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JOURNAL



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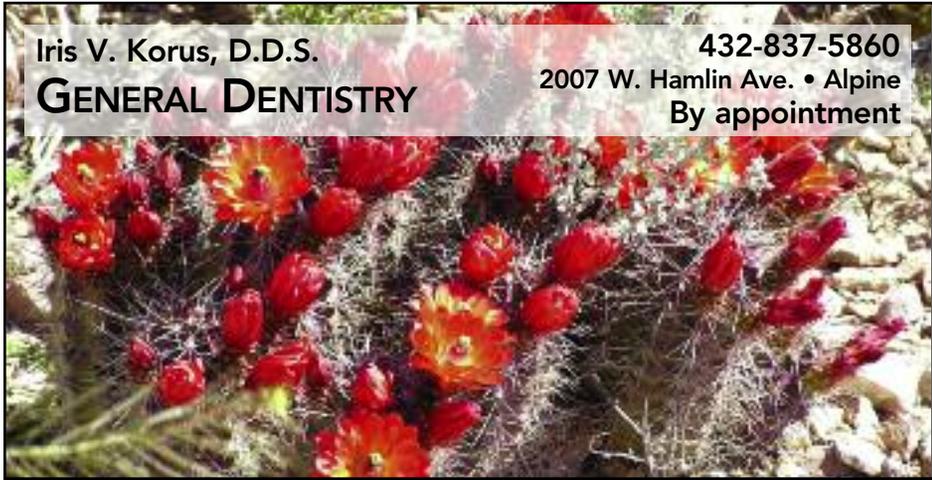


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What's The Deal With Marfa?

by Rani Birchfield

People ask that question often; sometimes tourists, sometimes locals. I've even seen a tagline somewhere in Marfa that read, "You either get it or you don't." Although it's only 24 miles down the road from Alpine or Fort Davis, Marfa seems like another world. I set out to "get it," to uncover the mystery of the Marfa Arts.

Marfa was catapulted onto the radar in the '70s by the late Donald Judd, the artist who found the antidote to the New York art scene in West Texas. Thanks to Judd and his anti-establishment, minimalist wave, Marfa is now a regular feature in society news and glossy magazines – publications not necessarily popular in the local region.

I started with the Ayn Foundation as I heard they had something new. Gretchen Lee Coles is the liaison for the gallery as well as a resident Marfa artist. Coles has two graduate degrees, one in sculpture and one in cartography, but prefers to be known as an artist enjoying the arts in Marfa.

The gallery is set up to view the works in natural light, but the day I visited was solid chrome sky with snow starting to blow in through the gray. As we walked through the darkened rooms our footsteps rang out on the empty floors. The stillness of the large space was serene, to the point of over-

powering the gargantuan pieces. I felt expanded, and started to understand why people would come back to the same thing over and over.

As it turned out, there are two exhibits in the Ayn gallery and both have been up for over a decade. Andy Warhol's *The Last Supper*, and Maria Zerres' *September Eleven* have shown since the Brite Building opened in 2005. The foundation's philosophy is to show work for free to the public for very long periods of time. This is so people can spend time with the art, getting to know it intimately, as opposed to looking at it in an art history book or viewing it on slides, Coles said. People come back later, maybe years later, and are excited to be able to revisit something – much like a long lost relative.

If you're a newcomer on an art quest in Marfa, start with the foundations, then visit galleries, suggested Coles. See the differences and experience the differing philosophies. Foundations are funded by grants and private donors and therefore have a bit more freedom to offer showings to the public at little or no cost. "They can have one artist take up the whole of the showcase and not worry about how many postcards and pieces they sell," Coles said.

I took this advice and set out for Ballroom Marfa. Easily accessible,



Photo by Rani Birchfield. Tibetan Buddah located at The Etherington Gallery in Marfa

Ballroom was founded in 2003 and is one of the major foundations in the town. Free or affordably priced, Ballroom is into co-mingling the arts according to Daniel Chamberlin, the Communications Director. They change their exhibits, completely transforming their space for each one, and hold two major visual art shows per year. They also participate in a variety of other cultural programs throughout the year that incorporate visual and performance art, live music and film. "Ballroom is wild and weird; maybe they're a little different, but they have world-class art," Chamberlin said.

Apparat, a show about the mammalian hand and the tools it touches,

was showing at Ballroom Marfa while I was there. One of the installations in the show was an interactive display that invited visitors "to" chill their hands in a chest freezer, the better to contemplate a series of paintings made with liquidized cow's brains." I didn't perform this ritual, finding it more fascinating that others were lining up to do it and gaze at the seemingly blank canvases – a bit like the emperor's new clothes. The installation didn't strike me, as suggested, as the moment consciousness departs at the deathbed, nor did it lead me to ponder upon degener-

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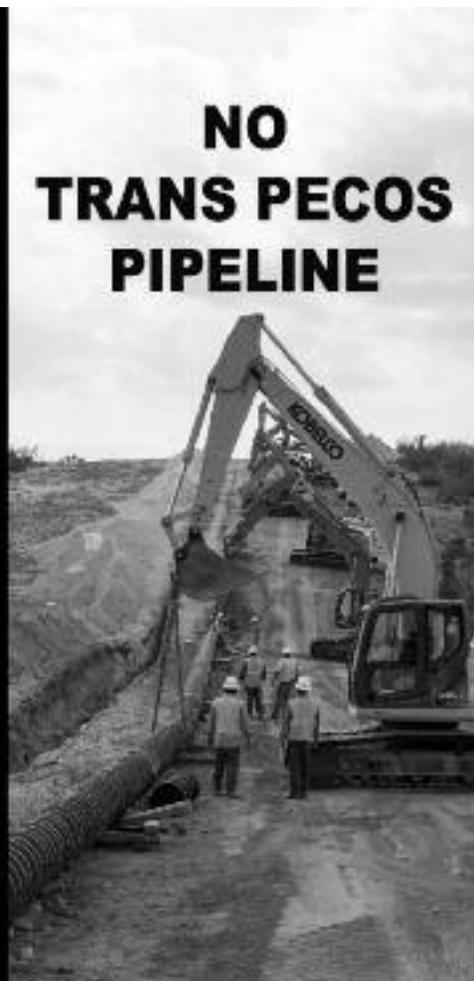
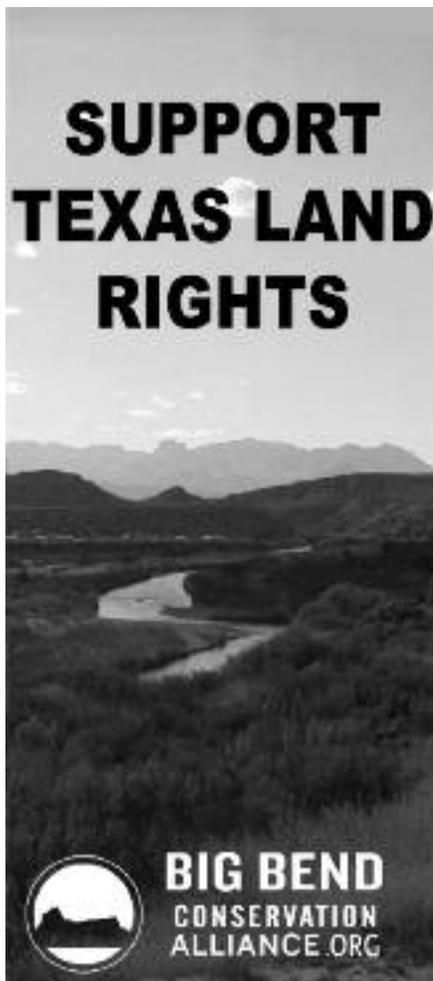
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Cenizo Journal

Volume 8 Number 2

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Billy Faier passed away on January 29, after receiving brief, but excellent, end-of-life care at Big Bend Regional Medical Center in Alpine. Up until the last two weeks of his life, Billy had been playing the banjo for 68 years. Billy moved to Terlingua in 2001, and Marathon in 2005. He will be missed. *Web: billyfaier.com*

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Cover: Photograph of open mic at the Starlight Theater in Terlingua by Laura Rebecca Payne.

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Cenizo Notes

by Carolyn Brown Zniewski, publisher and Danielle Gallo, editor



I am watching my dog Lulu on her morning adventure while sitting on my front porch as the morning light changes over the mountains to the north. The birds are dive-bombing like crazy cartoon airplanes and the wild-

flowers are canvassing the desert. This is the reward for the snowstorms of last fall, now an almost forgotten memory.

There is something about living in Big Bend that demands you live in the moment. If it's a beautiful contemplative day, take that trip to the park and stop in Presidio for a meal or enjoy an afternoon beer on the porch at the Starlight Theater. On the other hand, it may be the perfect chance to catch up on the laundry that has been piling up near the washing machine. Hanging it to dry in the sweet-smelling air might be a truly enjoyable and meditative task.

In the spring, it is hard to believe this is a desert. Trees are bursting with fresh green leaves and every trip to town is a nature show. At night the javelina muscle their way through the yard and the raccoons are sure to come hunting for a stray chicken or something interesting in the garbage can.

Big Bend is the home of lifelong DIYers who started doing it themselves years ago. The creative energy here is so thick you could cut it with a knife. This month we've got a little music, a little art, a little history, some stories and some DIY; pretty much like Big Bend itself. Please sit back on your porch and enjoy a very good read. Then let us know what you liked! We are always glad to get feedback from our readers. Publisher@cenizojournal.com.



In an election year, it's always nice to bring our focus a little closer to home, to appreciate the richness of our communities and the diversity of ideas and strengths that make our region the place we want to call home. For a moment, at least, it's a

pleasure to look up the street and recognize the good in our neighbors and the hard work of our friends, regardless of whom they support or how they vote.

