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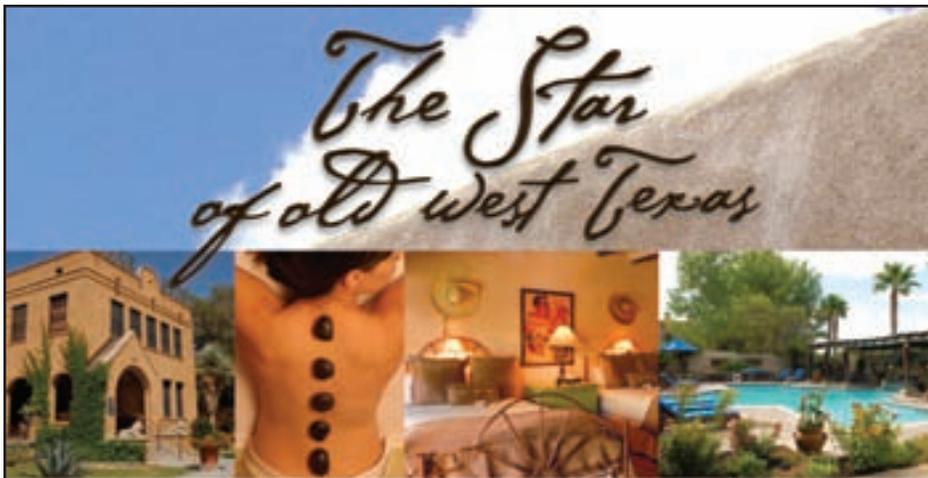
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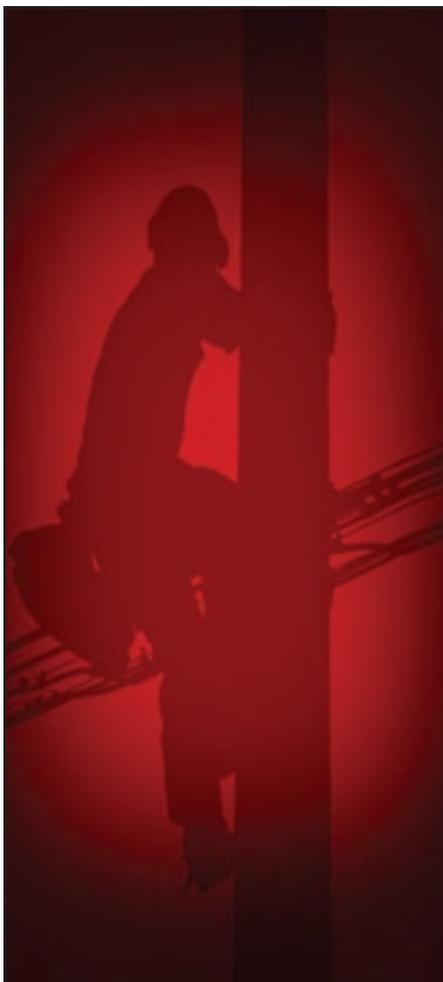
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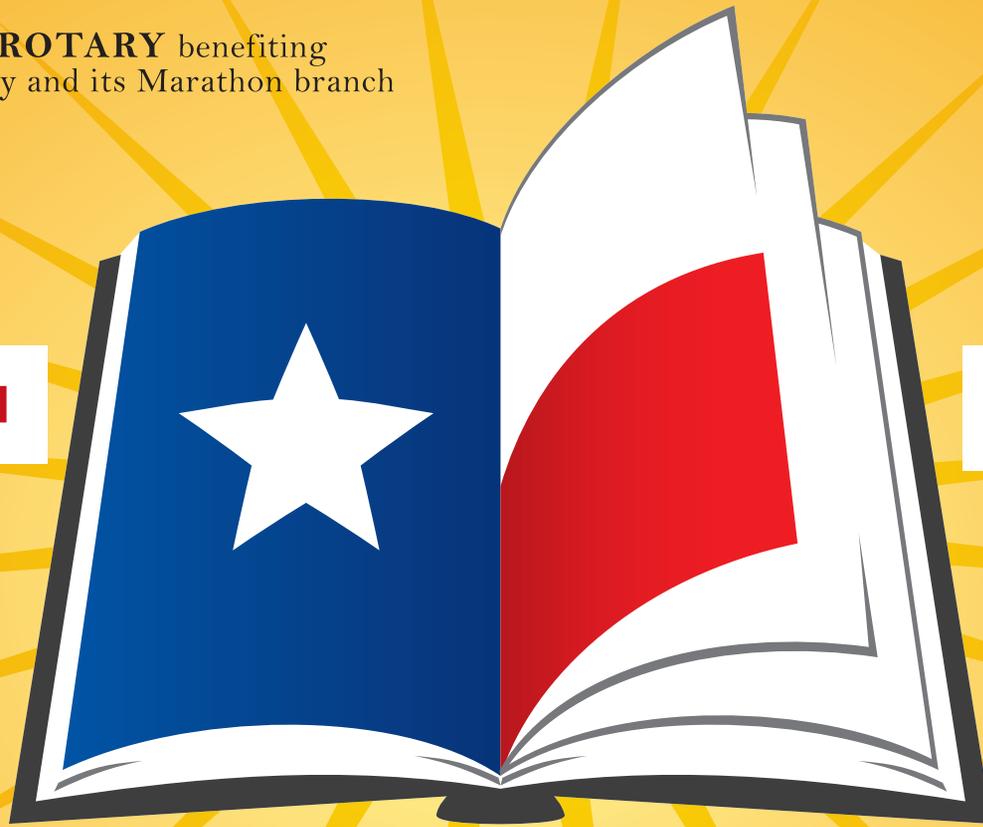
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Tools of the trade – Cases and drawers of type

# Menagerie Press: Hot Type in the Terlingua Desert

by *Nora Seymour*

The fresh, yeasty scent of new ink fills the air inside a small adobe building perched at the top of Terlingua's Ghosttown. At a waist-high red desk in the corner, Menagerie Press owner, designer, typographer and printer Lauren Stedman carefully fits individual lead blocks into a wooden frame, or "chase," aligning them with breath-taking precision and attention to detail. The letters are locked in with

"quoins," small wedges that hold the type in place.

Soon, Stedman will use a painter's palette knife to spread a small amount of green ink onto the flat, circular platen of a letter-press dating from the 1920s. The spinning motion of the platen will spread the pigment evenly in a thin layer.

Amid the whirl of the flywheel driving the press, Stedman mounts the type

block and sets the process in motion. The press begins to thump rhythmically, a large yet elegant beast awakened from slumber.

With only seconds between impressions, Stedman feeds sheet after sheet of heavy paper stock into the press. As press meets type, type meets ink and ink meets paper, something completely new is born. The resulting printed piece is so sharp it looks embossed. The

letters are precise, razor-sharp – a harmonious marriage of age-old technology and modern design esthetic.

Like the desert in which it dwells, Menagerie Press is a study in contrasts. Take the building itself: The formerly abandoned rectory beside the old church in Terlingua now houses an

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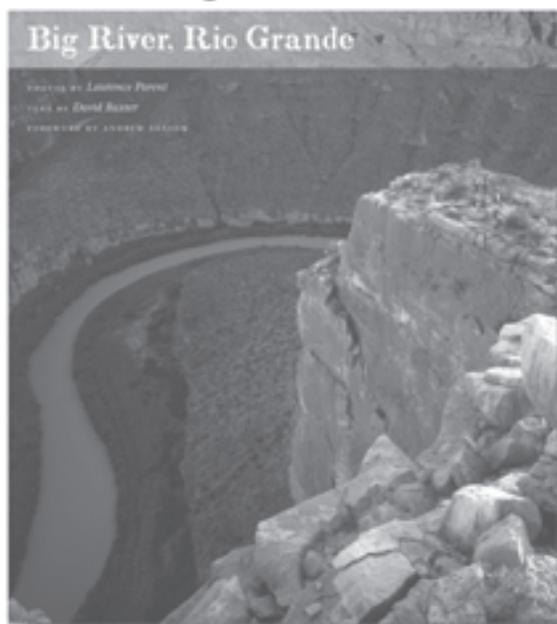
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## Editor's Notes



**T**hank you to all of you who have taken time to tell us how much you like the *Cenizo Journal*. From the stories to the photos to the ads – it's been great to get a round of applause. Lots of people even comment on the paper!

We appreciate your encouragement and especially thank *Big Bend Sentinel* and *International* publishers and editors Robert and Rosario Halpern for their generous welcome to the literary life of the Big Bend. Saludos, amigos!

Many people ask how they can support us. To that I say – patronize our advertisers and thank them for advertising – ask folks who don't advertise to do so and – subscribe! We are off to a great subscriber start – thank you for your support.

But there's more ahead – it's summer and lots going on in the Big Bend of Texas. One of the best events is the one we salute in this issue – the Way Out West Texas Book Festival July 31 and August 1 in Alpine at the Espino Conference Center (second floor of the University Center on the Sul Ross campus). This event is sponsored by our local Rotary International chapter and benefits the Alpine and Marathon libraries. Last year (the first) was fantastic and raised \$10,000 for the libraries, and this year promises to be, as they say, even better!

The same beautiful land, breathtaking skies, dark nights and "something special" that has inspired ranchers to ranch and dreamers to dream and painters to paint is inspiring writers to write!

You'll meet some of them in this issue – proven writers like Lonny Taylor; new writers like Megan Wilde and her artist husband Avram Dumitrescu, visiting writers like Sasha Watson and poet Jessica Moore, both translators, too, and people in new places like Andrew Stuart, newly the editor of the *Hudspeth County Herald* and *Dell Valley Review*.

We start this issue with a new private printer, Lauren Stedman of Terlingua who creates beautiful printing with antique presses from a restored building in the Ghosttown. And we end with a bit of history about a Fort Davis building that has come to house, among other things, the Jeff Davis County Library.

And in between, learn what the Lannan Foundation residency program for writers in Marfa is all about, as well as the July Texas Writers' Retreat in Alpine each summer; see the photographs that capture the heart of the Big Bend in the words of the photographer herself, June Redford Van Cleef; listen to the oral history of Jim Glendinning's "Voices of the Big Bend" and learn from Steve Anderson's review of the newest book about the Rio Grande, the always-a-favorite trivia quiz and j vigil martinez' ethereal poetry.

All kinds of writing for all kinds of readers – enjoy! And see you at the Way Out West Texas Book Festival.

*Dallas Baxter*



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# Cenizo Journal

Volume 1 Number 2

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**Cover:** The Rio Grande stretches 1,885 miles with beauty and sadness along its way. Here, *Douglas Fir on Crest at Sunset* by Laurence Parent; photographed in Cibola National Forest, Sandia Mountains, Sandia Crest, N. M.

