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Susan Gonzalez

Andrew Vera

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the panamerican

Volume 71, No. 10

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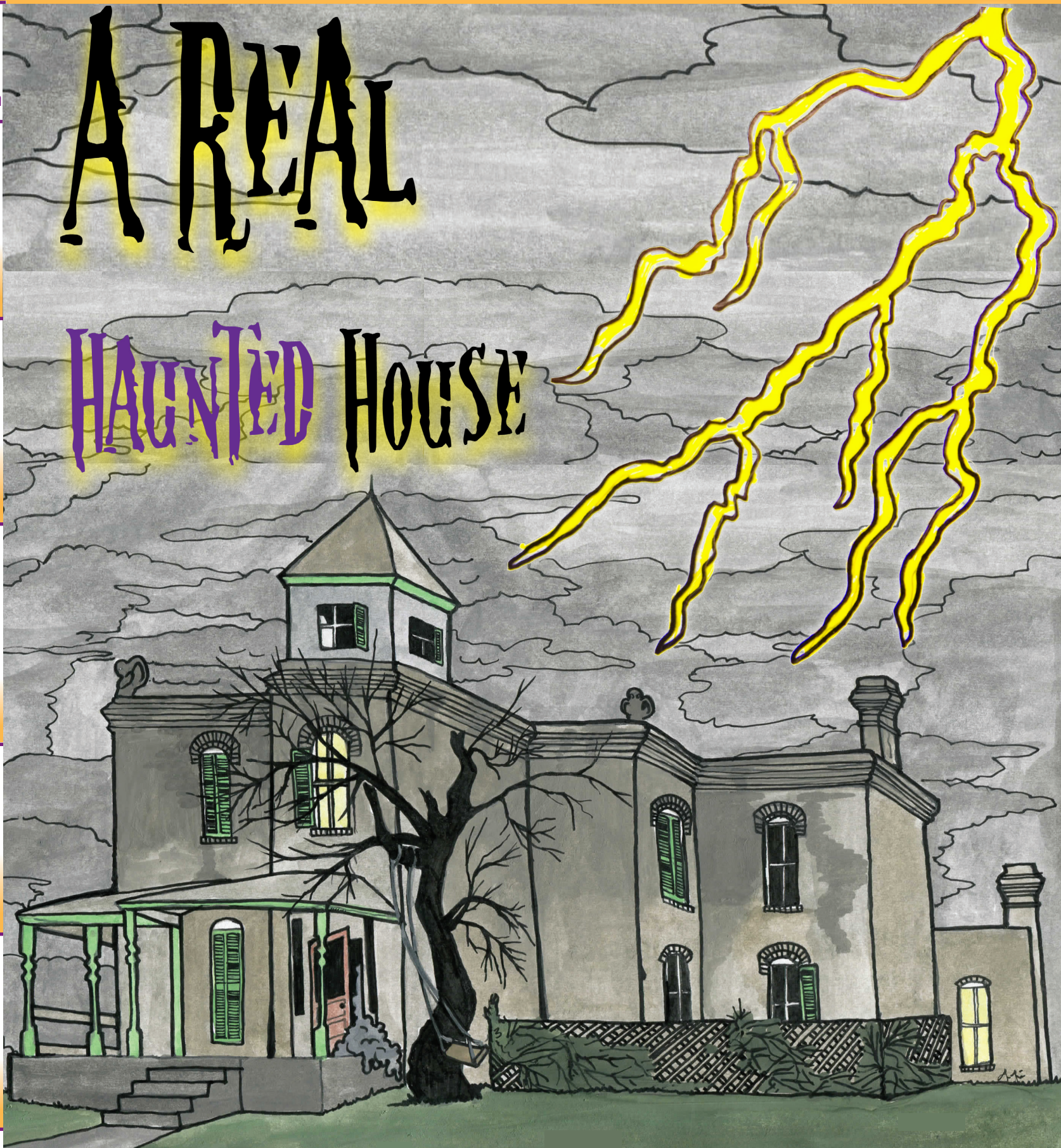
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The Pan American accepts letters of 300 words or less from students, staff and faculty regarding recent newspaper content, campus concerns or current events. We cannot publish anonymous letters or submissions containing hate speech or gratuitous personal attacks. Please send all letters to:

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THE PAN AMERICAN

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WHY WOULD TEXAS BE LAST?