It's a relief to turn off the shrieking media at the end of the day, when I'm weary of hearing bitter stories of division and rancor and ugliness, and look over toward my neighbors, whom I love. There is peace in knowing that, though we certainly don't vote the same ticket, we can always count on each other to be there.

This issue of *Cenizo* takes a look at some of the important work that Marfa contributes to the art world, the passing of a musical legend, an evening spent drinking with Mother Nature, and the tragedy of border relations gone bad. Enjoy an interlude with the past and present of the world's best place to live, before returning to the noise and nonsense of the political arena.

On another note, I'm very pleased to mention that our talented graphics designer, Wendy Lynn Wright, has a show, *Chinati Mountains*, opening April 8. It takes place at the Greasewood Gallery at the Hotel Paisano in Marfa, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and will showcase Wendy's watercolor paintings of the mountain range she has been circumnavigating for 17 years. The *Cenizo* is proud to have Wendy in charge of our design, and I'm looking forward to enjoying an evening of her art and company. Hope to see you there!

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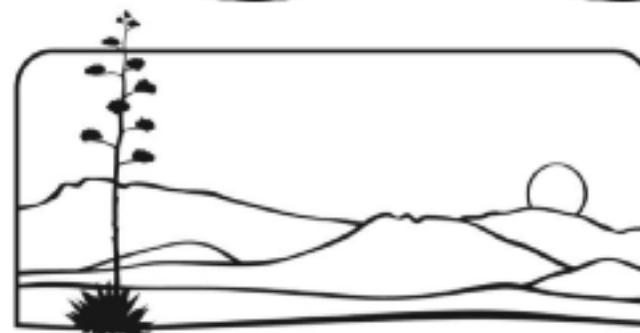
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Billy Faier

The Life and Times of a Folk Musician

by *Billy Faier, with Chris Wand*



Billy Faier performing at Gerdes Folk City, Greenwich Village, New York City, January 3, 1961. Irwin Gooen, courtesy of Chris Wand.

I was born on Dec. 21, 1930 at 7 p.m. I lived in Brooklyn my first 14 years. I hated every minute until we moved to Woodstock, New York in 1945. At that time and in that place I discovered that the world had good stuff in it. It was there that I had my first introduction to folk music. I had been singing songs all my life, but I didn't know they were folksongs until then. Many of the artists, writers and musicians in Woodstock sang folk music and played guitar. There was a camaraderie among these folks that was new to me. Not only did they seem to like and understand each other, but they included me in that communal umbrella of friendly feeling, even though I was new to them and a 14-year-old kid.

In Brooklyn I had been patronized, ignored or abused by most of my schoolmates. The same was true at Kingston High in Woodstock, but outside school there was a group of people

who accepted me. These were the artists of the Woodstock art colony. They had an intense love of the place where they lived, both the community of Woodstock and the Catskill Mountains. It gave me, for the first time in my life, an intense feeling of BELONGING to something bigger than myself. I spent the next three years enjoying and being encouraged by the creative people and energy of that artistic community.

My real awakening to folk music happened in Washington Square Park, New York one Sunday afternoon in October of 1947. It was there that I saw all sorts of people, kids like myself as

well as adults, singing the songs we came to know as folk songs. It was a weekly gathering, outside in good weather and moving indoors to Gabe Katz's place when it got cold. For me this was the beginning of the Urban Folk Revival and a second introduction to the intense joy of group singing. I started playing five-string banjo, a truly American instrument. I gave up a promising career in the world of busi-

ness to devote myself to music and women. For the next ten years I learned to play the banjo and guitar.

From the age of 17 to 21 I lived in a cold water flat on East Fifth Street and Avenue D on the lower East side, about a mile walk to Greenwich Village. The rent was \$17 a month. Beside the people of the folk community, I knew many young poets, painters, Anarchists, Socialists and

Communists. We were the pre-hippie crowd of beatniks. (Publisher's note: Although *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac was not published until 1957, it was written in 1951.)

During that time I became acquainted with anarchy, poetry, Buddhism and marijuana. Grass made me sick the first three times I tried it. As a cigarette smoker, I tried to smoke reefer like it was tobacco. It made me feel sick so I gave up smoking pot for the next ten years. I had a lot to learn about that herb.

I have recorded and performed with many other folk singers in my lifetime. My main act was always as a solo artist. I have been to almost every folk festival anywhere, played an untold number of venues from backyard campfires to nationally-known performance stages, written and published about folk music, and recorded more albums and CDs than I can count. I have traveled all over the Western Hemisphere of the Earth with my banjo, performing on all levels, from professional concertizer to itinerant street musician. I live today in Marathon, Texas where I run my website, billyfaier.com, and play banjo and piano. Not one to sit still, I am still

traveling. One of the biggest reasons I like living in Texas is that it is the only place I have ever been where the inhabitants love to sit around the campfire singing songs about their home state late into the night.



Image courtesy of Wendy Wright.

A few years ago I donated all my old tapes, papers, letters and memorabilia to the Southern Folklife Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chappell Hill. The request came from Bill Ferris, a folk and blues collector who is also a donor to the collection. I

playing since the late forties, but who have also made a significant contribution to the art form." I could live with that, and so I made the donation.

I do not write for the already-convinced audience, looking for applause at how well I can put our mutually-held

convictions into song. White racists are the ones whom I would love to sell my records to, in the hopes that the messages in my songs have an effect on them and their racism. That's why I wrote the songs, to change people. As my friend Woody Guthrie once told me, "People come and people go, but the music goes on forever."

January 30, 2016—yesterday my grandpa Billy passed on to the next world. He was and still is an absolute musical legend and I will miss him a lot. In the time I knew him he taught me how to play banjo, how to roll a joint, and most importantly helped open me to accepting new and beautiful experiences of adventure, spontaneity and folk music. I am so glad we got to spend a lot of time together the past few years, glad we went to the Grand Canyon, glad we sneaked out of the house with our banjos to go to Mendocino without telling my parents, and glad we got to play a lot of music together. I only wish it would have been more, but I know that he is Flying Away to that Great Hootenanny to meet Jesus in the Air.

RIP Billy Faier. For anyone interested to view Billy's last concert, it is available on YouTube at: Billy Faier 1, and Billy Faier 2 ~Chris Wand



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Photo Essay

Tintype Nostalgia by Luc Novovitch





Tintype is one of the oldest photographic processes. It was a favorite of portrait photographers in the 1870s through the 1890s because a tintype photograph could be developed, fixed and ready to be handed to the customer in a matter of minutes. The technique produced images with messy edges and a shallow depth of field due to

the format of film and lenses used at the time.

My ongoing series, Tintype Nostalgia, was born from my attraction to old photographic processes. I used to make images of landscapes and studio stills using platinum printing and carbon transfer. Nowadays I use the current technology — cameras with sensors in lieu of film, and phones with built-in

cameras. My main concern is not technology or equipment, it is to make images. So why not use today's tools to make images that bring back visual "flavors" from the past? That is what I attempt to do when I create images using the built-in camera of a telephone, and software to trick light and electrons into producing an image with 19th Century looks.

Voices of the BIG BEND

Jim Glendinning The Galloping Scot, Author, World Traveler and tour operator to Copper Canyon, Mexico.

Story and photographs by Jim Glendinning

BILL BROOKS

Bill Brooks was born in Norfolk, VA, to Jack and Elizabeth Brooks, the second of four children. His father was a flight engineer in the Army Air Corps; his mother was an English teacher. She interpreted the disruption to his studies due to frequent moves positively. "Think of it as an adventure," she said.

Schooling was in El Paso, Japan, Guam, and back again to El Paso, where he graduated in 1963 from Burgess High School. He played trombone in the band. Music was to play a role later in his life. He attended Texas Western University (now UTEP) for two years before deciding that college was not for him.

Instead, Brooks took jobs as a disc jockey with local rock and country music stations. The Vietnam War intervened. Recruited by Army Intelligence, he enlisted in August 1965. He trained in counter-intelligence, studied Chinese for a while, and served in West Germany. Later, he spent 19 months in Vietnam, extending his one-year tour.

During the 30-day leave that was granted between tours, he came back to El Paso. A friend fixed him up with a blind date, Margie Rogers, whom he married on 26 September, 1969, and who bore three children, Jennifer, Betse and Stephanie. The couple moved to Maryland, where Brooks continued working in counter-intelligence. He quit the Army in 1972 as a Chief Warrant Officer.

Brooks moved to Alpine and started Territorial Printers. He went on in 1977, with Bob Dillard, to buy the *Alpine Avalanche*, then an independent newspaper, before selling in 1990. Next he got involved with selling computers and writing software. He



BILL BROOKS
Alpine

became one of the first internet service providers. "I enjoyed it all," he says.

Brooks's career then took a different turn. In June 2002 he joined US Customs and Border Protection and became Chief of Public Affairs along the southwest border, subsequently supervising 10 persons. It was at this time that the Border Patrol's Citizen's Academy was started, seeking to improve relations with the local community. Brooks participated, and the Big Bend project was considered a success.

Retiring from full-time work in 2014, Brooks now works part-time for the Border Patrol, teaching uniformed agents how to deal with the media.

Brooks continues an involvement with SRSU that started in 1978. In



ALLYSON SANTUCCI
Alpine

that year, the SRSU theatre program needed a trombone player for a musical. Shortly after, Joanna Cowell needed an actor for the play *Salt of the Earth*, which she directed. Brooks fit the bill and was hooked. Since then he has acted in dozens of performances.

Another hobby is the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club. Brooks derives great pleasure connecting up, relishing the number of contacts he makes worldwide, with radio hams in far-flung places around the globe. At home, he enjoys practicing on his trombone in his radio room, which he calls his "man-cave." He has also been involved with the Cowboy Poetry Gathering since its inception, and visitors to this year's Gathering doubtless heard him effortlessly introduce some of the participants.



