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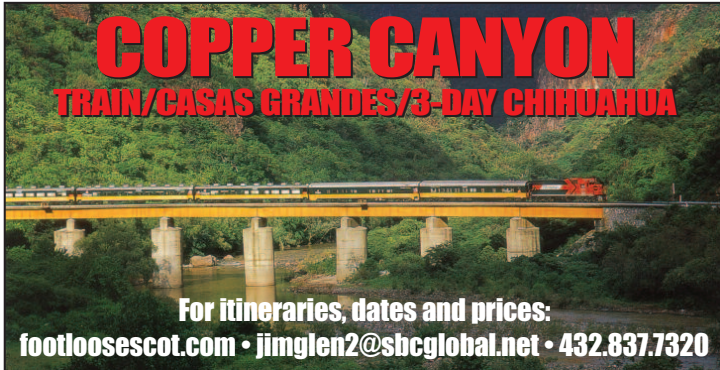
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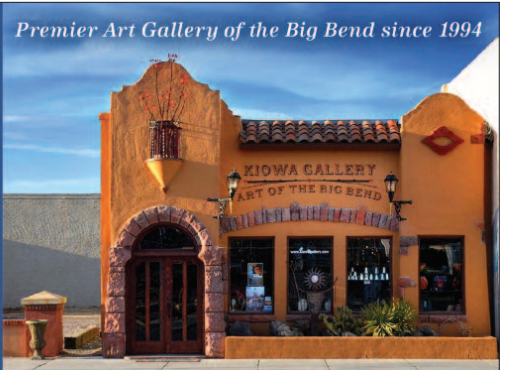
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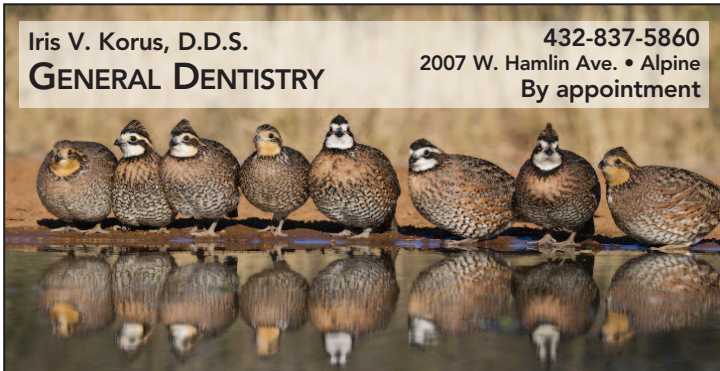


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Discover the Davis Mountains: Hummingbird Capital of Texas

by Madge Lindsay



Above: Davis Mountains Preserve scenic, photo courtesy of Michael Gray



Left: Rufous Hummingbird, photo courtesy of Michael Gray; Middle: Lucifer Hummingbird, courtesy of Kelly Bryan; Right: Amethyst-throated Hummingbird, courtesy of Michael Gray.

Located in the northern Chihuahuan Desert, the geography and ecology of the Davis Mountains is fascinating. With rugged terrain and “bigger than life” landscapes, the region’s wild character

draws visitors from around the country and beyond. The Davis Mountains is one of three Texas sky islands found in the region, including the Guadalupe Mountains National Park, 110 miles north-northwest in Culbertson

County, TX, and the Big Bend National Park, 100 miles south-southeast in Brewster County. The Davis Mountains are the largest of the Texas sky islands; eight times larger than the Guadalupe Mountains (Texas portion)

and over 50 times larger than Big Bend’s Chisos Mountains.

continued on page 26

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Cenizo Journal

Volume 9 Number 3

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Cenizo Notes

by Carolyn Brown Zniewski, publisher and Danielle Gallo, editor



First, just saying, the *Cenizo Journal* is still up for sale. I've had a few nibbles but there is nothing official as yet so if you are yearning to publish your own magazine, contact me at my email listed below.

Now onward to our summer edition. July is always the height of summer for me. June 21 may be the first day according to the calendar, but for me and just about everyone else summer begins with Memorial Day. This is a time for picnics, barbecues and potlucks. Everything happens outside, so it is always the more the merrier.

Every town in the Big Bend has a big celebration for Independence Day. I hadn't looked at the Declaration of Independence since American History in eighth grade, so I looked it up on Google. The writers and signers were pretty radical folk for that age and time. Yet here we are 241 years later, still struggling along trying to make it work. As that line in a Grateful Dead song says, "Sometimes the light's all shining on me/ other times I can barely see/ lately it occurs to me, what a long strange trip it's been."

So while you are out there picnicking, hiking, biking or on a road trip across Big Bend Park and along the Rio Grande; while you are watching a horny toad hunker down in the shade of a prickly pear; while you are drinking a cold beer and laughing with your buddies; while the kids are yelling and running through the sprinkler or while you are lying on your back at night looking up at the stars, remember "We the People" are all in this great world together. Let's keep on making it work. Have a great summer!



Oh sweet West Texas summer, in all your glory. The sun beats down and bakes the moisture from the hard yellow earth, building the rumbling thunderheads drop by drop--a perfect metaphor for synergy, as the scant precious offerings of mist and sweat and the exhalations of withering cacti are returned tenfold to the earth, beating my poor nascent pomegranates from their bushes. Children chafe in the bonds of forced siestas, resenting so much "inside time" out of the sun, then run hog wild and splash in shallow pools through the endless evenings. I try to go to bed with the chickens, and find the chickens want to stay up later than I do. I have to stay up and wait for them to tuck themselves onto their roosts, because the foxes and skunks are out on the prowl.

There is something so dear about the smell of the baking desert. There is no smell quite like it, ancient and severe, alive in spite of its mineral tang, with maybe just a whiff of long-extinct seas to tantalize the imagination. It enlivens the senses and excites a primal sense of urgency--we must complete these tasks before midday, because all desert creatures retreat to the shade until the evening.

And while we're all tucked away into our burrows, holding still out of the midday blaze, snacking on popsicles and ripe tomatoes, the *Cenizo* is the perfect companion to while away the hours of siesta.

We hope you enjoy this issue, and maybe we'll see you at the barbecue when the sun begins to set.

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The Things I Will Miss

Story and photograph by Wendy Lynn Wright

I recently sold my house in Casa Piedra, where I had lived for over 10 years. Prior to living in Central Presidio County, I lived in Marfa from 2002 to 2006. Before that, for a few years, I lived and worked as caretaker in South Presidio County at Chinati Hot Springs.

While living in Casa Piedra, I worked in Marfa on one or two consecutive days a week. I worked for the Marfa Studio of the Arts in an administrative role and for their SITES (Studio in the Elementary School) program teaching art at Marfa Elementary. On the days I went to town I had an amazing 45-mile, one-hour commute. I rarely saw another vehicle. My drive was filled with the gorgeous desert and mountain vistas where the early morning or late afternoon light cast beautiful shadows

across the land.

Although I was born and raised in Central New York, had lived in both North Florida and the Texas Hill Country, I will miss Casa Piedra and Big Bend more than I have ever missed or longed for any other place I have lived. I knew this area felt like home when I came out for my first visit in 1999 and I moved to the Big Bend as quickly as I could.

My time in Casa Piedra was truly Waldenesque. While living in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by the incredible beauty and solitude of the Chihuahuan desert, I took all the tools I had collected over my life and put them to use. How to eat well, exercise, create art, play music, meditate, read great books and commune with nature. I also took the time to foster some of the best relationships of my life.

In 2015, I met a man from El Paso who made my world a bigger place. He treats me like a queen. And for the first time in my life, I had a boyfriend who made me, and our relationship, the top priority in his life. For this, and a million other satisfying reasons, it was very hard to refuse when he asked me to marry him and move to the west side of El Paso.

Now that I have moved to the Big City, there are a few things I will truly miss about the place I called home for so many years. Although El Paso affords me the beauty of the Chihuahuan desert and Franklin Mountains, the stars at night cannot compare to walking outside my house in Casa Piedra and seeing the milky way in all its luminescent glory. I will miss the way the starry night sky made me feel so small in our universe and yet

made my heart feel so big. I knew I was very fortunate to be seeing such a sight and appreciated it to the very depths of my soul.

I am thrilled that my new neighborhood is lovely, tidy and quiet for my daily morning walks. But I will surely miss happening upon the wildlife out in the Big Bend. I shall miss my close encounters with jackrabbits and cottontails, lizards, roadrunners, coyotes and an occasional javelina. I consider myself very lucky to have had the opportunity to come face to face with Casa Piedra's resident bobcat on one of my morning walks, years ago.

I will deeply miss my artesian well, with its soft, sweet, 80-degree water free-flowing and creating a little oasis on my property. I will miss the lush lawn my well provided me, that kept the dirt, dust and weeds at bay. I will

miss the myriad of birds that flocked to my oasis and the shade trees where the birds would nest and find sanctuary.

