

IN BRIEF

Leach indicted on felony sexual assault charge



Jeff Leach

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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TERLINGUA — Jeff Leach, a self-described diet and gut researcher and founder of Basecamp Terlingua, has for months denied that he assaulted any of the women who accused him of doing just that. When Katy Milam, a former Basecamp employee, told authorities in July that Leach had allegedly held her down and told her “he gets what he wants,” Leach sued her for defamation and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

As that lawsuit progressed, three more women filed affidavits accusing him of sexual assault and rape. But Leach maintained his innocence.

“I did not force myself on or assault Katy [Milam] in any way,” he stated in his own affidavit, from last year. He also denied the allegations made by the other women.

But a grand jury in Brewster County thought differently — finding at least one of the allegations against him credible. Late last month, they indicted Leach on a felony sexual assault charge.

The Brewster County Sheriff’s Office on Saturday took Leach into custody, announcing the news on social media.

Leach was released on \$20,000 bond. As a condition of his release, he can’t have any contact with the victim named in the indictment. The Brewster County Jail confirmed on Tuesday that Leach was no longer in custody.

Of the at least four women who made allegations against Leach, just one is referenced in the one-page indictment. Leach allegedly “intentionally and knowingly” had sex with that woman “without [her] consent,” it states.

The woman — who has asked *The Big Bend Sentinel* not to name her in our reporting on Leach —filed an affidavit on November 5. In it, she stated that, in 2014, Leach raped her. “This was violent assault,” she stated. “There was no consent.”

After the alleged rape, the woman felt “weak and broken,” according to her affidavit.

“I avoided Terlingua,” she stated. “I was scared to return to Terlingua alone for some time.”

“Jeff Leach is a powerful man in this area,” she stated. “I worry about how he may have influenced people’s feelings about my reputation.”

Reached on Tuesday, that woman said she was aware of the indictment but declined to comment further.

The controversy against Leach has been a test case in unwanted publicity. In his lawsuit from September, Leach called Milam’s allegations against him “false defamatory statements” and demanded she stop.

Instead, three more women came forward. The local media, including *The Big Bend Sentinel*, and countless residents started following the case. Airbnb kicked Basecamp off its platform, citing “multiple sexual assault allegations.” And District Attorney Sandy Wilson convened a grand jury, which ultimately resulted in the indictment against Leach.

The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Photo by Sarah M. Vasquez

Grace Rothery and Owen Thompson carry the rockets across a ranch outside of Marfa before the launch.

With high-powered rockets, local students shoot for the stars

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — It’s a beautiful Sunday afternoon at the Fowlkes Ranch near Marfa, and a group of students from Marfa and Alpine are getting ready to launch the rockets they’ve been working on for months.

Also in attendance are some fans (read: parents) and a couple of Blue Origin employees who have helped the mostly teenage members of the Marfa ISD Blue Origin 2019 Rocketry Workshop build their rockets and prepare for this launch date.

Joseph Mattingly, a propulsion test engineer at the space exploration company, gives the countdown. *Five, four, three, two, one!*

A student presses the launch button, and a neon orange rocket, the first of three, blasts off into

the sky with a fiery roar. Some residents of the Fowlkes Ranch— specifically, three horses and a donkey — sprint away, startled.

These aren’t your average school science project rockets, the dinky little black-powder-powered toys that readers might remember from their youth. At around the height of some of these amateur scientists, the Marfa rockets rely on “ammonium perchlorate composite propellant,” which are rubber-based fuels that are “essentially attached to a car battery,” says Mattingly, the Blue Origin employee. They go so high that the group had to seek approval from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Mattingly has always been interested in space. As a kid, he went to space camp in Alabama. Later, at Georgia Tech, he started a rocketry club that grew from just four members to around 50.

“People figured out rockets were pretty cool,”

Mattingly jokes of the group’s growth, adding: “I still consider this my hobby.” But he concedes that the rockets he launched as a kid weren’t quite on this level.

At Blue Origin, Mattingly helps test the company’s BE-U and BE-3U rocket engines, which can include everything from logistics to maintenance. “I like to tell people I’m a jack of all trades,” he says.

To those trades, Mattingly can also add school science instructor. Blue Origin, which started operating a rocket test site near Van Horn in 2006, has been working with Marfa students for around three years, said Oscar Aguero, superintendent of the Marfa Independent School District.

Blue Origin started teaching students about

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TxDOT adds passing lanes to US 67, rethinks intersection at the county courthouse

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — The Texas Department of Transportation had surveyors out last week to begin early stages of two projects. The first, to add passing lanes along U.S. 67 between Presidio and Marfa, and the second, to potentially redesign the intersection of Highland Avenue and West Lincoln Street in front of the Presidio County Courthouse.

Both are safety improvement projects. The changes to U.S. 67 come after a years-long study of the U.S. 67 corridor. “One of the things we heard loud and clear through the U.S. 67 study was that additional passing lanes are needed, and we were able to secure funding to do passing lanes near Shafter,” said TxDOT Alpine Area Engineer Chris Weber. “The first thing we do is survey before we start any design or anything.”

The new lanes will follow the same “theme” as the changes that have been made between Fort Stockton and Alpine and between Alpine and Marfa, Weber says. The stretch of 67 between Marfa and Presidio already has climbing lanes, but TxDOT never had funding to add passing lanes. During the study, the state agency learned more about the various issues when traveling between Marfa and the border, including Solitaire Homes’ manufactured homes,

speed differentials and traffic. Solitaire Homes’ wide load trailers have speed limitations and are regularly using the corridor. Passing lanes will let other travelers get around them.

Meanwhile at the courthouse, TxDOT is currently in the design phase of a safety improvement project located in front of the Presidio County Courthouse, at the intersection of State Highway 17 (Highland Avenue) and West Lincoln Street.

The project is funded for approximately \$120,000, which consists of constructing a roundabout to increase the overall safety performance. TxDOT began the environmental evaluation process, which will follow the National Environmental Policy Act and federal regulations.

This phase of project development will also include detailed evaluations of impacts to natural and human environment, engineering feasibility, cost and public input. This project is estimated to begin construction May 2021.

The project is funded through the Highway Safety Improvement Program, because the intersection saw a higher incidence of crashes over a three year period, including a few incapacitating injuries, though no deaths.

Depending which side of the intersection a driver approaches, they are currently supposed to have right-of-way, come to a full stop or yield. While

locals have a hang of it, Weber says, it can become confusing or dangerous once visitors are involved.

“We were able to get funding for some sort of intersection improvement like a roundabout in front of the courthouse,” Weber explained, but he added that ultimately, “We may or may not do the project.”

They will survey, determine if a change is something the community wants, and then determine if there are additional environmental considerations or extra restrictions from the Texas Historical Commission because of its proximity to the historic courthouse.

What does the Marfa community think of this concept? Weber hopes to find out. He also explains that roundabouts, from a safety standpoint, essentially eliminate T-bone accidents, because cars aren’t entering the intersection at a perpendicular angle.

“The ‘no build’ alternative is carried all the way through as an option. The best way to hear community opinions is early and often,” Weber says. If the project is rejected by the local community, and “we don’t end up doing it, the funding goes back into the pool for other projects. We can’t use it for anything else, but it’s not something that we have to do.”

TxDOT is striving to make the intersection safer not only for drivers, but for pedestrians and cyclists too.

Hospital district board votes against operating a Presidio County hospital

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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TRICOUNTY — The Big Bend Regional Hospital District (BBRHD) board voted that operating a hospital in Presidio County was neither feasible nor desirable at a meeting last Thursday at the Presidio County Courthouse.

At previous meetings, City of Presidio City Administrator Joe Portillo and City Attorney Rod Ponton had asked board members to discuss the possibility, referencing legislation that requires the board to “periodically review the feasibility” of operating a hospital in the county.

Texas’ special district local laws code has a special section just for “medical services for Presidio County” that requires the board to consider the “feasibility and desirability of

operating a hospital in Presidio County,” and says they “shall operate a facility that provides medical services in Presidio County. At a minimum, the facility must provide outpatient medical services to the district’s residents.”

But the final subsection says the board may contract or otherwise cooperate with another entity to provide the services required. That’s what BBRHD does, says Jacqueline McCracken, the district’s executive director. “We have clinics through PCHS in Presidio and Marfa. We also have a contract with Marfa Country Clinic,” she explained.

Though the law is satisfied, McCracken’s recommendation to the board is that they should consider the option of a hospital in Presidio County every year, to assess needs and viability. At the meeting, the board asked Big Bend Regional

Medical Center CEO Rick Flores to weigh in: what does it cost to operate a hospital in the area?

It’s \$25 million a year, according to Flores. The board withdrew into a closed executive session to discuss the potential of a Presidio County hospital, allowed because the board would be discussing provision of services. When they returned, with little public discussion, they unanimously voted that operating a hospital there was not “feasible or desirable.”

McCracken wants it returned to periodically. “People don’t just build hospitals on a whim,” she explains. It takes time, discussion and roughly \$25 million a year. “That’s a lot of money, a lot more than we have.” Because of the legislation requiring periodic discussions of a Presidio hospital, McCracken says, “We have to answer

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Here are the 2020 primary election results for Presidio County

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TRI-COUNTY — Presidio County on Tuesday joined the rest of Texas (and 13 other states) in voting in the “Super Tuesday” primary elections, selecting candidates up and down the ballot to represent the Democratic and Republican parties in November’s general election. For Presidio County, a largely unchallenged field of incumbents means little will change in political offices, but statewide races are just heating up.



Gina Ortiz Jones

In Texas’ 23rd Congressional District, Gina Ortiz Jones beat back a field of challengers in her second bid to be the Democratic nominee for TX-23, successfully avoiding a runoff ahead of November. The percentage of Presidio County residents who voted for Ortiz Jones (60.57 percent) was lower than the district overall (67 percent), with Jaime Escuder, an Alpine lawyer, getting around 14 percent of the vote. A Republican runoff between Tony Gonzales (28 percent) and Raul Reyes (23 percent) will determine who faces Ortiz Jones in a race to take over retiring representative Will Hurd’s seat in Washington.



Ori White

In the race for the 83rd District Attorney’s Office, which covers Presidio, Brewster, Jeff Davis and Pecos counties, incumbent Sandy Wilson fell to challenger Ori White in the Republican primary. Wilson championed her efforts to train and educate local law enforcement, while White said he was running to restore “people’s faith in the values and principles of accountability, responsibility and common sense.” Since there are no Democratic challengers in this race, White of Fort Stockton will become the new 83rd district attorney.

