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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### **2026 TRAIL OF VOLUNTEERS AT NIOSA®**

“A Night In Old San Antonio®” (NIO SA®) is put on by volunteers each year and produces far more revenue for historic preservation than any other event in the nation for the Conservation Society of San Antonio.

For the past 76 years, NIOSA has provided almost the entire funds for the Society’s preservation activities. All of NIOSA advance planning, staging and booths are run by an army of 10,000 volunteers, with all proceeds going to the Conservation Society.

NIOSA invests approximately \$1 million in the community by using local entertainers; local suppliers; health, fire and electrical permits; SAPD security; and to lease La Villita.

### **NIOSA-WIDE STORIES**

**VOLUNTEERS IN CHARGE OF EVERYTHING:** **Julie Terrill** is the 2026 NIOSA Chairman and Fourth Vice President of the Conservation Society—a volunteer, unpaid position where she is ultimately responsible for everything from decorations and cascarones to security and placement of all booths.

Situated at the peak of the NIOSA organizational volunteer pyramid, Terrill is assisted by Vice Chairs Monica Reyes, Anita Gonzalez, Lisa Pierce and Abbi Power, and DeAnna Keese as NIOSA Treasurer; 14 area chairmen; and chairmen of the hundreds of food and drink booths. Some food booths have been run by second or third generations of a family; **all are volunteers**. Other committees include banners, cascarones, central supply, hospitality, cold drinks, coupons, paper goods, decorations, electrical appliances, consolidated food supply, gates, ice, locks and keys, maps, paper supply, safety and fire extinguishers, signs, souvenirs and advance ticket sales. And even though NIOSA has only three full-time staff members, they do the work of 20, and volunteer many, many hours, along with NIOSA volunteers, to make NIOSA happen every year.

Many of the volunteers’ contributions may seem small by themselves, but by banding together they form the core of the event. Over 1,000 volunteers are required to obtain a current TABC certification to check IDs and serve beer and wine.

### **“Characters” of NIOSA: not tied to an area**

**STAGERS OF NIOSA:** Unseen and unknown to the general public is a team of men (the stagers) who work endless hours in the weeks leading up to April 21, putting NIOSA together, and then spend at least eighteen hours a day, from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. all four days of the event, to keep the “wheels greased,” seeing that the huge affair goes off without a hitch: Brad Dietrich, Rick Zertuche, Chris Celis, Juan Garza, Ray Moreno and Artie Dietel. Brad Dietrich has been a Stager for ALL of NIOSA for over 40 years and is now the Head Stager.

“San Antonio’s story, culture and historic buildings come alive during A Night In Old San Antonio. We couldn’t have this event without our great volunteers, which is also a testament to how fantastic San Antonio is. When you visit us, you will be greeted by our exceptional volunteers and friends, who come to serve you and support NIOSA and the San Antonio Conservation Society. They are truly here to have a party with a purpose and have a great time.” Brad Dietrich

**Christopher Wallace, the "Huichol Shaman" of NIOSA:** Christopher's father, Clifford L. Wallace, led the first opening night parade in 1976 wearing his traditional Huichol (a native group from the current Mexican states of Nayarit and Jalisco) men's costume. The "bolsas" were imagined to contain potions, spells, amulets, and talisman, so "shaman" (medicine man or healer) was the best designation for the created character...and the "Huichol Shaman" of NIOSA was born. Christopher began doing the parade with his father when he was a freshman in college. He continued to lead the parade with his father until his father's last year in 1994. Clifford died in December of that year, and Christopher has done it ever since.

**A "WALKING TOUR" OF THE WONDERFUL  
BEVY OF NIOSA VOLUNTEERS  
(Organized by the 14 areas of NIOSA)**

**ARNESON THEATRE: Greg Smith, Area Chair**

1. Greg Smith has been Area Chairman of Arneson Theatre for 19 years. Greg and his wife Cindy have been volunteers for over 40 years; Cindy served as a NIOSA Vice Chair for four years in the past.  
*"I enjoy the Arneson area because of the great group of volunteers that are in my area. Everyone helps each other, and we really do have fun. Volunteering is my way of giving a little back to the community. Greg Smith*
2. Volunteers for 30 or more years: Carol Barnes, Area Chair Greg Smith and Cindy Smith.
3. In this area's **Beer Booth**, one volunteer comes annually from Colorado.
4. The Arneson is the only NIOSA area with "Riverfront property."
5. Big sellers in this area: Broadway Chicken and Fried Jalapeños.

**CHINA TOWN: Julie Hamilton, Area Chair**

1. Julie Hamilton has been volunteering in China Town for almost 30 years. She spent many years as the chair of the Wonton Booth, and then moved to Fried Rice, Beef and Broccoli, Edamame and Wine booths. This will be her 7<sup>th</sup> year as the Chinatown Area Chairman. *"NIOSA is such a fun event. You meet up with old friends and sample amazing food. The profits give so much back to the community and keep San Antonio's amazing small-town feel with the history we are known for."* – Julie Hamilton
2. An average of 6,600 egg rolls are sold annually. There are people who say the main reason they come to NIOSA is to have a China Town Egg roll...or two...or three....
3. Cold Drinks – Cindy Garza has chaired the booth since China Town opened as new area in 1982 under the leadership of then Area Chair Fran West. She got involved due her mother's love of the Conservation Society and active involvement at NIOSA as booth chair, treasurer of NIOSA, etc.). Her daughter Kate works in the booth, and her son-in-law Christian Umana is chair of the new "NIOSA Tattoos" booth. It is Cindy's hope that her 5-month old grandson Cruz will love NIOSA and keep up the tradition!
4. The Yak-i-Tori booth rocks and rolls all night long, selling 2,300 servings annually. Ruby Lehrmann started the Yak-i-Tori Chicken booth at NIOSA around 1984. Ruby recruited her friend and fellow Sunday School teacher, Mary McDonald, to help work the booth in 1985. Mary and Randy became regular volunteers for Yak-i-Tori and became the booth chairs in 1987. For a few years, they added a second side for the busy Yak-i-Tori booth where Debbie and Doug Boazman helped chair. Randy and Mary were some of the first people to set up speaker systems for their booth, which has caught on over the years. In 2010, Randy and Mary's daughter Mistie and her husband Joey stepped up to help co-chair the booth; Mistie had volunteered at the booth since she was a teenager and had to keep the NIOSA family tradition alive. Once Mary and Randy wanted to step back after chairing the booth for 30 years, Mistie and Joey enlisted the help of their friends Cince & Steve Maller and Brian Howard. Yak-i-Tori has some dedicated volunteers who have worked at the booth for over 36 years! Mistie and Joey's kids, Bailey and Brady have been around the booth since they were born. Now at 26- and 24-years-old, they have enjoyed volunteering for years, too. Yak-i-Tori will always hold many special memories for the McDonald and Boyle family.

