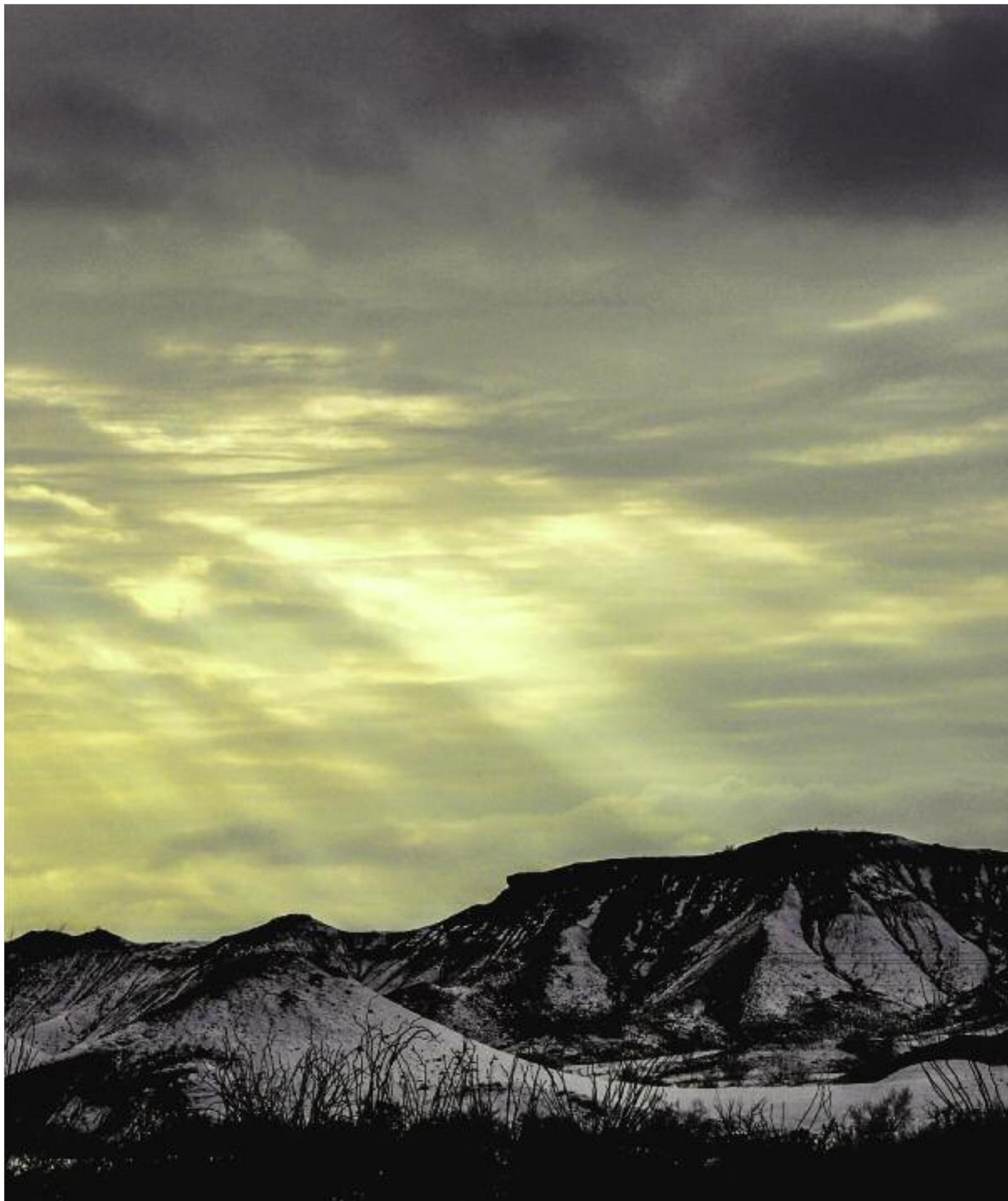


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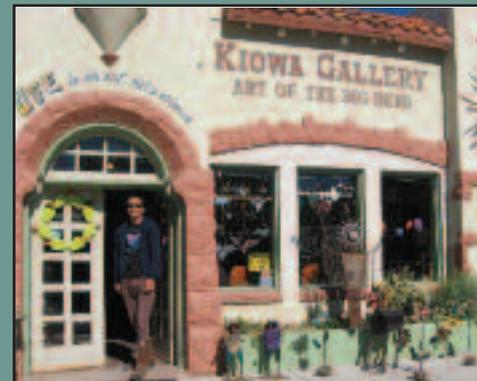


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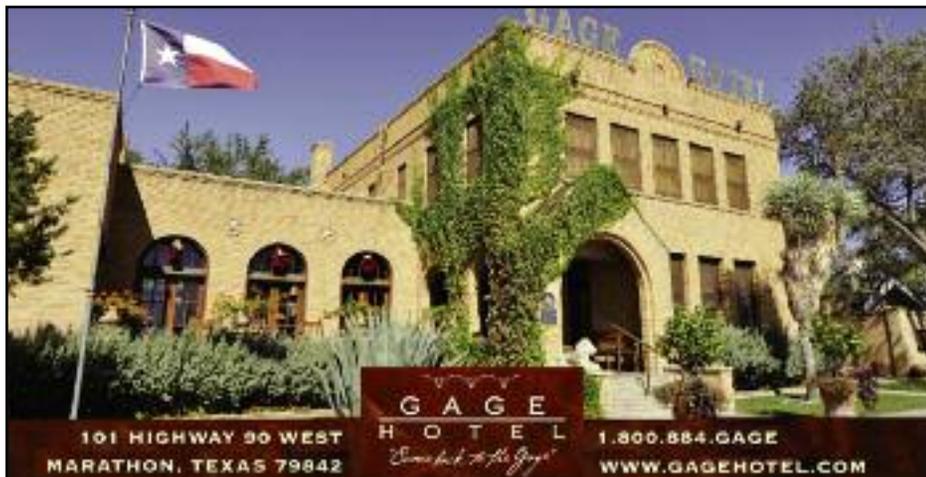


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Riding to West Texas



Photo: Leah Cohen

by *Debbie Wahrmond*

What happened in Marathon started in Fort Davis. Remembering the first time we joined cyclists for the 75 mile scenic loop outside Fort Davis is like dipping into a pot of goulash; you know who the first riders were, but after that it gets all mixed up with memories landing in Marathon. The memories include people, flavors, and smells of West Texas horsemint, too many mountains to remember their names and impossible sunsets and nights which have filled books and inspired writers and artists for generations.

The guys—The “Flying Dutchman” and my husband—started it with the September Cyclefest in Ft. Davis in 1998. They were always competing but this time, they outdid themselves. They were exhausted, pushed to the limit and

not a little hung over; intoxicated with the triumphs of attacking Bear Mountain, still breathing after climbing elevations with a 2,000 foot change, and clocking 40 miles per hour downhill. Like flying, or defying death, destruction and maybe old age. They came home with stories of the desert. Then the women went.

The three real cyclists joined the ride as I sagged with a friend from Marathon. One rider claimed the word “saggers” means super altruistic girls and guys. I like that definition. The guys had met our friend and her husband the year before. The year we “sagged” together, she created a marvelous “go juice” to get the riders over the mountains. The juice was a blender full of peanut butter, orange juice, yogurt, tofu, honey, bananas, plus other

secret ingredients, which she really should patent. We would wait for the group at the beginning of the first most daunting mountain. There is a nice shade tree and picnic table; I would set up my camp chair, read a book and offer encouragement. I did not feel guilty in the least. They would drink “go juice” and pedal on. As they cycled through one impossible climb after another, stories grew from the desert of one-eyed Indian Giants appearing behind the Point of Rocks (Syenite rock piles).

The four of us traveled the 400 miles from Austin for over ten years, and the first journal was begun in 1999. Our travel history has not been measured in years but experiences. The whole trip initially retraced steps from the campsite we reserved at the Davis Mountains

State Park (#83 is excellent) to the return through Ozona. It only took a couple of years for traditions to be broken, e.g. hamburgers instead of fried chicken. We determined on our fourth year that tradition would rule, no matter how silly. Tradition included breakfast at the Indian Lodge before the ride; outside dining at the Mexican restaurant in Ft. Davis with bring-your-own beer and wine.

I would drive the group to Marathon after we all packed and showered at the park. That was the quietest time of the whole trip. One by one they would fall asleep. By Alpine there would not be a sound. We would roll into Marathon at our friends’ adobe and they would all jump out like little kids saying, “We aren’t tired, it was a great

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Cenizo Journal

Volume 6 Number 1

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Cenizo Journal will be mailed direct for \$25.00 annually.

Make checks payable to: Cenizo Journal, P.O. Box 2025, Alpine, Texas 79831, or through Paypal at cenizojournal.com

SUBMISSION

Deadline for advertising and editorial for the Second Quarter 2014 issue: February 15, 2014.

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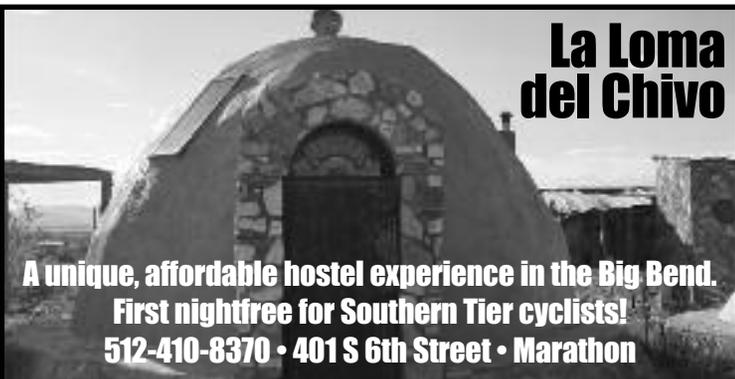


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Cenizo Notes

by Carolyn Zniwski, publisher and Danielle Gallo, editor



This issue is the fourth since I became publisher. I've enjoyed almost every bit of it. I couldn't have done it without the great *Cenizo* crew. Contessa Danielle, editor and advertising manager, whose knowledge and

ability have been indispensable. Fairy Queen Lou, whose business expertise has kept us on course. Wendy, Artistic Graphics Maven who brings her skill to every page. Astronaut Jenny who sends our copy off to the internet. Charlie, the Pick-up Truck Cowboy who not only does 'Trivia' but drives all over He!! and gone putting the *Cenizo* on the newsstands. And I can't forget our stringers; Jeff in Sanderson and Jim in Fort Stockton. A tip of my hat to all the writers, photographers and artists, both regular and irregular, who fill the pages with such excellent work. A special shout out to the local business folks who have such great advertising that folks comment on how much they enjoy the commercial pages. I can't forget Dallas, who started it all and my Ex ZZ who spied the possibility and encouraged me to jump in. Last but not least, my daughter Maya and grandson Ian who have had my back. A New Year's Toast to all of you and so many friends and neighbors. Good Health, Good Fortune, Good Family and Friends!!

Airplanes, birds, travel and books – this issue is a jam-packed read. With our incredible winter sunsets and long dark evenings, you'll have plenty of time to let your intellect fly. Be sure to eat black-eyed peas before Groundhog's Day. Oh yes, I could use a stringer in the historic district of El Paso. Let's do e-mail!



Having just passed the shortest day of the year, I'm so looking forward to that slow elongation of our daylight hours, those days when the perfect chill stillness of a lemon winter sunset begins to give way to

the gentler pinks of Spring. Don't mind me if I wax poetic—winter is a hard one for me, which is why I'm always pleased to find myself in the Trans-Pecos. I know we're still a little ways off from our springtime weather, but having turned the corner of 2014 I can feel it rushing on towards us—bluebonnets and Spring Break, the return of the vinegaroons, packing all those bulky, static-y sweaters back up into the closet. Right now, while we're still in hibernation mode, contentedly storing away all the holiday cookies and eggnog against a bitter windy day, is the perfect time to sit and enjoy *Cenizo*. What else is there to do when it gets dark so early?

