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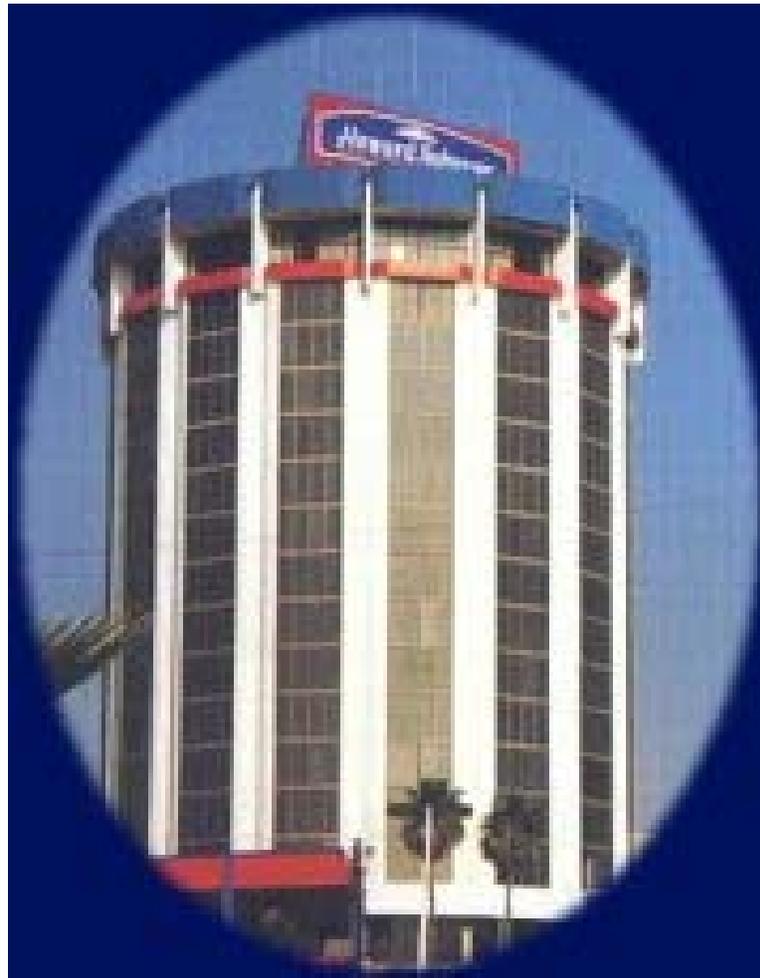
This is where it all began in 1985. The founders meeting was held in this hotel.

The 20th annual convention will be here also, dates are April 18th through 21st, 2004.

Details are inside on page 4.

Eloy has arranged an outstanding convention for us. Please get your reservations in early and plan on meeting all your old friends and compadres at our 20th.

RIO GRANDE PLAZA



There's a glorious place where the river bends

Rio Grande Plaza
1 South Main Ave
Laredo, TX 78040

NEWS FROM THE CASA!!!

Last issue had us just about to leave Green Valley to take Amy, Katherine, and baby Annika back to San Diego. Our trip back was uneventful and we spent three weeks over there with Amy and family. Just wanted to be sure she had her feet back on the ground before we left her on her own. It was hard to leave them.

We returned home end of June and began planning our summer trip. We traveled up to Orondo, WA to see our next door neighbors. They had sold their home there and we wanted to see it before they left. Another couple of friends from the neighborhood joined us there and we had a fun weekend. It was hot, though. Believe it was some cooler in Green Valley than it was there in WA. Oh well!!! We left Orondo and headed for Idaho - had a blow-out just out of Sandpoint, ID. Spent the next morning getting all new tires on the truck. Found some neat U. S. Forestry Parks in Idaho and western Montana. Played golf in Libby, MT. Headed from there to Red Lodge, MT - played another round of golf there - what a beautiful course. Made the trip over Bear Tooth Pass on Friday, Aug. 8th. Tom had been wanting to make that drive for years. It was a bit of a "white knuckle" drive but worth it. Scenery was gorgeous. We spent a couple of nights in West Yellowstone (no room in the Park as all campgrounds were full). Left on the 10th for home as Tom was having trouble breathing. Got home the 12th of Aug. to find our fridge in garage had died - what a smell. Emptied camper, Tom found someone to take the "dead" fridge and then he just sat. Ended up putting him in hospital that evening. He has some lung issues but at first they thought it was heart trouble. Spent the week there and then home for a about three weeks and then back again. He is on oxygen full time at the present. Hopefully he won't be on that forever - we'll see. Finally seems to be on the road to recovery. Needless to say our summer was cut short.