MICHAEL "AKU" RODRIGUEZ
Balmorhea

ALLYSON SANTUCCI

Allyson Santucci was born in April 1951 in Rockford, IL. Her father, Antonio Fera, worked in sales for a heating equipment company. Her mother Ethel, born McFalls, had four other children, all boys. Allyson was the youngest in the family.

Schooling was in Rockford, and she graduated in 1969 from a Catholic high school, which she remembers as being "pretty strict." She was a good student, studying English and languages. But family life was shattered when her mother died; Allyson was seven years old.

After high school, Allyson moved to Chicago to live with her dad, who worked there. She enrolled in Chicago City College, majoring in languages. There she met a fellow student, Antonio Santucci, whom she married

in 1971. Convention required that she forego her studies, and her passion for music and dance, to “cook, clean and raise a family.”

Her first job was in a bank, where she rose to be stock registrar. Her first child, Alessandra, was born in 1973, followed by Marco, Carlo and Marisa. Her husband worked as a machinist for the City of Chicago. By the mid-eighties, Allyson was creative director of a youth performing troupe, working after hours; however, the strains on her marriage had become too great, and she divorced Antonio in 1986.

While still in Chicago, she took a Montessori training course and, from 1979-1987, was a lead teacher. She resumed at Montessori in the late nineties, as Director of Education at Downers Grove Montessori, IL. In between, she took a succession of jobs: with Benetton, in real estate; with a company selling nutritional products; and with a communications company.

On the Montessori school notice board she noticed an ad for someone to teach at the Montessori school in Alpine, TX. She drove 20 hours in August 1996 to meet with Liz Sibley, the energetic founder of the school. More students were needed, Liz told her. Why did such a move appeal to her? “I guess I’m a Renaissance woman,” she offered.

After two years and hard work on the part of Allyson and two other teachers, it was time to leave when new administrators were brought in. Alpine,

peaceful and pretty, with a growing arts/music/intellectual scene, had been a good move. But now she needed a new job.

Undaunted, she plunged into the restaurant business. In 1999, she opened La Tapatia, a tortilleria and café. In 2007, La Trattoria opened, in larger premises. Starting with almost zero equipment, she persevered and, a year later, was doing good business. Two years later, realizing a restaurant should be a family affair, she sold the business.

Allyson then moved into Spanish language teaching and also got a paralegal certificate at the University of Texas in El Paso. She started doing private legal work in Spanish, and then interpreting in the court system. She also returned to her first love, music and dance, by joining Alpine’s Tahitian dance group for three years, and more recently resumed singing and sometimes playing bass for the local band “Special Delivery.”

MICHAEL “AKU” RODRIGUEZ

Michael “Aku” RoDriguez, of Apache and Zapotec heritage, has returned to the Big Bend region after a career in music and documentary film production. His most recent work, a documentary trailer called “Their Last Ride,” won three industry awards.

RoDriguez was born in 1972 in Irvine, Texas to Rosie and Dee Rodriguez, a truck driver. In the early days, the family travelled a lot due to

his father’s job, including to Marfa and Balmorhea, where he “nested” (a favorite expression) and also went to school.

His teen years were troubled. He was temporarily estranged from his family and was kicked out of the house. He later attended junior college briefly. He got married, then divorced. The traditions of his culture helped him survive. He derived solace from his Medicine Man, who explained his spiritual identity. “We all have gifts,” said the Medicine Man, who remains a force in his life, adding, “Light and dark are always with us.”

During five years with his family in San Bernardino, CA, he started playing music with a band called “The Tabloids.” At age 24 he moved to the Dallas area. Enrolling at Tarrant County College in Fort Worth to study film, he gained experience as a line-producer and cinematographer for fashion trade shows. It was here he started working as an actor as well as learning the intricacies of feature film production.

He also joined a band called “Spoon-Fed Tribe,” playing alternative tribal music. The band toured Texas, became successful and recorded with Sony. He played bass guitar, keyboards and percussion. Later, RoDiguez joined another band, “Joint Method,” which split up over financial disagreements.

With his Native American features, his black hair falling in two braids and

a dazzling smile, RoDriguez was a natural target for film-makers looking for a certain type of actor for cameo roles, typically a Harley biker with two guns. Later came more substantial roles, as in the indie film *The Prodigy* (2005), and the “Walker, Texas Ranger” TV series.

He then got into a variety of indie film productions, while also investing in film-making equipment. He expanded his film-making roles to writing as well as producing and directing and, over four years, made promotional documentaries, moving from Texas to California to New York. In 2008 he produced, wrote the music for and starred in *The Rose, A Sense of Place* about Fort Worth’s historic Rose Marine Theater, which was aired by PBS.

In 2015 he returned to Balmorhea, this time with his wife, Dragonfly. There, he came across a Cherokee woman, Neta Rhyne, who was deeply concerned about the transportation of slaughter-bound horses past her house heading to Mexico. Aku was equally moved by this inhumane traffic of horses, and he collaborated with Neta Rhyne to produce a trailer, *Their Last Ride*, by his company So Be It Films. The full-length documentary is expected to air later this year. Meanwhile, there are all sorts of other subjects in the area likely to attract the attention of this active documentary film-maker.

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The New Pioneer

by Belle Lancaster

With the Marfa zip code tattooed on her left wrist, Virginia Lebermann is proud to call West Texas her home. “It’s difficult to make things happen in Marfa, but it’s that struggle that keeps me vibrant and alive,” says Lebermann. Co-founder of Ballroom, owner of the Capri and the Thunderbird Hotel, Lebermann is one busy woman. As she walks through the grounds of the Capri, she gets asked multiple questions by three different people, then silences her ringing phone to sit down with me and her dog, Tiny. She smiles, and after she exhales says, “Sweetie, it’s just crazy over here.”

The Capri seems to be Lebermann’s main focus at the moment. The building itself has been primarily used as an event space for several years. Only recently has a new kitchen, tea room, bar, and VIP lounge been added. It has a 1920’s speakeasy vibe, with a West Texas flair. Exposed adobe walls accent a newly-designed mahogany bar that’s lined with brass bar stools topped with turquoise leather seats. The space functions as a restaurant, bar, and front desk office for guests checking into the Thunderbird Hotel. A night-time visit displays patrons happily bellying up to the bar, ordering signature drinks, tapas and small entrees. A group in the front tea room describes their secluded seating area as a private gangster booth. The hidden nooks throughout the building and garden provide a sense of discovery to anyone visiting the Capri for the first time.

Lebermann is a wonderfully hospitable, creative and practical woman, who doesn’t mind getting her hands dirty. She and her husband Chef Rocky Barnette are often found having business meetings in the garden, or



Photo courtesy Belle Lancaster

working hurriedly during dinner service. Chef Barnette is classically trained and has an extensive resume. He was the executive Sous Chef for four out of his nine years at the Inn at Little Washington, in Washington, Virginia. He has cooked state dinners at the White House, and has cooked for the James Beard Foundation in New York City. He often speaks to clients about locally-sourced food and his pre-Columbian Mesoamerican influences. If you’re the type of person that doesn’t want to talk about food, but would rather taste it, the restaurant opens at 6:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday, and closes around 10 p.m.

As a young woman fresh out of grad school, Lebermann and her friend Fairfax Dorn shared ideas on creating a forum for creative people to express themselves. They wanted to offer people who live in urban settings the space to think and experience life in a rural environment. They both successfully manifested their vision with the opening of Ballroom in the fall of 2003. Ballroom is a non-profit organization that has brought several art-based programs to Marfa. The building itself functions as an office for employees and as a gallery space. Regular gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday, 10:00am-6:00pm, and Sunday 10:00am-3:00pm.

The historic Thunderbird Hotel opened at the end of 2004 under new ownership. Lebermann and her partners at the time bought the motor-lodge and renovated the 24 rooms into a boutique hotel. Two of the original stakeholders left to pursue ventures of their own, leaving Lebermann and one small shareholder. The rooms are spotless and shout “Welcome to Marfa!” with their cow hide rugs and contemporary minimalist decor. If you’re the kind of person that must have a TV to watch your programming, then steer clear of the Thunderbird. Even though it’s without television, vintage bikes, typewriters, and record players are available for guest use. The hotel has a couple hundred records in its vinyl collection to choose from.

Weary travelers wanting to check in wander around Lebermann’s maze-like compound. They eventually read the signs that lead them across the street to the front desk/bar in the Capri, where a delicious breakfast with homemade mesquite bread, locally raised eggs, Texas meats & cheeses, yogurt, freshly squeezed orange juice, French tea and locally roasted coffee, should make it up to them.

Some people are born entrepreneurs, and Lebermann is one of them. She’s got that grit that’s given her stay-

ing power in Marfa, with its somewhat transient population. “I come from a long line of renegade Irishmen, who were primarily focused on being their own boss,” says Lebermann. She later adds that the women in her family were also strong matriarchs. When asked about her challenges as a female entrepreneur in West Texas, she initially shies away from the question, but then states how it’s difficult for any person to become an entrepreneur. “It definitely adds that extra layer of complication that otherwise wouldn’t be there if you were a man,” she concludes.

Lebermann’s introductory West Texas trip began in Terlingua at the age of 30, where she rented a house for a year. During that time, she kept returning to Marfa and said, “I fell in love with it because of the Lannon Foundation, the bookstore, and the Chinati Foundation. It felt like a beautiful, small Texas town with an international twist.” Lebermann mentions that at one time she wanted to be a photojournalist in war-torn countries. “I don’t know why, but it just sounded like something I really wanted to do,” she says. Perhaps Marfa provided her with just the right amount of challenge to keep her engaged.

