

Early voting begins this week

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Early voting kicked off in Presidio County on Tuesday, with polling locations in Marfa and Presidio city.

Early voting runs from this week through Friday, February 28. The main primary election is then on “Super Tuesday,” March 3. The locations are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.. Residents can make sure they’re on the voter rolls by contacting the Presidio County tax assessor/collector’s office at 432-729-4081.

In Marfa, residents can vote early in the rear of the Historic USO Building, which now also serves as the Marfa Visitor Center. In Presidio city, people can vote early at the Presidio county annex complex, which is right next to the Presidio county annex building on O’Reilly Street in the center of town. Locals might also know it as the old ambulance building.

A voter card is not required to vote in the primaries, though voting officials ask that residents please bring a driver’s license or other proof of identification.

For the convenience of voters, we’ve uploaded copies of sample ballots for both the Democratic and Republican primaries to our website. Those are available at: <https://bigbendsentinel.com/2020/02/19/sample-ballots/>

Council disbands the HOT committee, candidates file to run

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Marfa City Council unanimously voted to dissolve the Hotel Occupancy Tax committee that granted funds to local organizations to promote tourism. The move came after the council approved HOT Committee chair Deirdre Hisler’s resignation. In place of the committee, the council voted to form an in-house team to review grant applications.

Hisler tendered her resignation after she says it was clear to her that “after having gone through all the budget talks, that city leadership was moving towards taking the manner in which HOT moneys are allocated back to the way it was done in the past.” The council accepted her resignation, and then moved on to discussions about the future of the committee itself.

The city had taken back control of distributing historic preservation grants during the budget season last fall. Hisler agreed with the move, saying, “We as a community should take care of the buildings we own.”

“But I felt that there wasn’t much value given to a group of volunteer committee members that worked very hard to be very transparent and help all of our nonprofit and some of our for-profit individuals to receive those HOT moneys and bring more programming to Marfa – because

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Hannah Marshall, an archivist at the Chinati Foundation and new Marfa Museum board member, looks at a photograph in the Frank Duncan archives. Marshall is volunteering her time alongside Judd Foundation Archivist Caitlin Murray and Sul Ross’ Systems and Discovery Services employee Mike Fernandez to create a needs assessment for the museum collection.

Photo by Maisie Crow

Photos and story on page 6.

Vandals deface mural at historic Blackwell School

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO COUNTY — The mural at Blackwell School Park was vandalized with lewd graffiti over the weekend.

Marfa police responded to the scene on Monday morning, after authorities received a call about the vandalism.

The spray-paint graffiti includes male genitals, the letters “B” and “WB,” the words “LEAVE” and “U SUCK” and “a drawing of what looked like a teepee,” according to an incident report from the Marfa Police Department. At press time, no arrests have been made.

Police learned about the vandalism from Gretel Enck, president of the Blackwell School Alliance, a volunteer group that works to preserve and commemorate the Blackwell School. Enck told police that she’d returned from a trip to learn that the school’s mural had been vandalized.

Enck had learned about the vandalism from Ann Marie Nafziger, the former Marfa mayor who lives near the park, according to an incident report from the Marfa Police Department. The obscene imagery was covered up with a tarp.

When Enck went to check on the mural Tuesday afternoon, she learned the tarp had also been vandalized. “Why cover art?” read a new graffitied

message in the same pink and gold spray paint.

Enck called police, who were aware of the latest vandalism, she said. The Marfa Police Department confirmed Tuesday evening that they were aware of this latest incident.

In an interview, Enck said she hoped to see the mural restored in the next couple weeks. She was not happy about graffiti but was also not surprised.

“Unfortunately, the way some people express their opinions is through vandalism and graffiti,” Enck said. She saw the vandalism as a sign that someone in Marfa was hurting — and hoped it could spark dialogue. “When your town is getting



Photo by Maisie Crow

After a tarp was placed over the defaced mural at The Blackwell School Park, a vandal struck, spray painting “why cover art?” on the tarp.

national coverage, and you don’t see yourself in that coverage, what does that do to your sense of community?” she said, reflecting on the sometimes stark divides in Marfa.

Enck was also disturbed by the “LEAVE” message, which she worried could have racial or bigoted undertones.

“If it happens again, we’ll just keep repainting it, because that’s the message we want to send,” she added. Since the Blackwell School Park is the only playground on the Marfa’s south side, she stressed it is important for the park to be a “welcoming and safe space for families and kids.”

Before the vandalism, the mural included a desert scene and the message “Welcome friends and neighbors to the Blackwell School,” in English and Spanish. The mural was completed last summer by Sam Watts, an art teacher at the school, and Brenden Cicoria, an employee at Ballroom Marfa. Marfa schoolkids also contributed during a party last April.

In an interview Tuesday, Watts said that he and Cicoria plan to restore the mural. He described the vandalism as a “disappointing gesture” that “creates work for people that already do so much for the community.”

“It was made to be a gesture of community,” he said of the mural. “It’s an odd choice of things to vandalize.”

Water regulators greenlight water for fracking operation

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO COUNTY — County water officials last week gave Helios, an Australian company that’s been fracking in northwest Presidio County, an operating permit to use local water in its fracking work.

Helios paid a \$100 permit fee and will pay \$10 per acre/foot for water it uses. While the Railroad Commission of Texas regulates oil and gas operations in Texas, fracked wells (including Helios’) typically use water to “hydraulically fracture” the wells. That gives local water officials like those at the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District authority to gather data on the water usage of such operations, just as with other large and water-dependent commercial activities like farming.

PCUWCD’s approval of Helios’ permit shouldn’t be taken as carte blanche support for fracking in the region. In order to deny industrial permits, regulators would need scientific data showing that Helios is negatively affecting county water supplies.

Neighbors are also entitled to contest fracking company water permits if they can show that fracking (or any other water-using activity) is affecting their own water well levels. But no concerned neighbors turned up at the water

district’s meeting last Thursday, where water officials unanimously approved the Helios permit after a brief discussion.

In a statement to The Big Bend Sentinel this week, Trey Gerfers, chairman of PCUWCD, said he was very pleased with the hearing, which he said showed that both Helios and his district were working in good faith to comply with county water rules.

“This is how groundwater districts are supposed to interact with the major water users,” Gerfers said. “You get a process in place, and then applicants can come.”

Helios started fracking operations in Presidio County in April 2017, the company states in its application. From then through last August, the company estimates it used around 3.26 million gallons of water. Going forward, it also estimates it will withdraw around 50 gallons per minute for a roughly three-month period.

The company asked for a three-year permit, noting in its application that “ongoing drilling/development operations are planned.” But at last week’s hearing, Helios agreed to instead apply for just one year at the request of PCUWCD, which approves or renews water-use permits on a yearly basis. PCUWCD said it would be happy to renew the company’s permits in 2021 if there are no new negative impacts.

The company is fracking on land owned by

Rebecca Berthold, who lives in Atlanta, Georgia, according to the permit. Reached for comment on Monday, Berthold declined to comment.

Julian Ayala, a landman for the company, was present for the meeting last Thursday. Water officials explained that — since this was the company’s first permit in the county, rather than a renewal — the company would need to attend an in-person hearing, just like any other new user.

During discussion on the permit, Trey Gerfers, the district chairman, had a few questions for Ayala — including what Helios planned to do with the “produced” water that’s left over after fracking operations. “Is it just going to sit in ponds, or are y’all going to truck it out?” he asked.

“It depends,” Ayala responded. The company typically put produced water into lined pits, he said. From his experience, the water usually evaporated within one year — the deadline set by the Railroad Commission of Texas on wastewater disposal pits. But if not, he said the company would likely have vacuum trucks “come and suck it out and properly dispose of it.”

Gerfers also asked about Helios’ plans for expansion, which are referenced in the application and in other public statements from the company. “When do you think you’ll be scaling up?” he asked.

“Within the year of this permit, we’ll probably

(Continued on page 3)

Man facing felony after clash at city council meeting

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — A Marfa man is facing a felony charge after he disrupted a city council meeting last year.

Marfa resident Michael Calvert, 66, has been charged with making a terroristic threat after he allegedly threatened to shoot Marfa city councilmembers, according to his January 31 indictment.

The indictment states that Calvert allegedly intended to “place the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of a serious bodily injury.” Calvert turned himself in on a \$2,500 PR (personal recognizance) bond, meaning he didn’t have to pay the sum to secure his release.

The charges stem from an animal ordinance workshop at the Marfa City Council in July. During the meeting, Calvert told the council that he would “kill every one of you.”

At the time, reactions from council members ranged from shock to laughter. Marfa Police Chief Steve Marquez, who was present at the meeting, asked Mayor Manny Baeza if Baeza wanted him to do something, but Baeza decided to continue the meeting.

Calvert expressed regret for his remarks, which he said he made because it seemed like city council “didn’t even want to listen” to public comments.

“Right after I said it, I thought, ‘You idiot, you’re not going to shoot nobody,’” he said last year. “If they need an apology, I’ll give it in writing, or whatever they need.”

Marfa Police Chief Steve Marquez, though, said that the comments were nonetheless unacceptable.

