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# THE PAN AMERICAN

The Student Newspaper of The University of Texas-Pan American

December 1, 2005



■ "We were so excited to have brought the South Texas Indian Dancers to Pan Am to offer a unique experience for students."

- Lisa Tovar, UPB Heritage Committee chair

Karla P. Niedzwiedz/The Pan American

## UTPA retention, graduation rates rising

By LUKE KOONG  
The Pan American

On Dec. 17, UTPA will be taking a closer look at the amount of graduates receiving diplomas.

Over the years, low graduation rates have become a major problem, not only for University of Texas-Pan American, but other UT system schools. Currently, the university's four-year mark is 10.4 percent while the six-year one is 26.7 percent.

According to Dr. Ana Maria Rodriguez, vice president for undergraduate studies, UTPA and other universities in the system are trying to fix that.

"We are very much the same with those institutions that are like us. The graduation rate at University of Texas-San Antonio is about 24 percent. For University of Texas-El Paso it's about 26 percent. We're all struggling," Rodriguez said. "For any institution with first-time, full-time, first-generation Hispanic students, we have very similar issues. All of us are trying

See **GRADUATION** page 11

## Less is more, or is it? *Workload adjustment passes*

By EMMA CLARK  
The Pan American

As the workload reduction appears to have been delivered as promised, The University of Texas-Pan American has moved one step closer to its peers in the UT system. Faculty will receive more time away from the classroom and be able to then produce more original research as part of the University's ongoing quest to become a more viable doctoral-type university.

After years of deliberation, the question remains, will UTPA's students suffer as a result?

The UT System Board of Regents approved adjustment of official required teaching hours at UTPA from a 4-4 two-semester load, to a 3-3 schedule, effective in the spring.

This translates into one less hour spent in the classroom for faculty and proponents of the plan are excited and ready for the growth spurt the University will experience.

"It will add to the prestige of the University and, in turn, to the value placed on a student's degree from here; it will help the University faculty in terms of giving faculty time to seek external funding sources for research..." explained communication professor Dora Saavedra, a member of the University Task Force on Workload and Standards Committee, the group that helped birth the process and result.

Saavedra remains adamant that faculty will not have less work to do.

"Faculty will be teaching one class less in order to use the time to meet the new research expectations of the University," she explained.

As the UTPA enrollment climbed to over 17,000 this year, institutional goals have become more dynamic, aided by a new president in Blandina Cardenas.

"It's recognition that we are trying to move very seriously toward being a

research-based institution," said Wendy James Aldridge, chair of the task force and professor in the anthropology and psychology department.

UTPA's long-term institutional goal, first introduced by Cardenas, is to transition UTPA into a research university, which may bring more money to the University in the long-run, as well as attracting some of the area's finest students. As outlined in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (the HOP) in addition to teaching classes faculty must comply with university service requirements by taking part in campus activities and organizations.

They must also devote time to publishing academic research, which falls under the heading of professional achievement. Cardenas described this as a three-legged chair; the university needs service, professional achievement and

See **WORKLOAD** page 11



Joey Cortez/The Pan American

## Fight the Power!

There is a demonstration planned for today during the activity period in the Quad at which various citizens will voice their disapproval of the administration's policy in Iraq. Above, a graffiti artist voiced a counter opinion on a poster this week.

### Since the implementation of UNIV 1301...

- Retention rates have increased 2 percent since it was started.
- Entering freshmen: retention rates have increased 14 percent from 52 percent since 2000.
- For first-time full-time students, the increase was 1.6 percent from 66.4 percent in 2000.
- 80 percent of students who have taken the class, 75.8 percent of them have remained for their sophomore year.

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

## THE PAN AMERICAN

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**The PAN AMERICAN** is the official student newspaper of The University of Texas-Pan American. Views presented are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the university.

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By **DAVID RODRIGUEZ**  
*The Pan American*



A week ago I was struck with righteous indignation. I was standing by the side of the road at the end of my driveway struggling to fit one more fetid, white, drawstring trash bag into the Dumpster when I decided that enough was enough. I was sick and tired of this country's over-consumption. So many countries have so little and we throw away so much. I felt nauseous, and it wasn't because of the tuna-water on my shoe or the coffee grounds on my wrist. I steeled myself to address this issue in my own life. No longer would I be part of the problem. I was going to take action.

I marched inside and washed my hands. Then, as the cat licked my shoe, I declared before God, my family, and my brother's weirdo friend, Ricardo that I was going freegan. I told them that I wasn't going to contribute to the gluttony of this nation any more. I let them know that no longer would I stand idly by while the profit-centered economic system of this country laid waste to the beautiful land we had stolen from the Indians when we landed on Plymouth rock, no doubt scratching it in the process. I tried to make them understand the atrocities we were doing by our naked appetites and convince them to join me. I also told them I wasn't taking out the trash anymore.

Did they care? No. My mother laughed and told me to put a new bag in the trash can. Easy for her to say. She works for a greedy corporation that rapes the earth all fiscal year long. They

exploit the land and force it to do their agricultural dirty-work for them. What's more, this corporation has the audacity, the utter gall, to pay people to force Mother Earth into submission; people who then take the blood-money and buy food with it. Food they might not eat all of! But I wasn't deterred.

I spent the next five minutes at freegan.info doing exhaustive research on the tenets of Freeganism. For you bloated uninitiated, Freeganism is a combo

of the words "free" and "vegan." If vegan is hip, freegan is Andy Warhol. Freegans don't participate in or propagate the normal economy. Freeganism seeks minimal use of resources, social unity, and sharing. The principal method to achieving these goals is waste reclamation and urban foraging. That's right. I was going to Dumpster dive. And I wasn't going to be alone.

In an article in the Times Online, Janet Kalish, a New York high school teacher, described her own forays into foraging.

"It's fun. It's a thrill. It's more fun and more satisfying than just going to the store and saying, 'I wanted some bread and I got it.' It's the surprise - and the prize," said Kalish.

After reading this and other completely un-stupid accounts of the joys and personal satisfaction of urban foraging, and hearing my stomach start to growl, I was ready to go.

I thought long and hard about where I would start. I decided that a true freegan would not waste gas by driving all over town. So I walked back to the street in front of my house. After poking around a bit, I found some perfectly good Chinese food; but that was what I had for lunch and I just wasn't in the mood for leftovers. It occurred to me I would have to look elsewhere to do my waste reclamation.

I drove to the nearest El Pato and swung

around to the back alley where there were three Dumpsters lined in a row. This is going to be a veritable buffet, I thought. I hoisted the lid of the first can and, sure enough, there were the remnants of what looked to be a beef and cheese pato. My favorite. But before I could grab it, a grubby rough hand came out of nowhere and snatched it.

"Hey," I shouted without looking up. "I was reclaiming that!"

I turned and there before me was the epitome of freeganism. A bum. He didn't pay much attention to me at first. He just wolfed down the pato. I walked up to him and told him he was my idol. I explained my newfound disgust for the waste this country produced and how I hoped that I could, in some small way, do as much for this country as he did. I told him I too was sick of the results of consumer gluttony; things like sweatshop labor, rainforest destruction, global warming, strip mining, oil drilling and the oppression of farm animals.

"Huh," he said.

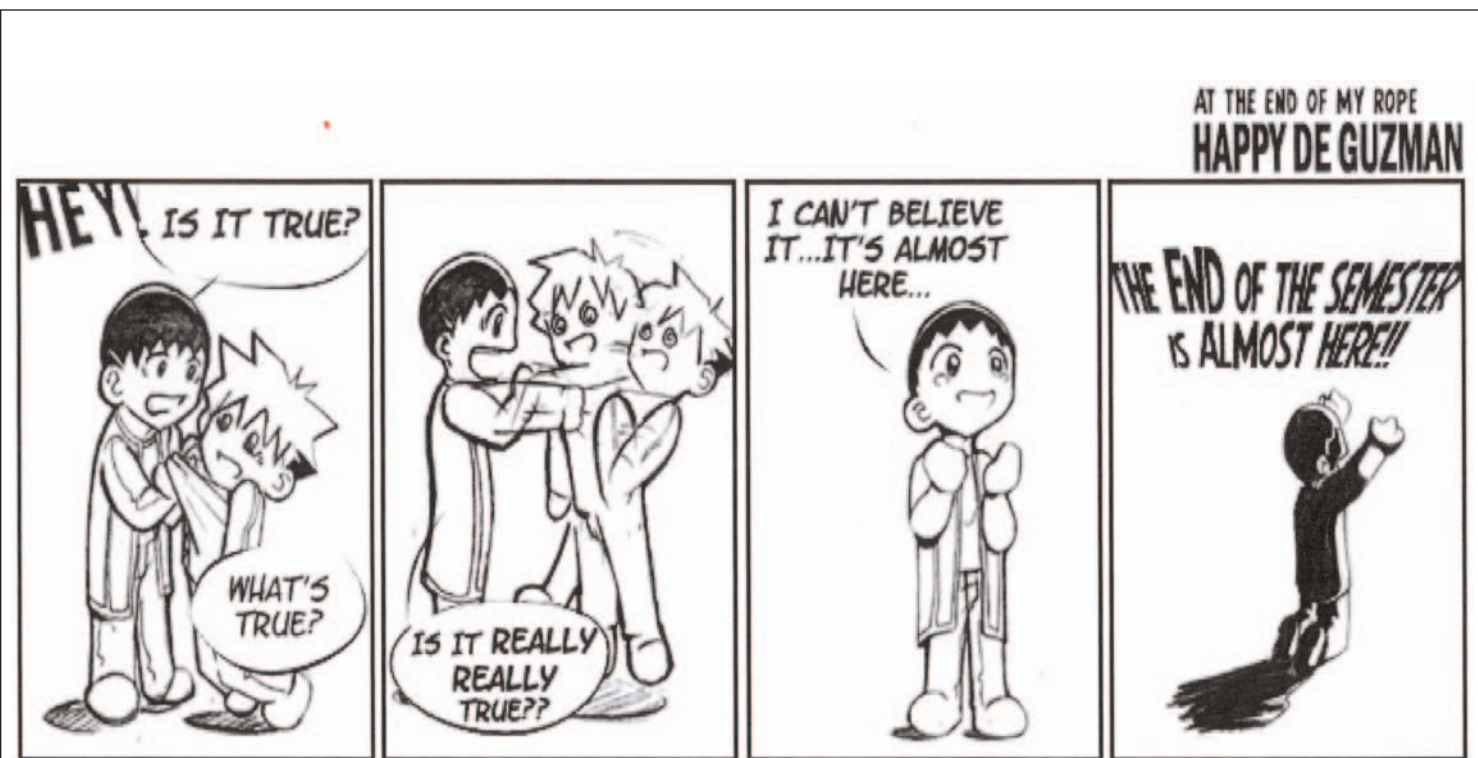
"I'm freegan just like you," I said.

"You're out here for that stuff?" he asked. "You know why I'm out here? I'm out here because I'm freegan-hungry. You're out here to save the rainforest and farm animals? What about me? You'd rather take food outta my mouth than run the risk of throwing something away? Unreal

Nice Taurus you ungrateful punk. By the way, you smell like tuna."

I was crushed. The bum was right. I did smell like tuna. But he was right about the other stuff too. Here I was doing all this macrocosm worrying about waste. But here was someone who truly needed the trash. If anything, I reasoned, I should be throwing more away.

I promptly went home and took out the trash.



# NEWS



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## Women's perspective arrives in spring



Graphics by Erika Lopez

By **BONNIE BUSTOS**  
*The Pan American*

The Women's Studies Developmental Planning Committee will wave the victory flag this spring, as three years of hard work come to an end.

The committee has been working to jump-start the University of Texas-Pan American's women's studies program and its work will finally be coming together in 2006.

The task hasn't been easy. The committee had to research the history of women's studies, also referred to as

gender studies, do a comparative analysis of programs offered at universities nationwide, and plan an interdisciplinary curriculum for interested students at UTPA.

"The fact that our minor is interdisciplinary is one of its strongest points," said Jennifer R. Mata, coordinator for the new women's studies minor. "It draws knowledge from different methodologies."

As with other minors, there is an 18-hour requirement. Nine hours of course work have already been selected for students, with classes such as the introductory course, a theory of women's

studies, method and practices, and a capstone seminar in women's studies.

Students can choose the remaining nine advanced hours from a course list that is "cross-linked," which means students can choose women's studies courses related to criminal justice, English, history, philosophy, modern languages, music, nursing, political science, psychology, anthropology, or sociology.

Many students on campus are eager to participate in the new classes.

"I'm very excited. It's a very different and broad curriculum. It's such a huge step forward for our university," said Paulita Zuniga, a senior English

major.

Nedezhda Garza, a junior English major, says that what interests her most about the new minor is the opportunity to be exposed to education from a different perspective.

"I would have to agree, because most classes are male-perspective-based, and it's nice to analyze things from the woman's side of things," said Garza.

According to Mata, the classes are geared toward students of both genders.

"This is a definitely a course group for men and women. This isn't about

See **WOMEN** page 12

## CDC gets 'thumbs up' from Bronc parents

By **HILDA LORIA**  
*The Pan American*

"100 percent satisfied," seems to be the general sentiment of students, such as junior criminal justice major Iris Doria, who have taken full advantage of the Child Development Center (CDC) at the University of Texas-Pan American.

The CDC, which has become a second home to just over 100 children of UTPA students, faculty, and staff, passed two unannounced state inspections with no problems after its first semester of existence.

"We follow national standards," CDC Director Elda Perez said. "With a

higher institution and higher education, we're expected to serve high-quality child care."

Despite initial problems getting the facility set up by the Aug. 1 deadline, and a slow enrollment process that started with just eight children early in the semester, the CDC has met overall success.

Instituted as a response to a Student Government Association initiative to provide child-care services at the university, the center has received praise not just for compliance on the state level but perhaps more importantly from its main beneficiaries: the parents who double as university students, faculty, or staff.

"This is a great idea," Doria said. "I feel really comfortable with my son being here close to my work and school. It's comforting for parents to know that their children are close to them."

Perez explained that the purpose of the center was not only to accommodate the need for child care services, but to provide a rich learning environment for children to help them develop the tools they'll need to succeed later in life.

"We set up a learning environment with opportunities for socialization, problem-solving skills, and communication skills," Perez said. "When we give the children opportunities to express themselves and we boost their self-esteem, that goes a long way."



Joey Cortez/*The Pan American*

**CHILD'S PLAY** - Marlene Hernandez, junior social work major, watches over two children left in the care of the Child Development Center at UTPA.

