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THE PROSPECTOR



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FEBRUARY 28, 2023

Assayer of Student Opinion

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

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A grand review for a grand opening

BY MEAGAN GARCIA
The Prospector



Western Playland is under new management with Traders Village and had their reopening Feb. 26 from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. **Photo by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector**

When it comes to the activities and attractions El Paso has to offer, some of the city's most iconic are age-friendly staples in the borderland. Whether it is cruising down Scenic Drive or taking a splash at Wet N' Wild during the summer heat, there is always something for groups of families or friends to do.

However, one of the most popular forms of entertainment in Sun City is Western Playland, a local amusement park. They offer a variety of rides, carnival games, souvenirs and food options.

Although Western Playland is a staple within the city, there was a recent change in ownership and

management for the establishment.

Previously owned as a family business by Pat Thomson, the park was turned over to Traders Village after 62 years. According to a KSII article, there are reportedly new plans to expand Western Playland so it includes space for concerts, vendors, new rides, new food, drink options and room for markets in the future.

The grand opening of the amusement park under new ownership took place Feb. 25 and highlighted the inclusion of a new mural at the front gate and more food options at the booths.

The mural was made by Tino

Ortega, a local artist who has completed all kinds of work across the region. The gate features pops of blues, yellows and reds that not only accentuate the park's signature colors, but also adds a unique Mexican cultural flair due to the classic mosaic style of the painting.

Ortega's art can be found across the borderland but is most accessible on his Instagram @ortegino where he shares his work.

In terms of additional rides, the park recently gained one called the "Fireball." Western Playland has always offered the standard and beloved rollercoasters like "Bandido," the "Hurricane," the "Tsunami" and

many more. Though there is one that stands out above the rest and is one of the only ones to leave you hanging upside down.

The "Loco 360" rotates in a complete circle once or twice around an axis, but the "Fireball" track is a full circle and the boat like cart structure is attached to the actual rails. The ride is exhilarating because it makes multiple rounds and moves in both directions.

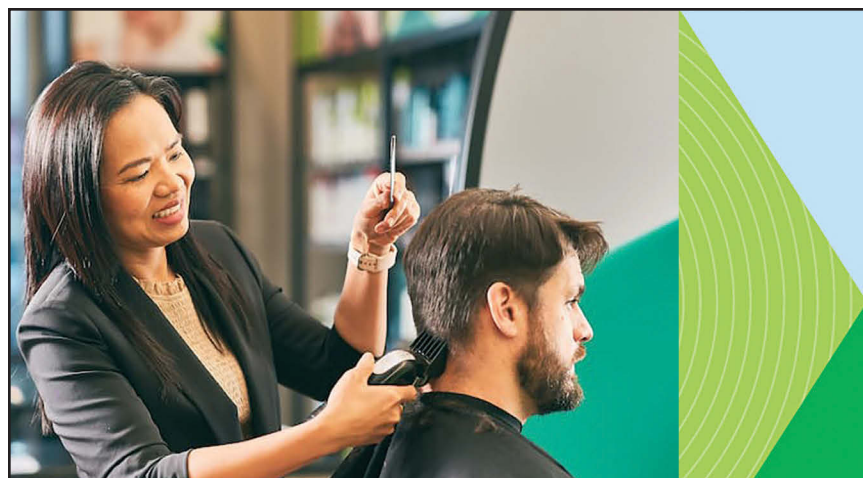
Riders should be warned they need an empty stomach to get on and nerves of steel given how daunting it can be. They should also be equipped with a good sense of humor in case the operator might

try and tease nervous park goers.

All in all, one of the newer additions was ranked at an eight out of 10 by me and The Prospector photo editor, Annabella Mireles. For parkgoers who want the full experience, it is recommended to sit at either end of the cart. Those who prefer a tamer rollercoaster ride should sit in the middle.

After a long day of making trips from ride to ride, Western Playland has food booths posted across the park to get refreshments and fill up. The menu includes things like sausage on a stick or bun, churros, loaded nachos, turkey legs, cotton candy, popcorn and chicharrónes.

see **PLAYLAND** on page 4



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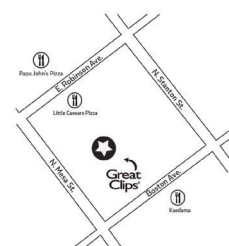
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Opinion

Itzel Giron, editor-in-chief

Building my path to citizenship

BY EMMANUEL RIVAS VALENZUELA
The Prospector

Earlier this year, I earned the great honor bestowed upon me by our democracy: citizenship. After a long and expensive journey, I finally became a naturalized citizen of the United States.

My journey began back in 2006 when my stepfather convinced my mother to live in El Paso with him. After a few years, my stepfather got a job in Fort Worth, Texas, which placed my mother and me in line for permanent residency. I vividly remember going through the application process as our biometric appointment was placed in a shopping mall just across the food court.

After becoming a permanent resident in 2009, I went to school where I developed a taste for music, writing and politics.

