



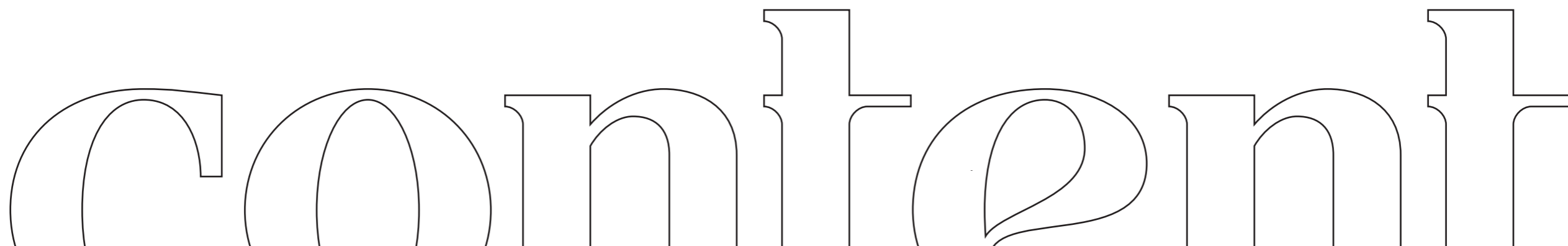
pulse

magazine | 20
19

(un)filtered



a look
inside the
(un)filtered
mind.



filtered

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004

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Pulse Magazine 2019

2019

First, let me thank you — the reader — for taking time out of your busy schedule to glance at this year's edition of Pulse Magazine! We know you should probably be studying, or working, or spending time with family, but I promise we won't tell... we don't have the time!

Our goal this year was to bridge two very different sides of the human minds:

The polished and grimy...
The repressed and overt...
The filtered and unfiltered!

And in the center of it all, you will find our intramagazine art gallery — Topophilia — based on the individual's extreme sense of place.

Why the center? Because at Pulse 004, we believe art, painting, photography, and music, are key to dismantling the internal boundaries which divide our ever-expanding mind.

Final disclaimer — as if we didn't ignore enough of those already — the views of the content published in this magazine are solely those of the authors who wrote them. We may agree with them. We may not. But at the end of the day, we believe the freedom for people to express their opinions, popular or unpopular, is one of the most important rights we have...

Erik Webster

letter from the editor

filtered

Words are but symbols for the relations of things to one another and to us;
nowhere do they touch upon absolute truth.

Friedrich Nietzsche

the venice beach great divide

VENICE BEACH, CALIFORNIA:
home of surfers, multi-billion dollar
tech companies, LA's most exclusive
restaurants, and an ever-growing
homeless community.

By: Karalyn Gliebe

WEALTH,
GROWING AND A GROWING COMMUNITY.
HOMELESS

According to the National Alliance to End Homelessness, NAED, the homeless population in the entire state of California is 134,200 persons, averaging 34.2 homeless singles per 10,000 people. Los Angeles County, which Venice Beach is a part of, has a staggering 55,000 homeless singles, which averages 59.2 homeless persons per 10,000 residents.



In Texas, according to Forbes, the population is 40-percent smaller than California, in the NAED states the total homeless population is 23,550, averaging 8.5 persons per 10,000. There are so few homeless persons in the Rio Grande Valley, that there are no available statistics on it. However, in Venice Beach, the number of homeless individuals has risen to over 1,000.

The rise in homelessness in Venice correlates to the housing crisis that is effecting all Angelenos. The average home price in Venice is \$1.9 million, and the average rental cost averages \$5,500 per month. These prices will buy or rent you a so-called starter home, which is two to three bedrooms, and one to two bathrooms. According to Zillow, the median list price per square foot is \$1,142. For some perspective, Zillow estimates the average home price in the Rio Grande Valley to be \$133,800, which is \$95 per square foot. It is hard to find affordable housing in the Los Angeles area, and many of the homelessness came out to LA chasing the Hollywood dream, and after struggling to pay bills, or getting sucked into an addicting party scene, they fell into homeless, and in Southern California, it's a hard place to give up, even if you have just a make-shift roof over your head.

Just John, as he wished to be referred as, has a similar story. He said he moved from small town Wisconsin to Hollywood to get into stunt acting. Work fell short, and he was evicted from his studio apartment which was located off Sunset Boulevard in West Hollywood. Not wanting to give up the dream, he couch surfed for a while, then ended up

making a tent his home a block away from one of the most expensive and trendiest streets in the country, Abbot Kinney Boulevard. He panhandles on in Venice during the day, by playing his home-made ukulele.

"WHY WOULD I LEAVE LA?" JUST JOHN SAID. "THE WEATHER IS PERFECT, THE PEOPLE ARE GENEROUS, AND I CAN LEGALLY LIVE FOR FREE IN A CITY WHERE MOST PEOPLE IN THE WORLD CANT AFFORD TO LIVE. I SMOKE MY VEEED, WHICH IS LEGAL NOWV, BUT I DON'T DO NO WACK DRUGS. BUT MOST PEOPLE ASSUME ALL OF US ON THE STREETS ARE CRACK HEADS."

When asked if he still pursues the stunt career he said, "I actually have an audition later today, I'm going to shower at the beach, then off I go!" Looking down at his current attire, "Don't worry, this is just my street-playing clothes, I got nice stuff at home."

Just John may be an exception to the Venice Beach homeless, because most of those visible are passed out on the sand, camped out close to the Muscle Beach tourist area, and are swollen from the sun and assumed drug or alcohol use. In busy encampment areas by the boardwalk, used hypodermic needles are a common staple of the sidewalks, and homeless persons are often seen incoherent or stumbling. One man has made a rifle out of what appears to be black plastic piping and red tape, and he circled around his belongings over and over again, as if he truly believes he was protecting his livelihood with heavy gun power.

A few yards away from the man with the pretend weapon, there is a woman who has a bottle of soap and a bucket of water. She vigorously and intently



washes and rinses her hands for over 15 minutes, mumbling incoherently to herself. With her tent pitched, suitcase full of her entire life's belongings, and a partner lying passed out next to her, she is dwarfed by an expensive boutique hotel, called Hotel Erwin, that looms behind her, as a constant reminder of the great divide between her and those hotel guests who can watch her out their \$300 a night room. Yet despite all of this disparity, the world continues around them. Skateboarders skate, tourists take photos of the famous Muscle Beach, nannies push babies home from the playground, and bicyclists ride on their way, not even blinking their eyes at the destitution around them.

HOMELESSNESS IS MORE THAN LIKELY NOT A CHOICE, AND THERE ARE ALWAYS UNDERLYING AND OFTEN TIMES UNKNOWN CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE PUT THEM OUT ON THE STREETS

Homelessness is more than likely not a choice, and there are always underlying and oftentimes unknown circumstances that have put them out on the streets, but the appeal to be homeless in a city like Venice Beach, is greater than in Texas, where temperatures spike to well over 100 degrees in the summer, or a city like New York, where there are frigid winter temperatures and year-round, temperamental weather. In Venice, the homeless often times have jobs, selling objects on the boardwalk, or like Just John, still pursue the Hollywood dream. The weather is near-perfect year-round, and they live tax-free with an oceanfront view, in a city where an oceanfront house on the boardwalk, where the majority of the homeless camp out, will cost you at a minimum \$8 million on up to over \$20 million. It is also legal in Los



Angeles to live in a vehicle as long as you park it on approved streets. A short drive around Venice will open anyone's eyes to how many people have trekked out to California in their RV's and make it into their beachfront home.

The homeless crisis has caused a great divide between local residents and politicians. With the growing number of tech workers from companies like Google, Snapchat and Facebook, moving into the self-proclaimed "Silicon Beach," politicians are grappling with what to do with the homeless. Venice Beach is an eclectic, artsy, beach community where the rich and famous and the poverty-stricken have always found a way to coexist. However, the stark contrast of extreme wealth that's moving in, and growing poverty has finally forced city leaders to try and

find a solution. Because homelessness is legal in California, politicians and law enforcement of the past have done little more than just offering some rehabilitation services and shuffling them around from street to street.

Last November, city leaders took the crisis to the polls, and ended up with 76-percent of Angelenos voting to approve a bond measure that will build affordable housing complexes on 12 units of public land, one of those being in Venice Beach, California.

Politicians have also put measures on the ballot to approve raising the sales tax by half a percentage. It may sound like a minimal amount, but now that the measure passed, the city will raise over \$3.5 billion for homeless programs over the next 10 years.

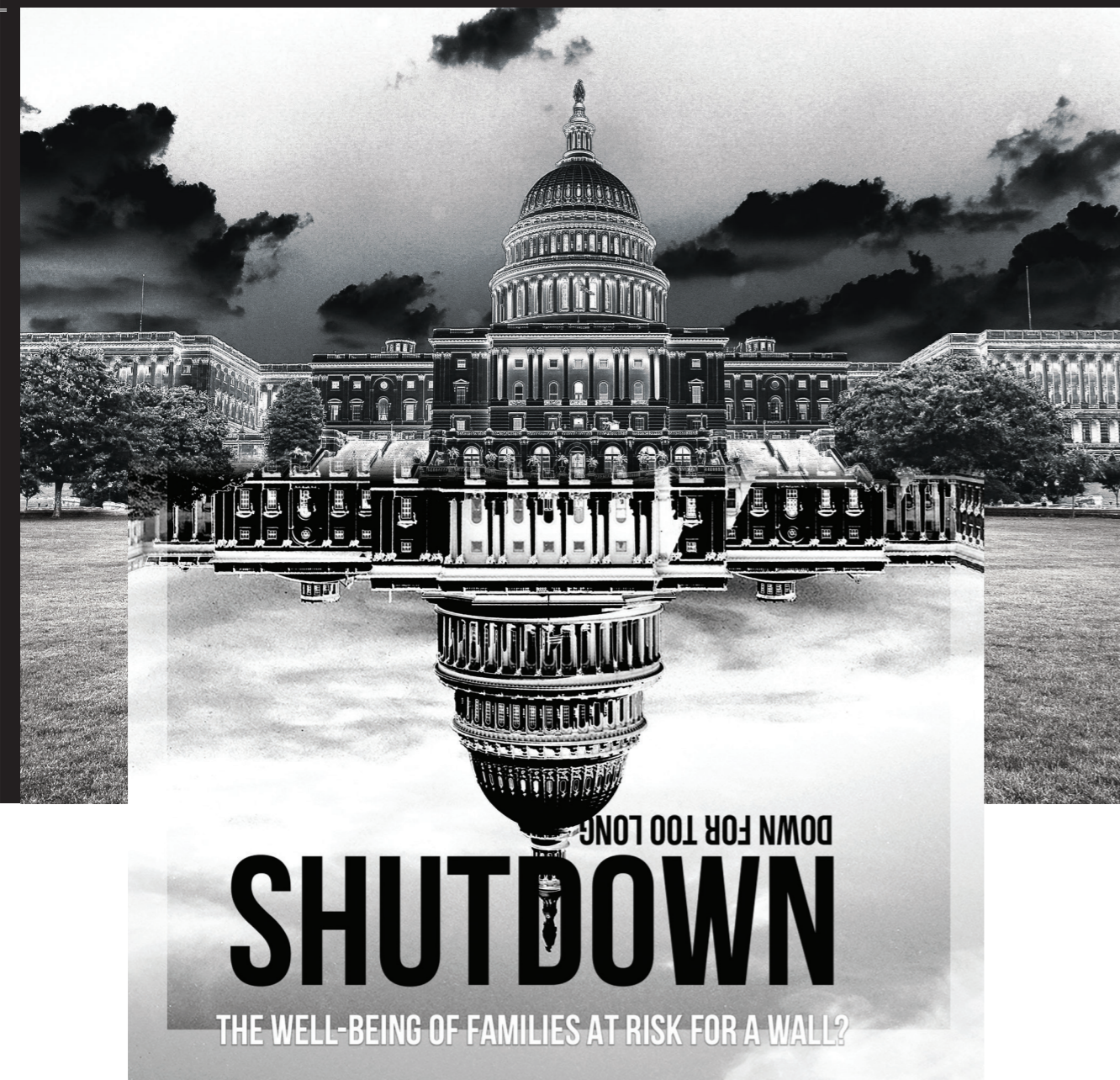
Some residents are skeptical, and not keeping their hopes up that these steps are going to do much to change the landscape of the homeless community in Los Angeles, or Venice in particular. When asked about the new measures being put into place, and the politicians taking action, one local resident, Steve, said that he doesn't believe the housing project will be beneficial to the homeless or to the residents.

"The councilmen think that building these multi-million dollar facilities are going to help clean up our streets? Or encourage the homeless to get their lives together and move on? No chance. If anything, it's going to encourage more of them to flock to our beach."

Whether the current housing project plan or the billions of dollars that will be contributed towards homeless programs will help clean up the streets and bring down the number of homeless

persons in Venice and Los Angeles is yet to be seen. The housing units will take years to build, and logistics on determining who will get approval to live in them are still being figured out. Paying residents and transient residents alike will have to wait and see and learn from Just John's outlook on the future. "Take each day as its own," he said, "relax, be compassionate and it will all work out."

"WOULDN'T YOU WANT TO LIVE HERE AND NOT PAY A PENNY TO PROPERTY TAXES OR RENT? THEY SHOULD BE BUILDING THESE HOUSING PROJECTS IN THE VALLEY OR SOMEWHERE LESS APPEALING."



By: Steven Hughes

On December 11, 2018, President Donald Trump announced he would declare a partial government shutdown unless Congress allocated \$5.6 billion in funding for a wall dividing the United States and Mexico border. At midnight of December 22, he followed suit with that promise.

On January 25, Congress passed legislation to reopen the government for three weeks to discuss a budget for the wall. After missing more than a month's worth of paychecks, furloughed government employees are beginning to receive backdated pay.

I know an individual – whose identity will remain anonymous – who although not severely impacted by the shutdown, was urged to apply for unemployment. As far as I know, they are managing, for which I am grateful.

Unfortunately, however, savings only last for so long. As the re-opening of the government is only temporary, it is likely that this person will start encountering issues should the government shut down once more.

I'm also concerned about the well-being of our national parks.

Television coverage of some state parks proved their condition is disgusting. Trash cans overflowed with litter was scattered everywhere. Moreover, areas that experience heavy snowfall have suffered from a lack of drivers to clear the roads, and keep safety on.

So many lives rely on government employees and President Trump has let us all down. This matter goes well beyond politics. The livelihood of the nation is at stake.

Lazaro Guerrero, an economics sophomore at the UTRGV, believes the government should be responsible for the hours of work these employees put in to serve the community.

"If the [government] is stopping people from getting paid, they should be responsible for making sure people are at least eating and getting their basic necessities," Guerrero said. "It's really rough for them not having a paycheck... The government should be held responsible for that. They should pay them back for all the trouble they went through... Give them their paychecks and even more."

Trump has said he will declare a state of emergency – a situation that would empower the government to perform actions that would normally not be permitted – this will happen if the \$5.6 billion isn't approved.

According Clyde Barrow, a professor and chair of the UTRGV Political Science department, although the president has legal authority to declare a national emergency under certain circumstances, a specific event constituting an emergency must occur.

During the Korean War, Harry Truman, the United States' 33rd president, attempted to declare a national emergency to seize control of the country's steel mills. The Supreme Court didn't buy it. The horrific events of 9/11, however, did merit a declaration.

"It's not something you orchestrate or that you declare because you didn't get your way on a particular piece of [legislation]," Barrow said. According to a Quinnipiac University National Poll conducted on January 29, 41 percent of respondents support the building of a border all, with 55 percent against it.

Of course, it is critical to monitor borders to assure malicious people don't enter the United States.

Robin Nelson, a business administration freshman at Texas A&M University, said it is imperative to improve the security of our borders.