New employees line up behind us to speak with Lebermann. It seems that her work is insurmountable, but something tells me she wouldn’t want it any other way. As we depart, I ask her one last question about her favorite spot in West Texas. She smiles and says, “Anywhere where I’m alone with Henry (her son) and Rocky.”

For more information on the Capri or Thunderbird Hotel please visit www.thunderbirdmarfa.com or call 432-729-1984. Information on Ballroom can be found at www.ballroommarfa.org or at 432-729-3600.

*Story and photograph by
Maya Brown Zniwski*

CHIHUAHUA PINE, NATURE'S EMERGENCY KIT

Commonly known as the Chihuahua pine, the *Pinus leiophylla* grows abundantly throughout the Chihuahuan Desert. It is one of only three pine species to have developed an adaptation which allows it to regrow if it has been burned by a range fire. Chihuahua pine grows in stands either as the lone species or in a mix with other trees.

As spring returns, my friends the trees begin to bring forth sap. With a little time and the willingness to get your hands a bit sticky, you can collect this sap or resin from the trees without tapping—drilling a hole in the tree—and create some wonderful concoctions for help in emergency situations. The trees of West Texas provide innumerable benefits in the desert: shade, food, and resin are three of them. I am going to talk about that last bit, resin.

Resin is the sap of the tree, like the blood. If you have touched an acacia, juniper, pine or any other tree, you've probably had sap or resin on you. For future reference, Everclear or isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol removes it. For several reasons I highly suggest, in fact I request that you collect the sap or resin from fallen branches of the trees and not harm the trees in an effort to test, for instance, the fire-holding ability of pine resin. I am focusing on pine trees, sap, and resin here, but generally the resin of any tree can be used in the same way. Check with a good outdoor guide before consuming parts of any tree.

If you take walks in the woods or deserts, or as I do, along the river, sometimes your boots do not fit as well toward the end of your journey as they did in the beginning and blisters develop. If you find a kind pine

tree, you will see the pine sap or resin forming to cover a wound the tree has. The resin protects the tree from invading insects and other damage. If you remove a small amount of resin, but not all of it, from the tree wound, you can protect yourself and allow the tree to continue to protect itself.

Resin can be used in a number of ways, including as a bandage over cuts or blisters. I highly recommend using the softer resin for this application, for obvious reasons. Imagine covering that horrid blister with a layer of pine resin and having it on the way to being healed by the time you get home. Pine resin is also used to cover and clean cuts, even bad cuts. Do the best you can to clean your wound, dry it and place softer resin over the area. Resin will treat you like it treats the trees, keeping bacteria out and acting as a super glue to bind your skin back together. When the resin has hardened or dried you can peel it off and see the stitching of your skin back together. You may need to replace the used resin with fresh and allow it to harden again.

Like all pines, the sap and the resin from the tree is very flammable. The resin also provides an almost rain- or snow-proof fire material. Find the smaller sticks that have fallen from the tree, split them and you will see and smell the resin in them. Use them as fire starters. Resin burns very easily and is not easily extinguished. For example, turpentine is made from tree resin,



and think of how volatile that is.

Resin from pine trees is very edible, and while not like the chewing gum of youth, not a bad flavor either. Birch tree resin is used in root beer, for instance. The softer resins can be chewed as a chewing gum and help to create moisture in your mouth and cleanse your teeth. It really doesn't taste bad; sort of nature-tasting and, well, tree-like. The taste will vary according to the species of tree, some more pine-like than others. Feel free to taste test which resin you like the best. Chew carefully; it is very sticky can pull out fillings. Just an FYI for those of us not blessed with perfect teeth.

Pine resin is also used traditionally as a cough drop or resin tea. The resin does not dissolve well in water, so making a resin tea is more complicated than one would want to do in an emergency situation, so I will skip the details. For a cough drop just suck on a small piece.

If you have ever had a hole in your tent you know what a huge downer that can be. Tree resin when heated returns to its liquid state, and you can easily add one

part resin or sap, one part hardwood or other charcoal gathered from your campfire and powdered, and one part ground plants, animal scat, sawdust or animal hair for strength. If you want your glue to remain supple then add one part fat or oil to the mix. Try to keep your resin from starting aflame by heating at a low temperature. If it does catch on fire, smother the flames right away. Then move your resin container to a cooler area of your fire. When you have mixed your glue, apply it to the area you wish to waterproof with a stick or you will be covered in glue. Honestly, you will probably be covered in glue after this anyway, think of it as a protective layer. You can also use this to glue broken items, from a cup to a tent pole. You may wish to strengthen your glued joint by wrapping it in cloth or string and painting the glue on the wrap.

Enjoy your time adventuring and do not worry about getting a blister or hole in your boot, a tear in your tent or a sore throat. All these things and more can be healed with pine resin!

PORVENIR MASSACRE ARCHAEOLOGY

by Glenn Justice. Photos by Jessica Lutz.



Archeologist Sam Cason uses a metal detector to locate bullet fragments across the volcanic dike against which the men were murdered.

One January night in 1918, a mass murder took place in far northwest Presidio County. It happened not far from a tiny, little-known village called Porvenir. In Spanish, Porvenir means future; however, there was no future for some 140 Mexicans living in the place, who subsisted by farming and raising goats, sheep, and a few cattle and horses. They occupied crude huts known as

jacales, constructed with stone or adobe walls and thatched roofs of ocotillo. While some were U.S. citizens, many of the residents of Porvenir came to Texas to escape the terrible civil war that consumed Mexico during those years.

Beginning in 1910 and lasting for a decade, the Mexican Revolution created havoc across Chihuahua as well as along the Texas border. On May 5,

1916, a group of bandits attacked Glenn Springs, Texas, located in today's Big Bend National Park. The raiders killed three troopers of the Fourteenth Cavalry and a four-year-old boy and set Glenn Springs ablaze. Then on Christmas Day, 1917, about 45 raiders thought to be *Villistas* attacked the Brite Ranch in western Presidio County. They looted the Brite store and hung mailman Mickey

Welch from the rafters before cutting his throat to make sure they had killed him.

These acts spread terror among Big Bend residents. Large numbers of people left their homes on the border, seeking safety in Marfa and other West Texas towns. There were heated demands for retaliation. Something had to be done. Sadly, these demands for vengeance developed into reality

and a terrible revenge descended upon the people of Porvenir, who had nothing to do with any of these raids.

Shortly after midnight on January 28, 1918, 40 U.S. cavalry troopers of Troop G, Eighth Cavalry, commanded by Captain Henry H. Anderson, along with as many as ten Texas Rangers and a number of ranchers, surrounded Porvenir in the darkness of a freezing cold night. Some of the ranchers wore bandanna masks to disguise their identities as they awakened the townspeople of Porvenir and ordered everyone outside while someone built a fire. The Rangers started separating the men from the women.

They selected 15 men and boys with ages ranging from 16 to 72 and marched them off into the darkness. Not long after, many gunshots rang out in the darkness as the 15 victims were shot to death without ceremony. The sound of gunfire produced instant pandemonium in the village as

the survivors realized that something dreadful had taken place. Fearing the worst, no one dared to venture out into the darkness to see what had happened.

Sometime before dawn, 13-year-old Juan Flores made his way to schoolmaster Harry Warren's house north of Porvenir to report the shooting. Young Flores was lucky to be alive. Someone had grabbed him the night before and shoved him into the group to be killed. But a rancher said the Flores boy was too young and somehow got Juan released before the massacre took place.

The following morning, Juan accompanied schoolmaster Warren to a location south of Porvenir, where they came across a pile of bodies guarded by the soldiers. It was a ghastly scene. According to Juan Flores, the dead apparently had been tied together and shot so many times they appeared to have been purposely mutilated. Juan saw his father's body. Longino Flores

was almost unrecognizable to his son, as part of the man's head had been blown away.

At some point that morning an old woman crossed the Rio Grande from Pilares driving a cart. The soldiers and some others helped her load the bodies on to the cart and she took them to Mexico, where they were buried in a mass grave in the Pilares churchyard. The survivors fled Porvenir, some going to Mexico, others to elsewhere. A few days after the massacre, a contingent of troopers from Camp Evetts came to Porvenir and knocked down and burned the abandoned *jacaes* the people of Porvenir once called home. The village ceased to exist.

Texas Ranger Captain Monroe Fox, commander of Ranger Company B in Marfa, attempted to whitewash the massacre, waiting three weeks before he even filed a report of the event. The captain

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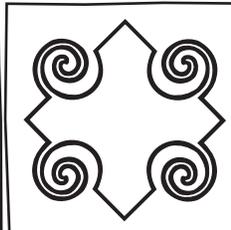
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Todd Elrod behind a scrim of sifting sand while screening for artifacts.

continued from page 17

claimed his men had gone to Porvenir in search of bandits and when they arrived, came under fire from the brush. They shot back and the next morning found fifteen dead bodies. Captain Anderson of Troop G Eighth Cavalry reported that his men came upon the bodies the morning after the massacre and had no idea how they had been killed. A few, very few, newspaper articles of the massacre ever went to press, but in June 1918 Governor William B. Hobby fired five of the

rangers who had been at Porvenir and disbanded Company B. Some Company B rangers simply resigned. Captain Fox also resigned citing political pressure, but no criminal actions resulted.

Historian Glenn Justice started researching the story of the massacre in the late 1980s and presented a paper about it about it to the West Texas Historical Association before publishing a book in 1992, *Revolution On The Rio Grande*, that included a chapter on the massacre. His research took him as far as the National Archives in Washington, D. C. and Suitland,

Maryland, where the author used the Freedom Of Information act to obtain vital, previously-classified army documents concerning the massacre. Slowly, paper evidence having to do with the massacre grew to the point that it left little to no doubt that the killing at Porvenir had actually taken place. Only one vexing question remained: who actually did the killing of the fifteen that tragic night?

