

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon Foundation

On the Edge!



Photo by David Townsend



Hi Ho!
New Golf Carts for Park Hosts
Photo by Eddie Tubbs

Partners recently purchased for Palo Duro Canyon State Park three new golf carts to be used exclusively by Park hosts. “Exclusively” means that the carts will not be used for trail maintenance, trail rescues (emergencies being the exception), or other tasks required by the Park. Wouldn’t you like to drive one? To qualify as a Park host or other volunteer position contact Jeff Davis or Lindsay Pannell at (488) 2727, ext. 2007. E-mail: jeff.davis@tpwd.texas.gov. or lindsay.pannell@tpwd.texas.gov.



Photos by Eddie Tubbs



**Joseph Allen
Park Superintendent**

Longhorns and Longjohns

The year 1886 ushered in the “Great Die-Up,” a bitterly cold blizzard that swept through the Great Plains, killing 90% of the northern herds. Charles Goodnight and his longhorns escaped the worst of that blizzard only to suffer through even more. The coldest temperatures on record for the Texas Panhandle reached minus 16 degrees on February 12th, 1899. The resiliency of longhorns and the natural shelter of Palo Duro Canyon meant Goodnight’s ranching endeavor survived.

Though cattle are an icon of the American West, they are not native to the Americas. Originally imported by Spanish Conquistadors, Andalusian longhorns travelled to Texas from South America during the 16th century. By the 19th century, escaped longhorns reached several million throughout Texas. These Mavericks were often rounded up by cattle bosses and sold at nearby markets. The longhorn cattle had adapted to survive the harsh climate of the plains by eating grasses and forbs shunned by European cattle, defending themselves with their sharp horns, and growing a thick coat for harsh winter winds.

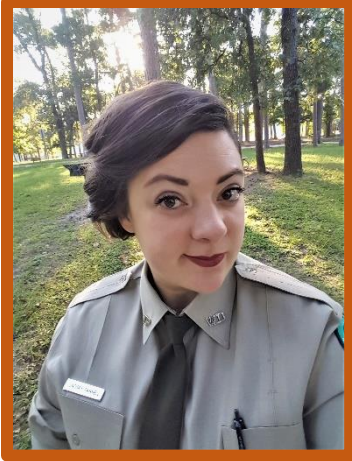
The invention and implementation of the railroad provided a unique opportunity. Cattle bosses realized they could sell each head of cattle for ten times the amount in distant cities like Chicago. Ranches like Goodnight’s JA Ranch right here in Palo Duro Canyon took advantage of the opportunity. Thus the age of cattle drives and the iconic era of the cowboy was truly born. Most Texas ranchers began with longhorns because of their plentiful numbers and ability to survive hard trail drives.

Today, we have four members of the official longhorn herd of Texas. The old-timers, T-Bone and Brisket, are joined by two new yearlings, Chicken and Waffles. Not a week passed after the babies journeyed from South Texas to the Panhandle that we were hit with a cold akin to the Great Die-Up. Over 120 years later, an arctic blast sent windchill factors plummeting to the negative twenties. Thanks to the hearty genetics of our stout longhorns and ample amounts of hay, our boys, new and old, made it just fine. *Ja*



Photo by Joseph Allen





**Lindsay Pannell
Park Interpreter**

**Catching the Dawn
by
Lindsay Pannell**

Boots laced
Pack ready
Work quickly paced

Over yonder
The barest blue
Race to burgeoning wonder

Art in motion
Deep feelings writ above
Sapphire, violet, scarlet commotion

Crescendo!
Heart swelling
Dawn's colorful salvo

Fading to day
Lavenders, yellows, and pinks
And with it dismay

The Llano Estacado is flat; many see it as featureless. Upon visiting Palo Duro Canyon State Park, guests are shocked to see the variegated canyon walls and elevation changes. Yet for the keen observer, the flat expanse we call home gives us the feeling of being in a sky bowl, the heavens surrounding us in all their calm, calamity and beauty. A riot of pastels, cerulean, deep-burnt sienna, vermilion, and violent violet roll across the skies as day breaks and night falls. The heart soars with every wash of color across the skies. And it is here, on the featureless plains that a unique opportunity presents itself. Specifically, *because* of the flat plains, people can view the phenomenon called the Belt of Venus with great clarity.

