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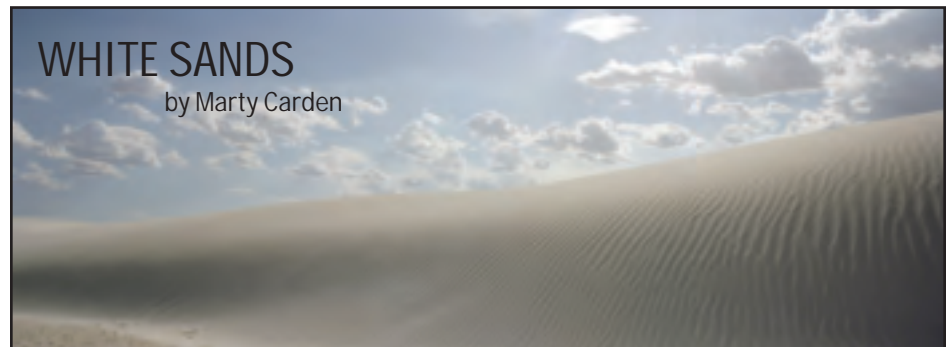


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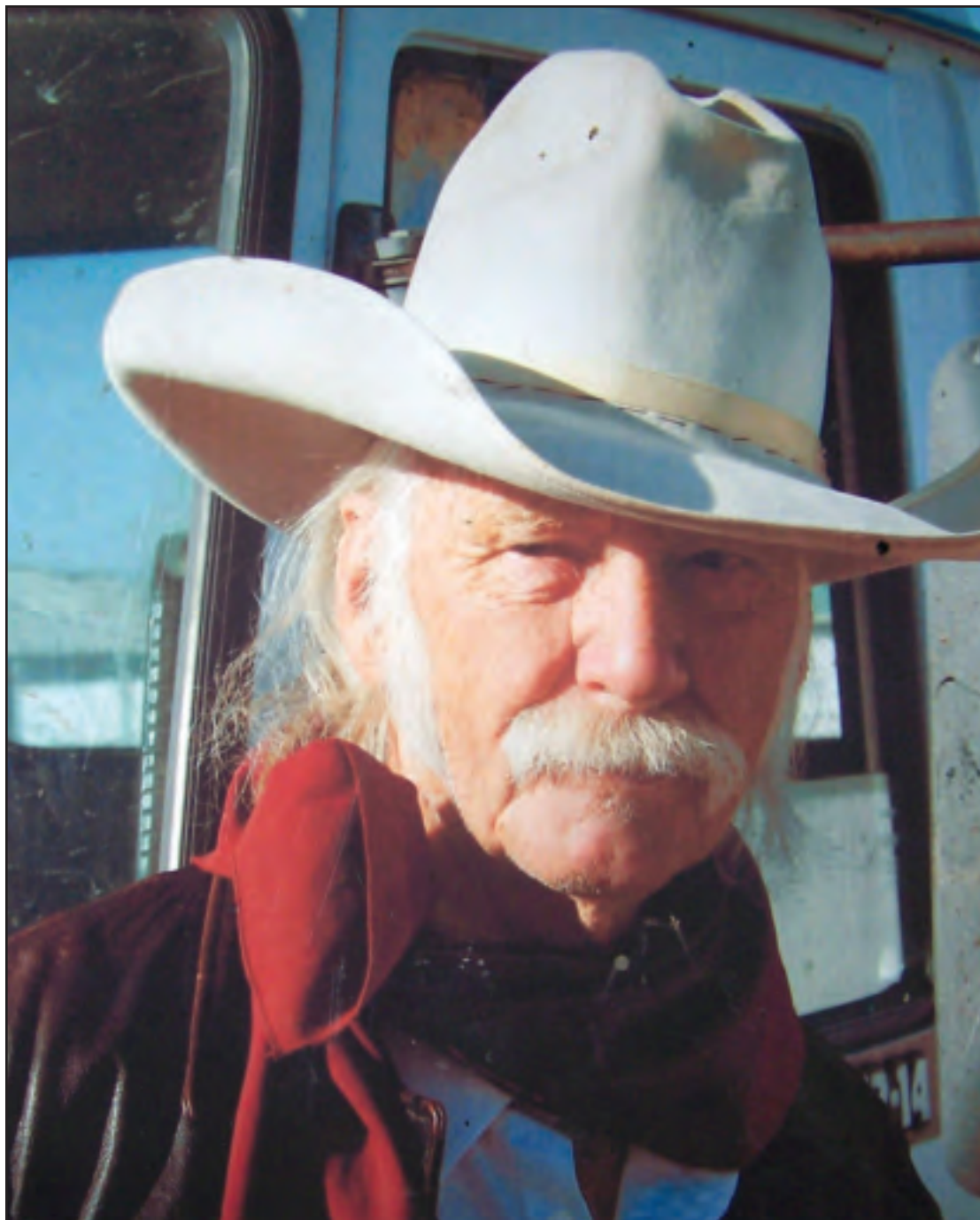
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This photo of A. Kelly Pruitt was taken by an unknown friend and given to Kelly who kept it in his home. The photo of the photo was taken by David Crum.

The Passing of A. Kelly Pruitt

by David Crum

buried Indian slaves in the cemetery facing south instead of east because they were not Christian and of Confederate soldiers killed here.

Kelly missed the large cottonwood trees he had known here as a boy, cut down years ago so airplanes could dust crops, and he was interested in developing uses for the tumbleweeds and salt cedar trees that are invading the no-longer-used farmlands.

Kelly remembered the Rio Grande used to be closer, and he was disappointed that the levee prevented him from riding his horse down to the river and maybe crossing it again.

In February 2009, Kelly invited a group of his friends to camp with him at La Junta Farm to discuss his vision of creating a non-profit organization whose mission would combine art, history, conservation, sustainable building and sustainable agriculture. The first of these friends to arrive found Kelly unable to rise from his outdoor cot near the old school bus.

He told them he was dying. "I was fixing one of Samson's shoes and fell over. Once I got up I could make it only this far. My arm hurts and my heart. There's nothing like dying. I know the Great Spirit has made such a magic world. Little old Pawnee would like to know when I die here, but wait until the dust settles."

Kelly refused to even consider going to see a doctor or of letting one come to him. "I have not been to a doctor since 1947, and if I go now they will want to

cut me open. I do not want that."

Kelly asked his long-time friend Terry Bishop to take care of the animals and dispose of his belongings. "I want to be buried here in the old cemetery, in my canvas bedroll. Please see to it I am not embalmed. There should be an easier way to leave this world. I hope it will be quick, and I will not linger."

Kelly's friends began a vigil and made Kelly as comfortable as he would allow. During the next several days Kelly talked of many things and all of the following quotes are Kelly Pruitt's words, written down as he said them:

"I would like this dying settled without my family. But afterwards someone will need to tell my little daughter Angelique. She is married to a movie producer in Hollywood. She loves me very much and will need to know. My second wife Donna is still in my life. She has an art gallery in Taos and has a large collection of my paintings. I have sons and daughters, and Terry knows how to get in touch with them.

"No, I will not go see a doctor, and I am tired of you mentioning it. I will get up from here and fist fight you if you bring it up again."

During the vigil, many other friends, hearing about Kelly, came to see him. A Presidio County deputy, the justice of the peace and his clerk came. Kelly dictated and signed his will. A nurse stopped by and tried to talk him into going to the doctor. He flirted with her and said no.

"Isn't this wonderful? A great funeral and I am here for it," Kelly declared after most everyone had left.

He finally agreed to drink some water. He had been fasting before his trouble and allowed a little water would not break his fast, but he would not drink from plastic bottles. At sundown, he became cold and decided he could probably make it inside the old school bus where it was warmer.

The next day found Kelly a little

continued on page 27

A Kelly Pruitt, renowned Western painter and sculptor, became a cowboy early in his life and by age 12 was catching wild mustangs in the Fresno Canyon area of the Big Bend. He helped bring trail herds from Mexico across the Rio Grande at Presidio and worked on ranches in several states. Kelly's paintings and bronzes are much prized on both sides of the border, and he touched people's lives with his philosophy of living simply, his kindness and unique spirit.

A few weeks before his death, Kelly had begun digging his own grave at the old cemetery located near where he lived with two dogs, a Mexican wolf, two

horses, a burro and 35 sheep. Kelly had bought an old school bus, and it was his home at La Junta Farm, owned by the Bishop family of Presidio and Marfa.

This spot near the Rio Grande was important to Kelly. He had returned to live here several years ago, first only during fall and winter but this past spring had chosen to stay all year. As a young boy, he would ride here from Presidio to watch vaqueros work cattle, hoping to learn their trade. Noticing Kelly's interest, the vaqueros taught him their skills, first teaching him how to rope. The history of this spot near La Junta de los Rios, where the Rio Conchos and Rio Grande join, was well known to Kelly, and he talked of how the Spanish had

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Editor's Notes



Summer is over. But as we head into the serious time of year, we still have temperatures warm enough to linger under a tree – or later, near a fire – with some good reading. And we hope this issue of *Cenizo* will keep you company.

We start with David Crum's moving story of the passing of noted Western artist, A. Kelly Pruitt. Kelly lived under the Big Bend sky, near the Rio Grande, for most of his life. And that was where he died – on his terms, with friends at his side.

Who among us has not spent an evening or two at the Railroad Blues in Alpine? You may not know that musicians from around the country look to the Blues as a shrine to good music and good times. Read all about it in Phyllis Dunham's rousing tribute.

Architecture in Far West Texas wouldn't be the same without Henry Trost, designer of four of the area's hotels and countless other buildings including the original Bhutanese style buildings on the UTEP campus. Texas historian Lonnn Taylor takes us through the Trost repertoire with facts and anecdotes to make you chuckle.

The Marfa mystique was bound to result in a bar on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Created by folks who, except for one, have never been to Marfa, their concept may amuse or surprise you. Sasha Watson brings us the whole story.

More on La Junta de Los Rios – that part of the Rio Grande near its confluence with the Rio Conchos – from Center for Big Bend Studies director Andy Cloud and history buff Bob Miles. We visit past cultures at La Junta and more recent settlement at Fort Leaton.

