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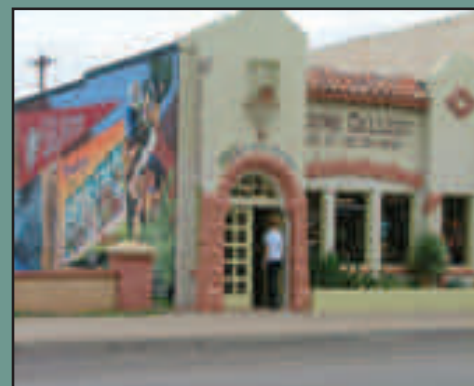
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Frontier Medicine ~ the hospital at Fort Davis

Story and photography by Donna G. Smith

Step back in time to when Fort Davis was an active military post. The community surrounding the fort was a bustling town, especially in the 1880s when garrison strength was over 600 soldiers. Serving the needs of the military and settlers' families was a smorgasbord of businesses – mercantile stores, saloons, brothels, hotel, bakery, milliner, newspaper, attorneys, realtors, meat markets, clock repair, saddler/harness maker, barber/tonsorial parlor and druggist. But the only medical doctor was at the fort, and in his off-duty hours he treated townsfolk.

Medical records kept by the U.S. Army during its stay at Fort Davis, the years 1854 to 1891, teem with heartrending tales that reflect the state of the art of medicine and daily perils of life. Almost all the deaths among military personnel at Fort Davis were due to disease, sickness, injury and accidents, or even homicide – not wounds received in battle. In fact, very few deaths can be attributed to combat engagements with the enemy.

Capt. James Patterson died at age 30 of acute pericarditis in 1873. Lt. and Mrs. George A. Dodd buried their 15-month-old son to cholera infantum in 1885. All seven children of ex-soldier George Bentley and wife died when a diphtheria epidemic hit Fort Davis in 1891. (No one knew yet to boil fresh milk to kill bacteria.) Pvt. John S. Mitchell was kicked in the abdomen by a horse in 1881 and died from internal bleeding. Cpl. Richard Robinson, age 31, was killed by his sergeant while sleeping in bed in the barracks in 1878. A young child died after drinking from a bottle of laudanum or tincture of opium. (There were no child-proof caps then.) Lightning struck and killed 20-year-old John Drinkwater and the horse he was riding in August 1885.

Diseases and medical conditions had some strange names, and Army archival records are filled with them. Ten cavalry soldiers were sick in February 1882 with parotitis (mumps). In 1886, former Cpl. John H. Mason, age 40, died of “softening of the brain” (hemorrhage). The common cold was known as catarrh; apoplexy meant unconsciousness, usually caused by a stroke;

edema or fluid build-up was dropsy; kidney stones, gravel; tuberculosis, consumption.

Consumption was a major killer of adults in America in the 19th century, and Fort Davis was not spared. In 1881, a Fort Davis officer was accused by his fellow officers of being “intoxicated” while serving on a court martial board. The officer was Post Surgeon Harvey Brown, age 45. His rebuttal was that he was merely treating his illness – consumption or TB, which caused him to cough violently and expel blood. Common treatment at the time for TB was ½-to-1 ounce of whiskey or brandy every two or three hours – or opium in combination with alcohol! Because of his debilitating illness, Dr. Brown requested to retire early. But the surgeon general in Washington, D.C. denied the petition – there was no vacancy on the U.S. Army's retired list. The army transferred Brown to Jackson Barracks, La., where eight years later the ailing doctor still on active duty died of phthisis pulmonalis – the disease he had had at Fort Davis. One wonders how many soldiers he infected in the meantime. But that was before TB was known to be contagious.

In the mid- to late-1800s, U.S. Army physicians were among the best-trained in America. They had to be graduates of allopathic (mainstream) medical schools and had to pass a rigorous exam to enter the Army Medical Department. Yet, at the time, what caused disease was unknown, so all that doctors, or anyone, could do was treat the symptoms. For TB, they treated patients with medicinal alcohol or brandy. For diarrhea, they prescribed opium, ipecac or nux vomica (strychnine). For headache, they ordered quinine. For venereal disease, the best treatment was mercury – they figured a powerful disease required a powerful treatment. For diseases of the digestive tract, two popular patent (over-the-counter) medicines contained arsenic: Fowler's Solution and Donovan's Solution (which was arsenic and mercury).

No one knew about bacteria, viruses or parasites such as intestinal protozoa. The average lifespan of a white male in America was 48; for a black male it was 33. Children died of measles, typhoid fever, diphtheria, whooping cough or other illnesses we hardly worry about

The average lifespan of a white male in America was 48; for a black male it was 33. Children died of measles, typhoid fever, diphtheria, whooping cough or other illnesses we hardly worry about today.

A real human skeleton was an important reference tool for 19th-century physicians in the days before X-rays and other diagnostic aids like MRIs.

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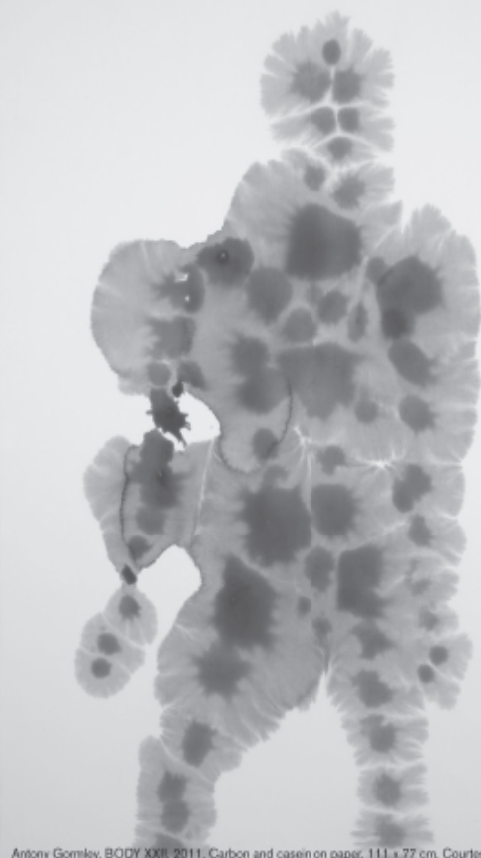
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Antony Gormley, BODY XXXI, 2011. Carbon and casein on paper, 111 x 77 cm. Courtesy of the artist.



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Editor's Notes

by Dallas Baxter



The nighttime temperatures have finally dipped into the 50s, however briefly, and that means fall is about to make its entrance. Ahh – the evenings beg for a fire and the days for a hike.

Cenizo remains for sale, although we've shifted some of the day-to-day from me to others, and getting out from under some of the workload is great. There's a lot to running this little magazine – but don't be shy – if you live in and know the Trans-Pecos and want to take the publication forward, get in touch!

We've added a simple map to our editor's page for those who travel without a map and wonder where they are.

Our first piece of fiction runs in this issue. Many know Bridget Weiss for her wonderful cooking at the late lamented Marfa Table. She brings her artful skills from the kitchen to the page with "Beneath my Skin," giving Annie Proulx a run for her money.

If you think our current medical technology has hit a peak, read Donna Smith's story of medicine at Fort Davis a mere 125 years ago. Yikes! Now imagine 2137 – what will they think of us then?

That handsome adobe mansion in Marathon was built by the town's founder, Capt. Albion Shepard. Get the details from Danielle Gallo's story.

Dana Jones is back, this time with the cover shot and the photo essay. Check out his fine photography.

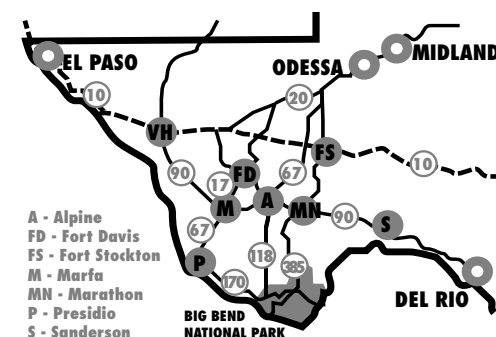
Jim Glendinning introduces us to three more Voices of the Big Bend, R.T. Castleberry returns with poetry, and new *Cenizo* poet Carolyn Adams brings her many years of poetry to our pages.

Come on – you know you've always secretly wanted to be a bird and fly over this wonderful country. You can almost be a bird in a glider. Barbara Novovitch explores soaring in the Big Bend skies over our mountains and grasslands.

Lonn Taylor recounts early wax-producing efforts down south through the life of Bill Dodson, and Colin Shakelford brings us the latest news on efforts to restore our grasslands to native grass species, giving a food source and habitat to our native mammals, birds and insects while holding the soil in place.

Although we haven't seen as many as we might in recent years, Jim Sage sings the praises of his favorite grasshopper – the horse lubber, and Charlie Angell tests our Mexican Revolution knowledge with a quiz on the Texas side of that conflict.

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Art, photographic and literary works may be e-mailed to the Editor.

For advertising rates or to place an ad, contact: advertising@cenizojournal.com

Cenizo Journal

Volume 4 Number 4

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Albion Shepard

Sea Captain and founder of Marathon, Texas



Albion Shepard built this two story adobe house and the carriage house behind it in 1890. It still stands today and is owned by the Gage Hotel.

Story and photography by Danielle Gallo

When the tracks of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway reached present-day Marathon in March of 1882, there wasn't much of a settlement there, though the railroad crew noted some settlers in the area. The few residents were mostly clustered around Fort Peña Colorado 5 miles to the south, where fresh water and the protection of the Army afforded early settlers a measure of security from the harsh desert and occasional border violence. The fort's inception in 1879 provided an oasis of civilization in an otherwise wild landscape.

With the railroad came a swift means of communication with the outside world, access to and transportation for goods and raw materials – and former sea captain Albion Shepard, who first passed through the area in 1881 as a

surveyor for Southern Pacific. The old wood-fired and later coal-fired engines required frequent stops for water, and finding good wells for the trains in the arid Big Bend was of paramount importance. In 1882, the railroad assigned Capt. Shepard the duty of naming Southern Pacific's water stops between Del Rio and El Paso. A strong well had been dug and a pump house installed between Alpine and the thriving town of Haymond, west of Sanderson. Shepard felt the grassy hills of the area greatly resembled Greece, and so he named the water stop Marathon after the Grecian city famous for the Battle of Marathon, in 490 B.C. According to the legend of Marathon, one Pheidippides was sent from Marathon to Athens to announce the Grecian victory over the Persians, whereby he ran the

entire 26.2 miles without stopping, announced the good news and died immediately of exhaustion.