"It's my understanding that a barrier is a necessary part of a comprehensive plan to increase border security," Nelson said. "I believe it's important to secure our borders."

Lasting 35 days, 2019's shutdown was the longest in U.S. history — followed by a shutdown during the Clinton administration — that lasted 21 days. Over 800,000 federal employees missed their paychecks and many have filed for unemployment. Slowly, federal workers stopped showing up to work, calling in sick or providing another excuse.

According to Barrow, some airport workers faced a lot of stress, such as the closing of La Guardia Airport in NYC.

Since the first work period of civil servants not getting paid, families have gone hungry, with many turning to food banks for assistance. There are benefit programs available, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which helps people buy the food they need for good health, according to the program's webpage. Due to the uncertainty brought about by the shutdown, SNAP benefits were distributed early in February.

THE PRESIDENT:
MY FELLOW AMERICANS, TONIGHT, I AM
SPEAKING TO YOU BECAUSE THERE IS A
GROWING HUMANITARIAN AND SECURITY
CRISIS AT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER.
A CRISIS OF THE HEART
AND A CRISIS OF THE SOUL.
DEMOCRATS IN CONGRESS HAVE REFUSED TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THE CRISIS. AND THEY HAVE
REFUSED TO PROVIDE OUR BRAVE BORDER
AGENTS WITH THE TOOLS THEY DESPERATELY
NEED TO PROTECT OUR FAMILIES
AND OUR NATION.
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REMAINS
SHUT DOWN FOR ONE REASON AND
ONE REASON ONLY: BECAUSE DEMOCRATS
WILL NOT FUND BORDER SECURITY.
THANK YOU AND GOODNIGHT.

Alyssa Guajardo, a physical therapy junior at UTRGV, said it breaks her heart to see families struggling.

"I do believe it's important for people who are working in the government — in the future — to save money on the side... you never know when this type of situation will occur," Guajardo said. "It breaks my heart to see people having to rely on the food banks. But I'm happy to see the people who are helping out at the food banks and the business's helping out these federal workers during this time of need."

On January 10, President Trump landed at the McAllen Miller International Airport to speak to local, state, and federal officials and to evaluate the border. On both sides of 10th Street, rallies of Trump supporters and protesters against Trump were found; aside from two arrests, no records of misconduct were reported.

What I hope Trump's visit to McAllen brings is more awareness of the situation at the border. Perhaps his supporters, who are not close to the border, will realize how nice it is and want to learn more about its culture.

Trump swore to protect this country and, in my opinion, he has failed.

He is not doing a good job and it is upsetting that children are missing meals because of a needless wall.



THE BEAUTY OF THE RIO GRANDE

By: Laura Juárez

Illustrations: Cecilia Sierra

WITH A TOTAL LENGTH OF 1,896 MILES, THE RIO GRANDE HOLDS THE TITLE FOR THE 5TH LONGEST RIVER SYSTEM IN NORTH AMERICA. IF YOU'VE NEVER BEEN CONVINCED TO CHECK OUT OUR BEAUTIFUL RIVER, MAYBE THIS STORY WILL DO THE TRICK.

The first word that pops into your head when you think of the Rio Grande Valley probably isn't "eye-catching". I always thought the Valley lacked beautiful scenery and picturesque locations. But the Rio Grande River is one of those places that I can wholeheartedly say, is stunning if you explore the right areas. Since I was young, my dad has rented a small cabin along the Rio Grande River. It was his kind of escape and a fun thing to do when I was younger. We'd make a day of it by enjoying the great outdoors and watching the mesmerizing sunset all while getting eaten by mosquitoes. My story depicts the beauty that is the Rio Grande River. If you've never been convinced to check out our beautiful river, maybe this story will do the trick. With a total length of 1,896 miles, it holds the title for the 5th longest river system in North America.

I've seen some alarming things happen at the river that may or may not be a reason for you to steer clear. One evening

we were sitting out on my dad's floating dock. On the other side of the river, we witnessed some people in inner tubes trying to cross over from Mexico. It was pretty shocking, considering I was a pretty young child and didn't know too much about politics or "the wall". Border patrol quickly darted towards them within a blink of an eye and after a couple of minutes they were apprehended. Slightly traumatizing, but these things happen all the time I was told. Whenever we spend time at the river, there are helicopters constantly circling the area and border patrol speeding by.

Whether I want it or not, if I'm at the river, I'm getting a history lesson. My dad loves to go on and on about the Rio Grande and how it all came to be. Everything from stats on the river that the average person to crazy stories of people testing the great wilderness. I won't lie, I do tune out a lot of it, but the bits and pieces I do catch are very fascinating. If you grew up in a small



town as I did, you probably have found yourself thinking “there’s nothing to do here”, or “I’d love to escape the monotony of this place”. However, there’s something about the Rio Grande River that makes you feel like there might be more to all of it. If you take photos of the sunset it can’t even

I FEEL FREE WHEN IM THERE, AS IF NATURE CALLED ME TO IT. STARING INTO THE SUNSET MAKES YOU FEEL LIKE YOUR WORRIES HAVE DISAPPEARED, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A MINUTE.

capture 1/10th of the beauty you can

see in real life. The silhouette of the trees against the cotton candy colored skies is something you have to see with your own eyes.

The Chimney Park, an RV park in Madero that a lot of Winter Texans call home. In 1907, the Mission Canal Co. irrigation system was founded which began much of the agricultural growth in the RGV. This 106 foot tall, 6 feet in diameter chimney made of handmade brick carries smoke to drive its pump. To build this chimney, they had laborers being paid 40 cents a day working tirelessly. The very top of the chimney bears an odd design, due to it not being fully completed. The reason behind its incompleteness is a mystery still to this day. Chimney Park opened in the 1960s with not many amenities to draw people to it, but today it’s open as a 55 and older community with poolside views, community events and games. Chimney Park is also where border patrol launches their boats.

Neighboring the Rio Grande River is La Lomita mission which was built in 1865 after the land was purchased in 1845. This mission became an important site for the Calvary of Christ, where Oblate missionaries performed their duties. The city of Mission was founded in 1908, the city got its namesake in honor of the La Lomita Chapel.

The Rio Grande River is also the landmark of the Treaty of the Guadalupe Hidalgo and why it was signed. After this treaty went into effect in 1848, the whole river became available to people of both countries equally, which in turn ended the Mexican-American War.



To counteract the history of the Rio Grande River, there’s a lot of nature and wildlife that are perfect to pique anyone’s interest. One time I saw a butterfly in flight pollinating a lavender plant that was blooming near the water. Every time I visit the river there’s never a shortage of insects. Butterflies, dragonflies, beetles, and cicadas are some of the fascinating bugs that inhabit the area. There’s always plenty of scenery for the butterflies to become attracted to and let you take their pictures.

In fact, the Rio Grande Valley is home to the National Butterfly Center which provides a place to stay for many of these winged creatures. There are many outdoor gardens and an extensive variety of plants for them to make their own.

OVER 300 DIFFERENT SPECIES OF BUTTERFLIES HAVE BEEN FOUND IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY.

Over 300 different species of butterflies have been found in the Rio Grande Valley, making it a place of attraction for many butterfly enthusiasts. The National Butterfly Center is not only home to butterflies, but also to rare species of plants and flowers. As if that wasn’t enough proof that Texas really loves its butterflies, the RGV also hosts the Texas Butterfly Festival, an annual celebration of the fact that we are also known as “the butterfly capital of the USA”. This butterfly festival also features field trips for children in school, private gardens, and tours. There’s no shortage of something to do no matter your interest.

Although all of these things seem very interesting and enjoyable, I’ve personally never attended any of these events or festivities. After researching about them, though, I might just have to. I usually take advantage of the different types of nature I see either with my phone or camera. It’s just easier for me that way since I always have them on me. I am always fascinated by how beautiful these creatures are, but yet I feel that they aren’t talked about enough.

“THE BUTTERFLY CAPITAL OF THE USA”.

I’d love to learn more from people who research different types of wildlife and nature in the RGV, maybe through blogs or social media.

ONE OF THE VALLEYS PRIZED POSSESSIONS ARE OUR PALM TREES.

Once I captured a picture of a monarch butterfly seeking solace on sunflower by the river. It was incredibly windy on this day, and all of the plants and grass were shaking and swaying with the wind. I loved seeing the butterfly just clutch on for dear life and play along with the weather. He didn't seem like he'd mind if he fell off, he stayed on the sunflower for at least ten minutes and let me photograph him. One of the valley's prized possessions are our palm trees. At sunset you can see the silhouette of the tall palm trees sticking out from the regular trees and shrubs. Reflecting across the river is a mirror image of the palm trees. It almost looks like a glass frame, but that's the beauty of nature. It can mimic many man-made objects and give the illusion that they're not real. There's an abundance of palm trees in the valley which is slightly surprising considering they're more of a tropical tree and the valley is humid, flat, and frankly, anything but tropical. Most people think weeds and cacti when they think of Texas plants. It has been said

that the trees were brought down from other parts of the US where palm trees flourish abundantly to attract tourists and visitors to Texas. Although the hot, dry climate that the valley claims does make sense when winter Texans take a look at all the palm trees.

There have always been doubts in my mind if I'd ever truly find amazing worthy spots in the Rio Grande Valley. I've lived here my whole life and I never really saw much that was outstanding or that was better than other states I've explored. Once you've seen Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and the Grand Canyon... the RGV doesn't seem as spectacular. Now I see that I wasn't looking hard enough. There are so many beautiful things to see in this small area- remarkable landmarks, eye-catching sunsets, and flourishing wildlife. There's beauty everywhere you look, and if you can find the beauty in something, someone else will too. On the list of all the places I've been with stunning views, I can now add my own hometown to the list.

THERE ARE SO MANY BEAUTIFUL THINGS TO SEE IN THIS SMALL AREA: REMARKABLE LANDMARKS, EYE-CATCHING SUNSETS, AND FLOURISHING WILDLIFE. THERE'S BEAUTY EVERYWHERE YOU LOOK.



TECOSVILLE

SAN BENITO'S BACKYARD GROCERY STORE

By: Cynthia Rodríguez

Photography: Michel Flores Tavizón



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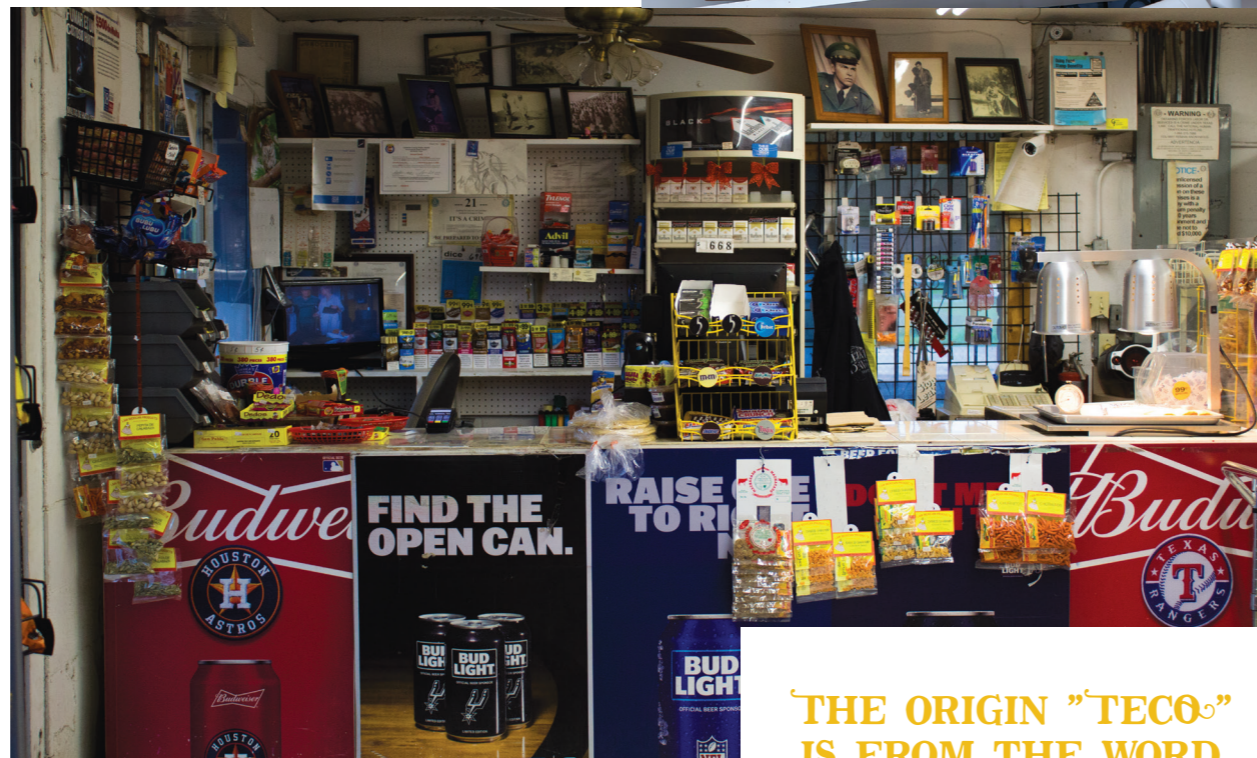


Whenever you visit a new town or city, you'll see the tall buildings, the lights, and historical landmarks. Here is the thing, do you notice every historical building or landmark? In the Rio Grande Valley, what you'll find that is most common in small towns are the local family-owned grocery stores and gas stations. Most of these places have been passed down to generations and keep the traditions alive. For one person, it will be like that store is just a regular store, but for others might think differently. The people here in the Rio Grande Valley have such different mindsets compared to others who are not from here. Everyone it's from the culture of where family is important and everything that they own is valued by it. One local gas station that has a special historical and special meaning to a certain small town is Tecosville Groceries.

Tecosville Groceries is located in the outskirts of San Benito, TX, surrounded by the colonias of La Paloma and Rangerville. This store has been around this area for more than 50 years, upholding its traditions and values within the family and the customers. The purpose of this gas station or “convenience store” was to make it a home for the neighbors and to make sure that they had all of the gas and groceries they needed in their homes without having to travel out 15 to 30 minutes into the city of San Benito. The owner of this store was all for the people. He was very open to everyone and cared for their safety. He wanted to make sure that everyone had what they needed. Everyone knows everyone in this little area, which explains why the owner of the store wanted to do this. This owner was Gilberto M. Rodriguez.

Gilberto M. Rodriguez was born and raised in San Benito, TX on April 4th, 1935. Growing up as a child, he would always have to work multiple jobs to support his family, along with the rest of his brothers and sisters. He grew up having “work for your money” as the mindset. In this situation, as young as 16 years old, he made the decision to switch with his brother and join the army because his mother did not want his older brother to leave. For such a young teenager going into the world where there will be so much violence, he was strong enough to know that he can handle anything. He ended up serving in the army and was part of the Korean War from 1951 to 1953. When he came back Home, his then wife what’s out there waiting for him. He told his wife,” I need to make a change in her town to show that we are all family.” He said that because after what we have

**‘I NEED TO MAKE A
CHANGE IN HER TOWN
TO SHOW THAT WE ARE
ALL FAMILY’**



experienced, he knew he had to make a difference. He ended up having seven children with his wife. He knew that he was a hard-working person and he still needed to go to work for the money to support his family. Since he knew a lot of people in the area, he had the help from many of his friends on finding a location and building the convenience store. That store that standstill today, he built it. He knew how the store would look like, where would everything go, where people can park, where to put the stations for gas, and everything else. Once he opened the store, it became everyone’s home.