**Occasional art:** Pen and ink on board, 2 inches by 3 inches, Wendy Lynn Wright

**Proof reading and copy editing:**  
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# WRITING IS THE HARD PART

by Lonn Taylor

As an historian whose career has been in museums, I have written several books dealing with aspects of American history. I always tell people that my kind of writing is 80 percent research and 20 percent writing and that writing is the hard part. Right now I am engaged in a project that perfectly illustrates that formula.

In 1975, a colleague, David Warren, and I wrote a book about 19th-century Texas furniture, the kind of pine and walnut furniture that was made by small town cabinetmakers before the railroads brought Sears, Roebuck to Texas.

Most of it was made to order for clients who could pay 10 dollars for a dining table, 15 for a bedstead, 30 for a wardrobe, and some of it is quite beautiful, especially the pieces made in Fredericksburg and New Braunfels by cabinetmakers who were trained in Germany.

Our book was unimaginatively titled *Texas Furniture*, and it was published by the University of Texas Press. It included 220 black-and-white photographs of furniture and four chapters of text. It was not exactly a page-turner, but copies were snapped up by antique dealers and furniture collectors, and by 1980 it was out of print. If you can find a copy today it will cost you several hundred dollars.

David and I went on to pursue other interests and write other books, and we pretty much forgot about Texas furniture until we both retired from our respective museum jobs several years ago. Then the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin approached us and suggested that we do a new edition of the book, adding examples of Texas furniture that have come to light in the past 35 years.

We thought that would not be too difficult, assuming that we got most of

it the first time around. It has not worked out that way.

During the past year and a half we have driven over most of the state and examined at least a thousand pieces of furniture, from which we have selected about 180 additional items to be included in the new edition.

Finding the furniture was not as difficult as we thought it would be; photographing and recording it has been an adventure.

In working on the first book, we relied largely on word-of-mouth to locate examples. This time we utilized the e-mail network of the Texas Historical Commission, which put us in instant touch with every member of every historical commission in all of the 254 counties of Texas, and through them we discovered a whole network of dealers and furniture collectors that had grown up since our first book was published.

Collectors of anything tend to be slightly peculiar, and furniture collectors are no exception, although most tend to be peculiar in delightful ways. I spent an extremely pleasant research day riding around Fort Worth with Kelly Young, a Fort Worth oilman with a significant collection of Texas furniture who spent most of the day talking not about furniture but about his adventures as a wildcatter in the 1950s and his attempts to get a movie made from a friend's novel about the oil business.

One of the major collectors of Texas furniture is a Huntsville man who has founded his own religion and has taken the name Ethicus I. He owns a second home in the Tuscan hill town of Gioviano, and his Web site features a photograph of the main street of Huntsville over the caption, "Huntsville, City of Death" beside a photograph of Gioviano captioned "Gioviano, City of Life."



"A Writer's Studio" by Avram Dumitrescu. Acrylic on card, 23 1/3 inches by 33 1/3 inches. Created for the cover of the *Writer's Magazine Guide to Fiction*, 2007

Unfortunately, his furniture collection is in Huntsville.

One of my most productive days was spent tramping around a farmstead outside of Fredericksburg with a man whose Texas-German family has lived there since 1848 and has never thrown anything away. As we proceeded from his ranch-style brick house to a frame house built in the 1920s to a log barn built in the 1850s, he showed me furniture, farm implements, wagons, trunks of clothing, stacks of German-language newspapers and assorted debris that had been accumulating there for 160 years. One outbuilding was filled with empty cardboard boxes whose torn corners had been repaired with twine by his parents during the

Depression. "Some people say we Germans are cheap," he told me. "That's not true. We're frugal. We take care of things."

The impulse to take care of things has preserved as much Texas furniture as has the impulse to collect it. Some of our best finds have been pieces that have been passed down to the descendants of the makers.

A lady in New Braunfels sent me a photograph of the finest Texas wardrobe I have ever seen, a huge piece of walnut furniture nearly 9 feet high, with thick columns topped by cabbage-sized finials flanking the doors and an elaborately carved arrangement of fruit above them. She said that it had been made by her great-

grandfather and that her cousins had two other pieces of his furniture. These proved to be a walnut youth bed whose sides were intertwined grape vines carved out of two solid walnut planks and a secretary-bookcase topped by carved figures of Adam and Eve between two coiled rattlesnakes.

My research showed that the maker was not a professional cabinetmaker but a farmer, born in Germany and trained there as a woodcarver, who made these pieces for his family in the 1870s. They have been lovingly cared for by his descendants since then.

A farm wife in Central Texas showed me a beautiful Biedermeier desk made by her grandmother's uncle, who was a professional cabinetmaker, which was stored in a tenant house. The tenant had placed a wood stove about a foot in front of it, but he assured us that when he fired up the stove he leaned a sheet of asbestos against the desk to protect it from the heat. I have persuaded the owner to move the desk to a safer location.

A lady in Hallettsville wrote to say that I had called her 35 years ago about a china cabinet that her great-grandfather had made, and she had been too

busy getting her cotton crop in to return my call, but if I was still interested she still had the cabinet. I went to see it, and it is a gem.

The research is the fun part; the writing is the hard part. When I am writing I like to work in the early morning hours. I am usually in my study by 5 a.m. with a cup of coffee beside me. I work steadily in my bathrobe for two hours, then get dressed, have breakfast, go for a morning walk with my wife and then come back and write until noon.

I seldom work in the afternoon and never in the evening. About 20 percent of my writing time is writing and the rest is re-writing. I try to get the burden of the narrative laid out in a first draft and then go back over it five or six times before I am satisfied.

The English language can be extremely precise, and I spend a great deal of re-writing time trying to coax it into saying exactly what I mean. Mark Twain said that the difference between the wrong word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning, and I try for the lightning.

I work with two dictionaries, a

Webster's Second International that belonged to my father and is so old that the color plates include the flags of countries that ceased to exist 70 years ago and a new multi-volume Oxford English Dictionary, and I keep Roget's Thesaurus by my desk.

I try to write short sentences, to use the active voice and to avoid the jargon and extended metaphors that characterize too much academic writing. Fortunately, my wife is a professional copy editor, and she reads everything I write and keeps me straight on matters of spelling, style and grammar. Neither one of us trusts spell-check for an instant.

The manuscript for the new furniture book has to be at the University of Texas Press by the end of this year, and there is still a great deal to do. David is working with a professional photographer to make publishable photographs of the furniture we have chosen for the book and is writing technical descriptions of those pieces.

I am working on a chapter summarizing what we have learned about Texas furniture since 1975 and am researching the lives of the dozen or so new cabinetmakers we have learned

about during the past year.

If all goes smoothly, our new book will be out by 2012. Since both David and I will be in our early 70s by then, I suspect it will be our last book on Texas furniture.

But it will be our best one.

*About Avram's illustration, Taylor tells the story: "When Avram first got the call from Writer's Guide to Fiction asking him to do a cover illustration of a writer's desk, he called me and asked if he could come over and make some sketches of my desk while I was working. I said, 'Sure,' so he came over one Saturday morning and made three or four sketches of me at work. He later told me that when he sent them to the Writer's Guide, the art director liked them but told him, 'No real writer's desk could possibly be that messy. Clean it up!' So the painting is a sanitized version of the sketches."*



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# An Exchange of Riches: The Lannan Residency Program in Marfa

By Sasha Watson

*"The Lannan Residency... provided solitude in the best sense of the word, the West Texas sky painted fresh each day, and the Chihuahuan Desert, a landscape that changes every time you blink."*

~ Monique Truong

*"The breathtaking, expansive desert landscape cleared my brain of excess baggage; and the gift of time gave me the freedom to not only write but to reassess my life."*

~ Marilyn Chin

*"Marfa is a remarkable place for any number of reasons, but I will always remember it as the green garden on the horizon that I pedaled towards on an old blue bike while my head rang with sentences and paragraphs I had yet to write down."*

~ Benjamin Anastas

These are just some of the things that residents have said about the Lannan Foundation's Residency Program, which offers uninterrupted working time to writers, as well as the occasional visual artist. If writers tend to gush about the abundance of gifts they receive from the program, most Marfa residents would agree that the town also benefits from the quiet presence of these short-term residents.

Since its inception in 1998, the Lannan Foundation's residency program has brought well over one hundred writers to Marfa. Some residents' names are well-known, like those of Robert Creeley, Rick Moody, Lorrie Moore, Adrienne Rich, Melanie Rae Thon and David Foster Wallace; all add to the diversity and richness of today's literary culture.

Writers, who generally spend between one and three months as residents in Marfa, are offered a monthly stipend, a Toyota Prius to drive and a house to live and work in.

The foundation currently owns five houses in a quiet neighborhood to the northwest of town, four of which are home to writers during their stays. With

their hardwood floors, spare décor and large windows, the houses give writers room to breathe, think and work. The fifth house is used for receptions, notably those following readings given by residents at the Marfa Book Company, which are free and open to the public. The receptions provide an opportunity for writers and members of the Marfa community to share dinner, conversation and the beauty of a desert sunset.

This generosity is unusual for most writers. Journalist and author Dahr Jamail spent time as a resident in the fall of 2008, while working on his book, *Military Resisters: Soldiers Who Refuse to Fight in Iraq and Afghanistan*, which was published by Haymarket books in June. "The Lannan residency has been one of the highlights of my writing career," says Jamail. "I've never experienced that kind of support from any other organization."

It's precisely because of its rarity that the Lannan Foundation has made the support of writers one of its central aims. "Truth be known," says Patrick Lannan, president of the foundation, "there's very little money available for literature. There's a lot for the visual arts, which may have something to do with the fact that you can collect art and hang it on your wall, but there's not much at all for literature." The Lannan Foundation is one of the foremost supporters of the literary arts in the United States today.

The Lannan Foundation was established in 1960 by Patrick Lannan Sr., a self-educated businessman with a love of the arts. An avid collector of visual art,



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Lannan also moved in literary circles, maintaining a long-time friendship with the writer Nelson Algren and offering financial support to *Poetry* magazine, based in Chicago. After Lannan's death in 1986, the foundation received an endowment from his estate, and Patrick Lannan Jr. took the lead in expanding its activities and its reach.