The town of Marathon lies in the Marathon Basin, a valley surrounded by gently rolling hills, ridges of Caballos Novaculite, a distinctive and ancient form of rock, and volcanic mountains. Shepard decided to make the area his home. He traded his property interests on the Great Lakes for the present-day Iron Mountain Ranch, which included School Section 18, Block 4. The Marathon townsite was included in this section. The original townsite comprised six blocks running east and west and six blocks north and south, divided in the center by the railroad tracks.

At the time Haymond was the largest settlement in the area, boasting a full railroad depot and a 24-hour telegraph

service. At Marathon, train business was conducted out of a lowly railroad car. But the advent of the railroad enabled a handful of ranching pioneers to begin shipping their stock both into and out of the Big Bend, and Marathon soon showed the first stirrings of commercial enterprise. With an influx of sheep, goat and cattle ranching, merchants soon began to bring their enterprises to the area, and Marathon's strong water supply and advantageous location became increasingly attractive to settlers and entrepreneurs.

On Sept. 23, 1882 Capt. Shepard officially requested a post office be established at Marathon. In his application he told First Assistant Post Master Frank Hatton of Washington, D.C. that the population of the immediate area was "one hundred thirty and increasing rapidly," though the

town itself was estimated at a mere 50 souls. There were six businesses in Marathon at the time: four livestock breeders, one saloon and one sheep breeder, Shepard himself. Nevertheless, the post office was established in 1883, and Shepard was named the first postmaster, a post at which he served until 1887.

Capt. Shepard signed a quit-claim deed for the Marathon townsite to his son Ben Shepard on Dec. 1, 1885, for the sum of \$5. After platting the townsite, Ben Shepard began to sell the lots. The first recorded lot sale in the town was to Otto Peterles in March of 1886. Peterles paid \$50 to Ben Shepard for the lot now occupied by the Gage Hotel.

There is an interesting clause in the quit-claim deed for this sale which appears in other lot sales by Ben Shepard as well. It states:

"That the said Otto Peterles shall not himself or permit the same to be done by anyone holding title or possession by, through or under him, keep for sale as a beverage... upon the premises herein conveyed any spirituous or intoxicating liquors under a forfeiture of the title to the premises as above described to the grantor..."

In other words, the sale or trade of alcohol on the property would cause ownership of the property to revert to Ben Shepard – though there are no records indicating that this ever happened, in spite of the proliferation of saloons over the next decade.

This is possibly due to the fact that in 1904 every lot in Marathon was declared delinquent for state taxes for the years 1899 to 1901 by State Comptroller J.W. Stephens, rendering the entire town forfeited to the state. At the time all land deals had been affected by quit-claim deeds, which offer the recipient no guarantee that the title to the land being purchased is free and clear – or even that the grantor rightfully owns it. Fortunately for the residents, John Stillwell filed on the section as school land and then sold part of the town to the Hess brothers and Tom Burnham, all of whom recognized the quit-claim deeds held by previous purchasers.

In 1887, the counties of Buchel, Foley and Brewster were formed out of what had been one vast Presidio County. Marathon was made the county seat of Buchel County, but a decade later Buchel and Foley Counties had yet to be organized. In 1897 the two were absorbed into Brewster County, named for Henry Percy Brewster, private secretary to Sam Houston. This lost Marathon its status as a county seat but made Brewster the largest county in Texas.

After establishing Iron Mountain Ranch,

Shepard imported 25,000 sheep from California to stock the ranch, which in the fashion of the day was unfenced. Shepherds herded the flocks primarily on foot, warding off predators and moving the sheep constantly to find feed. Shepard's wife, Diantha Shepard, was the first woman in Brewster County to register a brand, and though sheep in Brewster County quickly gave way to cattle for their hardiness and profitability, the Shepards thrived, as evidenced by the large two-story adobe house that still stands on Avenue D North, complete with carriage house, which Shepard built in 1890. It was renovated in 1994 and operated as an inn by Russ Tidwell. Captain Shepard's Inn has recently been purchased by the Gage Hotel.

When Fort Peña Colorado was decommissioned in 1893, the settlers there began to move into the town. With the advent of the guayule rubber processing plant in 1909, the only domestic rubber production in the United States, Marathon became economically the strongest settlement of the half-dozen towns that once dotted the railroad tracks between Alpine and Sanderson. Soon the mines at Boquillas and Terlingua were shipping their products to Marathon, and the town slowly absorbed the other settlements around it, until it remained the only town between Alpine and Sanderson.

Whether Capt. Albion Shepard had an inkling that Marathon might be the town to outlast the booms and busts of the early 20th century is unknown; but his affection for and efforts to establish and strengthen the little hamlet nestled in the hills that so resembled Greece gave Marathon a beginning that has allowed it to survive that first tumultuous century and to greet the present one with head held high.



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Voices of the BIG BEND

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Story and photographs by Jim Glendinning

FLORINDA MADRID

La Cueva de Oso restaurant in Balmorhea was packed on a recent Friday when I visited at 2 p.m. Young waitresses scurried around carrying plates, and busy noises came from the kitchen. Dark-haired, vivacious Florinda Madrid emerged after a few minutes and explained that there had been a local funeral and the mourners had come to La Cueva de Oso for lunch. We left the noisy restaurant and walked a few yards next door to her large, Mediterranean-style, two-story home, which her husband Joel built himself.

Born in Odessa on June 10, 1964, Florinda, an only child, was adopted and raised in Balmorhea by her aunt, Socorro, and Socorro's husband, Pedro Vasquez, a Balmorhea farmer. She remembers a very safe childhood in Balmorhea, which was a bigger place then. She went through the school system, graduating in 1982.

After school she started work at West Texas Utilities, a job she kept for 18 years, even while starting a restaurant. In high school she had worked at Mary's Café and in the evenings at the truck stop on I-10 and gained experience in the food business. She was already a hard worker, but the rewards were still to appear.

In 1985 at a dance in Fort Stockton, she met Joel Madrid from Pecos. She said he was fun to be with and "a dancing fool." Joel had a degree in criminal justice from Sul Ross and was then a deputy sheriff in Reeves County. They married in Las Vegas in August 1988. The new husband and wife were shortly to start a business enterprise as binding as their marriage.

Balmorhea had had no lasting successful restaurant. In 1990, Florinda and Joel started the Bear Den, a snack bar selling burgers and burritos. They hoped to cash in on the property's proximity to the high school. It took off, and next year Joel was



FLORINDA MADRID
Balmorhea

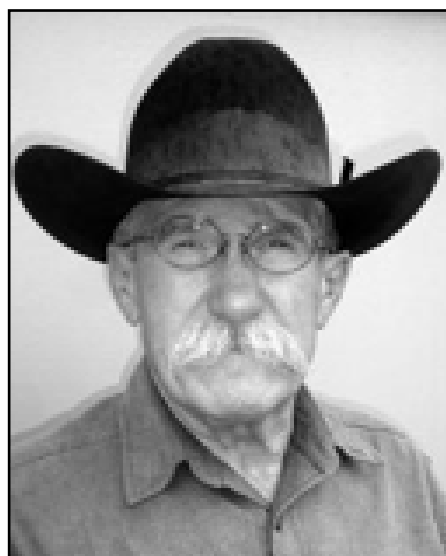
able to quit his job as parole officer.

The timing and location of the Bear Den proved successful. In 1995 four more tables were added. Joel loved cooking and 12 years later is still in the kitchen, now cooking a greatly expanded menu, which is mainly Mexican and includes fish, steaks and burgers. Soon Florinda left her job at West Texas Utilities, and from then on they were both full-time on the premises.

Feeling that Balmorhea needed an upscale motel, the next project was to build the 20-room El Oso Flojo Lodge, immediately adjacent. Joel built it himself, taking four years to finish. Rooms are each decorated with a different theme, and nesting swallows add a feature, as well as a cleaning challenge, in the courtyard.

The Madrids have two sons. Liberty, 28, is at Texas A&M University, studying animal science. Joel, 17, known as Bubba, just graduated from high school.

"Life is not easy," said Florinda, sitting in an elegant chair in her living room.



JOEL NELSON
Alpine

However, with a sound work ethic, a strong marriage and business partnership, the luck of timing and a good location, the Madrids prove that there are rewards.

JOEL NELSON

Joel Nelson was born in 1945 on a farm in Seymour, Texas, near Wichita Falls, the only child of Grady and Margaret Nelson. His father, a stonemason and farmer, later became the local deputy sheriff. Nelson's earliest vivid memory, at age 4, was when his father pointed out to him how to distinguish between horse and cow tracks. Two years later he joined in what was to be the last cattle drive on horseback to market.

At Seymour High School he was fortunate to have excellent teachers of English literature, who instilled in him a lifelong love of poetry. Graduating in 1964, he headed for Stephen F. Austin College in Nacogdoches to study forestry. But he yearned for the open mountain and range



HECTOR ACOSTA-FLORES
Presidio

landscape of the Davis Mountains, which he had first visited as a 12-year-old. He moved to Sul Ross State University in Alpine in 1967 for his junior year and got a taste for cowboying.

Drafted to Vietnam in February 1969, Nelson was assigned to the 101st Airborne. He spent 14 months in the jungles as a sergeant, where he learning about sacrifice and responsibility. Back home, hurt by the public's response to its returning soldiers, he bought a truck and headed west.

Back in the Big Bend region, Nelson worked at various local ranches through the 1970s learning the cowboy trade. In 1978, he started at the 06 Ranch, where he had to measure up to new demands. In 1982 he met master horse trainer Ray Hunt, under whom he studied for 10 years, a life-changing experience. As well as reading poetry, he now started to compose verse.

Nelson and his wife, Barney DeGear, married in August 1971 and had a daugh-

ter Carla in 1973. In 1986, they attended the Elko Nevada Poetry Gathering, then in its second year. Nelson recited some cowboy poems that he had written. They returned in February 1987 and afterward resolved to start a poetry gathering in Alpine. This took place one hectic month later.

Nelson's poetry evolved, becoming shorter in length as he learned the art and understood how poetry distills and condenses to produce its special effect. In 1999, he was awarded a poetry residency scholarship by the Northumberland Art Council in Northern England. His CD, *Breaker in the Pen*, was nominated for a Grammy the same year. In 2009, he was awarded a prestigious National Heritage Foundation Fellowship, the first cowboy poet so honored.

Joel and Barney Nelson divorced in 1991. In 2004, while escorting some visiting tourists over 06 Ranch trails, Nelson met the group's organizer, Sylvia Super, and one of the clients, Arnold Witte. Two years later he

and Sylvia married. They now live south of Alpine, running coriente cattle on various local properties. And Arnold Witte is partner and investor in this operation.

Trim at 145 pounds, and meticulously dressed as always in his trademark black hat, this cowboy/horse trainer/mystic poet reflects a quiet and thoughtful manner, which belies a stellar reputation. At the end of our meeting, he discusses some books he's been reading, shakes my hand and goes on his way.