In Texas House District 74, Republican Ruben Falcon overtook Robert Garza to continue on to the general in November. In the Democratic race, Eddie Morales defeated Rowland Garza and Ramsey English Cantu in Presidio and across the district, narrowly avoiding a runoff by garnering 50.8% of all votes returned. The seat opened up after Poncho Nevárez announced he would not seek re-election after a

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Feds move to seize real estate in child sex abuse obscenity case

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TERLINGUA — Federal authorities plan to seize a Terlingua-area compound owned by Thomas Arthur, a local man they accuse of running a for-profit website focused on child abuse text erotica.

Arthur was arrested last year after federal authorities raided his sprawling multi-building property near Terlingua. In his initial indictment, from November, federal authorities gave notice of a “demand for forfeiture,” indicating that they planned to seize his property as part of the case.

A follow-up “bill of particulars,” filed on February 21, offers more details. Prosecutors say they’ll repossess any property that was allegedly “used or intended to be used” to run Arthur’s website, as well as any property that is “traceable to gross profits or other proceeds.”

That could include everything from computers and hard drives to cash and property bought with the site’s income. Prosecutors say Arthur was earning between \$10,000 and \$14,000 from the website in question, as well as another one focused on adult erotica.

Notably, authorities also want to seize Arthur’s Terlingua home, where they’ve said Arthur allegedly ran the website. Authorities list out three property descriptions, all linked the address 1260 Angel Road near Terlingua. All together, the lot descriptions account for around 105 acres of land.

Meanwhile, the criminal trial against Arthur continues. Prosecutors in January requested (and a judge later granted) more time to build their case against him.

Those prosecutors say the case is “so unusual or so complex” that they will need until around June to prepare. They cited the large amount of evidence that authorities are still sorting through, including 25 media devices like cell phones

and flash drives and 95 boxes of “sexually oriented books.”

Another possible reason for the delay: the laws on text-based child pornography (as opposed to visual depictions of it) aren’t exactly settled. In 2002, the Supreme Court ruled that “virtual child pornography is not ‘intrinsically related’ to the sexual abuse of children.” In response, the U.S. Congress in 2003 passed new restrictions — banning drawings, cartoons, sculptures and paintings that depict a “minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct.”

At a bond hearing in November, authorities said they’d found suspected child pornography on media devices owned by Arthur. But the three initial charges against Arthur — “importation or transportation of obscene matters,” “engaging in the business of selling or transferring obscene matters” and “obscene visual representations of the sexual abuse of children” — focused on the text-based child pornography hosted on Arthur’s website, as well as one drawing apparently made by a site member.

At that same bond hearing, federal Judge David B. Fannin declined to offer Arthur bond and instead decided to keep him custody. Fannin cited the nature and significance of Arthur’s alleged offense in his decision.

But in a filing last week, Arthur’s lawyer, Houston-based criminal defense attorney Mark Bennett, said the government should reconsider giving Arthur bond in light of the slowdown.

“More than seventy days after the detention hearing, the Government has provided almost no discovery [evidence],” Bennett wrote in his filing, from February 26. He also argued that authorities had “falsely identified ammunition seized from Defendant Arthur as ‘armor piercing’” at the previous bond hearing.

A judge on Friday agreed with the request, and Arthur now has another bond hearing set for March 16. Bennett did not respond to requests for comment by press time.

Mexican official: Ojinaga preparing for transmigrante route

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PRESIDIO — After months of rumor and speculation, a Mexican official said at a meeting Tuesday night that a transmigrante route will soon open in Presidio-Ojinaga — and that Ojinaga is already getting ready.

That was the main takeaway from Presidio’s first international multi-agency workshop on the traveling merchants, who buy consumer goods like used cars in the United States and sell them back in their home countries (but not in Mexico).

Mexico controls the route(s) for these transmigrantes, and the country has long floated the idea of opening such a route at the Presidio-Ojinaga Port of Entry. Those discussions have put Presidio at the frontlines of an international-trade arrangement that is largely outside the border city’s control.

Such a route has broad implications for Presidio County and the Big Bend region as a whole. Opponents say it will create logistical, traffic and safety issues in Presidio and along U.S. Highway 67 up through Marfa. Proponents see it as part of expanded international trade through the Big Bend region — a trend that also includes a reopened international trade bridge, the bridge improvements at the Presidio-Ojinaga Port of Entry and the “Entrada al Pacífico” trade route.

Kleinman Consultants, which is organizing the workshops, reached out to several U.S. politicians and public officials at the federal level. None of them came to Tuesday’s workshop. That includes officials at the Presidio Port of Entry — though they did at least share their vision for streamlining transmigrante traffic through the city.

In an email to the city on Tuesday afternoon, Alejandro Leos, assistant port director at the Presidio Port of Entry, said he was “unable to attend this meeting or send a representative.” But he agreed transmigrantes are “an important issue” and said the “broker processing of paperwork” is a “critical point” in preventing a logjam. He also said officials would implement procedures for the



Photo by Sara Button

A transmigrante with a vehicle for resale in tow. Debates and rumors over transmigrantes — traveling Central American merchants who buy used goods in the United States and resell them back home — have been causing worry in Presidio city.

merchants, which could possibly include “a 20-vehicle limit for presentation at the port.”

No other federal officials attended or contributed information to the workshop. It’s a problem Presidio Mayor John Ferguson has complained about for months. While the federal government in Mexico is apparently taking a lead on transmigrantes, federal officials in the United States are nowhere to be found, he says.

“You know what we really need in Presidio?” Ferguson said on Tuesday night. “We need for our federal government to say, ‘We’ve got your back on this.’ We need Congressman Hurd to say, ‘We’ve got your back.’ But he’s not saying that.”

At city council meetings, and especially at recent ones, Presidio has repeatedly discussed transmigrantes. But as the debate has drawn on for months, city leaders and citizens have grown increasingly frustrated.

Attempts to plan for transmigrantes have been bogged down by side controversies, including one surrounding the city’s plan to build a parking lot for the travelers. Meanwhile, city leaders say they’re getting little information from Mexico and even less help from the feds and the state.

And so, at Presidio’s last city council meeting, the city agreed to have a series of “workshops” on the issue. The goal is to bring together local, federal and Mexican officials to discuss and plan for a new proposed transmigrante route

through Presidio-Ojinaga.

The first such workshop happened at the Presidio Activity Center on Tuesday evening. When it ended around three hours later, participants were about halfway through their agenda, and tempers were hotter than ever.

Several Mexican officials were present at the meeting. Among them were Melissa Franco, a Mexican social development official based in Ojinaga. She said a transmigrante route in Ojinaga could open as early as March but could also get delayed, as Mexican officials readied the port.

Ojinaga is already getting upgrades, she said. There are plans to build a new highway loop around Ojinaga, and the city is removing street-wiring and medians along major roads, including on Avenida Morelos. At first, she said, transmigrante traffic will be split between Ojinaga and Los Indios — currently the only approved transmigrante port — until Presidio-Ojinaga are ready for all of it.

“For many years, we’ve been waiting for a development on both sides of the border,” Franco said. The transmigrante route, she said, will “detonate” business growth. That includes not only brokers but businesses like food sellers and bunkhouses.

Presidio City Administrator Joe Portillo pushed back against the idea that transmigrantes will bring revenue to the city. He cited his experience meeting transmigrantes while working in law enforcement.

“They didn’t stay in a hotel. They

do eat, but they eat very simply,” he said. “They spend the least amount of money they can.”

Presidio city and county officials have a more pessimistic take on transmigrantes than Franco. They say the route will strain EMS and other city resources and contribute to already long wait times at the port. “I’m imagining Christmas holiday constantly,” city Councilmember Irvin Olivias said.

County officials worry about strain on the narrow and winding U.S. 67, as well as safety issues. At the meeting, David Beebe, a Presidio County justice of the peace, brought up the possibility of crime “with transmigrantes as victims.” After all, he said, they carry cash.

Oscar Prado, a Mexican broker in Ojinaga, disagreed. That was “completely erroneous,” he said. Transmigrantes use credit cards.

This meeting — like previous ones — was bogged down by debates over the city’s proposed transmigrante parking lot. H. Cowan, a representative of Solitaire Homes, repeatedly interjected to express his objections to the plan.

At one point, he asked Mayor Ferguson whether he planned to enforce a city parking ordinance. Ferguson said yes. “You will have the biggest boondoggle you’ve ever seen here, and it will be a black mark against the city,” Cowan said.

Cowan also repeatedly complained that too much of meeting was happening in Spanish.

“You need to start learning Spanish,” Prado, the Mexican broker, said in English.

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Election

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scandal involving illicit drugs found at an airport.

In Texas State Senate District 29, Democrat César Blanco, a current state representative for El Paso, and Republican Bethany Hatch both won their uncontested races, preparing the two to face off.

Joe Biden emerged as the frontrunner of the Democratic presidential primary on Tuesday night after winning several states, including Texas, in the “Super Tuesday” primary elections. But the vote between Biden and Sanders was relatively close, with the men getting around 33 percent and 30 percent, respectively. But Sanders trounced Biden in Presidio County, getting 41 percent compared to Biden’s 17 percent. In the Republican presidential contest, President Donald Trump easily took Presidio County and Texas, with challengers winning only a handful of votes in Presidio County.



Adan Covos

Locally, Adan Covos won Precinct 2 Constable, defeating incumbent Esteban “Steve” Coker. Covos said he felt pretty sure he would be victorious, speaking of his campaigning efforts with signage and through social media. In a statement, Covos thanked voters, friends and family for their support and said he looks forward to serving the citizens of Presidio for the next four years.

A number of Presidio County elections were uncontested, and in those races the incumbents naturally won. Among those unchallenged incumbents were county commissioners Brenda Bentley and Jose Cabezuela, County Attorney Rod Ponton, Sheriff Danny Dominguez, Precinct 1 Constable Estevan Marquez, County Tax Assessor/Collector Natalia Williams and District Judge Roy B. Ferguson, who will all hold their seats.

In the race for U.S. Senate, longtime incumbent John Cornyn handily won the Republican primary, with over 76 percent of the vote (and around 63 percent in Presidio County). The Democratic primary was messier and will require a runoff, as the frontrunner, Mary “MJ” Hegar, got only around 23 percent of the vote. And the Presidio County Democratic primary was more liberal than most of the state, with two progressives — Annie “Mamá” Garcia and Cristina Tzintzún Ramirez — coming in the lead with around 25 and 20 percent, respectively. Tzintzún Ramirez and Royce West are battling it out for the chance to face Hegar in the runoff as the last returns trickle in.



Image courtesy Radio Bilingüe

Original artwork by Malaquias Montoya (1976) for the station pays homage to Radio Bilingüe’s farmworking and activist traditions.

New radio station set to debut in Presidio

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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PRESIDIO — Radio Bilingüe was started by Latino activists and farmworkers in 1976 as *La Voz que Rompió el Silencio*, or “The Voice that Broke the Silence.” And now, 44 years later, the station is set to arrive in Presidio city by the end of the month.