This issue has a bit of everything, the better to keep one's mind active while drowsing away the winter doldrums. Should the lights go out again for a couple of days, the *Cenizo* requires no battery! We hope you enjoy it with the last of your Christmas turkey and that final glass of New Year's champagne; For auld lang syne!

Correction:

Two sharp eyed readers spotted a substantial error in the "Bow Hunting Free Range Aoudad story." The line should have read "At just over 20 yards the guide signals to stop." It read 200 yards. We try our best to proof our copy carefully. I'm afraid that extra 0 got away from us.

Published by Cenizo Journal LLC

P.O. Box 2025, Alpine, Texas 79831

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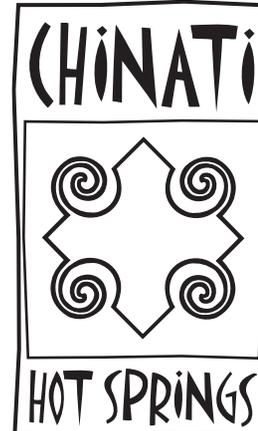
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THE RETURN OF THE APLOMADO FALCON, *a Missing Cog in the Desert –* *And Spotting Its Competitor,*

“*The outstanding scientific discovery of the twentieth century is not television, or radio, but rather the complexity of the land organism. Only those who know the most about it can appreciate how little we know about it. The last word in ignorance is the man who says of an animal or plant: “What good is it?” If the land mechanism as a whole is good, then every part is good, whether we understand it or not. If the biota, in the course of aeons, has built something we like but do not understand, then who but a fool would discard seemingly useless parts? To keep every cog and wheel is the first precaution of intelligent tinkering.”*

- Aldo Leopold

In the struggle to reconsider land use and land management practices in West Texas, overgrazing stands out as the most challenging sin to overcome. Lush high desert grasslands when first settled were quickly reduced to dust, tumbleweeds, prickly pear and mesquite by overgrazing. That original high desert grassland habitat, with patches of yucca and vast, open vistas, was a habitat that has been forever changed. The current generations of ranchers and land managers have made significant strides in repairing the damage of our beautiful Trans-Pecos region. In its original state, it was ideal for the Aplomado Falcon (*Falco femoralis*), a long, slender, graceful hunter which favored doves, sparrows, rodents and insects.

Aplomado Falcons are larger than kestrels, smaller than Peregrine and Prairie Falcons, but with very long wings and tails relative to their body size. From a distance, their buoyant flight and dark upper wings are reminiscent of nighthawks, but their strong wing beats and bright white chests give

them away. Their classic falcon 'hood' is a stately black that matches their dusky bellies; adults have bright white chests and young birds have a buffy orange hue to their chests. Both have buffy orange feathering on their legs and under their tails, giving them a novel color among North American falcons.



Photo: Matt York

This bird was right above my head. Sometimes we see less with binoculars than we do with our naked eye. Gazing at this huge bird with those magnificent features, most certainly its eyes, I can't help but wonder what it really sees and hears. What might it sense that is beyond my capability? What all it notices that we do not. Perhaps it senses more than we can handle.

This photo was taken from a respectful distance. This observation was as well.

Historically, Aplomado Falcons have been a bit of a birder's enigma. They were extirpated from their former range in part due to the overgrazing, but just as importantly human settlement. Along with human settlement

in a grassland comes trees; that is, additional trees not along native water-shed riparian areas. Certainly, they were small at first. But trees mature, and mature cottonwoods are a magnet for owls—in this case, Great Horned Owls (*Bubo virginianus*).

Is there really a Great Horned Owl problem? Well, not for you and me.

Let it be known that these owls are not the bad guy in all this. These avian native-Texans, as with any of us, need shelter, places to raise their young, and food to nourish both adult and young. It takes a lot of energy to nest, lay eggs, feed nestlings, feed begging fledglings, and ultimately feed themselves.

So what does this have to do with Aplomado Falcons being reintroduced to part of the Great Horned Owl's native range? Great Horned Owls are of course birds of prey. These falcons are as well. Thus, the falcons are potential competitors for food resources within Great Horned Owl feeding territory. The Great Horned Owls are having none of it.

In southern Texas and along the Gulf Coast's barrier islands, Aplomado Falcons are making a remarkable comeback with the help of reintroduction. These areas have low or no Great Horned Owl populations. The bulk of the work is among networks - private, state, and federal - with The Peregrine Fund out of Boise, Idaho coordinating releases of young Aplomados during summer months.

Captive-rearing young Aplomado Falcons for the goal of releasing and reintroduction takes a lot of work and resources. They are individually too valuable, and quite frankly expensive, a resource to be losing birds nightly to Great Horned Owls during captive-release exercises at sites across the Trans-Pecos.

A little bit about the owls: Great Horned Owls are year-round residents in the Marathon Basin, greater Big Bend area, and over much of the continent. We certainly have at least one breeding pair around Marathon and the surrounding Marathon Basin.

This individual pictured could be one of that pair.

The Great Horned Owl is King, and Queen, of the jungle. An absolute apex, top-of-the-food-web predator, the feet and talons on this bird are amazing and impressive in size and strength. Soft, fluffy, and dense-surfaced plumage gives the owl near-silent flight. If you ever find a feather with a rounded, ovoid shape to it, there is a good possibility it is an owl feather depending on some other features. These stealthy-flying Great Horned Owls have excellent senses, most certainly that of hearing. Many owl species have facial discs, which in a way work as satellite auditory receivers. Eyesight is fairly good, but not necessarily supernatural. At night, they still use moonlight to their advantage. One sense that is not so keen is the olfactory system or the sense of smell. The Great Horned Owl is a key and primary predator of skunk species so it kind of works out for them; for us, too. Someone has to do it.

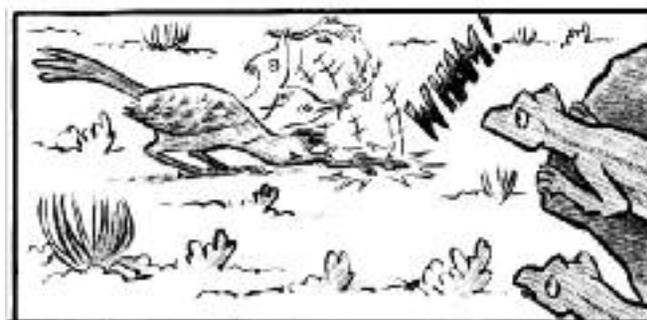
The myriad of habitats that make up the Big Bend region can be viewed as an organism. It breathes, it consumes, it nourishes and takes nourishment. It

is an organism that is a balance, millenia in the making. We who live here are part of that larger "land organism," too. Take pride in it, and responsibility unto it, along with your fellow "cog and wheel." It is a most important and worthy stewardship effort.

If ever any of us need a reminder, step outside. We live in an amazing place, that which is larger than self.

Perhaps one day, we will see the Aplomado Falcon flying this land again. It deserves to. We deserve to.

Gazing at this huge bird with those magnificent features, most certainly its eyes, I can't help but wonder what it really sees and hears. What might it sense that is beyond my capability? Does it notice that we do not? Perhaps it senses more than we can handle.



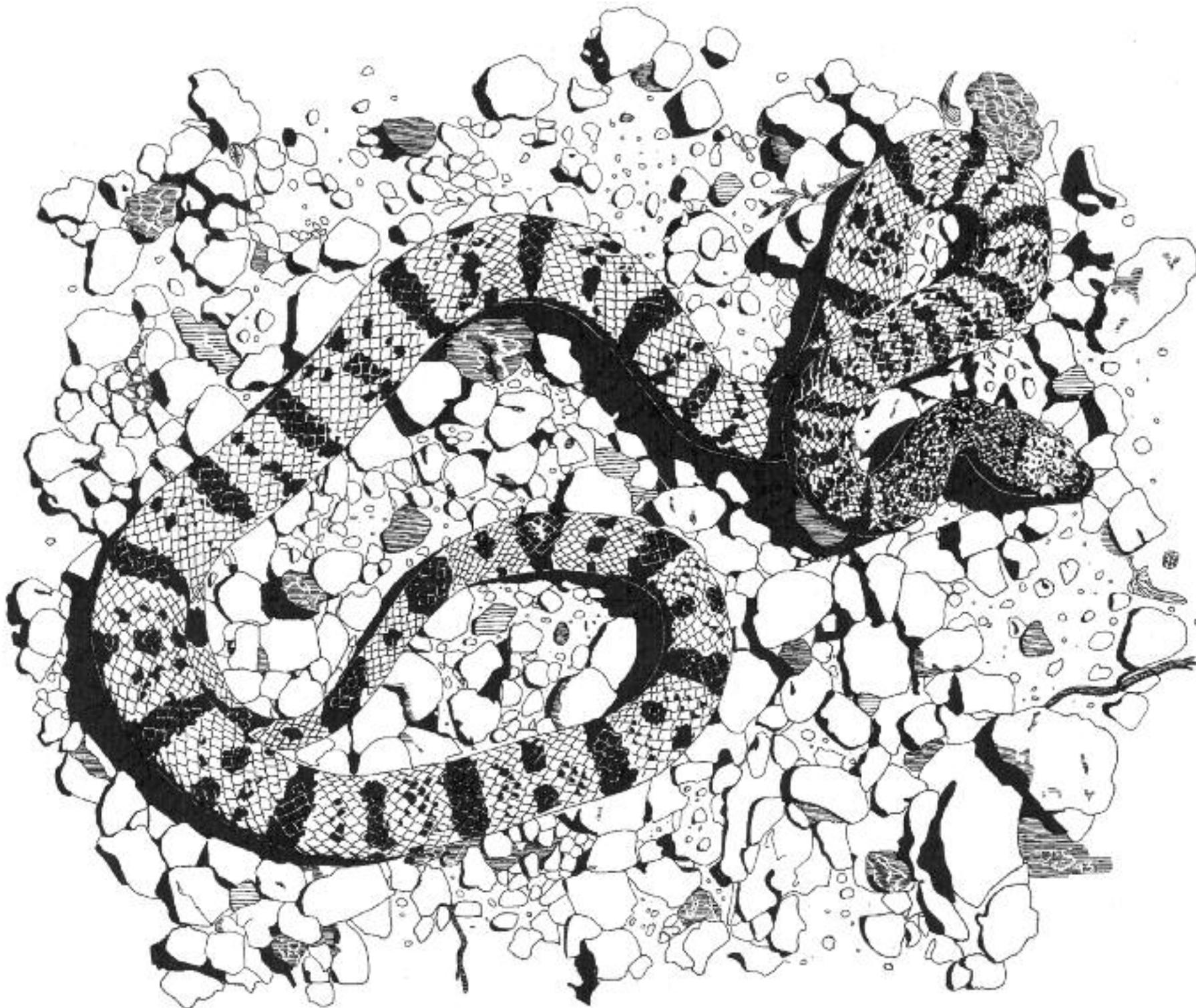
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SNAKE NOTES

by *Craig Trumbower*

If you grew up in Florida in the 1950s and 1960s, then you grew up at a time when your parents introduced you to the dangers of the state's native animals with the frequent, universally standard, lecture on child safety. No one really knows where this lec-

ture originated, but I have my suspicions that June Cleaver and Donna Reed had something to do with it. For those of you that did not grow up in those magical television days of "Leave It to Beaver" and "The Donna Reed Show," June Cleaver and Donna Reed

represented the quintessential "mom" of the time. Middle-class American moms would tune in weekly to these family shows for an almost biblical direction on how to raise your kids and keep them safe.

Mom's lecture on safety usually

included, "Watch out for (the dreaded three) alligators, "bugs" (mosquitoes) and "deadly snakes" (all snakes were deadly). By the way, nowhere in that lecture was a warning about "stranger danger." In fact, as a child of the 1950s, you were taught to obey all adults!