HECTOR ACOSTA-FLORES

When newly appointed Mexican Consul Hector Acosta first visited Presidio in 2006, the first thing he did was to add flowering shrubs outside the consulate building. Six years later, the consul, due to retire in December 2012, is credited with achieving much more than simply sprucing up Presidio's Mexican Consulate.

Hector Acosta was born in

Juarez in December 1947, one of four children of Raul and Maria Acosta Matamoros. At home in the suburb of El Barreal, Juarez, where his father worked for Mexican railroads, he enjoyed a good family life with three sisters. Graduating from high school in 1968, he moved on briefly to the University of Guadalajara to study international relations. In 1970 he moved again, to the National Autonomous University of Mexico in the capital.

Reading a local newspaper one day in his dorm room, he noticed an advertisement from the Mexican government Foreign Service soliciting recruits. He applied, took the entrance test in September 1971 and finished third out of a total of 1,000 applicants.

Graduating was forgotten.

Acosta never married. His first posting in 1972 was to the Dominican Republic, which was then experiencing political tension. He passed "seven wonderful years" getting to know the country and learning the ropes

of the international diplomatic community. Five years later, he was sent to help reopen the Mexican Embassy in Madrid, Spain following Franco's death. After Madrid, he was assigned to Nairobi from 1981 to 1991; today, looking back, he says those 10 years in Africa influenced him profoundly.

Returning to Mexico in 1991, he first worked in Juarez in the Mexican government's Northern Border Office, then in 1995 transferred to the adjacent International Boundary and Water Commission. In 1996 he moved to the huge Mexican Consulate in El Paso. Ten years later he was named consul in Presidio.

In spring 2006, Presidio area residents were surprised to be invited to a cross-border Mardi Gras procession, followed in May by a concert in Ojinaga by the symphony orchestra of the University of Chihuahua. Over the next few years, Acosta organized an increasing number of events locally: a visit by a Mexico City art professor who

conducted classes for children; a conference on drugs; a tourism workshop; folkloric dances; and commemorations of historic events in Mexico's history. This little-known Mexican consular outpost was bursting with creative energy. Tours have been started to Copper Canyon at Easter and seasonally to Casas Grandes, Oaxaca and Yucatan.

A man who likes to keep busy, Acosta radiates conviction and passion. He firmly believes that national governments do not understand border issues. His ambition is to develop cross-border initiatives in commerce and culture. He intends, from his retirement in Juarez, to keep firmly involved. Meanwhile, he said he was due in Mexico City shortly to talk with the Mexican foreign minister and later would address the annual conference of border mayors in San Diego.

Big Bend residents on both sides of the border have been well served by Consul Hector Acosta-Flores.

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BENEATH MY SKIN

by *Bridget Weiss*

The lightning and wind woke me at 4, course there was no rain in it, and Miss Ruby keening like someone was dead and trying to crawl into my skin. She who came into my headlights in a storm on the Mexican river road has always been scared of weather. She who is red and white with a stumped-off tail and consolidated like a well-shaped loaf of bread will run cattle if asked, but the girl has her own fears, and she is my friend. I settled her down so I could watch the skies from the porch in her company, without which I would be alone, and then came in to look at the post office computer. The screen glows strange in the dark of the office, we are not supposed to turn it off, and no dogs allowed, and there it was: a volcano erupted in Iceland last night, shutting down flights clear across Europe. I did know this some-way, maybe because my dog cried it thus, at least I knew when I saw it, and such was not entirely startled. Volcano ash will mess up an airplane engine, they said, cause it to catch fire and crash to the ground with everyone on board and no survivors, could be it brought the wind to the casita and made my Ruby cry.

Unnatural light from the sun not yet rightly risen came through the high fixed windows and threw itself green and strange against the cinderblock walls, and got me thinking about a million or trillion or maybe more little pieces of floating cinder going up bright and hot and drifting down gray and silent to coat an entire continent. Maybe that's where Marco went, if you will follow me – the heart of a young man, not the body pre-

maturely set into a plywood box 6 feet on the wrong side of the grass, into dirt born of rocks and what time made of them.

We make our own headlines and weather in Valentine, population 187: the biggest earthquake ever in Texas in the 30s, and almost every other year on the national news for being one of three towns with this name in this country, with our boxes jammed to overflow with people driving God knows how many miles wanting special postmarks for Valentine's Day. Local folks come in wanting to hear what's going on out there, it's part of my job to tell what I learn from off the computer. Miss Harris, sweet sister-widow that she is, likes to say, Raul my newspaper man, what you got today.

My name is Raul but I'm not Spanish. My real mother is Aunt Jo. She was 13 when she got pregnant, just a kid herself and way over her head messing around with some high school senior. Aunt Iolanthe who everyone calls Io was 30 at the time. My daddy and her never could have kids, and they took me soon as Aunt Jo delivered in the hospital in Midland. Jo went on back to school and only had to catch up half a year. The way Momma tells it, when my real father who I never did care to meet went to study horses at Sul Ross in Alpine, he didn't give a backwards look at her, left her with her heart broke into half and his dust settling in the driveway, and a slow settling: she didn't marry Abe until she was 42, took her those years to put on a dress and fall into love again, but I won't say it lightly, love is what they have got. No harm can come from a slow backwards drift into what you used to imagine was real.

Momma's been taking in strays long as anyone can remember, she says that used to drive Granddaddy crazy. Goddammit, Io, we got enough going on around here without patching up another cowdog hit by a cattle truck. Grammy loved little ones: her four pretty girls and most of the neighborhood kids, not to mention those messed up, broken-down things Momma dragged home to their three bedroom stick built house. Why else we got this brand new chain link fence around one third an acre if we're not gonna fill it

When Daddy and her took me home, Momma decided two things right off: my paper name was Raul Jesus Boyd Johnson, and we were leaving Midland to live somewhere nobody knew us.

with children and dogs, she'd say to Granddaddy. Eat this hot gravied hash and let your Io be.

Momma had a thing for the Mexican names. I tell you the reason she has had all these animals around her was to name them. Tiburcio, Abelardo, Santa Minerva, Inocencio, Esmeralda – the list of round, chocolate namings goes on longer than my arm. Daddy only says, Well then Miss Io, and there's another dog on the porch, and it's settled. He sits easy on a horse, he rests quiet and forgiving with Momma and

her desire to love on lost and broken things. No one would say it to my face that I was a stray too.

When Daddy and her took me home, Momma decided two things right off: my paper name was Raul Jesus Boyd Johnson, and we were leaving Midland to live somewhere nobody knew us. A fresh start, Boyd, she said to Daddy.

That's how we went to live outside of Monahans, where all you can see for 30 miles is the giant wind electricity mills sitting up on the mesas, turning slow and looking like stick figures with crazy extra fingers when they're spinning, or totem poles from the Indians built up to talk to some god in the heavens. It takes 500 acres to run one cow in the Trans-Pecos on account of there is no water, and the way the land is nothing but sage and horse-cripple cactus. There is wind, Lord God knows there is, and blowing dust to spare. If you got 10,000 acres and a million dollars and you're forward thinking, a wind farm is how to go. Auction off the cattle, wait for the mailbox money, and sit back nights knowing you're making lights for people all the way down to San Antonio.

They look like they're turning slow from I-10, but me and Marco got a six-pack of Schlitz tallboys when we were 15 and trespassed up there on his daddy's four-wheeler, and I tell you what: the turbines move fast enough to take your head off and 25 stories high. We laid on our backs on a horse blanket, beer spilling down our necks and laughing like coyotes, our breath stolen away from squinting into a white hot sky watching the arms go around. Mr. Gonzalez caught us coming back down and swore not to tell. He said the blades turn 200 miles an hour. I believe him, for I have never seen anything like it, slow from a distance and fast close up. Seems like since then everything that ought to have been quiet has run real quick and cutting, and me with no ability to slow it down to the way we used to be.

Me and Marco were cut out to be friends – peas from a shell, Momma said. He taught me to rope calves and two-step.

There's no shame in that, but I wouldn't have wanted anyone to see. Summers we worked cattle drives and slept on the ground. I could hear him breathing in his sleep. Once I got stung on the end of my nose by a bee when we were moving the Pruitt's cattle to the other side of the Davis Mountains. The more I messed with it, the worse my eyes watered and my nose ran, you would have thought I'd been bit by a rattler. Raul, dejalo, you're rubbing all the poison into your skin, he said. He pulled the stinger out of my nose with his teeth and spat it onto the ground. We halfway never heard the end of that from the cowboys. Marco used to say, Shit, Raul Jesusito, you're half Spanish already, that's how come all the ladies want to dance with you. It felt alright to dance with Marco.

We were raised to do better than Monahans. Day after graduation we piled into the 1956 Ford pickup with only a coat of gray primer left on it that his daddy gave him for finishing and came here, west to Valentine. Our mamas cried when we left that morning, hanging onto each other like lovesick hens, waving dishtowels and talking Spanglish. Daddy shaking our hands, Now you boys be good. He give me 500 dollars in bills dirty, torn and dry like old wallpaper, and rolled up in a rubber band. Marco's papa made the sign of the cross on our foreheads, Vayan con Dios, mijos. We were gone with the screen door slamming and the dust rising in the road.

There are times I wish to have said kind words, to have left some water from my eyes in the sere earth of my home, to have spoken the things I did not speak when they were right to say. Now they would only be disassociated letters committed to ground whence lightning strikes cease, a prehistoric tongue or broken language with no comfort to come of them, too many years after to put them back where they belong. When you hold yourself quiet in sadness or in hope, the words go home to small graves, not ever to be restored to their rightful vibrancy.

cy and intent. Unspoken love is as the old vultures that fly south in the winter, some years to expire in Mexico, nor to return to the high mesas of my boyhood.

We had a job mending Mr. Johnson's five-wire fence, and one of his old adobes to rent for 60 dollars a month if we kept the plaster up after the rains, and furniture from Monahans. He's my third cousin somehow removed, and a big-time rancher although you don't ever ask a man how much land he has. People say the J Bar is 50,000 acres if it's a hundred. I came to know it after tending his roads for three years.

It was serendipity how the day we left Monahans a neighbor shot a javelina that had been rootching his kitchen patch and gave the berserk orphan pigling to Momma. She named it Lucinda Elida and had another Spanish baby to raise up. I told her from the pay phone next day how we were settled in with our saddles and my books from school. Mr. Steinbeck talked about the Okies trying to survive in my Daddy's day, even to the gruesome rightness of Miss Rosasharn offering her childless teat to a starving old man. Mrs. O'Connor told about a fight with God, how maybe you shouldn't be so damned proud else a bull might kill you out of sheer meanness. The ways in which I see these things now is a great stone on my back from the truck to the porch every day. No release has come; it is mine to carry; I will.