**CLOWN ALLEY: Jennifer Fischnar, Area Chair**

1. A NIOSA volunteer for 22 years, Jennifer will be leading the Clowns in her sixth year as Area Chairman, following the path of her mom, Leslie Fischnar. *"It has been rewarding volunteering for the last 22 years for this 'Celebration of Preservation.' Not only do I get to contribute to such a good cause, but I also get to come back year after year to work with some of the best people! I love these Clowns."*

Jennifer will be joined in the office again with her wonderful Vice Chairs, Tammy Exum, Kyle Fischnar, and Amanda Palmgren.

2. **Dutch Chocolate Freeze:** Linda and Craig Nolder have been slinging Ice Cream for about 15 years. *"I used to volunteer with Carol Blaschke in the area's cold drink booth and always said I wanted a booth. When the Ice Cream chairman moved up to a new job in NIOSA, I got my wish—and I have loved it ever since! Nothing is better than simple ice cream. This sweet treat is a vanilla ice cream bar, dipped in warm chocolate syrup and Rice Krispies. This is an out-of-this-world sweet treat, and the perfect way to cool off during these warm Fiesta nights!"*
3. **New this year: Retro Relics Booth:** remember past NIOSAs through some of this classic merchandise. This souvenir booth will sell medals, posters and other staples from previous years!

#### **FRENCH QUARTER: Leticia Diaz, Area Chair**

1. *"I have volunteered for 39 years, mainly because I feel that NIOSA--through the Conservation Society--is a great contribution to the support and conservation of San Antonio's wonderful history."--Leticia Diaz*
2. Nicho Gutierrez is Area Vice Chairman: *"I've always enjoyed the camaraderie that is involved with volunteering for NIOSA – meeting new people and reconnecting with old friends. We make it a family affair every year. This year, will be my 28th year volunteering."* – Nicho Gutierrez
3. Dottie Rios and Evelyn Casanova both started volunteering at NIOSA in 2006 and have co-chaired the **Escargot** booth since 2007. When they started volunteering in the Escargot booth, they asked a few friends that are hearing-impaired to volunteer; that number has grown to 12. Evelyn is also hearing-impaired.
4. Volunteers for 20 or more years: Leticia Diaz and Nicho Gutierrez (Vice Area Chair).
5. Guests can take photos in front of the 15-foot lit Eiffel Tower.
6. Big sellers in this area: Beignets, Escargot, Shrimp Po Boys.

#### **FROGGY BOTTOM: Terri Bell, Area Chair**

1. *"I've been part of the Froggy Bottom Krew since 2008, where I started in the Bottoms Up Beer Booth with my best friend who was booth chair. I eventually took over the beer booth in 2013. For the past four years I was Area Vice Chairman; this year will be my first year as the Froggy Bottom Area Chairman. I love seeing all the smiles and joy in everyone's face when we come back together for the year; each time it feels like it was just yesterday and we haven't skipped a beat!"* Terri Bell, Area Chair.
2. Dennis Rivera is Area Food Chairman, making sure all booths have their supplies daily. Prior to this current role, he worked for several years in Mr. Chicken. Dennis moved from Boston to San Antonio after a visit here and fell in love with NIOSA and said this is the place he needed to be.
3. Denise Trevino is Area Food Vice Chairman and wears a variety of hats during NIOSA. She started in 2013 in Bottoms Up Beer booth and served as Booth Vice Chair until 2022.
4. Mr. Chicken tops the list as NIOSA's favorite dish; 22,000 pieces are sold annually.
5. Booth Chairmen/Vice Chair:
  - **Bottoms Up Beer:**
    - Veronica Hager has been Booth Chairman for the past 4 years but has been NIOSA volunteer for the past 10 years
    - Richard Felan, Vice Chairman, had volunteered in this booth for the last 10 year, and other places at NIOSA for the past 20+ years.
  - **Mr. Chicken:**
    - Armando Bravo – Chairman; David Suarez and Gina Schiller are Vice Chairman (she's served in booth since 2021 and other places in NIOSA for nearly 40 years)
    - This booth typically has 60+ volunteers
  - **Funnel Cake Fries:**
    - Chris Garza - Chairman since 2024; previously the Shrimp Parrilla Vice Chair. Emily Garza is Vice Chairman since 2024 with her husband Chris. This is area's newest booth for 2 years, but has sold out each year!
  - Shrimp Parrilla – renamed this year as **Cajun Shrimp:**
    - John Herman - Chairman since 2016; wife Bethany Herman is Vice Chair. Their two children are in training to continue the family legacy.  
John Herman: *"I keep coming back each year because of the family and the bonds that continue to grow and strengthen with every Fiesta season. Over time, the people*

