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See story on page 18.

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When: Morning of May 3, 2009

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Dear Representative Raymond:

It has come to the attention of the residents and homeowners of The Village Del Mar Condominiums, Regency Park, Cambridge Place Condominiums, Las Fuentes Condominiums, and La Mansion Condominiums that you have quietly applied a great deal of pressure to the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission in Austin to approve the liquor permit application of Stingray Alley. We are also aware that Dr. Victor Treviño, the owner of Stingray Alley, is a major contributor to your political campaign fund.

As you may be aware, the Texas State Office of Administrative Hearings conducted a hearing in December to consider the concerns of nearby residents regarding the impact Stingray Alley would have on their quality of life. Based

on the evidence and testimony presented at that hearing, the administrative judge determined:

The place or manner in which Applicant plans to conduct its business warrants refusal of the requested permits based on the general welfare, health, peace, morals, and safety of the people in the neighborhood adjacent to the proposed premises.

Because you chose to take the side of a major campaign contributor against the interests of hundreds of residents and voters who would have to live with the impact of this night club, we can only conclude that you were uninformed about the true consequences of this decision. Please go to this web address, www.youtube.com/watch?v=titnKPePiXE to view a short video that highlights the

problems that plague our neighborhood from the existing bars and night clubs, which I hope will be instructive to you. You can also find the video on You Tube by searching for "Little Sixth Street, Laredo." Needless to say, the addition of another nighttime establishment in the neighborhood that would serve alcohol and attract even more "visitors" to our neighborhood in the late night and early morning hours would be a disaster for the residents of the area.

It is clear that Dr. Treviño and his cohorts are continuing to pursue ways to open a nightclub at Stingray Alley. I urge you to have the political courage to put the interests of the citizens and voters of your district ahead of the narrow finan-

cial interests of a single individual, even if that individual has contributed to your political campaigns.

Specifically, we hope that you will cease exerting political influence on behalf of Dr. Treviño as he continues to attempt to circumvent the local zoning ordinance and to bring this blight to our neighborhood.

The voters of your district deserve to have their interests represented in Austin and not to have those interests traded for political and financial consideration. We will be watching your actions closely and we will maintain our vigilance both in Austin and Laredo.

Respectfully,
Daniel Ryan

LareDOS

PUBLISHER

María Eugenia Guerra
meg@laredosnews.com

EDITOR

Monica McGettrick
mcgettrick@laredosnews.com

STAFF WRITERS

Catherine Archer
John Andrew Snyder
editorial@laredosnews.com

SALES

María Eugenia Guerra
ads@laredosnews.com

CIRCULATION, BILLING & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Jorge Medina
circulation@laredosnews.com

LAYOUT/DESIGN

Raúl Lancón Jr. /JM Design
design@laredosnews.com

SHUSTRING PRODUCTIONS, INC.
WWW.LAREDOSNEWS.COM
1812 HOUSTON STREET
LAREDO TEXAS 78040
TEL: (956) 791-9950
FAX: (956) 791-4737
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CONTRIBUTORS

Juan Alanis	Neo Gutiérrez
Cordelia Barrera	Steve Harmon
Jesús Cadena	Henri Kahn
María Eugenia Calderón	Randy Koch
Norman E. Cantú	Alex Mendoza
Bebe Fenstermaker	Salo Otero
Sissy Fenstermaker	Jennie Reed
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Frontera Nortedur	Steve Treviño
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Letter to the Editor

Money is tight but not at Webb County. The Webb County Commissioners Court has authorized the Webb County Public Defender to send five to 10 of his staff attorneys to Las Vegas, Nevada to attend a legal conference. The ninth annual public defender retreat will be held at Imperial Palace, but the attorneys are too good to stay there and are staying at "nicer" hotels on the strip, like Caesar's Palace and Donald Trump's Hotel. Everyone in our country is tightening their money belts, but Webb County Commissioners believe in loosening the

purse strings for the Public Defenders who have a reputation for being arrogant with their indigent clients. Who is in charge of overlooking the County budget? Do these attorneys (even the one who was recently arrested by Texas State Troopers for a DWI charge) really need to go to Las Vegas for a legal conference? Aren't there any conferences they can go to in Texas to receive their legal education credit hours? I think so -- look on the Internet and you will find these conferences. Taxpayers beware of government spending of our hard working tax dollars!

Vanessa Rodriguez

Letter to the Editor

Resolution passed unanimously by TAMIU Faculty Senate on April 17, 2009:

"The Faculty Senate of Texas A&M International University opposes the presence on campus of all firearms not in the possession of a trained and certified peace officer."

This resolution is in response to current efforts in the Texas Legislature to allow students with concealed weapons permits to bring their weapons to class.

Does this mean that faculty should be armed as well? As the parent of a TAMIU student, I cannot imagine faculty who have dedicated their lives to young people engaging in armed combat with students. Do we want a forum for intellectual activity, or do we want the OK Corral? Do we want the bookstore to stock Plato and Aristotle or Smith and Wesson?

Robert W. Haynes, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
TAMIU

Letter from the publisher

What you are holding in your hands, *LareDOS* in its new, downsized configuration, pretty much tells you what is happening to newspapers around the world as a result of soaring fuel and paper prices.

To be clear, there are changes occurring even more significant than the physical size of publications. Advertising revenues, the key to any newspaper remaining in print, are down, and they have been for some time. This issue of *LareDOS* looks flush, but on the whole, our sales have been flat for some time, and we have had several longtime advertisers cut back or leave our advertising family altogether. We are deeply grateful to all our advertisers

For most businesses, advertising is the first place to tighten the belt. We believe that when the business climate slows, advertising is one of the surest ways to bring customers back in, whether by running ads with special offers or ads that reassure the buying public of the company's longevity, surefootedness, and commitment to service.

There were times in the early days of writing and publishing *LareDOS*, that our viability looked tenuous. Things have never looked that grim since, but our sales have definitely hit an uncomfortable impasse, as no doubt your sales have if you are a business owner.

The purpose of our work here has

never been about money -- if it was, the five of us would be working at higher paying jobs with benefits and retirement packages-- but it has been about good writing and about staying in business so that we can continue to publish informative stories about the issues that most affect us.

And so I am asking anyone who has products or services to sell to use our product, this well written, far reaching little news journal that has a life on the web beyond the hard copy. We can do a good job for you. For anyone considering advertising in *LareDOS*, please know that your hard copy ad also appears in the online version of *LareDOS* at www.laredosnews.com.

A few months ago, in an effort to whack a few hundred bucks from our printing bill, our largest expense after payroll, we cut our page count from 72 to 64. That change was seamless. This, our new, truncated size, is quite a different change. We ran out of room so early in the process of designing the April issue that it was alarming. Our columnists will have to be more brief. I don't know how to be brief, but I'm going to have to try.

If you'd like to discuss advertising or any other matter with me, please feel free to call me at (956) 791-9950.

There is plenty of good writing and reading in this issue of *LareDOS*. Enjoy it!

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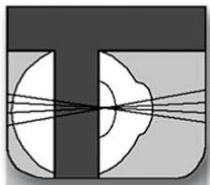

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WCHF prepares for Founders Day luncheon, celebration of the arts, and recognition of E.H. Corrigan and awards for service and preservation

In addition to conferring the honorary title of President of the Republic of the Río Grande (RRG) on entrepreneur and philanthropist E.H. Corrigan, the Webb County Heritage Foundation will celebrate the arts at its annual Founders Day luncheon Saturday, May 16, at the TAMU Student Center Ballroom.

The Foundation looks to the arts in conferring its awards this year. Renowned photographer George O. Jackson is recognized with the Preservation of Folklore, Customs, and Traditions Award.

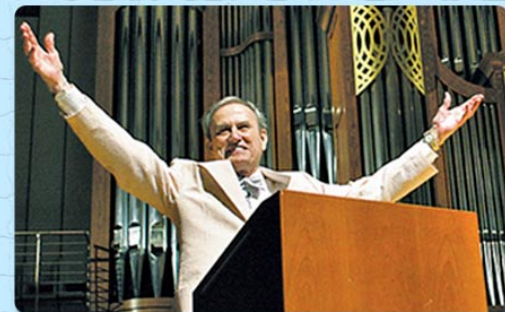
Meritorious Service awards go to Mark Ballas in dance; lifetime educator Neo Gutierrez in dance; Quarter Notes/Rene and Rene in music; Alfonso Gomez-Rejon in film; watercolorist Mary Quiros in visual arts; and Russell and Aladar Deutsch in jewelry design. Writer John A. Adams Jr. is the recipient of the Jim Parish Award for Documentation and Publication of Local and Regional History.

Historic Preservation Awards for significant contributions toward preserving the heritage of Webb County go to the Laredo Art League; the Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra; the Laredo Philharmonic Chorale; the Laredo Little Theater; and the Laredo Center for the Arts.

Corrigan, his own life deeply committed to the arts (see profile on page 32), is an excellent choice for the 2009 President of the RRG. He has said that with his cabinet -- preservationist Linda Leyendecker Gutierrez; businessmen Hector Hall, Hank Sames, George Neel, and A.M. Leyendecker; rancher Tom Gates; investor and developer Gary G. Jacobs; educator Ray M. Keck; and photographer Mario Gutierrez -- he will work in this year to promote the culture, arts, and history of Laredo.

For further information, or to purchase tickets, please call the WCHF at 727-0977. ♦

*Congratulations,
E.H. Corrigan*



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Courtesy Photo



At the Cesar Chavez March for Justice

Zunny Escobar, Violet Escamilla, Diana García, and Luz Ramirez were among the TAMIU students who took part in the annual march celebrating the life of migrant and human rights champion Cesar Chavez.

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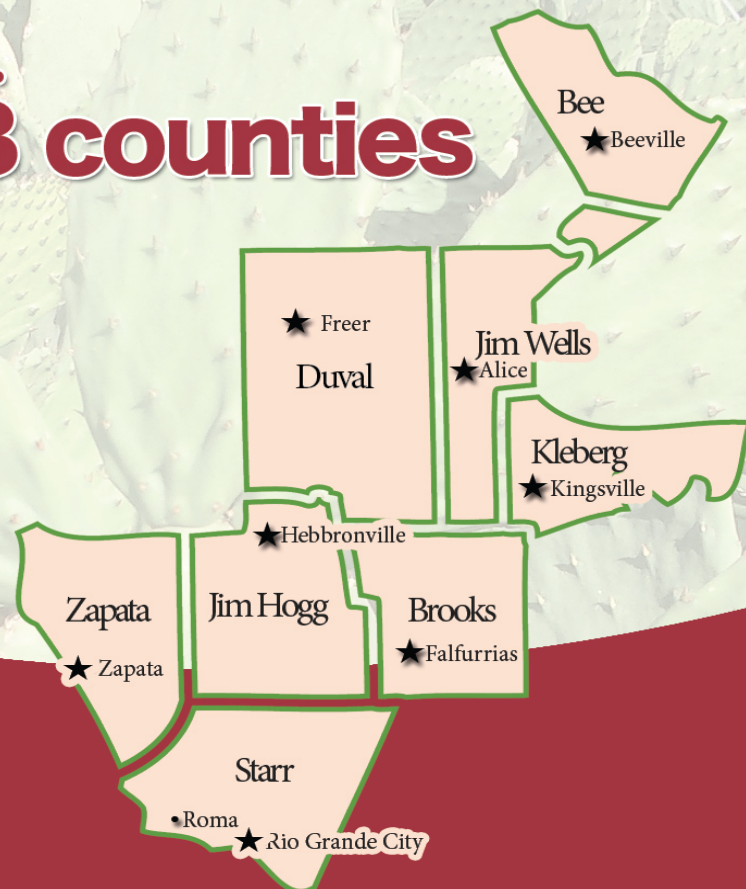


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Entering my own name into the family history, the story of our lives that moves like a river through and along this river

By MARÍA EUGENIA GUERRA

The decision to put together a family history for my granddaughters has moved me through hundreds of photographs and letters that span more than a century. I have the benefit of the thorough genealogy my father and his cousin Margarito constructed of the Guerra-Cañamars who came from Montaña de Castilla in Spain and arrived in the New World in 1602. As pertains to the lineage that arrives at us, each generation is named -- husband, wife, and children. Many of the names are archaic sounding -- Juan Nepumoceno, José Ciriaco, Gertrudis, Matiana. No doubt in the passing of time my own name will take on the gossamer of antiquity.

On both my maternal and paternal side, Guerrero Viejo was the point of our diaspora into Texas. Some of us went to Los Ojuelos, some to try to settle Palafox, some to San Ygnacio, and others to Laredo.

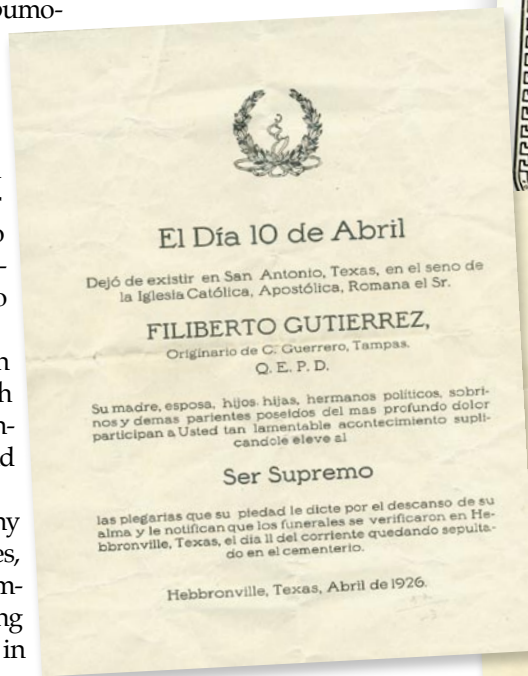
There's a bounty of information on the Guerra side of the family, but much less on my paternal grandmother Leandra's side of the family, the Castaños and the Barcenas.

I'm grateful my father saved so many letters and documents -- birth certificates, international crossing cards, a 1917 summons from the War Department calling my grandfather Armengol to service in World War I, his discharge from the Army, poll tax receipts, my grandmother Leandra's certification as a second grade teacher in Los Ojuelos, which is where she met Armengol.

There is no shortage of information on my grandmother's people, the Benavides-Treviños of San Ygnacio, but I am struggling to fill in what can be known about my grandfather Filiberto Gutierrez. I know he attended Draughan's Business College in Galveston and with companions from Zapata and Guerrero survived the 1900 hurricane. I have beautiful pictures of him in his Hebronville general store, The Cash Store, and I have tender letters he wrote my grandmother when she was away from him in San Ygnacio or Guerrero. I have pictures of his funeral and his obituary, which ran on the front page of the April 14, 1926 issue of *The Hebronville News*. I have a copy of the *esquela* that announced his death, and I have the Porter Loring invoice for his fu-

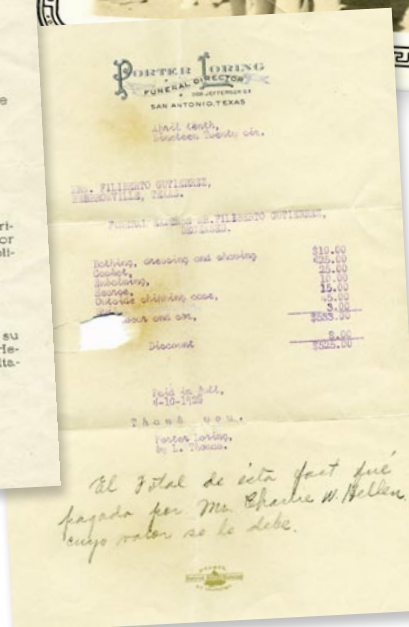
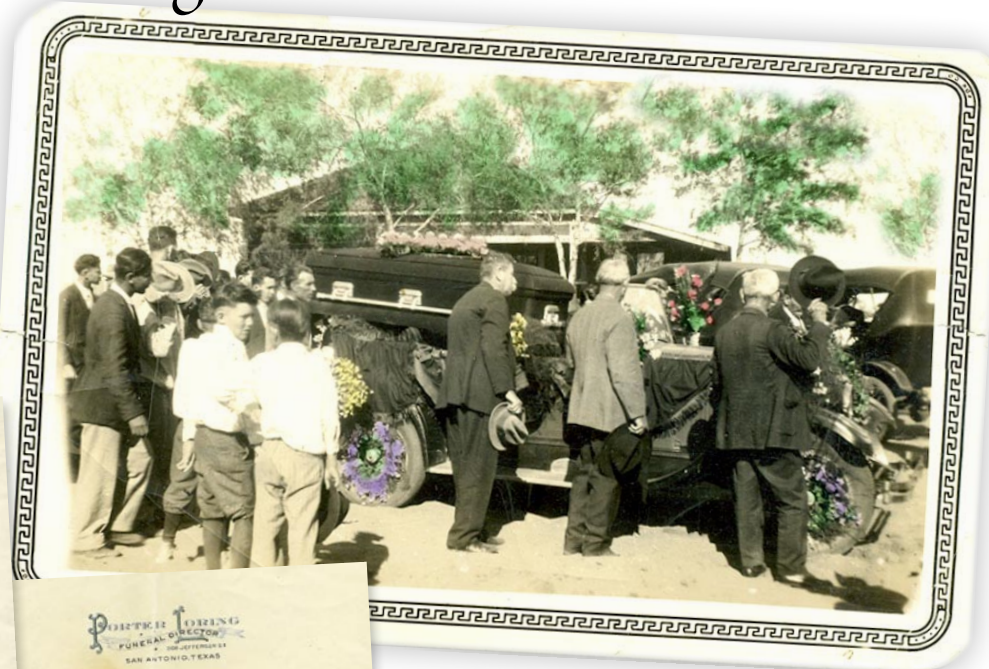
neral, which according to a note penned by my grandmother María the services were generously paid for by his good friend Charlie W. Hellen who would be reimbursed.

There is much to be learned from letters in florid cursive and even from invoices or copies



of bank checks drawn in 1915. The language and the choice of words tell a story beyond the purpose of the communication. The dulcet tone of my grandmother writing her "Inolvidable Fili" never fails to touch me, and it tells me a story I could not have known about my grandparents because Filiberto had been dead 22 years when I was born, and I do not recall that I ever heard my grandmother speak of him.

Even as I say that this piece of photo and data gathering work is for my granddaughters who will for now and for a couple of decades skip over the archival matter and enjoy the pictures of more recent times, I understand that the true purpose of this work, this assembly of timelines and lineages is to tell the story to myself. With every peer into the sepia faces of our people, I connect



the dots and understand I am committing myself to the story, entering my own name into the story of our lives that moves like a river through and along this river.

I become overwhelmed sometimes by how ambitious this project is. I'm not worried about the writing. It is the assembly and the desire to tell a whole, long story that can explain who we are today. I am pleased that when they are older my granddaughters will also have the archival record of *LareDOS* to learn about me. (Why did Nana pick so many fights?)

It is the pictures and hand written letters that give the story depth, and so I have undertaken a flurry of finding, scanning, and digitizing, of opening old boxes, files, and folders.