See **CHILD DEVELOPMENT** page 12

## UTPA staffer international contest winner

By **ANA LEY**  
*The Pan American*

For Ernesto Santos, winning the creative digital category of Nature's Best Photography magazine's 7th annual international competition was no fluke. It's taken years of hard work.

For the past three years, the University of Texas-Pan American employee has been submitting photographs to contest without receiving so much as an honorable mention. But in 2005, one of the 19 photographs he submitted gave him worldwide recognition as he won one of the most prestigious photography awards in the world.

"As the judge of the competition, I was struck by the beauty of the image," said Bob Tope, chief editor of Nature's Best Photography. "It is clearly a striking image in that regard."

Tope gives Santos credit for his outstanding technical merits, such as exposure, focus sharpness, and composition, which he says are all critical elements in photography.

"It really comes down to aesthetics, artistry, and technical proficiency, along with a sense of freshness - never-before-seen creations," he said.

The panorama titled "Rio Grande Sunset," was created when the artist took a sequence of shots at Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park and digitally stitched the images with Adobe Photoshop.

"Digitally speaking, the picture wasn't as complicated as the other applicants," Santos commented. "But the dramatic setting of the sunset was really something else."

See **PHOTO** page 12

## Semester honors projects not at all humdrum

By **ANA LEY**  
*The Pan American*

Most people can probably agree that, for college professors, grading class assignments can get pretty tedious after a while.

"With most things you assign, you bump into the same mistakes year after year," said Kenneth Buckman, a philosophy professor at the University of Texas-Pan American. "Of course, it's the first time the student sees it, but for us, it's something we've done over and over."

However, when he assigns his creative project assignments to his honors class every semester, this is definitely not the case.

"When I assign these projects, it's really something I love to evaluate; instead of just checking off mistakes, I actually get to see what my students can do," he explained.

Buckman, who teaches honors classes generally consisting of no more than 25 students, believes that what makes this project as fun as it is for him is the fact that it is based on creativity, and "the students can become deeply involved in some casual interest they've had and find out that even if they aren't art majors, they still do have a creative side."

Rather than just talking about existing art, he urges students to actually imitate the artistic tactics that they're reading and learning about, without actually duplicating previously done work.

"The Mona Lisa was done once—I'm not expecting them to do it again. What I want is for students to learn how pieces were made so that they can create their own," said Buckman. "They generally do a pretty good job about that."

See **HONORS** page 12



Joel de la Rosa/*The Pan American*

**BUILDING BLOCKS** - From left, Randa V. Soto, junior electrical engineering major, Freddy Lerma, junior biology major, and Ricardo Chica, sophomore biology major, discuss Lerma's honors project, a model of Solomon's Temple.

# Two savvy politicians compete for judgeship

By **CELINA A. GILPATRICK**  
*The Pan American*

March 2006 will see the position of Hidalgo County Judge up for grabs and it is up to the local community, including students at the University of Texas-Pan American, to choose the right person for the job.

Two politically savvy minds are vying for the position: Ramon Garcia, the county's current judge, and former County Clerk JD Salinas are busily campaigning and working for every vote as they aspire to make their mark on Hidalgo County.

Terence M. Garrett, professor of public administration at UTPA and teacher of local and state government on campus, understands the magnitude of this position.

"The county judge position is important for county government leadership," said Garret.

Leadership being a priority, the county judge is also responsible for presiding over a five-member commissioner court, as well as overseeing the budgetary and administrative aspects of county government operations.

Garcia and Salinas share the goal of serving their communities to the best of their abilities, but each has a different strategy for accomplishing that.

Salinas says that, if elected, he will devote himself full-time to his duties in order to better serve the community.

"Now it's time to move the county judge's office and the county as a whole to another level and that's going to take someone full time to do that," said Salinas.

Garcia, on the other hand, is not only the Hidalgo County Judge, but he also works as a trial attorney in Edinburg. According to Garcia, his law office does not conflict with his work for the county and but rather has helped him serve better.

"This law firm is my office and it doesn't matter whether I am here or at the county office," said Garcia. "I am still going to be talking to the same people, and I have more state-of-the-art equipment here and no matter where I am, everyone is able to communicate with me."

As per Garcia's ability to handle the job, he simply said, "look at my record," asking those in doubt to look at the improvements that have been made.

One area where Hidalgo County residents can track the progress made under Garcia's leadership is in the county's budget.

"When I ran for office, this county was in a bad financial state and today I am proud to say that the county is in the best financial condition in its 153-year history," said Garcia. "Since I've been in office there have been no new taxes in any of our budget cycles and we are no longer running out of money for our community, specifically for indigent health care."

Although Salinas is new to the possible position of county judge, he feels that his experience in other aspects of county government make him a

great candidate for the job.

"I have more experience with the county judge's office than Garcia does, as I worked for six years as a county administrator and have served as county clerk for seven years," said Salinas. "He's only been in office for three years, so my experience is almost twice as much in county government."

While the candidates may differ in some of their opinions, both hope to tackle the issue of improving the Valley's roads and highways when in office.

"We need to widen, improve and build more roads," said Garcia. "We are no longer a rural area. We are a developing area with problems of a big city and big city traffic."



**SALINAS**



**GARCIA**

Candidates Garcia and Salinas say they each understand the need to add a loop much like San Antonio's Loop 410.

"We need to have a loop at the state's expense, not the county's," said Salinas. "The state needs to pay for the loop in Hidalgo County much like they paid for San Antonio's so that we can catch up with other areas."

One of the major issues Garcia feels he needs to be involved in is the county's growing drainage problem.

"Our county's drainage system is totally inadequate," said Garcia. "Our engineers tell us we need to widen and improve our current drainage canals and make new bigger canals which will cost our county approximately three million dollars."

If reelected, Garcia hopes to avoid possible tragedies by working on the current drainage problem.

"We have to be ready. We are not ready, and we are very lucky that no major hurricanes have hit us, but I'm not sure how much longer we can rely on lady luck," said Garcia. "We need to avoid any disastrous situation like what happened in Louisiana this year."

Another area where both candidates agree is in the need to increase the number of students who vote and are politically active.

"It's unfortunate, it really is, that university students don't vote," said Garcia. "This is their county and what we are doing today is going to affect them very directly in their future. They need to be involved."

Garcia and Salinas both hope to see the university and its students flourish.

"I think the university is one of the biggest gems that we have in the area and we need to help it grow faster and have better services," said Salinas.

The candidates agree that voting and involvement help the community to advocate change and movement. Despite perceptions, every individual counts.



Joel de la Rosa/*The Pan American*  
**COWBOY** - Kinky Friedman, an entertainer, gubernatorial candidate and self-proclaimed 'Jewish cowboy' spoke at the Student Union Theater Wednesday evening.

## Getting Kinky on campus *Why the hell not?*

By **MEREDITH LAGRONE**  
*The Pan American*

Kinky Friedman has just about done it all. He's been a writer, a singer and a caregiver to abandoned animals. Now he's aiming for politics.

Following suit of other celebrity governors, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger in California and Jesse Ventura in Minnesota, the Jewish cowboy is stepping out of the entertainment spotlight and running for governor of Texas.

From his song titles, such as "Get your Biscuits in the Oven and Your Buns in the Bed," and "They Ain't Makin' Jews Like Jesus Anymore," anyone can see he's far from ordinary.

Consider the campaign slogans: "Why the hell not?" and "My Governor is a Jewish Cowboy."

One of his main goals is the "dewussification" of Texas.

On gay marriage: "They have every right to be just as miserable as the rest of us."

He's clever, but is that all it takes to win the election?

According to Ventura, Friedman's doing everything right.

"Independent-minded Texans should be thrilled with the latest Zogby poll results..." he wrote on [kinkyfriedman.com](http://kinkyfriedman.com).

The results showed Friedman at 21 percent against Rick Perry's 41 percent.

Friedman has several concerns. The hallmark of his administration, as he calls it, is the integration of biodiesel into Texas.

"Willie Nelson's bus runs on biodiesel," he said. "Smells like french fries and it's biodegradable."

As governor he would have the power to put every school bus and the state fleet on biodiesel, he said.

Illegal immigration is another issue on which Friedman plans to focus.

"It's both a problem and an asset," he said. "Just to ignore the border and let it bleed is not the answer. The answer is complex. Get rid of the policy we now have— bring us your drugs, your bombs, your gangs, your terrorists... Welcome to Texas."

Friedman said the Mexican government and PEMEX need to pay their fair share.

"We're happy to educate the children," he said, "but we can't do it free."

Public education is also at the top of Friedman's list.

The consensus from the Friedman camp is that the No Child Left Behind Act is ruining Texas's

schools.

Friedman came to the University of Texas-Pan American campus last night to participate in a forum on education titled, "Higher Education in Texas: Who Will Pay for It?"

The panel was held at the UTPA Student Union Theatre at 6:30 p.m.

Before the forum, Friedman sat outside, meeting students, smoking his trademark cigar.

It consisted of Aaron Pena, state representative; Adrian Sandoval, president of the UTPA student government; and Friedman.

The host of the event was Dr. Jose Llanes, of the department of educational leadership at UTPA.

"We asked Rick Perry to come," Llanes said. "He said no. We asked Kinky, and he said ok. I invited him because he was a candidate and represented the private sector."

Llanes opened the forum with an introduction of each participant.

Pena began the forum.

"Who's going pay?" asked Pena. "I guess the answer to the question is we're all going to pay. We have to invest in each other; we are our brothers' keepers."

Sandoval spoke next. He said he was very sympathetic to the plight of the students, but the tuition increase at UTPA was unavoidable.

"The majority of us work a job, or two or three," he said. "We're seeking an education at the same time as we're supporting families. This is disheartening to me because funding will decrease over time, and the cost will increase for students. As a state, we need to recognize the importance of education. If we don't, the students will continue to pay."

Friedman, a University of Texas graduate, was the last to speak.

"I think I am a poor choice to speak for the private sector," he said. "I am the oldest living Jew who doesn't own any real estate in Texas, and I've never had a job."

Friedman plans to "get rid of the old farts" on the boards of regents of universities and fill the seats with young people.

"I see the state being sold out to old politicians," he said.

He closed by saying the biggest issue was that the wrong people were running education.

"We've put all these people who should be FEMA directors in charge," he said. "I don't want to appoint people who are passionate about Republicans or Democrats, but people who are passionate about education."

# Q & A *with* Aaron Pena

By SANDRA GONZALEZ  
*The Pan American*

*Trying to arrange a sit-down meeting with a state representative is not an easy task, especially around the holidays. It's even harder when he's Aaron Pena, state rep., father, lawyer, and activist.*

*In an exclusive interview with The Pan American, Pena addresses a recent spat with Greg Moses, editor of the Internet newspaper Texas Civil Rights Review, the University of Texas-Pan American's role in the past legislative session, and some issues very close to his heart.*

**PAN AMERICAN: Mr. Pena, in commentary made on Oct. 28, Moses had this to say about your recently formed drug task force: "That's how one behaves in front of voters, nurturing commonsense hypocrisies with warm milk. Apparently, it can't be helped. Here at TCRR we say, legalize it all: the drugs and the people, too." What was your reaction to that?**

**PENA:** Four years ago I had a son. That's him right there behind you (he points to a picture that sits atop his desk). He went to a party and was offered a drug. He took it, and he died, he and two other kids. He actually gave somebody a ride and they said 'here take this.' He tried it. He died.

Since that day, May 18, 2001, I've spent a considerable part of my life studying the drug issue. I've worked with people in the anti-drug community. I've immersed myself in drug trafficking and the drug trade. For, essentially, four years, I stopped practicing law so I could learn more about what it is that happened and what was the problem. I quickly learned was that the border is ill-equipped for the drug problem.

**PA: When you said you 'immersed' yourself, what do you mean by that?**

**PENA:** I went and stayed in a couple of drug-

treatment centers. Here. Laredo. Houston. Dallas. All over Texas. And what I found was a system that was ill-equipped to handle the problem. One time I checked myself into a drug treatment center, not because I have a drug problem, in fact I don't drink, smoke, or do drugs, but I wanted to see what it was like for them.

So I checked myself in and pretended to be a patient. The administration knew I was there. And I saw what they went through. Most of them were professionals, at least the ones I dealt with. Teachers. Doctors. Principals. Nurses. These are people who are suffering with a severe addiction. They don't want to be there.

**PA: So, with all your experience, you don't take Moses' statement about legalization lightly.**

**PENA:** This is serious stuff. So when you read stuff like that from a guy who says 'well, why don't we just legalize everything, legalize all drugs, and that will solve the problem.' I got angry, especially about his comment about warm milk and it being a political stunt. If he only knew what I've gone through to get to where I've got to today. If he knew the pain of a father to bury his son at 16 years of age, to see other kids buried before they even turn 18, and to see children so poor that they were buried in cardboard coffins.

Some people sit in their comfortable rooms and make simple statements like 'let's legalize all drugs and it will solve the problem.' It made me angry.

**PA: So will drugs ever be legalized in Texas?**

**PENA:** Although the decriminalization of some minor drugs is an argument that is legitimate, it's not one that is legitimate for the state. I sit on the very committee that decides whether or not we will legalize drugs or not. There's no chance in hell.

For him [Moses] to make that kind of criticism was personally offensive to me, but he has the right to say whatever he wants. It's just not an educated statement.

And on top of that, if the guy wants all drugs legalized, he's talking to one of the persons who's going to, he's not doing himself any favors (laughs). Not smart.

**PA: Well, this task force was formed during the last legislative session, correct?**

**PENA:** Yes.

**PA: What else were you a part of that you were particularly proud of?**

**PENA:** If you remember, the Supreme Court came out with the decision that eminent domain, the taking of your property, was okay if you took the property not for the government but for private business. We passed a law, Senate bill 7 I believe, that made that illegal. Eminent domain can only be used for government purposes.

They can't take away your property and say, 'well we want a 7-11 to go there.' It has to be used for a public purpose.

I want to protect the average citizen so they can protect their land so they can enjoy it as they see fit.

**PA: What happened in the last session, as far as funding for UTPA goes?**

**PENA:** We had a very difficult situation in the last session in that, traditionally, universities have built buildings with something called Tuition Revenue Bonds, bonds that investors can buy up that are guaranteed by the government and they're repaid with tuition.

We had a political decision made by a senator this session not to let Tuition Revenue Bonds be issued. Pan Am was looking for I think \$37.7 million in tuition revenue bonds. That money was not available for us. We were going to do renovations on one of the buildings on campus; that had to be put off.

The challenge is now for us to go back and try our best to get some funding for high-growth universities like Pan Am.