These interests piqued in high school when I joined the schools band and early college program. In band, I had the opportunity to become section leader of the mellophone section and became the first chair of the schools wind ensemble. In the classroom, I excelled in my OnRamps Rhetoric and Writing



course while learning more about U.S. History in my OnRamps history class and my Tarrant County College Dual Credit American Politics.

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Policy Manual states “An applicant for naturalization must show that he or she has been, and continues to be, a person of good moral character.”

My experiences growing up shaped my character into one suitable for naturalization. Leadership, hard

work and kindness are among the characteristics I developed prior to my naturalization. I am clearly not alone in this journey. In 2021, nearly 900,000 individuals earned their right to citizenship each year in the U.S.

I officially started my petition for citizen status in Jan. 2022 when I could finally manage to pay the \$725 application fee. At that point, I was a few days out from returning to UTEP for the spring semester. A few weeks later, my biometric appointment was scheduled. The only hitch was the appointment was located back home in Fort Worth.

I managed to find about \$300 for a round trip plane ticket in early February. I spent a few days away from school and managed to spend some time with my family and friends and I even got to see the newest version of The Batman during opening weekend.

After traveling back to El Paso, I waited just about six months for the next phase of my application process; the interview. This was advertised as the make-or-break portion of the whole process. An agent will determine if the petitioner is qualified for citizenship based on a series of spoken and written questions regarding several aspects of U.S. history and social studies. This is where my aptitude from high school kicked in. I passed my citizenship test with ease.

There was a hitch, however. Most individuals who become naturalized are naturalized after the interview.

The problem was that my freaky name was misspelled.

When my mother applied for my permanent residency, something went wrong, and my green card spelled my name as Emmanule Rivas as opposed to Emmanuel Rivas. As a result, all

my records read as Emmanule. Thankfully, USCIS offers name changes when someone applies for naturalization.

I decided to change my name to its proper spelling and on top of that, I decided to add two additional surnames.

The first one would be the family name of my late grandmother, Valenzuela. The second would be my stepfather’s surname, Armendariz. This name change would force me to wait another six months.

This brings me to Feb. 7. After another expensive plane ride home, I finally closed the chapter on my permanent residence status and became a U.S. citizen.

Over 100 people from various generations from almost 40 different countries filled a room on the precipice of something unique and beautiful.

As a USCIS judge swore us in, I looked around the room and saw hundreds of different journeys, stories and struggles. The beauty that makes the U.S. was in that room. I was in that room, the room where it happened.

After finishing the Oath of Allegiance, I felt a wave of emotions as the judge congratulated us.

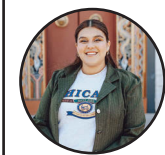
I began to reminisce about everything that had brought me to that moment. My mother, stepfather, friends and family came to mind.

The experiences in grade school and UTEP that formed me into the man I am today. The rush brought me to tears.

This is not the end of my journey as I fought for the right to vote, run for public office and most importantly, my right to continue my work as a free journalist.

Emmanuel Rivas Valenzuela is the sports editor and may be reached at erivas7@miners.utep.edu: @rvasenmanuel2 on Instagram.

Who is going to take the Best Picture award at the 2023 Oscars?



Itzel Giron
Editor-in-Chief
“Everything Everywhere All At Once” or “The Fabelmans”



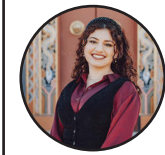
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COMIC BY MAYA ALVARDO

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Rival schools fundraise to help migrants

BY AVERY ESCAMILLA-WENDELL
The Prospector

Rival universities, UTEP, New Mexico State University (NMSU) and The University of New Mexico (UNM) worked together to raise money to donate to an El Paso foundation to buy donations to go towards immigrants seeking asylum in El Paso. The sister school's student governments had a goal to reach \$30,000. With the help of the community, the fundraiser was able to bring back hope for migrants.

Rivals for Relief started due to the growing concern with Title 42 and the large groups of migrants coming to El Paso for asylum. Student Government Association President and international business major, Gabriela Muñoz, mentions how fundraising was brought up to her by the NMSU president, Garrett Moseley.

"He had this amazing project

that he wanted to try to develop," Muñoz said. "He would love to collaborate with UTEP as we are right here on the border."

The mission of the fundraiser was to provide the necessities and essentials migrants need while preparing to start their new life. The associations wanted to bring awareness to the El Paso and New Mexico community.

The NMSU President connected with the Community Foundation of Southern New Mexico (CFSNM), which allowed the universities to create the fundraiser. Through CFSNM people from New Mexico and El Paso would not only be able to donate money to the cause but through this, the schools were able to strengthen their relationship by working on a large cause together.

"I think it was an amazing project just us being able to get together to

give something back to the community, especially involving a humanitarian crisis," Muñoz said.

The associations were able to share their experience with the humanitarian crises during this process. With this, many of the leaders shared their perspectives and understood each other's views.

"We are impacted way differently than New Mexico is since they are a little further away," Muñoz said. "For them, I guess it was just different seeing everything like on the news, on media, as opposed to everybody here in our El Paso Student Government Association that could see everything kind of unfolding in our own eyes."