While Marfa NYC may show us the imagined Marfa, Louise O'Connor and Cecilia Thompson show us the real deal in their pictorial history of the town, aptly called *Marfa*. In the book, reviewed by Madeleine Cantu, we see and hear about a town that has reinvented itself many times in the past 125 years.

Could the Davis Mountains become the next center for wine-grape growing? Read Ingrid Krohn's argument for just this, and learn how this idea might go far to help cattle ranchers keep ranching, create jobs for local folks and boost the tourist industry – in addition to bringing water back to the desert and preserving habitat for wildlife.

How is the Texas mountain lion controlled in this part of the state? Read Mark Glover's account of trapper Bill Applegate's efforts.

And, of course, there's poetry, Voices of the Big Bend, Trans-Pecos trivia and last, but far from least, a wonderful photo essay by James Evans who is also our cover artist.

Thanks to all our contributors and our readers and our advertisers. All of you keep us going.

Ed note: Growing pains were bound to get us! In the last issue the answer to Trivia question #5 was, indeed, William H. Emory.

And, in a real gaffe, photo credits were omitted in several places: Lauren Stedman took the photos for "Menagerie Press: Hot Type in the Terlingua Desert;" Santa Fe photographer Don Usner photographed Patrick Lannan in the Lannan Foundation essay; Jim Glendinning took the photos for "Voices of the Big Bend;" Andrew Stuart took his own photo in "The Disappearing Place." And the photograph in "Historical Markers" is from the Archives of the Big Bend, Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library, Sul Ross State University, Alpine.

Our apologies to those whose work was not acknowledged at the appropriate time.

Dallas Baxter

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Cover: "Ocotillo with Planet" 2009 by James H. Evans. From the series "Rock, Paper, Scissors."

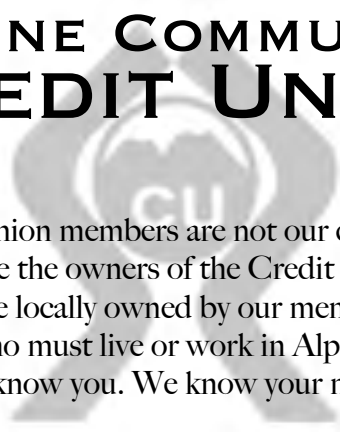
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LIVE FROM THE RAILROAD BLUES – THE BEST LITTLE HONKY-TONK IN WEST TEXAS

by Phyllis Dunham

“There’s a little place in Alpine...”

That was how Texas singer-songwriter James McMurtry began his answer when asked in a radio interview where he most enjoyed performing. He was speaking, of course, of Alpine’s Railroad Blues, that ramshackle honky-tonk/roadhouse/juke joint on the west end of town where the beer is always cold, and the crowd’s always friendly.

McMurtry isn’t alone in his opinion. Some of Texas’ and the nation’s finest musicians love the “Blues” and go out of their way to play here, even though they’re accustomed to larger venues and crowds and certainly more pay. Arlo Guthrie, who swore he would no longer sing “Alice’s Restaurant,” felt compelled to do the long version when he played at the Blues. Pure country legend Dale Watson abandoned his regular set list and sang requests for old and obscure country songs hollered from the crowd the first time he played here. As Blues co-owner Richard Fallon tells it, “Old folks were asking for songs from the 30s or the 60s, and Dale knew every one of ‘em.”

Austin songstress Toni Price recorded a CD here, complete with the blasting and rumbling cacophony of the trains that roar past the Blues throughout the evening. Texas country sensation Pat Green has played the Blues at least three times. Heck, you could have seen Los Lonely Boys for six bucks a few months before they made history at the

Grammies. There’s just something about the Railroad Blues that makes for magical musical evenings.

When Jerry Jeff Walker played the Blues for three hours straight, the chairs had to be removed to make enough room for the crowd. As if the evening weren’t enough fun already, the bar staff sent a round of the Blues’ famous sangria to the stage. One taste, and Jerry Jeff and the band broke into “Sangria Wine” and ripped the roof off the joint. He later bought three gallons of that sangria for the bus.

So what makes this place rock like the dickens? Sure, there’s the selection of over 136 different brands of beer and that infamous sangria. And there’s that great sound system and the friendly and family-like staff, most of whom have worked here for years. Mary Jo Martin, the bar manager, is on her 11th year at the Blues. That’s approximately five incarnations in bar time.

There’s also the fact that owners R.C. Toler and Richard Fallon take darned good care of the musicians, feeding them right and putting them up at the comfy and homey Antelope Lodge.

When modern-day honky-tonker Jack Ingram was in town, R.C. says, “We took him out to a gal’s house and just fed him a home-cooked meal. I think he was grateful.” It’s the kind of care musicians don’t see much of on the road.

But R. C. and Richard have another theory on what makes it all work, and that has to do with the patrons them-

selves. “There’s an amazing amount of musical talent out here in West Texas, and a lot of those folks come to the Blues not just to play but to hear music,” says R.C. “The musicians get off on the crowd. These folks know music. They’re fans. They sing along with the bands and know all the words. And they dance. They dance!”

Boy, do they dance. One evening years ago when blues singer/guitarist Percy Strother was onstage, a patron walked back to his table from the dance floor and declared, “Damn, that’s good music!” just before taking a long draw on his beer and dropping dead on the spot from a heart attack. Staffers turned up the lights, the music stopped, and the crowd stood by reverently while the EMTs handled the situation. A few minutes later, however, a slightly shaken Strother hit the stage again and kept the party going, stopping only once in a while to remark, “Nothin’ like that ever happened before.” Maybe not, but it didn’t stop the dancing for long, and the departed music lover probably would have appreciated that it didn’t.

According to Richard, the mix of the crowd is special, too. It’s hard to have a homogenous patronage in sparsely populated West Texas. “In Austin, you have biker bars, student bars, professor’s bars, etc. Here, everybody is in the same place – cowboys, tourists, rockers, lawyers. The crowd isn’t all alike, they’re all doin’ different dances, and they’re always smilin’, always friendly with each other.” They must be. In 14 years, according to

the owners, you can count the number of fights on one hand, and none of those were serious. That’s something in the bar business.

The magic has a lot to do with the mix of the music, too. You can hear a funk/dance cover band like Liquid Skin from El Paso one night and a raucous young Irish throwback punk band like We Should Be Dead the next. You might drop by for a beer and hear locals like the Doodlin’ Hogwallops on a Thursday night. You might find yourself dancing the Texas two-step or the cumbia to South Brewster County’s Pinche Gringos on a Sunday. Or you might be lucky enough to catch Omar and the Howlers or Ray Wylie Hubbard, Charlie Sexton, the Gourds, Guy Forsythe, Mingo Saldivar or Billy Joe Shaver. They’ve all played the Blues, as have Joe Ely along with Terry Allen and David Byrne (formerly of Talking Heads), Brave Combo, W. C. Clark and Asleep at the Wheel. Not bad for a small joint in a small town.

So what are the owners’ favorite all-time nights at the Blues? Richard tells of the time that Del Castillo packed ‘em in “like a Latin Mick Jagger in Vegas. The women were four deep around the stage.” R.C. says that Texas blues-rock guitarist Eric Johnson drew “every guitar player from El Paso to San Antonio” into the Blues. “We’ve never had a crowd of so many men before. They were ringed thick around the stage just absorbing what they could.”

Both grin from ear to ear when they











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Photo by Phyllis Dunham
R.C. and Richard at the Railroad Blues.

talk about drinking a Guinness with down-to-earth rocker Ian McLagan before the show. The British keyboard player, formerly with Small Faces and the Jeff Beck Group, is a living legend. As Richard tells it, "This guy has played with the Stones for heaven's sake, and he just sits down and talks to everyone, and he loads his own equipment."

Many of the musicians talk about the big open fire pit in the parking lot. The lead singer for the Nancy Boys asked from the stage one night why we needed a fire as big as the town outside, but it was clear she loved it. Even the pile of scrap lumber used to feed the thing is bigger than it needs to be. When I remarked one evening that you could build a house with that stack of sticks, my companion shot back, "Honey, that was a house." The fire serves as a source of heat in the winter and a beacon and gathering place throughout the year. The Blues experience wouldn't be the same without it.

Did they plan it this way? When they bought the Blues from the former owner in 1995, did Richard and R.C. know it would be such a special place for musicians and fans alike? Not really. When they decided 14 years ago that they would create a little music club, they just wanted to pull in some bands travelling along Interstate 10 on their way to Austin or the West Coast. And they did.

On a recent "magic night" the Latin band Tremoloco gave the crowd goose bumps with their stirring performance, but the highlight of the evening, according to those who were lucky enough to catch the gig, occurred when they started to perform the beautiful, classic Mexican song, "Volver." They were a little unsure of the lyrics, so Alpine's

own Rick Ruiz of Grupo de la Paz took the mike and knocked everyone's socks off with his powerful rendition. It is palpably apparent as Richard and R.C. speak of the moment that they still get a charge out of the whole thing. R.C. says, "You could just feel the soul and the heart of music of this caliber."

So the Blues rocks on, and the romance lives. At least four marriages got their start when couples met at the Blues. One can only guess at how many break-ups. Maybe after all the great performances and the good times, the very boards and rafters are charged with something mystical. Maybe. And maybe you'll share the experience soon if you haven't already.

May the beer always be cold and the music always hot. Long live the Blues.



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HENRY CHARLES TROST:

Versatility Was His Game

*Story and photographs
by Lonn Taylor*



The Hotel El Capitan in Van Horn, an example of Spanish Colonial Revival style, was completed in 1930.



The Venetian Gothic New Occidental Building in Albuquerque, modeled after the 14th-century Doge's Palace in Venice, was built in 1917.

Although the architect Henry Charles Trost is credited with building modern El Paso – his firm designed more than 300 buildings there between 1903 and his death in 1933 – he also left his mark on Marfa, Alpine, Van Horn and Marathon by designing the principal hotel in each of those towns, providing each town with a link to one of the most versatile architects ever to practice in the Southwest.

Trost is described by architectural historians as a pioneer of Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie Style architecture in Texas, and he did design at least one notable Prairie Style building, his own residence built in 1909 at 1013 W. Yandell Drive in El Paso's Sunset Heights subdivision.

