

HARLINGEN ART FORUM

Issue: April 2007

Tuesday, April 17, 2007

Mexico "Go-with-Jo" Trip planned

Applications are now being accepted for members to join a Mexican Trip in March 2008.

That's right, the Harlingen Art Forum is working with travel professional Jo Liston to create a tour scheduled for March 17 to March 22, 2008.

The trip will include the expert art and guide services of Armando Ortiz. Stops will include San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato, Dolores Hidalgo and Queretaro. A \$100 deposit will hold your seat, the deposit is refundable up to 30 days prior to departure.

Total cost of the trip will depend on the number of persons and will be:

with 30-35 persons – Single \$621, Double \$460pp, Triple \$429pp

with 36-39 persons – Single \$579, Double \$419pp, Triple \$399

with 40+ persons – Single \$555, Double \$395pp, Triple \$369pp

prices include Transportation for 6 days, Hotel Room and Taxes, Bi-lingual Guide, Baggage handling and

maid tips, Tours per the itinerary including trolley tour in San Miguel. Additional costs of meals, tips to guide and driver, personal items are the responsibility of the individual. Mexican Visa is required, currently free.

This trip will probably fill up quickly, so stop by Go With Jo at 900 Dixieland Road to reserve your place.

RIOFEST – HARLINGEN FAIR PARK April 20 - 22

Riofest is back and celebrating its 25th year anniversary! Come and join the international celebration of arts and culture featuring artists from across the United States and Mexico. With original artwork, lots of music and entertainment, there is fun for everyone. Don't forget there are plenty of activities for the kids, too!

Be sure and stop by and support your fellow HAF members by shopping in the HAF booth or at their individual booths.

Beachcombers Treasure Trove

The 48th Annual Beachcombers Fine Art Show is underway! Well, it's not yet actually making way, but the sails are being trimmed and the decks are getting swabbed and artists are lining up to be sure they are aboard.

If you've been thinking of having your own booth and setting up to sell your art get your sign up sheet completed and submitted. There are a limited number of spaces available and the deadline for applications is still a little ways off, but don't delay!

Don't forget that during the show HAF members who volunteer in the HAF Exhibit Booth, at the

front desk admissions table or anywhere they are needed will have the opportunity to win! Keep track of these clues and submit the most accurate Treasure Trove Manifest and that winning volunteer could be you!

While Carolina pirates congregated in Charles Town and Bath Town, Caribbean pirates hailed from Tortuga, Gulf of Mexico pirates went to what town in Mexico, not for its flying carpets, but for its free and easy morals and 1001 nights of thievery? The Habsburg Emperor of Mexico thought it such an important city he had Austrian troops garrisoned there. Today it no longer exists.

HARLINGEN ART FORUM MEETING IS MONDAY April 23rd 6 PM AT D'ARTE CENTRE

HAF Members Duane Beard and Ben Moran will be presenting an interactive workshop on Miniature Indoor Art Kites. If you haven't flown a kite in a while, or never thought of flying one indoors, then this should be an exciting meeting as you will not only get information, but will have the opportunity to create and fly right on the spot!

Don't forget to bring a few dollars for the raffle!

SPECIAL ITEMS OF INTEREST:

There are 122 members of the Harlingen Art Forum as of April 2007



Benjamin Varela discusses acrylic painting with Beverly Allies on Tuesday at the Upper Valley Art League in Mission.

Dotted Designs: Artist gives a spotted rendition to smooth forms

[Travis Whitehead](#)

[The Monitor](#), April 5, 2007 -

MISSION — The mysterious cat stares out of the canvas, an ancient Olmec emblem recast by the hand of **Benjamin Varela**.

In "The Kingsville Connection," the New York artist uses white dots on acrylic to create a menagerie of different objects: a cat, giraffes, people, buildings. He got the inspiration for the giraffes from a Salvador Dali painting; Diego Rivera influenced the inclusion of the sun and moon in the work. He also painted, in one of the cat's eyes, a portrait of Santa Barraza, an art professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville where Varela earned his bachelor's of fine arts degree. Varela's medium of choice is stippling, the technique of using small dots to simulate varying degrees of solidity or shading.

"The stippling was influenced by Chuck Close," he said during a recent classroom session at the Upper Valley Art League where he teaches every Tuesday.

Varela appears to have been strongly influenced by Close, who is a painter, photographer and printmaker. The Web site www.chuckclose.coe.uh.edu/ quotes him as saying, about the stippling technique, "Sometimes the little space between the dots were too white. I wanted to give it tone ... it is not an accident that one little spot is bright and one dull."

Varela, 52, says he "has been always wanting to do that."

Another one of his works featured a huge saxophone with a palm tree for a neck.