“Whether he was joking around or not, it’s not appropriate at an official meeting,” he previously told *The Big Bend Sentinel*. “He kept mentioning shooting people through the whole meeting. It was very disturbing for him to say that to our leaders.”

After the meeting, some city staff and council members decided to give statements to Marfa police. The Marfa Police Department and the Presidio County district attorney’s office declined to release more information on those statements or who gave them, citing the ongoing case.

Liz Rogers, an Alpine-based lawyer, is representing Calvert. In a phone interview on Friday, Rogers said she was “very saddened” by the indictment and looked forward to representing him in court.

“Everybody who knows [Calvert] and his wife knows that they’re fine citizens of Marfa,” Rogers said. “He apologized immediately, and he’s very ill. He’s taking all sorts of medications.”

Calvert does not have any prior charges in Presidio County, according to court records.

Aircraft makes emergency landing near Marfa

PRESIDIO COUNTY — A helicopter made an emergency landing in Presidio County late Friday morning after it clipped a rotor on some fencing.

The pilot, Ken Kothman, was herding cattle at a ranch near Marfa when he got too close to a fence and damaged his tail rotor, the Presidio County Sheriff’s Office stated on social media. Kothman reportedly sustained minor injuries.

Working with the Texas Department of Public Safety Air Unit, Presidio County sheriff’s deputies “assisted the pilot to safety,” according to the sheriff’s department.

Kothman could not be reached for comment, and the Presidio County Sheriff’s Office did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

MEET THE CANDIDATES

PART 5:

TEXAS STATE SENATE DISTRICT 19



PETE FLORES
INCUMBENT(R)

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

I am Senator Pete Flores, a retired colonel game warden. I reside in Pleasanton, Texas. I’m the incumbent. I am running for reelection to continue to provide effective representation for all the citizens of Senate District 19. The result of my first term was the authoring and sponsoring of over 30 bills which were signed by Governor Greg Abbott. Together, they bring well over \$200 million to our district, including the funds to rebuild the San Antonio State Hospital.

I serve as a member of key committees such as the Senate Finance, Natural Resources, criminal Justice, Health and Human Resources and Redistricting committees. I also serve as a commissioner of the Education Commission of the States. All of this provides our district with a place and a voice on major committees.

What are the top two issues for you?

Property tax reform, especially as it pertains to appraisal districts. Also, public infrastructure like roads and bridges.

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?

Border security is important. I voted for and support the \$800 million appropriation to enhance Texas border security with state police resources. I am a strong believer in the rule of law.

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?

My record will reflect that I am a strong proponent of rural healthcare through initiatives like telemedicine and loan forgiveness up to \$185,000 for rural doctors if they practice in rural Texas. I support our rural hospitals and educational opportunities for healthcare professionals at our medical schools.



XOCHIL PEÑA
RODRIGUEZ (D)

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

My name is Xochil Peña Rodríguez. A graduate of Rice University and The University of Texas at Austin School of Law. I am an attorney with over 10 years of experience as an assistant city attorney and the associate counsel for The University of Texas at San Antonio. I have broad transactional practice and in-house legal experience. I have written and negotiated a wide range of contracts and policy, handled disputes and reviewed and analyzed the impact of legislation on the city and university.

I learned from my father, former U.S. Congressman Ciro Rodríguez, that a good public servant knows public service is an honor and that everyone’s voice, no matter how big or small, should be heard and respected by their elected officials. Because of his example, my door will always be open to the constituents I serve.

My mom, Carolina, was a public school teacher and librarian. The first lessons I learned about justice, fairness, culture, heritage and

TRI-COUNTY — Welcome to part five 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. Early voting has started at the Historic USO Building in Marfa and at the Presidio County annex complex, also known as the old ambulance building, in Presidio. Early voting is Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., all the way through Friday, February 28.

Over the last two weeks, we’ve brought you candidates for Texas’s famously “purple” 23rd Congressional

working to make a better world came from her, and I am still learning from her today. Through my husband, a public school teacher, I know about the daily challenges faced by teachers across the state — from limited budgets to endless testing requirements — and I know the legislature can do more to help them and the children they teach. As our state’s economy continues to change rapidly, Texas needs to work harder to provide access to opportunity that is not dependent on what resources you have. All Texans deserve the chance to succeed.

I am running to ensure Texas values are once again reflected in the budget priorities of our state and that our communities are no longer ignored or treated with contempt. It is no secret that Texas has failed to adequately invest in education, expand access to quality healthcare and rebuild our infrastructure. To change the direction of our great state, we need to change the face of power in Austin. As a mom, I am teaching my daughter that everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. I know that simply having our voice heard by those who are elected to represent us is critical. I pledge to have an open door to listen to your concerns and work together to build a better Texas.

What are the top two issues for you?

Education and healthcare are my top issues. Like most families, I want my daughter to have good public schools to attend, so that she’s prepared to deal with whatever the future brings. I want public school teachers, like my husband, to have adequate funding and respect from legislators so they are free to teach and don’t have to teach to a test. The fact is, the economy is rapidly changing. The types of jobs that exist now may not in the future, so people need to have access to training and education. I support investing in education from pre-K through college or trade school, including options for adult education and apprenticeship to help people find their second or third career without the crushing debt of student loans. This is America, and the opportunities available to you shouldn’t be determined by the family or neighborhood you are born into. Texas can do better.

Texas has the most uninsured

District. This week, we’re bringing another race with national interest: that for the Texas’s State Senate District 19. Democrats held the district for over a century, but after longtime Democratic incumbent Carlos Uresti was sentenced last year to 12 years in prison for his role in a Ponzi scheme, Republicans managed to flip it in 2018 — even as a Democratic “blue wave” swept other state and federal districts across the country.

Since then, the district has been represented by Pete Flores, a retired game warden turned Republican politician. This year, three Democrats are challenging him. That count started off with four Democrats, but

and the most expensive health system. Further, Texas policies have contributed to the number of rural hospitals and clinics that have been closing. We need to look at all potential options to fix this. It would benefit the people of Texas to expand access to Medicaid and leverage the federal money that is currently going to other states instead. Expanding access includes funding community health clinics, including women’s health clinics and residency programs and loan forgiveness for health professionals working in underserved areas. Should the Affordable Care Act be struck down in the courts, Texas needs to protect people with pre-existing conditions. To be healthy, it helps to breath clean air and drink clean water.

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?

A wall is only as good as how long it takes to get over, under, or through it. A wall on the Texas-Mexico border is further complicated by the fact that we have a river and that much of the property would have to be taken from private landowners, cutting them off from the river and in some cases their own land. Technology can be used much more effectively to secure the border in a much cheaper and less environmentally destructive way. Further, the militarization of our border as a political issue harms our residents and economic ties and promotes negative stereotypes. Securing the border is the federal government’s job. These funds could be better used by helping impacted communities deal with the logistics of handling the influx of people in a humane way. Our current policy

one of them — Belinda Shvets — was booted last month after a Democratic opponent, Xochil Pena Rodriguez, contested her residency. In an interview with The San Antonio Express-News, Shvets said she had no hard feelings and vowed to “put this behind us and move forward.”

Taken together, these details will make this an interesting race no matter what happens. One candidate — Democratic challenger Freddy Ramirez — did not complete our survey by press time despite multiple attempts to include him. Here are the other candidates, in their own words. We’ve edited these interviews for clarity and brevity.

is not addressing the needs of these communities. I would advocate for redirecting border security resources to help local communities and give them a voice in how these resources are spent.

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?

Wider access to health insurance coverage would help. Funding community health clinics, veteran’s clinics, mobile clinics and women’s health clinics, including funding of residency programs and loan forgiveness for health professionals working in rural areas, could increase access. Increasing internet access may also help, so that telemedicine can be an option. Access to healthcare is a life-or-death issue. Out of the 17 counties in SD 19, 10 have no OB-GYN. The fact is, much of the state has no hospital that can help a woman deliver her baby. We need to address the terrible maternal death rate in Texas.



ROLAND GUTIERREZ
(D)

Introduce yourself. Why are you running for office?

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HOT committee

(Continued from page 1)

that’s what truly puts heads in beds.”

At the council meeting, City Manager John Washburn said Tourism Director Minerva Lopez wasn’t getting any documentation and was being “left out of the loop.” Hisler disputed this after the meeting, saying Lopez was given the applications and meeting minutes via email, as they had been instructed to do.

It was during the meeting that HOT committee members learned the committee might be dissolved. Committee members had requested a meeting with staff, but it did not occur.

Washburn provided a memorandum to council members where he recommended that “all applications and requests occur during and as part of the annual budget adoption process.” He suggested in the meeting that the council instead grant 75 percent of the funds during the budget process and save 25 percent of HOT funds to be disbursed for smaller events throughout the year.

City Attorney Teresa Todd also noted that the HOT committee members had conflicts of interest, for which they repeatedly had to recuse themselves. Hisler said the committee had documented all recusals in the meeting minutes and shared it with the tourism director.