"We believe that us as leaders of our institutions couldn't sit back and let everything unfold," Muñoz said. "We have to use our voices to advocate and to stand up for humanitarian rights."



UTEP, NMSU, and UNM worked together to raise money to donate to an El Paso foundation to go towards immigrants seeking asylum in El Paso. Photo courtesy UNM Newsroom

The fundraiser was completed on Feb. 17 with an amount of \$2,115 raised in total. UTEP was able to raise \$290, NMSU raised \$1,790, and UNM raised \$35.

The Foundation has not announced which El Paso foundation the money will be donated to. SGA

hopes to continue projects with the sister universities in the future. To learn more about future projects, UTEP SGA can be reached at sga.utep.edu and on Instagram @[utepsga](https://www.instagram.com/utepsga).

Avery Escamilla-Wendell is the staff reporter and may be reached at amescamilla@miners.utep.edu or on Instagram @[by_avery_escamilla](https://www.instagram.com/by_avery_escamilla).

Fashion faux problems during Fashion Week

BY ERIK ACOSTA
The Prospector

With gleaming catwalks and high-end fashion models strutting down the runway, fashion week is one of the most anticipated annual events for designers and models, for fashion-lovers and the high-end clothing associated with it.

Despite its glamorous reputation, Fashion Week occasionally stirs up quite a bit of controversy by allowing problematic designers to showcase their creations, having real animal fur walk the runway among other things.

As a result, one may ask why they would allow this sort of behavior on the runway.

High-fashion brands like Prada, Diesel and Blumarine highlight their innovative designs to the public but occasionally, some problematic designers are still welcomed kindly and return to fashions' good graces despite their controversies and or pasts.

Just earlier this month at New York Fashion Week, celebrities and high-profile editors like Vogue editor Anna Wintour were all present for designer Alexander Wang's first runway show since 11 men accused him of sexual assault back in 2020.

These accusations came to light in December 2020 when model Owen Mooney came forward and accused Wang of inappropriate touching just shortly after stylist and fashion archivist David Casavant recounted a similar experience to The New York Times.

According to Business of Fashion, Mooney shared his experience about Wang on TikTok and in a statement he discussed why he

chose to come forward.

"I have never kept what happened to me a secret. I have always been very vocal and open to my friends and family about it," Mooney said. "I was sickened and shocked I was not the only victim of this behavior. So, I felt it was necessary to stand with these people."

From there, multiple people anonymously as well as on the record made statements against Wang to publications such as The Cut, The Guardian and BBC.

Wang's initial response denied these allegations and gaslighted his victims by calling their allegations false and fabricated.

In the wake of the scandal, a shift in Wang's marketing tactics started to appear along with his sudden focus on Asian American initiatives struck some as an attempt of him deflecting his behavior and unwanted allegations.

Shortly after this, in March 2021, Wang issued another statement on his Instagram account. It was the designer's first acknowledgment of any wrongdoing.

"While we disagree on some of the details of these personal interactions, I will set a better example to encourage others to recognize harmful behavior," Wang said. "Life is about learning and growth, I will do better."

Since then, Wang has evaded accountability even while his first fashion show in New York received much praise sending a strong message that celebrities were ready to forgive and forget.

So, it would be safe to assume that the term cancel culture does not exist in the fashion industry for

designers like Wang.

Fashion Week, which includes shows in New York, Paris, London, and Milan, which some fashion experts regard as the "Fashion Capital of the World"—takes place twice a year, typically during the spring and fall seasons.

To some, the beautiful thing about Fashion Week is that it brings people from all over the world to get a sneak peek at the latest fashion trends.

Fashion designers can be innovative and freely reinvent themselves on the runway with their vibrant garments, daring silhouettes, and couture designs.

In last month's Paris Couture Fashion Week, Schiaparelli, a fashion house, set the tone with exaggerated silhouettes, gloves, and animal heads embellished on some dresses, which shocked some people on the internet.

Even though the animal heads were not real, some argued that using them could glorify the killing of animals, which is true in the fashion industry where real fur is used. Others believed it was a creative approach and a start toward using these fake animal heads more elegantly and humanely.

Animal fur has been losing popularity in the last few years due to protests by the fur industry.

Designers are adopting new cruelty-free procedures and realizing the harm it causes.

Though the fashion industry is on the right track, there is still more work to do since the industry still allows offensive work from creators.

Erik Acosta is staff reporter and may be reached at emacosta@miners.utep.edu



Designers like Alexander Wang are still invited and applauded during New York Fashion week despite sexual assault allegations. Photo courtesy of Eoin Noonan/Flickr

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PLAYLAND from COVER

While not many big changes have been made yet, this new managing company will hopefully take every opportunity to expand the business in the ways it has been advertised. El Paso has many local businesses and vendors for those market events and much room for adding more rides.

As of right now there are more talks of Western Playland hosting events throughout the season to keep the community entertained. “This summer we’re going to have live music and fireworks and then we’re also talking to vendors about coming and doing little pop-up tents,” said Lee Ann Murray, Marketing Director for Traders Village,

in a KSTM article.

