

LOOKING BACK

2017 in Review

BY THE NUMBERS

400

Members

10,000

Audience members

15,000

Students
in the classroom

600

Tour participants

25

Programs

25

Presenters

15

Institutional partners

3

States

4

Cities

2

Countries



JUST a few weeks ago, I celebrated my first anniversary as executive director of the Tom Lea Institute, and what an amazing year it has been. In February, we co-hosted *I Love El Paso* with the UTEP College of Business Administration Graduate Business Center. “Boss Lady” Nevena Christi of Rocketbuster Boots spoke about her love of El Paso and how she turned her dream into a thriving business.

On the education side, the Institute developed four innovative blended curricula around the artwork of Tom Lea and his friend José Cisneros.

The curricula series began with *Awakening the Giants of Our History* and grew to include three additional units on topics as diverse as World War II, the New Deal, and the Mexican Revolution. Staff arranged school tours of two downtown murals – Tom Lea’s *Pass of the North* (1938) and Carlos Callejo’s *Our History* (1995). Downtown stops included the El Paso Museum of Art, the El Paso Museum of History, Dave’s Pawn Shop (to see Pancho Villa’s mummified finger), the Chihuahua’s Baseball Stadium Art Collection, and historic and architecturally significant buildings. I am not sure who enjoyed the tours more – the instructors, the students, or the tour guides – but I do know how much I enjoyed being with students and learning with them.

Bringing our vision into reality

As we moved quickly through the summer months, Tom Lea Month appeared on the horizon. In October, the Institute co-sponsored more than 20 programs, collaborating with 10 institutions in four cities, three states and two countries.

November began with our participation in the Texas Book Festival, where Adair Margo and co-author Melissa Renn led a lively discussion about their book *Tom Lea, Life Magazine, and World War II*. Never one to sit on her laurels, Adair also made a presentation to the Congreso Internacional de Turismo Creativo, a gathering of over 300 tourism professionals in Ciudad Juárez. The following week, Institute staff traveled to Los Alamos where I presented a session on cross-border collaborations at the New Mexico Association of Museums Annual Conference.

The year came to a close with Adair’s presentation at the Friends of the Texas Historical Commission Real Places Conference and a meeting with state Sen. Mary Kay Papan of Las Cruces, NM, to secure formal recognition of the *Tom Lea Trail* in New Mexico.

My sincere thanks to our founder, Adair Margo; the Board of Directors; and our friends, partners, supporters and sponsors. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Thank you for including me in this adventure.

– Lisa M. Pugh, Executive Director

Mighty Horses on El Camino Real

IN our new curriculum, *Mighty Horses on El Camino Real*, students in primary grades learn about the significance of the Don Juan de Oñate's expedition from Santa Barbara, Mexico, to the borderland region where three states and two countries meld into one unique culture. With them, the Spanish brought European livestock, including the horse, to North America and introduced new agricultural crops such as fruit trees, grains, and grapes to the native peoples.

As they approached the Rio Grande from the south, Spanish explorers in the colonial period viewed two mountain ranges rising out of the desert with a deep chasm between. This site they named El Paso del Norte (the Pass of the North), and it became the location of two future cities, Ciudad Juárez on the south bank of the Rio Grande and El Paso, Texas, on the opposite side. In gratitude and after surviving the ordeal of traveling through the Chihuahuan Desert, 21 years before the Pilgrim celebration in Plymouth, the expedition held a banquet thanking God on the banks of the Rio Grande at the present-day location of San Elizario – hence, the



John Houser's *The Equestrian* monument depicts Don Juan de Oñate.

very first Thanksgiving. Native tribes helped expedition members survive on their journey through present-day New Mexico toward Santa Fe. Socorro (which means “help” in Spanish), was named in honor of those who provided food and water to the travelers.

With the assistance of UTEP Creative Labs and the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Museum, the blended project-based curriculum will “gamify” the expedition by creating a video game-like learning experience. Teachers from our partner district, San Elizario, will ensure the

lessons enhance student achievement in Social Studies, Art and English Language Arts. The artwork and character qualities of Tom Lea and José Cisneros will form the foundation of the curriculum. The process of creating and casting John Houser's monumental sculpture *The Equestrian* will also be featured. Contact the Tom Lea Institute for more information about this project and how to introduce the curriculum in your local school district.

– Holly Packard Cobb, Director of Education

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

ON Thursday, January 11, I spent the morning at El Paso's Chapin High School giving a presentation on Tom Lea and his WPA (Works Progress Administration) murals. Mrs. Jeanna Rodriguez-Lawson's 11th graders were covering the Great Depression and their teacher reached out to the Institute to connect El Paso with the larger picture.

