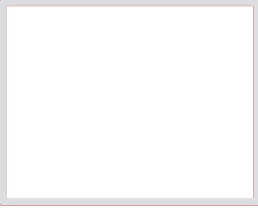
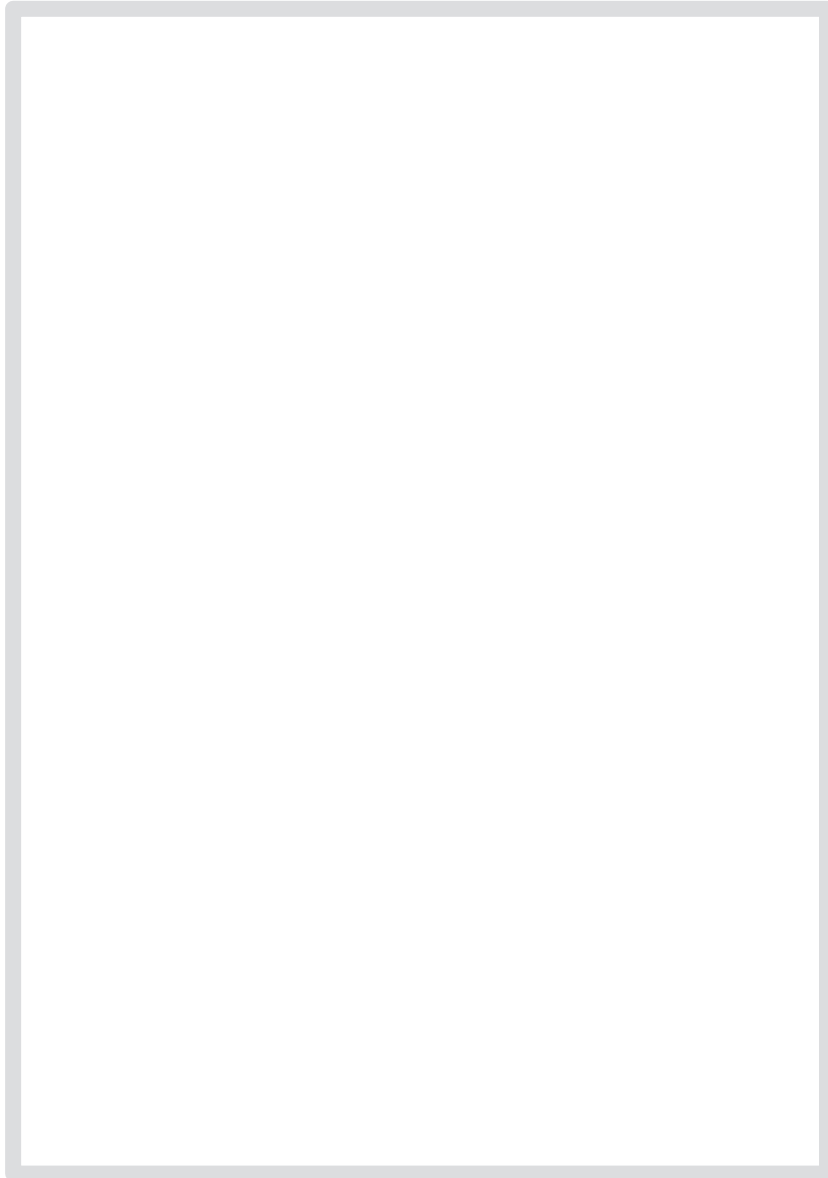
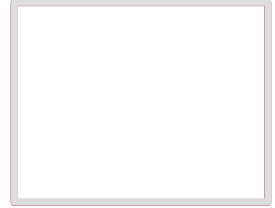


Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation



On the Edge!



**Image by Jim Livingston
Milky Way over the Lighthouse Formation**



Jim Livingston

The image on the front cover was taken about 11 p.m. on August 12th during the Perseid Meteor Shower. Jim was given permission by the Park personnel to stay the night at the Lighthouse for the purpose of photographing the meteor shower. It is important that anyone planning to replicate Jim's experience must get permission from the Park administration to stay all night.

The image is a 20 second exposure with a 28mm lens on a Canon 6d at 8fstop ISO 3200. Noise reduction Topaz denoise.

Jim's photographs are sold in the Canyon Gallery in the Park's Visitor Center.



**Nearly a Dozen Years of Night Sky
Observing at Palo Duro Canyon
State Park
by
Art Schneider**

This past July 31st, Bernice Blasingame retired as Park Interpreter at Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Her expertise ranged from flora to fauna to geology, and she has collaborated, as well, with local astronomers to bring the night sky to many Park visitors over the years.