Our great state may legalize same-sex marriage sooner than expected



Andrew Vera Co-EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Just this June 16 states across the U.S. allowed same-sex marriage. Today, that number has doubled to 32 not including the District of Columbia. While the initial 16 states took 10 years to achieve this status, the latter 16 legalized in just four months. When rejoicing in this shift toward equality, all that can be heard from friends and

peers is "Texas will be the last to legalize." But why is that the go-to response? What about Texas makes anyone feel this way?

What some fail to realize is that Texas, although one of 18 states that does not allow or recognize same-sex marriage, is closer to equality than other states. In February 2014 a Texas judge ruled the ban on same-sex marriage to be unconstitutional. Rather than moving on with his decision to make same-sex marriage legal through state legislation, he stayed on his motion. This in turn left the decision up to the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals, which left a ban on same-sex marriage, according to Pro-Con.org, a website that lays out the pros and cons of same-sex marriage legalization.

With this in mind, it's clear that there are 13 other states that are further behind on the road toward marriage equality. States such as Tennessee and the Da-

kotas have no laws that consider same-sex marriage unconstitutional and have constitutional bans currently sitting on the shoulders of the states' same-sex couples.

According to *San Antonio Express News*, the 5th Circuit Court, which reigns over Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, will meet in January

6th Circuit Court states are among the most conservative in the nation Texas has made some steps recently that might say otherwise.

According to Travis-CountyClerk.org, the county allows domestic partners, or a couple who lives together outside of marriage, between county em-

ployees the right to be dependents on an insurance plan regardless of sexual orientation. This right to insurance from a partner is also allowed in Dallas, Fort Worth,

El Paso, Houston and San Antonio.

Also, Texas has nearly 50,000 same-sex couples that are unable to get married, according to a study done by the University of California Los Angeles law school. Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter recently said that "if Texas doesn't want to have gay mar-

riage, then I think that's a right for Texans to decide," which begs the question: aren't there already Texas people who have decided they want it to be legal? With numbers this large, Texas has certainly recognized that there is a desire from its people to enforce marriage equality despite what the opposition has to say.

So why say that Texas will be the last state to legalize same-sex marriage? While Texas is not at the forefront of change, it has made progress toward marriage equality and that ought to be recognized.

Within the next two months, Texas could potentially be the 33rd state to join the states that have already shifted to the "right side of history."

What some fail to realize is that Texas, although one of 18 states that does not allow or recognize same-sex marriage, is closer to equality than other states.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In the October 16 issue of *The Pan American*, my former editor, May Ortega, reiterated an old line about our region that is more or less in common usage. This of course is the cliché about how valley people, or as she puts it, "valleyites" are stubborn.

This description of valley people is a relative of the family of sentences that begin with the words, "Valley people are so..."

I don't exempt myself from the charge of having used one of these sentences as an expedient

phrase. But most recently, I found myself thinking about how "valleyites" don't value tradition and history until it is threat-

I found myself thinking about how "valleyites" don't value tradition and history until it is threatened with the omission of tradition, thus deeming itself as just history.

ened with the omission of tradition, thus deeming itself as just history.

These clichés do run

rampant among our university, they are usually unflattering and like any other they too go through the hardly strenuous syn-

thesis of becoming common knowledge.

Students and Teacher's Assistants have told me

about how they do not take interest in athletic events because unlike bigger schools, we're only Division II or III; be-

cause our athletic teams have never beat any good schools, etc.

But when I think

of the Division I conference we're in, the inaugural year of our girls' soccer team, how our baseball team beat Alabama last season, I think of how our students should take more pride in the achievements of our university.

Great universities have undergone name changes but have kept their nicknames/mascots, like The University of Pennsylvania, Columbia University, Princeton and Texas State University.

What these great institutions have in common, aside from their

proud traditions, is the longevity that has allowed for those traditions to live on.

So if fighting for our school's traditions is stubborn, then let's be honored, my fellow Broncs, to be a part of this proud tradition of stubbornness.

-Jonathan Salinas Student Government Association Senator-At-Large and psychology major

CREATING BONDS

New health care alliance benefits Valley vets

By Andrew Vera

The Pan American

A collaborative effort between Sen. Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa, D-McAllen, and State Rep. Sergio Muñoz Jr., D-Mission, have the wheels spinning on an initiative to improve health care conditions for Rio Grande Valley veterans.