**‘THE ORIGIN “TECO”
IS FROM THE WORD
TECOLOTE
WHICH MEANS “OWL”
IN SPANISH’.**

You are probably thinking right now,” why the name Tecosville?” and “what does that mean?” Well, Tecosville came after Gilberto’s name. Back when he was a kid, he would love to be outdoors especially at night. He was always playing around with his friends at night and he got so used to it that as he grew older, he would sometimes get night jobs around we’re he left so that way

he knew his family was safe. The origin “Teco” is from the word “Tecolote” which means “owl” in Spanish. He grew up with that nickname for years, and it never faded away. Every time you would see him in public, people will tell him “hey how’s it going Teco?” and “how are you Teco?” This nickname became a part of this life and that’s how everyone knew him. As mentioned earlier, everyone knew who he was in our area. So, the people who live there would start calling that area Tecosville, in honor of him. He was the first person to actually have a house in that area that he built himself so that way he could always be close to the store. The name caught on for so long that even on TV during the weather segment for the news, the weather reporter will sometimes mention how the weather is in Tecosville. This is why his store has this name. it’s everyone’s home.

When the store had its grand opening, it was a huge party. There is music, there is food, his whole family were helping out with the people including his kids, anyone went out to talk to everyone to see how they liked it. Of course, everyone loved his store. They knew that they could come at any time they want and by anything that they need without having to make the travel to San Benito. This wasn’t the only time he made a huge celebration. When it comes to holidays, she makes massive celebrations. For Halloween, he got his whole family to dress up in costumes and have everything in the spirit. Hits kids would be in the back stirring the pot of menudo as if it was a witches pot, his wife in front of the store passing out tons of candy that you bought for the kids, and play a lot of Halloween

music. When Christmas comes around, there are Christmas trees everywhere, he would dress up as Santa, and we would have all lot of tamales to gift to the family so that way he will know that the people have dinner on the table for Christmas day. Gilberto has such a kind heart. He just wanted to let everyone know that we are all family.

Gilberto would not just care for the people in this area, but the people beyond the RGV. Throughout the years, there have been a lot of hurricanes that cost disaster to people's homes. Every time this would happen, he will take his time out of his life to go out and donate a lot of foods

and waters to the people that had to go through this situation. He was featured on the newspaper many times and received a letter from the city of San Benito, thanking him for doing good actions. He was also featured in news channel 5's segment "Con Mi Gente" where

he got to explain why he does the things that he does. He was on the segment because people knew how much history was in this grocery store and all the good things that happened because of him. He puts so much time and dedication into the store to make sure that everything was okay. Yes, later on in time other local convenience stores were popping up, but that didn't stop him from doing what he loves. When people drive by the area they have heard of the store and wanted to know where it was and who owned it and what the whole deal was. Every time

you walk in, you will always be greeted as if you were a family member. He or anyone that would be working there will always have a conversation with you and ask how you are because that's how much they care for the customers, the neighbors, and the people who live there. He was sometimes hear stories from his customers on how they are struggling with food, family, not being able to provide a play on their children's table, and so on. He was so generous that he would sometimes donate phone to the people that would come in so that way they know that they would have something to lead and help them work their way to have things for the family.

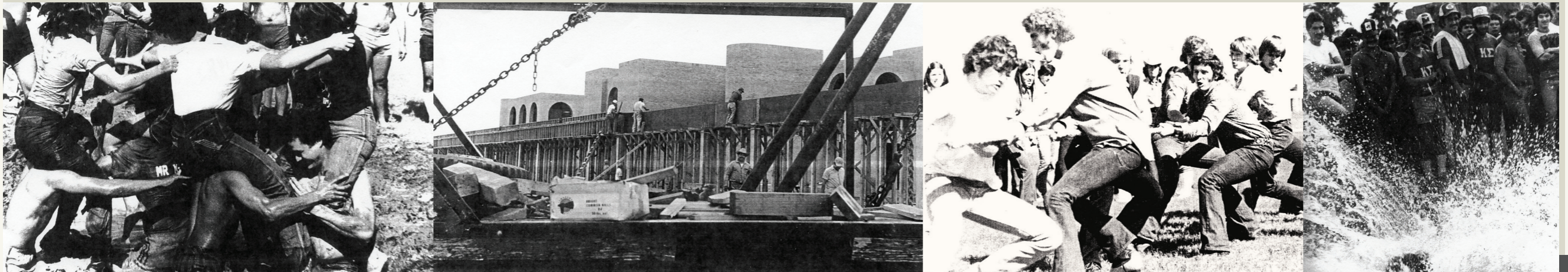
"I KNOW THAT THE PEOPLE ARE NEVER GOING TO STOP COMING HERE. YES, THE OTHER STORE MIGHT HAVE MORE THINGS THAN MINE, BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THEM AND US IS THAT WE CARE FOR THE PEOPLE."

As of today, the store is still in that same spot and is still runs today by his family. The store still stands up to its values and traditions as it was many years ago. The only thing that is different from wanted open to now, is that there are no more stations for gas. A few years ago, down the road where Tecosville is at, there is a Dollar General. People would go to him and ask him, "Teco, you're not scared that your store will close down?" He would always replied back "no, because I know that the people are never going to stop coming here. Yes, the other store might have more things than mine karma but the difference between them us is that we care for the people."

Sadly, Gilberto "Teco" Rodriguez passed away on October 19th, 2018. Though he is not with us anymore, he passed on the store to his oldest son Gilberto Jr, and you will still keep up with the values and traditions of the store as it was a promise from him. This store left a lot of history and special meaning, to the area of Tecosville, and to all of the surrounding colonias. No one will ever forget who it was and what is whole goal in life was.



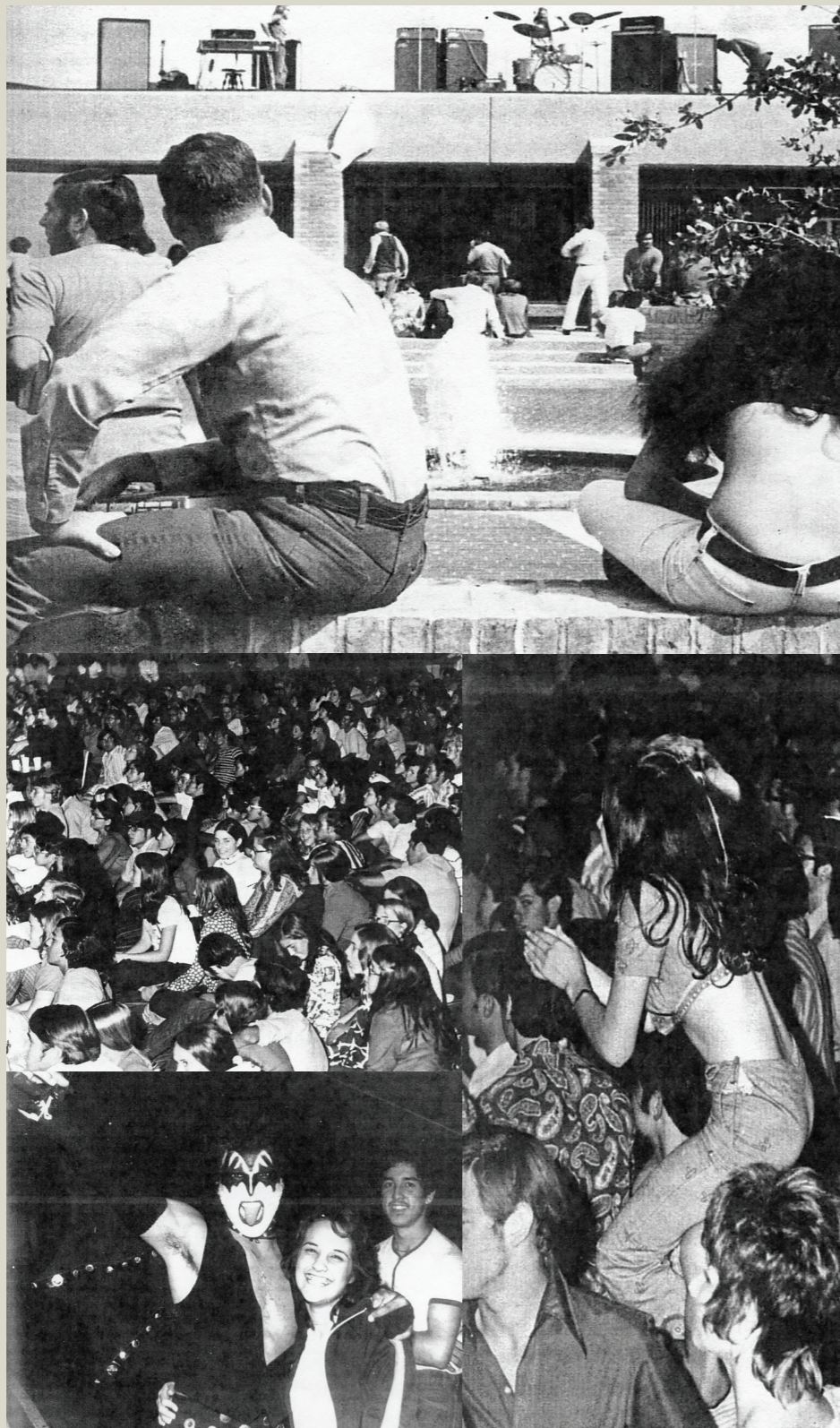
UTRGV



By: Francisco Zuloaga Cosme, Arael Meza & Steven Hughes.

A Memoir.

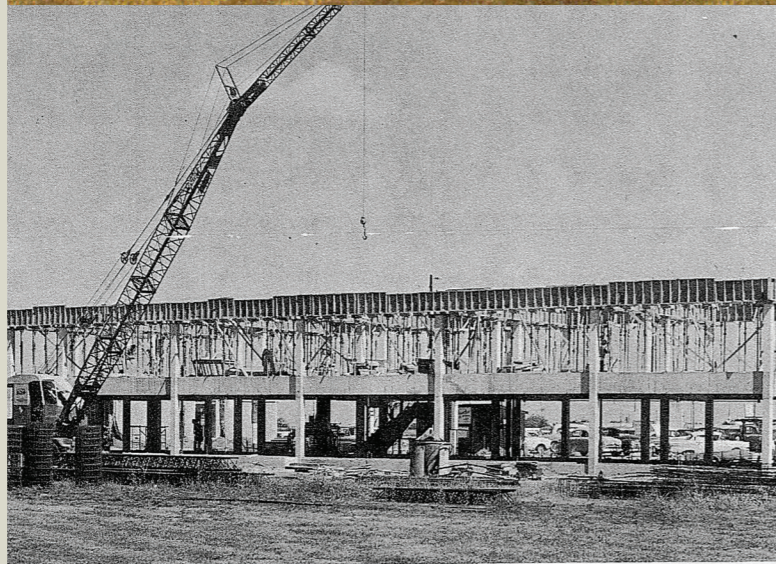
UTPA first opened its doors in 1927 as Edinburg College. Facilities included an auditorium, administration building, science building, engineering building and library. The original campus was located on 8th Avenue, in Edinburg, TX.



Admitted to the Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools of Southern States. UTPA became Edinburg Regional College in 1933.



In 1952, after becoming the 22nd institution of the Texas System of Colleges and Universities, The name changed to Pan American College.



Occupants of the two new dormitories will include the scholarship athletes formerly housed at the Belrose Hotel and foreign students.



Approved to offer graduate programs in 1970, the college began offering degrees in the Master of Arts, Master of Education, and Master of Science.



In 1971, achieved full university status and changed name to Pan American University. By 1989 UTPA was granted state approval to be part of the University of Texas System.



UTB, once a part of Fort Brown, opened its doors in 1991. Prior to 1926, UTB was known as Texas Southmost College. In 1973, TSC formed a partnership with Pan-American University establishing the University of Texas-Pan American at Brownsville and became an official institution in 1989. After UTB opened, another partnership led the institution to become the University of Texas at Brownsville-Texas Southmost College. In 2012, UTB and UTPA were approved to become a single regional institution known as the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

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the

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UTRGV ALMA MATER

By: Erik Webster

Ask any student at UTRGV what they think about the university's alma mater, and they'll probably tell you, it doesn't exist. Ask Roberto Garza, and he'll probably tell you, he helped write it. That's because Garza, a music education senior at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, participated in – and won – the university's alma mater lyric writing competition last November.

The competition, which was conducted between Nov. 19 and Nov. 30, 2018, encouraged UTRGV students to write and submit original lyrics to a previously-selected instrumental arrangement.

"I've always loved writing [but] I've never been gifted as a lyricist," Garza said. "I've composed before. I've been contracted to write for schools [before]. But usually it's a predetermined text, so I don't really have to come up with lyrics. This was the complete opposite! We had the

music, but we needed the text for it." So, Garza wrote. And wrote. And wrote... And, after spending countless hours jotting down words and poetry. After pulling a proverbial – and actual – "all-nighter." He was finally able to compose a set of lyrics he was proud of.

But could they win...? He wouldn't have to wait long to find out.

At midnight, on Dec. 1, 2018, the UTRGV alma mater competition officially closed. And – after tallying votes between the three lyrical variations that had been selected as finalists – Garza's rendition emerged victorious.

"You know, I'm just competitive by nature," Garza chuckled, reflecting on the situation. "In my mind I was saying, 'You have to win!' But honestly, as a musician who enters something like this, it was kind of like, you're gonna enter this to win this thing. So, give it your all!

Alma Mater

*Gather as one in voice ascending
raising the song and anthem to thee.
Orange and grey, your reign's unending;
Hail to the mighty U.T.R.G.V.!*

(Chorus)

*Strength and devotion, we shall sustain.
True to your colors we shall remain.
Ever our song shall be raised on high.
U.T. Vaqueros til' we die!*

*Joyful our days in halls eternal
knowledge and skill forever endured.
Let it be said "your loves' maternal".
Nurturing wisdom which all are ensured.*

(Repeat Chorus)

Still, Garza wasn't 100 percent sure his lyrics had what it took to win the competition. He experienced his fair share of doubts and even debated sending his lyrics at all.

"I wrote something I was proud of, [but] I finished it off and actually sat on it for about two weeks. I said [to myself], 'Let me keep it and see what I think about it.' But, I was proud with what I came up with. So, I sent it off." But does an alma mater merit importance? what do those impacted by the university think about it?

According to Danae DeLeon, a future UTRGV hopeful who wishes to pursue a bachelor's degree in business management, an alma mater is a critical component of a university's spirit.

"I think it's important," DeLeon said. "Alma maters demonstrate a university's heritage and history. And, more importantly, it enables students to demonstrate their pride and support for their school."

To DeLeon, an alma mater is more than just a song. It's more than just a set of words set to music. Its a critical component in the foundation of a university's heritage.

As for Garza and his lyrics? Well, they shall forever be engraved in the historic legacy of UTRGV. They shall forever be sung in the sacred settings and halls of the university. And just how does Garza feel about that?

"I was proud with what I came up with. That's all that really matters to me!"

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ARE VAQUEROS EATING THEIR VEGGIES?

By: Yazmin Sánchez Cortez

Illustrations: Aaliyah Garza

What do you prefer for breakfast? Pancakes with chocolate chips inside, topped with whipped cream and chocolate milk or a bowl of fruit with an orange juice? At noon, will you rather eat a bag of chips or some Oreos to keep your stomach quite during class? Are you going to eat Chick-Fil-A for lunch with a coke or a salad with water? Are you going to order that pizza at midnight during finals or would you rather eat some strawberries you found at the back of the fridge?

Decisions like this are made more than once in a day, and most of the time you don't realize that you are not picking the healthiest option.

WE'RE NOT THAT UNHEALTHY...

According to Forbes 2017, 52% of organic consumers are millennials. But, according to students surveyed by PULSE, even though most of them described their diets as, "balanced," "vegetarian," and claiming they include rice, fruit, and vegetables, a common question was asked while collecting surveys: What are legumes?

