

2017-2019 STATUS REPORT

Pan American Round Table Brownsville I

Pan American Round Tables of Texas
Biennial State Convention

March 28 – 31, 2019

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PART I of BROWNSVILLE

**Presented at State Convention in Fort Worth
March 28 -31, 20019**

The Executive Board of PART I of Brownsville was installed on June 2, 2017. Normalinda Castellano, PART I Director 2013-2015 and a State Board Member, conducted the installation. Each of us received a packet of flower seeds, symbolizing the Board as the seeds who will grow and bloom to produce a strong and beautiful Table for this two-year cycle. Each of us had a different flower indicative of our position on the Board. It was a lovely celebration.

Board Members

Director – Suzanne Champion	Associate Director – Sandra Maxwell
Recording Secretary – Normalinda Castellano	Corresponding Secretary – Rachel Ayala
Treasurer – Elka Jaross	Historian – Amelia Yznaga
Custodian – Lourdes Deytz-Gamez	Parliamentarian – Virginia Hale

The summer was spent preparing the new Yearbook and checking on corrections to be made. Standing Committees and Special Committees were organized. The Board met to set up important dates for the year. It was a busy summer.

Standing Committee Chairmen

Membership – Virginia Hale	Yearbook – Serena Putegnat
Luncheon – Amelia Yznaga	Decorating – Delma Tercero
Publicity – Susan Cowen	Finance – Elka Jaross
Scholarship – Teddy Renfrow	Costume Chair – Nohemi Gonzalez
PART Costume Corporation – LeeAnn Greer	

Special Committees 2017-2018

85th Birthday Celebration – Benilde Olvera	Pan American Observance – Irene Gulley
Protocol – Maria Enriqueta Yzaguirre	Courtesy & Telephone – Sondra Shands
Revisions – Maria Enriqueta Yzaguirre	Cookbook – Suzanne Champion
Outreach – Lourdes Deytz-Gamez	Electronic Communication-Isabel Vezzetti

Important Dates 2017-2018

October 19, 2017 – Bingo Fundraiser
November 18, 2017 – PART Brownsville 85th Birthday Party
April 6, 2018 –Pan American Observance Day-Joint Celebration with PART Brownsville I, Brownsville II, and San Benito
June 1, 2018 – Scholarship Luncheon

In August, some of us attended the PARTT Workshop organized by our new State Director, Dee Moore. This was not only a very helpful workshop, but a wonderful time to make new acquaintances and meet so many sisters of our organization. Dee did a fantastic job of helping us to learn the ropes and encouraging us not to stress over the seemingly daunting tasks ahead. The workshop was a worthwhile experience.

Our first regular meeting of the year was October 6, 2017. We had a wonderful turnout. The new Yearbooks were handed out as members paid their dues. We initiated an “in-house raffle”. The purpose of this raffle is to supplement our general fund to help cover added expenses that occur every so often, such as corsages for guests, gifts for speakers, mailing out yearbooks to those who do not attend often, etc. The board members were asked to donate simple items for each monthly meeting. The ladies were most enthused with this idea and looked forward to the raffle each month. Other members have also brought in gifts to raffle for this project. It has helped to defray little expenses that pop up.

For the Director’s Message at this first baptismal meeting, Suzanne presented *Lessons from Geese*, that Lana Harper had presented at the August Workshop. Suzanne drew simple posters of the geese and each board member held one up as Suzanne read the “lesson” to be learned.

Marsha Betancourt presented the program on Bolivia. She made a “photo book” of a trip with her family to Bolivia which explained each beautiful picture in the book. That book will be a wonderful memory for her family as the children grow older. We enjoyed a delicious lunch of typical Bolivian food – Quinoa Salad, Albondigas, and Rice.

Two weeks later, on October 19, Sandra Maxwell, Associate Director and Fundraising Chairman, along with her Co-chair, Isabel Vezzetti, presented our Table’s first fundraiser, a Mega Bingo Game! They had worked all summer persuading donors to contribute seed money to buy prizes such as a large flat screen TV, lawn chair sets, a diamond ring, a luggage set, and so on. In other words, very worthwhile prizes. It was an arduous task and a long summer for them, but they accomplished their goal. Besides daubers, the bingo cards, soda drinks, and cheese balls, the players were served a delicious chicken salad croissant and chips. Everyone had a great time, and many left the venue that evening hauling off huge winnings.