I will miss the overwhelming smell of creosote in the air after a rain and seeing the red velvet mites crawling around after a soaking downpour. I will also miss the captivating scent of blooming white brush several days after a good rain. Although I see this desert flora in El Paso, I will miss cultivating my Casa Piedra cactus garden with its ocotillo, lechuguilla, yucca, agaves and rainbow cactus.

I will miss the quiet. The incredible, deafening quiet. With that quiet I became very in tune to the subtle sounds of insects, of birds songs, of coyotes howling in the distance and of the wind. My time with nature in Casa Piedra was a great education. I learned that most bugs, snakes, and quadrupeds are more afraid of me than I should be of them. That they simply want to get away from a human presence as fast as possible. I gained a healthy respect for sentient beings and their struggles in their harsh environs.

I will really miss tarantulas. Truly. I think they are beautiful creatures and have long adored them. I know they

are around El Paso but I doubt I will see one in my house as I did last June.

I will miss my 360-degree unobstructed view of the horizon. I will miss the epic sunrises and sunsets my view afforded me in Casa Piedra. I will miss moonrise and moonset on the desert horizon. I will also miss seeing incredible thunderstorms in the distance and the way cumulonimbus clouds change from pale yellow to peach to rose and crimson during twilight.

I will miss going days at a time without getting in my truck and driving anywhere. I do try to adhere to this in El Paso - making a point to not drive anywhere a few times a week. But the Big City is too tempting. Too much to see. Too much to buy. Too, too convenient.

I will miss the desolate roads: the Casa Piedra Road, the Pinto Canyon Road, and the River Road. I will miss Chinati Hot Springs. I will miss the annual Terlingua Music Bash in October. I will miss lovely little Boquillas, Mexico. I will miss Balmorhea. I'm so very glad I was able to enjoy the heck out of those magical waters.

I will miss the fact that the folks at

the bank and post office knew me by name and greeted me with a smile. I will miss how certain servers at the restaurants I frequented in Marfa knew my "usual" by heart and would bring me my meal rather than a menu.

I will miss my weekly music practice with my dear friend, and mandolin player, Paul Graybeal. Paul owns the Moonlight Gemstones shop in Marfa and in my humble opinion, is one of the hardest working artists in town. I will miss living in/near an 'Art Town' and the fact that the region attracts artists and feeds an artist's sensibilities. I will miss Art Walk (always Gallery Night, in my mind...) and Chinati Open House Weekend.

Oh the music... I will miss the jam sessions with my fellow musicians whether in Marfa, Alpine or Terlingua. There were many a rousing gathering with guitars, mandolin, banjo and an occasional fiddle, viola, keyboard and even accordion. I will forever miss the weekly Marfa Music Jam I began in 2003 that gathered at several, now defunct, Marfa venues including: The Holiday Capri Hotel, The Brown Recluse, Marfa Coffee & Wine and The Q Cafe.

I will miss my neighbors in Casa Piedra, as I knew all dozen or so, very well. We could count on each other in a pinch. We looked after each other, our property and our pets. I have no idea who the dozen or so folks who live on either side of me, or across the street here in El Paso, are.

There are a few things I will not miss. Most of all, I will not miss the burden of maintaining every aspect of a house and 10 acres, by myself out in the middle of nowhere - an overwhelming task, I assure you. I will not miss conenose beetles or rattlesnakes on my porch. I will not miss feral hogs tearing up my yard. I will not miss the March winds. I will not miss being stuck at my house because Alamito Creek is running high. I will not miss the pipeline. I will not miss going through the Border Patrol checkpoint every time I drive north. I will not miss the slackers. I will not miss small town drama.

I will certainly visit my old stomping grounds, when I miss the things I miss too much. But, as it seems, even when places and events are in our own town or right down the road, it's simply easier to stay put when you are blissfully happy to call a new place your home.

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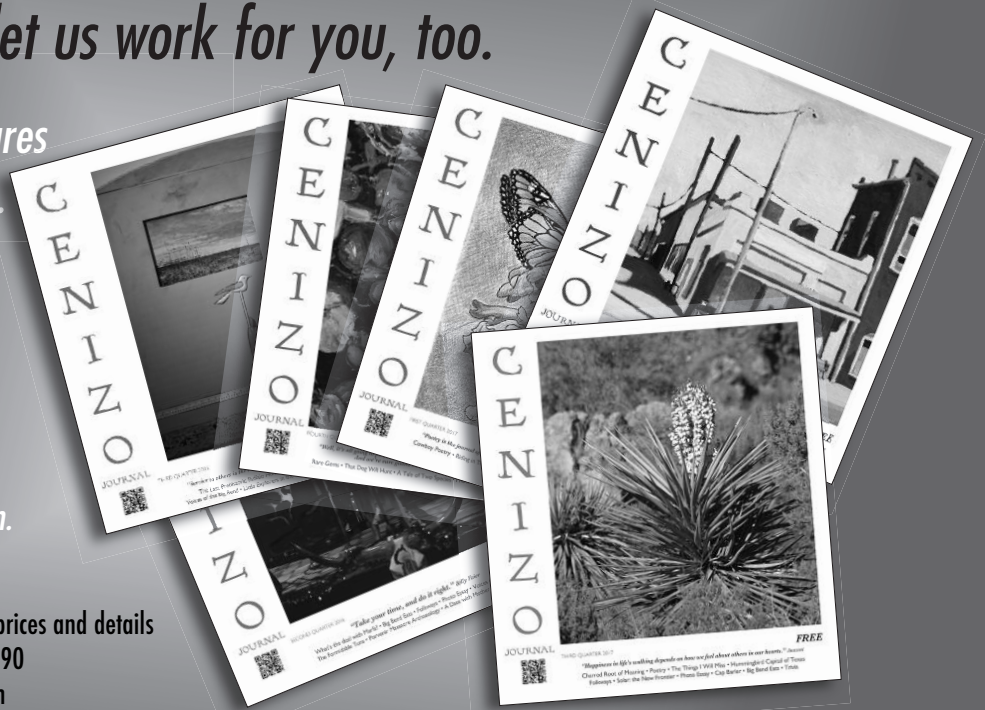


Photo Essay

by *Matt Walter*



Fort Davis National Historic site is recognized – as the name implies – for its history. And rightly so, since it was a very important site along the Overland Trail, home to the famed Buffalo Soldiers, and is today the best-preserved frontier fort in the American Southwest. But it is also so much more, and visitors to the Fort can engage in a variety of other outdoor activities, hiking some of the wonderful trails, enjoying expansive vistas, spotting wildlife, chasing the weather, appreciating architecture and of course photography, which adds an extra dimension to each of these pursuits.







Charred Root of Meaning

*Story and photographs
by Philipp W. Rosemann*

I first traveled to the Big Bend in the spring of 2011, having lived in Texas for 14 years without discovering its most extraordinary part. It was articles in the *New York Times* on Marfa and Marathon that had sparked my curiosity, making me Google and read more about those remote and mythical places in the desert, a mere seven hours' drive from Dallas. In Europe, seven hours lets you cross the boundaries of three or four countries—well, certain countries, like the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg. But still, Texas is big, by any standards. It is larger than France and almost twice the size of Germany, my native country.

I went with my partner. It was a brief vacation, just to get away from Dallas for a few days during spring break. We flew into Midland/Odessa, rented a small car, and headed south, via Fort Stockton and Alpine toward Marfa, our first stop. My partner, who was born in Odessa, had at first not been thrilled about this trip. I certainly understood why. Odessa is, sad to say, a singularly ugly place, and the monotonous steppe that surrounds it, with the oil rigs and the gas smell that reminds you of a leak in your kitchen stove, is hardly much better. As we drove further south, however, and the dusty prairie gradually opened up to the mountains, the sight dispelled any doubts about the wisdom of our trip. Over the next few days, we explored Marfa, where we learned about

Donald Judd, drove on FM 170 to the National Park (trying not to veer off the road and right down the bluff into the Rio Grande), hiked to the Window, were scared of Mexican riders who had, it seemed, taken possession of Boquillas, and finally returned by way of Marathon. It was a short time, but full of memorable impressions. Neither of us had ever been to a place as ruggedly beautiful as the Big Bend.

I returned almost exactly a year later. In March 2012, I came alone, however, since in the meantime my partner had committed suicide. I came to weep and pray, shaken to the core and still not quite sure what had happened. This is the kind of thing one reads about, but does not expect in one's own life—until it hits you, brutally and without warning, one night when you come home. Then, suddenly, you see the truth: there are no guarantees in life, anything can happen; the idea that you can control your fate is pathetically naïve.

I had a reservation—made long in advance, and hence for two—in the historic section of the Indian Lodge. On my very first afternoon, right after getting there, I climbed up the path behind the lodge, into the stillness of the hills. The landscape still bore the scars of the Rock House fire, which had devastated Presidio and Jeff Davis counties in April of the previous year. In particular, I noticed that all the sotols had been reduced to charred stumps, whose ashen blackness dotted

the mountain slopes and punctuated the sides of the trail. An air of death hung over the Davis Mountains. The soil was dry as dust.