**PA: Lastly, did you happen to see the front**



**PENA**

**page of The Monitor that had the article about birthright citizenship possibly being outlawed?**

**PENA:** Was that the one with the baby wrapped in the American flag?

**PA: Yes. What do you think about that?**

**PENA:** There are people who believe we need to constantly be changing our constitution. Our founders made the system where we could change the laws quite easily. But constitutional amendments should rarely be made. They are the principles that stand the test of time.

The 14th amendment, what we call the equal protection clause, is so fundamental to the philosophy of American government. So, to eliminate it would be to eliminate all the America we know. Every citizen is to be treated like every other citizen.

The equal protection clause says that if you are born in America, you are an American citizen, they're saying you need to earn that right. Unfortunately, they are choosing to change the law at a time when there is a debate over immigration. This country has always argued over its immigration policies. The debate is no different than the debate we had at the turn of the century when the first large waves of immigrants came over.

It's not going to happen. I like the country I live in, and I don't want to see it change because somebody can't be smarter in the way they run our government. We need to deal with it in other manners than undoing the country we know.

## UTPA alum runs for Hidalgo County district attorney

By VICTORIA RODRIGUEZ  
*The Pan American*

The poster boards are up again, adorning every street post, lamp post, and fence in Hidalgo County. It is nearing election time, and candidates running for office are preparing their speeches, and posing for pictures that will show their ready and smiling faces to the county's voting constituents.

Early elections start on Feb. 20 and Election Day is March 7, 2006.

One such candidate is Alma Garza, an independent trial lawyer who is running for the position of district attorney for Hidalgo County. Garza has been practicing law for 16 years, eight with the district attorney's office.

She claims that she's wanted to be a lawyer since the age of eight, when she watched Perry Mason on television and fell in love with the excitement of the courtroom.

"I've worked on both sides of the law," Garza said. "After almost nine years at the DA's office, I worked as a defense attorney to know how the

other side worked, and what to expect when I would be prosecuting their clients."

At an early age, Garza knew that she was going to one day be a lawyer. Similarly, she knew after only one year of working at the DA's office that she wanted to become district attorney. It was just

**■ "One of my priorities is to maintain an open line of communication between myself and the police departments in every city of Hidalgo County."**

- Alma Garza

Candidate, Hidalgo County district attorney

a matter of time.

In her opinion, the time is now.

Garza maintains that the Rio Grande Valley has changed greatly over the years, and the time has come for other changes as well, changes that she says she can help bring about if she is elected DA.

"If elected district attorney, one of my priorities is to maintain an open line of communication between myself and all the police departments in every city of Hidalgo County," said Garza.

"If they have problems in their city we can address and fix the problem, as well as any other issues that arise. I want to make it a better place for all the citizens of Hidalgo County."

Garza hopes that the students of the University of Texas-Pan American vote for her come Election Day, even though many are not involved in the political aspects of the community. She believes that in order to see change, especially any changes that students might want, they have to get out there and vote.

Garza herself is an alumnus of UTPA. She and her husband, Hector Villarreal, who ran for DA in the last election (and garnered 20 percent of the votes), are partners in their practice.

Incumbent District Attorney Rene Guerra, who has held the office since 1981, and Mauro Reyna III are also running for the office.



Melissa Martinez/The Pan American

**KICK-OFF** - Alma Garza, a UTPA alumnus, kicks off her campaign for the position of Hidalgo County district attorney at a celebration at the Holiday Oct. 19.

# Sesión de Preguntas y Respuestas con Aaron Peña

Por SANDRA GONZALEZ  
Traducido Por SYLVIA LORENZEN  
*The Pan American*

*No es tarea fácil el tratar de concertar una junta con un representante estatal, especialmente cerca de los días festivos. Es aún más difícil cuando éste es Aaron Peña, representante estatal, padre de familia, abogado y activista.*

*En una entrevista exclusiva con The Pan American, Peña abordó una reciente controversia con Greg Moses, editor del periódico por Internet Texas Civil Rights Review (TCRR), el papel de la Universidad Panamericana de Texas en la pasada sesión legislativa y algunos temas muy cercanos a su corazón.*

**PAN AMERICAN: Sr. Peña, en comentario hecho el 28 de octubre, Moses declaró lo siguiente sobre su organización para el combate a las drogas formada recientemente: “Es así como actuamos frente a los votantes, con hipocresías, no tiene remedio. En TCRR declaramos, legalícenla: Las drogas y la gente también”. ¿Cuál es su reacción?**

**PEÑA:** Hace cuatro años yo tenía un hijo. Esta justo a sus espaldas (indica una fotografía sobre su escritorio). Mi hijo fue a una fiesta y le ofrecieron drogas. Las tomó y falleció, él y otros dos muchachos. De hecho le dio a alguien un aventón y le dijeron “toma esto”, el la probó y murió.

Desde aquel día, el 18 de mayo del 2001 he pasado una considerable parte de mi vida estudiando la cuestión sobre las drogas. He trabajado con personas en la comunidad anti-drogas. He estado inmerso en el tráfico y comercio de las drogas. Desde hace cuatro años dejé de practicar la abogacía para poder aprender más sobre lo que ocurrió y cuál fue el problema. Rápidamente supe que la frontera no esta preparada para manejar el problema de la drogas.

**PA: Cuando dice que usted estaba ‘inmerso’, ¿a qué se refiere?**

**PEÑA:** Estuve en un par de centros de tratamiento de drogas. Aquí, en Laredo, Houston, Dallas. En todo Texas y lo que encontré que un sistema que no estaba acondicionado para manejar el problema. En una ocasión me registré en un centro, no porque tuviera un problema de drogadicción, de hecho no bebo, no fumo ni consumo drogas, pero quería ver lo que era para esas personas.

Entonces me registré y pretendí ser un paciente. La administración sabía que me encontraba ahí. Vi por lo que pasaban. La mayoría de ellos eran profesionales, por lo menos con los que traté. Maestros, doctores, directores de escuelas, enfermeras. Estas personas que sufren de adicciones severas. No desean estar ahí.

**PA: Entonces, con su experiencia, no toma la declaración de Moses a la ligera.**

**PEÑA:** Esto es cosa seria. Cuando lees esto de una persona que dice “bueno, por qué no legalizan todo, legalicen todas las drogas y ello solucionará el problema” me molesto mucho, especialmente sobre su comentario sobre hipocresías y que esto sea un truco político. Si tan solo él supiera por lo que he pasado para llegar a lo que tengo hoy. Si supiera el dolor de un padre de enterar a su hijo de 16 años, ver sepultar a otros jóvenes antes de que cumplan los 18 años de edad y ver a muchachos tan pobres que fueron enterrados en ataúdes de cartón.

Algunas personas se sientan en sus cómodas oficinas y hacen declaraciones simples como “legalicemos todas las drogas y con ello se resolverá el problema” me enoja mucho.

**PA: ¿Alguna vez se legalizarán las drogas en Texas?**

**PEÑA:** Aunque la despenalización de algunas drogas menores es un argumento justificado, no lo es para el

estado. Estoy en el comité que decide si se legalizan las drogas o no. De ninguna manera va a pasar esto.

El hacer [Moses] ese tipo de crítica fue personalmente ofensivo, pero tiene el derecho de expresar lo que desee. Es solo que no es una declaración educada.

**PA: Bien, esta organización se formó durante la sesión de la pasada legislatura, ¿correcto?**

**PEÑA:** Sí.

**PA: ¿De qué otra cosa se siente usted particularmente orgulloso?**

**PEÑA:** Si recuerda, la Suprema Corte decidió que el dominio inminente, la privación de la propiedad era legal si tal propiedad se tomaba no para el gobierno, sino para negocios privados. Aprobamos la ley, la Ley del Senado 7 I lo hizo ilegal. El dominio inminente puede ser usado para propósitos gubernamentales solamente.

No pueden tomar tu propiedad y decir “bueno, queremos poner ahí un 7-11, tiene que ser de utilidad pública”.

Quiero proteger al ciudadano promedio para que cuide su tierra y la disfruten como mejor le parezca.

**PA: ¿Qué ocurrió en la última sesión, respecto a los fondos para UTPA?**

**PEÑA:** Tuvimos una situación muy difícil. Tradicionalmente las universidades han hecho sus construcciones con lo que se llama Bonos de Ingresos por Colegiaturas, bonos que los inversionistas pueden comprar y están garantizados por el gobierno y que pagan con colegiaturas.

Tuvimos una decisión política hecha por un senador de que no se expidieran los Bonos de Ingresos por Colegiaturas. Pan Am esperaba, creo \$37.7 millones en estos bonos. Ese dinero no estaba disponible para nosotros. Íbamos a hacer remodelaciones en uno de los edificios del campus, tuvieron que posponerse.

El reto ahora es regresar y tratar lo mejor que podamos de conseguir fondos para universidades de alto crecimiento como Pan Am.

**PA: Por Último, ¿ha visto la primera plana del Monitor del artículo sobre la posibilidad de que el derecho a la ciudadanía por nacimiento sea proscrito?**

**PEÑA:** ¿Fue el que tenía un bebé envuelto en la bandera americana?

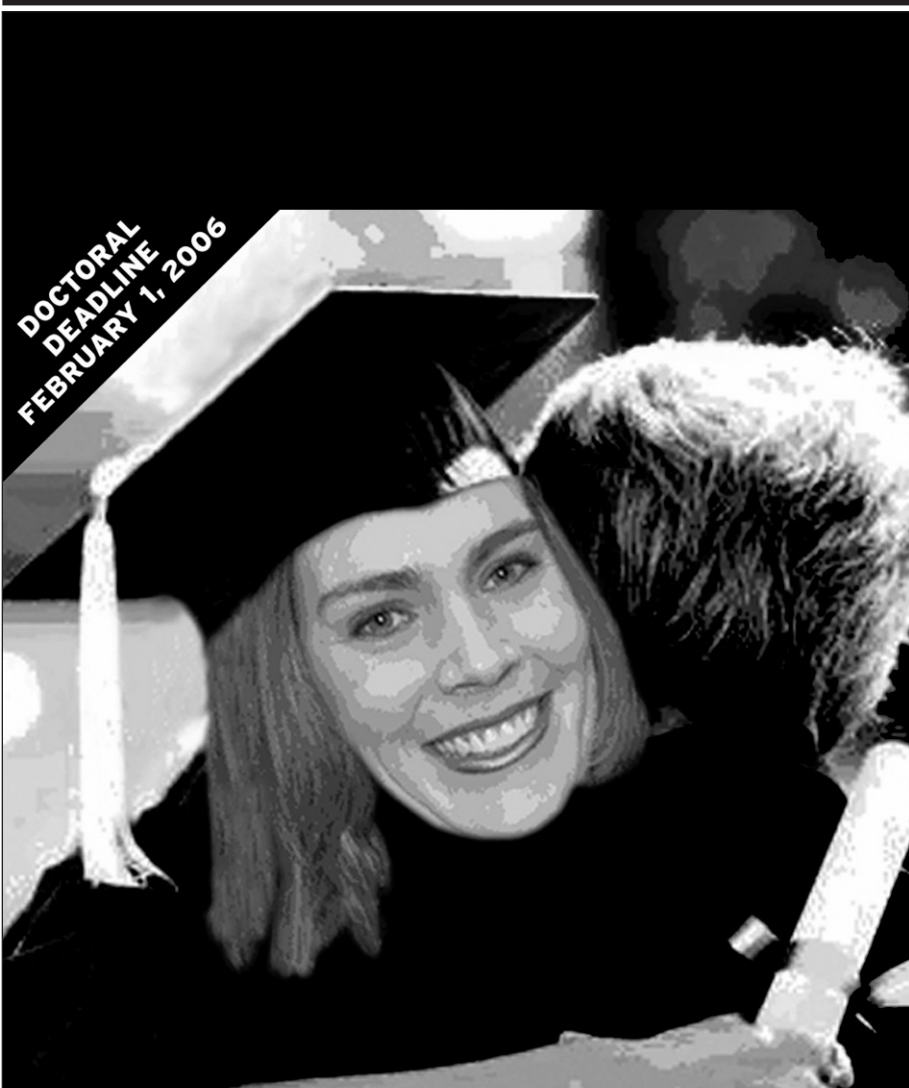
**PA: ¿Sí, qué opina al respecto?**

Hay personas que creen que necesitamos cambiar nuestra constitución constantemente. Nuestros fundadores crearon un sistema en donde podríamos cambiar las leyes con facilidad. Las enmiendas constitucionales casi no se deberían hacer. Hay principios que pasan la prueba del tiempo.

La 14va. Enmienda, que declara la igualdad de protección, es fundamental para la filosofía del gobierno americano. Entonces, eliminarla sería como eliminar la América que conocemos. Cada ciudadano debe ser tratado como cualquier otro ciudadano.

La cláusula sobre la igualdad de protección dice que si naces en América, eres un ciudadano americano, dicen que necesitas ganar ese derecho. Desafortunadamente están escogiendo cambiar la ley en tiempos cuando existe un debate sobre inmigración. Este país siempre ha argüido sobre sus políticas de inmigración. El debate no es diferente al que tuvimos a principios del siglo pasado, cuando llegaron las primeras olas de inmigrantes.

No va a ocurrir, me gusta el país en donde vivo y no deseo que cambie porque alguien no puede ser más inteligente en la forma de gobernar. Necesitamos manejarlo de otra forma en lugar de deshacer el país que conocemos.



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## A unique children's play: *Bocon* comes to UTPA

By **FRANK CALVILLO**  
*The Pan American*

*Bocon*, a children's play from The University of Texas-Pan American, is scheduled to open at the Jeffers Theatre on Thursday, Dec. 1 and will run through Sunday.

The coming-of-age play, written by Lisa Loomer, tells the story of Miguel, an outspoken boy who finds his life changed when soldiers begin to invade his family's village. The play deals with such themes as freedom of speech and expression as well as the rights to which all human beings are entitled.

In an unconventional technique, many of the

play's messages are conveyed through song and dance. The play also happens to be presented in the dual languages of English and Spanish, a unique way of reaching an audience.

Loomer is best known as the author of the hit play "The Waiting Room," which has been performed in Los Angeles, New York and in Europe. She is also the one responsible for penning the screenplay adaptation of the 1999 Winona Ryder drama "Girl, Interrupted."

Loomer has written nearly a dozen plays dealing with various human-interest themes, and is considered one of the most respected contemporary female play-

wrights working today.

"She wanted to bring to life an immigrant's story from a child's viewpoint, which is very relevant nowadays," said Brian Warren, the play's director.

Warren, an instructor at UTPA since 2002, holds a B.A. in English from The University of Iowa as well as M.A.s from UTPA in English and theatre. With 60 acting credits, 20 directing ones (70 percent have been for children) and over half a dozen playwriting credits to his name, Warren may be the ideal candidate to bring Loomer's play to the stage.

