

OPINION

Laredo Morning Times

A HEARST NEWSPAPER

William B. Green
PUBLISHER

Adriana Devally
GENERAL MANAGER

Zach Davis
MANAGING EDITOR

CUIDANDO LO NUESTRO

Honoring local leaders on Women's Day

In honor of International Women's Day, I would like to give a shout out to some amazing leaders. Our community is full of some remarkable women leaders. I have had the privilege of meeting and working with some great ladies. First of all, my current officers: Nadia De Leon (UW President), Erica B. Garcia (Past President), Claudia Camano Rodriguez (Treasurer), Vanessa Frausto (Secretary), and Carolyn M. Schmies († Our 2025 President that passed away in December).

When I first started with United Way, I was blessed to work with Peggy J. Newman (†), Sylvia Bruni, Nora Munoz Leal, Mary Trevino, Graciela Ramirez (†), Candy Hein, Alicia Valdez, Veronica Castillon, Mine Barrera (†), Libby Rhodes, Audrey Plotkin, and Adriana Guardiola (†). Through the years, some other incredible board members have included Natalie Hernandez, Lucy Hastings, Rosie Ramirez, Anna Isabel Alvarez, Fay Mainhart (†), Mayra Ramirez, Roberta Ramirez Trevino, Margarita Flores, Becky

Azios, Patricia Hinojosa, Monica Calles, Gracie Medina, Linda Teniente, Ysela Arechiga, Mary Ellen Smyth and so many more.

With our partner agencies, I've work with legends like Barbara A. Kazen (†), Ruthe B. Cowl (†), Sister Maria Teresa Grajeda, Sister Yolanda, Sister Isidra, Sister Vicky, Sister Rose Mary Welsh, Brenda Tisdale, Hilda Barron, Isabel Mendez, Roxana Guerra, Sara Buentello, Lillian Dickenson (†), Rebecca Solloa, Alma Boubel, Nora Murillo, Sandra Salinas, Claudia Guzman, Sandra Solis, Luisa Ortiz, Rosaura Rodriguez (†), Zeina Ramos, Gloria Vasquez, Dr. Severita Sanchez, Monica Bautista, Angie Osterman, Ali Manrique, Vernet Carranza (†), Maria Elena Montemayor, Patricia Argais, Blanca Villarreal, Victoria Rosas, etc.....

The list is of super-heroes is endless and I'm sure I am leaving lots of astonishing women out (my apologies). There are so many remarkable women in our community. Actually, when I think of International Women's Day, I think of Dalia F.

Martinez. A few years ago, she coordinated an event at IBC for International Women. I fondly remember the endearing way Mr. Nixon described her when she was our United Way president, "Ninety-nine bounds of Dynamite!" She is dedicated, organized, motivated and extremely professional. I would be remiss if I didn't mention Ms. Pamela Juarez. She is another marvelous lady. She is always thinking outside the box and how you can make things better. Beside her astounding work in field of education, she is a remarkable lady of faith.

In this world there are so many women that shine. There are also many who humbly work in the background never seeking recognition. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge two of my co-workers: Norma Lozano and Elizabeth Luna. They have worked with me for more than 20 years. Thank you for your love and service to the people of our community.

Carol Sherwood is another inspiring lady. She has been the Executive Director of Habitat

for Humanity of Laredo-Webb County for many years. It is a non-profit organization that seeks to put God's Love into action. They bring together people to build homes, communities and hope. Their vision, "A world where everyone has a simple, decent, and affordable place to live."

Last week, Habitat Laredo announced their new Women Build dates on their website. This project, "gives women the opportunity to be a part of something meaningful. It builds homes, empowers women and strengthens our community." Companies are encouraged to register as a group. The photo gallery on their website shows women from Falcon Bank and Doctors Hospital. They also have groups from State Farm and AEP Texas that have lent a hand.

If you are interested in volunteering but are worried that you have no construction experience...DO NO WORRY...IT IS NOT A PROBLEM! They provide training. You just need to have the willingness to help your community and make a difference.

Training courses are available that help increase job opportunities. You can learn how to improve your home, information on mortgage lending, construction trade, outreach, retail and there are even internship opportunities. Habitat Laredo recently announced that the Sally Gonzalez Internship in Non-profit leadership was awarded to Anel Espinoza.