We made a trip to San Diego again. Tom wanted to get out of the house for a bit. Can't say I blame him. We went over the 26th of Sept. and were there to celebrate Amy's birthday with her. Got together with Bruce & Cathy, Dave & June and Pete and Janeth for a Mexican lunch. It was fun to visit with them. Looks like we'll be "house-sitting" for Pete and Janeth again this December. Oh, by the way, congratulations are in order for Bruce and Cathy who became new grandparents the end of August and also to Dave and June who are grandparents again with grandbaby #2 born in September. We returned home Oct. 3rd and have been busy with projects around here.

Guess that about wraps it up for the present. We hope everyone had a great summer. Gosh, where has this year gone? Will be looking forward to seeing everyone in Laredo next year.

Til then, Bye see ya!!!!

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¿ Que Paso ? is the Official Journal of
The Fraternal Order of Border Agents.

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HERE'S THE FAMOUS FOBA HIT LIST!!! These members have not paid 2003 dues!!

Bowen, Terry
Bradley, Jim and Nena
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Champion 111, A.V.
Everett, William B
Herber, Jane Anne
Keating, Thomas E
Medina, Roberto G and Stephanie
Nigh, Dorothy and Richard
O'Shea, Bill
Raffanello, Thomas W
Rains, Norman
Smith, Ronald E
Valigura, Lawrence A

**DUES ARE \$20.00 PER MEMBER, PLEASE
SUBMIT PRONTO!!!**

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: —Bruce Stock

Greetings Fellow FOBA Members:

Chapter Eight: How times fly when you are having fun or at least trying to. I don't know about anyone else but I kind of missed our Fall Board meeting, at least getting together with the FOBA friends. I found myself in downtown La Jolla this morning and walked by a shop selling tee shirts (nothing new in the California beach communities) but a couple of shirts caught my eye, they read "Old Guys Rule." Now for some of you who have not spent much time in California it's a term well recognized here, the "Rule" part anyhow.

Speaking of "Old Guys" the next annual "Pre-73 San Ysidro Customs" Christmas lunch is tentatively scheduled for December 18, 2003, which is a Thursday. We will furnish more details as soon as possible. For the past four or five years this event has been well attended at LaMaze in National City and we hope to do the same this year. The restaurant recently had a fire and has not been open for a couple of months but they are trying to open for the holidays, as I said more info to follow.

Now speaking of FIRE by the time you receive this issue of the Que Paso you will know the "Rest of the Story" concerning the Southern California Fire of 2003. I can tell you I've never seen anything like it. I was returning from a hunting trip in Canada sometime before midnight on Saturday, October 25th when the Air Canada pilot told everyone on the left side of the plane to look at the fire. At the time we were passing over Bakersfield on approach to Los Angeles. There were fire lines as far as I could see. After a plane change in LA, I watched the horizon on the flight into San Diego. The impact of the extent of the fire was not apparent until I got on the ground. The days following the start of the fire have been dramatic to say the least, and utterly heartbreaking for many others who lost so much. As many fires do, it would pick and choose as it raced around the northern part of San Diego County burning property, buildings and houses at will. Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Riverside and Ventura Counties suffered as well. The only saving grace, if you can call it that, was that the loss of life was kept to minimum due to the diligence and hard work of law enforcement and fire fighters.

From what we hear from Eloy Garcia et. al., the 20th Anniversary of FOBA scheduled for Laredo, Texas in April is awaiting your arrival. Unfortunately we have already had a few cancellations from those who were selected to a higher calling. Our hearts and prayers go out to those families who lost their loved ones. The Border will be a lonelier place without them. We know that the "Vaya Con Dios" column is a necessary part of the Que Paso, but I sure hate to read it.

Make your reservations early and pass the word. I need to mention that there is no truth in the rumor that the unofficial name of this meeting is "We are all going to Fritz's house."

Saludos and Viva Laredo!

Adios and God Bless America.
Bruce Stock



YOU MEMBERS ON PAGE TWO ON THE HIT LIST, COME ON AND SEND IN YOUR PAST DUES, WE DO NOT WANT TO LOSE YOU AND YOU SURELY DO NOT WANT TO QUIT FOBA. FOR ALL MEMBERS: IT IS NOT TOO EARLY TO SEND IN YOUR 2004 DUES, COME ON AND SEND THEM IN NOW!!

INFORMATION FOR THE 2004 CONVENTION

The dates will be April 18th thru 21st 2004 in Laredo, Texas.

Check-in is 3:00 p.m. on the 18th at the Rio Grande Plaza Hotel.