Marian Monta, a long-time professor of theater, agrees.

"He's able to bring tremendous amounts of energy and skill to children's theatre," she said. "He's just good."

The seasoned actor/director/writer/teacher was first drawn to the play because of its ability to convey such deep revelations to a young audience.

"It's a very intriguing journey of discovery for the main character and since most children are in the process of discovery, they can relate," he said.

Cast member Hugo Gamino, a UTPA sophomore who plays a judge in the production, feels the same way.

"We can understand where the character is coming from because we've all been in situations where we've had to try and find ourselves," he said. "The play's very funny and has a lot of good moments that also happen to be learning moments for children," he said.

Despite all of the play's attributes, the question that remains is why is a play like *Bocon* being performed at a college campus?



Melissa Martinez/*The Pan American*  
**SCARY STUFF** - Amber McCallum as Miguel, tormented by the aspects of "la llorona."

Warren believes it is the themes the play explores that will draw in the audience, which is expected to consist of various age groups. Yet he also realizes that the play will of course have different meaning for different people.

"I think the play will definitely appeal to families. Little kids of course won't get it, but elementary school kids will like it as well as their older brothers, sisters and parents," he said.

The play also happens to be presented in two languages Spanish, a unique way of reaching an audience which once again leans toward unconventionality.

Those behind the *Bocon* hope the one-act play will leave its audience thinking as well as laughing.

"You come out learning something while still being able to have a good time," said Gamino.

"I like the whole idea of getting children excited about theater," Warren said. "With this play, however, I'd really like for their imaginations to be sparked. We're all on a journey of discovery, but children even more so than adults."



Melissa Martinez/*The Pan American*

**KID'S PLAY?** - (Left to right) Mercedes de la Cruz, Annette Perez, Amber McCallum and Karla Gastel in a scene from *Bocon*, the latest children's play from Brian Warren.

## Folklorico dancers kick off annual concert series

By **CLARALEXIS RIOS**  
*The Pan American*

The University of Texas-Pan American's 24-member Ballet Folklórico Dance Company, directed by Francisco Muñoz, will begin its annual concert series "Alegria 2005-2006" on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 7:30 p.m. at the UTPA Fine Arts Auditorium.

Maria Garza Muñoz, associate director for special programs, explained what will be featured at this year's concert series.

"'Alegria 2005-2006' will feature a collection of choreographies focusing on folk cultures and traditions representing a variety of Mexican states," she said. "The Dance Company and live musical accompaniment, provided by *Mariachi México Lindo*, will create a spectacular collaboration of music and dance."

Choreographed by Francisco Muñoz, Maria's husband, *Canciones de mi Tierra* (Songs of My Land) pays tribute to some of Mexico's oldest tunes and melodies. A new dance piece entitled *Reboso*, also choreographed by Francisco Muñoz, focuses on the traditional Mexican reboso (shawl).

Associate director Muñoz elaborated about this

new dance piece.

"As Gregorio de Gante, a Mexican poet wrote, 'The Mexican reboso is a baby's crib, a pillow for sleeping, a window for love, a noose for caring, a bandage for healing, a bandanna for working, a feminine shroud, and a national symbol,'" she said. "*Reboso* is a collection of stylized dance movements and patterns honoring the reboso's symbolism in the Mexican culture."

*La Revolución*, a choreography based on the Mexican Revolution, will showcase the Adelita and Juana Gallo, the powerful and influential heroines of the war of 1910. The dance, *Calabaceados*, is a manifestation of the turns and kicks of the broncos (wild horses) as they set off dust storms in playful amusement. Norteño music from the Baja California area will be played to this dance suite. The company's crowd pleaser titled *La Danza del Venado* (Deer Dance) is a highly symbolic drama that represents the spirit of goodness and evil.

Additional choreographies presented in "Alegria 2005-2006" will focus on traditional dances from the Mexican states of Michoacán, Tamaulipas and Jalisco.

Ismael Villarreal, a graduate dance major,

explained how he is preparing for this event.

"I warm up physically and mentally," he said. "This is the way I get my adrenaline going before a show."

Daisy Garza, a junior finance major, described her feelings when performing on stage.

"I feel nervous and excited," Garza said. "You are overwhelmed with emotion and try to do your best because you don't know what is going to happen on stage. I dance folklórico because I love it and want to represent my culture. When you are on stage, a dancer's job is to transmit excitement to the audience because they paid to go see this event."

### BACKGROUND DETAILS

The husband and wife team, Maria and Francisco have been the company's directors since 1980. They both received their bachelor's and master's degrees from Pan American University. Francisco continued his education by receiving a Ph.D in dance and related arts at Texas Woman's University in Denton.

Both have studied with professional dancers and choreographers including *Ballet Folklórico* with

Professor Rafael Zamarripa Castañeda, who helped the directors prepare for their future jobs by creating a dance technique, choreographic style and directing discipline.

The Folkloric Dance Company was founded at Pan American University in 1970 by Dr. Amilda Thomas and started off as an extracurricular activity for a few students who were interested in performing this Mexican dance art. The first dancers were known as the "Pan Am Dancers." They gained popularity by providing entertainment at local beauty pageants, barbeque fundraisers and a National Dance Association conference in Seattle, Washington in 1977.

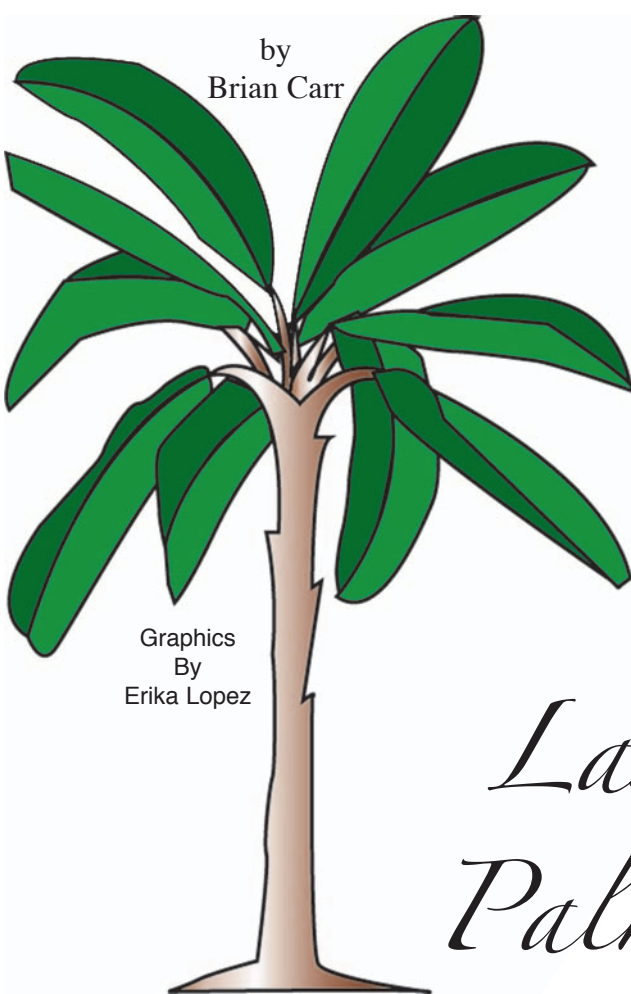
In 1980, Mexican Folkloric Dance became a course offered in the department of health and physical education. Today, this company also performs 15 student and public concerts annually for approximately 15,000 people.

Oscar Canales, a sophomore and folklórico fan is excited about the recital.

"I look forward to seeing what kind of choreography the dancers are going to perform," he said. "I would also like to see them do a lasso act while I watch this show."



# A TASTEFUL RESURRECTION OF A RESTAURANT



by Brian Carr

Graphics By Erika Lopez

# Las Palmas

Last year when Omar Villarreal went on vacation he blessed Las Palmas Café. "It's my baby," the restaurateur explained. "I don't want anything to happen to it. My uncle uses holy water over there at Red Barn, but I just said a blessing." The bearded 32-year-old has every reason to be protective of his McAllen eatery. After all, he has poured his life into it.

Born to migrant farmer parents in Michigan, Villarreal came to the Valley at the age of eight after his father was laid off from his factory job there.

"Both of my parents are from here," said Villarreal matter of factly. "When my dad lost his job he looked at my mom and said 'Momma 'we're going home.'"

The family immediately entered the restaurant industry upon returning, helping to run the family-owned Red Barn from the building which is now Las Palmas.

The small green and yellow building which sits 100 yards off the corner of McColl and Violet in McAllen is Las Palmas' second home. Ownership of the portable building – which looks like a misplaced residency of the neighboring McAllen Mobile Park - exchanged hands and the would-be burger joint became a seafood restaurant before the Villarreal family took complete control in 1995.

"All this was added when it was a seafood

restaurant," Villarreal said as he pointed to the cozy dining room of his family friendly restaurant. "Before that everything was take -away sold through a pickup window in the front."

The addition of the dining room, along with fryers added for the seafood operation, made Las Palmas a possibility, as it allowed Villarreal to add customer service to his list of job duties, and stellar French fries as a menu item.

Sitting in the corner booth of his beloved home cooking restaurant the proud Cubs fan pours on his favorite-uncle brand of charm as he explains the insurmountable differences between Las Palmas and a typical McBurger joint.

"Everything we do is fresh," Villarreal simply stated. "We hand-form our patties from beef we get from Bob Starks. We get in fresh vegetables daily. That's what gives us a better taste."

By using locally butchered and ground beef, and with a dedication to freshness, Las Palmas menu items, which at first glance appear mundane in simplicity, are elevated to benchmark levels.

The practice of fresh and local ingredient dedication was championed by Ferdinand Point during the nouvelle cuisine revolution which took place in France halfway through the past century. And though the cuisine which bolstered the paradigm switch from the classic standards is unrecognizable in Mexican and American fare which are Las Palmas' strong suit, the difference in product selection imparts the same level of quality.

Homemade chips and salsa begin each Las Palmas dining experience. Made daily, the hearty chips are the perfect vehicle for the simultaneously spicy and cool salsa of tomato, onion, jalapeno, cilantro and garlic. Enjoyed with a beer in the gentle dining room the small helping of the Mexican standard immediately resonates backyard nostalgia, and the host emotes the same quality of house-guest comfort.

Choosing a cheeseburger and fries might

seem unadventurous, but the combo is a must for Las Palmas first-timers. Served loaded with lettuce, diced tomato, onions, pickles mayonnaise and mustard on a buttery gilled bun, the generous hand-formed patty explodes with flavor and provides ample sustenance. Greasy in the good way, messy in the good way, and tasty in every way the cornerstone of the eatery is perhaps the perfect representation of the American classic, and the French fry accompaniment; they are crisp and golden on the outside and delicate and fluffy within, rivaling its main-course master in cravability.

But as those who dine at Las Palmas can tell you, the experience is a leisurely one. Villarreal is not in the business of making his customers into numbers he feeds quickly and ushers through a rotating door. There is a casual pride that the cook and server takes in getting to know his customers, and quality takes priority over quantity.

"I'll slow things down," Villarreal explains of the lunch rush which the restaurant thrives on. "I'd rather things be perfect than fast."

Customers don't seem to mind much, however, and the majority of the diners – who include everybody from the McHi football team to local politicians – are regulars.

Skip and Minnie Karnes started coming to the Valley nine years ago as Winter Texans and became permanent residents, at the McAllen Mobile Park two years ago. Their park is directly across the street. They eat at Las Palmas all the time, but they aren't just patrons of the restaurant, they are part of the Las Palmas family.

"Albert used to be a cop," Villarreal explains. "And Minnie was a banker."

It's not his job to know these things, it's his passion, which he undoubtedly gets from his mother Shelly who does a good portion of the cooking and also helps run the front of the house.

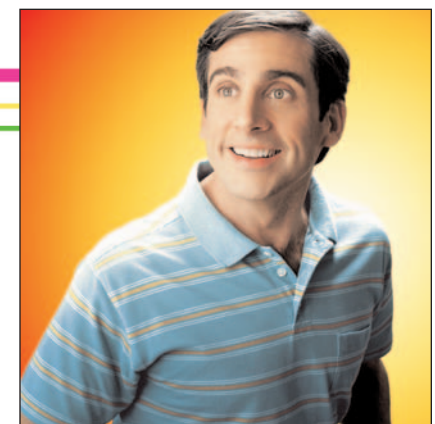
Albert and Minnie have five children. Shelly can name them all. That's what Las Palmas is all about



## THE A&E EDITOR'S PICKS



BY Jason Chapa  
GRAPHICS BY Erika Lopez



# McAllen Chamber of Commerce cultural arts

by Kristina Garcia-Corral

With the success of last year's Cultural Arts and Entertainment Series, the McAllen Chamber of Commerce has decided to give it another go.

The series is a mix of courses offered from September to April. Classes are held once to twice a month and range from storytelling and salsa dancing to genealogy. In the series, no class is held more than once, so if you find one that you like, take it.

"We have been fortunate enough for people to be happy to offer their services,"

said Rita Perera, the McAllen Chamber's creative incubator.

These classes are made available to the public thanks to various clubs and organizations in McAllen, such as the McAllen Genealogical Society and the McAllen Library. Members of the various clubs and organizations involved are the individuals who take the time out to teach the classes. According to Perera, this fall has been a success and the rest of the series looks promising.

Feedback from the public has been

solid so far as well.

"I think it's good that the McAllen Chamber is holding classes in the arts. I hadn't heard about them till now, and the whole idea behind it is great," said Robin Lopez, an education major at The University of Texas-Pan American.

The majority of classes are free of charge except for materials students will need in order to attend the course. All age groups are accepted and the classes are held at either 1001 S. 16th St., or 1200 Ash Ave. in McAllen, and usually start at

7 p.m.

The series was started because of McAllen's proximity to the Mexican border and because the importance of art is not largely recognized in the area. As creativity has grown, so has the Valley's desire to learn more, with the Chamber offering an exciting program of holiday classes.

A scrapbooking class will be held Dec. 15, to offer basic skills and ideas for people wanting to start a personal scrapbook.

"The class is for anyone who takes photos. I'll go over how to organize and preserve photos as well as how to scrapbook," said Angel Rupert, a full-time consultant for Creative Memories, who taught the hour-long class last year.

Another course to look forward to during the Christmas break is the Culinary Arts class, which will be held Jan. 12. If you would like more information, there are flyers available at the McAllen Chamber of Commerce, call 956-687-2787.