Councilmember Buck Johnston suggested an in-house

review team that included the mayor, a council person, the tourism director and two seats for citizens to provide community involvement. But ultimately, Councilmember Raul Lara motioned to dissolve the committee and Councilmember Irma Salgado motioned to form a review board made up of Tourism Director Minerva Lopez, Mayor Manny Baeza and Councilmember Melendez.

Baeza is on the chamber of commerce and Natalie Melendez is an employee of Chinati, so the two will have to recuse themselves during discussions about Marfa Lights Festival and Chinati Weekend, Marfa’s two longest running festivals.

The motions both passed unanimously, with Councilmember Yoseff Ben-Yehuda absent from the meeting.

In other city business, while national and state election primaries are well underway in Texas, five candidates for Marfa City Council applied to run before the filing window closed last Friday.

All of the seats are at-large, so Marfa voters can select up to three candidates when they visit the voting booth this May.

Current councilmembers Natalie Melendez, Buck Johnston and Yoseff Ben-Yehuda have all filed to run again, hoping to hold onto their seats. Marfa residents Stephen Boelter and Eddie Pallarez have also filed to run for council.

Fracking

(Continued from page 1)

drill two more [oil] wells,” Ayala replied. But he said it was hard to say, noting that the operation is “still in its infancy stage” and that Helios would need to “re-circle the wagons” after proving to investors that its local frack could be feasible and profitable.

“If our engineering team figures out the right formula to unlock the geology, then that’s the scale up,” he said. “It’s hard to answer your question. It’s a wait-and-see.”

But if Helios’ operations do pan out, the water district could see an “explosion of permits,” Ayala added. Gerfers asked the company to keep a “channel open” with the water district, and Ayala said he would.

The meeting was amicable, with multiple water officials thanking the oil company for being “forthcoming” in response to requests for information. Gerfers likewise said he was “very impressed” with the cleanliness of Helios’ Presidio County operations and its disposal ponds, which water officials visited last year.

Helios and PCUWCD got off to a rocky start. While the company applied for permits to operate its oil wells, it was not apparently aware of the reporting requirements on local water usage. Water officials started reaching out to the company last September, after The Big Bend Sentinel first reported on these fracking activities. The company said that month in a news release that it had

injected around 64,000 barrels of “completion fluid,” which often includes water, into a well it calls “Presidio 141#2” in far northwest Presidio County.

Water officials tried for months to get the company in compliance, with little progress. Then, at a meeting in November, the district voted unanimously to have its lawyer, Mike Gershon, send the company a violation notice — a step PCUWCD had never before taken. But those efforts were called off at the last minute after Helios contacted both water regulators and The Big Bend Sentinel to say it was working on complying.

The problem, the company said, was that it needed the landowners’ consent before filing any public documents. “We want to be in compliance, but we don’t want to sign off on things that the landowners don’t want to sign off on,” Ayala told The Big Bend Sentinel at the time.

Despite the friendly nature of last week’s meeting, it was nonetheless a reminder of the drama that often plays out in Far West Texas between oil companies and locals. There to observe the meeting was Greg Perrin, general manager of the Reeves County Groundwater Conservation District in Pecos.

Perrin explained to The Big Bend Sentinel that he was there to learn about the process of approving or denying water well operating permits for fracking companies. His newly formed district had never before conducted such a hearing, he said. This week, they’re evaluating four.

The Meadows Foundation grants Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross \$100,000 for Respect Big Bend effort

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — The Meadows Foundation is granting \$100,000 to the Borderlands Research Institute at Sul Ross State University to provide support to the Respect Big Bend Coalition in West Texas. The university program will use the funds to support outreach and education on behalf of Respect Big Bend.

Respect Big Bend was launched by the Cynthia and George Mitchell Foundation in 2018 to “protect the natural resources and unique communities of the greater Big Bend region through a collaboration based on sound science, community outreach and education, landscape-scale planning and economic development,” according to a news release from BRI. While the Mitchell Foundation’s namesake George Mitchell is considered the “father of fracking,” the foundation today provides grants for topics ranging from water, clean energy and shale sustainability.

Respect Big Bend has partnered with SRSU’s BRI, and the university program is taking a leadership role in coordinating and implementing the outreach and education aspects of the project. BRI is communicating and meeting with stakeholders through a variety of strategies, from private one-on-one meetings to broader community forums. A series of seminars at SRSU is currently underway as part of the Respect Big Bend effort.

“We’re honored The Meadows Foundation has elected to support the Borderlands Research Institute through this grant award,” said Dr. Louis Harveson, who is the Dan Allen Hughes, Jr., BRI endowed director and professor of wildlife management at Sul Ross State University.

The Meadows Foundation is a private philanthropic institution chartered by the late oil and gas production magnate Algor H. Meadows and his wife Virginia Meadows. The Meadows Foundation

contribution comes after a \$300,000 gift to BRI this past October from the Permian Basin Area Foundation “to support stakeholder engagement and outreach as part of the Respect Big Bend Coalition’s efforts in West Texas.”

The Respect Big Bend Coalition’s website explains that the organization is “dedicated to collaborating with communities and landowners to maximize the benefits of responsible energy development while sustaining the communities, land and water of the Big Bend region.”

The Borderlands Research Institute, housed at SRSU for over

a decade, builds on a long-lasting partnership with private landowners, the university’s Range and Wildlife Program, and cooperating state, federal, and non-governmental organizations.

“Through our Stewardship Services program we will be engaging landowners, community members, and industry partners to ascertain their conservation values for the region. Ultimately, we hope to better prepare West Texas communities for energy development through our participation with the Respect Big Bend Coalition,” said Dr. Harveson.

*"I'll stand up and be a strong voice for all working families.
I will work hard with you and have an open door,
so together we can build a better Texas."*

- Xochil Peña Rodriguez

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Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I am writing to express my deep concern and confusion regarding your paper’s coverage of the “Leach case.” I’ve been following the articles that you have been publishing and I can’t help but notice a blatant lack of impartiality. To the point where it seems that your organization has a vested interest in protecting Katy Milam. Almost as if you are participating in her defense. The background and character of Katy and the other “victims” – those whose affidavits have been used to bolster her defense – have gone entirely unexamined. Not to mention the relationships that these people have had with Jeff and with one another, their histories, possible motives to collude, etc. You have omitted all examples of the very positive contributions Jeff/ Basecamp has made to local individuals and to the community at large over the years. His character has been assassinated and it seems very obvious that this was your intention; examples of his “bad behavior” are given with no context, heresy and lies are endorsed as facts. Upon reading your constant stream of coverage, one can only conclude that Jeff Leach is a monster who was on trial for assault and rape, a danger to the community. One will also conclude, based on your coverage, that the dismissal of the case proves that Katy didn’t lie, that this whole thing is resolved, that all accusations against Jeff are proven true. I can’t help but get the distinct impression that *The Sentinel* is on “Team Katy” and that your great interest in this issue is not without prejudice. This whole thing has gotten out of hand, an entire community has been divided based on hatred and lies, and your paper been the primary agent. Shame on you for using your position of influence in such an unethical, misleading, and downright malicious way.

Morgan Ellis
Terlingua

...

Dear Editor,

A few comments concerning your 2/13/20 issue:

1. Did Barry Zavah watch the same “State of the Union” on 2/4/20 that I watched, the one with no mention of impeachment by Trump
2. Congrats to David Beebe and wife Hilary
3. Jackie Boberg is correct to be concerned about rich political donors. One logical solution is to drop ALL restrictions on donations but ONE: Citizens can give ONLY to races / issues in the state which they legally reside. Should be a bipartisan “no-brainer” deal Congress could agree on. And, maybe our reps could address
4. The U.S. Post Office lost almost 9 billion in 2019, the equivalent of almost 17 billion (pure profit) 1st class stamps. Is anyone concerned?

Sincerely,
Steve Seegers, MD
Marfa

...

Dear Editor,

In one of last week’s articles, Jeff Leach was referred to as “a prominent Terlingua man and founder of Basecamp Terlingua.” There is nothing “prominent” about a person who has been accused by at least five women for a variety of offenses ranging from threats to rape. Better yet, the real “prominent” people of Terlingua are the five women who have shown the courage to report their truth.

Julia West
Presidio

...

Dear Editor,

If Mimi Swartz was attempting to paint an unflattering portrait of Tim Crowley, it worked. Other than that it appears to be an uninformed, highly inaccurate, pointless and rambling attempt to create conflict in the community and present Marfa in a bad light. Regardless, Tim Crowley likely saved this town that was dying right before our eyes and turned it into a pretty cool place. Thanks, Tim.

Cleat and Cami Stephens
Marfa and Fort Davis

...



MARFA LIVE ARTS AND MARFA HIGH SCHOOL PLAYWRIGHTS EL PASO WELCOME AND RECEPTION

Please join us in welcoming Marfa Live Arts and Marfa High School playwrights to El Paso for the exciting launch of their new book:

21 Short Plays for the 21st Century by Marfa Shorthorns
Published by No Passport Press

**Tuesday, February 25th, 3:30pm – 5pm
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The Marfa Shorthorns in this collection are Febi Brimhall, Georgina Brugette, Adrian Cataño, Odalys Chacon, Tais Chanez, Ana Guerra, Elena Hernandez, Alyanna Hernandez, Levi Hinojos, Shelby Laviers, Luis Lozano, Brooks Marginot, Ian Marquez, Juan Martinez, Isabella Morales, Eduardo Ocon, Cristian Ontiveros, Yessenia Sanchez Duran, Uriel Torres, Andrea Torres, and Ruben D. Watts-Ortiz.