This hotel was the site of the original Hilton Hotel where FOBA was formed. The location of the hotel is on the river about three blocks west from the old US/Mexico Bridge. The physical address is One South Main Avenue, Laredo, Texas 78040. **The toll free number is 1-877-722-2411. The regular number is 956-722-2411 and the fax is 956-722-4578. Our Point of Contact is Ms. Elizabeth Luque.**

We have been given 60 Upgraded Rooms on a first come first serve basis. These rooms have a refrigerator, iron, hair-dryer, etc. at the discounted rate of about \$62.00 for single or double occupancy per day. Guests will also receive a \$3.00 breakfast coupon. Once the upgraded rooms run out, we will be assigned regular rooms at the same rate.

The Americas East Room will serve as our hospitality room, meeting room, paraphernalia room, etc. It is on the lower floor with easy access to the outdoors for breaths of fresh air from war stories.

The Board of Directors meeting and the General Membership meeting will be held at 8:30 a.m. on the 19th and 20th respectively. Following the meetings, several organized activities will be announced including walking across the bridge to check out the shops and lunch at the old Cadillac Bar.

On Monday (19th) at 4:00 p.m. we will be transported by bus to Russell's Ranch on the Mines Road for the Pachanga.

On Tuesday (20th) at 10:00 a.m. golfers will be transported to the Laredo Country Club for Tee-Time of 11:00 a.m. Billy Stephens will coordinate.

Our Formal Dinner will be at West Rio Room at the hotel beginning with a cash bar at 6:00 p.m. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. followed by some pressing of the flesh dancing. **Please indicate your choice of either Chicken Cordon Blue or Sirloin Steak Medium.**

Registration will be **\$75.00 per person.** For those interested in playing golf, the cost is **\$66.00 per person.**

Please make all room reservations directly with the hotel. The block of rooms are reserved for the Fraternal Order of Border Agents (FOBA).

Registration fees, golf fees, and dinner selection must be forwarded to Eloy Garcia, Jr. at 3561 Demi John Bend Rd., New Braunfels, Texas 78133. Make checks payable to Eloy Garcia, Jr.

There is considerable interest by local and state dignitaries to attend. We will ensure that any invasion by these folks is minimized.

Remember, no organized tournament fishing this year. The water turned over during the drought and re-stocked fingerlings are too small. We do have a couple of other stocked tanks at another ranch available if the fishing bug strikes or if someone would like to organize a tournament. Ditto for tennis. If several members are interested in playing tennis, the country club also has tennis courts. Please give me a call at 830-885-5772 or e-mail me at demi-john@gvtc.com.

Looking forward to seeing you all there next year!

Eloy

VAYA CON DIOS

STOWELL, Donald D. November 8th, 1927 — February 9th, 2003

Don passed away at his home in Everett, WA after a two year battle with lung cancer. He is survived by his wife Helen and daughter Cherie Misich.

Don entered on duty as a Special Agent with the U.S. Customs Service on July 9, 1962 at Seattle, WA. He served in Seattle, El Paso, McAllen and Dallas TX and then with the Drug Enforcement Agency in Dallas and San Antonio until his retirement on November 30, 1982.

He was a member of FOBA and will be remembered by all his friends and fellow co-workers. (Sorry this is late, we did not get the notice in time for the summer issue)

VALVERDE, Carlos Jaime. February 13th, 1959 — June 4th, 2003

Carlos was the son of FOBA members Carlos and Irene Valverde. He had lived in New York City for 20 years and was employed in sales and marketing for ELLEGI.

He is survived by his loving parents and sister, Alma and numerous aunts, uncle and cousins. Services and interment were held in McAllen, TX on June 9, 2003

HUGHES, WILLIAM F. (Bill) April 14, 1926 — October 13, 2003

TIMES RECORD NEWS — Wichita Falls, TX —October 16, 2003

William F. Hughes, 77, died Monday, Oct. 13, 2003, in Wichita Falls, Texas.

Bill was born April 14, 1926, in Boston, Ma. He was a Navy veteran of WWII and was recalled to active duty as an Air Force officer from 1962 to 1963 in the Office of Special Investigations. He graduated from Boston University School of Law in 1981. During his career with Customs, he held positions in the Office of Investigations of Special Agent in Charge at Savannah, Ga., and at San Antonio, Texas. From 1968 to 1970, he was assigned to the Office of the Commissioner of Customs in Washington, D.C., as an internal affairs specialist conducting investigations throughout the U.S. and abroad. In 1973, he was transferred to the Office of Operations as the District Director of Customs at Laredo, Texas, and in 1975, as the DD at El Paso, Texas. Bill closed his career with the Treasury Department as Senior Customs Representative to the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), a multi-agency federal drug task force. After retirement from government service, he taught business law in the College of Business Administration & Economics at New Mexico State University from 1982 to 1988. Bill lived in Ruidoso, N.M., from February 1991 until April 1997 and moved to Wichita Falls in 1997.



He is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, the former Wanda June Rogers of Wichita Falls; and three sons, William F. Hughes, Jr. of Rockledge, Fla., Michael Rogers Hughes and his wife Oxana of Houston, Texas, and John Brady Hughes of Austin, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Hospice of Wichita Falls.

