

RIO GRANDE VALLEY



COURTESY PHOTO

An unidentified man orders tacos at "La Esquina Del Taco" taco stand, one of many places mentioned in the "Tacos of Texas" book.

Book launch party takes place today

STAFF REPORT

A book launch party for "The Tacos of Texas," by Mando Rayo and Jarod Neece, takes place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. tonight at the Historic Alonzo Building, 510 E. St. Charles St.

Tacos and beer will be available. The authors will be on hand to share highlights from the book,



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Learn more at the official "Tacos of Texas" website.

which includes a "top five" list of Rio Grande Valley taco makers, including three in Brownsville: El Ultimo Taco, Vera's Backyard Bar-B-Que and Gourmet Central by Cel.

The book, published by the University of Texas Press, highlights 10 taco cities/regions of the state, and includes interviews with "restaurant owners, taqueros, abuelitas, chefs and

patrons," according to the authors.

Neece and Rayo also wrote "Austin Breakfast Tacos: The Story of the Most Important Taco of the Day."

The event, hosted by the Brownsville Historic Association, is free and open to the public.

For more information visit www.tacosoftexas.com

'Active shooter' report prompts school lockdowns

BY KAYLEIGH SOMMER
STAFF WRITER

HARLINGEN — Police are calling it a diversionary tactic.

Hoaxers phoned in to report a crime so they could take off the heat as they robbed a pawn shop, police said.

Instead of calling in a bomb threat, the criminals called in a report of an "active shooter" at Harlingen High School South about 9:30 a.m. Thursday, police said.

The fake call prompted about a 45-minute lockdown of both Harlingen high schools, worrying parents and students.

"I was in the cafeteria taking senior class pictures," said Alyssa Torres, 17. "Everyone was worried, texting parents and loved ones."

Being in the cafeteria left the students wide open to the unexpected. In the cafeteria, Torres said they were surrounded by windows and open hallways. Anything could have happened.

"If there was an actual

shooter, there was nowhere we could go," she said.

That's when the group sprang into action and formed a prayer circle. The students prayed for everyone in the cafeteria and everyone in the school.

"It calmed most of us down," Torres said.

While officers responded to the school, they received a call about a robbery in progress at the Amigo Pawn shop on Loop 499.

Police said two men entered the pawn shop wearing masks and hooded shirts. One man was holding a gun, while the other man was holding a hammer.

The man with the hammer broke the glass counter and started removing jewelry. They also stole the truck of a customer.

Two men and a female accomplice are currently in police custody awaiting arraignment, police said.

The three were arrested in connection with the robbery and for making a false threat against the school, police said.

Police are working to connect the hoax with the rob-

bery suspects. The case is still active and remains under investigation.

Police said they will release information as it becomes available. The identity of the suspects will be released at a later time, probably today after they are arraigned, police said.

Hoax or not, the incident spurred fear in most, prompting questioning text messages from terrified parents — so much so that several took their kids home for the day.

Senior Lily Garcia, 17, took cover in her Physics classroom's supply room. The door was locked, lights were turned off and everyone was told to stay quiet.

By this time, Garcia was receiving several text messages from several people.

"Someone's shooting? Bombs?"

"My phone signal was bad. I kept thinking, 'What is actually going on,'" she said. "My dad was really worried and still is."

At the time of the lockdown, Mia Olivares, 17, was

in the girls locker room dressing out for athletics.

Surrounded by about 200 other girls, and just two coaches, the girls had to huddle down in the locker room and wait the lockdown out, unsure of what was going on outside.

Some girls hid in the showers and some hid in the toilet stalls, she said.

Many were frightened.

"We were told to remain quiet and we turned off our phones so we wouldn't draw attention to ourselves," Olivares said.

The girls had no way of knowing whether they were secure in the locker room. Their coaches did everything they could to reassure them of their safety.

At the start of the lockdown, Garcia thought it was just a drill.

As time went on, Garcia realized it wasn't a drill. The threat was real to the girls huddled in the locker room.

"When they said to remain quiet, we didn't know what to do," Garcia said.