**MOVIE OF THE YEAR**  
The 40-Year-Old Virgin  
Of all the films I saw this year, and of all the ones I actually remember sitting through, "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" stands out as the funniest movie of them all. This raunchy flick, which comes out Dec. 13 on video and DVD, has something that many films lack, funny or not: heart. It's because of this that all the laughs, as sophomoric as they get, score big. Of course, that isn't the only thing the film has going for it.

Steve Carell's portrayal of Andy, the seminal title character, is right on target. As probably one of the world's oldest virgins, his performance makes any allusions that, in real life, Carell is a father and husband, seem impossible. How he could not have spent his entire adult life collecting toys, playing video games and ignoring the fairer sex just to prepare for this part is beyond me. For those struggling with similar 'woes,' every painful experience Andy suffers makes anything we've suffered that much more funny in retrospect.

But Carell isn't the only pitiable character of the lot. Paul Rudd (of director Judd Apatow's hilarious "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy") and Seth

Rogen (of "Freaks and Geeks" and "Undeclared," two of Apatow's short-lived but critically acclaimed television series) are the funniest of Andy's coworkers. Rudd is, for all his good looks, a loser who can't get over that one ex-girlfriend who broke his heart, and badly I might add. Rogen steals practically every scene he's in as Cal, Andy's pot-smoking, heavyset assistant. It'd be a shame if either of these folks doesn't take the spotlight sometime in the near future.

Since this film is at heart a very perverted love story, you can't forget to mention Andy's love interest. Catherine Keener (of such 'unique' films such as "Death to Smoochy" and "Being John Malkovich") plays Trish, the lady who just might be the one for Andy. Throughout her suffering with Andy's 'dilemma,' she really convinces the audience that she's worth making Andy a man. Despite being a grandmother.

The rest of the cast is rounded out with a surprising amount of character actors who make the most of their bit parts. Not a second is wasted with any of them in the two hours of the film. And every one of them says [at least] one thing that will make you laugh.

"The 40-Year-Old Virgin" surpasses other films with similar gross-out humor because it doesn't limit itself to that realm of comedy. Instead it's a strong, character-driven film that captures all the trials and tribulations of those unfortunate individuals who are unlucky at love in general, not just those who are unable to get any. If you can't relate to Andy, you'll relate to somebody in the film, which makes it all the more engaging.

And really, it makes being a virgin something not to laugh at. With, maybe. But as with everything in life, it makes the journey itself more charming than the destination, even though the end of the film has a pleasant surprise at the end.

Of course there is a copious amount of scatological, physical and stupid humor thrown in to keep us from getting the point.

**ALBUM OF THE YEAR**  
Gorillaz, "Demon Days"

In summer of 2001, the summer before I started my tenure at UTPA, I saw a music video on MTV2 (back when they showed a lot of them, good and bad). It was like nothing I'd ever seen, at least on any sort of Music Television. And that was a very good thing.

The video was called "Clint

Eastwood," by an animated band (a la The Archies) called Gorillaz. Of course, it wasn't about Dirty Harry or any of his many incarnations. Instead, it featured a four-piece (five if you count the rapping ghost) band squaring off against zombified, red-reared gorillas. The combination struck a chord, and I've been a fan ever since.

The duo behind this animated sensation, "Tank Girl" creator Jamie Hewlett and Damon Albarn, front man of Blur (famous for "Song 2"), with the help of cult favorites such as Del the Funky Homo Sapien (said rapping ghost), Dan "The Automator" Nakaruma and former Cibo Matto vocalist Miho Hatori, brought Gorillaz to life. When touring, they often performed behind a screen while music videos of the "band's" exploits sated the masses.

Well, four years and numerous collaborations later, Gorillaz returned with "Demon Days," and have captured all the spirit of their self-titled debut. Albarn and Hewlett promised that they'd bring in more talent to help animate Noodle, 2-D, Murdoch and Russel (sans Del, who has since been 'exorcized' from the band's drummer), and they do not disappoint.

The videos, which are almost as important as the singles, carry on the tradition the debut. It's suggested that somehow, if you enjoy the songs, you find a way to see the videos. They compliment the music, and serve as more than mere advertisement for the record.

On "Feel Good Inc.," the album's first single, legendary hip-hoppers De La Soul share the mic with 2-D (Gorillaz's vocalist, or Albarn's alter ego) as the band rocks the heavens in their own windmill-powered transportation.

On "Dare," Noodle and Shaun Ryder (of U.K. bands The Happy Mondays and Black Grape, as well as Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas) make wonderful music together, despite Ryder appearing to be a disembodied head kept alive for Noodle's amusement.

Perhaps the weirdest cameo is that of Dennis Hopper in "Fire Coming Out of the Monkey's Head." Though he doesn't sing or rap as other "guests" are expected to, his presence nonetheless fits in perfectly in the eclectic mix of sights and sounds that are Gorillaz.

There are a lot of labels that Gorillaz can fit in. Perhaps the best is the category of "Alternative."

## Straylight Run pens deep lyrics

By **TREY SERNA**  
*The Pan American*

In an MTV generation, where music is heavily based on an image rather than the music itself, it's comforting to know that meaningful music still exists in an industry full of fabricated pop trends that fade just as quickly as they arrive.

Straylight Run was born in May 2003 out of Long Island, N.Y. The band consists of John Nolan (vocals, guitar, piano), his sister Michelle Nolan (vocals, guitar, piano), Shaun Noon and Michelle Nolan make up Straylight Run. Cooper (bass) and Will Noon (drums).

John Nolan and Cooper were a part of the band Taking Back Sunday until early 2003. After their departure they began putting together songs. Noon jumped on board after leaving the band Breaking Pangaea, and Michelle Nolan was the icing on the cake of what became Straylight Run.

"Music was always what I wanted to do ever since I graduated high school," Noon said.

The band quickly grew a fan base after posting six demo songs on their official Web site. The guitar- and piano-driven songs were pleasing to many ears. Straylight fever was spreading and fans anticipated the day a full-length record would be released. Their prayers were answered in October 2004 when the band released their self-titled full length record. On Oct. 4, 2005, not even a full year later, the band released an EP titled "Prepare To Be Wrong."

The band went on a tour to support the release of their EP with the bands Paramore, The Plain White T's and Simple Plan, coming to Houston in Nov. 16. Though the band has had two incredible years under their belt and a growing fan base, their humble attitudes are quite refreshing.

"Not very much has changed since the band started," John Nolan said.

"John moved out of his parents' house," Cooper said.

"My life has changed a lot," Michelle Nolan said. "Before this band started I wasn't in a band so I had this whole different life. I was a hair dresser and dance teacher," she said.

Meeting the demands of a grueling tour schedule and being the only girl in the band and one of the very few on tour, really has no effect on Michelle.



Courtesy of simpaticographics.com

**INTENSE TUNES** - (left to right) John Nolan, Shaun Cooper, Will Noon and Michelle Nolan make up Straylight Run.

"Being in a band with a bunch of guys is not all that hard. It's just these three guys. I've known John my whole life obviously and I've grown to know Shaun and Will very well so there's not really much of a struggle at all," she said.

"Touring is harder because it's a lot of guys but I don't know. You need girls in your life. Shaun's good to shop with," she said.

They have an obviously good relationship within the band, and a great sense of humor and laid back style. Any Straylight fan can tell you another outstanding thing about the band is their lyrics. They're not your typical rhyming line songs that really have no depth or meaning.

With the EP to keep fans' ears temporarily busy, and a tour that just ended, it's only natural to wonder what's next for the band.

"We don't really have any plans to release anything. We're still in the very beginning stages of writing and recording the demo version of the songs," John Nolan said.

If it's an album Straylight fans are waiting for, it may be awhile. In the very near future though, they may be heading to a city near you as the headlining act.

"It's not definite yet but we're working on it. We're getting it planned out so we'll definitely be doing some sort of tour in February or March that we'll hopefully be headlining," John Nolan said.

Cooper added on the upcoming tour and the possible bands they may be on the road with.

"They will be awesome bands. Awesome bands," he said.

## San Juan Shrine to host VSO

By **ANGELA SALAZAR**  
*The Pan American*

It is that time of year when kids are writing out their wish lists to Santa and houses glow with the light of decorations. The holiday season is generally one of happiness and good will toward men and women.

The Valley Symphony Orchestra (VSO) is carrying on the tradition with its annual Christmas concert at 8 tonight in San Juan, the largest and most popular VSO event each year.

"We are sold out," said Glenda Boykin, an administrator at the VSO office "We've sold over 3,000 tickets. All that's left is general admission."

This is not the first time the concert has been sold out, and requests pour in from everywhere for the chance to hear the orchestra and chorale. Since last January requests for tickets have been called in from New York, North Dakota, and Utah.

The interest in the holiday concert is also in part to the venue. When the holiday music is performed with San Juan's Shrine of the Virgin de Guadalupe as its backdrop the effect is all the more dramatic. The venue also draws attention to the already popular concert.

The Valley Symphony Orchestra has been around since 1952 and started at the university. The VSO plans on playing not only classical Christmas songs, but ones that will have the audience singing along.

The concert will include "Gloria," by Italian composer Giacomo Puccini, "Gloria," by John Rutter, and "Alleluia Chorus from 'Messiah,'" by Frideric Handel. The concert will also include holiday favorites "White Christmas" and "Let it Snow."

"The type of music we are doing is basically a mix," said Peter Dabrowski, VSO conductor.

"It's a holiday mix. Not only purely classical like the 'Gloria,' but also pieces by Albert Bernstein from 'The Magnificent Seven.' This concert offers just about any variety of music you can think about," he said.

The 88-member orchestra and 100-member chorale is made up of professors of UTPA, UT-Brownsville and high school music teachers and some college students. These are some of the elite musicians in the Valley.

"Ever since I heard they were doing 'Beethoven's 9th,' I wanted to join," said Jennifer Bryant, a music education major.

"I wanted to be a part of an organization that is rewarding. We have rehearsals every Monday night. They seem short, but we get a lot done in that amount of time. And when everything is all put together, the end result is rewarding," she said.

For more on the Valley Symphony Orchestra and Chorale visit [www.valleyorchestra.org](http://www.valleyorchestra.org).

## Cuban dancer graces stage

By **MEREDITH LAGRONE**  
*The Pan American*

Rolando Sarabia isn't the everyday illegal immigrant. He walked across the border through Mexico like many of his Cuban counterparts who have left their home country.

What makes Sarabia stand out is his occupation. He is a 23-year-old former company dancer for Cuba's Ballet Nacional.

According to an August New York Times article by Erika Kinetz, the decision to desert his ballet company and sneak across the United States border came from the refusal by Alicia Alonso, the director of his company, to allow him to accept a contract from the Boston Ballet in 2003 to be a principal dancer.

In the New York Times article, Sarabia said he got permission from the Cuban government to travel to Mexico to teach dance. After crossing the border illegally and spending a week in Texas with friends, he made the decision to travel to Miami to stay with relatives and apply for political asylum.

"I have family, lots of aunts and uncles, in Miami," Sarabia said. "I plan to return there when I finish with this production. I really like the Valley, too. It's very relaxing here; I can concentrate on my dancing. I want to stay a long, long time in this country."

This Christmas, Sarabia is coming back to the border, this time to McAllen. He will be featured in McAllen Ballet's production of "The Nutcracker." It will be the Rio Grande Valley's only professional production of the famous ballet.

Sarabia will be dancing the part of Cavalier in the upcoming production. He came back to the Valley because an old friend from Cuba, Richard d'Alton, invited him. Sarabia and d'Alton have been friends for a long time, and d'Alton is a coach for McAllen

Ballet. Also from Cuba's Ballet Nacional is Rolando Pacheco, who is a member of the support staff for McAllen Ballet.



**SARABIA**

"Sarabia and I were good friends in Cuba at Ballet Nacional," said d'Alton. "I invited him to come dance 'The Nutcracker,' to come spend some time with me."

This will not be Sarabia's first time dancing the famous ballet.

Sarabia is a big draw for McAllen ballet. He's been dancing since the age of 5 and grew up in a family of dancers.

"My father was a soloist for the national ballet of Cuba," he said. "My brother is dancing in Boston for the Boston Ballet."

The dancers and employees of McAllen Ballet are excited to have him in the Valley.

Kathy Taylor, business manager, believes Sarabia is not only a good dancer but also an excellent teacher.

"The great artists we get in here are the ones that love to teach," she said. "They are the ones who want to pass it on to the next generation."

Taylor said many of the dancers they have on hand right now are stars.

She thinks the other dancers also have the dedication to make the McAllen Ballet stand out.

"After rehearsal, this is when the real stuff takes place," she said. "They love getting in here and pushing it and fine tuning it. They're in tune with each other. It's the part of rehearsal I love watching."

"The Nutcracker" will be performed on Dec. 3 and 4. For more information, contact McAllen Ballet at (956) 630-3287 or access the company's Web site at [www.mcallenballet.org](http://www.mcallenballet.org).

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## WORKLOAD continued from page 1

teaching to work properly, and faculty members must do these things in order to ensure their tenure, or promotion to the next level as employees.

UTPA's entire resource bank will be spent, explained Cardenas in a previous interview with The Pan American. By recruiting over 1,000 staff members to accommodate for the adjustment, Cardenas hopes that students will not feel the effects of less class time.

Aldridge pointed out that with the research-intensive nature of the University, more graduate programs will be offered and more graduate students will be available to teach the undergraduate classes.

By doing more original and updated research, faculty will be able to add spice to their classes and not be overworked.

"Professors do everything and sometimes, it's hard to do everything," said Aldridge.

Saavedra agrees that the quality of teaching at UTPA will also improve.

"Students will be taught first-hand information that faculty and students here on the UTPA campus have gathered through their research...there are questions that need be asked and researched."

### PLAYING THE WAITING GAME

With the spring 2005 schedule already in place, the UTPA campus is prepared for the adjustment and has been getting there for months. Only if the plan had been rejected would chaos have erupted, points out Aldridge.

Nonetheless, the transition brings some critics.

"There are a lot of faculty who came here because

the research requirement was moderate and they wanted to be part of an environment that valued undergraduate students ahead of articles and academic work," said one faculty member in a previous Pan American interview on the subject who wished to remain anonymous.

Some teaching-oriented professors are worried that the transition toward a research focus will hurt their chances for tenure, and alter the student-based approach that UTPA has used in the past.

Saavedra recognizes this as a legitimate concern.

"One of the special qualities that UTPA has been known for in the past has been the excellent relationships between faculty and students and the relatively small classes as compared to bigger universities," she said in that same previous article.

Aldridge did say that while the University was expecting the policy to be approved, there might be some teething problems that students will just have to cope with.

"What will happen is that fewer courses will be offered initially, until the workload implementation settles down," Aldridge said. "It will be interesting to see where the rough spots are. Students will need to be somewhat flexible, give it some time."