Now I will tell you it was August of 1970 when the sheriff from Van Horn came onto the porch. We were only fixing beans and pork shoulder for supper with a clean casita for his parents to stay. Boys, now which one of you is Marco Estrella from Monahans?

We got pretty liquored up after he left, all pale and sorry and shaking from behind his gold star and starched shirt. We agreed that when a semi crosses the median at full speed, there's likely not even one moment of pain or fear. With a fire out back we sent photographs up to heaven in the flames. Am I the only

son of loss? Marco cried, but who was I to answer. To God, we said, crossing ourselves and staggering around the yard like hobbled horses. When Marco went down, tall grown man that he was, wailing like a coyote sent off alone, I held him like a brother and rocked him to the ground. On our knees, I whispered at him what I knew to say,

***When Marco
went down, tall
grown man that
he was, wailing
like a coyote
sent off alone,
I held him like
a brother and
rocked him to
the ground.***

Your mama and papa are in God's arms now, is there any better place to be. I kept him still. We slept out on the dirt tangled into each other, our clothes shot through with cactus spines. The sky shone so bright I believed it held no remorse for its inherent beauty. What He gives, He sees fit to take away.

We made good in Valentine working for Mr. J, keeping the house and running drives for extra money. We got invited to big suppers and dances, being new to town and all the girls looking at us with fresh eyes. Miss Darlene Whitbold and I did think we would get married and have pretty babies, and set to buy a five-acre mesquite piece on Highway 90. Even Marco said, She is the one, marry her, Raulito. Said it right in front of her, too, made her blush and get quiet. He courted a girl from the ranch, and the nights we stayed up on the porch talking about such things: all the world in our grasping hands, and knowing where we belonged.

Marco came home from the sorry Van Horn grocery in August with no jalapeños because there were none, and a slimed-up little bunch of cilantro. We popped the tops off a few Lone Stars, raised a toast, and broke dirt on a kitchen

patch. We fenced it against the livestock but when the bunny rabbits came in low, we added another round of chick wire sunk into the ground four inches. When the antelope jumped the fence, we took it up to six feet. There was a ranch hand ran water out to a spigot courtesy of Mr. Johnson. We had jalapeños, cilantro wanting to bolt, collards, thick-skinned tomatoes, hills of squash, and everyone talking about what we did. The garden came right up out of what we thought was dust, same way mine does now. If you tend to something, it will give back, Daddy said. I don't know there's anything more unnatural than dirt and water, what comes from the mix.

Marco got promoted to working cattle year-round, and I was the full-time handyman. You're good boys, hard workers, Mr. Johnson said. He gave us a bigger casita to live in for free. It was only the 12th of December that year when Marco was vaccinating calves, and I was screwing tin back down onto the bunkhouse roof that the wind peeled off like aluminum foil last wind storm. The foreman came driving up fast that morning, spinning dust in the road and all out of breath when he got out of the truck, took his hat off and stared down at the ground. Mijo, he said. I was grown enough to know what a man holding his hat in his hands means to say: it is no good. I wished to spin the dust from his truck backwards in fast motion, to erase the slow dulling sound of his boots ascending our porch, to put the hat back on his head where it belonged in a right world. To seal his lips closed for all perpetuity, to close the day at noon, to dial the hands on any clock face back to the time when I knew how to be awake.

The cowboys at the funeral told how Marco's horse pitched a wall-eyed fit in the corral, sent him sideways into the steel gate. The crazy cattle stepped on his head until it split right open and

continued on page 26

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A Stranger's Story

The new moon hangs low and bright,
frightening as it rises.
The silence of a winter road leads
to a warehouse lane of cobwebbed windows,
the rake of a north wind coiling
shreds of steam and plastic sheeting.
I fear day's end.

Raised by a pack aching for extinction,
I was born to a language of scars, of reprisal.
No one worried about injury. No day turned to my luck.
Restless, remote,
I live in my nineteenth neighborhood.
I've ripped every root that would hold.
Friendships drain through distance,
changing identities,
bruise of brusque suggestion.
My doubts are precise as execution protocol.

I live my life shivering on a homestead corner.
A foundation, four stone steps
are muddy leavings in a fenced-off field.
A single headlight, a motorcycle's sweep
ripple the air nearby.
Half the night is left, the deepest cold.
I pitch a brick over the wire,
wave good-bye, amble off.

R. T. Castleberry

Subsistence

Witness
an act ancient and absolute:
A hawk subdues
a clumsy, lesser bird.
Beak, talon,
unflinching will
Feeding
on her mantled prey
among the fallen leaves,
the hawk is in no hurry.
Resting, working.
Shredding useful flesh.
The air, restive,
seeks another tableau.
The light holds,
waiting for her
to rise,
to recede again
into the hell
of her origin.

Carolyn Adams

Snapshot

A boy pulled a tow chain
from a Chevy as black and sleek
as his hair,
wiped his hands on his jeans,
hung a cigarette from his lips.
He took a snapshot
from his back pocket.
A girl hung laundry
on a wire clothesline.
The wind unfurled
a green lace willow,
like an ocean surge.
She lifted a yellow dress
into the waves of air,
pinned it gently to the line.
A shadow crossed the girl's face.
The boy didn't recognize her
for a moment,
with her opal eyes
and her diamond mouth.
A low song had begun
in the back of her throat.
A small heart had opened
onto the world.

Carolyn Adams

Above the Winter Rock

I work in diagonals,
in tangents of mud track and Ursa Minor.
Trained as a scout,
I turn out bitter as cowboy coffee,
huddle with rifle and knife,
the taste of campfire steak
and a corn silk smoke on my tongue.
From a tree line advantage,
I watch the posse's stalking cadence
as it seeps across the trail,
watch them try to match
hoof marks on stone through snow.
Not calm but resigned,
I uncock the hammer,
take the Vernier iron sight
from a tracker's chest.
We'll play a fair game here.

I took the bank with three other men.
Two are caught.
The other is ridge-riding with his split.
There's escape over the mountains, an easy slide
to a side wheel steamer or the riverside train.
With a thousand yard Sharps,
I'll wait out the night, the steeple of a hunter's moon,
wait for the Pinkertons to circle closer or circle away.

R. T. Castleberry



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Photo Essay

by Dana C. Jones



Dust and Sunlight

Earlier this year, I was invited to photograph the events at the rodeo sponsored by the Big Bend Cowboy Church. The thought of taking images of small town America was exciting and challenging.

The first event venue was underneath the Sul Ross State University S.A.L.E. Arena. To prepare, I made several trips to the arena to figure out how to introduce enough light into my photographs. The answer came in the form of a 12-foot-long extendable fiberglass painting pole with four strobe lights attached. The arena's open-end tubing-fence panels allowed this contraption to be placed

anywhere along the perimeter, and the lights could be aimed by rotating the paint pole shaft.

My first two images are a balancing act between the ambient light underneath the arena and the flash exposure. In order to stop the rodeo action, a fast shutter speed is required, which in turn reduces the strobe light's effectiveness. Underexpose the ambient light by one f/stop, which increases the shutter speed, and the strobe lights provide the fill light.

The image of the "Roping Family" was taken with available light. I have come to learn how harsh the sun can be in West Texas. Coupled with the fact that most

cowboys and cowgirls wear a wide-brimmed hat, it makes for some dark shadows that must be dealt with in post processing.

I'm having fun and learning as I go, but I could do with a lot less dust!

"Dust and Sunlight" was a lucky shot – I turned my strobe lighting stick towards the far end of the arena to follow the action as the horses flew by. However, I was not sure my light would reach the cowboys at that distance. The streaming sunlight from the setting sun came to my rescue. The dust being kicked up was the icing on the cake. Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good.

"Cowboy Ranch Rodeo" captures the spirit of the entire roping event – the horse and rider working together and the action and intensity of the sport. The eyes of both are focused on the task at hand while the dust is flying in the background. The catch light in the eye of the horse let me know that my lighting stick was working.

"Roping Family" was captured at the Pasture Roping held at the 06 Kokernot Flats. I had arrived early in hopes of getting images of Western Americana. This family caught my eye while they were registering for the event – she is the rider, while Dad tends the family.



Cowboy Ranch Rodeo



Roping Family

Soaring above Marfa ~ *Pterosaurs Did It Eons Ago, Glider Pilots Still Do!*



Story by Barbara Novovitch
Photography by Rebecca Culmer

Master Flight Instructor Burt Compton and his student Jacob Elledge, landing the ASK-21 sailplane at the Marfa airport.

Jacob Elledge needs neither a motor to fly nor any gas beyond that which he buys for the towplane that pulls him into the sky on weekends from Marfa Municipal Airport, then sets him free to negotiate the cauliflower-shaped cumulus clouds creating the thermal uplift for which Marfa is internationally famous.

Read correctly, that solar energy combined with wave lift from mountains to the east, south and west of the Marfa Plateau allows humans in long-winged, lightweight gliders to do what pterosaurs – prehistoric flying reptiles – did millions of years ago.

Elledge calls soaring “the purest form of flying,” and indeed soaring has made Marfa as much a “brand” for glider flying as Donald Judd has made it a “brand” in the art world.

The town’s small size – population about 2,000 – and its relative isolation in Far West Texas, where ranching remains the main industry and overflights from commercial motorized aircraft are rare, contribute to the town’s popularity as a mecca for soaring.

The mountains surrounding Marfa help to generate the exceptional soaring conditions. At 5,000 feet above sea level, the Marfa Plateau is relatively flat, but the mountains nearby – the Davis Mountains to the north, the Glass Mountains to the east and the Chisos Mountains to the south, in Big Bend National Park – are more than 7,000 feet, and they generate thermals and wave lift year-round.

Next to the glider hangar, a National Landmark of Soaring plaque states in part: “Above the scenic mountains surrounding the Marfa Plateau, an abundance of atmospheric energy attracts gliding enthusiasts from around the world. Since 1960, sailplane pilots have utilized convective thermal updrafts, the ‘Marfa Dry Line’ and wave lift for record-setting soaring flights, five US National Soaring Contests (1967, 1969, 1972, 1991, 2006) and the first World Soaring Competition (1970)

flown in the United States...”

The Marfa Dry Line – a term known to soaring enthusiasts and weather specialists – separates the Gulf of Mexico’s moist air 600 miles to the east and the dry air of southwestern U.S. deserts and the deserts of northwestern Mexico. The strong updraft thermals are usually generated early in the day, and they can form a convective cloud “street” that extends even into the Midwestern states of Kansas and Nebraska.

***. . . the towplane . . . sets
him free to negotiate the
cauliflower-shaped cumulus
clouds creating the thermal
uplift for which Marfa is
internationally famous.***

The soaring potential of this “dry line cloud street” from Marfa was first explored by glider pilots in 1960 after a national soaring contest was held in Odessa, 178 miles to the northeast.