On closer inspection, however, most of the burned trunks were still alive. Out of thick black stumps, there sprouted little heads of green leaves. The sight was so moving that I decided to come back the next day, with my camera, to take a few pictures. This I did, but with what quickly turned out to be a malfunctioning camera. It was new, but kept giving me error messages. I hoped that at least

finally able to complete recently, after years of gestation. The book is entitled, *Charred Root of Meaning*. The title takes its inspiration from a passage in the works of the great French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984). In *The History of Madness*, Foucault wrote these words, in his inimitably lyrical and dense style:

“The plenitude of history is possible only in the space, at once empty and populated, of all those words without language which, to everyone who lends his ear, make heard a muted noise from beneath history, the obstinate murmuring

The price we pay is that we become incapable of hearing those eccentric voices that continue to murmur, inaudibly, amidst the noisiness of our world. We have killed these voices; silencing them was the first step we took in our journey toward Reason. This is what the “charred root of meaning” means for Foucault: for modern life as we know it to become possible, we first had to burn that with which it is not compatible.

That is to say, things like mourning and melancholy. Professional psychologists allow us a period of time for mourning after the loss of a loved one. Exceed that time frame, and you are depressed, in need of counseling or—most likely—of medication. But what if melancholy had a place in everyone’s life, all the time, and actually alongside joy? Such a complex state of mind would only reflect reality: the fact, namely, that there is always an interplay between life and death. There is always something to mourn, and always something to celebrate.

The two are inseparable, like two sides of a coin.

This is the lesson that we can learn from the charred sotol plants. Death and destruction are real; but so is life. Life without a realization of the death from which it comes and to which it will return is shallow. Occasionally, we need to take the time to escape from the busyness of everyday life, where we are urged to be ever more rational and efficient. The quiet and peace of the mountain desert allow us to listen to the murmuring of a different reality that the noise of industrial civilization has drowned out.



Ty looking over the Rio Grande from the River Road.

some of the photos I took would remain intact, but—no luck. Back in Dallas, I found the images on the faulty SD card had all been erased.

It took another trip a year later to capture the life that had come back after the big fire. At that point, while the damage to the sotol stems was still very evident, each root was already green with many new leaves. Destruction, it turned out, had only been a phase in nature’s larger rhythm of life and death. Reduced to ashes by the fire, the mountains had come back to life. Like I had.

I plan to use one of my photos of the resurrected sotols on the cover of a book that I was

of a language which would speak on its own—without speaking subject and without interlocutor, folded in upon itself, a lump in its throat, crumbling away before having reached any formulation and returning without much ado to the silence from which it has never broken off. Charred root of meaning.”

The History of Madness attempts something like a rehabilitation of madness. In a world in which we pride ourselves of being ever more rational, Foucault argued, there is a price to pay for suppressing all that seems mad, crazy, and strange—that questions us in our emphasis on efficiency, progress, and profit.

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Timeless Treasure

Pretty bits of colored glass
half hidden under the mesquite,
Turned purple by the sun
and a hundred years.

Hikers exclaim at their find,
touching smoothness of old cut glass,
Examining patterns that still show
even though half-buried in hot sand.

Could this design be part of a thistle, he said.
And is this one a rose?
Here, this one, said she, must have been a bowl
with perfect teardrop beading on the rim.

The purple glass fragments were added
to loaded pockets
As hikers also gathered pretty rocks,
and hurried on.

The only tears from the pioneer woman
who had broken her wedding bowl
Came from the damp spot leaking
from the hiker's pocket.

by Reba Cross Seals

Cactus Lady

(Valentine, Far West Texas)

We drove down a dirt road, a block or two
off the only highway going through the hamlet.
Years before, the desert had taken up residence
in the old house we stopped in front of, its yard
overgrown with cholla and purple prickly pear.

God knows what the stooped elderly neighbor
thought when she saw me open my car's trunk,
take out the skulls of ram and steer,
and place them on the posts of the barbed-wire fence
as my wife was setting up the tripod.

She appeared out of nowhere, inconspicuous
as a creosote bush. Holding her sawed-off shotgun
with its barrel angled toward the dirt,
she asked what the dickens we were up to,
and blurted, "You're trespassin', ya know."

"Taking photos for the cover of a poetry book,"
I stammered. When I offered to mail her a copy
of the published book, she thought for a minute
and muttered, "Guess so." She gave her address
as "Cactus Lady, General Delivery, Valentine, Texas."

Said that's all I needed to put on the envelope.
She then stretched the hem of her well-worn T-shirt,
lifted it a little from her body, and grinned,
as she flashed in bold letters, "Valentine Pirates,"
the mascot of the eight-student local high school.

by Larry D. Thomas

Folkways

by *Maya Brown Zniewski*

COOL DRINKS FOR SUMMER



The heat of summer is upon us. Is there anything better than a shady spot and a cool drink when the heat rises? These are flavor-filled super herb-packed drinks and treats to cool you off. I highly suggest sharing them with friends; everything is better with friends.

Citron Presse. I love those fancy names for things like fresh lemonade. Squeeze a lemon into a tall glass filled with ice cubes and a couple of sugar cubes, top with plain or sparkling water.

Ginger Lemonade. Fresh sweet and sour lemonade with the tang of ginger. Muddle a slim slice of fresh ginger in a glass, then add a tablespoon of honey and squeeze a lemon or use a squirt of lemon juice and top with water and ice cubes.

Peppermint and hibiscus ice pops. I was reminded the other day of having a cherry popsicle that dripped down my leg, causing my mother to think I had blood poison-

ing. It was only after sticking my foot in salt water that the dried-on cherry popsicle rinse off. The hibiscus will leave a tart flavor and a less-intense red color than FD and C colorant used in commercial popsicles.

Make a strong peppermint and hibiscus tea with an ounce or so of fresh peppermint leaves and about a Tablespoon of dried hibiscus flowers in a quart of water. Bring to a boil and steep as for tea, blend in honey to taste, I like about

a Tablespoon. Remember that things get sweeter as they cool down. Pour into ice cube trays or Popsicle molds and freeze. Enjoy!

I was asked at a barbecue the other day what one thing, as an herbalist, I would suggest for most people. This is that one thing: Nettle Infusion. In a quart mason jar add about an inch of dried nettles, fill the jar with cool water and leave overnight in the fridge. Strain, composting the nettles, and enjoy the tea. This has a very green taste so you might start with 1/2 inch of nettles. So healthy!

Elderberry Bubble. I love the color of elderberries. Do not eat these uncooked, darlings. In a small saucepan put 1 cup dried elderberries, two or three allspice berries, 1/4 teaspoon of cinnamon, a peppercorn or two, a slice of fresh ginger and two cups of water. Simmer until berries burst, a half-hour or so. Strain, reserving liquid, and add two or three Tablespoons of honey,

stir and store in the fridge. Add a couple of tablespoons to lemon bubbly water. This also makes fantastic flapjack syrup and is great on granola or oatmeal. Drinkers may like it to replace bitters in cocktails. I love it in a plain glass of water with ice.

It's the name that makes the drink, isn't it? Haymaker's Punch has a ton of other names, Switchel is one, but I like Haymaker's Punch best. The farmer's wife brought it out to the fields for the farm hands.

One gallon of water, 1 1/2 cups molasses, 1/3 cup apple cider vinegar (use the good stuff! organic with

water. I know it sounds a little unusual, but that light onion infusion flavor really blends well with other flavors. You can try it out any way you think it would taste yummy. Perhaps it would be a nice addition to a Bloody Mary.

To Make:

1 1/2 cups Champagne or white wine vinegar; use good vinegar not cleaning vinegar, please.

2 1/2 cups chive blossoms, the tops, those gorgeous purple tops. Steep for one week or more.