It is in this emotion-laden effort of discovery that I came across contact sheets of my wedding pictures, photos that mark the day in 1971 that I married the most handsome man in the universe. I married him on an altar made of hay bales on his parents' farm in Hallettsville.

Why I waited 38 years to have the photos printed eludes me. Perhaps I was waiting to be sure it was safe to come out. Perhaps I waited until just the right moment so that I could objectively look at the value of such a timepiece.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 59 ►►

Driven by self-determined high academic standards, TAMIU's Saldivar en route to doctoral program at Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration

By MARÍA EUGENIA GUERRA

Few were the students possessed of writing skills in a section of journalism I taught at TAMIU a few years ago.

Teaching that class presented me a sobering revelation for the state of education in Laredo, for how many students are short-changed by the system, graduated out of high school without knowing how to read or write, without critical thinking skills, moving ill-prepared into college studies and having to take remedial classes before being able to take classes for credit.

In a class of about 15, few stood out for being interested in the course, or being articulate and possessed of good grammar skills. One who did stand out was Karina Moreno -- now Karina Moreno Saldivar -- who, undaunted by the redlined drafts I handed back to her, wrote to become a better writer. She was an excellent student, a good listener, and one who adhered to self-determined high standards for her work.

The 2002 graduate of United High School (as a junior), fast-tracked to an undergraduate degree in communications with a minor in English in three academic years.

The recent news that she's headed to Rutgers University next fall on a full scholarship to earn a PhD in Public Administration comes as no surprise to colleagues, mentors, and students she has assisted.

Only eight scholarships are awarded for the four-year Rutgers School of Public Affairs and Administration (SPAA) program, and only three of the eight come with full tuition, health insurance, and a monthly stipend. At the end of her full-time studies at Rutgers Saldivar will have completed a PhD with a concentration in Public Management and a minor in Performance Measurement and Improvement.



Courtesy Photo

Christopher and Karina Saldivar

"Rutgers was always my top choice, but I knew they only accepted eight students. Never did I foresee it would be the first school that notified me of my acceptance and scholarship," Saldivar said, adding, "Not all eight students receive scholarships. It is very competitive, so I am extremely grateful to be one of the ones selected for assistance."

Saldivar credits mentor Dr. Peter Haruna, TAMIU associate dean and assistant professor of public administration, for encouraging her to pursue doctoral studies even before she graduated with a Masters of Public Administration.

"Rutgers SPAA has ongoing research and projects with New Jersey's state government and other countries. When I visited the campus in March and met with Dean Marc Holzer he told me of work on a project with Prague on E-governance," she said, adding, "I learned more about the four scholarly journals published by SPAA, as well

as ongoing research by the National Center for Public Performance (NCP) housed at Rutgers-Newark campus, and seminars/conferences hosted by Rutgers to train public administration professionals."

Saldivar, excited at the prospect of undertaking studies at an SPAA school ranked #10 nationwide by *US News*, will make the move in August with her husband Chris Saldivar, an instructor for the TAMIU Office of Special Programs.

Karina Saldivar is TAMIU's CAMP coordinator, a program that addresses the needs of students who come from migrant families. She is also a former financial aid counselor at the university.

"I want to become involved in the Rutgers state projects and hope to publish at some point in one of the scholarly journals," Saldivar said, adding, "I am definitely looking forward to student teaching, which Dr. Haruna said is the best part of completing a PhD program. My long-term goal is to achieve a research-oriented faculty position that will bring me and my findings to the classroom."

Saldivar said, "Chris and I plan to return in four years. Giving back to my community is of most importance."

Saldivar, who moved to Laredo from Monterrey in 1988, is the daughter of Israel Moreno and Idalia Moreno. ♦

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SCAN mentoring fills a void in young lives

By JOHN ANDREW SNYDER

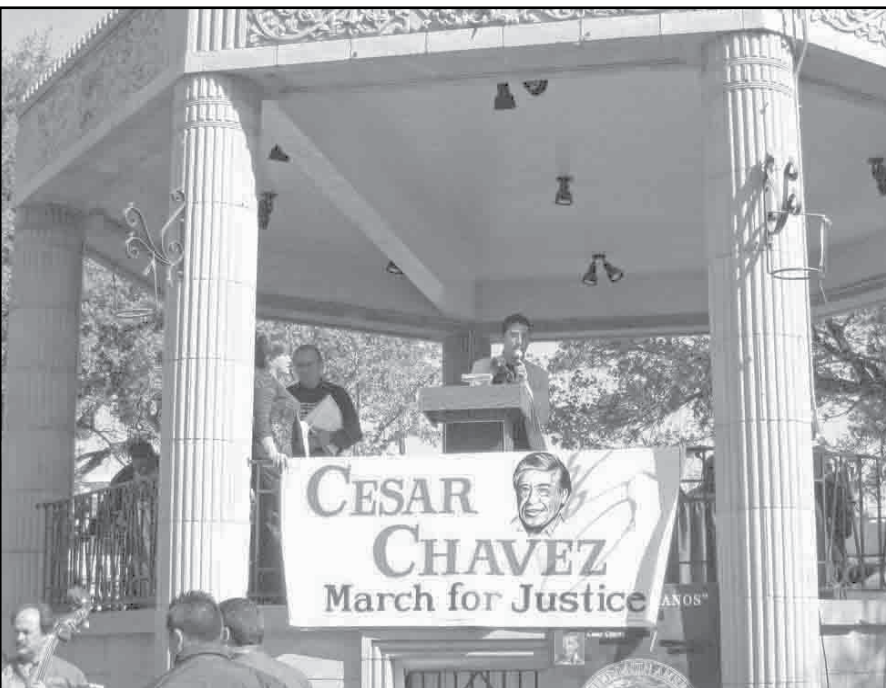
The Laredo Rotary Club recently heard a presentation on a SCAN (Serving Children and Adolescents in Need) mentoring program presented by Sylvia Vega, director for MCP (Mentoring for Children and Prisoners). Vega was present at the Rotary meeting to provide an overview of the Futuros Positivos Program, which is an arrangement for mentoring children and prisoners between the ages of four and 18. Vega said that the program had funding to run for seven more months, adding that more volunteer mentors were needed to better serve the 75 mentees in the program.

SCAN has been serving Laredo for 27 years, and its stated mission is "to foster the healthy development of children, adolescents, families, and communities through the provision of engaging, responsive, comprehen-

sive, and developmentally appropriate services that are deeply rooted in the community. It is funded primarily with federal funds, and Vega said that the current Futuros Positivos program grant expires in September 2009.

"Children participate voluntarily in this program, and many times are recommended by their schools," Vega said, adding, "We help children who can benefit by being mentored by a positive adult's energy, caring, and support as an actuator and problem solver." She said that mentors must be at least 19 years old and able to pledge four hours per month for 12 months to provide advice, access, and advocacy through bonding activities.

"A mentor must be honest, flexible, open to opportunities and solutions, in addition to being a good listener who is able to respect others' culture, beliefs, value systems, and points of view," Vega said. ♦



Former migrant worker shares experiences at Chavez march

Former migrant worker Carlos Ramirez, now a TAMIU College Assistance Migrant Program mentor and a candidate for May graduation, spoke of his experiences as a migrant worker. He is pictured in San Agustín Plaza with march organizer Manuel Bocanegra.



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Photo by George Altgelt



Questioning authority

Budding journalist Emily Altgelt took a moment from some serious Coneja day activities on the banks of the Río Grande to ask if this agent could commandeer his vehicle across the river.

Courtesy Photo



Cub Scout Adventure Weekend

About 50 Laredo Cub Scouts enjoyed the recent Cub Scout Adventure Weekend at Camp Huisache. In addition to honing camping skills, the youngsters enjoyed scaling the portable rock wall at the camp.

Congratulations



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New writing center to help LCC students

Laredo Community College sophomore Cristina Rodriguez, born and raised in Laredo where approximately 93 percent of the population speaks a language other than English, struggles with her English writing assignments. The 2007 graduate of United High School is surrounded by friends who also have a difficult time expressing themselves in English.

LCC English instructor Charlotte Cunningham-McEachin said Rodriguez and her friends are not alone. "We cannot ignore the fact that we live on the border where we have the competing languages of English and Spanish," McEachin said. "Our students are immersed in two languages as soon as they are born, making it more difficult to learn both languages."

LCC's English instructors, about 20 of them, are addressing that issue by volunteering for the college's new writing centers at the Fort McIntosh and South campuses. The centers are focused on assisting students in improving their English writing skills.

McEachin, one of several instructors who spearheaded the project, has been with the college four years as an English instructor and has seen first-hand the need for such a program. "We have been talking about this project for years, and I'm glad it's now here," McEachin said. "Our students are shocked, surprised, yet excited because they know they need that extra help."

Another LCC initiative called IPASS, or Instructors Promoting Academic Student Success, has helped hundreds of students since 2005 with teacher-to-student tutoring in a variety of subjects. But the writ-

ing centers will be dedicated to those students who have English language writing issues in their coursework.

"We've been very successful with the IPASS program," Phil Worley, LCC Dean of Arts and Humanities said. "But, we have noticed that our students at both campuses could benefit from an intensive program that addresses specific issues in writing."

Along with teacher-to-student assistance, visitors to the writing centers will be introduced to computer-assisted tutoring services with "live" chats from English instructors situated in different parts of the country.

"When we talk about which dialect students can benefit from in the long-run, it is Standard Written English," McEachin said. "It's the one dialect that will open doors to business and education fields."

McEachin added that the writing centers will be a tool to enhance students' lives.

"I want my students to be more successful," McEachin said. "I want us, as instructors, to be proud and to be the people that got them where they want to go because they were immersed in an intensive program at LCC."

The writing center at LCC's Fort McIntosh Campus is located at the Corral Internet Lab, and the South Campus writing center can be found at the Learning Enrichment Center.

For more information on the writing centers, contact the LCC English Department at 721-5445. For the writing centers' hours of operation, contact the Corral Internet Lab at 721-5722, or the Learning Enrichment Center at 794-4348. ♦

Congratulations and Cheers!



E.H. Corrigan
President of the
Republic of the Río Grande



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Courtesy Photo



Mark Webber recognized for teaching excellence

Mark Webber, journalism and photojournalism instructor at the Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts, is a semifinalist in HEB's Excellence in Education awards. Webber also received the award in 2007. He is a 2009 Fellow of the American Society of Newspaper Editors' Reynolds High School Journalism Institute and will attend the Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University in Phoenix this summer. In 2007 and 2008 he received the First Class Award with Two Marks of Distinction from the National Scholastic Press Association. He is the 2008 recipient of Best Buy's Te@ch Award and the Sames Motor Company's February 2007 Driven for Success Award. In 2007 he was also the recipient of the Distinguished Merit Award, Star rating finalist, in the Interscholastic League Press Conference.

Photo by Monica McGettrick



Former CBS anchor in Laredo

Former CBS Evening News anchor Dan Rather, recently visiting Laredo to research private prisons, took a moment to pose for a photo with attorney Ron Rodriguez, his wife Mari and children Athena, Angelina Meli, and Christian.

Alzheimer's Support Group Meeting

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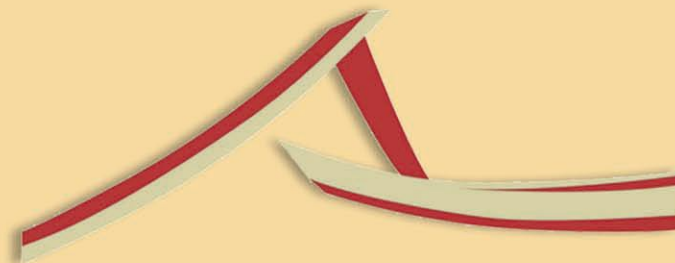
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TOMA -- bend it like Beckelhymer; a witch hunt at the behest of a sore winner

By MARÍA EUGENIA GUERRA

If you had to pick a local taxing/public money spending entity that most often bends if not violates the Texas Open Meetings Act (TOMA), your interest might gravitate to the “We don’t need no stinking Roberts Rules of Order” LISD board of trustees.

Take for example the Nov. 24, 2008 agenda item styled “Discussion and possible action on the duties and responsibilities of the Internal Auditor as assigned by the Board of Trustees. Possible Closed Session Pursuant to Texas Government Code, Section 551.074 (a)(1).

Ms. Elizabeth G. Henry, Internal Auditor.”

According to TOMA, an agenda item that is going to be discussed in executive or closed session should have been identified in open session, and when the board returns from executive session, all final actions, decisions, or votes should have been made in open session.

A curious thing happened when the trustees returned from executive session that evening. Trustee George Beckelhymer called upon trustee Daniel Rigal to make a motion based on what was discussed in executive session. Rigal stumbled through trying to form a motion with, “I make a motion on the duties and responsibilities of the auditor as assigned by the board of trustees.”

“For what?” Trustee José Valdez asked with a hint of a scoff in his tone.

“So that we can discuss the audit,” Rigal answered.

“Maybe Mr. Chairman would make the motion,” Valdez addressed Beckelhymer.

“I’ll do it, yes, that we assign an audit to investigate certain campuses for electioneering using district re-

sources. Is that it?” Beckelhymer said. Rigal seconded a motion that scarcely sounded like the agenda item it was supposed to reflect.

Trustee Mina Montes asked, “You mentioned the word ‘certain.’ Are you being specific when you say ‘certain?’ What are you asking the auditor to do? You are not being transparent. The internal auditor needs to be instructed in great detail. You are not being specific.”

Valdez said, “I agree with Mina, but only on that.”

Beckelhymer got as far as “All those....” as he tried to call a vote on his motion, but Rigal interrupted, postulating that it would be unfair to the auditor if the subjects of the audit had a heads-up.

Valdez said the audit could have harmful results. “This is not a simple audit with a paper trail. It should have been brought up when it allegedly happened,” he said.

The tenacious Montes added. “Allegations must have evidence. A judge will ask for evidence. This is an allegation. Is that what we are about, allegations? We are about education,” Montes said.

Impatiently, and with a bit of ground glass in his voice, Beckelhymer said, “I don’t understand why everyone is ignoring the private conversation we had in the back. Vote for it or not.”

Montes and Valdez voted against the measure; trustees Rigal, Jesus Martinez, and Beckelhymer voted to have auditor Henry conduct the electioneering inquiry.

The only campus that Henry investigated was Nixon High School, the school at which the wife of Beckelhymer’s recent trustee election opponent (Juan Gutierrez) teaches.

Christina Gutierrez, in an exercise of her First Amendment rights on a day off, reportedly campaigned

for her husband outside Nixon High School, holding a placard the lawful distance from a polling place. She was not one of the Nixon administrators or staff members that Henry interviewed over three days in January 2009.

Arriving unannounced at the Nixon campus, and accompanied by armed LISD police investigator Anna Muñoz, Henry did not disclose to Principal Lupita Cortez the purpose of her first visit on Jan. 15, 2009, even when Cortez asked her personally. Henry commandeered the office of assistant principal Raquel Pedraza and conducted the interviews without regard for the administrators having to leave their classes or other duties unattended.

When Henry returned to the Nixon campus on Jan. 16, again with investigator Muñoz, she refused Cortez’s request that she sign in. In addition to interviewing Cortez and Pedraza, Henry also sequestered and interviewed assistant principals Guillermo Pro, Aleida Treviño, Alma Ramos, and Sylvia Cantu. Henry also reportedly questioned Nixon employees who were not administrators, as reported by assistant principal Loretta Cisneros who was not interrogated.

Henry’s tactics, the absence of a written record of questions and answers, the presence of a police investigator packing heat, Henry’s reading of the Whistleblower Act, the lack of notice of the interviews and the lack of information about their purpose did not set well with the Nixon administrators who saw themselves as targets of an “audit” meant to impugn reputations by hurling allegations of electioneering on school district time and property.

Cortez, Pedraza, Pro, Ramos, Cantu, and Cisneros filed a grievance on Jan. 20, alleging that Henry had created a hostile environment by her lack of professional courtesy, secrecy,

violation of rights, lack of due process, and a line of questioning meant to discredit the administrators.

The grievance also alleges defamation of character respective to Henry’s interrogation of teachers and staff with a narrow line of questions that suggested that the administrators had participated in a conspiracy of wrongdoing and electioneering.

The grievance alleges violation of the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators, unethical conduct toward professional colleagues; violation of employee welfare, freedom from harassment, violation of Texas Association of School Boards policy, harassment of employees by other employees, employee welfare, freedom from harassment, and threatening or intimidating conduct.

“Allegations of electioneering at a taxpayer funded public school is something you deal with when it is happening. It is a serious allegation. You go to the District Attorney’s office. You don’t wait a couple of months to start asking questions,” said George Altgelt, the TSTA attorney representing the six Nixon administrators.

Outspoken trustee Montes said, “There was no written, dated documentation of the alleged electioneering. Hearsay is not good enough. We have a policy for public concerns like this. Why did the school district’s attorney Mr. Kazen let the matter proceed and why did it not go through the superintendent’s office?” Montes reiterated the lack of specificity of the Nov. 24 agenda item that empowered Henry to conduct what many have called “another LISD witch hunt.” How that item read and what was offered as the outcome of that discussion in closed session were two different animals. That’s a violation of TOMA, and I was not going to go on record supporting that.” Montes reported the

TOMA violation to Webb County District Attorney Chief ADA Marisela Jamanca on Apr. 23, 2009.

Insult to injury for the six Nixon administrators is the district's HR director Ernesto Guajardo's lack of neutrality about their grievance. On Jan. 20, 2009 he called Principal Cortez, and according to Cortez, Guajardo told her, "There are too many people knowing about it," and that the board had "directed this investigation." Cortez said that Guajardo told her that the investigation wasn't "against me." The Nixon principal told Guajardo he "should remain neutral since he was the head of the human resources department."

On Feb. 23, 2009 Guajardo called Principal Cortez on her cell phone to once more dissuade her from proceeding with the grievance. She recounted the phone conversation thus:

EG: Are you going to proceed with the grievance?

GC: Yes, why?

EG: It was my understanding that the audit was finished and you all were cleared.

GC: If it's finished, then when can I get a copy of the audit?

EG: I don't know if this is available yet.

GC: Anyway, Mr. Guajardo, you need to understand that our grievance is not about the audit itself, it is about the process that was used.

EG: You do understand that possibly it will be heard by the board.

GC: Does that mean it will go directly to Level 3?

EG: Yes, but I am worried about the bad publicity.

GC: Bad publicity on whom?

EG: Bad publicity on you all, me, and the superintendent.

GC: I need to check with our attorney.

Ernesto Guajardo is not without sin.

The fates of the Nixon Six and other dedicated LISD educators have been subject to the actions of Guajardo who as a UISD assistant principal in 1992

was sanctioned by the Texas Education Agency for falsifying the TTAS appraisal records of five teachers.

