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JOURNAL

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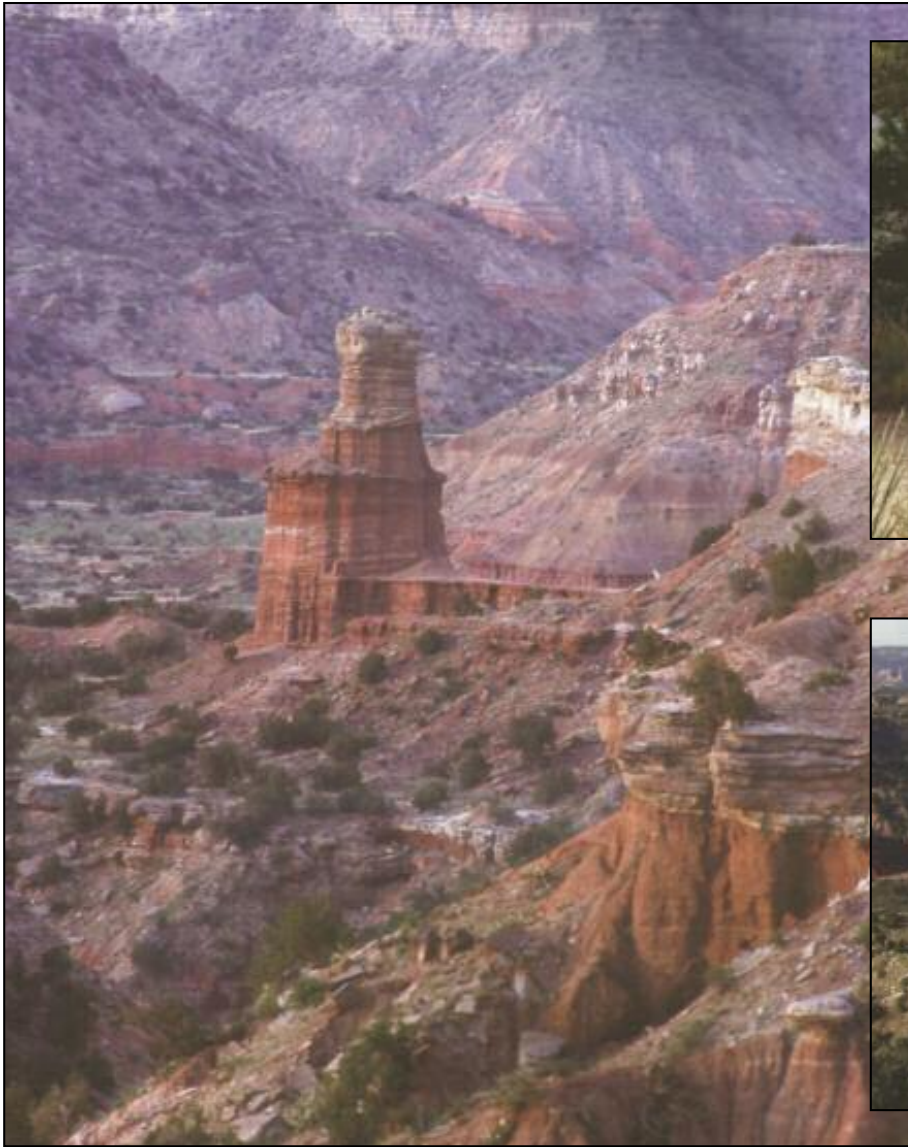
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Left: The Lighthouse. Above: A view across Timber Creek Canyon from the Interpretive Center in the State Park. Below: Trujillo sandstones are visible from the turn to the left on the road down into the canyon.



# From Palo Duro Vistas: A JOURNEY THROUGH PALO DURO CANYON

by *William MacLeod*

Palo Duro Canyon near Amarillo, Texas is one of the most photogenic places in Texas. The wonderful array of subtle hues from the rock layers contrasted against the lush vegetation

and bright red shale along the canyon floor creates a setting that is unmatched in the southwest.

The narrow gorge, protected from the prevailing west winds and the bitter

winter northers, has been a place of shelter for humans from their first arrival in the Panhandle, 12,000 years ago. Water and grass supported abundant wildlife for the hunter-gatherers who continued

to use the canyon until the Federal government drove them into reservations in

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# Cenizo Journal

Volume 11 Number 2

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## SUBMISSION

Deadline for advertising and content submissions for the Third Quarter 2019 issue: May 15, 2019.  
Art, photographic and literary works may be e-mailed to the Editor-in-chief at [editor@cenizojournal.com](mailto:editor@cenizojournal.com) or the Associate Editor at [aed@cenizojournal.com](mailto:aed@cenizojournal.com).  
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# Cenizo Notes

by Carolyn Brown Zniwski, Publisher and Danielle Gallo, Editor-in-Chief



April is here and we have already had an outrageous early display of Texas Blue Bonnets and a carpet of bright yellow blooms. Then coyote the trickster came flying through, blowing winter back to our door for a few days just to keep

everyone on their toes.

Every year more and more folks come to visit. Almost any time of year you had better make reservations early if you want to be sure of having the right place for you to stay. More folks are moving here, too, looking for a life away from the city and the suburb and the furious pace of 21st century America. A place to live where one can set their own pace and spend time doing what one loves to do.

So far, we have not been overrun by chain stores and tract housing, but I hear grumbling here and there about how the changes are encroaching on the special life offered by living in the middle of nowhere. We could stop telling everyone how great it is here in Big Bend; how incredible the sky is at night with the Milky Way almost touchable. We can stop talking about the palpable silence, the beauty of the mountains, the intense colors of the sunsets and the ageless patterns of the rocks and mountains.

We can tell folks about the wind storms when dust seeps into every corner of our house or the days that are so hot you can barely raise a cold beer to your lips, but I don't think that will stop people from coming; Big Bend is such a magical place. We just need to continue to be good caretakers of this special place and shepherd its growth carefully. Keep up the good work!



Spring seemed a long time coming this year. Time kept ticking away, yet the cold weather lingered, stymying my kids' desire to try on their new shorts and ride their bikes to school in the early mornings. Does a long, cold spring mean a brutal hot summer? A rainy one? One that's soft and mild, devoid of wind? Ask three Big Benders and you'll likely get three answers.

Now that the hordes of Spring Breakers have returned to their usual routines and we've all had a moment to catch our breaths, it's time to think about the warmer months. With the passing of Easter, it's safe to plant the garden. The late freezes didn't manage to kill all the peaches and apricots, for a change. Summer vacation is looming just ahead for the children, and how will we keep them away from all the screens for three months?

This issue of *Cenizo* is a good place to start. Train robberies, lost mines, what to do with all that plastic, thoughts on the border, and more await your consideration in its pages. Before we slalom out of spring and into summer, take a moment to enjoy a few good stories with us.



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Unrecyclable items (mostly plastic) from 1 person (who recycles) for 1 month

# TRASH TALK PART 2: THE DARK SIDE OF CONVENIENCE

*Story and photographs by Rani Birchfield*

**Mr. McGuire:** I want to say one word to you. Just one word.

**Benjamin:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. McGuire:** Are you listening?

**Benjamin:** Yes, I am.

**Mr. McGuire:** Plastics.

**Benjamin:** Exactly how do you mean?

**Mr. McGuire:** There's a great future in plastics. Think about it. Will you think about it?

That scene from *The Graduate* (1967), a ground-breaking film of the era, used plastic to symbolize the superficial and bourgeois society that was growing in America at the time. Mr. McGuire, a cocktail-swilling member of the 'older generation,' is attempting to impart his wisdom of a career choice onto Benjamin, a recent college graduate drifting in his ennui and ignorance. Plastic was part of the rapid social mobility and modernization of life after World War II, and to some it

symbolized success and equality while to others it symbolized a one-dimensional, materialistic generation. But plastics indeed: There was a great as well as terrible future in plastics.

The average American will produce 90,000 pounds of trash in their lifetime. Although plastic is only a portion of that figure, it's the most visible roadside litter (that and beer cans), decorating roads and landscape as I discussed last issue. Plastics have an interesting history, which can't be done justice in this

article, but I'll hit the highlights, because I'm obsessed with trash, much of which is plastic.

Shellac and rubber are distant forebears of plastic, as we know it. Shellac comes from a resin secreted on trees by the female lac bug. Its widespread introduction is believed to be late 16th / early 17th century, when it began to be described in the standard texts of the day. It was used as a molding compound for small items such as combs, picture frames, small boxes, etc. in the



mid-nineteenth century.

In the case of rubber, the Olmecs developed different formulas for using rubber as far back as 1600 B.C., but Charles Goodyear brought the vulcanization process – a chemical process used to harden rubber – into the coming Industrial Age, patenting it in 1844. This discovery led to a revolution in combs, of all things.