As a professor at Amarillo College teaching astronomy, I have had the great pleasure of visiting and volunteering at numerous state parks and national parks as far away as the Badlands in South Dakota. And for at least the past ten years, Bernice has invited me to share the heavens with visitors to Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

Sometimes the numbers looking through our telescopes are more than 100, with visitors from a number of foreign countries, such as Germany, Canada, England, and Ireland. All are impressed with the celestial views deep in the heart of Texas.

Always assisting me has been my wife, Jean. She is instrumental not only in helping to set up and take down the equipment but also in operating an additional telescope to make sure the wait in line is not too long for stargazers. On numerous occasions, members of the Amarillo Astronomy Club have been available as well. At times, we have had as many as six telescopes peering into the heavens.

Our first location was in the parking lot of the Visitor's Center, but the hill behind the Center usually blocked a good bit of the sky. We then moved to the Lone Star Interpretive Area. This area has been the best

location, affording visitors seating and bathroom facilities nearby. For a time, we tried the Juniper Day Use Area but decided that the Lone Star Interpretive Area was the best location.

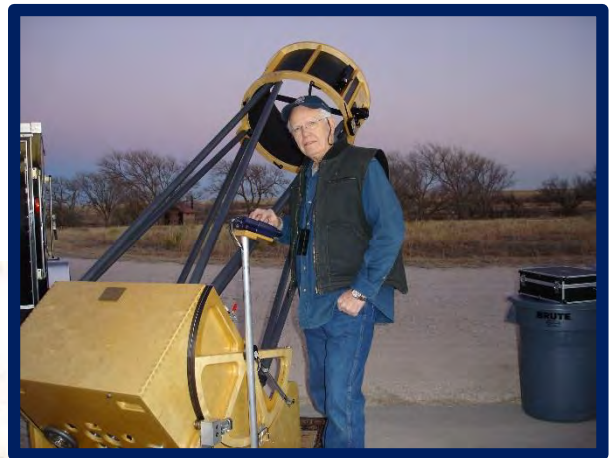


Although, the Amarillo city lights brighten the sky toward the Northeast, the rest of the sky is quite dark. On a scale used by observers that rate state park sites as a 1 or 4, the Canyon is rated as a 4. In comparison, Caprock Canyons State Park is rated a 2, and the darkest location is Big Bend State Park as a 1. Viewing in the Fort Davis, McDonald Observatory area near Big Bend State Park has been one of my favorite viewing areas during the winter months.

What do we see? Stars, constellations, planets, the moon, star clusters, galaxies, nebulae, and man-made satellites (ISS—International Space Station). On most evenings, a few meteors also show up.

The telescope I am standing by is a 24 inch diameter mirror Dobsonian reflecting telescope, which moves in a horizontal and vertical manner with programmed motors. The blue box is a computer which can point the telescope to many thousands of astronomical objects. Once an object is

found, the telescope will track the object automatically.



This telescope has been used on occasion at the Canyon, however, its smaller, 16 inch little brother, is the preferred public instrument.



The telescope pictured with the black skirt is the 16 inch being used at the Visitor Center. Being shorter than its big brother, it is a safer instrument and does not require climbing very high on a ladder as does the 24 inch.

These telescopes are among the largest ever used in the Canyon. A 30 inch reflector telescope holds the record for the

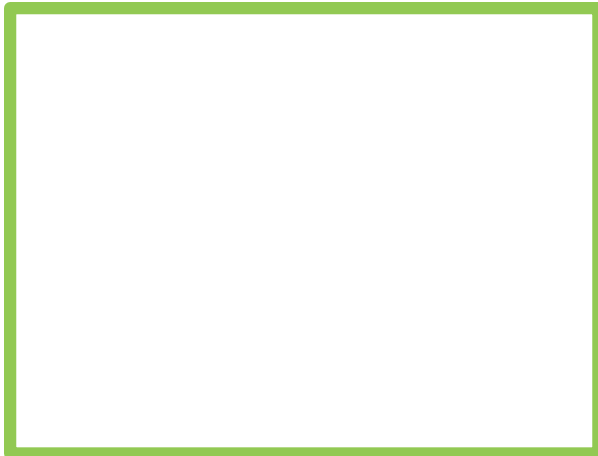
largest size, amateur telescope, ever used in the area.

Major highlights for stargazers in the Canyon are those of seeing light from a galaxy that left 2.5 million years ago or viewing the remains of an exploded star—a Supernova.

Check with Park Headquarters to see when night sky programs may be offered this fall.

(Editors note:) Art Schneider, Professor Emeritus, Amarillo College, is on the Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation Board of Advisors.

Sculptures by Joshua Abraham (Juan Sandival)



Joshua Abraham, also known as Juan Sandival, is an artist whose work is found in various art galleries around the world. The figures “. . . evoke warmth, humor, and

childlike innocence.” They are intended to make one smile.