The Belt of Venus appears at sunrise and sunset, being most prominent at sunset. On a clear evening, turn from the west to the east. You will see a band of pinks and oranges ringing the sky just above the horizon. This band is the Belt of Venus caused by the earth's shadow and Alpenglow or reflected light of the sunset on dense portions of the atmosphere. On particularly amazing summer sunsets, one can turn in place, seeing a glorious nimbus ringing the skies. Without our featureless plains, we could never experience the Belt of Venus in all its majesty.

Lp



Photo by Lindsay Pannell



Editor's Notebook

When I was a young man (early twenties), I was an apprentice glazier and worked for a glass company in Ft. Worth. Of the eight or ten men who worked with me, so far as I knew I was the only one who went to church on a regular basis, a fact known to the others.

One football season, we had company pools concerning which team would win a particular football game. As luck would have it, I won the first four or five pots, so much so that the pool soon dried up. I suppose the others were tired of giving me money.

One day soon after the pool disappeared, one of the journeyman glaziers asked me if he could borrow fifty dollars. His rationale for his request was this: "I like God!" I guess he thought I had some divine line to God which enabled me to win the money and get more money.

Knowing that he was a heavy drinker and knowing that he would probably never pay me back, I granted his request. I suppose I assumed that, since he "liked God," he would at least intend to pay me back.

He never did.

When I was nineteen, I won a box of chocolate-covered cherries from a drugstore scratch-off card. So far as I can remember,

these are the only times I ever won at gambling.

My point is this: at Partner's annual banquet this past October, I won in a raffle an original oil painting by Jack Sorenson.



Other than the obvious monetary value of the painting (Jack is a nationally known western artist.), I am proud of the painting, not only because of its portrayal of Palo Duro Canyon that I love but also because Jack and his wife Jeanne are good friends of my wife, Mary, and me.

For the past several years, Jack has donated a painting to Partners to be raffled off at the annual banquet which is held either the latter part of October or the first part of November.

Partners in Palo Duro Canyon is a non-profit organization. Raffling Jack's paintings at the annual banquet is part of the yearly fund raising. The banquet is funded by Partners in order to honor the many Park volunteers, both those who work with the Park personnel to maintain the Park and for the volunteers who work in Partners' Gallery.

Jack and Jeanne have been staunch supporters of Partners since its founding and have contributed time and art to Partners over the years. Jack's father, Jim Sorenson, owned a horse ranch just outside the Park entrance where Jack grew up working with horses as a trainer. In addition to his art, he has trained 93 horses. (I think that's the right number. If not, I take full responsible for the misinformation.)

(Jack's brother runs the riding stable located on the Sorenson ranch outside the Park.)

By the way, the buffalo in the painting (bison for you purists), is unique to my painting. Most of the other raffled paintings did not have animals. Thanks Jack.
Cf



**Photo by Mary Fowler
Jack and Jeanne Sorenson**

**To volunteer for the Park,
contact either Jeff Davis or
Lindsay Pannell at (806) 488-
2727, ext. 2007**

jeff.davis@tpwd.texas.gov
lindsay.pannell@tpwe.texas.gov

**To volunteer for the Canyon
Gallery, contact David
Townsend at (806) 488-2506
partners@midplains.coop**

Who's That?

A few years ago as David Townsend, Canyon Gallery Manager, was walking to his office, he noticed someone familiar standing in the hall looking at one of the paintings for sale. "Larry!" said David.

"Yes!" was the reply,

The guest was Larry Gatlin who had stopped over to visit Palo Duro Canyon while on his way to a concert in Chicago where Barbara Streisand had invited him to hear her sing one of his songs.

From this chance meeting, David and Larry became friends, and this friendship resulted in Larry and his brothers holding a concert in the Amphitheater to raise funds for Partners. The friendship continues, and David and Larry correspond frequently.