In addition to admitting to the falsifications, Guajardo admitted that he continued to conduct his teaching and school activities in violation of state law. In 1992 the TEA ordered Guajardo to surrender his Texas Teacher Certificate for the cancellation of the field of "Temporary Assistant Principal." Guajardo agreed to the cancellation of all administrative and supervisory

Sidebar

In 2002 I came to the defense of Ernesto Guajardo against Veronica Guerra, before they made up and before the barnacle found the power host. The havoc he has wreaked on careers and lives is indefensible, and if there is truth in the theory of goes around/comes around, he should brace himself.

I would never agree with Mina Montes that Veronica Guerra is one of the best things that has happened to LISD, but I am very glad Montes is an outspoken member of the board of trustees and that she is not easily railroaded or silenced.

And though I am loath to throw trustee José Valdez a rose (because he sued me once, and lost), his cautionary assessment of George Beckelhymer's push for an audit for electioneering was dead-on. He spoke from experience and with a measure of wisdom.

Trustee John Peter Montalvo, one of the board's most inarticulate members, is a fountain of spite, but

fields on his teaching certificate.

Eventually, in the spirit of one Laredo school district taking on the other's baggage, Guajardo was recycled by Supt. Vidal Treviño into the position of LISD elementary music supervisor. In 1995 Guajardo reportedly assisted like-minded individual Tony Gutierrez -- an assistant superintendent whose claim to fame, among

others, was the vast amount of LISD landscaping business he arranged for the school district to conduct with his own floral company (yes, a corner floreria that stocked gallon pot boxwoods and huge oak trees) -- to take part in an all-night and early morning paper shredding event as news of the outrageous LISD spending practices became a matter of interest to the FBI. Guajardo and Gutierrez were espied by then-trustee Armando X. Lopez and were reportedly shredding con-

at least he wears his agenda on the outside. He could never be accused of being a wolf in sheep's clothing, just a wolf.

And though he can be articulate and though he like all the other board members could have protested the personnel purges and the actions that dismantled this district from the inside out, George Beckelhymer has more often been complacent than a leader. He is, however, savvy about board politics.

Daniel Rigal is a lost cause as long as he is Beckelhymer's bus boy.

José Perez, no political neophyte but new to the board, may surprise us, though many are skeptical about a board member whose brother is the district's chief financial officer.

The newest member of the board, Jesus Martinez, faces an immense challenge wrestling not only with the district's pressing needs, but also navigating through the board's pecking order. We wish him well.

MEG

struction documents Gutierrez did not want to produce for an open records request made by activist Hector Farias.

In an ironic tit-for-tat all these years later, Gutierrez now works for UISD.

Guajardo eventually became coordinator/director of the Vidal M. Treviño School of Communications and Fine Arts, but was later banished by then

Supt. Dr. Jerry Barber to Lamar Middle School as an assistant principal. Guajardo returned from exile to work his way into his most recent incarnation as HR director, the position to which he was named in 2007.

Guajardo is himself one of the most disturbing aspects of former Supt. Guerra's tenure and her record of retaliations and reassignments, a record to be shared with a board that in some cases either directed her to or looked away from various witch hunts. Henchman-waterboy-mandado man, Guajardo, one who has leveled accusations and spun cases from whole cloth for humiliating, character besmirching, life altering demotions, is known to shift loyalties and to barnacle himself onto the power wielder of the day.

His greatest career success, albeit one void of honor and dignity, was to have played Torquemada to Guerra's Pope Sixtus IV, he who kept the racks and fires of the Spanish Inquisition primed. Guajardo's obsequious demeanor before the board sharply contrasts with the harsh, angry one-on-one accusatory encounters in his office, as reported by those marked by the administration to face demotion or termination.

For a good part of a decade, past and present LISD trustees -- legends in their own minds for professionalism and truth telling -- have played musical chairs with the leadership of the district. There have been three interim superintendents and five superintendents in 12 years.

In the wake of every new superintendent's attempt to re-order the district or to please his/her board -- or as in Supt. Guerra's case, to exact career-smashing paybacks by demotion of skilled educators and advancement for the loyal inept like Guajardo and Dr. Oscar Cartas -- there have been changes that have eroded the core of the district and the continuity of worthwhile programs and their administrators

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 ►►

Attentiveness, mentorship were the hallmarks of Dr. Annette Olsen-Fazi's instruction

By CATHERINE JERLINE ARCHER

A few weeks into the semester, and a couple chapters into *Horseman, Pass By*, I set my notebook and planner ready for lecture and doodle as the class carried on in its usual manner of shuffling papers and exchanging weekend stories.

Ten after one and we finally begin to look outside of ourselves, out of curiosity, at Dr. Sean Chadwell pacing outside the classroom door. Our energy was offset by the seriousness of Dr. Paul Niemeyer and Dr. Chadwell's body language when they walked in. Our attention was gathered, focused, and the blow was delivered. The class was torn -- the men with uncertain eyes and tense foreheads, and the women with open mouths and wet cheeks. Over the weekend we had lost our professor, mentor, and friend.

Dr. Annette Olsen-Fazi's attentiveness to us, and the influence she had on us as students and writers, was the hallmark of her teaching style. It seemed each of us had a personal relationship with her. Other teachers pale in comparison to how much she gave of herself for the purpose of instruction, enlightenment, and sharing what she loved in literature.

The loss of her in late January goes beyond the TAMIU community, for former colleagues and students around the world will miss her. No words can convey her beautiful and natural virtues and genuine fervor and love that radiated from her to every person who came in contact with her.

Dr. Olsen-Fazi was a Fulbright Scholar, a former member of MENSA, a pivotal Golden Key International Honour Society member -- part of the nation's oldest academic honor society Phi Beta Kappa -- an affiliate of the invitation only Alpha Chi coeduca-



tional academic honor society, as well as a member of the national English association Sigma Tau Delta. She was nationally recognized as a McMurtry scholar, and she was the first scholar to gain access to Larry McMurtry's journals and letters to and from correspondents during the time he was writing some of his award winning novels. Her 600-page dissertation for the PhD she received from the University of Paul-Valery in Montpellier, France was based on her extensive research on the Texas author. Her work brought her acclaim in academia.

Her well-established academic acumen and a lifetime of accolades were dwarfed only by love and pride for family. She is survived by her mother Birgit S. Olsen; brother John Olsen; daughters Stephanie Fazi and Lisa Fazi Moldanado; five grandchildren Jessica Fazi, Noah Fazi, Emily Moldanado, Stella

Moldanado, and Mike Moldanado; and her beloved partner Warren Graffeo.

Olsen-Fazi and Graffeo made their way to TAMIU in 2005 from LSU. Fazi wasted no time to single-handedly reinvent the school's French curriculum against all odds in a community where most students can easily CLEP out of their foreign language requirement rather than take courses. In one single semester more students signed up for her French class than had in the previous 10 years combined.

Among her passions was her service with the Laredo Breast Cancer Coalition, which assists uninsured women diagnosed with breast cancer so that they can receive medical treatment.

"She was particularly adept and people recognized her worth. She certainly cannot be replaced; other people can teach classes and run programs, but no one can bring the fervor and joy

A light not dimmed by death

Most pass through life with halting steps of mediocrity and, at best, mere adequacy. But now and then, perhaps once in a lifetime, some few are privileged, for a time, to stride at the side of greatness. We, in this university, have been so privileged.

It is the natural order and nature of the universe that within great galaxies the brightest stars are the shortest lived. Perhaps it is also true of mortals that the brightest lights burn not the longest.

We who were honored to be intimate companions of Dr. Annette Olsen-Fazi have been dealt a wound that will never heal. Those inspired by her life have memories of her warmth, and the enthusiasm of her life teachings will be forever moved by their contact with her.

It is not necessary to list her honors and accomplishments; they are there for all to see. But her greatest joy, the honor she treasured above all others, sits upon no shelf, nor does it hang on any wall. That honor is the love and affection she received on this campus and so richly deserved. It is this well of love that fueled her energy and fired her luminance. Her students and colleagues were always her greatest source of comfort and happiness.

Her passing leaves a void that cannot be filled. Her absence will long be felt, but the memory of her life and the radiance of her soul will always be with those of us who work and dwell within these walls. She shone that we could see, and how she did shine.

Warren J. Graffeo

that she had," Graffeo said.

Donations to the memorial scholarship for Dr. Annette Olsen-Fazi can be made through the All4TAMIU Campaign, coordinated by the TAMIU Office of Institutional Advancement. A plaque has been placed in the language lab in honor of Dr. Olsen-Fazi's passion for teaching, and a marble stone commemorating her in the Walk Of Honor at TAMIU is to be set in the spring.

Graffeo, who was privileged enough to know Annette Olsen-Fazi better than most, said, "Exuberance, joy, personality, the energy that made her what she was -- an internal and unbounded goodness. Nothing that she ever did was for Annette; she never did anything to see what she could get out of it. It was all for her students, travel, the university, this and writing was her love." ♦

Dickerson, five others, honorees at Laredo Rotary Club ceremony

By JOHN ANDREW SNYDER

The Laredo Rotary Club will hold a special awards ceremony on the evening of Thursday, May 14, 2009 at 7 p.m. at the Martinez Fine Arts Building on the Laredo Community College Main Campus at West End Washington Street.

Laredo attorney Joseph Michael Dickerson will receive the Cliff Dochterman Award for service to scouting and five other members of the Laredo community will be recognized with the Service Above Self Award.

The public is invited to attend for a donation of \$20.00. Complimentary cocktails will be served from six to 6:45 p.m.

Dickerson is an active member, a former vice-president of the Laredo Rotary Club, and a Paul Harris Fellow. The 5k run that he established as an annual fund raiser has helped finance the uniform ex-

change program for the Boy Scouts of the Aztec District.

The Cliff Dochterman Award recognizes an individual Rotarian or Rotaractor who acts as a role model and renders distinguished and dedicated service to scouting. Named in honor of former RI president and scouting enthusiast Cliff Dochterman of Moraga, California, the award that Dickerson will be receiving recognizes his accomplishments, dedication, and relationships.

In addition to being a registered merit badge counselor, Dickerson is the current Aztec District vice-chair and outdoor activities coordinator for Boy Scout Troop 201. He also keeps the Laredo Rotary Club informed on scouting activities and participates in recruitment of Merit Badge Counselors.

In addition to presenting Dickerson with the Cliff Dochterman Award, the Laredo Rotary Club will also present

Service Above Self Awards to Martin Cuellar, Webb County Sheriff; Dr. Juan Maldonado, Laredo Community College president; Shirley Gonzalez of the Gua-

dalupe and Lilia Martinez Trust; Javier Santos, trustee of the Fernando Salinas Charitable Trust; and Webb County Judge Danny Valdez. ♦

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Stopping substance abuse before it starts -- STCADA pushes prevention for kids and their parents

BY PENELOPE WARREN

The room is a cheerful daffodil yellow. On the walls, inspirational posters show forest scenes and a crocus pushing up through snow. The captions read "Service," "Success," and "Never Give Up." Teenagers crowd around an open square of tables that almost fill the floor space, laughing and joking. They're led by two South Texas Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (STCADA) counselors for the Youth Prevention Indicated (YPI) program, Myrthala Alejo and San Juanita Perez. Despite their Master's degrees and a string of other certifications, they seem hardly older than the kids themselves -- not really

peers, very much in charge, but close enough to claim membership in a common generation. Close enough to have faced the same problems. Close enough to relate.

The topic from the Positive Action curriculum this afternoon is "Stranger Danger," but the kids are way too cool to be threatened by "danger." So the counselors turn it around -- How can you be safe? How can you be safe on the Internet?

"Don't give out personal information," one girl offers.

"Right!" says San Juanita. "No personal information. And don't ever put personal pictures on the Internet. Once they're out there, they're out there forever! You never know

who's going to get hold of them. You have no control. So don't take pictures of your boyfriend or girlfriend on your cell phone and post them, okay? Don't put photos of yourselves out there on MySpace you wouldn't want your mom or a future employer to see, okay?"

A ripple of half-embarrassed giggles answers her, and the discussion moves on to exchanging emails with strangers and cyber bullying, the anonymity of the net and its potential to allow a predator to pose as a teen's new BFF. The counselors cover the bullying issue from both perspectives -- not just how to avoid becoming a victim but how to avoid the slide into abusive behavior that's facilitated by the same anonymity that gives a predator cover.

The kids in the YPI class at STCADA have been referred to the program for truancy or other minor infractions; behaviors that don't rise to the level of lawbreaking but that are well-marked mileposts on the path to serious trouble. Most of these 14 to 17-year-olds are already dabbling in drugs but haven't yet acquired a "drug problem." A lot are experimenting with sex, too.

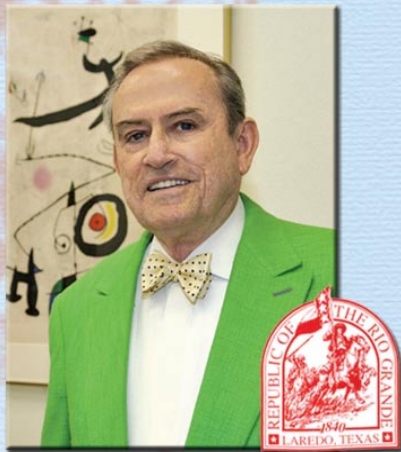
The issues they bring to the table are the same that young adults have

always faced. With girls, it's mostly relationships. They worry about keeping the boyfriends who may be pressuring them for sex, and about the support or rivalry of other girls. With boys it's a different kind of pressure -- to fit in, not to be a nerd. In many cases, fitting in means using drugs or even dealing.

Youth Prevention Indicated isn't therapy or treatment. It's prevention though teaching the kids to value themselves and to make choices that reinforce self-respect. The Positive Action curriculum Myrthala and San Juanita use was tailored by its developer for precisely the kids that fill the room this Friday evening -- Hispanic teens who aren't getting all they could out of school, who need more support than the adults in their lives can give them. Positive Action operates on the premise that positive thoughts lead to positive actions, which lead to teens' positive feelings about themselves. Myrthala puts it this way -- "The program gives the kids a tool. It gives them practical skills, something they can apply to everyday life. It provides a lot of optimism because it teaches them to think in a positive manner."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ►►

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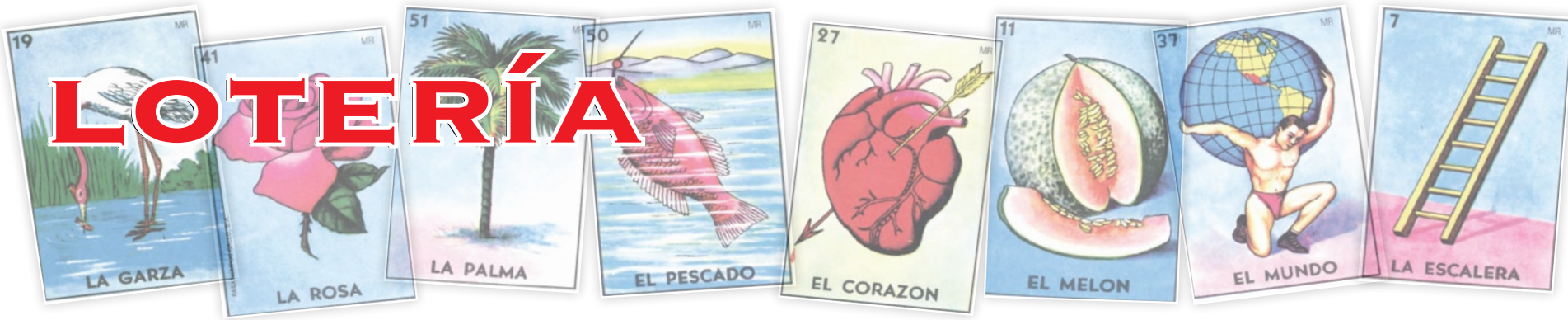
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Rescue Me!

Built in 1924, the old Del Valle/Canseco home at Chihuahua and Seymour sits in a state of abandon, neglect, and degradation. Located outside of the City's historic districts (as though historic districts in Laredo offered protection and legal consequences for owner destruction of historical properties) the condition of the property has taken a visible nosedive over the last decade. Construction of the stone and poured concrete block home began in 1922 and was completed in 1924 in Second Renaissance Revival style. In its glory, the home featured inlaid wooden floors, papered walls, and high ceilings. The 17-room home had a library, four bathrooms, a loggia, two pantries, a basement, two terraces on the second floor, window boxes at every upstairs window, a carriage house, and a formal garden. It was once the residence of Dr. Francisco R. Canseco and his wife Margarita Zambrano Berardi who designed the home to resemble "a small corner of Versailles" where the Cansecos had lived before moving to Laredo. Dr. Canseco purchased French stone cutting equipment for the construction of his home. The owner of record is George M. Beckelhymer.

LOTERÍA



Photos by Monica McGettrick



1519 Matamoros

The Rosa Benavides home at 1519 Matamoros sits in full splendor, its architectural integrity held intact by family members who safeguard the historical significance of the home. It was built by Rosa Benavides after the death of her husband Ignacio Nicanor Benavides in 1920. The builders were Benjamin and Juan P. Botello. The Botellos, using stone cutting equipment borrowed from the Cansecos, built Rosa Benavides a home that closely resembles the Canseco home. The architectural style is Renaissance Revival. Though the Benavides home at 1519 Matamoros and the Canseco home at 1415 Chihuahua once had much in common, the similarity ends with the distinctly different care accorded each historically significant building. The owner of record of the Benavides home is the Arturo N. Benavides family.



220 Farragut St. in the heart of the Azteca Barrio

The owner of record of this excellent example of preservation in the face of careless indifference and disregard by the City of Laredo and its Landmark Board is John Ross Campbell. The early 20th century residence was built between 1910 and 1920 brick and features a square, hip roof with center gable. An attached porch extends across front and to side opposite the street. The porch supports are Doric columns. The home features pilasters, ornamented stained glass windows with single larger lower pane. The only alteration to the original structure over the last 100 years was the enclosure of the side porch. Deed information on the property lists B. Lopez, 7/20/1878; V. Telles, 12/12/1878; P. Telles, 2/9/1880; M. Ramon, 3/4/1881; M.R. Marulanda, 1/19/1909; M.A. Hirsh, 8/24/1923; Micaela R. Marulanda, 7/6/1929; R.W. Davis, Jr. for F.M. Ramsey, 7/17/1929; Luis Marulanda, 3/1/1932; Olivia Marulanda, 2/10/1965; Luisa Marulanda; and John Ross Campbell.

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*From your friend
Guillermo Z. Benavides*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

These board members have forged egregious, politically charged policies that have rendered the district a train wreck. While the grownups on the LISD board and administration have played politics with the lives of educators and children, the focus on education has been in recess and 25,500 LISD students and countless Laredo taxpayers have been short-changed.

The lack of credibility of LISD trustees over the last decade -- coupled with the handicap of being inarticulate for lack of intelligence, lack of education, or just struggling to speak English -- will go down in the history books.

