a state park, do you inquire about programs that will be given while you are there? Are they important, or are they just something to fill your extra time? Do you want to learn all you can about the park you are visiting?

As the Park Interpreter, it is my job to provide programming so people have an appreciation for the resources of the park and want to do their best to preserve it. My programs include history of the Native Americans, Charles Goodnight and the JA Ranch, and the Civilian Conservative Corps (CCC). There are programs, as well, about the flora and fauna of the park. Nature hikes are a way to get out and learn about the park in a safe way.

Geology hikes are popular with some visitors. Star Parties are provided for enjoyment of the beautiful night skies over the canyon. Astronomers bring telescopes, and sky stories are told. Children's nature programs in the summer are a way to get children involved in caring and taking

ownership of a state park. In the spring and fall, many schools use the park as an outdoor classroom with the Park Interpreter giving the programs. There are some students who never have an opportunity to really be immersed in nature until they visit with a class.

Do I have a favorite program? I would have to think long and hard to say I have a favorite, but I enjoy the Full Moon Hikes, Star Parties, and nature hikes the most. While doing these activities, I can always throw in a story or two. Being outdoors with people and sharing knowledge with them is very satisfying.

The next time you visit a state park and ask, "What is there to do?" you will likely be given a calendar of events listing the Park Interpreter's programs for that month. At least, that is what I provide for visitors to Palo Duro Canyon State Park. After all, "Life's Better Outside," especially when you have an Interpreter who can help you enjoy it.



Farewell to a Superintendent

Cory Evans, Park Superintendent of Palo Duro Canyon State Park for the past three years, is leaving our Park for the superintendent's position at Ink's Lake State Park in Central Texas.



Cory Evans

Cory has been a staunch supporter of Partners. We will truly miss him.

To show our appreciation to Cory, the Board of Advisors, gave him a farewell party in the Visitors Interpretive Center, El Coronado Lodge, shortly before he left to assume his new position.

During Cory's tenure with Palo Duro Canyon State Park, Cory has overseen the building of the Mack Dick Family Pavilion (Partners was a partner with Texas State Parks in providing furniture and state-of-the-art kitchen facilities as well as in promoting the building of the Pavilion). He has overseen as well the construction of three bridges over Water Crossings 1, 2, and 6, projects which at this writing are still incomplete but nearing completion. The bridges will be followed when funds are available by the construction also of bridges over Water Crossings 3, 4, and 5.

The Equestrian Area is undergoing improvement, as well, with corrals and camping facilities. (Partners provided the funds for the pipe used in the construction of the corrals, thanks to the hard work of Glenn Campbell, former member of the Board of Advisors.)



Corrals in the Equestrian Area



Water Trough in the Equestrian Area

Partners presented Cory with a Ken Richardson's handmade hunting knife to express our appreciation of his contributions to the Park and support of Partners. We presented his wife, Shannon, with a set of sterling silver, Native American created ear pendants.

Partners looks forward to welcoming Cory's replacement and trusts that we will continue our cordial relationship with whomever that may be.





**Frannie Nuttall
President**

A Tribute to Cory Evans

Cory Evans has been a huge asset to Palo Duro Canyon State Park and has worked tirelessly putting our Park back into a healthy routine of proper conservation, maintenance, and improvements that were lacking for many years. It has been a relief to see Park Management Plans considered, approved, and implemented during Cory's tenure

Although, Cory's leaving with the upcoming tourist season is unfortunate, he has made the decision to transfer to Ink's Lake State Park to be nearer his family and

his son who will be attending Baylor University.

Cory came to the Park with both feet on the ground and immediately began working on correcting the pressing issues that faced the Park. Obviously, no time will ever be good when losing such a valuable employee, but we understand and wish him well.

I have been assured that Texas Parks and Wildlife management will work quickly to hire Cory's replacement.

Godspeed to Cory, Shannon, and their family. He and they will be missed.



Notice!

Partners is holding a membership drive September 26th at the Mack Dick Family Pavilion in September with Young Country playing. Food will be provided and dancing encouraged.

The dance will start at 6:30 p.m. and last until 9:30 or 10:00 p.m.

Watch your mail in August for more information.

BRING FRIENDS!



Mack Dick Pavilion

Mack Dick Pavilion Events

The Mack Dick Pavilion has been a much-needed facility for a number of years. Since its opening, the Pavilion has provided the Park, the state, and local communities with a resource for numerous events that were beyond the capability of the Park to manage before its construction.

Nowadays, the Pavilion has various events almost every weekend and often during the week. In fact, those who desire to utilize the Pavilion must plan to reserve the building well ahead of the date needed; otherwise, they run the risk of having to find somewhere else to host the event.

On May 7th of this year, the Amarillo Convention & Visitor Council held one of its What's On Tap? receptions at the Pavilion, one of a series of special events held by the Amarillo CVC to observe National Tourism Week 2014.