The proposal, pegged to be filed in the state Legislature at the opening of the next senate session beginning in January, will ultimately create ties between veteran health care and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley medical school, set to open in fall 2016. The purpose of this coalition is to alleviate the problems more than 48,000 Valley vets have with wait times and new patient sign-up.

The VA health care system was under fire earlier this year after \$845 million worth of medical malpractice suits had been filed against it because of long patient wait times and rumors of sexual harassment, racism and illegal drug use in facilities, according to Politico. An internal audit performed by the VA revealed that 57,000 veterans waited more than 90 days to receive medical care, according to *The Washington Post*.

That same audit marked the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Harlingen as having the “worst wait times in the nation,” according to KRGV-TV. The report stated that new patients had to wait 145 days to see a specialist and, in some cases, primary care patients waited for upward of 85 days.

Senior criminal justice major Carlos Infante said this information does not surprise him. As a student veteran and someone who deals with VA hospitals for health care, he said this problem has become worse over time.

“The service over (in Harlingen) was never that great to begin with,” said the former Marine who served four years in Afghanistan. “The saddest part is when you see older gentlemen in pain and hoping for help that they might have to

wait months for.”

In an effort to resolve the results of the audit, a work group that consists of UTRGV Medical School Dean Francisco Fernandez, representatives from UT Health Science Center San Antonio, the Texas Veterans Commission and federal VA partners in the Valley is currently meeting to discuss the possibilities of a newfangled approach to harnessing funds from both federal and state entities.

“A partnership and coordination among our UTRGV medical school, our federal VA partners, academia and the private sector will enhance access to medical service for all of our Valley veterans,” Hinojosa said.

Muñoz wrote to the UT System in May asking for consideration of an integrated veteran health care system as planning for the medical school began. He wrote in a letter to UT System Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa that a “way for our veterans to benefit from the development and implementation of the medical school” needs to be found.

In another letter to Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp Muñoz said that the funding for the hospital would come from the VA but administration would be controlled by the state of Texas.

Plans to use UTRGV as a hub for veteran health care are in motion but Hinojosa said authorization is still needed to move forward with the plan. While the VA is allowed to contract with state entities - UTRGV in this case - there are stipulations and limitations to this arrangement. First, the VA hospital must not be able to fully serve its community and be incapable of housing proper hospital care.

Retired Navy Petty Officer First Class Gabriel Lopez, a member of South Texas Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Association, a group that keeps tabs on the Harlingen clinic, said the worst case he has heard of is a patient who waited 18 months for service. Lopez noted that the wait

times are due to a lack of staff.

With these incidences in mind, Hinojosa knows that this system needs to be amended for Valley vets.

“While there is still much work to be done, our legislative delegation is successfully moving in the right direction,” Hinojosa said in an Oct. 17 press release. “We need to do better to improve the well-being and mental health of all our veterans and their families.”

According to U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs website, 11-20 percent of those who participated in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom suffered post-traumatic stress disorder, an anxiety disorder than individuals suffer from after extremely emotional trauma. Fernandez, who specializes in psychiatry and neuroscience, said the mental health of veterans will be at the forefront of the working group’s agenda as it seeks to improve their health care.

According to Hinojosa’s Oct. 17 press release, there are already state funds set aside for mental health disabilities for veterans that the working group, along with Muñoz and Hinojosa, hope to take advantage of during the budget processes of the 2015 Texas Senate session.

While Hinojosa and other state lawmakers are hopeful that this new health care system will provide better service to Valley vets, Infante feels it will take a lot more to fix the problems veterans currently face.

“I think the problems are so big that it will take a lot more than getting UTRGV involved,” the 29-year-old said. “It might help (some people) but the rest of the people will probably be stuck with the same issues they had before.”

Still, Hinojosa is proud of the proposal and sees a bright future for the health care of Valley veterans.

“We are working towards this goal and I applaud Representative Sergio Muñoz for his leadership and commitment to this initiative,” he said.