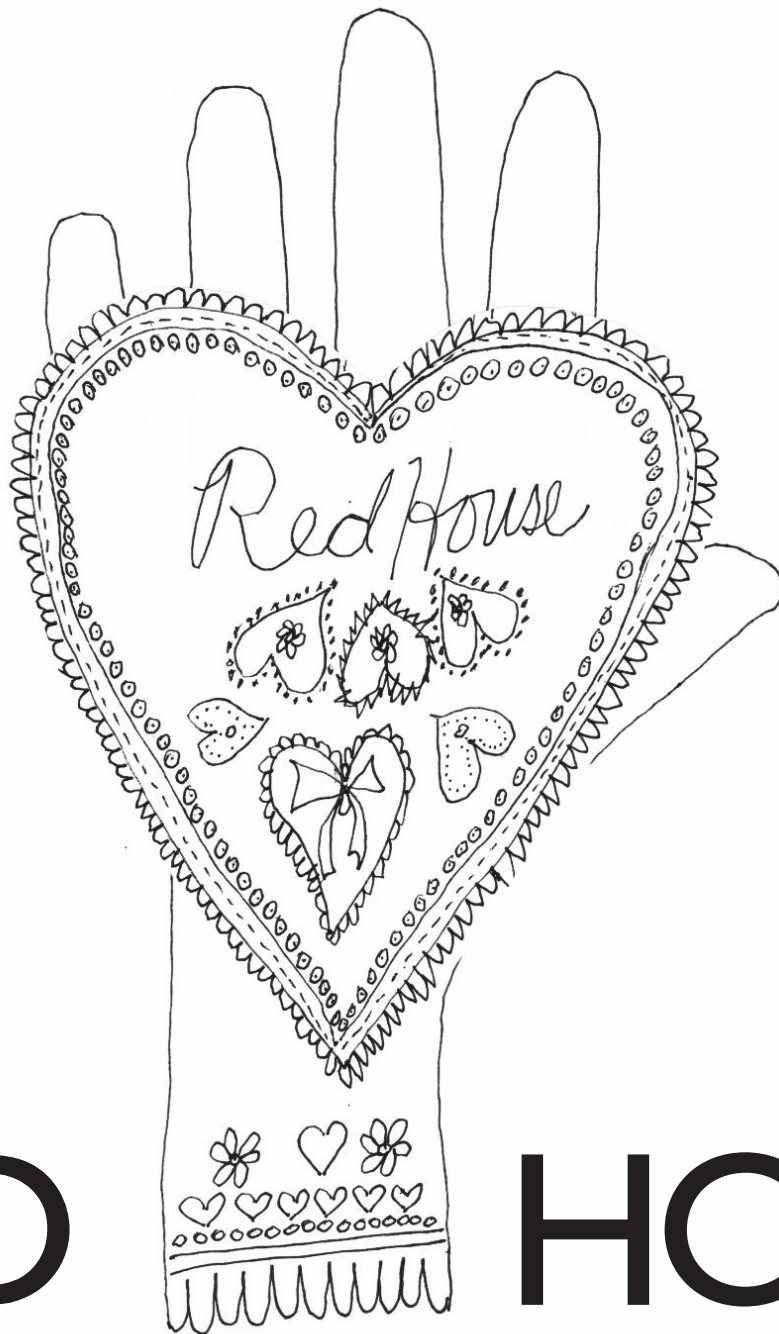
Don't forget about the wonderful additions to plain water. There is lemon, but also sliced cucumber,



the mother!) a couple of slices of fresh ginger or 1 Tablespoon dried ginger. Mix everything, stirring well, and serve over ice. You can use honey instead of molasses. You can vary this any way you wish, one suggestion is a couple of slices of lemons or limes.

Chive Vinegar. Adds a peppery vinegar-y spicy taste and a lilac hue in clear drink. Try this in tonic water, if you have a liking for tonic

sprigs of mint or basil, lavender flowers, roses petals, cactus tunas. Lots of variety is available to spark up a cool drink of water on a hot summer day.



RED HOUSE

by Susan Covington. Illustration by Carolyn Brown Zniwski.

I have a vacation and rental home in beautiful, magnificent Big Bend. Pinch me - how in the world did that happen? A few years ago I started looking for a home in the Big Bend area where I plan to retire in a few

years. I figured if I took my time, I could find the perfect place - and I did! Amazingly, this happened a few years earlier than I anticipated and after buying The Little Red House, I realized using it as a vacation rental to

cover annual expenses until I retired might just possibly be a brilliant idea. What an entirely new experience! Red House is so much fun, I wish I'd bought it years ago!

Mind you, managing a property

when I live a good nine-hour drive away is not the easiest thing to juggle and I could not manage without my wonderful local caretakers, Tom and Klemie. They make sure the water is dripping when the temperature drops,

prepare the house for guests, take care of guests if issues arise, clean after guests go home and generally give me the peace of mind knowing that Red House is safe and sound while I'm away. My neighbors, too, are marvelous about giving me a call if they see something they think needs my attention.

Furnishing the house was fun. It took me several trips over several months as I spaced out my precious vacation days from work. My son would tease me when I loaded up my car to head out the next morning before sunrise. "Yeah, Mom [pause] Low-Rider" was his favorite line once I closed the trunk and got in to the driver's seat to make sure I could see out the back using the rear view mirror. Then came the day he was privileged to drive the U-Haul – with furniture – out to Red House. What is normally a nine-hour drive took 11 hours. During the first nine hours I saw nothing but the hind end of that truck.

Once we left the interstate I was in the lead, feasting my eyes on the wide open spaces I so love. I must live a bit of a charmed life – we made this particular trip in the middle of January; the weather was absolutely glorious. A couple of days after we finished our trip it snowed. What timing! Now that I'm no longer hauling in loads of stuff, I can occasionally fly and drive two and a half hours from Midland, cutting down on the number of grueling drives.

There is so much still to do. Even sparsely furnished, I advertised on AirBnB, and was astounded at how many people wanted to stay at Red House. Thus encouraged, I

also advertised on HomeAway (which – magically – links to VRBO) and even more people rented. Most guests are very nice and considerate but there have been a couple of instances that were not so pleasant. Fortunately, missing glasses and silverware were relatively easy to replace. Some others have taken work. Being a stain removal wizardress, I was able to eradicate a considerable amount of dark brown lipstick from a pastel handmade quilt (thank you to the guest who confessed). Spring Break, summer vacations and holidays book fairly quickly. Most of the rest of the year just fills in. I continue to be amazed at the number of people who visit Red House, and I am happily pleased that I have a couple of "regulars." Last summer one couple who were searching for their own vacation home in Marathon stayed and found the vacation home of their dreams. It was just a few blocks away from Red House. Small world. The wife and I grew up not far from each other in Houston. We didn't know each other then, but we've since become great friends.

One friend at work asked me who would want to vacation, much less live, in Marathon, Texas? Obviously, he's never been to far West Texas. That made me curious, so I analyzed my records for the first year and discovered that seeing Big Bend is on a lot of bucket lists! Then there are wedding guests, birders, hikers, cyclists, folks visiting family, local hunters, and those who want to experience the darkest night sky in West Texas.

Other folks ask me why I want to live in Red House.

Usually I just smile and say that when I can drive for half an hour and see only one other vehicle on the road, I'm in heaven.

Having a vacation rental property means following some stringent rules for tax purposes; there are only so many of my own vacation nights I can stay in Red House per year. I have yet to stay the maximum. I'm mostly working, doing something to improve the house or the property, and I drive home pretty exhausted but it is so-o-o worth it! Refreshing the inside, painting, decorating, rearranging and organizing to make the most of 900 square feet, making repairs, getting to know the yard and figuring out landscaping – all keeps me busy! Staying only a few days at a time helps me realize what my guests experience and that sparks ideas to improve the Red House. I'm always thinking of ways to make it a better experience. Driving miles of highway and getting to know the area also allows me to make recommendations to my guests who aren't familiar with Big Bend. At present, according to reviews, I must be succeeding.

To answer that inevitable question, "Why Big Bend?" Like countless others, I went camping in Big Bend when I was a senior in high school, fell in love with the area and promised myself that someday I would live here. Lucky for me, only 46 years later, I'm actually here. Hope you can stop by Red House sometime! I'm up on the hill overlooking the Glass Mountains.

To rent Red House in Marathon, contact Susan at red-housemarathon@gmail.com.

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SOLAR: THE NEW FRONTIER

Story and photograph by Rani Birchfield

America's history is carried on the backs of its energy procurement, its future formed by the choices therein. Up until now, earth-bound carbon forms provided our energy: food for humans followed by fodder for animals; then the abundant forests of the New World provided fuel. As coal dropped in price, it grew exponentially and took over as king. Although dangerous and dirty, it became a defining fuel for the Industrial Revolution. Coal powered the railroad industry and connected the territories, creating cohesion for a

budding America. Coal was given a run for its money by oil, then overtaken by natural gas. Now, as carbon energy production fuels climate concerns, cleaner sources that aren't carbon-based are catching up. One of the most powerful of these is solar.

Solar power is the conversion of energy from the sun into electricity. It sounds almost magical, but there are two ways to do this: directly using photovoltaics or indirectly using concentrated solar power. In simple terms, a photovoltaic cell (PV cell) is a specialized semiconductor diode that con-

verts visible light into direct current (DC).

Although the cost in the past of photovoltaic cells has been high, with the development of new technology, solar is growing rapidly. Its contribution to the power grid is silent, in the background, in deserts and areas with abundant sunshine. The US Department of Energy reports that solar employment accounts for the largest share of workers in the Electric Power Generation sector, which includes oil and natural gas, coal, wind, bioenergy, nuclear, hydroelec-

tric and solar. According to the report, solar has more than double the jobs of the coal industry now and almost as many as natural gas, although much of that is due to new solar site construction. Last year, a half-million solar panels were installed every day (worldwide), according to an article in the Business section of the Telegraph last October. While many of these were in China, some of these were done right here in the Big Bend region, a few miles outside of Alpine.