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MARFA MEANDERTHAL

Alley cat wisdom

By ELLEN KIMBLE

Hello out there, all you people who can read and don’t discount the validity of an article written by a “lower animal.” Most humans are a little on the arrogant side when it comes to the literary realm, but I assure you that people are not the only species that can read and write. And, there is an issue that I feel should be addressed so that you can all be aware of some of the welfare needs of us more environmentally dependent citizens.

I am an alley cat living in the town of Marfa. Now don’t confuse me or my running buddies with “feral cats” like the ones that have drawn attention in recent news items. We are definitely not feral. I, for one, have a home; it’s a real house, with people and everything. I have a bed, a food dish and water bowl, and even a litter box (though I seldom use it; there are just some things that don’t need to be done in the house).

My humans are really mostly okay, and they even gave me a name. I am called Joe, and they classify me as a grey striped tabby. But I prefer the outdoors and only go inside when the weather is really nasty, or when my mom person is cooking something good enough to give up a little freedom for. And, since my favorite playground and hangout is the alley behind the back yard, that makes me an official alley cat.

In our neighborhood alley there are four of us that usually hang out together. Besides me, there is a lovely white girl kitty with black ears that we call Ears and a kind of bratty cat we call Mouth. He’s black and is always yammering and yowling about one thing or another, and some of the local human-types seem to think his name is Scat or Hey You. Then there is our neighborhood meanie, a grubby yellow cat we call Grouchy. He doesn’t have much to say, but his ears are notched and ragged and the talk is that he has successfully fought most of the feline tough guys and even a couple of dogs. He won’t discuss it and we don’t press him. I think he has some people up the street a block or two and usually sleeps in their garage. Anyway, that’s our alley gang, and we share three dumpsters and hunting rights to the alley and backyards that don’t have dogs. And that brings me to our chief situational problem, being chronic dumpster-divers and compulsive scroungers. Did you ever take a serious inventory of the stuff that you can encounter down in a dumpster? Humans put some really interesting items in there! You can usually find some neat boxes for hiding in, maybe a few rags or some piles of grass clippings or leaves to burrow into and snacks of all kinds. There’s also usually some fun stuff to play with, rattly cans and balls of aluminum foil or great pieces of string or ribbon. We all like a good game of hide and seek or trash tag, and so we really appreciate the neat stuff many of you give us for our entertainment and lounging comfort. Thanks, guys!

But (yeah, there’s always a “but”) we occasionally meet up with something that scares or even hurts us. Like day before yesterday, when Grouchy tried to hide in a huge can in his favorite dumpster. It did smell a little funny, but none of us realized that it had held green paint that wasn’t dry yet until poor old Grouchy climbed out all sticky with a green head and left front paw. With his disposition, none of us dared to laugh out loud, but darned if he wasn’t a sight to see! I wonder though if it made him sick trying to lick it off. We haven’t seen much of him since then, and no one knows if he’s ill or just embarrassed about the undignified way he looks. I know that Ears said she once got pretty sick from something she ate from a rusty bucket. I think she said it was called “herbicide” or something like that. It wasn’t too long ago that I was running from a loose lab and his mutt friend and leaped into a dumpster I’m not used to. There was a wad of wire about halfway to the bottom, that kind of fence wire that has those sticky things on it. Well, I got tangled up in that scratchy pokey wire and got all cut up trying to get free of it. When my mom person saw me, she had a real fit, crying and grabbing at me and everything. Then she poured stinky brown stuff all over me! I ran away quick as I could, but it took forever to get it off. I know because I counted. And, then just last week, I had a date with Ears, and took her to dinner at my favorite neighborhood diner, Chez Garbage. The special that evening was spaghetti marinara, and just as we were settling into my special corner, some rude human tossed in a tragically flimsy bag of something slimy that simply reeked. The bag of course burst, and you could’ve heard

Ears yowling all the way to Alpine! Now she’s never gonna want to go out with me again, even if she does manage to get that goop out of her fur, not to mention the way she smells now.

I guess as long as I’m ranting about these things, I should mention that we cats don’t like flies any more than you do, so please try not to put things out here that attract them. Spoiled and rotten food and junk really should be sealed up in some kind of container. The same goes for yucky stuff that bees seek out. We don’t handle bee stings any better than people do, you know.

When you’re throwing out food and other garbage, please be sure it gets into the dumpster or other receptacle instead of on the ground. We live pretty close to open country around here, and it isn’t unusual to find skunks, javelinas and even coyotes out in the alleys at night. They don’t climb or leap too well, but if food is on the ground they hone in on it. They can be pretty fierce when they’re eating if they think you might take their goodies away. Fortunately, we don’t see too many raccoons, but they can get into a dumpster or trashcan pretty easily, and they can be downright vicious! The foxes don’t pose much of a problem yet, but I’m not crazy about the idea of having them move into the neighborhood. It could get way too crowded in a hurry.

I guess what I’m trying to say is that we alley cats just want a little respect and the ability to feel safe on our home turf. If you think of it, try to be a little careful about the stuff you throw into the alleys and trash receptacles. Sharp, pointy, pokey things are most unpleasant to land on when you jump into a dumpster, and tangly-up things are just as bad. We try not to annoy the humans in our neighborhood, and although you probably don’t think about it too often, we actually do you all a service. When was the last time you went to take out the trash and were accosted by a rat, or even a mouse? We keep them pretty well under control, as well as the great big ugly bugs and huge spiders, never mind the occasional snake. So maybe you could be just a little careful about the objects that you toss in the trash cans, you think? You can’t be totally sure that your young humans won’t be climbing in there, too. I know you’d be pretty upset if your kid got cut up or poisoned by something he found while rummaging around in the alley. And yes, they will eventually play there. Take it from me, it’s super fun! I overheard Mouth yammering away at Grouchy just this morning about the things that humans throw away, and he made a pretty good point. I’m not sure what you call them, but some human people don’t have enough of some of the things you might be throwing away. I’ve met a few of these people over the years, and I’ve never minded sharing my dumpster treasures with them. They’re pretty kind, and I’ve never been kicked by any of them. An alley cat can snuggle down in a pile of grass clippings and stay comfortably warm if he needs to sleep out some night, but people aren’t so fortunate. Compared to us, they are more delicate; they need more covering and clothes and stuff. It just might be a good idea to discard old blankets or jackets and things of that sort at a place reserved for humans. I think they call these places thrift shops or people shelters or something. Not saying I have any great answers or anything, but even old alley cats occasionally think about other critters.

Have a nice day, and meow.

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY
Judge Cinderela Guevara:
(432) 729-4452
Marfa Mayor Manny Baeza:
(432) 295-0048
Presidio Mayor John Ferguson:
(432) 229-3517

BREWSTER COUNTY
Judge Eleazar Cano:
(432) 837-5831
Alpine Mayor Andy Ramos:
(432) 837-3301

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY
Judge Kerith Sproul-Hurley:
(432) 426-3968

State Sen. Jose Rodriguez:
(915)351.3500 (El Paso office)
(432)729.4800 (Marfa office)
(512)463.0129 (Capitol office)

FEDERAL:
U.S. Rep. Will Hurd:
(202) 225-4511 (D.C. office)
U.S. Sen. John Cornyn
(202)224-2934 (D.C. office)
(806)472-7533 (Lubbock office)
U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz
Washington, DC
(202) 224-5922

HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

How to destroy a democracy

By George A. Covington

Who would’ve ever guessed that the Bible would have the words that perfectly describe the senators who voted to let President Tweet continue his rampage against the Constitution and common sense, “On every side the wicked struck about, the shameless are extolled by all.” (Psalm 11:9).

In the haunting words of Martin Niemöller (1892–1984) stated in his famous work of 1946, “First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me.”

Niemöller was speaking of the silence of the German people, but his words are as relevant today as they were at the end of the Holocaust. Two phrases that come down to us from that era are, “I didn’t know what was happening,” and “I was not a Nazi, I was just a good German.”

Today, we are seeing the same tactics applied to American politics. Instead of blaming all of economic and social ills on Jewish people, President Tweet and his band of jolly pygmy tweets are aiming their vitriol at immigrants, the poor, the elderly and the disabled.



One of Hitler’s first acts after coming to power was to destroy Germany’s mainstream media. Within a year of taking control of the government, all media that did not support his regime was out of business either from threats or actual violence. Even before day one of his administration, Trump denounced our mainstream media as his enemy. He quickly decried any news article that challenged his ramblings and called them “fake news.” He quickly discovered that, while he was not the brightest bulb in the chandelier, if he destroyed the credibility of the other bulbs, he could look like the brightest bulb.

