

IN BRIEF

Dozens of voter registration cards go undelivered in Presidio County

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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Presidio County residents who registered to vote by the Monday deadline, but never received their voter card in the mail, will still be able to vote in the March primaries.

That’s the message from the county tax assessors office after it says an unknown number of such cards were returned to sender, causing those voters’ registrations to be suspended shortly after they registered or changed their address.

Voters in this situation will still be able to use a regular ballot — though they may need to file a document affirming their physical address, according to Natalia Williams, Presidio County tax assessor/collector, and others in her office.

Office workers also suggested users wrongly filled out their cards or failed to provide an accurate P.O. Box, causing the post office to return registration cards to the Presidio County Courthouse.

When a registration card is dropped in the mail, it’s delivered by the postal service, first traveling all the way to El Paso, before returning to the post office and landing in the inbox of the county tax assessor/collector. Williams takes them to the Presidio County Annex where they are added to the voter rolls. That office then sends out voter registration cards based on the information provided by those hoping to register. Those are dropped back in the mail, en route to the newly registered voters. But handfuls of cards have bounced, returning once again to the county courthouse.

Those bounced cards are then marked in the voter system, the office attempts to reach out with a letter to the person, and the voter’s registration is “suspended.” Those suspended will still be allowed to access a regular ballot and rectify any discrepancies (such as an unverified address) on their registration. Voters will need a photo ID. Even those who think they’re registered to vote (and find out at the polls that they are not,) will be able to access a provisional ballot.

It’s unclear at this time how many voters’ registrations were suspended. Williams’ office puts the figure in the dozens. It’s also unclear why the cards aren’t reaching residents — though voting and postal workers suggested the bug could be a feature of the county’s rural postal system, which often doesn’t deliver mail to physical addresses and instead requires a second mailing address.

More recently, Texas has made it possible for registrars to merge Voter Unique Identifiers for people who have registered in multiple counties. Previously, people would end up on multiple voter rolls with different VUID numbers, especially when there were legal name changes between registrations. Now, Williams and her staff are trying to merge VUIDs.

For those who are uncertain of their registration status, Williams is encouraging them to call her office at 432-729-4081.

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Photo by Sarah M. Vasquez

Senator José Rodríguez shares updates on the Texas Legislative Session during his town hall meeting in Marfa. Rodríguez’s District 29 covers Presidio and Jeff Davis Counties.

Rodríguez makes pre-retirement visits to Marfa and Presidio

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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MARFA — State Senator José Rodríguez made stops in Marfa and Presidio last week in what will likely be some of his last town halls in the area.

That’s because Rodríguez, 71, announced in September that he would not be seeking re-election in 2020, as *The Big Bend Sentinel* previously reported. He’s served Senate District 29 since 2011 and has decades more of what he considers to be public service under his belt.

In his town halls last week, Rodríguez said he wants to spend more time traveling and being with his family. And he wants to take more hikes “before my knees go out completely,” he told a crowd of constituents in Marfa last week. “I want to be able to do a little travel I haven’t been able to do.”

“Thank you for the honor of privilege that you all gave me to represent you,” he said. “It’s been a tremendous honor for me.”

Rodríguez was scheduled to come to Marfa months ago, in August. But “unfortunately, because of the mass shooting that took place in El Paso, we had to cancel town halls,” he explained.

Governor Greg Abbott started organizing roundtables on gun violence that Rodríguez was a part of, and he said some of his constituents were busy grieving. “And that’s why we’re here,” he said of his delayed visit.

Much of Rodríguez’s town halls focused on his trademark issues, from better health care access to more resources for students – and especially ESL learners.

He spoke about the Texas Legislature’s efforts last year to overhaul school funding. Dipping into the state’s “rainy day fund” was not a long-term fix, he said.

“My argument with regards to [school] funding is, while we may have improved it, we still have a ways to go,” he said. “Particularly for our rural districts.”

“It’s unconscionable that Fort Davis had to give

up its UIL programs because of the lack of funds,” he added. “But that’s the position public education has been in for quite some time now, under the state’s vision.”

On health care, Rodríguez spoke of his and other people’s efforts to help bring a “full-fledged medical center” to El Paso, which ultimately led to the city’s own Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, established in 2013.

But Rodríguez stressed that Texas has more work to do when it comes to health care. He described the state’s decision not to expand Medicare as part of the Affordable Care Act as the “biggest disappointment” of his career. The state still has “the highest rates of uninsured people,” he said, “especially among our children.”

He also touched on mental health care — describing Texas as “near the bottom, or at the very bottom” when it comes to mental health outcomes.

Texas needs to do better, he said — and “not

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Renovations and performance reviews: Last week at the Marfa school board

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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MARFA — At a regular school board meeting last week, members of the Marfa ISD School Board heard proposals to renovate school facilities, from ventilation systems to the Hunter Gym.

The board also gave a unanimous vote of confidence to Superintendent Oscar Aguero after previously discussing him at a closed-door executive session last month.

The board was also observing “School Board Appreciation Month 2020.” With the walls decorated with space- and school-board-themed art, including some made by students (“Launching the next generation,” one poster read), board members celebrated at the end of the meeting with cake and photo ops.

The meeting started as usual with a recognition of visitors. First up was parent Vince Fuentez, who urged the school board to revamp its heating and cooling system. Fuentez has been in the heating/cooling industry for 17 years, he told the board.

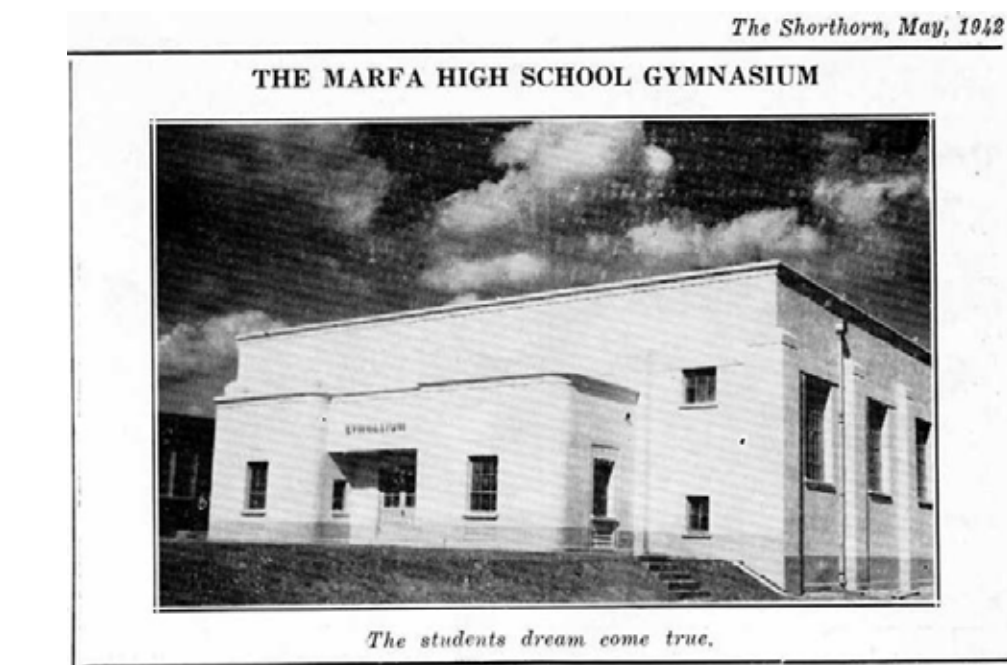
He acknowledged that revamping Marfa’s air systems could cost thousands but argued there was a “happy medium” that could “drastically reduce maintenance costs.” He also stressed the cleaner air could improve student and teacher performance.

“Indoor air quality is tied — again, with many other factors — to student quality and teacher quality,” he said. He suggested that a bond could pay for the work.

The board considered the proposal but took no action. “Thank you for your time,” Fuentez concluded before leaving. “I’m going to go buy cucumbers for my daughter, because that’s what she’s craving.”

Next up was another proposal for renovations. Mike Green, a retired architect, said he wanted to help fix up Hunter Gym, which he described as “part of Marfa’s history” and badly in need of repair.

A historic structure first built in the 1940s with



An archival photo of the Hunter Gym from 1942

a New Deal-era grant from the Work Progress Administration, Hunter Gym received recognition from the Texas Historical Commission in 2010. Boosters have for years discussed fixing up the gym, but Green’s proposal is a little different: He wants a nonprofit “Friends of Hunter Gym” to take over the gym and repair it. He’s using the same strategy for a church in Ruidosa, he said.

“I don’t want the school board to be layered with the associated costs and the burden of liability,” he said, explaining his reasoning behind the nonprofit proposal. “Your strengths are better served to the community.”

The school board said they would look into the proposal, which is already backed by school board member David Walstrom. Mark Cash, another school board member, reminisced about how beautiful the building was before it fell into disrepair.

Green agreed. “I’ve heard so many stories about

people that played there and remember when the windows were intact — and what a different kind of space it was with all the natural light,” he said. “Thanks again for including me. I just want to get started. It’s time.”

Last but not least, the school board gave a unanimous vote of confidence to Superintendent Oscar Aguero. The superintendent and possibly other administrators were the subject of a closed executive session last month, which lasted for hours and ended with no action taken.

Reviews of school administrative staff — as well as renewals of their contract — are a routine part of the school board’s annual affairs. This was the first formal review of administrative staff since last September, when a Border Patrol operation in Marfa triggered over an hour of lockdown and shelter-in-place orders at Marfa schools, prompting scrutiny of Marfa ISD’s security and emergency-response plans.

Amid defamation case, new sexual assault allegation surfaces against Jeff Leach

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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TERLINGUA — Another woman has come forward with sexual assault allegations against Jeff Leach, a prominent Terlingua man and founder of Basecamp Terlingua.

All together, that now makes at least five women who have accused Leach of a variety of offenses ranging from threats to rape. Katy Milam, a former Basecamp employee, told police in July that Leach had allegedly pinned her down and told her “he gets what he wants.” Leach filed a defamation suit against her in September. And then two more women gave affidavits accusing him of sexual assault and rape, as *The Big Bend Sentinel* first reported.

A fourth woman also received a restraining order in 2017 after Leach allegedly threatened her, as *The Big Bend Sentinel* previously reported. That woman has not responded to multiple requests for comment, but court documents filed in December offered context.

Leach was arrested in 2015 after the woman called authorities to say she’d had an “altercation” with Leach and was “worried he will come back,” according to a report from the Brewster County Sheriff’s Office. He allegedly “went off on [the woman] for no apparent reason,” “began throwing things around the house,” “grabbed her and shoved her around” and then left, the report states.

The latest affidavit, filed on Sunday night, is from a woman who says she met Leach in Terlingua in 2014, shortly after he moved to the desert community. She later worked with Leach on business projects. That woman asked *The Big Bend Sentinel* not to identify her in our story, and we have redacted some details to protect her privacy.

In summer of 2017, the woman states Leach allegedly sexually assaulted her. “I had to fight him off to get him to stop,” she states. “This sexual contact was non-consensual.”

A couple weeks later, the woman and Leach got into an argument at her house. Outside, Leach allegedly “threw his glass into the night” and “knocked some things off of a table,” and the woman “ran out into the desert and hid in the bushes.” Leach got some clothes from inside and left, according to her affidavit.

“I stayed hidden in the desert for a while after Jeff left,” the woman states. “I remember feeling like it was over, and I was relieved.” After the woman stopped working with Leach, he at least twice “threatened me with litigation,” she states.

This woman’s affidavit, as well as two others made against Leach last year, have surfaced in court during Leach’s ongoing defamation lawsuit against Milam, the former Basecamp employee who also goes by Schwartz in court filings. The multiple allegations demonstrate his “propensity to assault women,” Milam’s lawyers, Jodi Cole and Liz Rogers, argued in a motion last year.

The case has continued for almost five months and is now on its third judge. The first, Roy Ferguson, recused himself last year. He was the judge who granted a woman a restraining order against Leach in 2017.

Next was Judge Thomas Spieczny. Leach’s lawyers, Rae Leifeste and Christopher Flores, objected to him on December 24, before his first hearing. The court filings do not explain the lawyers’ reasoning, and one of those lawyers — Christopher Flores — said he and Leifeste have a policy to “not comment on active litigation.”

Next was Judge Stephen Ables. Last month, according to filings from Milam’s lawyers, a hearing was

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MEET THE CANDIDATES

PART 3:

TEXAS’S 23RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES



ROSALINDA “ROSEY” RAMOS ABUBARA

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

I am running for Congress because I believe progressive reform is long overdue in the United States. I believe that Americans are entitled to more rights and services than their government affords them. Conservative leaders have consistently failed the American people. Our wealth disparity is obscene, our healthcare system is fatally dysfunctional, and our workers are consistently denied rights and protections. Our criminal justice system is fraught with systematic corruption and prejudice. The hate crimes against citizens and human rights violations at the border have become far too familiar. The consequences of conservative politics are completely unacceptable. I am running for office because I want to assist Americans in demanding more from their government. I’m running for office because I believe in reform, and I believe in progress towards a future of equality for all.

It’s a crowded field. What sets you apart — and what are your two top issues?