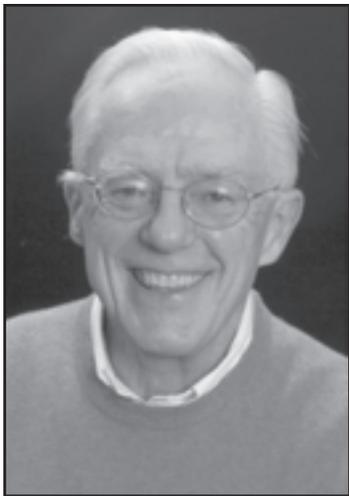
Throughout the late 80s and the 90s, the foundation, then based in Los Angeles, launched much of the work it does today, instituting annual literary awards in fiction, non-fiction and poetry; collecting and gifting contemporary art; offering grants to non-profit arts organizations; funding projects encouraging education, environmental protection, legal rights and the preservation of languages in Native American communities; and, through its Cultural Freedom Program, offering prizes, grants and fellowships to recognize people and organizations promoting freedom of imagination, inquiry and expression. In 1997, the foundation moved its offices to Santa Fe, N.M., where it is now based.

The Lannan Residency Program in Marfa began to take shape in the mid-90s when Patrick Lannan made a trip to see Donald Judd's work. "I was really impressed with what I saw in Marfa," Lannan says. "I found the town charming, and of course it was incredibly beautiful." Soon after this visit, Lannan returned with other members of the foundation's board. That trip resulted in the purchase of the first Lannan house. In 1999, the English poet, Peter Reading, occupied that house as the program's first writer-in-residence.

Still, the program didn't take off immediately. "It was problematic because we were far away, in L.A. and then Santa Fe, and the program didn't have a structure yet," says Lannan. It wasn't until

Douglas Humble came to Marfa to act as residency manager about a year later that the program took on its current streamlined shape. "Under Doug's guidance," says Lannan, "the program has evolved into what we'd hoped for: a beautiful environment with lovely houses that give writers the time and space to write."

Unlike many residency programs, writers can't apply for this one. Instead, they're invit-



**PATRICK LANNAN JR.**, The Lannan Foundation is one of the foremost supporters of the literary arts in the United States today. Founded in 1960 by Patrick Lannan Sr. and led since 1986 by Patrick Lannan Jr., the foundation provides, among its many programs, Marfa-based residencies to writers from around the world.

ed by the board. Asked how writers are chosen, Lannan says, "We have a web of contacts, and we check on it periodically, asking for suggestions. Sometimes names are completely new to us and some we've known. In either case, we look into them, and if we find them interesting, we'll make them an offer." The program has grown, not only in the number of writers it offers residencies, but in name recognition over the years. "In the beginning," says Lannan, "It was a lot harder to get people to take the bait because they thought, 'Oh, West Texas!' but now everyone knows Marfa."

In fact, many residents

draw inspiration from the West Texas landscape and the local community. David Hinton, poet and translator of Chinese poetry, remarked at a recent reading that his attention had been drawn to the subject of water during his time in Marfa. Struck by its absence in the desert landscape, Hinton began to reflect on and write about water. The poet Tryfon Tolides spent time during his recent residency at the Chinati Foundation, looking at Judd's work and writing in response to it. Toward the end of his stay, he read both at the Marfa Book Company and at Chinati.

Another unique feature of the Lannan Residency is that it entails no social obligations. As a matter of tradition, writers are invited to read at the Marfa Book Company, but they're under no obligation to do so, says book store owner Tim Johnson. The reading, explains Johnson, takes place at the end of the writers' time here, in order to afford them as much privacy as possible during their stay. Most writers do agree to the readings, and the result, says Johnson, is that the book store and Marfa are home to "one of the better reading series going." Alice Jennings, who frequently interviews residency writers for Marfa Public Radio's "Talk at Ten" interview program, agrees. "It's yet another example of the world coming to Marfa," she says.

Happily for the town and for the writers, this decade-old residency program seems to be here to stay. "We want to do anything we can to help writers write," says Patrick Lannan, "and we're committed, on a long-term basis, to doing that in Marfa."




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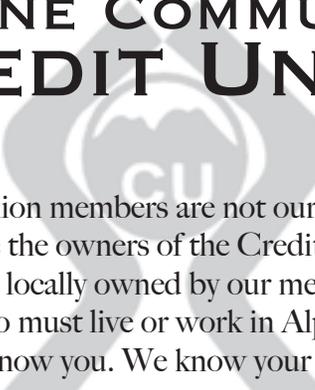


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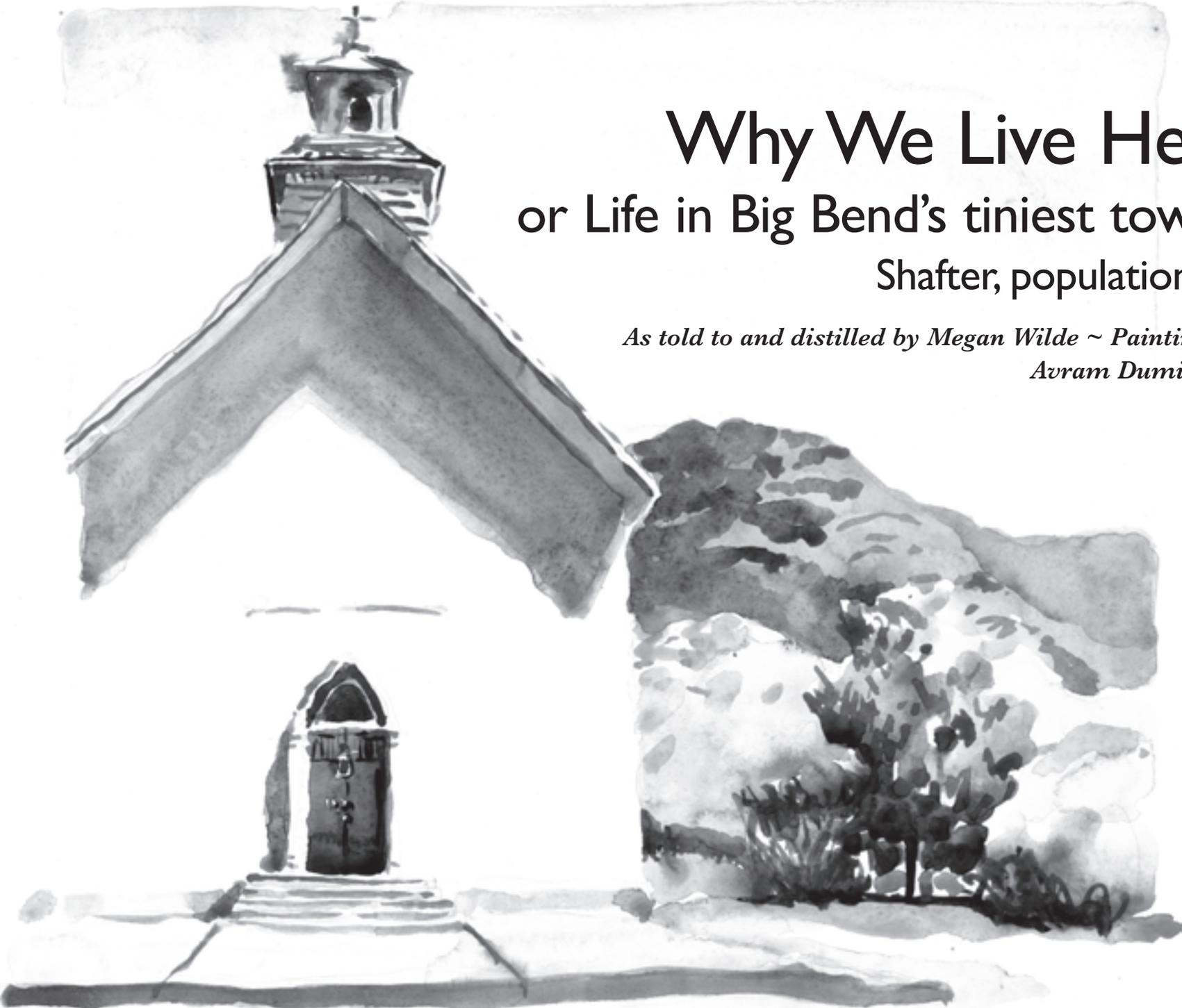
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# Why We Live Here or Life in Big Bend's tiniest towns: Shafter, population, 27

*As told to and distilled by Megan Wilde ~ Paintings by  
Avram Dumitrescu*

Sacred Heart Church, Shafter, Texas, Watercolor on paper 11 inches by 17 inches

Patt Sims, long-time science teacher in Presidio, and Ken Sims, retired Customs agent, first moved to Shafter in 1976. The Sims have lived on a hill overlooking Cibolo Creek since the mid-1980s.

**P***att:* I miss the old-timers. When we moved here to Shafter, it was primarily Hispanic old people, some who were miners and, of course, their wives. There were only 13 people living here then. And then it's gone through several changes. At one point it was mining people again. Then it was law enforcement. Then there were

teachers, and we're still in the teacher phase.

*Ken:* There's several Presidio school teachers that live here now.

*Patt:* That's most of it.

*Ken:* I don't think there's anybody from cities.

*Patt:* It's nice to have a diversity of people. We don't see our neighbors

very often, but if they need something, we're here to help them. But I do miss the old-timers. They were an unrushed society. You go. You sit down. And you just watch Shafter. And then eventually somebody will say something. The talk is very quiet and very relaxed. No pressure. No judges.

*Ken:* I remember the first time we

took (our son) Josh trick or treating...

*Patt:* Oh God...

*Ken:* We probably made it to maybe four houses because we had to stop and visit everyone.

*Patt:* We never made it to everybody in Shafter. Ever. But it was really enjoyable. It wasn't just "Here, have a couple of Snickers." It was "Here, have a bag



Graves and outbuildings in the old Shafter Cemetery, Watercolor on paper 11 inches by 17 inches

of candy." At Willis' you got sat down and had homemade donuts and hot chocolate. At Monk Adams' you had some kind of special cake. Always good. And we probably visited 30 or 45 minutes at each house. The evening would be getting on! (Our neighbor) Amparo was always upset with us, because we'd wait and come to her the next day. Josh got to be 9, and people in Shafter were still expecting him. We were living in Presidio and Josh said, "Do we go trick or treating this year?" And I said, "Son, we have to." So he put on a sheet, because if you're going to a ghost town, you've got to be a ghost.

*Ken:* Shafter ghost town.

*Patt:* I hate that. Ghost town. Everybody in Shafter hates that. Because it has some implications you don't normally think of. Like there was a big flood coming down the creek. Well nobody let us know because it's a ghost town. If you knew it was coming, you could have called somebody. But no, it's a ghost town. Can't call ghosts. Great.

*Ken:* That (ghost town) sign's always been up on the highway.

*Patt:* No, we've taken it down occasionally. A lot of people have taken it down. Doesn't do any good. People come through, see that and

think they can help themselves to things.

*Ken:* I guess it just looked like a ghost town. Somebody's idea of a ghost town.

*Patt:* I guess.

*Ken:* There used to be one little store here...

*Patt:* ...two stores. Where Madelyn lives was a very little store.