*involved have become more than just a team—they've become family. Fiesta holds a special meaning for me and my family, especially because my daughter was born just a few days after the 2025 NIOSA ended, making that season one we will always remember."*

Bethany Herman: *"It's the Froggy Bottom Crew that makes it so special. They are so much fun to work with, and there is never a doubt about our shared commitment to success because when our area succeeds, NIOSA succeeds. Over the years, many friends and acquaintances have volunteered in the booth, and the time spent together—seeing everyone have fun while working toward the same goal—means so much to us. My husband and I are grateful for the culture of joy, teamwork, and dedication that makes it all possible."*

○ **Malt Beverages:**

- Lillian Villanueva - Chairman and Fiesta Commissioner has volunteered in Froggy Bottom since 1997. Her daughter Anita Reyes is co-chairman and has volunteered at NIOSA for the past 25 years in Bongo K-Bobs and Chicken on a Stick.

Lillian Villanueva: *"I love the food, music, people watching and most of all my area staff and volunteers."*

○ **Cascarones:**

- Carlos Quiroz, Booth Chair, and his wife Laura (booth Vice Chair) have volunteered in this booth for 12 years. Their son Adam Quiroz is also booth Vice Chair.

## **FRONTIER TOWN AREA: April Smith, Area Chairman**

1. April Smith is Area Chairman for Frontier Town; her brother Brad Dietrich also dedicates time as Staging Coordinator to assemble NIOSA; their mother Nancy Ingalls was involved at many levels during her tenure; her daughter, Leticia Smith-Williams and grandson, Lucas Williamson, have also been involved throughout the years in Frontier Town. This is April's 40th year as a volunteer and 30th year as Frontier Town Area Chair  
*"I am a native to San Antonio and believe in the mission of the San Antonio Conservation Society to preserve the history and culture in our city. I love the rich heritage San Antonio has and appreciate the efforts the Society invests to maintain this. I know that through my efforts we are working to preserve the rich history of our city."* April Smith
2. Never underestimate the power of the egg: EVERYONE loves the **Shypoke Eggs**. The recipe was donated to the original booth chairs by the owner of the Hipps Bubble Room, the originator of the recipe. People ask for salsa and salt & pepper, thinking they are real eggs. Visitors ask for boxes of the Shypoke Eggs to take back home.
3. Mary Falcon (a postal employee) actually brings in a mailbox and the official NIOSA cancellation stamp for the official **U.S. Postal sub-station** in Frontier Town. Mary and her fellow workers hand-cancel each card before mailing. We are excited to be doing a stamp unveiling again this year on the band stage in Frontier Town on Tuesday night. We will also have special post cards this year with Fiesta themes. Many NIOSA attendees come EVERY year to mail NIOSA postcards to themselves or loved ones. Yvette Martinez is current chair of the Post Office, following in her father's footsteps; Enez Martinez served as Chair for the Post Office five years prior to having his daughter take over.
4. Allison Slavin Schmidt has been Booth Chair of **Cowboy Klopse** since the early 2000s but she has a long legacy of NIOSA volunteerism. Her parents, Joy and Richard Slavin, worked the Chili Con Queso booth in the late 1960s and became its Vice Chairs in the early 1970s. In 1976 they and another couple became co-chairs of the one-year-old Cowboy Klopse booth. Her parents took over as co-chairs while Allison became vice-chair; her husband took over the tamale booth as it moved next to Cowboy Klopse. In 2000 she and her husband became chairs of the booth and her parent moved to Vice Chairs. A few years ago, their daughter became the booth vice chair and is now serving as Co-Vice Chairman of Frontier Town. Her and her twin sister started coming to NIOSA in utero, then attended during elementary school, high school and college. They adopted their mom's strategy of "finding money or tickets on the ground--especially the beer booths." Allison says: "NIOSA has been a part of our family tradition for three generations--close to 60 years. It is our civic service to keep its rich heritage alive."
5. Armando Hinojosa was "**Fast Draw Suds**" Chairman from 1970 to 1994. For over 20 years Armando organized the volunteers and supervised the operations of the biggest beer booth in NIOSA. His

children "grew up" with NIOSA as part of their Fiesta experience. Armando passed away in 1994; one year after Armando's death, his wife Gloria and children Diana Hinojosa, Theresa Albach, Gloria Rice and Juan Hinojosa decided to continue the Hinojosa family legacy at NIOSA by volunteering to chair booths in Frontier Town. Juan Hinojosa took over as chair of the Fast Draw beer booth in 2013, and the rest of the Hinojosa family continues to play an integral part of Frontier Town:

- Gloria Hinojosa (wife): Frontier Town Food Deliveries Coordinator (1996-present)
- Juan Hinojosa (son): Calf Fries, Chairman (1996-2012), Fast Draw Suds, Chairman (2013-2017)
- Barbara Hinojosa (daughter-in-law): Calf Fries, Co-Chair (2009-2012), Fast Draw Suds, Co-Chairman (2013-2017)
- Diana Hinojosa (daughter): Horseshoe Shoe Sausage, Chairperson (1996-2012), Frontier Town, Vice Chairperson (2013-present)
- Theresa Albach (daughter): Ranch Steaks, Chairperson (1996-present)
- Terrence Albach (son-in-law): Ranch Steaks, Co-Chairman (1996-present)
- David Sanchez (nephew): Horseshoe Sausage, Co-Chairman (1996-2012), Horseshoe Sausage, Chairman (2013-present)
- Nathan Adcock (grandson): Horseshoe Sausage, Co-Chairman (2013-present)
- Other family who serve in booths as volunteers:
  - Daughters: Carmen Hinojosa-Laborde and Gloria Rice
  - Son-in-law: Alfred Laborde
  - Grandchildren: Elise Adcock, Kathryn Adcock, Erik Albach, Audrey Albach, Samantha Hinojosa, Caroline Hinojosa, Veronica Laborde and AJ Laborde

5. Big sellers in Frontier Town: Texas Bird Legs, Ranch Steaks, Steer on a Stick (6,800 servings sold annually), Shypoke Eggs and Horseshoe Sausage.