By 1969 Marfa was so well known that more than 80 glider pilots entered the U.S. National Soaring Contest held there, and by 1970 it hosted the World Soaring Championships, the first ever held in the United States, at the Army airfield near where Cal Rodgers landed his Vin Fiz in 1911 on the first transcontinental flight in the country.

That airport was returned to nature in 1973, and the airport that opened in 1955 3 miles north of Marfa on Hwy. 17 is now Marfa Municipal Airport, where Burt Compton’s Marfa Gliders hosts the annual Texas Glider Rally held each spring.

Soaring enthusiast Elledge lives in Alpine but works in Marfa as manager of the NAPA auto parts store. In a

mid-summer interview he said he had always planned to take flying lessons – his grandfather and uncle both flew planes – “But then I saw the gliders and thought... ‘this is cool.’”

He finds soaring more challenging and fun than flying in motor-driven planes. “There’s a little bit of false perception that you have safety in front of you... called an engine. In a glider there’s not, so you have to be more aware of what you’re doing, all the time. If you come in a little low in an airplane you give it a little throttle; in a glider, you’re gonna land.”

His teacher, Burt Compton, moved to Marfa from Florida in 2001 with his wife Kathie in search of “a drier climate and a clear sky in a quiet region of Texas.” Burt said he soars almost every day, either as a teacher or simply to indulge his passion.

Unlike many people who talk in dour, grumpy tones about being exhausted from a day’s work, he says he’s never happier than when he comes back home “mentally drained” from a day spent reading the clouds and air currents to figure out how best to fly above the mountains, plains and occasional towns of West Texas.

“I love teaching and explaining the mysteries of the invisible ocean of air that makes soaring flight possible,” Compton explained, “especially in the exceptionally strong thermal updrafts we find year-round above the Big Bend.”

The master pilot – he was selected as FAA flight instructor of the year in 2007 and 2009 – has, in fact, been reading clouds longer than he’s been reading books. He figures he was flying before he was born, since his mother, also a pilot, was flying herself or as a passenger with his father at the wheel in Florida.

Burt was born in Miami in 1951.

His dad – Capt. F.B. “Fritz” Compton, former Soaring Society of America director and pilot of a World Soaring Championship team – had established

southern Florida's first gliderport on 60 acres of land below Miami in 1945. (A newspaper clipping Compton kept from the *Miami News* of yesteryear shows a picture of his father with a tongue-in-cheek cutline: "He soared to new heights with peanut butter and jelly for fuel.")

Burt Compton has flown 51 different types of gliders at more than 80 sites around the world. Kathie and Burt also have a musical avocation – they're part of the Moondogs "oldies" band, which frequently plays at Padre's in Marfa.

Burt compares soaring to chess and engine-powered flying to checkers. In gliding, as in chess, he said, "there's more than one choice or option, a bunch of right options, but which is the most correct?" Plus, he added, it's time-consuming – "it's like playing a musical instrument, you have to learn the scales; it's something you can't learn quickly. It takes time to learn, to become one with the aircraft."

"It's like a fly fisherman," he suggests. "On a lake in Minnesota he takes you out and says, 'cast there,' and you get a fish. He's so finely tuned to the look of the water, a ripple. In my mind I'm looking for this image of a bird." He even wears orange blue-blocker glasses to better read the clouds.

Gliding is relatively safe – so safe that the FAA allows 14-year-olds to fly gliders solo, while in most states they must wait until they're 16 to drive automobiles.

Experienced glider pilots have made cross-

country flights of more than 1,000 miles and have even achieved speeds of 120 miles per hour, the Soaring Society of America reports. Marfa attracts glider pilots year-round and in the fall particularly from the northern states, after temperatures begin to plummet there but can still be warm in Marfa.

An economics impact study issued in 2011 by the University of North Texas for the Texas Department of Transportation's Aviation Division states that in 2010 the Marfa airport employed 19 people, with salary, wages and benefits of \$385,644, and accounted for economic activity of \$1,163,862.

Compton said he believes Marfa residents and others in the Big Bend area have learned to value glider activities at the airport now, when earlier some people thought it was 'just for the rich cats.'

Presidio County, he said, owns the airport fuel tanks, and visitors who come to fly in the gliders – "lots of glider pilots from Houston come out here frequently" – or take soaring lessons will be eating at local restaurants, overnighting at motels or hotels and shopping at local stores.

Ronnie Lewis, who has worked at the airport since about 1955 and still is employed there, along with his son and grandson, recalled a *Big Bend Now* article last year explaining how during the post-war era there was great enthusiasm from locals to learn to pilot a plane – because back then the

GI bill would finance the instruction.

"At that point in time a poor boy could buy an airplane and learn to fly," he recalled. "The price of the aircraft, the price of the fuel, the price of the instruction was such that the average working man could afford an aircraft." Lessons then cost \$4 an hour for the airplane and \$2 for the pilot-instructor; a two-seater plane cost about \$300 and gas was 18 cents per gallon, he said.

Lewis still sells aviation fuel at the airport, but it now costs \$5.80 a gallon. The price of a two-seater glider starts at \$10,000 these days, and a single-engine airplane starts at \$20,000.

The glider business now accounts for 80 percent use of the Marfa airport. And visitors who take a glider flight are likely to rave about what they've seen from the air, saying that it accentuates their appreciation of the area.

On a brief flight in mid-summer, after pointing out the Village Farms greenhouse buildings below, the old road to Fort Davis that lies west of the current Hwy. 17 and pointing toward the Davis Mountains, Mount Livermore, Elephant Mountain and Big Bend National Park, Compton indicated some shower clouds and asked, "Do you see the walking rain?"

Later that night those clouds would deposit welcome rain on Alpine, Marfa and Marathon.

"It's beautiful across the prairie," he said. "Every time I come up I see something new, experience a new joy."



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Bill Dodson ~ *Didn't Volunteer to Make Wax*

Story by Lonn Taylor

Photographs courtesy of Bill Dodson

Bill Dodson age 6, and his little brother Jess, age 5, refreshing themselves with bottles of beer, about 1943.

Bill Dodson of Alpine has a sign on his gate that says "Primo The Ledge." This is because, he says, "All of the Mexicans call me primo (cousin), and I'm a legend in the national park." He is a legend in Big Bend National Park because he was born there in 1936, made candelilla wax all over it as a young boy, knows it like the back of his hand, knows everyone who works there and likes to take people on hikes there.

When I first met Bill a few years ago, he told me he had just taken a new ranger on a 12-mile hike through the Dead Horse Mountains. "I wore that boy out," said Bill, who was 70 then.

Bill's family were a special breed of river people. His grandfather, Harve Dodson, was born in Tyler, Texas in 1865, grew up on a ranch near Salado and settled below the Chisos Rim in 1901. He raised his family in a remote canyon there. When park Supt. Ross Maxwell first met him, he asked him how in the world he got his family into such an inaccessible part of Texas. "Me and the old lady walked in," Dodson told him. "The kids was born here."

Bill told me that the Big Bend was a violent place then; Harve Dodson had to kill three or four men. He cut one man's head off and threw it in the Rio Grande. Years later, he told his daughter-in-law, Bill's mother, that long after this happened he was riding one night from Terlingua Creek over the mountain to Blue Creek. On the Castolon Road he became aware that someone was riding along beside him in the dark. He looked and saw that it was a headless rider. He shot every cartridge he had at him, but the headless man stayed with him all the way to Blue Creek, 20 miles, and then disappeared.

Harve Dodson started writing an autobiography on his deathbed, but he only got up to 1875 before he expired, so no one knows why he came to the Big Bend. Perhaps, like many early settlers here, he wanted to be where no one could find him.

According to Bill Dodson, his mother met his father, Harve Dodson's son, Del Dodson, when she was 13. He was picking cotton on her father's farm near Fort Stockton. When the crop was in, he left and she left with him. They married and had four children before he killed himself at the age of 35. They lived in a tent and made their living by trapping in the Chisos Mountains and along the river, but, Bill said, "he had to leave the river because people kept shooting at him. He went to Fort Stockton and killed himself because he couldn't see his children." Bill's mother was a 27-year-old widow, seven months pregnant when her husband died. She had his last child by herself, in a barn at San Vicente, and then supported herself by buying furs in Mexico and selling them on this side of the river, traveling at night armed with a pistol to meet the trappers on the Mexican side and carrying the furs back on her back. A year later she married Sotero Marin, an 18-year old vaquero. The re-marriage so traumatized young Bill that he did not talk until he was 10 years old, and he still speaks with a slight lilt.

Bill's new stepfather had a hard time finding work on ranches during the Depression. When Bill was 7 years old his family started making candelilla wax for a living. Candelilla wax is derived from the candelilla plant, a cluster of tube-like stems resembling small candles that

are coated with a wax that is used in a wide variety of commercial products ranging from waterproofing to cosmetics. For the next nine years the Dodson children and their mother and stepfather lived in tents in a series of wax camps in southern Brewster and Presidio counties, moving every three or four months when they had exhausted the local supply of candelilla.

They had a dozen burros and a wagon, and every day they would go out and pull candelilla plants up, using both hands and working all day long, all year long. In the summertime the temperatures would hover around 110 degrees. "We worked like dogs," Bill said. They tied the plants into bundles with rope and loaded them on the burros, four 60-pound bundles per burro, and at the end of the day drove the burros back to camp and stacked the bundles. After three or four weeks of pulling, they would have a stack of bundles "as high as a house," as Bill put it. Then they would spend four or five days cooking the wax off of the plants.

The cooking was done in a metal vat that was buried in the ground at the camp. The one that Bill's family used was about 8 feet long, 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep. It took about 200 gallons of water to fill it, and the water had to be hauled in buckets from a nearby spring. That was Bill's mother's and his two older sisters' job. When the vat was full, a mound of plants was forked into it. Bill's job was to climb on top of it and tromp it down into the water so that no plant protruded above the surface. When it was stamped down flat, a hinged grate was lowered over the vat to hold it down and a fire was lit in a hole scooped out under the vat. The fire was started



Bill Dodson's stepfather, Sotero Morin, and young Bill (left) loading burros with candelilla plants, about 1948.

with wood and then fed with the remnants of plants left over from the last cooking. When the water started to boil, a little sulfuric acid was added to it, and the wax started to float up the surface, a brown foam that looked "just like oatmeal swelling up," Bill said. Bill's stepfather then took a skimmer, a perforated metal disk attached to a handle, and began lifting the hot foam off the surface of the boiling acidic water and tossing it in a 55-gallon drum. It took about half an hour to boil the wax out of a load of plants, and then the cooked plants were forked out of the vat and the process started over again. The wax dried into chunks in the drum and then were sewn into burlap sacks and taken to the refinery in Alpine to be processed. Bill recalled that the refinery was at the Casner Motor Company, a sort of adjunct to their automobile business.

