

Events & Highlights

Tom Lea Month 2017

WITH the generous support of our sponsors and help from numerous volunteers, the 11th annual Tom Lea Month offered twenty different programs and activities for more than 10,000 people. Events took place in six cities, three states and two countries.

The Institute supported an array of educational programs, all related to discovering the wonders along the *Tom Lea Trail*, the first artist-named heritage trail in Texas. Programming highlights included the official launch of the *Tom Lea Trail*; a heritage tourism symposium; walking tours of downtown El Paso, Ciudad Juárez and Las Cruces; a guided experience at the War Eagles Air Museum; book signings; a visit from renowned White House Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier; two equestrian events; and many other activities.

The Lea Family Collection of Casa Grandes pottery (collected by Tom Lea, Sr., in the late 1920s) and associated watercolors by his son were exhibited at the El Paso Museum of Archeology and Tom Lea's seldom-seen watercolors were on display at the El Paso Museum of Art.

Tom Lea Month presenters included authors, university professors, first ladies, historians, archeologists, art historians, environmentalists, architects, chefs, educators and a surgeon who discussed the first recorded surgery in North America. All were dedicated to ensuring that people discover and experience all that the *Tom Lea Trail* has to offer. With this edition of the newsletter, we give you just a taste of this year's Tom Lea Month offerings and offer a very sincere thank you to all of the talented volunteers, knowledgeable presenters, and the gracious hosts who made Tom Lea Month 2017 possible.

– Lisa M. Pugh, Executive Director



TEXAS BOOK FESTIVAL

AS a testament to Tom Lea's universal and enduring appeal, Adair Margo and Harvard scholar Melissa Renn spoke to an overflow crowd at the Texas Book Festival in Austin. Their book, *Tom Lea, Life Magazine and WWII*, chronicles the more than 100,000 miles Tom Lea traveled as the first embedded artist-correspondent for LIFE magazine during World War II. His works depict eyewitness experiences in four theaters of war, with LIFE publishing all of his paintings, many more than any other artist correspondent. Dr. Renn and Adair Margo wrote introductory essays for the book.

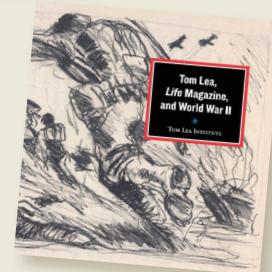
Dr. Renn shared the importance and impact of the Artist-Correspondent Program in chronicling the war while Adair provided insight into the man behind the art. Tom Lea said, *"I became, for deeply felt reasons, an eye-witness reporter, in drawings and paintings, of men and their machines waging a war worldwide. I want to*

make it clear that I did not report hearsay; I did not imagine, or fake, or improvise; I did not cuddle up with personal emotion, moral notion, or political opinion about War with a capital-W. I reported in pictures what I saw with my own two eyes, wide open."

Attracting Pulitzer Prize-winning authors, The Texas Book Festival draws authors and readers from all over the country to celebrate and encourage literacy. It raises thousands of dollars annually to inspire Texans to love reading and provides books to low-income schools throughout the state.

Tom Lea, Life Magazine and WWII is available for purchase through the Institute, Literarity Book Shop in El Paso, and the War Eagles Air Museum in Santa Teresa, NM.

– Holly P. Cobb,
Director of Education



Tom Lea Month – Then and Now

THE first Tom Lea Month was held in July 2007. It began as the centennial celebration of Tom Lea's birth on July 11, 1907. The Adair Margo Gallery kicked off events with an exhibition curated by Becky Duval Reese, former director of the El Paso Museum of Art. In addition to showing the paintings selected from private collections, the gallery hosted a series of evening presentations – eight in all – that featured celebrated friends, enthusiasts and scholars. Also at the Gallery, the King Ranch hosted the release party for the 50th Anniversary edition of *The King Ranch*, Tom's literary masterpiece.

UTEP hosted an exhibit on Tom's 1938 *Pass of the North* mural at its Centennial Museum. The reproduction they made now hangs in the cafeteria of Tom Lea Elementary School. Claudia Rivers, director of the Library's C. L. Sonnichsen Special Collections, put together a King Ranch exhibition with original studies for the illustrations in the book, and organized a display of special art work, manuscripts and books related to Tom's historic significance to the region.