She explained that by cutting one class from the schedule, faculty has some breathing room.

"We won't constantly be looking at the clock. The psychology of clock time can be very freeing," Aldridge said.

## GRADUATION continued from page 1

to find answers and strategies to share with each other."

The key to improving graduation rates begins with retention. Currently, UTPA has a retention rate of 68 percent for freshmen, when the national average is 72 percent. Regents from the UT System made that a key issue in a recent meeting in Austin last month.

UTPA has created several initiatives over the past five years. One of them, UNIV 1301, or the Learning Frameworks class, was implemented in

have priority over a student's education," McMillan said.

McMillan added that UTPA was recently awarded a federal grant that reduces the daily charges that a parent would have to pay in order to have a child at the Child Development Center. He hopes this and the center itself will ease some student-parent worries.

"The issue of child care for parents is a difficult one when you're trying to juggle family and trying to go to college at the same time," McMillan said.

"We hope by opening a child development center

### UTPA Measures Up

#### Graduation rate:

- University of Texas-Pan American is 10.4 percent while the six-year graduation rate is 26.7 percent
- University of Texas-San Antonio is about 24 percent.
- University of Texas-El Paso is about 26 percent.

#### Retention rate:

- UTPA - 68 percent for freshmen
- National average is 72 percent.

Source: Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness

Fall 2004. The course on survival skills is required for all entering freshmen with less than 30 hours.

Rodriguez believes the importance of the course is to help new students adjust to a new environment and make the most out of their time at UTPA.

"Everything we have read and heard about for many years now has been the need to have a freshman seminar where you orient students to what college is going to be about," Rodriguez said.

Since its implementation, UNIV 1301 has been a success. Retention rates have increased two percent since it was started. In the entering freshmen cohort, retention rates have increased 14 percent from 52 percent since 2000. For first-time, full-time students, the increase was 1.6 percent from 66.4 percent in 2000. Currently, out of the 80 percent of students who have taken the class, 75.8 percent of them have remained for their sophomore year.

According to Rodriguez, one of the major reasons the Learning Frameworks course is working is because it promotes interaction between faculty and students.

"Before we started any of this, it was possible for a student to go through their entire career at the university without speaking with the professor," Rodriguez said. "There are a very small percentage of students that can be successful like that, but the majority of students need a connection with the faculty."

Another initiative focusing on retention is the University Retention Advisement Program, or URAP. Implemented in 2000, URAP has over 12 student development specialists advising students in course selection and career guidance.

A major part of URAP is the Early Warning System, or EWS, a system in which professors flag students who are struggling in their classes, at mid-term. Those students then receive help and counseling to pass.

Retention programs are more than just academic advising and counseling, however. According to Dennis McMillan, associate vice president for enrollment and student services, they can also be services to students, such as the Child Development Center,

"Sometimes the expense of family needs has to

and acquiring this grant it will help reduce the rate that our students pay and help them stay in school."

Rodriguez believes one of the main problems influencing the dropout rate at UTPA is the different set of circumstances students at the university face, in particular the socio-economic background.

"Most of our students are first-generation college students, so there's no one in their homes to help them look at how to get into college," Rodriguez said. "They don't know how to get in, how to engage the system, and how to be successful."

Ideally, UTPA would like to increase retention rates about 1 percent per year. University officials like Rodriguez hope the programs will help them achieve their goals.

"I think we have an obligation for retaining students," Rodriguez said. "The labor market of the future requires people to have a post-secondary education. We need to ensure that once they get in here, they are successful. If not, they've used up a lot of resources that have not gotten them anywhere."

The university is constantly working to improve the student experience at the university and encouraging retention. According to Nancy Smith, assistant to the vice president of enrollment and student services, the more students are involved and take an active role in their educational environment, the more likely they will remain in school.

"All of the strategies we have are still a work in progress. So, we're evaluating the strategies we are doing, to see if they're efficient," Smith said.

At present, retention and graduation rates have been on the rise. However, the university believes there is still room for improvement. One clear message Rodriguez would like students to know is the university is open and available to anyone who needs assistance with their studies at UTPA.

"It's not a sink-or-swim attitude here. Whatever control we have and whatever we can do, we're working to try to help out our students become successful," Rodriguez emphasized.

## Fall 2005 Final Exam Schedule

### Thursday, Dec. 8

7:45 - 9:30 a.m.  
9:45 - 11:30 a.m.  
5 - 6:45 p.m.

\*Specific English 1301 day schedule to be announced by instructor.

### for ENG 1301 classes

\*English 1301  
English 1301  
Evening English 1301 classes

### Friday, Dec. 9

8:30-10:15 a.m.  
10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
1-2:45 p.m.

### for MATH classes below

Math 1300 classes  
Math 1334 classes  
All Math 1340 classes

### Monday, Dec. 12

7:45-9:30 a.m.  
9:45 -11:30 a.m.  
12:45-2:30 p.m.  
2:45-4:30 p.m.

### for classes that meet

MWF (7:45 a.m.-8:35 a.m.)  
MWF (11:45 a.m.-12:35 p.m.)  
TR (9:10 a.m.-10:25 a.m.)  
TR (2:35 p.m.-3:50 p.m.)

### Tuesday, Dec. 13

7:45-9:30 a.m.  
9:45-11:30 a.m.  
12:45-2:30 p.m.  
2:45-4:30 p.m.

### for classes that meet

TR (7:45 a.m.-9:00 a.m.)  
MWF (8:45 a.m.-9:35 a.m.)  
MWF (12:45 p.m.-1:35 p.m.)  
TR (4 p.m.-5:15 p.m.)

### Wednesday, Dec. 14

7:45-9:30 a.m.  
9:45-11:30 a.m.  
12:45-2:30 p.m.  
2:45-4:30 p.m.

### for classes that meet

TR (10:35 a.m.-11:50 a.m.)  
MWF (1:45 p.m.-2:35 p.m.)  
MWF (10:45 a.m.-11:35 a.m.)  
MWF (2:45 p.m.-3:35 p.m.)

### Thursday, Dec. 15 for classes that meet

7:45-9:30 a.m.  
9:45-11:30 a.m.  
12:45-2:30 p.m.

MWF (9:45 a.m.-10:35 a.m.)  
MWF (3:45 p.m.-4:35 p.m.)  
TR (1:10 p.m.-2:25 p.m.)

**SATURDAY CLASSES:** Dec. 10 at regular class time

**EVENING CLASSES:** At regular class time beginning Thursday, Dec. 8, and ending Wednesday, Dec. 14. (Classes beginning at 4:30 p.m. or after are considered evening classes.)

Source: <http://registrars.panam.edu/deadlines/FinalExamsFall.htm>

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT continued from page 3

A typical day for the children, whose ages vary from three months to four years, consists of meals, discussions and story times, free play in the classrooms and playground, instruction by teachers, nap time, and the occasional field trip around the UTPA campus.

"I love the center," senior psychology major Teresa Mendiola said. "My daughter has learned quite a bit and she gets to spend time with a lot of other little children which makes a big difference because she's an only child."

Doria, whose son had previously been enrolled at another day-care center, immediately brought her son to the CDC when it opened up in August.

"I like the fact that this is more like a school for my son," Doria said. "At the other daycare, I felt like he was just watching TV, but he's well taken care of and I can see that he's more developed here."

Both Doria and Mendiola said they plan on enrolling their children at the center again next semester.

Aside from the rich learning environment and obvious convenience of location, Perez takes pride in the state-of-the-art facility that includes classrooms, a playground, administration offices, full-service kitchen, reception area, and computer log-ins for parents. The facility, along with the nation-

al standards the center follows, makes the CDC different from other local day care centers, Perez said.

Cost is not too steep with weekly student rates at \$90 per week for children aged 3-17 months and \$85 per week for children aged 18 months to four years. Faculty and staff rates are a little higher at \$100 per week for children aged 3-17 months and \$95 per week for children aged 18 months to four years. The costs are comparable to the rates of other child-care facilities in the area, Perez said.

However, a recent grant award may provide a student discount of up to \$40.

Perez doesn't anticipate any major problems for the center. Its popularity has forced the administration to wait-list families because of limited space and resources.

"Just the overwhelming response from our parents indicates the extreme success even this early in the stage," Perez said.

And what about the children?

"She loves it," Mendiola said of her first daughter and first child-care center. "Sometimes she doesn't want to go home."

The center is open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, contact Elda Perez at (956) 381-2469.

## HONORS continued from page 3

The results for this year are no exception.

"I'm really proud of what my students produced. I'm always amazed by what they can do when they put enough effort into their projects, and when they're assigned to use their creativity, the results are incredible," he beamed.

The students worked on the three-step project from September to November. The first step required them to conduct extensive research on an artist or piece of art of their choice, including reading a full-length book on the subject they chose.

The second step of the project called for a detailed summary of their own creative renditions, inspired by their research, in which they had to display a deep understanding of the work they studied and an ability to implement artist techniques to their own work.

If students chose literary works, they were required to add scenes or update sections of work.

The final section of the paper was composed of an analysis of what each student learned from the first and second parts of the assignment. The students were to state how successful they believed they were in reproducing the techniques.

Frances Morales, a 19-year-old sophomore, chose to create 3 fresco paintings inspired by Etruscan murals. The biology pre-med major said she liked drawing, so she got to explore another more creative part of herself.

While initially frustrated by the difficulty of the task of creating fresco paintings, she was satisfied with the end results.

"At first I thought it was impossible to make them, but in the end, it wasn't that bad," said Morales. "I learned a lot about how to do it from the research."

The paintings took about 5 hours each to paint. To make each painting, Morales first poured plaster into a wooden mold, and let it dry almost completely. This was used as a canvas. She then carved her drawing onto it, and filled in her carvings with oil paint.

However another student, 21-year-old Diana Munoz, found the project to be very challenging from

beginning to end. The chemistry major claimed she had never taken an art class before doing the project, and had absolutely no knowledge of it.

"I was hesitant to believe my project was any good, even though I got compliments on it and received a good grade," said Munoz. "I seriously knew nothing about art."

Her piece was a rendition of "The Good Shepard." The original piece was a sculpture, but for hers, she drew out the sculpture as a 2-D image, and used carbon paper to transfer her drawing to a wooden canvas, using as much detail as possible so that she would be able to use different colors of glass to enhance the image's properties. She cut the glass manually, meticulously creating hundreds of granule-sized pieces.

When she was done gluing the pieces to the canvas according to shape and color, she filled in the cracks between the glass fragments with grout. Over the course of two weeks, she took about 24 hours to complete her mosaic glass image.

"It was really important that I cut different shapes and shades for the wrinkles and shades of things," Morales explained. "If I didn't do that, the thing would just look like a big clump of glass pieces."

"There were so many tiny little pieces of glass I had to cut! My hand hurt a lot during the process," she said. "I kept getting scrapes from the little flakes that were produced from me cutting through the glass."

Overall, Morales believes she learned the most through trial and error.

"I did a lot wrong, and I can see where I did mess up. I can't imagine how hard it was for people to do this in the past," she said. "I took 24 hours to do mine, and it's a tiny little piece. Their stuff was much more detailed than mine, and they would do churches full of this stuff. I can honestly say I gained a much deeper appreciation for this medium of art."

Munoz said her inspiration was the Byzantine era, which is characterized as an era in which colored glass mosaic art flourished.

## WOMEN continued from page 3

discrimination. It benefits everyone," said Mata. "You not only learn about women and their perspective, but you'll understand the power of relationships between women and their environments."

While the thought of women's studies courses often revives the stigma associated with feminism, Mata asserts that this is unjustified.

"Some feminists give feminism and women's studies a bad name, but these courses aren't about hating men or not shaving your legs," said Mata. "What we're trying to do is open up dialogue between women and their immediate sphere of life. Historically, being a feminist was given a bad name, but if you believe in gender equality then you're a feminist."

Mata strongly encourages students of all areas of study to consider taking a women's studies course. Because it is interdisciplinary, students will learn about women's roles in journalism, politics, healthcare, writing, and other areas.

"Many times I feel like things are missing the

view point from a women's perspective, which is why I feel that this minor is just what UTPA needed," said Mata.

Garza agreed.

"Everyone should take one of these courses," said Garza. "College is all about expanding your horizons!"

Currently, 621 universities in the nation offer women's studies course work. In Texas, only 18 universities offer courses, with UTPA making it 19. Before this minor was offered at UTPA, any Valley students interested in this area of study had to travel at least 155 miles to Texas A&M International University in Laredo, or 255 miles to San Antonio.

For students with a minor in women's studies, the options after graduation are many.

"Not only do many graduate schools look highly on this type of course work, but you will open up a new avenue of knowledge for whatever job you decide to take, be it social work, law, health care, teaching or politics," said Mata.

## PHOTO continued from page 3

Santos had visited the park on many occasions before taking the winning shot, but through his examination of the landscape, he "previewed the light, to see when it got good for dramatic photos," he said.

"In September, I was looking around one day and saw a lot of thunderstorm clouds in the sky and figured it'd look pretty neat if I took a shot of it, and it turned out it did," said Santos.

The grants budget specialist for the Office of Research/Sponsored Projects says that much of his expertise was acquired by observing the work of previous competition winners.

"That's how I did it," Santos said. "I looked at the techniques they used, and applied them to my own work when I began to enter the competition."

While the only instruction Santos has received is a photography course he took in the 1970s, he now considers his work to be semi-professional. Unlike when he was in college, the 47-year-old Santos is now able to afford the equipment and time he needs to develop quality work.

"I have time to read up on it and study books on the topic. I'm pretty much a self-taught photographer," he said.

More than 12,000 images from 27 countries were entered in the widely respected nature photography competition. Out of these, only 131 were selected to be in the quarterly magazine's special contest edition, 14 of which were selected winners for the various categories in the competition, and one of which earned the competition's grand prize.

In addition to appearing in Nature's Best Photography's fall 2005 collector's edition, the winning photographs will be exhibited at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., starting this month.

Tope believes that "his image and the caption accompanying it will likely inspire others to use this process to create outstanding panoramas of their own with unlimited possibilities."

Now that his hobby has taken on a more professional route, Santos intends on keeping it that way.

"I didn't make the grand prize this year. I guess that's something to shoot for next year," he laughed.

Santos' personal Web site, [www.esartprints.com](http://www.esartprints.com), displays a collection of his work. Results of the Nature's Best Photography competition can be seen at [www.naturesbestmagazine.com](http://www.naturesbestmagazine.com).

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# SPORTS CLIPBOARD

## Alamia named one of top players to watch

The senior nominated for Brooks Wallace Award

UTPA senior outfielder Louie Alamia was one of the top 125 players nominated for the Brooks Wallace Award Tuesday, presented annually to the National College Baseball Player of the Year by the College Baseball Foundation.