For more information on the park and its operating hours, visit westernplayland.com. You can follow its socials on Instagram or Facebook for updates on the park’s status as weather conditions change.

Meagan Garcia is the arts & culture editor and may be reached at megarcia19@miners.utep.edu.



TOP LEFT: The “Hurricane” is one of Western Playland’s more popular roller coasters.

BOTTOM LEFT: Attendees ride the Loco 360 during the reopening of Western Playland Feb. 26.

BOTTOM RIGHT: Guests riding the “Sky Glider”, one of Western Playland’s more kid-friendly rides with a minimum height requirement of 36”.

All photos by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector



Striking a ‘HIGHER’ goal

BY EUGENIO CANTU
The Prospector

The path to success is paved with hard work and big dreams and it is also a path that is very different for everyone where people need great mentors to guide them every step of the way. El Paso Community College (EPCC) has successfully created another step for students to achieve their goals.

As part of the Valle Verde campus and their Center of Students with Disabilities (CSD), Project HIGHER is an initiative which brings tutoring, coaching, advising and materials to students with various disabilities.

It consists of nine certificates within EPCC majors, not only accommodating their needs but giving college support.

Students are not required to take the TSI or do any of the university core curriculum, instead every student who applies goes through a review process by Volar Independent Living Center (CIL) Committee which directly accepts and places them within the program.

Currently, there are 25 spots, each carrying over to graduation, given their necessary support every step of the way.

Ever since its conception in 2015 in EPCC, it has had 36 graduates, with a high retention rate; some of them continuing to pursue their associate degree and others working for organizations such as Children with Disabilities: Youth Leadership.

Their current graduating class will be the largest with eight graduates this Spring.

Four agencies came together to collaborate on the project. Volar CIL created the admission committee, University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) provided interns and counselors, Region 19 Educational Services Center as additional research and educators, and Texas Workforce provided funding for these positions.

The positions would eventually be incorporated into the EPCC system, creating better opportunities as well as expanding the project into the campus.

Even during the pandemic, Project HIGHER didn’t shut down but faced its own challenges.

“The manager position was frozen as well as others,” said CSD Director and EPCC alumni Maria Lopez. Before Lopez took on the position two years ago, she had been working for EPCC for over 20 years. Lopez explained both her and Alejandra Mendoza were hired during the middle of the pandemic.

“We faced our own difficulties, but we keep pushing,” Mendoza said.

In Project HIGHER it seems that nothing can stop the progress of success and that any student’s intellect can overcome any challenge and they can always reach for ‘HIGHER’ dreams.





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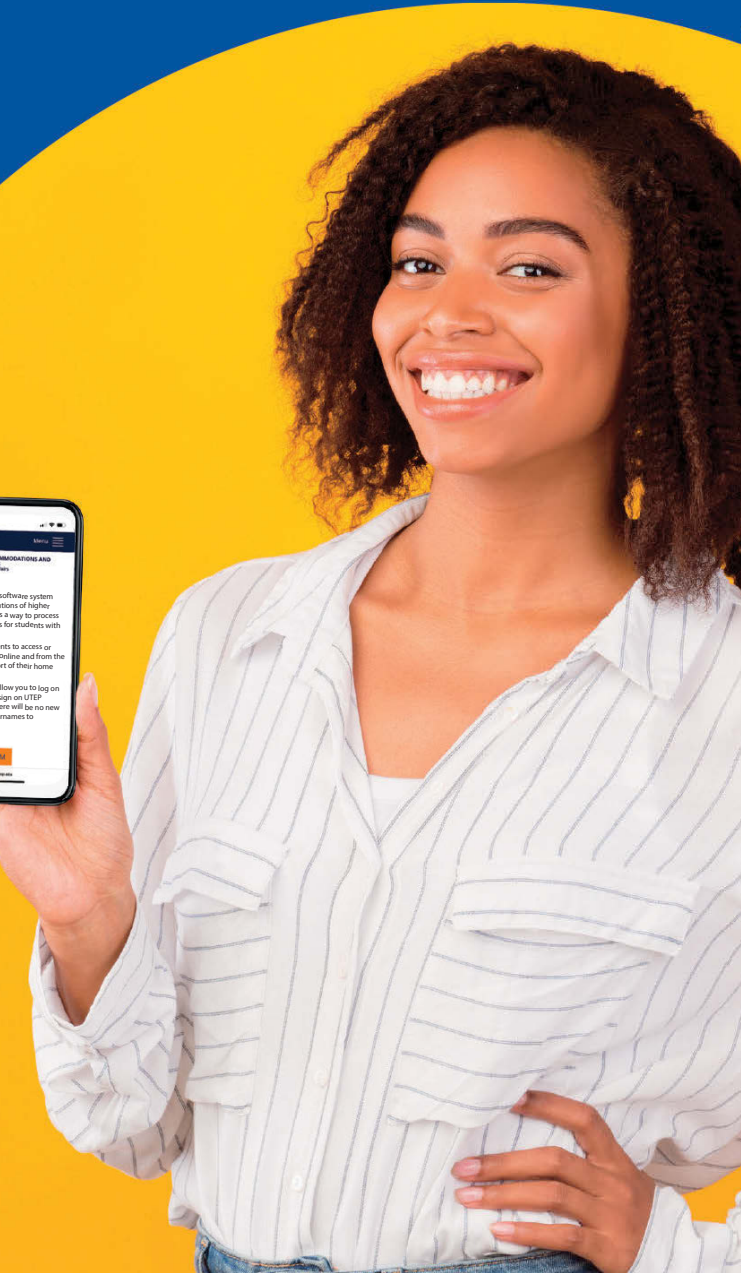
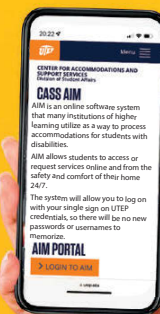
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Arts & Culture