*Ken:* They've been closed for years.

*Patt:* So we had limited supplies and one small gas station. The other one at some point was a gas station, but they weren't open when we came.

*Ken:* We used to have a post office.

*Patt:* They had lost the keys to the boxes. I don't remember when they did that. So it would be "Patt Sims, Shafter, Texas 798..." That's what was on your driver's license. So I would go to Austin, and I'd say, "Well can I pay with a check?" "Yeah, if you have ID." So I give 'em my ID. "Um, do you have a street?" "Well, we've got streets, but they're not paved, nor are they named." "Mm, is it general delivery?" "No, it's not general delivery." And I'd say, "See this department? There are more people in this department than in my town." And boy, they would remember you. Next time you were there and you pulled that ID out –

"Oh, I remember you!" We really liked that. So I was upset when they got rid of the post office and actually gave us boxes.

*Ken:* It's been quite a few years. Ten years maybe?

*Patt:* I miss that.

*Ken:* At one time Shafter had its own zip code.

*Patt:* Doesn't any more.

*Ken:* Not now. Our mail is addressed out of Marfa actually.

*Patt:* Which is very amusing. Marfa? Well okay, we live 40 miles south of Marfa. Twenty miles north of Presidio...

*Ken:* They actually accept either. I guess it makes a difference as to what UPS driver gets a hold of it, if it's Marfa or Shafter.

*Patt:* We've got to have the right UPS driver. I was talking to somebody one time, this was years ago. They said, "Well we need a street address." I said, "Well make something up. Believe me – our UPS driver knows where we work, where we live, what bicycle we're riding, what car we're driving."

*Ken:* It's been quite awhile. They know us. It could be addressed to Marfa or Shafter. We'll get it.

*Patt:* Yeah, we've enjoyed

continued on page 23

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# Voices of the BIG BEND

*Jim Glendinning recreates some of his popular radio interviews from “Voices of the Big Bend,” an original production of KRTS, Marfa Public Radio, which is broadcast throughout the region at 93.5 FM.*



GLORIA RODRIGUEZ



RAY HENDRYX



SHIRLEY ROONEY



RAYMOND SKILES

**G**loria Rodriguez was born in 1957, the oldest of nine children, in Las Conchas, Chihuahua across the Rio Grande from Ruidosa. Her father, Enrique Rodriguez, was a farmer who often harvested candelilla wax plants which he sold to Rex Ivey in Lajitas. Gloria's schooling was in San Carlos, Chihuahua, 17 miles south of Lajitas, and then at a Catholic school in Ojinaga.

Gloria's first job was in 1975 at the Lajitas Trading Post, then the hub of cross-border commerce in South Brewster County, latterly owned by Bill Ivey. It lasted to 1981.

In 1980 she married Rick Page of Lajitas and worked in their busy liquor store in Lajitas, while also selling condominiums at Lajitas Resort. Their daughter, Vanessa, is married to a Border Patrol agent, Rush Cotter and also works for the Border Patrol. They live in Sanderson and have a daughter, Marilyn Kay. Gloria and Rick's 23-year-old son, Russell, is studying electrical engineering at Texas A & M.

In 1996, divorced from Rick Page, Gloria opened a guest house in San Carlos, called La Gloria, the product of a 20-year dream. Proud of her

Hispanic culture and keen to show visitors the beauty of San Carlos Canyon and explain the history of the town, she designed a modern hacienda and supervised the construction. At the entrance to the canyon, with year-round water flowing through the terraced garden, the guest house with red tiled roof and wide porch was readily accessible from Paso Lajitas. Guests arrived from all over the world.

Following 9/11 and the closing of the Lajitas crossing, Gloria advertised getting to San Carlos via Ojinaga. With the Ojinaga/San Carlos road now paved, the trip from Ojinaga is less than an hour.

Tourist cards and vehicle import permits are not required by the Mexican government, although a passport book or card is now required by the United States government to reenter the States.

Gloria continues to promote La Gloria. Although bookings have been affected, Gloria has never shied from a challenge or hard work. "I like to take risks," she says.

When she gets bookings for La Gloria ([lagloriabb.com](http://lagloriabb.com)) she drops her job in Alpine's Penny's Diner and meets

her clients in Ojinaga for the quick drive to San Carlos.

**N**o person in the Big Bend region comes close to matching Ray Hendryx as the Voice of the Big Bend – both literally, because for 31 years he has anchored the local radio station KVLFF and figuratively, since his opinions and attitudes reflect the best of our community.

He was born in 1953 in El Paso to Lucille and Gene Hendryx, who met in 1949 at Sul Ross State University.

After graduating from Alpine High School, Ray went to Texas A & M University. He describes his grades during a one-year stint at A & M in 1971 as "not so good" and acknowledges that the subsequent four-year service in the United States Navy made him focus, imposed some discipline and offered some stability. In 1976, after four years as a radioman, he left the Navy.

Since childhood he had been fascinated with "the box that could talk" and took a course in radio technology at the Elkins Institute of Technology in Dallas prior to his Navy service.

Ray's father had taken over the fledgling radio station KVLFF in Alpine

in 1951. During high school Ray had worked part-time at KVLFF. By the mid-70s his dad's health was failing and, swearing that the move was temporary, Ray took over the "Morning Show" in 1978. To do this, he rose at 4:45 a.m. to go to work and has been doing it ever since. KALP, the FM station, was added in 1980.

In 1974 Ray married Rita Evans. They have two sons, Travis, who works at Sul Ross, and Otis, who lives in Kansas with his wife Kelly and their three children, ages 2, 6 and 8.

Visits to Kansas, and an occasional fishing trip, are about the only time Ray gets out of the studio. It's a binding routine, he acknowledges, but he wouldn't trade it for anything. Living in small-town Texas can't be beat.

Ray brings a human element to broadcasting, whether looking for a misplaced message to read over the radio, applying his deprecating sense of humor or giving his listeners a perceptive take on local issues. Ray Hendryx is, indeed, the Voice of the Last Frontier.

**W**ith an energetic enthusiasm that belies her 74 years, many of

which were spent standing in a kitchen baking, Shirley Rooney talks about her life.

She was born in Balmorhea in 1934, the oldest of the five children of Charles and Marjorie Smith. Her earliest years, and best memories, are of Marfa, where her dad ran the café in the Greyhound bus station from 1946. She says, "I was raised in a restaurant."

The family moved in 1948 to Marathon, and her dad took over the Bluebonnet Café, later named the Big Bend Café. Shirley, then 14, was put to work washing dishes, handling cash and waiting on table.

That early experience of dealing easily with the public has stayed with her to this day.

Married in 1952 to Pat Rooney, who worked for the Gage Ranch, Shirley lived below Black Gap and brought up three daughters, Becky, Francene and Betty Jo.

The family returned to Marathon in 1963, and Shirley worked as a cook at the Big Bend Café. She then bought out her dad and ran the café for 11 years until 1975. Subsequently, she worked in Sanderson as supervisor of the school cafeteria, then at the Gage Hotel for 13 years, where her baking expertise became widely appreciated.

In 1998, at an age when most cooks might hang up their aprons, Shirley, responding to a suggestion from her daughters that she start her own bakery, did just that.

Shirley's Burnt Biscuit Bakery opened May 1, 1999 and was a quick success. Shirley started work at 3 a.m. and opened at 5. Truck drivers and cowboys quickly got to know this and were knocking on the door. Tourists loved the place.

Shirley baked bread, biscuits, bread, donuts, fried pies and cookies. (The donuts and fried pies were the most popular). Coffee was available, and

two chairs provided seating. A modest place, the bakery nevertheless gained regional notice because of its strategic location, the excellence of the baking and the effervescent character of the owner. Favorable press notices appeared in *Texas Monthly* and other magazines.

Shirley sold the bakery in August 2006, and, happy that it's in the good hands of Don Boyd, she keeps herself involved with the community that means so much to her by working in the Marathon library on a temporary project.

This allows her plenty of time to do what she does even better than baking – chatting with people.

**B**orn in Alpine in 1955 to Jack and Wilmuth Skiles, who were both attending Sul Ross graduate school at the time, Raymond came between his sister Peggy and younger brother Russell.

The family home was in Langtry, and Raymond's teenage years involved hunting, fishing and visiting neighboring ranches. After some years of teaching, Jack Skiles took the job as manager of the new Judge Roy Bean visitors' center and introduced an excellent native plant garden there, which survives to this day.

Following graduation from Comstock High School in 1973, 6-foot-3-and-a-half-inch-tall Raymond headed for Angelo State with basketball on his mind. But changing direction, Raymond transferred to Texas A & M, graduating in 1979 with a degree in wildlife biology.

He took his first job with the concession company at Chisos Mountains Lodge in 1979, which led to early contacts with Big Bend National Park personnel.

For the next seven years Raymond worked a variety of positions with the National

Park Service.

He trained in law enforcement as well as emergency medical procedures and moved around the country from Death Valley National Park, in California, to NPS headquarters in Washington, D.C.

In 1987, he took up the position as park ranger in resource management in Big Bend National Park. Later, his first hike across the Rio Grande into the mountains of Coahuila introduced him to rough, raw land and the different wilderness philosophy practiced by the Mexicans.

In his many years of work at Big Bend National Park, Raymond has consistently engaged with the wider community of the Big Bend, sitting on the local school board, attending Brewster County Historical Commission meetings and participating in Leadership Big Bend.

He acknowledges that action by National Park Service employees in the early days of Big Bend National Park unnecessarily alienated local residents but says that today relations have improved hugely between the park service and local residents. Differences will remain, but, an optimist and a diplomat, he believes "even differences can help us work together" if we share the same values, such as love of the land.

Working in resource management as a wildlife biologist, Raymond deals on a daily basis with the park service dual mission: to provide a good outdoor experience for visitors and to protect the park's natural and cultural resources.

The National Park Service could not have a better ambassador.



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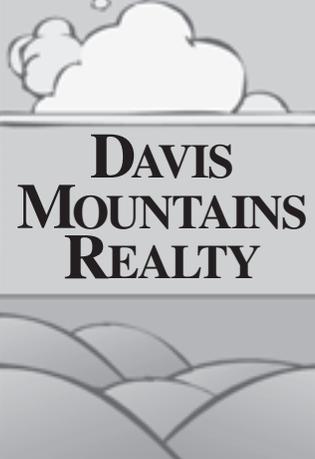
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# photo essay

by June Redford Van Cleef



*The Last Supper on Velvet, Presidio County, Texas*

## **The Last Supper on Velvet**

James Barrow's Dining Room  
Presidio County, Texas

My lifelong friend Tida Neill, who was then 82 years old, and I traveled to the place on the Rio Grande River

where the village of Porvenir was once located. Early in the 20th century there were massacres here, and all the residents were either killed or fled. This spot on the Rio Grande River was still a troubled area as a crossing for drug traffic. Although neither I nor Tida

spoke of it, we both felt a strong uneasiness. With Tida's help I had gained permission to photograph on the goat ranch of James Barrow (a distant cousin of Clyde Barrow). James did not want to be photographed so I centered my attention on his living space. I felt

such excitement as I looked about the neat, clean rooms that he and his wife occupied. I believe the photograph I made that day tells of a special and unique place and culture more than words could ever express.