I am one of the only Latinas running for this position. With a district population that’s 70 percent Hispanic, I feel that I am most qualified to represent this district. My top issues include healthcare and comprehensive immigration reform. I believe that my extensive background in the medical field has prepared me to make decisions that would benefit our course of action for healthcare. As an activist, I have worked alongside organizations that provided aid and helped migrants relocate to their final destination. Through this, I was able to experience and hear firsthand the many difficulties of crossing the border and the migrants’ stories for wanting to have a better life in the United States. My community work has allowed me to connect with people and organizations at the grassroots level, preparing me to make informed decisions in solving problems.

What are the primary challenges facing the 23rd?

I believe the primary challenges facing the 23rd District of Texas are the border crisis, healthcare coverage in rural areas, education- and student-debt relief, environmental protections, working towards producing renewable energy and ending the fracking industry that has plagued our environment.

The 23rd is sometimes called a “swing” or “purple” district. In this hyper-partisan era, how do you plan to reach voters across the aisle?

In order to reach across the aisle, I am willing to listen to others’ perspectives and take them into account while making decisions about the district I represent. I am running to represent everyone in this great district, and I believe I have the appreciation and critical decision-making skills in order to encompass everyone’s concerns while solving issues. I believe in progressive legislation that largely focuses on the many underrepresented people of this district. However, I believe that listening to opinions and concerns from the other side is just as valuable. Reaching across party lines is essential in maintaining a stable and fair democracy.

The border — both in terms of immigration and trade — is a major political issue here. What

are you thoughts on the myriad border issues affecting this region, from undocumented migrants to transmigrantes?

The border poses a major issue in this district. Assuming that the undocumented migrants are of no violent threat to the United States and that their work is valuable, I don’t see any reason why we can’t allow more transmigrantes. Undocumented migrants and transmigrantes are basically the same. They are human beings who deserve all the rights that any human has. They’re seeking better lives than they can find at home. We need to make a clear path to citizenship and allow migrants to start a better future in this great country.

Rural healthcare is hard to access in our area and across Texas. What efforts would you make to serve your constituents’ healthcare needs and access to specialty care?

There are many options that could be available to this region for healthcare. I would like to see physicians receive tuition forgiveness if they serve at least two years in rural areas. This would encourage more students to pursue a career in the healthcare field. We need to improve our medical infrastructure, looking at all aspects of health care, and see what works for the people of our district. Further, I would like to make providing remote access to healthcare professionals from around the country more accessible at healthcare facilities. This would help improve the overall standard for treatment and provide access to specialists that wouldn’t otherwise be available to the patient.



JAIME ESCUDER

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

My name is Jaime Escuder and I am a trial lawyer living in Alpine, Texas with my wife and two young daughters. I graduated from the University of Chicago Law School and have been an advocate in the trial courts for over 15 years. I serve the people of the Big Bend in state and federal courts and also take pro bono cases with issues involving fundamental rights or the environment. I am running for office because my work has given me a front row seat to the disastrous consequences of systemic poverty and the lack of access to opportunity. I understand how our government works and have the advocacy skills to fight for the changes that people in this district need.

It’s a crowded field. What sets you apart — and what are your two top issues?

As an experienced trial lawyer, I’m the only trained advocate in this race. Recently, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi mentioned “comfort in the courtroom” as the primary trait that she wants in an impeachment manager. With me in Congress, the Democratic party will have a deeper bench to choose from when it comes to exposing the corruption that is rampant in Washington. I think addressing the clear and present danger of climate change has to be the top concern of the day. No other issues matter if we do not have a habitable planet. I also think we have to change the unconscionable wealth inequality in this nation, which affects healthcare, education, housing, criminal justice and access to opportunity in general.

What are the primary challenges facing the 23rd?

I think the biggest challenge the people of the 23rd face is balancing

TRI-COUNTY — Welcome to part three of our meet-the-candidates series. The deadline to register to vote was this Monday, and primaries are on March 3. Residents can make sure they’re on the voter rolls by contacting the Presidio County tax assessor/collector’s office at 432-729-4081.

This week, we’re diving into one of the most watched races in the state, if not the country: the race for Texas’s famously “purple” 23rd Congressional District. Represented by Will Hurd, a (relatively) middle-of-the-road Republican congressman who focuses on bipartisan issues like cybersecurity and human trafficking, the competition for this district has been used in recent elections as a bellwether for the mood of the country.

the needs of those struggling with issues like suppressed wages and lack of healthcare with the wealthy few who profit from it.

The 23rd is sometimes called a “swing” or “purple” district. In this hyper-partisan era, how do you plan to reach voters across the aisle?

Polarization has made it hard for us to hear one another. Political gamesmanship has trumped recognizing our common humanity. I think the idea that a Democrat can sway Trump supporters by moving their positions to the right is a myth. However, the core principle underneath all of my policy positions is recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of every human being. I think that is something that appeals to Democrats and Republicans of conscience, and it is the starting point for creating policies that work for the good of all.

The border — both in terms of immigration and trade — is a major political issue here. What are you thoughts on the myriad border issues affecting this region, from undocumented migrants to transmigrantes?

As someone who lives and works in a border county, I understand how important this issue is. While I recognize the need for a secure border, I oppose the building of the wall and support the repeal of Title 8 of the United States Code [USC] Section 1325, which criminalizes unauthorized border crossings. I believe they should be a civil issue. I see immigrants as an asset to our country and support citizenship for DREAMers. I believe that all applicants deserve a reasonable path to citizenship. I support trade with Mexico, but oppose any agreement that does not account for climate change. I believe all current and proposed agreements to be inadequate in this regard.

Rural healthcare is hard to access in our area and across Texas. What efforts would you make to serve your constituents’ healthcare needs and access to specialty care?

I live in a rural area and am well aware of the challenges to accessing adequate healthcare. I support Medicare for All, as well as increased incentives for doctors to practice in rural areas. I also support an upgraded public transportation system to include high speed rail, which will allow rural residents to more easily and affordably get to urban areas for specialized care.



GINA ORTIZ JONES

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

I’m a first-generation American who was raised by a single mother who came to this country because she believed in the promise of a better life. She taught my sister and me that talent is universal, but opportunity is not. I grew up in San Antonio and went to John Jay High School, where I earned a four-year Air Force ROTC scholarship to attend Boston University. I served in the U.S. Air Force as an intelligence officer, deployed to Iraq and returned home to take care of my mom when she was diagnosed with cancer. I spent my career in national security, from the Air Force to the executive office of the president. I ran for Texas’s 23rd Congressional District in 2018 and came within 926 votes winning. I’m running for Congress to expand and protect the opportunities that allowed me to grow up healthy, get an education, and serve our country.

It’s a crowded field. What sets you apart — and what are your

two top issues?

In 2018, I was honored to earn the support of so many folks across our district. Our campaign is picking up right where we left off, and we’ve been overwhelmed by the grassroots support and momentum we’ve experienced so far. In Congress, I will fight to expand access to affordable healthcare while protecting critical programs like Social Security and Medicare, and work to invest in the infrastructure critical to closing the economic, educational and healthcare gaps that exist between our urban and rural communities.

What are the primary challenges facing the 23rd?

Lack of access to affordable healthcare is the number one issue all over South and West Texas. Similarly, voters talk about the lack of opportunities in their rural communities, which forces them to leave for better jobs elsewhere. This is why I’m focused on building the infrastructure that helps to close the opportunity gaps between our urban and rural communities. One way to do that is to invest more heavily in renewable energy. Texas leads in this field, and much of the wind and solar power generated in our state comes from TX-23. We need to invest in the renewable energy infrastructure and training that will bring even greater economic opportunities to our district.

The 23rd is sometimes called a “swing” or “purple” district. In this hyper-partisan era, how do you plan to reach voters across the aisle?

In 2018, I came within 926 votes of winning TX-23, which shows that this district is ready for better representation in Washington. Our message of opportunity for all resonated with voters all across South and West Texas, and we look forward to building on that this year. I have a long record of public service, putting country above everything else. That is the approach I continue to use when talking with voters about the issues they care about and the change they want to see in our communities.

The border — both in terms of immigration and trade — is a major political issue here. What are you thoughts on the myriad border issues affecting this region, from undocumented migrants to transmigrantes?

As a first-generation American and veteran, I know that immigration strengthens our economy and is key to our national security. I support a clean DREAM Act to honor the promise we made to those young people who are American in every sense of the word. We need policies that tap into our country’s talent, not ones that force vulnerable communities into the shadows. Moreover, the federal government should not steal billions of dollars from our military and seize private land to build a wasteful, ineffective border wall. When I speak with elected officials and voters in our border communities, they want the type of infrastructure that generates revenue and capitalizes on the natural economic, social, and cultural ties between our border communities. They’re talking about bridges and broadband — not a border wall.

Rural healthcare is hard to access in our area and across Texas. What efforts would you make to serve your constituents’ healthcare needs and access to specialty care?

I am focused on protecting and working to expand Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. These are lifesaving programs and critical to sustaining our rural healthcare facilities. As someone who gets my own care through the VA, I will work to ensure veterans living in our rural communities have the care they deserve. We need to bring down the costs of prescription medicine and invest in the infrastructure needed to fully realize telemedicine and telepsychiatry in our rural communities. Lastly, we need to identify ways federal investments may help our rural counties and municipalities deal with the unique challenges of their older residents aging in place.

Hurd has held the seat since 2015. In the midterm elections of 2018, Democratic candidate Gina Ortiz Jones lost — by just 926 votes. But Hurd announced last year that he was retiring, and it’s an even more crowded race this election, with a total of 14 candidates running in both the Democratic and Republican primaries. We reached out to all the candidates to include them in this series, and all but one — Efrain Valdez, a Democrat — ultimately got back to us before our deadline.

Due to the crowded field, we’re splitting this race into two parts, beginning this week with the Democrats. Here are those Democratic candidates, in their own words. We’ve edited these interviews for clarity and brevity.



RICARDO MADRID

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

I am a worker and a supporter of the working class. I am currently working as a Texas-certified community health worker in the San Antonio, Texas metroplex. I grew up in and around the 23rd District as a bilingual and bicultural Latino. I am a first generation high school graduate that went on to serve my country in the United States Army. I often worked two jobs to save money for college and travel abroad, to witness firsthand opportunities and solutions to common global problems. I continued working mostly full time and overtime in multiple jobs over the years as I earned my Associate’s Degree from Chabot College in Hayward, California, and my Bachelor’s Degree from The University of California at Berkeley. In my lifetime, I have witnessed and experienced the nation losing ground on human and civil rights; losing ground on social and economic rights and opportunities; losing ground on environmental actions, social justice and world peace.

Nowadays, things are much worse. It is appalling and a grave injustice to humanity that in the richest country in the world we have such high rates of poverty and the highest rates of people without health insurance. A high percentage of people go hungry. A high percentage of people are in jail, many innocent. Many are homeless or near homelessness. Enough is enough! This is unacceptable. We can do much better than that. This is why I am running for Congress. I have the courage, vision and leadership ability to take us to a better tomorrow.

It’s a crowded field. What sets you apart — and what are your two top issues?

I am a worker and supporter of worker rights, not a politician. I like telling the truth. I have an unbreakable and incorruptible moral backbone to carry out the issues in our platform. I stand with and for the workers and families, the poor and the middle class and the benefit of all society. I am living through some of the issues addressed and discussed in my platform and campaign. The issues that I put forward are backed by real-life examples, science and common sense. I am committed to the issues in my platform regardless of whether I am involved in politics or not, which is why I am doing this campaign mostly on my salary. I am and have been in the trenches, and I am still trying to break out of generational poverty by having two jobs. Sometimes, I still struggle to survive. For most people, the social mobility to move up the economic and social ladder does not exist. So here I am, trying to make my community and nation a better place to live, because I know it can be done. Together, we can do much better than before. A better world is possible!

What are the primary challenges facing the 23rd?

The lack of good, paying union jobs and lack of infrastructure. The lack and access to all kinds of resources (water, electricity, government help, etc.) and congressional misrepresentation.

Two things that would help fix those problems are the passage of the Green New Deal and the passage and implementation of my Regional Strategic Action Plan for Texas District 23, creating community economic development special zones for business and trade, immigration and temporary workers, social and cultural programs and economic

and historical development. It would mandate that Texas and District 23 strive to become a green-energy leader through a comprehensive infrastructure and transportation program that commits to helping all communities, and especially rural communities, with their infrastructure projects. The plan would recognize that resources on public lands are public resources and leverage those resources for the benefit of all society. It would encompass solar and wind power, high-speed and light-rail and, more importantly, would provide thousands of good, family-sustaining union jobs with a jobs guarantee.

The 23rd is sometimes called a “swing” or “purple” district. In this hyper-partisan era, how do you plan to reach voters across the aisle?

By appealing to the basic issues all voters want, such as: comprehensive universal healthcare coverage, free public universal higher-education programs, a \$15 dollar-per-hour minimum wage, student-loan debt forgiveness, etc. More importantly, I would work hard to carry out my platform and turn this district totally blue.

The border — both in terms of immigration and trade — is a major political issue here. What are you thoughts on the myriad border issues affecting this region, from undocumented migrants to transmigrantes?