Meagan Garcia, editor

A look into 'Heroes and Saints'

BY ELISHA NUÑEZ
The Prospector



The play is located inside the Wise Family Theatre and is selling at \$18 for adults, \$15 for UTEP Alumni, faculty and staff, non-UTEP students, and \$12 UTEP students.

Photo by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector

As the weeks of spring semester have gone by, new campus events and recurring ones are steadily rolling out.

One such event that signals the start of UTEP's theatrical productions for the semester is the year's first play, "Heroes and Saints."

A play by Chicana feminist, poet, activist, essayist and playwright Cherríe Moraga; the production is set on the backdrop of issues that are political, social, religious etc.

"This play is about the struggles of living in fields and how a lot of women were oppressed during this time," said Daniela Chavez, a theater performance major at UTEP. "It's basically a very empowering play (aimed) towards women, how we take a lot of the things that men don't. I am playing Ana Perez, the reporter. She just shows up throughout the play to do her job, but then (she) gets more (involved) with the community and stuff."

The drama is set in the 1980s and takes place in the fictional town of McLaughlin, Calif., which is based on the real town of McFarland.

It centers around Mexican immigrant farm workers and citizens in the town who are affected by the toxic pesticides in the fields nearby.

The effects from living near the fields vary from terminal illnesses to birth defects.

Combined with, unsafe working conditions inspired the townspeople to take a stand against the problems, while trying to solve their own personal ones.

"It's kind of out there. It has some pretty, kind of scandalous scenes, and it touches on multiple issues,"



The play is set in the fictional town of McLaughlin, California and centers around Mexican immigrant farm workers and their town, which is being affected by toxic pesticides in the fields. Photo by Annabella Mireles/The Prospector

said Lucero Mendoza, a theater performance major at UTEP. "There's a lot of pain and sensitive topics. I would describe this play (as) very unapologetic. I play Amparo. She is an older woman who starts the snowball of the protests. She is the main leader of this little revolution in their town, and she really is the voice for everybody in the town as far as trying to seek justice."

The play focuses on a couple of residents in the small town, including the Valle Family.

The family consists of four characters: Dolores, the religious mother, Yolanda, a daughter who has become a mother to Evalina, Mario,

who hides his sexuality from his mother, and Cerezita, the youngest, who was born without a body and is seen in the play as just a head on top of a moving box.

Other characters include a Catholic priest named Juan and Amparo, a friend of the Valle Family and activist for the residents of McLaughlin and more.

The play dives into the dilemmas of each character, from physical deformities to clashes with faith.

All the characters' issues were portrayed with perfection and each of their stories brought the big picture to life.

"I definitely think it's an impor-

tant thing to show the community because these things are still happening," said Darenka Zamora, a theater major in performance at UTEP and an ensemble actress in the play. "Even though it was written a long time ago, there's still a lot of cases with kids who are born with health problems, and there's not a lot of change. I did a little bit of research on it, and I think about 11,000 people die a year in America alone due to pesticides. So, we have all of this information and still nothing is happening."

In emotional scenes and even some risqué moments, "Heroes and Saints" was a bold start for UTEP's

2023 theater season.

Despite the plays' age, it still proves to be a relevant story that tells of issues still happening to many in modern-day America.

"This play was written a while ago and it's in the eighties, yet it has so many topics that we still see today," said Daniela Mendoza, a theater performance major at UTEP and ensemble actress in the play. "That's why it's also important to showcase this play, so we can be more aware of all this."

Elisha Nunez is a staff reporter and may be reached through egnunez2@miners.utep.edu

'Art Bridges' exhibitions at the EP Museum of Art

BY H. CATCHING MARGINOT
The Prospector

The city of El Paso is home to many famous and important historical landmarks, especially in the city's lively downtown area. One notable spot is the El Paso Museum of Art (EPMA) in the Downtown Art District.

Founded in 1959, EPMA has had many opportunities in having highlighted thousands of pieces such as, a portrait of George Washington by Gilbert Stuart. Other works exhibited, including Stuart's, has been pulled from many parts of the world, as well as different periods in our history.