In exchange for a free spot to set up their antenna, Radio Bilingüe is making Presidio a sponsor and will allow the city to contribute content if it wishes to do so. “They really didn’t have to pitch us very hard,” said Brad Newton, executive director of the Presidio Municipal Development District. “We were very receptive from the beginning.”

Radio Bilingüe, a California-based Latino radio station, says it will be on Presidio airwaves by late March after city council gave the group permission to set up an antenna on city property last week.

The nonprofit first approached the city with the proposal earlier this year. City leaders see the proposal as a way to bring more Spanish-language programming to residents of the Presidio/Ojinaga border region.

Radio Bilingüe offers news and cultural programming in Spanish, including a call-in show (*Línea Abierta*, or “Open Line”) and traditional Mexican music like mariachi and conjunto.

The station will get the call letters KRBP, for “Radio Bilingüe Presidio,” Newton said. It’ll be on air no later than March 24 — the deadline the nonprofit has to use its Federal Communications Commission license before it expires — but the

group says it expects to be on air even sooner.

Radio Bilingüe has over 50 stations and affiliates, including in Mexico, California, New Mexico and Arizona. In recent years, the group has also been trying to reach the massive Latino population in Texas, said Hugo Morales, executive director and co-founder of the station.

Radio Bilingüe is already broadcasting in South Texas, including with stations and affiliates in Zapata and Crystal City. “But Texas is very large,” he said, explaining why the group hasn’t reached the whole Texas border region just yet.

Morales predicted the station will broadcast for around 60 to 80 miles. But he doesn’t expect Marfans will pick it up, because he says the Chinati Mountains will get in the way.

“Basically it’s just going to be Presidio and Mexico,” he said of the new station. “The mountains will block any transmission in the Marfa direction.”

For Morales, this latest station is another step in bringing together cross-border Latino communities in the United States and Mexico. And Presidio, where many residents regularly travel to Ojinaga, is a “microcosm for the border,” he said.

“We want these families to have economic opportunities,” Morales said of Presidio residents, noting that a Spanish-language station could help bring them important updates on education and healthcare. And Línea Abierta will be an opportunity for residents to “call in and be heard,” he said.

“That’s something we value. That’s our contribution,” he added. “The radio station is in fact a bridge.”

Hospital

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this question, it has to be done at a meeting formally and if it generates more of a conversation, that’s great.”

When McCracken arrived at the role, she says the board was focused on the viability of the hospital in Alpine. Now that it’s stable, she says, they’re able to think about other opportunities.

At the Thursday meeting, the board welcomed new member Alejandro Armendariz, whose appointment to represent Presidio’s District 1 on the board was approved in December.

The board also cancelled an upcoming election due to no new applicants to contest incumbents. Esther Howard, the board chairman, plans to depart from District 5, but will be “held over” until a candidate applies and is approved by the board in lieu of an election. At the meeting, it was noted that every member of the current board has been appointed

rather than elected, owing to the low interest in joining the board. After the May 2 election date, interested applicants are invited to apply for the soon-to-be-vacant District 5 seat.

The board also voted to approve new legal counsel from Alan Bojorquez, an attorney out of Austin with an office in El Paso.

Hospital CEO Flores updated the board on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), saying that risk was low in West Texas, but the hospital was attempting to prepare. “We’re just waiting. Our crew is ready for the worst. Can we accommodate? I don’t know,” he said. He recommended the board and the public monitor the illness’ spread through Johns Hopkins’ tracking: <https://systems.jhu.edu/research/public-health/ncov/>

The next meeting of the Big Bend Regional Hospital District will take place March 19 at 5:30 p.m. at the BBRHD office in Alpine.



Photo courtesy of NASA

At Blue Origin’s West Texas facility, the BE-3 engine demonstrated a full simulated suborbital mission profile, igniting, throttling and restarting on command.

As new Blue Origin factory opens in Alabama, company expects growth in Van Horn

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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VAN HORN — Larry Simpson remembers the day he met Jeff Bezos, the billionaire founder of Amazon and a space enthusiast.

It was around 2005. Bezos had big dreams of opening a rocket testing facility near Van Horn, and Simpson was running The Van Horn Advocate. He later retired in 2012 after running the paper for almost 40 years.

Contrary to popular accounts of the meeting, Simpons said Bezos didn’t just walk in. He called and scheduled a meeting. And the interview itself was pretty standard. “We pretty much just let him tell us about his vision,” Simpson said.

“But,” Simpson added, “it was unusual for a guy that owns Amazon.com to walk into the office and sit down and talk to you.”

It’s been over 10 years since Blue Origin, the space exploration company launched by Bezos, settled in Van Horn. The West Texas operation is part of a nationwide business that includes facilities for design work in Los Angeles, engine-building in Washington State and government affairs work in Virginia.

In Van Horn, the company has been testing and operations for its “New Shephard” suborbital rockets and development for its “BE-3” and “BE-4” rocket engines. Bezos is also funding the Long Now Foundation to build 10,000-year clock in the area.

Last week, Blue Origin opened a new engine production facility in Alabama, which will produce BE-3 rockets that are later tested in Van Horn. But the company stressed to The Big Bend Sentinel that the news didn’t mean the company would scale down its operations in Van Horn.

Instead, “West Texas will remain the engine

development testing center and will be as busy as ever,” as more engines from Huntsville, Alabama, would mean more tests in Van Horn, a spokesman said in a statement.

“To be clear,” the spokesman added, “we have never manufactured engines in Van Horn.”

As Blue Origin has scaled up its operations in Van Horn, the regular visitors (both Blue Origin employees and rocket-launch enthusiasts) have meant more business for Van Horn restaurants, hotels and other service industries. In the heart of town, Hotel El Capitan confirmed that Blue Origin employees were regular guests. They declined to comment further, citing a confidentiality agreement with the company.

Those economic benefits may not always trickle downmarket. Sam Patel, the office manager at in Knights Inn motel in Van Horn, said most of his guests were truckers and tourists traveling along Interstate 10 — not rocket engineers.

“They stay in those high-end hotels,” Patel said. “They don’t come to my place.”

But on a macro scale, the Blue Origin business has meant more money for the city, said Lisa Cottrell, a member of the Van Horn Economic Development Corporation and the owner, along with her husband, of a couple local businesses, including the local branch of NAPA Auto Parts and the Van Horn Cattle Company, a steakhouse.

Cottrell pointed to a new apartment block in development, and to 12 new houses that are being built specifically for Blue Origin employees, she said. More revenue was coming in, and taxes have risen, she said.

“Thank God we have them here,” she said. “They’re great for our community. I hear that they’re going to expand here, employee-wise.” The Blue Origin spokesman declined to confirm these rumors, saying the company had “no detailed specifics to share at this time.”



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*Class is based on three 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.

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THE MIRAGE SERIES



A collaboration between Uta-Maria Krapf & Tom Barnes

Artists’ reception: Friday, March 6th, 6-8 p.m.
Greasewood Gallery at the Hotel Paisano
207 North Highland, Marfa



URANUS IS AFOOT

Birth Chart Marfa: Part Two

By JACK COPELAND

In Birth Chart Marfa: Part One, we explored Marfa’s gestation and birth. Determining that January 12, 1883, at precisely 2 p.m., was the foundational date for Marfaastrology, we cast her natal chart. Bill Nolan, an astrologer with over 40 years of experience interpreting such celestial blueprints, made the following observation after studying Marfa’s newly-minted scorecard (see diagram below): “If this were the chart of a person, I would insist they regularly consult not one but two, maybe three, psychotherapists.”

Before we stampeaded for the salutary waters of Balmorhea (once it reopens), let’s take a deep breath. Yes, it’s true Marfa was foaled with a powerful stellium of Pluto, Neptune, Saturn and Chiron in her 12th House. In astrology, the 12th House is uncharitably called the dustbin of the horoscope, because it is here where we sweep away problems too painful to face. Let’s just say that it can be the kind of place that might give Stephen King a restless night. But it’s also a place of creativity, inspiration and hidden strengths. What’s more, this potent stellium is conjunct in Taurus, a zodiac sign which is patient, practical and earthy - all excellent qualities that help us survive and thrive in our high desert.

Like any good fake astrologer, I like to address the skeptics out there. You’re thinking: even if there’s a speck of verisimilitude to this Marfaastrology business, how do we know that you’ve chosen the right birthdate? Well, if the cogent and exhaustive arguments presented in “Birth Chart Marfa: Part One” did not convince you, I offer a kind of astrological proof-checking. It’s known as *chart rectification*. Now granted, we’re not talking randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled scientific protocol. But it is a technique which can test whether Marfa’s historical identity conforms with our natal chart assumptions. In other words, it’s an approach that’s got *horse sense*, a commodity well prized in these parts.

So what planets, signs, and aspects dominate Marfa’s birth chart? Appropriately for this column, we begin with Uranus. It occupies Marfa’s 5th House, the house of creativity and self-expression. What’s more, Uranus has the whole 5th House to itself – a powerful and exclusive accommodation. Where Uranus sets up shop, you get a place that’s iconic, quirky, unique, innovative, rebellious, freedom-loving and independent. Starting to sound a little familiar? To strengthen the brew, Uranus trines Marfa’s Sun sign Capricorn. The Sun sign of a person (or place) is how one shines out into life, and a trine is a favorable alignment. We end up with an interesting, if slightly schizoid, mix where unpredictable Uranus disrupts Capricornian caution and conventionality.

Uranus isn’t done. It’s also working behind the scenes, through a trine, to energize Marfa’s 12th House. And just to gild the desert lily, Marfa’s Midheaven, which represents life’s direction and calling, is in the sign of Aquarius (see the upper vertical line in the chart below). Guess who rules Aquarius? *Uranus*, of course. Where you find Uranus in the horoscope is where you tend to do the unusual.

Now to Venus, our lead actress. She represents art, love, beauty, sensuality – and she’s got the full run of Marfa’s 7th House, the house of partnerships and relationships. So who has partnered with Marfa in this Venusian realm over the years? There’s opera and theatre, from the Marfa Opera House to the Crowley Theatre; literature, drama and poetry – from a Dostoevsky-reading railroad engineer’s wife to Marfa Book Co./Lannan Foundation/Marfa LiveArts; painting and sculpture, let me count the ways: Chinati Foundation/Judd Foundation/Ballroom Marfa/Building 98, and galleries and studios too numerous to mention. Marfa’s got Venus in spades.

Marfa’s Ascendant, the zodiac sign that was rising over the eastern horizon at the time of her birth, is in Gemini. The Ascendant represents how the world sees you, a sort of first impression. What’s key here is that Gemini is ruled by the planet Mercury, which governs transportation and communication. So how did the world first see Marfa? Quite literally, as a water stop for the Harrisburg, Galveston and San Antonio Railway. Bingo! Score another touchdown for chart rectification. And we can add a two-point conversion when it comes to communication. How many towns our size have an NPR station? How many communities this size host internationally acclaimed writers, poets, playwrights, musicians and dancers to regularly perform? How many whistle-stop tank towns still maintain a local newspaper? (And a darn good one at that, all conflict of interest aside.)