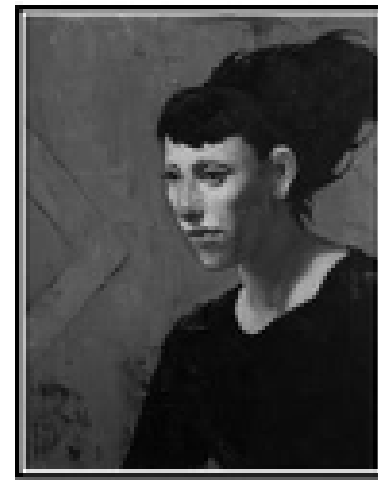
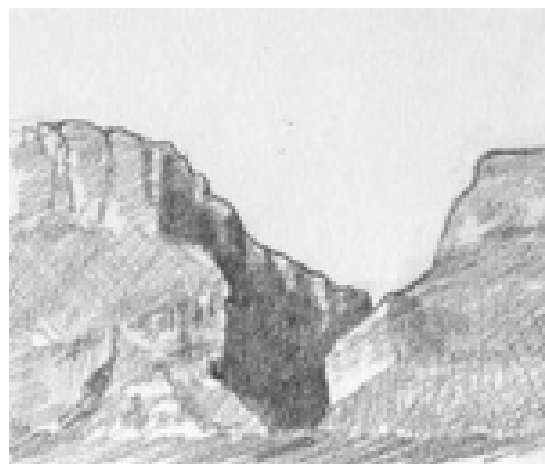
Wax-making was a dangerous business. Once in a neighboring camp, Bill recalled, a man slipped and fell into the boiling vat. The other wax-makers pulled him out, but then one, attempting to throw cold water on him, grabbed the wrong bucket and doused him with sulfuric acid instead. Even today, old wax camps can be identified by the damaged shoes found around them, shoes eaten away by sulfuric acid when the wearer stomped too hard on the plants during the boiling process.

When Bill's family moved their camp, they loaded the vat on the wagon, hitched two of the burros to it and drove the rest along behind. The wax business worked on a sort of sharecropping system, with the ranchers who owned the land Bill's family was pulling plants from providing them with sulfuric acid, coffee, sugar, beans, rice and canned tomatoes and taking a share of the wax sales. I asked Bill what they did for meat, and he said, "My stepfather had a rifle, and we had deer meat year round." Once, he said, Game Warden Pete Crawford was visiting their camp out of deer season, and Bill bragged, "My daddy just killed a deer." Crawford just grinned and said, "I'm going to put you in jail, little boy." Bill said he

made sure that he was asleep in bed when Crawford left their camp. "After I started talking I got slapped across the mouth a lot for talking when I should have been listening," he added.

Bill was liberated from the wax camp when he was 16. A school opened at San Vicente, on the Rio Grande upstream from Boquillas, and his family moved there so that the children could go to school. He entered the first grade, worked as a cowboy for Sheriff Jim Skinner and drove the school bus. "I was driving the school bus before I learned to read and write," he told me. He also learned to have fun. "I never had fun until I went to school," he told me. "I never knew any boys my own age."

Bill joined the Air Force at 18, served four years, married and came back to Alpine, where he had a 30-year career as a mechanic with the Texas Department of Transportation. Today he is a cheerful, open-faced man of 76, tall, lean and witty, with a bushy head of black hair turning gray and very blue eyes. He clearly enjoys his role as an expert on Big Bend National Park. Looking back on his life, he says, "There's lots of ranchers that'll tell you that they made wax, but the fact is that it was the Mexicans that did it while they watched. I'm the only Anglo that ever made wax down here, and I'll tell you, I didn't volunteer."



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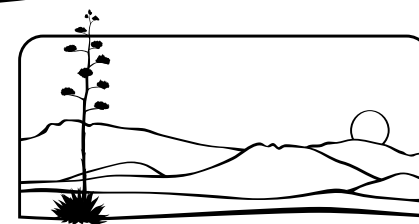
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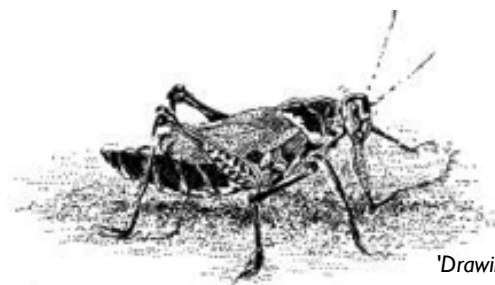
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The Horse Lubber



'Drawing by Walle Conoly

by Jim Sage

When I moved onto the South Double Diamond, south of Alpine, I rather expected a lot of wind, and I was not surprised when the hot desert sun ate all of the paint off of the old Plymouth. What I had not anticipated was the huge numbers and kinds of grasshoppers and their voraciousness. Several years ago they moved in by the thousands and ate the entire garden. They ate the sotol down to the ground. They shredded the yuccas and the bear-grass. They even ate the screens on the windows! But there was one jewel among all of these hoppers: a 2-and-one-half-inch giant who looked as if he had just arrived from Mardi Gras in his gold Cadillac. This was the horse lubber (*Taeniopoda eques*), common throughout the Southwest and extending as far south as Central America.

The horse lubber has gold and black antennae, gold on the nose and around the throat, a large gold band around the thorax and gold dots along each side of the abdomen. He is black in color with greenish forewings, which cover the more delicate, red hind wings. When he flies, it appears that he has only one set of wings with the underside colored red.

Unlike all other hoppers he appears to taste his food and then decide what to eat based on flavor. The female lays her eggs in the ground, where they spend the winter and hatch out after the monsoon rains the following summer. The eggs are enclosed in a pod made of a frothy material that protects them from parasites and desiccation. I have read

that in a serious drought the eggs do not hatch, but I would have to see this to believe it. *

To avoid being eaten, many grasshoppers, employ a mechanism called crypsis, matching the soil and other background in color or texture. The horse lubber does the opposite. He advertises his presence with his vivid coloring. Because he extracts toxins from the plants he eats, he is unpalatable to most predators, and his coloration warns them of this. He also spits out distasteful foam when threatened.

Another way he avoids predators is by his ability to jump 20 times his body length - imagine how far a human could jump at this ratio! The large muscles of the hind legs provide much of the force for jumping, but there is another factor adding to these impressive leaps. In fact, most of the energy comes from a crescent-shaped organ located in the knee of the large hind legs. It is made of elastic fibers that release in a burst of explosive energy propelling the hopper into the air.

The horse lubber is also cannibalistic, and if you leave two in a cage you will be left with one. Often you will see crushed ones on the highway with those who were following eating them.

I sometimes imagine that I will come home and Fran will say, "Honey, a horse lubber ate the garage door." I will reply, "Yeah, but they are so pretty I just can't kill them."

**In recent years all grasshoppers are scarce in the South Double Diamond, including the horse lubber.*



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Handles were often made of different materials from the instruments - and where they joined could harbor germs, which were unknown to doctors of the time.

today. Contrary to what action-packed old Western films taught us, most soldiers at frontier Army forts like Fort Davis suffered and died not in battle with Indians but from maladies like pneumonia, consumption, venereal disease, bowel obstruction, inflammation of the lungs and other respiratory diseases, pericarditis, dropsy, infection from injury, gunshot wounds, rheumatism, scurvy, typhoid and diarrhea.

Diarrhea or dysentery took the lives of many Fort Davis soldiers in their 20s. They did not know to wash their hands before meals or to boil water before drinking from the creek. If they got an "intestinal bug," they just kept running to the privy. They got dehydrated and sometimes died (no IVs then). Army doctors at the fort blamed diarrhea on improperly baked bread, hot weather or excessive indulgence in alcohol after payday. Not knowing what else to point the finger at, they blamed diseases like pneumonia on miasmas or bad air that emanated from decaying vegetable and plant matter. Finally, late in the 19th century European scientists like Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch proved the "germ theory," and doctors began to unravel the mysteries of germs and microorganisms that caused disease.

Fort Davis records show that the U.S. Army kept the death rate low by discharging soldiers who had an injury or debilitating disease that prevented them from performing their duties - after a reason-

able period of recuperation was allowed. Sometimes two or three soldiers per month were medically discharged. Typical were Pvt. Peter A. Lee, age 21, medically discharged in March 1884 for chronic rheumatism, Pvt. David R. Dillon, medically discharged in November 1884 for constitutional syphilis and Pvt. James Kidd, injured in 1882 when the bullet from a fellow soldier's Colt revolver accidentally hit him in his private parts; Kidd's wounds failed to heal, bleeding every time he rode his horse, so the Army medically discharged him.

Anesthesia was available, as the use of chloroform and ether was first demonstrated in 1846. But it was difficult to regulate the amount when dripped onto a sponge or cone-shaped cloth over the patient's nose. Sometimes patients died from overdose or the surgeon was overcome by the vapors. One lesson learned from the Civil War was that patients did not usually survive surgical procedures because of the infections that followed. Army doctors at Fort Davis rarely performed surgery. From 1880 to 1890, there are records of fewer than 10 surgeries: removing a rifle ball from a soldier's leg; two finger amputations as a result of baseball injuries; fistula in ano surgery on three soldiers; tendon surgery on a soldier's foot.

Fort Davis medical records contain some curious incidents as well. In a fight on New Year's Day of 1882, a fellow soldier bit off the ear of Pvt. James Henry. Pvt. Patrick Burke, bugler, was treated for chapped lips for five days in April 1885. One soldier who suffered from a headache was Pvt. Egnog Cloudy. Pvt. Joshua Stallcup in 1886 was bitten by a pet raccoon kept at a local saloon.

The National Park Service at Fort Davis National Historic Site has been restoring the 1876 post hospital. In the recently furnished post surgeon's office, you can see the full-size skeleton used as a consultation tool by army doctors. Interactive displays include "Wheel of Misfortune" or the "You Be the Doctor" exhibit of old medical instruments. These exhibits are based on case studies of actual Fort Davis people. One item alone that is worth the visit is the tonsillotome - the thought of having a doctor jam this nickel-plated instrument with sharp prongs and retractable blade down one's throat to remove tonsils is terrifying!

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Bringing Native Seed to West Texas

The Trans Pecos Native Plant Material Initiative

by *Colin Shakelford*

Everyone's got a story to tell – people, landowners and, yes, the land and its plants. Those stories vary in style and color as much as they do in point of view or need. They might even conflict a little depending on the telling or the goals and beliefs behind them, but all are true nonetheless. Let me tell you a true story, one with a lot of diverse characters all looking for the same thing: native seed.