When Tom and Nancy Lea left Chicago for Santa Fe in the 1930s, they did not escape the effects of the Great Depression. Lea ended up working for the Laboratory

of Anthropology in Santa Fe documenting Pueblo Indian pottery designs as part of the Public Works Art Program (PWAP). During PWAP's six-month lifespan, 3,749 artists were employed and produced 15,663 works of art.

Following the PWAP came the WPA which commissioned artists to place works in locations that citizens visited frequently, such as post offices and courthouses. During the WPA period, Tom Lea painted seven murals in Texas and other places in the United States. They are located in El Paso, Dallas, Seymour,



Sarah Prezioso visits Chapin High School.

and Odessa, Texas; Pleasant Hill, Missouri; and Washington, D.C. Recently I became aware of a mural Tom Lea painted in 1940 in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and am currently working with the local historical society to determine if it was commissioned by the WPA.

– Sarah Prezioso,
Community Outreach Coordinator

De la Vega-Fosters Join Society of XII Travelers

IN old Europe, royal families arranged marriages to unify their interests in different parts of the world. The U.S./Mexico border has its own version, though it happened in a more natural way. It occurred when Paul Foster of Texas met Alejandra de la Vega of Chihuahua and they fell in love. Paul and Alejandra met at La Viña winery during an El Paso/Juárez Chapter meeting of the Young President's Organization. Paul was then president of YPO and frustrated that there were no Juárez members. Ten prospective members were invited one evening, with Alejandra being one of them. "I did join and we got married, which was not the purpose of the organization," she laughs.

Paul, an accounting major at Baylor, came to El Paso in 1991 as the marketing manager of El Paso Refinery. When it declared bankruptcy two years later and the banks foreclosed, he was a 35-year-old single dad with two children and no financial resources. He went to Dallas in 1993 and worked for a company that managed refinery assets for the banks. After four years, he founded Western Refining and ended up purchasing the refinery in 2000 and the Chevron Refinery across the street in 2003. When Western Refining went public in 2006, it quickly rose to become the fourth largest publicly traded independent refinery in the United States. Paul never forgot El Paso and the institutions that helped him succeed. A \$35 million gift to Baylor – the largest ever made by a living alumnus – established the Paul L. Foster Campus for Business and Innovation. A \$50 million gift for the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine – the first U.S. medical school on the



Paul Foster and Alejandra de la Vega-Foster have deep roots in the border region.

Mexican border – was the single largest private gift ever made to Texas Tech.

Paul's generosity and integrity reflect the character qualities Alejandra knew growing up in Juárez. Her late father, Federico de la Vega, was an industrialist and philanthropist who helped establish institutions of higher education. Her mother, Guadalupe Arizpe de la Vega, is a CNN hero recognized for her work as the founder of FEMAP, a global leader in health, education and micro-finance. Alejandra, after graduating with a degree in industrial engineering from Mexico's Monterrey Tech, managed her father's major league soccer team Cobras de Juárez. FEMAP began a pilot-program for troubled youth whom psychologists and doctors were having difficulty reaching. Recognizing young people's hero-worship of soccer players, Alejandra invited the young people to games, where they met the players and went out on the field. She invited a boy or girl to travel with her to away games – a program that transformed their lives.

Alejandra de la Vega Foster is vice president of Almacenes Distribuidores

de la Frontera, a company that operates convenience stores in the city of Juárez, and northern Chihuahua, Mexico. She owns the Domino's Pizza franchise in the city of Juárez and the franchise rights for La Madeleine Country French Café. Mrs. de la Vega-Foster is co-owner of the El Paso Chihuahuas, the Triple-A Baseball affiliate of the San Diego Padres, and co-owner and president of the Board of the Mexican Division 1 A Soccer Team Franchise for Ciudad Juárez, MX – Los Bravos de FC Juárez.

In October 2016, the governor of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, appointed her to serve in his cabinet as the secretary of economy for the electoral period of 2016-2021, a position that she currently holds.

A royal couple, Alejandra and Paul Foster have unified their mutual interest in the borderlands for the benefit of everyone. As the eighth members of the Society of XII Travelers, they help insure that the youth of the region will proudly know their own history and heritage.

– Adair Margo, Founder



FROM THE CHAIR

THE Tom Lea Institute is very pleased to begin its tenth year with the initiation of seven new board members. Welcome to:

☼ **Maria Woody** was born in New York City and raised in El Paso. Maria has a BBA in accounting from The University of Texas and her Master Gardener designation from Texas A&M. Maria is married to Darren Woody and lives in Austin.

☼ **Yolanda Arriola** is owner/CEO of Southwest University at El Paso. She is a leader and innovator and was recently awarded the LISTA (Latina Women in Business) award in New York City. Yolanda also sits on the board of the Make a Wish Foundation.

☼ **Stephen Feinberg** is the chairman and CEO of Dorsar Investment Company. He serves on boards including the Feinberg Foundation, the American Jewish Committee, and the University of Texas College of Education Advisory Board. Born in Chicago, Steve lives in New Mexico and Texas.