The Nazi Party began to pack the courts with their followers and enacted laws that discriminated against anyone of Jewish descent. Doesn’t packing the courts sound familiar?

In 1787 Thomas Jefferson said, “The people are the only censors of their governors: and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution. To punish these errors too severely would be to suppress the only safeguard of the public liberty. The way to prevent these irregular interpositions of the people is to give them full information of their affairs thro’ the channel of the public papers and to contrive that those papers should penetrate the whole mass of people. The basis of our government being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right; and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter. But I should mean that every man should receive those papers & be capable of reading them.”

Jefferson could have never imagined the digital age and the death of newspapers. In the past 15 years more than 20% of the newspapers in the U.S. have closed, and more than 50% of newspaper jobs have ended.

The journalistic style known as the Inverted Pyramid, which consisted of who, what, when, where, why and how has been changed to, “The Ukrainians are to be blamed for everything in the world,” and “The Russians are the sweetest people on earth.”

If Virginia asked, “Is there a Santa Claus?” her little smart phone would be ringing for a year with answers ranging from, “No, you stupid rich girl,” to “He is a metaphysical conception of a higher being who delivers goodness to those of kind heart and open countenance.” President Tweet would probably chime in with, “He once existed but he was shot down when he tried to fly over the Ukraine, and I think Joe Biden was behind it.”

The latest edition to President Tweet’s attempt to fake the news is fake, local newspaper websites. Certain people on the far right create non-existent newspaper websites for targeted communities. They contain small news articles wrapped around a totally misleading central article full of misdirection, misinformation and complete falsehoods. So, if you see a website that claims to be The Big Bend Sensational, you can bet it is one of the fakes. If you want to get the real facts, check out USAfacts.org.

USAfacts.org is a database built and paid for by the former head of Micro-soft. For three years and millions of dollars of his own money, Steve Ballmer worked with professionals and academics in a variety of fields. If you don’t think you have the time to check the facts, remember ole Ben Franklin’s admonition, “We have given you a republic, if you can keep it.”

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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The fight to preserve Marfa history

Right: During last year's Marfa Lights Weekend, the Marfa and Presidio County Museum used the opportunity to have visitors help identify faces and places in the photos. At times, photographs that are donated to the museum don't have accompanying information for the photos. Below Left: The museum holds collector's items like the "Giant" poster that was made to welcome the production of "Giant" to Marfa. Below center: An exhibit at the museum provides visitors with the history of the United States Border Patrol. Below right: A set of filing cabinets holds the Nancy Keith archives, telling the story of Marfa in the late 1900s from a local female photographer's perspective.



By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

PRESIDIO COUNTY — The Marfa and Presidio County Museum has come a long way since its 1966 conception by Marfa High School student and Junior Historian President Eddie Hernandez. Once housed in the high school's hallway, the museum has grown as locals have donated photographs, artifacts and ephemera of life in the Big Bend. And since last fall, some locals have stepped in, offering their expertise to carry the museum into the future.

The museum's historic adobe home on Highway 90 has seen better days, and the ever-growing collection of local history is now being seen as a potential resource for historians if it can be strategically catalogued and preserved.

When they moved to its current location, the museum board contracted with the City of Marfa (the owners of the historic Humphris-Humphreys home) to pay \$1 per year in rent for the Highway 90 property. As the museum moved into its new home, it also assumed the responsibility of building maintenance in the lease agreement.

Since moving the museum into the Humphris-Humphreys house in 1996, water damage and faulty adobe restoration practices sank the east wall into the ground, dragging the interior's floors into a deep slope and sending the window frames askew in three rooms. The ceiling had slowly settled to rest on the spines of books housed in a room displaying the history of medicine in Marfa, until visitors were entirely blocked from entering the room.

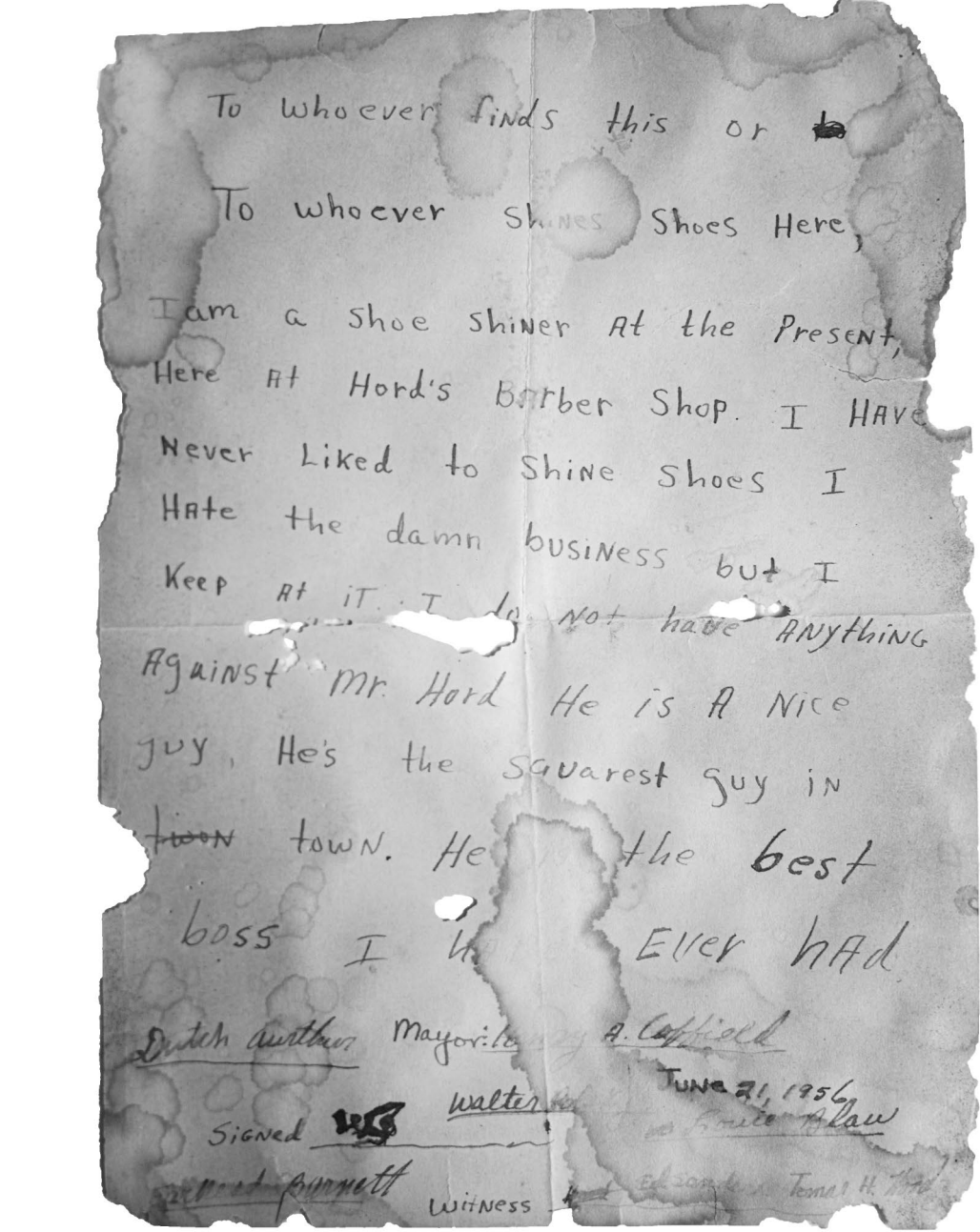
The city hired local contractor Joey Benton to stabilize the adobe east wall, and today, visitors can access the previously closed off exhibit. There's still restoration and replastering to be done, but efforts funded by a grant from the city are fortifying the building for museum-goers to continue learning about regional history.

The museum exists to preserve the history of the Big Bend region, building its collection largely off of donated items from local families. Artifacts fill the house's twelve rooms. In one, the Shafter mining history is told. Another hosts vintage switch boards, telephones and typewriters. Other rooms hold ephemeral relics of turn-of-the-century domestic life, a history of border patrol, antique Marfa fashion and prehistoric tools from the region.

A letter pinned in the doorway of one room tells the story of a local African American shoe shiner who hated his job, but loved Marfa. The man loved the local sports teams so much, he was eventually buried in his Shorthorns letterman jacket.

Martha Stafford, a museum employee, says there's something to interest everyone at the museum. Museum board member Jennifer Lees described Stafford as a fountain of knowledge. When guiding tours, she walks through each room of the house, adding descriptive color and detail to any artifact a visitor might ask about.

When she's not giving tours, Stafford peruses uncataloged artifacts in the archive, piecing together clues to reveal local histories that might otherwise be lost to time. While working away on the computer in the back office, she fields curious calls from far and wide about Marfa, Presidio County, family trees,



A letter by a local shoe shiner was discovered during renovations of a Marfa building and donated to the museum. It was found under the floorboards at Marfa Realty during renovations, owner Bob Wright said.

historic documents and photos.

Stafford is also tasked with unearthing, researching and archiving items that are stored in the house's back room and a backyard storage building. She pulls photographs, papers and artifacts from piles, cabinets and boxes, which overflow in insurmountable abundance.

