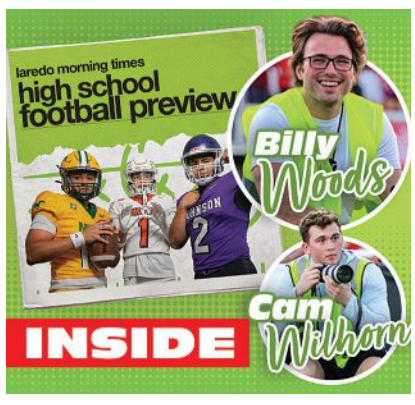

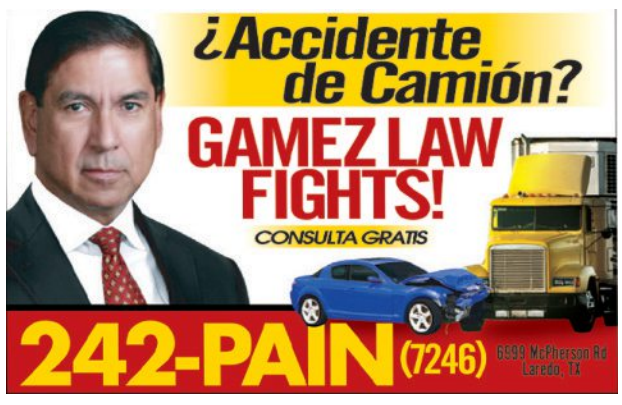

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The Laredo brothers who conquered the world of boxing

Gaby and Orlando Canizales reflect on record-setting careers

By Jason Mack
STAFF WRITER

When Gaby Canizales returns from Houston to visit his brother Orlando and other family, it's impossible not to reflect on their historic world championship boxing careers as he passes the welcome sign and water tower bearing their names.

"They really supported us and still go out of their way to honor us. It means a lot," Gaby said. "I feel really honored that they think about us. It's been a long time since I retired. Knowing they are thinking about us is good."

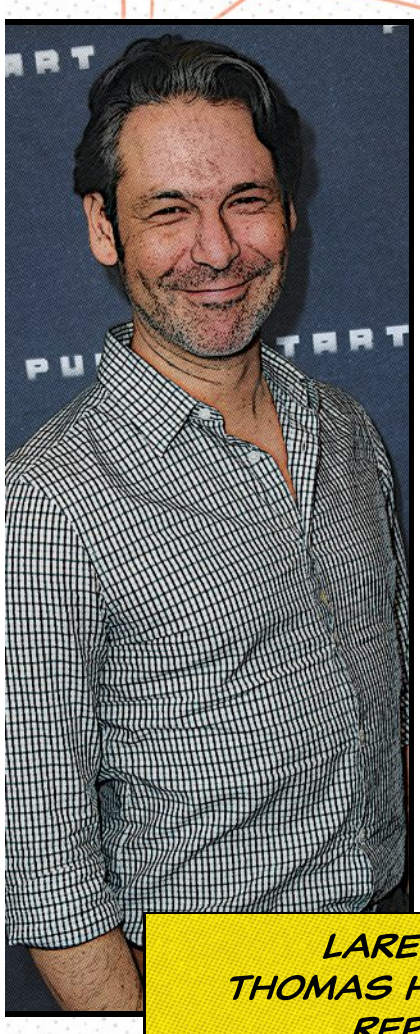
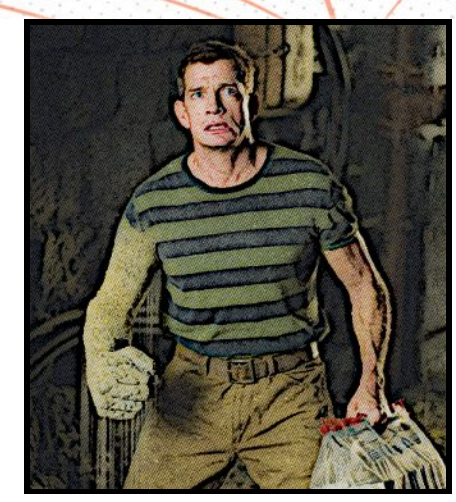
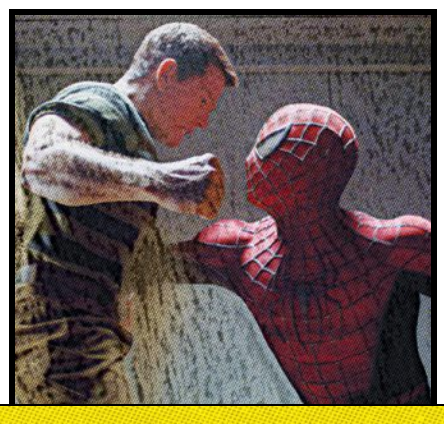
Gaby, 66, is the middle of five children, and Orlando, 60, is the youngest. Their older brothers also tried boxing as their father encouraged them all to find sports to stay out of trouble, but Gaby and Orlando were the only two who stuck with boxing.