"If you look at it, every one is a stipple but a different lead value," said the 52-year-old artist, who has had his work displayed throughout the United States, including the Bronx Museum.

These days Varela teaches drawing and design at the University of Texas Pan-American in Edinburg, where he earned a master's in fine arts. His work can be seen at D'Arte Center in Harlingen and at UTPA in the office of the president. His class at the art league is from 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. each Tuesday. Varela, who has only been with the art league about six weeks, is a great new addition to the organization, said Maxilou Link, president.

"Ben is an unusual person, and he's gifted," she said. "I am just intrigued. I can't stop looking at his paintings, because you find something different. You can just look and look and look. You

never tire of what's in the painting. And it's easy on the eyes, at least it is for me. It's almost comforting."

Varela's students at the art league, she said, aren't studying the stipple technique; he's able to assist artists in a variety of techniques.

"They're doing their own thing, then he helps them with the drawing ideas and the color schemes and all the techniques," she said. "We're hoping that once he gets his publicity, that there'll be some people come in that would like to do his type of art work, stippling."



Gabe Hernandez/Valley Morning Star, Jo Fiegel has been teaching art for about 40 years and has been drawing since she was a little girl. Fiegel painted her first oil when she was in college at Texas A&I University in 1947 and sold her first painting

Time for painting, After lifetime of travel, woman focusing on art

[By ALLEN ESSEX](#)

[Valley Morning Star](#) March 27, 2007

After a lifetime of making her passion for art fit into a life of traveling around the world, wherever her husband's career in the oil industry took them, **Jo Fiegel** now has the chance to focus on painting.

"I've been teaching for about 30 or 40 years," the Aransas Pass native said.

"I've been drawing since I was a little girl," she said. "I painted my first in oil when I went away to college (Texas A&I University in 1947) when I was 17."

But marriage and the birth of her daughter interrupted college, she said.

"After I had a year in college, I married and my husband, Francis Fiegel, went to work in the oil industry," she said.

"He was in the construction end of the oil industry," she said of her husband.

She and her husband lived all over the United States and then in places like Africa, Brazil and Puerto Rico, Fiegel said. There were also stints in Venezuela and Colombia.

She would attend art classes anywhere she had the opportunity, she said.

She and her husband first visited Harlingen in 1977. "I've been teaching on and off ever since I came here," Fiegel said.

First just a place to winter, Harlingen developed into her home, she said.

"I moved to Harlingen in 1988 and I was already teaching (art) in the trailer parks," she said. "My husband died, and I just stayed here and I've been making my living with my art ever since."

She now teaches art at Golden Palms, with residents and visitors attending her classes at the facility's art room.

But, earlier, she held classes at Winter Texan trailer parks, she said.

"I did those paint-alongs like they do on the television," she said.

"You paint a picture and they follow you, but it just wore me out. It was terribly stressful. I did that for about six years."

Some of her students began in her classes in the trailer parks, she said. Two women have been taking art lessons from her for 16 years, she said. Her oldest student is in her 90s.

Many of her paintings are made from photos she has taken during her world travels, Fiegel said. One

of her favorites is an oil painting of a young girl she saw through a chicken wire fence in her back yard in Brazil.

The girl was riding a swing and her long hair would drag on the ground as she leaned way back, Fiegel said. She ran home for a camera, took a photo and later used it to create the painting.

One of the largest paintings she has done is the baptistery background at the downtown Church of Christ in Harlingen, which is an 8-foot by 8-foot mural of the Frio River, she said.

Her art is also shown and sold at the annual **Beachcombers** art show on South Padre Island, she said.

INTERESTING PLACES TO VISIT ON AND OFF THE WEB

<http://zonezero.com/exposiciones/fotografos/guzman/index.html>

Imaginative photographic montage and surrealist images. Not for the faint of bandwidth, flash-media of unique perspective. If you have dial-up, be prepared to wait, its worth it.

"Dear Monsieur Picasso" is an e-book currently available on the Harlingen Art Forum website for download. This book is by Frederick Baldwin and is basically a memoir of his intersection with Picasso in 1955. Very interesting reading and very full of rare photographs.

<http://www.taea.org/taea/gallery.cfm?option=10>

The Texas Art Education Association Gallery. Many fine works by Texas Art Educators

http://www.myharlingen.us/harlingen_museum.htm

Don't forget to visit IN PERSON, the Harlingen Arts and Heritage Museum. This month featuring works by Tony Schaub. On Friday May 4th HAF member Robin Cate facilitates "Spoken Word" a meeting of poets and writers, come listen to some great poems and poetry.

[Www.harlingenartforum.com](http://www.harlingenartforum.com)

Check the Harlingen Art Forum website in late April for a complete listing of upcoming events for May and June.