The RGV has more than **48,000** veterans

8.6% of Texas citizens 18 and older are veterans

8.92 million Americans are enrolled in the VA health care system

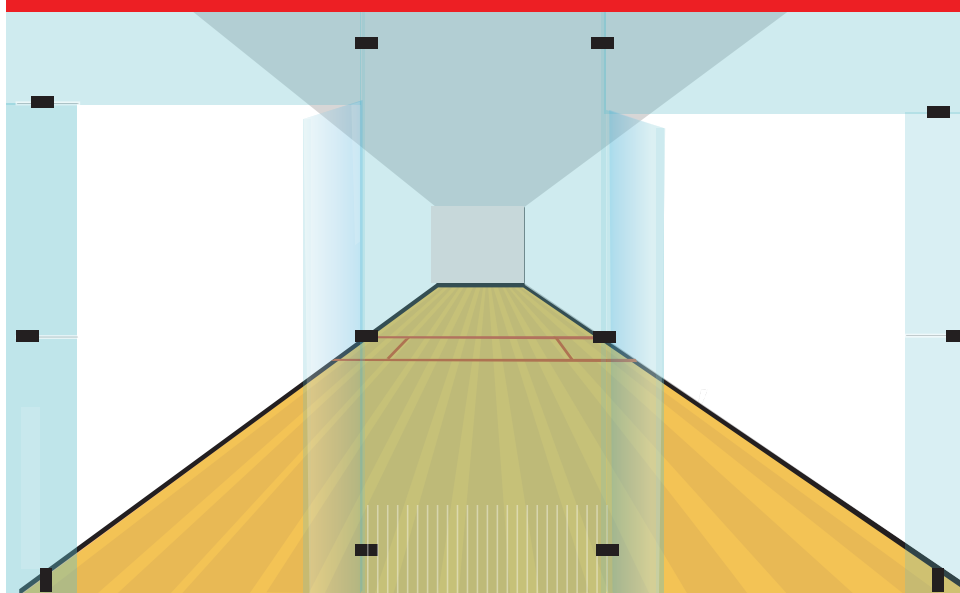
Wait times at the VA Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System in Harlingen are 145 days for patients waiting for a specialist and 85 days for those waiting for primary patient care.

At least 20% of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have PTSD and/or depression.



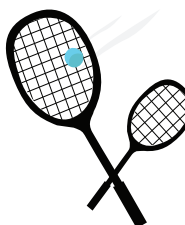
50% of those with PTSD do not seek treatment

Texas has 1.7 million wartime veterans



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A REAL HAUNTED HOUSE Toluca Ranch opens to the public

Story by May Ortega

Photos by Jon Nutt

The Pan American

When Julie Vera's husband bought 6,000 acres of land known as the Toluca Ranch in Progreso, Texas in December, she was more than excited to visit. It wasn't until after the deal was done that they discovered it had a haunted history and a set of graves next to the land's house.

"I didn't know anything about it. After we closed on it I started doing some research and that's when I started reading the stories and the legends and the tales," said Vera, an Edinburg resident. "I was kind of excited to be part of the history but also kind of scared because you don't know what you're getting yourself into."

After being abandoned for 12 years, Vera and her husband Domingo Gonzalez decided to embrace the place's reputation and open it to the public as a haunted house. Gonzalez said the attraction would help raise funds

for their nonprofit organization RGV Helping Hands, which supports disabled individuals with low incomes.

There are various stories concerning the ranch's original owner, Florencio Sáenz, and how he climbed the ladder of success. Vera explained that Sáenz built the house in 1880 and due to his success in business he also built a school, general convenience store, post office and a church - which still stands less than 100 feet away from his home. According to the Catholic Diocese of Brownsville, Sáenz built the St. Joseph Church "in thanksgiving for the fresh water found on his land."

Today there is no access into the boarded-up structure. Vera herself has never seen the inside, but said sky-blue boat sails hang from its ceiling. On its lawn are eight graves holding Sáenz's descendants, which gave way to tales

of the land's supernatural history.

In one local legend, as told by author and RGV resident David Bowles, Sáenz made a deal with the devil to become wealthy. In exchange for his success, he had to sell his soul and would never be able to have children. He came into possession of the ranch soon after and began making use of his new property. In this version of the story it is said he used the church next door to pray for his bartered soul. As promised by Satan, Sáenz and his wife failed at having children. After a family tragedy the couple adopted his niece, whom they raised as their own. It was inside the small church where he died in 1927 at the age of 91 but was buried with his wife's family in her hometown.

Now Sáenz's grandchildren and great-grandchildren lie buried in front of the

church just yards away from the house.

Vera said her family has made some restorations like repairing broken windows and the roof. She also explained the three-story house and the church were constructed out of bricks made from the ranch's own dirt, inside a factory Sáenz also had on the land.