In the backyard storage room, the windows aren't weatherproofed and the storage isn't climate controlled. Unexplored artifacts in cardboard boxes are vulnerable to hungry insects. Last fall, Stafford took it upon herself to pull all of the paper archives out of the room for safe-keeping from encroaching mold and mildew.

Returning to the archives in the back room of the house on a Saturday afternoon last fall, Stafford shows the \$1,000-a-piece fireproof cabinets, which hold historic photos by Frank Duncan, an early 1900s photographer who captured the Big Bend region, often in sweeping panoramas. Prints of his work are on

display throughout the museum, showcasing some of the still-pristine vistas the Big Bend is known for, and documenting the Rio Grande's broad flow before invasive plants choked it into today's narrowing passages.

Across the room, the Nancy Keith archives, which tell the story of Marfa in the late 1900s from a local female photographer's perspective, still await their transfer to fireproof cabinets. Stafford says the museum can't currently afford to properly store them.

That afternoon, Chinati Foundation Archivist Hannah Marshall arrived for her first look at the museum's photography collections. As she opened the cabinets, Marshall pinpointed rust and mineral deposits that dotted the metal canisters that house dozens of rolls of film negatives. She says those chemical reactions threaten the stability of the film and ought to be replaced, another expense for the museum.

Marshall arrived at the request of Lees, who hoped to assemble a comprehensive needs assessment of

the museum's collection. Marshall, Judd Foundation Archivist Caitlin Murray and Sul Ross' Systems and Discovery Services employee Mike Fernandez have offered to volunteer their time on the project, a crucial first step.

The trio gathered in the museum's back office (and home of some of the museum's archives) to dig into the museum history and get a firm idea of how the archive formed. They will interview board members and staff, assess the massive amount of volunteer work put into the archive thus far and ultimately provide a report that will reassure granters that "objective third parties have come in to give suggestions to improve stewardship of the collection."

The board of five is hoping to expand the reach of the museum, drawing in locals and tourists, and find new funding sources to support the collection. Board member Mary Williams pointed out that the collection underrepresents Shafter and Presidio currently. The archivists noted that an assessment could reveal asymmetry in the museum's coverage, and the board could seek donations of material from other areas as a result.

Lees says the museum and its archives have the potential to become a resource for research statewide and on a national level, beyond serving the local community.

For many years, the museum has financially relied on the Marfa Museum Thrift Store to support its operations. Its modest income sustains the museum from Thursday through Saturday, and recent contributions from the city of Marfa's hotel occupancy tax fund have let them open the doors Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday too.

Benton, the contractor who executed the wall's stabilization, said the highest priority was the initial repair, which would replace the failed bricks, remove the concrete plaster and let the adobes breathe again. After that, a larger assessment is needed to determine the entire scope of a full building restoration.

Benton hopes opening the museum's walls will also open a conversation about a different part of Marfa's history. "I think it's a place to talk about some of the vernacular qualities of Marfa and really embrace earthen building, how it came about and what that culture was like," Benton said.

The help of local archivists to make a needs assessment will fortify the museum's grant applications too. Under the leadership of President Maggie Marquez, the board is hoping to double its size from five members to 10 in order to expand their talents, resources and reach. Marshall herself stepped up to become the newest board member, bringing her archival insights to the museum conversation.

Speaking about the archive and the building's infrastructure problems, Lees explained, "We understand these are long projects that will cost a lot of money, so we have every intention of becoming self-sufficient." Museum efforts to repair the building, catalog and preserve the archive, and find funds to keep the museum updated are all integral to moving the Marfa and Presidio County Museum into the new decade.

The Marfa Museum recently got its first website (<https://marfamuseum.org/>) and launched an Instagram (@marfamuseum) that shares images and descriptions from Marfa history.

Arts & Culture

The dancing stars of Alpine, Texas

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — Alpine’s citywide dancing competition is over a week away, but contestant Jenny Hatch is already hitting the campaign trail.

Hatch is looking for votes to proclaim her one of Alpine’s best dancers — and really, it’s more of a campaign chair. Hatch, the barber/owner of the Americana salon in downtown Alpine and last year’s winner of the city dance-off, jokes that her job gives her a “captive audience.” As she does haircuts, she has time for stump speeches.

Hatch turns to her customer: long-time client Roseland Klein, who’s midway through a haircut. “I’m cutting your hair,” Hatch says. “Want to vote for me?”

“Yes, I do,” Klein says. She’s been a customer for around 20 years — long enough that she remembers when Hatch’s 17-year-old son was as a baby. “He was adorable,” Klein says. “He still is.” After the cut, she gives Hatch 60 votes in the form of a \$300 check to the Alpine Public Library.

Dancing with Alpine’s Stars is now in its second year, offering one of the more unique library fundraisers in the Far West Texas region. Here’s how it works: Dance partners spend weeks or months perfecting a three-minute choreographed dance routine to a song of their choice. Friends and supporters can then “vote” for them by giving a \$5-per-vote donation to the Alpine Library.

On Sunday, February 29, at the Alpine Civic Center, area residents will get a chance to see the dance moves in action. The event runs from 6:30 until 9:30 p.m. and costs \$20 per person or \$35 per couple — a cost that includes complimentary snacks, sweets and one drink.

The first Dancing with Alpine’s Stars event last year was a breakout success. Around 250 people attended, making it a “packed house,” said Lee Smith, president of the Friends of the Alpine Public Library and a member of the library’s board of directors. The event raised \$14,000 all together.

Events like this are important to help fund the city’s library, according to Smith. “The library gets over 50 percent of the funds to meet its operating costs from donations and fundraisers like this one,” she said.

Hatch, 51, likewise has positive memories of last year’s event. “There was a line around the block to get in,” she says. “They ran out of wine before it even started.”

“We were so nervous, but it was such an incredible audience,” she added. “They made us feel so good, and everyone got up and danced at the end of the evening. It was so special.”

That year, Hatch and her dance partner, Joseph Rosco, won with swing dance to Count Basie’s song “Splanky.” Rosco is a good friend, Hatch says, who she knows from a drinking club that’s “full of mechanics — and me.”

Hatch won’t give away too many details on their performance this year, except to note that it will be “blues drag.” But she and Rosco have been hard at work perfecting the performance, she says. She estimates they’ve practiced, on average, five hours a week since November.

Hatch has always been a thespian. “I love being on stage,” she says. She grew up in Missouri and Texas, later settling in Austin before moving to Alpine 23 years ago. “I’m a newcomer,” she jokes of her time in the far West Texas town.

A newcomer to Alpine, maybe — but not to the Lone Star State. “I’m a Texan,” Hatch stressed during an interview at her barber shop last week. “It’s important for people to know that. I was born in Texas.”

In Austin, Hatch got involved in theater. But friends always “needed their hair cut for shows, and they didn’t have any money, so I cut it for them,” she recalled. Friends complimented her skills and suggested she go into barbering. Hatch remembers telling them: “I’m an actress, not a hairdresser.”

Eventually, she changed her tune. “I realized it’s not so bad,” she said of hairdressing. She attended barber school in Austin and loved it. “I’m home,” she remembers thinking as she entered the profession.

In addition to running Americana, she also serves on Texas’s Advisory Board on Barbering. The group advises Texas lawmakers on everything from licensing and education to sanitation and enforcement. A woman of many interests, she’s also currently studying criminal justice at Sul Ross State University. Giving a hint about her performance this year, she says it’s a reference to her studies.

Judging from her interview, Hatch has a self-deprecating sense of humor — and that extends to her dancing skills. “I’m terrible,” she says. “In Alpine, we have no stars and no dancers. But we’re not going to let that stop us.”

Klein, the longtime customer, agrees. “The important thing is to support the library while also giggling at the same time,” she says mid-cut.

Despite the first-year jitters last year, Hatch says the warm and neighborly reception has her going into this year’s competition in good spirits.

“I feel good,” she says. “I’m confident. I’m going to pack that ballot box.”

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu
Feb
20

Menudo Fundraiser for the Marfa Nutrition Center
9 am at the Marfa Nutrition Center
105 N Mesa St
\$7/cup

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 Perfect*.

Last Call Band
7 pm at the Holland Hotel in Alpine
West Texas trio performs in historic hotel in downtown Alpine.

Fri
Feb
21

Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering
Friday & Saturday, February 21-22 in Alpine
Inaugural poetry gathering with chuckwagon breakfasts, speakers and music. Visit lonestarcowboypoetry.com for a complete schedule.

David Farias
6 pm at OldGringo Coffee and Cocktails in Alpine
Grammy-winning Tejano musician David Farias of La Tropa F performs in West Texas for one night only. Seating is limited. Doors at 6pm. Call Old Gringo at (432) 837-4012 for phone tickets/ stay and play packages at the Big Bend Biker Hotel.

Spicy Loops
6:30 pm at Ritchey Wine Saloon in Alpine
Austin band stops in Alpine to promote the release of their third album, “Road to Bisbee.”