Comprehensive immigration reform. Legalize DACA recipients. Encourage, promote and sponsor legal seasonal migration, permitting people to come to the U.S. and return to their countries, as in temporary worker programs that are safe and fair to all workers and committed to humane, compassionate and fair border control measures. Immigration-friendly is also people- and business-friendly. Legislation that considers the root causes and true impact of our policies on our own people and on the countries people migrate from. No jails or physical walls, but rather virtual monitoring and surveillance. Reform and eliminate ICE.

Rural healthcare is hard to access in our area and across Texas. What efforts would you make to serve your constituents’ healthcare needs and access to specialty care?

Americans pay the most in healthcare costs and should get the most — the best in the world. Comprehensive universal healthcare coverage for all. Establish a health care commission to set the legal foundation by providing a detailed deep study and report with recommendations and solutions that all branches of government could follow as a blueprint to implement changes that could lead to universal healthcare coverage for all, or greatly expanded Medicare as a minimum that generously covers most medical procedures, including vision, dental, hearing, mental health and the social determinants of health. Use the collective bargaining power of the federal government to lower drug prices. Break the health insurance and drugmaker monopolies. Establish public health clinics in every town that includes specialty care, providing good family sustaining jobs for people in the communities especially in rural areas.



CORRECTIONS

Ann Marie Nafziger is not a teacher at MISD. She is an independent consultant and does fundraising and special projects for schools, non-profits and foundations, including Marfa ISD. She also directs Read Big Bend.

In the January 30 issue, the outline for the front-page photo incorrectly identified the bridge. Pictured was the rail bridge, which received work on the US and Mexican sides last year.

Polling locations will change to comply with election code this year

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — This year, voters will need to pay special attention to their precinct in order to determine where their voting location will be. For Marfa voters, the voting location will now be at the USO Building. In Presidio, what once was one voting location will now be split into three, depending on which precinct voters live in.

This year's changes were spurred on when, in the fall of 2019, watchdog group the Texas Civil Rights Project informed Presidio County that they believed the county had violated Texas Election Code by combining certain precincts, specifically those in south county.

The group recommended remedial action immediately to avoid further monitoring or possible enforcement actions against the county.

If the county did not comply, the group stated they would "consider all legal and equitable remedies available to bring the county into compliance with state law, including litigation and other avenues for bringing

attention to this issue."

In prior years, the county has combined precincts one and seven into a polling location in Marfa, and combined precincts two through six into a Presidio city voting location. For Presidio area voters, Democratic County Chair Clark Childers said, "The voting precincts all used to be combined, but in accordance with election law, we have split them up into three locations."

Here is the new polling location information:

- Voting Precincts 1 & 7 - The USO Building, 302 S. Highland Ave. Marfa, TX
- Voting Precinct 2 - Presidio ISD: Administration Building, 701 E. Market St., Presidio, TX 7845
- Voting Precincts 3 & 4 - Presidio County Courthouse Annex - Building C, 301 E. O'Reilly St., Presidio, TX 79845
- Voting Precincts 5 & 6 - Marquez Hall @ Santa Teresa Catholic Church, 1101 O'Reilly St., Presidio, TX 79845

Those who arrive at the wrong polling location can have election workers check the rolls and redirect them to their proper polling place.

Rodríguez

(Continued from page 1)

just because of the mass shootings that are taking place." Mass shootings are "not all tied to mental health," he said. "We don't want to stigmatize mentally ill people as violent, because they're not."

Rodríguez then pivoted to gun violence. "We have an epidemic," he said. He pinned the shootings in malls, churches and schools to the degradation of civic discourse in Texas and beyond. The senator was troubled that the El Paso shooter — who before killing 22 people published a manifesto complaining of an immigrant "invasion" — appeared to be acting "with racial animus."

"I know there's people in the room that feel strongly about the Second Amendment," he said. "I do too, as a lawyer."

But noting that gun killings happen every day, and not just in mass shootings, he stressed the United States needs to stop looking for convenient scapegoats for the carnage. "Japan has a lot more people playing video games than we do," he said. But their gun violence rates are far below the United States.

Rodríguez also gave a recap of the last legislative session, including "the good" (hemp production), "the bad" (more guns in schools) and "the ugly" (preventing Confederate monuments that are more than 40 years old from being removed).

"The legislative process isn't just about passing bills," Rodríguez said of the biannual Texas session. "A big part of it is also killing bills."

"There are always people on the other side who want to kill my bills," he added, laughing. "And believe me, some of my bills get killed."

In Marfa, Rodríguez's town hall took place last Wednesday at the Hotel Paisano. Among the attendees were Justice of the Peace David Beebe, MISD Superintendent Oscar Aguero, Jeff Davis County Commissioner Todd Jagger and Robert Halpern, former owner of *The Big Bend Sentinel*. Then, on Thursday, Rodríguez visited Presidio.

At the Hotel Paisano, Rodríguez took questions from the audience — though his detailed, hour-long presentation had answered most of them. And he reiterated that, even though he was retiring, he wouldn't be leaving public life anytime soon.

"It doesn't mean that I won't be engaged," he said of retirement. "I believe fully in engagement. People ask me: What are you going to do? How are you going to spend your time? I don't like fishing; I don't have the patience for it. I don't like golf."

"I used to enjoy rabbit hunting," he concluded to laughter, "but that was a long time ago."

Instead, he said, "I'm going to be raising hell in the community," and being an "ankle-biter" for politicians, to make sure they are "doing the right thing." Still, he did acknowledge he'd be taking some time off, whether it was to explore the Davis Mountains or attend a concert of David Beebe's band.

"There will be plenty of things for me to do," he said. "Don't worry about it."

Leach

(Continued from page 1)

cancelled after Ables was unable to attend.

Around that same time, more stickers with the phrase "Katy lied" showed up at a business in Alpine. Cole and Rogers have previously accused Leach or someone associated with him of distributing the stickers in Terlingua. Flores declined to comment on the stickers, and Leifeste did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Milam's lawyers, Jodi Cole and Liz Rogers, have asked judges to dismiss the defamation case. Their argument rests largely on the Texas Citizens Participation Act, a 2011 law that protects people from getting sued for using their legal rights.

"Mrs. Schwartz has a protected constitutional right to express what happened to her," they wrote in one motion to dismiss, from October. "Her communication was by definition a public concern, because it was related to her own, and other women's, safety."

At a teleconference on Monday with Judge Ables, Leach's lawyer Rae Leifeste argued that the case had dragged on for too long and that Cole and Rogers had missed deadlines for filing motions to dismiss the case. "We are beyond the deadline by quite some time," Leifeste said. "In no event — no event — should a hearing [on dismissal] occur after more than 90 days."

Leifeste also urged Judge Ables to seal the most recent affidavit against Leach, which he described as

"salacious." But Judge Ables declined to do so, noting: "I'm not too big on sealed pleadings."

Cole, for her part, argued that the rotating cast of judges — and not missed deadlines — were the main reason the case had dragged on. (A court filing from Cole and Rogers on Tuesday made the same argument, with the lawyers concluding that Leach "is strategically attempting to use litigation to attempt to silence very serious complaints of sexual harassment and assault.")

In the teleconference, Cole also urged all sides to "de-escalate," expressing concerns about "safety issues at stake" in the case.

"This is new legal territory — but it also crosses into matters that involve trauma and violence," she argued. "This person [Leach] is a very sick and dangerous individual."

Back in September, a couple weeks after Leach filed his defamation lawsuit against Milam, he also sued her in small-claims court for around \$1,300. That case was scheduled for last Friday morning at the Terlingua Fire & EMS building.

Then, on Thursday afternoon, Leach emailed the judge and one of Milam's lawyers from a personal email. Attached was a motion apparently dropping the case.

Milam, Rogers and a couple supporters turned up at court Friday morning, just to be sure the case was really over. Leach wasn't present. Judge Jim Burr dismissed the case with prejudice — meaning Leach can't make the same claims in court again.

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Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

How many factual errors are there in “A Battle for the Soul of Marfa” by Mimi Swartz, let us count the ways. The article appears in the February issue of Texas Monthly magazine.

Some errors and misrepresentations are glaring and others are small, but it seems like an unusual amount of mistakes got through the editing process in a magazine that sets the standard for excellence and accuracy as the definitive source for all things Texas.

Here are some:

- You can see the Davis Mountains and Chinati Mountains from Marfa, there’s Cathedral Mountain off in the distance, and some lesser peaks and ranges along the horizon, but you can’t see the Chisos Mountains from here, even from the dome of the Presidio County Courthouse.
- Who told Swartz city government is “ineffectual,” Marfa schools are “substandard,” there’s a “dearth of adequate healthcare,” and housing prices are “soaring”? Those are unsubstantiated generalizations, although it is a seller’s market when it comes to Marfa real estate, that’s true.
- Our city water and wastewater systems work fine, trash is picked up once a week, and City Hall maintains an ambulance service, police department, library, senior center, a meals on wheels program and recycling program. The Utility Department recently repaired a water main in the middle of the night so daytime service wasn’t interrupted. That had never happened before so that was kind of forward-thinking cool. The city recently repaired and repainted its two water towers in a much-needed preventative maintenance project. There aren’t many bells and whistles to it, but the City of Marfa provides basic services effectively.
- Marfa schools actually have a B rating, or “recognized performance” in the Texas Education Agency public school grading system. The RoboHorns robotics team teaches science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics to girls and boys, and an experiment designed by a team of Marfa students was selected to ride on the International Space Station last year.
- There are two vibrant medical clinics staffed by several physicians, physician assistants, family nurse practitioners, and registered nurses, in addition to the state health clinic, an EMS ambulance crew who are second to none, a drugstore has returned to town, and the hospital and emergency room are just 26 miles away. Seems adequate for most of the medical and healthcare needs of our small population.
- The writer states that after we sold the newspaper, “Then the Sentinel published a news story about the late-night permit controversy. (It was news, after all.) Crowley promptly stopped distributing free papers at the Saint George.”
- The article was published by us in January 2019, six months before we sold the newspaper. The Hotel Saint George didn’t stop distributing the Sentinel after we published the story.
- Cochineal has never been a “high toned Mexican restaurant” by any stretch of the imagination and palate. That’s like saying the barbecue restaurant Lambert’s in Austin is a sushi place.
- Tim Crowley has one special needs son, not two. Why was this even in the article?
- Swartz blames Crowley for former Mayor Ann Marie Nafziger’s political defeat because he didn’t like a parking ordinance she was proposing. Few, if any, downtown business owners liked the proposed parking ordinance. We didn’t like it, either. Ann Marie lost the election for a second two-year term because she had a formidable opponent in current Mayor Manny Baeza, a Marfa native and 10-year city council member. Manny won the election fair and square based on his civic experience and with 56 percent of the vote.
- “Opponents of the concert have pointed out that Crowley stands to profit handsomely if thousands of people show up in town.” The Hotel Saint George has 55 rooms, that’s all they can offer at a time, unless they plan to put cots in the hallways. And if the hotel’s restaurant and bar are also to profit handsomely, so will the Hotel Paisano, the Thunderbird Hotel & Capri lounge, the Riata Inn, El Cosmico, all the short-term rentals, restaurants, bars, shops and galleries, what you want to bet?
- “He began to replace the mom and pop stores on Highland Street.” Which ones? We’ve owned a building on Highland and ran the newspaper there for years, and we can’t think of one displaced mom and pop.
- “The Crowleys couldn’t understand why the owner of a Mexican American restaurant didn’t want to move out of one of their properties after they offered her a nicer spot south of the railroad tracks. Neither of them realized they were trying to get her to move to the proverbial wrong side.” Swartz is waxing metaphoric because City Hall, the Marfa National Bank, all the shops and businesses along San Antonio Street/US 67-90, even the Hotel Saint George, are located south of the railroad tracks. The Mexican American restaurant to which she refers was in several locations over the years, all south of the tracks. There is no “proverbial wrong side” anymore.
- The juxtaposition of what the late artist Donald Judd did in the 1970s and 1980s – “Judd began buying up local real estate . . .” - and what Crowley did years later should be viewed in the same light, but Judd is portrayed as a visionary artist and Crowley becomes the big bad capitalist, although his support of the art/music/literary/culture community is unparalleled. Both men gave the town a boost.

And while all of Crowley’s past and present real estate transactions – except for the theater – include taxable properties, almost all Chinati and Judd foundation properties are tax exempt. We don’t know what Crowley pays in property taxes for his hotel and other real estate, but the Judd and Chinati foundations don’t pay a dime.