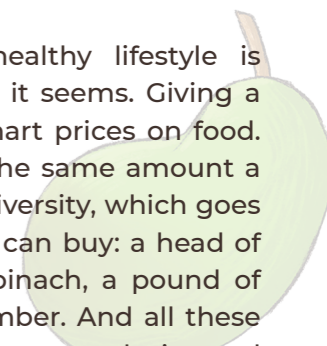
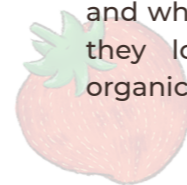
Several articles have been written about how millennials and Generation Z (born 1995 and after) are the healthiest generations so far. More the Gen Z than Millennials. Since they grew up in an environment where obesity is a reality and not a possibility. An article from Washington Post claim that millennials "want to know how their food is made," and when looking for natural products they look for "food that's natural, organic, locally sourced or sustainable."


But almost all students surveyed at UTRGV don't shop organic or natural, they eat conventional veggies and fruit. Except for those who admitted that don't eat fruit. Shame on you guys.

Natural Products Insider released an article of characteristics about the newcomers Gen Z. One of them says that this generation prefers organic food, that they care more about the nutritional value than whether it looks cute or not. They believe organic food is better because of the lack of pesticides. They know that to evaluate quality and nutrition, they need to look past branding and packaging.

I'm not saying that these articles represent me as a millennial or a Gen Z. I can be a lazy person, a cellphone addict or anything that many articles and data want to say I am, but not a healthy person, which should shame me. Although social media is commonly showing a society who eats healthy and try to avoid meat and fats. The truth is that out of a hundred students surveyed, only 4 students follow vegan or vegetarian lifestyles.

But, following a healthy lifestyle is actually easier than it seems. Giving a quick view at Walmart prices on food. With more or less the same amount a salad cost at the university, which goes from \$6 to \$10, you can buy: a head of lettuce, a bag of spinach, a pound of carrots and a cucumber. And all these will last you at least a week, instead of a meal like a regular salad for the same price. If you want to be more creative, you can add to this cart a bag of mozzarella cheese and a dressing,





but that will elevate the price to almost \$20. But the bottle and the cheese will last you a week. And if the dressing doesn't last more, then you should start reconsidering your dressing consume.

BUT, WE'RE NOT THAT HEALTHY EITHER...

Although there are students living at the university, UTRGV is primarily a commuter university. 70 out of 100 students surveyed live with their immediate family. This means students travel from home to school and back home, so it could be easier for them to wait to arrive home to eat something. However, a lot of students buy lunch at the university or at fast food venues near the university, making their carbs consume larger than the amount of protein. One student even described his diet as Chick-Fil-A.

There are a lot of diets out there, if you google "diet," you'll have 1.19 billion results, but not all diets online are good for your health. The thing to do before starting a diet is to consult your doctor says Dietitian Susie Gonzalez. Also, a diet that includes healthier fats and monosaturated fats. "A lot of research has suggested that the Mediterranean diet," Gonzalez said. "That has been a diet that has proven to improve cardiovascular disease."

But moving to a healthy diet can be hard, especially if you are not used to it. Doing the transition overnight can end discouraging you, start with small steps could be the better option to begin a diet. A support group can also be helpful to not be discouraged once you started following a healthier path.

"Building the trust and encouragement among friends, because having someone along with you choose the healthier food versus a burger it'll keep the motivation going," Gonzalez said.

WELL, I'M NOT FAT...

There's this belief that if you're skinny then you're healthy. But a person can eat two burgers a day, do a lot of exercises and appear to be healthy, but the reality is that this person is not giving the correct nutrients to its body. According to dietitian Gonzales, the way that people appear, whether it is skinny or fat, or overweight it doesn't necessarily mean that is not healthy. Everyone has different metabolisms and we all eat differently and that is where it depends.

All the decisions we make about what's going inside our bodies count. Choosing a bag of baby carrots over a bag of chips will make the difference. Changes are never easy, but it will depend on you. If you want to change your eating habits and you don't like eating healthy, then start looking for alternatives. You don't need to add sugar or Splenda to that smoothie, fruit has sugar already. You can add spinach to that spaghetti, it will not change the taste of it that much. Believe me, you don't need that midnight snack. I'm not saying to delete the meat from your dinner plate, but at least finish your veggies.



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UTRGV Dining

FAST FASHION

By: Rocio Villalobos

Graphics: Andrea Alemán

What we wear should not come at the cost of another being.

I'm talking about fast fashion. If you're not familiar with the term, fast fashion is clothing inspired by high fashion runway trends that quickly becomes available to consumers well-below catwalk prices.

And while there's nothing wrong with wanting to fit in by wearing the latest trends deemed "hot" without spending a fortune, shopping from fast fashion retailers like Forever 21, H&M and Zara is not the way to go.

When you spend your money at retailers such as these, not only do you support their apparel, you also support their ethics.

Take a minute to consider how these companies are able to make a profit when you pay so little for their apparel.

All of this is possible by taking advantage of laborers desperate to keep themselves and their family from

starving and off the streets that they are willing to work for next to nothing. As environmental journalist Lucy Siegle said, "Fast fashion isn't free. Someone somewhere is paying."

"What's wrong with accessible designer-inspired fashion? Why should we have to spend a fortune to look stylish?"

If you were to go to your closet and take each garment you own off of its hanger and check the tags, you would realize that most of your clothing is produced in developing nations.

That's because the minimum wage in those countries, such as Bangladesh and Indonesia, is much lower than that of the United States. So much so that it is rarely enough for workers to live on.

According to a 2014 report by the National Institute of Development Administration, "Minimum Wage in Bangladesh's Ready-made Garment Sector," garment factory workers are paid as little as \$38 a month. This figure

doesn't come close to covering living expenses. Not only are sweatshop employees not fairly compensated for their work, but they are also forced to work 10 to 12 hours per day with few breaks, according to a study by the University of Sussex.

Other findings from the study were unsafe working environments with a high volume of dust, lack of ventilation and exposure to chemical adhesives.

"Once apparel manufacturing moved overseas it became an, 'out-of-sight-out-of-mind' matter," said Shannon Welch, communications consultant for Fashion Revolution.

According to its website, Fashion Revolution is a global movement that aims to unite people and organizations

"The production of clothing and the way we take care of our clothes after we buy them uses up a lot of land, water, energy, chemicals, and produces too much waste."

in radically transforming the way clothes are sourced, produced and consumed.



It was founded after a 2013 building collapse at the Rana Plaza in Bangladesh. The collapse was due to unsafe working conditions — including safety code violations and faulty infrastructure — and it took the lives of 1,138 people manufacturing clothing for the western market.

It is highly unlikely that you would support these labor conditions for yourself or those you love. So why is it okay when it's someone whose name you can't pronounce? In addition to the ethical implications of fast fashion exist severe environmental consequences.

"Fast fashion has a huge, and often negative, social and environmental impact," said Welch.

Fast fashion brands produce 150 billion articles of clothing annually; the average annual consumption of new clothing is only about 80 billion articles.

The amount of water one typically drinks over a three-year period is the same amount needed to make a t-shirt. Clothing production also accounts for around three percent of global carbon dioxide emission.

As these companies tend to capitalize on what the runway dictates to be trendy, their clothing items do not last on retailers racks for very long before they're considered out of style and are quickly replaced by the next trend.

tm

So what happens to the clothing that was not sold? More often than not, it ends up in a landfill. While some items can be recycled, many cannot do to their blend of artificial fabrics.

According to the Council for Textile Recycling, the average American discards 70 pounds of clothing each year, which is a whole bunch.

And fast fashion makes it so easy to throw away a barely-used garment. Because the pieces are rapidly produced out of low-quality materials, the clothing's lifespan is short. So you probably wouldn't think twice about tossing out a \$20 dress you wore for one occasion and got a great picture out of.

But for the sake of the environment and the generations to come, it would make a world of a difference if we all decided to spend our money on environmentally friendly, fair-trade apparel.

When you shop fair-trade you do not compromise the livelihood of the

craftsperson behind your apparel because your conscious purchase ensures they are earning a living wage and are not having their labor taken advantage of.

While a fair-trade certified items may cost as much as an entire haul from a fast fashion retailer, you may take peace in knowing that you are not supporting an industry that exploits its workers and degrades the environment.

Another option to consider when looking for a "special occasion" outfit is to rent it. Doing so allows others the chance to rock the look before the garment's life span concludes.

Having a low budget is no excuse to turn to fast fashion. With affordable secondhand shops and resale apps, you can do your wallet, as well as the environment, a favor.

When you purchase from a thrift shop you provide new life to garments and help keep them out of landfills.

Visiting a thrift store can be just as fun as visiting a mall. You just have to adjust your perspective. Before you know it, you'll have learned to love hunting through racks of individual items until you find something that suits your style.

With a wash and perhaps some new buttons, your finds are as good as new. Or you could consider going through your closet and finding ways to revamp your wardrobe.

"A great rule of thumb is to first wear what you already own, mend it if you need to, or take it to a tailor to have it altered," said Welch.

Another creative way Fashion Revolution recommends bringing new-to-you items into your closet is by hosting a clothing swap with your friends. It can be fun!

There are endless ways to embrace your inner fashionista without choosing to shop from a greedy company profits by stripping away basic human rights from its laborers.

Are you ready to join the fashion revolution?

Start with the simple action of turning a garment you own inside out and asking yourself, "who made my clothes?"

Check out the hashtag on social media and join a band of fashion revolutionaries conspiring to hold brands accountable for their production methods.

Although society might shame "outfit repeaters," there is nothing wrong with having a minimalist wardrobe composed of high quality pieces that will last you season after season.

What is uncool, however, is exploiting the environment and other beings in the name of fashion.



STAY WOKE

CAPITALISMO CONSCIENTE, ¿ES POSIBLE?

By: Melissa Flores Tavizón

Graphics: Michel Flores Tavizón



Los Millennials han sido una de las generaciones mayormente criticadas en los últimos tiempos, sin embargo no deberíamos ignorar que actualmente éstos representan el 24% de la población estadounidense, pues son aproximadamente 77 millones de personas que, poco a poco, han alcanzado la madurez socio-económica.

Los más jóvenes (entre 18 y 27 años) obtienen unos ingresos aproximados de 25 mil dólares, además de que son considerados la generación más educada y racialmente diversificada. Muchos de ellos han comenzado a casarse y a formar familias, por lo que se convierten en un target atractivo para las marcas que anteriormente ponían sus esfuerzos en los Baby Boomers, una de las mayores potencias de consumo.

De acuerdo a un reporte de Accenture, los Millennials gastan aproximadamente 600 mil millones de dólares anualmente, sin embargo su verdadera fuerza vendrá en 2020 pues se estima que la cifra aumente a un total de 1.4 billones de dólares, representando el 30% de las ventas en retail.

Contrario a lo que muchos creen, los Millennials son una generación mucho más consciente, caritativa y continuamente enfocada en movimientos sociales y el bien común. Les preocupa ser buenos padres, hacen donaciones a asociaciones filantrópicas, recolectan fondos para causas de su interés, realizan voluntariado y comparten información sobre eventos sin fines de lucro que ayuden a poblaciones desfavorecidas.

Aunque no comprendan el mismo grado de madurez económica que un Baby Boomer, los Millennials consumen, y mucho. Las marcas, por su parte, no son tontas y buscan constantemente llamar su atención para el momento cumbre en que se vuelvan los mayores consumidores de Estados Unidos. Ambas generaciones cuentan con diferencias abismales entre sus hábitos de consumo, por lo que las marcas han comenzado a adaptarse (o morir).

Hay algunas que lo están haciendo bien –a secas– y otras que, como diríamos coloquialmente, la están forzando muchísimo, ¿por qué? Porque disfrazan campañas publicitarias como si fueran el Santo Grial (cuando en realidad es una lata de Pepsi sostenida por Kendall Jenner dentro de una manifestación), que va a hacer que todos nos unamos y olvidemos desigualdades sociales que han desatado guerras, dividido poblaciones y excluido a minorías por cientos de años.

Para entender por qué no deberíamos confiar ciegamente en una campaña woke debemos entender el origen de todo: el Capitalismo. Un sistema económico diseñado especialmente para producir, producir, producir y, obviamente, generar riqueza (para sólo unos cuantos). Las campañas publicitarias, por su parte, tienen un fin: incitar al consumo. Consumo que mantiene vivo a las millones de corporaciones y, por ende, al sistema capitalista, el cual va muy de la mano con el patriarcado, un sistema social en el que el hombre es reverenciado y es protagonista de los principales roles de

liderazgo políticos, sociales y morales, demeritando a la mujer y oprimiéndola en una segunda categoría.

En fines prácticos, el Capitalismo es, básicamente, el hermano mayor del patriarcado, la supremacía blanca y la burguesía; los cuales históricamente han dejado atrás a minorías en desventaja como el género femenino, las personas de color y la clase obrera; esclavizándolas, discriminándolas y explotándolas. Esta familia disfuncional sigue representando un sistema económico y social dominante, por lo que cualquier compañía que tenga como principal objetivo hacer dinero es parte del capitalismo y, por ende, siempre va a preferir un beneficio propio al bien común de una sociedad.

Esto no significa que el Capitalismo sea malo –no del todo– sin embargo, su origen no se basa en un activismo social, todo lo contrario. Este sistema es basado en desigualdades sociales que, lamentablemente, aún prevalecen; las mujeres siguen siendo objetivizadas, acosadas, violadas y asesinadas. Las personas de color siguen siendo ridiculizadas, discriminadas y, también, asesinadas. La clase obrera sigue siendo explotada, excluida, oprimida y –aquí vamos de nuevo–, asesinada. A pesar de que la mercadotecnia bien lograda puede incentivar la creación y perpetuación de estereotipos, así como influir en pensamientos e ideas en la sociedad, sería ridículo pensar que un spot publicitario acabará mágicamente con este tipo de injusticias.

Ejemplos de campañas publicitarias “woke” hay muchas, desde el reciente, bien logrado, comercial de Gillette sobre

la tóxica masculinidad hegemónica, hasta el fiasco que fue la campaña de Pepsi con Kendall Jenner, obligándolos a retirar el spot. Definitivamente hay delgadas líneas que los publicistas no deberían atravesar, es por esto que es sumamente difícil y arriesgado tocar temas de activismo social dentro de un stunt publicitario, sobre todo si las compañías no han tenido otra iniciativa que apoye a este tipo de causas.

Gillette ha puesto un tema muy importante sobre la mesa, uno del que hace tiempo se tenía que hablar y que hace énfasis en el mal que los hombres han hecho por años y por lo que, hasta ahora, habían salido bien impunes. Todo discurso que haga concientización acerca de lo tóxico que puede llegar a ser la masculinidad es, para mí, un mensaje positivo, sin embargo... ¿qué pasa cuando lo teórico lo llevamos a lo práctico? Es decir, cuando llegamos al pasillo de los rastrillos dentro de un supermercado y encontramos que Gillette no sólo ha dividido sus productos por color, segmentados para cada género, sino que adicionalmente los rosas (dirigidos al público femenino) suelen ser más costosos. Claramente ahí también tendrían que tomarse medidas, ¿no?

Éste, sin duda, es un momento para reflexionar y para incentivar a las marcas a que no sólo lancen spots “feministas” y con consciencia de clase, sino que aspiren a crear estrategias efectivas que no ridiculicen movimientos sociales y que no invaliden la lucha por la que miles de personas han muerto a lo largo de los años. Un producto nunca va a valer más que un ser humano.



THE NECESSITY OF TRUTH

By: Francisco Zuloaga Cosme

Graphics: Ariadny Balderas

Lying goes beyond that which seeks to secure our mind on false information; it is that which creates a disturbance of what to think.

