



Wear your mask. Wash your hands. Ain't hard.

AHS 63 Newsletter ~ November 2020

Howling at the Blue Moon Edition

Northern Outpost, Halloween. We came up here three years ago because we by-god wanted snow for Christmas. We were not paying attention that first Christmas, however, and had dawdled in the lounge at the Portland jetport (smile) for an hour, contemplating our new life after seeing the daughter off on the noon plane. Sweet life-in-review moments, but near disastrous. It had come a blizzard out of nowhere, and snow was up to the bottom of the car door before we could figure out the exit to the parking lot. No one else was around. They had paid attention. We aimed for the space between light poles with the courage of a pioneer woman steering a conestoga between trees—albeit fortified with couple of hot toddies and tacks on the tires. How hard could it be? Harrowing high adventure. We paid better attention after that. Turns out, weather is always high adventure here.

Which is why this week's threat of flakes 24 hours before Halloween leaped up on our radar—another out-of-nowhere thing—and the plan for awesome spray chalk on the street to entertain and maintain social distance in the Halloween parade was flat not gonna work. But that wasn't why they had to call it off. Mainers are canny creatures and have figured out masks and social distancing. Trick'r'treat in the first snow of the season would just add fun. No problem there. But, the dark truth was—we found out rather late—there was gonna be about three times the normal crowd, since all of the *other* small towns had called off *their* parades and *their* kids were all coming *here*. Three hundred goblins on the street in a pandemic surge? Chief Larry was having none of it. Which is how, in a matter of hours, Plan B was developed and implemented

with the efficiency born of always traveling about three feet ahead of an avalanche. So, sure nuff, three hundred cars came crawling through the circular drive at the rec center where all of us zealously sanitized and masked ghouls were lined up with two tons of treats to put in bags and plastic pumpkins held out of windows by little goblins. We were totally amazed at how well it came off. And the costumes. Mind bending. Especially the irrepressible little 5-year-old who announced—before we could say boo—what-are-you—that she was a taco. Taco? *Who knows from tacos up here? Isn't this the generation raised on superpowers? What the sam hill special power would a taco have?*

And then we snapped out of it. *Hell. Every damn Texan knows that is a stupid question.*

The remarkable Franklin Mendez



Frank will hate that title. He's a humble guy. But he has a huge talent and an outsized spirit for doing things from the heart. So the title stays.

It can be a trip to find Frank in the picture above—sort of a where's waldo experience—surrounded by his life-size portraits of Austin barrio veterans whose own stories are larger than life. Frank's twenty portraits of these veterans will be displayed in an art show on Veterans Day, 2020, to honor the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. We should all be there. Read on.

Frank paints from 5:30 to 7:30 every morning. Back in April, he wrote in to tell us about a project he had come up with to paint portraits of Viet Nam veterans—friends he has met for breakfast on a regular basis for the last ten years. He had read of another artist doing a project painting his buddies who were KIA in Iraq. But Frank's project is different. The working title was “Voices from the Barrio.” The whole idea of a portrait artist doing portraits of barrio residents is apparently unheard of in the history of portrait painting. Frank said he wanted to tell their stories because these veterans often met with resistance *in claiming the same rights and dreams they had fought for*. So, each portrait tells the story of each man's success and what it took to achieve it in the face of adversity

Frank wrote: “To the last man, these veterans came home, went to work, raised a family, became role models for their kids, and raised successful children. These veterans are the silent ones who never get a plug in any media or discussion in any Vietnam Veteran Magazine.” The project is to provide a traveling art show honoring veterans from barrios across the country—especially those from *El Quatro*, the Fourth Ward as it is called in Austin—to be exhibited in schools, colleges, and universities.

On November 11th, Veterans Day, Frank's portraits will be honored in an art show sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans at Don Dario's Mexican Restaurant Y Cantina on South IH 35 (invitation below). You should go. In fact, the Queen will buy the first pitcher of margaritas to toast this remarkable accomplishment of our fellow classmate, Frank Mendez ... who is not only a gifted painter but is also gifted at being a beautiful human on the planet.

Veterans Day

2020

Disabled American Veterans

*Sgt. James W. Allen Chapter 219
of
Austin, Texas*

Invites you to the

"Barrio Veterans Art Show"

To be held at

*Don Dario's Mexican Restaurant & Cantina
8801 S I H 35 Frontage Rd. 78744*

In the Patio

Mask required and Social distancing in effect

On November 11, 2020

From 1:00 PM until 5:00 PM

*Come celebrate with us this Veterans Day and enjoy
a collection of 20 living Vietnam Veteran portraits
by Austin artist and Vietnam Veteran*

Franklin Mendez

*Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War
with a special tribute to the Vietnam Veterans from
Barrio's across America*

Send us the bill and the story on this one—or zoom us in on the show.

We are big on zooming.

Our best party crown is on.

And we are really hot to go to this one.



Love, Queenie



02 JoAnn Morris Matthews (44) - Happiest 76th Birthday Wonder Woman—hope your 75th was fabulous all year!

03 Glynda Hodges Pickens (45) - Glynda! Wonderfulest and happiest 75th Birthday to you!

03 Dottie Plummer Blacklock (44) - Cute Dottie, hope your 76th year is even more memorable!

05 Kay Bartlett Threadgill (45) - Amazing Kay, have a most beautiful 75th birthday!

10 Brooks Peterson (45) - Brilliant childhood friend, happiest 75th birthday to you!

11 Terry Marlatt (44) - One of the really good guys--happiest 76th, Terry, and hope your 75th year was memorable.

14 Bob Bodoin (45) - Sooo wish you a wonderful and memorable 75th birthday all year, Bob!

15 John Neal (44) - Hope your 76th is even better than the 75th, John! Happy birthday!

15 Margaret "Margie" Cowan (45) - Margie, you're not a day over 16—but happy

75th, girl, and keepagoin'!

19 Linda Kreisle Littlefield (45) - Beautiful Linda, have a really special 75th!

20 Joe Dike (44) - Happy 76th Birthday, Joe, and hope this year is even more memorable than the 75th!

21 Steve Hackerman (45) - Distinguished and accomplished man, happiest 75th birthday!

23 Tom Moore (44) - Hope your 76th year is even more wonderful, Tom, just like you!

23 Marianne Mexia Robinette (44) - Marianne! happiest 76th birthday, and hope it's even more wonderful because we finally got it right!

24 Doris Rhoades Sadler (45) - Happiest, frabjous 75th birthday, girl!

—LOYAL FOREVER—

And y'all hunker down out there ...

The election is hopefully only temporary insanity,

but the "surge" is truly badass.

Pay attention. Wear your mask ... no yadayada, y'hear?



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You are on this list because you are brilliant & still drink from the fountain of youth known as Loyal Forever
- the AHS Class of 63

Our mailing address is:

Loyal Forever
2 Morton Street
Wiscasset, ME 04578