Thanks for hearing us out, and sincerely,
Rosario Salgado Halpern and Robert Halpern
Marfa

Dear Editor,

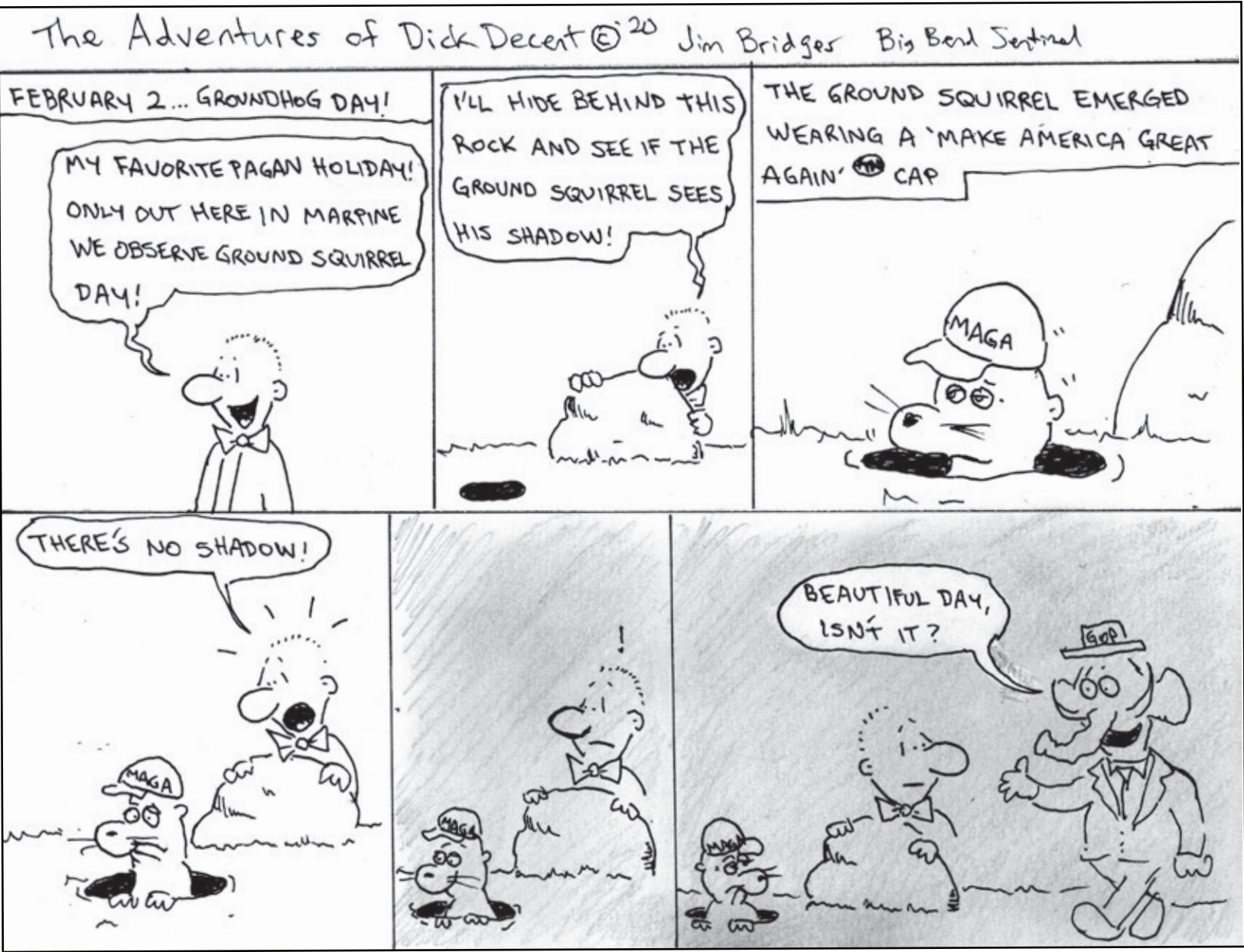
Texas Monthly needs to give itself the Bum Steer Award–2020, for its one-sided article trying to slam Tim Crowley. Tim Crowley has been our friend for many years, and has spent millions of his own dollars since the mid-1990s to improve Marfa, and help make Marfa the bright, vibrant tourist destination it has become. Many people in Marfa appreciate everything Tim has done to make Marfa a better place. Tim has restored downtown Marfa, employed hundreds of local residents, built and operated the award winning Hotel St. George, and continues to support Marfa through private investment and public generosity – The Crowley Theater.

Marfa does not appreciate Texas Monthly trying to stir up petty jealousies in our wonderful town. We have a bumper sticker out here in the Big Bend: “KEEP AUSTIN THERE.”

We like Tim Crowley and appreciate everything he has done for Marfa.

Rod Ponton
Dick DeGuerin

Got something to say?
Write a letter to the Editor at
editor@bigbendsentinel.com



Dear Editor,

We read the recent article about Tim Crowley, part of the “Small Towns, Big Money” package, with dismay. We immediately wrote a letter to Texas Monthly, and much of that letter is below. We felt that we should also share our thoughts with your newspaper, especially since you were mentioned and it is your readership to which Mimi Swartz consistently refers.

Not only do we, from the School of Theatre and Dance and the JT and Margaret Talkington College of Visual and Performing Arts at Texas Tech University, disagree with Ms. Swartz’s depiction of Mr. Crowley, but we are frankly appalled at what can only be called yellow journalism, a nod towards objectivity with an insidious underlying tone meant to negatively influence the readers’ opinion of Mr. Crowley.

Having worked with Mr. Crowley for almost a decade, we can honestly assure the readers that her depiction of him is untruthful.

Before we pointed to tactics that Ms. Swartz employs to manipulate her readers, we framed our response with a bit of history. As the Big Bend Sentinel knows, Tim earned his degree in theatre from Texas Tech, and when his alma mater experienced new leadership, we reached out to Mr. Crowley to see if he would be interested in donating to the students here. We visited him, long before the Hotel St. George was a reality, and he toured Marfa with us, sharing his affection for the art, the food and the culture that makes this small town such a fascinating and important destination. His affection for the town and its history was and still is obvious. He loves Marfa and its people.

In time, he offered our students an experience, one that would benefit their education and, in return, the town itself. As you know, each summer he gifts us his theatre, and, indeed, housing and accommodations for nearly two weeks so that students can learn devised theatre, based on an understanding of the environment in West Texas. Going on five years now, he has hosted over twenty students from TTU and Bilkent University in Turkey, and guest artists, making sure that they not only are privy to the art and culture that Marfa offers, but also, have complete access to his theatre where students begin with a “hunch” and, eleven days later, share a fully staged event. It’s a substantial gift, one of our signature programs. And it’s a program that we have often advertised in your newspaper, one which some of you have attended.

We pointed out to Ms. Swartz that, with Tim, it’s never been about the money. Rather, he’s intent on contributing to the education and experience of students, while, at the same time, introducing them to Marfa’s rich culture. Please note that he always considers Marfa and he’s introduced outsiders to many of the important artists -- literary, visual and theatrical -- whom he has met, again, to expand their knowledge of the town, its history and the surrounding areas. In other words, he wants students to love Marfa, and to appreciate all there is to learn there and in related towns, so much so that he’s also taken us to the McDonald Observatory, Fort Leaton, Shafter Ghost Town and Ojinaga.

Ms. Swartz’s article cites many of his generous acts, but her depiction of him suggests she doesn’t really know him. Anyone who spends time with Tim understands that he is neither a “fastidious” dresser -- instead, he most often sports jeans and a wrinkled button-down shirt or t-shirt -- nor is he anything like a “British Lord,” in all honesty, he’s most comfortable not in formal dress. The Texas Monthly article reads like someone who hasn’t spent much time in Marfa, who finds what dirt she can on one of the most prominent citizens there, and spreads it.

A smear campaign.

Anyone who understands rhetoric can see the games Ms. Swartz plays with language:

- “He flashes extremely white teeth”: Why add extremely? Isn’t this almost punitive?
- “The most Texan touch comes from the servers, who are mainly young and Latino and who repeatedly fill his water glass, asking over and over and over if he needs more of. . . anything. He is oblivious in the way of people accustomed to being fussed over.”: Why does Ms. Swartz use the word “repeatedly” and then repeat the word “over” three times, along with the carefully placed ellipses, unless she mean to criticize him for expecting good service? And doesn’t this intimate that only Tim receives excellent service in this five-star hotel? We are there often, and the service is always excellent.
- “For a few hours a day, any adult in town can swim free of charge in the hotel’s sprawling pool. (Kids get the privilege on Tuesdays only.)”: Why add the words “few hours a day,” when residents are actually welcome from 4 p.m. until the pool closes, and why add the word only unless you are trying to undermine a pool which makes room for children even when it may hurt their active bar scene there? [Name another hotel pool that allows residents. We often are surrounded by residents when we are guests at the hotel.]
- “Goode, meanwhile, was either alone battling rattlesnakes in her casbah or entertaining the cast of There Will Be Blood when they filmed just outside town. Friends noticed her jeans were now replaced with ensembles Crowley picked out for her. (Prada!)”: How does Ms. Swartz know that Mr. Crowley “dressed” his wife, and was their residence a “casbah”? Why use that word? Indeed, even “battling rattlesnakes” is pejorative. Isn’t this just hearsay?
- “Everyone from regular patrons of the Crowley Theater to employees in his various businesses was in some way dependent on him. ‘People

got attached to the money,’ one local explains. Crowley had become a modern-day version of the Mexican patrón: someone who was paternalistically generous but seemed to expect fealty in return.”: From whom did Ms. Swartz solicit this information? Some and one local? And isn’t the melodramatic and hyperbolic comparison to a Mexican patron the author’s herself?

There are countless other examples where Ms. Swartz takes the facts, obscures them with gossip by unnamed sources, and presents them as truths. She’s a gossip columnist, and this article is filled with her unsubstantiated claims and personal attacks.

Jim Lehrer, journalist of the PBS NewsHour, recently passed away. Known for his integrity and excellent, objective reporting, Lehrer published 16 Rules for Practicing Journalism with Integrity. One of the most important is Do not use anonymous sources or blind quotes except on rare and monumental occasions. No one should ever be allowed to attack another anonymously. Another: Do not distort, lie, slant, or hype. Ms. Swartz breaks these, along with several other of these 16 rules in her article about Tim Crowley. Her facts are suspect, and her opinions, slanted and overhyped.

Ms. Swartz paints a villainous picture of Mr. Crowley, a “British Lord,” a “patrón” whose vision of Marfa ignores the residents in favor of an almost megalomaniacal desire to recreate a town in his own image. All of his good works and generosity are undermined in a portrayal that insists he serves himself before all others. It’s not for us to judge what Marfa residents think of Mr. Crowley, and others responding to the article I’m sure point out the factual inaccuracies, but those of us from Texas Tech find this description to be slanted, unfair and untrue.

The Texas Monthly article makes for a good story, but unfortunately, with so much of the article rooted in fiction rather than fact, that’s all it is: a story. After reading the interview, we are certain of two things: we are not interested in reading the rest of the series, and we’ll think twice before we breakfast with Ms. Swartz.

Sincerely,
Mark Charney, Director of Theatre and Dance
Cory Norman, Director of Marketing and Company Manager
Noel Zahler, Dean of the JT and Margaret Talkington College of Visual and Performing Arts

Dear Editor,

Quoting ...

The Roman Republic was broken after 536 years, Senators subjugated by Imperial power. Republican Senators, intimidated by Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Trump’s Nero-like authoritarianism, failed our Constitution in just 234 years.

The difference is Americans know better than accepting a no witness/ documents, “the fix is in with the defendant” outcome! President Harry Truman said, “America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand.”

Stirred by xenophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric, Trump’s rightwing base is pre-disposed to violence. Reasonably foreseeable consequences of “dog whistle” exhortations cannot be ignored. Paranoid about “stolen elections,” anticipate more violence.

Was Jesus violent upending some tables? Primarily, he addressed social injustice through parables and loved so hard it hurt.

That doesn’t mean holding-off action awaiting intercessory prayer. It’s not faith or works. Stay engaged. “God helps those who help themselves,” said Algernon Sidney.

Pastor Greg Laurie said, “The word ‘believe’ is made up of two words: ‘be’ and ‘live’. Faith helps us to ‘be’ spiritually. But then it is expressed in Christian works and deeds.” (Acts 8:13, 21-22)

Love doesn’t exclude taking a stand. Non-violence is action. “At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love,” according to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Call, write policy makers and vote. Demonstrate peacefully! Quoting Jean-Paul Sartre, “Commitment is an act, not a word.”

