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# The Prospector, February 21, 2017

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ASSAYER OF STUDENT OPINION

# THE PROSPECTOR

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VOL. 102, NO. 20

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

FEBRUARY 21, 2017

## AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE STREETCAR PROJECT



DESIGN BY ANA RAMOS / THE PROSPECTOR

BY ADRIAN BROADDUS

The Prospector

Growing up in Brooklyn, New York, Carl Jackson, assistant director of Streetcar Operations at Sun Metro, was always infatuated with trains, subways and any other means of public transportation. Coming from a third generation of public transportation specialists, Jackson knew he always wanted to work on big machines, like trains and railcars.

He's worked on major projects, such as the Atlanta streetcars, the Portland streetcars, the Kansas City streetcars and the Seattle

streetcars. Jackson saw the impact that a streetcar had to each individual city and how much the local area benefited from it. However, none of his previous projects have struck him quite like El Paso's future streetcar project.

"In all my 30 years of working in streetcar operations, I have never worked with such a great group as we have now," said Jackson, who has been working with the Sun Metro team for nine months now. "Every day we are doing more to get this going and hopefully we can have this ready by the end of 2017 or the start of 2018."

While some would consider it a construction and traffic nightmare, the El Paso streetcar project has been under construction since early November and plans to continue throughout the year.

When finished, the streetcars will have two major routes: the first will be through the major streets in the downtown area, and the second will go from South Stanton Street in downtown, up to North Stanton Street, then take a left on Baltimore Avenue up to Glory Road, and finally a left on Oregon Street, which goes all the way downtown.

There will be six streetcars running at all times and they will arrive at each stop every 10 minutes, according to Jackson. He said the design for the streetcars will resemble the old streetcars, but include the amenities of a modern streetcar, such as WI-FI, air conditioning and a modern interior. Day passes to ride the streetcar for the whole day will cost around \$10, while single ride fares and monthly passes will be available.

"People are going to love it. In my experience when cities like Portland, Seattle, Kansas City or Atlanta get a streetcar, business-

es open up around there so they can get in on the action," Jackson said. "It's going to go from the downtown to the uptown and the movement is to take the city and uplift it."

However, there are some individuals concerned about the construction associated with the project.

The owner of Nuovo Cappetto, Edward Davis, shut down his business, located at 2711 North Stanton Street, because he claimed the construction had brought business down drastically.

Frank Ricci, the owner of Rock-in' Cigar Bar, located adjacent to

see STREETCAR on page 4



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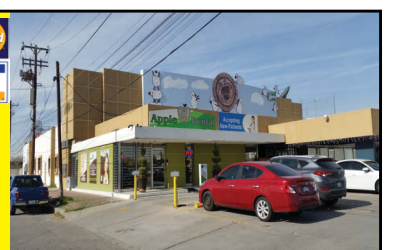
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FEBRUARY 21, 2017

OPINION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
MICHAELA ROMÁN, 747-7477

Should we care who our athletes vote for?

BY JASON GREEN  
The Prospector



As Tom Brady continues to make the media rounds following his record-breaking fifth Super Bowl victory, the incessant amount of questions from the endless number of talk-radio hosts has led to more and more political talk outside of the realm of sports.

Brady sounds like a very smart University of Michigan-educated man when he talks about the Xs and Os of the Patriots’ world-beating offense and Bill Belichick’s play calling that can stump even the best defenses in the NFL. That is exactly what we want to hear out of the mouth of Brady. However, more of Brady’s words are outside of that “realm of sports” that he is so good at residing in.

On Valentine’s Day, Brady spoke out, presumably in reference to six teammates who have already said that they will skip

the traditional Super Bowl champions’ visit to the White House.

“It really is a great experience,” Brady told NBC Sports’ Pro Football Talk. “Putting politics aside, it never was a political thing. At least it never was to me. It was something that was a privilege to do.”

The funny thing is, until recently, Brady hasn’t always put politics aside.

Google “Tom Brady” and “Make America Great Again” and up pops dozens of pictures of a smiling Brady at his locker, surrounded by media, with the fiery red symbol of Trump’s campaign prominently displayed in his locker. These images were taken during the campaign back when Brady was proud of his friendship with Trump and Trump often tweeted—as he has been known to do from time to time—about his great friendship with the championship quarterback.

Fast-forward to Super Bowl week and Brady is surprisingly apolitical.

“If people want to take sides, you know, they can do that,” said the fair and balanced Brady when talking to USA Today Sports. “It’s everyone’s right. They have a right to do that, and I have a right to stay

out of it, too. I want to keep my focus on where it should be for me at this moment.”

Now, that the big game is over, Brady can finally get back to telling his teammates who aren’t going to visit the wall-building, Muslim-banning, misogynistic, racist-in-chief that they are wrong for not visiting him, because it’s not about politics...it’s about the experience.

An experience, by the way, that Brady skipped out on when President Obama was in office, due to a “scheduling conflict”

So, the question is, do we want our athletes to remain just athletes? Or would we rather have athlete-activists?

In the 1990 Senate race for North Carolina, Democratic candidate Harvey Gantt reached out to Michael Jordan, as a fellow African-American, for an endorsement against famed incumbent Senator Jesse Helms, once described in a 2001 Washington Post piece by journalist David Broder as “the last prominent unabashed white racist politician in this country.”

Jordan would not give Gantt his endorsement, and Gantt went on to lose the election to Helms by the slimmest of margins. Jordan reportedly told a friend soon

after that, “Republicans buy sneakers, too,” referring to the famous Jordan line of basketball shoes.

Never has there been a president more divisive than Donald Trump, it seems safe to say. His actions, in just a month in office, have given athletes a chance to show that they will not stay quiet if they feel the need to speak up.