This story begins in South Texas in the late 1990s. A proposed interstate highway corridor was planned to run through the region. Many landowners were troubled by the planned use of non-native plants for re-vegetation as part of the construction. New research findings in South Texas were showing that non-native plants had significant negative impacts on important wildlife species. Landowners were worried about the possible impacts these plants could have on the wildlife values of their property. Realizing that non-native plants could spread from right-of-way plantings onto private ranchland, landowners took action. In 2000, the Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute (CKWRI) at Texas A&M Kingsville, working in partnership with concerned private landowners, formed South Texas Natives (STN) with the goal of developing sources of native seed endemic to South Texas and making them commercially available.

Move 500-plus miles northwestward, fast-forward 12 years and 20 successful commercial plant releases later. In an effort to improve native seed availability in the Trans-Pecos, the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI) at Sul Ross University is partnering with CKWRI and the Texas Native Seeds project (an expansion of the original STN project). Modeled after STN, this work is spearheaded through the Trans Pecos Native Plant Materials Initiative (TPPMI). The goal is to provide economically viable sources of locally adapted native seeds and restoration strategies that can be used for the restoration of native plant communities in West Texas.

Restoration is a growing story in West Texas. Common restoration goals include providing habitat for wildlife, re-vegetating highway rights-of-way and oil field reclamation. Commercial sources of locally adapted native seeds for these kinds of projects are critical for successful restoration. Currently there are few commercial

sources of native seeds available that originated from the Trans-Pecos ecoregion.

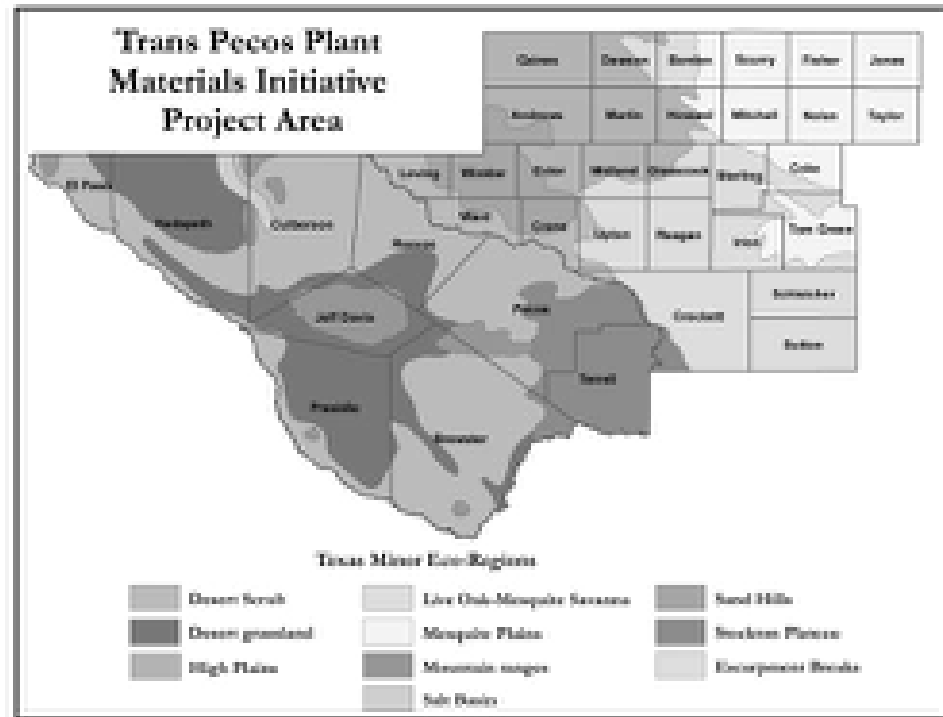
Wait a minute, you may be thinking. Grass species native to the Trans-Pecos are already available. Take sideoats grama for instance, a plant found across large parts of West Texas. Isn't a sideoats grama just a sideoats grama no matter how you slice it? If only it were that simple. The plant species itself may be native to the region, but the genetics of currently available seed sources are not. The "El Reno" variety of sideoats grama originates from central Oklahoma and the "Vaughn" variety from central New Mexico, areas with very different climates and soils from West Texas. Experience has shown that many plants established outside of their range of adaptation may germinate and perform well for several growing seasons but will not persist over the long term.

Isn't a grass just a grass and any old grass will do? From research on wildlife habitat across Texas, we know the answer is no. Without native seed to plant, exotic grasses are often used to prevent soil erosion in reclamation projects or following habitat improvements. However, research clearly shows that they can have negative impacts on the ecosystems they are introduced into. Exotic species disrupt the entire ecosystem by decreasing native biodiversity. It's not only that exotics use up the water, space and resources native species need; native

critters most often prefer native plants for food and shelter. For example, CKWRI scientists have documented a 50 percent decline in bobwhite quail densities on sites dominated by exotic grasses compared to sites with native species.

Additionally, the reach of non-native species goes beyond the immediate area planted. Many non-natives tend to spread to adjacent native grasslands. Look at Lehmann lovegrass, a non-native plant used widely across West Texas. It is better able to tolerate drought, utilize winter rainfall and take advantage of the variable summer rainfall that is typical of West Texas. As a result, Lehman lovegrass occurs today in areas where it was never intentionally seeded. This proliferation is an example of one of the most important plot twists in this story: Given the sheer quantity of acreage being reseeded in Texas each year, it is important to do what's right by the land.

The Texas Department of Transportation is one of the state's largest seed users. In addition to looking for ways to lower costs (like using lower-growing seed mixes to cut back on mowing), they are federally mandated to look for native seed. As a result, TxDOT has provided significant support to CKWRI and BRI for this initiative in order to help meet the agency's long-term seeding needs. Another agency heavily involved in seeding is the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCIS is a



Map courtesy Trans Pecos Plant Materials Initiative

major partner in the project, providing land and technical support through their Plant Materials Centers in Knox City and Kingsville.

So, how do you develop this native plant material? The first step is to gather seed collections from a list of selected plant species from across the 37 counties of the West Texas project. This list was developed by the Trans Pecos Native Plant Materials Initiative and its board of technical advisers and includes over 75 plant species. The goal is to get a broad representation of each target species to maintain genetic diversity. That means a lot of windshield time, lots of brown paper bags, repetitive site visits and walking through "weeds" looking for ripe seed. Researchers then identify populations with the best natural adaptation for successful restoration use.

Private landowners providing access for project staff to make small collections of seed are vital for project success. TPPMI has already made 277 seed collections from 32 ranches across the region. These landowners play a big role in the story. Of course, everybody has a different motive for providing access for collection, but they all have the goals of restoring disturbed land and protecting their own habitat or ranchland. Different

(but often linked) backgrounds include farmers, cattlemen, wildlife ranchers, the oil and gas industry and Teddy Roosevelt-style conservationists focused on the region's unique biodiversity. Without all of these various characters and interests, this story would be a short one.

Seed is collected, cleaned, cataloged and then propagated in greenhouses. Seedlings are transplanted into test plots and evaluated based on several criteria, including germination, growth rate, size and adaptability. Test sites in West Texas currently include the Texas AgriLife Research Station in Uvalde, the Pecos River Irrigation District #3 farm near Imperial and a new facility south of Alpine being built in cooperation with CF Properties' Sierra la Rana development.

In the first year, plants are evaluated under minimal irrigation. They're watered right after transplanting to get up and growing; after that, they're on their own. Because weather plays such a pivotal role, it typically takes from three to five years to complete an evaluation.

Once the populations best suited for a release are identified, the original collections of those native seeds are propagat-

continued on page 27



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continued from page 13

the vaqueros had to pick pieces of his mind out of the dirt, but those cattle didn't mean to. The churchyard was packed with folks from all over but somehow I quit Baptist First after that.

Lo sentimos mucho, mis vaqueros said. Son, we need you, you belong here now so don't be going off by yourself, Mr. J said. I shook hands all around and took my pay. I gave away Marco's furniture such as it was, and moved into this adobe one-room built by Mexicans last century, way out on a piece of what used to be the old Truehome Ranch.

Miss Darlene was blue eyes, gold hair and girl-soft every way to Sunday. That woman still is so pretty and sweet, and married to Miguel with those four mostly grown kids of theirs. Momma and Daddy left me in her arms with their blessing after we put Marco in the ground. She brought supper every night, and I ate some but not much, fed it to the dogs when I could get her to leave, usually crying, thought her tears would wash me off the porch by the time she quit, a monsoon I could not abide nor find shelter from, I only wanted to be quiet and dry. Baby, come on, kiss me Raul Jesusito, she said, I miss him too, honey. I did try to eat her food and lie down with her, but soon as she was asleep, I would soft step out onto the porch with the dogs and wonder what was wrong that I was so gone. The tender hopes of a young girl did not fill the sinkhole that became my mind, couldn't stop it opening up every morning and funneling the darkness down into it. It's a wicked thing when a good horse and some skittish calves crush the life from a man; it's hard times God chose not to lay up stores against. Either that or He turned a blind eye, although I mean no disrespect.

The church people brought food too, a reason to lay on hands and get me back to seeing it their way. Casseroles and prayer did not cause me see the rightness or goodness in Marco going home to Jesus like they

said he did. You will forgive me when I say Marco does not sit on the right hand of God at His eternal throne in heaven eating his mama's enchiladas verdes and refried beans watching Monahans high school football. His bones have turned to dirt after the worms had his flesh, and weren't even his mama or papa still alive to place a stone on the mound.

Valentine took up a collection for a concrete angel with wings and hands folded, and a carved headstone. One night in my young dreaming, her cement wings took flight and in her aggregate kindness I was chosen along with her. We drifted quiet and high above the desert like the aerostat Border Patrol flies to catch Mexicans trying to come in. Mr. Johnson's cattle were small specks of black, and I knew property lines and rooftops from the air. Upon waking I swallowed the gritty small pieces of concrete left on my lips and in my teeth from her parting kiss. She never did return. The years hence have been bereft of wings to carry and of stones to anchor. Folks don't talk sense any longer nor do I recognize my hand in front of my face.

I've been the one to tell Miss Harris about about tsunamis and hurricanes and earthquakes. There was a story attached today about another volcano erupted in 1883 in Krakatoa, about ash that turned the skies the world across blood-orange and crazy purple and all what-not other colors for years after, caused scientists to discover the jet stream and the winds that blow up over the rooftop of the earth — way above our hail storms that make the roads and fields white in five minutes time in summer, or the blowing dust that flies by 65 miles an hour sideways in spring. The Krakatoa volcano caused unknown painters to become famous for making 500 paintings of those startling skies; it set the world on its ear, spewing belief and the utter lack of it, all in one instant and for days and years to follow.