(Continued on page 8)

NEWS OF AND LETTERS FROM THE MEMBERS

From: "Dennis Harlan" <hoot7@fone.net>

I worked with Carlos Green Valley and my condolences go to him and his family. The old BP/Customs/DEA, whatever they are calling it now, does not matter, It's always been the MEN.

Regards,
D.W. Hoot Harlan



Tom, here is \$40.00 for two years dues. Maybe I can get to next year's convention.

Thanks, Roy Stevenson



Tom, I don't remember how far behind I am, but enclosed is \$60.00 to get me though a couple of more years. We have been very busy building a house the last couple of years. We hope now that we are done we can again travel to the conventions. Hope all is going well with ya'll.

Ray and Nancy Ferguson



Hi, Tom and Joby, Sorry to be so late (dues). I just remembered when we got the Que Paso.

I hope Lee and Betty filled everyone in on ol "Johnnie". He is doing fine, "ornery" as ever. Do we know him any other way!!?? We are planning a trip to Italy for the

month of August. Johnnie has a new great grand daughter that was born in Rome, June 13th. "Joy" is her name. Miss all of you!!

Marge Molittieri



Hi Tom and Joby — Sorry the check is so tardy. All well with Alicia and I. Still busy with our walking club and all of its activities. Keep saying I am going to get a little less active, but just cannot say "no".

We are planning a trip to Arizona next January. Are you going to be home then, (sure will be) Please let us know and maybe we can get together for dinner. (ok Jack we will be here, give us a call).

Think of the old days often, only wish I could get south more often.

Take care, Jack and Alicia Maxcy.



From Cal White — e-mail 10/16/03

FYI cliff Mentzer is not doing well, in ICU and his daughter told me they were bringing him home shortly to take to hospice. Your prayers are needed.....

From Pat White,



Sorry to be so long in getting this sent but with three daughters in hospital and my mom with problems, I never, ever seem to have enough hours in my days. The girl friend of our youngest daughter we took in fifteen years ago had to have half of a foot amputated. It did not work so we are waiting for the report on both legs to be removed.

(Continued on next page)

(LETTERS) — (continued from page 6)

Cal is as busy as ever. Never lets any moss grow on his feet. I am sending a check for \$220.00 for the jewelry I sold at the conventions. I hoped it would be more but I did not want to make the price up to high as I felt everyone also needed a bargain. I may have more to send in November as one person is ordering more. Will see.

Take care and see you next spring, Pat
(Thanks, Pat you did a good job!!)

HELLO Tommy and Joby,

By now you should be convinced that I am a slacker as far as paying my bills. It's not so. I just can't remember when the dues are supposed to be paid. I will probably always need the reminder card. Here's \$40 for two years. That should save you a card until this time in 2005.

I hope you are both well. We have been fine but many close friends have fallen serious ill recently and I guess that has refocused us on our family and children. We were looking forward to visiting with you in Laughlin but I got pulled away to deal with friends in need.

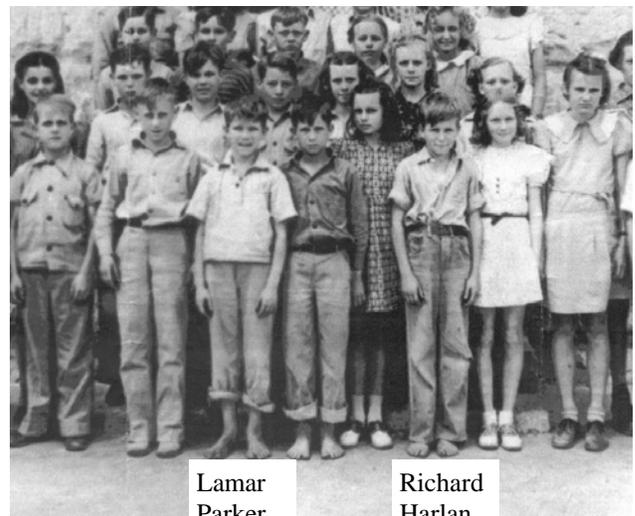
It's finally gotten warm here and has me thinking of going north this year. I thoroughly enjoyed stopping in at Underwood's party a few years back on one trip and will miss the party opportunity. We still might invite ourselves and drop in on Bill and Penny if we get in the area.