The captain of the U.S. soccer team, Michael Bradley, said he was “sad and embarrassed” over Trump’s immigration ban. Several other U.S. team players followed his example, as well as other Olympians. In all honesty, though, there were no Jordan level players speaking out.

When it comes to the Brady’s and Jordan’s of the sports world, maybe it doesn’t matter if we want them speaking up or not, and maybe it is their endorsements that determine ultimately what they take a stand for. Do they only stand for the bottom line?

Honestly, the biggest sports celebrity who spoke critically of Trump in the first month was NASCAR driver Dale Earnhardt Jr., which is even more shocking considering the NASCAR fan base (and

Tom Brady) probably single-handedly keep the “Make America Great Again” hat companies in business.

Athletes have taken stands for ideals—and knees, in the case of Colin Kaepernick—but even more so now, we have begun to see some athletes take stands against (or for) politicians.

Do we care? I do. The Super Bowl was far more fun for me, without a dog in the fight, to pull against the Patriots and their Trump-loving quarterback and Trump-loving coach and Trump himself! Honestly, I would have been a lot more accepting of Brady if he had just taken a stand. Say “Yes, I support Trump. You saw the hat. I supported him back then, I still do.”

It’s the pussyfooting (pun-intended) around it that is the problem. It’s the same for Michael Jordan. Dale Earnhardt Jr. will get a lot more respect for people knowing where he stands. The same for Michael Bradley and a lot of his teammates. Just be honest.

Most of all, let your heart guide you and not your wallet.

Follow Jason Green on Twitter @greenevansj

The thrill of finding close parking

BY MICHAELA ROMÁN  
The Prospector

It’s no secret that UTEP is a large commuter school. With that, comes plenty of students rummaging for parking every morning.

Going into UTEP, my brother, who was an experienced super-senior, taught me there was no need to buy a \$300 parking permit when I could simply park in front of a stranger’s house.

I used to find parking almost every day by Taco Bell, which at the time had no parking meters, or somewhere on Kerbey Avenue, going up to Campbell Street at the furthest. Every semester, the struggle became more and more real. It got to the point where at the end of my sophomore year I would park where New York Avenue meets Florence Street, which is a 10-15 minute walk to class plus however much time it took to find the spot.

I know what you’re thinking, “wow you’re so lazy, can’t walk 10-15 minutes to class.” Truth be told, I actually enjoy a walk that wakes me up, but I could be spending at least five of those minutes with my eyes shut still in bed. At the end of my junior year, my early-onset senioritis kicked in hard. I mastered extreme parallel parking on Stanton Street, while heavy traffic swished by.

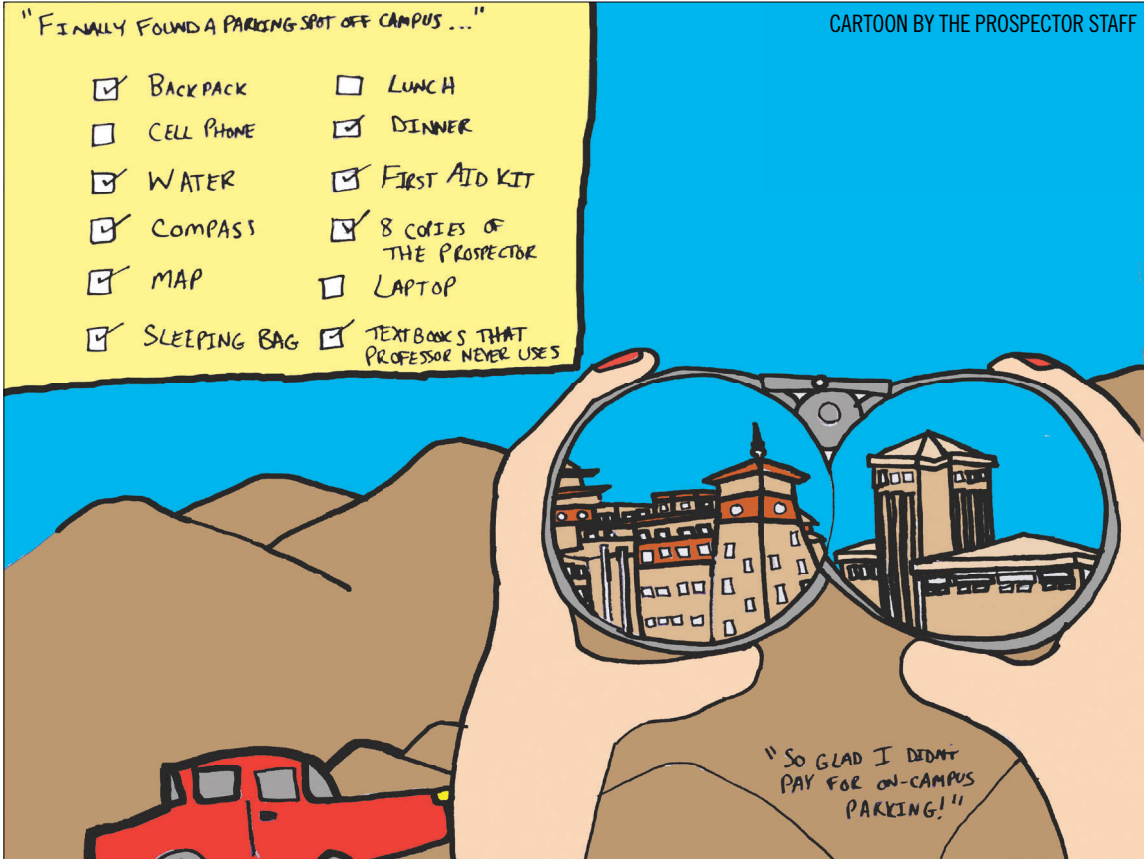
There’s a rush I’d receive the closer I got to the corner of Stanton Street and University Avenue or the corner of Stanton Street and Kerbey Avenue. Almost as if close parking was a supernatural sign I’d have a good day.