With much history to include in one building, many institutions try bringing the best to the EPMA, but one who is achieving the museum's mission to spread the creative and artistic visions of talented individuals is.

Art Bridges, an organization that helps museums produce art collections to help platform visions that may not have platforms otherwise.

Three collections currently running in the Museum of Art are "There is a Woman in Every Color: Black Women in Art," "Hank Thomas Willis: Art Bridges loan" and "Vanessa German: Art Bridges loan." All three are being head sponsored by Art Bridges.

The first collection, "There is a Woman in Every Color: Black Women in Art," focuses on the



The support for this exhibit is provided by Art Bridges and it showcases Black women in art. **Photo by Jasmin Campoya/The Prospector**

artistic and general representation of Black women over the past two centuries. With more than forty different works collected from Bowdoin College Museum of Arts, each unique piece displays the true reality of marginalization of Black women over a long stretch of time.

Each piece can range from selected paintings, photographs and even objects like artistic sculptures and historical books.

Noteworthy artists to be included in the collection vary from famous New York born sculptor, Edmonia Lewis to influential photographer, Carrie Mae Weems. "There Is a Woman in Every Color: Black Women in Art" is currently show-

ing and ends May 14.

The second collection showcased one of Thomas' more specific installations. A piece called "Pitch Blackness/ Off Whiteness," by American conceptual artist, Hank Willis Thomas.

Thomas, the 46-year-old artist, based in Brooklyn, New York, aims to confront the themes of perspective and identity in our current standing society.

He tackles these themes head on with his conceptual approach while also exploring why oftentimes America has commodified what it means to be Black.

His work spans from photographs, sculptures to specific instal-



Hank Willis Thomas explores how American society commodifies Black male identity. **Photo by Jasmin Campoya/The Prospector**

lations. This work will be displayed presently until May 31.

Finally, the third collection being shown off from Art Bridges is from American activist and sculptor, Vanessa German.

Titled "Black Girl on Skateboard Going Where She's Got to Go to Do What She's Got to Do and It Might Not Have Anything to Do With You, Ever," German explores the vibrancy of the color yellow on Black skin.

The piece is inspired by the roots of Folk Art, combining fluid assertions of emotion and energy all squeezed into one sculpture.

German creates a piece of art that expresses the joyous feeling of

showing off your colorful personality and flying through the world while doing so.

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H. Catching Marginot is a contributor and may be reached at hcmarginot@miners.utep.edu



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Sports

Emmanuel Rivas Valenzuela, editor

Softball closes UTEP Invitational with loss to No. 4 Oklahoma State

BY EMMANUEL RIVAS VALENZUELA
The Prospector



Sophomore infielder Rylan Dooner is met at homeplate by the team to celebrate her homerun against the No. 4 Oklahoma State Cowgirls Sunday, Feb. 28, 2023 for the UTEP Softball Invitational at the Helen of Troy Softball Complex. Photo by Gianluca Cuevas/The Prospector

Following a frustrating end to the Dr. Diana Natalicio Tournament over a week ago, the UTEP softball team found some success at the UTEP Invitational Tournament. UTEP hosted the Cal State-Bakersfield Roadrunners (3-12), University of Missouri at Kansas City Roos (3-10), Tarleton State Texans (11-7), Creighton Bluejays (6-8) and the No.4 ranked Oklahoma State Cowgirls (13-1). The tournament ran from Friday, Feb. 24 to Sunday, Feb. 26 at the Helen of Troy Softball Complex.

To start the team's weekend, the Miners faced the Cal State Roadrunners at 4 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24. There, the Miners got off to a strong start going up four runs at the end of the second inning. Junior outfielder Ashlynn Allen bombed a two-run homer toward the left center field in the bottom of the second. Sophomore infielder Rylan Dooner and senior infielder Pate Cathey would go on to score after junior outfielder Lexi Morales

found herself on base.

The Roadrunners would climb back in the top of the fourth, scoring three runs. Unfortunately for the Roadrunners, these would be the final runs for the game.

At the bottom of the fifth, the Miners began to stretch the lead after noting seven runs that started with a solo hit from junior outfielder Idalis Mendez. UTEP followed with six runs. The bottom of the seventh inning allotted the Miners a final run placing the final score at 12-4 in favor of UTEP.

The Miners would play a second game that same day at 7 p.m. against the University of Missouri at Kansas City (UMKC) Roos. The first inning was quiet on both sides as the Miners would go on top and break the silence at the bottom of the second inning scoring four runs. Thanks to a single from Morales, Cathey was able to run in to secure the 4-0 lead to end the second inning. The Roos would answer with two runs at the top of the third,

closing UTEP's lead. UMKC's momentum would soon shift back to the Miners thanks to two runs at the bottom of the frame.

UTEP would not give up its lead to the Roos winning the game 8-6.