Then in the spring of 2002, Justice learned of a Porvenir survivor still living. His name was Juan Flores. At the time Mr. Flores was 97 years old but still in good health and his mind sharp

for a person of his age. Remarkably, he did not even tell his family about the massacre until his last years. Mr. Flores suffered from terrible nightmares about the massacre that his family did not understand. Finally, he decided to tell the story of what he had witnessed that awful night.

In November 2002, Mr. Flores made a journey to the Porvenir massacre site and revealed to those present the exact location where the killings took place. Remarkably, some cartridge casings still lay on the ground, and metal detectors indicated the presence of many more at the site. Justice

picked up a few, and over the next decade returned to Porvenir numerous times, on each trip finding more and more cartridge cases, bullets, bullet fragments and other artifacts.

In 2015, former Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson and Austin lobbyist Lee Woods offered to help with the Porvenir project. Everyone felt it important that the little-known Porvenir massacre story be told, and that it would make a great topic for a documentary film. But, at the same time, the group realized that in order to accomplish this, archaeological work had to be done at the massacre site. Also, it would be necessary to shoot at least enough video to put together a documentary film trailer to help raise money to fund such a project. Archaeologist and historian David W. Keller had long been familiar with Justice's work at Porvenir, and agreed to assemble a group of archaeologists to investigate the site. David headed up the archaeological team, including Sam Cason, Tim Gibbs and Amber Harrison. In addition to being an archaeologist, Sam has expertise doing photographs with aerial drones that would prove to be most helpful in mapping the 15 acres surrounding the massacre site. With the drone and its high-resolution photos, the mapping of the precise location of each of the artifacts could be clearly shown.

The archaeologists also planned an intensive five-acre metal detector survey on foot around the site. The Porvenir project employed the services of filmmaker Ford Gunter and his assistant Patton Baker to film archaeological work at the site, do interviews, and also shoot aerial footage of the site, the village of Porvenir and surrounding countryside. Stanley Jobe of El Paso was kind enough to provide a helicopter to do aerial filming. In addition,

Jessica Lutz and Ashley Avera did still photos. Charlie Angell and two of his helpers worked hard as camp cooks preparing great meals for everyone.

the first two nights, plunging temperatures into the high 20s. And, of course, the wind and dust blew like the devil. At first no one thought the helicopter

Colt, and .45 acp. The head stamps on the cartridge cases are dated and most were manufactured by two United States Army ammunition manufacturers. Some were made by the Frankfort Arsenal of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania which produced ammunition for the U.S. Army from 1816 until it closed at the end of the Vietnam War. Other cartridge cases found at the massacre site had been manufactured by the Union Metallic Cartridge Company, a division of Remington Arms that made rifle and pistol ammunition for the U.S. Army from the time of the Civil War. The head stamp dates on all of the cartridge cases ranged from 1909 to 1917. It should be noted that guns carried by most Texas Rangers during the time of the massacre were revolvers chambered in the .45 Colt caliber and 30-30 Winchester saddle guns. No .30-30 cartridge cases or bullets were found at the massacre site. Some U.S. Army troopers carried .45 caliber revolvers, but generally 1911 Colt Automatic Pistols were carried by officers, since the weapon was in short supply during the World War I years.

Overall, everyone who took part in the archaeological work at Porvenir considered the finds to be exceptional. Principle archaeological investigator David Keller summed up the project, "Considering that I was skeptical that we would find additional materials, I was pleasantly surprised by the volume and consistency of our finds. The intensive survey also revealed a highly patterned artifact distribution. I can say with a fair degree of confidence that the artifact distribution, the types of artifacts, all strongly conform to the hypothesis that this was the site of the Porvenir Massacre of 1918. The findings also strongly implicate the U.S. Cavalry."



Above: artifacts recovered during excavation. Below: bullets and fragments found at massacre site.



On Friday, November 20, 2015, the expedition set out for Porvenir. Because of the extremely remote location everyone had to camp out for the next three nights. A cold front blew in

could fly in such wind, but fortunately by Sunday the weather cleared and could not have been nicer.

The work went well through all of this. The archaeologists unearthed 27 new artifacts, mostly bullets, bullet fragments and cartridge casings. Up to that date, Justice

had found 21 artifacts, giving a total of 48 artifacts thought to be related to the massacre.

The cartridge cases and bullets came in several calibers, including 30.06, .45

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Big Bend Eats

by Carolyn Brown Zniewski

SUMMER GARDEN VEGETABLES

Grab a basket and head out to one of the local farmer's markets. Several of them dot the Big Bend, five at my last count: Alpine, Marfa, Fort Davis and Terlingua. The counters and tables are piled with fresh vegetables from local gardens. If you have your own garden you only have to walk out your door for the taste of spring and summer. There are always delicious salads to make with a combination of fresh lettuces and vegetables dressed with your favorite dressing, yet may I suggest something more? With zucchini spilling off every vine and summer squash and eggplant not far behind, try them in a fine vegetable stew: Ratatouille in France, Caponata in Sicily or Vegetales in West Texas. The seasonings vary, but the basic vegetables are the same.

Here I have a simple recipe open to lots of variation depending on your taste buds and what is in your vegetable basket. Put together the chopped vegetables and then add the seasonings of your choice for a variety of possibilities. Serve this hot right off the stove, or at room temperature, with a great loaf of crusty bread.

Combined with some good salami or a nice chunk of cheese, you have a great meal on the table with all the flavors of the garden.

Vegetable stew, three ways

Dice into one inch cubes:

- 1 good-sized eggplant
- Several zucchini
- 3-4 summer squash
- 2 red or green bell peppers
- 2 cups fresh tomatoes or
- 1 14 oz. can chopped tomatoes
- Optional additions:
- Mushrooms
- New potatoes
- Green beans
- Fennel bulb



Photo courtesy Maya Brown Zniewski

You want a total of 12 cups diced vegetables, add:

- Large onion, thinly sliced
- 3-4 garlic cloves, finely diced
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper
- ½ cup olive oil

Toss these into a nice big pot with one of the following three spice combinations:

- Ratatouille - French:
 - ¼ cup chopped parsley
 - 1 Tbsp chopped tarragon
 - ¼ cup fresh chopped chives
 - Garnish with a dollop of sour cream and chopped green onions

Caponata - Sicilian:

- ¼ cup green olives
- 3 Tbls wine vinegar
- 2 Tbls brown sugar
- 1 Tbls basil
- Garnish with parmesan cheese and chopped green onion

Tex-Mex Vegetales - West Texas

- 2 Tbls chili
- 1 Tbls cumin
- 2 tsp oregano
- Hot sauce to taste
- Garnish with grated jack cheese and chopped green onion

Put everything in a big pot, give it all a good stir, cover it and put in on to

cook. You may simmer gently on top of the stove for about an hour, put it in the oven at 250° for an hour and a half or cook it in a crockpot for about four hours. Serve with crusty bread, either warm or room temperature. Great for a day when life forces everyone to eat supper at different times. Good for a potluck and the perfect solution to the prolific zucchini. If you are worried this won't be hearty enough after the cattle drive, throw in a can of your favorite beans.

This is a truly delicious taste of summer any time of the year.

Lost in the Folds

Of her loose
Full garment
In her house
In a fold in
The hollow
Behind the
Hills where
Quiet still
Prevailed
And slow
Was the
Way and
We met
And loved
The days
Away

In the folds
Of her loose
Full garment
In the hollow
Behind the
Hills in the
Quiet and
The slow.

by K.B. Whitley

Billy Faier

billy faier's defunct
who used to play
a water smooth silver banjo
and write one, two, three,
four folk songs
just like that.
jesus he was a handsome man
and what i want to know is
how do you like your one
eyed boy,
mister death?

*by Carolyn Brown Zniewski
after e.e. cummings*

A Date with Mother Nature

by Perry Cozzen. Illustration by Gary Oliver.

Billy Joe Shaver says, in *Willie the Wandering Gypsy and Me*, “Moving is the next best thing to being free.” They say the Sundance Kid couldn’t hit anything unless he was moving. I believe moving is what I love the most. Big Bend is for movers. Almost everyone who lives here moved here one way or another. Even the original people were on the move; nomadic, they say. If you are a mover, your imagination is your only limitation.

To me there is nothing better than a cool summer night and an empty road. Open the wing, roll down the window, stick your arm out, look in front, look behind, pop a cold beer, and turn on some Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. Cruising through Mother Nature: mesquite trees, dry creeks, plowed fields, oil field pump jacks, maybe see a rabbit or notice a light on in a farmhouse. Listening to Bob, Wills that is. About that time the one comes on about the mule and the grasshopper eatin’ ice cream, mule gets sick, and they laid him on a beam. I’d call that acid country.

Oh Mother Nature, it’s been a long haul for you, been some floods, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, freezes, some terrible heat, pestilence, and plenty of crooked politicians. You’ve been drilled, blown out, and dug into. You’ve had dams built on your rivers, been scraped off, piled on, poisoned, conquered, communized, socialized, democratized, lived on peacefully once or twice and finally divided up: bought and sold.

I believe I’ll have another beer.

Yep, Mother Nature has taken some lickings, but she rolls with the punches pretty good. I was in Wyoming one time, a couple of years after a bad forest fire; you could hardly tell it. The first-growth timber grew fast and it was already tall. Poison takes a little longer and sometimes nothing will ever grow on the ground again. Floods are not bad to get over, except for replacing the stuff the humans built.

Looks like we’re coming into a town. Think I’ll get a little gas. There’s a cafe across the street from the gas station and it looks pretty busy. There are a few people driving around, and a movie letting out. I’ll just throw these empties in the trash, and drive on West.