Sticking to the sport wasn't always easy when Gaby was first coming up. Sometimes they had to train at a gym with a ring made from hoses. Other times, they would spar with neighborhood kids in the backyard, and Gaby would cut up pants and

Boxing continues on A12

Photo Illustration by Louis San Miguel/Laredo Morning Times

An amazing Spider-Man connection

LAREDO NATIVES ROGELIO RAMOS, THOMAS HADEN CHURCH AND EMAN ESFANDI REPRESENT THE GATEWAY CITY IN THE ICONIC SPIDER-MAN MOVIE FRANCHISE

STORIES BY JASON MACK, LAREDO MORNING TIMES
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LOUIS SAN MIGUEL

A wrong number changed everything for Rogelio Ramos, launching him from a young career in radio and TV news to a rapid rise in Hollywood highlighted by roles in "Spider-Man 3" and "Silicon Valley."

Ramos

When a San Antonio talent agency mistakenly dialed his news pager, Ramos ran with the sign from the universe. Early success with commer-

Ramos continues on A2

Thomas Haden Church's path from Laredo to Hollywood went from Webb County ranches to the digital sands of "Spider-Man 3" before returning to the Texas Hill Country to run his own ranch.

Church

Church was born in California in 1960 but moved with his mother, Maxine Sanders, to his grandparents' house in Fort Worth about a year later. They relocated to

Church continues on A7

Eman Esfandi's route from Laredo to the "Spider-Man" universe ran through a galaxy far, far away — and began with a spiritual encounter.

Esfandi

While watching "Star Wars Rebels," Esfandi said he felt the presence of Ezra Bridger, the animated character he would later portray in live action. He took it as a sign, sending photos of himself and Ezra to his agent and

Esfandi continues on A8

Laredo Morning Times Staff

Then-Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks next to former Laredo Mayor Pete Saenz on July 23, 2015, at the World Trade Bridge in Laredo, Texas.

The day MAGA threw its hat in the ring

Trump first donned the iconic cap in Laredo 11 years ago

By Jose De La Rosa
STAFF WRITER

On July 23, 2015, billionaire businessman, reality television star and then-Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump stepped off his plane in the Democratic stronghold of Laredo wearing a white baseball cap bearing four words that would become synonymous with his political movement: "Make America Great Again" — in what reports described as the hat's debut.

Trump had announced his candidacy just five weeks earlier, making immigration and the U.S.-Mexico border central to a campaign that was already drawing national attention and controversy.

During that announcement, Trump delivered what would become one of the most defining lines of his early campaign.

"When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best," Trump said. "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

He also promised to build a wall along the southern border and make Mexico pay for it, putting border communities like Laredo at the center of the national debate.

Looking back on that moment more than a

Trump continues on A14

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