

# Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

## *On the Edge!*

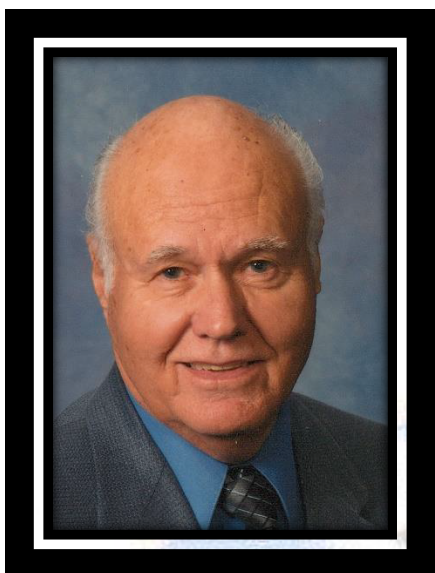


## **“Hard to Get to”**

By

**Jack Sorenson**

**Jack Sorenson Fine Art**



## **Annual Banquet**

**By**

**Carl Fowler**

I have been the editor of this newsletter for almost nine years. Recently, it occurred to me that those of you who read this may not know what I look like. Therefore, struggling with my modesty (two seconds), I decided, for better or for worse, to impose upon you, my reader, my face. You may do with it what you will.

This column is really about the Annual Banquet to which Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation invites its members (free of charge), but not finding a better place to force upon you my photo, I have placed it at the beginning.

Partners has been in existence for more than twenty-five years. It was founded with a few books and a coke machine. Look at it now! If you have not visited the Canyon Gallery located in the 1934-built Coronado Lodge, why haven't you? The Gallery is your contribution, as members of Partners, to Palo Duro Canyon State Park, the pride of the Panhandle and the jewel of Texas.

All of your profits from the sale of Gallery merchandise provides assistance to the Park. But that is a subject for another column.

The Board of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation provides the funds for the Banquet so that the Board can reward you for being a member of the Foundation. Your membership fee goes to assist the Park along with the selling of merchandise from the Gallery.

The Banquet is held each year during the fall months, usually in October or November. In its early years, the Banquet was held in local restaurants, either in Canyon or Amarillo. As Partners grew in size, so did the Banquet. Then, for several years, the Banquet was held in the Alumni Dining Facility on the campus of West Texas A&M University. After its construction, the Banquet has been held in the Mack Dick Pavilion. You, as a member of Partners, are invited. When you get an invitation to the banquet, please RSVP to David Townsend.

After the construction of the Mack Dick Pavilion in the State Park, of which Partners provided the funds for furnishing the building and the kitchen, the Banquet was moved to the Pavilion. Its use is provided to Partners by the Park free of charge, because of Partners' contributions to the Park.



**Mack Dick Pavilion**



Over the years, the Banquet has been catered by local businesses with a variety of menus. This year the main menu will be fajitas.



**Glen and Lea Nelson**

Speakers for the Banquet during its early years were mostly drawn from area personalities, each of which provided insight into various aspects of the Park which were often little known. In later years, the speakers have come from a broader range of experiences, several from Native American Tribes, such as Comanche, Navajo, and Sioux.



**Navajo Speaker**

The speaker for this year is Jack Sorenson, whose copy of his painting, "Hard to Get to" is on the cover page of this issue of the newsletter. The painting hangs above the fireplace in the Mack Dick Pavilion.

Jack grew up on the rim of Palo Duro Canyon and still calls the Canyon home. According to Jack, the inspiration for the scene derives from stray livestock which hid out in the canyon when he was growing up and required considerable skill for the rider to find a way into the canyon to find the strays.

Jack is now a nationally known western artist. Each year he donates an original painting for raffle at the Annual Banquet. The plans now are to hold the Banquet outside on the patio.

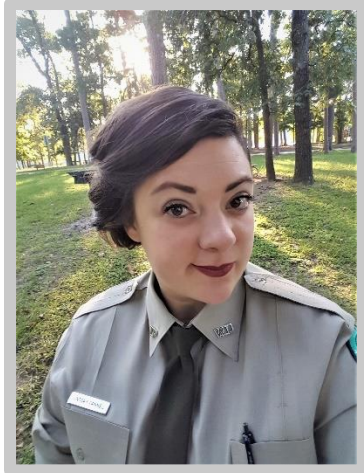


**Jack Sorenson signing copies of one of his posters at a previous Banquet.**

Disclaimer: My photo at the beginning of this column is several years old. But it is still a reasonable likeness. *Cf*







### **Lindsay Pannell Park Interpreter**

A child with debilitating asthma was kept indoors and away from strenuous activity. Yet, despite this obstacle, Teddy Roosevelt became one of the founding fathers for wildland preservation. A robust nature enthusiast, TR traveled the world to experience the outdoors. His passion and hard work influenced Teddy's cousin and admirer, young Franklin Delano Roosevelt, to follow in his footsteps.

Teddy's principles of conservation stuck with FDR as he grew up, eventually becoming one of the United States' greatest presidents. Attempting to wrest America from the brink of collapse during the Great Depression, FDR created the Civilian Conservation Corps, or CCC, as a part of the New Deal. It was then, in the early 1930s, Palo Duro Canyon State Park was created.