There are lots of stars out, no moon, just right for driving and thinking.

Humans have got to be the only thing that embarrasses Mother

Nature. The other animals live and die but don’t really screw anything up. Humans have multiplied way too fast, they eat up all they can grow, drink up all the fresh water they can find and pollute the rest. They also foul the air. Plus they dump various things in the ground that will be there forever and will never react naturally with the rest of the earth again.

The worst thing about them is that they can’t even get along with each other, or anything else for that matter. They’re always done in by their hate and ignorance. Once they hate something, they refuse to learn another thing about it. Occasionally you can get them to quit hating one thing, but it’s not long before they’ve found something else to hate instead.

I believe I’ll have another beer.

Don’t get me wrong, I have known some good humans, but on a wide scale they’re pretty miserable. So to keep from just shooting yourself, or them, you have to scale down. Find a few good humans to hang around with and depend on.

About the time the town behind me has dropped out of sight, I notice some taillights on the side of the road ahead.

As I get closer, I see it’s a red Caddy ragtop and a fine looking lady standing beside it.

“Yes ma’am, having some trouble?”

“Oh, I stupidly ran out of gas; I thought I could make it 20 more miles to the gas station up ahead.”

“I’ve got about two gallons in a can that ought to get you there. I’ll follow you to make sure you make it.”

After we gassed up, the lady goes into the convenience store, buys a 6



pack of Big Bend beer and walks over to me.

"Your name is Joe isn't it?"

"Yes it is, how did you know?"

"Oh, I've been watching you since breakfast. Mind if I ride along with you?"

"Yes ma'am, please, I'm just fooling around enjoying a nice summer night."

"I enjoy that too, good night for it, how about a beer?"

After we went a mile or two, I asked her how she knew my name was Joe, and what was her name?

"I heard your buddy call you that when you were walking out of the cafe this morning. My first name is Mother, last name Nature. I'm that woman you've been thinking about tonight. I saw you come out of the cafe after breakfast, and just decided to follow you today. I thought you were kinda cute."

"How else does Mother Nature spend her days?"

"Well, I'm not always a human; yesterday I was a bird part of the day and flew down the Rio Grande. I added some water to the river downstream from El Paso, enough to flood it and cut the original channel through the

silt all the way to the gulf. I caused a couple of cracks in the Glen Canyon Dam on the Colorado but the folks that work there will have plenty of time to get out before it falls down. After that I put some more wolves in Yellowstone, became one, and hung around long enough that I knew they were comfortable. Then today I came back here, and drove my car out where you found me and just waited for you to get there. I wasn't really out of gas."

"Yeah, I noticed your car only held eight gallons. It bothers me a little that you know what I'm thinking. Are you just a crazy woman?"

"No, watch this, Joe. In one minute two rabbits are going to run across the road in front of you in opposite directions and just past them you'll see a polar bear standing up on your right, and I promise to quit reading your mind."

First the rabbits, then the bear! "Well, I'll be damned, I guess you really are who you say you are, or that was just one hell of a trick. One thing though, if you don't mind, I'd like to call you Honey instead of Mother. I'm sure you might understand."

"Sure, I'll answer to Honey, and if you don't mind turn Bob back on, he's

my favorite too. Want another beer?"

We just rode on into the night listening to the music, me wondering what the hell I had got myself into and Honey with her bare feet on the dash, looking out the window, sipping on her beer and smiling.

"Joe, I know we're getting close to your house and I know you have a bottle of whiskey, could we just sit outside, look at the stars, and have a couple of drinks?"

"Yes ma'am, be there in about ten minutes. It's a farmhouse about a quarter mile off the road, we'll turn in and park."

"Nice place you've got here Joe, real comfortable, and you're a good housekeeper, looks great."

"How do you like your whiskey?"

"Just a little ice, thanks. Can we sit outside? Such a nice night if I do say so myself."

"Head on out the back door, there's a couple of lawn chairs and a little table, I'm right behind you. Honey, I guess you know the name of every one of those stars."

"Yes I do, some have gone out, and become something else, and some are brand new, so to speak, just the way the atoms all lined up."

"Have you ever been a star?"

"No, I can't get off the earth. This is my planet. I want you to know I'm not mean and am not responsible for the disasters that happen. That's just the way this place evolves. I can't do anything about it. I can make it rain sometimes though, and that's what I'm up to tomorrow, trying to stop a couple of droughts and fill some lakes with drinking water. Could I have another drink, and one of your cigarettes?"

"How did you decide what kind of human to be?"

"Well, you're kind of an experiment. I had never experienced life as a human and wanted to give it a try. I made myself your age, and tried to look like someone you would be attracted to, just had to guess at that, but I could tell you had a good spirit."

"Honey, you have to realize how crazy this is for me, surely you must have some idea. I can't quite get comfortable; hell you might flood me out if I piss you off. You hit a good combination when you built yourself. You're real attractive to me, but I'm not sure what you are."

continued on page 24

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“Ha, well don’t let that worry you, Joe. I already care a lot about you and would never harm you. Caring about you is a new experience for me and I don’t know what that is. It’s a funny feeling. Please just look at me as a woman, that’s what I am, just like all the rest. I could quit being one any time, but I like it so far. Can I get you a drink this time?”

“Let’s have one more, then I’ll take you back to your car. It’s about an hour away from here.”

“Ok, thanks.”

“Are you hungry?”

“No thanks. Tell me how you ended up here.”

“I went in the Navy out of high school, got a degree at Sul Ross after I got out. I moved to San Angelo and worked as a stockbroker and got married. I’d been married a little over three years when my wife got killed in a car wreck. I hung around there another year and then my mother died. She’d been living here by herself after my father died, had a hired hand do the farming. I thought I could use a change of scenery, so I moved back here to live.”

“Thanks for catching me up Joe, sorry about your wife dying so young. It’s an hour drive both ways back to my car, could I just sleep on your couch? That way we could have another drink before we go to sleep.”

“That sounds good, Honey, I wasn’t looking forward to driving back. So tomorrow you just go where they need

rain, and make it rain?”

“Yeah, that’s one of the things I can do if the conditions are right. There’s just a certain amount of water vapor in the air over the earth, but I have the ability to move it around a little. I try to keep droughts down, but I can’t stop a flood if the weather gets out of control.”

“Well, there’s a lot of work for you around here, seems like somewhere in Texas always needs rain and I know that better than most, being a farmer. I know humans terribly mismanage the water we have. A few people around here are starting to catch rain-water for their gardens and raise crops that don’t take much water. Anyway, if I need a rain, I’ll holler. Sure nice to know the lady that’s got it.”

About half an hour after we said goodnight Honey knocked on my door.

“Joe, I started missing you, is that another crazy human thing?”

“Yeah it is, but I was missing you too, come on in.”

The next morning I got up and started the coffee, and Honey came in the kitchen rubbing her eyes and yawning.

“Joe, I need to go outside and check on things; just part of my job to see if the sun comes up at the right time and all the critters are okay.”

By the time she got back, I had breakfast on.

“Honey, I raised the hog that sausage came from, the chickens that the eggs came from, and the potato for the hash browns, but I buy the flour and the milk for the biscuits, and gravy in town.”

“It smells great Joe. I’ve never tasted any of this, but I can’t wait to try it.

You know I had never experienced any of these human things, but you made me feel so good last night and this morning that I’m having a hard time sorting it all out.”

“Honey, believe you me I’m right there with you. I hope you don’t just leave, and that’s the end of it.”

“I’ve got a busy day today, but I’d like to come back tonight around happy hour.”

“Yes ma’am, you are sure invited. Tonight is Saturday night. I think it’s about time you experienced some Mexican food and dancing to some music that’s a lot like Bob Wills and Hoyle Nix. Let me give you a ride to your car.”

“That’s alright, I can get there real quick as the crow flies, I’ll see you tonight.”

That night about five, the red Caddy turned up the road to the house. Honey got out with two big bottles of whiskey and kissed me on the cheek. We had a drink, got in my pickup, and headed out for Saturday night on the town.

We got home close to midnight, laughing and talking. I got us a couple of drinks on the way through the kitchen.

“Joe, I did love the Mexican food, and the dancing, I promise I’ll get better at it.”

“You haven’t said anything about how your day went today. Did you get everything done you wanted to, Honey?”

“I’ve just been in a daze all day thanks to you. I made a couple of mistakes, just not paying attention. A bridge got wiped out from too much rain but it was just a little one.”

“I know what you mean. I’ve been a

little slow in the head today myself. I went to town at lunch time to get a bite to eat and told all the boys I was sleeping with Mother Nature, but they just laughed at me.”

When I woke up Sunday morning Honey was gone. I looked out the east window. She was standing outside with the sun coming up out of her head.

“Honey, today is Sunday and humans usually don’t work much on Sunday. Why don’t you stay here today? We can just lay around and be in love all day?”

“I’d like that Joe, in fact I’m liking everything about this being a human.”

A year passed, and Honey and Joe never had a quarrel. They went out every Saturday night and hung around the farm together on Sunday. They took a couple of short trips, but mostly they just stayed at home.

The morning of their one-year anniversary, Honey said, “Joe, I don’t know if you realize it but this is the one-year anniversary of our first night together. I’ve cooked up a little celebration. Hope you don’t mind.”

When they got out to the backyard Joe looked around. Every critter in the county had gathered there. They were all calm and didn’t make a noise; rabbits sitting next to coyotes, rattlesnakes next to mice, all the birds in the county roosting in the trees and Joe’s hogs and chickens in the front row.