Inside the house there are nine rooms of various sizes and purposes, their paint-chipped walls bearing white bricks. Steep wooden stairs connect the first two floors but access to the single, empty room perched at the top of the building is much more narrow. The house's tall walls are lined with deep cracks and the high ceilings have peeling paint over wooden planks. In addition, six of the seven fireplaces sit broken and unusable. The only functioning one is in a room on the second floor. On either side of this furnace is a door carved into the wall, opening to a solid brick wall. The back of the house has several bul-

let holes as remnants of a battle between soldiers and bandits who were trying to burn the house down in 1915. In the end one soldier died and Sáenz moved to Mercedes temporarily to escape the outlaws.

As for hauntings, their daughter Gina Gonzalez said that while preparing the house for the public during the day, objects seemed to have been moved from room to room. In one video her father took after purchasing the house a set of dark feet can be seen reaching the top of the wooden stairs even though he was the only person inside the house. When he investigated, he found he was indeed alone.

Gonzalez, who is originally from Del Rio, said his family had initially planned on moving in and making renovations but

after Vera discovered the unsettling tales, she rejected the idea.

Instead Domingo, Vera, Gina and other volunteers began work on the haunted house project in September and officially opened Sept. 26. The normally private property has its last open weekend this Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Adults pay \$20, kids pay \$10 and students with a valid ID get \$5 off.

Outside of the house sits an old, rusted hearse where spectators hear screams of agony. Once they enter through the front door they will go through various rooms, each with a different theme. There are also black-cloaked figures scattered throughout the house. Gina, who came down from Austin to help her family put the scares together, said her favorite area is the "Baby Room."

Upon entering, guests will walk



through hanging dolls and bloody sheets to find a red-stained bed with a life-sized porcelain doll waiting to make them part of her own collection.

Although Gina has found the opportunity to design a haunted house incredible, she said her father was most ecstatic to create such an attraction.

"This is my dad's dream more than it is mine," she explained. "I would say just as much as mine, but no. He's a kid in a candy shop with this."

Domingo discussed his love for terror while putting the final touches in the "Clown Room" which he made because of his interest in them.

"It's fun to watch adults get scared by something as simple as clowns," he said. "It's a really fun time chasing people around and it's for a good cause."

Overall there are 20 actors hidden throughout the house including Domingo himself, who plays Leatherface, a chainsaw-wielding maniac who hunts guests throughout their journey as seen in the 1974 cult movie *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.

Members of the team show up to the property in the afternoons to add to the haunted house and tweak things. Even if the doors open for business at 9 p.m. Domingo will be working on something until 8:50 before getting into his costume.

Another actor in the house is Angel Gonzales who had no prior knowledge of the place's history, but said the house didn't need an introduction to be creepy.

"The first time I walked into the house I was really nervous," the 20-year-old said. "I kept thinking I was going to see something or something was going to pop out."

Since its opening, Gonzales said guests have fainted during scares and said they've had several cases of wet pants exiting the attraction as well.

"It's funny to watch people get scared," she said with a smile. "They've peed their pants and we've had people leave crying."

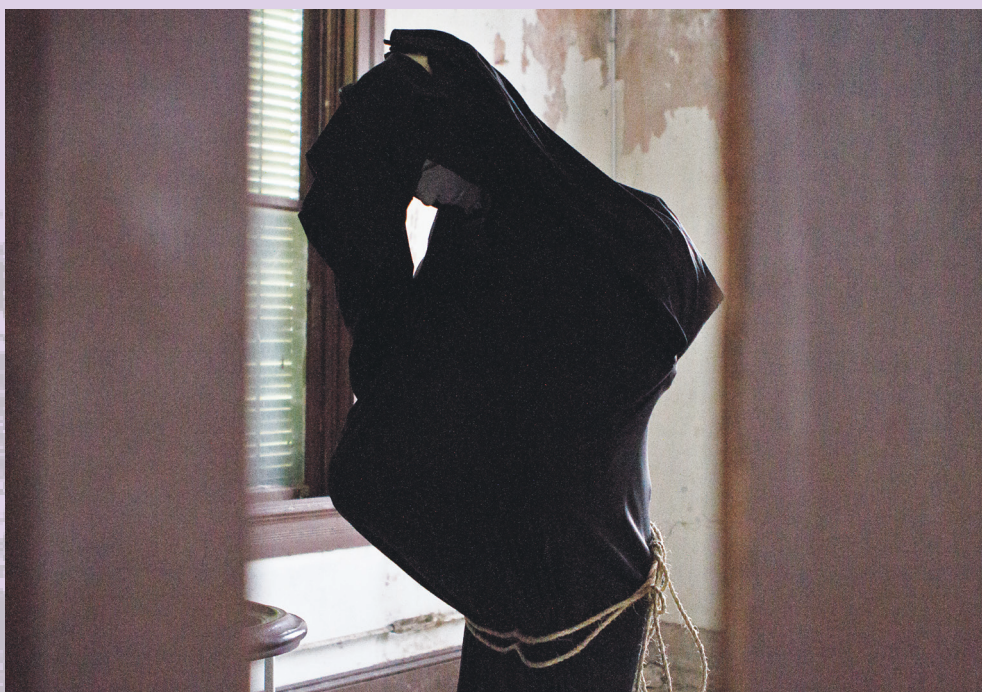
Vera said that although the house is scary, it isn't meant with malice and she is glad the family has found a good use for it.