#### **HAYMARKET: Rose Moran and Nick Escobar, Area Co-Chairman**

1. Area Co-Chairman Rose Moran has volunteered for over 34 years at NIOSA. She started as a NIOSA volunteer in the late 1980s, serving as booth worker, booth Vice Chair and booth Chairman, then International Walkway Area Chairman and the last 12+ years as Haymarket Area Chair. She also served as a NIOSA Vice Chairman, and has been a member of the Conservation Society for over 22 years. *"I love my city, I love TEXAS, and I love NIOSA. I'm a big believer of preservation of our history, customs and diverse cultures that builds this beautiful city of ours. I love being a part of the NIOSA Family. Volunteering at NIOSA (now going on 33 years) is a great way to help continue our city's story as well as educating our youth of today, tomorrow and the future."* –Rose Moran
2. Area Co-Chair Nick Escobar says: *"I am the proud son of two former retired SAISD teachers of 65 years combined (Lanier H.S./ Page M.S.) who began volunteering at NIOSA over 40 years ago w/Norma Willams in the Piñata booth. We would sell out every night! When my twin brother Kevin Escobar (my right hand!) and I found out that the Piñatas booth was closed down, we knew that we couldn't let our family tradition end. I bravely walked into the NIOSA office and took over the Puffy Tacos booth! 12 years later, when friends talk about Fiesta, it always involves NIOSA! We have always served in Haymarket and love the NIOSA chairs as the true leaders always teaching us the ways! Can't speak highly enough about the staging crew that has led us since day one! As we have grown year after year, we thank the leadership and teamwork it has brought to our families! Our daughters love hearing about our crazy nights and can't wait to help in the booth one day and eventually run the booth their Daddy's love all year long! NIOSA is our favorite time of the year and we are proud to be born and raised in San Antonio and raise our daughters in. NIOSA is Family, NIOSA is Friends, NIOSA is Teamwork. We love devoting our time with everyone that has helped us along the way! This is a true Escobar tradition for us."*
3. Rose's Street Tacos (named after longtime Area Chair Rose Moran) was a new booth in 2025; this booth is doubling in size in 2026 due to its popularity. Booth Vice Chair Cheri Jester says: *"My mom (Booth Chair Patsy Ryan) started selling tamales at NIOSA with Joy Christilles in 1976...when they heated the big cans of tamales over a charcoal pit. 39 years ago, when I was 14, Mom and Joy taught me the ropes. Joy also got me involved in the Decorating crew for the Mexican Market area and I chaired that committee for a few years and convinced several of our "crew" to volunteer for that, too*

*(especially my mom Patsy Hudek-Ryan, Mercedes O'Higgins, Tammy Ahlers). Now that crew is volunteering in the popular Rose's tacos booth. David joined our NIOSA family 17 years ago, and luckily married into our family 2 years later...now he's a permanent fixture in our booth. Kim & Myles Hurkmans have joined us, too."*

4. Haymarket has one of NIOSA's most famous and beloved foods: **Maria's Tortillas**, a hand-patted, grilled corn tortilla, buttered and filled with cheddar cheese and salsa, named for Maria Luisa Ochoa, housekeeper to Ethel Harris, Conservation Society president from 1951-53. Ochoa was enlisted by Harris to make tortillas for the event. Introduced in the early 1950s, the booth today sells nearly 6,600 concoctions each year.
5. All of the following are nieces and nephews of Area Chair Rose Moran: Casey Lopez (third generation) has been helping off and on since in high school; he chaired the Gorditas booth for four years and not helps where needed; Leonard Calderon, Letty Calderon and Tina Lopez have been helping with set up and tear-down at Maria's Tortillas booth for the last 20+ years.
6. Louie Garza has been serving as Area Vice Chair and Main Stager for as long as Rose has been Area Chairman. *"I have great support from my family and friends - we are a team and all work for this wonderful cause."*
7. **Preparadas** is also a very busy booth in Hay Market; Mark Montes has been Vice Chair and now Chair for this booth since Preparadas were introduced.
8. **Puffy Tacos** wouldn't run as well as it does without the Villanueva Family. Vice-Chairs Mónica Rodríguez, Ariel Palomo, and Maddison Paredes are vital to our operation.
9. Best sellers are Maria's Tortillas,(2,800 servings sold annually), Gorditas and Puffy Tacos. **Chicken Gorditas** are new this year.