LYING AS EXAGGERATION THE INEVITABILITY OF CONFLICT

DONALD TRUMP: "BUT WHEN YOU SEE CHINA, THESE ARE FIERCE PEOPLE IN TERMS OF NEGOTIATION. THEY WANT TO TAKE YOUR THROAT OUT; THEY WANT TO CUT YOU APART. THESE ARE TOUGH PEOPLE. I'VE DEALT WITH THEM ALL MY LIFE."

Good Morning America' Interview
November 3, 2015

Athens, ~ 431 B.C.

The funeral was almost over. The remains of the dead were buried in accordance to their tribe. Three days had already been given for the people of Athens to bring offerings to the fallen soldiers. The Athenians waited for the final speech to end the funeral. Thus was the tradition of Athens when in war — and Athens was no stranger to war. But this time was different.

Thucydides, historian and general, waited among them. His interest, however, was different than around him. He was there to make an account of whatever happened next — an account that in the coming years would give Abraham Lincoln the inspiration to address the Union soldiers at Gettysburg, and which would lead to the creation of the concept,

the Thucydides Trap (more on this later). Pericles, named "the first citizen of Athens" by Thucydides, was chosen to give the final speech.

Pericles' speech can be viewed as a eulogy of the growth of Athens, a call for further action into the war with the Spartans, a reminder of the Athenian values — or as the three of them — but never as a stark mourning for the dead. Regardless, many historians believe that Pericles and this exemplary speech, along with others, are the agents responsible for the eruption of the Peloponnesian War. One of Pericles' main arguments was that if Athens budged in a minor thing over Sparta (a commercial treaty), then a snowball effect would follow, leading the latter to destroy the former.

No ground would be ceded — all glory for Athens. A true hero had given a heroic speech. So does it appear.

In reality, Pericles' enthusiasm for the war was not grounded in desire to see Athens prosper over Sparta. It was a more personal and political matter. Pericles sought to divert the public attention from the legal problems his political allies were facing. In order to do this, he presented the war with Sparta as an inevitable event. It wasn't.

This is the Thucydides Trap, the idea that a war is inevitable whenever an established power becomes fearful of a rising power. Through rhetoric and emotion, Pericles inserted this idea in the minds of the Athenian people in



order to save his friends from disgrace.

In the end, Athens lost the war. Glory can be so elusive.

It is now just a matter of time to see whether or not the United State falls into the trap.

DONALD TRUMP: "WE CAN'T CONTINUE TO ALLOW CHINA TO RAPE OUR COUNTRY AND THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE DOING. IT'S THE GREATEST THEFT IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD."

Good Morning America' Interview
November 3, 2015

LYING AS DIVERSION PANEM ET CIRCENSES

Mexico, March 2010

On the news for three weeks straight, the story of the disappearance of four-year-old Paulette populated all the screen time. Family dinners stopped focusing on the family and instead gave space to discuss who was the most probable kidnapper of the girl. Cynicism was at its peak.

Her parents were prime suspects. So were her nannies. The testimonies of the suspects claimed different stories. Police were unable to arrive to any credible theory. Political parties started to use the case to advance their interests. It seemed as if there was a conspiracy surrounding the strange circumstances of the case, and everyone was desperate to know more.

"FREEDOM REQUIRES TRUTH, AND SO TO SMASH FREEDOM YOU MUST SMASH TRUTH."

Dr. Jason Stanley

USA, October 31, 1998

"No one would have believed, in the last years of the 19th century, that human affairs were being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's, and yet as mortal as his own," recited Orson Welles as American families sat around their house radios to hear the Mercury Theatre on the Air. The exact number of people listening to this transmission was not yet determined. Coming out of the looming voice of Welles, the words depicted a terror whose origin is the empty and dark place that is space. Nonetheless, the horror caused great entertainment. And truly great entertainment it became.

Welles updated the story, which originally took place in 1800s England, to America in the 1930s. The first half hour went as expected, with the story progressing as it did in the book. The actors played the characters as described in the novel. But by the arrival of the second half hour, a news bulletin interrupted the transmission. The news: an alien object had just landed on Earth and a giant tripod had emerged from the hole that it left in the ground.

Soldiers fired at it, but it was useless. Their weapons were no match. Martial law was imposed across the nation. These segments brought panic to everyone who tuned in to the show. Many ran to the streets looking for help. A wave of horror engulfed their minds. The Martians were here. One can only imagine how proud Orson Welles must have been of the first-rate spectacle he had just created. For it was spectacle that caused such fear...

Mexico, March 2010

... and such interest in the minds of the whole nation. The media seemed to stop caring of any other kind of news. Paulette was their star, their golden child. As the investigation progressed, more and more professionals were brought to examine the room where Paulette had disappeared. Nothing was found. Even sniffing dogs failed to find anything that could lead somewhere. One day everything was solved, more or less. The body of Paulette was found under her bed — a bed that had been in a room inspected in and out by countless professionals and trained dogs. It seemed beyond credibility that that could have just happened. But it did, and all of Mexico was still interested. The people had just been given the greatest spectacle of all time and were asking for more.

Juvenal's words still ring true: "Panem et circenses."

"IF LIBERTY MEANS ANYTHING AT ALL IT MEANS THE RIGHT TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO HEAR."

George Orwell

FINAL IDEAS

THE NECESSITY OF TRUTH

The first section makes no claims of President Donald Trump as either a fascist or the destroyer of the United States. To claim such would be a deviation from the facts, therefore a lie. A criticism on a specific matter is not a condemnation of a whole subject.

Things can sometimes be as simple as they appear to be, but let us not forget that it is by virtue of our reasoning and curiosity that we must find when they truly are.

If we are to have a meaningful opinion on something then we must search the truth, not by following tradition (which today seems to be the claim that "Donald Trump is bad") but by inquiring on facts and logical reasoning. Let's stop making kindergarten judgments. We are not robots, that is true. We are not cold machines that solely rely on mathematical and logical processes. But neither are we animals that base their whole actions on instincts and basic emotions.

When has the media lied? When has the president lied? Those are some questions; let's search for equally good answers.



THE RISE OF TECHNOLOGY AND *Internet Culture*

By: Rocio Villalobos

Graphics: Alexa Mendoza



accidentally left behind in their home, who would not turn around to retrieve their cellphone?

The answer is few.

With 512GB of storage offered for Apple's latest iPhone XS model, people may feel they are leaving behind much more than a phone. It would mean missing emails, falling behind in group chats and having to resort to another way to kill time between class without LTE Internet service to tweet or make memes — just to name a few of a modern smartphone's features.

Depending on one's specific use for their device, there could be greater risks to being out of touch for an entire day. People might even assume you're dead or were kidnapped.

Seriously, how many of us know someone who is always updating the world on their whereabouts through social media? How many of us notice their absence if we don't come across them on our timeline and begin theorizing what may have happened?

Exactly. Our world has been transformed by portable, advanced technology.

The iPhone alone has intensely upgraded by way of storage, picture quality and battery life. It's a flashlight, voice recorder, stopwatch and calculator rolled into one sleek, pocket-sized device.

When the Apple device first launched in 2007, it was considered revolutionary. The iPhone 2G could be purchased with 4 GB, 8 GB or 16 GB of storage.

Through its upgrades it has taken away some of its more functional features, and is offering them back at a cost. Those in the Apple community commonly air complaints about the removal of the headphone jack, which inhibits users from charging their phone while listening to music.

You can activate your Bluetooth, however, and listen to your music library wirelessly with a one-time purchase of Apple AirPods for \$159. Even so, compared to what cellphones cost when they debuted (the Motorola DynaTAC cost \$3,995), this price could be considered reasonable.

Once cellphones became more affordable in the late '90s, most professionals and adults have got one.

Nowadays, children on average receive their first smartphone at the age of 10, according to a 2017 report conducted by The Nielson Company. They, and everyone else, are likely to have either an iPhone or an Android device.



While Apple has a die-hard fan base that reacts with disgust whenever they receive a message in a green box (text message), some Android users are just as fervent of their choice.

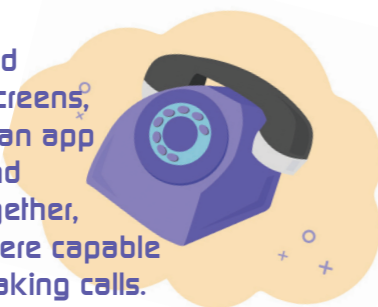
Computer Science senior Aldo Bañuelos has dipped his feet into both worlds — Android and Apple — and has a clear preference. Before starting school at UTRGV, Bañuelos was faced with a choice. Should his first smartphone be a Samsung device or an iPhone?

As he owned and communicated through an iPod touch that had just cracked, his initial idea was to purchase an iPhone and transfer his data. "It would have been easy," he said. "But then, the Galaxy S6 Edge came out with a major redesign.

"It blew my mind."

What Bañuelos noted to be the primary difference was the camera quality, which stood out to him as a photographer. The features of the newest model of iPhones — the iPhone XS — he said, do not begin to compete with the 960 frames per second slow-motion feature his Samsung offers.

But before we had high-resolution screens, face recognition, an app for everything, and social media altogether, mobile phones were capable of one thing — making calls.



Most Generation Zers likely will not remember the days when early models of smartphones did not have a front-facing camera, or when they had actual buttons. "Today's kids will never know or understand," has become a trending phrase in the cyber world used most commonly by millennials to express the "struggles" they lived through that are no longer an issue in society.

Examples include "how cool slap bracelets were" and "the struggle of having to rewind a VHS tape."

There are far fewer inconveniences today than there were even a decade ago thanks to our pocket-sized computers. For instance, smartphones

have eliminated the need for directional literacy; as is the case with phone books, physical maps are long-gone.

While technology has solved some issues, it has created others. Nobody knew what cyber-bullying was 20 years ago. Why? Because it didn't exist.

As children are often given their own internet-equipped devices to play games or watch videos, they could potentially be in harm's way if parents do not monitor websites their adolescent visits and ensure that personal, private information is not shared publicly.

If not careful, the Internet can lead to a world of trouble — depression, sex trafficking, pornography addiction — for people of any age.

A 2018 study by researchers by San Diego State University found that excessive use of technology is linked to higher rates of unhappiness among teens. The happiest teens, they found, use digital media for less than an hour each day, investing rather in activities such as reading and playing sports.

It has become normal to hear one talk about taking a social media detox or retreat, which entails deleting the app (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) from their phone for a period of time to relieve themselves of negativity.

"Black Mirror", a science-fiction television show, made its debut to Britain in 2011. Its premise is to highlight, and perhaps warn, of the potential consequences of technology. People consider it to be a modern rendition of the popular series "The Twilight Zone", which ran from 1959 to 1964.



While the stories may have seemed far-out at the time, many of the ideas and inventions are present today.

The season five episode, "You Drive," features a car that acts on his own. Today, they are referred to as "driverless" cars. Other themes of the show, such as a fear of foreigners and extreme government surveillance, are also evident in our society.

Similarly, episodes of "Black Mirror" are proving true.

Its season three episode, "Nosedive," depicts a society in which personal advancement is governed by a system of social likes. China has such a system in place in which doing "good" deeds boost one's social credit score — whereas "bad" deeds, such as criticizing the government, lower one's score and can lead to a travel ban.

UTRGV psychology freshman Marissa Solis said she sees the future of technology evolving into no-touch, mindreading holograms.

And it is not something she looks forward to.

"I just wish we could stay where we're at and try to focus on other important stuff," said the Mission resident. "Maybe focus on the environment because we're kinda messing it up right now."

Solis is on the iPhone train and said she is aware she spends too much time on her phone, mainly checking Twitter.

She has embarked on social media vacations only to re-download them a day later.

"I did feel much more comfortable, but I guess nowadays we can't really stop," she said, citing her fear of missing out on what's happening with her friends. With breaking news happening from one moment to the next, it takes not much longer than the blink of an eye to fall out of the know as far as international and domestic happenings, as well as in personal relationships.

For the sake of our sanity, we need to find a balance between online and face-to-face interaction.



From carrier pigeons to wireless telegraphs to touch-screen smartphones, the way humans communicate across vast regions has taken on many forms. What is to come next is surely being worked on at this very moment, just waiting to be revealed and held by millions.



On the New Statistics of AUTISM

CALL FOR ACTION & SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY

AUTISM IN NUMBERS

Autism in numbers Recent statistics on the rates of Autism Spectrum Disorder (hereafter refer as ASD) reveal an increased rate of the diagnoses among the American population. The CDC report revealed that 1 in every 54 children are diagnosed with Autism, distinctly a study published in 2018 at the journal Pediatrics revealed a rate of 1 in every 40 children (Michael et al., 2018). Approaches in methodologies can be a factor of the discrepancy between the two statistics but the public health concern is evident. With the increasing rates of diagnosis of ASD in children, resources and assisting programs for the children, families, and schools are an imperative need.

The increasing trend, as per Autism Speaks based on the CDC Reports, goes as follows:

2004: 1 in every 66 children
2006: 1 in every 150 children
2008: 1 in every 125 children
2010: 1 in every 110 children
2012: 1 in every 88 children
2016: 1 in every 68 children
2018: 1 in every 59 children

The results calls for the mental and public health community to adjust measures in elevation of advocacy, clinical research, and effective treatments, specially culturally competent ones, for the needs of the children on the Spectrum.

A CALL FOR ACTION

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has ongoing initiatives such as parent-trainings programs and community-need based research.

UTRGV's NEWSROOM reported that Dr. Ward from Human Development and School Services (Brownsville Campus) leads a program on serving the needs of families with ASD in the Lower Cameron County.

Dr. Cecilia Montiel-Nava from the Clinical Psychology Doctoral Program at UTRGV will began community-based research with the local ASD communities.

Local buildings will light in blue across McAllen during April in honor of Autism Awareness Month and the call for the Rio Grande Valley to light it up blue is hereby made!

The author(s) are students at UTRGV aiming for increased networking between ASD advocacy and families. On April, we encourage our fellow student body and UTRGV community to light it up blue and help

us increase awareness about Autism. As local buildings light in blue, we encourage you to use the EmpowerASD.com hashtag: **#BlueHorizon** and join the international/online community.

Beginning the conversation on Autism, reducing stigma, and advocating for higher services indeed of dire need. However, action beyond hashtags were pragmatic solutions for the families and children with ASD is what will case the much needed social change.

WAYS TO HELP

We invite the UTRGV and RGV community to foster an environment of awareness of Autism beyond the official awareness day/month.

Local and regional organizations at various capacities are a paramount foundation to the social support network of families with a relative with ASD. TEAM MARIO, Capable Kids Foundation, and EmpowerASD are a few of the entities in the Valley in which the public can volunteer for the improvement of the future for children and families with ASD.

To any family in need of help or resources of any kind contact the American Autism Association Help Hotline **877-654-GIVE**.

BEYOND THE HASHTAG

By: Andy Torres
Co-author:
Dr. Cecilia Montiel-Nava

BLUE HORIZON

RESOURCES

1 in every 40 Stats - <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/142/6/e20174161>
CDC/Autism Speaks Stats reports <https://www.autismspeaks.org/science-news/cdc-increases-estimate-autisms-prevalence-15-percent-1-59-children>
Capable kids- <http://ckrgv.org/>
EmpowerASD- www.empowerasd.com
Dr. H Suying Ward- www.utrgv.edu/newsroom/2018/08/30-utrgv-grant-will-help-train-parents-caring-for-children-with-autism-spectrum-disorder.htm
Dr. Cecilia Montiel-Nava <https://www.utrgv.edu/psychologyphd/people/faculty/index.htm>


TOPOPHILIA



they say home is where the heart is, but where is home?

THIS GALLERY HIGHLIGHTS THE TOPOPHILIA POSSESSED
BY OUR FRIENDS, CLASSMATES AND NEIGHBORS.
YOU MAY SEE YOURSELF REFLECTED IN THESE IMAGES.