The planet Mercury itself occupies Marfa’s 9th House – the house of expanding one’s horizons. To begin with, Marfa was literally born with expansive horizons. Every morning we can waltz out our front door and behold a fabulous sky. It’s a huge part of why we’re all here, and a big part of what attracts travelers from so many distant lands. Speaking of expanding horizons, let’s not forget that world class observatory just up the road, or the Blue Origin Spaceport an hour’s drive from here. And another cosmic piece of the chart rectification puzzle falls into place.

We conclude with Marfa’s 12th House, the final house in the zodiac. This is the part of our chart that would compel any sane astrologer to give the zodiac equivalent of medical informed consent. That’s because we’ve got Saturn, Chiron, Neptune and Pluto all conjunct in our 12th House – the house of seclusion, secrets and the subconscious.

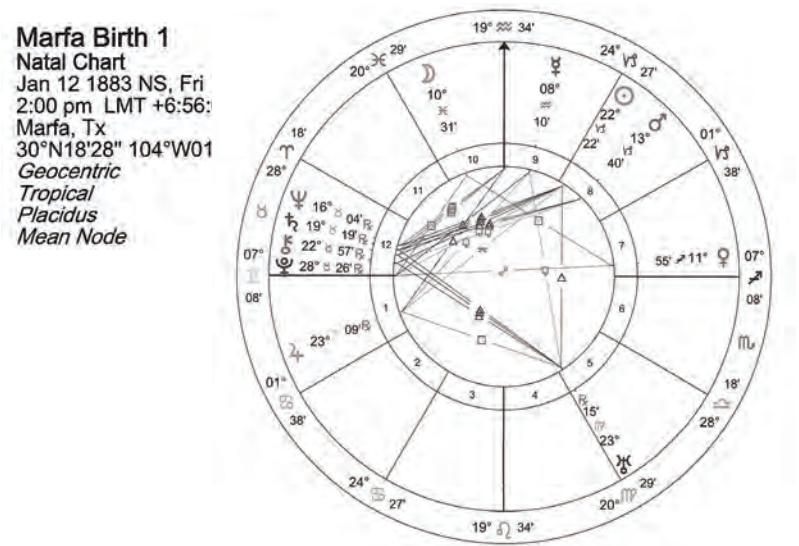
These house guests are dominant, slow-moving planetary bodies that exert strong and long-term influence on our affairs. To say that they can wear out their welcome would be an understatement. Let’s take them one at a time, beginning with Saturn. Described as the god of time, Saturn is about discipline, responsibility and knowing one’s limitations. This ancient teacher means serious business. He’s a demanding taskmaster who challenges us to succeed in this remote landscape that Spanish explorers once called *despoblado*. Saturn also rules Capricorn, Marfa’s Sun sign, which doubles down Saturn’s grinding effect.

Chiron, discovered in 1977, is variously described as an asteroid/comet/planetoid body orbiting our Sun between Saturn and Uranus. In Roman mythology, Chiron was a centaur and son of Saturn. (I guess Son of Saturn, while no picnic, beats Son of Sam). Centaurs are wild half-human, half-horse creatures given to excess, and occasionally still spotted at the Lost Horse on a Saturday night. But Chiron, mentored by Apollo, was gentle and gifted in the arts of medicine and music.

In astrology, Chiron symbolizes the “Wounded Healer,” successfully ministering to others but unable to cure himself. While his own wound could not be healed, his message is to learn how to live with that pain and prevent it from ever happening again. What has been the Marfa/Big Bend community’s greatest wound? I refer you to Lonn Taylor’s article “The Worst Thing That Ever Happened On The River,” included in his book *Marfa for the Perplexed*. It’s a historical account of the Porvenir Massacre on the night of January 27, 1918. That’s our Chiron.

Neptune may seem an odd bedfellow to take up residence in Marfa’s chart. After all, Neptune makes us think of the ocean, and there’s not much maritime activity up here on the Marfa Plateau (non-geologically speaking, that is). But Neptune also symbolizes the depths of imagination, the spirit and dream world, and escapism. It rules film and television, and Marfa is no stranger to the cinematic arts. Sadly, drug addiction is part of Neptune’s shadow side – and I’m afraid that Marfa cannot claim immunity in this arena.

To have Pluto in your natal 12th House is like inviting Al Capone to audit your taxes. Or asking Jeffrey Epstein to chaperone your junior prom. It’s Trouble, with a capital T that rhymes with P that stands for Pluto. This Greek god of the underworld is comfortable with that which is hidden from view. But Pluto is also about empowerment, reform and rebirth. To quote astrologers March and McEvers: “Where you find Pluto in the chart, you’ll find complexity; it is where you’ll have to solve problems alone and unaided.” Scary, but trust me brothers and sisters, Marfa has done it before and will do it again. We reinvented ourselves when Fort D.A. Russell closed in 1946. We survived a decade-long drought through the fifties. With each new crisis we found a new identity, or reformulated an old one, to keep our tank town on the map. As writer Sterry Butcher noted in her article “The Marfa Mystique”: “My theory is that Marfa’s isolation...forced its people to be open to the eccentricities of whoever came along...It’s an act of faith to be here – faith that it’ll all work out...”



Reinforcing that faith is the fact that Marfa’s natal 12th House is in the sign of Taurus. The Bull’s qualities of patience, practicality and earthiness help these outer planetary visitors become more comfortable with the real estate. What’s more, Marfa’s Sun sign is Capricorn, which connects us to the land, and how to thoughtfully and successfully live on it. In Marfa, even the cattle and sheep ranchers managed to get along.

Above all, the 12th House is known as a place of *mystery*. “Mystery Lights” anyone? First reported in 1883, we continue to celebrate them every Labor Day weekend. Now that’s what I call positive chart rectification. Albert Einstein wrote that the most beautiful and deepest experience anyone can have is a sense of the mysterious. And with that, the astrological defense for Marfa’s birth chart rests.

P.S. - As I write this column, and as you read it, Mercury is retrograde (through March 9). So, as the Brits say, mind how you go.

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: 1535-1946,” by Cecilia Thompson; “Marfa for the Perplexed” by Lonn Taylor, with Foreword by Sterry Butcher.

Astrology sources include: “The Only Way To Learn Astrology: Basic Principles, Vol 1,” by Marion March and Joan McEvers; and notes from astrologers Tom Brady and Bill Nolan.

HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

Trump’s candy-coated cow patties

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON

It has been stated in more ways than one that if you place all the economists end to end, they would never reach a conclusion. The English prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), once said, “There are liars, damned liars, and statisticians.” Simply put, numbers are easy to both manipulate and confuse the facts. President Tweet has claimed repeatedly that it is his policies that have created the great economic successes of the past three years. If you look closely at his statements you see that his ramblings are nothing but candy-coated cow patties, and you might even say his economic views are “Trumped-up.” Here are a few facts to set the record straight; you can check these facts at the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



A recent study on poverty and a new way of measuring the quality of jobs show the foolishness of GOP claims about the U.S. economy. Poverty went up in at least one county in every state, concentrated in rural areas and the South. And a new system of measurement called the Job Quality Index shows that, although there are jobs available, for the most part, they are low paying and part-time jobs, with few, if any, benefits.

Today, leisure & hospitality is our largest sector with 14.7 million non-management employees. President Tweet has claimed that he has raised the basic earning of the lowest income earners with his tax cut. In fact, he fails to realize that the lowest income earners have been unable to keep up with the economy for the past three decades, and their tax breaks amount to pennies compared to the major international corporations and the top 2% of the country’s wealthiest.

After President Tweet started a tariff war, China retaliated with tariffs that were devastating to U.S. farmers. Despite \$28 billion in farm subsidies in the last two years (much of which went to large agriculture corporations, some foreign-owned), farm bankruptcies surged, especially in the Midwest. President Tweet has denounced socialism and yet what are subsidies to farmers?

His tax cuts for the top 2% wage earners and the international corporations have rocketed us toward a \$1 trillion deficit and has raised our national debt. Here are a few more debt problems facing our country:

The record \$14 trillion in debt that Americans owe is spread across mortgages, auto loans, credit cards, student loans and other forms of debt. By themselves, student loans make up \$1.5 trillion of the debt total. And medical costs are still growing faster than income — medical costs have gone up 33% since 2009.

Republicans have repeatedly claimed that the Obama Administration left the country in a dismal state. However, here are a few facts:

During Trump’s first 36 months in office, the U.S. economy gained 6.6 million jobs. But during a comparable 36-month period at the end of Obama’s tenure, employers added 8.1 million jobs, or 23% more than what has been added since Trump took office.

The average monthly gain so far under Trump is 182,000 jobs. During the last 36 months under Obama, employers were adding an average of 224,000 jobs a month.

At this point in his first and only term, Jimmy Carter had enjoyed a gain of about 10.1 million jobs. Employers added 8.5 million jobs during the first 36 months of Bill Clinton’s term and 7.8 million jobs during the first 36 months of Lyndon Johnson’s tenure, even though the labor force at that time was less than half the size of what it is today.

As a licensed attorney for 30 years, I understand the old platitude, “The devil is in the details.” So, be sure and check the numbers for yourself. Between Wikipedia, Google, USAfacts.org, and the appropriate federal website, you can confirm anything the Russians make up.

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

Cochineal’s Alexandra Gates finds her sea legs in the desert

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

MARFA — Alexandra Gates’ inbox was flooding with messages of congratulations last Wednesday — the Cochineal owner and executive chef just wasn’t quite sure why. Gates just recalls that her husband, Cochineal partner and owner James Harkrider, was ecstatically screaming at the realization that she was nominated for a James Beard Award.

She is one of twenty chefs honored with the 2020 James Beard Best Chef: Texas nomination, a new category that recognizes Texas’ culinary scene in its own right, instead of including it in one of the awards’ multi-state regional categories.

“I find that as I get older, the things I like best are things from my childhood,” Gates says of her cooking. She grew up in the Bay Area, but would spend her summers visiting her maternal grandparents in the Swiss countryside.

“My grandpa would bring back buckets of fish that were still swimming and put them in the bathtub until lunchtime. We always had whole trout,” Gates recalls. “Whenever I do a whole fish, I think of my grandparents, and that’s endearing to me.”

Cochineal’s menu is European-inspired, but the chef incorporates Texas ingredients. But even the Texan-twist hearkens back to Switzerland. When she was there, her family would get fresh eggs from the farm. “I love the idea of that being reintroduced into our culinary and dining experiences, supporting local farmers,” she says. In Marfa, she’s cultivated relationships with urban farmers in Alpine and Fort Davis and has a growing garden of ingredients behind the restaurant.