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
22

Slime Party
Saturday, February 22, 1pm at Marfa Public Library in Marfa
Make, decorate and play with slime. Compete for the prettiest, grossest and best-sounding slime. For grades 3-6. Registration required at marfapubliclibrary.org/programs.

FCCBB Annual Cowboy Poetry Dance Fundraiser
Saturday, February 22, 8pm at The Alpine Civic Center in Alpine
Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend hosts a night of dancing featuring Craig Carter and the Spur of the Moment Band. Tickets are \$10 each, children 16 and under are free.

Eric Sommer
8 pm at The Sentinel in Marfa
Singer/songwriter performs his Americana tunes at the Sentinel.

Sun
Feb
23

Tue
Feb
25

Big Bend Backpacking 101
6-7 pm at The Choss Shop and Cafe in Marfa
Join Big Bend Ranch and Davis Mountains State Park rangers to learn backpacking tips and tricks for all experience levels. Free to attend.

Wed
Feb
26

Amy Shreve
7 pm at Hillside Baptist Church, 205 Church Rd. in Alpine
Nashville recording artist and Worship Leader performs in Alpine.

Marfa students become published playwrights as book launches in El Paso this week



Courtesy of Marfa Live Arts

Thirteen of the 21 students that were published this year pose together last April.

EL PASO — Marfa Live Arts in association with MISD will travel to El Paso with Marfa High School playwrights for the launch of their new book, 21 Short Plays for the 21st Century, by Marfa Shorthorns (NoPassport Press) on Tuesday, February 25.

The welcome reception will include a performance of short excerpts from the book, brought to life by actors of El Paso’s The Border Theatre troupe.

In spring of 2019, Marfa Live Arts brought playwright Monica Sanchez into the classroom for their annual Playwrighting Program. Students drew on personal experiences to craft their own plays, a handful of which were performed in Marfa that year.

21 Short Plays for the 21st Century contains 21 award-winning plays written during the Spring 2019 program. The Shorthorns in this collection are: Febi Brimhall, Georgina Brugette (Class of 2019), Adrian Cataño, Odalys Chacon, Tais Chanez, Ana Guerra, Elena Hernandez, Alyanna Hernandez, Levi Hinojos, Shelby Laviers, Luis Lozano (Class of 2019), Brooks Margino, Ian Marquez, Juan Marti-

nez, Isabella Morales, Eduardo Ocon (Class of 2019), Cristian Ontiveros, Yessenia Sanchez Duran (Class of 2019), Uriel Torres, Andrea Torres and Ruben D. Watts-Ortiz.

Since 2011, Marfa Live Arts has worked with MISD to teach the Playwriting Program. The program emphasizes skills that build self-confidence and critical thinking while helping kids to find — and express — their inner voices. Each spring, an invited guest playwright facilitates a series of writing exercises with students, opening the door for students to develop characters and plots based on their own experiences, stories and imagination. To date, the Playwriting Program has produced more than 775 student-written plays.

There will be a Marfa book launch of 21 Short Plays for the 21st Century by Marfa Shorthorns with student playwrights in attendance on April 14 at The Crowley Theater.

The El Paso book launch and performance will take place Tuesday, February 25 th at Café Mayapan, 2000 Texas Avenue, El Paso, from 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. It is a free event and open to the public. For more information go to www.marfa.livearts.org.

Presented by

**FOOD
SHARK**

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Satchel
4 Nowhere to be seen
8 Visored military cap
12 — out a living
13 State
14 Object of worship
15 Have a bug
16 Dilute
18 Up to
20 Finish
21 Second letter
24 Sponsorship
28 Negative aspect
32 Took the bus
33 Fire residue
34 Oodles
36 Wager
37 Amorphous lump
39 Onion rings, e.g.
41 Takes to the skies
43 Carry on
44 "That feels so good!"
46 Black board?
50 Exemplar of dullness
55 Cattle call
56 Leading man
57 Volcanic flow
58 Request
59 Floor cleaners
60 Gasoline, e.g.

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	29	30					31		32				
33					34				35		36		
37				38		39				40			
41					42		43						
				44		45			46		47	48	49
50	51	52				53	54			55			
56					57					58			
59					60					61			

DOWN

1 Suitor
2 Related
3 Moolah
4 Anarchic
5 Eggs
6 Prepared
7 Genealogy chart
8 Actress
9 "Green" prefix
10 "Bam!"
11 Hostel
17 Genetic stuff
19 — Saud
22 Twitches
23 Fire-fighting legend Red
25 Asian desert
26 Mid-month date
27 Green or
Rogen
28 Slight touches
29 Norway's capital
30 "Halt!"
31 Icelandic poetry
35 More than just a few
38 Lullaby composer
40 Society new-bie
42 Tool with teeth
45 50 percent
47 Muscat's land
48 Small winning margin
49 Oxen's harness
50 Water barrier
51 Berlin's
"What'll —?"
52 Potential syrup
53 Greek cross
54 56-Across' partner

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Puzzle solutions for last week’s issue

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

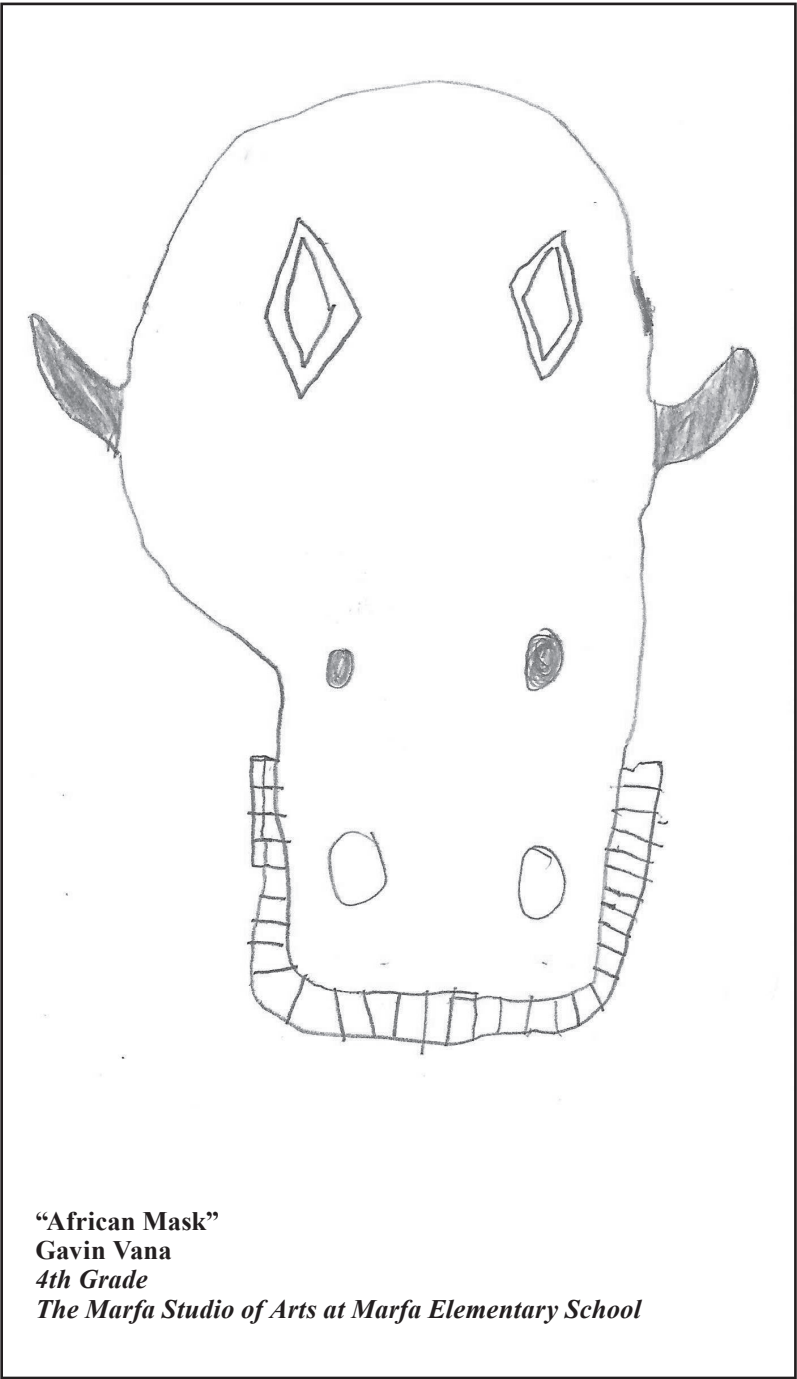
Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	A	S	E		A	L	P	S		A	G	E		
A	L	O	T		N	O	S			N	O	W		
W	I	S	C	O	N	S	I	N		A	R	E		
				H	E	A	T		D	I	C	E		
A	D	D	E	D		F	I	D	O					
H	A	R	D		F	A	L	L		C	O	N	E	R
A	L	A		S	I	L	A	S		D	A	Y		
B	I	C	O	N	V	E	X		V	A	S	E		
		O	B	O	E		G	I	S	T	S			
A	M	N	I	O		F	A	T	A					
L	E	I		Z	I	R	C	O	N	I	U	M		
I	R	A		E	V	A	N		D	O	S	E		
T	E	N		D	Y	N	E		S	N	A	G		

Community & Education

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Big Bend Little League gears up for spring season

Opening day for Big Bend Little League is scheduled for March 28. The season runs through the end of May.