Legendary is this board's and former Supt. Guerra's administration of punishment of these accomplished lifetime educators who were moved to demeaning positions -- former Cigarroa High School principal Mario Guzman counting textbooks; former LISD athletic director Sylvia Barrera sent while in treatment for cancer to become an assistant elementary school principal after giving the district 26 years of her best efforts; Cigarroa's head coach and youth mentor Ricardo Alaniz's reassignment to campus testing coordinator; Memorial Middle School principal Lupita Perez to oversee Pregnancy, Education and Parenting (PEP).

That's the short list. There was Director of Procurement Evaristo Ortega, Internal Auditor Deyanira Serna, Records Coordinator Alma Ochoa, Heights Elementary Principal Imelda Murillo who had once written a letter of support for former Supt. Sylvia Bruni; HR director Juan Montemayor; and Cigarroa principal Sonia Sanchez. Unaccounted for are dozens of clerks and support staff who were collateral damage in the purges and reassign-

ments.

Legendary is the LISD board's collective failure in every manifestation of factions formed and factions disbanded to know they have caused by their actions, decisions, and inactions more damage to this school district than the two-decade tenure of superintendent for life Vidal M. Treviño who ran the patrón system from 1600 Houston Street.

Trustee Mina Montes, often discounted by trustee Beckelhymer's eye rolling and barely masked derision, has -- especially recently -- raised her voice about board actions she believes are not in the best interest of students and educators. It is sometimes painful to hear her get to a point, but as an elected official charged with the public trust she has taken seriously the right and the duty to ask questions and get answers. Beckelhymer is bothered by how much time her questions require. I am bothered by his rush to approve an alphabet's worth of agenda items without discussion.

The LISD board of trustees and its attorney John Kazen have been complicit by their quiet acquiescence as witnesses on the sidelines, observers of the destruction of much of the district's leadership and its cadre of excellent, experienced teachers. If in this dismantling of a school district there have been among them moments of reflection or remorse for the human cost of their machinations, the taxpaying public was never privy to them.

Our sincere best wishes go to the new interim superintendent Dr. Ronald K. McLeod, who though he has experience as a superintendent on the border by now has understood he has never faced the likes of an LISD board or highly paid self-serving administrators like Ernesto Guajardo.♦

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The godly power of canyon walls and the river

Jason Archer and Ram Galindo on the rapids of the Río Grande

By CATHERINE JERLINE ARCHER

Twenty Newman Club Catholic Campus Ministry members from TAMIU and LCC joined 1,300 individuals who embark annually on the 83-mile challenge of canoeing the Lower Canyon of the Río Grande as it moves through Big Bend National Park.

Campus ministry leader Father Michael Therese of the Congregation of St. John led our group in its fourth year down the river. He adopted the idea from Karol Wojtyla, later known as Pope John Paul II, who took groups of youth canoeing and kayaking at Lake Drawsko in Poland. An athletic man himself, John Paul II strongly believed that sports play an active role in culture, and he spoke of the topic in 120 addresses during his papal tenure. Speaking particularly of his canoeing and hiking expeditions, he said, "On the mountains, the chaotic noise of the city is silenced and quiet dominates the limitless space; a quiet in which man can hear more clearly the interior echo of the voice of God."

The 118 miles of the Río Grande that borders Big Bend National Park in the Chihuahuan Desert are part of the two percent of United States rivers designated by Congress as "Wild and Scenic," so designated to preserve their free-flowing condition and to actively

protect their ecosystems. The 83 miles of the Lower Canyons begin at Heath Canyon and end at Dryden Crossing. This rugged area is described by the US Department of the Interior National Park Service as "The most challenging rapids on the Río Grande accompanied by extreme remoteness." Moreover, Park Ranger Sharon Collyer writes, "Those who undertake this adventure usually have extensive river experience, and are fully self-reliant, since help is often many days away. Needless to say, a Lower Canyons trip is not for everyone. Extensive preparation is essential to keep mishaps to a minimum."

As far as extensive river experience, Father Michael stood alone in that category, followed (not very closely) by four sophomores. Self-reliant was a concept lost on some of the girls in our group who may have thought they had signed up for a Carnival Cruise and not a raw, challenging, character building adventure on the river. The trip organizers flawlessly attended to the preparation and the logistics of getting us down the river. We fit our personal gear in our not-so waterproof bags, and with that detail executed, 19 trusting souls followed their leader for a sort of anti-spring break that promised the fruit of joy reaped through hard work and control.

In this game of us versus the river, I depended on four fearless freshmen

and three brothers (two religious and one blood) to lead the way, to set the momentum of our travel down the river, to take care of all practical and spiritual matters, and to take up the slack with a smile. I counted, too, on two friends who were good company for heaven and star contemplations after campfire. A great sidekick reminded me to laugh at the bumps and bruises and to see the bigger adventure.

Before daylight we downed a quick breakfast of oatmeal and coffee, took down our tents, and packed personal and communal gear into our canoes. Dawn marks the canonical hour reserved for lauds. Morning prayer began with an introductory verse and a hymn, the singing or chanting of psalms and Old Testament canticles. This was followed by reflection time on a nature-themed scripture. As the morning sun begun to drink the dew from our life vests, it was time to hit the river.

As Father Michael made a quick run through to make sure everything was securely tied into our canoes, we did our best to evenly distribute strength, ability, and willingness, sometimes substituted to fulfill the 'new partner every time' motto.

Once on the river, a few sleepy paddlers woke themselves with a prompt flip of their canoe with the help of a wayfaring current or underlying rock, reminding others to be alert. Rapids and

reefs marked the time until a canned tuna lunch. There were splash fights and impromptu hikes that separated the days that would eventually flow into one -- as time does when you are in nature rather than observing it.

Once Father Michael spotted a campsite, it was time to unpack, set up camp, and get to the chapel, a collapsible table set up with Padre's "traveling Mass kit" for daily Mass and Adoration. Between dinner and campfire there was personal downtime usually filled by nursing, or rather comparing and bragging over, battle wounds, getting as clean as one can possibly get with a travel pack of wipes, and using a wag-bag, which is exactly what it sounds like. Tired eyes consumed by the cosmos fell easily to slumber.

Tents missing poles, losing the boiling pot and propane tank to the river, and individuals breaking under the psychological stress were just some challenges that we handled, and almost welcomed, as character building opportunities to become proactive and resourceful.

Uninterrupted, unyielding nature presents us with obstacles that act as a litmus test to reveal a person's true colors. There was no difference between the two countries that owned each of the riverbanks. There were no cell phones, no nice clothes or make-up to pad or obscure or enhance whom we were -- small, raw human beings surrounded by that to which we will return. ♦

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PRESIDENT E.H. CORRIGAN: enlightened leadership for the Republic of the Río Grande. Georgetown graduate is connoisseur and philanthropist

By JOHN ANDREW SNYDER

The gaze-drawing trio of signed Joan Miró originals that hang on a wall in his suite of offices on the corner of Laredo Street and Stone say a lot about the man-myth who is E.H. Corrigan, Laredo businessman, patron of the arts, and new President of the Republic of the Río Grande.

Corrigan's sharp mind, ready wit, public-spiritedness, and

generosity place him at the pinnacle of Laredo's pyramid of princely people.

"The mission of the incoming Cabinet is to show what the Republic of the Río Grande can do to enhance our community's position to other Laredoans and visitors near and far," Corrigan said.

A true native son of the Texas Borderlands and a citizen of the world when it comes to friendship, travel, and history, Corrigan is an Irish-Texan whose family has for three generations cultivated a productive international relationship with Mexico and has helped Laredo thrive and grow as an import-export nexus on the banks of the rushing Río.

Corrigan was born in Laredo on March 5, 1927, the second child of Edward Harrington Corrigan and Anita Sharkey Corrigan, both of Laredo. His maternal

grandparents were Ernest Sharkey and Viola Burkette Sharkey, also Laredoans.

Corrigan attended public and private schools in Laredo and graduated from St. Edward's High School in Austin. He followed his older brother Bat Corrigan to Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., the nation's premier Jesuit institution, where he studied at the School of Foreign Service, graduating with a bachelor's degree in Foreign Service (BFS). He then entered a tour of duty in the U.S. Navy in 1948. Returning to Laredo after being honorably discharged from the Navy, Corrigan joined his father and older brother Bat in the import-export business.

"Bat, my sister Mary Alyce, and I were close," Corrigan said, adding, "We stayed together for a long time. Their passing was felt keenly."

Corrigan's paternal grandfather emigrated from Ireland to the United States and then moved to Mexico when the Mexican national railroad was expanding from Mexico City to Tampico, Veracruz, and Saltillo. "The family of my grandfather was part of a colony that stayed in Saltillo until the winds of the Mexican Revolution made it obvious to many Anglo-American families that they would have to leave the country. My grandfather had three children -- Bat Harrington Corrigan, Edward Harrington Corrigan, and Julia Harrington Corrigan -- an old tradition of giving all the children their mother's maiden name for a middle name. My father at first chose San Antonio because at the time real estate was available, and schools were being built. My Uncle Bat (Bartholomew) and Aunt Julia settled in San Antonio, as well, he said.

Corrigan recalled times well. "We grew up during the Great Depression. There was not a lot of mobility in those days. There were few automobiles and highways were minimal and in poor



condition. Overall, life was difficult, and families spent a lot of time together and visiting relatives often. Communication as we think of it today was nonexistent. Ordinarily, one had to yell on the phone -- no volume and overriding static all the time. My family had close ties with the Tex-Mex Railroad Company, and all of us together formed a close nucleus -- parents saw one another and all of the offspring knew one another: I remember the O'Donahues, the Ryans, and the Corcorans, among others."

He continued, "The Irish colony in the United States was a group of congenial spirits, and we knew Irish families from Boston and New York, and Galveston and San Patricio on the Texas Gulf coast -- all these were cities where there was a lot of steamship traffic. Everybody helped everybody else get started in the New World. Our parents were absorbed in making a living and raising a family, so there was little time for social interchange.

"My father came to Laredo in 1923 and became a U.S. Customs Broker and opened a freight forwarding business, importing mostly raw materials like bars of metal and candelilla wax (used in candles, cosmetics) from Mexico," Corrigan said, adding, "and he also shipped American automobiles to various points in Mexico, from where they were then distributed. This was about the time that GM had first assumed importance, and U.S. auto production capabilities had increased. Laredo was smaller, of course, and the unpaved

streets were muddy, but there was already a lot international traffic to and from Mexico."

The Corrigan import-export business continued to flourish under the guidance of siblings Bat, E. H. and Mary Alyce, just as it had under E.H. Corrigan Sr. "The timing was fortunate because the economy of Mexico began to unfold with vigor. At the same time, Mexico began mass importation of U.S. products into Mexico," Corrigan said.

Corrigan's mother, Anita Sharkey Corrigan, was a charter member of the Society of Martha Washington and was prominent in the Tuesday Music and Literature Club, the Pan American Round Table, and the Laredo Deanery, the Webb County Tuberculosis Association, as well as serving as a founder and beloved Catechism instructor at Blessed Sacrament Church. Anita's sister Vera Sharkey Enckhausen, was the founder of the Laredo chapter of the Girl Scouts of America.

Civic-minded and outgoing by nature, Corrigan is a lifelong music lover (opera of particular interest), Shakespeare aficionado, and connoisseur of fine art, particularly artists of the Renaissance and the Baroque periods. Corrigan's philanthropic spirit and generosity have enhanced the world of the arts locally and nationwide.

Among the institutions that Corrigan has generously supported over the past decades are the Santa Fe Opera; the Gladys Porter Zoo, Brownsville; the McNay Art Museum, San Antonio; the Shakespeare



Theatre, Washington, D.C.; the Morgan Library and Museum, New York City; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City; the Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra, and Texas A&M International University, for which he donated the Sharkey-Corrigan Pipe Organ. Queried about the magnitude of his gift of the pipe organ, Corrigan, in his incredibly self-effacing manner, said joyfully, "It was a pleasure to do it!"

Corrigan also likes to travel abroad to patronize the arts. "It is satisfying visiting Vienna and Salzburg in the springtime, especially during Holy Week, when they schedule a series of events: productions of opera performances, two orchestral concerts, and a large choral program. Over the years I have had the privilege of watching, more than once in person, Conductors Herbert Von Karajan, Claudio Abbado, Georg Solti, and Ricardo Muti.

Corrigan reflected, "As a teenager, multi-story buildings downtown were a novelty. The Hamilton Hotel went up in stages, and building it was considered quite a feat. Activity in Laredo revolved around St. Augustine Plaza, and of course there were few two-story homes in the surrounding blocks. Beyond that one would be in a barren area that was waiting to be developed. Today, most of downtown is a dense commercial area."

In keeping with the goals and special areas of interest and emphasis cherished by the Webb County Heritage Association, Corrigan commented, "Laredoans can be grateful to Tom Herring who is responsi-

ble for La Posada Hotel coming into being. He purchased the property from LISD. He was enlightened and sensitive enough to realize the importance of the modest, one-story building that had housed the Republic of the Río Grande; Mr. Herring not only kept it through proper maintenance, but performed elaborate cosmetic and functional improvements. The present owners of La Posada have happily followed that path."

He added, "The Laredo of today is still a city of cross-traffic between Mexico and the U.S. There has been a lot of intermarriage, and the citizens freely use two languages. We're still a city of merchants -- we always have been -- and these merchants stock their businesses with larger and larger inventories to satisfy the customers that walk in and love to shop in Laredo. A friendly tradition of excellent service in Laredo has inspired loyalty in customers who make other people aware of the supplies and services available in the shops and stores of Laredo."

Of the city's growth, Corrigan said, "It also gives me a sense of pride when I consider what has taken place as far as the city's growth is concerned, and it pleases me that Laredoans read newspapers and communicate and try to improve themselves," Corrigan said, adding, "I am proud to be President and I am happy to succeed my predecessors Elizabeth Foster and Dr. Ray Keck."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 ►►

YPI is just one of several STCADA programs aimed at stopping substance abuse before it starts. Youth Prevention Selected (YPS), also called *Familias Saludables*, is aimed at children between eight and 12 years old who are in grades third through fifth. It's school-based, with participating families meeting for two-and-a-half hours after school, once a week for eight weeks. *Familias Saludables'* guiding principle is that parents are the primary, most effective safeguards against drug use and the development of behavioral problems in their children. The program brings at-risk kids and their parents together in a setting that breaks down barriers to communication. In a society where it's not unusual for a family of four to have 12 different mealtimes in a day, YPS furnishes participants with at least one old-fashioned sit-down-and-talk-to-me family dinner a week.

Games are a part of the therapy, too. Kids and their parents play Scribbles, in which each family member makes random drawings with their eyes closed -- scribbles -- and then finds objects in the shapes they've created. There's also singing and charades. In the charades, kids are encouraged to act out their own feelings, while others guess what those feelings are. Though it's a form of play, the charades allow children to express emotions that can be troubling or even painful, and do it in a way that avoids the awkwardness of words. It also requires that parents and others recognize and put a name to the child's feelings, something that's frequently as difficult for them as it is for the child.

The program also provides a parents support group, and uninterrupted one-on-one time for parent and child. Like the family meals, the special time set aside just for the child opens up communication. It helps parents grow into the role of supporter and protec-

tor, and builds the kind of trust that will bring a troubled child to mom or dad.

In addition to the Families and Schools Together (FAST) brief therapy YPS provides presentations and education and skills training to both adults and children. In 2008, this program exceeded every one of its participation goals by margins ranging from one percent to an astonishing 311 percent. Teachers report that kids who complete the program successfully show increased attention span, better performance in school, and more open communication with their parents. They also experience reduced aggression, anxiety and depression. They're more involved with their parents. The parents themselves are more able to lead from strength and to hold down tension and conflict within the family as a whole.

STCADA's third program aimed at school-age kids is Youth Prevention Universal (YPU). Using a classroom based curriculum for kids in grades

third through eighth, it overlaps the YPI and YPS in age group and in goals. Like YPS, it strives to open up lines of communication for kids who are experimenting, or may soon be experimenting, with risky behaviors. And like YPI, it teaches decision-making and problem solving skills in a context designed to build self-confidence and social skills, along with resistance to peer pressure and drug usage.

STCADA is perhaps best known as a leading local resource for substance abuse treatment. The organization runs a total of 14 programs, many of them geared toward adults who and older youth who are at or near the point of entering recovery. The youth prevention programs are designed to stop substance abuse before it starts to give kids and parents the tools they need to make healthy decisions that foster self-respect. To paraphrase Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts, "It's easier to build a kid than to fix an adult."

And it hurts a lot less. ♦

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Small group of Laredoans protest government bailout

By MONICA MCGETTRICK

On tax day, a small group of Laredoans gathered in front of Pro Bike on San Dario in solidarity with thousands of other Americans across the country to protest what they believe is an unfair and gross overspending by the United States government.

"Don't reward failure," said Marion Santiago who, together with her husband, organized the Laredo protest. "If they want to go belly up for wasteful spending, we should let them," she said, referring to the banks, investment firms, and auto companies currently receiving large amounts of funds from the government.

Santiago, who is from the South of France, spent time in Germany before emigrating to "the land of the free" in

1977. She equates President Obama's bailout, which actually began with the Bush administration, with socialism. "I left because I wanted to get away from socialism," she said. "I'm speaking for my grandchildren. If these companies can't make it, they should fail."

When asked to give an alternative solution to the economic crisis, several of the protestors replied that the government should cut wasteful programs.

"No new programs," said Sam Lozano, the self-described mouthpiece. "Clean up the old programs and that will take care of the problem. Spending what we don't have is like taking a credit card out in our kids' names."

To add emphasis to their belief that the government is robbing their children of a debt-free future, the pro-

testors brought their children out in force. The children, some of whom appeared to be younger than three, held signs that read, "Save my future" and "Don't mortgage my future." Other protestors held signs that read "no tax," "You are not entitled to what I have earned," and "No more government spending."

Protestor Stan White, who ventured out to purchase a patriotic shirt before the gathering, said, "Our politicians have lost sight of the people they

serve. We pay taxes on everything. This protest is a small way to tell the politician what we think."

Javier Elizondo, a former IRS agent and CPA, said, "In 43 years of accounting, this is the worst I've ever seen. The economy always fixed itself."

Laredo's protest, which was vastly smaller than protests around the country, addressed the fear and worry gripping the country as the government works towards lifting itself out of this financial bog. ♦

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When the word "mensa" doesn't mean what it means in Laredo

BY DR. NEO GUTIERREZ

(Dr. Neo Gutierrez in L.A. is a Ph.D. in Dance and Related Fine Arts, Laredo Sr. Int'l USA 2008, Tiger Legend 2002, Sr. Int'l de Beverly Hills 1997. Contact neodance@aol.com)



Because stress raises the blood sugar count in our bodies, I try hard to control my feelings about all the terribly sad things happening in our country and throughout the world. Imagine -- I sold my house in LA in 2000 when I retired so I wouldn't have to worry about repairing the stucco every time there was an earthquake. And today, I try not to listen to news programs more than one hour per day, just enough to

be informed and not get toxic. Then, for distraction in true escapist form, I reach for lighter fare on the Internet or a favorite chat room.