The following day, the Miners faced the Tarleton Texans at 4 p.m. and the Creighton Bluejays at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25. The Miners kicked off the day with a win over Tarleton. UTEP only trailed in the first inning where the Texans scored a single run. From there, the Miners would note four runs to close out the second. After three quiet innings, the Texans and Miners would exchange runs in the sixth inning to push the score to 5-2 in favor of UTEP.

Later that day, UTEP would go through its first loss of the tournament falling to the Creighton Bluejays 10-2. The Miners struggled to get anything going, only scoring its two runs in the bottom of the fourth. The Bluejays started out strong, going up five runs in the

first. The Miners would go through four pitchers through the course of the game.

Finally, the Miners faced No. 4 Oklahoma State University (OSU) at noon Sunday, Feb. 26. The Miners did not struggle to score, noting six runs against the ranked Cowgirls, but failed to curb OSU's scoring allowing 10 runs to close out the tournament with two straight losses for the Miners.

Moving forward, the Miners travel to Albuquerque, N.M. for a doubleheader against the New Mexico Lobos (6-9) at 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 1 at the Lobo Softball Field.

The next home match for UTEP will be against Western Kentucky (9-6) at 6 p.m. Friday, March 17 at the Helen of Troy Softball Complex in El Paso, Texas.

All stats and quotes for UTEP courtesy of UTEP Athletics, utep-miners.com.

Emmanuel Rivas Valenzuela is the sports editor and may be reached at erivas7@miners.utep.edu: @rivasesmanuel2 on Instagram.

WNBA to look into Las Vegas Aces cap

BY KATRINA VILLARREAL
The Prospector

The Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) is currently investigating the 2022 WNBA champions, the Las Vegas Aces, for allegations regarding under-the-table payments to players.

According to an article by The Next, the Aces are accused of having calls with free agents and current players to discuss contract extensions. The Next mentions that the Aces were offering a specific amount of money from a pre-selected company that could later be negotiated. This would be a violation of the WNBA's salary cap.

If the allegations are proven to be true, ESPN explains it would lead to significant disciplinary actions by the WNBA since the New York Liberty were fined \$500,000 for unsanctioned chartered flights to away games during the 2021 season. In the WNBA's collective bargaining agreement, Article XV states that, "a team or team affiliate is not allowed to enter into an agreement in which a third party offers a player compensation for services."

After the Aces won the 2022 WNBA championships, the allegations began to rise. During the off-season, the Las Vegas Aces signed two-time MVP Candace Parker to a \$100,000 contract and two-time WNBA champion Alysha Clark to a two-year \$220,000 contract. The Aces have also resigned Kiah Stokes to a one-year \$81,000 deal.

"I am heartbroken. Being traded is a part of the business. Being lied to, bullied, manipulated, and discriminated against is not. I have had my character and work ethic attacked. I was promised things to entice me to sign my contract extension that were not followed through on. I was accused of signing my extension knowingly pregnant. This is false. I was told that I was 'a question mark' and that it was said that I said I would 'get pregnant again' and there was a concern for my level of commitment to the team. I was told that 'I didn't hold up my end of the bargain' (Because 'no one expected me to get pregnant in the next two years'). Did the team expect me to promise not to get pregnant in exchange for the contract extension? I was asked if I planned my pregnancy. When I responded, 'no,' I was then told that I 'was not taking precautions to not get pregnant.' I was being traded because 'I wouldn't be ready, and

Mexican Federation names new manager

BY EMMANUEL RIVAS VALENZUELA
The Prospector

It was announced earlier this month that Argentinian, Diego Cocca, was selected by the Mexican Soccer Federation to manage the Mexican National Soccer Team. This is following the departure of Gerardo "El Tata" Martino after a disappointing World Cup stand.

Martino left with a 42-12-12 record with Mexico.

"I am the first (person) responsible for this terrible disappointment and frustration that we have," said Martino after announcing his departure. "As the person in charge, it causes a lot of sadness, I fully assume some responsibility for this failure." Cocca comes from Club de Fútbol

Tigres (Tigres Football Club) where he managed the team for a little over a month. Bouncing from club to club, Cocca was a member of clubs such as Club Atlético (Athletic Club) River Plate, Unió Esportiva (Athletics United) Lleida and Atlas where he would later coach. Cocca began his managerial career in 2008 with the Argentinian club Godoy Cruz Antonio Tomba. His first foray into Mexican football came when Cocca joined Santos Laguna in 2011.

The announcement came as a surprise to some including Argentinian sports journalist Flavio Azarro.

"When we learned that Diego Cocca was appointed as coach of

the Mexican National Team, I was surprised because in Argentina he failed with Racing and Rosario Central, I think this could happen with the Mexican National Team," Azarro said.

"We are going to work to avoid making ourselves ridiculous, as we have been doing lately," said Ignacio Mier Velazco, a member of the Chamber of Deputies, "(The failure to advance in) Qatar cannot happen again, especially in a country with all the soccer tradition that exists in Mexico."

This hiring was a part of a national initiative by the lower house of Mexico's congress to transform soccer in Mexico.

"I believe a lot in Mexican soccer players and their talent," Cocca said after his hiring. "But talent is not enough. You have to give them a whole lot of tools so they can take off, and that is my goal, I want to make them take off."