I’ve met some nice folks during my parking adventures. One man on Stanton Street told me I could park in front of his house whenever I’d like to, and if it was

trash day I could just move the trash bins up to his porch and go ahead and park there. Although I wasn’t sure if he was trying to get me to do his chores or just be friendly, it was a nice gesture. I found another lady a few houses down often sitting on her porch in the mornings smiling at me. She didn’t say much, but would always laugh when clumsy me would hustle back to my car, forgetting the occasional textbook, coffee or one of the many items I carry every morning.

This semester, my 2016 Stanton Street parking spree came to a close when reality (also known as the streetcar construction) struck. No more morning cheer from the lady on her porch or potentially moving a guy’s trash bins for him. As of this semester, I now have to hustle to find somewhere on Kansas or Campbell or the streets that run off of it. It’s my sophomore year all over again out there, but worse. Some streets require parking decals like they have for years in Sunset Heights. I guess it was always too unrealistic to think everyone is just fine and dandy with students parking in front of their houses all day, every weekday.

The risk of parking on campus and possibly receiving a parking ticket became tempting, so I tested my luck. The first time I woke up late and was going to speak in my class, so I knew I had to be on time. I parked in S4, across from the Sun Bowl Parking garage and was not ticketed. This led to a second attempt the following week. I quickly scanned the area for bright green vests and when the coast was clear, I speed-walked to class and speed-walked back with a friend as it ended. “Just in time” my friend exclaimed as a parking enforcer approached my



car. He quickly heard the statement and picked up his step to the scene of the crime. He took one quick glance at my naked rear-view mirror then glared back at me. “I was only here for two minutes,” I begged. “No, you two just got back from class.” He was a pro, he smelled the lies. “I’ll give you a warning,” he sighed. Just like that, I avoided my first UTEP parking fine as it stared me in the face.

UTEP parking fines are no joke: they can really add up.

One friend of mine paid a grand total of \$500 to remove the boot she received on

her car in the parking garage after racking up nine \$50 unpaid tickets plus the \$50 to have the boot removed.

My advice is to always try to talk your way out of your UTEP parking tickets at SGA traffic court, who meet every other Friday, especially the first one. Word on the street is they usually dismiss the first one.

With this semester plus one more year to go until I finally receive my diploma, the struggle for the perfect unassigned parking spot will continue. Or maybe one day I’ll be like my boyfriend, who’s

also without a parking permit, but simply drives up University Avenue every day and parks wherever the line of cars end. He probably saves way more time not thriving off of stress and thrills like his girlfriend.

Or maybe one day all my dreams will come true and they’ll give me VIP, 24/7 parking spot in front of the Union, or at least occasionally a spot will open up in front of Kinley’s, that would be cool too.

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# Protestors object to Gov. Abbott’s visit



GABY VELASQUEZ / THE PROSPECTOR  
El Pasoans gather outside of the Blackstone Event Center to protest against Senate Bill 4 on Saturday, Feb. 18 during Greg Abbot’s visit to El Paso for the El Paso Republican Party’s Lincoln Day Dinner fundraiser.

BY CHRISTIAN VASQUEZ  
The Prospecter

Governor Gregg Abbott’s visit to El Paso for the El Paso Republican Party’s Lincoln Day Dinner fundraiser drew approximately 150 protestors Saturday, Feb. 18, outside the Blackstone Event Center.

The protestors were largely against Senate Bill 4, known as the sanctuary cities bill, but many were also against his stances on abortion and the environment.

Fernando Garcia, executive director for the Border Network for Human Rights, was one of the organizers of the protest.

“Governor Abbott is here and he’s responsible for the most anti-immigrant legislation that we have had in the history of Texas,” Garcia said. “He

wants to force our community, our police department, to force immigration laws. He wants to break the trust that exists between communities and police officers, he wants to transform police officers into immigration agents.”

The protest drew police and security presence, but besides a few heated arguments it was a peaceful event. Mayoral candidate David Saucedo was also attending the dinner and had a conversation with the protestors, where he said that undocumented immigrants hurt the El Paso economy.

Isaac Yepez, a senior majoring in English and American literature, is a member of UTEP’s College Republicans and attended the fundraiser. Yepez said that he thought the protesting was

a good thing, as long as it remained peaceful and encouraged dialogue.

“I’m actually really impressed with (the protestors), they’re being peaceful. I mean, some of them are shouting obscenities at me, just for asking them what they’re doing here,” Yepez said.

Shouting was largely heard from one man who would yell “Nazi” and “fascist” at attendees as they arrived.

Rachel Zimmerman, one of the protestors, said she wanted to show that the community wants progressive change.

“My family is Jewish and they were able to escape the holocaust, but were denied entrance to the United States and so they went to Mexico. So immigration is an important issue to me,” Zimmerman said. “It saves a lot of lives when you let people in.”

But not everyone saw the protests with hope. Charles Hooten, a former county commissioner of El Paso, said that he does not understand why the protestors are against SB 4.

“It’s discouraging. We are a nation of laws; we do have immigration laws. Are they in favor of illegal immigration? I don’t know,” Hooten said. “No civilization I know of has survived out-of-control immigration, so we got to have orderly immigration. I think that’s the crux of it. People want to enter the country without going through the process and earning citizenship.”