A new poster of the Lighthouse formation by Jack Sorenson entitled *Sandstone Sentinel* was featured. More than 150 posters were given to tourism representatives from across the state, all posters signed by Jack. Eric Miller, Communications Director for the Amarillo CVC and Partners board member and former president, states that the event may have been one of the most successful What's On Tap? events held during the past eighteen months. (Our thanks to Eric for providing the above information.)

(Jack Sorenson designed and painted the Partners logo of the Lighthouse portrayed on the first page of this newsletter and on the return address. You may have noticed, as well, that the logo is also the watermark presented on these pages.

The logo is the exclusive property of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation and may not be used by anyone else without permission.)

On May 27th, an event was held, as well, by the Texas Health Department in the Pavilion. Lunch was served, and a member of the Partners board was asked to give a brief history of Palo Duro Canyon.

These are only two of the many events held in the Pavilion and are representative of the variety of uses available for those who desire to utilize the facility.



Jack Sorenson



To Volunteer for Park

Call Bernice Blasingame

Park Interpreter

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To Volunteer for Gift Shop

Call David Townsend

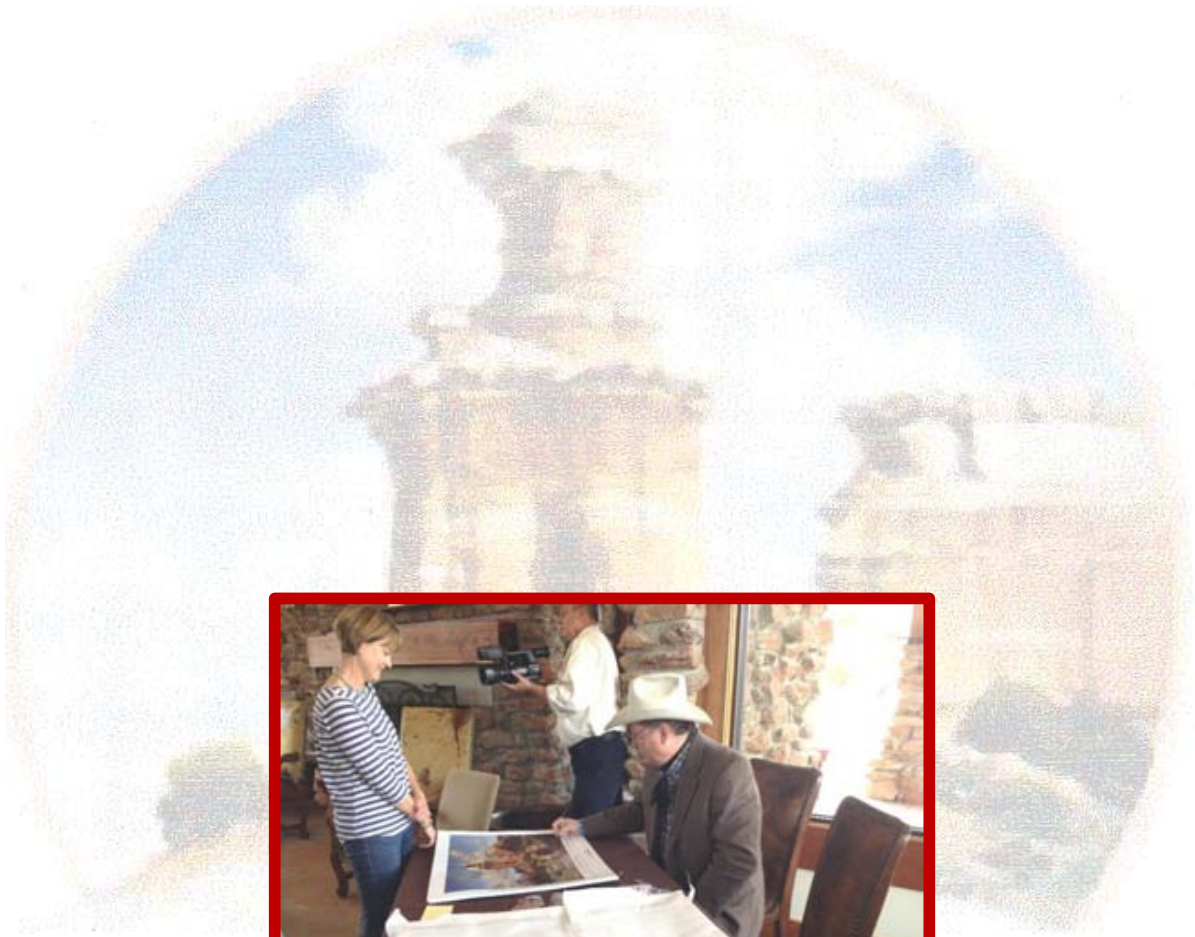
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Jack Sorenson Autographing Posters

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