#### **IRISH FLAT: Rick Klamm, Area Chairman**

1. Area Chairman Richard Klamm has been volunteering at NIOSA for 54 years, the last 33 in Irish Flat. This will be his first year as the Area Chairman. He started out as vice chairman of the beer booth, then in 2006 took over as the booth chairman and in 2019 also took on the role of Area Vice Chairman working with his good friend Abbi Power. *"It's a family tradition. I grew up watching both my parents Dick and Joan Klamm, volunteer at NIOSA every night. The family story goes that when I was three, I stood on a counter calling to the crowd to get folks to buy Ham and Honey Biscuits (just for a bit, I didn't work a full shift). As I got older, I started volunteering in my Mom's coke booth in Gilded Cage (working full shifts nightly) and would recruit my friends to help in the booth as well. Gradually, as I got older I started volunteering in other booths, Cheesecake (with Bonnie Nagel), Anticuchos (grilling meat, that was a hot and sweaty volunteer gig), Fortune Telling (just taking tickets and guiding folks to the real volunteer talent for Miss Minnie and Miss Floy), and as a Money Runner for the Front Gates before landing in the Irish Flat Beer Booth (first with the DeArmis and then Pat and Archie Potts). This year I'll be the Area Chairman of Irish Flat (leading the Band of Merry Green Misfits). The Band of Merry Green Misfits has had some changes this year in leadership, booths and location and we are excited to be welcoming some new members Karen Harris and Darrold Usher in our new Karaoke Booth. The booth chairs of Irish Flat and their volunteers are a dedicated group with many of them connected to the environmental field. Personally, I'm committed to the cause because the Conservation Society continues to preserve the historical and cultural treasures of the City-the things that contribute to the uniqueness of San Antonio and would have been lost without the work of the Society, and it is without a doubt the best party with the greatest collection of volunteers."* Rick Klamm
2. Rhonda Reza, Area Vice Chairman: This is Rhonda's first year as the Area Vice Chairman; she's bringing a lot of enthusiasm and fresh ideas. The area will look different this year, offering some new photo ops to create memories, thanks in part to Rhoda's creativity. In addition to serving as the Area Vice Chair, she'll continue to be the Chair of Blarney Bacon. *"My husband and I started volunteering around 2007 in another area. In 2009, we were invited to volunteer with the Band of Merry Green Misfits (Irish Flat) and have stayed since then. My sister and her husband also volunteer with us, and it's become a yearly family event."* Rhonda Reza
3. Velma Galle, the chairman of the **Irish Good Luck Eggs** (elaborately decorated cascarones with Irish themes) and her partner Lloyd Miller, make cascarones that are truly Irish. All are green and white with leprechauns, shamrocks and sometimes even little girls in Irish dress. Velma has the distinction of being a volunteer in Irish Flat with the longest tenure, her dedication to the Area is outstanding. Lloyd is

easily spotted with his green vest covered in Fiesta medals.

4. Ian Smith is the new Chair of the new beer booth "**The Pub**" with Malcolm Ferris assisting as Vice Chair--it will be the first time in these roles for both of them, but they are both long-time volunteers. The Pub is an entirely new concept for the event. There will be five premium beers and **Dos Equis® Lime & Salt ZERO**—the first NA beer ever offered at NIOSA. This will be the only beer booth in the event offering this selection of premium beers. On tap will be Smithwicks a Red Irish Ale and past crowd favorite, Harp an Irish Lager, Kirin Ichiban a Japanese lager, Pilsner Urquell a Czech / Bohemian beer, and Slow Ride an IPA. The non-alcoholic beer will be Athletic Run Wild an IPA styled beer.
5. **Blarney Bacon** is a popular event and area favorite. The bacon is caramelized with brown sugar. This booth is chaired by Rhonda Reza, with her sister Bianca serving as her Vice Chair. At least one evening during the event Rhonda and Bianca's husbands dress in bacon costumes and have a fun bacon dance-off; "line dancing" has been known to break out with the crowd.
6. This area hosts a version of the popular **Preparadas** (a flavored malt beverage with fresh fruit, chamoy and chili lime powder) which is green in color. Helen Siedlik (who was introduced to the area by her aunt Sharon Hearn) is the booth Chairwoman, with her friend Beverly Preciado as her Vice Chair.
7. **Potato Skins** is another favorite. Amy Visnaw is the Booth Chair who took over the booth a few years ago from her mother Linda. Amy's Vice Chair is Laura Tennant; they have recruited some great volunteers to create Potato Skins—which are fried then covered in cheese, ranch dressing and bacon bits. A great taste of the Irish culture.
8. Big sellers in this area: **Potato Skins** and **Blarney Bacon**.
9. New booth chairs for the new "**Karaoke Booth**" are chair Karen Harris and Vice Chair Darrold Usher. This will be Karen's 55<sup>th</sup> volunteering year, with family ties to her cousin Patti Anderson who chairs buñuelos in Mexican Market. Darrold is a long-time volunteer with stints in the German Beer booth and face painting. The booth will have several styles of music with a few Irish favorites.

#### **MAIN STREET USA: Edward Falcon, Area Chairman**

Edward Falcon, the former Area Stager for Main Street for 12 years, is now Area Chair. *"I am a 17-year military veteran and 26-year veteran with San Antonio Fire Dept. I've enjoyed serving my country and community. I'm a proud dad and grandpa. NIOSA is just another way of giving back, and is lots of fun, so bring your family and friends out and have a good time."* Edward Falcon

1. As a first year Area Chair, Ed has recruited several "newbie" NIOSA volunteers: Area Vice Chairman Joseph Munoz; Area Food Chair Marco Falcon (Nick's son!); Strawberry Lemonade Booth Chair Agustin Salazar; Beer Booth chair Richard Ortiz; and Decadent Pops & Strawberries Booth Chair Denise Chavez (first year for booth, too).
2. Main Street will have two new food booths--**Strawberry Lemonade** and **Decadent Pops & Strawberries**.
3. Also new this year: a second band—**Dirty River Jazz Band**—will play in the area's historic gazebo. It will join the popular **C-Rock Band** that plays in the area's main patio.
4. **Beer Booth** Chairman—Kim Johnson continues her families' tradition of volunteering their time and efforts to NIOSA since before 1976 when the area was created. She has been with Main Street for 39 years.
5. Other longtime booth chairmen in Main Street are:
  - Area Vice Chairman Jesse Ramon (10-year volunteer of NIOSA; 1<sup>st</sup> year with Main Street)
  - Flat Bread – Booth Chair Diana Gaston (with her brother Vice Chair Rene Trevino) - 30 years
  - Banana Splits – Candy Morris - 20 years
  - Fried Oreos – Gloria Oropez - 17 years
  - Fried Green Tomatoes – Ann Kay - 29 years
  - Fried Cheesecake – Reyne Foley - 32 years
  - Wine – Sara Ramirez
  - Cold Drinks – Christine Sykes - 40 years
  - Cascarones – Mason Brown - 12 years
  - Chicken Wings – Mike Lemoine

Big sellers in this area: Fat Bread, Banana Splits and Fried Oreos.