Next came celluloid, which was considered the first thermoplastic. It was pliable at higher heat, and because it solidified upon cooling, it was useful for many applications. Celluloid was first patented as Parkesine in 1862 by Alexander Parkes and from there, morphed through a few different phases. The introduction of Parkesine to the planet is generally regarded as the birth of the plastics industry.

In 1863, a New York billiards supplier offered a \$10,000 prize – in gold, as the story goes – to anyone who could come up with an alternative for using ivory to make billiard balls. Upper-class society in Europe and the U.S. had developed a taste for billiards and every mansion and estate had a table. It was also becoming popular in growing urban areas. A concern was growing that this desire for billiards would hasten the extinction of the elephant, as up to one million pounds of ivory were consumed every year, much of which was used in billiard balls. 1869, John Wesley Hyatt, inspired by the contest to find a substitute for ivory in the billiard balls (and having acquired the patent from Parkes), came up with a usable substance and called it celluloid.

Although celluloid didn't work for the billiard ball, it did work for combs. Celluloid enabled items to be formed and colored to look like marble, tortoiseshell, semi-precious stones, or rich colors like ebony black and lapis lazuli. Hyatt's pamphlet stated that "celluloid [has] given the elephant, the tortoise, and the coral insect a respite in their native haunts; and it will no longer be necessary to ransack the earth in pursuit of substances which are constantly growing scarcer."

Celluloid was a small but significant turning point for plastic, because it began to level the playing field in consumer goods, democratizing "a host of goods for an expanding consumption-oriented middle class," as historian Jeffrey Meikle pointed out in his cultural history, *American Plastic*. However, because celluloid was chemically

unstable – factories were fraught with fire – and labor-intensive, its popularity was short-lived and technology advanced to combat the problem.

Bakelite was next in the plastic family tree. Patented in 1909, it was the first

on, scientists...sought "to rearrange nature in new and imaginative ways." Plastic's place in the world was set and its growth was exponential. Cellulose acetate, polystyrene, nylon, polyethylene, and later Teflon and Kevlar were

*like a magician, makes what he wants for almost every need." They envisioned him growing up and growing old surrounded by unbreakable toys, rounded corners, unscuffable walls, warpless windows, dirt-proof fabrics, and lightweight cars and planes and boats. The indignities of old age would be lessened with plastic glasses and dentures until death carried the plastic man away, at which point he would be buried "hygienically enclosed in a plastic coffin."*

Although the chemists' vision of a material utopia was delayed by war, afterwards the factories used for plastics in war production turned to making plastic conveniences for the masses, which democratized consumer goods; a middle-class and consumer age was formed.

Fast forward to present day: We are now citizens of a "Plastic Age," although maybe not what those chemists had in mind. Plastic is everywhere. In our homes, in our cars, in the ever-growing landfills, in the woods, on the mountains, it fills the oceans, our food is packaged in it, rumor has it plastic is in our food now via the nano-plastics in the food chain....

But wait – this is depressing, isn't it? Why do we write of such things in the *Cenizo Journal*, a literary magazine that contains the beauty and quirkiness of the Big Bend region between its pages? Because although the Big Bend area is vast and remote, we're still citizens of the Plastic Age. We cannot escape. We're all consumers, and plastic is the base for convenient living. Dwellers and visitors to these sparse islands of civilization may be even more dependent upon plastic for transport and packaging than city-dwellers. Really, how could we live Out Here without plastic?

We didn't invent plastic, and we may not have many choices about the make-up of goods, and there's no reason to demean the situation we're in, nor cast away our love of plastic amenities. But what can we do about it? Well for one, we could NOT LITTER. For another, we do have choices of how to dispose of things. It's called RECYCLING.

Without sunlight and air, even newspapers won't degrade. All those things that you put into your plastic kitchen garbage bag.... Well, they'll still be around in some form when a future

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Tierra Grande Master Naturalist highway cleanup

wholly synthetic plastic, and had game-changing characteristics of electrical nonconductivity and heat resistant properties, making its use practical and far-reaching throughout industries. It also had the ability to be precisely molded into almost anything, of any size, including, of course, combs.

"The creation of Bakelite marked a shift in the development of new plastics," says Susan Freinkel in her book *Plastic: A Toxic Love Story*. "From then

some of the offspring of Bakelite.

Just before World War II, a pair of British chemists wrote a piece about how plastics would offer salvation from the uneven distribution of wealth due to their inexpensive mass-production:

*"Let us try to imagine a dweller in the 'Plastic Age,'" Victor Yarsley and Edward Couzens wrote. "This 'Plastic Man' will come into a world of colour and bright shining surfaces...a world in which man,*

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archaeologist comes and excavates the man made hill (aka landfill) to unearth clues about past civilizations. Plastic takes 1000 years to degrade. Glass takes a million. Yes, it seems overwhelming, the fight against litter and the pervasiveness of plastic in our world. But we can recycle.

Hal Flanders Recycling Center in Alpine was started in 2009 and will celebrate their 10-year anniversary this year. Texas Disposal Systems runs the center while the City of Alpine contracts with them to manage the personnel. All of the recycling is moved by TDS to a facility near Austin, with the exception of the glass and mulch, which is a city operation made possible through a grant. The facility is available to residents of Brewster County, which is nice as that includes residents "down South."

The recycle process is not like in the city, where you put everything in one container and a little fairy comes by and swoops it off your porch and – poof! – it's gone. You do have to work at it. You have to drive

your recyclable goods to the center and separate everything yourself (gods forbid!), which means you have to clean it and store it at your abode until you can get to it. This is inconvenient; it's the dark side of the convenience plastic serves us. But if we all did something it would help. Your water bottles and beer cans, that go into the trash (you better not throw them out the window!), which go to the landfill and don't degrade.... Well, unfortunately those will outlast us by generations, but recycling helps alleviate our footprint on the earth.

Here is a list of things the recycling center in Alpine takes. And, need I mention, items must be clean? Glass, plastic, paper, tin, etc. (This leaves out milk carton cardboard recycling, for example.)

- Plastic #1 and #2 only
- Mixed Paper (no milk cartons and the like)
- Glass Bottles & Jars (no broken glass, no champagne bottles, no gallon bottles)
- Scrap Metal
- Newspaper
- Corrugated cardboard
- Aluminum

- Tin
- Used Oil & Filters – From DIY
- Brush (no thorny plants or cactus)

We're fortunate to have recycling Out Here. Why not use it?

So, I wonder... did Benjamin go into plastics even though he was disillusioned and put off by the older generation's bourgeois lifestyle? I'll bet he did. And maybe his children were disillusioned by his lifestyle when they grew up in an easy, yet throw-away mentality symbolized by plastic, the heavy legacy of a consumer world. But now The Graduate's children and grandchildren are left with a different outlook, perhaps saying to their children: "I want to say one word to you. Just one word: Recycle."

More on trash, recycling and options in next issue as we continue our series on Trash in the Big Bend. I had a tremendous amount of responses to the first piece; apparently more people than just myself have noticed and are concerned about the uptick in roadside litter.

Thank you for writing in.



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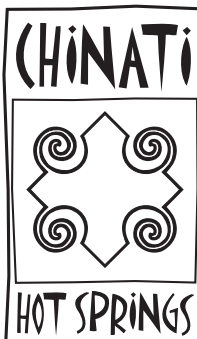
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# From Out of the Vaults MUSEUM OF BIG BEND

*by Matt Walter*

From out of the vaults: A U.S. Army 1885 brass Cavalry Buckle from the Indian Wars period. This buck-

le, also known as a "US Oval Rectangular Buckle," was used with a black leather waist/saber belt worn by

both officers and enlisted men. This particular buckle was donated to the museum in 1977 by Mr. Ralph England of

Presidio, Texas, and due to its obviously well-worn condition, was most likely worn by a Buffalo Soldier.







# TEXAS GOLD FEVER

*Story by Howdy-Nocona Fowler. Illustrations by Kevin Bishop.*

In 1848, a man named James W. Marshall picked a gold nugget out of the South Fork of the American River by Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California. Before the 1849 Gold Rush was over,

300,000 people had migrated to California from around the world in search of gold. This '49 Gold Rush was also directly responsible for the founding of not just one but two historic

American corporations, the Levi Strauss Company and the John B. Stetson Hat Company.

In August 9, 1904, a solitary prospector named Shorty Harris and his pack

burros discovered what became the Bull Frog Gold Mine just outside of Beatty, Nevada, 96 miles north of Las Vegas. Shorty reached down and picked up a rock to throw at a hard-to-catch burro,



when he noticed that the rock was a lot heavier than it should have been for its size.

The Bull Frog Gold Mine was in operation from 1904 until 2006, and has produced millions of dollars in gold.