But the real measure of his genius is that he was able to design buildings successfully in any style that his clients wanted, from the Venetian Gothic New Occidental Building in Albuquerque, modeled after the 14th-century Doge's Palace in Venice, to the Spanish Colonial La Tuna Federal Correctional Institution in Anthony, Texas, a sprawling, gleaming white complex that resembles a 17th-century Mexican monastery.

It's not surprising that Trost would have been adept at so many historic styles because he grew up and started practicing architecture at a time when most architects sought inspiration from the past, and most clients wanted houses that would reflect some heroic period in history. Historic styles, especially European styles, were thought to have a civilizing influence on American towns, and in the 1890s, no one thought it odd that a white-columned Greek Revival

house, a half-timbered Tudor house and a Renaissance French chateau would stand side by side in a Midwestern town that might be only 50 years old.

Henry Trost grew up in just such a town. He was born in Toledo, Ohio, in 1860, to German immigrant parents. His father was a carpenter and building contractor, and his mother managed the family grocery store. Not much else is known about his parents, except that they must have been admirers of the 17th-century Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus, as they named one of their children Gustavus Adolphus Trost and his twin brother Adolphus Gustavus Trost. Both brothers were eventually associated with Henry Trost in his architectural firm.

Trost graduated from high school in Toledo and went to work as a draftsman for an architectural firm there, but he had wandering feet, and in 1880 he moved west to Denver, where he worked for a while as a draftsman, and then to Pueblo, Colo., where he briefly set up his own architectural firm. His movements over the next few years are hard to trace, but he evidently worked in Dallas, Fort Worth, Galveston and Dodge City, Kansas, before settling in Chicago in 1888.

Trost spent eight years in Chicago, but information about his activities there is sketchy, most of it derived from local architectural magazines and city directories. Only two things are certain. He was a member of a group called the Chicago Architectural Sketch Club, and he was associated with two ornamental iron companies, the American Art Metal Works, which he founded with a

partner in 1889, and the Chicago Ornamental Iron Company, for which he served as designer and vice-president from 1892 through 1896.

Trost's years in Chicago were a time of great intellectual ferment among the city's architects, with Louis Sullivan and his firm of Sullivan and Adler developing new building forms that rejected European models and evolved into the purely American Prairie Style. Frank Lloyd Wright worked for Sullivan and Adler, and Trost knew and admired Sullivan, but there is no hard evidence to show that he ever worked for him or with Wright, as several writers have alleged.

There is no question that he absorbed their ideas. The house that he designed for himself in El Paso in 1909 incorporated those ideas in its soaring façade, overhanging eaves and the sculpted frieze which encircles the building just below the roof, as well as in the open floor plan, exposed rafters and stenciled wall frieze of the interior. Trost's El Paso house bears a close resemblance to the house that Frank Lloyd Wright built in 1904 in Springfield, Ill. for Susan Lawrence Dana, now open to the public as the Dana-Thomas House.

Troy Ainsworth, the historic preservation expert for the City of El Paso and an expert on Henry Trost's work, says that in 1952 Frank Lloyd Wright came to El Paso to speak at Texas Western University. The faculty member assigned to pick him up at the airport and drive him to the campus purposely drove him up West Yandell past the Trost House but said nothing about the

house to him. Wright stared at it as they drove slowly by and then turned to his host and said, "I'll be damned. I do not remember ever designing a house for a client in El Paso."

Ironically, few of Trost's other buildings reflect the influence of Wright and Sullivan. He left Chicago in 1896, moved back to Colorado and then to Tucson, Ariz. (where he designed a house for Linda Ronstadt's grandparents, Fred and Lupe Rondstadt) and finally settled in El Paso in 1903.

In El Paso he brought his brother Gus (Gustavus Adolphus), also an architect, into the firm as a partner, and a few years later Gus' twin Ad (Adolphus Gustavus) joined them as a structural engineer. Their nephew, George Ernest Trost, assisted them. Trost and Trost was in every sense a family firm.

El Paso was probably not ready for Prairie Style architecture. The favored exotic style in the city when Trost arrived was Spanish Colonial Revival, sometimes called Mission Style, which was being popularized by the railroad stations and hotels being built across the Southwest by the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

One of Trost's first commissions in El Paso was the Joseph Williams house, which is still standing at 323 W. Rio Grande Avenue, a confection of archways, Alamo-like gables and red tile roofs. Trost continued to work in this style the rest of his life, and the El Capitan Hotel in Van Horn and the Paisano Hotel in Marfa and the Holland Hotel in Alpine are fine examples of its later evolution. Even the staid Gage in Marathon shows its influence.



The Prairie Style building Trost designed as his own residence built in 1909 at 1013 W. Yandell Drive in El Paso's Sunset Heights subdivision.

Trost applied Spanish Colonial ornamentation to the facades of some of the multi-story buildings he designed in downtown El Paso, such as the Cortez Hotel, which was publicized as "a castle of Old Spain on the plaza of El Paso" when it opened in 1926. The lobby of the Cortez is ornamented with painted wooden beams and glazed tiles, features that are repeated in the Paisano and the El Capitan.

Perhaps the strangest Trost structures in El Paso are the four buildings in the Bhutanese style that the firm designed in 1917 for the original campus of the Texas State School of Mines and Metallurgy, now the University of Texas at El Paso. The buildings were inspired by an article on the Himalayan kingdom in the April 1914 issue of *The National Geographic* which caught the eye of Katherine Worrell, the wife of the dean of the School of Mines. Worrell persuaded her husband that the style was appropriate for an arid, mountainous site, and, even though he had to explain to them where Bhutan was, the president and regents of the University of Texas eventually agreed, and Trost and Trost got the commission to build. Their distinguishing features are walls which slope outward from the roof to the base, caus-

ing the windows in the lower story to be very deeply set. They make the older part of the campus look vaguely like Shangri-La.

A visitor to El Paso's Sunset Heights can still see some of the residences Trost designed for El Paso's elite. The Turney House, now the El Paso International Museum of Art at 1211 Montana Avenue, is a brick Classical Revival house with a two-story porch supported by Corinthian columns, built in 1909 for banker William Ward Turney. It could not be more different from the house Trost built for himself that same year, as its row of white columns conjures up images of the Old South. Not far from Trost's home is the Tudor Revival house he built for David Cohen, a half-timbered fantasy out of a Sir Walter Scott novel. Just down the street is the Douglas Gray house, a squat Egyptian Revival structure with two fat Egyptian columns supporting a wide frieze over the front door.

Trost's business and institutional structures are equally varied in style. His Classical Revival El Paso High School, built in 1916, is the archetypal American high school, evoking memories of Greece and Rome and classical learning. His Venetian Gothic New Occidental building in

Albuquerque looks like a chunk of the Doge's Palace that has broken from its moorings on the Grand Canal. His Franciscan Hotel in Albuquerque, demolished in 1972, was a bizarre adaptation of Pueblo Revival style to a seven-story reinforced concrete building. His 15-story Bassett Tower in downtown El Paso is still an outstanding example of the Art Deco style introduced into the United States from Europe in the 1920s. There is no question that Trost and Trost could produce buildings in any style that the client wanted – and could do it well.

Troy Ainsworth summarizes Trost's work by saying, "Henry Trost mastered every single architectural style of his time, and he built in them with unparalleled precision." It is a shame he didn't build more Prairie Style houses.



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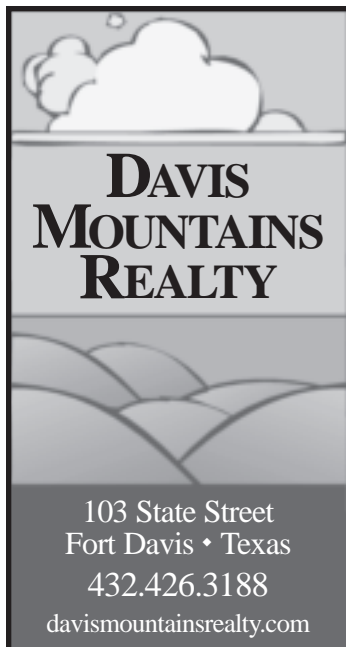


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Marfa NYC: A West Texas State of Mind

by Sasha Watson

Whether you grew up here, have come to make your home here or have just passed through, everybody knows that, out there in the rest of the world, there's buzz about Marfa.

It's only recently, though, that the buzz has become a bar. Marfa NYC is located on East Second Street in Manhattan, and its owners haven't spent much time in the real place. So how exactly did this bar come to be, and what does it have to do with the West Texas town that gave it its name?

Marfa NYC was opened by Hayne Suthon, a New York restaurateur known for creating establishments that serve as restaurant, bar and all-around party places, and Bill Brunner, the architect who came up with the concept.

Brunner, who lives on the Lower East Side and has been to Marfa just once for a Chinati Open House weekend, says that it was last October that the idea for Marfa NYC first came to him. He had just returned to New York after designing an Atlantis-themed hotel in Dubai. "The economy was in the toilet and there were about 5,000 unemployed architects in the city," he says, explaining that he was on the lookout for a project.

Brunner is a long-time friend of Boyd Elder, Valentine resident and artist. The two were walking down East Second Street together, when Brunner pointed to a bar called Waikiki Wally's. "It didn't look like much was happening in there," he says, "So I said, 'Why don't we open a bar there and call it Marfa?' I threw it out as a

joke, but then I thought, why not? We could pull it off." Elder was enthusiastic about the idea, and Brunner started looking around for others who might be interested.

As it turned out, Hayne Suthon was the owner of Waikiki Wally's. Suthon, who bills herself as a "diva of the downtown restaurant scene," opened her first New York eatery in 1986. Cave Canem, a Roman-themed restaurant in a restored bathhouse, took off with New Yorkers looking for a

"I didn't want to go down the Judd road, because that's so loaded," he says, adding "I had a very idealized image in my head of a place that would have music and art openings. I was thinking of the music of Terry Allen, Joe Ely, Ryan Bingham. I wanted to really make it like you were hanging out somewhere else."

To start making that idea a reality, he contacted John Kelly, a lead painter and set designer in Hollywood, who agreed to work on the project. When another architect friend told him, "I've got nothing going on except for one house I'm designing in Marfa," Brunner asked him to get involved, too. Together, they started collecting pictures of abandoned adobe houses.