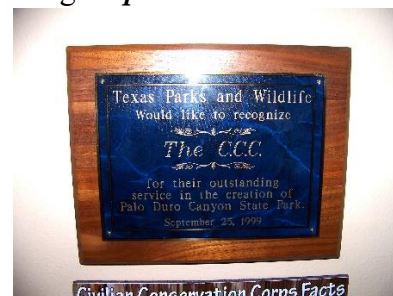
The CCC worked tirelessly, fashioning an amazing Park that over 400,000 visitors see each year. Today, dedicated Park staff and volunteers continue the legacy of conservation. Teddy is attributed with the quote: "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance

to work hard at work worth doing." From the Rough Rider himself to men desperate for a job, and to the legion of park rangers across the state, hard work is a privilege and a necessity.

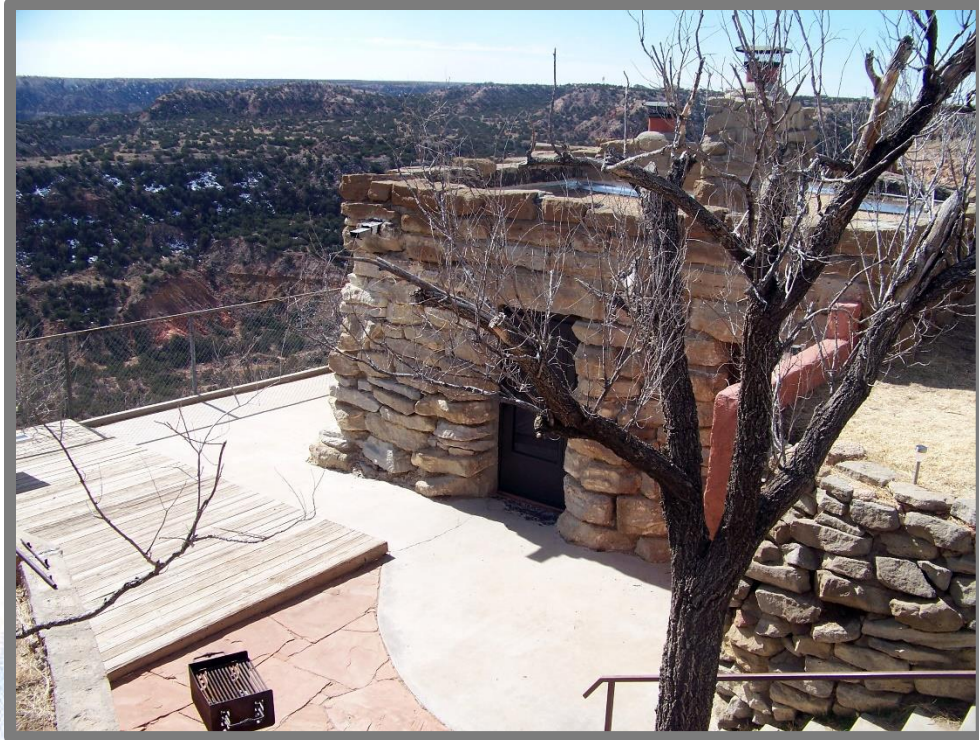
I have never appreciated that quote from Teddy Roosevelt more than these last few weeks. Serving as a park ranger is a fulfilling and challenging career, one that rewards hard work in sunrises and sunsets, fills the soul with joy at the smell of juniper after rain or the sight of turkey vultures spiraling into the thermals high above. But work and life, as I knew it, dwindled to nothing by mid-July. My world shrank to the four walls of my bedroom after contacting the novel corona virus.

For nearly a month, the "work worth doing" was out of my reach. As breathing became a struggle and all smell and taste vanished, I recalled Teddy Roosevelt's own breathing issues. But, also, I recalled his curiosity and passion for nature. Perhaps TR's determination and viral hunger for the outdoors began when he was too ill to experience it. Similarly, the nature I love became more precious as it fell out of my reach.

Now, weeks later and virus free, I can take a deep breath in the Canyon. Once again, I can smell the juniper after a rain, listen to the wind roll through the cottonwoods, and protect the wildlands with ferocious and passionate determination. It is hard work, but it is, without a doubt, "work worth doing." *Lp*







**Sorenson Cabin**  
**Photo by Eddie Tubbs**

During the past several months, a remarkable change has occurred in the three rim cabins in Palo Duro Canyon State Park. Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation, along with assistance and coordination with the staff of the State Park, has renovated the interior of each cabin. The Board of the Foundation has provided approximately thirty-six thousand dollars for the renovations and for refurnishing the cabins. The money has come from the dedicated purpose of the Foundation—to provide monetary assistance to the State Park when needed.

Pebbie Comer, with considerable time and energy, has supervised the renovations for the cabins. Pebbie has spent a great deal of time overseeing the construction workers and working on the cabins herself and has been tireless in her efforts—all of this as a volunteer and a member of the Partners Board.

When needed, other Board members have pitched in to help Pebbie.

The following photos are provided by Eddie Tubbs, also a Board member of Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation. The interior of the cabin displayed below is that of the Sorenson Cabin. *Cf*







**The cabins may be reserved on the website of the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife.**





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