Our big deal this year is a trip to visit Rocky Heuschele in Croatia in early Fall followed by a major kitchen makeover.
Stay well. Fondly, Jerry Kane

Hey Tom: Well, I am back from Barcelona. As I mentioned a while back, I won the gold at the Texas Police Games at Midland in June in the 100 meter dash and the long jump. I got the silver in both events at Barcelona at the World Police & Fire Games. I am officially hanging up the track spikes and going on the FOBA tennis tour and I look forward to a fun tournament at Laredo! See yall there. Bill Everett

This letter and photo (Xeroxed, so not very clear) was sent in by Richard Harlan, member from Hewitt, TX

Just got the summer que paso and pleased to see Doris and Lamar Parker on cover. Enclosed is pix of Harper School, 4th grade in 1938 or 39. I doubt if we knew what the border was then. Harper did not even have a paved road going through it. This is the Lamar I remember. PS you can see we did not live on fast food, TV or video games nor wear funny looking tennis shoes!!!!



Lamar
Parker

Richard
Harlan

FOBA MEMBERS,

Thank you for your thoughts, prayers and condolences. It was of great comfort in our time of sorrow. Your kindness is deeply appreciated and thank all of you who remember us.

Sincerely, Carlos and Irene Valverde



Cathy and Bruce,

We received the beautiful plaque last night from Rick May. He said his Mother brought it back from the Convention. He has been visiting them for a month and returned last weekend with it.

Dick and I want to thank both of you and everyone for remembering us with such kind words. This, being from our FOBA group, means a lot to us.

Sincerely,

Amy and Dick Vasquez

(At the Laughlin convention, President Stock awarded Dick and Amy with a FOBA plaque of appreciation for their outstanding support of FOBA for the last several years.)



VAYA CON DIOS - *(Continued from page 5)*

HENRY GIORDANO - By Wolfgang Saxon - NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

Head of Treasury narcotics bureau in '60s; 89

Henry L. Giordano, a pharmacist who went undercover as a federal drug agent and eventually surfaced to take charge of the Treasury Department's narcotics bureau in the 1960s, died Sept. 19 in Olney, Md. He was 89 and lived in Silver Spring, Md.

President Kennedy chose Mr. Giordano as his commissioner of narcotics after he made his mark in one of law enforcement's most hazardous fields. He served as commissioner from 1962 to 1969, a period when drug addiction was starting to be perceived as a threatening national disease.

Mr. Giordano spent 28 years in government service, most of it in the Treasury Department. When he took over the narcotics bureau, it had already seen nine agents killed in action and many others wounded. He succeeded Harry J. Anslinger, who had headed the bureau for 32 years.

Henry Luke Giordano was born in San Francisco. He received a pharmacist's degree in 1934 at the University of California and worked as a pharmacist in San Francisco until he joined the narcotics bureau as a junior agent in 1941. Except for three years with the Coast Guard during World War II, he remained undercover, working in Seattle, Kansas City and Minneapolis.

Mr. Giordano is survived by his wife of 64 years, Elaine Watson Giordano; daughters, Marjorie Vincent



MENTZER, Clifton — June 23, 1928 — October 21, 2003

Clifton Lee Mentzer of Houston passed away quietly on Tuesday, October 21, 2003. Born in Savah, Indiana on June 23, 1928 to Basil and Virginia Mentzer, Clifton married Mary Lou Whatley in McRae, Georgia on August 15, 1954. Clifton served in the United States Air Force from 1946 to 1952. He graduated from Michigan State University in 1955. He worked with the U. S. Customs Service for 23 years, and was a retired Regional Director of Investigation. He loved traveling, fishing, playing poker, reading, and spending time with friends and family. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou Mentzer; three daughters, Virginia Ann Belval, Marilyn Lou Mentzer, and Catherine Jean Mentzer; a son-in-law, Thomas Kevin Belval; and two grandchildren, Jeffrey Clifton Belval and Leah Marie Belval. He is also survived by a brother, John E. Mentzer, and a sister, A. Catherine Downs.

A memorial service will be held at 10:00 a.m. Saturday, October 25, at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church, 12955 Memorial Drive, Houston.

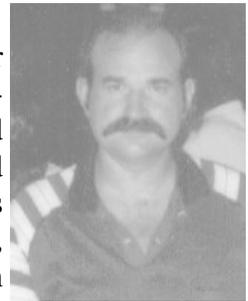
In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Memorial Drive United Methodist Church or a charity of the giver's choice. Published in the Houston Chronicle on 10/24/2003.