“I’m very particular about high quality ingredients. I’m making sure the meats don’t have any hormones. I’ve got some heritage breed, free-range all-organic chicken eggs. The yoke was almost red — it’s so beautiful. You know the chickens are taken care of, and I love that aspect.”

But bringing Europe to the deserts



Courtesy of Jennifer Boomer Photography

Executive Chef and Owner of Marfa’s Cochineal restaurant, Alexandra Gates, was recently named a semifinalist for the 2020 James Beard Awards in the Best Chef: Texas category.

of West Texas has its own challenges, and the menu can shift based on the weather. “I get fish flown in. Sometimes if the weather is bad, we don’t get our order, because it’s overnighted,” Gates says.

Gates is one of three Texas chef nominees cooking in a rural area. “I didn’t know that James Beard was even paying attention to such a small town, which is really nice to know,” she said.

She began working at a Japanese restaurant, where she was a server and had to wear a kimono. But she continued working in restaurants, even as she pursued an art degree. She arrived in New York to study at the School of Visual Arts. “When I started in New York, it dawned on me, I had a studio and school was really expensive.” She slowed down on her masters degree studies.

Gates bypassed formal culinary school, cutting her teeth in the kitchens of New York. “I sought out women-owned restaurants and ended up working with two really amazing women while I was there,” she says. Soon, she was in the ranks of Ingrid Roettele’s female-driven kitchen in the East Village. She decided consciously to only work for women, and joined the kitchen

of Marja Samsom.

It was her Texan husband who brought her first to Austin, and eventually to Marfa. She befriended former Cochineal owners Tom Rapp and Toshi Sakihara. When Sakihara fell ill, they decided to sell the restaurant. Then Sakihara passed away, Gates and her husband adopted their daughter and Gates was hit with a cancer diagnosis. When the dust settled, Rapp and Gates reconnected.

“Something kind of clicks when you’re diagnosed with something like that. You’re like, life’s short, I’m going to do what I want. We ended up purchasing,” she says. That was 2017. Soon, Gates and Harkrider were Marfa residents with a restaurant on their hands.

“It took some time to get our sea legs. I have a lot of great people around me. The team is really more of a family and everybody’s got each other’s back. We work really well together and are positive with each other.” Gates says it took some time to piece that all together.

“It’s probably a big reason why I actually got that semifinalist. I don’t even know who nominated me,” she laughs. “I love what I do, so I feel very content.”



Photo by Casey Dunn courtesy of Willow House

The front patio of Willow House’s main house.

Willow House earns spot on hotel “it list”

TERLINGUA — A boutique Terlingua hotel got a shout-out last week from a national travel magazine.

Willow House, a Terlingua hotel, was featured in the “It List” from Travel + Leisure magazine of the best new hotels in the world. The unranked list, which features 72 hotels from the United States and abroad, was released in late February.

The hotel, which includes 12 casitas on almost 300 acres of land, debuted last spring. And it’s already earned plaudits from publications like Architectural Digest, which last year called the hotel’s design “thoughtfully conceived” and said it was a “homage to Terlingua’s natural beauty.”

Travel + Leisure was similarly effusive. They compared the architecture to “a Donald Judd installation” and said the beds were “cloudlike.”

“Deep in West Texas, first-time hotelier Lauren Werner has made her mark with Willow House,” the magazine stated. “The casitas, which put a Texan spin on understated Scandi style, are a treat to come home to.”

Reached for comment, Werner was excited about the listing. She called it unexpected but said she was “extremely grateful” that Travel + Leisure sought out and included “small, independently-owned and run hospitality concepts like ours.”

“Creating Willow House has brought me immense joy and I am lucky enough to witness the joy it brings to others on a daily basis,” she said. “This magical piece of land and the love surrounding this place inspires openness, community and relaxation from the moment guests arrive.”



Photo by Claire Schaper courtesy of Willow House

An interior of one of Willow House’s ten casitas.

Mirage Series to open at Greasewood Gallery

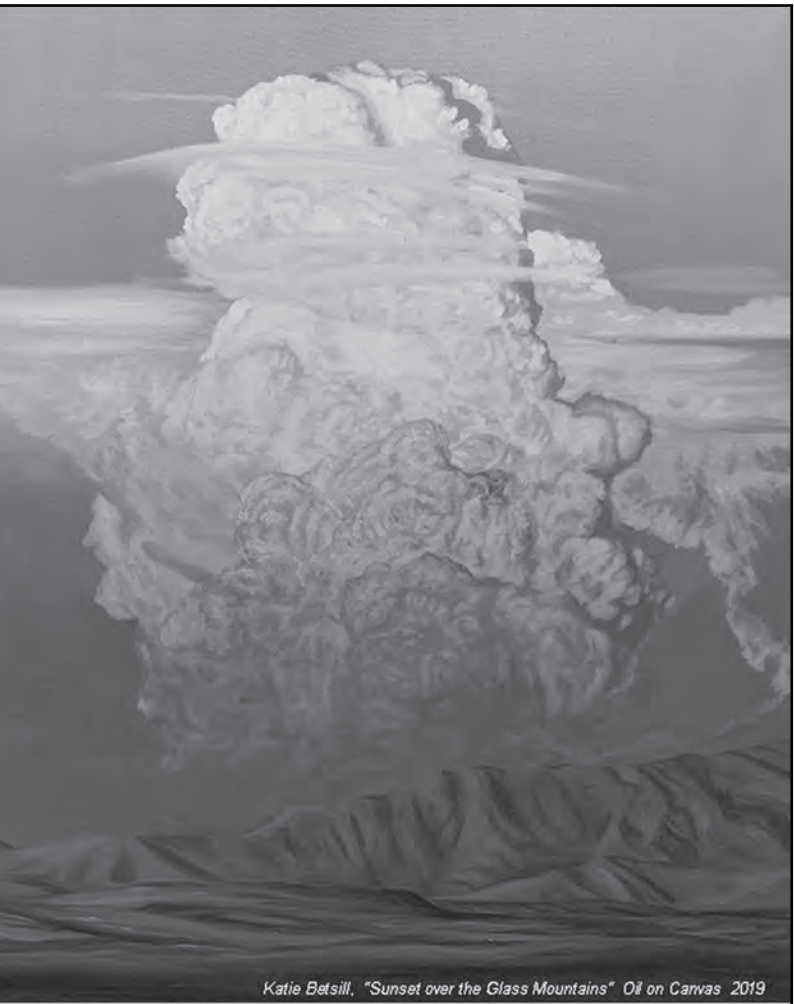
MARFA — A new exhibition is coming to the Greasewood Gallery at the Hotel Paisano.

The Mirage Series, a collaboration between Marfa artists Uta-Maria Krapf and Tom Barnes, is based on photographs from Southwest Texas. The series focuses on the beauty and unique nature and of the Big Bend region with the goal of revealing “a new visual experience,” according to a statement from the artists.

The goal of Krapf’s work is to seek “non-literal interpretation of forms beyond the finite ones.” She focuses on light, color as light, and the representation of dimension on the surface. Her work has been shown in galleries across the United States and abroad. Barnes’ work is featured in permanent collections at a number of institutions, including Texas State University and the Pentagon.



Image courtesy of the artists



Katie Betsill, “Sunset over the Glass Mountains” Oil on Canvas 2019

AN EXHIBITION OF WORK BY ARTISTS OF THE BIG BEND

Katie Betsill, Richard D.Curtin, Lori Griffin, Charles Mary Kubricht, Shelly G. Rogers, Shea Slemmer, CJ Stephens, Shelly Rogers and Rhonda Turholksi

Opening Reception: Friday, March 6, 6-8 p.m.



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Som Tum Salad
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Warm Minced Meat Salad with Herbs and Spices.....\$11.50

Pad Thai
Classic Noodle Stir-Fry Topped with
Your Choice of Tofu, Shrimp, or Chicken.....\$12.50

Curry of the Day with
Your Choice of Tofu, Shrimp, or Chicken.....\$12.50



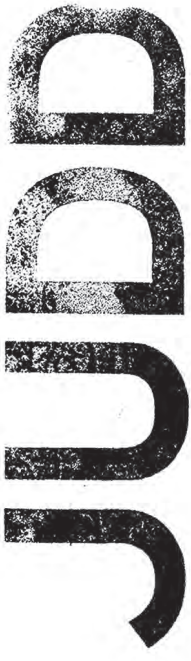
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Then, Again exhibition by Diego Rodriguez-Warner opens



Image courtesy of the artist
Diego Rodriguez-Warner, *The Plan*, 2019, latex paint, acrylic, spray paint, graphite on panel, 60 x 48 in

MARFA — RULE Gallery opened Then, Again, Diego Rodriguez-Warner’s first solo exhibition with the gallery, on Friday, February 28. The show presents an evolution in Rodriguez-Warner’s practice towards the development of paintings that are more pared down in scale and color, yet continue to unobtrusively express themes of entropy, anxieties, violence and truth through cunning beauty and domesticity. His works are a thoughtful amalgamation of traditional high art, printmaking and street art practices that merge through his deep engagement with art and human history.

Rodriguez-Warner’s work plays with the deconstruction of both figure and surface. He begins by adding to his established vocabulary of forms, silhouettes and nudes from known and lesser-known artists, unrestrained by time period and art movement. He then eliminates the noise and context around his subjects to make them contemporary, allowing him to capture the interconnectedness and influence time and cultures have on one another through universal underlying themes. He then mobilizes the extracted forms into renewed configurations, liberating their dormant existence. The delicate paper cutouts become twisted and contorted, imparting movement to familiar faces that passively gazed back at you from an art museum. The familiar, objectified idle nudes overflow with sensuality and vigor, revealing human anxieties and flaws that exist in a dynamic global world.

Once they find their placement in carefully arranged maquettes, the translation of the painted shadows reveal the original design. Applying printmaking techniques, he selectively carves and stains the panel’s surface, moving along with the wood’s materiality through color imperfections, voids, and knots that add their own voice to the final piece. The compositions are filled with subtle critiques and carefully masked wit and cynicism. By skillfully capturing the timeless essence of the past, the works become playful and familiar, as well as independently lyrical and novel, revealing a history of their own.

Rodriguez-Warner (Managua, Nicaragua, 1986) lives and works in Denver, Colorado. In 2008, he studied under the Cuban minister for fine arts, Lesbia Vent Dumois, in Havana, and earned BAs in COIN theory and fine arts from Hampshire College in 2009. In 2013, he received his MFA from RISD and upon graduation was awarded the Toby Devan Lewis Fellowship. Rodriguez-Warner has exhibited both nationally and internationally including Havana, Berlin, New York City, and was selected for Art of the State 2020 at Crystal Bridges Museum of Modern Art, Arkansas. Regionally he has exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; the Museo De Las Americas, Denver; the Gallery of Contemporary Art, Colorado Springs, among others.