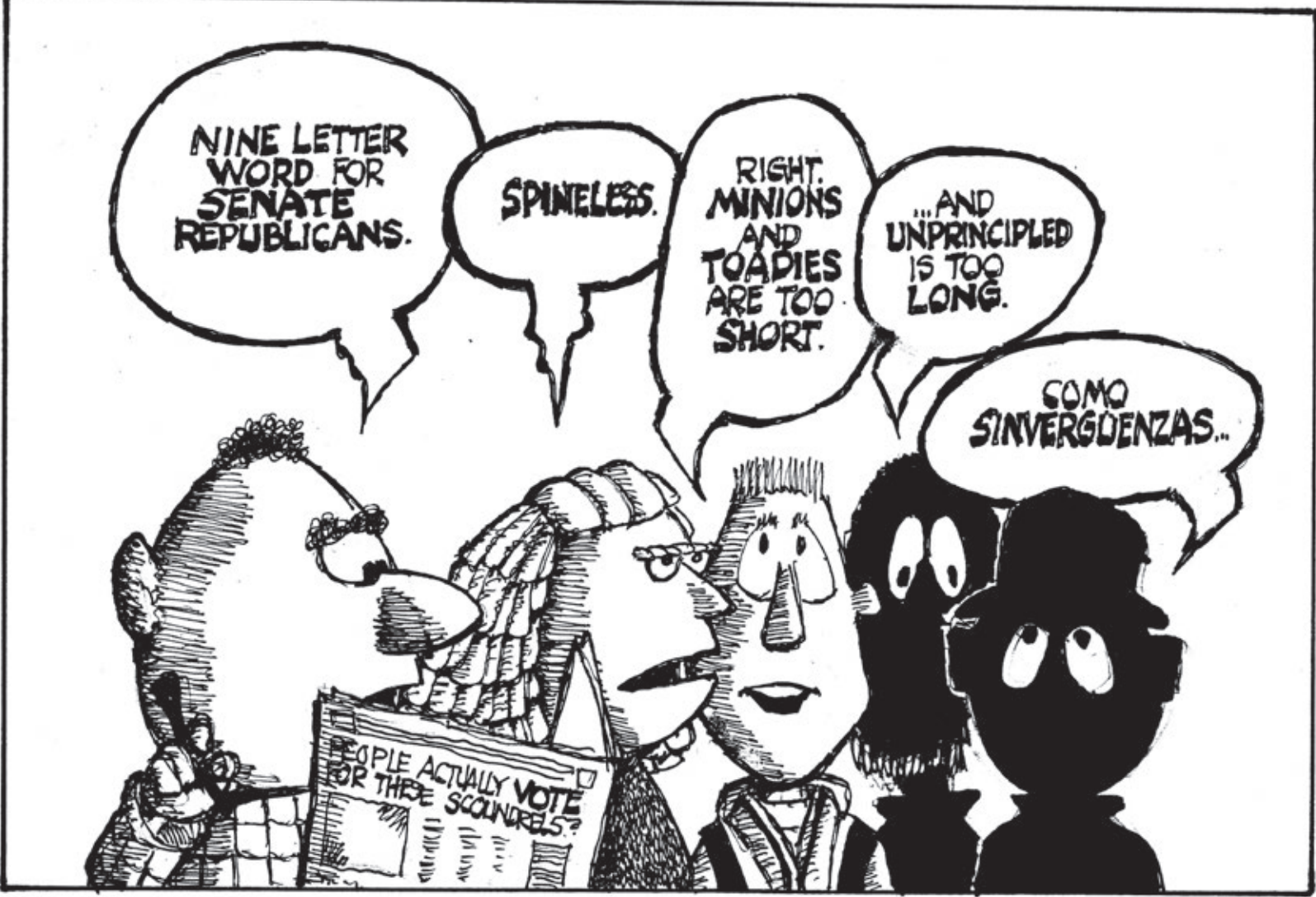
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CROSS WORDS



URANUS IS AFOOT

Birth chart Marfa: Part one

By JACK COPELAND

Picture Marfa, sitting alone, nursing a ranch water at the Lost Horse. Suave, sexy Presidio, a few seats down, makes eye contact. Casual and confident, he ambles over and asks, “Hey baby, what’s your sign?” Marfa is flummoxed - she has no idea what her sign is. Presidio drifts away, and chats up Ojinaga at the south end of the bar.

Houston, we have a problem. Solving that problem is the subject of this column: when was Marfa born? Figuring out her precise time of birth, for Marfaastrology purposes, is easier said than done. But what kind of a serious fake astrologer would I be if I couldn’t throw a proper birth chart for our beloved town?

Let’s dig in, with a little help from our friends, past and present. Historian friends like Lonn Taylor, Lee Bennett and her Marfa Junior Historians, Cecilia Thompson, Louise O’Connor, Sterry Butcher, the Marfa Public Library, our County Clerk’s Office and the Marfa and Presidio County Museum. Presidio County was initially decreed by the Texas Legislature on January 3,1850. Twenty-five years later, the county became formally organized (and down-sized a tad) on May 13,1875. Then it’s another ten years before Marfa became the Presidio County seat. By a popular vote of 391 to 302, the removal of the county seat from Fort Davis to Marfa became official on July 25,1885. So, is this the date we should use to proclaim Marfa’s cosmic arrival?

Think again, buckaroo. If we use that county seat date, then Lee Bennett would surely protest from the Great Beyond. Why? Because Lee chaired the steering committee for the massively successful Centennial Marfa Celebration, held in 1983. Which would make Marfa’s official birthday sometime in 1883 (not 1885).

So far, so good. But we’re not out of the Marfa Plateau just yet. Exactly when in 1883 does Marfa get her first swaddle? Loosen your chaps, because it gets a little tricky from here.

Lee’s planning committee, as recorded in the August 12,1982 issue of The Big Bend Sentinel, chose May 6, 7 and 8, 1983 to celebrate Marfa’s centennial. These dates were selected, not because that was Marfa’s official naissance, but for practical reasons – good weather and a time when Marfa’s teachers and students could join in the fun and not conflict with end-of-year school activities. It turned out to be an auspicious choice of dates for the fete. A horse named

Marfa ran in the Kentucky Derby that very weekend. I kid you not. The horse was even favored to win, but alas finished fifth on a sloppy track.

Putting the mint juleps aside for a moment, we still have a mystery to solve. Cuando in 1883 is that eventful birth? Marfa made application to Washington, D.C. for a new post office on March 22,1883. That application was granted by the assistant post master general on April 21,1883. That sounds pretty official. Now can we cast Marfa’s birth chart?

Not so fast Shorthorns, but we’re getting warmer. The truth is, Marfa’s mother (let’s call her Mary) went into labor circa January 1882. Think railroad labor. The Southern Pacific Railway had been laying track east of El Paso,

but lack of water was a serious problem. Water wells needed to be dug every 20 to 30 miles so that the steam engines would have water for their boilers. These wells became known as “Tank Towns,” and were named by persons affiliated with the railroad. As we all know (and accept as gospel, no matter what any interloper may say), the wife of the railroad chief engineer was given the honor of naming our as yet undesignated water stop. She chose Marfa, a character in Dostoevsky’s Brothers’ Karamazov. The eastbound tracks arrived here on January 16,1882.

But wait! We’ve only got half a railroad. The Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railway (a subsidiary of the Southern Pacific) was making tracks westbound from San Antonio, and hadn’t yet united with its eastbound mate. The gap was closed at Mile Post 415 at exactly 2 p.m. on January 12,1883. A gold spike was driven by Colonel Thomas W. Pierce, president of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio, to celebrate the union. What’s more, this precise moment was officially captured for posterity when the mayors of San Antonio and El Paso exchanged telegrams as the lines met.

The El Paso Times noted the occasion, proclaiming that at long last, the Southern Pacific Railway had now linked its Sunset Route from New Orleans west to Los Angeles. Marfa is on the map. Its ranchers could access San Antonio cattle markets by rail. The first passenger train from San Francisco reaches San Antonio [through Marfa] by February 7,1883. Within a year, Marfa’s got a boxcar railroad station, one store, one hotel, a post office, a Chinese restaurant, a gambling hall, a few adobe homes and nearly a hundred people on a good day.

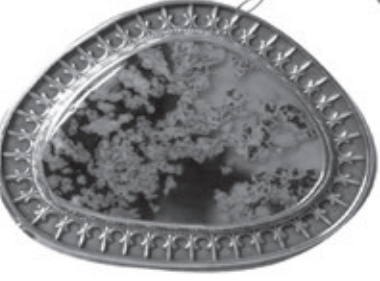
Marfa is birthed, mis amigos, she’s in the straw. A Capricorn with Gemini rising, a rare four planet stellium in Taurus and, as luck would have it, Uranus playing a lead role in her astrological cast. Stay tuned for “Birth Chart Marfa: Part Two.” Lovely Marfa is flummoxed no more.

Jack Copeland is a retired busboy radiologist and active Judd Foundation tour guide.

Historical resources for this column include “History of Marfa and Presidio County, Texas, Vol One, 1535 - 1900” by Cecilia Thompson, “Images of America: Marfa” by Louise S. O’Connor and Cecilia Thompson (2009), “Junior Historian Files” and the “Centennial Marfa File” from the Marfa Public Library and from the Marfa and Presidio County Museum, and “Presidio County Commissioners Court Minutes” (November 12,1883, Vol 2). Astrology source includes notes from astrologer Bill Nolan.



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Skip chocolate, support women’s rights

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON

Of all our holidays, Valentine’s is one of the mildest, but that has not always been the case. It was once called Lupercalia. The festival celebrated the rescue of the legendary founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus by a she-wolf. It began as a Roman festival, and quite a rowdy one according to the internationally renowned holiday expert and illustrator Valerie “CrowCrumbs” Howard. She recently wrote, “Historical festivities weren’t any tamer. In ancient times the celebration began by getting drunk and naked and then running around randomly whipping others with strips of sacrificial goat or dog skin. Anyone who wanted a baby would line up for a lashing because it was believed to improve fertility and promote an easy labor. People also chose names at random to couple up with for the duration of the festival. If the match happened to be a good one, the couple stayed together until the following year’s festival. Some would even fall in love and get married. As with the fate of most pagan festivals, a pope, Pope Gelasius I, was upset by all the fun. At the close of the 5th century, he replaced Lupercalia with the tamer celebration of Valentine’s Day.”

The sweet cards and sweeter candy did not begin until the late 1700s. Most modern women would settle today for their full rights as American citizens rather than a bunch of expensive flowers that will wilt in a few days.

The Equal Rights Amendment is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution designed to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of sex. It seeks to end the legal distinctions between men and women in divorce, property, employment and other matters. Although introduced in 1923, the ERA did not pass both houses in Congress until 1971 and 1972 when it was sent to the states for ratification.



Congress had originally set a ratification deadline of March 22, 1979, for the state legislatures to consider the ERA. Through 1977, the amendment received 35 of the necessary 38 state ratifications. With wide, bipartisan support (including that of both major political parties, both houses of Congress, and presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter) the ERA seemed destined for ratification until Phyllis Schlafly mobilized conservative women in opposition. These women argued that the ERA would disadvantage housewives, cause women to be drafted into the military and to lose protections such as alimony, and eliminate the tendency for mothers to obtain custody over their children in divorce cases. Many labor feminists also opposed the ERA on the basis that it would eliminate protections for women in labor law, though over time more and more unions and labor feminist leaders turned toward supporting it.

Five state legislatures (Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee and South Dakota) voted to revoke their ERA ratifications. Four claim to have rescinded their ratifications before the original March 22, 1979, ratification deadline, while the South Dakota legislature did so by voting to sunset its ratification as of that original deadline. However, it remains an unresolved legal question as to whether a state can revoke its ratification of a federal constitutional amendment.

In 1978, Congress passed (by simple majorities in each house), and President Carter signed, a joint resolution with the intent of extending the ratification deadline to June 30, 1982. Because no additional state legislatures ratified the ERA between March 22, 1979, and June 30, 1982, the validity of that disputed extension was rendered academic. Since 1978, attempts have been made in Congress to extend or remove the deadline.

In the 2010s, due, in part, to fourth-wave feminism and the Me Too Movement, interest in getting the ERA adopted was revived. In 2017, Nevada became the first state to ratify the ERA after the expiration of both deadlines, and Illinois followed in 2018. In January 2020, Virginia passed the ERA, making it the 38th state to ratify the ERA counting the five that have voted to rescind their ratifications. However, experts and advocates have acknowledged legal uncertainty about the consequences of Virginia’s ratification, due to the expired deadlines and the five states’ purported revocations.

The ERA will have a rough time, but I think it would make it because I remember immortal lines from Kipling:

When the Himalayan peasant meets the he-bear in his pride,
He shouts to scare the monster, who will often turn aside.
But the she-bear thus accosted rends the peasant tooth and nail.
For the female of the species is more deadly than the male.

George A. Covington has worked in the fields of law, education, journalism and disability rights. He considers himself retired from every one of them with the possible exception of journalism. He is a graduate of the University of Texas schools of Journalism and Law. He moved to West Texas – Alpine – in 1997 after a 20-year career in Washington, D.C. where he once served on the staff of the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives (Democrat) and shortly thereafter served as Special Assistant to the Vice President of the United States (Republican) 1989 to 1993.

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Arts & Culture



Photo by Julian MacKinnon



Photo by Jared Menane

Above: Sam Walker stands in front of a painting by Calhan Hale at the Wrong Gallery. Left: Works by “Mink Floyd” in the foreground and a painting by Calhan Hale in the background.

A free association of luxury and excess in DE\$ERT MONEY art show

By SARA BUTTON

MARFA — On Friday night, a crowd flocked to the Wrong Gallery for its latest opening, a pop-up show called DE\$ERT MONEY. As art-goers sipped canned Modelo and knocked back a couple shots of sotol, three young artists’ works commanded the attention of the room.

The three artists, whose work is displayed at the space through February 11, are “Mink Floyd” of Marfa, Calhan Hale of Austin, and Julian MacKinnon of Marfa.

Between the three artists, eight pieces of their work are currently installed at the Wrong space. Hale was the first of the three artists to make a sale on one of the displayed works. Her works consist of three acrylic paintings on canvas, one with a tight typeface that reads, as is titled, “The Things I Heard Were True.”

Her paintings incorporate vibrant, neon colors in a varicolored scheme. Each of Hale’s three pieces have a checkerboard print painted in the bottom right quadrant. Hale said that the pieces she made for DE\$ERT MONEY have to do with stories, stereotypes, place, communication and making things your own.

“I was interested in the way information is gained and lost as it moves from our own experience, to our memories, to digital interfaces and then back into a physical object like a painting,” Hale said.