*Jim Dyer Heeling a Calf, Jeff Davis County, Texas*

### **Jim Dyer Heeling a Calf**

Dyer Ranch  
Jeff Davis County, Texas

It was a rather cold, windy April morning when I set out from my little adobe house in Marfa at 5 o'clock in the morning to photograph cattle

works on the Jim Dyer Ranch located on Highway 505. When I arrived the cowboys were just bringing the cattle into the pens. It had been a dry spring, and the dust was flying everywhere, making it hard to see, let alone photograph. I had no idea which man was Jim Dyer, since I had only talked to him

on the telephone and had never met him. After the cattle were penned and the calves were cut away from their mothers, the cowboys got off of their horses and began to get ready for the branding and marking of the calves. A tall, slender man with a worn felt hat and a friendly smile approached me

and introduced himself as Jim Dyer. One observation I have made over the years is that you seldom see a fat cowboy. Riding horseback and doing physical work keeps men and women trim. Also, I think it is a code of the West to be slim and trim. The horses certainly appreciate you more when you stay thin. Because they had a lot of cattle to work that day, there were two teams of five men each and two "heelers" – Jim Dyer and his nephew, Zach Dean. Heeling requires perfect timing on the part of the roper and photographing the process also requires perfect timing to capture the action at the most expressive moment.

### **Ted Harper, Rancher**

Harper Ranch near Casa Piedra  
Presidio County, Texas

I had been calling Mr. Harper for three weeks trying to get permission to visit him and his wife, Frances. I had heard many stories about Ted Harper, that he was an excellent horseman and roper. He had become a legend in Presidio County, so I was eager to photograph and to interview him. The Harper Ranch is located in the rough, desert-like part of south Presidio County near Casa Piedra. The ranch headquarters is situated on a hilltop with a picturesque view of San Jacinto Mountain in the near distance to the northeast and Cienega Mountain to the northwest. As I approached the house, Ted Harper, a tall slender man in his early 80s, came out to my truck to meet me. Opening my door he extended his hand, and as we engaged in a firm handshake, I noticed his large and strong hands that told the story of his life of hard work.



*Ted Harper, Rancher, Presidio County, Texas*

*June Redford Van Cleef will be signing her books at the Way Out West Texas Book Festival. Look for her at the Front Street Books table.*

# BIG RIVER, RIO GRANDE

*Book Review by Steve Anderson*

By David Baxter and Laurence Parent

132 pages, 90 color photos, 1 map

University of Texas Press, \$39.95 hardcover

The University of Texas Press is bringing us a nice new book on the Rio Grande called, simply, *Big River, Rio Grande*. It's got pictures by Laurent Parent, a prolific nature photographer who's based in Austin, and text by David Baxter who, for 27 years, was editor of the *Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine*.

*Big River* is the 63rd volume in UT's Corrie Herring Hooks Series, which specializes in books on natural history and includes such admirable titles as *Birds of the Trans Pecos*, *Wild Orchids of Texas* and *Cactuses of the Big Bend*.

As far as I'm concerned, we can't have enough books that tell us about the natural wonders of this special place we live and also remind us of how fragile it all is. On both counts, *Big River* is a success.

I first laid eyes on the Rio Grande crossing to Nuevo Laredo in the summer of 1965. I was 16 years old and riding shotgun in a Sunbeam Tiger convertible with my older brother, John, on the way from West Point, New York to Guatemala City (with a brief stop-over at our hometown in North Texas).

On some level, I knew that crossing this river was portentous, but I scarcely imagined the wonders to come. Even if the Rio Grande had no other claim to fame, and it has many, no other river on Earth separates such starkly different worlds.

Over the next 20 years, I floated all the canyons, from the Colorado north of Lajitas, all the way through the lower canyons to the Texaco sign on Dudley Harrison's ranch, southeast of Sanderson. And, in 1993, I had the good

would have counted it a life well lived, and, for that alone, I love the Rio Grande.

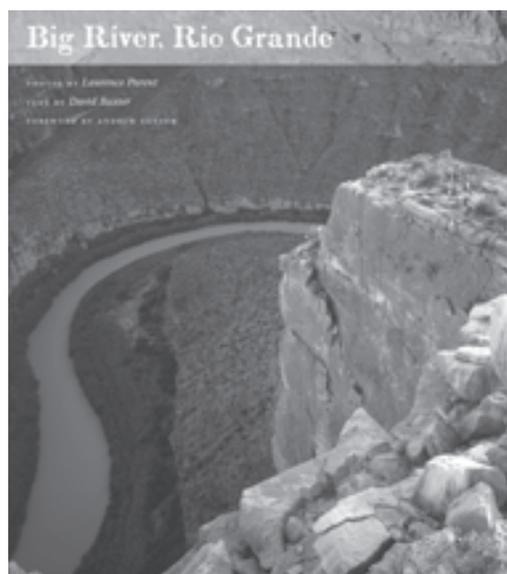
That's why, though *Big River, Rio Grande* is a well-executed and absolutely necessary book, for anyone who loves the river and knew it before its present degraded state, it's also sad read.

Part journalism and part photographic essay, Baxter and Parent have basically conducted a survey on the current state of the Rio Grande, and it's not pretty (although Parent's pictures are, a dichotomy noted by Baxter). Fortunately, they also tell the stories of all the people who are devoting a good part of their lives trying to turn things around.

The authors start their journey at the mouth of the river, near

Brownsville, and work their way north and west, through the Valley, the Big Bend and the "forgotten" (and basically non-existent) stretches between Presidio and El Paso; then through New Mexico to the headwaters in the San Juan Mountains of southern Colorado – about 1,900 miles, all told. There's also an excursion in Mexico to the headwaters of the lower Rio Grande's main tributary, the Rio Conchos.

Along the way they stop to talk with a wide variety of people, who are struggling, often against seemingly



fortune to cross the river at Boquillas and ride horses into the Sierra Del Carmen for a week with a group led by Marcos Paredes that included such luminaries as Glen Perkins and Molly Ivins.

These trips on and over the "Big River" included encounters with rattlers, skunks, badgers, coyotes (of both varieties), bandoliered wax smugglers and a flash flood in the lower canyons that almost wiped out a whole patrol of bright-eyed Outward Bound students. I saw careers and love affairs begin and end on the river (sometimes on the same trip), and I saw a few ghosts. All in all, even if I'd never had an adventure anywhere else, I

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agglomeration of antique presses and old lead type combined with computers, printers and new fonts and faces from custom foundries.

On waist-high wooden counters that line the press room, artisan papers in sumptuous colors are neatly stacked next to test pieces Stedman has accrued in the course of her jobs for a diverse clientele of local businesses and private clients, as well as her own personal projects.

Handmade books featuring flowing calligraphy and elegant colored ink bound with textured art papers and embellished with bead-and-string closures dot the press room, the walls of which are decked in printer's "job cases" – compartmented wooden cases, which gave birth to the terms "upper case" and "lower case" – filled with antique type and "dingbats" (printer's ornaments) 50, 75, even 100 years old.

And there is the designer herself. Stedman was born in Fort Davis and spent her childhood as part of an Air Force family that lived around the world, with stints in Germany, France, Italy and the Philippines.

She readily ascribes her design esthetic to her exposure to European art and architecture, which blended with her innate artistic nature to produce an appreciation of graphic design, typography and, ultimately, fine-art printing.

She was especially influenced by the clean lines of the Bauhaus style that swept Germany in the 1920s, the Craftsman style of influential 19th Century British designer and typographer William Morris and the return to fine-art printing exemplified by the American Roycroft School.

Stedman pursued an artist's

education in California, studying lettering, typography, calligraphy, graphic design and art history. Her fascination with printing and typography dove-tailed with the resurgence of fine-art printing in



Stedman at one of her large presses.

the late 1980s and early 1990s.

By the 1960s, letterpress printing had been phased out by large-scale linotype operations. While scattered private presses held on to the old ways, newspapers and other commercial printers migrated to linotype – and more recently, to computer-generated typography.

This sea-change had a silver lining: Small-scale printers across the country started selling off presses and type, allowing fine-art printers like Stedman to acquire classic equipment for their own use.

"People started using letterpress as an art form," she says, "creating small-edition books with hand-done woodcuts and illustrations."

In 1999, fueled by her dream of making a life in fine-art printing, Stedman founded Menagerie Press (the name refers to the wide array of household pets she grew up with) in Fort Bragg, N.C.

Two years ago, Stedman came back to the Big Bend. She brought along her presses

– and her dream of creating a studio printing operation that would use classic equipment to create bold new designs.

She gained permission from Ghostown proprietor Bill Ivey to rent the old adobe rectory next to the church. The abandoned building needed work: There were no floors, and sections of walls had fallen victim to neglect and the harsh environment of the Chihuahuan Desert. The building needed a new roof.

But Stedman saw potential in the structure and proceeded to bring it back from the brink of ruin, transforming it into a snug yet airy home for her presses.

Stedman has collected old presses and lead type for several years. Menagerie Press is currently home to a large 1920s Chandler&Price

platen press she found in Ukiah, Calif., a large-format 1961 Vandercook flatbed press acquired in Hillsboro, N.M. and a smaller Chandler&Price press, circa 1900.

She put together her type library, which she continues to expand, from letters found on eBay or acquired from letterpress printers going out of business, as well as specially commissioned type from small type foundries across the country.

Stedman's work reflects wide interests and a deep reverence for classic typography and design.

For Marathon artist Mary Baxter, Stedman designed and printed large-format business cards on silver stock, featuring Craftsman-style graphics and elegant copper-plate type in midnight-blue ink. Another iteration of Baxter's card features bright turquoise ink on glossy coated stock in vivid pink.