Adriana Cadena, Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance member, be-

lieves that Gov. Abbott’s policies are detrimental to communities.

“The first thing we hope that comes out of this event is that he knows that wherever he goes, people are going to be protesting on this. Because this is not the first time that he has come into contact with us, just about a week ago he was in the lower Texas area, and our different groups that we work with were also protesting his fundraiser up there,” Cadena said “I think also people who support him to know that, in general, the community is against proposals like this. That if this is kind of the leadership that he is showing, that he is pushing his agenda onto our communities and onto local jurisdictions—that is not the kind of leader we want.”

According to an article in the El Paso Times, Gov. Abbott spoke about states’ rights, school vouchers, property tax reform and making assaults on police a hate crime. However, Abbott did not talk about SB 4 at the dinner.

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STREETCAR from page 1

Nuovo Cappelto, said he has not seen any sort of decrease in business due to the construction.

“Our sales have grown by 100 percent since last year,” Ricci said, who has owned the bar for over a year. “We were one of the few bars here when we first opened and now we’re happy where we are from one year ago.”

Ricci does not think that once the streetcar lines are open, it will help boost his business because his customer’s usually drive to their location.

“I don’t know if there’s some sort of master plan behind having the streetcar come up to Cincinnati, but I personally don’t see the need for our customers,” Ricci said. “We have business from Mexico, but they drive their cars here. Unless there’s a master plan, I don’t know why they developed money in the train.”

Jackson said that since El Paso is a big city, people should be enthralled by the new addition.

“This is going to be something for everybody—for the older generation, for the younger generation, for the tourists,” Jackson said. “Millennials, especially, will take this concept and love it. This is a fundamental change for El Paso that people will end up loving.”

Some of the things people will not love, Ricci said, are the traffic and parking problems it’s causing. Although Rockin’ Cigar offers a backside parking, bar-goers in the Cincinnati district might have to park as far as UTEP to go to the bars.

“Work has to occur for the product to be produced,” Jackson said. “Construction and traffic are only temporary problems. When our team closes a street or a block down, they have it up and running within the next month.

For any change to come, work has to be done—it’s just like when there’s pot-holes in the streets—it has to be fixed.”

Matthew Torrez, a sophomore history major, uses public transportation as a means of getting to and from school each day. He said that by adding the streetcar, it can give the city an added flavor.

“I always used to ride one in San Antonio, where I used to live, and I think an opportunity to ride one would be a real treat,” Torrez said. “Traffic is always a concern, but with buses or streetcars, there’s always a set time. Most people on the road avoid buses, so the average time to get from one place to another is pretty much the same each time.”

Follow Adrian Broaddus on Twitter @adrian\_broaddus

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BY RENE DELGADILLO

The Prospector

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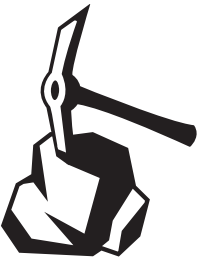
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FEBRUARY 21, 2017

ENTERTAINMENT

EDITOR  
LESLIE SARIÑANA, 747-7477



UTEP GRAD  
KEEPS  
PRINTMAKING  
ALIVE

BY EDDIE VELAZQUEZ  
The Prospector

As an emerging community, the art scene in El Paso needs all the passion and fervor it can get. Located at 800 Montana Ave., Proper Printshop heeds the call to provide for those eager to share their ideas in the border community.

Proper Printshop serves as a venue and local art space that fosters El Paso’s surging movements and provides retail space as well.

The shop started five years ago at a UTEP dorm.

“Screen printing was always a side hobby that turned into its own business, much to the dis-

may of our rent deposit because it is a messy process,” said Jonathan Childress, founder and UTEP grad.

Originally Childress had two other business partners, Stephen Escarzaga and Mark Martinez.

“We loved printing shirts. Stephen printed shirts for his band and it just (went) from there,” said Childress.

However, as the brand grew, the line between hobby and viability as a source of income thinned for some of the original founders.

“My two other business partners had grown up. They got married, had kids, and being a broke artist

wasn’t for them, so they left,” said Childress.

It was then that Childress decided to merge with fellow screen-printing venture, Recovery Shirts, owned by Alan Hodson.

“We merged about two and a half years ago. We felt it was a good fit between Alan and myself, and it has grown from there,” said Childress.

The stability has allowed Proper Printshop to develop into a space for anyone in the community to express themselves and grow as artists.

“We try to give back to the community as much as we can; offering a space for movements to happen, promoting nonprofits through our program ‘Shirts For Charity,’ where we give the nonprofit a design and help them raise funds,” said Childress.

Another project that has made strides in showcasing local talent is “Art En Vivo,” a yearlong project that featured 52 different artists. The project was accessible, with the cost of the paper being the only expense artists had to worry about.

“We live printed their work every Thursday and put around \$15,000 in artists’ pockets,” said Childress.

Creative endeavors like “Art En Vivo” not only benefit the artist, but they also engineer a market

for collectors in a growing cultural space like the Sun City.

“There isn’t a huge private collector market here, but it is starting to build up with a lot of beginning collectors, and we are happy to help out with that,” said Childress.

With Proper Printshop being the current product of a merger, Childress considers the rise of other art spaces such as Power At The Pass nurturing to the El Paso community.

“You need somewhat of a concentration, collaborations to improve the density of those creative spaces,” said Childress.

As part of their multifaceted approach to art, another one of Proper’s side projects is a vegan

cooking class happening the first Sunday of every month

Looking toward the future, ownership plans to expand the retail space by opening a boutique inside the current art space building, while also expanding on projects such as “Art En Vivo.”

“We want to be able to retail some of our designs, as well as developing artist collections to help them merchandise and retail for themselves,” said Childress.