Mexico is set to face Suriname in the CONCACAF Nations League March 23 which will serve as qualifications for the CONCACAF Gold Cup. Mexico fell in the 2019 finals match to the United States.

Cocca will be the third straight manager who is not Mexican and the fifth Argentinian to manage the Mexican National Soccer Team.

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we need bodies.' I planned to play this season, and I have expressed my desire to play this season. I have pushed myself throughout my entire pregnancy and have continued to work out (basketball included on my own and with team staff - even on days where it was uncomfortable to walk, only to be inaccurately told that 'I was not taking my workouts seriously.' And 'yeah we just don't see that' (with my return). I remained transparent with everyone within the organization, and yet, my honesty was met with coldness, disrespect, and disregard from members of management. I have only put this organization first since day one before any of them were here. 'You're getting moved regardless and it's best for your career that you move on from the Aces.' The unprofessional and unethical way that I have been treated has been traumatizing. To be treated this way by an organization, BY WOMEN who are mothers, who have claimed to 'be in these shoes,' who preach family, chemistry, and women's empowerment is disappointing and leaves me sick to my stomach. We fought for provisions that would finally support and protect player parents."

Jan. 21 the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA) released a statement explaining that they are investigating for possible violations. All matters are now under investigation.

Katrina Villarreal is the multimedia editor and may be reached at kvillarreal1@miners.utep.edu

Beach volleyball struggles in opener

BY ITZEL GIRON
The Prospector

In the team's inaugural season, the UTEP beach volleyball team (0-4) headed to the University of Arizona to take part in the Cactus Classic for opening weekend, Feb. 24 and Feb. 25.

The Miners tried their best to defeat the Pacific-12 Conference foes, but ultimately fell in the end to the University of Oregon (1-3, 0-1 Pacific-12 Conference), Arizona State University (ASU) (3-1, 1-0 PAC-12), No. 18 The University of Arizona (4-0) and Colorado Mesa University (1-3).

Since its announcement last spring, this is the first time anyone gets to see the Miners beach volleyball team in action.

"It's really exciting. It's been a couple of years coming. When I first got the job in 2019, Jim (Senter) and Julie (Levesque) approached me about this, and we started putting our brains together about a way we could make a really competitive, exciting beach volleyball program here in El Paso," said Head Coach Ben Wallis in a question answer interview with the University of Texas at El Paso Athletics Department. "They want me to be the Director of Volleyball to run both programs initially, with some thought down the road that we could potentially hire a beach-only coach. But for right now, I'm going to run both programs. I think we've

got a really neat financial plan for the program, and the opportunities here in El Paso are pretty endless for beach volleyball. Most people don't realize that the state of Texas has a really big beach-only population. There are really good beach-only clubs across the state that are ready to send recruits and prospects to El Paso to play at UTEP."

For its first season, the Miners have included the talents of several indoor volleyball players such as Alianza Darley, Mattie Gantt, Ema Uskokovic, Sara Pustahija, Serena Patterson and Marian Ovalle.

During Friday's matchup the Miners lost all its games against the Colorado Mesa Mavericks and the University of Arizona Wildcats.

Against Arizona, freshman Krista Paegle and junior Katie Martin fell to the Wildcats, but had the smallest point difference with scores of 21-19 for both sets.

Freshman Sara Pustahija and sophomore Ema Uskokovic were

the only pair to force a third set in their close matchup versus the Arizona Wildcats.

In game two against the Mavericks, the Miners set the standard by winning the first sets of courts three and four. Unfortunately, it was not enough to come out on top.

"Tough day in the beach volleyball world for the Miners," Wallis said. "Against two good opponents in No. 18 Arizona and Colorado Mesa, who is the defending 2022 NCAA DII champions. Both opponents have completely different styles of play and while we competed well in both matches, we came up short in both but showed a lot of progress and growth against really good beach volleyball teams."

Saturday, Feb. 25 the Miners were looking for a comeback against the Oregon Ducks and the ASU Sun Devils but came up short.

Against the Ducks, the Miners were able to take three games to three sets but received the short

end of the stick losing all five games. Against ASU, the Miners also failed to find momentum, losing all five games again.

"We really learned a lot against four quality teams this weekend," Wallis said. "We weren't hurting for talent, athleticism, or tactics, and that was evident. We're just a long way away in the skill and experience departments. It was nice to get out and compete against teams other than ourselves and be able to measure our strengths—what we're good at—but more importantly, what our weaknesses are and where we need to be better at in the coming months."

The UTEP Miners are set to travel March 10 and March 11 to compete in the California State University-Bakersfield Tournament in Bakersfield, Calif.

All stats provided by UTEP Athletics, utepminers.com.

Itzel Giron is the editor-in-chief and may be reached at prospector@utep.edu; [@byitzelgiron](https://www.instagram.com/byitzelgiron) on Instagram; [@itzel_anahi_16](https://twitter.com/itzel_anahi_16) on Twitter.

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