The El Paso Museum of Art invited Philip Parisi, who wrote *The Texas Post Office Murals: Art for the People*, to give a lecture on Tom's New Deal murals. At the Fort Bliss Museum on Marshall Road, Renee Klish, curator of the U.S. Army Center for Military History, spoke about the international impact of Tom's World War II paintings.

The El Paso County Historical Society, having inducted Tom into its Hall of Honor in 1975, hosted a garden party. While members enjoyed music, hors d'oeuvres

and wine, they learned about Tom's life and art from historic photographs, artifacts and newspaper clippings laid out on long tables inside the Burgess Perrenot home.

The Mexican Consulate mounted a *Tom Lea y la Fiesta Brava* exhibition and reception. Tom frequented the bullfights in Juárez and wrote a manual that informed the public on the intricacies and beauty of bullfighting. His novel *The Brave Bulls* was adapted to a film starring Mel Ferrer that premiered at the Plaza Theatre. The exhibition was curated from the collection of Carlos Chavez, a bullfighting aficionado and collector of Tom Lea's work.

Fifteen hundred people attended the events, and made time to visit Tom Lea's five murals in El Paso and Las Cruces. Some travelled from out of town. They continue to do so today, and with the naming of the *Tom Lea Trail*, we are confident the word will spread – not only to the eleven communities along the trail, but to Europe as well.

Tom Lea Month is a time to experience three states, two countries and one region at the Pass of the North. From eight to twenty events and as attendance figures show today – with over 200,000 in 2016 (including visitors to an exhibit at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans) and in 2017, with more than 10,000 people attending local events, interest continues to grow. What's more, the themes are inexhaustible and enlivening. What else would you expect from authentic history and real life experiences on our beloved Mexican border?

– Adair Margo, Founder

BECOME A MEMBER

Keep up with the latest events and support the Institute.

Membership levels and benefits are listed online.

It's easy to join at <http://tomlea.com>.

ONLINE

Check out our newly redesigned website at <http://tomlea.com>.

Follow the Institute on Instagram and like us on Facebook.



INSTITUTE STAFF

Lisa M. Pugh, *Executive Director*
Holly P. Cobb, *Director of Education*

Sarah Prezioso,
Community Outreach Coordinator
/Collections Manager

Arturo Flores, *Finance Manager*
Paola Martinez, *Membership Coordinator*

TOM LEA MONTH | *Events & Highlights*

THE WAR EAGLES AIR MUSEUM

ON October 14, the War Eagles Air Museum hosted an event to celebrate Tom Lea's work as a World War II LIFE Magazine war correspondent. As LIFE described to readers in 1941, Lea was the first of several artists commissioned to create "America's first gallery of defense art."

Tom Lea included aircraft in many of his WWII paintings and made portraits of the pilots who flew them. The War Eagles program featured a brief introduction to Lea's life during WWII by Adair Margo, Lea's aviation artwork, and a customized tour of the War Eagles Air Museum to see and touch some of the actual aircraft featured in his paintings. Reproductions of his artwork were strategically placed next to the aircraft in the hangar, allowing viewers to see what these planes looked like and imagine what the pilots would have experienced while seated in them. Lea gave his audience a firsthand experience that was based in truth, as he accompanied pilots in the air and experienced flight with them. It was interesting to hear the battle stories that accompanied each type of plane such as the P-38 Lightning,



Attendees get a close look at planes from Tom Lea's WWII paintings.

P-40 Warhawk, and the P-51.

The War Eagles Air Museum is located at the Dona Ana County Airport in Santa Teresa, New Mexico, and is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

– Sarah Prezioso, Outreach Coordinator

Thank You to the presenters and sponsors for Tom Lea Month and Made in El Paso. We sincerely appreciate your generosity and support of the Institute's activities and educational programs.

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TOM LEA MONTH PRESENTERS & HOSTS

Laura Aguilar
Morris Brown
Barbara Gonzalez Cigarroa
Tomas Cuevas
Kathryn Flynn
Dody Fugate
John Hamilton
Shannon Harris
Adair Margo
Michael Martin
Roland Mesnier
Charlie Overstreet
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Branigan Cultural Center, Las Cruces
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El Paso Museum of Art
El Paso Museum of Archeology
Keystone Heritage Park
Literarity Book Shop
Museum of Indian Arts & Culture,
Santa Fe
Texas Tech University Health Sciences
Center, El Paso
War Eagles Air Museum, Santa Teresa

TOM LEA MONTH | *Events & Highlights*



Kids try their luck roping plastic steers at the Kid's Horsemanship Clinic presented by the El Paso Sheriff's Posse.

EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S POSSE

THIS year the El Paso County Sheriff's Posse and the Tom Lea Institute came together for a Kid's Horsemanship Clinic where Posse members and volunteers taught cowboy skills to kids. Children were shown how to position their hands and wrists to throw a lasso and successfully rope the head of the elusive plastic steer. It was entertaining to watch the young cowboys and cowgirls give it their best shot. After lasso instruction, the kids took a tour of the stables where they had the opportunity to meet and interact with some of the horses. (This was a big shock to some of our adult EPCC Ambassadors, who had never been near horses.) Local horse trainers Laura Aguilar and Christine Scott demonstrated how to properly groom, prepare, and tack up a horse. When the horses were saddled, the children were taken for rides while a farrier demonstrated horseshoeing techniques for the rest of the crowd.

Sarah the Cow (the Sarah Farms mascot) kept toddlers on their toes and dancing while other visitors checked out the antique carriage display. By early evening, the clouds covered the warm El Paso sun and the bonfire became the place to be. With country music playing and s'mores around the fire, it was a wonderful escape from fast-paced city life.

Inside the Posse Clubhouse, it felt like the Wild West. Visitors found the artwork of Tom Lea, a vintage bar, old photographs, and hunting trophies lining the walls. Posse members brought dishes to share. From chile con queso to



A horse comes out to meet the young participants.

homemade quesadillas to pigs-in-a-blanket, everything was delicious. Sipping on hot cocoa and eggnog, we ended the night with dancing and music by Michael Martin. We would like to thank Sarah and Pat Byrne of Sarah Farms and the El Paso County Sheriff's Posse for creating this wonderful family event in celebration of Tom Lea Month.

— Paola Martinez, Membership Coordinator

TOM LEA MONTH | *Events & Highlights*

WHITE HOUSE PASTRY CHEF



Former White House Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier demonstrates dessert preparation for EPCC students.

FORMER White House Pastry Chef Roland Mesnier visited El Paso for the third time during this year's Tom Lea Month celebration. Chef Roland was born in Bonna, France, into a family of nine children. As an apprentice, he traveled to Paris and Germany where he learned his craft. He then worked as a pastry chef for a cruise line, where former First Lady Rosalynn Carter tasted his delicious desserts and asked him to consider working for the First Family at the White House. As the White House pastry chef, he created desserts for five presidents.

After his first trip to El Paso, he went to Marathon, Texas, where he stayed at the Gage Hotel and became fascinated with cowboy culture. During his second visit, students at El Paso Community College Culinary Art Center created pastries inspired by Tom Lea's artwork. This

year's visit was incredibly special. Chef Roland worked with EPCC Culinary Arts students and prepared three pastries – Floating Island, a Gingerbread Soufflé and the grand finale: a Chocolate Mousse Swan. After the demonstrations, Roland signed copies of his book *A Sweet World of White House Desserts*, one for each of the students.

Later that evening, the chef made an appearance and spoke at Made in El Paso – A Culinary Experience, where the students he worked with that morning prepared and served an amazing five-course dinner. The following day, Whole Foods hosted a book signing for Chef Roland's fans including one of their bakers, a graduate of the EPCC Culinary Arts Program, who brought his treasured and well-used copy of Mesnier's *Dessert University* to be signed by the author.

– Arturo Flores, Finance Manager

TOM LEA ELEMENTARY

TOM Lea is world-renowned El Paso artist, novelist and historian whose work still graces the walls of federal buildings and art museums. To students at the school that bears his name, Tom Lea can oftentimes be just a name on the school's marquee. That is why, during the local celebration of October as Tom Lea Month, the Tom Lea Elementary School PTA decided to host an art competition that honors the artist's legacy.

"It's important for the students to know who Tom Lea was and what his background was, so they can be proud of their school," PTA co-vice president Lorraine Armengol said. The competition, which was open to the whole school, focused on the theme "Lea's Bulls at the Pumpkin Patch."

"The bull is not only our mascot, but bulls are so indicative of Tom Lea because of the novel *The Brave Bulls*, which he wrote and illustrated." Art teacher Yuvia Rodriguez had the students focus on use of color in their creations. Some students used a bull template to create their artwork, while other students



Photo by Leonel Monroy/EPISD

made their drawings from scratch.