"It's entertainment. It gives people something to do, something to talk about," she said. "And you can take them out of the regular routines. It's exciting."

Regardless of the home's history and the fact that she doesn't like horror films or haunted houses, Vera still sees a bright future for it.

"I am in love with this house," she said. "It is one of the most beautiful homes I've ever seen. I absolutely love this home. Hopefully we get to do something much nicer and share it with the public."

Once the Halloween season ends the props and actors will be gone, but the house will still stand behind its gargoyleguarded fence. Domingo said plans to live in the home don't seem likely, but he wants to make use of it for other events such as Mardi Gras. Until then the house will be waiting for more visitors.



'VICTIM TO SURVIVOR'

Event on campus starts dialogue on rape, sexual assault

By Susan Gonzalez
The Pan American

Sitting in a circle on the brightly lit stage of the Student Union Theater with more than a dozen other people UTPA alumna Alexis Bay recounted the story of her rape in vivid detail. Bay, who graduated from the University in May of this year, shared her story with those who attended the "Victim to Survivor: A Mentality Shift Session" held Oct. 28.

Co-hosted with UTPA student Christina Alvarez, the event was held so individuals could share their experiences with rape and sexual assault as well as educate the 20 attendees about the prevalence of sexual violence in society.

Bay, who was a high school student when she was raped, is one of the estimated 17.7 million American women who have been victims of attempted or completed rape, according to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network. However, these statistics do not account

for the rapes that go unreported. For example, 42 percent of women who are date raped do not report it, according to the University of the Sciences in Philadelphia.

The 24-year-old said she shared her story to help these survivors.

"I can personally say that had I attended an event like this I think things in my life would be very different and a lot of people have told (Alvarez and I) that before," Bay said. "I believe the reason for that is because sometimes all you really need in life is just to know you're not alone. Sometimes you just need to hear somebody describe something that sounds similar to what you're dealing with."

According to RAINN, victims of sexual assault are three times more likely to suffer from depression and six times more likely to suffer from "post-traumatic stress disorder," a mental illness that can manifest after going through

a distressing event. Bay said she experienced both after her rape, but believes support groups and sessions such as "Victim to Survivor" can help those coping with this type of trauma.

"If you really think about it, we do not do a good enough job in terms of teaching young

“ A lot of people silently suffer and it's really sad because...when you realize that there are other people who have either suffered as you have or are currently suffering it makes the world a less alienated and scary place.

- Alexis Bay
UTPA alumna

people and people in society how to cope because we don't teach even just basic coping mechanisms or have really good outreach or resources," said Bay, who currently works as a community organizer in the Rio Grande Valley. "A lot

of people silently suffer and it's really sad because...when you realize that there are other people who have either suffered as you have or are currently suffering, it makes the world a less alienated and scary place."

In 2013 there were 17,844 sexual assault incidents reported in Texas, as stated in

Hidalgo County.

Bay shared statistics and facts about rape and sexual assault during the event, but it was not her first time presenting on this issue. In fall 2013 she participated in The Archer Fellowship Program. This academic program allows University of Texas students to participate in internships in Washington, D.C. while earning college credit. After telling her professor she had been raped as a teenager, she was asked to share her story with the rest of the Archer fellows. This experience was therapeutic and eye opening, Bay said.

"I had people telling me about their own previous experiences with assault and rape and molestation," she said. "I had men tell me that they were going to reach out to women in their lives that had gone through this, but (they) never really understood the gravity of what it means to be a survivor. There was not a single person who made me feel bad

or awkward or strange. There was just complete unity in the group."