On November 18, 2017, our Table celebrated its Eighty-Fifth Birthday! Benilde Olvera, Chairman, and her Co-chair, Peggy Klinger treated us to fantastic party at La Hacienda complete with exquisite raffle prizes and door prizes, plus a very enthusiastic estudiantina from Hanna High School. The ladies thoroughly enjoyed the lively music. Many guests and Table members from Laredo, McAllen, Edinburg, Alamo-San Juan-Pharr, Rio Grande City-Roma, San Benito, and Brownsville Table II joined the celebration.

December 1, 2017, Shannon Ostos presented a lovely and interesting power-point featuring her country, the Dominican Republic. It shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti and is

the second largest Caribbean island. The beaches are astounding. The menu included Chicken Fideo Soup and Croquetas de Atun, followed by a Banana Crème Cake.

Marie Ramirez surprised us with *Crispy Crunch Chocolate Candy Bars* (known in the U.S. as *Nestle's Crunch*) at our places for our January 5, 2018 meeting. These familiar candy bars most of us grew up with, are made for export to the U.S.A. from the country she presented which was Canada. Who knew? It was a most educational program, followed by a Canadian meal of Cheese Soup, Montreal Beef, and a Brownie, Canadian style.

February 2, 2018, Lillyana Rodriguez was most excited to introduce the ladies to her home country of Columbia. She explained about the interesting and colorful festivals celebrated in her country, all with fresh flowers. With a video showing the parades, we observed the most vivid array of flowers mounted on huge circular frames that are placed on the heads of people in the villages to march through the dusty or cobbled streets with this giant disc (over 6 feet diameter) attached to their heads. We enjoyed lentil soup, sweatie chicken with potatoes, and Columbian bunuelos with green fig syrup. Of course, we were served Columbian coffee.

Rachel Ayala entertained us with a colorful power point about Costa Rica on March 2, 2018. The Costa Ricans live by the motto, "*Pura Vida*", which stresses that there are no "artificial ingredients" in the Costa Rican lifestyle. She accompanied her program with the lively music the Costa Ricans love so much. All the ladies felt like dancing. During the program the members lunched on the food of that country – black bean soup, enchiladas of cheese, and a fantastic corn meal cake with cream for dessert.

A week later, March 10, we had an inspiring visit from our Alliance Director General, Nhury Gutierrez Vilchez, from Chile. Because of her busy schedule in Texas, she was not able to attend our regular monthly meeting. However, she was kind enough to make time for our Table, by planning a Workshop. It was held at 1:00 PM at the Historic Brownsville Museum. She spoke of the importance of the community of Round Tables in the Western Hemisphere and how we learn to accept others. We presented her with a most interesting local book, *A Pictorial History of Brownsville*, authored by Robert Vezzetti and Ruby Wooldrige. We made note of a page in the book, featuring a photo of Pan American members in costume from the early 1930's. Light refreshments were served.

Pan American Observance Day for the three Lower Valley Tables was celebrated April 6, 2018 in Brownsville at Pepe's Restaurant. Brownsville Tables I and II, along with San Benito, hosted a joint fiesta. As we sat down to a typical Mexican lunch, a band of Mariachis burst through the door playing trumpets and guitars with gusto as only mariachis can do. They were received with much clapping and cheers. Many ladies sang along with them. Dr. Tony Knopp, our guest speaker, gave a slide presentation of numerous trips in Mexico. He pointed out interesting styles of architecture seen throughout that country. As a special "thank you", we presented him with a new book showing the historic homes of Brownsville, *Brownsville Architecture: A Visual History*. He was enthralled with this "hot off the press" gift. The Historic Brownsville Museum had just received the first shipment of books from the publisher.

Our Table had a real treat when Cel Galindo gave us a culinary tour of Cuba on May 4, 2018. Cel is a professional chef and owns Gourmet Central, the eclectic restaurant where we meet each month. Her program was most interesting, especially for the cooks in our group. The Cuban menu consisted of Black Bean Salad, Crema de Papa, and Torta Cubana con Ropa Vieja. Dessert was Baked Apples with Raisins and Ice Cream.

June 1, 2018, our last general meeting of our first term was quite exceptional. We had an abundance of activity plus special guests. The June meeting is always our Scholarship Luncheon. Present were six outstanding students, and their mothers, to whom we awarded each a \$1,500 Scholarship. They stood as Ginny Hale, Scholarship Committee member, read a brief biography about their activities and future plans. Dr. Esperanza Zendejas, Brownsville Superintendent of Schools, was also a guest. She offered words of advice to the students and expressed the value of scholarships relating the value of a \$100 scholarship she was awarded as a migrant student in California in the 1960's.