Most Florida boys heeded their mom's warnings and avoided anything to do with snakes. Those same boys learned how to kill a snake and even invented new ways to shoot, stomp, and separate the dreaded head of the serpent.

They learned how to identify the dangerous snakes of Florida by the observation of a "triangle-shaped head," which included the corn snake and water snake (not so much). These same boys learned in Cub Scouts, "Red before yellow kill a fellow, red before black friend of Jack." Evidently none of these boys were named "Jack," and remembering that poem in a moment of self-induced terror was impossible. The result was the immediate mangling of red, yellow, and black colors of many non-venomous scarlet kingsnakes (*Lampropeltis t. elapsoides*) and scarlet snakes (*Cemophora coccinea*). Although this behavior seemed to be normal boy behavior of the time, there were a few of us, like myself, that were led in a different direction by a fascination with the same snake that mom's lecture warned us about.

In the summer of 1955, I was not quite seven years old when I remember my dad standing behind our house in Azalea Park, a suburb of Orlando, Florida. The Major was resplendent standing there in his flight suit, his chiseled jaw flexing as he raised his government issued .45... Bam! bam! bam! ... and it was over for the 78-inch eastern diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus adamanteus*) that had neatly coiled into concentric circles of yellow diamonds that faded into a blur of black serpent. I followed my dad as he slowly approached his target, the air was filled with the smell of gunpowder as he slid the pistol back into its holster. We stood at the edge of the ditch for a long time before dad cringed and with a look of disgust said, "Don't go down there ... probably more around."

I stood there, outlasting the crowd of neighbors that walked over to take a peek, outlasting my friends and other Air Force brats that came and went. I watched as the old man measured the lifeless snake with an old cloth tape measure and said, "Seventy eight inches...six and a half feet, that's a big one." With that said, he pulled out a pocket knife, cut off the snake's rattle and handed it to me. The blood on my hand matched the color splashed over the diamondback. I didn't get it. I felt sorry for the snake. What did he do to

deserve three bullets and why did the old man cut off his rattle?

Every day for the next week I would walk down to the ditch and stare at what was left of this giant snake. It wasn't the first snake my dad had killed and wouldn't be the last, but it was the first animal I remember dying in front of me.

I suppose that day in 1955 was my first snake story...a story of evil...but was it? Or was it a story of fascinating discovery, a story of violence and death (it was), and finally a story that introduced me to a feeling of passion, a feeling that I feel every time my brain attempts to decipher the complexity of color and coil that eventually transfers to snake.

I kept that snake's rattle for years.

It's been well over fifty years since I felt those conflicting feelings, experiencing the death of an animal. That same 10-year-old boy grew up to be an avocational herpetologist with a passion for studying rattlesnakes. With that same life-long study has come a side-light curiosity and interest in why and how snakes generate such an (in most cases) irrational fear. In my mind it seems there are very few land-based creatures in the animal kingdom that precipitate such an array of emotional and physiological responses by humans.

It is a fact that there are very few animals capable of eliminating something as much as a hundred times its own size. Why have some snakes evolved to be capable of that feat? There are various theories that address this but the fact is, we don't know. The study of venoms and toxins is complicated. With all of this being said, I'm sure the fact that we understand the capability of some venomous snakes to deliver a serious and in some cases a lethal bite makes the statement "irrational" in need of correction to the more appropriate word, "rational."

Those of us who call West Texas and more specifically The Trans-Pecos home are also surrounded by a great desert that exudes life. There are more than 50 species of reptiles that share a common ground with us. A few can be considered dangerous under certain circumstances. Rattlesnakes represent most of the few snakes that should command respect for their ability to envenomate a threat to their existence (in most cases human).

I like to say we are blessed with six species of rattlesnakes in our Trans-

Pecos surroundings. The fact remains that they are here and part of our surroundings with each species representing a unique place and role in the environment. These six very different species of rattlesnakes are as follows:

western diamondback rattlesnake

(*Crotalus atrox*)

mojave rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*)

prairie rattlesnake (*Crotalus v. viridis*)

blacktail rattlesnake (*Crotalus ornatus*)

Chihuahuan Desert population,

formally (*Crotalus m. molossus*)

rock rattlesnake (*Crotalus lepidus*)

desert massasauga (*Sistrurus c. edwardsii*)

Although these six species are considered dangerous because of their ability to envenomate a threat, in most cases if left alone they pose little if any danger to humans. I don't encourage the killing of any snakes but in certain cases understand the justifiable homicide of my friends. If a rattlesnake is found in the immediate vicinity of a person's home or animal shelters it indeed can present a danger to humans and animals, especially children. If you are not equipped with the knowledge and skill to safely relocate a venomous snake that presents a direct threat, then in those cases it probably is best to dispose of that snake. With all of this being said I certainly don't advocate the killing of any snake except for rare and special circumstances. These animals are an important part of our unique environment here in the Trans-Pecos, and are a part of the food chain that keep wild animals in a normal and essential balance critical to the stability of nature.

The two species of rattlesnakes that in my experience seem to cause the most problems to humans in West Texas are the western diamondback rattlesnake and the mojave rattlesnake. These two rather common species are often confused for one another and there seems to be an inordinate amount of fear concentrated on the latter of the two. The mojave, or known to many out here as the "mojave green" or "green mojave" can in fact deliver a very dangerous bite because of a high concentration of neurotoxins in its venom. This fact in itself does not lessen the seriousness of a large western diamondback bite. Although in different proportions, all species of rattlesnakes have venom that is a combination of neurotoxins, hemotoxins and hemorrhagins.

The mojave and western diamondback are similar in appearance and are often misidentified. Color alone is not a good way to identify any snake, especially the mojave rattlesnake. Mojaves are not always greenish in color and although some populations are in fact green, many are gray (light or dark), almost black in some higher elevations and even present with a yellowish coloration in some areas. Another problem in using a "green color" to identify mojaves is the fact that our prairie rattlesnakes and blacktail rattlesnakes are often found having various shades of green coloration in their pattern.

It's important to know that a bite by either species of rattlesnake should be considered a medical emergency. It's equally important to understand that there are very few human deaths by snake bite in the United States, including mojave rattlesnake bites.

If bitten by a rattlesnake, you should go directly to your nearest hospital emergency room. It can be helpful to kill the snake that bit you and bring it to the ER with you for identification. Do not freely handle the dead snake.

The old rules of cutting and suctioning venom from a snake bite wound are no longer valid. Neither are the practices of applying a tourniquet or icing the snake bite area.

It's interesting to know that in this country far more humans are killed or seriously injured by activity with horses or dogs than snakes! "Give a snake a break!"

Footnote: The more recent correct spelling of the common name for "Mojave" Rattlesnake is Mohave Rattlesnake. "Mohave" being taken from the Native American term hamakhava, rather than "Mojave" from The Mojave Desert. "Mojave" was used in this article because most people in West Texas know this species as "Mojave" Rattlesnake.

Some of the article Snake Notes by Craig Trumbower was taken from the book *More Than Snake Hunting* by the author.

For more information on Craig Trumbower's book *More Than Snake Hunting* you may contact the author at trumbower@att.net or ECO publishing at ecouniverse.com.



Photo Essay

by *Chloe Peppercorn*



Anil de Muerto



Cenizo



Acacia

Anil de Muerto, *Verbesina encelioides*, also known as Golden Crownbeard is easily overlooked as a roadside ditch weed. Although a member of the sunflower family, it is easily distinguishable from the familiar roadside sunflowers we see in the BB region. With a large percentage of desert wildflowers having yellow blooms, its silvery, grayish-blue hued leaves noticeably stand out against the darker browns and greens of other desert foliage. If in doubt, Anil de Muerto can be recognized by its rotting meat odor, hence the Spanish

name “sunflower of the dead”. Medicinal qualities are first and foremost an anti-inflammatory against symptoms of stress. “Traditional Mexican uses talk of good relief from irritated hemorrhoids and stomach ulcers with a hot cup of tea made from the leaf. Mostly recommended for its external uses, skin inflammation such as sore gums, insect bites and stings, bruises, burns and some skin rashes can benefit from a salve or poultice.

Yerba de la negrita, *Sphaeralcea spp.*, commonly called Globe Mallow, can perform its floral colors in an array of

oranges, pinks, purples, reds and white. Crossed varieties of species as well as environmental conditions can influence these changes, but the properties of the plant are universal. When crushed, the leaves are mucilaginous, which is just another way of saying that it’s SLIMY! In medicinal terms this equates to soothing characteristics. Often used at the onset of an unproductive cough, Globe Mallow is the quintessential tea for a sore throat, and is also said to boost lung immunity in such infections. The tea can be used to soothe urinary and bladder conditions.

It is a good first aid plant to know when out in the wild as it helps to push splinters and thorns to the skin’s surface, and can reduce swelling in sprains.

Cenizo, *Leucophyllum frutescens*, or Purple Sage, is a plant not to go unrecognized! A bushy shrub with gray silvery leaves and reddish purple flowers, it acts more like an evergreen, never really losing its leaves during the cold months. Plain and simple, Cenizo has been used for decades throughout Texas and the Chihuahuan desert as the basic cold and flu tea. Primarily it



Globe Mallow



Beebush



Sumac

works by encouraging the body to sweat which is the starting point of breaking a fever, and secondly is a mild sedative which allows the person to sleep during dis-ease. The taste is quite pleasant and can also be drunk for enjoyment.

Catclaw Acacia, *Acacia greggii*, can look a lot like a Mesquite except for its yellow puff ball flowers. There are several species of Acacia and they can all be used interchangeably. Its most notable property is astringency, which is characterized by the tightening affect it has on tissue. This being said,

Acacia is your remedy the morning after a long night out on the town by easing stomach nausea, vomiting and hangover. Also a good plant for first aid, it is an affective hemostat and antimicrobial wound wash. All around a good plant to know.

Pajul del Norte, with its several varieties, is universally called Desert Sumac, or just Sumac. There are other common names for native species such as Evergreen Sumac, and Little Leaf Sumac, but since their medicinal qualities are interchangeable, just plain Sumac will correctly suit. Probably

most notable as a wild food, it is also aptly called Lemonade Berry. A cooling and refreshing beverage for hot days can be made by steeping a handful of fresh berries in one gallon of clean water, and sweetening with honey. The berries can also be dried for later use. The leaves have many more medicinal uses than do the berries. To name a few, it is a superb disinfectant and soft tissue sore tightener for nostrils, lips, mouth, and nursing mother's nipples, as well as general burns, scrapes and cuts.

Oreganillo, *Aloysia wrightii*, also

known as Beebush and Desert Oregano. Ahhh, the smell of Beebush warmed by the sun! Appropriately named, bees love the sweet scent too. Although sweet to the smell, it is an aromatic bitter tea, and drunk before a meal can aid in the digestive processes. Or, if indigestion and bloating follows a meal, a cup of tea will likewise aid in moving these symptoms along.

The First

More than 100 years ago, in 1911, most people in the world – and even in the U.S. where it was invented – had never seen a real airplane. But that year, the Big Bend area was a witness to aviation history when the first cross-country flight came through from San Antonio and Del Rio to Sanderson. It then passed through Marathon, stopping at Alpine and continuing on to Marfa and Valentine, before going on to Sierra Blanca and later El Paso on its way to California.

The ever-present cigar clinched in his teeth, Cal Rodgers passed through West Texas sitting on the lower wing of his Wright EX Flyer less than eight years after Wilbur and Orville Wright's first official "heavier than air powered flight" at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina.

There have been recent reports in the last year that the Wrights may not have been the first in the air, but back in 1911 there was little doubt that the Wrights indeed were first.

