

WWII camp brings history to life for middle schoolers

MORE than a hundred middle school students discovered history does not have to be boring! Recently, we worked with the 21st Century Program to develop a two-week summer camp about World War II. Using Tom Lea's art as a basis, students built model airplanes, made a movie about Peleliu, painted dioramas, played games, flew gliders and created their own WWII propaganda posters. They gained insight into the contributions of Hispanic soldiers by watching our video about El Paso native Manny Rivas, who landed on Peleliu with Tom Lea.

We also conducted training for more than 50 instructors. Dr. Jose Maria Herrera, a UTEP professor, taught a segment on the use of model airplanes in pedagogy. The instructors were so impressed with the curriculum, they predicted students will excel on state testing about WWII.

Collaboration enriched learning. Bryan Degner, director of education at the National Museum of the Pacific War (NMPW), made a living history presentation. He used guns, grenades, and other artifacts. The City of El Paso Downtown Library exhibited issues of LIFE Magazine featuring Tom Lea's reporting as the first embedded artist correspondent. The exhibit included one of Lea's original notebooks from Peleliu (provided by TLI). Learning



Veteran docents gave campers tours at the War Eagles Air Museum in Santa Teresa, NM.

For information about implementing Tom Lea curricula in a school or camp, contact Holly Packard Cobb, director of education: hollycobb77@gmail.com

culminated with a field trip to the War Eagles Air Museum in Santa Theresa, NM. The museum paired Tom Lea's LIFE Magazine works containing airplanes with the corresponding aircraft. This marks the third Social Studies/English Language Arts Camp we have designed for the 21st Century Program.

TLI and NMPW have built a strong partnership over the years. It began with the exhibit of more than 40 of Tom Lea's works for LIFE Magazine. Brought out of storage at the Army Archive at Ft. Belvoir, the paintings had not been seen for almost 75 years. This summer, the museum sponsored the living history presentation coming to El Paso. This fall, the museum and institute will collaborate on a video and curriculum, *Uncommon Valor: WWII Through the Eyes of Admiral Chester Nimitz, and Tom Lea*. The curriculum will be implemented in the Fredericksburg and San Antonio regions.

Holly Packard Cobb
Director of Education

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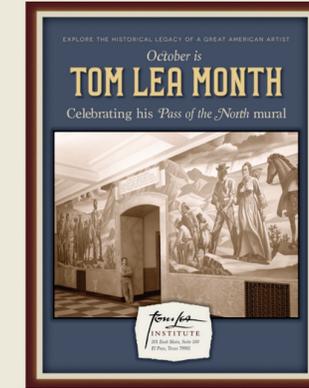
*Died but will never be forgotten

October is Tom Lea Month

PLANNING Tom Lea Month has been an exercise in creativity for me. Thinking about how to bring to life this year's theme, the *Pass of the North* mural, in a way that would not only enliven the artwork but also enliven the history that is documented within it. I ended up deciding to base events around a giant within the mural. Also, I wanted to convey more than just the history; I wanted to make connections.

People learn in different ways; some may be auditory while others are visual. It is important to teach in a multitude of ways to engage each and every sense. Keeping this in mind when I'm giving tours of the mural, I like to ask students and visitors to imagine what it sounds like, smells like, and feels like. Allowing them to create a "time sense," if you will. Think of time sense as similar to the five senses: being able to step into a time machine, visit a point in history, and make it tangible. Imagine yourself in a colonist's shoes where every day at a specific time you had tea. Tea was the drink that connected you to the homeland you left, but now you've found that taxes make it unaffordable. How did you feel in that moment? That emotional connection you experienced has now built a bridge to the Boston Tea Party. By being able to imagine yourself into an artwork and think outside the box, historical content and meaning become more realistic.

Keeping that in mind, I thought of



a few ways to bring the mural to life. The Magoffin Home will lead two cooking classes based on 1898 recipes for fall pies, connecting how kitchens on the frontier and at the turn of the century would have smelled and tasted like. Partnering with I Painted That!, you will be able to learn the technique Tom used on the mural, *alla prima* or wet-on-wet, being able to smell and feel the paint. October marks the 80th anniversary of Tom's masterpiece but it also marks the 350th year that the mission in Juárez was consecrated. There will be tours of such historic sites as the *Mision de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* and the San Elizario presidio chapel, where you can walk in history and listen to music of the time. Blending the senses with history, in my opinion, bridges the past and present. Much like the way certain smells, sounds, and feeling remind us of things in our personal past.

— Sarah Prezioso,
Program Director

About Lea's 'Pass of the North'

WHEN I recorded Tom Lea's oral history, he told me how much he enjoyed painting the *Pass of the North* mural in El Paso's Federal Courthouse*. He said he had never researched anything more thoroughly, worked more tirelessly, nor enjoyed himself more fully than when he created the mural for his hometown.