Last season, Alamia ranked first on the Broncs' squad in batting average (.343), total bases (57), hits (46) and stolen bases (6) and finished second in at-bats (134), runs scored (26), runs batted in (19), slugging percentage (.425) and on-base percentage (.407). In the UTPA all-time record books, Alamia ranks first in hits (199), second in triples (10), fourth in total bases (266), fifth in at-bats (569) and batting average (.350), sixth in runs scored (117) and tied for eighth in doubles (29). A three-time All-Independent selection, Alamia earned his first nod on the first team All-Independent squad this past season.

The Wallace Watch will be trimmed to 12 semi-finalists in May before the selection committee narrows that list to three finalists following the NCAA Super Regionals at a press conference in Omaha, Neb.

## Trio earns All-Independent volleyball honors

Phillips adds to her accolades

Three members of The University of Texas-Pan American women's volleyball program were honored with All-Independent post-season honors, on the list released Monday.

Freshman Kellie Phillips was selected as a second team All-Independent team member after she finished the season ranked fourth in total attacks among all NCAA Division I Independent players, 10th in kills and 10th in service aces - which were all tops for an Independent freshman.

The Lady Broncs had a pair of players earn honorable mention All-Independent honors in senior Danielle Holthe and junior Chrissie Carrigan.

The 2005 NCAA Division I All-Independent Team was voted on by head coaches and sports information directors at NCAA Division I Independent institutions.

## Keating finishes fifth at National Championships

Senior captures his third All-American honor

UTPA senior Westly Keating earned his third All-American honor in cross country after he finished fifth overall out of 253 runners at the 2005 NCAA Division I Cross Country National Championships in Terre Haute, Ind., on Nov. 21. Senior Hector Gandara finished 206th overall with a time of 31:57.9.

UTPA Sports Information



UTPA Athletic Department

**TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS** - Sophomore Bronc Dexter Shankle puts in a reverse layup during the first game of the season against Sul Ross State.

## FOR THE RECORD

### UTPA SPORTS

#### Basketball

**Men's**  
Tuesday, Nov. 29  
TEXAS 82, UTPA 54

	UTPA			A	Pts
	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-D-T		
East	0-7	2-2	2-2-4	1	2
Lien	2-4	0-0	3-3-6	0	8
Sheppard	3-4	0-0	2-2-4	2	6
Chatman	4-13	2-8	1-3-4	0	10
Shankle	3-8	4-6	1-0-1	0	10
Puente	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	1	0
Gaither	0-3	0-0	1-1-2	0	0
Robinson	2-3	0-1	0-0-0	0	4
Edwards	1-4	0-0	0-0-0	0	2
Burrell	1-3	0-0	0-0-0	0	3
Trader	4-9	1-3	3-7-10	1	9
Buck	0-0	0-0	0-0-0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>20-58</b>	<b>11-18</b>	<b>13-20-33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>54</b>

Percentages: FG .345 FT .611, 3-Point 3-16, .188. Blocked shots: 1. Turnovers: 21 (Sheppard 7, Trader 5, Shankle 3, Gaither 2, Edwards 2, Chatman 2). Steals: 8 (Chatman 3, Sheppard 2, Shankle 1, Edwards 1, Trader 1). Personal Fouls: 22 (Edwards 5, Lien 4, Shappard 3, Shankle 3, East 2, Chatman 2, Burrell 1, Trader 1, Buck 1).

UTPA.....23 31 - 54  
UT.....32 50 - 82

#### Men's upcoming schedule

Dec. 3 Air Force  
Dec. 6 UT-San Antonio  
Dec. 10 Texas Tech

#### Dec. 15 Texas State

Dec. 20 Stephen F. Austin  
Dec. 22 Wright State  
Dec. 28 Oregon State  
Dec. 30 Arkansas  
Home games in bold.

#### Women's

Saturday, Nov. 26

UTPA 74, PRAIRIE VIEW A&M 55

	UTPA			A	Pts
	FG M-A	FT M-A	Reb O-D-T		
Jones	0-0	0-0	1-1-2	1	0
Reed	1-8	7-10	2-3-5	7	9
Daniel	4-8	0-2	3-1-4	2	8
Montague	6-10	0-0	2-2-4	5	17
Garrett	2-5	1-1	1-0-1	0	5
Pierce	1-5	2-2	0-4-4	1	4
Kostacky	1-2	0-0	0-0-0	0	2
Winfrey	2-6	4-4	0-1-1	1	9
Knerr	1-2	2-2	0-1-1	0	4
Ramirez	1-3	0-0	1-4-5	4	3
Coulson	2-3	1-2	0-1-1	0	5
Gooden	2-4	5-6	3-4-7	0	9
<b>Totals</b>	<b>23-56</b>	<b>22-29</b>	<b>17-29-46</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>75</b>

Percentages: FG .411 FT .759, 3-Point 7-15, .467. Blocked shots: 5 (Daniel 2, Montague 1, Winfrey 1, Knerr 1). Turnovers: 19 (Winfrey 4, Montague 3, Reed 2, Garrett 2, Coulson 2, Gooden 2, Knerr 1, Ramirez 1, Pierce 1, Daniel 1). Steals: 13 (Montague 5, Winfrey 2, Reed 1, Daniel 1, Pierce 1, Kostacky 1, Coulson 1, Knerr 1). Personal Fouls: 23 (Daniel 4, Garrett 4, Knerr 4, Coulson 3, Gooden 3, Ramirez 2, Winfrey 1, Montague 1, Pierce 1).

UTPA.....42 33 - 75  
TAMUK.....18 36 - 54

#### Women's upcoming schedule

Dec. 2 Kansas State (Wildcat Classic)  
Dec. 3 TBA (Wildcat Classic)  
Dec. 8 University of North Texas  
Dec. 10 Texas State  
Dec. 18 University of Arkansas  
Dec. 20 Schreiner University  
Dec. 22 Texas A&M-International  
IBC Battle at the Border Tournament  
Dec. 29 UTEP vs. Texas Southern  
Dec. 29 Texas State  
Dec. 30 UTEP vs. Texas State  
Dec. 30 Texas Southern  
Home games in bold.

### Cross Country

#### Men's

NCAA National Championships  
Nov. 21

- Simon Bairu Wisc. 29:15.9
- Richard Kiplaget Iona 29:21.9
- Chris Solinsky Wisc. 29:27.8
- Josh Mcdougal Lib. 29:32.6
- Westly Keating UTPA 29:38.1**
- Josh Rohatinsky BYU 29:40.2
- Josphat Boit Ark. 29:49.1
- Kurt Benninger ND 29:50.2
- Matt Withrow Wisc. 29:50.7
- Robert Cheseret Ari. 29:50.8
- Neftalem Araia Stan. 29:51.6
- Peter Kosgei Ark. 29:53.7
- Brian Olinger Oh. St. 29:54.3
- Antony Ford Wisc. 29:55.2
- Joe Thorne Tex. 29:59.0
- Ryan Warrenburg Ari. St. 30:29.9
- Adam Roche Iowa 30:58.0
- Travis Boyd Wash. 31:25.9
- Robert Wade Loy. (Ill.) 31:54.8
- Hector Gandara UTPA 31:57.8**

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# Lady Broncs look to rebound after slow start

By **JOEY HINOJOSA**  
*The Pan American*

The UTPA women's basketball team started their 2005-2006 season with four straight losses and just recently collected their first win against Prairie View A&M on Nov. 26.

It's not the way the team and women's basketball Head Coach DeAnn Craft would have hoped to begin the season, especially since this is supposed to be one the program's best teams ever. But they aren't dwelling on the losses, which came to Auburn, Prairie View, Louisiana-Lafayette, and Mississippi Valley State.

"I wouldn't say we had a rough start. I think the expectations have been a little unfair for a team that is so young," said the Garden City, Kans. native. "With us playing eight of our first nine games away, with us only returning two players that played substantial minutes last year; you're asking a lot early of a basketball team."

The third-year head coach has found some positives from the opening five contests.

"I think they've played some very good minutes, but they haven't learned how to put a whole ball game together," said Craft. "I do think that they dominated from start to finish the other night against Prairie View, and the bottom line is they learned how to finish the game."

"So I'm very proud of the effort they gave us. We really rebounded the way that we are going to have to at this level because of the type of opponent we are playing," added the Central Florida alumnus.

The players also felt that the first several games have given them the chance to learn. They won 14 times last year but are integrating several new players into the rotation.

"It's definitely not what we wanted to be, but we can't change the past," said senior Stacey Gooden. "We can just look ahead and try to get better everyday. If anything losing four games in a row is a lesson to us, so I think we will definitely pick it up from here."

"We've been through a couple of learning experiences. We started out 0-4. That's not what we wanted, but we had our first win this past weekend, and I think it can be a turn around. It can be a start for us," said senior Devin Reed.

According to Craft the first win is always the hardest for a young team to get, but is looking for her team to continue to improve. Dominique Montague has been the leading scorer so far at 11 points per game, while MaHogany Daniel, Reed, and Dottie Kneer combine for just over 20 per game. The Lady Broncs have shot just 31 percent from the floor so far, but they expect to get better.

"I think we need to shoot the ball more consistently. I think a lot of the times we settle for just a shot instead of the best shot. The other thing is that we can control the inside game as far as second chance points," said the third-year head coach. "We are very young in the interior, so teams are going to get some interior shots against us, but we should be able to box out and make sure that they don't get second and third shots against us. Rebounding will be a constant point of importance for us."



Delisa Guadarrama/The Pan American

**LUSTER** - Devin Reed comes up the court against Prairie View at the Field House Nov. 21. UTPA lost 67-66.

Craft noted that the team has not had their starting point guard, Tiona 'Shorty' Wilson, at all so far. Wilson injured her knee three days prior to the team's departure for the season opener at Auburn.

"It was very unfortunate that it happened, but you can't predict when injuries are going to happen. For a young team to lose their starting point guard that was kind of tough," said Craft. "The fact that we didn't get to have any practices because we played five games in eight days (hurts as well). We don't have time to work on things we just have to get ready to prepare for the next team."

Last year Wilson finished third on the team in steals and fourth in assists. The decision on whether Wilson will play in the upcoming Wildcat Classic will be made later today. In her absence other players have stepped up.

"I think our team realizes how valuable Shorty is in a lot of different

ways. I think Devin Reed did an admirable job, but Devin is a two [off guard, not the point]. She is a great leader and took it upon her shoulders and it got us our first win," said Craft. "I think Cinthia Ramirez really played brilliant against Prairie View at the tournament, so I think she is now getting into playing shape. We will eventually get everybody into playing shape, and when we do then I think we are going to be the team I think we can be this year."

The next Lady Bronc action will come at the Commerce Bank Wildcat Classic Dec. 2-3 against big-name teams in host Kansas State, St. Joseph's and Houston. Craft and the players are intrigued by the matches.

"What a big-time place we are getting ready to go to. Kansas State is in the top six in the attendance in the country, and they are just one of those special places," said the head coach. "I hope it is going to be a time for our young ladies to see what it really means to play at the highest level. They need to be proud of the opportunity they have to represent this institution."

"I think that this tournament with high-profile teams features big-time programs, and if we use that in context then we can be a very successful team the second semester when we play teams that are a little more equal to us," added Craft. "We know that Kansas State is at the level they're at because of their tradition, but that doesn't mean that our want is going to be any less to perform well, so we've got to take it in stride and help it make us better for the long run."

For some players, facing a big name team doesn't seem to phase them from their goal of winning games.

"The name doesn't really matter," said Gooden. "If we come out ready to play then it doesn't matter. We just have to focus on us."

Reed agreed, saying that "it is going to be a good experience because you get to play in front of thousands of people. When we go in we'll be hyped up to play, so hopefully we can be calm and play at the level we need to play at. It is going to be fun and hopefully we can win and that will make it even better."

UTPA will be facing Kansas State in their first contest and either St. Joseph's or Houston on the second day.

Following the Manhattan, Kans. tournament the Lady Broncs will be on the road for three more games when they visit North Texas, Texas State, and Arkansas. The squad will play their next home game during the winter break Dec. 20 against Schreiner University.

More home games will ensue versus Texas A&M International Dec. 22 and at the Battle at the Border Tournament, when the team will take on Texas State and Texas Southern. Before spring classes begin the group will travel to UTEP, Northern Arizona, and Northern Colorado.

# First season in books for Bronc soccer

By **ABEL SALINAS**  
*The Pan American*

The return of soccer to the University sports scene was a big story in 2005. The first season since the late 1990s came and went faster than the time it takes to explain the inside rule to a 5-year-old, and though the soccer was of the club variety instead of NCAA Division I, the hopes are high that someday soon the sport will return officially to the athletic department.

The men made a splash in the postseason; after a second-place division finish in the regular season, the state tournament in Lubbock was next, where the Broncs reached the quarterfinals before being eliminated by tournament host Texas Tech.

Despite the elimination, the morale of the club was impeccable. They took their wins and losses and returned home with an experience that will help them develop as a team in seasons to come.

"I can't wait for the next season to start," said Rodrigo Castillo, defender. "We gave it our best. We did the best we could we just came short."

The team, in its first year, was recognized by opponents and spectators alike as the "surprise of the tournament."

"The tournament was big for us," said Polo Tapia, club soccer president and defender on the unit. "I feel great about the performance, especially since we were all 'first timers.'"

The men's team had opponents to compete against, but they also had to battle exhaustion, the heat and the absence of coach Oscar Coronado.

Coronado had been with the team since April, donating his time and effort for the love of the game and his players. His responsibilities however were still with his family and his duty to provide for them forced him to leave South Texas and his beloved team before the Lubbock trip.

"We knew that the coach was not going to make the trip," said Castillo. "It was difficult going into the tournament, but we understood his situation and we could not hold him back, it just was fair to do so."

The team tried to overcome the absence of their coach and had some success in their first game, against Texas. But their inexperienced and a depleted roster due to red cards and injuries had them on the losing side in the next two games.

"The team stepped up to the occasion," said Tapia. "The team captains made the roster and the adjustments. We did the best we could but, we definitely needed direction in the last two games."

The Broncs played three matches in less than eight hours, so exhaustion was a significant factor.

"By the third game we didn't have anything left," said Castillo. "Our mind was willing, but our body will not let us go for the ball."

On the other hand the Lady Broncs experienced firsthand what it's like to play a tournament at the college level and will look to build on the experiences for next season.

"They left their hearts on the field," said Coach Luis Aguirre. "We just needed a little more experience."

The Lady Broncs will have 13 returning players and a ton of experience next season.