The Alpine plant is 50 megawatts, which is approximately enough power

to supply the entire Big Bend/Davis Mountains area or a city the size of San Angelo, according to Matt Held, Vice President Asset Development for Solaire Direct, the plant's owner. This particular plant is of the photovoltaic class, with the power dumping anonymously into the grid. The other type, concentrated solar power, is the Eye of Sauron type – the glass and steel version – where tons of mirrors focus solar energy into a small beam, which is then used to heat water and generate electricity through steam power.

The job took about six months to complete, with an average workforce of about 180-200 (with peak around 225-230 for about six weeks) including managers, engineers and supervisors. Held said, "We had very strong turnout from around the area, so a good pool of applicants to choose from including folks who worked some of the solar jobs in Pecos County."

Many of us are familiar with the oil field line of work; perhaps we've experienced some of the cash flow from it ourselves, directly or indirectly. But what do we know about solar workers? What kinds of people choose the renewable energy route both as a job and as a consumer?

Paul Sojen is a Quality Assurance Technician who worked at the farm in Alpine during construction. Prior to working solar, he did time in the oil field and travelled throughout the Permian Basin. "I just kind of go everywhere," Sojen said. "When I get a new gig, I go to the location and hope to find housing, mostly looking on Craig's list for trailers for rent or rooms."

It's not a life conducive to a relationship or a family, or even a home. "I feel like a wandering ghost," he said. "Some people think it's cool, and I've made pretty good money. If I want to call somewhere home, when would I ever be there?" Drifting

around is the nature of the business, and he's lived in seven places in the last three years. "When you finish a project, just like in the oil field, you move on – when you're done, you're done," Sojen said. "If I really wanted to settle down, I'd have to do something different. There's a manufacturing plant in San Antonio that makes parts for the company I'm with now. Maybe I could get on with them in the QA department."

The travel, which is a downside, is also the benefit. "If I want to see a new place, I'm going," Sojen said.

Another boon, according to Sojen, is the pay. "At least in the QA aspect the pay's pretty decent. The per diem is good. It's not strenuous or stressful for the most part. It's cool, it's laid back. It's nothing like the oil field, beating your body up every day."

The safety culture and the work morale is a whole lot better than oil field work, Sojen said. "Oil field comes from old school thinking, like harder and meaner is better. There's not all that macho, ego crap in solar."

Although Sojen transitioned seamlessly from Alpine to a solar farm in McCamey, steady work is not always the case; it could be a delay of several months if there are no projects in the pipeline. "If you're a solid worker," Sojen said, "they'll keep you informed." Sojen said a couple weeks after being in his new location, he had an epiphany: "I did not realize how beautiful Alpine is. It's like an oasis for these parts."

Sojen likes working in renewable energy, and calls it the cutting edge of the world's future. "I'm getting lots of experience, marketable experience, and learning new, cool things. The vibe is different. Oil field is fighting and abusive; solar is completely different. It has a more positive vibe. The oil field seems like it's a dinosaur."

Along with utilizing the

local labor pool, specialized workers came in from all over the United States as well as Europe and Asia. Chuck Fernandez is one of 15 commissioners at a company that programs, repairs and troubleshoots the equipment that tracks the sun. The company he works for goes out to solar plants near the end of the construction phase when it's mechanically complete to set up the software, getting it working and fully functional. "We test everything," Fernandez said, "Functionality, voltage, mechanical." (At the plant in Alpine, every row has its own computer, as opposed to being on a giant link where upwards of 40 rows are connected to one motor; on those, if one goes down, all the connected rows go offline.)

Fernandez lives in California, close to Palm Springs. He came from the wind turbine field and gravitated to solar. He's been all over California in the year and a half he's worked for his current employer, as well as Utah, Kansas, Georgia and more recently, Alpine, Texas.

Fernandez goes home every week unless it's crunch time at one of the jobs and he needs to hammer it through, he said. As he does get to be home most weekends, he enjoys the traveling and meeting a plethora of new people. "There's so much camaraderie, especially like if you're on a huge site for eight months." (For perspective, a huge site would be one roughly the size of Alpine.)

Fernandez liked working in the little town of Alpine. "Here is nice – I like it," he said. "Everyone is so nice and generous. It's been a good experience. You don't always get that."

Carolyn Macartney is an Alpine resident on the other end of the solar spectrum; she recently acquired solar for her

continued on page 20



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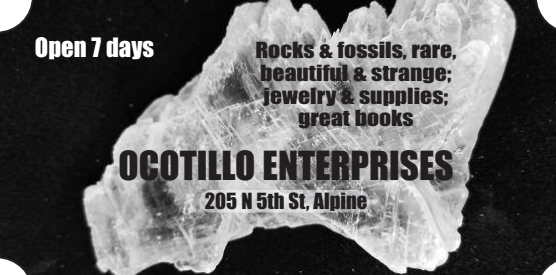
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continued from page 19

home. The process was simple enough, she said: long term cost and usage overview; site visit; work out financials; installation; and various follow-up details. AEP switched the meter, and the solar company inspected the roof for total area, angle to the sun and amount of sun vs. shade. They also looked at the bill to determine how much usage there is, to install a big enough system to supply all the electricity needs.

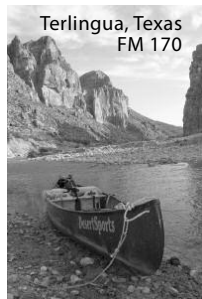
"A lot of people don't want to think in the future, especially about having a payment for 10 or so years, but most of the time my meter is running backwards, racking up credit," Macartney got a fixed rate to do the install, which will be paid off in 12 years. That sounds like a long financial commitment, but with a

meter that runs backwards, there's no electric bill, which offsets the monthly loan payment. When the loan is paid, the electricity is free. An extra bonus, Macartney said, is the panels provide shade on the roof. "It was quick and easy and affordable to install solar," Macartney said. "Why the heck wouldn't you?"

Solar used to be for the wealthy, an indulgence, if you will. But with the advancement of the technology comes a drop in prices, making a term like "greener and cleaner" take on a new meaning, one of saving money as well as being better for the earth. There's more solar output at higher elevations, which makes Alpine the perfect place to utilize solar, AND electric companies here still give rebates.

Some people lament the "eyesore" of the solar plant, although if you're not looking for it, it's easy to miss - it's

non-descript and low to the ground. But this is one monocrop that doesn't destabilize the soil, nor does it suck precious desert water out of the aquifer. There are downsides and upsides to everything and the risks and benefits must be calculated in the production of energy. We could go back to hunter / gatherer society, but seven billion people lighting home fires would be destructive as well. Solar may have "side effects" like habitat disruption in sensitive areas and bird fatalities, but the solar farm near Alpine is less dangerous than the concentrated form. We must look at the bigger picture, one in which, according to the National Audubon Society (who are all about birds), climate change is ultimately the most destructive force to wildlife. There are no perfect solutions, but there are, perhaps, best answers. We just have to find them.



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Big Bend Eats

By Carolyn Brown Zniewski.

Summer is in full swing and the markets overflow with fresh fruit of all kinds. We all like to gobble it down fresh from the tree, but it can also make a picnic or a dinner a bit of a celebration when fresh fruit is gussied up for dessert. These recipes are perfect for the summer season. Not one of them requires an oven, stove burner or even a microwave.

This first one I've been eating as both a salad and a dessert since early childhood. Grapes are readily available much of the summer and fall. My grandmother brought the recipe back with her from a train trip on to the West Coast in about 1928. This combination may seem a little strange, but believe me it is so delicious and refreshing you will serve it again and again.

Green Grape Salad

- 2 cups sour cream
- 5 cups green seedless grapes
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1/4 - 1/2 cup brown sugar

Mix well. Chill.
Garnish with chopped pecans.

This next recipe is vegan, delicious and high in vitamins and minerals, so even if you aren't concerned about a

vegan diet give it a try. Serve as plain pudding or it makes a great dipping sauce for strawberries, pineapple, pears or banana chunks.



Chocolate Pudding

- 1 avocado
- 4 ripe bananas
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 2-3 Tbls honey

Blend well. Chill.

Cheesecake is an all time favorite. Over 2,000 years ago it was first prize at the original Olympics. With the development of cream cheese and ice boxes about 100 years ago it became a standard on our table. This is a light

cheesecake, good after supper or as a late-night snack.

Summer Cheesecake

- Graham cracker crust
- 2 8oz pkg cream cheese
- 1 3oz pkg cream cheese
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 pint whipping cream

Let the cream cheese soften at room temperature. Beat together cream cheese, vanilla and sugar. Whip cream. Fold whipped cream into cream cheese mixture. Spread into crust. Chill 1 hour or more. Just before serving, cover cheesecake with fresh berries.

Melon with Lime Sauce

- 2 cantaloupe or honeydew melons
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 1/2 can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup lime juice
- 2 T lime zest

Seed, peel and dice melon into 1" pieces. Beat remaining ingredients together. Serve melon using cream cheese mixture as a sauce. Garnish with fresh raspberries.