For more information and business opportunities, Proper Printshop can be reached at <https://www.theproperprintshop.com> or call (915)887-8351.

Follow Eddie Velazquez on Twitter @ezvelazquez



PHOTOS BY CLAUDIA HERNANDEZ / THE PROSPECTOR

(Top) A Proper Print Shop employee helps a visitor make a print at Mighty Mujer Triathlon event. (Bottom left) Jonathan Childress and Alan Hodson co-own Proper Printshop. (Bottom right) Proper Printshop has multiple print machines and provides artists with most of the materials.



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# Sun City Roller Girls: More than just a sport



GABY VELASQUEZ/ THE PROSPECTOR

Las Catrinas defeated the Chuco Town Chulas at the season opener Sunday night.

BY LESLIE SARIÑANA

The Prospector

Lace up your skates, it's derby season! The Sun City Roller Girls opened their ninth season on Feb. 19 at the judging area behind the El Paso County Coliseum.

Last season's champs, Las Catrinas defeated the Chuco Town Chulas Sunday night, 189-113. This women-owned and operated roller derby league has been in El Paso since 2008. The league is all about boosting city pride, and there are current UTEP students and graduates on every team.

Since its creation, roller derby has proven to be more than just a sport. It's all about strong females showing they can kick ass while wearing fishnets. Ev-

everything about the bouts are entertaining. From the costumes to the emcee's comical commentary. Each player goes by a derby name such as Sin-Derella, Lady Latte Pain, Skatey Perry, Cheri-Vicious and Lilly Wonk-Ya.

Watch out for the whips and reverse blocks, because in this sport bruises are normal. Let's put it this way, if you're not bruised you didn't play.

Every lady got into derby in different ways and their reasons for doing it are vastly different, but overall they all share the same passion for the sport. All of these women have jobs and families and does derby as a hobby or stress reliever. Women of all statures and ages compete in roller derby.

SCRG's season runs from February to November. They have a bout every month and twice a month in the summers. Although Sin-Derella of Las Viudas Negras says that "playing once a month is not enough," they pick up new players every year.

All of the teams practice together twice a month. This year marks the third season that they have competed on a banked track. To kick off the season, go out and meet the teams that keep El Paso and this sport so interesting.. Tickets are \$7 in advance and \$10 at the door. Tickets are available at Pershing Inn, All That Music, Blue Panda Tattoo or Uptown Cheapskate.

✉ Leslie Sarinana may be reached at theprospectoraily.ent@gmail.com.

## SEXECUTIONERS

Also known as "SeXies," this is the team in the league with the most championship wins. They are one of the original three teams that has been in the league since 2008.

Motto: Respect few.  
Fear none.

Always crossing their arms to throw up an 'X' is their staple. They pick their skating song depending on the theme of the bouts. They are big into believing that anyone can skate.

## CHUCO TOWN CHULAS

The Chulas have always skated out to one song and one song only, "Low Rider."

The theme of this team captures the city's Chicano essence. They are one of the three original teams that started with SCRG in 2008. The Chulas are one of the most relaxed teams in the league.

Motto: One block, one hit, one skate, all together, one love.

## LAS CATRINAS

The Catrinas are one of the original teams that have been in the league since 2008. They are also last season's champs. The Catrinas can always be seen sporting half a skull on their faces during bouts

as part of their uniform. They usually get pumped with Rob Zombie's song "Living Dead Girl." Taking the song literally, they dress as living dead girls

Motto: Que Vivan las muertas!

## LAS VIUDAS NEGRAS

The newest team in the league the Viudas joined in 2012. You can always see them with spider webs painted on their faces for the bouts. The Viudas have never won a championship, but that hasn't discouraged them from giving it their all and enjoying themselves on the track..

Motto: When spiders unite, they can tie down a lion.

## LAS DIABLAS

These female devils have been a part of the league since 2010. They


are the underdogs this season that will raise some serious hell.

Motto: Getting ready to raise hell this season!



GABY VELASQUEZ / THE PROSPECTOR

The SCRG season runs from February to November.



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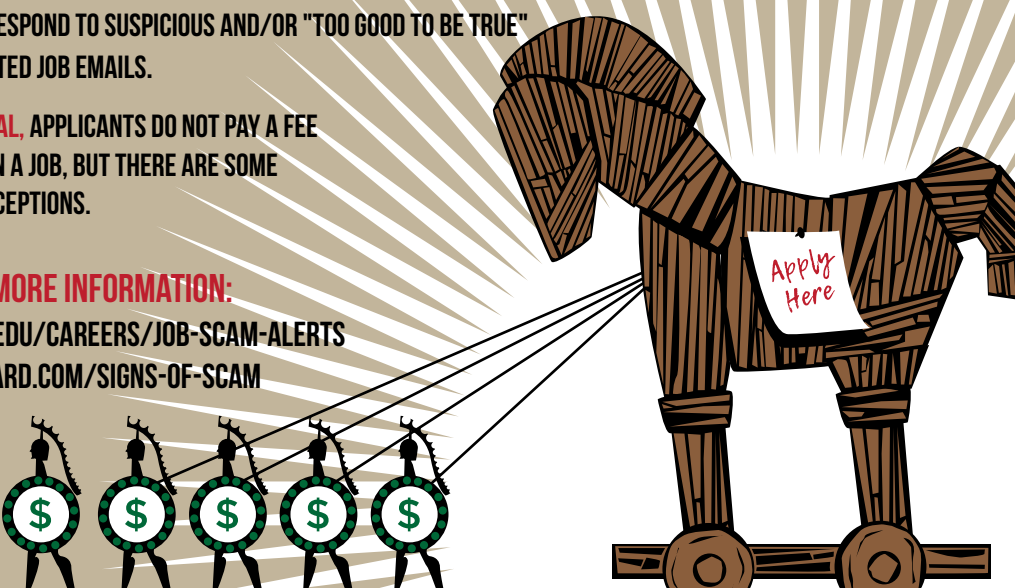
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# Concerts coming to El Paso this weekend

## Texas Country Music Festival

BY ADRIAN BROADDUS  
AND LESLIE SARINANA

The Prospector

Taking the stage at the El Paso County Coliseum for the first time, the Texas Country Music Fest will launch its inaugural festival on Saturday, Feb. 25.