In Valentine there is not so much to see or to buy, excepting postage stamps and old baby fur-

niture at the church rummage sale. I drive to Van Horn or Marfa for my Jeremiah Weed and what I can't grow myself. Mostly I eat from the garden, cook it up with some rice and a fried egg on top. I don't know how you can eat that slop, says Orlando, my compadre of 30 years at the post office. He sits down with his wife and family at night to hot supper. Venga, he says, a mi casa con mi familia. They invite me to come but I don't go. I did go once maybe 30 years ago. Por favor, make grace Raulito Jesusito, Rosa said, all smiling and soft and kind, what with Orlando swatting the two littlest ones under the table for laughing at the way I am. Maybe they thought I didn't see, but those little children didn't mean anything by it. God bless this meal and keep this house, I said. The seven of them sat by staring with Rosa's carne guisada on the table, and her corn tortillas sending up trails of steam and the smell of another life.

An Act of God, people are calling it, but I don't believe that. Maybe He brought Miss Ruby seeking shelter from a storm on the border road, but I do not imagine He erupted that volcano, or can be held accountable for every earthly wrong. Likely He is tired but not entirely absent, just watching now. Last night as I slept in the small bed of my childhood with a red dog on the floor beside in a one-room mud house, ashes unbidden and untold rightly rose up into the air we breathe. A whole continent was drifted in dust, countrymen awoke with grit and death upon their lips, and the big machines went quiet.



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ed in 1-acre seed increase fields. That seed is harvested and provided to cooperating commercial seed dealers, who then plant larger fields. Seed harvested from those commercial sites eventually makes its way to the consumer as a formal release of selected native germplasm (rather than a cultivar of a genetically bred variety). This process insures the exact genetic makeup of naturally occurring species from the region.

So, as I've mentioned, landowners across the region have opened their gates for seed collection. Ronnie Cooper, who ranches on the Pecos River near Imperial, is also offering sites for restoration research. He is hopeful that readily available sources of native plant seed will help bring increased economic value to much of the former farmland he now ranches. As Cooper says, "If you don't have an oil or gas well on your property, native plants are one of the few ways you can put value back into the land. This project is going to help landowners address some of the future needs for agriculture and economic productivity. It's working to benefit agriculture as a whole for West Texas."

Agreeing with Cooper is Michael McCulloch, who ranches in Brewster and Pecos counties. He believes the plant materials project is more important than ever because of the need to bring value back to landowners in the form of wildlife habitat and increased forage. For men like Cooper and McCulloch, the prospect of growing native seed in the region makes economic as well as ecological sense.

With support from individuals like these, the Trans Pecos Native Plant Materials Initiative hopes to release 15-plus native species over the next decade, ensuring the commercial availability of diverse native seed mixes that will successfully meet restoration needs across West Texas.

The diverse wildlife found across the Trans-Pecos is a result of the region's rich native plant communities. Our goal is to make native plant restoration after habitat disturbance a viable management option for all land users, regardless of their diverse interests.

Well, that's my native plant seed story. What's yours?

For information about the Trans Pecos Native Plant Materials Initiative, or for considering native seed collection on your property, please contact the author (see page 7).



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Allison Ainsworth, ANP

Allison Ainsworth is an adult nurse practitioner who offers primary care for men and women over the age of 13. Allison received her MSN while working at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. She has worked with over 3,500 patients and also has experience in supervising care for a Nursing Home.

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 with an emphasis on the relationship between art, architecture, and the surrounding landscape.

Most exhibitions are accessible by guided tour only. Advance reservations are required to guarantee admission. available at www.chinati.org or 432 729 4362.

HOURS AND TOUR INFORMATION

Wednesday through Sunday

Full Collection Tour 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM (break from 12:30 - 2:00 PM)

Includes all works in the permanent collection: Judd, Koolhaas, Long, Rabinowitch, Chamberlain, Flavin, Ansonson, Wesley, Horn, Andre, Oldenburg & van Bruggen.
\$25 Adult, \$10 Student

Selections Tour 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Selected exhibitions from the permanent collection: Judd, Flavin, Chamberlain.
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Auxiliary Sheds Tour 3:45 - 4:15 PM

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HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

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*Closed December 24 & 25, Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

*Closed December 31 & January 1, New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

*Chinati Weekend, Friday, October 5 - Sunday, October 7

*Karole Armitage performance, Sunday, November 18, Crowley Theatre

*Sunset at Chinati, Friday, November 23, 7 - 8:30 AM

*Winter Art Classes for area students, December 15 - January 4

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The Mexican Revolution in the Big Bend

- During the Mexican Revolution many U.S. Cavalry outposts were established along the border to protect Texas from raiders. Posts were established at Castolon, Lajitas, Redford, Presidio, Ruidosa, Candelaria and several other sites. What was the name of the Cavalry outpost between Presidio and Ruidosa?
 - Indio
 - Deluxe
 - Chaa
 - Chinati
- In 1914 the Mutual Film Corporation, a motion picture conglomerate, filmed the Battle of Ojinaga, documenting Pancho Villa's defeat of the Mexican federal forces. What well-known actor and filmmaker of this era produced films through Mutual Films?
 - Shawn Adams
 - Howard Hughes
 - Charlie Chaplin
 - Lucille Ball
- After the Battle of Ojinaga, some 4,000 refugees comprised of federal soldiers and civilians crossed the Rio Grande into Presidio. U.S. Cavalry soldiers then led them on a brutal winter march to Marfa, where they were placed in camps. The bulk of these refugees were then subsequently transferred to where?
 - Fort Bliss
 - Fort Worth
 - Fort Stockton
 - Fort Davis
- In May of 1916 dozens of Villistas attacked the villages of Boquillas and Glenn Springs, in what is now Big Bend National Park, looting and taking two captives. What was the name of the U.S. colonel that led the expedition into Mexico that rescued the hostages several days later?
 - Glenn Justice
 - George T. Langhorne
 - George Patton
 - James J. Kilpatrick
- Howard Perry, owner of the Chisos Mining Co. in Terlingua, conducted several arms-for-firewood trades with Pancho Villa, using an agent of his to meet with Villa's brother, Hipolito. Which Rio Grande crossing was used for these exchanges?
 - Lajitas
 - Contrabando Canyon
 - Mariscal Canyon
 - Santa Elena, Chihuahua

Bonus: Which person mentioned above was also known as "the King of Candelaria."

Answers: 1-a 2-c 3-a 4-b 5-d
Bonus: 4d James J. Kilpatrick

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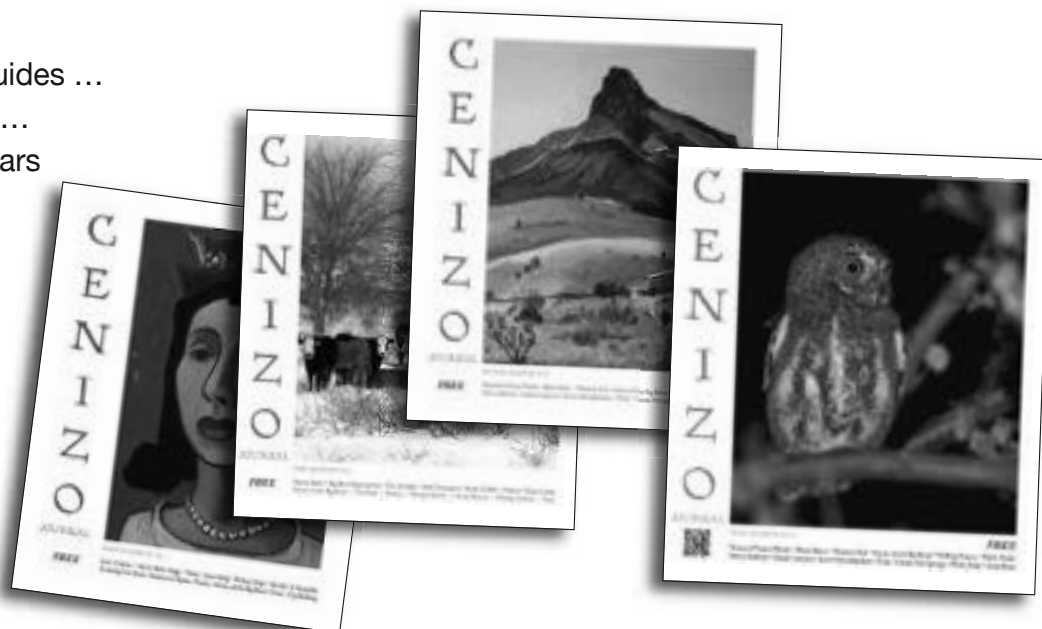
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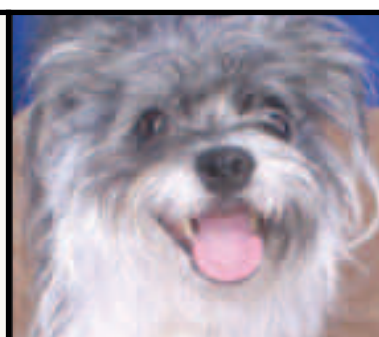
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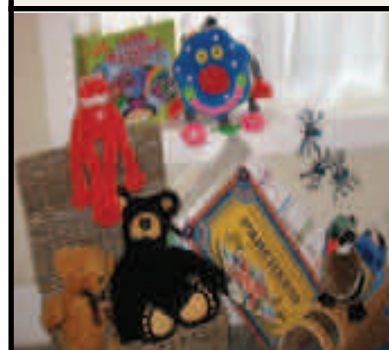
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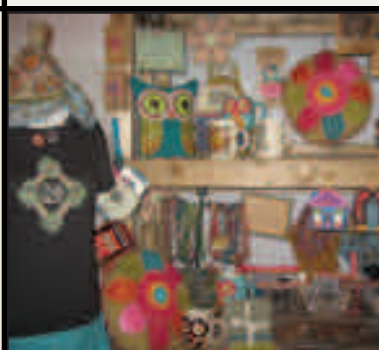
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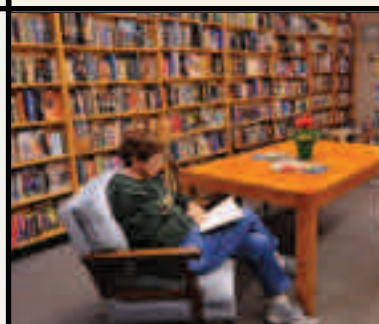
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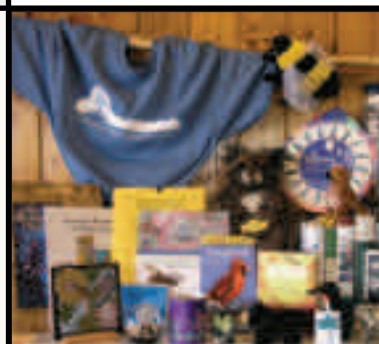


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