The exhibition runs from February 28 to April 25, 2020. There will be an artist talk on Saturday, April 4 at 2 p.m. at the gallery at 204 E San Antonio Street in Marfa.



Image courtesy of the artist
CJ Stephens mixed medium painting on paper

Big Bend artists look to the sky

The Marfa Studio of Arts will be holding an opening reception for the exhibition “Big Sky” on Friday, March 6, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the MSA Gallery located at 106 San Antonio next to the Marfa Public Radio Station. The community is invited to attend the reception and meet the artists of this beautiful show.

The Big Bend region of West Texas is graced by its extraordinary, clear skies. The sunrises and sunsets are awe-inspiring. The clouds are unending in their variety and sheer beauty. Night skies are pristine and studded with endless stars. Artists have been coming to this region to capture the beauty of the skies for many years.

This exhibition displays how nine artists and their work has been influenced by these marvelous skies with different styles and vision. The works in the exhibition vary from the hyper-realistic to flowing abstractions of clouds. Others see the sky more literally, and some works combine a more graphic symbolism linking the relationship of the sky to the earth. All works celebrate the allure of the big West Texas skies to visitors, and especially to an artist.

Big Bend area artists represented in this exhibition are Katie Betsill, Richard D.Curtin, Lori Griffin, Charles Mary Kubricht, Shea Slemmer, CJ Stephens, Shelly Rogers and Rhonda Turholski

Big Sky will run through April 26, 2020. MSA Gallery hours are Wednesday to Saturday noon to 4 p.m.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu
Mar
5

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 Fantastic Mr. Fox.

Fri
Mar
6

Lenten Fish Fry
5 pm at St. Mary's Catholic Church's Parish Hall in Marfa
\$10 per plate. All are welcome.

The Mirage Series artists reception
6 - 8 pm at Greasewood Gallery at the Hotel Paisano in Marfa
The Mirage Series is a collaboration between Uta-Maria Krapf and Tom Barnes of Marfa. The digital prints in this series are based on photographs taken in southwest Texas.

Big Sky opening reception
6 - 8pm at Marfa Studio of Arts, 106 E. San Antonio St. in Marfa
An exhibition of work by local artists featuring the West Texas skies.

Yikes! Ghosts! opening reception
7 - 11pm at Marfa Open, 102 S. Plateau St. in Marfa
Marfa Open presents Yikes! Ghosts! A retrospective exhibition of new and selected works by artist Christopher Dyer.

Sat
Mar
7

The Not-So Newlywed Game Show
Saturday, March 7, 7:30-8:30pm at the USO Building in Marfa
Marfa ISD PTO invites everyone to a Not-So Newlywed Game Show. Competing couples include Cinda & Teryn Muench, Myra & Greg Mead, and Mando & Patricia Hernandez. David Beebe will be our host and Gory Smelley will be doing the show music. A portion of the money collected will go to the Marfa PTO scholarship fund.

Sunset Soundtrack: Simon Flory
Saturday, March 7, 6-10pm at El Cosmico in Marfa
As part of the regular music series under the big sky, Country/Americana singer Simon Flory hosts an EP release and film screening.

Brought to
you by

**Big Bend
Banks**
NA

Sun
Mar
8

Lannan Reading: Dara Wier
6 pm at Crowley Theater
Poet Dara Wier reads from her work.

Mon
Mar
9

CDRI annual cactus sale
Monday-Wednesday, March 9-11, 9 am, at Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center in Fort Davis
The Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute's annual fundraising cactus sale offering large and small cacti native to the Chihuahuan Desert on a first-come-first-served basis.

Tue
Mar
10

Ojito Adentro Hike
10 - 11 am at the Ojito Adentro Trailhead in the Big Bend Ranch State Park
Take a guided exploration of this moderate .08 mile hike that requires crawling and rock scrambling. Pets are not allowed. Meet at the Ojito Adentro Trailhead, 8.5 miles east of Botella Junction on Casa Piedra Road. Free with park entry: \$5 for adults, free for children 12-and-under.

Wed
Mar
11

West Texas Xeriscaping: Plants, Process, and Purpose
2 - 3 pm at the Powell Visitor Center at Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute in Fort Davis
Join CDRI Head Gardener Seth Hamby for a presentation on West Texas Xeriscaping. Free to attend.

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

Presented by

**FOOD
SHARK**

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

7			6		5		3	
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			2	1		4		
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8				3		9		

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

- TGIF part
- Bing's buddy
- Block the flow
- Just out
- "Hail!"
- Become one
- Meadow
- High-flying tourist
- \$ dispenser
- Soviet cooperative
- Genius
- Decorate
- Easter eggs
- Boast
- Discoverer's cry
- Weaken, in a way
- Nary a soul
- Star in Orion's left foot
- "Now" or "never"
- Drench
- TV dinner veggies
- "Go, team!"
- Wild and crazy
- Rescues
- "The Raven" writer
- TV show for entrepreneurial hopefuls
- Transgression
- Asian nation
- Hockey surface
- Superlative ending
- That is (Lat.)
- "Ben-Hur" author Wallace
- Vast expanse
- Grable
- One-on-one fight
- Pismire
- Bay State sch.
- Multipurpose truck
- ApiECE
- Start a garden
- Regions
- All-out attack
- Carpet
- Consumed
- Solidify
- That woman
- Anger
- White or
- Praise in verse
- Eggs
- Unruly kid?
- From what place
- Use
- Church recesses
- Din
- Busybody
- Old card game
- Distort
- Tackle moguls
- Scuttle
- Exist
- Scale notes

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54	Hockey surface	Grable	32	Praise in verse
55	Superlative ending	7 fight	33	Eggs
56	That is (Lat.)	8 Pismire	36	Unruly kid?
57	"Ben-Hur" author Wallace	9 Bay State sch.	37	From what place
58	Vast expanse	10 Multipurpose truck	40	Use
		11 Apiece	42	Church recesses
DOWN		17 Start a garden	43	Din
1	Extended family member	21 Regions	44	Busybody
2	"Choppers"	23 All-out attack	45	Old card game
3	Hindu ascetic	24 Carpet	46	Distort
4	Mexican peninsula	25 Consumed	48	Tackle moguls
5	Exaggerate	26 Solidify	49	Scuttle
6	White or	28 That woman	50	Exist
		30 Anger	51	Scale notes
		31 Siesta		

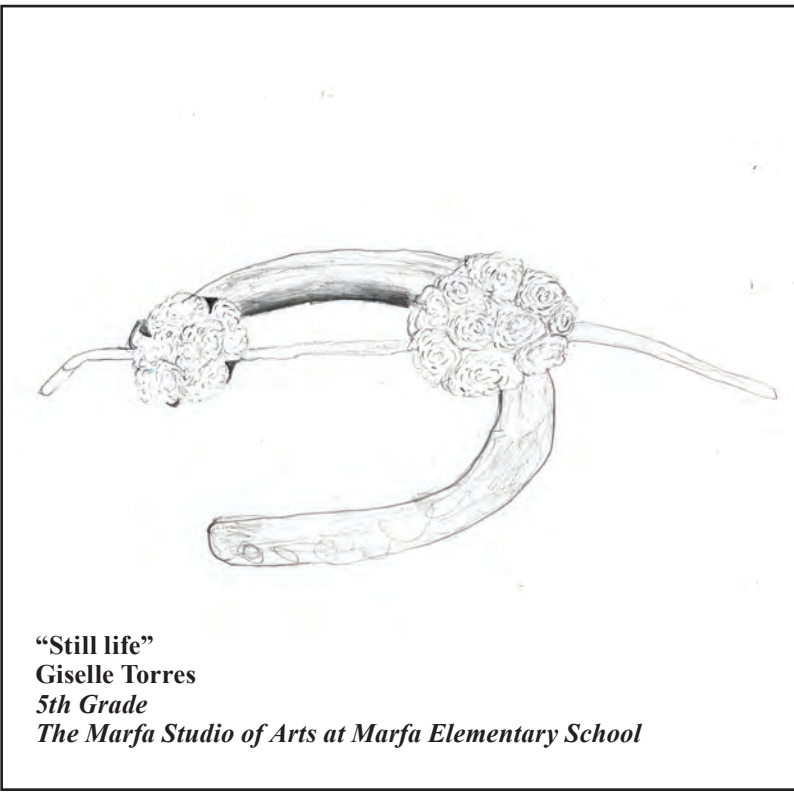
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Puzzle solutions for last week's issue

Weekly SUDOKU													King Crossword												
Answer													Answers												
4	5	1	3	9	8	2	7	6					A	B	S		P	I	E	S		V	E	A	L
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Community & Education

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



“Still life”
Giselle Torres
5th Grade
The Marfa Studio of Arts at Marfa Elementary School

David Keller wins local history award from state historical association

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

AUSTIN — A book written in and about the Big Bend has taken home The 2020 Al Lowman Memorial Prize for Best Book on Texas County or Local History, from The Texas State Historical Association. *In the Shadow of the Chinatis: A History of Pinto Canyon in the Big Bend* was penned by David Keller, the senior project archaeologist at the Center for Big Bend Studies at Sul Ross State University.

When Keller set out to detail the history of a small ranching area, he says it was for mundane reasons. “I was commissioned to do it — I was asked by the landowner to do this and he funded it.” But Keller soon discovered what would drive him to unravel the history of Pinto Canyon.

As an archaeologist, he had been to Pinto Canyon Ranch for field research on historical sites and former residents. “I didn’t know anything about them and nobody I had talked to knew anything about them. It was a mystery of who lived here, when, why did they leave?”

He called it an overwhelming mystery, presented to him by the area itself. What he soon discovered was an abundance of material that he had never expected. He found descendants and oral histories, recording over 100 interviews during his research. “Without [the descendants] it would’ve been a bunch of statistics, and people don’t want to read that. It really put meat on the bone.”

Bandits, death at the hands of a Texas Ranger and the struggles of a family eking out a living as

ranchers in the remote desolation of the Big Bend make *In the Shadow of the Chinatis* a fascinating read into the lives of a family pioneering in the area.

“I didn’t even know who my audience was when I was writing it, so I just kind of wrote it with my friends in mind. I really wasn’t writing to other historians,” he says, so the author was happy to discover that the academic communities received it well. “That was a surprise to me.”

Keller attended an award ceremony and luncheon on Friday, February 28 in Austin, which also gave him a chance to wrap up research in the archives at University of Texas for his next book. Still in its early stages, Keller’s next historical book will look at the life of 1920s Big Bend area photographer Frank Duncan. “He’s one of these uncelebrated heroes. I’ve been admiring his work for many years, and I’ve always wanted to do a book on his work.”