There is nothing on earth that will pique people's interest and get them more excited than tales of lost gold and buried treasure. The Big Bend area of Texas cannot be left out when it comes to tall tales of lost mines, Spanish gold, and buried treasure, such as stories about a cache of Spanish gold coins that were found by a Mexican goat herder on top of a remote mesa in the Sanderson, TX area; remnants of Spanish silver mines in East Texas; or the famously lost Bill Kelly Gold Mine in the Big Bend Country of Texas. These stories and others fuel the fires of the adventurer's soul.

But before you load your gear and head to Far West Texas to find your fortune in this hot, rugged landscape, you should educate yourself about hunting for lost treasure.

When Texas was admitted into the Union, she lost much of her mineral-rich lands when

she gave up millions of acres to pay her war debts. These debts were incurred fighting for her independence from Mexico. These grounds included gold-bearing mining districts in New Mexico and Colorado. The former Texas mining districts of White Oaks and the Jicarilla Mountains of southeastern New Mexico have yielded up the largest gold strikes in New Mexico history, and gold is still being mined there. Colorado gold mines also produced billions in gold ore. Gold is still being extracted there to this day.

Because of geological make up, Texas is better known for her silver deposits. But precious metals like gold and silver usually run together in varying amounts, with the most prominent mineral deposit determining which metal is mined. The mines at Shafter, Texas (1880-1926) testify to this. The Shafter Mining District has employed up to 400 men during peak operations. This mine produced 3.6 million ounces of silver (10 ounces per ton).

Since Texas boundaries were redefined as we know them

today, gold is rarely found except in unprofitably small, almost microscopic amounts. The forces of nature which work to produce gold just don't exist within modern-day Texas. Most mountains in Far West Texas are remnants of ancient reefs, not mineral-laden rock. Geology alone forbids many gold strikes in the state of Texas.

But there is always the exception.

The closer you get to the Rio Grande, geology changes in the prospector's favor. For instance, the Shafter Mining District is just 20 miles north of the Rio Grande, but no mineral-rich strikes have ever been made north of Shafter in Texas. At the Shafter Silver Mines, 8,400 ounces of gold were recovered. At roughly \$20 an ounce back then (late 1800s through early 1900s), that would be \$168,000 in gold ore alone. Then, east of Shafter and along the Rio Grande, a man named William Kelly made a well-documented rich gold discovery,

continued on page 14

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Second Quarter 2019

13

continued from page 13

and its location was lost.

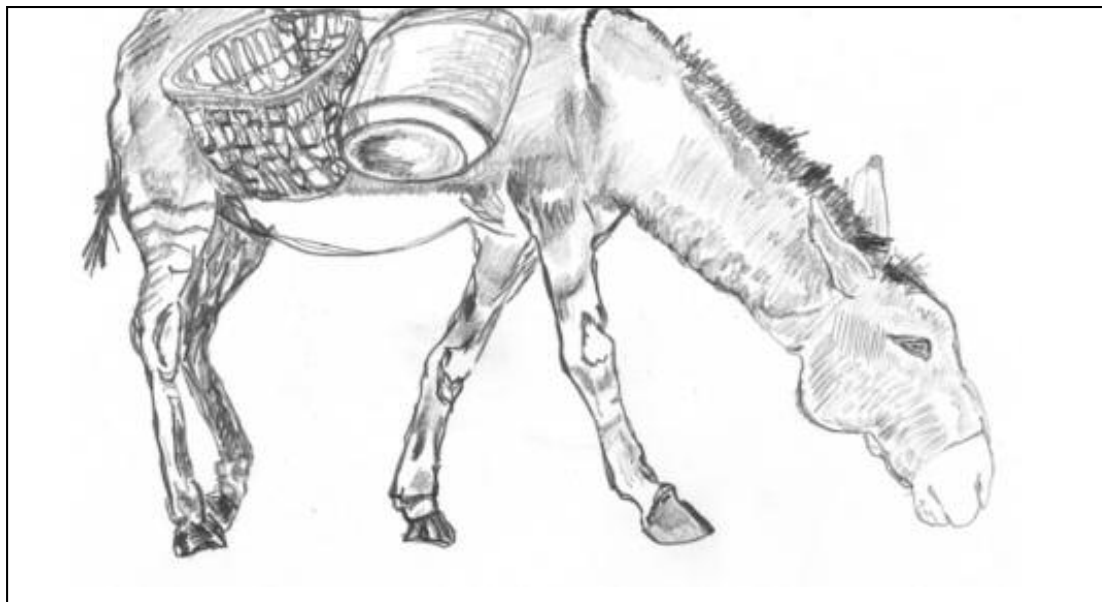
This happened in 1884, when the Reagan brothers, Frank, Jim, Lee and John, hired a young 19-year-old Seminole Black cowboy (Seminole Blacks were used to train the Buffalo Soldiers) named William 'Bill' Kelly from Muzquiz, Mexico. While gathering saddle horses for a cattle roundup, Bill found a gold-bearing ledge on the Reagan Ranch somewhere in the vicinity of Maravillas Creek in Reagan Canyon. The ledge was said to be located near the mouth of Maravillas Creek where it empties into the Rio Grande.

Kelly's employers laughed at him when he told them that he had found gold. They continued to make fun of him even after he showed them the gold-laden quartz he had brought back to camp. To add to the insult, John Reagan even threw a chunk of Kelly's quartz in the river, telling Kelly it was worthless. That night, Bill Kelly slipped out of camp on a borrowed horse and headed back home to Muzquiz. He left the horse in Sanderson. After all, he wasn't a thief; he just needed transportation to the train depot in Sanderson, 75 miles northeast of Reagan canyon.

There in Sanderson, while waiting for the train, he met a railroad engineer named Lock Campbell. Kelly and Lock hit it off, and Kelly gave Lock some of his ore samples so they could be assayed. Campbell, true to his word, took the samples to Austin. The assays on Kelly's samples were high, the find was very rich. But Bill Kelly had disappeared from Texas, and he could not be found. Efforts to find him in Mexico proved fruitless, as well.

The assayer's report addressed to Bill Kelly was delivered by mail in care of the Reagan Ranch. After reading Bill Kelly's personal mail, the Reagans realized that they had made a big mistake in laughing the 19-year-old kid out of camp.

Lock Campbell, armed with assay reports, tried to discover Bill Kelly's whereabouts for a number of years. He posted ads in the larger Texas newspapers, with no results. The Reagans realized they couldn't find the gold without Bill Kelly, and they, too, launched a search to try and locate him, but again, no Bill Kelly. The Reagans even formed a partnership with D.C. Bourland and O.L. Mueller and hired a man named Finckey to do the actual



gold prospecting. Finckey did return with some pretty rich ore; but, he never revealed to the Reagans where he had found it. By continuing to prospect, Finckey could continue to string the Reagans along with their payments for prospecting.

During the time the Reagans were looking for Kelly's gold-bearing ledge, they started a rumor to throw other prospectors off: Bill Kelly, the Reagans reported, had actually found the gold ore across the river in Old Mexico. But a prospector named John Chambers exposed the fictional story when he said, I have found gold on both sides of the river. The existence of the Shafter Mines confirms what Chambers said. But the Reagans, in trying to keep gold-hungry prospectors from digging up their ranch, circulated the fictional story far and wide, in hopes of keeping Kelly's Strike for themselves. The Reagans never located the gold.

According to C.W. Smith of Sanderson, Texas, this Strike was so rich that Prospector Harry Turner, who purportedly found Kelly's ore-bearing ledge, claimed that if he revealed his ore samples' assay reports, he would have been accused of assaying \$20 gold pieces. But Prospector Turner was killed in a separate mining incident on another ranch, and knowledge of the whereabouts of Kelly's ore-bearing ledge was lost with Turner's death.

This is where you need to keep your head, use some common sense. Never

allow Gold Fever to take over. For instance, I have read that Kelly's ore assayed at \$38,000 to the ton, also \$75,000, \$63,000, \$80,000. All of these figures are so far off from known mining facts, they are unreal. Let's take the lowest figure of \$38,000 to the ton; at \$20 an ounce (gold prices then), that puts the Strike at 1,900 ounces per ton. That means Kelly's Strike would be producing more ounces of gold per ton than the famous 16-to-1 Mine in California, the richest mine in North America. Even if Bill Kelly's Strike assayed at \$3,800 that's still 190 ounces of gold per ton...11(+) pounds of gold per ton at the turn-of-the-century prices. Not impossible, but highly unlikely. Beginning prospectors should beware of being captured by the legends and myths surrounding mines and lost treasure. Do diligent research and stick to the hard facts.

In the early 1990s, I helped rescue a feller who was left stranded with no food or life-saving supplies after his crew abandoned him out in the desert. The crew's New Mexico gold-hunting expedition failed, but the man with terminal Gold Fever stayed on, and Gold Fever almost got him. Never take a book on Treasure Hunting at face value. They are written to create sensation. If you have ended up with a map leading you to a lost mine or buried treasure, throw it away... it's fake. Keep your head about you and go prepared.