The festival will feature headlining country band, Josh Abbott Band, and will feature performances from country music stars Wade Bowen and Tracy Lawrence.

Prior to the show, the music festival will host a Corona Extra Patio Pre-Party from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. outside the coliseum. The pre-party will offer live music from artists such as Hunter Hutchinson and Joe Barron,

### Jimmy Eat World

The rock band famous for their hit “The Middle” is coming to El Paso on Feb. 25. They will be performing at Tricky Falls with opening act AJJ.

This tour comes after the release of their ninth album and the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of their album “Futures.” The band formed in 1993 in Mesa, Arizona, where their sound started off as punk rock, but over time they’ve transitioned to rock alternative.

This tour is for their newest album “Integrity Blues.” The lead

who is a local opener. Along with the music, food and drinks, other activities will commence prior to the show.

Kicking off the show will be the multi-platinum CMA and ACM-award winning Lawrence. Growing up in his humble home of Atlanta, Texas, Lawrence has been rocking in the country music scene for over two decades. He was a part of the mainstream rise of rock-tinged honky tonk in the early ‘90s.

Following Lawrence is another Texas native, Wade Bowen, who will share the stage. Born and bred in the small city of Waco, Texas, Bowen began his country music career in the band West 84 with Matt Miller. After a brief break going back to school in the early 2000s, Bowen returned to the country music scene in 2002 with his debut solo album, “Try Not to Listen,” and climbed the ranks of the Texas country music scene. He



COURTESY OF JOSH ABBOTT BAND FACEBOOK

currently has five independently released albums and more than a decade of touring to back him up.

Then, headlining the show will be the Josh Abbott Band. This group has taken the style of contemporary country to a new level. The group out of Lubbock, Texas, utilizes a modern edge to their Lone Star sounds. In fact, when Abbott himself was a student at Texas Tech, he was in-



COURTESY OF JIMMY EAT WORLD FACEBOOK

single, “Sure and Certain,” peaked at no. 10 on the Billboard Alternative Songs chart.

Tickets are still available for \$25 at TicketFly.com.

see CONCERTS on page 10

spired to be a Texas country star like Bowen.

After their two first albums, “Scapegoat” and “She’s Like Texas,” the band elevated their country music rankings with their two albums, “Small Town Family Dream” and “Front Row Seat.” Through the decade, the band has toured across the nation and truly

established themselves as a high-ranking band. In fact, the Houston Press called the Josh Abbott band, “the top tier Texas country act of this decade.”

For more information about the music festival or tickets, contact the El Paso County Coliseum at 915-534-4229 or visit their website at [www.TexasCMF.com](http://www.TexasCMF.com).

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FEBRUARY 21, 2017

SPORTS

EDITOR  
JASON GREEN, 747-7477

# Chihuahuas roster takes shape at Padres spring training

JASON GREEN  
The Prospector

On Valentine’s Day, pitchers and catchers reported to the San Diego Padres’ sprawling training camp in Peoria, Arizona. Pitchers and catchers from every level of the massive system that it takes to build a Major League Baseball team reported at once, from the 18-year-olds drafted last June to the grizzled 30-something-year-old veterans hoping for one last shot at the big time.

Joining pitchers and catchers by the end of the week were every player in the system, including most of the 2016 Pacific Coast League Champions—the El Paso Chihuahuas. Some of the players from that team have moved on to other systems and other training camps, some will be moving up to San Diego in all likelihood, and some may be coming back to El Paso to continue to prove their worth to the higher-ups in the Padres organization.

Championship-winning manager Rod Barajas will be returning to the Chihuahuas for the 2017 season, but until spring training is finished and the Padres’ roster is finalized—Barajas and Chihuahuas’ fans are left to guess who will comprise the roster for the team’s fourth season.

### Catchers

At the Major League level, catcher Derek Norris was traded to make room for last season’s catcher Austin Hedges to permanently take his spot behind the plate for the Padres. Hedges has long been rated as one of the best defensive catching prospects in minor league baseball and in the last two seasons with the Chihuahuas, and his batting has clearly caught up.

In 2015, Hedges batted .324, with just two home runs, before being called up to San Diego and basically languishing on the bench. With a full season in El Paso

in 2016, Hedges put it all together with a .326 average and 21 home runs.

This season, another familiar face could very well be behind the plate for the Chihuahuas yet again. Rocky Gale has played for the Chihuahuas during every season of their existence and looks like he may be starting opening day 2017 as well. Despite a career .255 average, Gale has never batted below .278 as a Chihuahua.

The second catcher spot should come down to two other non-roster invitees to spring training, either Hector Sanchez, who played 55 games as a Chihuahua last season, batting .324, with 13 home runs, or Tony Cruz, who spent almost all of last season with Omaha, batting .264.

### Infield

Another familiar face should be back in El Paso in 2017 with infielder Brett Wallace. Wallace was with the Chihuahuas in 2015, batting .305 with eight home runs. After being called up in 2015, Wallace batted .302 with five home runs for the Padres and earned a one-year Major League contract for the 2016 season.