Teasing the story, Keller says it tells the tale of a long, deep relationship between a father and daughter, which he wasn’t expecting. The prolific photographer corresponded with letters to his daughter, a patient in a Big Springs mental hospital, over the course of sixty years.

The award-winning author took home a certificate and \$1,000. The Al Lowman Memorial Prize was established in 2013 in tribute to Al Lowman, a bibliophile and connoisseur of well-designed books and a much loved figure in Texas history circles. The intent of this award is to revive the publishing of Texas county and local histories.

Local adobero, activist speaks at state cultural symposium

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

WACO — When parks workers, ecologists and historical preservationists met last week for the first meeting of Texas Cultural Landscapes Symposium, the Big Bend region — and specifically, its historic adobe structures — got some recognition.

Sandro Canovas, a local activist and *adobero*, or adobe-builder, was invited to give a presentation. His goal for speaking, he said, was to “bring to the attention of the Texas Historical Commission that the permanence of this tradition is at stake.”

One threat: gentrification. In the view of Canovas and others, adobe — a low-cost building material made from materials like mud, straw and water — has come under threat in Marfa as housing costs continue to rise.

What was once a working-class building method has now become a status symbol, Canovas said in an interview Monday. He cites Presidio County’s tax code and appraisals, which Canovas and others argue penalize adobe structures, as well as desire by (often richer) newcomers to culturally appropriate aspects of Latino culture (from adobe to sotol).

Former *Big Bend Sentinel* reporter Sasha Von Oldershausen, writing for *The New York Times* in 2018, came to the same prognosis. “Adobe ... has become fashionable, a building material befitting the town’s cool mix of culture and desert aesthetic,” she wrote. “But for many of Marfa’s longtime residents, the gentrification of the adobe home has made living in one rather expensive.”

It isn’t just appraisals, though. Another big threat facing adobe is that simply not enough people still



Photo by Maisie Crow

Sandro Canovas strands in front of an adobe home.

know how to make or use it.

Skills like these are often called “intangible cultural heritage,” and the heritage of adobe-making is quickly disappearing in the region, Canovas said. He only knows one other person in the area who works with adobe, and they use “stabilized adobe,” which incorporates cement or other modern building materials. In other words: not the real thing.

Over the weekend of March 28 and 29, Canovas plans to host a workshop on traditional earth and lime plasters in Marfa, with an exact time and location to be determined. Canovas says that use

of non-traditional plasters on adobe buildings is exacerbating their decline — and he sees the tradition falling victim to the same trends of cultural appropriation. He wants to help reinvigorate those traditions, he says, in hopes of empowering the Latino community.

It is efforts like this — to teach others about adobe-making — that earned Canovas accolades at the symposium. He’s “trying to protect not only adobe structures, but the process of building adobe,” said Robert Melnick, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Oregon and a keynote

speaker at the event.

“I was so impressed with the fact that he teaches kids how to do adobe for the next generation,” Melnick added. “He’s really concerned not only with buildings that exist, but also with doing adobe and doing it correctly.”

Melnick brought up an analogy from his own field. Landscape was primarily a noun, he said. But it could also be a verb, as in *landscaping*.

“To me, adobe is like that,” Melnick said. “It’s something you do.”

Rockets

Mattingly were just speaking for themselves and not for Blue Origin.)

Watching students build and then launch rockets is a special experience, he said. “It’s an achievement for these kids,” he added.

Before the launch, students were putting the

“I like watching things blow up. Plus I like science in general.”

finishing touches on their rockets at the Marfa Elementary gym. And at least one student — eighth-grader Grace Rothery — had come from as far away as the Dallas area.

The Rotherys moved away from Alpine last

year, but they decided they couldn’t miss the launch. “Her STEM teachers were like, ‘Please record this,’” said her mother, Linda. “They’re very intrigued.”

“I like building things,” Grace said when asked about her interest in rocketry. “I like watching things blow up. Plus I like science in general.”

Grace was busy loading some Skittles into the nose of her team’s rocket, the “Stealth Screw Rocket,” just to see what would happen. Her hypothesis: With less air pressure, they would expand.

Back at the Fowlkes Ranch, the crowd watched and waited for the first rocket to descend. It reappeared briefly, a flash of parachute that quickly disappeared into the brush behind a ridge on the horizon. A couple kids set off on an all-terrain vehicle to find it. And within the hour, the second of three rockets took off.

Later, Grace’s mother, Linda Rothery, texted the results of the Skittles experiment.

“The Skittles stayed the same,” she wrote, “and were just as tasty after going up into the atmosphere.”

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MARCH	Thurs, March 5	Fri, March 6	Mon, March 9	Tues, March 10	Wed, March 11
BREAKFAST	sausage kolache, yogurt	cinnamon roll, sausage	pancakes, bacon	cereal bar, yogurt	chicken-n-biscuit
LUNCH Menu courtesy of PORTER'S SINCE 1945 Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	Asian bowl (teriyaki beef, rice, eggroll), broccoli florets, mandarin oranges	cheese pizza, baby carrots, garden salad, fresh sliced apples, cookie	Shorthorn chicken bowl (mashed potatoes, corn, shred cheese, roll), peaches	pepperoni pizza pocket, Italian vegetables, garden salad, marinara sauce, chilled pineapple, cookie	chicken fajitas, spanish rice, tortilla, beans, baby carrots, lettuce & tomato garnish, pears, sherbet cup

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9am Sundays

Young Hoon Kang, Pastor

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Raul Lara
City Council Member

Cell# 432-249-1189
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Fri - Sat 10 am - 9 pm
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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

HIGH SCHOOL TRACK		
Date	Location	Team
Friday, March 6 (Gusher Relays)	Grandfalls	HS Boys/Girls
HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY SOFTBALL		
Date	Location	Time
Saturday, March 7 (Marfa Tourney (Marfa, Presidio, Ft. Hancock, Van Horn)	Home	TBA
Monday, March 9 (v. Fort Stockton)	Away	7pm

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OBITUARIES



Brooks

William Laird “Bill” Brooks, an Alpine resident since 1976, slipped peacefully from this earth at sunset Monday surrounded by his family. He was 75.

A memorial celebration will be held Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m. at Kokernot Field.

He was a husband; father, brother, son, uncle and friend.

Perhaps his greatest calling was as the grandfather of four boys to whom he was affectionately known as Chief.

Mr. Brooks was raised on Air Force bases around the world, and enjoyed many beaches and baseball fields. He graduated from El Paso Burges High School, and received a music scholarship to Texas Western University, which later became UTEP.

He volunteered for the U.S. Army and served two tours in Vietnam as an intelligence officer, and was in the country during the Tet Offensive.

On leave from the Army, he met his beloved Margie on a blind date, and they spent the evening trading insults. He proposed two weeks later, and went back to Vietnam.

The couple were wed on Sept. 26, 1969.

Their first daughter, Jae, was born in Maryland in 1972. Betse was born in El Paso in 1976, a couple of months before the family moved to Alpine. Stephanie was born in Alpine in 1978.

Mr. Brooks spent some time as an apprentice in his brother-in-law’s print shop in El Paso, and decided to move his family to Alpine and start his own business. It was called The Territorial Printer, the eponym of many championship Pony League baseball teams.

In 1979, he purchased the Alpine Avalanche with a couple of partners. He moved the print shop in with the newspaper, and added the office supply store.

He sold the newspaper and office supply 10 years later, but continued to run the printer.

In 1994, he started researching a new technology called broadband internet, and then started Brooks Data Consultants, the first internet service provider in rural West Texas.

Following 9/11, he felt a pull to once again serve his country, and sought work with the U.S. Border Patrol. He started in the intelligence department, but later became the Public Affairs Officer for the Big Bend Sector, and eventually the entire Southwest border region.

He finally retired in 2015, and spent time traveling to ballparks and Latter Day Saints temples with Margie, and playing with his grand boys.

It was announced this week that he was awarded the ARRL West Texas Section Ham of the Year. He was among the first to respond to the tragic Saragosa tornado in 1987, and was crucial to communication during the wildfires in 2011.

Mr. Brooks was a soldier,

patriot, entrepreneur, musician, actor, race car driver, HAM radio operator, championship baseball coach, master of ceremonies, and a loyal fan of the Yankees and the o6 Cowboys, Sul Ross Lobos, and Alpine Bucks.

He even did a little cowboying when his friends asked for help with round-up.

He was a past president of the Alpine Chamber of Commerce, a founder of the Texas Cowboy Poetry Gathering, and a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

In between all of that, he was the life of the party. He could tell a joke and he could take one.

He taught his daughters to pursue whatever they wanted, and to stand up for what they believed in with the constant counsel to be bold and honest.

He adored Margie. Theirs was a love story for the ages.

Mr. Brooks is survived by Margie and their girls, two sons-in-law, John Sublett and Joe Esparza; grandsons Noble and Will Sublett, and Jake and Ethan Esparza; two sisters and their families, Ann Pearson of El Paso and Susan Yeager of Las Cruces, New Mexico; his sisters-in-law, Winnie Brooks and family of Austin, Texas, Sandy Sanford and family of Idaho, and Bobbie Barney and family of Utah; and brother-in-law Dean Rogers of Georgia.

He was preceded in death by his best friend and brother, Johnny Brooks.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alpine Cowboys or the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club to assist them in their pursuits of Chief’s favorite pastimes.

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home. Online condolences may be left at alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.

Texas; a Brother, Scott Howard and wife Lynda of The Woodlands, Texas. Her father, Lorne Vincent, preceded her in death and she is survived by her stepmother, Carol Vincent of Aiken NC. She is also survived by her loving mother-in-law, Dorothy Chriesman; brother-in-law, Blain Chriesman and wife Teri, all of Sanderson Texas. She has numerous nieces and nephews including Brad, Aschley and Chris Hawkins, Ella Howard, Shane & Jalen Chriesman and Blakeney Carter and several great-nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests Memorial donations be made to The Carcinoid Cancer Foundation <https://carcinoid.kindful.com> or The Neuroendocrine Tumor Research Foundation <https://netrf.org/get-involved/give-now/>. The family wishes to extend their gratitude to Dr. Scott Paulson and the staff at Baylor Scott & White of Dallas, along with Ochsner Hospital doctors and staff in Kenner, LA and the wonderful people in the Carcinoid Cancer Texas Survivors (CCTS) group for their valiant effort at helping Lorinda’s last days with us comfortable and peaceful. We will miss her dearly, but she is now soaring high without pain.

