

FALK:

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Beck: College professor? I'd like to hear more about that.

Falk: I received my masters degree from St. John's College in Santa Fe (N.M.), and then went into the Ph.D. program at (The) University of Chicago. I have all but dissertation status from (The) University of Chicago in the Committee on History of Culture. I passed my qualifying and language exams but didn't write the thesis. My personal life changed dramatically and I could never finish. I taught at Saint Mary's College (of California) in Moraga for about fifteen years after that.

Beck: Will you ever finish the thesis, or does that matter anymore?

Falk: No. It's not that it doesn't matter but I'm not teaching anymore. The profession changed, and once I moved on, I didn't want to go back. So I've taken the material I was thinking about and ... sometimes it shows up in poetry. It's just something I live with. It certainly affects my understanding of things. When I got into real estate, I thought that would be an interesting way to find out about how money flows and about politics in a small town. I'm a student of political science in a lot of ways, and it has been interesting. I was interested in being

on the Borrego Springs Community Sponsor Group for quite a few years before I got on. I'm interested in participatory democracy. I became a broker a little over a year ago. Up until then I was content to be a real estate agent. Then it was time to do my own thing. At a certain point in your life, you prefer not to work for someone else if you don't have to. So this has been a year of being in a very public position. It's good. I balance it out by being somewhat reclusive in my private life. The people part is fun for the most part. Real estate brokerage in 2014-2015 is hard work. There's lots of paperwork and you have to be good at details. You have to be very careful and watch out for people who really need your help. There are a lot of issues they won't know about unless you tell them.

Beck: I can see it's very important to pick the right person for help there.

Falk: This town has more than its fair share of very competent real estate brokers and agents. It's important that you work with someone you trust; someone who will tell you what you need to know and will watch out for your interests. I do get a lot of appreciation. People love it when you take care of them well.

Beck: How's business in real estate going this year?

Falk: The season hasn't really unfolded yet so we don't really know what it will ultimately bring. It's definitely brought higher listing prices and we hope it continues to bring higher-priced sales. The last number of years have been hard on sellers; low prices and people losing a lot of money. It has been painful for a lot of people.

Beck: Do you think it will change this year?

Falk: If real estate is an indicator of the economy ... real estate seems to be healthy here in Borrego, even with the market downturn of recent years. Of course there was a high volume of sales with the low prices because it was a great time for buyers who could now afford to buy even though a lot of people were not doing that well economically. At this point in our conversation someone came into Becky's office asking about some property for sale. I listened as she gave him a multitude of information and advice. She was very specific about what she could and couldn't provide for him when asked certain questions, because she told him, she represents both the seller and the buyer. After fifteen minutes the man left armed with new ideas on how to locate what he was looking for and better informed about the various costs involved. He said he'd be back later after doing



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some more research.

Beck: That was a lot of preliminary information you just gave him while I was sitting here. I wouldn't have known to consider all those things.

Falk: Most agents will help with all this. I'm an academic, so I like to have information and I like to give it out. There hasn't been a lot of building in Borrego except for a few high-end homes in the Indian Head Ranch and Verbena (Drive) areas. Costs have gone up since people were building regularly, although the permitting process is different with manufactured homes.

Beck: Speaking of manufactured homes, what do you think of the place on Verbena (Drive) that

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