"We wanted it to feel like you were walking into this weathered, abstract space," says Brunner. Once they got to work, the space came together quickly. "We did everything very Tom Sawyer-style," Brunner says. "We got all these people — artists, carpenters — and we just did it. It was like an assault." One month later, the job was complete.

An idea that had first been conceived in October, the bar was open in mid-February, and, just as Brunner had hoped, it featured art and music, all straight from West Texas. At the bar's opening, the gallery showed artwork by Boyd Elder and by James H. Evans.

Elder, who was born in Valentine and lives there now, has designed album covers for bands including the Eagles, Joe Jackson and, more recently, the new album by the band Yacht. That album's title, *See Mystery*



place to eat, drink and dance on the bar. In 1993, she opened Lucky Cheng's, an Asian restaurant where drag queens not only serve the food, but also offer up nightly cabarets.

When Brunner approached her, the idea of a bar and restaurant called Marfa resonated. With friends in Marfa, Suthon knew about the town, though she'd never actually visited. "I said, 'Wait a minute, this could work,'" says Suthon. Brunner says that the idea, "started to take on a synergistic life of its own all of a sudden, when Hayne said, 'Yeah, let's do it.'"

The next question was how to approach the design. Suthon asked, "How do you represent a place like Marfa without being too kitschy?" Brunner had a slightly different concern.



Photos courtesy Marfa NYC

Lights, refers, of course, to Marfa.

Evans, who has lived and worked in the Big Bend region since the late 80s, is known for his photographs of the West Texas desert and his portraits of the people who live here. His book of photographs, *Big Bend Pictures*, was published by the University of Texas Press in 2003, and several of the images on the walls of Marfa NYC can be found in its pages.

The opening in February also featured music by Marfa resident and musician Ross Cashiola. *Missing Scenes*, an album by Cashiola and his band Hotel Brotherhood, was described in a review by the *Daily Texan*, as being “painted with the same earth tones and big skies that make up the 3,800 square miles of Presidio County.”

If West Texas was present in images and song, it was also there for the taste buds to enjoy. Suthon designed a bar menu called “Marfa bites” with tapas portions of pulled pork, barbecue ribs and mini corn dogs. Bigger eaters can get a barbecue meal for parties of eight or more. Guests can also enjoy the “Marfarita,” a drink that combines grapefruit juice and Serrano-chili-infused tequila.

Suthon says that the menu has proven popular with the mixed crowd that frequents Marfa NYC. “Texans come in for the barbecue,” she says, “and end up hanging out with trendy locals and the art crowd.”

If there’s been any bad feeling about New York’s appropriation of the name of Marfa, Brunner, for one, doesn’t mind. “I thought it might make people mad because they have such strong feelings about the place,” he laughs. “But no one should take it seriously.” That he didn’t know the town well, says Brunner, “gave me a weird freedom.”

He explains that “for most people, Marfa exists in the imagination and not as a real place.” It was that intriguing idea that inspired the bar. “There’s an abstractness to the

word and to the concept that allows people to project their own imagination into it,” he says, adding that the associations people have with Marfa, true-to-life or not, are what make the bar what it is. “If it was the same exact place and it was called Joe’s, it would be closed by now,” he says.

In any case, Brunner’s Marfa-of-the-mind has become a real-life bar, and Marfa residents passing through New York might just want to stop in to see the West Texas art on the walls and enjoy some barbecue.

And while they’re there, maybe they’ll try a Marfarita, a drink that will probably prove just as exotic to them as it is to the New Yorker on the next bar stool over.



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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.

Story and photos by Jim Glendinning

I was greeted at the door of Lolo Baeza’s home in Fort Davis, right next to the grocery store he started 44 years ago, by his daughter Yolie, who had agreed to sit in on my interview with her 92-year-old father to add support as needed. It wasn’t. The man who came to the door and firmly shook my hand was alert, smiling and completely at ease.

Lolo (Dolores) Baeza was born July 8, 1917 in the small community of La Haciendita, close to Presidio. His father, Jesus, farmed cotton and melons. His mother Gregoria Soza bore 10 children, of whom Lolo was the fourth. School at La Haciendita consisted of 10 in a class, supervised by a Mrs. Leverton. When asked what he did in the evenings after school, which he continued to the seventh grade, he replied “chopping weeds.” Everyone worked.

In 1935, at age 17, he applied for a job with the Civilian Conservation Corps. He had hoped to travel but, he laughed, was sent instead to build roads for \$1 a day in what was to be Big Bend National Park. Employment with the CCC continued at Indian Lodge in the Davis Mountains State Park and at Balmorhea. He sent \$25 a month to his mother, keeping only \$5 for himself. When, in 1938, he married Fay Granado, his mother sent him \$500 she had saved to pay for the wedding expenses. In 1939, their first child Leroy was born, followed by daughters Yolanda and Sandra.

Drafted in 1944, Baeza drove wounded soldiers in Europe for the Medical Corps. In 1946 he was discharged in San Antonio and, with \$1,400 in his pocket, took the train to Alpine and came back home. Using his pre-war experience as a carpenter and painter at the Sproul Ranch, he worked for different employers in the area for 20 years.

In addition, he invested in local property with GI Bonds, including the block



LOLO BAEZA

where the grocery store and his house now stand. His policy: Never borrow; buy only when you have cash. In 1965, he opened a grocery store in Fort Davis. He petitioned to sell wine and beer and was successful – a breakthrough, he recalls. Further stores were later opened in Presidio (1975) and Alpine (1994).

Meanwhile, property investments and rental income increased. “I had it made,” he said without any hint of conceit, more like a matter-of-fact report on a business enterprise. A basic reason for his success was, in Yolie’s opinion, his ability to handle people and get on with people, notwithstanding the hostile racial attitudes which prevailed in earlier times.

Cheerful, seldom argumentative, always hardworking and shrewd in assessing the business potential of an investment, Lolo Baeza demonstrated that the principal of hard work, a willingness to get along with people and a keen mind for business add up to success. Listening to an elderly gentleman, cheerful and at ease, lightly describe so many years of toil made the day better.



MAISIE LEE

Maisie Lee was born in Mildura, Victoria in Australia where her father Frederick Kane owned a vineyard. Of Irish stock, her dad had previously fought in the Boer War in South Africa and served as a Canadian Mountie. Her mother, May Mitting, hailed from Kent, England and would live to be 103.

In the early 1920s, the vineyard was sold, and the family, including five children of whom Maisie was the youngest, moved to Florida.

Elementary school in Florida was not popular with Maisie. But she remembers fondly the welcome rain, after the Australian drought, the beautiful countryside and alligators in the lake near the family home. In 1929, the family was driving to California to check out employment and investment possibilities. They were in El Paso when the stock market crashed, wiping out the family’s investments and savings. “Not a dime left,” recalls Maisie. El Paso was now their home.

Her brother Walter became a cattle buyer and on trips to Marathon took



A. DANIEL BODINE

Maisie with him. Maisie noticed lots of cowboys who would come into town for a bath and shave. One of them in particular, Guy Lee, tall and muscular, caught her eye. In 1939 they married in front of the justice of the peace in Alpine, a marriage which would last 55 years.

Guy worked for 24 years at the Gage Ranch, in addition to a spell from 1949 to 1950 at Hot Springs as a river rider. He patrolled the border to prevent infected cattle from crossing from Mexico. Maisie settled easily into country life and raising kids which she recalls as “lots of fun.” The first child, Jerry, was born in 1940, followed by Ronnie and Janet.

Growing up with parents whom she feels she never really knew, and later living with a husband who was sometimes “hell to live with,” Maisie was sustained by her art. Her mother had been a sculptor, and Maisie had drawn pictures from her earliest years. In fact, in second grade she was kicked out of school for this offense. Later, her brother gave her a piece of wood, and she carved a face

on it, using her husband's pocket knife.

Over the years, she has sold or traded many, many sculptures. She traded some with an El Paso doctor for treatment for her daughter Janet. San Antonio Hemisfair in 1968 displayed three. A local rancher has five. Her studio in the house in Marathon where she has lived since 1975 contains an unfinished door with a carving of an angel, one of her trademark pieces. She works on her art most days.

Considered soft-spoken and genteel by others, Maisie nevertheless feels that she is not good at communicating with people. This, she believes, makes her focus more on her art. She loves Marathon and West Texas which have an aura that reduces people to size. Her recipe for a long life is to live close to nature and not to become dependent on medicine.

It sure seems to be working for her.

It was a hot July day when I went looking for Daniel Bodine's home in Presidio. I found the house and was let in by a young girl with lustrous long hair. She took me round the side of the house to a small, cluttered office where Dan Bodine was sitting in front of a computer. Bodine speaks softly with a slight stutter and is not in full health. I told him I needed about an hour of his time for the interview. Almost three hours later I left.

A. Daniel Bodine was born on Nov. 13, 1943 in Cleburne, Texas, the middle of three children of Ruby and Ralph Bodine, a housepainter. His parents told him: "You get you an education; it's the one thing they can't take away." Over several years he pursued a degree in journalism, finally graduating in 1974 with a B.A. degree from North Texas State University. In 1984 he earned an M.A. in political science from the University of Texas at Arlington.

To help pay for his education, he worked for Texas Instruments. Navy service intervened, from 1967 to 1971, first shore-based in Iceland then later on the carrier USS Independence.

Back home and working from 1974 to 1977 as a cub reporter for the *Temple Daily Telegram*, he recognized he was where he wanted to be. He had a natural ease of getting stories out of people and found writing in some way easier than coping with his stutter.

He gained steady promotion and then bought into four local papers with partners. But, by fall 1989, all four were collapsing, as had his 1977 marriage. He badly needed a change, saw an ad about a job at the Presidio newspaper and

took it. He moved to Presidio. His first impression: "It was the ugliest place in the world," he recalls; but the folks were the friendliest and accepted him.

The paper was not making enough money to pay a decent wage. Fortunately, in 1992, the position of justice of the peace opened up. The early 90s were tumultuous times in Presidio, and his docket was constantly full. The job was emotionally satisfying but exhausting. He struggled with the lack of facilities (prison, family crisis center) to cope with numerous social problems. But he held the job for 17 years and gained the respect of the community.