Through the online Recuerdos Room, came a note from Jesus Segovia, a former Laredoan now up east, remembering how when we were kids we used the words *menso* and *mensa* to describe someone who wasn't totally well-informed. I imagine that *mensa* would be a short form of "*una tonta inmensa*," or similar. And as we do with colloquial language usage, we shortened it. I don't even know if today those expressions are still used in Laredo.

But, lo and behold, *mensa* reminded me of an aspect of that word that many may not know -- Mensa International. This organization has been around since 1946 and boasts a membership of about 100,000 people with

high IQ's. You can visit their website, www.mensa.org. It's a non-profit organization open to people in the 98th percentile or higher on a standardized IQ test. The group functions in national groups under Mensa International. But Mensa doesn't mean smart -- in Latin is means "table," used in their logo to symbolize a round-table of bright equals, free from racial and religious distinction. Although the group represents many points of view, it is strictly a non-political organization. Of over 110,000 members worldwide, the U.S. and Britain have the largest national groups, with 56,000 members and 24,000 members respectively.

A bright friend, former Laredoan Sara Puig Laas who lives near Austin, asked me if I was a member of Mensa, to which I replied, nope. The only time I have been in the top 2% of any academic group was when I graduated in fifth place from MHS in Laredo in the 1952 class of about 200. I have never known if anyone from Laredo is a member of Mensa, by the way.

Let's jump over to an undoubtedly bright and very gutsy lady, whose obituary I noticed a few weeks ago -- Conchita Cintron, who fought bulls while she was on horseback. I would swear that when I was a kid my father took me to a bullfight in Nuevo Laredo and I saw Conchita Cintron fight a bull Portuguese style, on horseback. But then I had doubts because I could not find a print source of her being in NL, so I started thinking maybe I had just seen her in a news clip at the Royal Theater. So I asked friends if anyone remembered Conchita in NL, and retired Navy Commander Delis Negron Jr. answered, verifying that he

must have seen the same bullfight that I saw, because he remembered having been at such an event.

Interestingly, Conchita, who died at 86, was probably the most famous female matador. A striking blonde, the Peruvian was known as *La Diosa Rubia*, and she killed over 700 bulls in Europe, Central America, and South America. She started bullfighting at 13. In February she died of a heart attack in Portugal. Probably the best known of women bullfighters, she was born in northern Chile to a Puerto Rican father and an American mother, which probably explains her blonde good looks. It was in Lima she actually learned Portuguese bullfighting on horseback. She retired at age 27, when she married and had a son.

Border residents may not know that most Americans find bullfighting abhorrent. When I taught at Beverly Hills High School, I one day decided to show in a Spanish culture lesson a bullfight documentary film. The students made me stop the film at the first man/bull contact. They were horrified!

I'd like to close with a note from a former student when he was in the ninth grade at Christen many moons ago, Raul Flores, former Laredo City Engineer now of Houston. He notes that Dell Computer's new featherweight laptop computer is called *Adamo*, which in Latin means to fall in love. The computer sells for a minimum of \$1,999, for one with not too many features. Raul jokingly wonders how our Normis Adamo got all this done, and what cut she will get from each sale. And on that note, it's time for, as Norma Adamo says, TAN TAN! ♦

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If I knew then what I know now: Alex Proyas' *Knowing*

By CORDELIA BARRERA

Science fiction, which projects contemporary scientific research and knowledge into the future, or past, for that matter, can have the feel of a great tragedy when it asks the right questions. But science fiction, or, as the author Margaret Atwood calls it, "speculative fiction" can also turn to so much cheese -- especially when it's shaping the debate of cultish agendas or propagandist intentions...but I digress.

Or do I?

I'd rather write about tragedy, anyway. The ancient Greek tragedies of Aeschylus or Sophocles asked whopping questions of humanity: Are we the architects of our lives, or are human beings fated -- destined -- to enact some pre-ordained plan devised by the gods? Is the world patterned by coincidence and randomness, or is there a stiff determinism formed by a chain of occurrences that patterns the meaning of our lives?

Fate vs. Free Will; Coincidence vs. Synchronicity. These are big ideas, as big as the tragic heroes Oedipus, Agamemnon, or Hamlet who have remained through time. They question our beliefs, or what we think we believe about religion, science, metaphysics, the nature of our individual will, or how such a will may or may not affect world occurrences...or individual decisions as banal as which new film to see.

Alex Proyas, who co-wrote and directed one of my all-time favorite movies, *Dark City* (1998), directed *Knowing*, starring Nicholas Cage. In the film, Cage plays John Koestler, a widower and professor of astrophysics at MIT. His son, Caleb (Chandler Canterbury) is a student at William Dawes Elementary School in Lexington, Massachusetts, the setting of the film's first eerie, ominous scene.

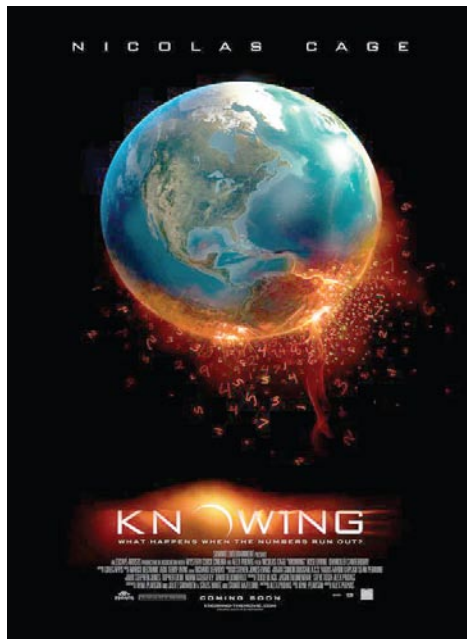
The movie begins in the year 1959 with another student, a girl named Lucinda Embry (Lara Robinson).

From the start, we know Lucinda is "different." She is, in fact, a "seer." Like the oracles of Greek tragedy, Lucinda "sees" what we cannot. And so, when her teacher asks her to color a picture for the school's time capsule that is to be buried that day with the goal of ceremoniously being opened 50 years later, Lucinda does not follow the assignment -- to draw what she thinks the future will be like in 50 years. Instead, trancelike, she writes a page of seemingly random numbers. Lucinda then disappears. A search ensues, and when her teacher finally finds her in a dark closet in the school's basement, we see that the girl has not stopped her strange, and now bloody, scrawls.

Cut to the present and the unearthing of the time capsule. Each current student at Dawes is handed a drawing from the past. Coincidentally or not (for that is the question), Caleb is given Lucinda's "drawing." He takes the drawing home, where it lands in the hands of his father.

Cage is a fitting "Everyman." After the death of his wife, he grows despondent, and distracted. He drinks a lot. But is that a pattern he sees through the booze and in the random sequence of numbers?

Yes it is. But it's a pattern so amazing, so unbelievable, a pattern that seemingly prophetically announces the dates and death tolls of every major disaster over the last 50 years. But how to be sure? And what do those other numbers mean? What do those two letters, EE, the last Lucinda al-



most carved onto the paper mean?

Knowing asks big questions and uses the dramatic elements of science fiction, suspense, and even terror to tell a story that for the first hour and a half is compelling, tense, and actually, quite eerie.

But the last half hour really pissed me off. And I can't tell you why, because I'd be telling you too much. The movie is good

because Proyas is good. And so is Cage. There's a long shot of a plane crash scene that made my stomach turn. And those odd whisperings and shadowed faces, like the music, are like so many little quivers on the back of your neck -- creepy, foreboding, skillfully placed.

But the end...oh, God...the end. A hokier, more scheming ending I could not imagine, although, for me, CGI-enhanced apocalypse is always worthwhile. And so, because this film is "supposedly" about ideas, I'll leave you with some without giving it away: cultish, propagandist, manipulation of the masses, indoctrination. How's that for ideas?

(Former Laredoan Cordelia Barrera is completing PhD work in English and American Literature at the University of Texas in San Antonio.) ♦

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Deer from Laurel family ranch, Las Ovejas, helps feed the hungry



BY SALO OTERO

Salo Otero is the director of development for the South Texas Food Bank. He can be reached at sotero@southtexasfoodbank.org or by calling 956-726-3120.



Texas Hunters for the Hungry is a statewide program that places Texas hunters in a position to give back to the community. The method is simple. Hunters will kill their game and the meat they don't want can be donated to food banks to help feed the hungry.

In Laredo, thanks to cousins Roberto J. Laurel and Oscar M. Laurel Jr. there is a dent in the hunger problem after the avid hunters donated 101 deer, totaling 3,669 pounds of meat to the South Texas Food Bank (STFB) to help feed the hungry. The does were killed on the Laurel family ranch, Las Ovejas, in Zapata County in late March.

The deer donation, the biggest of its kind in food bank history, comes during the food bank's Hunger Awareness Month. The meat will be used in bags of groceries the food bank prepares for the thousands of clients served monthly in the Adopt-A-Family program. There are 638 Adopt-A-Family clients and a big 727 on the waiting list. An annual donation of \$120 provides for a family for the year.

Roberto Laurel, who owns Laurel Insurance and Associates, noted that Las Ovejas is in the first year of a Texas State Game Management program that requires an animal inventory and harvesting of excess deer.

"There are too many deer and not

enough food," Laurel said. "We live in such a dry area."

The deer were captured by net from a helicopter and then killed. Wildlife biologist Mickey Hellickson from Texas A&M University and the King Ranch was involved in the operation.

"We are aware that times are difficult and there are a lot of hungry people who could use all that venison," Laurel said.

Laurel not only arranged for the does to be killed but also had the animals skinned, quartered, and prepared for processing. A STFB refrigerated truck was on the scene in the wee hours of the morning for two days to help keep the meat fresh.

The Laurel hunting party included his son, Roberto Jr., cousins Oscar M. Laurel Jr., Oscar M. Laurel III, Lorenzo Laurel, and several others, among them Juan Salinas, Jose Diaz De Leon, Beto DeHoyos, George Mapus, and Blas Martinez Jr.

Leo de la Garza, food resource director for the STFB, was also on hand. The meat was boxed and placed in the STFB freezer awaiting processing by the Nixon High School meat processing classes taught by Ausencio Lopez.

Lopez welcomed the deer with open arms. The meat donation boosts the Nixon students two-fold. "It helps us with our budget. We don't have to buy product to carryout instructions for the class and the kids are motivated knowing that what we do goes back to help the community. Everybody benefits all the way around."

The Nixon students process 10 deer per week. In fact, Laurel says he has plenty of wild pigs ready for slaughtering and will deliver to Lopez's classes. Laurel also mentioned he would "ask some of my ranching friends to donate at least one calf per month to help the students and the food bank."

Alfredo Castillo, STFB executive director, noted, "We're very appreciative. Protein products are hard to come by. It is a big blessing for our clients."

Erasmio Villarreal chosen as STFB board jéfe

Erasmio Villarreal was elected president of the STFB board at the organization's March meeting. Villarreal, director of the City of Laredo's building development service, is a charter member of the food bank board.

Other officers elected were Olga Maldonado, vice president; Danny Cuellar, treasurer; and Kevin Romo, secretary. Maldonado works of AEP-Texas, Cuellar is a CPA, and Romo is a State Farm Insurance agent. The board lauded the work of outgoing president Odie Arambula.

The board heard a financial and service report from executive director Alfredo Castillo. The STFB distributed 589,278 pounds in February. Clients served in January were 15,890 families, including 12,665 children, 22,228 adults, and 55,163 meals.

Through STFB programs 6,269 individuals were served this past month in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP for elderly), 638 families received aid through the Adopt-a-Family program, 293 families signed up in the food stamp outreach, and 7,152 meals were served at the Kids Cafés. Unfortunately, the food bank has huge waiting lists for the Adopt-a-Family (727 families) and CSFP (1,248 elderly) programs.

The board heard the following reports:

* The Border Media South Texas Food Bank Radio Drive, which is running through April 30, kicked off on March 26 at the food bank office grounds. The new food bank logo, designed by board members Maldonado and Goyo Lopez, was also unveiled.

* The Laredo Entertainment Center-South Texas Food Bank Empty Bowls is set for August 20 at the LEC. The fundraiser will include a silent auction and the added attraction of a concert by the musical group America. Tickets and sponsorships will go on sale later.

Food for thought from the South Texas Food Bank

Rock Fitness has a special day of exercise and outdoor fitness on Saturday, April 25 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at their 1705 Jacaman location. General manager Tony de la Garza said, "Rock Fitness and the South Texas Food Bank are joining forces to fight hunger."

The Rock's goal is to sell 100 new memberships at \$30 per member with \$15 of the \$30 going to the food bank. T-shirts will also be sold for \$20 with 25 percent donated to the food bank.

A food drive sponsored by the fitness group Curves brought in 500 pounds of product for the food bank shelves. Our thanks go to Edna Castaneda and Martha Hernandez. ♦

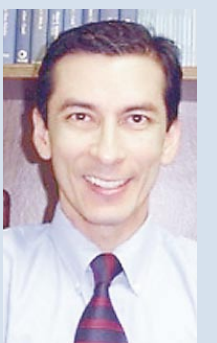


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Desegregating the Longhorn athletics programs

BY ALEX
MENDOZA

Native Laredoan Dr. Alex Mendoza is an assistant professor of history at the University of Texas at Tyler. He can be reached at mxela@hotmail.com.



April is Texas Relays month. On the first weekend of April for over 80 years, the University of Texas at Austin hosts inarguably the biggest invitation track and field meet in the Lone Star State. Amidst the hoopla, the nostalgia, and the building of new traditions at a facility that is less than a decade old lurks the dark shadow of the school's history of segregation and racial injustice.

It was in the 1962 edition of the Texas Relays that runners from all-black schools were allowed to compete for the first time. That spring, spectators could sit where they wanted for the first time without regard to race.

The more than 12,000 people who attended the Relays that year witnessed Coach Stan Wright's Texas Southern Tigers win five relay titles and, in the words of an African American alumnus of the university, "smashing exalted records to smithereens, establishing new standards, and striking new pages in the annals of sport history." Texas Southern's Ray "Jackrabbit" Saddle led his fellow Tigers to the meet's outstanding team award at the conclusion of the multi-day event.

While the accomplishments of the Texas Southern runners demonstrated the ability of African American athletes, there was still a negative blight on the 40 Acres campus. No African American athlete ran in the Texas Relays as a member of the University of

Texas track team. While the Board of Regents had previously ruled that African American athletes could enter the Texas Relays as members of integrated teams or individuals, prior to allowing them to compete as members of all-black schools, rules remained in place that barred black students from participating in intercollegiate athletics. In essence, the 1962 announcement that all-black schools would be allowed to compete in the Texas Relays was seen as an indulgence to the rising tide of Civil Rights activism across the country. It was never intended, of course, to affect the most cherished of all Longhorn sports -- football.

It is odd to point to the university's policies on racial discrimination considering that black athletes at UT have garnered so much acclaim and notoriety in the school's history. Vince Young, Earl Campbell, Clarissa Davis, Carlette Guidry, Sanya Richards, Ricky Williams, to name a few, have received national -- if not international -- acclaim for their athletic exploits while donning burnt orange. Yet as historian Dwonna Goldstone has chronicled in her study of UT Austin during the 1960s, the Board of Regents worried that allowing black students to compete on university teams would "violate the spirit of the [white Texas] community." In other words, African Americans could participate in the school's intramural teams, but not as an intercollegiate athlete during the early years of that tumultuous decade.

Naturally, the Board had a litany of excuses as to why black athletes could not compete in intercollegiate athletics. First, the regents thought that the student body would not accept the notion. Second, the university had a "gentlemen's agreement" with other schools in the Southwest Conference (SWC) not to integrate athletics. Third, UT did not want to be the first school to integrate its athletics programs. Fourth, segregated housing and eating

facilities would be a logistical nightmare for traveling Longhorn squads. Fifth, the regents believed that good African American athletes probably meant they were not capable students. Sixth, if black athletes were allowed to compete, recruiting good white athletes would thus suffer.

Thus, segregation remained in place a decade after the famous *Brown v. Board* ruling that challenged the cornerstone of Jim Crow.

Yet Texas' stance was not isolated to the Southwest Conference. By the early 1960s, only Texas and the University of Arkansas had integrated their classrooms while SMU and TCU had integrated their graduate programs. The remaining schools, Texas A&M, Rice, Texas Tech, and Baylor remained completely segregated in every capacity.

Outside the conference, UT faced schools that had integrated their athletics programs. In 1961, in particular, the University of Oklahoma's Junior Coffey, a former all-state athlete from Dimmit, Texas, ran roughshod over the Longhorns in a 35-17 victory at the 1961 Cotton Bowl. To add insult to injury, Coffey had indicated he wanted to play for the University of Texas as a senior, but was forced to leave the state due to the Regents' policy against African American players.

It was over a year before UT made another historic ruling. On November 9, 1963, the regents voted to desegregate all activities, including athletics. Yet the timing of the ruling would have no impact on football as head football coach and athletic director, Darrel K. Royal, stated that it would not be until 1964 that any recruiting could take place.

However, the track and field program would beat the football team to integration when UT track coach Jack Patterson allowed James Means and Cecil Carter to participate in workouts for the Longhorns in December 1963. Two months later, Means and another African American student, Oliver Pat-

erson, would be the first black athletes to compete for UT when they ran at the Texas A&M Relays on February 29.

The watershed moment had arrived. Yet by 1967, no UT coach had actively recruited an African American athlete. Nevertheless, that year, Sam Bradley of San Angelo signed a track-basketball scholarship to become the university's first African American athlete to make the transition to UT athletics directly out of high school.

In February of 1968, Royal finally offered a scholarship to an African American football player, Leon O'Neal of Killeen. O'Neal, however, dropped out of school a year later and was not part of the 1969 national championship football team. It was the last all-white football team to win a national championship, according to Goldstone.

Within a decade's time, black athletes were commonplace at the university. Yet Mexican American athletes who made their way into the athletic program predated them. Runners like Humberto Adame of Laredo's Martin High School and Ricardo Romo of San Antonio's Fox Tech High School were part of the Longhorn cross country and track teams during the 1960s.

Ironically, throughout the multi-million dollar renovation to UT's athletic facilities during the last decade there is no plaque or memorial to the students who weathered the taunts and jeers from fans and spectators during that turbulent era.

Yet there are hundreds, if not thousands, of plaques, bricks, tiles, or other form of reverence to commemorate the wealthy alumni and financial supporters of the university. Even if people are sometimes slow to recognize the past mistakes, perhaps it is about time that in the wake of native Laredoan Francisco Cigarroa being appointed as the first Mexican American Chancellor to the UT System that school officials begin to do something to acknowledge the injustices of the Jim Crow era at Texas' flagship university. ♦

Celebrating Easter with style and visiting with old friends

BY JENNIE
REED

By The Way appears monthly in Greater Laredo Magazine. It is reprinted here with permission.