Over the past couple of years, Hale said that she has used painting as a way of re-examining and reclaiming parts of her Texas upbringing by bringing Texas iconography into conversation with elements informed by digital experience. “I’m interested in the way that people, places and objects can be the holders of multiple, often contrasting, things at once, and how their context and our own experiences greatly inform the ways we encounter them,” she said.

“Jared [Menane] had the vision for DE\$ERT MONEY and tapped on Julian and me to make a few pieces. It was truly so special getting to show work with artists and friends that I really love and admire,” Hale said.

Menane, who operates as an artist under the moniker Mink Floyd, organized and curated the show and says that it fell “together really casually.” He previously worked as the art director for the nonprofit art festival Marfa Open.

“I came up with the idea for “DE\$ERT MONEY” after reading an article in some major newspaper about tech entrepreneurs hitting their IPOs and building their dream homes in the chic southwest,” Menane said. “It felt fairly apropos to highlight that concept at this time in the political landscape of not just Marfa, but maybe the entire country.”

He says that the show isn’t political whatsoever, though. He really just liked the way it sounded. His contribution to the show is a piece called “racks” that includes six separate 6.5 x 3 inch canvases with screen printed dollars in \$1, 5, 10, 20, 50 & 100 variations, as well as a seven second video

loop of champagne being poured over a thong-donning, gyrating buttocks. “The concept was to infer a free association about luxury and excess” he said. Besides the pop-up in Marfa, Menane is currently working on shows in New York City, Houston and Chihuahua, Mexico.

The third artist, MacKinnon, moved to Marfa from New York last November, looking to fill the void he was experiencing after finishing up his undergrad degree.

“I met Jared my first weekend in town and we almost immediately started planning a show,” MacKinnon said.

MacKinnon’s pieces for this show included a 92” x 54” painting called “cuidado” as well as two seperate and slightly smaller paintings, all three being oil on canvas.

“Like most of my figurative work, the paintings deal with aspects of the human condition,” MacKinnon said. “There are so many reasons that Marfa attracts people. Whether it’s a romanticization of the western ranch lifestyle, or an escape from a big city, I sought to capture a few different perspectives on this magical place.”

“After talking to Buck [Johnston] it was a no-brainer to do it at the Wrong Gallery. She and Camp are so supportive and just let us do our thing with the space.”

All three artists had nothing but great things to say about Wrong owners and curators Buck Johnston and Camp Bosworth. “Buck and Camp of Wrong were incredibly kind and generous to offer up their beautiful church gallery for the show,” Hale said.

“Their aesthetic is quintessential to me and they have always impressed me with their curation and presentation,” Menane said. “Shout out to Buck and Camp, they’re real ones.”

According to Johnston, it was a really positive experience for them. “They curated, organized, got a Sotol sponsor, got the DJ and everything. It was a sweet event.”

Johnston and Bosworth have been hosting events like this in Marfa for more than 10 years. The original Wrong church space officially opened in 2010 and they recently moved the store into a separate space on Highland.

The original Wrong church space, though, will house future artist residencies. Behind the gallery space there is a little apartment that Johnston said they usually rent out. When there is an exhibiting artist, they usually give that space to them to stay while the show is being installed.

“The response has been tremendous,” Johnston said. They’ve already got a couple of artists lined up this year. And in between the residencies and other exhibitions, Johnston said they hope to host more pop-ups for local artists.

Presented by

FOOD SHARK

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	4		8				7	
6			4	3		5		
		2			1			3
8			7			2	3	
		9			6	8		
	7			9				6
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	1			8				5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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Marfa Public Radio to read your love notes on air

MARFA — It’s time for Marfa Public Radio’s annual Love Drive on February 14. On this day, the station will broadcast listeners love notes, poems, odes, missed connections and loving gripes.

To submit your stories, call the station’s Google Voicemail at 432-242-1896 to record your message. You can also email your note to love@marfapublicradio.org. If you would like to have your love note transcribed on a postcard and mailed from the Valentine post office, please include the name of the recipient and mailing address in your email. The deadline for submission is Sunday, February 9.



Photo by Sarah M. Vasquez

Children dance in front of the stage at last year’s Valentine’s in Valentine event.

Valentine’s in Valentine event to return this year

VALENTINE — A pared-down Valentine’s in Valentine event will return to the Valentine Mercantile building on North Main Street next weekend.

The party — now in its eighth year — was originally sponsored by Big Bend Brewery. But after the company went bankrupt last year, organizers were determined to bring back the company’s signature Valentine’s Day event.

The party will happen on Friday, February 14, from around 4 to 10 p.m.. The exact times may vary based on the weather, but festivities will go on “rain or shine, snow or swelter,” according to the event’s website, available at www.valentineinvalentinetxt.com.

Among the attractions will be a barbeque crew from Fredericksburg and local musical acts like Ryan Rooney, The Valentine OG’s and the Doodlin’ Hogwallops. The event is free, though donations (which are welcome!) will be split 50/50 between the City of Valentine and Valentine Independent School District.

There will be no shuttle this year, and the event is BYOB — though one local bar hopes to help provide drinks.

The bar, which goes by “Valentine Bar” but doesn’t have an official name yet, is located in the old Hi Way Cafe building on U.S. Route 90.

King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Move like molasses
- 5 High card
- 8 Judicial garment
- 12 Place for sports reporters
- 14 Vivacity
- 15 Aware
- 16 Flex
- 17 Do sums
- 18 Kindle down-loads
- 20 Sew loosely
- 23 Liveliness, in music
- 24 Wheelbase terminus
- 25 Obama’s old title
- 28 — de Janeiro
- 29 Hawaiian dances
- 30 Deity
- 32 Dakar’s country
- 34 Salver
- 35 Bacchanalian blast
- 36 Yonder
- 37 Hallux, more commonly
- 40 That girl
- 41 "Superfood" berry
- 42 Mexican miss
- 47 Showroom

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13					14		
15										16		
				17				18	19			
20	21	22					23					
24					25					26	27	
28										30		31
			32		33					34		
									36			
37	38	39						40				
41												
47								48				
49								50			51	

- 8 Start the PC up again
- 9 Bread spread
- 10 Savings institution
- 11 Make — meet
- 13 Faction
- 19 Prejudice
- 20 Tavern
- 21 Line of symmetry
- 22 — gin fizz
- 23 Stop, at sea
- 25 Hints at
- 26 Shrek is one
- 27 Below
- 29 Medal earner
- 31 Coloring agent
- 33 Idea
- 34 Gas bill units
- 36 Commandment starter
- 37 Commanded
- 38 On the rocks
- 39 Chess or checkers
- 40 Use scissors
- 43 Historic time
- 44 Wall climber
- 45 Can metal
- 46 Joan of —

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Puzzle solutions for last week’s issue

Weekly SUDOKU									King Crossword			
Answer									Answers			
8	7	9	6	3	4	5	1	2	Solution time: 24 mins.			
1	6	3	5	7	2	4	9	8	P	R	O	P
2	5	4	1	9	8	3	6	7	A	U	R	A
9	3	1	7	4	5	8	2	6	S	T	E	P
4	2	7	8	6	3	9	5	1	E	I	R	E
5	8	6	2	1	9	7	4	3	S	H	O	E
3	9	2	4	8	6	1	7	5	R	I	P	O
6	1	8	9	5	7	2	3	4	V	A	L	E
7	4	5	3	2	1	6	8	9	E	M	M	Y



Photo courtesy of Shawna Graves

Bill Ramey and Danny Self operate Marathon Sky Park, a stargazing mecca in Marathon, Texas.

Marathon sky park welcomes stargazing visitors

By SHAWNA GRAVES

Marathon, a small town located at the junction of Highways 385 S and US 90 in Far West Texas, is quickly becoming a premier destination for serious and casual stargazers alike.

This easy going, quiet hamlet of about 500 residents possesses Class I dark skies, the darkest designation on the Bortle Scale, a chart that measures night sky brightness.

With easy access to Big Bend National Park 40 miles to the south, Marathon has long been a popular destination for travelers reveling in the great outdoors.

Now those adventures last long into the night, thanks to the growing popularity of a new attraction, the Marathon Sky Park, located at Marathon Motel and RV Park.

Motel owner Danny Self says, “We’ve got the wow factor going on. Many people have never even looked through a telescope. When they see Saturn through our scopes, they’re blown away. It makes their vacation.”

The Sky Park started as Self’s

personal hobby of late night star gazing. It now boasts multiple observatory grade telescopes, including a 24-inch Dobsonian reflector, a 30-inch Newtonian, and a Cassegrain Equatorial Scope.

The telescopes are brought out for public viewing on most evenings, with the motel’s resident astrophotographer Bill Ramey, leading the party.

“I’m interested in capturing the imagination of children,” Ramey says.

He leads star parties free of charge for motel guests, and for a donation of \$5 for anyone else.

The donations all benefit additions and upgrades to the Sky Park.

Most recently, Marathon Chamber of Commerce along with local businesses, chipped in \$500 to help cover repairs to the mirror on one of the larger telescopes.

The stars over Marathon look different from what most urban dwellers are used to seeing. “It’s hard for people to spot the North Star out here, because the sky is saturated with so many more stars

than people are used to seeing,” Ramey said.

Marathon’s unique location in a basin between massive mountain ranges, protects it from light pollution coming off of larger cities. Its nearest neighboring town is many miles away on the other side of the mountain pass. Its dry climate gives more opportunities for clear nights. And an even bigger plus is the town’s location off a major highway with numerous conveniences and amenities. There are restaurants, cafes, gas stations, a grocery store, and a growing number of lodging options all conveniently located in Marathon.

Besides sky parties, the Sky Park offers a state-of-the-art remotely operated astrophotography lab. The heavily surveilled equipment results in unparalleled glimpses into deep space. For photos, a webcam, and other info, visit marathonmotel.com.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu
Feb
6

Rio Grande 4-H monthly meeting
6 pm at Presidio Activity Center Senior Center in Presidio
Monthly 4-H Meeting for the 4-H members to discuss upcoming events, new business, old business, etc. There will be a public speaker from Texas Parks and Wildlife. Meetings are open to the public.

El Cosmico: Film Thursday
7 pm at El Cosmico in Marfa
Come by the Lobby for Film Thursdays. Snuggle up, watch a film and grab a grilled cheese. This week’s movie is In the Mood for Love.

An American Forrest
8 pm at Lost Horse Saloon in Marfa
Western music, country and folk tunes performed at the Lost Horse.

Fri
Feb
7

Allison Smith and Nicholas McIntire book readings
6 - 7:30 pm at Front Street Books in Alpine
A double debut with graphic novelist Allison Nichole Smith and author Nicholas McIntire.

Caleb Young Band
9 pm at Ole Crystal Bar in Alpine
Country / southern rock band

Please submit a one sentence maximum description of your weekly event including who, what, when, and where by Tuesday at 10 am to calendar@bigbendsentinel.com

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Sat
Feb
8

15th Annual Fish Fry
6 pm at Marathon Community Center in Marathon
Fundraiser with food, an auction and a dance. Music provided by Justin Trevino. Donations benefit the Community Center and Post Park.

Marfa Prom
9 pm at The Sentinel in Marfa
Relive the 90s to 2000 at the return of the Marfa Prom that was held 10 years ago at Padre’s. No cover. Everyone is invited.

Sun
Feb
9

Lannan Reading: Amitava Kumar
6 pm at Crowley Theater in Marfa
Amitava Kumar will read from his work. His books include Immigrant, Montana: A Novel; Lunch with a Bigot; and A Foreigner Carrying in the Crook of His Arm a Tiny Bomb. Every Day I Write The Book, a collection of essays on writing, is forthcoming.



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**MARFA
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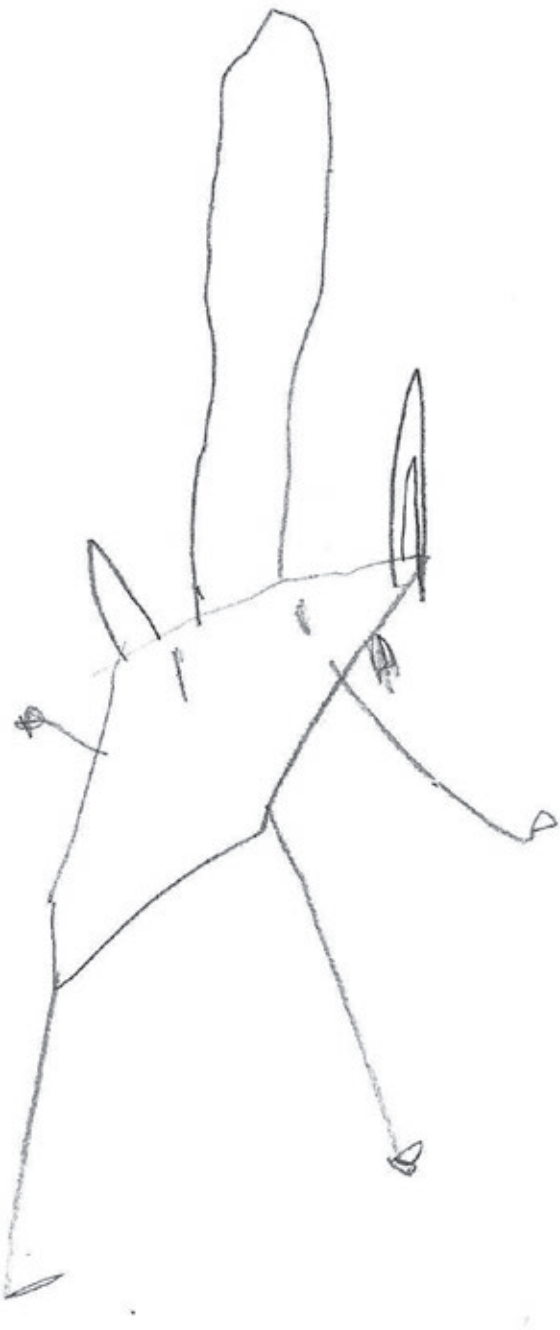
HITS FROM THE 90S TO 2000
90S ATTIRE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED
PRIZES FOR BEST OUTFITS
9PM. NO COVER

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Community & Education

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



“Unicorn”
Sofia Guzman
Pre-K
The Marfa Studio of Arts at Marfa Elementary School



Snow day!