Feeling he needed to learn Spanish to be more effective as a J.P., Bodine arranged to take Spanish lessons with a woman from Ojinaga. She was no use as a teacher, he said with a smile. But other factors were at work. He married his teacher, Gloria Noemy Fierro, a year later. In 2005, Dan and Gloria adopted a 5-year-old girl from Chihuahua City, Maiya Kareli. This confident and beautiful 10-year-old was the person who let me into Bodine's house.

Dan Bodine and his family continue to live in Presidio, and he is currently working on his memoirs.



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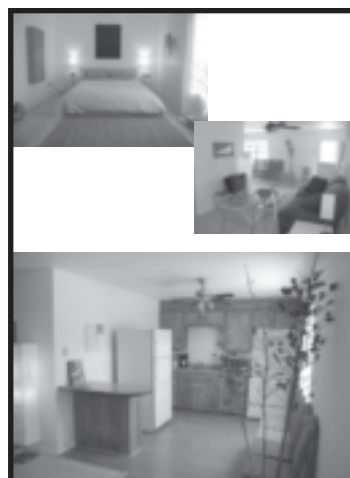
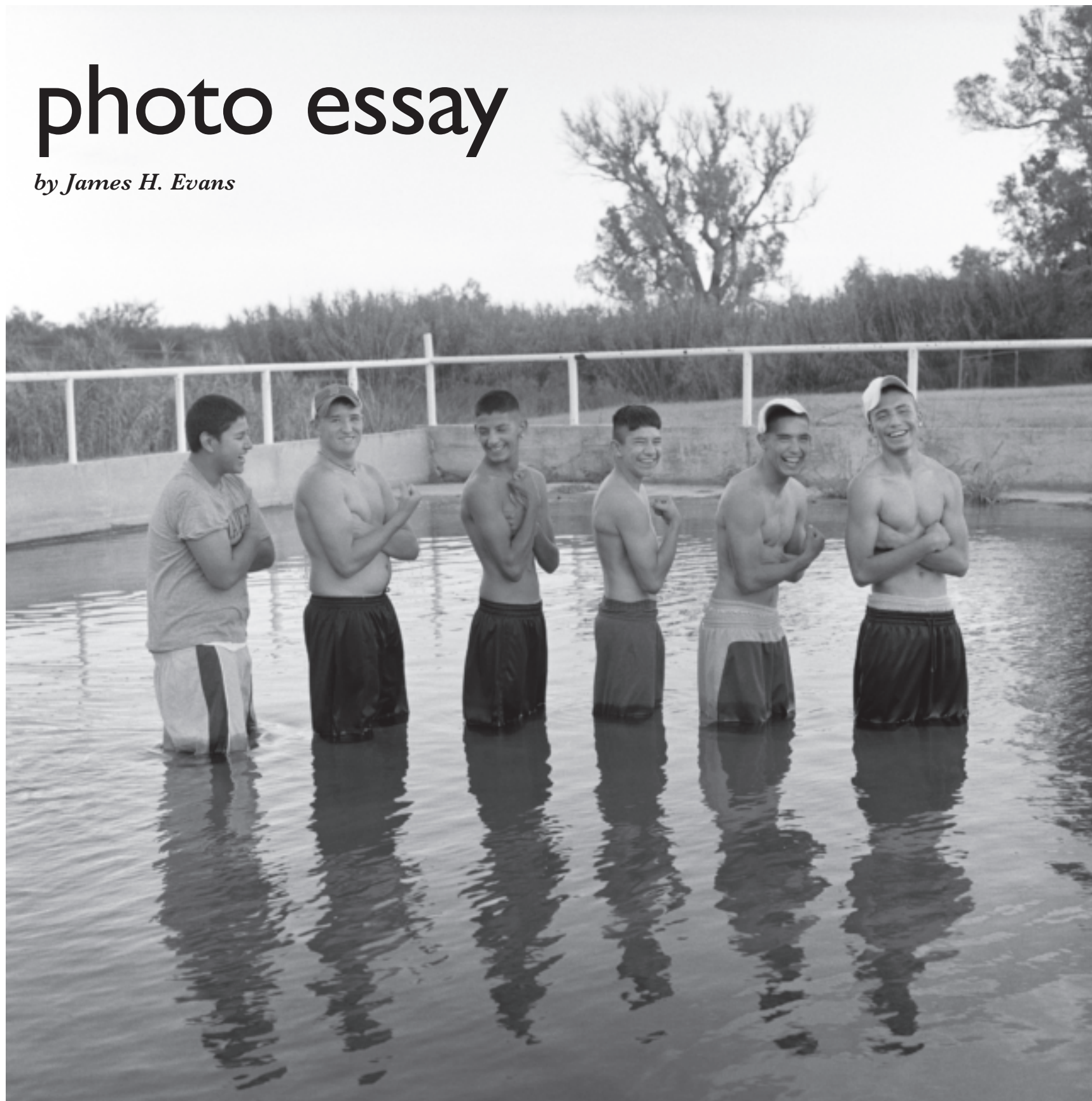


photo essay

by James H. Evans



Six Man Football Team

This is one of those great things that happen on the way. I was photographing Billy Faier for a banjo publication. Billy didn't want to travel far, so I thought I would take him

down to the Post and maybe get some kind of reflective thing with the Caballos Novaculite in the background. I usually have a general idea of what I want to do, but I am very willing to let it go if a better situation or idea presents itself. The football team was there just talking. After I photographed Billy, I asked the guys if

they would get in the water and let me make a photograph of them. They did, and, of course, boys are boys, and they were joking and showing me their muscles. Billy's image was fine, but this image is great. A lot of times on my way to an assignment or coming back from one, the images I've made along the way

were just as, or more, important. You never know when a masterpiece will present itself. Ansel Adams was on his way (I believe to Georgia O'Keeffe's) when he photographed "Moonrise over Hernandez."



Ocotillo and Rock

This image is from the series “Rock, Paper, Scissors.” In 2007 I hiked and photographed extensively at night. I had four film cameras and one digital. The exposure times for the film cameras could be an hour to six hours long, and so while they were exposing I would shoot with the digital camera. The desert is wonderful at night. I hiked with a lot of equipment. I never once felt threatened or scared. It was a rewarding experience.

Bill Dodson and Soterro

My friend Hillary Loring gave me a list of people she thought I should photograph. Bill Dodson was on it, and so I called him and was invited to his house. I enjoyed this man. He is downright funny. I perceived him as a hard-working, fun-loving human being with a genuine good heart. I photographed him for a couple of hours, and he asked me if I wanted to meet his dad. Of course I did. We were off to meet Soterro. He wasn't nearly as talkative. I love photographing people with their parents. Of all the images I have taken, the one of me and my mom and of Hallie and Dadie Stillwell are my favorites.



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Map created by David Hart of the CBBS.
The location and extent of the La Junta Archaeological District as defined by J. Charles Kelley.

La Junta's Remarkable Past

by *Andy Cloud*

Soon after Spaniards visited the area where the modern-day towns of Presidio, Texas and Ojinaga, Chihuahua are located, they began referring to the confluence of the Rio Grande and Rio Conchos as La Junta de los Rios. Translated, this phrase means "the joining of the rivers" (nowadays often shortened to La Junta). Areas along the rivers teem with life compared to the surrounding stark desert environs, and it was within these relatively lush settings that prehistoric inhabitants founded villages and began farming about 800 years ago.

Farming La Junta Indians had endured life along the Rio Grande and Rio Conchos for over 300 years before the first Spaniards arrived in A.D. 1535. Led by Cabeza de Vaca, this small group of shipwreck survivors passed through La Junta as they walked from the Texas Gulf Coast back to New Spain.

Over 45 years later, several Spanish entradas visited the

area on their way to the pueblos in present-day New Mexico. It was not until A.D. 1683-1684 that Spanish missions were established at La Junta; however, attempts to establish missions were severely hampered over the next 80 years by local Indian revolts and by Apache and Comanche raids. The latter stymied settlement of northern New Spain and ultimately led to establishment of a presidio at La Junta in A.D. 1760.

A year later, oppressive Spanish policies had driven over half of the local population from the area. During subsequent years the remaining resident population slowly, but steadily, was assimilated by the Spaniards and then Mexicans, resulting in a blended culture with distinctive languages, food, art, customs and lifestyles.

The study of these cultures began in 1937, when a budding young archaeologist who had just received his B.A. in anthropology from the University of New Mexico examined an open pit on the outskirts of Presidio. About 2 feet below the

surface he observed "a horizontal line of ash and charred reeds containing burnt and broken fragments of clay."

The pit had been excavated by V.J. Shiner, a local archaeological enthusiast, who showed it to J. Charles Kelley – the young archaeologist – then working at Sul Ross State Teacher's College in Alpine. Kelley discovered that the burnt clay fragments were fire-hardened pieces of mud dauber nests and that the reeds were part of a buried pithouse. Recognizing the significance of this find, he soon conducted a scientific excavation of the house, and thus were the beginnings of archaeological research at La Junta.

Kelley's pithouse excavation was within one of the La Junta villages, now referred to as the Millington Site. A dozen or more of these settlements lie buried along the rivers in an area called the La Junta Archaeological District.

In 1938, Kelley began extensive investigations at Millington and at Loma Alta,

another village a short distance up the Rio Grande. As a result, a vast amount of information about the village cultures was gathered. Armed with these data, Kelley and his associate, Donald J. Lehmer, proposed a cultural framework for the villagers. Noting patterns in their datasets, they called the overall development the Bravo Valley Aspect, spanning the period from A.D. 1200-1760. Changes in stone tools, ceramics, burials, and house constructions through time were used to divide the "aspect" into discrete periods or phases, and both rectangular and circular house traditions (jacals placed in pits – some as deep as 6 feet below the surface) were recognized.

Kelley renewed his La Junta research after World War II. He synthesized his field and archival work in 1947 with completion of a Harvard University dissertation entitled "Jumano and Patarabueye: Relations at La Junta de los Rios," which was published by the University of Michigan in 1986.