Many visitors from all over the world visit the Canyon and the Gallery, including many whom we label "celebrities." You never know who might show up. This is one perk of working as a volunteer in the Canyon Gallery.



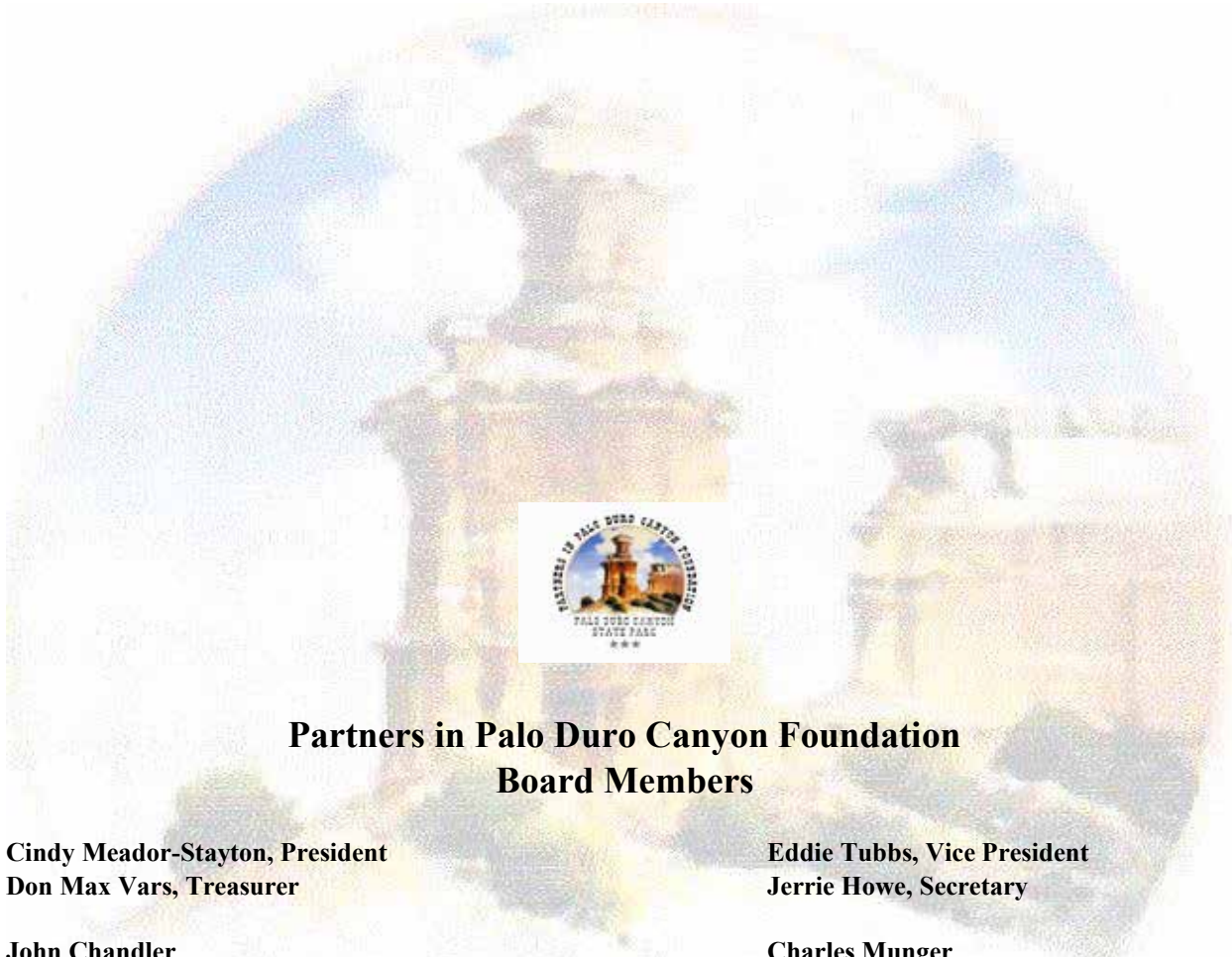


The Great Freeze of 2021
Photos by David Townsend



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