To help bring unity to others Bay and Alvarez started a support group for rape and sexual assault survivors with the help of The Feminist Alliance at UTPA. The group is in its beginning stages, but Bay said it will have weekly support through blogging site Tumblr and email.

For Bay, raising awareness of this support group and other resources was one of the most rewarding parts of speaking at "Victim to Survivor."

"I feel like my favorite thing about this event...is (for people) to know this (group) exists," she said. "Maybe eventually (more survivors) can come to one of these events and know they're loved and cared for and they are important... what happened to them does not determine the rest of their lives or their value as a person."

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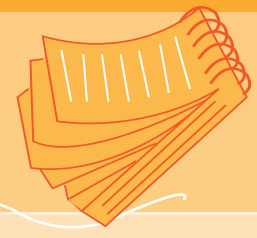
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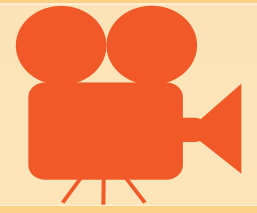
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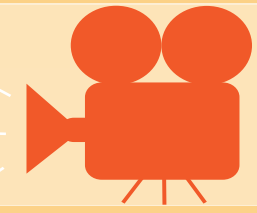
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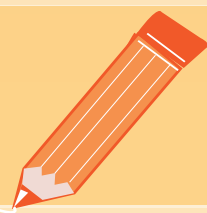
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Vertical limit

By Kristela Garza
The Pan American

The University is home to dozens of clubs, but only one of them hangs high above the rest, altitude-wise that is. The Rock Climbing Association is two years old and run by Sarah Soto, an avid rock climber clamoring to draw in new members.

The club is made of 18 regular climbers who each take part in the rock wall at the Wellness and Recreation Center. The group is led by University senior Soto, a two-year veteran climber who took over as president earlier this year and appointed Selena Ramirez as the vice president.

This marks the first semester the club isn't split into two separate groups. It was previously divided into the traveling climbing competitors and the home team of non-traveling enthusiasts, who mainly climbed the wall at the rec.

"The RCA is very different, it is not your typical club," Soto said. "It is not your typical exercise and people are drawn to that. We are a universal type of group and people...it is about the ambiance, the rock wall and friendships that are created while we are around."

The traveling team often

went out of town to compete in small rock climbing competitions and took outdoor trips until the leaders decided to make the club into one unit this year. Soto said, they did not get to participate much in travel competitions last year because of work and school. This year their goal was to make outdoor excursions more feasible for everyone by combining the groups.

This allows for a single, open group that climbs on a non-competitive basis, giving a more recreational feel. For Soto and Ramirez this year is almost like starting anew.

"We are having to do everything from the beginning," said Ramirez, a sophomore. "We are still learning and trying to raise money. It gets stressful at times but I think we need to get everything going again and people will start seeing us and getting involved."

TOTALLY MENTAL

According to Soto, rock climbing is different from other recreational activities because it strengthens the body and the mind. It requires considerable physical strength, constant attention and careful movements in order to safely ascend.

The mental workout helps

Soto work on problem-solving skills. She said that climbing is a stress reliever and that the mental challenge keeps her mind sharp, aiding in life's tough day-to-day decisions.

"It is amazing how problems kind of coincide when you are able to figure out a problem on the rock wall," Soto said. "It translates very easily to your everyday life and your problem solving throughout the day."

Although rock climbing is not an everyday activity for most Rio Grande Valley natives, there are three off-campus places that club members often visit. For example, one is Enchanted Rock in Fredericksburg, located in the Central Texas Hill Country.

There, people interested in outdoor climbing can participate in bouldering or "freebase climbing," which is climbing without the use of assistance or safety equipment. Veterans can also participate in climbing high, natural rock faces with the assistance of ropes and special equipment.

According to Soto, places like Enchanted Rock are useful because they offer variety in difficulty levels. The rock face climbing route is different and in order to be a well-rounded climber it is best to have expo-

UTPA Rock Climbing Club reaches new heights

sure to many different kinds of situations, outdoors or indoors.

Although the club does have a rock wall on hand at the University, the club VP claims the 35-foot rock wall is not enough.

"The rock wall is so small," Ramirez said. "We are very limited. There are only five routes with one being the hardest."

SAFETY FIRST

Although most of the club members are experienced, Soto makes sure to include those who are not accustomed to the challenge of climbing. She is afraid of heights and therefore knows now most beginner-level climbers feel when first strapping on a harness.