(MENTZER—Continued on next page)



RAMIREZ, Armando — February 19, 1946 — October 24, 2003

Armando Ramirez met our eternal Father at the age of 57 years, on Friday, October 24, 2003. He was born in Laredo, TX on February 19, 1946. He graduated from Martin High School in Laredo, TX in 1965 where he excelled in basketball. He attended St. Mary's University on a basketball scholarship and graduated in 1969. He coached basketball at Longfellow Jr. High School in San Antonio, TX. Armando began his distinguished career as a law enforcement officer with the Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. Over a 30-year career he served with distinction throughout the United States and overseas in San Antonio, McAllen, Houston, Brownsville, TX, New Orleans, LA, Panama - Central America and Las Vegas, NV. He retired in January 1999, in San Antonio, TX. Armando was preceded in death by his parents, Rodolfo and Flora Ramirez. He is survived by his loving wife, Olga Nella Garza de Ramirez; three daughters, Ana Laura (Mark) Hessbrook, Diana Alicia (Roland) Teneyuca from San Antonio, TX, and Rosa Imelda (Ruben) Vega from Brownsville, TX. He is also survived by his brother, Rodolfo (Minnie) Ramirez, Jr. from Annapolis, MD; two sisters, Graciela Duncan from Ft. Lauderdale, FL and Alicia Ramirez from San Antonio, TX. He is also survived by his seven grandchildren, Alejandra and Christina Vega, Miranda, Diego and Nicolas Hessbrook, Roland John and Gabriella Teneyuca. He is also survived by numerous nieces and nephews. Sleep with the angels, Mando. We love you like the whole sky. Love, your family. SERVICES The family will receive Visitors on Sunday, October 26, 2003 from 5:00 - 7:00 P.M. prior to a Rosary which will begin at 7:00 P.M. at Mission Park Funeral Chapels North. Funeral Procession will depart the funeral home on Monday, October 27, 2003 at 9:30 A.M. for a 10:00 A.M. Funeral Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, 4201 DeZavala in San Antonio, TX with Msgr. James Henke as celebrant. Interment will follow Services in Mission Burial Park North. Mission Park Funeral Chapels North.. 10/26/2003 San Antonio Paper



Eulogy for "Mando" by Eloy Garcia

I was asked by Armando's family to say a few words to commemorate the life of a loved father, grandfather, relative and dear friend.

(See RAMIREZ page 11)

Tribute to Cliff Mentzer by Dave Ellis

Let me say a few words about the Cliff Mentzer I knew from his first month on probation as a Customs Agent until a couple of years ago when his health prevented attendance at our FOBA meetings, few of which he had ever previously missed. You must understand Cliff's background to understand him.

Mentzer was a country boy from the mid-west who went to Michigan State University which at the time had the best Police Science and Police Administration program in the country.

An All-American football hero named Fred Rody had just returned for his senior year in the PS & PA program after having spent one year as a police officer in a small Michigan town. Six months into this on-the-job training program the Police Chief died and Rody was appointed Chief for the remaining six months. He was a hero to those in the PS & PA program including Mentzer and they became friends.. While still in the University Rody married to Lou. Cliff was married to Mary Lou. Despite the difference in seniority they became life-long personal friends as did their wives.

Before he graduated Rody had taken the new Civil Service Exam for Treasury Agent and was selected off the Register for the Laredo CAC office. Rody was a success in Laredo and liked the work.. He told the Head of the PS & PA program at Michigan State about Customs and Cliff and others then took the next Exam when eligible.

Because of Rody's success in Laredo, Customs took four more PS & PA grads from around the Country - including Mentzer - as a Bureau engineered experiment. A Personnel type (who had never been an Agent) designed their test program. They were put in the charge of a good New York water-front experienced Agent and then sent to the Mexican Border by way of Houston. They showed up in Black Ford sedans with long whip antennas. We got the cars repainted and police type antennas installed. They then went to the Border where they all did a creditable job which then opened the doors for many more future Customs Agents - despite being educated.

Mentzer subsequently served in Agent and Supervisory positions including Boston, Chicago, Washington and Houston and he always tried to position himself between those who were risk takers (and made the headline cases but scared some of the Washington leadership) and those who went by the book (and never scared the Washington leadership but always accomplished what the law required to protect the revenue.). I do not recall anyone ever saying anything bad about Cliff Mentzer, personally or otherwise.

After we were all retired Rody, Mentzer and I kept in touch and once Cliff and I drove up to Montana and spent a week fishing in Rody's hideaway located on a trout stream between two National forests. I was amazed at the risks Cliff took wading all day after trout in the fast water. Finally concluded that on his own time he was as reckless as any other Agent but just didn't make as much noise in the process..

We also did a lot of talking about Agents we had known and their investigative talents. Cliff had a good handle on those with whom he had worked, but was more tolerant in his appraisals than Fred and I. He always saw and remembered the good. Never said anything about the bad.

There was no pretense in him. He never tried to conceal his farm boy origins and attitudes. What you saw and heard was what he was. An Honest, Truthful, Family Man and a Good worker.

Those who make it "Up There" will find Cliff Mentzer waiting.