Gathering thoughts and reflecting on life in general, we count our blessings this Easter season, encompassing family and friends, each so dear. The Luncheon Club hosted its usual "Easter Bonnet" themed gathering, where creativity and originality reigned. Hostesses were Olga Meyer and Shirley Greenblum. Some of us look better in hats than others. Those of us in the latter wore one anyway. The rest looked awfully glamorous!

The Colonial Ladies held their annual meeting, and we mixed and mingled with more good friends, and then followed the DAR meeting at the lovely home of Mary Freeman, where we celebrated patriotism and hoped for the best for our beloved country in these very trying times.

A visit from brother-in-law Courtney Reed and his brother-in-law Jim Hefren was reason to spend time in the Alamo City where we ate, drank, and were merry for a long weekend. Daughter Vickie Vela and her husband Raul hosted us for a great afternoon of catching up. Son Barry Jr. did the honors at the barbeque pit and Vickie prepared a delicious repast from her kitchen.

The day before, we shopped and visited with old friends Mary Hanson and Barbara Sanders. Could we possibly have finally found our dream shoes at the Birkenstock store in the Strand, where we were introduced to Naot shoes, made in Israel? We hope so. These are tennies that are actually soft as a glove, shaped like a human foot with plenty of toe room, a narrower heel, and a built-in arch support that

felt like a caress, even while sitting. What a dream come true for tootsies that have yet to find that seemingly simple thing -- a comfortable shoe! We also came away with fantastic hand and foot cream from the Dead Sea. A thoroughly enjoyable visit.

Bede and Daniela Leyendecker -- attended by cousins who had such fun honoring Daniela when the Princess Pocahontas Council presented her that we decided to have regular get-togethers -- hosted a delicious and fun evening. The talented mom and daughter team cooked up lasagna, a fabulous salad, and a dreamy dessert. Those attending included Linda Gutierrez, Carolyn Jordan, Rosemary Contreras, Judy Jordan, and her daughters Helen and Elizebeth, and Dani's friend Kristie Esparza.

It is so nice to have Bede and Dani even closer in our circle of *primas*. We recently attended the Encanto Español recital of Classical Spanish Ballet, Guitar Ensemble, and Spanish Poetry Readings by students and faculty of the Spanish program at TAMU. The

fantastic performance was held at the Laredo Little Theatre on Thomas Avenue with a wine and cheese reception. The full house thoroughly appreciated the evening's offerings. Thanks to Ana Flores for alerting us to the Pan American Round Tables (PART) of Texas' 54th State Convention held in Brownsville

March 20-22. Hostess Tables were PART of Brownsville I, PART of Brownsville II, and PART of San Benito.

Laredo's attendees were Ana Flores, Gloria Zuñiga, Bettina Muñoz, Alicia Cantu, Sylvia Williams, Diana Czar, Hercilia Camina, Ina Pool, Diana Rodriguez, and Mary Helen Cantu. ♦



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The parallel worlds of Obama and Churchill and the tangent lines of their eloquence

By JOHN ANDREW SNYDER

Prime Minister Winston Churchill spoke some of the most memorable, significant, and inspirational words ever to come out of London in the mid-1940s, when, early in the Battle of Britain during World War II, he said, "Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few." Prime Minister Churchill was referring of course to the valiant airmen who were fighting off the German Luftwaffe's lethal aerial assault on the British Isles. The odds favoring German success in this venture were overwhelming. Churchill went on to say, "We have before us many, many long months of struggle and suffering."

The Free World is facing another crisis today, one that is no less threatening to its existence and to its future. We all know something about it because it affects everybody and because, whether we like it or not, we're doomed to stay right in the midst of it until TARANTULA loosens its furry grasp. President of the United States Barack Obama, *de facto*

leader of the Free World, has had many Churchillian moments to which he has responded with appropriate eloquence. He recently said at a press conference, "We find ourselves in a rare moment where the citizens of our country and all countries are watching and waiting for us to lead. It's a rare responsibility that this generation did not ask for, but one that we must accept for the future of our children and our grandchildren."

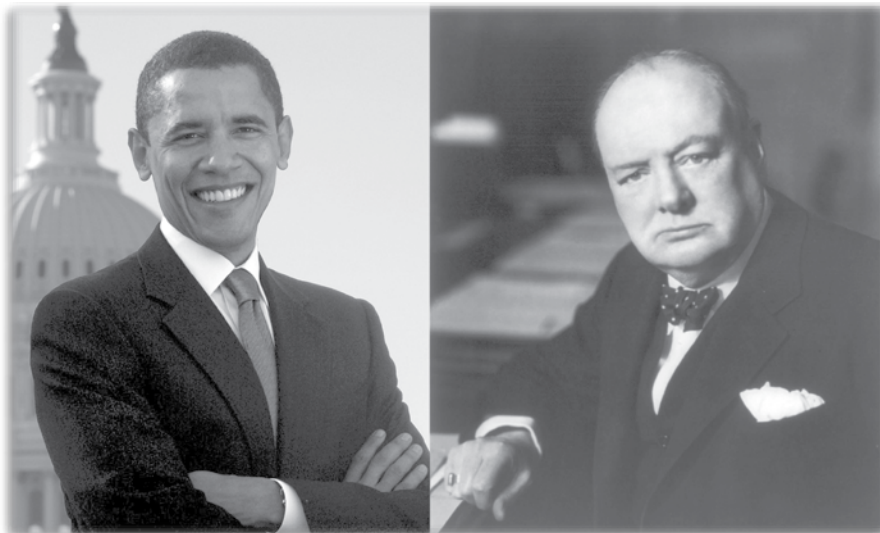
Churchill further stated in mid-1940, "You ask, What is our aim? I can answer answer with one word: Victory -- victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival." Churchill instilled hope and inspired courage at the same time that he assured that the end result of the struggle would be victory.


Similarly, Obama recognized the triumph of courage and long sacrifice in the following statement in his victory speech delivered on the night of November 4, 2008: "It's the answer that led those who

have been told by so many for so long to be cynical and fearful and doubtful about what we can achieve to put their hands on the arc of history and bend it once more towards the hope of a better day. It's been a long time coming, but tonight because of what we did on this day...change has come to America."

Winnie was no doubt the right man at the right time for the Brits -- they were in a jam and he was a can-do leader with more than his share of brains, guts, eloquence, patriotism, and, above all, fighting spirit. America has gotten itself into a fine kettle of fish, and as Ben Franklin put it, fish and uninvited guests begin to smell after three days.

Barry seems to have enough "cool" to put the fish on ice (and I don't mean throw Bush and Cheney in jail -- that's an insult to fish) because, like Winnie, he's smart, daring, fluent, patriotic, imaginative, and champing at the bit to lead. Of course, it's debatable whether we can call America's current troubles "uninvited guests," like Nazi planes in British skies during the Blitz, because it looks a lot like we're just getting what's coming to us for being a nation of obese dropouts, wastrels, rascists, sexist pigs, greedy elitists, and smokestack-huggers. ♦





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Let loving kindness be your guide

By MARÍA EUGENIA CALDERÓN

When I think of death, I think of the end, the left behind, the empty spaces in the future. I relate to this certainty with the traditional roles banality has trained me to perceive. I schedule the updating of my will, the repositioning of investments, the additional last wishes to be carried out, until I get bored with this exercise and have to regroup my thoughts.

Leaving all business aside, I reflect on what I really leave behind. The money, properties, furnishings, and collected valuables will surely enhance the quality of life of my offspring, but in moments of intense sadness, feelings of helplessness to fix the unfixable, decisions riddled with doubt, with uncertainty of outcomes, where should I be? Gone, of course, by death of physical presence, but where will I be? I am their teacher, their mother, what is my legacy? What words and attitudes will my children remember to repeat or ignore in their journey of life and the inevitable crisis that presents itself?

At the top of the list would be patience with themselves and whatever the problem is. It is said our human mind processes from 300 to 3,000 words per minute; so, it is very easy to deceive it into a state of confusion energized by a rationale that serves to complicate rather than simplify the search for an

answer. With patience we can objectively retreat from the crisis, if only for a moment, to view it from a distance and engage it head-on into a battle for change or a quiet acquiescence.

The first layer of observation should ask why did the problem compromise my peace? A problem is a problem, but have I exaggerated it out of ego? Is the resolution centered on the opinion of others? Who is most affected and why? What do you have to prove and to whom? Unless it is within your job and its obligations, which exist in a structure of rules and regulations, you should face yourself and investigate who you are and what you really believe. If you get this far, your objective review is on the right journey.

The next step would be to observe the outcome by walking it in several different directions. How and why do they affect me? What is best for me? This is the most difficult question. To answer this truthfully requires a focus on "the truth." Not my truth, but *the truth*.

Now, line up everybody involved in your decision and whose truth prevails? That righteous truth with which everybody comes to the table, or does a new one emerge, codified by trims and tucks of limited interpretations? The conclusion to this exercise is that there is no truth; we created probable outcomes based on the truths edified

by our cultural structures and these truths are modified by every generation as they challenge our structures and rebuild concepts based on new interpretations. What do we do? We scramble for the rationale to limit our wanderings and deviations, but this provides no solutions, it only creates spaces full of redundancy in which we sometimes allow the authority of inertia to make the final vote.

In a global experience called Planet Earth this is often an answer, and the instability of lack of choice finds its flow in the direction of the forces that created its existence. As a personal experience this is not necessarily the best, but it is the most influential of positions to take. Bad usually becomes worse and eventually gets exposed, and best gets diluted without rein-

forcement. So where does the decision maker go? He goes on a search without creating the answer or to the authority of inertia. What are the stakes? Whatever their value, their existence is in jeopardy. The decision now becomes a perspective, only a perspective, because the truth is always in connotation to the circumstance. Don't fret, your patience will see you through and hopefully your choice is not one you regret as you look back on your life. Every choice has an outcome that authors consequences. Choose the one that will cause you to look back and see that you never jeopardized your integrity, your honor. At the end of your life you finally realize that the person most influenced by your decision was none other than yourself. Let loving kindness be your guide. ♦



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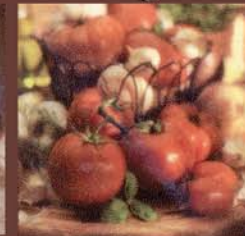


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Serranías del Burro: breeding grounds for supercell thunderstorms

BY JUAN ALANIS

Juan is Webb County Coordinator for the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS) and an Associate Member of the American Meteorological Society (AMS). He is currently a teacher at United Middle School.



It has been very quiet time weather-wise so far this spring here in the Gateway City. Despite the fact that we are in the heart of severe weather season, it has hardly even rained at all the past several months.

Despite the lack of action, we must always remain alert for rapidly changing weather conditions at all times. South Texas in general is not as active weather wise as north Texas, Oklahoma, or the Midwest region of the United States. Recent studies, however, indicate that the mountains west of Laredo are actually a prime breeding ground for the most dangerous type of thunderstorm, the supercell.

Recent research conducted by Roger Edwards, forecaster at the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma, Joshua Weiss, from the University of Massachusetts-Lowell, and Jon Zeitler, forecaster at the National Weather Service office in Austin-San Antonio, indicate that the Serranías del Burro (SdB) mountains, the northern section of the Sierra Madre Oriental mountains, located in the state Coahuila are a breeding ground for supercell thunderstorms.

Edwards documents several reasons why the SdB help create supercell thunderstorms. These reasons include their higher elevation, their proximity to the richly moist boundary layer of the western Gulf of Mexico, and their

latitudinal positioning beneath the subtropical middle and tropospheric jets that help contribute to much needed deep-tropospheric vertical shear.

In his paper, Edwards writes that since the advent of real-time satellite data in the 1970s, forecasters have noticed that the SdB are a focal point for the creation of cumulonimbus clouds...so much so that the highest of the SdB mountains have been nicknamed by some as "magic mountain."

Based on analysis of radar imagery from the Del Rio/Laughlin Air Force Base (KDFX) Doppler Radar, Edwards states that many of the supercell thunderstorms that form in the SdB mountains of northern Coahuila show very similar characteristics to the supercell storms of the Midwestern areas of the United States that bring hail and tornadoes. These characteristics include hook-echoes and intense meso-cyclones, both of which indicate tornadic develop within the storm. In March 2000, a SdB supercell near Del Rio, bore striking similarities on radar imagery to supercells of Oklahoma that produce violent F4 to F5 tornadoes, including the common "debris knobs" associated with violent tornadoes. This storm did produce a tornado outside of Del Rio, however, the storm weakened considerably by the time it crossed the border.

The Eagle Pass tornado of April 2007, which caused about \$80 million in damage and seven fatalities, was confirmed to be an SdB supercell according to an email Edwards sent me.

Weiss and Zeitler further researched SdB supercells and found more interesting data. They analyzed radar and satellite data over the SdB region from January 1996 to May 2007. During this 10-year period, 76 supercells formed in this region, which averages to about eight per year. Of these 76 supercells, 21 have crossed the Río Grande into the United States, including the 2007 Eagle Pass tornado and the 2000 Del Rio supercell mentioned above.

On March 19, 2006, a SdB supercell hit near Del Rio, bringing with it hail of 1.75 inch diameter.

In April 2007, a supercell about 60 to 70 miles west of Laredo, appeared on radar to have a tornado in it, as a hook echo was detected by radar at times. However, this supercell died by the time it reached Laredo.

Watching the radars from this current spring season, a supercell from the SdB region formed on March 25th around 5 p.m. about 30 miles south of Piedras Negras, Mexico. This cell was moving southeast parallel to the Río Grande and based on radar imagery, this storm may have had a tornado, as a hook echo/rotation was visible on radar. Fortunately, by the time the storm crossed the Río Grande around 6:30 p.m. that evening in extreme northwestern Webb County, the storm had weakened below severe limits.

Some of the interesting data from Zeiss and Zeitler indicate that 65% of SdB supercells develop in April and May. The typically SdB supercell was found to have an average lifespan of about 94 minutes, which is a slight bit longer than supercells studied in the United States. Plus, almost

Webb County Rainfall Report	
STATION	RAINFALL
WB3---San Isidro	0.27"
WB5---Callaghan Ranch	0.14"
WB6---McPherson/Chacon	0.30"
WB9---Mangana Hein Rd E	0.31"
WB10---United Middle School	0.29"
WB14---Laredo 18.4 NE	0.29"
WB22---Laredo 23.7 ENE	0.11"
WB23---Freer 29.5SW	0.36"
WB24---Trautmann MS area	0.28"
WB25---United South MS area	0.24"
WB26---Zaragoza St downtown	0.23"
Laredo International Airport	0.07"

Source: CoCoRaHS/National Weather Service


all of these SdB supercells formed between 2 p.m. and midnight, with the average time in which these storms achieve "supercell" status being around 6 p.m.

The deadly April 2007 Eagle Pass tornado hit at 6:01 p.m. In May 2004, a tornado touched down near Del Rio during the 6 p.m. hour, according to storm archives at the National Climatic Data Center.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60 ►►

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Doctor Thorne by Anthony Trollope

"Other doctors in the county had ditch-water in their veins."

By JOHN ANDREW SNYDER

The most morally upright characters in a novel do not always bask in the final sunlight, if final sunlight there be at the end of the yarn. And so much great literature features the trials and tribulations of fatally flawed individuals who zig when they should have zagged and often flop when all they had to do was flip. The world often tends to deal harshly with the decent, the well intentioned, the incorruptible, and the unflashy pillars of fortitude among us.

But in some classic novels, like Anthony Trollope's *Doctor Thorne*, the author rewards the quietly heroic plodder (Doctor Thorne) and the unfortunate damsel in distress (Mary Thorne), while the denizens of inherited wealth, social snobbery, and political corruption get a come-uppance, and even a downfall.

Doctor Thorne is a highly polished Victorian novel by a top-tier master of English prose who was also a consummate story-teller, a skeptical democrat, an often satirical observer of his country's social system, mores, and customs, and a good-natured portrayer of Victorian character "types." In other words, there's a lot for a reader to enjoy in *Doctor Thorne*.

The setting of all of this stage setting is the lawn at Greshamsbury Mansion on the occasion of the coming-of-age party of Frank Gresham, heir to the Greshamsbury property and future husband of Mary Thorne. Mary is the orphaned niece and adoptive stepdaughter of Doctor Thorne, the hub of all the action and the hero of the story.

Trollope allows us to enjoy the creative processes with which he is operating and invites us, so to speak, to look over his shoulder as he performs

the brick-and-mortar work of authorship. He tells us this about young Frank Gresham: "It is he who is to be our favorite young man, to do the love scenes, to have his trials and his difficulties, and to win through them or not, as the case may be. I am too old now to be a hard-hearted author, and it is probable that he may not die of a broken heart." He adds, "Frank Gresham was handsome, amiable, by no means a fool in intellect, excellent in heart; and he was, moreover, a gentleman."

He adds, "He would have been the hero of our tale, had not that place been pre-occupied by the village doctor." About Mary Thorne he writes, "She is our heroine and, as such, must necessarily be very beautiful; but, in truth, her mind and her inner qualities are more clearly distinct to my brain than her outward form and features," and "is...to say the least, very free."

The relationship between Frank and Mary will be a love affair between "a fine open hearted young man" and "a girl of good character and honest, womanly conduct."

The author portrays Doctor Thorne early on not as a mythical hero but as "...this man, with a man's heart, a man's humanity! Let it not be thought that our doctor was a perfect character. No, indeed; most far from perfect. He had within him an inner, stubborn, self-admiring pride, which he could hardly explain to himself." Furthermore, "he had also other gifts, such as a conversational brilliancy, and aptitude for true good fellowship, firmness in friendship, and general honesty of disposition, which stood him in stead a he advanced in life."

But Trollope advertises a man and delivers a man, not a saint, and so Doctor Thorne, the book's central character, has some rough edges: "He was brusque, authoritative, given to contra-

diction, rough though never dirty in his personal belongings, and inclined to indulge in a sort of quiet raillery, which sometimes was not thoroughly understood. People did not always know whether he was laughing at them or with them; and some people were, perhaps, inclined to think that a doctor should not laugh at all, when called in to act doctorially."

But the story is ostensibly "about" the future of the ancestral Greshamsbury estate, the disposition of the property and the marriage decision to be made by young Frank Gresham, heir to the property and his father's considerable debts, and along the way we meet many other people

The author looks at the people who make up the typical Victorian country gentry class with satirical good humor, often needing but a name, a comment, or a direct quote to make his point. We look around and we see the Duke of Omnium, the wealthiest man in the district: "There was a gleam of pride in his eye which seemed every moment to be saying, 'I am the Duke of Omnium.'" There was Miss Proudie, the social butterfly and gossip, and Mr. Nearthewind and Mr. Closerstil, the amoral political actuaries for hire to the highest bidder; and Bagley the sycophant and Reddypalm the bartender, and young Everbeery; and the rotund and jolly Bishop of Barchester and his wife; and in the midst of them all was Doctor Thorne, who said, "If you're not true, you're nothing."