Honey and Joe stood next to Joe’s little table and a talking crow hopped up on top. The crow said a few words about always being good to each other. Joe kissed Honey. The yard exploded in an uproar. The coyotes howled, the rabbits thumped, the snakes rattled, the mice squeaked, the birds all sang their songs. Joe’s chickens clucked, and his hogs grunted in unison. Joe and Honey waved and bowed, then it started to rain a little so everybody left. Honey and Joe went back in the house.

They enjoyed that Sunday afternoon together. It rained about a half inch, real slow, and fell real pretty, took all day.

After that day Joe and Mother Nature lived happily ever after, following the crow’s words. Honey aged along with Joe until he rode on ahead. Then Honey became something else, and Big Bend Texas never needed rain again.

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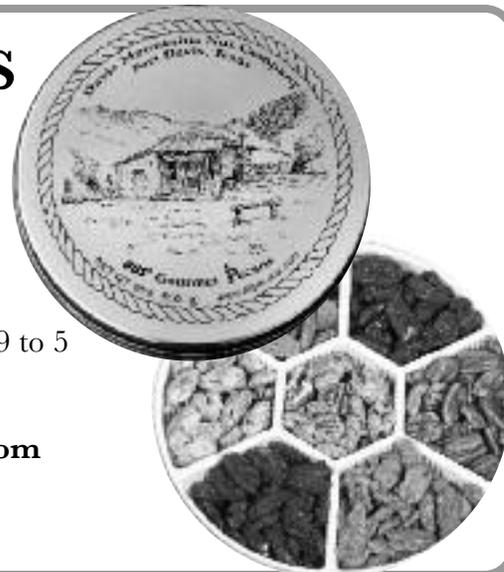
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ative brain disorders among slaughterhouse workers exposed to cow's brains. (Is that because I didn't put my hand in the hole cut in the top of the freezer?) Art is subjective and can be strange, but I found myself thinking about things outside my bubble. And that's the point: I found myself thinking.

My next stop was a small gallery called Etherington Art. Mary Etherington, the owner and director, is a transplant from Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. Etherington had a gallery on the Vineyard, and after visiting Marfa, decided to relocate. From expansive West Texas photography by Bob Anderson to life-sized photographs of Tibetan murals created from 1080 to the 17th century, Etherington told stories of the art and of Marfa as we sat at her picnic table in the gallery.

The current popularity of the town takes away from younger artists who come to Marfa to hang out and work for their big break, Etherington said. Yet despite the swing from inaccessible to trendy, Marfa is still an intellectually oriented place for artists. "It's very civilized," said Etherington. "That's what I like about Marfa. It's a rich cultural scene in the middle of nowhere."

An article in *Vanity Fair* magazine in 2012 entitled "Lone Star Bohemia" changed the coolness of Marfa, Etherington said. In past days, curators, collectors, and architects came to see the work of Judd. Now that Marfa is consistently on top 10 lists of best, remote, and cool towns to visit, it's shifted from a pilgrimage site to something else.

Whatever the "something else" is, the broad music scene and good festivals make Marfa more accessible to locals and people who aren't interested in formal art per se. It also makes the dollars of the locals

more accessible to businesses, keeping the wheels of local economy turning.

The current boom and shuffle will affect Etherington sooner than later; the building where she rents a space (near the new St. George hotel) is for sale. She may have to relocate, but Etherington says she will stay in Marfa.

Part of the coolness about an art field trip to Marfa is visiting the galleries grown out of abandoned spaces and historic homes. Such was my next stop. Brothers Fine Art is a gallery owned and run by Christa Brothers. Located on the west side of Marfa, the cobbled-together building functions as the Bavarian-born Brothers's studio, gallery and home. In a state of entropy and full of abandoned things left behind by past dwellers, Brothers and her husband saw beyond the residue and purchased the property. "It was in bad shape when we bought it, but the seemingly never-ending task of 'digging out' is like my playground," Brothers said.

Brothers features artists from all over the world. Native Texan Billy L. Keen, whom the editors of *Art Connoisseur Magazine* named artist of the year for 2016, is well represented in the rambling gallery. Keen is a multimedia artist who evolves the "tired landscape" into something more, something interactive and thought provoking. The strip at the bottom of his works is symbolic of always being on The Path, Brothers said.

Art from Berlin artist Inge H. Schmidt also resides at Brothers gallery. Traditionally-sized portrayals adorn the walls in Marfa, but Schmidt also does larger-than-life pieces. Her ongoing project, "Colors of Life," represents openness and tolerance toward ethnic and religious diversity. The formal exhibit for "Colors of Life" will open at the United Nations in New York on April 21 in conjunction with the gallery in Marfa.

The six-bedroom, two-bath building where Brothers lives, works, and shows will eventually be a place where artists can come and stay. Typically the artist is supposed to perform and produce in these types of settings, but Brothers wants to provide an informal retreat where artists can come and just breathe. "Do something or just gain a new perspective...easy does it," she said as we sipped coffee in her kitchen. I felt like I was in the home of my fun relative and happened to be surrounded by extraordinary creativity.

Connections are found in quiet galleries that are relatively empty even when there are crowds, at least in West Texas. If you only have one experience of the arts, you project that and your expectations come into play, narrowing your potential to see a larger expanse of the concept. The expansiveness of the large spaces in the foundations gives us more room to be in our minds. The galleries give us glimpses into human experiences different from our own, from the artists as well as the owners of the galleries. Much like traveling expands one's horizons, art can do the same - it's like seeing through the eyes of another, moving into their psyche (or psychosis) for a few moments, and can be a very intimate, sometimes disturbing, more often spiritual, encounter.

If you want something out of the typical West Texas norm, go to Marfa. Visit foundations, visit galleries. You may not like all of it, but you may create new space in your solid matter brain. Sit with the art, visit with the curators in the space held by the pieces, have a glass of wine or a cup of coffee - or just have a thought.

You may not get it.... But then again, you might.

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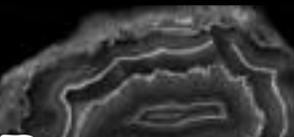


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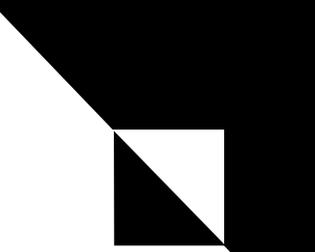
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IN PURSUIT OF THE FORMIDABLE TUNA;

A Far West Texas guide to gathering the fruit and making prickly pear juice

by *Bridget Weiss*. Illustration by *Carolyn Brown Zniewski*.

Prickly pear cactus fruits, a.k.a. tunas, ripen continually from early June until late October. In South County, they're often ready to pick as early as late May. Tunas typically don't ripen in Alpine, Marfa and Fort Davis until August. Groups of cacti only a few yards away from one another will fruit at different times. This variation allows harvesting into late fall.

The cactus has large and small spines (glochids) as defense. Never directly touch a tuna. Employ the indirect approach, with tongs and gloves, and hope for the best. Even if you imagine that you didn't touch a tuna, you will spend the following weeks picking tiny spines from all areas of your body as a result of merely being in their vicinity. The large spines are easy to spot and can be removed with fingers or tweezers. The small spines can be difficult to see and will happily embed themselves in your skin, sometimes choosing to take their exit months after your encounter. The tiniest broken bit of glochid in a finger or toe is a constant irritant and can lead to uncharacteristic expressions of profanity and frustration.

Be warned: tunas are a food source for javelina, wild hogs and wasps, and prickly pear are a fortress for snakes and burrowing animals. Watch the ground beneath your feet and examine the patch before collecting. Tarantula hawks (very scary wasps) and rattlesnakes are no joke. Harvest the formidable tuna with all caution. If you pick fruit along a county or state road and are unlucky, the local law or park employees will ask you to desist. Texas is 95 per cent privately owned, and the parks, thankfully, have most of the rest. In other words: one can't pick anything at any time for any reason without permission. If you go cowboy and do not ask first, be prepared for the property owner or ranger to appear in the middle of nowhere and ask what exactly you think you're doing with those tongs in hand on their land.

When you have gotten permission,

here is a costume and equipment list for collecting tunas: Water (hydrate or die), hat against the sun (it wouldn't hurt to make this a beekeepers hat—wasps!), long-sleeved shirt, heavy pants, snake-proof hiking boots, leather or heavy-duty rubber gloves (to be discarded after use), plastic cooler for collecting tuna (spines will stick and stay in cloth bags), very long-handled tongs. Now wade out to those bright pink fruits and fill that cooler.

After an appropriate recovery nap it is time to bottle tuna juice for holiday cocktails.

You will need some equipment and set-up before you actually bottle the juice. Fruit juicers can be purchased in El Paso, a short 442 miles round-trip. TIP: don't think it will be better to share

the gas expense with a friend for company; they might carry on about personal issues, pausing only for a breath while you are wishing the volume on the radio could turn up even higher.

All things considered, you might want to have ordered a fruit or wine press online a couple weeks ago. Fruit or wine presses will save you a series of burned-out juicer motors, not to mention an insidious purple spatter on every surface in the kitchen. You will also need a large round bucket with mesh paint strainers to fit, heavy-duty plastic gloves for processing, a vat of boiling water, a long-handled strainer spoon, a sponge mop, kitchen towels (all that you own) and three gallons kitchen wall paint. Your kitchen will never be the same.

Sounds so easy, "juice the fruit." Don't be fooled. Tuna skins are hardy, and most easily softened by spending

five minutes in a boiling water bath. Use just enough water to cover the fruit. Bring water to a boil and simmer five minutes. Using the large strainer spoon, remove the softened tunas to the juicer or wine press. Process the fruits according to directions of your chosen equipment. Run the processed juice through the mesh strainer affixed to a large bucket. If using a juicer, the quantity of spines, seeds and pureed skin will cause the straining process to take up to 30 minutes. If using a wine press, there will be minimal seeds and spines. If you need to feed the kids or have a glass of wine on the porch now, you can refrigerate the juice and finish the project tomorrow.