Charles and Lorena Cameron celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary with friends and family in Tucson. They were married on September 26, 1943 in San Diego, California and have lived in Tucson for 40 years. Mr. Cameron is retired from the U.S. Customs Agency and Mrs. Cameron is a homemaker. They have two daughters, Joan Handgis of Phoenix and Ann Leyland of Tucson. The Camerons have one granddaughter, Rhonda Hall; and four great-Granddaughters, Carley, Casey, Molly and Chelsi Hall of Jamul, California.

Congratulations to Charlie and Rena from the FOBA members



(Ramirez – continued from page 9)

As we offer our deepest condolences to Armando's wife Olga, his daughters Ana Laura, Diana, Rosa and his entire family let us not forget the Armando that has brought us all together on this day.

Armando was a man that dedicated thirty years of service to his country and fought on the front lines to keep drugs from reaching our children. Armando was a friend and advisor to his family and colleagues alike. Armando brought a smile to all who knew him with his sense of humor especially in trying times. Armando was a man that was respected by his family, peers and foes. Armando would want us to celebrate the good and the challenged times we had together and remember him as always being there in the background.

During his tenure in the DEA, Armando served in San Antonio, McAllen, Houston, Brownsville, New Orleans, Panama City, Panama, and Las Vegas. "Mando" as we fellow agents called him, learned of many of his exploits through the FTS intelligence hotline. However I can say that I personally was aware of one incident that was evolving when I first came on duty with BNDD. Having previously been a pilot in the army, I was asked to man the radios during some difficult communication linkage with an on-going operation in China, Mexico where a firefight ensued and Armando and Benny Pierce were in the thick of it. Luckily, the good guys prevailed. Unknowingly, I was indirectly introduced to the type of great agents that serve DEA. Armando was a great agent.

I know from reading the e-mails that many of you can attest to many situations both serious and comical that involved Armando. These experiences attest to the action type of person Armando was. He did not let the world pass him by.

I will read you a poem sent to me by Dick Bly that I think best describes Armando's life.

GOOD TIMBER

The tree that never had to fight
 For sun and sky and air and light
 But stood out in the open plain
 And always got its share of rain
 Never became a forest king
 But lived and died a scrubby thing.
 The man who never had to toil
 To gain and farm his patch of soil,
 Who never had to win his share
 Of sun and sky and light and air,
 Never became a manly man
 But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does grow with ease
 The stronger wind, the stronger trees
 The further sky, the greater length
 The more the storm, the more the strength
 By sun and cold, by rain and snow,
 In trees and men good timber grow.
 Where thickest lies the forest growth
 We find the patriarchs of both
 And they hold counsel with the stars
 Whose broken branches show the scars
 Of many winds and much of strife.
 This is the common law of life.

(Letter to) Olga,
 I am so sorry to hear about Armando. I just cannot believe it. I am so happy that I got to see both of you at the FOBA convention at Padre Island. He was a great boss in Brownsville and then later as you joined on, you both made such a difference to DEA. I cannot express my full feelings except that I want you and the children to know how much I admired both of you.
 Yours truly,
 Amy Vasquez

"Following the Path," by making her own, "that leads to the root of her existence," is the Nahuatl (na-wat-l) definition for Ohtli (ot-lee) and the premise of the award bestowed upon Mayor Betty Flores Monday night, during the Fiestas Patrias organized by the Consulate of Mexico. "Mayor Betty Flores was recognized for a lifetime of dedication, commitment and work in favor of the Mexican-American community," stated Blasita J. Lopez, in a press release sent Monday.

"What I have accomplished during my life has been done with no other intention than to serve my community and give back what has been given to me," said Mayor Betty Flores. "I truly feel blessed by this unique and wonderful honor. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Mexican government for considering me to receive the honor. I would also like to thank my family and friends for always supporting my every endeavor," she added.

Mexican Consul Daniel Hernandez Joseph explained that the lifelong Laredoan is being given the Ohtli award, "not because she is the mayor, but because she has made contributions to the Mexican and Mexican American population her entire life."

"She has forged new roads for the people of her community and its sister city in Mexico by promoting such causes as immigration, international trade and humanitarian issues before many others step forward to address them," he added.

The Ohtli (otl-lee) recognition was presented on Monday, at La Posada Hotel in the Phillip V Room, during the Mexican Consulate's independence day celebration. "Mayor Flores was surrounded by her family and dedicated members of the City's staff," said Lopez.

According to the Mexican Consulate in Laredo, the word ohtli (ot-lee) means the path that leads you to the roots of your existence. Taking this Nahuatl meaning the Program for the Mexican Communities Abroad of Mexico's Foreign Affairs Ministry reportedly established the recognition.

According to reports, the award is given to those Mexican men and women that have dedicated most of their lives and professional activities to "opening roads" for Mexicans abroad. Lopez added that the recognition also indicates that those Mexicans living in the U.S., as well as those living abroad, realize and appreciate the courage and value of the activities of Mexican-Americans on behalf of their compatriots.