The Bill Kelly Strike has never been located again; it is still out there waiting

to be rediscovered. The gold is still there close to the mouth of Maravillas Creek in Reagan Canyon. But there are two initial problems: The Reagan Ranch, specifically Reagan Canyon, now lies within the boundaries of the Big Bend National Park and Park Rangers take a dim view of Treasure Hunters and Prospectors. All of the ranch lands close to Reagan Canyon are on private property. Private property rights in Texas are considered sacred. Violating property rights could provoke bodily injury or, in extreme situations, death. So, a cold six-pack and a little old-fashioned front porch time with a Texas rancher could prove beneficial to your quest. Make sure you always secure written permission from land owners before embarking on any prospecting excursions in Texas. Take that signed permission with you.

Even today, a solitary man or woman with a little grit, a backpack, some time, and a few simple tools and supplies still stands a chance of becoming very, very wealthy, if they happen onto Bill Kelly's gold-laden ledge located somewhere around the Maravillas Creek area in Reagan Canyon. Gold that was only worth \$20 an ounce in 1884, is now worth \$1,289.90 an ounce today, in January, 2019.



# Folkways

by *Maya Brown*

## SPRING CLEANING

I like the results and the feeling of being done with spring cleaning: open the windows and out with the dusty, muddy, cold winter, in with the coming spring and summer. I like the giving-away of things that are useful to someone else but not to me and finding the things that I thought a house brownie had stolen. The part I don't like is getting to it and the financial, health and environmental costs of commercial cleaning products. Now, for a good while, I've made my own products, probably very similar to what our grandmas made years ago. Cheap because it is likely I have or can easily get the ingredients, environmentally sound and effective.

First, a shopping list, not long or expensive:

- 1) Distilled white vinegar, what I call cleaning vinegar, cheap white vinegar.
- 2) Borax, 20 Mule Team is the brand available but honestly all brands are the same as long as it's borax.
- 3) Washing soda
- 4) Baking soda
- 5) Water
- 6) Salt: cheap kitchen salt.
- 7) Dish soap. I use the kind I make, but whatever you like will work well for these purposes.
- 8) Newspaper (Please don't use the Cenizo, this is art!)
- 9) Cheap vodka, not just for drinking while you clean! It cleans too!
- 10) Orange peel, pine needle infused vinegar (directions are below)
- 11) Rags - old cotton t-shirts work well as cotton absorbs really well, much better than polyester.

Start from the top of a room or area, usually the doorway coming in to the kitchen, wipe the door frames

down with your old t-shirt soaked and wrung dry-ish in a mix of a half-gallon of hot tap water, a half-cup of distilled white vinegar, a teaspoon of salt and a couple of drops of dish soap (really just a couple drops.) Wipe down the whole door, all the dirt and dust and yuck will fall to the floor, mop the floor with a new batch of this same solution. Your cleaning water will probably be very dirty now, so make new cleaning water as you need it.

For kitchen cleaning, again, start at the top, with the vinegar-water-soap-salt mixture, cleaning the woodwork, doors, cupboards and any dirty spots near light switches. This solution will clean almost everything. Fill a spray bottle with the vinegar, water, soap and salt mix.

I also have a serious fondness for pine cleaning power and scent while cleaning, so a day or two before cleaning day I infuse about a half-cup of pine needles in a half-gallon of vinegar for two days or so. If you want the cleaning power of orange instead, infuse the peel of a couple of oranges or lemons.

In a spray bottle, mix a cup of the infused vinegar, a cup of water, a tablespoon of salt and a couple of drops soap. Shake well, it might become cloudy but that doesn't affect the power of the cleaning solution.

For some more delicate surfaces, like granite, use granite cleaner. I don't have granite in my house, I have wood counter tops, but I hear granite is picky and scratches easily, so test this on your granite in an inconspicuous area first. Add ½ cup vodka (or

rubbing alcohol), 1½ cups water, ½ tsp dish soap, mix in a sprayer and use as you would any spray cleaner.

I've had a ton of trouble getting mineral stains out of porcelain like the toilet and sinks, I wipe the sink down with vinegar to cut the grease then I mix about a cup of salt, a Tablespoon of liquid soap, a Tablespoon of Borax, and use that mix as a scrubbing agent. When I do the toilet, I shut the water to the toilet off, flush the toilet and slowly pour in a gallon or so of vinegar and let it sit overnight. If your mineral stains are very bad you might do this regularly once a month or so. With hard water, like our water here in Big Bend, those stains are inevitable. I figure toilets are just stained and my guests aren't there to judge me.

Grout cleaner works on moldy grout too! Mix ½ cup baking soda with 2 Tablespoons washing soda, 2 Tablespoons borax and 3 Tablespoons dish soap. Wipe grout with vinegar, it cuts soap scum and other yuckiness, then wipe grout cleaner on and leave for about 15 minutes. Wipe off and rinse with fresh water. There should be no problem but just in case, test this on an inconspicuous area first.

I have wood floors and for that I use "Murphy's Oil Soap." Cheap,

smells like home and works wonders. But for tile areas like bathrooms and entrance areas I use tile cleaner, which is the same mix as you've read before, vinegar, water a couple of drops of liquid soap. Just skip the salt, in theory it could scratch the tile.

If you really get into making your own cleaning products you could make laundry detergent, with 1 cup washing soda, 1 cup borax, ½ cup baking soda and a grated bar of lye soap. Mix and use about 1/4 cup per large wash in hot water.

For appliances, glass and mirrors use simple vinegar and water, a fifty-fifty mix in a spray bottle is all you need. Remember, elbow grease makes the best cleaner. Drying windows after cleaning with newspaper keeps the streaks away.

The most important thing, well the two most important things are, people love you no matter how messy your house is, a little every day is way easier than once a year and (okay, three things) why only clean for company? Aren't you an important enough person to clean for?

One last suggestion: make a spray bottle of environmentally-sound weed killer by combining 1 cup water, 1 cup vinegar and 1 teaspoon dish soap. Please, don't use round-up.



Photo courtesy Maya Brown

**KIND EARTH\***

Kind Earth:  
When your torture ends  
Will you spin more beautifully  
Or swirl into dustbowl entropy?  
Who will observe your loveliness?  
Oh, I know,  
No more rolling weighted dice for your spoils.  
You will simply spin from your own nature  
Like a dervish.  
Yet, our nature is to witness—  
It brings us joy  
And anguish for the beauty we cannot know.  
What about the children  
Who even from the womb observe?  
Be patient, our home,  
We can clean up;  
We'll start tomorrow

**UNTITLED**

When hiking alone,  
Screeching Mexican Jays  
Good company –  
They carry the sky around  
On their backs—  
Even in the rain

*\*Dedicated to those Indigenous, First Nation people, who try by action and words to make us see our sacred earth and to recognize at the deepest level this sacred truth  
– “Wni Wiconi” (Water is Life). And dedicated to all those who have started.*

### UNTITLED

A mountain thunderstorm  
Walks into the desert  
Spilling a ribbon of  
Holy water

### SUNDAY MORNING

The night rain gone but lingers—  
Cirrus clouds stretch a cool front  
Over the Chisos Mountains—  
Ocotillos bloom like fire switches—  
Behind the Del Carmens  
The sun finds seams  
In racing grey-belly clouds—  
Shadows piebald foothills—  
In her breath that fills me  
She races far from me—  
I wring my head trying to free  
A memory never found.  
My legs weaken  
Gravel bites my knees—  
Then my palms.

Gratitude moves slowly  
Along the desert floor.  
Shadows play  
A metal-black beetle  
Navigating its dung ball  
To the lip of a dry runnel—  
On the rim of stillness, Silence  
Spills into an unborn sea



# Photo Essay

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*Photographs and poems by David Winslow*



## **Sandhills Haiku**

once quartz now smooth talc  
wind soul symmetry in waves  
three days sandy shoes

### Sandhills Form & Function

I.

Every grain uniform, slightly slippery, suave, minute.  
Created by timeless wind, friction and gravity  
infinitely aligning in perfect harmonic position  
for an instant before displacement by another.  
Microscopic musical chairs played to a sinuous rhythm  
of windsongs.



II.

Smooth and hip-round  
long and leg-linear or arm-taut  
profiles intersecting in shadowed pubic zones  
or reclining breasts.  
Mother earth artistry sculpting,  
sand casting with tools of wind and sky,  
tempting thoughts of desire, not survival.