Above, Willa Bamburg gathers snow while building a snowman with her sister Mae Bamburg and friend Mabel Melgaard in front of the Presidio County Courthouse on Wednesday.



Left, Robert Salazar and Chuck Simpson clean the sidewalk leading up to the Presidio County Courthouse after Wednesday’s early morning snowfall.

Photos by Maisie Crow

Museum of the Big Bend receives \$5 million donation from the McCoy Family

By TRAVIS HENDRYX
Sul Ross State University

ALPINE - The Museum of the Big Bend has received a \$5 million contribution from the McCoy family to its Museum Capital Campaign. When completed, construction of a new museum complex will nearly double the size of the existing facility and better enable the Museum to serve the entire Big Bend Community.

The donation from the McCoys increased total donations to the campaign to \$7.5 million of the \$10 million goal to complete the Museum expansion.

“I am so excited for our family to be a part of this very important expansion of the Museum of the Big Bend,” said Miriam McCoy. “My late husband, Emmett, would be so pleased about this project.”

Sul Ross State University president Dr. Bill Kibler said, “With the largest donation in the history of Sul Ross State University, Miriam McCoy and the McCoy family have again shown enduring support for the Museum of the Big Bend.

This donation allows expanded facilities, displays and programming, and creates a lasting legacy for the University that further enhances

quality of life in the Big Bend.”

Museum of the Big Bend’s Director Mary Bones said, “The idea for the Museum expansion was first brought forth by Board member John M. “Marty” Davis, who passed away last December. Marty saw the museum as a great educational and economic benefit for the entire region. With enthusiastic support from the museum’s board and our contributors, Marty’s idea will now become a reality.”

The heart of the expansion, a new building adjacent to the existing Museum, will be the premiere venue for exhibits, meetings and performances in the Big Bend. The space will showcase both historic and present-day art inspired by the Big Bend, and have state-of-the-art collections and curation facilities to protect the museum’s valuable art and artifacts.

In 2005, Emmett McCoy recognized the architectural significance of the original museum building and its unique roof. With significant support from the McCoy family, a funding campaign restored the building. In 2007 when the

Museum of the Big Bend moved into its current location, the building was named in honor of the McCoys.

“We are excited to work with the McCoy

family to expand and enhance the Museum of the Big Bend,” said Judy Alton who chairs the Museum of the Big Bend Director’s Advisory Council. “Mrs. McCoy’s generous gift has now made it possible for us to create a unique museum experience.”

In 1927 Frank McCoy moved his family and a small contract roofing business from Houston to Galveston, Texas, and the McCoy Roofing Company was born. In the 1940s, Frank’s son, Emmett, took an active interest in the family business with a vision of selling roofing and other building materials directly to the general public, and McCoy’s entered the retail business with the McCoy Supply Company.

When Frank retired in 1950, Emmett became president of both McCoy Roofing and McCoy Supply. He promptly expanded the product mix at McCoy Supply Company and opened a second store near Texas City, Texas, in 1960.

The company would later become known as McCoy’s Building Supply.

McCoy’s currently operates 88 retail stores across Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Mississippi.

The family also operates McCoy Remme Ranches in Jeff Davis, Reeves and Pecos Counties.

FRIDAY

BIRDS OF PREY

R

Action/Adventure

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6:15 & 9:30pm
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HELD OVER

Bad Boys for Life

Starring Will Smith & Martin Lawrence

R/Action/Comedy

6:15 pm & 9:30 pm

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4:30–6:15pm

The Studios
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Judd Foundation
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Marfa, Texas 79843
432 729 4406
9:00am–5:00pm

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺					
FEB	Thurs, Feb. 6	Fri, Feb. 7	Mon, Feb 10	Tues, Feb 11	Wed, Feb 12
BREAKFAST	breakfast pizza	donut, sausage	pancakes, bacon	breakfast burrito, hash brown	power breakfast (biscuit, gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon)
LUNCH Menu courtesy of Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	cheese pizza, tiny tomato cup, corn, mixed fruit	potato bowl (carnitas, fries, cheese), roll, cucumber slices, carrots, rosy applesauce, cookie	breaded drumstick, biscuit, sweet potatoes, corn, orange smiles	crispy tacos, spanish rice, fresh veggie cup, beans, lettuce garnish, grapes	pepperoni pizza, oven fries, baby carrots, mixed fruit

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YOUR AD HERE! ONLY \$10 / WEEK Contact ads@bigbendsentinel.com	<table><tr><th colspan="5">HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL</th></tr><tr><td>Date Feb. 7 (v. Balmorhea)</td><td>Location Away</td><td>JV Girls</td><td>V Girls 6pm</td><td>V Boys 7:30pm</td></tr><tr><th colspan="5">JR. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL</th></tr><tr><td>Date Feb. 7 (District Tournament)</td><td>Location Fort Davis</td><td colspan="3">Time 5pm, 6pm</td></tr></table>			HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL					Date Feb. 7 (v. Balmorhea)	Location Away	JV Girls	V Girls 6pm	V Boys 7:30pm	JR. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL					Date Feb. 7 (District Tournament)	Location Fort Davis	Time 5pm, 6pm			YOUR AD HERE! ONLY \$10 / WEEK Contact ads@bigbendsentinel.com
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Library event brings a T-Rex, tea and a lesson in manners

By SARA BUTTON

MARFA — Focusing on more than literacy, the Marfa Public Library held a T-Rex Tea Party event this past Saturday that worked with its younger patrons on important skills like table manners. Patrons aged three and up gathered in the community room to paint tea pots, practice manners, roar like dinosaurs and, of course, read books.

Children practiced their tea-time skills such as curtsying or bowing and were encouraged to practice their dinosaur skills like stomping and roaring too.

Parents are able to register their children online for events like T- Rex Tea Party ahead of the event date, which allows the library enough time and supplies for all interested children.

Additionally, to help some of the youngest library patrons get ready to enter school, the library also offers Kinder Skills classes which are held on the first Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. “We work with them on skills like writing and coloring, gluing and cutting and things like zipping, snapping and tying clothes and shoes,” Roane said. “Our movement class also helps them out by teaching them to follow directions and play with others as well as working on their gross motor skills.”

This is all part of a broader initiative to offer more programming in 2020, and as a Tocker Foundation grant recipient for programming, the library is able to do just that. The Tocker Foundation offers grants to help fund libraries throughout the state of Texas.

Marfa Public Library has been a recipient of Tocker Foundation grants before for furniture, shelving and their Integrated Library System, but this is the first grant they’ve received from the Tocker Foundation for programming.

“We have gotten funds in the past that were focused on bringing in artists and performers,” Library Director Mandy Roane said, “but this is the first one that does such complete programming.”

A full year of programming for all patrons, preschoolers to adults, is covered through this grant. It covers weekly classes like Zumba, Kids Create, and ESL as well as bi-monthly/monthly programs like Preschool Movement Class, Kinder Readiness classes, and the adult crafter meetup Get Crafty!

“There are not a lot of things for kids to do in this

town,” Arlene Conners, assistant library director, said. “We are trying to make it where there are events that the kids can come out to and enjoy the library, especially the new community room. I think it brings a lot of people together – parents get to talk to one another, the kids make new friends. It’s a nice community, and this is something different.”

The grant will also cover supplies and artists for summer reading, MPL Day and some other events. “The grant also includes things for outreach like a canopy and tech supplies to go to different events and help people sign up for cards and tell them everything we have going on – which is a lot!” Roane said.

In addition to special programming like T-Rex Tea Time, the library offers quarterly events for third through sixth graders and separately, seventh through twelfth graders. Later this month, the library will host a slime party for third through sixth graders on Saturday, February 22 at 1 p.m.

The slime party will let kids create their own slime with different mix-ins to take home. If they want, they can also enter it to see who has the prettiest, grossest and best-sounding slime.

“Bad Art Night is a fun, stress-free way for our teen patrons to create art,” Roane said. They’ll bring out all sorts of odds-and-ends art supplies and let the kids see who can create the most horrible art. Whoever creates the worst piece will get a tacky trophy and a book.

The library also offers quarterly family events, Roane said, and the next one will be in March to end Spring Break. That is in addition to the events they will have the Monday through Friday of Spring Break for kids who aren’t able to go out of town.

“In the next few weeks, we’ll also be planning our summer reading,” Roane said, “which is pretty busy for us.”

Regular weekly programming at the library includes Monday night Zumba at 6 p.m. for teens and adults, Kids Create on Tuesday at 4 p.m., Story Time on Wednesday at 10 a.m., and ESL on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m.

All of the programs at Marfa Public Library are always free. The library never charges for anything, which is why organizations like the Tocker Foundation are so important for programming expansions. “We wouldn’t be able to provide all of the programs we do without their generous support,” Roane said.

TxDOT’s Don’t Mess with Texas offers prizes and scholarships to Texas students

AUSTIN — Don’t mess with Texas is holding two contests to award prizes and scholarships to Texas students demonstrating efforts to raise awareness about litter prevention in their communities. The 2020 Don’t mess with Texas Scholarship Contest and the Don’t mess with Texas K-12 School Art Contest are presented in partnership with Keep Texas Beautiful. Both contests are currently accepting applications and submissions.

The 2020 Don’t mess with Texas Scholarship Contest is open to any Texas high school senior currently attending public, private or home school and planning to attend an accredited college or university in the coming year. The contest will award one \$5,000 scholarship, one \$4,000 scholarship and one \$3,000 prize in May 2020. The scholarships recognize the achievements of high school seniors who are taking an active role in preventing litter in their schools and communities, while working to build awareness for the Texas Department of Transportation’s Don’t mess with Texas initiative.

In the Don’t mess with Texas K-12 School Art Contest, Texas students enrolled in kindergarten through 12th grade are invited to submit their original artwork for the opportunity to be featured in the 2021 Don’t mess with Texas Calendar. The artwork should promote the Don’t mess with Texas and/or Keep Texas Beautiful litter prevention messages to encourage and inspire Texas residents to advocate and take action for litter prevention. The top 14 winning designs will be featured in the calendar. Each winner will receive a Samsung Galaxy Tab A 10.1 tablet and a gift basket from Buc-ee’s. Teachers representing the students who produce the top 14 designs will each win a \$100 gift card from H-E-B/Central Market.

To submit to the Don’t mess with Texas Scholarship Contest or the Don’t mess with Texas K-12 School Art Contest, visit dontmesswithtexas.org. Applications for the Don’t mess with Texas Scholarship Contest must be received via online submission by 5 p.m. (CST) March 31, 2020. Submissions for the Don’t mess with Texas K-12 School Art Contest must be sent through the U.S. mail and postmarked on or before April 24, 2020. Sponsors for the Don’t mess with Texas Scholarship include Buc-ee’s, iHeart Media and the Astros Foundation.

“We are looking forward to rewarding students for their creativity and hard work in developing projects that keep their communities and Texas clean,” said Becky Ozuna, program administrator for the campaign.

OBITUARIES



DeAnda

Daniel G. DeAnda, 78, from Presidio, Texas passed away in the comfort of his longtime home on February 1, 2020. One of four children to Isidoro and Maria DeAnda, esteemed and long-term residents of Presidio and owners of DeAnda’s Grocery Store. Daniel graduated Presidio High School in 1960 the same year he led the basketball team to a district championship. He married Aracely Aguirre from Ojinaga, Chihuahua in 1964. Their early years of marriage were spent in Whittier California, birthplace of their four children and where he

was a barber. In 1972, he and his family returned to his hometown of Presidio where he took on the family business DeAnda’s Grocery Store and later went on to own Barn Auto Parts. During his lifetime in Presidio he was a 12-year member of the Presidio ISD School Board of Trustees, was awarded Presidio Citizen of Year, and was a longtime supporter of youth and adult sport activities. Some of his proudest achievements were leading the Presidio Little League to the State Championship in 1983, and in 2008 the Presidio Little League Baseball Park was renamed after him. He will be remembered by his siblings Zulema, Yolanda and Arturo. As well as his wife of 55 years Aracely, his children Yvette, Daniel, David and Marcus. Grandchildren Hector, Danielle, Isaac, Paula, Camila and Isabella. Great grandchildren Amani, Emilio, Julian, Daniel, Mayah, Maylah, and of course Blu his beloved four-legged companion.

Services for Mr. DeAnda are pending.