#### **MEXICAN MARKET, Patti Zaiontz, Area Chairman:**

Patti Zaiontz has served as Area Chair of Mexican Market for decades, except for the three years she

served as NIOSA Chairman in 2016, 2017 and 2023. She also served as President of The Conservation Society of San Antonio from summer 2019 to summer 2021.

*"If you wonder why so many people return year after year--many taking vacations from jobs--to volunteer long days planning, setting up, cooking, serving, cleaning and even dealing with ornery patrons, just look around this beautiful city and see how the Conservation Society makes such a huge difference. We are one of a kind; few organizations operate like we do, with volunteers as special as ours." – Patti Zaiantz*

1. **Bean Tacos booth:** This is one of our original booths from the earliest days of the original Mexican Market—the first area of NIOSA 78 years ago. These dedicated volunteers start early in the morning preparing the beans. They are slow cooked all day and freshly prepared that evening. They also press fresh masa and cook the tortillas over griddles on the spot. It takes a lot of prep and teamwork to serve a fresh hot, soft bean taco. Booth chair is Eugene "Gene" Padilla.
2. Can't forget the **Anticuchos**, the marinated steak shish-kebab available only at NIOSA volunteers sell more than 10,000 of these treats each year. A friend of Ethel Harris, former Conservation Society president, brought the recipe from Peru and it was introduced at NIOSA in the mid-1950s. Provisioning orders went from 200 pounds of meat to more than 4,000 pounds in 2014. The booth is filled with dedicated hard-working volunteers. These volunteers have to battle plumes of smoke, constant heat from braziers and fire boxes, and the char grease from the pits. Booth chairman Mark Rockwood says: *"My volunteers work the hardest of any booth in NIOSA but still have a great time, with smiles on their faces. I am proud to work with these volunteers. They could go and volunteer at an easier or less demanding booth, I suppose....but no—they keep coming back year after year to help cook and serve the Anticuchos."*
3. **Cascarones**, traditional Fiesta equipment, originated at NIOSA in the Mexican Market in 1959. Each year, approximately more than 30 dedicated Conservation Society volunteers work year-round to make more than 120,000 of the popular confetti eggs. The sale of cascarones at NIOSA has contributed over \$350,000 to historic preservation projects from 2005-2025 ALONE. Cascarones are sold all over the NIOSA grounds; Edna Jimenez is the longtime chair of the Cascarone booth in this area.
4. The **Bolsa booth** originated and still resides in this area, selling hand-painted paper shopping bags decorated by local artists who volunteer their talents. Danielle Beadle and Melissa Hoelscher continue the family legacy of volunteering in this booth.
5. Great family story: **Buñuelos** (crisp fried Mexican pastry discs dusted with cinnamon and sugar) are one of the foods offered at NIOSA since it began. The first chairman, Mary Ashley Culp, served buñuelos in 1938 when NIOSA was still called the Indian Festival. The same family has run the booth for 40+ years since Peggy Penshorn, former president of the SA Conservation Society, took over the booth and ran it until 1981, at which time her son Richard and friend Rosemary Doyle took over as booth co-chairs. In its early days, buñuelos were bought from a local bakery that could only make 700 for all four days of NIOSA, so they regularly ran out of the popular dessert. In the late 60s, the buñuelos were made at HemisFair by machine, so they could sell as many as 20,000 in its heyday. Today, Rosemary's daughters Patti Anderson and Sharon Doyle run the booth. Now, with so many other dessert options, they usually sell more than 1,200 annually.
6. **Tea and Mexican Coffee:** Another booth with a family tradition: booth chair Deana Selwyn took it over from her mom and grandmother. They make specialty Mexican coffee, iced Jamaica Hibiscus tea and pink lemonade.

#### **MISSION TRAIL – Ginger Klaerner, Area Chairman**

1. Area Chairman Ginger Klaerner ran a booth starting at age 18 and has worked her way up to becoming the Area Chairman of Mission Trail in 2001--taking over from her mother Judie Willette who started the area when it was added in 1991. Judie and Ginger were very active in the Gilded Cage area of NIOSA until Judie was asked to start the Mission Trail Area. Ginger was raised at NIOSA and grew up watching her parents work their way up to different positions over many years: Her father Gene Willette (former NIOSA Staging Coordinator overall of NIOSA) and her mother Judie Willette (former Area Chairman and Vice-Chairman) are both 50-year-plus volunteers. She has had as many as four generations of her family working with her in Mission Trail: she raised her daughters, Shea (Vice Area Chair) and Kara, down at NIOSA just like she was raised. Now her 14-year-old granddaughter Hailey (Shea's daughter) is "already showing NIOSA promise;" she can't wait to come down and help build the booths the weekend before NIOSA starts. The area's Mission Maiz booth was chaired by Ginger's

brother and sister-in-law, Trey and Pearl Willette; at one time her sister Shannon Thatcher also ran the Armadillo Eggs Booth.