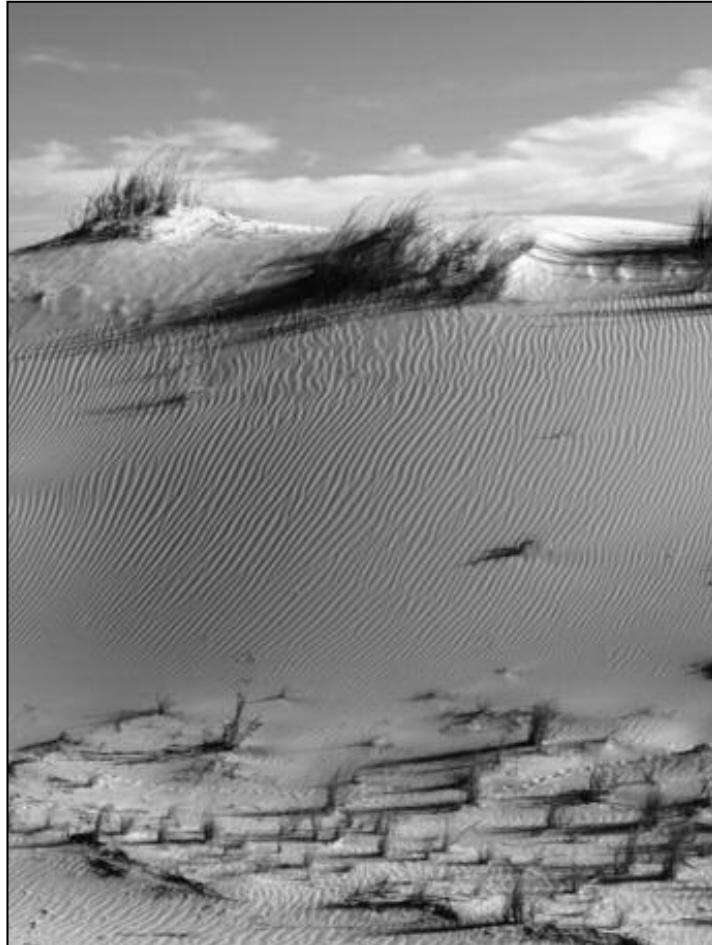
III.

Every seed, spore, semilla, fragmented root,  
arriving, perhaps landing,  
soon blanketed or blown away,  
survival improbable.  
But with morning dew or afternoon tormentas,  
fluttering flakes or pelting crystals,  
milagros grow into purpose,  
symbiosis - clinging sand or sandy grasp.



IV.

Every paw, print, slither -  
transient huellas left by all that land, even lightly,  
and perhaps seen by the few thereafter just in time.  
In time to observe and imagine,  
to question - what, who, why out here?  
Hungering for the transient life track,  
escaping from a future death trail,  
crossing with a determined purpose,  
or more likely wandering in aimless misdirection  
or windblown wonder?





# “I am a Poor Man and Need the Money!” TRAIN ROBBERIES IN THE BIG BEND

by C. W. (Bill) Smith

Such were the words of Tom “Black Jack” Ketchum as he held up the train near Lozier, Texas, on May 10, 1897, some 50 miles east of Sanderson.

When one thinks of train robbers in Terrell County, the mind quickly goes to the much-celebrated Ben Kirkpatrick and Ole Hobek and their infamous robbery gone wrong at Baxter Curve, eight miles east of Sanderson. It ended in gruesome death for the perpetrators and a public display of the carnage at the Sanderson GH&SA Depot, propped against a baggage cart.

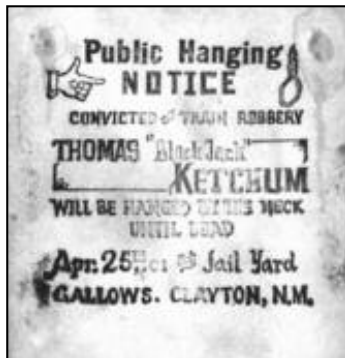


That iconic photo can be found in western anthologies and old west websites throughout the world.

It is sad that one of Sanderson's claims to fame is a botched robbery attempt and two bodies in one grave at Cedar Grove. And despite claims to the contrary, it was not the last train robbery in Texas, nor was it the only one in and around Terrell County. (The last train robbery in Texas occurred at Zilcher Park in Austin, Texas, in 1980, when two inebriated felons held up the miniature train ride and relieved patrons of their wallets and jewelry. They were caught almost immediately.)

Actually, there were numerous train robberies near Sanderson. Some were successful, and some ended tragically, both for the robbers and for hapless train crews and passengers.

The first train robbery in Texas was at Allen, Texas, February 22, 1878, by Sam Bass. He had held up stage coaches and thought a train might be more lucrative.



He made such a good haul that he robbed three more, but his crime spree was cut short when a turncoat in his own gang sold him out. He was ambushed and killed in a shootout at a bank in Round Rock, Texas, in July, 1878.

For the next 35 years robbing trains became very popular throughout the United States. Innovations in security by Wells Fargo and others made it increasingly hard for robbers to make a good living. Except for some very high profile cases in England in the 1970s and '80s, the practice of armed robberies on the railroad had practically disappeared by the mid-1910s. Today, the trend is toward hijacking boxcar-loads of merchandise.

One of the earliest train robberies in the Terrell County area occurred in August of 1889. A westbound passenger train was held up near Pumpville by three robbers, named Wellington, Three-fingered Jack, and Lang Staff. All had lived in the Big Bend country south of Marfa. After several days the Texas Rangers caught up with the three robbers. While trying to take the miscreants into custody, one robber was accidentally killed by one of his co-conspirators and the remaining two were tried and convicted. One received a life sentence in state penitentiary, but the other, gravely ill with “consumption” (tuberculosis) and dubbed a “weakling” by the

local press, was released and died very soon afterwards.

A westbound Southern Pacific passenger train was robbed on December 20, 1896, near Cow Creek, just a mile west of Comstock, Texas.

Bud Newman, Frank Gobble, Alex Purviance and Rollie Shackelford boarded the train and after furious gunfire, captured the train crew and tied them up.

They took money from the strong box but were unable to open a larger safe that was equipped with a timer lock.

The robbers rode off with next to nothing, and the train continued on.

When word reached Sheriff W.H. Jones a posse was formed that included Thalys Cook and several other Texas Rangers. Ranger Cook, who was an expert tracker, picked up the trail quickly, and by December 27, the four men were in custody. On a humorous note, the only thing taken besides the little money available was a package from the Express car, which turned out to be Rollie Shackelford's own pocket watch, which was being returned from a repair shop in San Antonio. Shackelford was a well-known

cowhand in the area, and as one local comic quipped, all he got was his own pocket watch and five years in the pen.

Ranger Cook and men of Captain Hughes' Ranger Company D stopped a robbery before it could happen, in the fall of 1896.

Word had reached the railroad of an impending train robbery at Altuda, west of Sanderson in Brewster County, by brothers Art and Jubel Friar and Ease Bixler.

Very soon the rangers picked up their trail, leading from the Glass Mountains north of Marathon, Texas, to a cow

camp at Nogalitos Pass. In the ensuing battle, the Friar brothers were killed and Bixler took off. He was caught a few days later, and chose wisely not to engage the crack-shot rangers in gunfire.

Black Jack Ketchum's robbery in 1897 took place west of Lozier, Texas, on a now-abandoned section of railroad



just east of Sanderson. Ketchum and one man boarded the train at Lozier station, while another waited with horses and dynamite at the first road-cut west of the station. Crawling over the coal pile in the tender, Ketchum and his man forced the engineer and fireman to stop the train, and then sent them back to the baggage car.

The Railway Express Messenger wouldn't let them in, so Ketchum fired a shot through the door, awakening and angering the Messenger's bulldog. The bulldog growled and barked and paced up and down the baggage car.

Having had enough, Ketchum pointed his rifle at the engineer and threatened to kill him. Seeing the seriousness of the situation, the Messenger relented, chained his dog and let Ketchum in.

Using much abusive language and cursing, Ketchum demanded that the Messenger open the two Wells Fargo safes. "I am a poor man and need money!" he said.

The Messenger could not open the large safe because it was on a timer, so Ketchum placed the smaller safe on top of the larger and dynamited both to open them up.

The blast, however, blew the smaller safe through the roof and wrecked the baggage car. Ketchum and his man gathered up about \$6,000 in loot, mostly Mexican silver, then disappeared into the darkness.

To their credit, Ketchum and his men did not bother with the mail and the passengers were not robbed.

The passengers didn't know what was happening until the explosion was heard.

Ironically, the Messenger gathered up an additional \$30,000 that the robbers missed when it fell through the floor boards after the explosion.

As soon as the train got to the next station, Captain Hughes and his Company D of the Texas Rangers were summoned and went to the site of the robbery.

They spent several days searching for the robbers, but never caught them or retrieved the missing money. This was one of the few robberies that went unresolved.

Black Jack Ketchum, however, was not to escape the long arm of the law. He finally met his end after holding up a Santa Fe Railroad passenger train at Folsom, NM, getting captured and wounded in the process. The conductor, having been held up three times before, finally had had enough and took matters into his own hands. He shot Ketchum with a shotgun, causing him to lose his arm.