Martha Gonzalez was unable to present her program on Brazil. However, she invited Mr. Eugene Fernandez, a well-known member of a pioneer family in Brownsville, to speak about his life when he lived in Brazil. He developed a deep love of that country and was more than happy to share his wonderful memories. He considers Brazil his second home.

Another guest, Ms. Nancy Livesay, from Reno Nevada attended. Her late brother, Mr. John Schwarm, donated money, over the years, to our Table to create the Susana Schwarm Scholarship, to honor his wife, a past Director, who passed away in 2009. Nancy was honored to meet the student who was awarded that scholarship. The Brazilian menu consisted of Brazilian Cuscuz Salad with hearts of palm, and the famous dish, Feijoada.

Important Dates 2018 -2019

October 17–21, 2018 - Alliance Biennial Convention, Bolivia

December 2, 2018 - Christmas on the Border Fundraiser

March 28-31, 2019 - 59th PARTT State Convention, Fort Worth

**April 13, 2019 - Pan American Observance Day – Joint Celebration with PART
Brownsville I and San Benito, Harlingen**

June 7, 2019 - Scholarship Luncheon and Installation of Officers

In August, some of us attended another helpful Workshop in Laredo. It was great to see again all the ladies of the other Valley Tables (Area C). Due to the activities of all the Tables throughout the year, we have made closer friends, though they live miles away. It is great to see how “sisterhood” blooms the more one becomes involved outside your own Table.

A Special Called Business Meeting was scheduled for September 7, 2018. There were two reasons to hold this meeting. The Revisions Committee had studied Standing Rule 7, which referred to the criteria for scholarships. The wording was changed in the school district boundaries to match changes made by the district. This change was accepted by 2/3 votes

of members present. Rule 7D wording was changed to clarify the criteria as to how the student proves he is officially enrolled in his university. This also passed with 2/3 vote of those present.

Next, Ginny Hale, Chairman of the fundraising event, needed to discuss ideas, plans, and logistics of the next project. A majority of women were in favor. The date, Dec. 2, 2018 was decided on and committees were formed.

October 5, 2018 proved to be another very special meeting. Over the summer plans were made for Brownsville Table II to join our Table I. Table II had very few members left due to members moving to be near families, other facilities, or of passing. We invited PARTT Director, Dee Moore, Corresponding Secretary, Ann Beitel, Lana Harper, Zone I Alliance Director, and Mini Martinez, State Associate Director. Included at the head table, was Normalinda Castellano, State Recording Secretary. The four ladies from Table II were introduced to the membership. They are now members of our Table and each were given a vase with three yellow roses to signify knowledge, friendship, and understanding. The ladies who joined us were Mary Ann Boehl, Gloria Cortez, Maria Lourdes de Cortinas, and Ruth Kulesa. Amelia Tyndal introduced the Caribbean island of Barbados. She provided a video and compared Barbados to our city of Brownsville. On the menu was a peach and avocado salad, pumpkin and carrot salad, squash stuffed with beef and Barbados custard.

Normally we celebrate our Table's Birthday in November with a large party and invite guests. However, it was decided we would only commemorate the day in a general meeting because we would be working on the fundraiser which was only a month away. So, at the November 2, 2018, Lourdes Deytz-Gamez presented a video showing all the interesting places to visit in Guatemala. The program was most noteworthy with information about a most interesting country. We ate delicious Souffle de Elote, Chicken with Tomatillo and Cilantro, with Flan and a Bunnelo for dessert.

Finally, the big day, December 2, 2018, arrived for our colorful and most authentic fundraiser, Christmas on the Border! Ginny Hale, Chairman, and her co-chairs, Sandra Maxwell and Isabel Vezzetti worked endlessly to produce a first-class event. The room at Amigoland Event Center was colorfully decorated with poinsettias and stars. Many guests from Tables up the Valley and some from along the border in Mexico attended. A Mexican Mercado offered many genuine items of clothing, jewelry, gifts, and even shoes. A notable Silent Auction with elegant items had many women trying to outbid each other. Others trusted their luck to an outstanding Raffle. Homemade Cookies packaged to give as gifts were on sale. Everyone was offered delicious homemade Tamales, a traditional Mexican Noche Buena Salad, and three types of Rice to enjoy. What a great fiesta!

Five days later, December 7, we had enough energy to have our December meeting which featured Christmas in the Caribbean. Boarding the *Pan American Princess* cruise ship, we embarked on a six-day tour to six special islands. "Tour guides" dressed in authentic dresses, guided us through their islands and talked about the unusual and notable Christmas customs of each island. The last stop was the Isle of Exuma in The Bahamas,

where we grabbed our bathing suits and swam with the famous swimming pigs frolicking in the ocean. The luncheon menu featured the spicy and aromatic foods of each island.