An important contribution of his at this time was publication of historical data concerning the La Junta pueblos and correlation of these data with geographical and archaeological features. On-the-ground identification of most of the La Junta pueblos mentioned in Spanish accounts followed, providing an important link between the archaeological and historical records. Kelley hypothesized that the villages were established by a migrant colony of Jornada Mogollon (Puebloan) people – sedentary agriculturalists living in pit-houses – who traveled down the Rio Grande from the El Paso area.

In the 1980s and 1990s another La Junta researcher came to the forefront – then State Archeologist Robert J. Mallouf of the Texas Historical Commission. Mallouf directed excavations at hunter-gatherer sites in the district and identified a heretofore unknown culture of the area which he named the Cielo Complex.

From about A.D. 1250-1680, this nomadic aceramic group seasonally occupied base camps at La Junta and are

thought by Mallouf to have been trading partners with the villagers. Mallouf's work at Cielo Complex and other La Junta sites led him to theorize that Bravo Valley aspect origins could be a result of cultural diffusion – that is, the villages sprang up through the transmission of ideas related to sedentism and agricultural pursuits rather than through an actual migration of peoples. In this theory, the villagers would have been indigenous hunter-gatherers of the Big Bend who merely adopted certain behaviors and lifeways they had observed in distant places – likely from people either at Casas Grandes in northwestern Chihuahua or in the El Paso area.

In the more recent past, the Center for Big Bend Studies (CBBS) of Sul Ross State University has taken the lead in unraveling the La Junta story. Excavations at the Arroyo de la Presa Site and the Millington Site directed by this author have increased our understanding of the hunter-gatherers and villagers who either lived at or frequented La Junta.

Much of this work has been funded through the CBBS's Trans-Pecos Archaeological Program (TAP), a research program designed to update the archaeological database of the region and to share those findings with both peers and the general public. Important contributions include a recently completed exhibit about La Junta cultures on the Texas Beyond History webpage (texasbeyondhistory.net) and publication of the 2006 Millington investigation.

Data recovered during the CBBS investigations have provided support for theories offered in the past by both Kelley and Mallouf. Modern ceramic analyses indicate that for about the first 250 years of village occupation (circa A.D. 1200-1450) pots were manufactured in distant places and traded to La Junta folks; during subsequent times pottery was locally manufactured. These analyses confirmed Kelley's thoughts on the subject, expounded almost 70 years ago.

Additionally, chemical analyses of human remains

from the Millington Site indicate the villagers ate only small amounts of corn and had to supply most of their foodstuffs through hunting and gathering, providing suggestive evidence in support of Mallouf's theory about indigenous La Junta origins.

While much is known of La Junta's rich past, many pieces of the puzzle remain unanswered. Since these sites are threatened from both natural phenomena (e.g., last year's flood) and unscrupulous looters, it is imperative that scientific research continue.

Future CBBS efforts at La Junta will include utilizing geophysical remote sensing techniques to locate buried houses and other features. Such techniques have been successful recently, revealing the likely locations of several Spanish missions – for which excavations are now being planned. Only through continued investigations at these important archaeological sites will the complete La Junta story be revealed.

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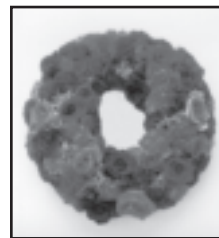
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DAVIS MOUNTAINS ~ WINE COUNTRY

by *Ingrid Maidel Krohn*

“And the desert shall bloom And blossom as the rose”
~ Isaiah

Most of us fortunate enough to live in the Davis Mountains of West Texas think of our home as cattle ranch country and rightly so. We love our wide-open spaces, cowboys, horses, ranches, rodeos and ranching ethos. And we want the big ranches to prosper because if they ever break up, our quality of life will disappear with them.

Calling the Davis Mountains “wine country” may sound a little strange. Yet in the future, it may be vineyards that give a vital margin of support to the ranching community, provide a gateway to entrepreneurs and employment to our young people, who now leave the area in large numbers to find jobs.

Vineyards may provide the economic strength we need to resist outside predators intent on water mining, urban sewage disposal and bentonite mining in the pristine desert.

In many ways our high desert is supremely well-suited to wine-grape production. We have mineral-rich volcanic soil, long hours of sunshine, a sharp temperature differential between day and night, a long growing season and the right kind of stress. Vines will not produce grapes in rich, fertile soil but prefer the bony, arid conditions we can offer in abundance.

Furthermore, as recently demonstrated by the first harvest at Cathedral Mountain Vineyard south of Alpine, these mountains produce superb high-quality wines with distinctive character – the kind of wine that could become a source of regional pride.

Despite problems with weather and disease, a short harvest and rough grapes, Times Ten Cellars in Dallas created from this first harvest some of the best wine ever produced in Texas.

The economic impact of the Texas wine industry is now \$1 billion annually. Texas is the fifth-leading state in wine grape production, and the sector is growing fast. Demand from Texas wineries is strong, and there is a shortage of vineyards and Texas-grown grapes to supply them.

Of course, it's true that California and France are still considered the traditional centers of wine production. But Texas, through T.V. Munson of Denison, introduced native Texas grapevine species to Europe, and Munson is still revered as a hero in France for saving French vineyards devastated by phylloxera disease in the late 19th century. Native Texas species are the basis for most rootstocks still used worldwide today.

Texas is not a Johnny-come-lately to the wine industry.

Residents and outsiders have both noticed the potential for wine grapes in West Texas. There are now three vineyards on Hwy. 118 south of Alpine, and Times Ten Cellars of Dallas chose this area specifically for its favorable character.

Curtis Woodall of Alpine, who is planting his vineyard this year, has researched the area for years and cannot find any flaw in the idea of a thriving wine industry in the Davis Mountains. He points out that for economic survival, it's important to “think on the

edge.” He believes that “the day is here” and that the key to success is the production of very high quality wine. Once that prestigious wine is produced from Davis Mountains grapes, the momentum for a local industry will be unstoppable.

What about water? West Texans are understandably nervous about water supplies. Yet grape vines are very parsimonious in their use of water, each vine requiring a mere 2 gallons of water per week, when mature and producing. Contrast this with the water-guzzling habits of the ubiquitous junipers, each one of which consumes 140 to 280 gallons of water per week. Look at the overwhelming number of junipers on the landscape and do the math.

In one study of the effect of junipers on aquifers, junipers were cleared from the Bamberger Ranch in Blanco County. Junipers had strangled and shaded out many trees, shrubs, native grasses and forbs that had once covered the hill-sides. Within two years 11 springs surfaced, the number of bird species rose from 48 to 155 and over 100 native grass species began to flourish.

Vineyards reduce junipers, use very little water and cause the water table to rise. Charles Troxel, owner of Char-Don Vineyard near Alpine, uses a 1-gallon-per-hour dripper for each vine for two hours per week maximum. In the summer when it rains sufficiently, he doesn't water at all.

Although junipers are native to Texas, they never in the past dominated and overwhelmed



Photo by Jim Bones
A cluster of Pinot Gris or Pinot Grigio grapes from The S&S Anderson, Mile High Vineyards, south of Alpine.

our ecosystems as they do today because they were naturally controlled by periodic wildfires. We can no longer allow wildfires to burn unchecked, so the need for alternative juniper management presents itself.

If junipers are removed, and grape vines planted in their place, the water table rises and wildlife benefits greatly; aquifers recharge.

In one study plot where 40 percent of the junipers were removed, there was a 35,000 gallon per acre per year increase in water.

Other obstacles to grape production – including disease, weather, lightning and insect pests – do, of course, exist, but these are foes faced by farmers everywhere.

Pierce's Disease (PD) is an especially serious threat spread by insects called "sharpshooters," it but it can be largely avoided by planting PD-resistant vines, such as Black Spanish or Blanc du Bois.

As for fungal diseases, West Texas is dry so they are not the problem they are further east.

Nonetheless, grape-growing is not for the faint of heart. It is a serious commitment, and the learning curve is steep.

If we are lucky, a few

investors will make the leap. If we are lucky, they will succeed.

Hopefully, they will produce superb wine. Hopefully, they will employ local masons to build charming Southwestern-style buildings of rock or adobe adjacent to their vineyards so that the inherent beauty of the vineyards will be enhanced.

Beauty is important; it's not a detail. We need a setting worthy of superb wine and the spectacular surrounding

country.

How then can we foster our fledgling wine industry? In his book *Outliers*, author Malcolm Gladwell analyzes the components essential to extraordinary success; exquisitely fine-tuned timing and conditions are essential. The right confluence is historically rare. And the people who produce the success must be hard-working and well-prepared to take advantage of any window of opportunity.

We have the timing and the conditions.

If we also have the Texas grit, then the Davis Mountains can bring forth Mediterranean crops such as grapes and pomegranates.

We can follow the example of Argentina where they now grow Malbec grapes to complement and support the Argentinean cattle industry.

West Texas is a gift. We've been handed favorable conditions on a platter. Let's invest in vineyards and make wine! Let's have beautiful Mexican-style stone or adobe wine-tasting and reception buildings where visitors can stop on their way to Big Bend National Park.

Above all, let's protect the ranching community and our youth – and this gift of the Davis Mountains.

The statistics come from two papers: "Starting a Vineyard in Texas" published by GoTexan; and "Juniper and Water in Central Texas" by Noah Hopkins and Ryan McGillicuddy. Other information came from Curtis Woodall and Charles Troxel of Alpine.

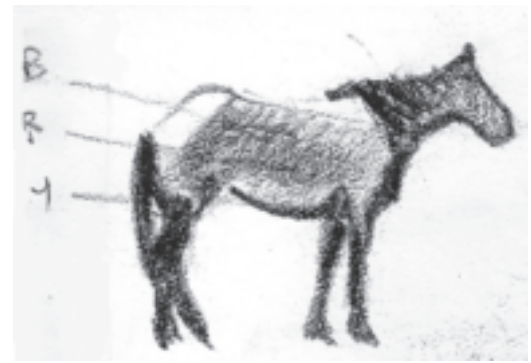


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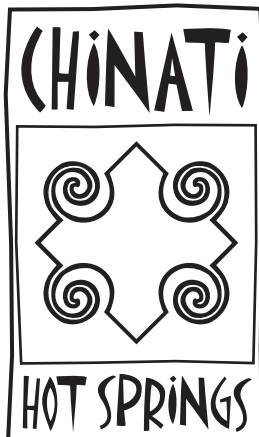
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THE WEST TEXAS MOUNTAIN LION

Story and photo by Mark Glover

Brewster County — Bill Applegate steers the oxidized green Ford up the road. The V-8 lugs while rocks crackle under the grind of the four-wheel drive. The only thing that's seen through the windshield is blue sky.