To bottle the juice, once you have some, you will need a water bath canner, canning jars (1/2 pint-size, as the actual amount of juice will be small), a jar lifter, a cooling rack, fresh-squeezed lime juice and agave nectar or honey.

Heat the water bath and sterilize the jars. Ball Jar has a website for information on canning. Measure the juice. Using a non-reactive pot, bring juice to a boil and simmer three minutes. Remove from heat. For each one cup of juice, add one Tablespoon fresh lime juice and two Tablespoons agave nectar or local honey. Ladle the hot mixture into sterile jars, put on lids, lower jars into canner, bring water bath to full boil and process the jars in the canner for 10 minutes. Remove jars from canner, tighten lids and allow to cool. As the lids seal, you will hear a ping.

Now for the word we have all been waiting for:

Margaritas:
1 – 2 parts prickly pear juice
1 part fresh lime juice

1 part agave nectar or simple syrup
3 parts tequila
1 part people you want to impress with your understanding of the land.

So you think you know your tunas? Using your notes, take the quiz.

1. Tunas are a favored food source for:
 - a) Naturalized camels
 - b) The neighbors
 - c) Javelinas and wasps
 - d) All of the above
2. One can harvest tunas on any county road:
 - a) While loudly playing "This Land is Your Land" by Arlo Guthrie
 - b) Wearing snake-proof boots
 - c) When the moon is in the seventh house
 - d) Never
3. Tuna juice, a.k.a prickly pear nectar is:
 - a) Earthy in flavor like a beet
 - b) The primary reason alien life crashed in Presidio in 1974
 - c) Used as an aphrodisiac in Pago Pago
 - d) An ingredient in saltine crackers
4. Cactus spines are:
 - a) Harmless and frequently used in card games
 - b) Spontaneously generated by horned lizards in heavy rains
 - c) Difficult to avoid even with precaution
 - d) A friend to all

Bonus:

What answer listed above is the best fodder for a free form poem?

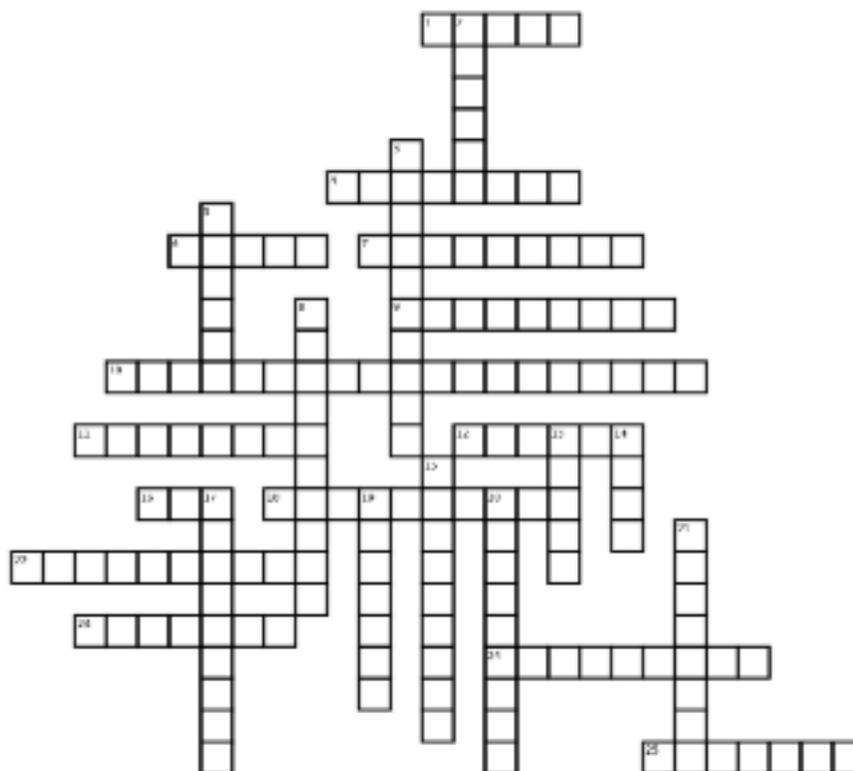
Answers:
1-C, 2-D, 3-A, 4-C,
BONUS 2-C or 4-B

Sit on your porch and enjoy the Margaritas!



Crossword Puzzle

by *Melissa P. Lindsay*



Down:

2. A water-carved gully or channel
3. Ancient meteorite impact crater
5. Black-tipped, stubby tailed cat
8. The last of the flying reptiles
13. James, Liz, and Rock's epic portrayal of Texas ranching
14. Prominent Chisos mountain named for early park superintendent
15. President who established BBNP
17. Cactus capital of Texas
19. Late 1850's bustling silver mining town
20. Home to a misplaced yurt
21. It divides a community

Across:

1. A rock, earth, and plant fiber house
4. The more recognized name for La Harmonia Ranch
6. Distilled spirit made from the desert spoon
7. Showcase for cowboy gear and western art
9. Faceless border agent welcomes you to U.S. from this town
10. The lizard with the pink shirt and green pants
11. Distinctive peak southwest of Marathon
12. Prada knock-off along Hwy 90
16. Beneficiary of chili cook-off aficionados
18. A constellation named after a vain queen
22. "If he catches you, you're through."
23. A birder's paradise
24. The last live lobo mascot at Sul Ross
25. A false agave

Answers on page 28



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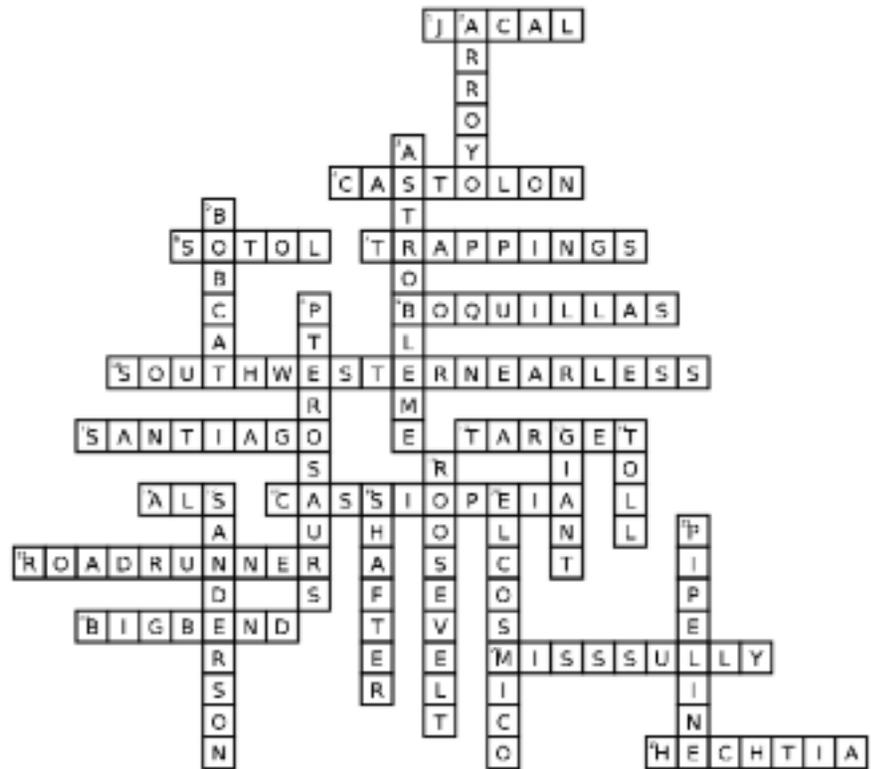
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Crossword Puzzle Answers

from page 27



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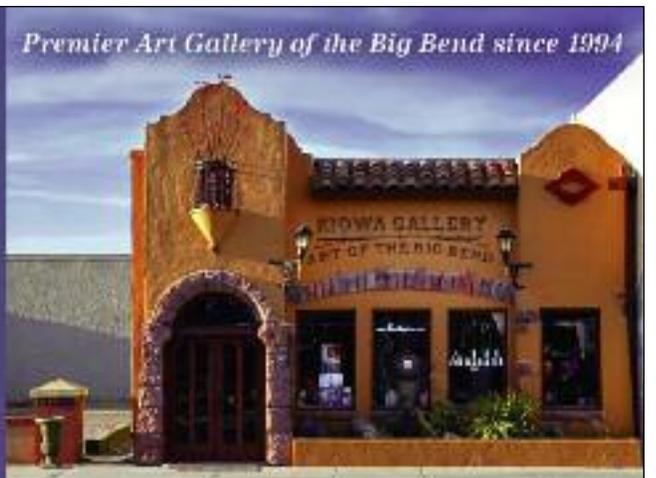
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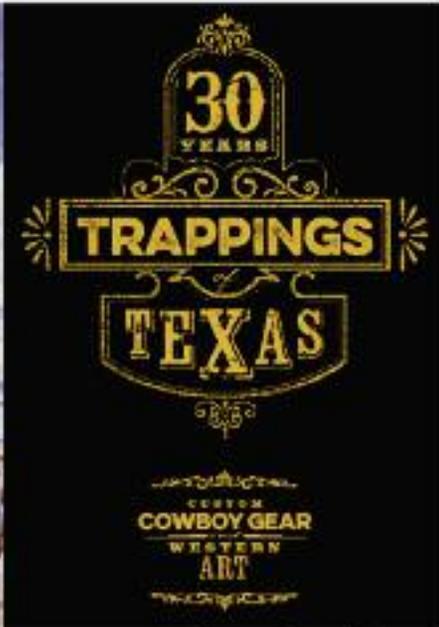
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