There are many ways to help. If you're not able to volunteer, you can always pick up your golf clubs and join in their "GOLFING FOR ROOFS" event scheduled for March 28 at the Casa Blanca Golf Course. Registration starts at 7 a.m. and the Shotgun starts at 8 a.m. It is a three-person scramble handicapped. The fee is \$150 per player, and it includes breakfast, lunch and two beverage tickets. Prizes to be awarded are 1st Place Team \$2,400, 2nd Place Team \$1,650 and 3rd Place Team \$1,350. Check out their website for the different sponsorship opportunities for this event: www.habitatlaredo.org/save-the-date

My thanks to Carol, Cindy Liendo and all the great ladies at Habitat for Humanity. For more information on how to volunteer email volunteermanager@habitatlaredo.org or call 956.724.3227.

Mark your calendars LAREDO THEATER GUILD: JASON ROBERT BROWN'S THE LAST FIVE YEARS

The Laredo Theater Guild proudly presents this romantic musical at the LC Shoebox Theater. It opened on March 12 and runs through March 22. For more information on tickets and times visit their website at www.laredotheaterguild.org

MILEONE: POT OF GOLD WHERE CONNECTIONS GROW

Your invited to join us on Thursday at 1312 Houston St. There will be food, music, door prizes and powerful connections. Event starts at 6:30 p.m. For more information email [mvillarreal@mileone.com](mailto:mvil-larreal@mileone.com)

NEIGHBOR WORKS LAREDO: 15TH ANNIVERSARY HOME FAIR & EXPO
Saturday from noon to
Cuidando continues on A7

YOUR OPINION

UISD Wind Symphony's amazing concert

Congratulations to members of the UISD Wind Symphony for performing an amazing 9th Annual Veterans Concert at the Laredo College Guadalupe and Lilia Martinez Fine Arts Center Theater on Feb. 1.

The magnificent musicianship was at full display as the UISD Wind Symphony, consisting of UISD, LISD, VMT, TAMIU, Laredo College, retired local and out-of-town music educators, and community members, offered a stunning array of musical selections that included "Farandole" from "L'Arlesienne", "Second Suite for Band", "Dances with Wolves", and several others.

Rene Guzman, Retired

Band Director, masterfully conducted John Williams' NBC theme "The Mission". In addition, clarinetist Alberto Martinez and vocalist Irma I. Reyes executed exquisite renditions of Astor Piazzola's "Oblivion" and Ennio Morricone's "Once Upon a Time in America", respectively.

The public and Veterans in attendance enthusiastically joined in when their Service song was played in "Armed Forces Medley". Furthermore, the audience cheered and waved hundreds of flags as the Wind Symphony played one of the greatest marches ever written by John Philip Sousa, "The Stars and Stripes Forever". "God Bless America"

was done as an encore, concluding the program.

Eventful public presentations like these require the assistance of countless people. Abundant gratitude goes to Dr. Julie Bazan, AHEC Executive Director; Hazel Medellin and Vicky Morales, AHEC Academic Programs Coordinators; and the entire AHEC family for their staunch support and for their assistance in preparation for this concert.

Much appreciation to Dr. Minita Ramirez, Laredo College President, for her warm welcoming remarks and for allowing the orchestra to share their music and their talent with our Laredo community.

Special thanks to Lare-

do College personnel Kristina L. Valenciano, Hector Mares, Brenda Wolfe, Vicky Ramos, Alex Soto, and all the LC courtesy service crew for their assistance, and to Professor Eddie Vandewalker for his exceptional piano playing.

The Wind Symphony acknowledges Ruben Villarreal, LC's Public Information Officer/ Television and Podcast Productions Director, for his outstanding contribution as Master of Ceremonies. As always, his warm disposition and captivating personality kept the audience engaged throughout the evening.

This incredibly successful event would not be possible without the

guidance and support of Gerardo S. Rodriguez, UISD Fine Arts Director, and the Wind Symphony committee members Hiram Gonzales, Tomas Aguilar Jr., Rosario de Leon, Joe Lopez, and Chris Moore.