Applegate spits out the window and then nods to a saddle in the ridgeline.

"Lions will find the lowest place to get through," he says. "I trapped one there last month."

Texas is the only state to maintain an open season on mountain lions.

The most recent field study of the West Texas mountain lion occurred on the 464-square-mile Big Bend Ranch State Park. The study was performed by Texas Parks and Wildlife, and 21 mountain lions were trapped and collared between 1993 and 1997.

During the study, 17 of the 21 lions in the control group died, including 15 on private lands adjacent to the park.

"I'm responsible for 14 of those," Applegate says. "I called Texas Parks and Wildlife every time and returned the collars."

Applegate provides coyote, pig, bobcat and mountain lion predation maintenance for ranchers.

Presently Applegate has 200 mountain lion traps set on West

Texas ranches.

He trapped 26 lions last year. His highest take was 38 in 2003.

"There are fewer out there than they think," Rocky McBride said from his ranch outside of Alpine.

"If it wasn't for the new type of landowners in our area,

Game, released eight West Texas females into south Florida's wildland.

Today there are over a hundred panthers living in Florida, but they remain listed as an endangered species.

Applegate's truck stops in a sea of sotol and gramma grass. He steps out and pushes his

sweat-stained Stetson up. The Glass Mountains of Brewster County glow in the east.

"This isn't supposed to be here," Applegate says as he kneels over a dirt-covered trap. He re-arranges the rocks. "You have to guide them in. They don't like to step on rocks or sticks."

The early morning sun rays catch his teeth, and they glitter white against his unshaved, sun-tanned face.

He dips a stick in a crude batch of canned lure that contains "glandular drippings and a little urine," then places the seasoned stick just above the trap.

The Big Bend Ranch State Park study did not determine the population of the West Texas mountain lion, but Texas Parks and Wildlife is working on a computer modeling program that may provide better estimates of mountain lion populations in the future.

"Lions are secretive, so it is nearly impossible to estimate population size," Texas Parks



Trapper Bill Applegate and his 40-year-old Ford.

they'd probably all be gone by now," McBride said, referring to the recent acquisitions of large tracts of West Texas land by private and non-profit land conservators in the area.

McBride and his father were instrumental in helping Florida resurrect their declining panther population.

In 1973, the Florida panther was listed as an endangered species. By 1995, according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife, only 20 remained. To restore the species, McBride and his father, together with Florida Fish and

and Wildlife mammalogist John Young said. "We are extracting DNA from contemporary samples and museum collections. Our goal is to use genetic markers to assess how lion populations have changed in size over the past century."

"If seeing 'em is a criteria for counting them, then they'll be pretty hard to count," Presidio County rancher Rick Tate said. "They were hunted pretty hard during the sheep and goat days of the last century. Back then they had a trapper on every ranch. But they're pretty elusive. I don't foresee a big problem of being able to kill 'em out."

Open season on mountain lion allows Texas ranchers to legally cull the potential predators year round to protect their livestock.

"Traditionally in Texas it's been kill the predators, clear the land and make it productive," McBride said.

Ninety-five percent of Texas is privately owned, compared to a 70-percent average for the rest of the states.

Aldo Leopold, an early conservationist of this country, realized it was the private landowner that could make the most difference in preserving a species for the future. He defined "conservation" in his book *A Sand County Almanac*, written in 1949: "When the land does well for its owner, and the owner does well by his land: when both end up better for reason of their partnership, we have conservation."

But maximizing economic returns from land may not

always create a harmonious relationship with wildlife. Ranchers in West Texas depend not only on revenue from cattle but increasingly on deer leases.

According to the latest U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics, predators killed 39,100 cows and calves in 2005 throughout Texas. Non-predator losses for the same year including disease and weather accounted for 531,000 losses or about 93 percent of total losses. Coyotes were responsible for 58 percent of predator kills, dogs at 12 percent and mountain lion and bobcats lumped together at about 3.5 percent. County breakdowns were not available.

The 40-year-old truck bounces down the road and the linkage breaks on the shifter. The truck coasts to a stop and Applegate climbs underneath.

In the distance a wild turkey struts up the road then vanishes in the mesquite. Buzzards glide on the high winds above.

Feline fossils date back 100 million years. According to the *Journal of Heredity*, mountain lions survived the last North American Ice Age by migrating south. They returned to repopulate the continent after spreading their genes in South America. Today they range from Chile to Alaska.

Although mountain lions can reach lengths of 8 feet and weigh 160 pounds, they have more in common with house cats than lions and tigers.

Female mountain lions reach sexual maturity at about 2 years of age. Typically they

produce a three-kitten litter every two years. The average lifespan of a mountain lion in the wild is approximately 10 years.

Other than the small population in Florida, the mountain lion, also known as panther, puma or cougar has been extirpated in the eastern United States. Today the animal's range is almost exclusively in the Western states. The three distinct areas of mountain lion population remaining in Texas are the Guadalupe-Sierra Diablo area, South Texas and the Trans-Pecos.

Applegate pulls up to the next trap and examines it. "Something messed with this one," he says while dusting off the area with a coyote tail.

He carries a leather satchel strapped across his shoulder. In it are the tools of the trade: stake puller, lure, coyote tail, knee pads, knife, pick, hammer, sifter and trap spares.

Along with his Model 96 Winchester lever-action rifle, a pistol holstered to his belt and a \$40 hunting license, the only other thing needed besides a truck is Texas.

An abbreviated version of this article appeared in the San Antonio Express News on June 5, 2009.



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Poetry

GRAPEVINE HILLS, 1961

Bronze, windswept Chisos,
timeless against clear March skies,
stand mute in wisdom.

Sing your Song to me,
oh Mother Earth. Father Sky,
I listen for your

red, waxing moon song.
Warm, fitful desert winds swirl.
One lone coyote sings,

first just for himself,
next for his imagined friends,
then lastly for me.

Sleep sits near my fire.
Her deep kiss is sweet and long
in velvet darkness.

Glen Walton

AT THE MARFA MYSTERY LIGHTS VIEWING AREA

We secede from ourselves, burrow beneath
The broken tortoise shell of the sky.
For these moments we don tourist souls,
Ignoring clogged restroom stench and
Plastic littered across the Chihuahuan floor,
Peering out at the far edge of nothing.

We spy four gold orbs in the southwest sky,
Then a fifth, scintillating much higher,
Then a sixth and then a seventh.
A few frozen in the desert heat.
Two waltzing as awkwardly
As finished lovers on a last date.

Ghost lights.

*Ain't nothing but cars on some old highway,
Cackles a beery West Texas honey.*

*Wait til you see one shoot half way across the moon,
Replies her tattooed boyfriend in the Toby Keith tank top:
I seen it. It can happen.*

She says: *I can tear right out of here too.*

When you aren't looking, I tear right out myself,
Leaving you behind with the scattered trash.
I vault the fence, praying for rattlesnakes.
I run Mitchell Flat maybe three miles before I stop,
My breath a freight train in the distance,
My heart open to gilded globes to spirit me away.

But there are only mesquites and blue pools
Of nothing. And the surrender of desire.

W.K. Stratton

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Historical markers - FORT LEATON

by **Bob Miles**

"Home of Ben Leaton, first Anglo-American farmer in Presidio County. In 1848 Mr. Leaton acquired the building, and it has since been known as Fort Leaton."

Ben Leaton's historical marker stands near his one-time home not far from the Rio Grande near its junction with the Rio Conchos (La Junta de los Rios) a few miles from Presidio. It bears little information about the man because little is known about him. He was apparently born in either Kentucky or Virginia and was in the Southwest by 1837, when he took part in a massacre of Apaches in the Animas Valley of New Mexico with a party of scalp hunters under J.J. Johnson. (The location of this event was erroneously transferred in folklore to his later home at Fort Leaton.)

Several Mexican states paid bounties for Apache scalps in a desperate attempt to control the raids that were threatening to depopulate Mexico's northern frontier. Some groups of American and other frontier adventurers were more than willing to profit from the gruesome practice, which naturally served to increase hostilities.

Some have said Leaton served with Col. Alexander Doniphan's Missouri Volunteers during the Mexican War, but no records have been found to substantiate this claim. He must have been in Chihuahua City in the 1840s, where he married Juana Pedrasa, who had acquired a grant of land near Presidio del Norte.

In 1848, Ben and Juana and three children moved to the La Junta region

and into the adobe complex known as El Fortin de San Jose, said to have been occupied since 1773. It had been abandoned in 1810 and re-occupied and restored by Juan Bustillos in 1830. Leaton bought the buildings from Bustillos and made it his home, operating a trading post and freight business from the complex.

Apparently he was a harsh employer and was accused of buying stolen livestock from the Apaches and supplying them with firearms. However, he played host to travelers on the Chihuahua Trail, Indians from several tribes and military and civilian explorers, including the ill-fated Hays-Highsmith expedition, which sought a route from the Central Texas settlements to El Paso but became lost in the rugged Big Bend area and never reached its goal.

Never a formal military fort, the complex often served as a sub-post for Fort Davis and furnished supplies for Forts Davis and Stockton.

Leaton died in 1851. Where and how is not known, nor is it known where he is buried. His widow married Edward Hall, and they continued the trading operation, although not successfully, for John Burgess foreclosed on the Halls in 1862.

When they refused to vacate Fort Leaton, Burgess allegedly had Hall murdered at his dining table in the fort. About 1927, Fort Leaton was aban-



Photo by Dallas Baxter

South wall, Fort Leaton. Built on stone foundations, constructed of adobe bricks, plastered with adobe plaster.

doned and began eroding back into the earth.

In 1967, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department acquired the property and began an extensive research and restoration project that was completed in 1978.

Today visitors may step back into the past and learn what life was like in an earlier time on the Far West Texas frontier. Touring the more than 30 rooms of the restored Fort Leaton, one of the largest and finest historic adobe structures in Texas, visitors can better appreciate how people lived during the time when Fort Leaton was an active trading center on the Rio Grande.