For the newly opened

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## THE PRIVATE PRESS MOVEMENT

~ Lauren Stedman, 2009

*The private press movement, which began around the turn of the 20th century, sought to revitalize printing as an art form, focusing on typography, design and print quality rather than profits.*

*William Morris was inspired by the illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages and was the father of the movement in England. The beautiful works of his Kelmscott press influenced those in the United States as well.*

*Midwest-born printers and typographers Frederic Goudy, Bruce Rogers and Edwin and Robert Grabhorn made the private press their lives' work, becoming four of the most influential figures in the private press movement in the United States.*

*The Roycrofters in New England, among their many other crafts, were exceptional printers.*

*For the last 15 years or so, letterpress printing has been experiencing quite a revolution, not only in style but in method. New private presses have sprung up all over the United States and Europe to join hands with the ones that had been around for decades.*

*The philosophy of the private press printer today is much the same as in the past: quality above profit and a complete personal freedom in thought and expression and exemption from exterior influence or compulsion. To quote Will Ransom: "The simplest and perhaps the truest type of private press is that maintained by one who is, at least by desire, a craftsman and finds a peculiar joy in handling type, ink and paper..."*

*Hopefully the proprietor can adhere to these principles and make a living along the way.*

*The change in style is mainly in the amount of impression on the paper. To qualify as a good printer the old printer kissed the paper with ink. Little impression was left on the surface and certainly not showing on the backside.*

*Today, with our scrumptious thick, soft, cotton papers, the look to achieve is deep impression, almost giving an embossed look,*

*but, of course, embossing is entirely different.*

*It seems every month the paper mills come out with an even more exceptional paper, and "green" is very much in the forefront of paper making these days, also.*

*We still have the old established paper mills in Europe to rely on for those very special jobs: Fabriano, Puglisi and Magnani from Italy; Puymoyen and Brousses in France; and one I especially like, Gmund in Germany. Crane paper mill here in the United States makes a paper specifically milled for letterpress printers, giving us the soft impressionable texture for a deep impression that is so popular.*

*Today letterpress printers have the distinct advantage of the old and the new technology. With the modern computers and scanners we are able to use images from many sources: drawings, books, rubbings, any copyright-free printed material and images and hand lettering, to name a few.*

*These images can be scanned into the computer, the file sent by e-mail to one of the many engravers in the country, who makes either a polymer or magnesium plate of the image which is then mounted on a wood or aluminum block, ready to lock up on the press.*

*The printer has the option of designing the entire job on the computer or combining type-setting with lead type and the newly created image or, of course, doing the entire job in house.*

*My love of type, typography, design, books and paper led me to the world of letterpress printing. Now I can incorporate my passions into one craft and satisfy some bit of creativity through this antiquated form of printing. The computer graphic design work I do is second-rate to setting lead type by hand. It just doesn't compare.*

*I have been interested in doing book design for some time, and last year had the opportunity to design and publish a small volume for a*

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# The Disappearing Place

by Andrew Stuart

*A couple of years ago, I was having an early morning phone conversation with a good friend in Marfa. I was angst-ridden: it had been a long night, of questionable choices.*

*"You'll see!" I said. "One of these days, I'm going to just – disappear."*

*"Where are you going to go?" she asked.*

*"To the... to the... disappearing place," I said.*

It is a pleasure to write to you as the editor of the *Hudspeth County Herald and Dell Valley Review*, officing in Dell City. (Officially, for a three-month trial period, I am the assistant editor, though, as far as I can tell, even at present, I enjoy all the privileges and – this seems clear – the responsibilities of editorship.)

The editor of the *Cenizo Journal*

suggested it might be interesting to hear what it was like to edit the weekly paper in the least populated county in Texas. Hudspeth County is not that – Loving County, with a population of 67 according to the 2000 census, takes that cake easily – but it is certainly among the most sparsely populated. Hudspeth County is the third largest in Texas – only a few hundred square miles smaller than number two, Pecos – and in 2000, the census recorded 3,344 residents, which means there are about 1.4 square-miles of land for each person.

After announcing my arrival in the paper, I received a very friendly welcome – hand- and typewritten letters arriving in the mail, phone calls, kind e-mails and personal visits wishing me the best.

Things got lively pretty quickly.

On my fifth paper, I included, on the front page, news of two indictments: one of a former elected official accused of thieving public funds; the other, of some local boys accused in the (non-fatal) shooting and beating of two seasonal workers.

This decision was not born of a zeal for muckraking or trouble-causing; from what I'd informally learned about journalism, the items just seemed like news. But some readers – accustomed to the publication of happy news only – were rattled.

At the post office the following Monday, I got a thumbs-up from the postmaster and from a gentleman who has lived in the Valley, as it's called, for some 50 years. This was heartening –

as it balanced less appreciative communications. Responses, mostly positive, continue to come in.

Unexpectedly, this forced me to enter the cafe (there are two restaurants in Dell City, both pretty good) with a certain swagger. I can't back down. "I'd rather be tolerated than universally loved" or some such thing, wrote Edward Abbey. I like to be liked, but it seems inevitable that at some point I'm just going to be put up with by most people. I suppose it might as well start sooner rather than later.

I read recently in the *Big Bend Sentinel*, which arrives at the office each week, comments of Larry McMurtry's about small towns – that most are "intolerant, prejudiced, narrow." Which is certainly true, of most.

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But being here (and though my home site is 25 miles from Dell City), I'm reminded that they do have things to recommend them, these communities with fewer people. The fact that they have fewer people, for example. (Obviously, they also provide an alternative to the saturation of consumerism, the abominations of strip malls, etc. and are good places if you find the non-human world as interesting as the human one. And you develop cordial relationships with people you would likely only have glancing encounters with in a city.)

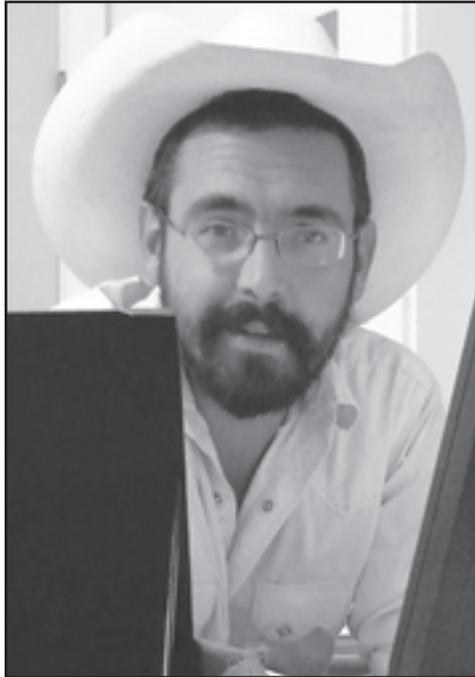
In addition, it's possible that things will be preserved, albeit in states of decay, which are pushed out in cities – things which pass in this country for old. (In fact, Dell City itself is not an old town, even by West Texas standards. It grew up as a farming community in the late 40s. But some of the founding generation, "the pioneers," are still alive, and their kids run the town's few businesses. A certain continuity.)

So it's interesting to encounter some of these things in Dell City and the other nearby pockets of human beings.

It's fun to run the newspaper – I'm the only employee; it takes two to four days of my week – and to learn the landscape of the county. Many of the features are similar to those I encountered in other West Texas communities, transposed, with variations.

There's the smart, no-nonsense county judge; she rides herd on the county. There's the ambiguous languor of a West Texas sheriff's office (torporous, but only to a point – like a sunbathing rattlesnake). There's the beneficent, long-suffering face of the school principal's secretary, who is the nerve center of the institution.

There are the dynamics of each of the small towns, the allegiances, the gripes and grudges – some fresh, some



ANDREW STUART

generational. There are the relationships of the towns to one another, both cooperative and contentious.

Feeling this out, making contacts and putting out the paper on the weekly rhythm is pleasant.

It is also probably a healthy bulwark, something familiar to lean on as I encounter things that are somewhat less familiar. Struggling with words, with projects that don't have such a clear deadline, and the

forms of which are more mysterious to me. The Valley and the country itself. Near at hand, a cluster of igneous peaks and mesas known as the Cornudas Mountains. And, always dominating the view, at home or in town, the Guadalupe (rising 5,000 feet above the desert and topped by a sheer, 1,500-foot wall of carbonate – the crushed and compacted remains of ancient sea life).

There is also the more extreme human emptiness, the solitude. The real wilderness.

Not long ago, a man was arrested near Carlsbad, for allegedly killing a Fort Stockton rancher 20 years ago. The accused had spent part of the interim in Dell City (he left a few years back). A Dell Valley native and I

got to talking about it.

"Dell City is a good place to go if you're trying to hide out, to sort of disappear," he said.

I'm happy to report that, even with the instant notoriety imparted by a small town, I am beginning to disappear.




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Famous Burro restaurant in Marathon, she combined different colored stock with hip illustrations – cowboys, burros and bucking broncs – that tread the fine line of elegance just this side of kitsch, emblazoned with the tongue-in-cheek slogan “a burro is not a horse.”

Stedman has a particular interest in creating books – from beginning to end. Her 2008 book project, *Why Terlingua: Adventure on the Edge of Texas*, combines character sketches of local residents and memoirs of Terlingua old-timers along with travel tips, photos and a guide to the area.

Though the book project was digitally designed, Stedman says the art of good typography is “imperative,” whether set by hand in a composing stick or designed on a computer screen.

Stedman has deep roots in the Big Bend region. Her maternal grandfather, Roe Miller, came to Fort Davis at

the age of 12, eventually married her grandmother, Pearl, and became a well-known area cattle rancher. An aunt, Gene Miller, still lives in Fort Davis.

In earlier days, Stedman says, the area was remote and insular, with few newcomers to add variety to the firmly entrenched population of ranchers. “Fort Davis was a cow town,” she says, and it held little interest for an artistic young girl hungry for inspiration and the chance to express her talents.

Even so, she was always homesick for the wide open spaces of her West Texas childhood, and when it became possible to return to West Texas, Stedman leaped at the chance.

Having come full-circle, back to the Big Bend, Stedman reflects on the changes in the area since she knew it as a young child. The main difference she sees is the influx of outsiders, which is adding diversity and opportunity to a county once dominated by ranching.

Stedman’s outlook for the art and craft of letterpress printing is sunny: In the past five years or so, she says, art schools and universities have taken up the gauntlet, teaching typography and printing as a legitimate and valued part of an art education.

Her own future is equally exciting. She’s putting down roots – building a house in Terlingua and looking to expand her clientele to cover Fort Davis and Alpine and planning collaborative projects with local artists and writers.

She hopes to expand her work into posters, broadsides, chapbooks and larger print jobs. Like a hardy desert bloom, Menagerie Press adds color and texture to the perennially fascinating palette of the Big Bend.

*Why Terlingua: Adventure on the Edge of Texas* is available at Terlingua Trading Co., Front Street Books and other area bookshops. Menagerie Press is located in the Terlingua Ghosttown. 432.371.3131, or [menageriep@bigbend.net](mailto:menageriep@bigbend.net).

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friend here in Terlingua. Even though this is computer work, it is something I would enjoy doing more of.

The art of good typography is imperative whether setting type in a composing stick or digitally on the computer.