The Connecticut Legislature passed a bill in the summer of 2013, pushed by Governor Dannel P. Malloy, officially proclaiming that on August 14, 1901 – more than two years before the Wright brothers' accomplishment – Gustave Whitehead flew 1.5 miles, 50 feet above the ground, near Bridgeport, Connecticut, in his plane "The Condor," powered by flapping wings of canvas stretched over wooden "bat-like" wings.

It would not be until December 17, 1903, before the much shorter 852-foot, 59-second flight at Kitty Hawk. But documentation for the Whitehead feat is lacking and Smithsonian Air and Space Museum Senior Curator Tom Crouch was quoted as saying he believed the Condor "never left the ground." The alleged craft seemed to be an "ornithopter," a machine that produces lift and thrust by flapping wings like a bird. Today, more than a century later, man still has not successfully developed that technology.

There were other "first flight" reports before Kitty Hawk, including at least one near West Texas, but they also lacked significant documentation.

Cal Rodgers was the scion of two preeminent US Naval families. He was the great-grandson of Commodores John Rogers and Matthew Calbraith Perry, who were close associates throughout their naval careers. The latter was credited with bringing Western civilization to Japan in 1850.

Publisher William Randolph Hearst had offered a \$50,000 prize to the first person to fly coast to coast, stipulating the flight would have to be accomplished in 30 days. Cal was attracted to the Hearst prize and, with the support of his wife Mabel, decided to go for it. Having won the biggest purse in a Chicago air meet, Rodgers approached J. Ogden Armour of the Armour Company, who had become a Rodgers fan. Armour had developed a new grape-flavored soft drink called Vin Fiz and a flying billboard seemed like an excellent vehicle for a national advertising campaign.

There was no prohibition against repairing the airplane or crashing along the way to qualify for the Hearst prize. Cal did plenty of both, and very little of the original Wright Flyer was part of the machine that finally dipped its wheels in the Pacific Ocean on December 10, 1911, more than a month after Cal's ceremonial official end at Pasadena, California, and some three months after he left Sheepshead Bay, New York.

He had been the first private citizen to buy a Wright Flyer and decided on the Hearst prize after winning \$11,285, the top money at the Chicago Air Meet—which he accomplished just after learning to fly and getting Pilot's License Number 49, after 90 minutes of flight time. He left New York on September 17 and headed west for Chicago, one of the few requirements for the Hearst prize. With no such thing as aerial navigation

aids – or even road maps – Cal followed the Erie Railroad, whose crews put out white cloth on the correct track after a switch so he would know which to follow.

Everywhere Rodgers flew on his cross-country flight, he drew huge crowds, even when he just passed over a town without landing. It calls to mind the excitement we all felt in the early space age when man was first walking on the moon and some of the flights leading up to it, including Alan



Shepard's first sub-orbital flight. Today, humans in space engender the same enthusiasm as routine airplane flights did a century ago.

After Chicago, Cal and his three-to six-car train carrying his support team turned south toward Texas. Aboard the train were Mabel and Cal's mother, Maria R. Sweitzer. The support crew included Armour representatives, members of the news media and "mechanicians," including Wright's chief mechanic Charlie Tailor, who stayed with the team until he had to leave from Sanderson to attend to a family emergency on the West Coast.

One element of the train was a "hangar car"—a baggage car painted white and emblazoned with the Vin Fiz logo—with a supply of spare parts and tools to keep the flyer going. Also on board was a Palmer-Singer auto-

mobile for ground transportation at the many stops along the way.

Along the route, women sold souvenir post cards and the first "air mail" – letters officially carried aboard the Vin Fiz aircraft. Some of them, in fact, were so transported, although many were just ceremonial.

Once in Texas, Cal took a wrong turn when a passing freight train obscured the white cloth at Whitesboro and he sailed blithely west some 30 miles before correcting the error. The wrong turn gave the people of Blanco an unexpected treat.

After getting back on track, he later landed at what today is a prime residential area called Ryan Place south of downtown Fort Worth. He overnights in "Cow Town" and the next day turned back east 30 miles to Dallas where he made an unscheduled appearance

at an air show at Fair Park. On the way, Cal met an eagle in flight which flew up to see the strange bird that was invading his air space. Apparently satisfied, the two fliers went their separate ways.

Cal then flew to San Antonio before turning west toward the country we all know so well. At Terrell County, Cal stopped at Dryden to take on oil that was getting low and then flew the 20 miles west to what would years later be known as the "Cactus Capital of Texas."

Cal had one fairly serious crash while trying to leave Sanderson and then was forced down with engine trouble in Fort Hancock, causing minor damage to the aircraft in the landing. In between the two, he sailed right through West Texas

continued on page 27

Coal Train

Come a long Coal
Train a blowing
thru town mph
so fast you can't
count the cars
No caboose Just
poof the SOB go
Taking the load
to be burn back
East 4 engines
103 cars return
empty and we
wonder why
the climate is
a warming but
the Coal Train
keeps a coming
Nobody seem to
care much at all.

Dark as Dead

Then there was
the night Dark
as dead I lay in
the bed with
my busy brain
Listen to trains
blow Thunder
rattle No rain
Heat lightning
streak across
the sky from
here to there
Open my eyes
Couldn't sleep
If my life was
on the line On
this high dry
dusty hill the
Far Edge of
West Texas
Near to Mexico.

Making Hole

Walking to town
looking down
Like I always do

Stopped at an
ant bed in an
Asphalt street

Bunch of ants a
running to &
fro making hole

As they say for
The Man make a
hole coming thru

Or as they say
in the oil patch
Making hole

Stepped around
the ants left them
alone making hole

Voices of the BIG BEND

Jim Glendinning continues the tradition of his popular radio interviews from "Voices of the Big Bend," an original production of KRTS, Marfa Public Radio. The program continues to be broadcast occasionally throughout the region at 93.5 FM.

Story and photographs by Jim Glendinning

JOE ESPY WILLIAMS

Wearing two hats, old and new Marfa, simultaneously and with success, Joe Espy Williams relates his busy life story. He was born on July 31, 1951 in Fort Stockton and grew up in Sanderson. His father, John T. Williams, owned wool and mohair warehouses in Sanderson and Alpine. His mother Tommie Espy also had another son, Travis, who works in Indonesia in the furniture business, and a daughter, Kay, now deceased.

Williams' earliest memories are of nature, sheep and cattle, an "absolutely wonderful experience." After early schooling in Sanderson he moved in 1964 to the New Mexico Military Academy in Roswell, NM, where he learned discipline and had "one of the best private educations you can buy." He graduated in 1969 and went to the University of Texas in Austin, but quit after a year and moved to Australia.

He says this radical move to a distant continent was due to there being no future for him in the wool and mohair business and also to his grandfather's refusal to teach him the cattle business. He thrived in his new home; Americans were popular, and his work ethic was rewarded. Arriving in 1970, he first worked in the outback, moved to Sydney for a city job, then to Hunter Valley, NSW, planting vineyards.

Williams returned to Texas in 1975 to help his mother move into an inherited property near Wild Rose Pass, Star Mountain Ranch. Five years later he returned to Australia. This time he moved to Queensland and formed a partnership. He started



JOE ESPY WILLIAMS
Fort Davis

buying land, trading in cattle and improving the herd with practices learned in Texas. His partner bought him out in 1987, when Williams realized he needed to return home to help his mother, now in poor health.

In 1989, Williams joined the Superior Livestock Video Authority, a brand new innovative enterprise, as an independent contractor. This company, selling livestock via video, has since become the largest of its kind in the world, and Williams has been extremely successful. He continues this work today, driving 90,000 miles annually. This is the "old hat" he wears.

The "new hat" is one he discovered in Marfa when he bought Big Bend Coffee Roasters in 2008. In cof-



GINGER HILLERY
Alpine

fee he recognized a sustainable and profitable product totally appropriate to the new Marfa. He moved into the old Pierce Motors showroom, and hired able assistants of whom he is extremely proud. Sales of 300 pounds weekly at the start have increased to 2,400 pounds.

Big Bend Coffee Roasters coffee is certified organic, and subscribes to Fair Trade principles. Williams also donates to three tri-county non-profits, as well as Casa Hogar children's shelter in Ojinaga. Food Pantry in Marfa, in particular, gets his money and his time.

Williams lives for his work, and loves the fact that he can wear both hats in the Big Bend country, while living in Fort Davis as well as keeping



E. DAN KLEPPER
Marathon

in touch with his two sons, Joe and James, who live in Austin and Washington, D.C. respectively.

GINGER HILLERY

Born in Oklahoma City on November 11, 1966, the eldest of three daughters, Ginger Rowe always considered herself a Texan. "I belong to Texas," she says. Her father John, a firefighter, and mother, Fran, a professional artist, moved to Lampasas, Texas, in 1977, where Ginger planned her future as she attended local schools.

By age 11, she had developed four passions: riding, writing, reading and cooking. She still retains today cooking recipes she compiled in the third

grade. At age 15, she had her first experience as a missionary, visiting Morelia, Mexico helping to convert a hacienda into a community center. She came back a changed person.

Graduating from high school as a straight "A" student in 1985, she enrolled at Mary Hardin-Baylor University, the oldest in Texas, and then switched to Howard Payne University, graduating Summa Cum Laude in 1989 with a BA in Spanish and English. During vacation she taught English in Ciudad Acuna, Mexico.

After graduation, she went straight to Big Bend National Park, which she had visited first at age 12 when her mother was painting Big Bend landscapes. She stayed for 12 months, waiting tables at Chisos Mountains Lodge. The vast and raw landscape was and remains a magical place for her, larger than life.

In 1990 Ginger enrolled at SW Baptist Theological Seminary. There she met fellow-student Philip Hillery, who had travelled the world and quoted poetry. They were married in Fort Worth in December 1991; their first baby, Thomas, was born in 1993.

The couple spent 1993-1995 in Japan as missionaries. Ginger taught English and cooking classes in a small port city and sang in a choir. They were amazed at the friendships they were able to develop. Returning to Central Texas, Philip worked as a chaplain and later, in Fort Worth, turned to renovating a property in Fort Worth. Their children Patrick, Maggie, Rose and Nora were born 1995-2003.

The family moved to New Jersey in 2002 to look after Philip's father. The children were enrolled in public schools. In 2004, Philip, aged 51, died from heart failure, a chronic condition which he refused to allow to divert him from an active life. The family moved to a farm in Virginia, 45 acres of rural splendor. Ginger home-schooled the children, grew produce for their table, tended livestock and resumed milling grain and baking bread, which she had previously learned in Fort Worth.

In 2010, pulled back to Texas once more, this time by her granddad's health, Ginger decided to put down roots. Alpine was chosen; she opened the Taste and See Bakery, and waited. It worked. The whole point about

milling as well as baking is that the natural, wholesome ingredients can be retained in the process. Alpine's population seems to agree. Now, producing all the bread she can handle, she feels she is also continuing her ministerial experience. During her recent absence for health reasons, she was overwhelmed by support from a community that clearly cherishes her.

E. DAN KLEPPER

Born in San Antonio on June 10, 1956, the second of three children of William and Nancy Klepper, Edwin Dan Klepper had an early introduction to the great outdoors, which would continue indefinitely. His father William Dan Klepper was an outdoors writer and photographer for 40 years, principally for the *San Antonio Express-News*. His mother, Nancy, held a doctoral degree in biology and retired from teaching at the age of 75. The whole family would typically travel as a group during an assignment for the paper, perhaps going to the Gulf Coast or on a fishing trip with baby E. Dan housed in an outdoors travel crib with a lid.

Klepper did not take well to school life, and completed high school (Wendell Holmes High School in San Antonio) in three years in order to finish early, graduating in 1973. He had already started taking photographs at age 14, using an old Minolta camera, and considered himself an artist. He was accepted in the Fine Arts program at the University of North Texas in Denton, graduating in 1977.

While at Denton he was introduced to video work, and loved the challenge of creating special effects electronically on tape. In 1978 he drove to Chicago and, on the basis of his video work, got a scholarship to the Art Institute of Chicago for their Masters program. Living in a \$90-a-month basement apartment and working day jobs, he spent the next few years learning and improving his video skills.