FROM GREEK TOPOS “PLACE” AND -PHILIA, “LOVE OF”)
THE AFFECTIVE
BOND WITH ONE’S
ENVIRONMENT



IF YOU HAVE A BEATING HEART, YOU HAVE
EXPERIENCED TOPOPHILIA.

IT MIGHT BE THE QUIET PLACE WHERE YOU GO TO
FORGET ABOUT EVERYTHING, A STAGE BEFORE AN
AUDIENCE WHERE YOU SHINE YOUR BRIGHTEST,
OR MAYBE IT’S NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR, YET
YOUR COMPANY MAKES YOU FEEL AT HOME.

NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE WORD, YOU CAN
BETTER APPRECIATE THIS FREE GIFT FROM LIFE.

NEXT TIME YOU FIND YOURSELF IN A PLACE
WHERE YOUR MIND AND SOUL FEEL AT PEACE,
YOU CAN TAKE A MOMENT TO THINK ABOUT
THE FACTORS THAT COMBINE TO CREATE THIS
EMOTIONAL CONNECTION YOU’RE IN THE MIDST
OF. PAY ATTENTION TO THE BIRDS CHIRPING, THE
CLOUDS IN THE SKY, THE LIGHTS FOCUSED ON YOU
— THE STAR — YOUR BEST FRIEND’S LAUGH, OR
THE SOUND OF BACON FRYING. IT’S POWERFUL.

TIES TO A
PLACE.



**A MOMENT CAPTURED FROM
THE EYES OF A VOYEUR.
WINDOWS ARE LIKE AN
INVITATION TO LOOK AND TAKE
IN THE WORLD AROUND US.**

Title:
They Were About To

Artist:
Alexandria Canchola

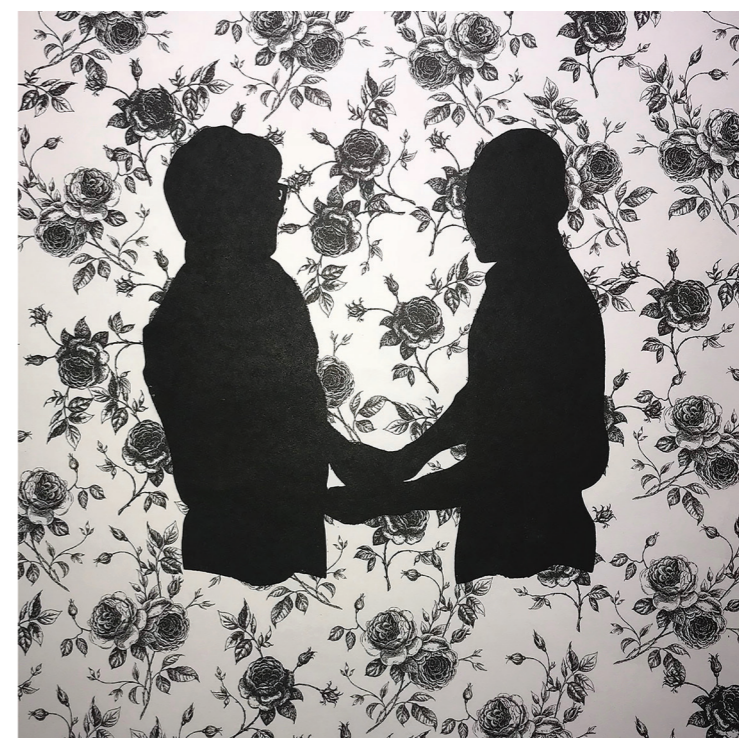
Medium:
Gouache on Paper

**THIS DEEPLY PERSONAL
PIECE DEPICTS THE
SILHOUETTES OF MY
HUSBAND AND I RECITING
OUR VOWS WHILE
GETTING MARRIED.**

Title:
'Til Death Do Us Part, I

Artist:
Camilo Garza

Medium:
Lino Cut



**WHAT IS IT THAT WE GROW IN
THIS WORLD, WHICH WE LAY
BEHIND FOR THE NEXT
GENERATION TO CONSUME.**

Title:
Cultivo

Artist:
Cristobal Rodríguez

Medium:
Charcoal on Paper

**THIS PIECE
REPRESENTS HOW IT
FEELS BEING STUCK
BETWEEN MEXICO
AND THE USA.**

Title:
La Frontera

Artist:
Michel Flores Travizón

Medium:
Lino Cut





Title:
Home is Peace

Artist:
Varesh Gorabi

Medium:
Photography

HOME IS NOT A SINGLE PLACE. - TO ME, IT ENCOMPASSES THE FEELING OF PEACE. THIS IS WHAT I FELT GAZING OUT ACROSS THE RESACA; I WANTED TO CAPTURE THIS FEELING, AND THE WARMTH I FELT IN THAT MOMENT.



Title:
I Feel No Restraint

Artist:
Adalberto Segura

Medium:
Oil on Canvas

THIS PIECE SHOWCASES THE INDULGENCE OF FREEDOM THE BALLERINA EXPERIENCES AS SHE PERFORMS. WHILE PERFORMING ALL WORRIES AND DIFFICULTIES ARE FORGOTTEN AND HER INNER PASSION IS EXPRESSED.

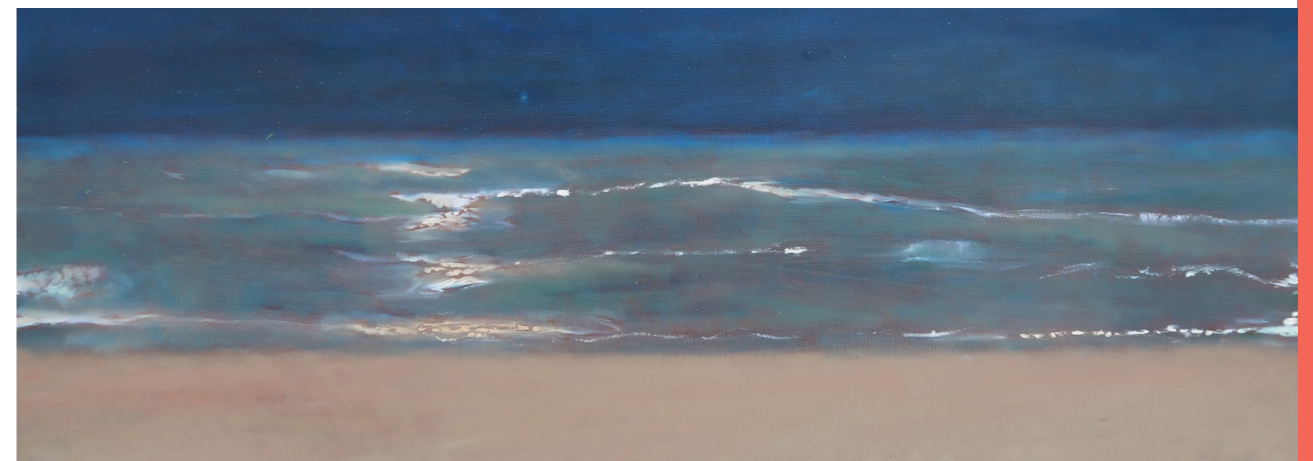


THE VIRGIN MARY WATCHES OVER LA LOMITA CHAPEL AND ALL THE HOPE THAT LIVES INSIDE.

Title:
Protector

Artist:
Rozena Shirvani-Arani

Medium:
Photography



THE OCEAN IS ONE OF THE ONLY PLACES YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS AND TIME. THIS PAINTING OF THE SHORE BRINGS CALM AND MOVEMENT TO OUR LIFE'S.

Title:
South Padre Island Shore

Artist:
José Ángel Lozano

Medium:
Oil on Canvas



FOR MANY HOME IS THE COUNTRY THEY'RE FROM. I FEEL LIKE THIS PICTURE REALLY SHOWS PRIDE AND LOVE FOR HIS HOME.

Title:
For Country

Artist:
Andrew Delgadillo

Medium:
Photography



THIS IMAGE IS NOT JUST ABOUT THE VIEW, BUT ABOUT THE JOURNEY WITH MY DAD. IT HAD BEEN 30 YEARS SINCE HE LAST VISITED THIS VIEW DRIVING HIS VW BEETLE AND NOW HE WALKED TO THE TOP WITH ME.

Title:
Panorama desde El Rodadero– Yauco, Puerto Rico

Artist:
Jesmil M. Maldonado Rodríguez

Medium:
Photography

MEET THE JUDGES



Alejandro Macias

Alejandro Macias is a Brownsville native who received his bachelor's in Fine Arts at the legacy campus, The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College.

Since 2006, Macias' artwork has been showcased in 80 exhibitions, including shows outside of Texas. He serves the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley as a lecturer of Art and Gallery Coordinator.

In Spring 2013, Macias became the director for The Galley at Ruesteberg Hall at UTB/TSC.



Celeste De Luna

Celeste De Luna is a self-taught printmaker from Harlingen and co-founder of the socially engaged arts collaborative Las Imaginistas.

Her work plays on the idea of social commentary with feminine sensibility.

De Luna is a lecturer of Art at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Since 1998, she has worked for high schools and universities across the Rio Grande Valley and has had her work showcased in 31 exhibitions, including shows outside of Texas.



Erik Webster

Erik Webster is a professional photographer and editor-in-chief for Pulse Magazine 004. At the state level, Erik has received multiple awards for his work in photography and videography, including first place in the prepublished "Environmental Photo" category, at this year's Texas Intercollegiate Press Association photo competition. Born in McAllen, Erik is a native of South Texas and is glad to be home after serving nearly a decade between the United States' military and Department of Defense.

PULSE MAGAZINE would like to thank all of the participants, the judges and the staff involved in the curation of this gallery. We hope you enjoyed the art.

win- filtered

Art is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature, but in truth a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature, placed alongside thereof for its conquest.

Friedrich Nietzsche

how yoga saved me

Y

And I mean EVERYWHERE! On social media, around campus; I always rolled my eyes at the posters around the Rec center and walked just a little bit faster toward the weights.

"It's a trend, it's what's cool right now, and it's not for me," I would tell myself. Splits? Yeah right. Headstands? Never. And that's the thing about yoga, it seemed like a flexibility game to me. All the cool poses required bends and I was not a gymnast. So, I left it at that. I went on with my life, avoiding the articles of all the benefits it brought, smiling tightly at my friends that practiced it. I didn't like it. I was intimidated by it.

Then, college started and it took my breath away, I wasn't prepared for it. I handled the school work well, but not the emotional tolls it began to take on me. I started dating someone when, looking back, I wasn't emotionally ready to. I was scared of everyone, not confident in who I was and in my purpose. I went through months of crying, then numbness. Then crying and not knowing why. I hated my body, I hated my lack of direction, I hated that I felt so inadequate in everything I did. How do you fix something if you don't know how it's broken? I was so broken.

I wasn't having any of it. I remember looking at the magazines sprawled on the counters, not really knowing how to politely walk away from the woman in front of me. She was so eager... so happy. It made me feel uncomfortable. Yoga sessions were being heavily advertised throughout the summer of 2015, everywhere I looked I saw a fit, flexible, smiling women doing various kinds of poses.

The media began promoting another trend: self-love. I remember coming across a HuffPost article by a contributor named Joyce Marter titled: "Self-Love Must Come First: How to Love Yourself." I read through it, yearning for anything to spark interest within me. One thing stood out to me, and even now I internalize it every time I need to. The article said "Self-love is a journey. It takes dedication, devotion, and practice...

“Self-Love Must Come First:
How to Love Yourself.”

By: Victoria Martínez Díaz

Photography: Erik Webster



Self-love is an exponential force." An exponential force. I kept browsing the web, and for the first time in a while, I remember feeling a warmth in my chest, a tiny flame. I then came across another article... about yoga.

I immediately rolled my eyes, the bias I had from the summer before weighted heavily on my hand as I clicked the link. "Yoga as a practice of self-love," written by Casey Jade. I skimmed through it until my eyes landed on this phrase:

“While the physical postures can look incredibly beautiful, yoga is an internal practice that touches the depths of your soul. The challenge comes in truly listening to what your body needs in each moment and choosing to honor that. When you honor that, you chose love over ego.”

At that point in my life, I was tired of my ego. I was tired of being afraid and being numb and cruel to myself. I wanted to choose love. I wanted to honor myself. To this day, I don't really know what was the motivation to get up and act on these feelings. I suppose

I was sick of pitying myself without actually trying to be better. I wanted something to focus on. And I won't lie...I wanted to look better. I wanted to be fit, like the ladies on the posters. I wanted to smile like them, too.

I found a book that taught basic poses and bought a cheap yoga mat at Walmart that very night. I went home, failed at all of them, and cried. It wasn't peaceful. I didn't know how to meditate and all the poses hurt.

I couldn't even touch my toes. One of my classmates recommended I go to Corazon Yoga Studio in McAllen. So, I scraped up the last of my paycheck and paid for a month of classes. There was no going back. It was a new start, the time to change my life- and I was ready.

Corazon Yoga was a blessing. I attended class with a friend the first time and the entire time we were so behind everyone. I didn't know any of the asanas (poses), but by the end of the 1-hour class, I had learned so much. We were hot, sweaty, and tired. But, oddly happy about the whole experience. We laughed on the way home, my body felt good. I wasn't a fan of the meditating because I disliked long silences. At the end of the session, we laid down completely flat and just meditated, focusing on relaxing every extremity and muscle. This was my least favorite part. I wasn't a fan of the meditating because I disliked long silences. We laughed on the way home, my body felt good. However, my friend loved it and encouraged us to go back the week after.

Unfortunately, she couldn't make it anymore, but after a few days, I missed the feeling. I began to attend regularly and eventually learned names and proper forms for the asanas. I got stronger, more flexible, more confident. But most importantly... I was happy.

I learned that yoga wasn't all about the meditation and the sitting in silence. I, in fact, don't do that very often. The point of breathing in each pose has physical benefits, including oxygenation to organs, muscle relaxation, pulse relaxation, and endorphin releases. The constancy of the breaths also helps with anxiety, I can personally vouch for that. For example, take a forward fold (touching your toes). While standing straight, you inhale, into your lungs. Then as you fold, you let out the breath, ending by hugging the knees or hips or whatever could be reached. It's not about reaching your toes, it's about listening to yourself and stopping where you should. It's not about doing what you're supposed to, it's about allowing yourself to do what you, as an individual, fully can. The practice is about you.

I also realized that yoga was kind to everyone, not just skinny and happy people. It embraced anyone that welcomed it, in a way I can't put into words. As months and years went by, I saw myself constantly improving. I'm even able to do unique yogi poses now. The cool things are a plus, especially when you realize how hard they truly are. It requires strength, I won't lie. I had zero of that at the beginning of my journey. As time went by, I was so invested in getting better and getting where all the famous Instagram pictures were that I didn't realize just how much stronger I was getting. It's a progressive and nice change because the physical improvements came as a bonus to what I was already working towards.



A lot of times, lost souls need direction, whatever that may be for you. For me, the constant self-improvement and discipline that yoga gifted to me saved me.



It was also incredibly beneficial as a pain reliever. I used to have chronic back pains due to bad posture. Also, my right wrist was sprained years ago and never healed quite right. The gentle exercises and stretches calmed any discomfort, even if they were internal, like when I was having colic or headaches. Plus, the sense of accomplishment you got after finally nailing a pose you were working on is indescribable. I worked on my headstand for months before nailing one. But it wasn't easy. I learned that it took tons of self-discipline and patience

to listen to yourself. I was sore for weeks, to the point that it hurt to move. I wasn't used to carrying around my own body weight, and I would over exert myself at first and try to do things I wasn't ready to do just yet.