Many type designers have influenced my thinking and approach to printing. Beatrice and Frederic Warde, both typographers, did much to type design and typography in the 1920s and 30s. Frederic Warde designed the italic typeface Arrighi to compliment Bruce Rogers’ Centaur, a graceful Roman typeface based on a 1470 Roman face designed by Nicolas Jensen.

These typefaces have been adopted as my house faces. A few of my other heroes are Eric Gill, Oscar Ogg, Frederic Goudy, Suzanna Liko (a pioneer in digital type design) and Herman and

Gundrun Zapf.

Two favorites in particular are El Lissitzky, a Russian who fell under the era of Russian Constructivism from 1917-1935 and Herbert Bayer whose design style was included in the Bauhaus school of design of the 1920s and 1930s in Germany.

Jan Tschichold must certainly be mentioned as one of the foremost type designers and calligraphers of the 20th Century. He got all the details right – with elegance.

My private press in Terlingua is as a print shop would have been during the mining heyday. It is housed in the rectory next to the church and renovated by myself, George Womack, Butch Fisher and many, many other friends.

All my equipment is vintage, no reproductions. I have many cases of type of various faces, wood type and a decent collection of original

printers’ ornaments and dingbats.

My paper cutter is the same vintage and make as my main press is, Chandler & Price, around 1920. I also have a smaller C&P which I use only for embossing. This press is slightly older, 1900.

Just last year I purchased a Vandercook flatbed press, vintage 1961, which allows me to print larger format pieces. I hope to do posters and broadsides.

Most of my jobs are business cards, letterheads, invitations and announcements. I also do chapbooks, handbills and greeting cards. Handmade and lettered books are a sideline when time allows.





Typical stone house in Shafter with the Morita Hills in the distance, Watercolor on paper 11 inches by 17 inches

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living here. Good neighbors. Most places we've lived we've had good neighbors.

*Ken:* We used to ride our bicycles quite a bit, but we don't seem to be doing that much any more.

*Patt:* The view.

*Ken:* The view. The cool evenings. Less dust than Presidio.

*Patt:* Yeah, we like to sit out

on our hill and watch the creek. Watch the mountains. Watch the stars. I remember, there was a guy in Austin. He said, "Oh, you live in Shafter? Escaping reality?" And I said, "No, going back to it. When *you* have trash, you put it outside. It disappears. When *you* need help, you pick up the phone and help appears. Where we live, if you need help, you depend on your neighbors. And you better have been good to them. Our



trash? We deal with it. Something goes out with the water system? You deal with it. You may have had to put the water system in to begin with." That's reality.

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insurmountable apathy, to save the river. Some of these people work in government agencies, some are employed by profit and non-profit groups and some do it just for love of the river.

Here are some of the good things and bad things that are happening.

In the Valley, national, state and local governments are finally waking up to the fact that eco-tourism may be the only thing that can salvage the area's chronically ravaged economy. Here the author meets with Roy Rodriguez, who leads interpretive birding and nature tours on both sides of the border, and John Ditto, a retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife manager who's now a fulltime nature photographer and con-

servationist. We learn that the economic contribution of just two federal wildlife refuges in the Valley has risen from about 22 million dollars annually in 1996, to over a hundred million today. In turn, this data encouraged Congress to fund "World Birding Centers" and Mexico responded by creating the 356-thousand-acre El Cielo Biosphere preserve across the river in the Sierra Madre Oriental.

On the downside, Baxter hears how Texas game wardens stationed along the river now have to carry automatic rifles and engage in running gun battles with drug smugglers, coyotes and even illegal commercial fishermen using "gill nets" – not a good advertisement for bird watchers.

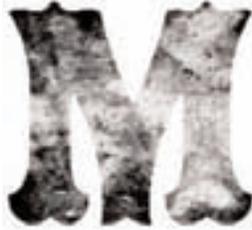
Now we'll soon have more environmental degradation and wildlife slaughter caused

by the new border fence. And prospects for further cross-border cooperation on the river are now deteriorating along with the river itself.

To top it off, we learn that the Corps of Engineers rates the safety of dams on a one-to-five scale, with five being safe and one being about to burst, and that Amistad Dam, on the Rio Grande just above Del Rio, is rated two ("potentially unsafe" and in need of "urgent" attention). But not to worry, the author is told, it's not the concrete dam itself that's crumbling, just its limestone foundation.

Crossing over the Pecos into the Big Bend, Baxter and Parent make a float trip through Boquillas Canyon with our own inimitable "river

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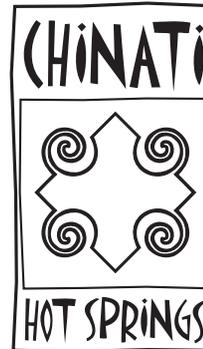
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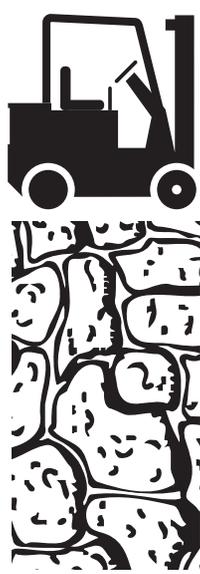
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# Poetry

## The Bird Bush

You ask what I've seen and I'll tell you:  
today I saw the fleet-footed herd  
listening and turned  
toward me, the dog, their ears  
high and shifting as birds shift  
en masse

Two days ago along the tracks  
how birds were like seeds  
scattered like that  
lifting from the tips of branches  
as though they'd sprouted there  
buds of a desert plant

Clouds of birds  
raining along the ground  
the bird bush bare  
seeds dispersing pale and fleet  
as antelope, turning and turning, leaves  
in the desert

Turning and white  
magical creatures, light-  
footed and leaping silent across  
sand roads enchanted, born of a wild bush  
somewhere, silver-leaved and white,  
dropped when the desert stripped itself of light.

*Jessica Moore*

## Sin Titulo

¿Que y cual es el absoluto?  
Clavelitos  
Crecen salvajes in los  
Cerros,  
Frágil y tiernos  
Debajo la sombra de los Pinos.  
Niños pasan por allí  
En la calma que es el amanecer,  
Fuerte el perfume que  
Llama la abeja.

What and where is the absolute?  
Dianthus grows  
Wild in the hills  
Fragile under the  
Umbral of Pines,  
Fragile and tender  
Under the  
Umbral of Pines,  
Children pass by  
In the early morning calm,  
Fragrant is the scent that  
Attracts the bee.

*j vigil martinez*

# Historical markers

by Bob Miles

## Keesey Building: Recorded Texas Historic Landmark 1965



Keesey building around 1908

Founded 1873 by O.M. Keesey and Geo. Gaither in an adobe building on this site. Later owned by W. Keesey, an army baker, who sold clothing, groceries, cradles, guns, whiskey, coffins, tobacco, spittoons, wagon wheels and harness and did private banking. First telephone in county operated out of store via barbed wire line to ranches. In 1906 he replaced the adobe with this stone structure that was bought by T.T. Kelly, 1964.

As the historical marker states, Otis M. Keesey (but not George Gaither, who did not come to Fort Davis until 1889) established a general mercantile store and saloon on the western corner of the part of the growing community of Fort Davis known as Chihuahua.

Nearly anything could be found in the store, as mentioned on the marker. Keesey had joined his younger brother Whittaker at Fort Davis sometime before 1870. Whittaker had been part of a party of civilian stone masons and carpenters who had accompanied the Ninth Cavalry under Col. John Wesley Merritt to rebuild the fort in 1867, following the War Between the States. He was not an Army baker, as the marker claims, but probably served as a baker for the civilian contingent. The Army at the time detailed enlisted men from each company to serve as bakers, and

Keesey was a civilian worker.

The section of land where the store stood was patented by Whittaker Keesey in 1874, and his donation of the northwestern corner of the section to the county (it was part of the old Presidio County at that time) for a courthouse insured the store would be in the center of town.

By 1879, the store was operating as Keesey Brothers & Co., but by 1880 it had become just W. Keesey & Co. By that same year, it had become the largest mercantile establishment in the entire Trans-Pecos area. In 1906, a stone structure was built around the old adobe store, complete with a coal chute and freight elevator to the basement. Once completed, local laborers demolished the interior adobe walls and hauled them out in wheelbarrows. The store remained open during the process.

In 1908, the store was incorporated as the Union Trading Company by a group of local men, and it remained The Union for many years, a fixture in the community, supplying residents, visitors and local ranchers with necessities.

Today, the building continues to serve the community in its reincarnation as the Jeff Davis County Library. The county purchased the building in 1994 and undertook an intensive renovation which enabled the library to move out of the cramped 1911 county jail building into 6,000 square feet of the old Union Mercantile building in 1999.

The old building now serves a vital role as library, community center and home of the Boys and Girls Club of Fort Davis. Local groups may use the building for meetings. One such group is the Texas Mountain Trail Writers, which meets in Fort Davis every other month. The library provides services for some 3,000 people a month with some 50,000 pieces of material on hand, including books, periodicals and videos, according to Librarian Toi

Fisher. A number of Internet computers are on hand for public use, and an enclosed video room provides a separate space for viewing videos.

A 2002 grant from the Texas Department of Transportation allowed the remaining portion of the building to be used by the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce.

This grant provides the only TxDOT public restrooms between Van Horn and Fort Stockton.

*The Texas Historical Commission Web site lists some 81 historical markers in Brewster, Jeff Davis and Presidio counties. The Cenizo Journal will visit these sites and flesh out the brief summaries listed on the markers, correct the occasional error and bring to life the people, history and natural wonders of our area.*



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Sept. 25-26, 2009 West Fest

Oct. 16-17, 2009 M2M Marathon

Dec. 5, 2009 Fiesta de Noche Buena

# West Texas Writes On!

By Cyndi Hughes

## Writers gather in Alpine to hone their skills, July 27 – 31

Alpine takes over as the state's literary epicenter the last week in July with the Writers' League of Texas Summer Writing Retreat leading in to the Way Out West Texas Book Festival.

The Writers' League, a statewide non-profit professional organization that supports writers of all types, presents its fourth annual writing retreat July 27-31 at Sul Ross State University in Alpine. The mountains of West Texas provide an inspirational backdrop for writers to get down to the business of serious writing.

Award-winning historical novelist Karleen Koen will return to reprise "Something Novel," the most popular class of the 2008 retreat.

"I loved being in Alpine's clear air and sweeping vistas. I could see the spirit of the West alive and well," Koen said. "I loved running into local legend Ted Gray at a coffee shop and his drawling politeness and charm. And I loved the opportunity to be around and work with aspiring writers and writers in general for a solid week under the big Texas sky. It's a special retreat."