There was as yet no work for video artists so he started writing occasional magazine articles. In 1994, he was awarded a Fulbright Grant to continue video studies in Europe, but turned it down in order to go back to Texas, where his father was dying of cancer. In Texas he continued writing and took a part-time job as a park ranger

of Kickapoo State Natural Area. In 1996, he wrote *Wolf Walking*, a natural history of wolves, followed by *Ghostdancing*, about the Native American spiritual movement in 1998, and *Spirit Walker: J.D. Challenger and His Art* in 2005.

The Klepper family had always travelled locally and sometimes abroad: first to Copper Canyon in 1972 and later to Columbia. Klepper inherited this passion for travel. In 1982 he married Julie Jacobs, and they travelled regularly over a 10 year period including to the U.K., before splitting up.

By the late 1990s he realized he needed to add photography to his writing. In 2000 he moved to Marathon, Texas where he established a gallery for his photography-based art that he also does on commission. He started writing regularly

with accompanying photos for *Texas Parks and Wildlife* magazine, and later for *Texas Highways*. His most recent article, in December 2013, is titled *Big Bend Winterland*. In 2009 he wrote the popular *100 Classic Hikes in Texas*, by Mountaineers Books. His next project is *75 Classic Rides in Texas*, which should take about a year. Nourished by the great outdoors of West Texas, his long apprenticeship in art, photography and writing has paid off.



CHINATI

The Chinati Foundation is a contemporary art museum founded by the artist Donald Judd. The collection includes work by twelve artists and focuses on permanent, large-scale installations emphasizing the relationship between art, architecture, and the surrounding landscape.

The museum is open Wednesday - Sunday. Tours are free of charge to residents of the tri-county area.

SELF-GUIDED VIEWING

Donald Judd's 15 works in concrete, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Wednesday - Sunday

Donald Judd's 100 works in mill aluminum, 2:00 - 4:00 PM, Friday - Sunday

TOURS

Most of the collection is available by guided tour only. Please reserve in advance to guarantee your spot.

Collection Tour, 10:00 AM, Wednesday - Sunday

Includes all works in the permanent collection and all special exhibitions.

Selections Tour, 11:00 AM, Wednesday - Sunday

Includes works by Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, and John Chamberlain

UPCOMING EVENTS

Winter Art Classes for ages 5 - 13

January 2 - 5, 2014

FREE

Sunset at Chinati

February 9, 2014

5 - 6:30 PM

General Admission \$10, Free for museum members and area residents

Spring Break Art Classes for ages 5 - 13

March 10 - 14, 2014

FREE

1 Cowley Row Marfa Texas 79843 www.chinati.org 432 729 4362

Texas Valentines Take Flight Valentine Travel Class Plan 2014 Trip to

ITALY

by Carolyn Miller
and Sara Ranzau



Demetrio Navarrete, Kyle Kerley, Lorraine Rojas with Maralea and Albert Miller and Maria Elena Carrasco in New Zealand 2010

We have all helped kids in our communities with fundraisers at one time or another, but living in Valentine, Texas makes it even tougher. The six junior and senior students who make up the Valentine Travel Class are working toward the trip of a lifetime – going to Italy in the summer of 2014! As members of one of the smallest school districts in Texas, with a total enrollment of 32, these students have learned to value one another as well as their community.

The Valentine Travel Class is legendary in this part of Texas. Since the 1960s, almost every student who has graduated from Valentine High School participated in the “trip of a lifetime.” Many current Valentine teachers participated in the trip when they were students. Current teacher and coach Bianca Porrás says, “My class went to Aruba in 1998. So



many life lessons came out of this unique experience. After two years of hard work, the trip of our dreams was the sweetest reward. Memories that last a lifetime are made and for some it

is the ultimate goodbye to Valentine High School.”

Many alumni of Valentine have returned to sponsor trips as well. Retired teacher Viola Calderon, who went to Washington, D.C. as a junior, recalls her time as a sponsor: “The last trip Chuy and I sponsored was to Hawaii. We went to all the islands on a cruise ship. The kids got to go to Pearl Harbor.” She and her husband, alumnus, teacher, and Mayor of Valentine Chuy Calderon also took several groups to Washington, D.C.

Originally, trips were to the Texas coast, Mexico, and American landmarks. Through the years, students and sponsors have expanded travel plans to countries all over the globe, a world away from their small ranching community. “I valued every moment because it was an opportunity of a lifetime, and I’m very happy with the place we decided

to go (Costa Rica). It’s not like you get to go out of the country a lot and for some, this will be the only time,” last year’s valedictorian Daniel Garnsey says of his trip in the summer of 2012.

In 2010, one of the smallest groups, only three students, raised money to visit the other side of the world: New Zealand. Lorraine Rojas, the only girl on the trip, still dreams of her time in the land of the kiwi: “We chose New Zealand as our junior/senior trip. We were there for two amazing weeks! We had a blast. I’m still on cloud nine from that trip. Amazing.” Their experiences have helped to shape the people they are becoming as they go through college and begin to face life head on.

They have traveled to destinations such as Jamaica, St. Kitts, Hawaii, Cozumel, Cancun, Costa Rica, Washington D.C., Australia, Mexico City, and New Zealand. Many of these students had never traveled outside of West Texas, much less out of North America. These trips provide experiences they have only read about. They allow the students to participate in activities completely foreign to the

dry desert land of West Texas. Current member and senior Daniel Koch is looking forward to the trip to Italy. “I am ready to see how things are done over there, and I’m ready to try a new cuisine.”

This trip can truly change lives because the students learn to reach beyond their comfort zones and set loftier goals. “The experience that these kids have had is beyond anything some of them will ever have again,” former sponsor Maralea Miller said of trips she and her husband Albert sponsored. “I am so proud to have been a sponsor and so proud when the kids come back with memories and tell me the things I taught them that they use now.” The trip is not just a way for students to have an amazing vacation, it truly is a way for students to learn lifelong skills.

The path to such a unique experience is neither a short nor an easy one. There is a strict “no pass, no travel” rule in effect for all of the members. Students who fail two grading periods are removed from the trip roster and not allowed to rejoin. The policy is not only a way to keep students on top of



Costa Rica trip 2012, left to right: 2 Daniel Garnsey, Nicole Campbell, Adriana Rangel, Cayenne Webb, Kimberly Morton and Aaron Morton

their responsibilities in the classroom, it is also a way to help them learn the value of truly working toward a dream. Rye Webb, junior and current member says, "I am very excited for the trip because it will pay off all the hard work we put in to the past two years of raising money."

The students have to work together in a variety of situations and become more of a family than just teenagers doing a fundraiser. There have been tears of joy and stress, sweat from the physical effort of preparing and serving the annual Valentine Homecoming lunch and dinner, and even a little blood while the students learned to properly use knives in the kitchen or work the pin at a roping. Current member and junior Latham Garnsey sums up his experience simply, "I have enjoyed working with my fellow travel class members. Our hard work will pay off, and we will have a great time."

Events are not always "work;" they are often filled with laughter and joy as the students and sponsors interact with the community and develop stronger relationships with one another. "I like doing travel class because I get to work with and get closer to my classmates. I

get to help out the community in some way, and I get to work on my social skills," says current member and senior, Maria Borunda.

Each event has also become important to the close-knit and incredibly supportive community of Valentine. An annual tradition, Travel Class members sell, bake and deliver pies for the holidays. At every home basketball game, Travel Class members, sponsors and supporters can be found cooking hamburgers for the fans. For many members of the community, the chance to share a meal with the students and see them working for a goal is rewarding. "Being in Travel Class is a great opportunity especially since we live in a small town. Ever since I was little, I always dreamed of traveling to Europe and now my dream is becoming reality." For current member and junior Gabriela Tarango, she is close to fulfilling a life goal.

They work for two years to reach their dreams and they understand that every hamburger and raffle ticket sold, every Valentine and Mother's Day dinner, every pie made during the holidays, every hot day of working at ropings, and every basketball game they

work means they are one step closer to their dream trip. "I'm super excited about our trip and I can't wait for summer to get here. I have no idea what to do over there, but I'm trusting that our sponsors will make sure it is fun. All I know, is that I want to have tons of fun, and I want to have the best time of my life," says current member and junior Enrique Navarrete.

For six high school students it is not always a clear path to raise money. Since the school is so small and currently only has the high school boys' basketball team, they have had to become creative in fundraising ventures. Raffles are a normal part of raising money and in the fall of 2013 the group raffled off a Brangus Heifer, custom etched drinking glasses, and anything else they felt could make money. They also held a bake sale in Ft. Davis, raising over \$900. The students, parents and Valentine community came out in force with many community members donating items. "This community never fails to amaze me in their support and endless giving for the students," sponsor Sara Ranzau said of the backing the Travel Class receives from members of the community.

Although they continue to raise funds, these students have still not met their financial goal and the bookings must be made soon. If you are interested in helping these students achieve their dream, please contact:

Valentine Travel Class sponsor Sara Ranzau
sranzau@valentineisd.com
Mail donations to
Valentine Travel Class,
Valentine ISD,
PO Box 188,
Valentine, TX 79854 or
call (432) 467-2671.

The parents and supporters of Travel Class also see the benefits of the experience for the students of Valentine. "In a remote little town off the beaten path in West Texas, our kids who participate in the Travel Class have an awesome opportunity to travel and see the world," Bill Hoff said of his time working with the students. These students are learning things they cannot learn from reading, sitting in a classroom, or listening to someone else's stories. They are learning to stand on their own feet and face disappointments and unexpected joys with their heads held high. "Valentine is blessed to be able to have this opportunity for the students, because it really is a once in a lifetime experience," says 2012 trip member Nicole Campbell.



APACHE LAST STAND AND CAMP HOLLAND

In this vicinity, June 12, 1880, the Apaches made their last stand in Presidio County when four Pueblo Indian scouts of General Benj. H. Grierson, U.S.A. fought and defeated 20 Apache warriors.

Erected by the State of Texas 1936

As the small detachment of Tigua Indian scouts were preparing to leave their campsite near Viejo Pass in the Vieja Mountains, they were fired upon by an estimated 20 Apaches. The detachment, under the command of First Lieutenant Frank Mills, 24th Infantry, was en route from Fort Bliss to Fort Davis to equip the scouts. They had found and followed an Apache trail into Viejo Canyon, where they camped for the night before the surprise attack (which Lt. Mills reported as taking place on June 11 – his report does not mention the size of his force.

The skirmish lasted some four hours. Lt. Mills reported, “I sent a detachment to occupy a height commanding the position of the attacking Indians, and when these men opened fire the hostilities [*sic.*] hastily withdrew.” The only casualty reported was Tigua scout sergeant Simon Olguin killed early in the fight. One

horse had been killed, two wounded badly enough to be put down and one injured mule was abandoned. Lt. Mills did not pursue the hostiles as his detachment was not properly armed and low on ammunition.

The Tigua Indians were settled in the El Paso area by the Spaniards fleeing the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, either as captives, allies, or both, from their original home at Isleta Pueblo near Albuquerque, New Mexico. They were friendly with the Americans and traditional enemies of the Apaches.

Lt. Mills continued on toward Fort Davis, by way of the stage stations at El Muerto and Barrel Springs, where he met a detachment of 20 troopers of Company K, 10th Cavalry, sent from Fort Davis to meet him. Second Lieutenant Robert D. Read, in command of the troops, decided to try and locate the hostile band, but lost the trail due to heavy rains.

It was first thought that the band

was part of the Warm Springs Apache leader Victorio's band expected to cross into Texas from Mexico and causing a flurry of activity by the U.S. military in the area. However, it was later thought that the hostiles were an independent band responsible for an attack on a wagon train and stagecoach in Bass Canyon near present-day Van Horn.