Big Bend Little League recently voted in its new board members for the 2020 Spring season. Many members are returning board members like Sarah Vasquez, who will be serving as the board president. Elizabeth Mesker, who has been on the board for the past few years as treasurer, will now serve as vice president. Kristie Mendoza will continue in her role as secretary. Robert Vasquez and George Mendoza, who have also served on previous boards will be the new player agent and umpire-in-chief, respectively. April McAnally will now be the registration coordinator. New to the 2020 board are Libby Newman as the treasurer, Sam Morales as the coaching coordinator and Kevin Lasoya. Registration for the 2020 season is now taking place and will be primarily conducted online this year.

Interested players have until February 28 to register. Prices for this year are: \$65 for T-ball (ages 4-6 years old), and \$75 for Coach Pitch (7-8 years old), Minors (9-10 years old) and Majors (11-12 years old). Siblings get a \$10 discount.

To register, go to <https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/bigbendlittleleague> or find the link on the Big Bend Little League Facebook page. Those interested in coaching or sponsoring a team can email bigbendlittleleague@gmail.com.

A player showcase for the minors and majors division will be held February 29, beginning at 1 p.m. at the Little League baseball field. The showcase is a way for coaches to see the player’s skills before the draft. Showcase attendance is not mandatory in order to be drafted to a team.

Congratulations to MISD perfect attendance and honor roll students!



PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Mrs. Eppenauer Alex Martinez	Mrs. Barton Lydia Henderson	Ms. Amaro Zoey Salgado Asael Zubia Joshua Kelly	Ms. Tandy Isiah Ramos Amaya Gomez	Mrs. Aguero Gisselle Torres Darren Campos Raven Martinez	Ms. Villerreal Hannah Sherrill Sofia Guzman Julion Tores
Ms. Devine Layla Anderson Avery Sherrill	Mrs. Roman Coy Sherrill		Ms. Travis Liliana Zubia		



HONOR ROLL

Mrs. Roman Alba Amaro Maricarmen Avila Lea Alvidrez Ian Harden Diego Labrado Giovanni Van-Etten Coy Sherrill Nathaniel Ramos Adrian Salgado-Tarr	Seth Nunez Tayvian Valenzuela Liliana Zubia Juliet Hinojos Juliet Hinojos Alayna Vasquez Aidyn Gonzales	Jerika Rodriguez Miguel Gonzales	Avalon Schroeder Aubrey Tarr-Salgado Flavio Udave Asael Zubia Ayden Alvarez Claudina Gonzales Natasha Labrado Jose Bueno MunozAaliyah Ramirez Itzel Urrutia Alexis Villela	Mrs. Aguero Lily Aguero Gisselle Torres Louise Culbertson Ava Flores Clegg Fowlkes Christopher Huerta Raven Martinez Easton Watt Noah Barton Madison Cash Daniela Fernandez Collette Fowlkes Mateo Meza Belen Soto-Torres Manuel Dominguez Darren Campos Abelardo Marquez	Ms. Tandy Gael Chavira Amaya Gomez Taryn Klockman Messiah Licon Waylyn Newby Joe Angel Davila Sara Salgado Riley Sturman Isiah Ramos Natalie Lewis Alexandro Rodriguez Ayven Phippen Sammy Estrada
Ms. Travis Mikayla Bentley Adeline Marquez Reece Klockman Ulises Estrada Alyssa Garcia Haylie Lewis	Mrs. Enriquez Gavin Vana Matthew Villar Alyssa Harden Terrence Resendiz Alberto Salgado Diego Sanchez John Anthony Van-Etten Lynna Hinojos Zoe Tollivar	Ms. Amaro Zoey Salgado Jayden Amaro Vanessa Diaz Christopher Garcia Michael Holguin Joshua Kelly			

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

FEBRUARY	Thurs, Feb. 20	Fri, Feb. 21	Mon, Feb 24	Tues, Feb 25	Wed, Feb 26
BREAKFAST	cinnamon roll, sausage	biscuit, gravy, scrambled egg	sausage biscuit	breakfast burrito, hash browns	cereal, toast
LUNCH Menu courtesy of PORTER'S SINCE 1945 Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	pepperoni pizza, garden salad, baby carrots, fresh apple slices	breaded fish square, mac & cheese, coleslaw, savory green beans, orange smiles, cookie	country fried steak, gravy, roll, fries, tomato cup, applesauce	boneless wings, multigrain chips, broccoli florets, baby carrots, peaches, pudding	fresh bread cheese pizza, marinara sauce, garden salad, Italian blend vegetables, mixed fruit

Come worship with us

First United Methodist Church

9am Sundays

Young Hoon Kang, Pastor

110 W Washington Street
Marfa • 729-4534

Raul Lara
City Council Member

Cell# 432-249-1189
councilmemberlara@cityofmarfa.com

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Congratulations on a great basketball season Marfa Shorthorns!
See Marfa ISD Facebook page for more details on upcoming events.

Classifieds & public notices



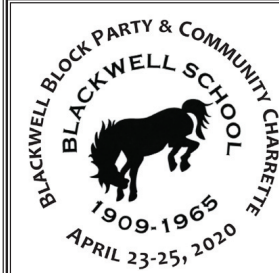
PLEASE CONSERVE WATER



City of Marfa Public Works is installing a new well for the City and we will be on the standby well for the next two weeks.

We ask the citizens to please voluntary conserve water for the next two weeks starting today.

Thank you,
Jeff Boyd, *City Public Works Director*



*Charrette [shuh-**ret**] A series of meetings that brings together citizens, subject matter experts, and decision makers to create a vision for development. A Charrette provides a forum for ideas and offers the unique advantage of giving immediate feedback to planners. Participants work together to identify issues and conflicts, brainstorm solutions, and determine detailed and realistic goals for the future. What makes a Charrette different from a workshop or conference is the emphasis on interactive conversations, collaborative outcomes, and the value of each participant's perspective.



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*Class is based on these models: Polaris Ranger XP 900, John Deere XUV835M & Kawasaki Mule PRO-FXR. The handling comparison was performed on the FSAE SKIDPAD course in gravel conditions. © Kubota Tractor Corporation, 2019. \$0 Down, 0% A.P.R. financing for up to 48 months on purchases of select new Kubota RTV-X Series equipment from participating dealers' in-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation, U.S.A.; subject to credit approval. Some exceptions apply. Example: 48 monthly payments of \$20.83 per \$1,000 financed. Offer expires 12/31/19. For complete warranty, safety and product information see dealer or KubotaUSA.com.

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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)	Al-Anon Meeting 2pm: Open 115 E Oak St. Library Movie Room (Left of main entrance)	Daily Reflections 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	Marfa Lights Group 6pm : Open	Daily Reflections 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	Marfa Lights Group 12pm : Open	Daily Reflections 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	Step Study 12pm: Open
		We Are Not Saints 6pm : Open Discussion St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Meditation Meeting 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	We Are Not Saints 6pm : Open Big Book Study St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Meditation Meeting 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	We Are Not Saints 6pm : Open Discussion St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Discussion 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)

JOBS

The Hotel Paisano is accepting applications for FRONT DESK CLERK for the OVERNIGHT SHIFT. 3-4 days per week, 10:00 p.m.-6:30 a.m. Applicants should have customer service experience, neat appearance, good communication skills, basic math and computer knowledge. Some janitorial services are also included in the responsibilities of this position. Applications are available at the hotel's front desk.

The Hotel Paisano is accepting applications for HOUSEKEEPERS. Part-time/full-time hours. Weekdays and weekends beginning at 8 a.m. each day. References required. Applications available at the hotel's front desk.



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FT or PT

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FOR RENT

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.

The City of Marfa is accepting applications for the position of City Secretary. An application and job description detailing duties and responsibilities can be obtained at the Marfa City Hall at 113 S Highland Ave. or online at cityofmarfa.com/ employment. Compensation will depend upon qualifications and experience. The position will remain open and posted on the City's website until filled.



Accountant or Experienced Accounting Assistant

BBT is seeking a full-time Accountant or experienced Accounting Assistant. The ideal candidate must be well organized, able to multi-task, work under deadlines, have excellent communication and analytical skills, General Ledger and Excel knowledge as well as the following qualifications:

- Minimum 3 years of experience in Accounting.
- Bachelor's degree in Accounting or finance preferred

Applicants must possess a valid driver's license, have a good driving record and be insurable under the company's insurance policy. Applicant may be required to work overtime or on weekends and holidays as needed and may be required to attend out-of-town training and/or meetings requiring travel by car, bus, plane or other means of transportation and overnight stays. Hiring Bonus, Competitive Compensation and Benefits Package included. This company participates in E-Verify.

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BBT, Attn: HR

808 N. 5th St.

Alpine, TX 79830

Or email resume to: HR@bigbend.com

Please no phone calls.

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