Thank you to Luis Rodriguez — HEB Plus; Sara Castellano — HEB Saunders; Erika Rodriguez — HEB Mercado; Ricardo and Alma Cavazos — RC Food Service and Produce; Vicente Gonzalez — Los Pasteles Bakery; Araceli Mata — Sam's Club; Bill Green — LMT Publisher; Women's City Club — Ana Laura Guajardo and Nancy de Anda; Sandra Saucedo — Wal-Mart Supercenter Clark Blvd.; Kelly Cruz — Adams Printing; Ike

Epstein — Dr. Ike's; Gilda Juarez — Casa Juarez; and Alejandra Rodriguez, pianist.

Last, but certainly not least, thank you to the U.S. Border Patrol and Laredo Police Department Combined Honor Guard, Border Patrol agent Joshua Steel for his wonderful singing of the National Anthem, Commander Doug M. Alford for reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and to U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar for presenting plaques to our three honored veterans: Most Reverend James A. Tamayo, Randy Villanueva, and Guadalupe Alvarez.

Carlos Gil is the Wind Symphony Conductor and a USAF Veteran.

GUEST OPINION

Trade pact with Canada, Mexico must stay

By Dennis Nixon,
Gerald Schwebel

FOR THE EXPRESS-NEWS

The United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement faces its first major review this year, a process that will determine whether the agreement is extended or allowed to expire.

The USMCA and its predecessor, the North American Free Trade Agreement, have established the world's largest trading bloc.

If the three countries



Nixon



Schwebel

do not agree to extend the USMCA during the review, the agreement will end in 2036 or could be allowed to expire earlier.

North America faces a critical moment.

Failing to update and

extend the USMCA for another six years will diminish our global competitiveness and set back the future prosperity of all three countries.

Delaying the 2026 extension would trigger annual reviews, prolong uncertainty and slow growth. Pursuing new bilateral agreements would weaken collective standards and reduce private sector input.

Since 2020, the USMCA has increased regional trade by 37% and foreign direct investment by

16%. Trade with Canada and Mexico supports more than 12 million U.S. jobs and has tripled service-sector growth. Nearly 40% of U.S. export growth now comes from these two partners, reducing reliance on China and strengthening regional supply chains.

The USMCA is the foundation for sustaining an economic bloc that will rival other trade alliances.

To protect, update and strengthen the USMCA, we must address nontariff barriers, establish common standards and confront unfair trade practices that undermine regional competitiveness.

About 18,500 trucks cross each day through the Port of Laredo, which has become North America's largest port by trade value. While the expedited approval process for international bridge permits has improved crossings, correcting ineffi-

cient inspection processes, and improving and expanding highway systems are necessary to keep this supply chain efficient.

Modernization of our border crossings is a much more effective use of taxpayer dollars than building walls.

National security, one of the Trump administration's top priorities, must be central to reducing these barriers under USMCA reform. Inspections are not merely procedural. They are about stopping criminal activity.

Much of this activity comes from Mexico, which lacks the personnel, infrastructure and technology to stop human smuggling and drug trafficking.

Addressing these disruptors requires aligning customs processes across North America through expanding preclearance programs, joint inspec-

tions and harmonizing documentation.

To fund these improvements, we should reinvest duties and inspection fees that are already collected by U.S. Customs and Border Protection to strengthen border enforcement, improve infrastructure and address labor shortages in North America. A strong regional workforce depends on coordinated immigration policies.

North American trade depends on having adequate visa pathways for workers who support cross-border operations. As supply chains become more integrated, trade policy must be paired with workforce mobility that allows skilled workers to move where they are needed to keep goods and services flowing.

Key to improving these policies is establishing clear communication channels, and businesses
Trade continues on A7

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Laredo Morning Times does not publish anonymous letters.

Letters must include the writer's first and last names as well as a phone number to verify identity. The phone number is not published; it is used solely to verify identity and to clarify content, if necessary.

When responding to another's letter, writers should focus on the topic and not on the original writer themselves. No name-calling or gratuitous abuse is allowed. Letters are edited for style, grammar, length and civility. Also, letters longer than 1,000 words will not be accepted.

Please send letters to editorial@lmtonline.com attached in a word document or in the email itself. If you cannot send an email, mail to Letters to the Editor, 5711 McPherson Rd Suite 203A, Laredo, TX 78041.