*"I have grown up from a child running around the grounds to having a booth of my own to now being an Area Chairman. I am proud to be from San Antonio, and proud to be part of the history and preservation that the Conservation Society exhibits. In Mission Trail we are all about family; when we get together, it is like we have been doing things together as a family all year long. We are so proud of all of our booth chairmen. Many of them either chair their booths with family members or the booths have been taken over by a family member. I can't do what I do without each and every one of my booth chair. I realize how truly blessed I am to have this group of people as my chairmen in the Mission Trail Area. If they are not related as a family member, then they have been best friends for years and that is just like family. They keep in touch with each other throughout the year. I get so many compliments on how well my chairman get along. They are my family and I love them all."* Ginger

2. NIOSA favorite Bongo K Bobs is chaired by Patricia Salinas and an incredible army of volunteers. They have about 280 volunteers who start four days before NIOSA prepping, cutting and skewering the meat in the NIOSA kitchen, and then still have another **240 volunteers to grill and serve 12,500 servings** during NIOSA. Patricia also has her sister Jenny and her son Chris as Co-Chairs with her.
3. Beer Booth was previously run by James and Patty Johnson; now chaired by their daughter Susan Johnson. Patty still volunteers 1 or 2 days during the week.
4. Buñuelos a la Mode – this booth is chaired by Beverly Taylor and longtime family friend Brian Latronico, serving the ever-popular vanilla ice cream with Cajeta sauce and buñuelo chips.
5. An old family recipe for Sangria Slush was created by Ginger's father Gene Willette; it is now prepped in a Margarita machine. Art and Leonard Vidal have taken over chairing this booth from the Villalobos family.
6. Many family stories:
  - Staging Chairman - Greg Klaerner and his team Ray Christian (wife Stephanie – ran the cascaron booth for many years before retiring), Diana Garcia and Norma Ponce do a great job keeping everything well organized while we build and run things during the week.
  - Staging co-chair Diana Garcia is cousin to Leti Garcia-McNerney, one of the area vice chairs.
  - Decoration Chairman Kathy Fairbank and her team come in on Tuesday morning and transform the area in less than 8 hours making it very festive
  - Vanessa York-Waid is now chair of Armadillo Eggs, after taking over for her sister Vicki Brown who is now a Vice Chair of the Mission Trail Area.
  - Hope Esperanza and Diana Perez (Mother and Daughter) are the Food Chairman and keep us well organized during the week
  - Chuleta de Puercos (Pork Chop on a Stick) is run by Eddie Villalobos and Lindy Rivera. The Villalobos family has been part of the Mission Trail area since the early 2000's
  - Cerveza Especiales and Michelada's are run by Frank and Sandy Aguilar and Sandy's sister Denise Nunnery
  - Cascarones are run by Brian and Cindy Harper along with their daughter Tiffany and son-in-law Austin
  - Cold Drinks is run by Lupe and Phil Barragan along with their daughter Crystal Uzquiano, which we were so lucky to get after they ran a booth in another area.
  - The Arista booth is run by Michael and Bianca Lecoche which they inherited from Bianca's Aunt
  - Tacos de Espada is now run by Danny Sanchez and Tony Ballez who have been longtime friends with Brian Latronico in Bunuelos al-a-mode
  - The Sombrero Cart and T-shirt are run by a great group of longtime friends; a lot of them are either still teaching or have since retired. They work hard for months prior to NIOSA putting together all those special hats
  - The Hitching Post is manned by our own "Busy Bodies" (longtime friends) that know everything going on at NIOSA.
7. Big sellers in this area: Pan Dulce de Mission (funnel cakes), Bongo K Bobs, Chuleta de Puercos (Pork Chop on a Stick), Sangria Slush and Tacos de Espada (brisket tacos).

#### **SAUERKRAUT BEND: Terry Schoenert, Area Chairman**

1. Terry Schoenert and her husband David began working in International Walkway with David's parents at a Pasta Salad booth about 44 years ago. Then they worked in Cerveza #1 in Mexican Market with the Zaiantz family while Terry also worked in Paper Supply in Sauerkraut Bend. Terry has been chairperson of Sauerkraut Bend for 24 years, even while serving as NIOSA Chair in 2020-2021. For

several years David was in charge of electrical appliances. Patti Zaiantz (also former NIOSA Chairman) and Terry have known each other since elementary school. Patti's daughter is married to Terry's son and they bring their children to NIOSA, meaning parents, children, grandparents, and grandchildren are together at NIOSA during the week.

*"I love to work at NIOSA because of the people that are in my area and the thousands of people that visit the area. I love meeting people and explaining NIOSA and how the money that is raised goes to preserve many San Antonio and surrounding area properties. I keep coming back because of the people."* – Terry Schoenert

2. Sauerkraut Bend has moved from the Villita Assembly Building down Villita Street to Alamo Street by the Bombach House. NEW in 2026: a Biergarten where German beers will be sold. Music will be in the garden, along with bistro tables.
3. Volunteers for 20 or more years: Terry Schoenert, David Schoenert, Robert Gurley. Volunteers for 14 or more years: Tracy Paseur and Becky Karp (Terry's sisters), Michael & Janie Mendiola, James & Anna Evans, Tiny & Brenda Floyd, and Jan Enlow.
4. Big sellers in this area: Bratwurst, Sausage Sampler and Sausage on a Stick (1,200 pounds worth of a sausage blend made exclusively for NIOSA).