Alpine Memorial Funeral Home has been entrusted with his services. Online condolences may be sent to: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

Jones

Stuart W. “Button” Jones, 93 passed away on January 27, 2020 in Visalia, CA, after a short illness.

Stuart was born in El Paso, Texas on March 2, 1926, and moved to Marfa with his family at a young age. He attended Marfa High School as well as Texas Military Institute in San Antonio, Texas. While attending TMI, he was chosen to be on their national riflemen’s team. That team won the prestigious William Randolph Hearst Expert Rifleman’s Award. Due to his military training at TMI, Stuart’s expertise and recognition led him to use vital, life-surviving skills to train new recruits for World War II.

As a World War II veteran, he served his country in the training of recruits in the handling of artillery, from rifles to grenades to explosives. In 2018, as a survivor of World War II, he was chosen to attend the National Honor Flight, being recognized at the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. This honor gave him so much joy for the rest of his life.

After serving his country, he returned to Marfa to continue the life he would always love – ranching. From an early age, he was given the opportunity to learn from “the best,” his father, George Jones, a long time rancher and businessman. As Stuart always said, “There was never a better

cowman that George Jones!” Wm T. Jones, Stuart’s grandfather also had an impact on him, being a pioneer and Texas-recognized contributor of the Hereford cattle breed to West Texas. His mother, Lillian Jones, in his estimation, “a wonderful woman,” embodied the pioneer woman’s spirit in love of family and that good, ole ranch-life cooking.

He married Anne Mims, of Fort Davis, Texas, in 1949, and they had two children, Adair Jones Vasilovich of Visalia, CA (and Fort Davis), and Wayne Jones of Parker, Colorado. While Stuart lived most of his life in California, his roots and heart would remain in West Texas. Consequently, he returned “home” numerous times in his lifetime, especially to attend Bloys Campmeeting. He loved seeing childhood friends and rekindling family relationships.

His parents, George and Lillian Jones, and his two sisters, Ethel Hassenflu and Sargie Evans, preceded Stuart in death. Those left to remember and celebrate his long life are his children, Adair and Wayne, a son-in-law Bob Vasilovich, their children and grandchildren, his sister Alice Harris, nieces and nephews, and especially his nephew Franz Hassenflu and daughter, Ali.

The Stuart Jones family is requesting that donations can be made in Stuart’s name to Bloys Campmeeting, JFE Camp, P.O. Box 1042, Fort Davis, Texas 79734.

Fantasy Novelist Nicholas McIntire presents

THE HUNTER’S GAMBIT



Friday, February 7, 6:00 pm

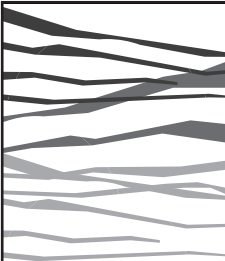
Front Street Books
121 E Holland Avenue
Alpine 432-837-3360

Nicholas McIntire is an award winning novelist and poet. Nicholas has a home in Fort Davis and much of “A Hunter’s Gambit” was written in and around Fort Davis, Marfa and Alpine.



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Classifieds & public notices



Photo courtesy of Superintendent Oscar Agüero

Ava Flores, Raven Martinez and Louise Culbertson, the third-place, second-place and first-place winners, respectively, in the 6th grade competition. Flores and Martinez both received ribbons and Culbertson received a first-place medal.

Marfa students wow at science fair

MARFA — The Marfa schools Science Fair was a big success this year, with 75 student participants and a whopping 42 winners across all categories. Cheri Agüero, a 4th- through 6th-grade Montessori teacher at Marfa ISD, helped organize and put together the event. Another teacher, Eliza Barton, also helped out, recruiting judges for the event.

With more students than ever before participating this year, the turnout was “amazing,” Agüero said. “The judges were very complimentary of our students and really enjoyed their projects,” she added. The 42 winners are eligible to compete in the regional Science Fair, which will be held this year at the University of Texas Permian Basin in Odessa in March.

Full list of this year’s winners:

2ND GRADE		
1st place (Class Project): Mrs. Roman’s Class		
(Individual projects)		
<i>Chemistry</i>		
3rd place: Nathaniel Ramos		
2nd place: Giovanni Van Etten		
1st place: Sienna Barton		
<i>Physics</i>		
3rd place: Eli Grajeda		
2nd place: Mateo Grajeda		
1st place: Aiden Daugherty		
<i>Earth Science</i>		
1st place: Alba Amaro		
<i>Engineering</i>		
1st place: Coy Sherrill		
3RD GRADE		
<i>Chemistry</i>		
3rd place: Mikayla Bentley		
2nd place: Adeline Marquez		
1st place: Juliet Hinojos		
<i>Physics</i>		
3rd place (tie): Alayna Vasquez & Ulises Estrada, Haylie Lewis, Alyssa Garcia		
2nd place: Liliana Zubia		
1st place: Reece Klockman <i>Life / Behavioral Science</i>		
3rd place: Koda Button		
2nd place: Hudson Webb		
1st place: Adelicia Razo-Leper		
<i>Earth Science</i>		
3rd place: Tayvian Valenzuela		
2nd place: Reyna Martinez		
1st place: Seth Nunez		
4TH GRADE		
<i>Chemistry</i>		
3rd place: Lynna Hinojos		
2nd place: Matthew Villar		
1st place: Lily Agüero		
<i>Physics</i>		
3rd place: Adonise Lujan		
2nd place: Easton Watts		
1st place (tie): Gavin Vana & Alyssa Hardin		
<i>Life / Behavioral Science</i>		
3rd place: Terrance Resendiz		
2nd place: Zoe Tolliver		
1st place: Alberto Salgado		
<i>Earth Science</i>		
3rd place: Miguel Gonzales		
2nd place: Diego Sanchez		
1st place: Johnny Van Etten		
5TH GRADE		
<i>Chemistry</i>		
3rd place: Itzel Urrutia		
2nd place(tie): Abelardo Marquez & Giselle Torres		
1st place: Noah Barton		
<i>Physics</i>		
3rd place (tie): Daniela Fernandez & Zoey Salgado		
2nd place: Colette Fowlkes		
1st place: Belen Soto-Torres		
<i>Life Science</i>		
3rd place: Vanessa Diaz		
2nd place: Mateo Meza		
1st place: Joshua Kelly		
<i>Earth Science</i>		
2nd place: Christopher Garcia		
1st place: Jayden Amaro		
<i>Engineering</i>		
2nd place: Natasha Labrado		
1st place: Asael Zubia		
6TH GRADE		
3rd place: Ava Flores		
2nd place: Raven Martinez		
1st place: Louise Culbertson		

Property taxes on farms and ranches could be reduced with productivity appraisal

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Texas farmers and ranchers can be granted property tax relief on their land by applying to the Presidio County Appraisal District for agricultural productivity appraisal and for a lower appraisal based on typical production, versus market value. The Texas Constitution authorizes two types of agricultural productivity appraisals, 1-d-1 and 1-d, named after the section in which they were authorized. For 1-d-1 appraisal, property owners must use the land for agriculture or timber and the land’s use must meet the degree of intensity generally accepted in the area. Owners must also show that the land was used for this purpose at least five of the preceding seven years. 1-d-1 appraisal does not restrict ownership to individuals and does not require agriculture to be the owner’s primary business. Most land owners apply for the 1-d-1 appraisal. Under 1-d appraisal, the land must have been used for this purpose at least three years and the owner must be an individual versus a corporation, partnership, agency or organization. The land must also be the owner’s primary source of income. Penalties in the form of a rollback tax, or the difference between the taxes paid under productivity appraisal and the taxes that would have been paid if the land had been put on the tax roll at market value, will

be imposed if qualified land is taken out of agriculture or timber production. A rollback tax occurs when a land owner switches the land’s use to non-agricultural. These rollback taxes are based on the three tax years preceding the year of change. Texas law allows farmers and ranchers to use land for wildlife management and still receive the special appraisal, but the land must be qualified for agriculture use in the preceding year. Land under wildlife management must also meet special use qualifications. The deadline to apply for productivity appraisal is April 30. If the last day for the performance of an act is a Saturday, Sunday or legal state or national holiday, the act is timely if performed on the next regular business day. Owners of land qualified as 1-d must file a new application every year. Owners of land qualified as 1-d-1 need not file again in later years unless the chief appraiser requests a new application. For more information about productivity appraisal and application forms, contact the Presidio County Appraisal District at 107 E Texas St. Marfa, Texas (432)729-3431 or (432)229-3963 Presidio office. Information is also available on the state Comptroller’s Property Tax Assistance Division’s website at comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax/.

Tricounty students make Sam Houston State University Fall 2019 President’s List

HUNTSVILLE — Two students from Alpine and one from Fort Davis earned spots on the prestigious President’s List at Sam Houston State University for the Fall 2019 semester. Alpine’s Kimber Cox and Catherine Ritzi are both undergraduate students at the Hunstville, TX school who achieved a perfect 4.0 grade point average in all work attempted while enrolled in not less than 12 semester hours. Joining them on the President’s List is Max Lannom of Fort Davis.



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Office space Downtown Marfa

The Corner Building at Texas St. and Highland Ave. has a 264 sf office space available for rent. This is a newly remodeled building in the heart of Marfa with bright and modern offices upstairs and retail downstairs. Please send any inquiries to thecornerbuilding125@gmail.com.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Beer Retail Dealer’s On-Premise Late Hours License by El Cosmico, LLC dba El Cosmico located at 802 S. Highland Ave, Marfa, Presidio County, 79843. Elizabeth Lambert, Manager.

The following have been accepted for storage at:
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Marfa TX 79843
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VSF License #0654157-VSF
www.TDLR.texas.gov

10245-D 2013 Grey Bentley VIN: SCBG3ZA8DC085485 Total charges as of Jan 13, 2020: \$871
10135-R Haulmark 28’ trailer VIN: 16HPB2429NH015693 Total charges as of Jan 13, 2020: \$455

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If the vehicle is not claimed within 30 days after the date this notice is published, this fact gives this vehicle storage facility the right to dispose of the vehicle. Additionally, failure to claim the vehicle is a waiver of all right, title, or interest in the vehicle and personal property and a consent to sell the vehicle at a public sale.

JOBS

Early Intervention/Linkage to Care Specialist
Assists people diagnosed with HIV and/or
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Clinical background or medical assistant
Bilingual preferred
Please call 432-837-4812 for more information

Fowlkes Cattle Company Inc. is now taking applications for truck drivers. At least 3 years experience and class A CDL license required. Must have a clean record and pass a pre-employment drug test. Come by Fowlkes Cattle Co., Inc., 1800 Golf Course Road, Marfa, TX to apply. For more information, call (432) 729-4664.

Cibolo Creek Ranch is seeking a Dining Room Manager, Cooks and Servers.

Experience in restaurants and the Hospitality industry is required.

If interested please send resume to obottois@cibolocreekranch.com

Help Wanted: Experienced Heavy Equipment Operators, with a clean Class A CDL preferred. Company yards in Fort Davis and Alpine, Texas. Wages based on experience. Heath Insurance and Retirement Options available after qualifying time period. Contact Jarratt Dirt Work and Paving, Inc. @ 432-426-3592 or send Resume’ to office@jarrattdirtwork.com. Contact Lance Jarratt at 432-249-0187 in Fort Davis, Texas for job related questions. EOE

The Hotel Paisano is accepting applications for the position of Housekeeping Supervisor. Applicants should possess housekeeping and leadership experience, organization and time management skills and should be bilingual. This is an hourly paid position, wage commensurate with experience. Benefits include health insurance, 401K, paid vacation and sick days. References required. Applications are available at the Hotel Paisano’s front desk.

MARFA ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

All meetings are non-smoking. For more information on area meetings, please visit www.nwta66.org.

Open meetings are open to anyone interested in AA.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MARFA 432-352-4432 (see schedule for locations)	<i>Al-Anon Meeting</i> 2pm: Open 115 E Oak St. Library Movie Room (Left of main entrance)	<i>Daily Reflections</i> 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday) <i>We Are Not Saints</i> 6pm : Open <i>Discussion</i> St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	<i>Marfa Lights Group</i> 6pm : Open <i>Meditation Meeting</i> 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday) <i>We Are Not Saints</i> 6pm : Open <i>Big Book Study</i> St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	<i>Marfa Lights Group</i> 12pm : Open <i>Meditation Meeting</i> 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	<i>Daily Reflections</i> 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday) <i>We Are Not Saints</i> 6pm : Open <i>Discussion</i> St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	<i>Step Study</i> 12pm: Open <i>Discussion</i> 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)

Maisie Crow
Max Kabat
Abbie Perrault
Stephen Paulsen
Ariele Gentiles
Claire Lindsay-McGinn
Miriam Halpern Cardona
Marisol Ely
Sarah M. Vasquez
Maria Salgado
Tomas Salgado
Jaime Juarez
Maria Gerardo

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The Big Bend Sentinel (ISSN 1076-1004 USPS 055-800) is published weekly, on Thursdays, 50 times a year by West Texan Media Group LLC, Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843. Annual subscription rates are \$50 in Presidio, Brewster & Jeff Davis counties, and \$60 elsewhere in Texas and the United States. Special rates apply abroad. Periodicals class postage paid at Marfa, Texas 79843.
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