Amelia Yznaga, introduced the country of El Salvador on January 5, 2019, wearing a bright blue and white dress representing the flag. The power point program gave us a glimpse of the brilliant colors and activities of the outstanding Festival of Palms. The menu consisted of Salvadorian Beef Soup, Russian Salad, Enchiladas of Salvador, and Baked Banana with Cream.

Also, at this meeting the slate of officers for the next two-year term was presented and will be voted on at the March meeting. Nominations from the floor will be allowed. The new 2019 – 2021 Board will be installed at the June meeting. The slate is:

Director – Sandra Maxwell
Associate Director – Isabel Vezzetti
Recording Secretary – Susan Cowen
Corresponding Secretary – Lourdes Deytz-Gamez
Treasurer – Amelia Yznaga
Historian – Virginia Wood
Custodian – Amelia Tyndal
Parliamentarian – Suzanne Champion

February 1, 2019, Maria Eugenia Ponce presented the program about Honduras. Especially interesting was the area of Intibuca and Lempira where the exquisite handmade Lenca Pottery is made. Maria generously donated some pieces she owned to our In-house Raffle. Everyone enjoyed the program. The members enjoyed the Honduran food of Vegetable Soup served with Radish and Pico de Gallo, Cheese Pupusa with Avocado Sauce, Beef Pincho, Rice with Plantain, Black Beans, and dessert of Honduran Eggnog.

At this meeting, on a whim, we decided to enter into the local Charro Days Parades in Brownsville. A committee, headed by Virginia Wood, was quickly assembled. Within less than one month, we had a convertible (decorated with flowers we made), signs with the PART logo on the doors, and authentically costumed ladies riding in the car and walking alongside, in the Friday night parade and the Saturday day parade on March 1 and 2, 2019.

A week later, March 8, Susan Cowen gave a most interesting program on Ecuador. She showed lovely photos of the countryside, as well as intriguing pictures of many somewhat strange animals of the Galapagos Islands, part of Ecuador. Also, at this meeting, the slate of officers was presented and voted on, as there were no nominations from the floor. We ate a cream of potato and cheese soup, plus an exotic chicken and rice with peas, pimiento, avocado, raisins, fried onion all mixed together. Very good!

We are so happy to have seven new members and three who have been invited to join this term. In December 1, 2017, Cel Galindo and Amelia Tyndal severed their year as Associates and became Active. Cyndie Rathbun became Active in January 5, 2018. June 1, 2018, Norma Pequeño was welcomed as an Associate, and Virginia Wood became

Active having served one year as an Associate. Graciela Salinas and Frances Molina became Associates on December 7, 2018. On March 8, three new members were voted on and invited to join. They are Ethel Cantu, Gloria Crixell, and Bertha Alicia Peña.

To finish this term, Pan American Observance Day will be honored on April 13, 2019 at Treasure Hills Country Club in Harlingen. PART San Benito and PART I Brownsville will be celebrating together at the Treasure Hills Country Club in Harlingen. The San Benito Table is the host and Brownsville I will share expenses and profits for scholarships. Dr. Zulema D. Mata will present the program, *Baile Folklorico – Its History and Influence*, accompanied with colorful and lively dancing by Grupo Folklorico Tizatlan.

Sandra Maxwell will acquaint our Table with her Mexican program on May 3, 2019. Having traveled many times to our neighboring country, it will prove to be most interesting. Of course, our Mexican menu will be no surprise.

June 7, 2019 will be our Scholarship Luncheon. We will be awarding \$1,500.00 to five remarkable students of Brownsville schools. The Scholarship Committee Chairman, Teddy Renfrow, and her dedicated ladies are already reading the applications to determine the final recipients. The final program for the year will be about Chile, presented by Virginia Wood. She traveled to Chile earlier this year, so this will certainly be an up-to-date report, as well as informative history-wise. The menu should be interesting.

The past two years have been a wonderful experience and I appreciate my membership and my board for their support, encouragement, and donations. It has been a joy to become closely acquainted to members of the Table and to make so many new friends of the sisters in other Tables of our organization. The State Board has always been so helpful to me and our Brownsville Table. This two-year experience has given me the opportunity to become conversant with this special and worthwhile organization. Being a leader and working “with-in” the Table, rather than only attending meetings, exposes one to a greater knowledge and understanding of the Pan-American spirit and its objectives. Above all, it certainly develops friendships!

Submitted by:
Suzanne Champion
Director 2017-2019

PART Brownsville I