Courtesy of Bronc Soccer Club

**ATTACK** - UTPA's Juan "Puma" Reynoso (20) attempts the shot against a UTSA goaltender earlier this season.

"We need more time to play more as a time and create team unity," said Aguirre.

Signs of team unity were provided by Laila Diaz, who showed tremendous dedication for the team as she tried to play the second game of the tournament with severe dehydration.

"I was just trying to help the team," said Diaz. "I wanted to stay loyal besides feeling dizzy and weak."

After trying to make a tackle, Diaz collapsed.

"We were worried about her," said teammate Karen Trejo. "We were concerned because she wanted to keep playing."

The attitude and commitment shown by all the players throughout the whole season leaves the school with a solid building block for the future. Hopefully the near future.

# Revamped Boxing Gym attracts boxers of all ages in Edinburg

By JOEY GOMEZ  
The Pan American

Edinburg's Boxing Gym may stand as one of the city's most visible feature businesses. Eight years in the making, the facility has only recently made its presence known right in the heart of downtown.

What started in the fall of 1997 as a joint effort between two brothers, Mark and Jaime Garza, has evolved into a multipurpose center for fitness and self-defense.

"At first we were doing it for ourselves and people followed," said co-owner Mark Garza. "We started with 200 members who were on a month to month basis. Within six months we rotated half of those."

Current membership, according to Garza, is higher because most people who join already know what they want out of the facility.

He said the gym currently has close to 290 members, including children as young as nine all the way to working professionals who squeeze in time to exercise even before the work day begins. Garza said he hopes to reach 500 members in the near future.

"The morning crew are the professional workers," Garza said. "Even for those over 40 the intensity is the same."

Garza sums up the workout in one word, calling it "demanding," as the gym trains potential fighters even if they don't compete.

The workout consists of stretching, various drills in the ring, bag drills and time on the speed bag to cool down.

Apparently, the results speak for themselves. According to Garza results also happen pretty quickly in terms of boosting self-defense and self-esteem.

In the relatively short history of the gym, the program has produced many talented fighters, some who have already turned pro. The facility is also well known among boxing's elite.

The Penas need no introduction. Pablo and Noe trained in Edinburg before signing on with Top Rank Boxing, home to the likes of current WBC super lightweight champion Floyd Mayweather Jr.

According to Garza the first female toughman champion in the Valley,



Delisa Guadarrama/The Pan American

**FLOAT LIKE A...** - Destino Moreno, left, and Rudy Alaniz spar in a recent workout at the newer Boxing Gym in Edinburg. The latest facility opened in September on the town square. The gym has produced former champions in its brief history.

Lolly Gomez, trained there. Former Golden Gloves champion Cheryl Milford, a grad of The University of Texas-Pan American, put in her time as well.

"They train you at different levels depending on what your goals are," Milford, who captured the regional Golden Gloves title in Feb. 2002, said. "It's a great stress release, you use your whole body."

Mark Garza is also quick to point out the gym's alias in the upper echelons of professional boxing. Known to many as the South Texas Boxing Camp, the facility has hosted training sessions for big names like

Oscar de la Hoya, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr, Fernando Vargas and Butterbean.

"Word definitely gets around," he said.

Garza brings 15 years of amateur fighting experience to Edinburg which he said was primarily a good way to get in shape. He said his career took him to fights in Pleasanton, Corpus Christi, and Killeen.

He is currently a student at UTPA, majoring in speech pathology. Despite owning a thriving business, he said it's important to set an example by making education a priority in life.

"It's not even a job," Garza said. "The business is guiding us."

## Boxing Club coming in 2006

By JOEY GOMEZ  
The Pan American

The Boxing Gym in Edinburg is looking to expand this spring. The extension will target those at the University of Texas-Pan American who want all the benefits of a boxer's workout without the pressure of preparing for any obligatory fight.

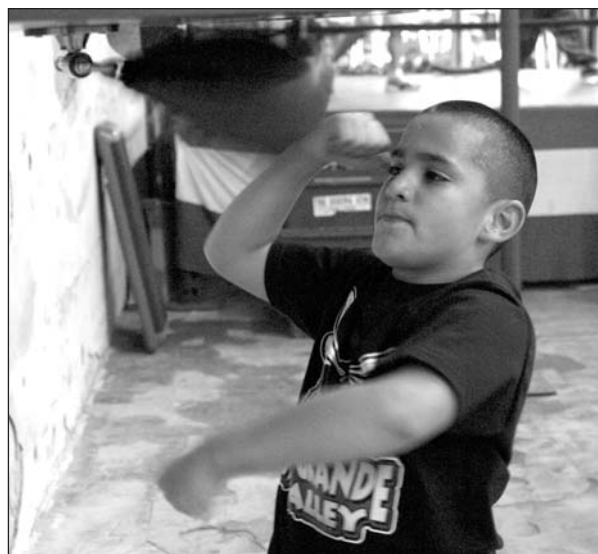
Management at the workout facility on the downtown square said that early 2006 is a likely time for the start of a new boxing club at UTPA. The club will be an extension of the current Martial Arts Club.

"There's really nothing yet," said Mark Garza, owner of the Boxing Gym who is also a student at UTPA. "In spring, we're set to begin with the membership drives."

If the club bears any similarities to the facility downtown, members will find themselves partaking in a highly intense workout regimen normally reserved for serious boxers looking to fight within six months.

Garza said that members on contract, who sign up for a 12-month commitment with the gym, are trained as if they actually were going to fight.

"Most members are females," Garza said. "They are there because they want to get in shape."



Delisa Guadarrama/The Pan American

**SCRAPPERS** - (Top) Santiago Villarreal, 9, works the speed bag. (Bottom) Moreno and Alaniz tangle in the ring.

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# SPORTS



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## Broncs take on rival Falcons Saturday

By **DARYL GONZALES**  
*The Pan American*

Heading into Saturday night's home game against the Air Force Academy, the Broncs have hopes of improving their record to 3-4. Since the 2000-01 season, The University of Texas-Pan American men's basketball team has enjoyed a 3-2 edge over the Falcons.

In the last meeting against Air Force, UTPA was handed an 84-51 setback on the road, and to show how much has changed since then, the leading scorer for the Broncs was Matt Berry with 10; he has since finished his eligibility so it's a new ball game.

"The last game that we played against them over on their court, we did not play well at all and they beat us pretty good," coach Robert Davenport commented.

On a good note, it was Derrick East who finished with a team high of five rebounds in that same game. Though he went 0 for 7 from the floor in the Broncs' most recent action, a loss at no. 2 Texas, he is the team's senior leader and has had a solid early season overall, leading the team in rebounds so far.

"Derrick has been playing well as a senior for us, and has been doing the good things that we need from him," Davenport said.

Guard Dexter Shankle and big man Colin Lien, who are averaging 12.8 and 11 points a game, respectively, join East (11.5) as important Broncs. Johnathan Chatman averages 8.8 per game and leads with 10 three-pointers. Sophomore Zach Trader has contributed 6.7 points and 5.2 rebounds per contest through six games.

"Dexter has been shooting the ball well, playing good defense, but then again we can always count on him to go all out every time for us," said Davenport. "Our thing all year is that we need to get better every time that we practice and I do feel that we've been getting better every time that we've played.

"The first ten games of the season are going to be the toughest for us, so we have to find a way to get better every time out, and the tournament this past weekend has enabled us to do just that," he added.

The Broncs follow the Air Force game with road games at UT-San Antonio Dec. 6 and Texas Tech Dec. 10. They are home for Texas State Dec. 15, then have four more road games through the end of December versus Stephen F. Austin, Wright State of Dayton, Ohio, Oregon State, and SEC power Arkansas.

Davenport said that transfer Larry Sheppard is still getting comfortable with what they are trying to do

offensively, but his quickness and speed are allowing them to do some good things.

"People don't really realize that he is a good defender as well," he said of the guard who leads the team in assists so far with four per game.

The last time that the Broncs came out on top in the series was in 2003-04, when they nipped Air Force 37-35. The zone defense kept it a low-scoring game, but this season the Broncs will need to play some better defense if they plan on exacting revenge after last season's loss.

"Their style of play is hard to defend and prepare for, but even though we might be more athletic and bigger than they are, all their guys can shoot the three in running a very consistent offense," the second-year head coach said.

"Our guys have to understand what they are trying to do and take their strengths away from them, and we've just got to make sure that it's our focus every time out," he added.

Davenport said that his team is always adding to the offensive approach, but the defense is prepared for



*courtesy of UTPA Athletic Dept.*

**IN THE MIX** - The Broncs gather before a recent home game. They face rival Air Force Saturday at the Field House.

what opponents going to try to do and take those things away from them.

"I don't expect it to be a low-scoring game that we have been used to in the past, because he said that they have been putting on the points in their other games this season," he said. "We have to do things that will help us later in the season, because the later games are the ones that we will need to win."

The Broncs are being outscored this season by 10.8 points per game, and shoot just 39.6 percent from the field, including a paltry 25.0 from downtown. They are out rebounded by 2.4 boards per game, and have a minus-15 mark in turnovers. They have posted victories over Sul Ross State and Texas Southern while losing to Illinois, Wichita State, Kent State and Texas.

**K**nown for its yearly warm climate and lack of rain, it seems that the Rio Grande Valley should be the Mecca of golf. And while this is somewhat the case for men in the area, a quick scan of local golf courses begs the question, where are all the women?

"The Rio Grande Valley, in general, probably has the lowest number of playing females of any area in the country," said Carlos Espinosa, director of golf at Palm View Golf Club in McAllen. Espinosa went on to say that, excluding the local high school girls teams, there is only one woman who plays out at Palm View frequently enough to call it her home course. He said from day to day, they see very few women come out to play, and sometimes a week will go by and they won't see any at all. While the gender imbalance may be extreme at Palm View, the numbers at other courses aren't much better.

Neil Etter, head golf pro at McAllen Country Club, said, "Couples golf, ladies golf, junior golf - I think those are an indicator of the overall health of a club," he said, "and that's where we're the weakest."

Barb Odale, the head women's golf coach at the University of Texas-Pan American and former professional golfer, said, "it seems to me that the number of girls here in the Valley is about equal to the number of girls when I was a player, and that makes the Valley about 20 years behind." Odale, 35, grew up playing golf in the Houston area but has lived in the Valley about seven years. Last summer her son participated in Little Linksters, which is the junior program put on by the South Texas Professional Golfers Association. Odale attended the rules class with her son in April, and she said there was only one girl out of the 13 junior golfers in that class. To encourage more girls to pick up the sport, Odale insists the problem must be addressed at the junior level. "We need to get as many girls interested

in playing that as there are boys."

So what is it about the sport that draws males but not females? Espinosa offers one explanation as to the lack of women golfers in the area.

"The majority of ladies in the Valley are probably married with kids, and kids take up a lot of time," he said. "The amount of time is just the biggest enemy we got." Though mothers who don't work have more time on their hands, it is still difficult for them to find time to play. Espinosa said it takes six hours out of a woman's day to play golf, including travel time, warm-up, playing, and maybe having a soda after the round. "The constraints that golf is going to put on a mother's time are tremendous," he said.

In the realm of girl's junior golf, Odale believes the shortage is a result of numbers. She presents a valid point as the population of Hidalgo County is

specifically West Texas. Raajpoot said golf has traditionally been a white sport in the past as many sports are "historical in nature."

Unfortunately the lack of golf may not be only a cultural issue but an economic one. According to the U.S. Census, the median household income for Hidalgo County is \$24,863, almost \$20,000 lower than the average for the rest of the country. Espinosa definitely thinks the lack of girls playing is tied to income and not just the result of a traditional Valley culture; just across the border at Reynosa Country Club, there are 35 ladies and girls who play regularly.

Although junior girl golfers are scarce in the Valley, it is interesting to note they have not fared well in the past when competing at the regional level. Of all the Valley schools that competed in regionals last spring, not one player or team

are hindered by the golf courses the Valley offers.

"The types of golf courses we have in the Valley limit us in our abilities to develop our talents," he explained. "I'm not saying that we don't have good golf courses, we just don't have the vegetation." The players are not accustomed to playing courses lined with trees or hills, and this can create a significant disadvantage when they tee it up with golfers from other parts of the state."

Offering a different thought, Etter shifts the onus to the high school coaches. He thinks too much emphasis is being put on filling numbers of the programs rather than focusing on instruction. He doesn't think the coaches are putting demands on the players to get them to improve their game.

"Specifically, the coaching mistake I feel is going on is all practice," he said. "The kids don't get out and play golf." He said he doesn't see the players really wanting to play.

"The Valley is the land of tomorrow, the land of mañana," Etter said. "Unfortunately, I think that way of life doesn't breed a competitive mindset."

In April, Palm View Golf Club hosted the Jalapeno FUTURES Golf Classic. With a surprising total of 2,000 in attendance over three days, Espinosa was hoping the women's professional tournament would spark some interest in women's golf in the Valley.

"We're hoping to use that as a platform to expose our golf course to ladies to see if we can generate some sort of interest," said Espinosa. He would like to see more ladies come out to play, but he doesn't think trying to convert women to the sport of golf is easy. Espinosa thinks the way to increase female participation is "creating new golfers at the junior ranks, not necessarily trying to get working mothers to play golf."

While no one can pinpoint the exact reason for a shortage of women players in the area, it's no secret there aren't enough young girls playing the game.

## Where are the links ladies?

by **Nicole Boychuk**

just over 658,000 compared to slightly more than 2 million in Houston, not counting the surrounding areas. Odale said if the Valley had that many girls to draw from, no doubt more would not only play but compete at a higher level as well. Included in that function of numbers, she cites the amount of golf courses the Valley has to offer compared to other parts of the country.

"We do have good quality golf courses, but we don't have the numbers the Houston area has," Odale said.

Uzzer Raajpoot, a sociology professor at UTPA who teaches a course about sports in society, said, "If you look at the United States, there are certain areas, there are certain regions where certain sports are popular." He cited the movie and book "Friday Night Lights" as an example, illustrating the emphasis that is placed on high school football in Texas,

advanced to the state tournament. But with an average temperature of 74 degrees and only 26 inches of rainfall a year, one would think Valley golfers should have plenty of time throughout the year to practice and sharpen their skills. So what has kept Valley players from playing up to this expectation?

"It's a major advantage for San Antonio schools when the regional site is in their hometown," said Dan Nelson, head golf coach at Edinburg High School. He said it's been about 10 to 15 years since regionals has been hosted in the area. It used to be played in Corpus Christi, and back then, the Valley would almost always send at least one team to state, according to Nelson.

Espinosa adds to that theory to account for a history of bad finishes. He thinks that although the practice facilities are getting better, the junior players