He was tried, sentenced and hung on April 26, 1901, at

Clayton, NM. It was the only time a train robber was hung for "felonious assault on a railroad," and that judgment was rendered unconstitutional after Ketchum was executed.

The hanging was the first (and only) in Union County, NM, and the novice hangman miscalculated the length of the rope required.

When the trapdoor was sprung, Ketchum's body plummeted to the ground, separating the head, which was cloaked in a black hood, and sending it flying into the pit beneath the scaffold. The head was stitched back on for the public viewing, but not before a lurid postcard photo was made.

Black Jack's last words? "Good-bye. Please dig my grave very deep. All right; hurry up."

Probably a more fitting answer would have been as Cherokee Bill Goldsby gave to that question: "Hell, no, I came here to die, not to make a speech."



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*"New Beginnings are often disguised as painful endings" ~ Lao Tzu*

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23

# THOUGHTS ON SHUTTING DOWN

by *Danielle Gallo*

I haven't paid much attention to national politics over the past couple of years, preferring instead to focus on my own sphere of influence—the things I can affect with my time and attention and energy, rather than wasting those resources on situations I can't affect.

But one thing that has affected me is the current debate over our border with Mexico, and the government shutdowns that occurred in an effort to force a border wall.

Having been a government employee with both the National Forest Service and the National Park Service, it hurt to see our parks shut down and their employees left stranded, many of them forced to work without pay. It hurt to think of the damage that was done to our parks both physically and financially, and how that damage will reverberate into the future. Mostly it hurt to think that a tactic similar to what my four-year-old uses to get her way was used against both

the public and our government employees. It was worse than your garden-variety blackmail; it was more like, 'give me what I want, or I'll force these low-wage workers to hold THEIR breaths until they pass out.'

The worst of it, for me at least, was the source of these tantrums. By this I mean the desire to encase our country in steel and barbed-wire. I mean the fearful nationalism that has crept into our discourse, our politics, and our policies periodically throughout our history, which is now enjoying a bloated resurgence.

We recall the result of that creeping chauvinism in the past: our refusal to allow hundreds of thousands of Jewish immigrants seeking asylum into the U.S. during Hitler's reign of terror; the border policies that caused us to douse Mexican day workers with gasoline, DDT and Zyklon B on a daily basis until the mid-1950s; our treatment of immigrant waves from the Chinese to the Central

Europeans to the Irish since the inception of the United States as a nation.

Every one of these periodic fevers against the 'others' seeking to destroy our precious American way of life has in the end resulted in an episode of our history that must be taught with regretful hindsight. No immigrant wave has ever destroyed the fabric of our civilization, our national health or our economy. On the contrary: every wave has added its many threads to our national tapestry, making it richer, stronger, and more beautiful. Yet, every time we are faced with a fresh batch of otherness at our doorstep, we react as though we're being attacked.

This is not to say that I don't see illegal immigration as a problem in our country. I do believe, however, that the problem of illegal immigration can be solved very handily without building a massive physical or technological barrier on our border. It can be solved economically, by helping those countries to have

stable, uncorrupted governments with good economies. That solution would likely cost a great deal less than the \$26-million-per-mile wall. It can be solved by actively and rationally addressing the war on drugs—the demand for drugs in the United States being the leading cause of the violence in countries like Honduras, whose people are fleeing to the U.S. in a desperate attempt to escape the horror. Most of all, it can be solved by opening, rather than closing, our minds, hearts, borders, policies, hopes and dreams.

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking I'm a hippie, or a Pollyanna, or a bleeding-heart liberal with no experience of the complexities of border issues. But I was here when they closed our soft crossings in 2002, and I lived in Boquillas during the closure. I saw the devastation those small closings had on our wider community. There was no

continued on page 27

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# Big Bend Eats

By Carolyn Brown Zniewski

## TIME FOR CHICKEN SALAD

I love chicken and spring is a great time for one-dish meals that can be made ahead and refrigerated until it is time to eat. When I started to do a little research about chickens in preparation for this column, I got to wondering about raising chickens in Alaska. What a surprise: when I googled "Alaska chicken" I found a wonderful town called Chicken, Alaska. It seems like the Twin Sister Town of Terlingua; or rather, maybe the mirror image, considering the weather. I immediately fell in love. I bet the Northern Lights are spectacular. There is a nice video on Youtube called Downtown Chicken Alaska. Check it out! You will be glad you did.

Chicken is eaten all over the world. It was domesticated in Africa, Asia, India and the Pacific Islands close to 3,000 years ago and became a common bird in Europe in the Middle ages. It is the domesticated version of the Red Junglefowl native to most of the Eastern Hemisphere. Chicken is not native to the Western Hemisphere but arrived about 500-600 years ago with European explorers in North America and Polynesian Explorers in South America.

Chickens are social animals. They share nests and keep each other's eggs warm. The males actually do a dance to court the hens. So there really is a "chicken dance." They eat seeds and grains and bugs, lizards and small snakes. If you are going to raise chickens give them plenty of room and keep the yard tightly fenced to keep out dogs, cats and those ever-so-tricky racoons.

## CHICKEN, CHERRY & BLUE CHEESE SALAD

Salad:  
4 cups torn mixed salad greens  
½ lb. cooked chicken in bite-sized pieces  
2 Tablespoons crumbled blue cheese

2 Tablespoons dried cherries  
½ red diced onion  
½ cup chopped pecans

Dressing:  
2 Tablespoons balsamic vinegar  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
½ teaspoon sugar  
½ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon garlic powder  
¼ teaspoon pepper  
6 Tablespoons olive oil

Assemble salad in a pleasing manner. This will make 4 servings. Mix dressing ingredients in a pint jar with a tight lid. Shake until well-mixed. Let each person add their own dressing. This salad is scrumdillyshess.

## PECOS CHICKEN SALAD

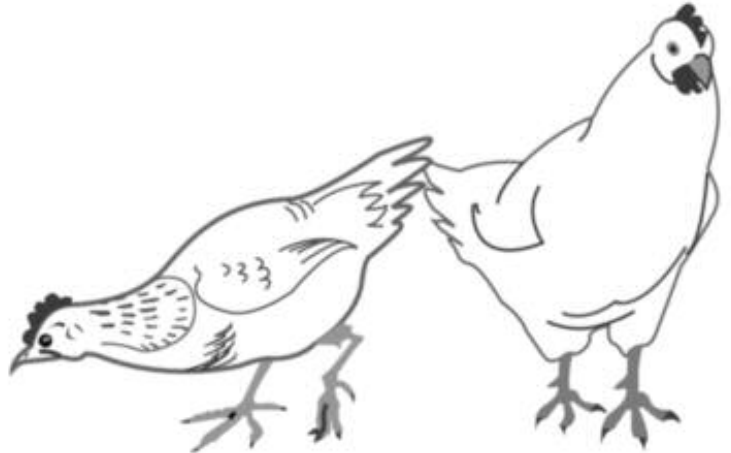
Salad:  
6 cups torn mixed salad greens  
1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cooked and sliced  
1 medium cantaloupe, peeled and sliced  
3-4 chopped whole green onions

Dressing:  
¼ cup lime juice  
1 Tablespoon honey  
1 Tablespoon minced fresh parsley  
1 Tablespoon olive oil

Arrange salad. Add dressing ingredients to pint jar with tight lid. Shake well. Dress salad. This is an excellent recipe for those delicious cantaloupes from the Pecos.

## YARD SALE CHICKEN SALAD

Salad:  
1 package (9 ounces) refrigerated cheese tortellini  
1 can (11 oz.) mandarin oranges, drained  
1 cup halved red grapes  
1 cup halved green grapes  
1 cup sliced strawberries



2 cups cubed cooked chicken, optional

Dressing:  
½ cup honey  
½ cup lemon juice

Combine salad ingredients. Combine honey and lemon juice. Pour dressing over salad. Refrigerate for an hour or up to 24 hours. Serve over lettuce. Makes a hearty dinner salad. For a vegetarian option double the tortellini and leave out the chicken. This is called Yard Sale Salad because it has a little bit of everything.

## BBQ CHICKEN SALAD

Salad:  
3 cups spring greens  
1 small thinly sliced red onion  
Chicken meat from a rotisserie chicken  
1 pint halved cherry tomatoes  
1 medium sliced and peeled cucumber  
1 pint blueberries  
¾ cup cheese curds  
1 Tablespoon dry rub

Dressing:  
Raspberry vinaigrette dressing

Combine all salad ingredients. Toss

gently. Dress just before serving.