Victorio's mixed band of mostly Warm Springs and Mescalero Apaches was soon driven back into Mexico, where he was killed by Mexican forces and his band killed, captured or scattered. This effectively ended Indian hostilities in far West Texas, leaving the area safe for cattlemen and other settlers until the Mexican Revolution of 1910 began to spill across the Rio Grande.

By 1915, Mexican bandits and some revolutionary forces were taking advantage of the fighting to raid ranches in Texas. The U.S Army sent troops to protect the border. A number of outposts were established along the river in the Big Bend area.

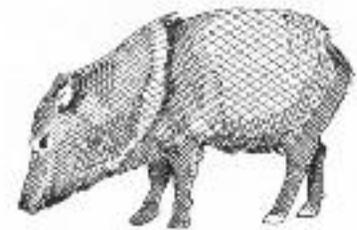
Camp Holland was established in the vicinity of the battle site near the pass in 1917 as a base camp for Colonel George T. Langhorne's 8th Cavalry troops in the western sector of the Big Bend. Supplies arrived by train to Valentine, then were carried

by pack train to “Jackass Camp” about a mile from Camp Holland and over the mountains by way of Viejo Pass to the outposts along the Rio Grande. It became a garrison post in 1918 following the bandit raid on the Brite and Nevill ranches.

The Brite Ranch was attacked by some 28 Mexican bandits on Christmas day in 1917. A number of people gathered for the holiday were besieged in the home, the store was looted, horses were stolen and three men were killed by the bandits who fled at the approach of a posse from Marfa. The Nevill Ranch raid took place on March 25, 1918, when 50 bandits crossed the Rio Grande and attacked Ed Nevill's home, killing the housekeeper and Nevill's son Glenn. They were “shot to pieces, then beaten with rifles and clubs.” This raid was blamed on the notorious outlaw Chico Cano. American troops followed the bandits into Mexico, killing some 30 of them (along with a few innocent villagers). This was the last large-scale raid in the Big Bend.

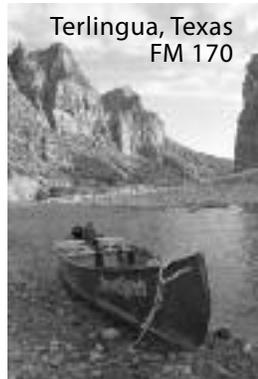
Camp Holland was not occupied after 1921. Today the barracks, blacksmith shop, several small officers' quarters and the Apache skirmish marker stand on private ranch land west of Valentine, unused and slowly returning to the earth. They are mute reminders of troubled times.

Note: This site is on private land. Please respect the landowners and do not trespass.



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Book Review

by L. G. Lindsay

Marie Blazek's memoir, *Let Go of the Rope*, examines her lifelong quest to find meaning and fulfillment in the hardscrabble events which shaped her life. Marie's odyssey takes her down an unconventional path, some steps of which she chose deliberately while others remained stubbornly beyond her control.

Born in 1947 in a small East Texas town, Marie was raised by parents who showed little outward affection. Unable to relate with family members or with peers at school, Marie attributes her perennial self-doubt and rebellious nature to an unsatisfying early home life. Not having found common ground even with classmates at college, Marie immersed herself in her studies and attained a degree in Latin Studies.

Reaching adulthood during the tumultuous and nonconformist Age of Aquarius in the late 1960s, Marie experimented like so many of her contemporaries with social mores and conventions. She made pottery and lived communally as a "hippie." After the first of her two marriages failed, she yearned to find deeper meaning. Grief-stricken following the death of her first child, Marie pursued in earnest her quest for meaning. Her work as a potter was punctuated by seven years as a public school teacher, a position which she found to be deeply fulfilling.

Social alienation marked Marie's early and middle years. She was adrift at a time of enormous cultural upheaval. While apolitical in her assessments Marie is clear about the low esteem

in which she holds her cultural origins: "I simply can't relate much to ancestors. Let's see, as a youngster, there was Catholicism, sexism, classism, consumerism, and Campbell's soup." There is not much polemic, however, in Marie's writing. For the most part she eschews making social or political criticism, i.e., she throws no stones. Marie's concerns are not about this world, and, for that matter, not about the next world either. She seeks lasting truth, and she finds it in exploring her inner self, in scaling mountains, and in pursuing close personal friendships.

The leitmotiv in Marie's autobiography is spiritual quest in which Buddhism serves as her guide. She explains how she was influenced, in turn, by Taoism, meditation, sweat lodges, yoga, and by Eastern philosophies. A recurrent theme in her memoir is that the true nature of existence is filled with "Dukha," which is the Buddhist term for suffering, anxiety, and stress.

In her strongest writing the author describes how she frequently shuttled back and forth from Marfa, Texas to Tepoztlan, Morelos, where she finds in Mexico a magic that long had eluded her. We glimpse Marie straddling two cultures. She is a single, sexagenarian gringa who attains maybe not enlightenment but certainly a sense of growing contentment. Marie is entranced by the color and vibrancy of a small, Mexican town. She is elated to find locals who embrace the present, demonstrating mindfulness, and who take solace in simple things.

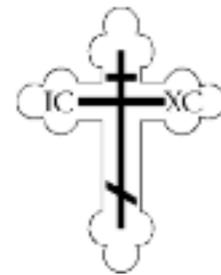
Marie is unabashed about being estranged continued on page 27

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Winter is the season to curl up under an afghan with a hot toddy, some pumpkin bread and a good book. Victoria at Front Street Books, Alpine, helped me put this list together: recent releases by local authors. Marfa Books, Marfa has a good selection as well. Reading's so nice, you'll forget the ice!

Craig Trumbower, *More than Snake Hunting*

Rawles Williams, *Boquillas Crossing*

John De Mere, *Terlingua Heat*

Marie Blazek, *Let Go the Rope*

Pat Seawell, *Big Bend Schoolhouse and A Surprise in the Park*

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Masie Lee, *Like a Stink in a Whirlwind*

Lonn Taylor, *Texas, My Texas*

Jane Larremore, *Self-portrait of a Texas Cowboy: Stories Told and Illustrated by Brian Larremore*

Bath Riots

by Danielle Gallo

It is not common knowledge in West Texas that it was accepted government practice to corral all Mexicans and “second class citizens” wishing to enter the United States across the Mexican border and cause them to strip, be shaved and be doused with chemicals before they were allowed to continue on their way—which for most of them was to work, as day laborers and housekeepers.

The madness that was taken as a matter of course along the Texas/Mexico border for almost half a century began in 1916, as the U.S. was preparing to enter World War I. As so often happens in times of war, patriotism mingled with anti-foreign sentiment ran wild through the population at large—sauerkraut became liberty cabbage and frankfurters became hot dogs. It was in January of 1917 that the Mexican border at El Paso closed with a bang: for the first time anyone entering the U.S. was required to have a passport, take a literacy test and pay an eight dollar head tax. It was also the year that the United States Public Health Service published its *Manual for the Physical Inspection of Aliens*, outlining procedures for the exclusion of “undesirables” from the United States—from homosexuals and “physical defectives” to contract laborers and anyone over the age of 16 who was illiterate.

1917 was also the year that El Paso mayor Tom Lea, Sr. saw the opening of his grand disinfection plant on the border. Lea was mortally afraid of contracting typhus, and was forever sending telegraphs to Washington, D.C. asking permission to quarantine the city. (There were in the years of Mayor Lea’s term fewer than ten cases of typhus in the region.) In June of 1916 he wrote to Rupert Blue, the Surgeon General: “Hundreds of dirty lousey (*sic*) destitute Mexicans arriving in El Paso daily/will undoubtedly bring and spread typhus unless a quarantine is placed at once.” In the summer of 1916 he sent health inspectors into Chihuahuita and other south El Paso

communities. Wherever lice were found, the inhabitants were forcibly deloused and the adobe huts were simply demolished. Hundreds of homes were destroyed and entire city blocks wiped out. The *El Paso Times* remarked that “Those places were cleaned up and disease stamped out”—in spite of the fact that in visiting over 5,000 homes, the health inspectors had uncovered nothing more than one case of chicken pox, two cases of typhus, one case of rheumatism and one case of tuberculosis.

Lea obtained permission to build his disinfection plant in 1916, and the doors opened on January 23, 1917. Dr. B.J. Lloyd, the U.S. Public Health

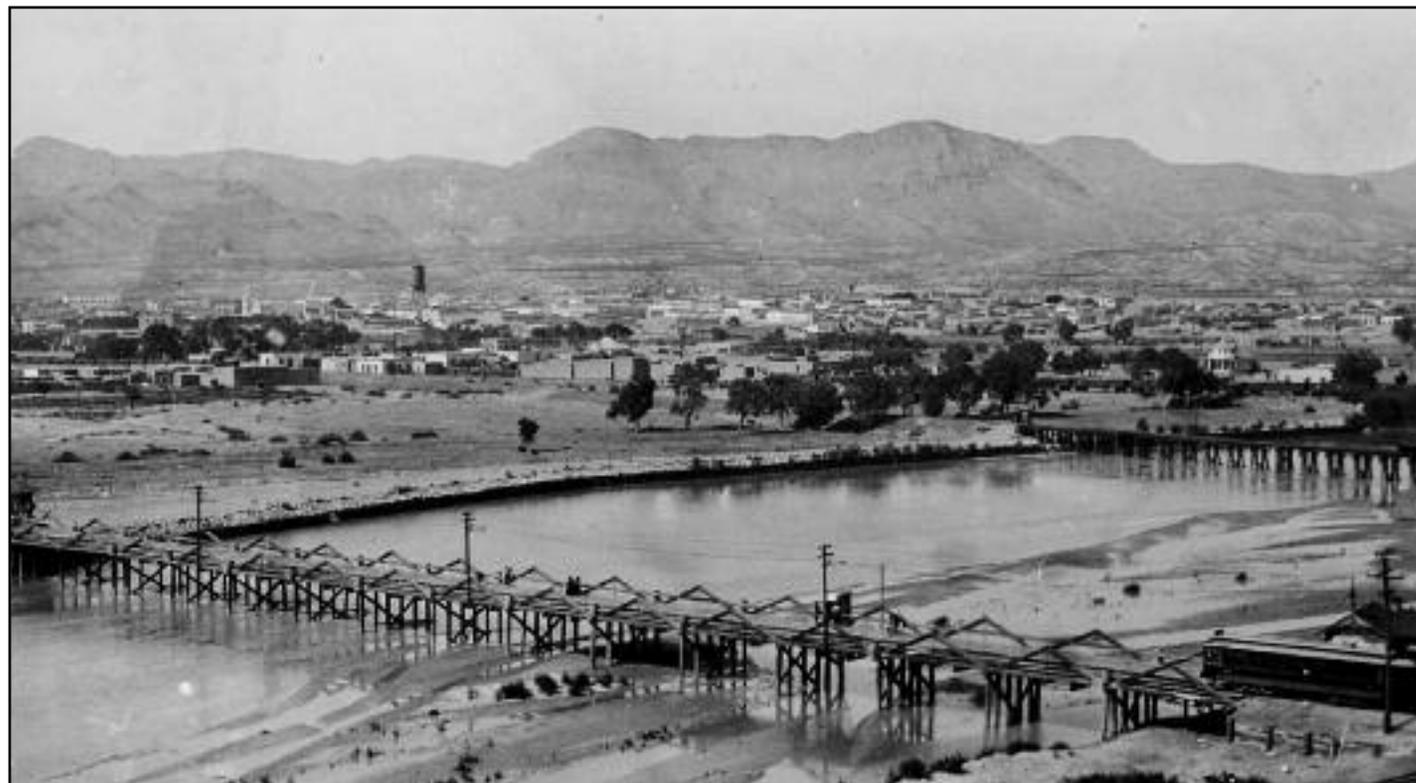
officer, was in charge of the plant, killing vermin in clothing, bathing rooms for men and women, a vaccination room, a “gas chamber” for fumigation with pesticides and inspection rooms. Every person (except “first-class citizens”) passing from Mexico into the U.S. was made to strip completely naked and turn in their clothing and personal effects to be steamed and fumigated with pesticides. They were then searched minutely in their “hairy parts” for any sign of lice. If lice were found (or imagined), every scrap of hair would be shaved off the body and the person would be made to bathe in a mixture of kerosene and vinegar. This process would merit the recipient a certificate showing that he or she had been bathed, which was good for eight days—after which the process had to be repeated.