The buildings are constructed of adobe bricks and plastered with adobe plaster. All jambs, lintels, sills, headers and roofing joists or vigas were made of hand-hewn cottonwood.

A full-sized replica of a Chihuahua cart or carreta with 6-foot-tall cottonwood wheels is on display in the large-walled corral area. Several rooms house

the park office and a museum that tells the history of the La Junta area, Fort Leaton and its inhabitants.

Living history events and other activities are held periodically. According to Fort Leaton State Historic Site Park Supervisor Tony Manriquez, plans are proceeding to again hold the annual Christmas posada at the site, and the museum will be revised and improved. Several of the historical markers along the path to the entryway will be corrected or removed. A new, more informative brochure is also in the works.

For additional information about Fort Leaton State Historic Site, call 432.229.3613 or tpwd.state.tx.us/fortleaton.

Unfortunately, little additional information is known about the controversial Ben Leaton.





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Marfa

Book Review by Madeleine Cantu

Louise S. O'Connor and Cecelia Thompson, Ph.D.
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Photo courtesy of Marfa and Presidio County Museum and the Big Bend Sentinel
The Art Deco Marfa City Hall in the late 40s.
The building burned in January 1995.

The tiny town of Marfa dates back to 1883. *Marfa*, the work of historians Louise S. O'Connor and Cecelia Thompson, spans the years that have seen Marfa grow from a small water-stop for the steam engine locomotive to a recognized destination for artists, actors, tourists and citizens alike.

Marfa's birth and subsequent growth is meticulously documented by O'Connor and Thompson. Both women were born and raised in Texas, each a daughter of a pioneer ranching family. Thompson is originally from the Fort Davis area and O'Connor from the Coastal Bend.

Each *Marfa* chapter begins with brief comments about what was happening in the town and surrounding area during particular periods of time.

The majority of the book consists of pictures that were lent to the authors by private families, the Marfa Public Library and the Marfa and Presidio County Museum. The result offers the reader a panorama of what Marfa and its townspeople have looked like – then and now. The photographs, all black-and-white, tell a striking story far better than words.

Some images in the book are actually postcards. Some are anonymous photos. All create a careful picture of the area, the times and the early experience of what living in a small West Texas town was like.

Important people, such as Milton Faver, and social groups that contributed to the town

and its people are included in the photographs. From the cattle ranchers that were an integral part of Marfa's birth and growth to the Marfa Ladies History Club, from the Texas Rangers to the polo team, the authors include a little bit of everything in their compilation.

Marfa is an in-depth history that will make Marfa-goers linger a little longer and look a

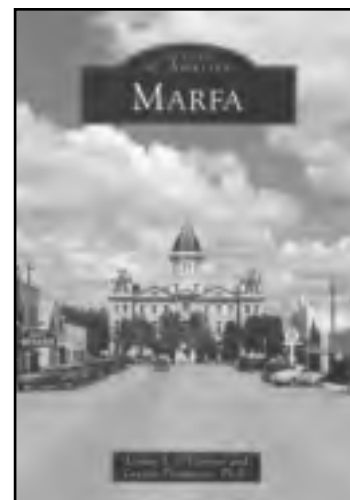
town saw its loss of both income and population as the war ended – a loss compounded by the drought of the 1950s – it also marked the beginning of another important period in Marfa's history: the arrival of the art scene.

O'Connor and Thompson follow up an otherwise depressing stretch of years by demonstrating how the entertainment industry began to change the small town. The appearance of many important big-screen names such as James Dean, who filmed *Giant* in the area, along with locals who stepped in front of the cameras, is chronicled.

It seems that even with the bad times, there is success to be found.

The last photograph of the book is perhaps one of the most appealing: the children of Marfa are pictured in front of the Presidio County Courthouse, which looks much the same as it did when it was built over a hundred years ago. It brings the story of Marfa up to the present day with a pointed message: Marfa may have struggled as a town in the past, but it is by no means ready to give up the fight.

Marfa itself is not a closed book. Indeed, Marfa began as a hope for something better and continues with the hope that an even brighter and more promising future awaits.



little harder at the town around them. The reader can envision a mail hack rolling up in front of the courthouse, bringing important goods and news from distant places.

The captions beneath each picture are informative and interesting, intermittently broken by anecdotal comments from the authors. Readers easily feel that the authors are standing behind them, filling them in on the stories that the pictures tell, inviting a closer look at the photo.

The period after World War II marks the beginning of Marfa's decline and commands a chapter to itself. Although the



stronger. He drank more water but still refused to eat. He took an aspirin that made him sick. From his cot he watched clouds, and from time to time he continued to talk of his life:

"I honor the Great Spirit who creates clouds and transports water to where it is needed. Clouds are a gift. I have kept the commandments as best I could."

"My birthday is not really known. My mother was not sure."

"At one time I was a Mormon and was married in the Temple."

"I was working on a ranch in Colorado. One day an old vaquero got off his horse, sat down, leaned on a big rock and died. That is a good way to go."

"I was a paratrooper in World War II."

"I have always had a strong connection with the spirit world. I need to stay close to the river. I am connected to the Rio Grande."

"The totality of A. Kelly Pruitt is three trillion cells, and when the spirit leaves the body, each cell is an energy that leaves with the spirit."

"We think our children are special, but sometimes enemies from past lives sneak back in their form to torture us."

"I was never a natural parent. We have no guidance. Teach the Warrior's Way."

"I was shoeing my horse when my left arm began hurting. It got so bad I had to lie down in the manure. Laid

there for a couple of hours. I thought it a fitting way for an old cowboy to go, wearing my spurs and hat."

"Please notify Pawnee, my ex-wife, after the fact. She also has a collection of my works. She is a warrior woman."

"Somehow the Universe works. It is a marvelous system. Yesterday I was involved in the business of the world. Today I am not."

"A bobcat killed one of the sheep and bit another that won't make it. A man in Redford will come and get the sheep. I wish we had a video of Wolf herding the sheep."

"What a marvelous prayer – Yea though I walk through this valley. Today the world is full of fear."

"Its for the best my horses ran away last night. I can't take care of them anymore."

Kelly appeared to gain strength, and everyone hoped his crisis had passed. He finally ate some food. His friends watched him closely. Too closely sometimes, and Kelly would tell them, "Dying is a private thing. I need you to go away now and just come back every once in a while and check to see if I have passed."

Early Sunday morning, February 15, 2009, Kelly called friends to him. "I have been

trying to die all night and just cannot get it done. I am in pain and do not think I can stand it any longer. I guess you should call the ambulance so they can come out here and give me a shot." The Presidio ambulance was on a trip to Alpine, and the Marfa ambulance did not make it in time. Kelly died peacefully, with friends at his side holding his hands.

Kelly's friends finished digging the grave he had started, and he was buried as he wished, in his bedroll, in the old cemetery at the Bishop's La Junta Farm.

Kelly's dogs and the wolf mourned with worried eyes, low moans and howls as Kelly's friends covered his body with shovels full of dirt and gravel. A combination of "Amazing Grace" and "Home on the Range" was sung accompanied by harmonica and guitar.

Kelly's vision of a non-profit as described in the story is being pursued: The recently formed La Junta Heritage Center is an IRS recognized 501c3 non-profit, with a 16-member board of directors. Terry Bishop and his family have given LJHC a 99-year lease on 72 acres of their La Junta Farm for the center. Richard Galle, executive director, can be contacted for more information about the center at 432.684.6827.



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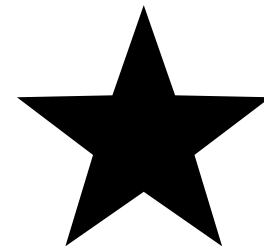
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Trans-Pecos Trivia

by Charles Angell

Flora of the Big Bend

1. What common shrub of the region can live for over 5,000 years and spreads out new growth through a shared root system?
A. Acacia
B. Scrub Oak
C. Alligator Juniper
D. Creosote Bush
2. False Agave, which resembles lechuguilla, is a member of what family?
A. Coachwhip
B. Prickly Pear
C. Pineapple
D. Aloe
3. The Ocotillo, which is often mistaken for a cactus or succulent, is the only other member of the family which also includes this plant that is only found in the Baja region of Mexico?
A. Joshua Tree
B. Boojum
C. Pitcher Plant
D. Stonecrop
4. What cactus is called Cimarron Peyote by the Tarahumara Indians of Northern Mexico and is sometimes used in their religious ceremonies and to cast spells?
5. What species of animal/insect is the primary pollinator of the Century Plant, or Maguey?
A. Pincushion
B. Living Rock
C. Horse Crippler
D. Golf Ball
A. Long Nose Bat
B. Honeybee
C. Rufus Hummingbird
D. Monarch Butterfly

BONUS: Ocotillo has several nicknames; which multiple choice option in this quiz is one of these names?

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



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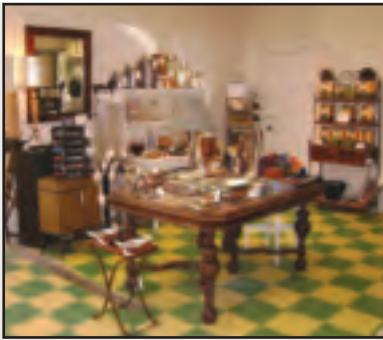


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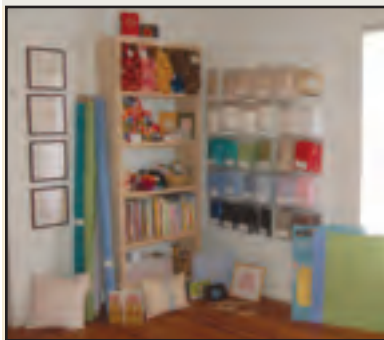


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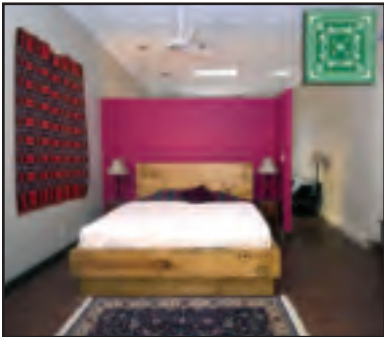
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