## CINNAMON CHICKEN SALAD

Salad:  
2 packages spring mix salad greens  
4 slices cinnamon-raisin bread  
2 cups diced cooked chicken  
2 cups sliced fresh Bartlett pears  
½ cup chopped walnuts, toasted  
½ cup dried sweet cherries

Dressing:  
⅓ cup olive oil  
3 Tablespoons cider vinegar  
2 teaspoons honey  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
⅛ teaspoon sea salt  
Dash pepper

Arrange salad. Add dressing ingredients to pint jar with tight lid. Shake well. Dress salad.

## CHICKEN, GRAPES AND BRIE

Salad  
1 package (10 ounces) hearts of romaine salad mix  
3 cups chicken  
1 cups honey-roasted cashews  
2 cups seedless red grapes  
4 ounces Brie cheese, cubed

continued on page 27



the late 19th century.

Today, Palo Duro Canyon is one of the best-known landmarks in Texas, a tribute to the industry and vision of local people, who have publicized the canyon over the years. Visitors can hear the ghosts of Texas history in the canyon, the Paleo-Indians who arrived near the end of the Ice Ages, the Comanches who took control over the area in the 18th century, and Charles Goodnight and the early cattlemen who settled in the area in the 1870s.

Although the canyon area is only a small section of Texas, the geology along the route encompasses several interesting facets: the final retreat of the ocean with the near-extinction of life at the end of the Permian period, the rebirth of life in the upper Triassic, the development of the extraordinary Ogallala Formation, and the wind-blown sands of the most recent two million years with the amazing fossils found in them.

### Taking a Trip through the Canyon

The road trip begins in the town of Canyon opposite the Plains Panhandle Historical Museum. The round trip to the end of the road in the canyon and returning to the museum is slightly over 40 miles.

The town of Canyon is situated on a finger of high ground between two creeks, to the north Palo Duro Creek, which downstream becomes the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River, and one of its tributaries, Tierra Blanca Creek to the west and south. The high ground is underlain by deposits of silt, limestone and loess of the Blackwater Draw Formation.

South and east of Canyon lies a basin some nine miles in diameter where the Blackwater Draw sediments have been eroded away and the underlying Ogallala Formation is at the surface.

Forty or more similar large basins are scattered over the Southern High Plains, most of them filled with salt water. They most likely developed as Permian evaporite beds dissolved in groundwater, causing the surface to subside. The nearest Permian evaporite layer is 860 feet below the surface at Canyon.

Later, as the valley of the Red River Prairie Dog Town Fork eroded back to the north and the Tierra Blanca Creek valley developed, the lake was drained and much of the lake bed carried downstream. Erosion continued until, at least in one place, red Trujillo mudstones

underlying the Ogallala Formation were exposed.

Once open to the Red River, several streams flowed across the basin, depositing sands, silt and clay, which you can see today in road cuts around town. At least two terraces have been cut into the banks of the basin. The first is about 40 feet above the floodplain of Tierra Blanca Creek and you climb onto it just above the Interstate underpass. The second, 60 feet above the floodplain, is a half-mile on towards the park. The terraces may have been benches, developed

cent of the recharge of the underlying Ogallala aquifer in the Southern High Plains, playas have clay-lined basins and periodically fill with water from rainfall and its associated runoff. As water accumulates in playas during rainy periods, it infiltrates the clay floor through cracks, plant root openings and other pores and flows through fissures in the Caprock to the Ogallala beds below. Eventually, cracks in the floor swell shut as the clay itself absorbs water, reducing the recharge. Once a playa is full, recharge occurs along its perimeter where there is

part of the country that receives as little as 20 inches of rain a year and has no permanent rivers or streams. They support an astounding array of wildlife. Two million waterfowl winter there, and you can find mayflies, dragonflies, salamanders, bald eagles, endangered whooping cranes, jackrabbits and raccoons at playa lakes. The Eastern Panhandle is on the Central Flyway, one of the routes by which birds migrate, so twice a year, migrating birds use the playa lakes for water.

### Timbercreek Canyon

Timbercreek Canyon comes into view as the highway dips down to Sunday Canyon Road. The edge of the canyon is very close to the highway, so this is a good place to discuss how canyons form and the rate at which they advance.

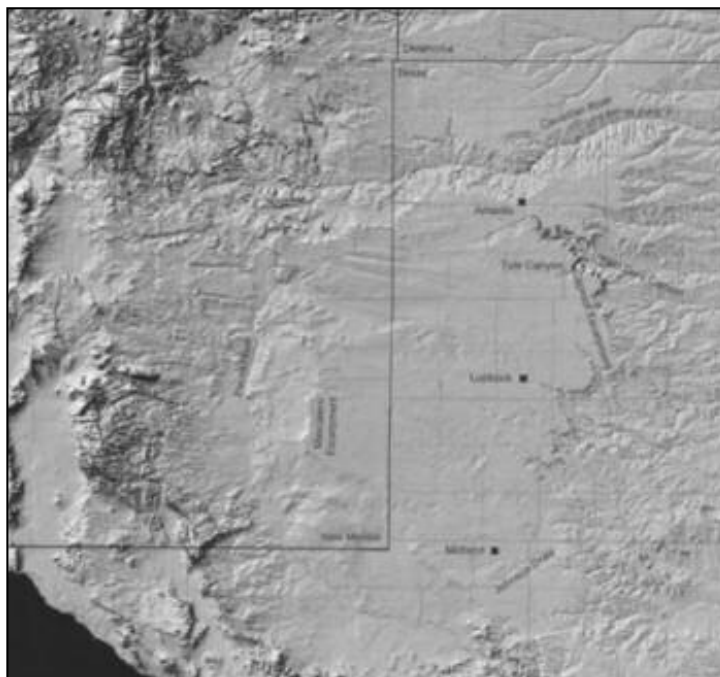
The walls of these canyons advance through two main processes. The first involves spring sapping, seepage erosion and piping. In spring sapping and seepage erosion, water seeping out at the base of sand beds in the Ogallala, and sandstone beds in the Trujillo and Tecovas Formations, carries with it particles from the beds and erodes them. Also, because seepage areas are wet, plants grow there; their roots contribute to the erosion. In piping, percolating water creates narrow tunnels or pipes by physical removal of grains and soluble material. Pipes exit through the escarpment, sometimes creating large caves.

The second main process involves the taking into solution of the underground evaporites. As the salts thin, the surface above subsides, causing the Caprock to fracture. Eventually, a body of rock breaks off from the wall of the canyon and slumps down the escarpment. Palo Duro Canyon has many such slump blocks, although none have been mapped in Timbercreek Canyon.

A critical question for residents of the Panhandle is the speed at which the Caprock Escarpment is retreating. As a rough estimate, the Ogallala Formation has been eroded back about 40 miles from its original eastern boundary in the last 4.5 million years, slightly more than one-half inch per year.

### The State Park Entrance

The State Park entrance is about 12 miles from the Canyon. A national park in the upper Palo Duro Canyon was the dream of local citizens early in the settlement of the area. However, the Federal government was reluctant to buy park land from private individuals, rather



A shaded relief map of the Llano Estacado, showing the geologic features of Palo Duro Canyon.

while the lake was still in existence, or perhaps they developed as the creek bed deepened.

### Playas on the Llano Estacado

Once you reach the High Plains surface at the top of the rise, not much is to be seen until the road bisects a playa about two-and-a-half miles beyond Farm Road 1541. Playas are an interesting feature of the Llano Estacado. Over 20,000 have been mapped, 561 in Randall County alone; a rough count west of the canyon found more than one per square mile. Generally round and small, they are shallow depressions, intermittently water-filled, that range in size from .30 to 843.4 acres, averaging about 19 acres.

Contributing roughly 85 or 90 per

cent of the recharge of the underlying Ogallala aquifer in the Southern High Plains, playas have clay-lined basins and periodically fill with water from rainfall and its associated runoff. As water accumulates in playas during rainy periods, it infiltrates the clay floor through cracks, plant root openings and other pores and flows through fissures in the Caprock to the Ogallala beds below. Eventually, cracks in the floor swell shut as the clay itself absorbs water, reducing the recharge. Once a playa is full, recharge occurs along its perimeter where there is

little or no clay. In some places where Blackrock Draw material is thin or absent, basins have developed in the Caprock. There are many theories about the origins of playa lakes, the most popular being that they result from wind action on soils disturbed by drinking animals. In this hypothesis, rainfall runoff gathering in a low spot on the plain attracts animals such as buffalo which break up the soil surface with their hooves. When the water dries up, the broken surface is blown away by the prevalent Panhandle wind. Such saucer-shaped depressions, called blowouts, are quite common on the Great Plains. Over time, blowouts expand to form playas.

Whatever their origin, playa lakes are important because they store water in a



This photograph, taken while the road down into the Canyon was being constructed, shows how many men from the Civilian Conservation Corps worked on the project. Photo courtesy of the Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum

than convert existing federal land to parks as in other states.