The art competition goes hand-in-hand with the annual celebration in October, which has been designated Tom Lea Month for more than 10 years.

– Alicia Chumley, *El Paso Herald-Post*, November 3, 2017
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Tom Lea Research Fellowships

In 2017, Tom Lea Research Fellowship grants were awarded to Jade Williams and José Miguel Chávez Leyva, both students at the University of Texas at El Paso. The awards helped Jade to explore museums in Washington, D.C., Dallas, and Chicago and further her research. José travelled to Austin and spent his time studying Tom Lea papers held in the archives of the Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.



JADE WILLIAMS

JADE'S research focuses on coming-of-age narratives within the African American literary sphere. "Museums are important cultural centers that validate one's humanity, culture, and history. They are places where we can take the children of our diverse society to see themselves in a positive light to know that they are valued. They are also places where all people can go to learn and appreciate a culture that may not be their own, which is a critical part of the fabric of American-ness. Tom Lea often provided an important artistic space for cultural identities that were easily overlooked. Museums that honor the legacies of minorities work to accomplish the same feat. When I began this research in January of 2017, it became abundantly clear that African American museums are not easy to find. With the help of a generous Tom Lea Research Fellowship, I was able to travel to museums . . . to find out how these constructions of history relate to our national public memory."

Jade Williams is studying English and American literature with a minor in legal reasoning at the University of Texas at El Paso. She is hoping to pursue a Ph.D. in literature, but first will serve two and a half years on a Peace Corps tour in Swaziland. For a complete copy of Jade's article, "Negritude for Beginners: A Comparative Analysis of Public Memory and Coming of Age Narratives within the African American Literary Sphere," please contact the Tom Lea Institute.



JOSÉ MIGUEL CHÁVEZ LEYVA

My research into Tom Lea began my senior year of college, as UTEP's centennial neared and most everyone was looking back one hundred years at the founding of the university. My honors class in history, specifically, asked us to think about the 1910s and what had happened in that era, considering the larger movements of the nation at the time. I was interested in how the Progressive Movement had manifested itself in El Paso, and my research began from there."

"What did Tom Lea remember about the El Paso of his youth, during the era I was looking at? This was the question that led me to look through his archived papers at UT Austin's Harry Ransom Center." José is still researching Tom Lea's life "to get a sense of what he perceived in his childhood and adulthood about El Paso. He was a very romantic person . . . his writings and commentary reflect that . . . not always in a helpful way to a historian." José was "constantly struck by just how kind and genuine he was in his personal letters. Especially those writings dating back from his early career . . ."

José Miguel Chávez Leyva is a Ph.D. candidate in borderlands history at the University of Texas at El Paso. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in anthropology and a Master's Degree in history. José is currently revising an article entitled "Fiends, Addicts, and Ethnic: Racializing Drugs in America and on the Border." He hopes to work in the museum studies or public history fields after he completes his degree.

It's Auction Time!

For the adventurous types and those who like to do their holiday shopping online, check out our first every charity auction, an Auction of Experiences. You can Fly the Tom Lea Trail, explore the ruins of Paquimé, discover dinosaur tracks in El Paso, or simply sit back in relax in a Barcelona chair while admiring your custom-made Rocketbuster boots. To join in on the fun go to charityauctionstoday.com, click on the **BID ON ITEMS** link, and search for **Tom Lea**. Remember the auction closes on December 15 so place your bids soon.



YEAR-END CAMPAIGN

TODAY, we are launching our 2017 Year-End Campaign. Our goal is to raise an additional \$65,000 to support programs such as the curriculum, create new and exciting activities for the children in our communities, and promote exploration of the Tom Lea Trail. This year over 15,000 students in the El Paso and Ysleta Independent School Districts learned about Tom Lea and his work through our customized curricula packages. On June 12, Governor Greg Abbott signed legislation recognizing the Tom Lea Trail as the first artist-named heritage trail in Texas. Tom Lea Month 2017 provided over twenty programs that served over

10,000 individuals. With so many successes in 2017, we look forward to 2018 and need your support.

Are you willing to make a special year-end donation of \$50, \$100 or whatever you can afford to help us meet our goal and continue to do the work we love? If so, please complete and return the form below

We appreciate your continued generosity, your support of our educational programs and especially your friendship.

*With gratitude,
Lisa M. Pugh, Executive Director*



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