When I was in seventh and eighth grade, oh so many years ago, all girls took Home Economics and all boys took Shop. Home Economics was a half year of cooking and a half-year of sewing. The very first thing we made in cooking class was Glorified Rice. It is still a wonderful summer dessert. Make this when you have leftover rice.

Glorified Rice

- 2 cups, more or less, cooked rice
- 1 cup drained crushed pineapple
- 1-2 sliced bananas
- 1 cup sliced peaches
- 1 cup pitted cherries
- 1 - 1 1/2 cups yogurt or sour cream

Gently mix. Add a little honey if you want it sweeter. You can use any combination of fruit you like. Mix drained canned, fresh or frozen (thawed and drained) fruit. Sometimes I add coconut or chopped pecans. The original recipe called for maraschino cherries, which do look great but are too artificial for me. You need about twice as much fruit as rice. The rest is up to you. If you make it a day ahead the flavors mingle and it tastes even better. Great for pot lucks. Kids love it.

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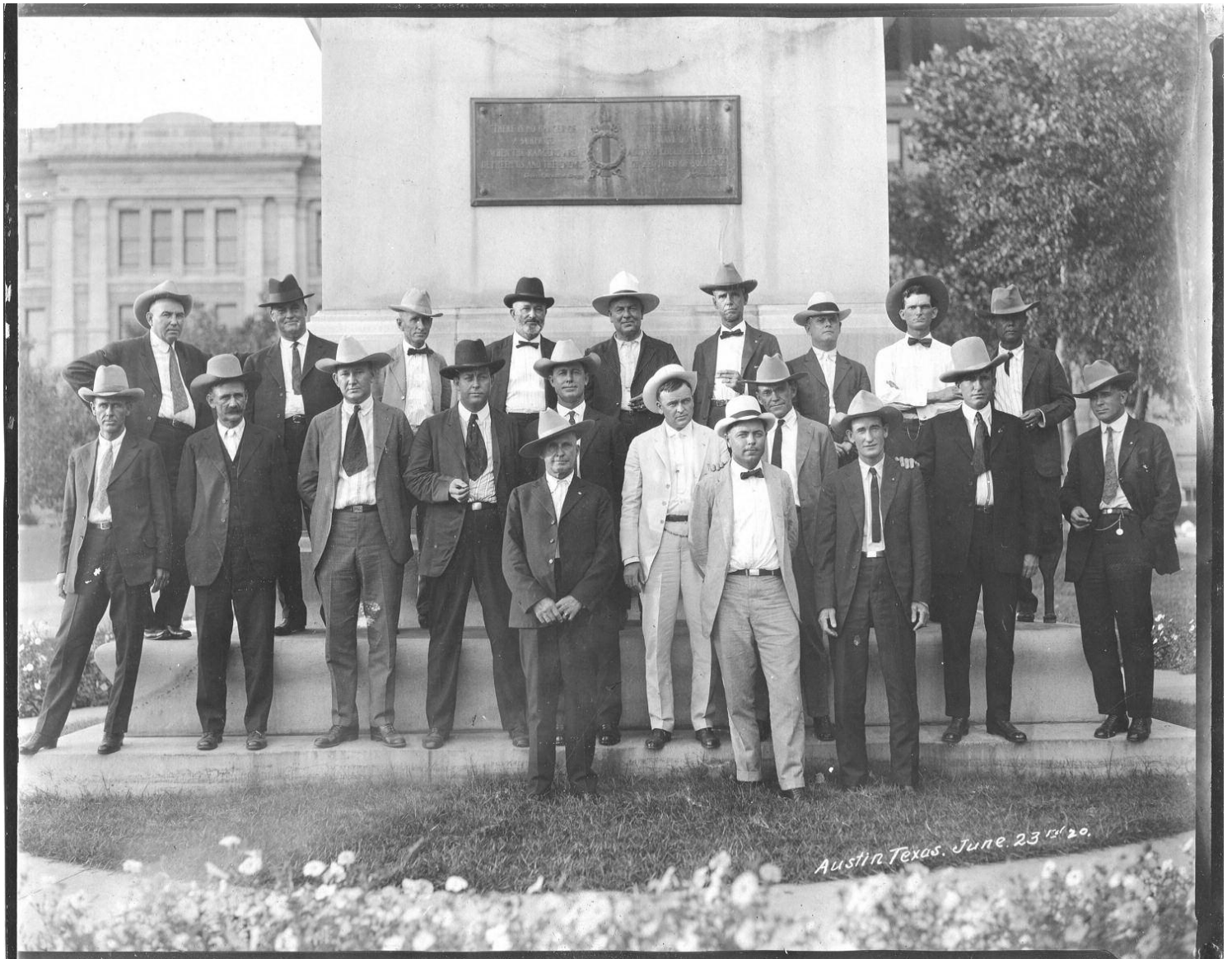
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Third Quarter 2017

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CAP BARLER – The Law in Texas

by C.W. (Bill) Smith



Group of Texas Rangers gathered in front of the Terry's Texas Ranger monument on the Texas capital grounds, 1920. Barler is the third from the left on the back row.



Cap Barler and his favorite mule, Chico, tracking a rustler in the Big Bend.

William Lee “Cap” Barler was a man you didn’t want to mess with. A career lawman, he served as a deputy sheriff under his father, Miles Barler, at Llano, Texas from 1911 to 1915. He joined the Texas Rangers in 1915 serving in Del Rio and Eagle Pass. In 1920 he joined the U. S. Customs Service, serving in Sanderson, Eagle Pass, and Falfurrias. He returned to Sanderson where he spent the last three years of his Customs Service career, retiring in 1940. From 1940 until his death in 1951, Barler worked as a special inves-

tigator with a group of Terrell County ranchmen known as Terrell County Ranchmen’s Protective Association. His specialty was livestock theft prevention.

Cap Barler came from humble beginnings. His father served in the Civil War and married Jane Buttery shortly after he came home. On January 2, 1874, Cap was born in Llano. His was a childhood filled with stories of the Civil War and outlaws and Indian depredations, and this only whetted his appetite for adventure and derring-do. At graduation from high

school at the tender age of 17, he moved to Mexico and managed a ranch there. This experience enabled him to become a recognized expert on the customs and mores of the Mexican border people.

Eventually he tired of this and his father offered a deputy’s job to entice him to come home. Young Cap got a taste of law enforcement and he was a natural. But, he wanted more.

When he joined the Texas Rangers in 1915, it took him only two years to make captain of his own company, and that earned him his lifelong nickname. He was a quick study and was keen on details and procedure. Col. Homer Garrison, Jr., director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, once said that Texas Rangers were “men who could not be stampeded.” That describes Cap Barler exactly. He was cool and calculating and never got in a hurry.

For unknown reasons, Cap left the Rangers in 1920 and struck out on his own as a private investigator in Del Rio and other southern West Texas towns, working for banks and other concerns as a private contractor. It didn’t take long for him to become restless once again.

Around 1925, Barler entered the U. S. Customs Service. His experience working in Mexico as a youth made him a natural Customs officer.

Eventually he landed in Sanderson, where he finished his career. Being so close to the border, Sanderson was a hotbed of bootlegging activities. Barler’s expertise made it hard for bootleggers and smugglers to make a living. And he was relentless in his pursuit.

As to matters of love, Barler was a quiet man, but he did marry Euna Bernice Jackson on March 8, 1908. The union produced one daughter, Isla Gayle, but the marriage did not last and they were divorced by September, 1918. His Texas Ranger lifestyle probably made it hard on the marriage.

Eccentricity was a hallmark of Barler’s life. He was especially fond of “Chico,” the pack mule he rode through most of his career, even to imparting human qualities to the animal. Once on a trip into southern Brewster County with Terrell County Sheriff J. S. Nance, he insisted on going home by way of Marathon, considerably out of the way and over difficult roads. When they arrived Nance insisted that Barler take care of his business, but Barler said he didn’t have any business in Marathon. “Well, why did we come all this way, then?” asked Nance. Barler answered, “Chico has never seen this country before and I wanted him to have the chance to see it.”

Another eccentricity was his devotion to details and his compulsion to do paperwork, which bordered on the obsessive. All paperwork was perfectly executed and turned in on time. Sims Wilkinson, Terrell County judge and treasurer for the Terrell County Ranchmen’s Protective Association, said Barler would refuse his paycheck until all paperwork was filed. Wilkinson said Barler was afraid his children might have to return money

continued on page 27

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

Story and photographs by Jim Glendinning

MARCI ROBERTS

Marci Roberts was born at Fitzsimmons Army Hospital in Aurora, CO in 1960, the older of two daughters to Robert Johnson, then serving in the army, and his wife Ruby. After her father died in a road accident in 1962 her mother moved to Dallas, working hard to bring up two daughters. She subsequently married Larry Roberts, a salesman, and the family moved frequently.