Over the years many different chemical agents were used to “disinfect” Mexicans seeking entry into the United States: gasoline, sodium cyanide, sulfuric acid and, in the 40s and 50s, DDT, which was sprayed liberally on the naked bodies of the

formaldehyde and creosote, before bathing in a second tub in a mixture of gasoline, coal oil and vinegar. Someone struck a match; no one in the building escaped unscathed. Of the 27 fatalities, 19 were Mexican nationals.

So it was with rather a sense of relief that hydrogen cyanide was settled upon as the fumigation agent of choice for the delousing of Mexicans. Hydrogen cyanide had been developed as a pesticide in the 1920s; when the El Paso delousing stations began to use it to fumigate the clothing and personal effects of Mexican maids and day laborers, they had no idea of the role they were playing in history. The El Paso Herald boasted to its readers in August of 1920: “Hydrocyanic gas, the most poisonous ever known, more deadly even than those used on the battlefields of Europe, is employed in the fumigation process.” The trade name of the gas was Zyklon B.

It was this innovative use of the deadliest poison gas ever invented that earned El Paso the kudos of Dr. Gerhard Peters, a German scientist



The old El Paso border crossing, complete with electric tram, was the site of the 1917 bath riots after mayor Tom Lea, Sr. instituted a policy of delousing Mexican day workers and “second class citizens.” Photo courtesy Beincke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

official stationed in El Paso, suggested delousing stations rather than a full quarantine, writing to his superiors that he would “cheerfully bathe all the dirty, lousy people coming up from Mexico.” When the plant opened its doors it boasted a hot steam dryer for

migrant workers. Gasoline was one of the earliest insecticides used, until Mayor Lea’s disinfection campaign caused a fatal blaze in the El Paso City Jail in 1916. Inmates about to be disinfected had to soak their clothing in one tub, filled with a mixture of gasoline,

and one of several researchers responsible for later patenting Zyklon B in its stable solid form. Peters wrote an article in 1938 for a German magazine which praised El Paso for its delousing stations. The article included photographs of the El Paso disinfection



Clipping courtesy of the University of Texas El Paso archives.

rooms and detailed descriptions of the process used on the American border. Two years later, Dr. Gerhard Peters became the managing director of one of two German firms which acquired the patent for the mass production of Zyklon B, which they supplied to the Nazis and which was used to exterminate approximately 1.2 million people in the gas chambers of German concentration camps.

That first year of the closed border, 1917, saw a difference in the El Paso/Juarez community like night and day. Where before there had been no “illegals,” now everyone had to have their papers in order and submit to chemical “sanitation.” A backlash was inevitable; it came on January 28th, 1917, not quite a week after the opening of the disinfection stations. It came in the form of a 17-year-old maid named Carmelita Torres.

The women who crossed the border daily and now had to submit to being stripped, examined and bathed had learned that photographs of them without their clothes had been circulating in local cantinas. Carmelita crossed the border every morning to clean American homes for a living; when she was directed to step off the trolley at the Santa Fe Bridge to be bathed, she refused. She got off the electric car and quickly convinced 30 other women to join her. An hour later there were 200 women blocking all passage into El Paso; by noon there were several thousand.

The women terrorized the street car drivers, sending them fleeing back to El Paso. They threw bottles and rocks at the customs officials who tried to disperse them, causing several to hole up in their own bathhouses to escape the riot. General Bell, the commander of Ft. Bliss, sent troops to the scene; the women mocked them and swarmed around them, injuring several with projectiles.

Mexican General Fransisco Murguia brought his squadron to quell the riot.

Murguia’s men, known as *el escuadron de la muerte*, brandished their sabers and raised their skull-and-crossbones insignia to no avail; the furious women pummeled them, laughed in their faces and sent them back into Juarez.

The *El Paso Times* kept a flippant tone about the incident, stating “The immigration men predict that as soon as the Mexicans become familiar with the bathing process they will not only submit to it, but welcome it.” The newspaper called Carmelita “an auburn-haired Amazon” and scoffed at the idea that the baths were in any way undignified.

There were no fatalities in spite of the size and anger of the crowd; unfortunately, the demonstration did nothing to change the policy, and laborers and immigrants were still being “deloused” at some Texas border crossings in the late 1950s, more than 40 years after a wave of xenophobia had first swept the border.

Incidentally, typhus never saw an outbreak in El Paso. It was October of 1918 when the great epidemic hit, killing nearly ten thousand in Juarez and El Paso—it was “Spanish” influenza, which killed 50 million worldwide, and it was first observed in the United States in Haskell County, Kansas. Soldiers returning to Fort Bliss from World War I had brought it home—and no borders in the world could stop it.



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Preserving the Hovey School

By *Jim Hammond*

By the time the Hovey school was moved to Fort Stockton the town of Hovey was a ghost town. Hovey, named after a Kansas City, Mexico and Orient Railroad official, was established in 1910. The town, situated on the tracks about 40 miles west of Fort Stockton, included a railroad depot and boarding rooms for railroad workers. By 1913 the townspeople erected a post office that also functioned as a general store, gas pump, Ranchers' Headquarters and schoolhouse. It burned three years after construction. Sitting on the Pecos and Brewster County line the town enjoyed a slow growth of folks, reaching 25 residents by 1930.

Education in Texas has always been a controversial issue. Even in early Texas history education was in the forefront of politics. The Texas Declaration of Independence denounces Mexico for failing to establish public education in the state. President Houston chartered a few private schools early in his administration. The problem the new republic had was lack of funds and Houston's later disinterest. It wasn't until the Father of Education in Texas, Mirabeau B. Lamar, requested the establishment of a public school system in 1838 that congress took action. Laws passed over the next few years brought public education to the citizens. The counties received land and control over the schools. The school system, although established, still teetered on the verge of collapse.

The annexation of Texas into the United States and the Constitution of 1845 spelled out funding measures for the school system. The state would reserve no less than 10 percent of tax revenue for the schools. The Civil War and reconstruction took a severe toll on all aspects of Texas and things moved slowly for a while. Finally, in 1871, Governor Edmund J. Davis signed the bill that inaugurated the public school system in the Lone Star

State. The bill allowed for the establishment of a state board of education which consisted only of the governor, attorney general and the superintendent of public education. The measure caused bickering within the Texas political machine but the law stayed on the books.

As settlers pushed their way west



and into the vast openness of the Trans-Pecos, the need for education became ever more prominent as new towns were being established everywhere. Originally many of the teachers doubled as preachers, Sunday school teachers and homemakers. The job only paid what could be gathered by the students' parents and often teachers did not receive pay for long periods. As the frontier became settled, the demand for more permanent teachers rose. Many young women looking for a different life moved west. Research suggests that between annexation and the Civil War nearly 800 single women moved onto the frontier, many of whom became teachers. These women were typically young, some only sixteen at the time of their first semester. By 1880, 25 percent of all adult white American females had taught school at some point in their lives.

Supplies tended to be scarce. Chalkboards were never taken for granted and most would settle for a small piece of slate. More often than not students would be required to take turns using the supplies to finish their work. As the 19th century rolled into the 20th, the frontier became more civilized. Supplies were easier to come

by, there were fewer daily dangers to be faced a more regular paycheck became normal.

The school year was short compared to today. Schools typically followed the farming season. Students had greater responsibilities at home, having to help plant and harvest a crop, feed and water animals and milk cows. The girls had to help take care of a baby sibling, clean and assist with laundry. Often classes were later in the day to give kids time to get to school. This held true especially in the more rural areas. Traveling just five miles to school could take most of morning, especially for the younger students. The school bus didn't come into common use until the 1930s.

Like countless other little communities, Hovey saw the need to erect a frame school building, with simple glass-paned windows with hemmed



burlap drapes. The drapes displayed the local ranchers' brands. The classroom was a large front room that used a wood-burning heater. The teacher had a personal bedroom next to the kitchen, each with their own source of heat. The school only employed one teacher who taught grades one through seven. Most of the students were children of local ranchers or employees of the railroad. There was a hand pump for water and behind the school was a two-hole outhouse.

On many occasions the building was used for other meetings. A concrete slab was poured out front and used as a dance floor for waltzes and

the Texas Two-Step. As education comes in different forms, many learned to dance in front of the school. In later years the school served as a place to gather for civic events.

The railroad stopped running through Hovey. As roads and automobiles improved students began attending Alpine schools. The Hovey school stood empty for a time, no more students, no more classes. It became a gathering place for the local ranchers. What began as a discussion over a game of "42" soon turned the friendly game of dominoes into a monthly event. The "Hovey 42 Party" continued from the '40s into the '70s and those attending were serious about their game, in which players take tricks like in hearts or bridge.

The town slowly dwindled; as time passed the buildings began to wear. In 1987 a few citizens came together and

moved the school to Fort Stockton on the southeast side of the parade grounds. It overlooks the Comanche Springs pool, overlooking children at play as it did so many years ago.

The Trans-Pecos is dotted with dozens of abandoned towns. Ghost town is what they are called, but many no longer resemble a town. Most have no buildings at all, since they were torn down and reused on

a ranch or just left to the elements to slowly disappear in the desert winds. Today, cars blow by these stops, in a hurry to get where they're going. Hovey doesn't sit on any major road so it's easy to miss. Today, a few buildings stand alongside tattered windmills as lonely sentinels, defiant to the wind and welcoming to those passing souls oblivious to their fading history.



BIG BEND

Up in the North Country a three dog night is so cold you'll need a dog at your feet and one on each side to keep you warm. We had a few of those here in Big Bend this winter and it seems we can expect more. So in honor of our wonderful canine buddies, here is a recipe for doggie treats. These are easy to make and a great project for the kids.

Doggie Treats

*1 cup oatmeal
1/3 cup shortening
1 cup boiling water
3/4 cup cornmeal
1 Tablespoon steak sauce
1/2 cup milk or broth
1 cup grated cheddar
1 egg
3 cups whole wheat flour*

Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Combine oatmeal, shortening and boiling water. Stir to melt shortening. Add cornmeal, steak sauce, milk, cheese and egg. Mix well. Stir in flour to make a stiff dough. Roll out dough on a floured board to 1/2 inch thick. Cut into rectangles (like cutting brownies). Place on cookie sheet 1 inch apart. Bake 30 minutes. Turn off oven, do not open door, let sit and harden for several hours or overnight. These will store for 2-3 months in an airtight tin. You 'best friend' will come running every time you shake the tin.



OLD MAN WINTER BRINGS the Storm of the Century

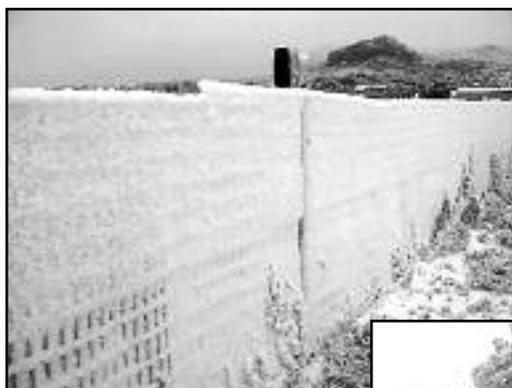
The mountain area of West Texas experienced a severe icing event, beginning between six and seven a.m. November 22, and continuing through the Monday morning, November 25. This event caused widespread power failures, beginning in most areas early Sunday morning. There were reports on Sunday of five to six thousand "meters" out of service, which could easily mean 10 to 15 thousand people without power. Most or all of the towns of Ft Davis, Marfa, and Marathon were without power, including wide rural and ranch areas surrounding those towns. Parts of Alpine were also without power.