Throughout this journey, I learned to laugh when I fell instead of getting mad. I learned to thank my body for lifting me up, for cooperating with me instead of being upset that it didn't do what I wanted to begin with. I learned that nothing is achieved without practice. I learned that yoga or any kind of practice that you decide to stick with creates an intimate bond with yourself. It's like I shook my own hand and nodded, after all the years of pushing myself away... I've got you now. Together, we will make it.

I'm not writing this to tell you to go out and start yoga. I'm writing this to tell you that even when you seem to be in an endless battle with yourself, you need to be gentle. A lot of times, lost souls need direction, whatever that may be for you. For me, the constant self-improvement and discipline that yoga gifted to me saved me. My mat gave me something to wake up to, the desire to win and to prove myself better than who I was the day before. This in itself drove me miles further than anything I had previously done. So go out there and find your passion.

If you're feeling lost, if you're bored, if you're broken, you don't have to do it alone. Find your community. It's going to be hard, very hard at first to break those old habits. But you have to. You get up, drag yourself out and do it.



I encourage anyone who is feeling lost, like I was, to try some form of physical activity. To try anything. Even if you think "it's not for me," it is... anything is for you if you just do it.



JOSIE DEL CASTILLO

By: Steven Hughes



Making progress is an amazing feeling. You know, like completing 90 percent of a project that's due next month or reading ahead in a textbook. There's nothing quite like it. As an artist, you're expected to improve every day. And what they say is true, you are your own biggest critic.

Coming to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley has taught me to not settle for less, and has had the same effect, I'm sure, on others. There's one student I know who lives her life always reaching for more.

Her name is Josie Del Castillo and she is working toward her fine arts Masters degree in studio art. Since she was young, Castillo has had a steadfast passion for art. While she's honed her skills in the Rio Grande Valley, some of her artwork can be found in galleries around Texas. With her accomplishments and ability to inspire, it would be a crime not to talk about her.

WHAT EXPRESSIONS DO YOU TRY TO CONVEY IN YOUR ART?

Del Castillo: Most recently, the concepts I follow have (been about) mental health. I struggle a lot with anxiety, depression, stress, insecurity and over thinking. And we must find a way to cope with all of these negative things, whether it's through therapy, taking medication or trying to have a healthier lifestyle. Everybody has their own way. Mine has always been through art.

Although my work doesn't really convey it, I try to make positive art. I don't want to paint someone suffering from anxiety. I (want to) paint somebody who's overcoming anxiety. That's what I want to be. I want to be someone who's overcoming those things. Those are the emotions in my art.

WHAT OR WHO INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME AN ARTIST?

Del Castillo: I took art classes throughout elementary, middle and high school. When I applied for college, I felt like art was the only thing I could be good at. I didn't see myself doing anything else. Art was the only thing that felt right for me.

When it comes to influences, there are too many — artists, professors, teachers, movements. There's not a specific thing (or person).

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE SUCH A LARGE INFLUENCE THROUGH YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS?

Del Castillo: Recently, I started uploading more and more of my work and then other artists started noticing me and retweeting me.

It's great how social media can impact artists. A simple retweet can lead more exposure, which helps you gain followers. I'm just putting my work out there.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST UNFORGETTABLE MOMENT SO FAR IN YOUR CAREER?

Del Castillo: There are a lot of good things that have happened to me. I'm grateful for the opportunities I've received. Just exhibiting my work where everybody can see it and experience it is, to me, the most wonderful (thing).

My most recent show was the New Texas Talent in Dallas, Texas. It's a very competitive exhibition. You have to apply and be juried. I was one of the youngest artists there and I was one of the few minorities present.

I think that was my peak, being in that exhibit. I just want to keep going up.

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED A SEVERELY DISCOURAGING MOMENT IN YOUR CAREER? IF SO, HOW DID YOU GET THROUGH IT?

Del Castillo: I think in the very beginning. I was an art major and I was discouraged by a few people that asked me, "What are you going to do with (an art) degree? Are you just going to be an art teacher like everybody else? Why didn't you major in something else?"

I'm sure everybody gets that a lot. I was just very discouraged. There's nothing wrong with being an art major. I'm literally in the studio every day in order to become better and better.



WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A STRUGGLING CREATIVE WHO IS UNHAPPY WITH THE ART THEY'RE PRODUCING?

Del Castillo: So there are a lot of answers to this question. Let's say you're drawing a live model and don't like the proportions because it doesn't look as realistic. When it comes to doing it, sketch it out, sketch it out, sketch it out. Sketch it out so many times that you just get tired of the figure. And don't be afraid to ask for help or advice from other students you look up to.

I'm always asking questions. I still ask questions to undergraduate students about my painting. I don't see myself superior to others. Whether it's your painting, your drawing, your sculpture, or any sort of art form, always ask for help. Others can advise you on things you don't see when you're drawing or painting.

It's good to be open-minded to constructive criticism. As art students we have critiques every other week, which are very helpful. They can be hurtful at times because you don't necessarily want to hear that your drawing sucks. But actually, it's not that it sucks, it just needs work. Or maybe you're doing really good and (wondering) how to go from good to great, and how do go from great to fucking awesome.

Being at the university has helped me grow so much, I wouldn't be where I'm at — getting into all these shows, receiving scholarships, working at a gallery, being a teaching assistant, getting a Master's degree — if it weren't for the opportunity UTRGV has given me. I want everybody else to have these opportunities.

unfinished business

By: S.B.

I re-encountered the painting while emptying my closet of the endless trash I hoarded due to its “emotional value”. It’s an unfinished painting, unlike many.

I see beyond a vase with four flowers. My dad was painting this around the time he and my mom were on the verge of dissolving their marriage. I was 12, maybe 13.

I was still young and neither my mom nor my dad would give me or my younger sister any details. The only way I could figure out why they were getting a divorce was through putting little pieces together: my father’s distance and obsession with work; my mother’s mysterious phone calls; my father’s eyes glued to his Blackberry; my mother dressing and acting more like a bachelorette.

I figured she was cheating on him, and I was mad. But I didn’t know the full story. He neglected her, their relationship. He was so wrapped up in his work because he had another woman... a forbidden business romance.

I didn’t figure this out until the summer after their divorce when he remarried. And even then, I didn’t comprehend it fully until years later.

It never occurred to me to take a second look... to analyze the hidden symbolism he subconsciously incorporated in this painting.



The Four Flowers

*I think we should put this in Spanish,
“Las Cuatro Flores”*

The first flower:

Yellow, very large and taller than the rest. That’s him, the head of the household, towering over.

The second:

Red, petals thin, dainty but still the second largest. That’s my mom; she may be a petite woman, but her presence is vast.

The third:

Purple, almost as big as the red matriarch. That’s got to be me, the oldest daughter, budding into maturity.

The final flower:

*Pink, and very small. At the time, my sister was just slipping out of the toddler age... too young to remember that life. It makes sense; she’s the small pink flower, sheltered by the rest...
tiny, innocent, unaware.*

*All four flowers are entangled by the stems, the way our family once was.
An unpainted vase. A lack of details. An unfinished painting.
It is essentially how he left us.*

A year before their divorce, we moved miles away following his job transfer request in hopes of starting fresh. It almost worked, but my parents married too young, too immature, naive, inexperienced. Their marriage managed to crumble.

He left...

He followed his mistress back to our old city, in our old country, hundreds of miles away. He started a new family in no time; two kids, a dog, the perfect suburban life.

My mom planted herself in a country whose language she did not know to prevent uprooting us.

My sister, small at age seven, she would tell our mom, “yo lloro por dentro” — I cry on the inside. Those words still shatter me.

Me, well... I just had to grow up a little faster. I bloomed, my petals stretching far and wide. I had to help my mom. I had to protect my sister!

It has been a decade. Financially, he is there for my sister and I. Emotionally, he says he tries. Texts and Facebook likes replaced hugs and kisses, but a pixelated blue thumbs up just doesn't suffice.

I have learned not to care. I have learned not to feel as much... to be numb. A plastic flower doesn't wilt.

He missed so many milestones, but he believes he didn't. I think he is lying.

But the fact remains. He never finished his painting. He left us.

We are his unfinished business!



OVAVP

Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention

The Office for Victim Advocacy & Violence Prevention works with students, staff, faculty and community partners to strive for a campus free from gender-based and interpersonal violence and to facilitate services for victims and survivors of sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, sexual harassment, and interpersonal violence.

OVAVP Provides

- Confidential advocacy services.
- Educational activities and prevention programs.
- Assistance in navigating campus and community resources such as legal aid, law enforcement help, medical or health assistance, mental health support, housing assistance, etc.
- Direct victim and survivor support services, such as weekly support groups.
- A critical voice for promoting change in beliefs and policies that marginalize members of the campus community who identify as survivors or victims of interpersonal violence.

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How to Stop The Pain?

SURVIVING A BROKEN HEART AND SUICIDE

By: Anonymous

I've had thoughts of suicide for years, and there have been a few attempts. I'm going to highlight one attempt that pushed me to seek help.

It happened during summer 2017, the July after I graduated from high school. I was in love with a boy who sadly didn't love me back.

He knew exactly how I felt about him. I would express my feelings by saying things like, "I'd die for you," or "I'd start a war for you."

Cross, right?

Anyway, the reason I didn't stop lusting after him and desperately attempting to make him as crazy about me as I was him, is because he never told me straight-up that the feelings weren't mutual. So I kept hoping for something, at least something to change.

He and I met on a few occasions, each time I considered to be one of the best moments in my life. I saw hearts floating around his angelic face during our initial meeting.

The world stood still for us. I felt happy — euphoric, even.

We began hooking up.

While the first time was a little awkward, the second time was unforgettable. We met at my place and cuddled for awhile. Then things escalated. Every time we were intimate, I felt a passion inside of me I never knew existed.

Maybe the strong feelings I felt for him and the belief we would have a happily ever after was all in my head. Looking back on the time with a self-awareness of my desperation to feeling loved, I realize that could be the case.

Our third and final encounter ended nice enough. I helped him edit a video and we ended up in bed.

Then the next day, through Snapchat, he admitted his feelings towards me — or lack thereof.

My heart shattered. Never had I felt so much pain in my chest. There was a giant, horrible sensation of pressure on a single point in my chest.



Illustrations: María Ruiz

I couldn't stop crying.

I started scratching my arms to relieve the pain, but it wouldn't go away. I took deep breaths. I drank water. I tried everything possible I could think of to stop the pain.

There was so much screaming in my head. The shell of my mind finally snapped and I lost all control of my emotions- and myself.

Eventually, I made the decision to grab a large handful of painkillers.

The room become dark and cold. All I could see was my hand clenching the pills.

A booming voice kept shouting "DO IT, DO IT, DO IT!" It was my time to go. There was no room for reasoning.

Right as I was about to shove them in my mouth, my best friend — who was due for a visit — came into my room and smacked me in the face. This act of brutality saved my life.

I confided in her. Opening up to her about my heartbreak helped remedy my pain, and it snapped me back to my senses. I felt relieved

Dang, I just publicly shared one of the darkest moments in my life. However, I like to think my story has a happy ending. Or at least I have the power to make it so.

As I mentioned, there have been more attempts, none successful — obviously.



So, I wanted to do something to break the cycle.

This past year has been huge for my mental health. Admittedly, it's scary, but also exciting.

Along my journey, I discovered the Counseling Center at the university. Their services have worked wonders for alleviating my anxiety, as well as enhancing my self-esteem.

It's a place that provides free and confidential counseling services addressing mental health concerns and promoting personal growth for those UTRGV students, according to its about page.

"We have multiple methods of helping out and educating students about suicide prevention, and other issues" said Christopher Albert, director of the center. "We do outreach programs... to help bring awareness to the campus on many mental health related issues, including suicide."

In 2017, the Counseling Center and the School of Medicine's Wellness program received a grant from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), to develop the Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention Program.

The amount of \$304, 453 will be rewarded to these departments over three years. "These types of programs... involve using a multi-method and proactive approach on our campuses to

help reduce suicide rates and risk," said Albert. "One main intervention we're utilizing out of this program is called Question, Persuade, and Refer, Suicide Prevention Gatekeeper Training.

"The goal is to train faculty, staff, students, and others to build confidence and learn how to effectively identify those who may be suicidal, and take the steps to bridge the person to the professional help he or she may need."

It's amazing that our university provides this service for free, but my heart hurts knowing fellow students may be suffering but are unaware of the Counseling Center's existence. Hopefully this story will help make a change on that.

I'm grateful for the staff for helping me return to a better place, as well as for my friends for letting me be vulnerable and supporting my progress by reminding me to go to my sessions. Even on dark days I know I have somewhere to turn.

Staff from the Counseling Center have advised me to do consistent workouts, practice breathing exercises, keep in touch with close friends, develop a system to manage my time for work, school, and personal stuff, and to explore self-care practices.

I am working every day to know my value and not rely on others for my happiness. I have since cut off all contact with my ex-beau and can say that I have moved on to greater things. While I look back on our time spent together with fondness, I don't have time to waste on people who don't return the effort.

If you ever find yourself contemplating suicide or another form of self-harm, there is a free 24/7 helpline for UTRGV students experiencing an emotional crisis or feelings of distress. If you ever need it, please call:

Vaqueros Crisis Line at 956-665-555.

IF YOU OR ANYONE YOU KNOW HAVE THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE, PLEASE CALL THE NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 1-800-273-8255, OR VISIT [HTTPS://SUICIDEPREVENTIONLIFELINE.ORG](https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).



POEMA SOBRE EL AMOR
EL MONSTRUO:



EL SOL

By: Clarissa Garza

Illustration: Celeste Strange & Cecilia Sierra

Este monstruo salio durante la noche,
entre la lluvia y sin verguenza,
su espiritu entro a mi cuarto oscuro,
aparecio en la noche encima los gritos de los coyotes,
me despierte espinada,
como las espinas de los nopalitas,
me lastimaron.
Se colocaron dentro del mar sobre mi piel,
intente sacar las espinas de su raiz.
Y falle.

Este monstruo, el sol, me secuestro,
me "empepe-no", como el dicho de mama.

I am up on mars and my identity is still the same.
here I don't have mirrors,
the deep below, the deep above-
the waters overflow.

Three-dimensional oatmeal saliva,
entertaining the ego-lack of empathy,
no familiarity of love and equanimity.

My psychic abilities know what's to come,
I am two lifetimes ahead,
reincarnations manifold into one being, I.

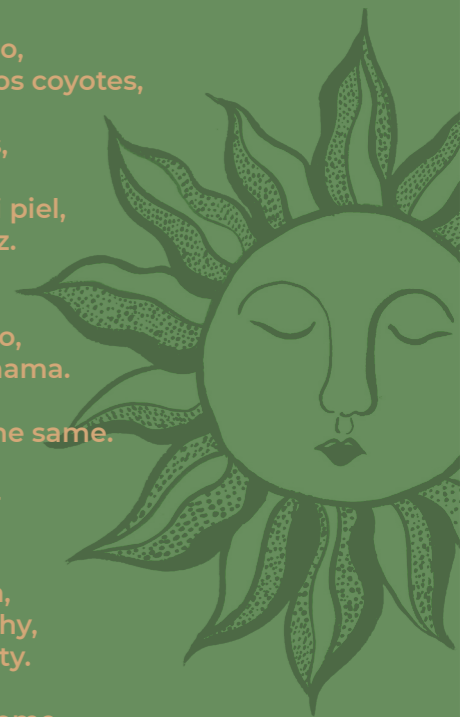
Take my heart and stab it with your cactus needle.
I will chew on your bones,
and slurp your bone marrow dry,
infect your puny blood and pluck out your eyes,
daily I quart it, offer my neck to its teeth.
My sleepless serpent eyes blinking in my dark space,
now I must sleep?