High school was Chapel Hill High School in Tyler, TX. A shy girl, Roberts excelled at school, gaining straight A's. She graduated in 1978 and moved on to North Texas State University, now the University of North Texas. Working several jobs to pay for tuition, she again excelled, graduating cum laude in 1984 with a BA in Fine Arts.

The Texas economy was in bad shape in the mid-'80s, so Roberts found work over the next five years in commercial design in Santa Fe, Connecticut and New York City. In 1993, she moved to Austin where, curious about new computer-generated design models, she laboriously taught herself from manuals how to use them, and worked for several architectural firms there.

She started to work for herself. However, the years 2000-2003 were physically and mentally challenging. She prospered on her own but also worked with a local firm for the sake of the camaraderie of team work, which she needed.

Roberts met James Evans in 2003 in Austin at a book signing for his book *Big Bend Pictures*. They hit it off and took to visiting over the next few years. It was in 2004, while sleeping on top of Evans' truck in Big Bend



MARCI ROBERTS
Marathon

National Park under endless stars, that she felt she "was finally home." The next year she moved to Marathon.

Always driven by curiosity, Roberts launched into local projects. She re-designed the Evans Gallery, and embarked on an entrepreneurial project by buying the French Company Grocer in Marathon, population 430. The store prospered, but not before she learned a difficult lesson about people management.

In 2011, the organization and promotion of the Marathon 2 Marathon, for which she had been a volunteer, landed in her lap. She switched the route and recruited 100 volunteers. The number of runners grew to 502 in 2015 from less than 100. "It's a kick," she said.



ELLEN LARGENT BAIZE
Fort Davis

The Marathon Independent School District was suffering from low morale, poor image and budget problems around 2010. Roberts started a newsletter shining a light on the achievements of the school. This garnered financial support from local ranchers, resulting in the Marathon Foundation that provides grants to MISD and other local non-profits, granting \$250,000 since it started.

Roberts married Evans in Terlingua on April 22, 2016, 10 years to the day since he first proposed. They are presently building a new home in Marathon, designed by Roberts.

In 2017 she was appointed by the Governor to the Texas Commission on the Arts, the only commissioner from the tri-county region ever so



PILAR PEDERSEN
Presidio

appointed. New challenges now confront this able and forthright woman.

ELLEN LARGENT BAIZE

Located just west of Bloys Encampment near Fort Davis is a beautiful, capacious stone-built house surrounded by grazing pasture. Inside are the paintings of celebrated cowboy artist Wayne Baize. Outside in a pasture is a flock of rare Shetland sheep, guarded by white Great Pyrenees sheepdogs. This is the domain of innovative sheep breeder Ellen Baize, Wayne's wife.

Ellen Largent was born in Merkel, TX near Abilene in 1950 to Jane and Rust Largent, a rancher. She preceded a sister, Linda, and a brother, Roy. Schooling was initially in Alpine, followed by high school in Fort Davis, "a

happy time," she recalls. She liked science and math and graduated in 1969 in a class of 15.

Looking for a small Christian college, she started at N.W. Nazarene College in Nampa, ID. Coming from Texas and with a ranching background, she was a popular figure. She moved on to Bob Jones University in SC, a bigger institution, where she was a nobody. "The best thing that ever happened to me," she says. She graduated in 1973 with a BSc in Home Economics.

From 1973-1982 Largent taught at private Christian schools, including a school in Fort Davis that she started with 15 students. In 1976 she met Wayne Baize, a popular artist, who was visiting her father's Point of Rocks Ranch to buy land. They married in 1982. Three of their four children Elizabeth, William and Jonathan work on the land, and the youngest, Charles, is a flight mechanic.

Rust Largent successfully raised miniature Hereford cattle and in 1991 he bought 10 Shetland sheep. These are small, sturdy sheep with patterns of wool colors, originating in the Shetland Islands off Scotland. The breed is thought to be around 1,400 years old. This flock was the first in Texas.

During the 90s Baize devoted herself and her four children, who were being homeschooled, to learning the Shetland sheep business. She was a knitter and learned spinning and weaving. All the children learned

carding (brushing the wool with a paddle to straighten it) and dyeing with native plants. Shetland wool is not traditionally sheared but plucked by hand, called rooing.

In 2008, following a bad local fire in that year, Baize purchased three Shetland ewes and a ram to keep down the undergrowth on the Baize land. The sheep were happy, the flock grew. This flock of 34 sheep is the 12th Shetland flock in North America. As it grew, she sent the wool to a mill in New Mexico. The resultant yarn and knitting kits she sells in Fort Davis at Fort Davis Outfitters and the Hitching Post in Midland, TX. Demand now exceeds supply for Shetland wool.

Ellen Largent Baize accidentally got into Shetland sheep raising. She never imagined she would become a successful breeder. But she researched, consulted and learned, just at a time when Shetland wool was becoming popular. Her two goals are to inform others about this ancient sheep species and to teach knitters about Shetland yarns. Many would bet she will succeed.

PILAR PEDERSEN

Olympia, WA was not a place Pilar Pedersen wanted to live in for long. She was born there in 1953, the eldest of three children of Carole and William Pedersen, a first generation American who worked in management consultancy. In third grade, Pedersen was already writing poetry about escaping urban life.

High school in Palo Alto, CA was worse, although she enjoyed 4H and learned Spanish, graduating in 1971. This was a time of political unrest and Pedersen wanted to participate and achieve something. She joined the United Farm Workers Union and worked in various positions for two years, including three months in the office of César Chavez, whom she remembers as a kind, gentle man.

From 1973, eager to taste life, she "bounced around" in various jobs in different places, including one year spent in Guatemala learning weaving. Three years later, urged by her parents, she enrolled in the Museum School of Fine Arts in Boston. She loved art school but, still rebellious, quit after four years without graduating.

In 1979 at a party in Boston she met Jon Lutz, a radar engineer. When Jon said "Let's go and see the world," she agreed. They moved to Boulder, CO in 1980 and married the following year.

Life in Boulder, however, was not the yearned-for outdoors life. She grew vegetables, baked bread and salvaged furniture. Two boys, Isaac and Travis, were born in 1984 and 1988, further tying her to an urban lifestyle as a stay-home mom.

In 1990 the family visited Big Bend. "This could be my place," thought Pedersen. On that visit she met M.R. Gonzales of Fort Stockton, with whom she would later partner in the Chaa Ranch near Presidio, TX.

Divorcing Jon in 1997, she

remained in Boulder until Travis graduated from high school in 2007, commuting between Boulder and the ranch. Her new life started that year when she finally moved to Texas. It is anchored by a strong sense of place and a passion for the boundless, raw landscape of the borderlands south of Chinati Mountains, where the Chaa Ranch is situated.

Along with a new, inspiring location, came rediscovered bonding with horses. She had ridden all her life, but now she had a herd.

Two events changed Pedersen's recent life. A visit to a ranch in Arizona opened her eyes to the need for water conservation. She is fully committed to restoring water systems to her desert property.

Across the border in Chihuahua she learned the needs of the indigenous Tarahumara in the sierra. An expert fundraiser, she first raised funds for food for the Tarahumara during the drought of 2011. She insisted on personally distributing all the food she purchased. Next, with volunteers from the Big Bend region, she started repairs on a run-down rural Tarahumara school in Bacabureachi, Chihuahua, which she continues to work on. In addition, she rode the historic Silver Trail 8 times, a 240-mile horseback ride across the mountains.

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Cenizo

Third Quarter 2017

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continued from page 4

Jeff Davis County is a far-flung part of Texas, nearly twice the size of Rhode Island, with a 2,265 square-mile landmass; it touches the Rio Grande on the county's western trapezoid tip. The county's population of 2,342 inhabitants has grown little over the years. In the 19th and 20th centuries, some brave souls came for cattle ranching in its spectacular highland plateau. Later and still today, the dark night sky and astronomy brings scientists and star gazers from around the world. But many of us call it 'home' because of its undisturbed nature and majestic scenery.

Once famous for stagecoach trails, Apaches and Buffalo Soldiers, Fort Davis, the county seat, is now proclaimed the "Hummingbird Capital of Texas" and is the gateway to the Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve, and the University of Texas McDonald Observatory. The unincorporated town sits at an elevation of 5,050 feet and also claims to be the "Coolest

Town in Texas." The region features one of the darkest night skies in the U.S., making it perfect for the observatory complex, built in 1932 at elevation 6,800 feet. Close to town, Fort Davis National Historic Site joins McDonald Observatory, Davis Mountains State Park and the Nature Conservancy's Davis Mountains Preserve as the county's tourism jewels. The preserve's Mt. Livermore is a popular feature as the county's highest point, at 8,432 feet elevation. Adjacent to and west of Fort Davis National Historic Site, the Davis Mountain State Park claims rights to nature with campgrounds, scenic drives, impressive bird viewing structures and the Indian Lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934. The old Fort Davis, built in 1857, is considered one of the finest standing forts in the U.S.