Local enthusiasts then approached their state government representatives with the idea of creating a state park. Texas did not have any state parks until 1923, when a State Park Board was established to accept donations of land

for parks. In 1933, the Park Board was persuaded to buy 16,402 acres of land from a landowner for \$377,000, having first secured agreement from the Civilian Conservation Corps that four companies of 200 men would be assigned to build amenities in the Park.

The Civilian Conservation Corps

was a federal New Deal entity formed to alleviate unemployment during the Great Depression, especially among First World War veterans.

The Park Board agreed to service the debt by assigning 50 per cent of gross entrance revenue and 20 per cent of all concession income for that purpose. The bulk of the debt was held by the landowner, the remainder by two Scottish mortgage companies.

The first project completed was the building of a road to the bottom of the canyon, followed by the construction of the Interpretive Center. Both were finished for the opening day, the Fourth of July 1934, to much local jubilation. By 1937, the CCC had also completed trails, the four Cow Camp cabins, the Park headquarters, the entrance building and shelters.

Despite these improvements, however, the Park did not generate enough revenue to service the debt. Unpaid interest was added to the principal, so that by 1945, total debt was about \$580,000. After much negotiating, however, the landowner agreed in 1945 to sell the entire property to the Texas State Park Board for \$300,000.

The purchase was funded by bonds that were serviced by 90 per cent of entrance fees and 20 per cent of concession income. This time, thanks to post-war prosperity and to inspired promotion by the Park concessions operator, the Park flourished, and the bonds were retired well ahead of schedule in 1960 and 1966.

The 2,036-acre Canoncita Ranch along the Park's southern boundary was added to the Park in 2002, funded by a grant from the Amarillo Area Foundation. The foundation funded the purchase of an additional 7,837 acres in 2005, including the site of the last Comanche battle in 1874. Palo Duro State Park now has a total area of 26,275 acres, making it the second largest operating state park.

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food, medicine or employment in those villages.

Those who stayed were destitute and desperate. Petty crime soared. Our law enforcement had no idea of what was going on, no lines of communication to

the other side. We are all poorer, more ignorant, and at greater risk for bigger problems when that border is closed.

When it's open, we have a free-flowing trade that allows our neighbors to thrive. We are enriched by the cultural exchange and the free exchange of information. We're more secure with our neighbors standing with us.

That's the point, really. It's a truism we recite mindlessly all the time, that united we stand, divided we fall. That's true of our communities whether they're separated by an imaginary line in the desert or not. It's true whether we all speak the same language or have the same religion or share the same culture or not. The more of 'us' there are, the bet-

ter. If we want to win the battle between 'us' and 'them,' we should make them a part of us.

It's one of the things we've been the proudest of in our history here in the Big Bend. Though judgments about how best to solve our problems might vary, we benefit from standing together.

continued from page 25

#### Dressing:

½ cup red wine vinegar  
½ cup olive oil  
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce  
Salt and pepper to taste

Make a bed of the lettuce. Distribute cashews, grapes and brie. Mix dressing ingredients well. Dress salad. The difficult part of this salad is stop yourself from eating all the cashews.

#### CUBAN CHICKEN SALAD

Salad:

3 cups chopped romaine lettuce  
1 small diced red onion  
1 sliced avocado  
1 cup halved cherry tomatoes  
½ cup diced red or yellow bell peppers  
¾ cup canned black beans, drained  
¾ cup mango, diced  
2 cups cooked chopped chicken meat

#### Dressing:

2 Tablespoons olive oil  
4 teaspoons fresh lime juice  
2 teaspoons minced garlic  
1 teaspoon cumin  
salt and pepper to taste

Toss the romaine with the onion, avocado, tomatoes and peppers in a large bowl. Divide among four salad plates. Top each salad with a mound of black beans, some mango chunks, and the chopped chicken meat. Whisk together the olive oil and lime juice with the garlic, cumin, salt, and pepper. Drizzle this dressing over each salad.

#### THAI CHICKEN SALAD

##### Salad:

1 head iceberg lettuce, shredded  
1 red grapefruit, peeled and sectioned  
2 cups shredded cooked chicken breast meat  
1 ½ cups shredded coconut

6 shallots, thinly sliced  
1 teaspoon chopped red chili pepper  
½ cup fresh mint leaves  
1 ½ Tablespoons finely chopped fresh cilantro

#### Dressing:

½ cup fresh lime juice  
1 ½ Tablespoons fish sauce  
2 cloves garlic, crushed

Arrange salad. Add dressing ingredients to pint jar with tight lid. Shake well. Dress salad.

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# TRANS PECOS TRIVIA

## NATIVE PLANT TRIVIA

by Maya Brown

- 1) Which of these plants are edible?
  - a) Agave
  - b) Barrel Cactus fruit
  - c) Chia Sage seeds
  - d) Mesquite Beans
- 2) Which parts of the prickly pear are edible?
  - a) Fruit
  - b) Tuna
  - c) Pads
  - d) Petals of the flowers
- 3) Where did Blue Bonnets originate?
  - a) Ladybird Johnson planted them
  - b) It is native to the area
  - c) California
  - d) They were spread by pioneer women

**Bonus:** Name and be able to identify five edible or otherwise useful plants in the Big Bend. You might thank yourself someday for knowing that.

*A Guide to the Plants of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert* by Carolyn Dodson and Robert DeWitt Ivey; *Little Big Bend: Common, Uncommon, and Rare Plants of Big Bend National Park* by Roy Morey; *Plants of the Chihuahuan Desert: A Guide to Common Native Species* by Jenette Jurado.

**Answers:** 1- All of them! All of them are edible. Most you have to boil or cook in some way to be consumable.

2 - Again all! All the named parts of the prickly Pear cactus are edible. As I'm sure you know, Fruit and Tuna are the same thing. I can't trick you, can I?

3 - b. It's a native flower! You knew that. It's the state flower of Texas!

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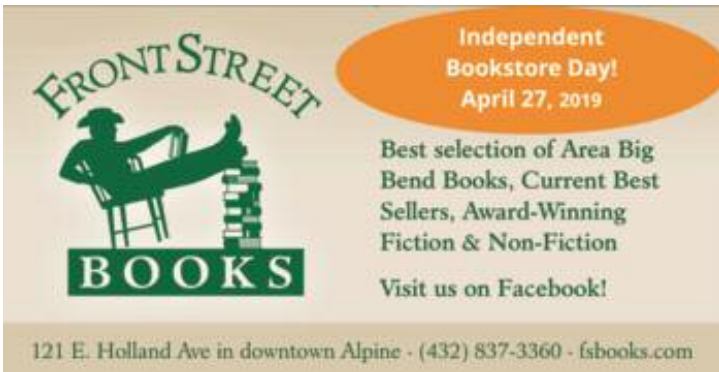


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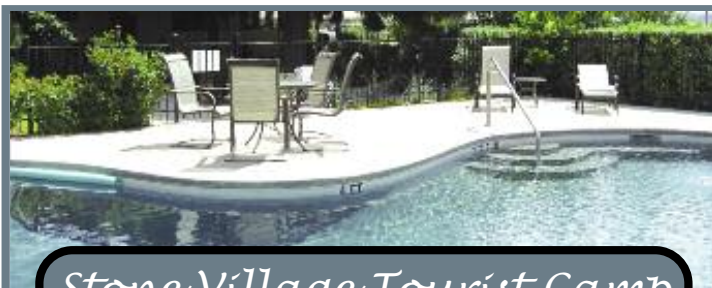
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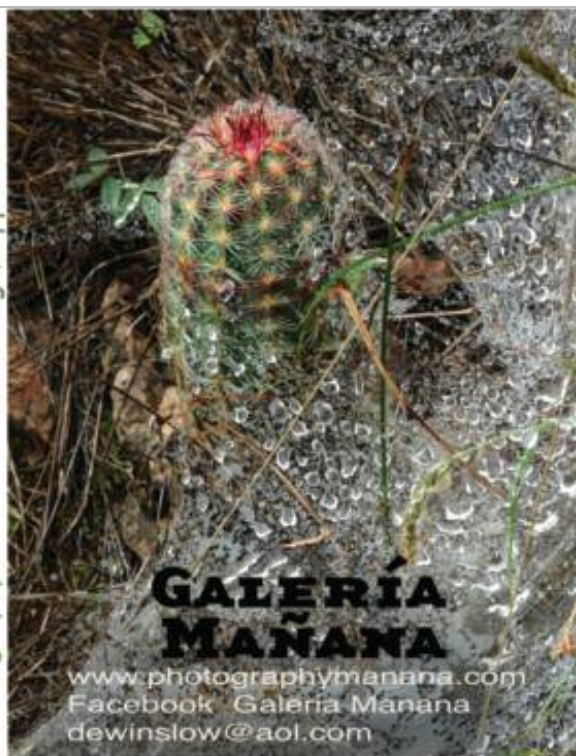


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