So they prayed.

UTRGV expands HESTEC to Brownsville, Harlingen

BY DANYA PEREZ-HERNANDEZ
STAFF WRITER

EDINBURG — This year marks the 15th anniversary, or quinceañera, of HESTEC — Hispanic Engineering Science and Technology week — and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley is commemorating the occasion by expanding the reach of the conference.

"We've seen throughout these 15 years literally thousands and thousands of students who have come through our campuses," UTRGV Provost Havidán Rodríguez said. "This has had a really positive impact in the education of our students. It is about expanding education opportunities, and what better example than HESTEC?"

This will be the first year the university will host two of its most popular events, the Robotics Day and the U.S. Navy SeaPerch Challenge, in Brownsville and Harlingen, respectively.

The conference was created at the former University of Texas-Pan American with help from Congressman Rubén Hinojosa to engage students starting at the middle school level in STEM — science, technology, engineering and mathe-

tics — activities and encourage them to seek jobs in these fields.

UTPA merged with its neighbor, The University of Texas at Brownsville, in 2015 to create UTRGV, which also offers teaching facilities in Harlingen, McAllen, Rio Grande City and South Padre Island.

During its 15 years of existence, HESTEC has reached more than 58,000 middle and high school students, 22,000 college students and 8,000 educators, officials said, and the hope is to continue reaching out to more students in the area.

One of the main focuses of UTRGV is to become an emerging research university and expand the degree offerings in STEM fields, so continuing the tradition of HESTEC is important, Rodríguez said.

"We are developing undergraduate degree programs, master's degree programs and doctoral degree programs that will be new programs for the University of Rio Grande Valley and have never been offered in the Valley," he said. "A lot of those programs are in the STEM fields, so there's a great correlation between what we are doing with UTRGV and what we are doing in HESTEC."

34-year-old man accused in common-law wife's stabbing

BY KAYLEIGH SOMMER
STAFF WRITER

SANTA ROSA — A woman is recovering from several stab wounds police say were dealt by her common-law husband of 17 years.

Francisco Hinojosa Jr., 34, was covered in the victim's blood when he was arrested Wednesday morning, shortly after the stabbing, police said.

Police Chief Ronnie Hernandez received a call from Cameron County dispatch alerting him to the disturbance around 8:30 a.m.

When he approached the apartment, he heard footsteps and yelling.

After opening the door to the apartment, he said he saw Hinojosa walk toward him. He was covered in blood, Hernandez said.

That prompted Hernandez to pull his gun. Hinojosa was immediately arrested.

Hernandez and other law enforcement officers made their way to the back bedroom where they found the victim, a woman

with 17 stab wounds to her neck and arm.

Hernandez said he quickly applied pressure to the wounds to stop the bleeding.

At that time, she told police that Hinojosa stabbed her after they argued. She made the call to 9-11.

She told officers the argument started after she told Hinojosa she no longer wanted to be with him. Police said Hinojosa became aggressive and began to stab her with a kitchen knife.

Together the couple have four children, Hernandez said. The children were not there at the time of the stabbing and are currently in the custody of Child Protective Services.

The woman was transported to the hospital, where she is currently in stable condition.

Hinojosa was charged with second-degree felony aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. His bond was set at \$500,000.

Hernandez said Hinojosa does not have a criminal record.

Event on Saturday focuses on Texas cowboy

STAFF REPORT

SAN BENITO — 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, at The Narciso Martinez Cultural Arts Center and The Greater Dallas Legal and Economic Development Foundation will present "Vaquero: Genesis of the Texas Cowboy."

This is an exhibition created by the Wittliff Collections at the Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos, presented in partnership with Humanities Texas, the state affiliate for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

It is being made possible in part by a We the People grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

During the early 1970s, noted Texas historian Joe Frantz offered Bill Wittliff a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — to visit a ranch in northern Mexico where the vaqueros still worked cattle in traditional ways.

Wittliff photographed the vaqueros as they went about daily chores that had changed little since the first Mexican cow herders learned to work cattle from a horse's back.

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