An elder American absent mindedly arrived at French customs at Paris airport and fumbled for his passport. "You have been to France before Monsieur?", the customs officer asked sarcastically. The ancient Yank admitted that he had been to France before. "Then you should know enough to have your passport ready for inspection", snapped the irate official. The American said that the last time he came to France he did not have to show his passport. "Impossible, old man. You Americans always have to show your passports on arrival in France." The old American gave the Frenchman a long hard look. "I assure you, young man, that when I came ashore on Omaha Beach in Normandy on D Day in 1944, there was no #@%^&(% Frenchman on the beach anywhere much less asking to see my passport!



Sometimes we just need to remember what the 12 Rules of Life really are:

1. Never give yourself a haircut after three margaritas.
2. You need only two tools: WD-40 and duct tape. If it doesn't move and it should, use WD-40. If it moves and shouldn't, use the tape.
3. The five most essential words for a healthy, vital relationship are "I apologize" and "you are right."
4. Everyone seems normal until you get to know them. (love this one!)
5. Never pass up an opportunity to pee.
6. If he/she says that you are too good for him/her - believe them.
7. Learn to pick your battles; ask yourself, "Will this matter one year from now? How about one month? One week? One day?"
8. When you make a mistake, make amends immediately. It's easier to eat crow while it's still warm.
9. If you woke up breathing, congratulations! You have another chance!
10. Living well really is the best revenge. Being miserable because of a bad or former relationship just might mean that the other person was right about you.
11. Work is good, but it's not that important. Money is nice, but you can't take it with you. Statistics show most people don't live to spend all they saved; some die even before they retire. Anything we have isn't really ours; it was given to us by God; He is just letting us borrow it while we're here...even our kids. So enjoy it while you have it.
12. **And finally.. Be really good to your family and/or friends. You never know when you are going to need them to empty your bedpan.**



QUALIFICATIONS FOR FOBA MEMBERSHIP

REGULAR: A REGULAR Member shall have the right to one vote and shall have the right to hold office. To be eligible to be a Regular Member, a person shall:

- (a) Have been an 1811 Agent in a Federal investigative service and assigned to and living on the Mexican Border for a period of at least three years; or
- (b) Have been an 1811 Agent in a Federal investigative service for a period of at least three years and currently assigned to a post of duty on the Mexican Border in an 1811 position; or
- (c) Have been a Federal law enforcement officer assigned to, and living on the Mexican Border for a period of at least three years, and currently serving in an 1811 Agent position; or
- (d) Have had, or currently has, direct supervisory responsibility for the US/Mexico Border law enforcement activities of the 1811 Agents of a Federal investigative service.

ASSOCIATE: To be eligible to be an ASSOCIATE Member, a person shall:

- (a) Have been an 1811 Agent in Federal service or have been in a comparable position in the State or Local employment sector and on many occasions conducted criminal investigations with a federal law enforcement office on the U.S./Mexico Border; or
- (b) Be the spouse of a Regular Member in good standing;1 or
- (c) Be the surviving spouse of a deceased Federal criminal investigator who met the eligibility requirements for Regular Membership.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP TYPE: Regular _____ Associate _____

NAME: _____, _____, _____
(last) (first) (middle)

SPOUSE'S FIRST NAME: _____ MEMBER? Yes ___ No ___

RESIDENCE ADDRESS: _____
_____, _____
(city) (state) (zip)

DATE OF BIRTH: ___/___/___ SSN: ___-___-___

PHONE: Home (___) ___-___ Business (___) ___-___ Fax (___) ___-___ E-mail _____

BUSINESS TITLE: _____

Periods of service, posts of duty and GS-1811 positions held for **Regular** Membership, or **qualifying** positions in which served for **Associate** Membership: **BE EXPLICIT OR APPLICATION WILL BE RETURNED.**

Applicant authorizes the Fraternal Order of Border Agents, Inc. to conduct such inquiries as it deems necessary to determine Membership eligibility.

Signature Date

Referred by: _____

Please send completed application with check for \$40.00 (includes \$20.00 initiation fee and \$20.00 annual dues.(Effective January 2003) Enclose an additional \$20.00 if you wish your spouse to become an Associate Member.

Mail completed application and your check payable to FOBA to:
FOBA, 2299 S. Via Massari, Green Valley, AZ. 85614
E-mail. Foba@cox.net

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:

Approved: _____ Disapproved: _____ Date: _____
Record entered: ___/___/___ Membership package sent: ___/___/___

Chairman, Membership Committee

FOBA ADDRESS!!!
2299 S. VIA MASSARI
GREEN VALLEY, AZ 85614
PHONE **520 648 5562**
New E-Mail is (**foba@cox.net**)

SEND IN YOUR 2003 DUES (\$20.00) NOW!!

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