Lately, with the Nature Conservancy's conservation of sky island habitat, residents, scientists and visitors now have access to scenic natural areas and high mountain forests where quaking aspen, madrone, oaks, pinyon pine and juniper species grow beside impressive stands of ponderosa pine and Southwestern white pine at

SKY ISLAND HUMMINGBIRD STUDY RESULTS

SPECIES	PROJECT TOTALS
Magnificent	210
Blue-throated	5
Lucifer	794
Ruby-throated	603
Black-chinned	7,199
Anna's	469
Costa's	5
Broad-tailed	3,705
Rufous	4,426
Allen's	138
Calliope	544
Broad-billed	12
Buff-bellied	1
Violet-crowned	1
White-eared	18
Hybrid species	31 hybrid individuals of 11 different combinations

TOTALS	18,146
---------------	---------------

Project totals reflect banded birds only.

The first on record in the U. S., an Amethyst-throated hummingbird was sighted October, 2016 perching on the Cornell Lab's live cam (<https://youtu.be/JAAXKsKKPk>). This species normally occurs only in the mountains of eastern Mexico. With this bird well documented, Texas now boasts 19 species of hummingbirds, one more than Arizona-its only U.S. rival for hummingbird diversity. More information at: (<http://westtexashummingbirds.com/>) and http://cams.allaboutbirds.org/channel/50/West_Texas_Hummingbirds/)

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the highest elevations. The lower elevation's grasslands set a spectacular backdrop for the highland's ecology and beauty. The Nature Conservancy is responsible for maintaining much of the sky island habitat through conservation easements with private landowners and on its 33, 075-acre Davis Mountains preserve, where the unique mountain avifauna has now been thoroughly documented.

The Preserve's higher elevations support birds more commonly associated with western mountain ranges,

such as the common black-hawk, golden eagle, and Montezuma quail. Various birds of prey and 13 species of hummingbirds are found there. At elevations above 5,500 feet, the range covers over 800 square miles and supports an impressive population of 108 known and suspected breeding bird species. Access to the region's biodiversity has only recently allowed scientific study.

In 2008 Kelly Bryan, a biologist now retired from Texas Parks and Wildlife, launched a scientific banding

study focused on the region's hummingbird diversity. His goal: to document the status and distribution of all species in the region, to band and catalog the birds' conditions, and to determine if they are breeding in the area. Sponsored and supported by West Texas Avian Research Inc., the banding study has revealed when and where most birds occur in the area. Many of the banded birds are recaptured or encountered elsewhere. As an example, one female Rufous Hummingbird banded in the fall of 2012 was recaptured in the summer of 2013 and again in 2014 in Alaska! Bryan banded 15 species in the Trans-Pecos region, 13 of which occur as seasonal residents during migration in the Jeff Davis County sky island (see results in sidebar).

With Bryan's study results confirmed, the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce realized they had another tourism "golden-egg" and thus launched an event touting the region's hummingbird diversity, known as the Davis Mountains Hummingbird Celebration.

Now, each year in mid to late August, the Celebration takes place next door to the town's hundred-year-old courthouse. This year the Celebration has been expanded, adding more programming which includes field trips to Davis Mountains Preserve, McDonald Observatory, Christmas Mountains, two private ranches, and other unique habitats. Additionally, participants are treated to well-known guest speakers who bring to life their experience with birds. Guests also enjoy workshops, garden tours, banding demonstrations and an outdoor banquet.

Mark your calendars to attend this exciting program—experience the fascinating geology, flora and hummingbirds of the Davis Mountains Sky Island complex at the next Davis Mountains Hummingbird Celebration scheduled for August 24th through August 27th, 2017. For registration details contact the Jeff Davis County Chamber of Commerce at Email: info@fordavis.com or PH: 800-524-3015 or 432-426-3015

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after his death for any work that was paid for but left undone.

Barler was eccentric in his personal habits as well. At 5' 8" with light brown hair, fair complexion and blue eyes, he was obsessive about his appearance. He always dressed in his "duck-ins," overalls made of heavy linen fabric resistant to thorns and snaggy cat claw, as well as his hat and boots. An extremely quiet man, he was hard to "read," which made him very dangerous in a confrontation. No one knew what was going through his mind. He hardly spoke and he never made comments about other men.

Barler was also compulsive about his driving habits. He never raced or went anywhere in a hurry, nor would he ride with men who liked to speed. Barler was well-suited to the life of law enforcement, and his powers of observation were legendary. He never liked to sit with his back to a crowd or the door. One would always find him at the back of the room, facing the crowd and probably making keen observa-



Studio portrait of William Lee "Cap" Barler

tions and judgments about the people in front of him.

For all his eccentricities and anthropomorphisms, Cap Barler was a kind-hearted man. In Margaret Farley's chapter on Cap Barler in the Terrell County history book, she related that during the war years Cap Barler was the unmarried lady schoolteacher's best friend. He was always ready to chaperone them on trips and was always a gentleman. Often he would invite the young ladies to go with him on a job out to area ranches, and would prepare an evening meal from his chuck box over a campfire to give them a taste of the cowboy way of life.

One of Cap's crowning achievements was to be featured on the cover of *Life Magazine* for April 10, 1939. He was always proud of that moment and talked about it often.

On November 16, 1951, Cap Barler passed from this world to the next. No doubt Chico, his mule, was waiting for him on the other side of the river, and even now they are tracking rustlers in the splendid wilderness of the Great Beyond.

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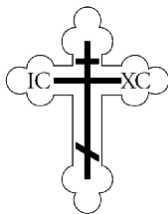
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TRANS PECOS TRIVIA

by Carolyn Brown Zniwski

Big Bend and West Texas history goes back millenia, from dinosaurs to solar energy. Here are a few highlights to pique your curiosity.

- 1) The McDonald Observatory on top of Mount Locke in the Davis Mountains has expanded our knowledge of the Universe since it was built in
 - a) 1903
 - b) 1967
 - c) 1932
 - d) 1951
- 2) One animal seen regularly here in Big Bend has been around for about three million years. It is a Peccary, also known as the
 - a) Armadillo
 - b) Javelina
 - c) Long Horn
 - d) Antelope
- 3) The people who have lived in West Texas longer than any other group are peace-loving farmers in the Rio Grande valley near El Paso. They are
 - a) Tigua Puebloans
 - b) Mennonites
 - c) Franciscan Order of Fathers
 - d) Seminoles
- 4) Judge Roy Bean was born in Kentucky in 1825, landing in Texas during the Civil War. He was a wild man and in later years held court in Langtry for 21 years, from 1882 until his death from alcohol consumption in 1903. Where is he buried?
 - a) In Langtry
 - b) On boot hill in San Antonio
 - c) In Del Rio
 - d) In Kentucky
- 5) The Rio Grande was so named in 1598 by Juan deOnate. It is the border with Mexico. If we build a wall along the river border how long will it have to be?
 - a) 872 miles
 - b) 623 miles
 - c) 1056 miles
 - d) 1248 miles

Bonus Question: West Texas is cattle country. Long before there were fences, cattle ranchers used branding to identify their cattle. Ranchers have registered over 200,000 brands with the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Assoc. When was the association founded?

- a) 1893
- b) 1877
- c) 1921
- d) 1868

Answers: 1-c 2-b 3-a 4-c 5-d and Bonus-b

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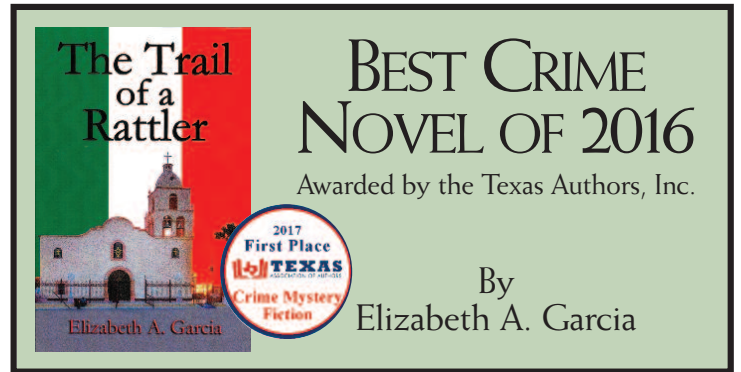
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Heritage Dinner and Charlie Russell Heads West September 15-16, 2017



The Forked Trail, 1903, oil on board, mounted on particle board, 7 1/2 x 11 inches. Bequeathed by Clara S. Peck, The Rockwell Museum, Corning, NY. 83.46.12 F.

4th Annual Heritage Dinner honoring Jane and Al Micallef,
September 15th • Ritchey Brothers Building, Marathon
Charlie Russell Heads West exhibit of The Cowboy Artist of America
September 16 through December 17, 2017

For more information, please contact:



Museum of the Big Bend
432.837.8143
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www.museumofthebigbend.com



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