Saturday we saw that the rime icing line had descended down the mountain during the night. The rime ice, also known as hoar frost, was already on the trees and every available surface.

We were in a state of shock after power went off at five a.m. on Sunday morning. Our attention was focused on more essential things than taking pictures. My access road is steep, and

was ice covered, so we did not feel we could leave. Freezing drizzle had pretty much stopped, but I was afraid our truck would start to slide down the hill and make a new gate in my fence! We did not feel safe to leave until about noon Monday. We went in to the McDonald Observatory for a hot meal! The ground was covered with a mix of ice, sleet, and snow pellets. Power would not be restored until around 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Thanksgiving day.

The cool season, from November through April, is also the "dry" season for West Texas so icing events, especially severe ones, are rare. There was still just a bit of ice left a week later, Saturday November 30.



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continued from page 4

ride!" No matter, there were friendships to be renewed and new friends to make in Marathon.

Many a time inspiration would come from food and being in the right place at the right time; the "Voodoo Tree" was a big, shady chinaberry tree in our friends' yard which was the right place after a tough bike ride or long drive.

We would be on "Marathon time" and pick up where we left off the year before with beer, wine, and yummy food. My husband picked a flower from the horsemint plant and carried it throughout the ride to Marathon. The plant is tall, the bloom purple like the mountains and more fragrant in the desert than the horsemint east of Austin. Pressed with provolone between fingers, the smell, it wrapped us in a magical spell. We chopped and cooked with our friend who tutored us in the art of roasted peppers cooked with fresh basil on homemade pizza dough; then we made music late into the night

under the "Voodoo Tree." We had supper that kings would envy.

In 2007 the group grew as it has off and on throughout the years. We had to caravan, picking up those who would try their mettle on the mountains. It seems once the Chihuahuan Desert gets under your skin, it sticks and won't let go; like the agave needle used for so many things. My husband and I bought a lot in Marathon about 10 years ago. We are among those who were pierced by the rugged beauty and intend to spend our time in Marathon and the surrounding area. There is so much to learn and I still haven't experienced a full season! The people are like the desert, learning to survive with limited resources and resilient no matter what is thrown at them. Everything seems to have its cycle and you feel it especially in Marathon, where you rest and leave room for the next rider or writer.

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without a scratch on the airplane or himself. He was not injured in either incident. Negotiating the mountains between Marathon and Alpine, Cal did find himself in heavy fog, cutting his visibility to zero. His only "instrument" was a short string to indicate wind direction. Knowing there were rocks in those clouds, Cal was in for some serious uncertainty but he flew out of the cloud none the worse for the experience.

On the way to the west coast, he would log 4,321 statute miles in 84 hours of air time, stop 75 times and crash 16 times, seldom sustaining any serious injury. His most serious injury was at Compton, California, after the flight officially ended at Pasadena on Nov. 5, delaying his final act of dipping his wheels in the Pacific by more than a month. He accomplished the final act of his trip still on crutches.

Cal would not live to see the first anniversary of his flight. He was killed in a routine flight over the Pacific west of Long Beach on April

12, 1912, when his newly refurbished Flyer apparently struck a flock of sea gulls.

The airplane would continue to be developed over the next several years, getting a huge boost from World War I. Between the wars flying saw the growth, first of "barnstorming" that developed flying skills, then air mail, followed by airline development, business air travel and now space programs.

But Cal's extraordinary accomplishment predated the much-more heralded Lindbergh flight across the Atlantic Ocean by nearly 16 years. Most school children today can readily recite the Wright's first flight and the solo Atlantic flight by "Lucky Lindy" in 1927, but few know of Cal Rodgers' amazing feat in 1911.

In 1960 a restored model of the Vin Fiz flyer was installed at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. Aviation enthusiasts generally agree a few hours going through the museum is time well spent.

continued from page 21

from her roots in East Texas. She disparages the daily grind in favor of a search for eternal "truth." Returning to Marfa after a lengthy stay in Tepoztlan, Marie perceives in her surroundings only drudgery. "So why caulk the bathroom sink? Today, what will I do that brings greater clarity, peace, justice, a better life for all of us and our mother Earth?" she asks herself. "I'm not sure that caulking will do it." But, then, Marie never really explains how studying Tibetan teachers or going to sweat lodges "will do it" either. Sometimes Marie paints herself into a corner from which she never fully emerges.

If it is hard for a reader to follow Marie's affection for sweat lodges and spiritual retreats,

the reader grasps, nonetheless, that the proof is in the pudding: Marie is reasonably happy after having survived two divorces, the loss of a child, aborted careers, mostly impecunious circumstances, years of itinerant wandering, shuttling between two cultures, and grueling introspection. The reader is not sure how she got there, but Marie is managing independently quite well, thank you, without a significant other and without the accoutrements of wealth and social station. She beckons us to "let go of the rope." Having rejected the cultural and religious icons with which she was raised, Marie finally attains a state of grace. Happiness, the author assures us, comes from within.

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by Charles Angell

AVIATION IN THE BIG BEND

- 1) The first transcontinental flight across the U.S. in 1911 lasted 49 days, accomplished by Cal Rodgers. Although no official landing strips existed in the Big Bend, what town did Rodgers touch down in?
a) Marfa
b) Alpine
c) Presidio
d) Redford
- 2) During the Mexican revolution the U.S. Army based DeHaviland DH-4 biplanes in Marfa to patrol the border. What material were these planes originally constructed from?
a) wood
b) braized copper
c) fiberglass
d) bamboo and silk
- 3) Based out of Terlingua, Rio Aviation conducts scenic flights over the region, offering a bird's eye view of Santa Elena Canyon and the Solitario. What access-restricted area is also part of the aerial tour?
a) Cielo Jumano site
b) the Devil's lunchbox
c) Area 51
d) Dahlquest site
- 4) In 1974 a small privately owned airplane allegedly collided with a UFO near the town of Candelaria, which was subsequently covered up by the government. Who are the authors of the book Mexico's Roswell, which details this incident?
a) Jim Grosset & Bill Dunlap
b) Travis Walton & Tom Mix
c) Noe Torres & Ruben Uriarte
d) Frederick Freekowtski & Phineas Freakears
- 5) An Air Force B-1 bomber flying out of Dyess AFB crashed into a mountainside in the Sierra Vieja range, near Valentine, killing four crewmembers. In what year did this incident occur?
a) 1988
b) 1992
c) 1998
d) 2002

Bonus: Which other town in the region did Cal Rodgers touch down at, which resulted in a crash upon take-off?

Answers: 1-b 2-a 3-d 4-c 5-b, Bonus: Sanderson, TX



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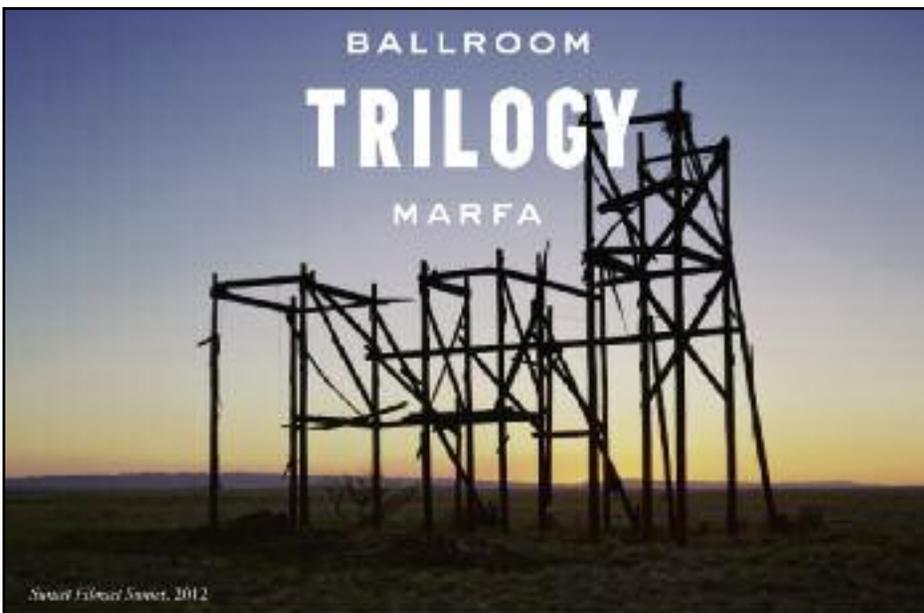
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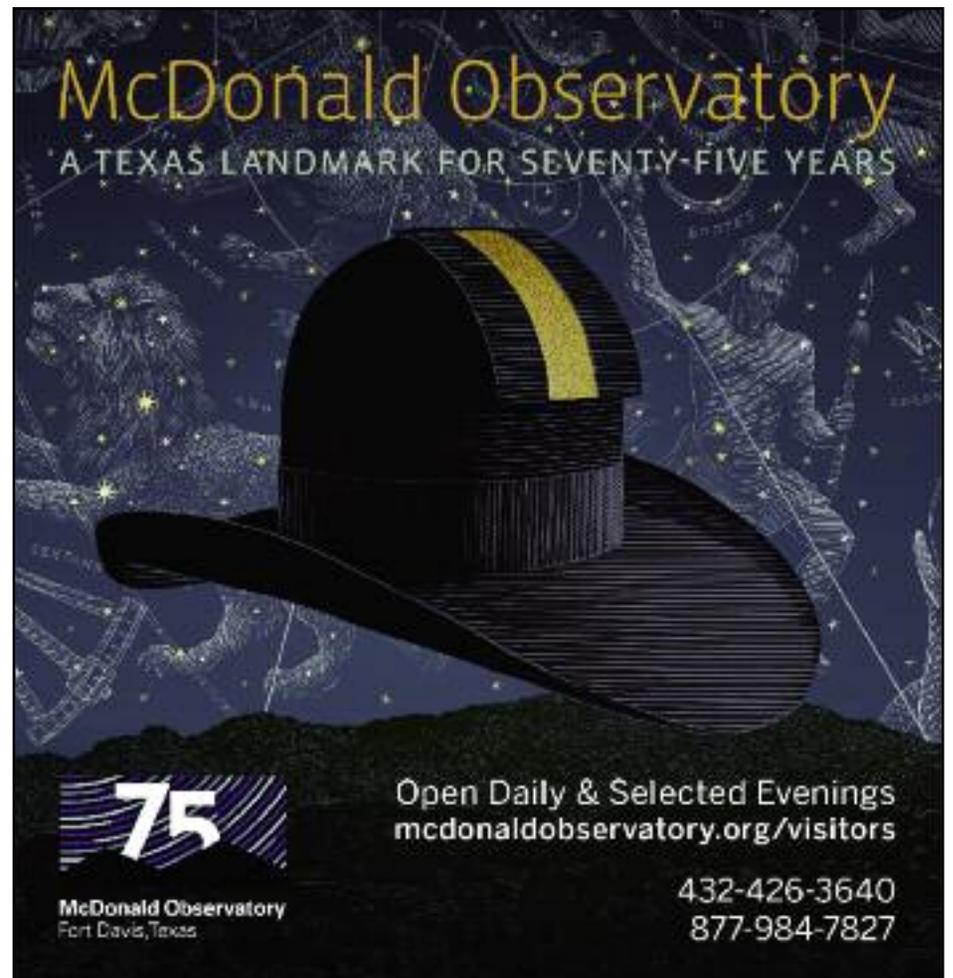
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Trilogy has been made possible by the generous support of Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, Texas Commission on the Arts, and The Brown Foundation, Inc. Honorary W&A underwriting support provided by Associate Dean Brock, Richard G. Whitley and Johannes Kluck members.

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