"I make sure to let them know they are not alone and not to be afraid," she said. "What happens is a lot of people stop themselves from joining because they think that we are all people who are athletic climbers and that is not the case at all. We have people that have only been climbing for a week to seven years, everyone is different."

For the club president climbing is a both a blessing and curse. She loves it and at the same time she fears it. However, with the help of fellow climbers she makes sure that even the

newest members are at ease and as safe as possible.

She has made sure that more than 10 club members are certified in climbing and rappelling equipment maintenance, known as belaying. These members protect climbers by maintaining rope length and control on the ground.

The club leaders are very careful and wary of dangers that come with climbing, insisting that every member be knowledgeable and certified to use the correct equipment. Soto and Ramirez believe it is right to be vigilant of their club member's safety. According to the Center for Injury Research and Policy of the Research Institute at the Nationwide Children's Hospital, there has been a 63 percent increase in the number of patients visiting U.S. emergency rooms for rock climbing-related injuries from 1990 to 2007.

The study estimates that 40,282 individuals between the ages of 2-74 were treated in emergency room settings for climbing-related injuries. Most of these hospitalizations had to do with ankle or foot fractures, sprains and strains. In addition, most of the injuries occurred as a result of falls from 20 feet or higher.

Though the injury numbers are high for rock climbing, this is a small percentage of the 3.5 million sports-related injuries that occur with children and teens.

Despite the risks, Soto and Ramirez have passion for the sport and it drives them to spread the word about climbing at UTPA and around the Valley.

"Rock climbing is not known here," Ramirez said. "So it is nice to have freshmen coming over and seeing what it is all about. I fell in love with it right from the first time and my goal is to get people to know about rock climbing more. It is just a whole different experience."



CLINCHING A SPOT

UTPA women's soccer fighting for position

By Marco Torres
The Pan American

After a 6-1-3 start the women's soccer team have lost five of the last six Western Athletic Conference soccer games. But despite recent back-to-back losses, UTPA has earned a spot in the Western Athletic Conference Tournament with one game left.

In their most recent game the Broncos tried to bounce back after a 4-2 loss to the Bakersfield Roadrunners Oct. 24 at the California State University, Bakersfield Main Soccer Field. Instead, UTPA fell to Grand Canyon University Oct. 26 at the GCU Soccer Field in Phoenix 4-1.

However, Head Soccer Coach Glad Bugariu believes the month has not been rough.

"The results have not been positive," Bugariu said. "But for a first-year team we are in a position to finish in fourth which would be a miracle...It is a team that starts 11 freshmen, playing teams that are vastly experienced and better funded. There is a gap and I think we

have done a good job in closing that gap."

The Broncos are now 8-7-4, 2-6-1 in the WAC, and have clinched a spot in the WAC Tournament after Seattle University dominated Chicago State University Oct. 26 11-0. The win gave the Broncos an automatic spot in the postseason, with the seeding (four or six) to be determined by the result in the final game of the regular season Oct. 31.

"The goal is to always get in the playoffs," Bugariu said. "We wanted to be a first-year team that gets in the playoffs, which doesn't happen very often for first-year teams. We are proud of that achievement and if we are the fourth seed it will put the conference in perspective. We won't be top three but we are the fourth team."

Throughout the inaugural season of the women's soccer team, the Broncos have realized that steps must be taken in order for a team to grow and become successful.

"This is not the first recruit-

ing class that is going to win us a WAC Championship," Bugariu said. "It is going to take two or three recruiting classes to get to the level of Seattle, Kansas City and Utah. And if you look at our results overall, our losses have come to programs that are better funded and that have been around much longer. So it will take some time but not that long."

The Broncos will close out the regular season Oct. 31 against New Mexico State in Las Cruces, N.M. The WAC Tournament is scheduled for Nov. 6-9 in Seattle.

Bugariu knows that it is important for the team to end the regular season on a good note in order to get some momentum before the start of the tournament.

"For us it is the final," Bugariu said. "It is the difference between a six seed and a four seed. The six seed will put us in position to battle with Seattle, Kansas City or Utah but a four seed gives us an accessible team in the first round to work with."



The UTPA Lady Broncos celebrate their 1-0 victory over Our Lady of the Lake University Sept. 20. In spite of their loss against Grand Canyon University, the women's soccer team will continue to play in the Western Athletic Conference Tournament Nov. 6.

Kevin Martinez