There are the Greshams themselves, Frank Sr., who is always short of money because his wife, Lady Arabella, is a De Courcy and has political ambitions for her husband and insists that he maintain for her a house on Portman Square in London where she can entertain fashionable guests; and there are Frank Jr.'s sisters -- the

Lady Augusta and the Lady Amelia. "The ponderosity of her qualifications for nobility was sometimes too much even for her mother;" and there was Lady Arabella's snobbish sister, the Countess Alexandrina, who held court in Courcy Castle.

Lady Alexandrina opined about her nephew, "In his position he (Frank) must marry money." But young Frank, who wanted to go to college and was astute enough to know who had his best interest at heart had held their heads up in the county, but by having high blood and plenty of money."

Though Frank's father supports his son's academic ambitions, his aunt tells him, "Your father is such an obstinate, pig-headed, ignorant fool, that it is no use speaking to him; it would be wasting fragrance on the desert air." Frank thought it over: "His aunt did not care two straws about his reading. It was not by reading that the Greshams of Greshamsbury. Reading was a matter in which she could no way assist him." Frank concluded, "When I get back to Cambridge I'll read like bricks. I am determined that I won't get plucked."

Perhaps the most colorful character of all is Sir Roger Scatchered, an alcoholic, an ex-bricklayer and murderer, turned wealthy railroad construction magnate, landowner, financier, and Member of Parliament. He was known as "one who would carry out Barchester politics in all their abrupt, obnoxious, pestilent virulence."

Except for young Frank, Frank's father, and Mary Thorne, every significant character in the story (and there were plenty of obnoxious ones) feels the prick of Doctor Thorne -- the thorn of his honesty, of his good sense, his intelligence, his work ethic, his uprightness, his steadfastness, his honesty, and his reliable goodness. ♦

Keeping customers despite a poor economy

BY
THE
MYSTERY
CUSTOMER



In such tenuous economic times customer service becomes all the more important because customers in some areas have become scarcer. If you built your company on a record of good service you may be spared a significant loss of clientele in this momentary downturn.

The MC has said it many times before -- the folks at **Sames Quick Lane** take their jobs and customer service seriously. The MC was in and out of the place with a checklist of fluid and filter changes all done, tires aired, windshield liquid topped off, and all things done for a flawless time on the open road. The time frame was excellent, the staff on the mark. Thanks!

Preparing the bunny trail for the children necessitated a hippity-hop to **Michael's** where the MC noted much improved service from stockers and department heads and especially at the checkout line.

The MC experienced the best service ever at **Red Lobster**. Staff member Chuy did all possible to work around two children and three adults. It was such a pleasant meal.

Breakfast at **La Posada's** ground floor café was a delight and such a wonderful place to catch up with an old friend. Lots of hot, stout coffee and no fawning wait staff. The *huevoitos* were great, too!

The MC recently had a deposition taken at his office by **Ab Initio** ("From the get go" as Professor

Flint used to say) and was suitably impressed. One the company's owners, Lizette, and her staff took care of everything -- the food, the coffee, the court reporter, and the videographer.

The check out line at the **Zapata Hwy. Wal Mart** looked like the Union Pacific holding the City of Laredo hostage for 45 minutes. There were two, count-em two, lines open. One was dominated by a customer who had a dozen or more shopping carts, one filled to the top with one brand of hand lotion, another with one brand of shampoo, another with conditioner -- you get my drift -- cart after cart filled with one particular item. Everything had to be scanned. Imagine the labor intensity of that proposition versus items sold still in a case.

If gardening is one of your passions, there is nothing like an early morning walk through the **Lowe's** plant department the day after a new shipment has arrived. The variety of showy specimen plants in the succulent/cactus department has been excellent and hits the spot if you have committed to Xeriscape and plants that are not water guzzlers. Very, very nice.

The folks at **Sames Ford** still hold true to the legacy of selling a quality product at the best price possible. The MC logged onto the Ford website, built a 2010 Ford Fusion Hybrid, entered his contact info, and in a matter of minutes was contacted by Joe Morales at Sames who then dropped the vehicle off at the MC's office for a test drive while he took the MC's trade-in for an appraisal. Mr. Morales (a straight forward, straight shootin' Sames veteran of 20 years) collaborated with the very professional and extremely courteous finance manager at Sames who hunt-

ed down the best possible APR. Total wait time to sign, seal and deliver was about 45 minutes. The MC was given a very fair price on the trade-in and an incredible deal on the new vehicle, which by the way is an awesome ride. Of the Big Three, Ford is the only one rolling out the vehicles of the future -- the ones that are attractive, affordable, and fuel efficient. Thank you, Joe Morales and the entire Sames team for making this as efficient a process as possible!

And while we're on the subject of **Sames**, the **Honda** division happens to have a great service department. Kudos to Monica who never misses a beat, always gets it right, and is very professional. The MC has been taking the family car

there since it was purchased from Ramiro in sales, the guy who goes to bat for you with the sales manager.

The MC highly recommends **Pete Mim's BBQ at Cosmos Bar and Grill** where the Ahi Tuna burger was prepared just right -- pink in the middle and topped with horseradish coleslaw on a ciabata baguette. As a side order the MC had the sweet potato fries. The service was courteous, quick, and attentive, and the owner himself was on deck manning the grill. The place was clean and the ambience very tranquil, a must for all those who are tired of the usual commercial eateries full of little screamers and parents who won't control them.♦

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Divorce-related insurance issues

BY HENRI
KAHN

Contact Henri D. Kahn with your insurance questions at (956) 725-3936, or by fax at (956) 791-0627, or by email at hkahn@kahnins.com



The obviously significant financial aspects of divorce are: who gets the property, what are the tax issues, how do we divide the retirement funds and future pensions, and who gets the House.

Most persons involved in a divorce or legal separation don't take divorce versus legal separation related issues into consideration. Legal separation is different from a legally established divorce because the separated couple could get back together and nullify the separation.

The homeowners' insurance policy considers a legally separated couple to still be related, so any spouse that leaves the insured house loses their insurance coverage. This is critical for liability issues as well as property. While the policy covers personal property of the insured away from the premises, the

separated spouse is no longer a resident and therefore no longer insured.

The auto insurance policy is very similar. Spouses are considered insured while residents of the household, but the auto policy provides coverage for the separated spouse only for 90 days after the change of residency; the effective date of another policy listing the spouse as a named insured; or the end of the policy period.

This gives the separating spouse some time before having to get a new policy. Once the divorce is final the couple are no longer considered related and property ownership becomes an issue. The title owner of the property needs to insure the property. Direct ownership and joint ownership of property becomes an issue because when the relationship dissolves both parties may

be tremendously attached to certain household items.

The financial and insurance implications of divorce are diverse and important. Consequently, if you don't want to get the nasty end of the stick, you should consult a Certified Divorce Practitioner.

You will find this type of qualified professional to be more knowledgeable and helpful than many attorneys or CPAs in your quest to get a fair deal out of this sad and tragic event. Go to www.academyfdp.org/index.asp to get the name of a CDP in San Antonio or elsewhere -- there are none in Laredo -- and save some money and a whole lot of grief.

Pray for Mr. Obama to start waving his tail while addressing foreigners in their homeland rather than slinking and walking away with his tail between his legs! ♦

I have yet to meet a newly married couple that doesn't expect happiness, companionship, sexual satisfaction, and personal fulfillment. So why do nearly five out of 10 marriages end up in divorce?

Sociologists tell us that poor communication, financial problems, lack of commitment, dramatic changes in priorities, and infidelity are the primary reasons.



CITY OF LAREDO

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To serve and Protect Our Environment

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When illegal dumping is observed, please report it to Environmental Services at 794-1650 with the following information if possible:

- Location of the Dumpsite
 - License Plate Number
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PASPort: A new way to find your future at LCC

By ROGER SANCHEZ JR.
AND STEVE TREVIÑO JR.

Laredo Community College has unveiled a new student account system that will allow students to login to their new email, register, and pay for their classes from one central location. The new system, Personnel and Student Portal (PASPort), is an initiative by the LCC Admissions and Registration Center to meet students' needs.

LCC's well-known five-year-old online enrollment system, OLÉ, supplied only a limited amount of information to students. It will not be replaced by PASPort, but rather be integrated to increase the flexibility of information and registration for the students.

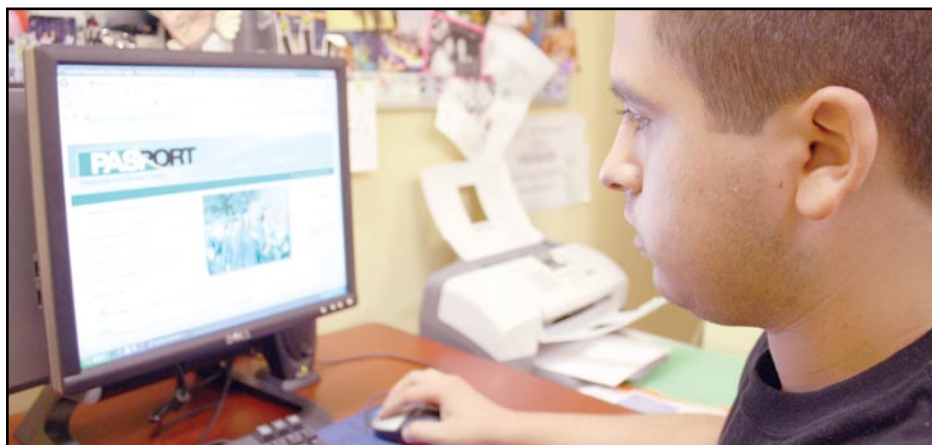
"In the past, it was cumbersome for students because they needed several different ID numbers to view information in their records," said Felix Gamez, dean of admissions and enrollment management. "With PASPort, it's very user friendly. Students now will have one ID to sign on and one password. That's all."

Students also will be able to view

their financial aid award and class assignments. Gamez added that for the first time at LCC, students will be provided with their personal LCC email account. "Students will be able to communicate with instructors more effectively by email and receive pertinent college information via their email," he said.

With PASPort, current students who already have a student ID card will find their username printed below their student ID number. Their password will be the same password used to access OLÉ. Current students who do not have a student ID card can visit the Student Activities Office at either campus. Online registration and advisement for both the summer and fall semesters are now under way. To log in to the PASPort system, visit www.laredo.edu or log in directly at <http://passport.laredo.edu>.

For more information, contact the LCC Admissions and Registration Center at the Fort McIntosh Campus at 721-5117 or at the South Campus at 794-4110. For ID card information, contact the Student Activities Office at LCC's Forth McIntosh Campus at 721-5179 or at the South Campus at 721-4178.



Introducing LCC's PASPort

Students at Laredo Community College are using a new student account system, Personnel and Student Portal (PASPort), which will allow students to email, register, and pay for their classes from one central location. LCC sophomore Martin Santos logs in to the new system at <http://passport.laredo.edu>.

On the passing of *mi compadre* José Ignacio Maldonado

By NORMA E. CANTU, PH.D.

Mi compadre José Ignacio Maldonado has left this world. I write these lines to memorialize Joe. I write so that those who knew him will recall his wit, his intelligence, and his humanity, and so that those who didn't know him will mourn not having known him.

Our community has lost a pillar whose quiet life, solid work, and steady presence made us stronger. He has gone where his father and father-in-law abide, he has gone to his ancestors. I have absolutely no doubt that he went straight to heaven, escorted by angels, blessed, and in bliss. His worldly suffering ended on March 25; claimed, despite a brave battle, by the silent killer, colon cancer. He may have lost the battle, but he didn't lose the war. As much as I dislike military metaphors, somehow they come quickly and easily when the big "C" is involved. We have been taught to think of illness as a battle. And Joe was the consummate warrior. My *comadre* Elvira was at his side every step of the way.

When a man like Joe passes, we feel the void, the emptiness that is left behind. We weep because that void is palpable and feels as an absence, a lacking, a want. *Una sed, un vacío*.

A *fronterizo*, a Tejano, a loyal and devoted husband, father, son, brother, friend, Joe was a man like any other with a family, a job, hopes, dreams, and desires. What set him apart was a deep sense of what is just, what is right. For many years he was a member of the Men's Club at St. Patrick's Church. Many in Laredo gathered at that same church for the rosary and for the mass to give their *pésame* to the family, to say a last good-bye.

The procession to the Catholic Cemetery was long, moving for many blocks. On Saturday mornings there is almost a festive air to the cemetery with the brightness of flowers and the sounds of families visiting. It is a place

that both consoles and scares us. It elicits gooseflesh every time I drive by or think about my own dead who lie buried there, or when I contemplate the plot that awaits my body when I am done with it. But this is not about cemeteries; it's about Joe.

Over 35 years ago, when Elvira informed us, her girlfriends, that she was getting married, I must confess that I worried. I had not met Joe Maldonado. I was not sure who this man was. I was away in graduate school and Elvira had returned from Texas A&I with her teaching degree and was settled into teaching. I was worried she was rushing into a marriage because it was the thing to do. But once I met Joe all my worries and concerns evaporated, fell by the wayside. When my mother found out Elvira was marrying *el hijo de la familia* Maldonado de Mother Cabrini parish, it was settled. "*Es un buen hijo*," she said, and so he would be as she predicted, a good husband and a good father. *Su familia* formed the backbone of Mother Cabrini church along with the Veras and the Martinez clans, along with so many others whose mothers belong to the Guadalupanas and the fathers belong to El Santo Nombre, now mostly known as the Men's Clubs in the various parishes in Laredo. My own parents were active members in San Luis Rey Church parish.

We, Elvira's girlfriends, -- Rosaura, Gloria, Leticia and I -- were bridesmaids and marched down the aisle at San Agustín Church. Joe and Elvira were so happy!

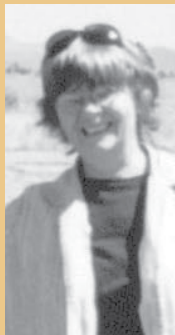
Joe was not a celebrity; in fact, he shunned the spotlight. But he deserved the recognition for all he did in our community. His mother, his mother-in-law, his siblings, nephews, nieces, *ahijados*, of course his children and my *comadre* Elvira, and all of us who knew him formed a circle that has been changed deeply.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 61 ►►

Larry Miles -- a multi-linguist in a city of bi-linguists

BY DENISE
FERGUSON

Denise Ferguson is newly arrived in Laredo. A Rhode Islander by birth, she and her husband retired to Laredo to be near their family. She can be reached by email at denise291.1@juno.com.



It is fascinating to live in a city in which most people speak two languages. How do so many people manage to conquer what must be a challenging learning experience?

Then along comes Larry Miles who speaks French, Russian, Spanish, Italian, and Arabic.

"I first became interested in languages when I was in the second grade," said Miles. Originally from Anderson, Indiana, he became aware of the fact that one of his teachers could speak French and expressed interest in learning it himself. It turned out that he had a natural aptitude for language. In addition, Miles remarked of his mentor, "She was an excellent teacher who ignited that spark of interest that I had."

Miles continued, "By the time I got to high school, I was working on a second and third language -- Spanish

and Russian."

Subsequently, he evolved from the language advancement placement category in high school, to advanced placement in college where he majored in language at Indiana University.

"In my freshman year, I visited the Italian University for Foreigners where I took a total immersion course in Italian," said Miles. "I met people from around the world." When Miles returned from Italy, he pursued studies in a total of four languages. "And, at the same time, I was maintaining all the requisite classes in order to graduate. It was a hectic time," he recalled.

When he returned home after graduation, he took a mall job while he decided what career to pursue. During that time, he ran into his French teacher who informed him that an acquaintance who worked for General Motors was interested in hiring an interpreter for its liaisons with French customers. "In a case of 'supreme injustice' I worked for the company for three years as an interpreter translating documents, making phone calls, and assisting employees who were weak in French -- but I never actually got to go to France," said Miles.

While working for the same company, there was an opening in the international business unit where Miles as-

sisted international customers and sales people. "I had to deal with customers in their time zone," said Miles. That meant being available at odd hours in order to communicate with them. "Customers in the Far East had their nights and days mixed up," Miles said.

Eventually, job changes required the company to move to San Luis Potosi in Mexico. In order to accommodate the company he worked for, Miles resettled his family in South Texas. Laredo was the "gateway" from which Miles could easily access his office from the United States. The move meant leaving his extended family far behind in Indiana, which did not go over too well with his immediate family -- his wife Connie and their three daughters and grandson -- none of whom have expressed an unusual interest in languages.

"We have been here since 1997," said Miles. "The job in San Luis Potosi was a good fit because I was fluent in Spanish and had an understanding of the culture," he added.

From time to time, Miles' interpretive skills have proven useful in outreach situations, too. In one instance a local priest asked him to go to Toronto to deliver a movie projector and cartoon tapes plus toiletries to a disadvantaged population. Miles' French skills proved useful in making arrangements and relating to the recipients of the donations. Miles has also been involved in outreach missions to Mexico.

Unlike many parents who do not have a clue as to how to make a presentation on "Career Day" at their child's school, Miles' gift of language came in handy as a speaker resource for his daughters as they progressed through school.

In order to get maximum usage out of the study of language, Miles recommends getting a Bachelor of Science or engineering degree, along with the language degree. "The study of languages needs to be combined

with something else to maximize career prospects," he stressed.

"My newest endeavor is learning Arabic," said Miles, adding, "I learned through a friend that there is now a Fulbright Scholar at TAMU who is a professor from Morocco." Miles is making use of that opportunity to learn yet another language. "I'm working on it," he said of his effort to be fluent in Arabic. "It is fun; learning languages is a passion for me. It helps me to relax and unwind. Arabic requires a different thought process, along with a different alphabet. The Russian language also has a different alphabet," he said.

Is five languages enough? Not yet, apparently. Miles remarked that he would like to study German, Portuguese, and Dutch in the future.

Miles feels that the best way to learn a language is in the strict grammatical sense. "Children might perform well with total immersion, but it is best for adults to learn grammar. That way you are best able to express yourself," said Miles. There are some commercial language courses that advertise success without laying a grammatical basis, but Miles feels that with that manner of instruction, "your speech sounds broken."

In Laredo, Miles works for Remy International, a sector of General Motors that deals in automotive parts and manufacturing. Their main facility is in San Luis Potosi, which he visits regularly.

What is Miles' next pursuit? "I would like to restart a French language conversation group. We had put a group together in Laredo in the past where we met regularly at Starbucks and spoke conversational French, but the members of the group dispersed to other locations. I would like to put together a new group," he said.

Voulez finir ensemble converser dans le francais?

If so, contact Larry Miles via e-mail at Miles.Larry@remyinc.com. ♦

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The groom in his top hat and tails wore his hair in a beautiful Prince Valiant. It looks like Jerry García and Janis Joplin witnessed the ceremony, joining a veritable congregation of longhaired back to the land-ers and Earth Mothers who were our friends. There are beautiful pictures of my mother, my Aunt Delia, and my dear mother-in-law Joyce Laas Biry with their helmet head coiffeurs. Tía Delia appears busy making the best out of this most unusual set of circumstances. My mother looks very skeptical, cocking the hammer on the I-told-you-so she would have to wait years to fire. She was never quite convinced that the priest who married us, Fr. Terrence Nolan, was not just someone dressed as a priest, and more than once she said the best man looked like Charles Manson.