His sculptures are in the Smithsonian’s Folk Art Collection and the Vatican as well. They are also in the collections of such luminaries as Laura Bush and her daughters and former Texas governor, Rick Perry. They are sold, as well, in the Canyon Gallery in the Visitor Center in Palo Duro Canyon State Park.

The sculptures in the background of the picture shown above are modeled after Ardith Parker Leming, great granddaughter of Quanah Parker. Ardith Parker, along with her husband, Glen, and her brother Don Parker are frequent visitors to Palo Duro Canyon. (The Gallery carries Ardith’s beadwork, too, which demonstrates the Comanche influence of her ancestral heritage.)

All of Abraham’s work is handmade, not mass produced, and is featured in numerous magazines. *Cf*



Ardith Parker Leming

**Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation
Board Members**

Frannie Nuttall, President
Cindy Meador, Vice President
John Chandler, Secretary
Ann Coberley
Tommy Nisbet
Art Schneider
David Hutson
Don Max Vars
Georgia King
Mel Philips
Lynda Barksdale
Eric Miller
Henrietta Doss
Lea Nelson
Dan Norman
Carl Fowler

Volunteer Opportunities

For Canyon Gallery (gift shop)

Contact:
David Townsend, 806.488.2506
Barbara Lite, 806.622.9219

For Park

Contact: Jeff Davis
Park Interpreter 806.488.2227
Ext: 106



**Shannon Blalock
Park Superintendent**

Palo Duro Canyon State Park is a jewel of the Texas State Park system that is enjoyed by over 300,000 visitors each year. Visitation numbers continue to grow; and, as we wrap up this summer, we can confirm that the growth continues. Continued growth means that we must strategically plan and develop the Park in a way that meets the needs of the

Park visitors and also protects the Park's rich history. At present, a number of capital projects are underway to help us meet the growing visitor demand.

The project in the Juniper Camping loop began early in 2015 and consists of water and electric campsites and restrooms and a group pavilion. The first phase of the project was completed in April and early May and included construction of the added restroom and pavilion facilities. Tentatively, the project should be complete in the Spring of 2016 and will provide a beautiful new campground for Park visitors.

At the Canoncita property, the second phase of work is underway on the Gilvin Educational Learning Center. Phase Two includes finish work on existing office space and bedrooms and the addition of an outdoor kitchen, and furnishings. Once complete, the Gilvin Center will offer students an outdoor classroom right here in the Canyon. It truly

is one of the most unique and rewarding projects I've been involved in.

We will also soon begin the planning and design work for a new Park headquarters facility. The current Headquarters Building, although rich in history, no longer meets the demands of visitation. We are hopeful that a new facility will allow us to capitalize on the visitor experience from the moment visitors enter the Park. A larger, more enriching facility will allow us the space needed to wait on more customers in a shorter amount of time.

It is an exciting time in Palo Duro Canyon State Park, and I am so fortunate to be a part of it all. I thank each one of you for your involvement and advocacy in and for the Park plans which have brought us to the current excitement.

Have a wonderful Fall! *Sb*



Long Time Park Interpreter Retires

Bernice Blasingame, Park Interpreter for more than ten years, retired in August of this year.

Bernice developed and conducted many educational programs for the Park during her tenure, and achieved recognition with Texas Parks and Wildlife by becoming the first Texas State Park Interpreter in Region 5. Her description of the tasks involved in achieving this distinction is related in the December 2014 edition of this newsletter.

Her last project, which was to be completed by January 2015, is an account of the Palo Duro School of Art which existed below the Visitor Center from 1936 to 1941.

A replica of the tents occupied by the School of Art has been erected on the flat below the Visitor Center.

The art school was conducted for the most part by the West Texas Normal School faculty (now West Texas A&M University). This project expands the history of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corp) era during the time that the state park was created.

In addition to her other duties, Bernice was the curator of the CCC Room in the Visitor Center in charge of the displays and the history of the CCC in Palo Duro Canyon. *Cf*



Bernice Blasingame

Partners wishes Bernice a well-deserved retirement. She will be missed.



Partners Annual Meeting and Dinner

November 7, 2015

Mack Dick Pavilion-6:00 to 8:30 p.m.

**Door Prize: Original Painting by Jack Sorenson: Tickets
Purchased at the Door**

You will receive a letter soon.



Jewelry Available in the Canyon Gallery



**Partners in
Palo Duro Canyon
Foundation**
11450 Park Road 5
Canyon, TX 79015
806.488.2227

NON-PROFIT ORG
US Postage
PAID
Amarillo, TX
Permit No. 664



On the Edge!

September 2015, Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation: Editor, Carl Fowler