He was one of fifty artists from eight states to submit a design to the 1936 competition, held under the auspices of the United States Treasury Department, Section of Fine Arts. Tom received his contract in June for a wall measuring fifty-two feet long by eleven feet high and pierced in the center by a doorway. He began with an inscription over the door:

O PASS OF THE NORTH
NOW THE OLD GIANTS ARE GONE
WE LITTLE MEN LIVE WHERE HEROES
ONCE WALKED THE INVIOLEATE EARTH

On either side he filled the space with giants, representing those who left their imprints on El Paso – the cavalryman, frontiersman, *charro*, Franciscan friar, pioneer couple, Apache, and sheriff among them. Some stood nine feet tall against a backdrop of Mount Franklin and the Juárez Mountains, with the Rio Grande making its course through the valley.

For five months Tom did research, finding local models to pose in authentic dress. Perry Hill, who worked for Hawkins Dairy, had grown whiskers for the Carlsbad Rodeo and volunteered to let Tom use them for the Spaniard before he cut them off. Other models included Laura Lawson, granddaughter of a colonel stationed at Old

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Eugenio Guerrero's love of bullfighting books lead him to the Tom Lea Institute for a visit.

Visit from a new friend

WE had an amazing visit from Eugenio Guerrero, member of the *Bibliofilos Taurinos de Mexico* in Mexico City. *Bibliofilo* means lover or aficionado of books, in this case books relating to bullfighting. Eugenio, a passionate bullfighting aficionado, fell upon an old used book in Mexico City titled *The Brave Bulls*. The more he read the more it awoke his curiosity about the writer, Tom Lea. It wasn't until one of Tom Lea's characters mentioned the place of Cusihuirachi that he realized who Tom Lea was.

Mr. Guerrero had lived in Ciudad Juárez as a young boy until his 21st birthday and attended Lydia Patterson Institute in El Paso. During that time, he recalled an El Paso painter who had received publicity in the *El Fronterizo* newspaper as well as *El Diario del Norte* for one of his renowned murals. Since he had left Juárez in 1954 he decided to do more research on Lea, and the research led him to our door.

We shared with him books, art, records and photographs of bullfights in Juárez. Somehow looking into his eyes you could tell he was a teenager again, re-living the bullfights. It was of great satisfaction to see Mr. Guerrero travel back through his memories. He asked if Tom Lea was a bullfighter or of Hispanic descent. He explained that Tom Lea had captured the exact essence of a Torero and was very accurate when describing the bullfights. I replied that Tom Lea never created unrealistic scenes in his art and that he always wanted to portray the truth. As a writer Lea kept to this same structure of rules. Not only did Lea attend bullfights but also befriended the bullfighters, learned their techniques and studied their personalities.

It was a beautiful experience to have Mr. Guerrero visit us and share with us his knowledge of bullfighting as well as memories from his youth. We love having visitors at the Tom Lea Institute, where we can share as well as learn from them.

– Paola Seegers, Membership Coordinator

Flying the Tom Lea Trail

‘CAN’T you imagine how fabulous it would be to fly the Tom Lea Trail?’ Adair asked excitedly one night at a fundraiser. It did not take long for the seed to bloom.

After months of planning with Sarah Prezioso, our final itinerary was set to go. Our first stop was Dallas to visit the George Bush Presidential Library. Curator Amy Polley gave us a guided tour. We were then greeted by Laura Bush who had graciously agreed to meet with us over lunch hosted at Café 43. It was easy to sense the love that Mrs. Bush has for El Paso, and the camaraderie and respect that Adair and Mrs. Bush have for each other was extremely evident. Then, after lunch, Mrs. Bush gave us a personal tour of The First Lady exhibit at the Library. It was so entertaining to see people's expressions as she walked through the crowd; it was as if she had stepped out of one of her portraits on the wall! She showed us the replica of the Oval Office and where Tom Lea's *Rio Grande* hung.

From there we visited two of Tom Lea's murals at The Hall of State at Fair Park. They adorn the entrance and the exit of The West Texas Room. One side has a lanky cowboy in wide chaps with a lariat in one hand and the other has a strong-jawed family in an open wagon. I've often wondered how uncomfortable it must have been for those first Texans to cross our enormous state. That night we stayed at the historic Magnolia Hotel downtown and enjoyed a birthday dinner for my son Jacques at Bullion.

The next morning we were off to Waco to visit Baylor University to see the original drawings Tom Lea did of Judge R.E.B. Baylor. We also visited The Carroll Library and see Dr. A.J. Armstrong's remarkable collection of such English poets as Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. The tour of the library and chapel were especially romantic with such quotes as "How do I love thee, let me count the ways," surrounding us along with another personal favorite, "Grow old with me, the best is yet to be."