My cousin Maya Guerra baked the wedding cake in Laredo and drove it to Hallettsville, one of the few wedding guests not stopped by county law enforcement for looking strange or hav-

ing peace and love bumper stickers or Dharmaseals on their cars.

I love these pictures, and I loved that day. My husband and I look bewildered and happy. My father, resigned that I had not accepted his offer a few minutes before the ceremony to get me, my mother, and my sisters all in the land yacht quickly and to return all the wedding presents, looked on stoically at the merrymaking. Both my parents were very clear about their reservations, for neither of us was gainfully employed, we didn't have a plan, and we ate gruel, uncooked vegetables, raw milk, yogurt, and dark brown whole grain bread.

And though I make light of what the wedding pictures and other pictures of that epoch reveal, I know what they will say to my grandchildren -- we were young and in love, incense burning, anti-war political idealists and environmentalists, the owners of Austin's only organic plant nursery.

Our friends named their children Cochise, Delilah, Indigo, and Moon Shadow.

We named ours George. ♦



Area students benefit from LCC's career day

Over 600 high school seniors from area high schools participated in the Third Annual Technical and Career Day at LCC's South Campus. Co-sponsored by LCC and the South Texas Tech Prep Program (STTP), the event offered high school graduates a look at job opportunities in technical fields. Pictured from left to right are U.S. Customs agents Henry Guerra and Robert Lozano with Lyndon B. Johnson High School seniors Brenda Perez and Orlando Mata.



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The Laredo Rotary Club Service Above Self Awards & The Cliff Dochterman Award Ceremony

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Laredo, Texas 78040

Donation \$20.00

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Drinking in the MFA

BY RANDY
KOCH

Randy Koch is teaching composition and pursuing an MFA in creative writing at the University of Wyoming in Laramie.



least implicitly, that liquor is the language of the literati, the elixir of the elite, the amusement that often fills in for the muse.

Since I've lived in Laramie, I haven't set foot in the Buckhorn or the Cowboy Bar, the two downtown saloons that most MFAers frequent. I did my share of drinking when I was in my 20s and can't imagine what more than a couple beers would do to me or the hangover they'd provoke now that I'm past 50. Besides, conversations embellished with liquor soon deteriorate into inside jokes, incoherent references to the previous weekend's bacchanalia, or indecipherable allusions to pasts I know nothing about. I'm better off at home putting *Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?* in the VCR or tinkering with a new poem on the laptop.

No, I don't want to bring the Texas Bible Belt concept of dry counties to Wyoming. It's just that alcohol is as omnipresent at writers' functions as references to post colonialism or dropping the name of the latest short-story writer published in the *New Yorker*. In fact, in March I flew to Hamilton, Bermuda, for a conference, where I'd been invited to read a handful of poems as part of a panel called "Stranger than Fiction: Contemporary Creative Writers and Historical Inspi-

ration." There, not only did one of the panelists offer wine to the attendees and other readers in order to create, as she explained, "an atmosphere of hospitality," but the conference's closing reception, complete with an open bar, was hosted by Bacardi Limited at their international headquarters, conveniently located across Pitt's Bay Road from the Hamilton Hotel where the conference was held.

Similarly, one weekend in April, when students Trampas Smith and Joe Posnanski and I, along with Eminent Writer-in-Residence Joy Williams, drove to Lander, Wyoming, to give a Friday night reading at the public library, liquor seemed almost a higher priority than literature. Joy followed Trampas, Joe, and me with a story from her new collection *Honored Guest*. When she finished and the applause waned, she said to the small audience, "I don't suppose you have any questions," smiled, and, before anyone could respond, walked to her chair in the back of the room. She put on her coat and a few minutes later was ready for the door. When Trampas pulled the Ford pickup into the hotel parking lot, the diesel engine growling and snow falling through the halogen security light above us, he asked with an East Texas drawl,

"Anybody want to go for a drink?" Emphatically, Joy blurted out, "Oh, yes." By the time I climbed out of the backseat and slammed the door, she and Trampas were halfway across the parking lot and walking toward the Lander Bar, where the back of menus told the tale of the extinct Popo Agie cowfish and t-shirts and baseball caps were silk-screened with cowfish skeletons.

And maybe that was and is the attraction of drinking and drinkers for lots of writers -- colorful stories and down-on-their-luck characters. One evening at an MFA barbeque in Program Director Beth Loffreda's backyard, Jason Kirkmeyer, a rail-thin 20-something English instructor, stood with a handful of people nursing drinks and eating burgers, music pouring from a porch window and talk and laughter rising from shifting clumps of students and faculty. He was imitating his "stepdaddy," his mom's second husband, an Oklahoma redneck who, when he'd had his fill of beer and was ready to call it a night, hoisted himself from his porch chair and, according to Jason, proclaimed, "I'm goin' get oblong."

It's the possibility of that sort of artfulness that keeps aspiring writers drinking in the MFA. ♦

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 51

Laredo's only recorded tornado, on April 28, 1905, was in fact an evening storm, like SdB storms, and did originate on the southern fringe of what researchers have now labeled the SdB region of Coahuila. Although due to lack of radars and satellites in the early 1900's, it will likely never be known if it was a true SdB supercell. Archives indicate it may actually have been a cold front that caused the Laredo tornado of 1905. This storm killed 21 people.

The SdB mountains also create many thunderstorms in the summer time. If one looks at radar during the early evening hours, thunderstorms will be shown west of Laredo. Sometimes, lightning may be visible in the western sky from these storms. However, no SdB supercells have been re-

corded during the summer months (July through September), as Zeitler and Weiss have concluded based on their research that there is not enough shear in the atmosphere to produce supercells. Plus, a cap of warm air in the midlevels of the atmosphere usually shuts down significant thunderstorm production.

It must be clarified, however; just because SdB supercells have not been observed in the summer months, does not mean a significant thunderstorm will not hit Laredo. It just means rotation (tornadic development) and large hail are less likely, when compared to the springtime months.

Other sources can fire up supercell storms. Back on June 2, 2003, strong thunderstorms caused by outflow boundaries from storms in Central Texas, hit Laredo with straight-line winds of up to 95 mph, and golf-ball size hail,

causing \$33 million in damage. This was a supercell, but not an "SdB supercell," as the Mexican mountains did not cause it. Radars did indicate tornadic rotation with this storm, however, no tornado ever touched down.

Once again, Laredo in general is not an active area for severe weather and tornadoes. On average, there are about 31 days per year with thunderstorms, and one day with hail. However, we must never let our guard down, and always keep an eye to the sky, especially during the springtime, as research now indicates the mountains to our west are a prime breeding ground for violent storms.

Further research regarding the SdB supercells is being done to help forecasters better understand the life-cycles of these nearby supercells, which in turn will improve the forecast ability for these supercells. ♦

"Se nos fué," I heard folks say at the funeral. Indeed he left us. But he lives on in the children -- Joey, Jackie, and Joshua.

When Joey was born, Joe was beyond proud. A son to carry his name! But Joe also worried about his family. He left teaching, which he loved, and began working at a bank. "A banker!" I exclaimed, "but Joe!" He pacified my fears. I need to do it, he said. Banking became his profession. But he loved teaching and so he taught as well.

Jackie made us *compadres*. In that hot summer of 1981 as I was taking off to Nebraska to work on my dissertation, Jackie was born in July. She was Daddy's girl from the start, the apple of his eye, a treasure beyond all treasures. At the baptism, as the priest poured the water on her tiny head, recited the prayers, dabbed oil on her forehead, Joe beamed. The proud father. We, her *madrinas* -- took turns holding her, cooing and aching at any little thing -- a smile, a yawn, her tiny hands. We were like *hada madrinas*, fairy godmothers with our good wishes for

her and for her family. And Joe patiently tolerated our carrying-on. And when the *coyotito*, Joshua, the baby was born, he and Elvira rejoiced but worried that they were getting too old to be parents.

Joe lived as a Tejano and died as a Tejano. Word spread quickly of his passing. Text messages. Phone calls. The sad news spread far and wide, within hours everyone in his circle of family and friends, sad and feeling his absence. There were no *esquelas* printed in the paper as they do in Mexico, or an announcement posted on the front of the Mercado as they do in Toledo in Spain. No. In his passing as in his life, it was a Laredo way of dying, a Laredo way of mourning that greeted the sad news. With his deeply religious life, the small acts of daily life, he touched all of us with his actions -- his co-workers at the bank, his students, his family. His life remains a testament to his deep sense of community. Laredo has lost a favored son, a solid citizen, a caring and integral member of our community. *Qué en paz descanse, mi compadre* José Ignacio Maldonado. ♦

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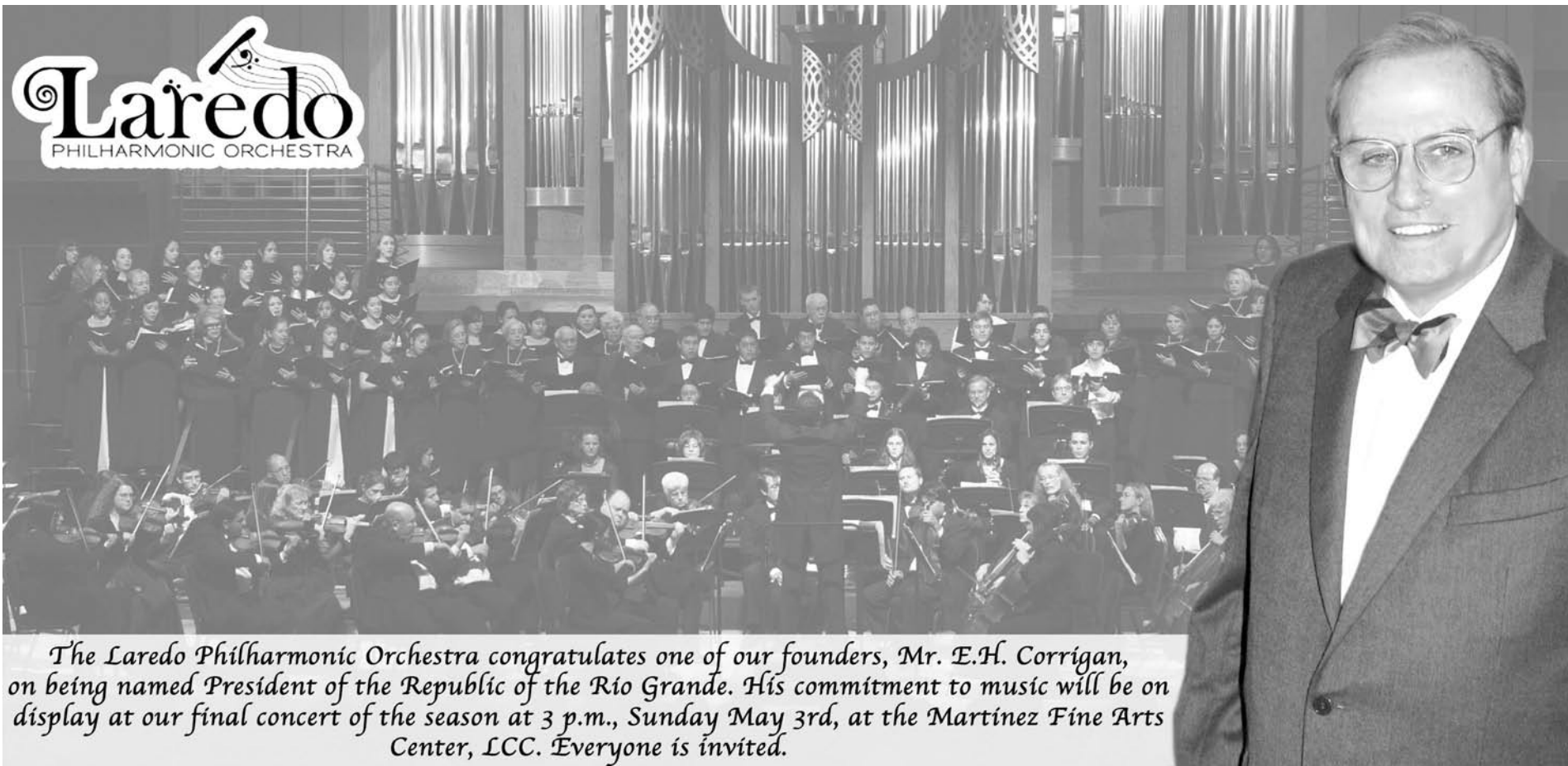


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WHY DREAD IT - WE'LL SHRED IT



The Laredo Philharmonic Orchestra congratulates one of our founders, Mr. E.H. Corrigan, on being named President of the Republic of the Río Grande. His commitment to music will be on display at our final concert of the season at 3 p.m., Sunday May 3rd, at the Martínez Fine Arts Center, LCC. Everyone is invited.



TAMIU criminal justice students speak at Boston conference

By STEVE HARMON

Four TAMIU criminal justice students shared their research on border violence -- a timely topic and one of national interest -- to criminal justice experts at a conference in Boston recently.

Norma Arreola, Kimberly Hill, Javier Salinas, and Daniella Tijerina presented their research, "The Effects of Violence in Laredo and Nuevo Laredo," at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences National Conference.

"The Conference is attended by scholars and practitioners from around the world. This is the fifth year that criminal justice undergraduate students attended the national conference," said Dr. Claudia San Miguel, assistant professor and director of TAMIU's criminal justice program.

"The Boston trip was a great experience

because we had the opportunity to present to graduate students and professors a topic that we know first-hand and give them a different perspective from what they see in the media," said Tijerina.

She added that they were one of the few undergraduate groups who participated at the conference.

"While we were in Boston, we also went on a sightseeing tour and saw the Freedom Trail and the Harvard Museum of Natural History. I had a lot of fun and am looking forward to next year's conference," Tijerina said.

The students, all members of TAMIU's Criminal Justice Association, raised more than \$2,000 to fund their travel to Boston. For more information on TAMIU's criminal justice program, contact San Miguel at 326.2529 or e-mail csanmiguel@tamiu.edu. ♦



Students share research in Boston

TAMIU criminal justice students Kimberly Hill, Javier Salinas, Daniella Tijerina, and Norma Arreola presented their research on border violence at the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences National Conference. Dr. Claudia San Miguel, director of TAMIU's criminal justice program, joined them.

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Spring arrives at Maverick Ranch-Fromme Farm



BY BEBE & SISSY
FENSTERMAKER

A rattlesnake greeted me in front of the chicken pen and got away. The next day the rattler had a lot to say in the barn at feeding time. Even Mole the longhorn took notice.

Gosh, it must be spring. This means there's a lot of work ahead to clean out everything underfoot in the barn so we don't get a really unpleasant surprise. It seems that we just did that cleaning but now it's time again. One thing is for sure; I don't have to mow around the barn because the drought is taking care of any plant growth.

Feral piglets have decided to tear up the pen in front of the chicken coop at night. They dig down, flip the corrugated tin panel, and eat what falls out the screen doors. I put that tin in front of the doors to keep obnoxious varmints from tunneling. Huge rocks are supposed to hold the tin down, but it can't withstand pig tractors. When they get tired of that they go around to the side of the chicken coop and pull rocks out of the wall. I wish they'd meet up with the rattler and have it out. The poor chickens are certainly getting lots of action outside their doors these days and nights.

The hunters got a boar the other night, but according to their night photos there are several other younger ones available. I know exactly where they are, and if they keep tearing things up here we'll make sure

the chickens get another kind of night surprise.

The Golden-cheeked Warblers are defending their territories now and one has moved into Sissy's yard. They come in for water and so do the deer. This morning and evening a young doe came to ask for food right at the house yard fence. Of course she got it but I had to tiptoe out to the fence so the cows couldn't hear. Their expert ears pick up a bucket clank a half-mile away and then they're down at the house in a flash. The deer have learned to be very quiet while eating their supper. Luckily neither species can get into the yard over the six-foot fence. That's why there are roses galore cascading over the roof of the old cistern house. Looking out at fragrant pink, yellow, white, and red roses in the early morning sunshine starts my day off right.

We got a report of good news from Ft. Davis. The US government will purchase the land (mountains) in back and above the old Fort to add to the historic site's acreage. Everyone was kept worried by threat of a housing development on that land. It would have been disastrous; everyone knew it, so they asked US Representative Ciro Rodriguez for help. He got the land included in a large government purchase of parkland throughout the country. This timely purchase will join the historic site to the Davis Mountains State Park and keep the scenic and historic viewshed intact.

BEBE FENSTERMAKER

The cattle and I are clashing. They have been getting into the yard and creating havoc with the cactus and other plants. Everything has received a haircut by them. They know when I'm away and are waiting for me when I return. Of course I do a slow burn on my way to the gate, hoping I can reach it ahead of them and throw them out there, before they hurry around to the

hole in the fence and sift their way out. Lord knows I've plugged it repeatedly against them. Time is what I need to do a proper fix.

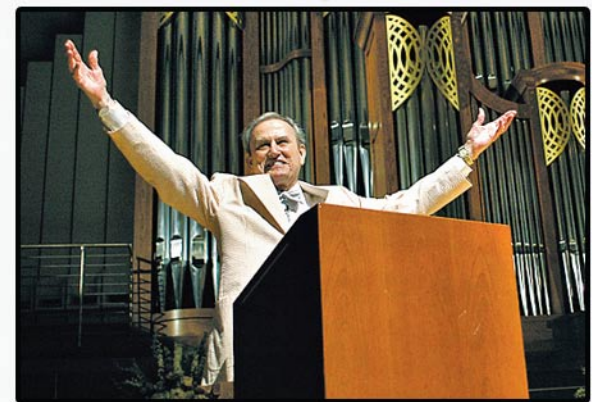
Our grandfather, William Fenstermaker, a building contractor by profession, was very fond of horses, in particular Standardbreds. He was a skilled horseman and an excellent harness driver. One account I remember hearing was when he was building a structure on Houston Street. Each day Mr. Fenstermaker would drive home for lunch, a two-mile drive down to Grove Street off Roosevelt Avenue. After lunch he would take a 15-minute nap before driving back to work. He accomplished all of that and was back at work within the hour. Our uncle, Arthur, said his father drove like a bat out of hell, slowing for nothing

and nobody.

Uncle Arthur loved to tell us of the time he himself was driving a team pulling a wagon to some property they had outside of San Antonio. As he pulled into the yard his father told him to drive through the gate next to the barn. Well, Uncle Arthur made two attempts, the second time hanging a wheel up on the gate and causing much commotion as the team got tangled in the harness and wagon tongue. His father ordered him off the wagon, got the team straightened out and calmed down, then climbed onto the wagon seat, took up the reins, wheeled the team around, and drove through the gate at a smart trot. Needless to say he hung nothing up on anything.

SISSY FENSTERMAKER

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