In 2016, Wallace came off the bench almost exclusively for the Padres and batted .189 with six home runs. Wallace was re-signed to a minor league contract this past offseason.

With first base, third base and most likely the bench spots locked up in San Diego, expect Wallace to man first base at Southwest University Park this season.

Another familiar face that could find himself back in El Paso is second baseman Carlos Asuaje. Despite a phenomenal season that saw him bat .321 and secure PCL all-star honors, Asuaje may end up as the loser in a three-way battle for the starting second baseman job in San Diego.

The consensus seems to be that former Chihuahuas Ryan Schimpf and Cory Spangenberg will secure the job as a pla-



FILE PHOTO / THE PROSPECTOR

The El Paso Chihuahuas are coming off of their most successful season on the field, however the 2017 roster will look drastically different.

toon. Schimpf batted .217 with 20 home runs after his call-up to San Diego last season. Spangenberg batted just .229 during an injury-riddled 14-game season.

Although Asuaje’s numbers appear to be better than the two incumbents, minor league numbers can sometimes be deceiving. Using “major league equivalencies” invented by Bill James, the founder of Sabermetrics, we find that Asuaje’s stellar 2016 translates to a .257 average with 102 strikeouts and 33 walks in 535 at-bats in the Major Leagues.

The rest of the infield for the Chihuahuas could end up a little full, with short-stop Jose Pirela expected back for another season. Joining him could be new signees—with familiar names for frequent PCL watchers—second baseman Dusty Coleman, third baseman Jamie Romak and Christian Villanueva.

### Outfield

If you want to see the 2016 Chihuahuas outfield again, simply turn on the TV and watch a Padres game. Starting in center field? Manny Margot. Starting in right field? Hunter Renfroe.

There will be some turnover in the Chihuahuas outfield, but El Paso fans can be proud of the prospects who have moved on. For as young as last season’s outfield was, 2017’s outfield could very well be the oldest in El Paso’s four seasons.

Three outfielders were signed to minor league contracts in the offseason and all have Major League experience. Nick Buss and Collin Cowgill spent time in the Major Leagues in 2016 with the Angels and Indians, respectively. Jamie Romak returns to the PCL, where he played with Reno in 2015, after playing in Japan with Yokohama in 2016.

### Pitching

The Padres pitching situation is very fluid, with starting pitcher Jered Weaver signed as late as Feb. 19. With several spots in the bullpen still up for grabs, the Chihuahuas’ pitching situation is entirely dependent on which way Padres Manager Andy Green decides to go.

A few former Dodgers’ top prospects could be calling the Sun City home in 2017, as they look to find again the minor league dominance that once saw them seemingly destined for Major League stardom.

Zach Lee was rated as high as no. 45 by MLB.com prior to the 2012 season and still carries a 4.29 ERA with 614 strikeouts in 794.1 minor league innings. In 2015, the former first- round pick made

see CHIHUAHUAS on page 12

# Men’s basketball heads into final games of season with tournament seeding in mind

MIKE FLORES  
The Prospector

If someone were to say that the UTEP men’s basketball team is on the verge of clinching a first-round bye in the Conference-USA tournament at the beginning of February, no one would have believed them. The Miners lost 12 straight games and dropped the first three games in league play.

However, just over a month later, UTEP is one of the hottest teams in the nation and not many teams want to get in their way. The Miners have won nine

out of their last 11 contests. Now at 11-15 and 9-5 in C-USA, the orange and blue are in a two-way tie for third place in their league with Old Dominion. The top four teams in C-USA earn a bye in the opening round of the tournament.

Head coach Tim Floyd, has seen his unit do a complete turnaround and has beaten some of the elite schools in C-USA in their run, such as handing Middle Tennessee (24-4, 14-1 C-USA) their only loss in league play, thrashing Marshall (15-11, 8-6 C-USA) for their first home loss in the conference and

handling Rice’s dynamic duo of guards (18-9, 8-6 C-USA).

With only four games remaining in the roller coaster of a season for the Miners, they have three schools (FAU, FIU, Charlotte) to face in the bottom half of the conference before the tournament starts on March 8. The two Sunshine State teams, along with the 49ers, have a combined record of 12-30 (a winning percentage of 40 percent).

The C-USA playoff format consists of the top-12 schools in the league receiving a bid to compete in the season-ending tournament, which means only two universities will be left watching from their couches. This year the playoffs will be held in Birmingham, Alabama.

No matter what, UTEP will be a part of the 12 best teams after their final four matchups. If worse comes to worst for the Miners, and they come up short in their final games, Floyd’s squad will still hold a higher record than the bottom two teams in the league, FIU (6-21, 2-12 C-USA) and North Texas (8-18, 2-12 C-USA).

UTEP is currently in the midst of their longest road trip of the season, but have continued their roll by winning the first two contests against Rice and UNT in overtime. This has lifted the Miners to 4-6 in away games this season.

The following two matches have the orange and blue scheduled against FAU and FIU, both in Florida. UTEP’s hot streak began against these two schools in El Paso, and the Miners will look to beat them on the road this time around. It was the first time since 1995 that the

Miners competed in back-to-back overtime thrillers.

On Thursday night, the Miners will face a team they squeaked by, FAU, for the 66-65 win at the beginning of conference action.

FAU’s Gerdarius Troutman was a problem for UTEP in their first meeting, as he scored 22 points while draining all six of the Owl’s 3-point makes (6-28 as a team). Troutman almost spoiled a game that saw UTEP lead for the majority of the contest.