I am still on mars,
I rip off the mask slowly, peeling off my flesh, naked,
what does one then do after having lived an entire lifetime in a moment?

A moment of impact, my finite infinity, there are infinite finities.
To extrapolate yourself from itself,
the mere self that just is, a self,
forcing you to stare at this unrecognizable, shadow beast creature.

Like females of my culture, attracting the same hoarded pain,
este monstruo, sabe chupar,
sabe que el cuerpo pide y pide, conoce bien sus apetitos,
even the most vicious of beasts show you love and compassion,
the seemingly angelic ones surprise you with untold cruelty.

QUE DESGRACIA!





Malditos humanos que no aprecian corazones,
los gestos, los modos,
y el espíritu femenino adentro de la mujer.

No entienden la facultad de la madre tierra.

Necesitamos entender que la visión es solo para uno,
para un hombre, para una mujer,
yo no quiero tus ojos, si no son solo para mí.

Aun la naturaleza solo es,
it's the one face, one set of eyes, one mind,
you cannot put an ocean or a brick wall between two,
you two are not a one,
you are independent twos.

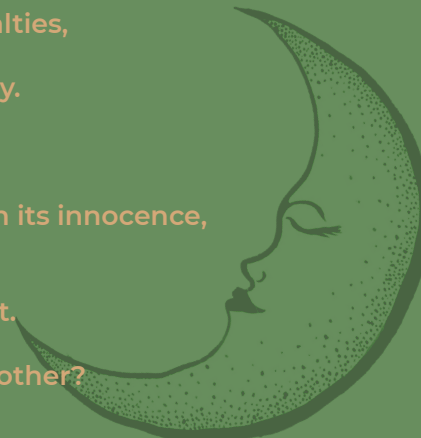
To imitate a mother's love,
since birth, a mother and her child's heart synchronize,
electromagnetic waves poeticize the beauty and spontaneity of nature.

TWO COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT PEOPLE.
EACH WITH THEIR OWN ROLE, OWN SOUL, OWN FACE.
YOU BRING SILENCE TO MY VIOLENCE,
YOU CAN CHANGE TO FORMS OF LIGHT THAT ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD,
YOU ARE NOT YOUR BODY,
YOU ARE MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN.

Most of us are simply more alive in the scenes of our dreams,
until I find the ideal love.
You will be my balance,
no es solo de cuerpo, también es del espíritu, de la mente.
It is a work, a duty, it knows without asking,
it just is, without expecting.

The sometimes I see you, the all the time I feel you.
I don't know you, because I only know of myself,
I am only certain of myself.
To live is to constantly interpret emotions.

There is an electrical circuit racing inside me,
y siento que me da toques.



Finding you, is finding myself.
The ancient soul that has endured casualties,
an orchestrated duality,
a feminine and masculine potentiality.

Love marks a one time happening.
A stare, shared words, a touch,
the butterfly bubbly sensation encapsulates love in its innocence,
love is this one time happening.

the first moment is the only moment.
Now you exist in its sphere.
How can I uplift, nurture, and rebuild the other?
any other apart from myself?

I need to feel the gods.
I feel them in plants, in seeds, in fruits, in leaves, in bees,
I need you to showcase the vibrations from the fifth dimension, here in
the third.

Each lifetime we will return to walk in the shoes of a different culture,
until we understand our oneness.

Our oneness resides latent inside our individual divine spirits,
nuestros presentimientos,
y nuestras espinas.
esas espinas, permanent scarring.

If it fruits,
my love for you will be no different than my love for the many.
The wholeness of humanity,
the wholeness of nature,
and the wholeness of the cosmos.

MI GENTE,
EL AMOR, COMO LA NATURALEZA, SOLO LO ES.

sabemos que con esto,
podemos transformar este mundo.



THE ROOM

By: Erik Webster

Illustration: Lorena Balquinta

The sound of the computer's fan broke through the silence. Like a wriggling snake, it slithered down my spine, raising every strand of hair on my body. I was in a trance. A heightened state of awareness.

I had been here so many times before — but today — today was different.

She held us in her tiny, delicate arms. Though small, they sheltered us from the coming storm, like they had for so many before us. She was there for us, even when we weren't there for her.

My brother joined me. His hair, dark and wavy, like the clouds of an approaching summer storm, saturated the room. His focus, pivotal. His dedication, questionable. But his passion? Burning with the voracity of a thousand fires!

The presence of bodies often graced her presence. But far too often, they were empty. Devoid of aspiration. Motivation. Dedication. We were her children. They? Wanderers who cared neither for her present nor past. Only for themselves.

The scent of her fading spirit grew stronger as I sat in her uncomfortable silence. It was stale. Decaying. Yet, somehow, comforting.

She had become family to me.

Oh, so long had I gone without acknowledging her. So long had I gone without realizing what she, like a lioness to her cubs, provided for us.

My time with her quickly fades, fleeting like the red and orange leaves of an autumn tree.

Where will the wind take me?
Only time will tell.

A cartoon illustration of Popeye the Sailor. He is wearing his signature red shirt, black vest, and blue sailor's cap. He is holding a green and yellow can labeled "VIAGRA" in his right hand, which is raised towards his face. His left hand is clenched into a fist. On his left bicep, there is a tattoo of a cross with a curved line through it. The background is plain white.

My Experience with Viagra

By: Lief Erikson

Graphics: Jonathan Manases Hernández

**I was horny.
I was hard.
And boy did it feel good!**

Not exactly the most eloquent way to start a story—I know—but nevertheless, you're still reading, right?

You see, I'm not exactly the youngest guy in college. In fact, by the time you read this, I will have hit the big three-oh. But I do love, "gettin' jiggy with it," from time to time. I mean, who doesn't? It's the reason we're all here after all. Before I jump too far ahead though, let me take a step back to clarify some things.

The Back Story

First of all, I am a sexually active, straight, Hispanic American male. I lost my virginity — to my junior-year high school girlfriend — when I was 17. And though I have had a couple of female sexual partners, in no way would I describe myself as a "player."

Every sexual partner I have ever had, was built upon a relationship of mutual feelings and trust, regardless of whether we dated or not.

Second, aside from the last year or so, I never experienced any difficulties in obtaining or maintaining an erection. And to be perfectly honest, 80 percent of the time, I still don't. But as a man who grew up during the dawn of the pre and post-technological evolution — where pornography has become readily available at anybody's fingertips — I feel there is a tremendous amount of pressure for men to "perform," as they have become accustomed to on the internet.

Don't get me wrong. I know I'm not a porn star. I know those scenes are staged, lighted, and filmed with the assistance of "performance" aids. And I know trying to live up to those standards is not realistic. Nevertheless, they have become engraved in my — and so many other American male's — minds.

I'm not blaming the pornography industry. I'm not even arguing whether the industry should exist. As a matter of fact, how can you begin to debate something so deeply engraved in our genetic makeup, as sex. Our predisposition to copulate and produce offspring is, I believe, as essential as breathing air or drinking water.

However, the pornographic industry has inarguably altered the perception of men and women on what sex should be, how it should play out, and has helped to enkindle a false sense of insecurity with regards to getting busy in and out of the bedroom.

The Problem

Nevertheless, within the last year, I started to notice that occasionally, I wasn't satisfied with my performance in bed. For the life of me, I just couldn't figure out why.

My girlfriend? The epitome of beauty itself... both lifegiving and breathtaking. Her eyes, deep and brown, like a pool of melted caramel. Her lips, red and lush, like the petals of a fresh spring rose.



She turns me on! And there is absolutely nothing about her that I am unattracted to.

But, why the problem?

From time to time, while we made sweet love, I found that man's best friend (and I don't mean my dog) decided to depart from me.

The first couple of times, it was embarrassing. But as it gradually happened more frequently, my disdain and frustration grew. Increasingly, I worried about it, and it seemed as though the more I worried about it, the worse it got.

It was infuriating!

It got so bad, it eventually led me to question my manhood. I wanted to pleasure my woman. I wanted to start a family. I wanted to be a dad. How could I ever do that... like this?

The Solution

As it turns out, I am far from alone. According to Health Line, a website dedicated to bringing up-to-date medical information to more than 125 million readers monthly, more than 18 million men in the United States suffer from erectile dysfunction. And that's assuming every man with this issue discusses it with their doctor. Experts argue that the number of men with ED in the U.S. may actually be closer to 30 million. Quite a few.

After discussing things with my doctor, we found it was primarily stress —

combined with post-traumatic stress disorder from my time in the service — that was the principal cause.

After a series of short questions about my health and providing my doctor with some basic information about my vitals, he wrote me a prescription for sildenafil, the generic form of Viagra.

The most remarkable thing about this process was — by utilizing the website www.forhims.com — I provided all this information and received my prescription over the internet, without ever having to leave my living room.

The Results

A week later, my first prescription for sildenafil was delivered to my mailbox. I tucked the tiny, round, white pills away in a corner of my dresser, so nobody would accidentally get their hands on them, and waited for the next time my girl would arrive.

An hour before she did, I took my first pill. It was so small, I didn't even need a glass of water to get it down. But by the time she arrived, I felt it.

I was a little hot. I was a little red. But I felt so energized. I could feel the blood pumping through my body. It was generally unexpected, I felt better.

I could feel my heart beating within my chest. I could hear the blood coursing through my veins. And as strange as it might sound, I felt perfectly normal.



I felt 18 again. I was so eager. I couldn't wait to see her!

Finally, she arrived, and I was so excited. We hadn't seen each other in a while and I knew the time was right. I couldn't wait to get her out of those clothes. She wore this tight jean skirt that day. I'll never forget. It was a little short. Not short enough to see anything, but just short enough to have your mind play tricks on you.

"Why are you so flush?"
she asked me.

"Oh, it's just hot in here,"
I replied.

Final Thoughts

Listen, I know somewhere out there, there's somebody thinking that I wrote this piece just for the hell of it. But trust me. It wasn't fun!

I experienced no pleasure sharing what has been a genuinely difficult circumstance in my life that affected me so immeasurably. That's why I had to write it!

Maybe you are a man who is struggling with a similar issue but doesn't want to admit it. Maybe you're a wife, or a girlfriend, or a significant other who is genuinely concerned about your man.

If this is you, then I encourage you not to be afraid to speak up. Don't live another day with the anger. With the frustration. With the fear. Treatments for ED are extremely effective and I hope my story will help inspire you to find help.



Sebastián Guerrero Cárdenas moved from Mexico to the Rio Grande Valley at an early age. He is a graduate from Carnegie Mellon University with a degree in Information Systems and Computer Human Interaction. Photography has always been a part of his life; he picked it up in his junior year of college to cope with stress and school. Guerrero Cárdenas found his passion and a way to express his emotions through this craft. Urban, vintage, and gritty are a few words that best describe his photos. Sebastián recently started working as a photographer for a fashion magazine in Seattle, Washington.

The interview has been lightly edited for length and clarity.

By: Andrea Alemán

SEBASTIÁN GUERRERO CARDENAS





WOULD YOU CONSIDER PHOTOGRAPHY YOUR HOBBY?

Sebas: It started off as a hobby but it transformed into a passion and an outlet. It sounds silly but when I went to school the climate was very stressful and there was a lot of tech. It was my junior year when I was getting tired of school. I think it's one thing to make technical things and another thing to actually create something. I always told myself "I want to do it, I want to do it," then I was just like "I'm gonna do it for sure."

WHAT CAMERAS DO YOU SHOOT WITH?

Sebas: Nikon FM is the most priceless to me; it's the one I love. The best thing about film or, honestly, in general about photography, is a nice camera is nice to have, but it's more of what you take a picture of. The good thing about film cameras is that you can buy some cheap ones. I went to Texas Thrift and bought one of my other good cameras for like, \$12. I bought another one my last year of college for about \$20. It's a point and shoot, but I use it for, like, a quarter of the photos I take. My need to get more cameras was to get more lenses and aperture sizes. I also needed a camera that I could take with me that wasn't too big and that I could break and not care.

WHERE DID THIS COME FROM? WAS IT YOUR FAMILY? WERE THEY INTO PHOTOGRAPHY?

Sebas: My grandpa was a radio host and had a lot of cameras in Mexico. When my dad was around 17 he got his first camera, a Nikon FM. Essentially, those are all the photos of my photo albums. When I was in this phase of my life I told my dad, "I want to be serious with photography," and I've always liked film. My dad said, "Well, you have my camera." That was the start.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN EDITING YOUR PHOTOS?

Sebas: When it comes down to editing, I try to remember how I felt that day or how the day was. Sometimes I feel like, in my eyes, green is really green and I'll just edit it and make it until I feel like that's how I felt that day. For me, it's what mood I am trying to set and making it match I saw it.

WHAT INSPIRES YOU? WHO DO YOU LOOK UP TO?

Sebas: My dad and my grandpa definitely inspire me. All the photo albums I grew up with helped me discover who I was. That's definitely an inspiration, but some of the other biggest ones are music or movies. I grew up watching so many movies. When I go out and take photos I'm always blasting music. When I'm editing,

whatever I'm listening to definitely affects how I perceive the photos.

My last year of college I took a photo history class from WWII to present day. Seeing all those photos, plus many more of my own, taught me so much more than I could learn just going out and taking photos on my own. Every photo you take, you're not really being unique, because everyone else has already done it before. Even when I thought I was doing something unique, a dude from 1972 already did it. So, I learned from what they did to make my photos better.



WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS?

Sebas: I have taken it easy with taking photos because this summer I took a lot of photos. I walk around a lot, just because I like to walk with friends and anytime I see a cool spot, I'll spot it on google maps. So, I have a bunch of spots ready. I've been reaching out to models, designers, and magazines. My goal is to get paid once to take photos but in reality, I would do it for free. I just like it that much. It's just fun for me to take photos.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO CONTINUE?



Sebas: What motivates me to keep going is that I'm young. Also, I've looked at the history or I've read about how photographers come up or what it took for them to get to where they got. Some of them is luck, some of them just had the right connections, some of them was the one photo that they took and some of them weren't even famous until they died. I think they just really loved what they did and people liked it. That's what keeps me going. That I'm young and that I can reach out to people and if they tell me no I'm okay with it. If they tell me yes, I get to meet and take really awesome photos. The fact that I can, is what keeps me going.

Minor White, a photographer, said "every photo you take is a self-portrait." I find it that when I take photos or when I edit them, there's something of me in there, even if I'm not in the photo. For example, I've noticed that I have pictures of bikes and scooters, a lot of them, but I don't know why. That's something in

me. I hope that when people see my photos or like them, that it makes them feel something from their past but that they also see something in me. Like the things I like or what I'm thinking of.



WOULD YOU SAY THAT WHILE YOU WERE IN COLLEGE YOU HAD LESS TIME TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANTED TO DO? DO YOU THINK YOU'RE MORE CREATIVE NOW OR THEN?

Sebas: I think, not just for me but I think anyone also, it was just a matter of confidence. I hope I'm not first one to admit it but I think I'm always thinking of weird things or weird and cool ideas would come to my head. I would think about them but I was never actually confident in pursuing them. I wasn't going to share it, I wasn't going to do anything with it. Now, I have no excuse. If I want to do it, I should do it. So, if I have an idea, I'll try my best to actually follow through.

DO YOU HOPE THAT ONE DAY PEOPLE WILL LOOK AT YOUR PICTURES IN CLASSES, LIKE THE ONE YOU TOOK OR DO YOU HOPE YOUR PICTURES TAKE PART IN HISTORY?

Sebas: I don't want to be in a history book, I'm not after fame. It feels good when someone likes your photos, it feels good when I like my own photos. I have photos of my dad when he was young. There's a photo of him taking a selfie with a camera and that photo is priceless to me. I just hope that somebody finds my photos priceless. I want somebody else to care about my photos than just me. Because I put in work into it, or I try to put in work into it and I enjoy it a lot.





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