After lunch at Café Homestead, we were off to the Texas Ranger Museum to meet Director Bryon Johnson and Collections Manager Shelly Crittendon. We were in awe of Tom Lea's *A Little Shade*, depicting a cowboy and his horse huddled under the only bit of shade on a sunbaked Texas plain. I think every Texan can relate to that splendid



Archivist Robert Marlin of Moody Medical Library shows a historic blueprint.

appreciation of shade on a hot day!

For our last night we set off to Galveston and The Hotel Galvez. That night we ate mudbugs under the Texas stars and enjoyed a nice stroll on the esplanade back to the hotel. The next morning was a fascinating tour of The Moody Medical Library given by archivist Robert Marlin, where we saw Tom Lea's powerful interpretation of *The First Recorded Surgical Operation in North America: Cabeza de Vaca, 1535*.

After lunch on the pier at the Olympia, we headed to our last stop of the trip before heading home. We had the unique experience of seeing not only Tom's work, but that of his first wife, Nancy Lea, at the Bryan Museum, accompanied by museum director Joan Marshall. The Bryan has a magnificent collection of Texan artists interspersed with Texas history and artifacts. I look forward to a return visit there!

On our flight back to El Paso, we were all happily sated with our new appreciation of all things Tom Lea. I truly enjoyed the experience and thank the Institute and Sarah for their hard work and dedication.

A little shout out to my TL homies: Tania, Ben, Sister Helen, Steve and Adair! Also, a special thanks to Ed Anderson and Diversified Interiors for providing exceptional transportation in the Lucky Duck.

– By Isha Rogers

LA CORRIDA: ITS REALITY, PAGENTRY AND MEANING

The traditions of bullfighting

FOR the first time, the Tom Lea Institute had an event at The Custodia de San Pablo Restaurant in Juárez. Though the event went over capacity, our guests had nothing but rave reviews.

The night began with each guest receiving a refreshing margarita. Guests mingled for a bit, then Institute founder Adair Margo welcomed everyone.

Cinco Feuille made a presentation about bullfighting, explaining the roles of the *matador* and his six assistants: two *picadors* or lancers, three *banderilleros* or flagmen, and the *mozo de espada* or sword servant. Before the *matador* goes into the arena there is a ritual where he prays in a small chapel found in the corridor. Once he finishes praying, the *matador* and bull play an intricate dance in the arena. This is where the *matador* discovers whether the bull is a brave bull or not. The *picadores* mounted on horseback have long poles with a sharp end that will only go a few inches deep into the bull's back. Since the bull is such a huge animal, this is done so he can bleed and not have a heart attack before the bullfight. Then come the *banderilleros*, who strategically place elaborately decorated sticks with sharp hooks at the end on the bull's back. Then comes the *mozo de espada*, who presents the sword to the *matador*. Finally, the *matador* plunges the sword between the bull's shoulder blades, an act called *tercio de muerte*.

After the presentation, a musical duet provided entertainment while the guests enjoyed dinner. Over dessert, José Mario, a tenor and owner of the restaurant, sang opera solos. He told guests about a February trip to *Puebla* that he is helping the Institute prepare, where participants will visit a hacienda called the *Ganaderia Rancho Seco* and see how brave bulls are raised. (see notice at right →)

– Arturo Flores, Finance Manager



Cinco Feuille gives a presentation about bullfighting.

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Contact the Tom Lea Institute: 915-533-0048 | TLI@tomlea.net

'Pass of the North'

CONTINUED

Fort Bliss in 1875, who posed for the settler's wife. Architect Louis Daeuble was the model for Doniphan bringing the American flag in 1846, and a priest from St. Anthony's Seminary posed for the Franciscan friar. Tom even found a Spanish-blooded palomino mare at Fort Bliss to pose for the Conquistador's horse.

It took four months to complete the detailed full-scale drawings, one for each figure. After gluing 19 yards of Belgian linen to serve as the base, he traced his giants up on the wall. He began painting on March 2, 1938, in colors he chose after studying the tones in the interior architecture. Then, working for 12 to 16 hours a day up on scaffolding and under bright lights, he painted in half-inch-wide strokes, never retouching. Each stroke remains as fresh as when it was first laid down.

When Tom Lea stepped down from the scaffold on June 24, 1938, he told the El Paso Herald Post:

I hold two hopes for this work just completed. One, that it may bring to life in a few minds that vivid history of the Pass of the North. And the other, that the point of view I have taken as a creative artist may help to demonstrate that the function of a mural painting in a community is to deepen and to enrich a people's perception of its own tradition and the character of its own land.

In its classical timelessness, *Pass of the North* continues to enrich our perception of where we live today.

– Adair Margo, Founder

*Renamed R.E. Thomason Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse on October 27, 2017.