Nevertheless, it was UTEP’s starting guard Omega Harris who saved his squad from the potential comeback attempt from FAU. Harris had a team-high in both points (18) and assists with four. He was also responsible for hitting the jumper in overtime that gave UTEP the lead that never faded in the extra minutes of the ball game.

As for the second game of the week, FAU has lost three out of their last four games and it circles back to the team not possessing a go-to scorer on their roster. The Owl’s leading scorer Adonis Filer is only putting up 10.3 points per match. His scoring total has him outside of the top 30 scorers in C-USA, while the Miners have three athletes’ averaging above Filer. The orange and blue should have the advantage when it comes to finding the bottom of the net, at an easier rate.

The lone senior on UTEP’s roster, Dominic Artis, nailed a go-ahead bucket in the final seconds of double overtime to lift his team over the Golden Panthers, 88-87, earlier in the year.

In a game that saw many swings, it was FIU that ended regulation with a 21-7

run to force extra time in the team’s first matchup. Regardless, UTEP’s top three scorers, Harris (20 points), sophomore forward Paul Thomas (19 points) and Artis (18 points), combined points of 57 were just enough to edge FIU’s six players who scored in double-figures.

One of UTEP’s main weapons is their height and ability to crash the boards, as they grab the most defensive rebounds in the conference (29.5), compared to dead last from the Panthers’ defensive boards per game (22.2).

Both teams have two players averaging over 13 points per game, but the Miners defense excels far better than FIU’s defensive efforts have all season. UTEP allows the fourth-fewest points per game as a team, only giving up 68.5 a night, while the Panthers sit in the bottom four teams by giving up nearly 74 points per game.

FIU will likely be playing the spoiler role, hoping to drop UTEP further in the rankings, in what might be a trap game for Floyd’s unit.

UTEP will clash with their toughest game left on their schedule, Old Dominion (16-10, 9-5 C-USA) at the Don Haskins Center, on March 2.

ODU is no pushover on the road as they have a winning record of 6-4 in such games. The Monarchs have an old-fashioned defense wins type of mentality. Their offense is near the bottom of the league as they only average 63.4 points on the scoreboard, but ODU’s defense has

see BASKETBALL on page 12



FILE PHOTO/ THE PROSPECTOR

After a very rough start, the UTEP men’s basketball team can still secure a first round bye in the C-USA tournament in Birmingham.



CHIHUAHUAS from page 11

his lone start in the Major Leagues, a loss to the New York Mets.

Hong-Chih Kuo was signed Feb. 18, after spending the last three seasons playing baseball in his home country of Taiwan. Kuo has battled injuries since he worked his way through the Dodgers’ system to earn an All-Star appearance in 2010. That season, Kuo set the Dodgers’ franchise record for lowest ERA in a season with a 1.20.

However, Kuo’s injuries worsened in 2011, he was unable to latch on with the Mariners, then the Cubs, and returned home on a three-year contract to play in the Chinese Professional Baseball League.

One of the only true prospects to potentially appear on the Chihuahuas’ roster to begin the season could be pitcher Dinelson Lamet, the Padres no. 9-ranked prospect according to Baseball America. The 24-year-old has moved through the season rapidly since moving over from the Dominican Republic.

Last season, an improved slider saw Lamet move to El Paso for the first time, where he found adversity for the first time in his young career. The future MLB set-up man should return to AAA this season to continue to hone his 93-95 mph fastball and still improving breaking ball.

With a new season and complete roster turnover comes another challenge for Barajas, who proved his worth last season by winning the PCL Championship. However, last season’s roster appears to have been laden with future MLB All-Stars. This season may just prove to need to be Barajas’ most impressive managing job yet. Chihuahuas fans will be hoping it is.

Follow Jason Green on Twitter @greenevansj

BASKETBALL from page 11

them in reach of the first round bye, as well. In C-USA, the Monarchs allow the fewest points, with only 61.6 granted to their opponents a night.

The Monarch’s top threat is their sophomore guard Ahmad Caver. He leads his unit in points (13.3 ppg), assists (4.5 apg), steals (1.2 spg) and 3-point shooting percentage (.362). UTEP’s guards will have their work cut out for them.

A couple of day later, UTEP will close out the regular season with the 49ers in El Paso. In Charlotte’s first 10 games, they have only come out on top in two of them.

Charlotte’s offense can go off on any given night, with Jon Davis leading the way with 19.7 points per contest. The 49ers have eclipsed the 100-point mark four times this season, more than any other C-USA school. As a team, it has put their lethal offense average on the year at 77.5.

Making free throws has been a constant struggle for UTEP (65 percent as a team), but Charlotte, takes advantage of almost every charity stripe attempt, connecting on a conference-high as a team (76 percent).

The orange and blue’s nine victories in the league have them a secured spot, but the question is where will they end up in the seeding. The finish line is weeks away, but UTEP is looking for their first NCAA tournament berth since the 2009-2010 season. With C-USA having the reputation of being a one NCAA tournament berth league, the league playoffs are usually the deciding factor.

Follow Mike Flores on Twitter @MikeyTheReal

Jennifer Han defends her title at Top Rank’s Boxing Dynamic Duo



IBF women’s featherweight world champion and El Paso native Jennifer Han defended her championship against challenger Olivia Gerula. Han won unanimously, 100-89 on all three judges score cards after the 10-round fight. Han is now 16-3-1 after her third title defense. Top: the undercard featured what should have been No. 3 lightweight contender Jose Felix’s last fight before an inevitable title shot, however, Felix was knocked down five times by Jonathan Maicelo on the way to a scorecard loss. Maicelo improved to 25-2, while Felix drops to 35-2-1. But, in the end, the night truly belonged to “El Paso’s Sweetheart.”

GABY VELASQUEZ / THE PROSPECTOR

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