### **SOUTH OF THE BORDER: Wendi Biving, Area Chairman**

1. Wendi has been volunteering since she was 21 years old with her aunt Patti Zaiantz, Area Chair for Mexican Market area. In that area, she volunteered at the Beer Booth for 25+ years, and for 8 years acted as Vice Chair of that area. In 2024, she took the reins over as Area Chair of South of the Border from longtime Area Chair Julius Womack, which she calls "a real honor." Julius returned as her Area Vice Chair in 2025.
2. Pollo Ranchero Booth - Jon Becker is the new Booth Chair of the Pollo Ranchero booth. He has volunteered at the Steak Ranchero booth over the years. Jon is co-owner of Texas Prime Catering in San Antonio. Joining him this year is Booth Vice Chair Leslie Skekel Jackson, who has volunteered over the years in the Churros booth as well as the Chalupa booth in Mexican Market.
3. Jugos Frescas Booth - Fonz Beltran has been Booth Chair for many years. This year, Fonz is turning the reins over to his niece America Tristan; she volunteered with her uncle for the past four years. America will run the booth with her vice chair Jo Schuh.
4. Micheladas Booth - Gilbert Acuna has been Booth Vice Chair for 12 years and took over as Booth Chair in 2025. He volunteers alongside his daughter Priscilla Acuna. Priscilla volunteered in the Michelada booth for 10 years prior to becoming Vice Chair last year.
5. NIOSAritas (Wine Margaritas) - Booth Chair Rey Zepeda volunteers alongside Vice Chair Rudy Cardenas. They have been chairs of this booth since 2000. Prior to taking over the NIOSAritas booth, they ran or helped run the Blooming Onion Booth, Frozen Margarita Booth, and Mimosa Booth at NIOSA

### **VILLA ESPAÑA: Cyndi Garza, Area Chairman**

Cyndi Garza is Chair of Villa España, and along with her husband, Juan Garza (who is on the staging crew that builds all of NIOSA), has been volunteering and playing critical roles for NIOSA for 10 years. Norma Leza is Vice chairman for Villa Espana and Brad Dietrich is Area Staging Chairman.

*"My husband and I started volunteering with staging in 2016--helping Brad's staging crew to set up ticket stands and food booths. Then we volunteered for the Sangria booth in Villa Espana. In 2024 Brad asked me to be Vice Chair and then in 2025 I became VE Chair. Back when we started, we started to cook for staging crew—and I still do on the day before NIOSA starts and when they break it down."* Cyndi Garza

1. Marquis Williams and Rachelle Gonzalez have perfected our Baja Fish Tacos as Chair and Vice Chair of this booth.
2. The large beer booth is supported by Booth Chair Greg Yurick and outstanding, long-time volunteer servers: Margie Peak's team for 42 years; Cindy Shoffstall and team for 16 years; Joe Hernandez and friends for 5 years; Kat Price and SAWS team--many who have volunteered 13 years or more; and Yurick's team, who have successfully closed down the beer booth for 16 years. David Garcia with SAWS has stepped up the last 2 years to help out on Wednesdays with a support team from SAWS.
3. Joe Martinez is the Chairman for the Cervera Especial beer booth, with Vice Chair Georgia Richards.

4. Eddie Gomez, a.k.a. "Mr. Sangria" in Villa Espana, has been making his special Sangria mix with red wine, citrus and "a lot of Fiesta spirit," for well over a decade. Eddie and his crew also play a tremendous role in getting NIOSA set up; Staging Chair Brad Dietrich brags about Eddie and his team: "many years ago we lost almost a third of ALL of our booths in the middle of NIOSA due to bad weather overnight. Eddie and friends came in early and helped rebuild all those booths so that we could open at 5:30 that next night...and they have continued on every year to now build all the coupon booths throughout the grounds, plus much more, working from 8 am to 6 pm the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before NIOSA. Eddie and his crew (including girlfriend Annette Martinez) personify the generous-beyond-words NIOSA volunteers."
5. Proudly serving his Cerveza Especial, Abel Guzman and his wonderful team have been volunteering for 11+ years.
6. Jessica Price joined Villa España 8 years ago as chair of the Water/Soft Drinks booth.

### **AVERAGE SERVINGS SOLD OF MOST POPULAR FOODS**

Anticuchos - Mexican Market area – 10,200 sold  
 Gorditas – Haymarket Area – 3,500 Sold  
 Maria's Tortillas - Haymarket area 6,600 Sold  
 Beignets – French Quarter –25,000 Sold  
 Fried Mushrooms - Haymarket Area – 3,300 sold  
 Yak-I-Tori - Chinatown – 2,300 Sold  
 Bongo-K-Bobs – Mission Trail - 11,500 Sold  
 Mr. Chicken – Froggy Bottom –22,000 sold  
 Steer on a Stick – Frontier Town –6,800 sold  
 Fajitas de Pollo – Mexican Market – 3,400 sold  
 Eggrolls – Chinatown – 6,600 sold

### **NIOSA FOOD FACTS**

Beef - 13,500 lbs.  
 Chicken - 11,000 lbs.  
 Sausage - 4,200 lbs.  
 Turkey Legs - 3,800 legs  
 Buns, etc. - 25,000  
 Masa - 1,400 lbs.  
 Tortillas (Corn, Flour) - 25,000  
 Chalupa Shells, Taco Shells and Gorditas - 16,500  
 Cheese - 2,000  
 Fresh Fruits and Vegetables - 11,200 lbs.  
 Guacamole - 800 lbs.  
 Ice Cream - 3,400 lbs.  
 Seafood (Shrimp, Fish) - 1,300 lbs.

### **HEALTHY FOODS AT NIOSA:**

Bongo K-Bobs – Mission Trail  
 Yak-I-Tori – Chinatown  
 Texas Bird Legs – Frontier Town  
 Steer-on-a-Stick – Frontier Town  
 Anticuchos – Mexican Market  
 Chuleta de Puerco (Pork chop on a stick) – Mission Trail  
 Aguacates (fresh avocado halves filled with sour cream and spicy sauce) – South of the Border  
 Pollo Rancheros – South of the Border  
 Iced tea is caffeine-free - all tea booths  
 Healthy canola/soy blend oil - used on all NIOSA dishes requiring oil