Four of Texas' top authors will teach a weeklong series of intensive writing classes in fiction, nonfiction and poetry and then appear at the festival on August 1. Classes include:

- "Something Novel: Craft and Creativity in Writing the Novel," with Karleen Koen, author of *Through a Glass Darkly*, *Now Face to Face* and *Dark Angels*.
- "Narrative Voice: Using Point of View to Seduce Your Reader and

Strengthen Your Prose Into an Irresistible Story," with Carol Dawson, author of the novels *The Waking Spell*, *Body of Knowledge*, *Meeting the Minotaur* and *The Mother-in-Law Diaries* and co-author of *House of Plenty: The Rise, Fall and Revival of Luby's Cafeterias*, winner of the WLT's 2007 Violet Crown Book Award.

- "Making Book: Turning Your Nonfiction Idea in to Reality," with Joe Nick Patoski, former *Texas Monthly* senior editor and author of *Willie Nelson* and biographies of Stevie Ray Vaughan and Selena, as well as *Texas Mountains* and *Big Bend National Park*.
- "Poetic Forms for Today's Poets," with Scott Wiggerman, poet and publisher of the *Texas Poetry Calendar*.

Small class sizes and personalized instruction are made to order for writers wanting to hone their craft and immerse themselves in writing.

Students can finish off the week of writing by staying in Alpine for the 2009 Way Out West Texas Book Festival on August 1, which will feature

appearances by the Summer Writing Retreat instructors, along with several other authors.

The Writers' League is pleased to be a sponsor of the festival.

The Writers' League established the writing retreat in 2006 under the auspices of league members Steve and Joan Neubauer after they moved to Alpine. The retreat is now the league's signature outreach program. Former instructors include Jodi Thomas, David Marion Wilkinson, Suzy Spencer and Clay Reynolds.

Sul Ross State University generously supports the Writers' League by hosting the retreat's classes and students.

Tuition for the Summer Writing Retreat is \$199 for WLT members and \$249 non-members through June 15 (\$249 WLT members and \$299 nonmembers after June 15). Room and board are additional.

For more information on the Summer Writing Retreat, call 512.499.8914 or visit [WritersLeague.org](http://WritersLeague.org)



ranger,” Marcos Paredes. Paredes tells them how low water flow beginning in the 90s led to an invasion of salt cedar and giant cane that was slowly “choking” the river, but also how Park personnel and a slew of volunteers are working incessantly to repel the invaders and are starting to succeed. Of course, they also learn about the cultural devastation caused when the informal crossings at Boquillas and other Mexican villages were closed.

The most depressing part of the journey is along the “forgotten river” from Presidio to El Paso. It’s called forgotten because there’s basically no water anymore – El Paso drinks up whatever isn’t used to irrigate fields in New Mexico. In fact, Baxter maintains the Rio Grande is no longer a single river but an upper and lower Rio Grande – one fed by snow melt in Colorado and ending in El Paso, the other beginning in Presidio at the river’s confluence with the Rio Conchos. Not one drop of that clear Colorado water ever reaches the Big Bend, much less the Gulf.

In El Paso, Baxter describes at great length the City of El Paso’s construction of a new water park along the banks of the Rio Grande’s once free-flowing tributary, the Rio Bosque. Although Baxter clearly considers this a bright spot, I found the fact that water for the park comes from the sewage treatment plant to be depressing – call me old fashioned. Still, some additional wetlands are better than none.

New Mexico and Colorado share some problems with Texas, notably salt cedar eradication, but at least their Rio Grande isn’t a casualty of the wars on terror and immigration. However, they both face even greater problems with

pollution - from commercial and residential development along the river banks (yet another instance where our current economic decline may have a silver lining).

I was happy, though not surprised, to learn that Baxter considers one of my favorite river people, Steve Harris, to be perhaps the most knowledgeable about the Rio Grande as a whole, and he certainly comes across that way in the book. That’s probably because Harris, who started the river guide outfit Far Flung Adventures in Terlingua and later moved to New Mexico, seems to be one of the few “experts” who is intimately acquainted with both the “upper” and the “lower” river.

In fact, Harris pretty much convinces Baxter that, despite current water flow, it’s a mistake to start thinking of the Rio Grande as more than one river because any lasting solution to its myriad problems will require a national consensus and commitment to repair and preservation. In 1994, Harris founded the non-profit group Rio Grande Restoration, which is dedicated to improving both the ecological condition and flow of the river.

Don’t purchase *Big River, Rio Grande* for a comprehensive history or geography of the river. For that, as Baxter admits, the starting and ending point is still Paul Horgan’s *Great River* (first published in

1954, but still in print). And although Parent’s photographs are quite beautiful, the still unsurpassed photographic essay on the river is Jim Bones’ (of Alpine) *Rio Grande: Mountains to the Sea*, published by Texas Monthly Press in 1985, now, sadly, out of print. Finally, for a truly idiosyncratic (and decidedly curmudgeonly) close-up of life on the “lower” river, try *The Tecate Journals*, Keith Bowden’s chronicle of his seventy-day journey by mountain bike and canoe from El Paso to the Gulf.

However, for anyone who loves the river (and I imagine that includes most people who have chosen to live in the Trans-Pecos), *Big River, Rio Grande* is an essential addition to the library. I’m not aware of any other source that provides such a comprehensive look at the current state of the river and the people involved in trying to save it.

It’s not a particularly optimistic picture, but it’s one we need to see and act on, if there’s to be any hope for the Rio Grande’s continued existence as a wild river.





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## Trans-Pecos Trivia

by Charles Angell

- What pioneer ranch woman of the Big Bend wrote the column for the *Alpine Avalanche* for more than 30 years and the book *I'll Gather My Geese*?
  - Virginia Duncan Madison
  - Hallie Crawford Stillwell
  - Edna Buchanan
  - Jewell Babb
- What 16th century Spanish explorer was the first to document exploration of the American Southwest in his book *Adventures in the Unknown Interior of America*?
  - Cabeza de Vaca
  - Carlitos Marron
  - Panfilo Narvaez
  - Hernan Cortes
- Author Blair Pittman wrote a collection of humorous stories told by local residents entitled *Tales from the \_\_\_\_\_*.
  - Big Bend
  - Dark Side
  - Trails
  - Terlingua Porch
- Match the following authors with the books they penned:
  - Glenn Justice
  - Jefferson Morgenthaler
  - Larry McMurtry
  - Don Henry Ford, Jr.
  - Contrabando – Confessions of a drug smuggling Texas cowboy*
  - Roads – Driving Americas great Highways*
  - Cattlemen and Dudes*
  - La Junta De Los Rios – The life, death and resurrection of an ancient desert community in the Big Bend Region of Texas*
- What early explorer/surveyor of the Big Bend who wrote *Report on the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey* has a prominent mountain in the Chisos range named after him?
  - Amon Carter
  - Vernon Bailey
  - William H. Emory
  - Johnnie Ward

BONUS: In which Texas city does Amon Carter have an art museum named after him?

Answers: 1-B, 2-A, 3-D, 4: 1-C-2-D 3-B 4-A, 5-A  
 Bonus: Fort Worth, TX

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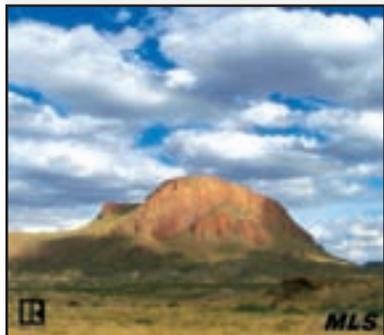
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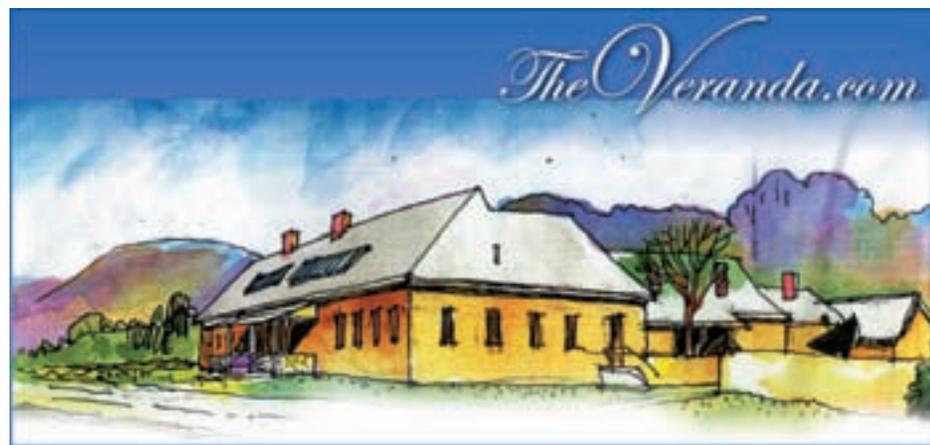
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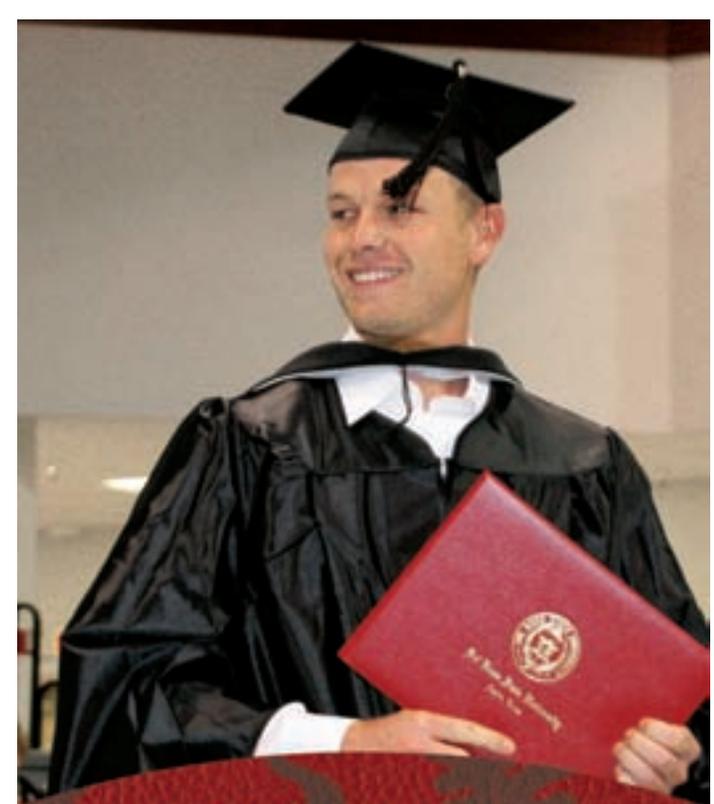


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