☼ **Will Harvey** is a native El Pasoan with a BA in Latin American Studies and a BS in Finance. He is currently president of EP Riverbend Development in El Paso, where he lives with his wife and three children.

☼ **Joe Lea, Jr.** is the nephew of Tom Lea and has been a practicing trial lawyer in Austin for 48 years. Joe brings a special perspective to the board and says he “treasures the times he spent with his uncle, Tom Lea.”

☼ **Bill Robertson** is serving as the interim dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. Robertson has received a number of awards including the UT Regent's Outstanding Teaching Award.

☼ **Laura Rodriguez** is a principal at the Raben Group, where she merges her substantial public policy and communications experience. She graduated from George Washington University and is co-founder of the Hispanic Lobbyists Association in Washington, D.C.

We would like to thank Bill Kiely and Jan Bullock, retiring trustees, for their leadership and keen interest for the past nine years. Their active board participation has been vital to the success and progress of the Institute. They will be missed! Also, many kudos to our former chair, Micki Costello, whose wisdom and steady hand have guided and enlightened us for the past three years.

– Anne Sewell Johnson, Chair

LOOKING BACK

A Few Favorite Events of 2017



Dr. Tomas Cuevas (top center, in blue) led a tour for the Tom Lea Institute into Ciudad Juárez, visiting history sites, including the first mission in the region.



Texas History Begins in El Paso is one of the downtown murals included in the Tom Lea curriculum tours celebrating his legacy and the arts in El Paso.



Former White House Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier held a 3-hour class with culinary students at EPCC in October. Students were shown how to make three of Mesnier's White House Desserts.



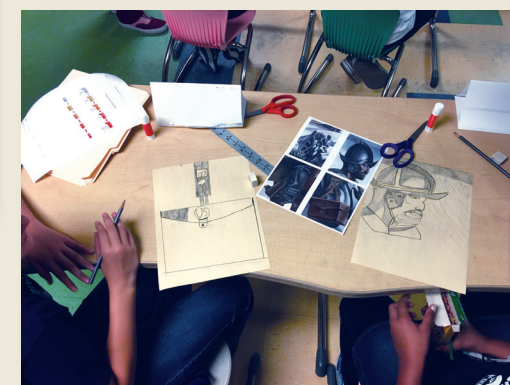
Architect Morris Brown (right, black shirt) and Adair Margo (to Mr. Brown's right) lead members of the Heritage Tourism Workshop on a tour of downtown El Paso.



Current and past members of the board visit the Tom Lea: Watercolors and Washes exhibit at the El Paso Museum of Art. L-R: Claudia Chiu, Jan Bullock, Cecilia Hager, Catherine Lea Weeks, Micki Costello, Anne Johnson, and Tania Schwartz



Dr. Melissa Warak discusses *Representations of the Horse throughout Art History* during Tom Lea Month at Compadres Horse Therapy. Floppy the horse, left, was rather interested!



LEFT: Students work on an art, history, and character activity, focusing on “alertness” to historical details, part of the Tom Lea curriculum in schools.

RIGHT: Dr. Alan Tyroch uses Tom Lea's *The First Recorded Surgical Operation in North America, Cabeza de Vaca, 1535* to give a presentation on medical history to a group of students from Silva Health Magnet.

The XII Travelers

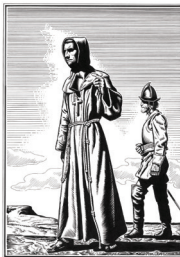
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Established by the Tom Lea Institute in 2011 through the leadership of founding member, J.P. Bryan, the Society of the XII Travelers is comprised of the first twelve \$100,000 donors to the Tom Lea Institute. The \$1.25-million-dollar endowment will provide a percentage of the annual operating costs of the Tom Lea Institute.



**Alvar Nuñez Cabeza
de Vaca Travelers**

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Houston



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Rodriguez Traveler**

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Wakefield Haley,
El Paso



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Travelers**

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Francis,
El Paso



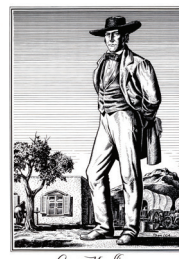
**Maj. Zebulon M. Pike
Travelers**

Paul & Alejandra
de la Vega Foster,
El Paso



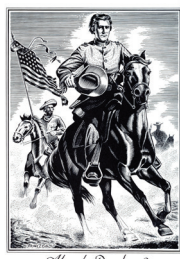
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Ponce de León
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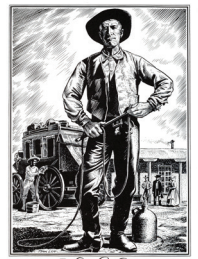
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* members who died but whom we will always remember

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