Howard) served in the military, she attended school in southeastern Italy where she developed a fondness for foreign travel, adventure and Italian architecture/decor. After moving back to the US in 1970, she attended Edison Jr High and Central High School in San Angelo, Texas where she graduated in 1977. She then went on to Angelo State University where she met her love and life partner, James (Ja) Chriesman from Sanderson, Texas and earned a Bachelor of Business degree in 1981. On April 3, 1982, she married Ja and they moved to Midland, Texas where she worked for Adobe Oil and Gas. In August of 1983, she and her husband Ja moved to Dallas where she worked in various positions in real estate, country club management and direct marketing. In 1989, she and her husband Ja moved to Houston, Texas and then on to the Middle East (UAE and Kuwait) from 1991-94. After returning to the U.S. from the Middle East adventure, she and Ja were blessed with their only son, Zachary James, in 1996. Since 1996, she has kept herself busy raising Zachary, decorating in her favorite European Style and developing excellent culinary skills. She also enjoyed and cherished many friends and neighbors.

Lorinda is survived by her loving husband of almost 38 years, Ja and her son, Zachary of Dallas; her Mother and Dad, Joyce and Dave Howard of Marfa, Texas; a Sister, Lisette Hawkins of San Angelo,



Garcia

Arturo Garcia, age 78, left us here on earth to be with the Lord Monday, March 2, 2020 with his family by his side at Medical Center Hospital in Odessa, TX.



Losoya

On Jan. 27, 2020 our beloved **Tina G. Losoya** entered eternal life with family by her side at the age of 72 in Alpine, Texas. She was the eldest child born to Ernestina and Eldefonso Garcia in Marfa, Texas. She married the love of her life, Joe Losoya, on Jan. 11, 1966, and recently celebrated 54 years of marriage.

Tina was devoted to her Catholic

faith, and was a member of the Guadalupana Society at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church in Alpine. For a short period of time, she lived in Presidio, Texas, worked as a clerk for Big Bend Telephone Company, and served on the Presidio ISD school board. She was an assistant manager at a general store until she had to care for her son who was in an accident. After a time, she returned to the workforce at First National Bank in Alpine, a nursing home, Dollar Store, and Big Bend Community Action.

She was a loyal friend with a kind heart to many, and never ignored a stranger. She lived life to the fullest by always being cheerful and compassionate. She loved to travel, and played the slot machines at various casinos, especially in Las Vegas. She was the biggest supporter and proud of her children and husband.

He is preceded in death by his parents; son: Sidney Garcia; and first wife: Janet Lee Garcia.

He is survived by his four daughters; Yvonne Voorhees and husband Blain of Richmond, TX, Naomi Stewart and husband Kenny of Stanton, TX, Shannon Garcia of Odessa, TX, and Amber McFadden and husband Cody of Odessa, TX; sons: Dave Adams and wife

Leesa of Lebanon, OR and Todd Adams and wife Rickquael of San Angelo, TX; previous wife of 38 years: Barbara Garcia of Ft. Worth, TX; brother: Lefty Garcia of Odessa, TX; sisters: Mary Lou Mitchell-Garcia of Odessa, TX and Grace Fierro of Grapevine, TX; grandchildren: Brittany and husband Andrew, Sidney, Stran, Rashae, Cayden, Cambryn, Jake, R.J., Aryan, Rickquael, Sara and Kailyn; great-grandchild: Easley; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, aunts and uncles.

A Rosary will be held at 1:30 pm Friday, March 6, 2020 at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Marathon, TX with Mass at 2:00 pm. Inurnment will follow at Marathon Cemetery. Arrangements are entrusted to Acres West Funeral Chapel and condolences to the family may be sent online at acreswestfuneral.com.

and Ruby Losoya. She was a grandmother of 10 children, and was soon to be a great grandmother.

Also to cherish her memory are her mother Ernestina and siblings Elodia Garcia, Poncho and Rosa Garcia, Eddie and Mary Garcia, Elia and Oscar Gonzales, and Eva and Michael Arriola.

She has rejoiced with her father Eldefonso and infant brother Lalo Garcia.

She had numerous nieces and nephews.

The Holy Rosary was recited by the Guadalupanas on Jan. 30, 2020 at Our Lady of Peace Catholic Church. Mass of Christian Burial was Jan. 31, 2020 at 10 a.m. Burial followed at Holy Angels Cemetery in Alpine.

Serving as pallbearers were Robert Losoya, Kevin Losoya, Glen Marquez, Jason Garcia, David Vega, and Darrell Losoya.

Alpine Memorial Funeral Home was entrusted with her services. Online condolences may be left at alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.



Chriesman

Lorinda Vincent Chriesman, 61, of Dallas, Texas peacefully left us for a better world on February 10, 2020 at her home in Dallas, Texas after a courageous 5 plus year battle with Neuroendocrine Cancer.

A memorial service will be held at The Pickens Center Chapel located at 12477 Merit Drive, Dallas on Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 2pm with Ms. Marsha Holmes officiating with a reception to follow at the Northwood Club at 6524 Alpha Road. Burial will be at 11am on Saturday, February 15th at the Wingate Cemetery in Wingate, Texas. Merit Memorial Funeral & Cremation Care will be handling the arrangements.

Lorinda was born in Abilene, Texas to Lorne and Joyce Vincent on January 24, 1959. At the age of 8, while her parents (Dave and Joyce



McElroy

William Walter McElroy Jr., Sonny, 88 passed away in his home in Fort Davis, Texas, on February 25, 2020. Sonny was born in Pecos, Texas, on December 15, 1931 to William Walter and Mary Daniel McElroy.

Sonny along with his brother, Earl and sister, Sis, grew up on the McElroy Ranch on the north end of Jeff Davis County. When it was time to go to school, he moved to town with his grandparents in Toyah, Texas. He loved sitting with his Grandpa Daniel and listening to the radio every evening. From this he acquired a vast knowledge of geography and news around the world.

Sonny graduated Valedictorian from Toyah high School. He attended Sul Ross State University where he studied Animal Science and served on the Livestock Judging team. His judging team

won first at the Fort Worth Stock Show and second at the Oklahoma City Stock Show. After Sonny’s dad was injured, he had to leave Sul Ross to manage the family Ranch and take care of his Mom and younger siblings.

Sonny’s ranch neighbor, Doris Morris, told him he needed to find himself a wife because she wanted a neighbor lady and was tired of cooking for him. He said you find her and I will marry her. She did! And he did! Penny Fort was the new District Home Service Director for Southern Union Gas Company in Pecos, Texas, and soon became Mrs. Sonny McElroy. They were married 57 years. They had three children, Tres, Misty and Christy.

Sonny was a member of the Fort Davis United Methodist Church. He served as a Trustee in the Balmorhea Methodist Church and on committees in Fort Davis.

Sonny served on the Toyah Limpia Soil and Water Conservation Board for 36 years. He was a County Committee member for the FSA. He was Vice President and Ground’s Committee member of the Jones, Espy, Finley Camp at Bloys Camp Meeting. Sonny was a Jeff Davis County Commissioner for eight years. He was one of the original board members of the Jeff Davis County Underground Water Board District. In 1973, he

won the Excellence in Grazing Management Award. Sonny was commissioned a “True Texas” by Governor Clements in 1983.

Sonny loved to tell stories about his life growing up on the ranch with his little pet bear. He loved sharing stories on the lives of his grandkids. Ten and three o’clock were special times of the day when Sonny and his coffee buddies exchanged information on a daily basis.

Sonny was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Earl McElroy, and his son, Tres McElroy.

Sonny is survived by his wife, Penny; daughter-in-law, Jody McElroy; daughter, Misty (husband, Lynn Williams); daughter, Christy (husband, Joe Barksdale); five grandchildren and one great granddaughter, and also a special friend whom he loved like a daughter, Adrian Walker.

A graveside service will be held at Hillcrest Cemetery, Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in Fort Davis, Texas.

Memorial Donations can be made to the Tres McElroy Memorial Scholarship or Jones, Espy, Finley Camp at Bloys Campmeeting.

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

2020 Youth Conservation Corps positions available at Fort Davis National Historic Site

FORT DAVIS — Fort Davis National Historic Site is pleased to announce that they will be hosting the Youth Conservation Corps program this year. YCC is a summer employment program for young men and women, ages 15 through 18, who work and learn together by participating in conservation work on public lands. The program is estimated to begin on Monday, June 15, and will run for 8 weeks until Friday, August 7, dependent upon available funding.

Applicants must be in very good physical condition. This work can be fun, even adventurous, but it can also be strenuous and is performed in hot, rugged, dirty environments. If regular exercise is not already part of an applicant’s lifestyle, they are strongly discouraged from applying. Planned work projects include trail and walkway maintenance, historic structures maintenance, grounds maintenance, exotic weed control, native plant care, and landscape restoration.

Environmental education is incorporated into the YCC program. This education will highlight the diversity and responsibilities of different National Park Service areas, introduce participants to the

natural and cultural history of the local area, and may involve field trips to surrounding sites.

Four YCC staff will be selected during a random drawing of applications on May 1st, 2020. Successful candidates will earn \$7.25 per hour (Texas minimum wage). All participants must bring a lunch and be able to provide their own daily transportation to and from the monument, be a U.S. citizen, and have access to an existing bank account to receive direct deposit paychecks at time of application. No housing is available and carpooling is encouraged. The work schedule is 7 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on federal holidays.

Applications for the YCC program must be mailed to Fort Davis National Historic Site YCC Program, Attn: Troy Perry, P.O. Box 1379, Fort Davis, TX 79734, and be post-marked no later than April 15, 2020. For more information about the program and to download applications, please visit the website at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/youthprograms/upload/YCCform-Crew-Member-Application-508-4.pdf> Interested applicants may also call Troy Perry at (432) 426-3224 Ext 235.



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Classifieds & public notices

CDRI’s multi-week cactus sale kicks off Monday, March 9

FAR WEST TEXAS — The Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute’s annual fundraising cactus sale begins Monday at 9 a.m., offering cacti large and small on a first-come-first-served basis. The sales event has expanded beyond its usual offering, bringing a restock of cacti this year as the sale expands into a two-week event. Ocotillo, Queen Victoria agave, golden barrel cacti and many other species arrived at the Chihuahuan Desert Nature Center for inspection and preparation this February. These plants are among the extensive selection of cacti and succulents offered for sale at the upcoming annual Cactus and Succulent Sale.

This year, CDRI Nature Center is delivering two three-day sales to match the two weeks of spring break recognized by separate “halves” of schools in Texas.

Phase one of the sale kicks off on Monday, March 9, with doors opening at 9 a.m., and continues until Wednesday, March 11, or until all phase one plants are sold.

After a restock, phase two of the sale begins Monday, March 16, and continues until Wednesday, March 18, or until all plants are sold. Doors will open at 9 a.m. The two-phased sale is designed to allow all statewide spring breakers a chance to take advantage of CDRI’s “once-a-year” sale.

The cacti species are all native to the Chihuahuan Desert. They were carefully sourced through growers in Arizona, New Mexico and Central Texas. Following years of protocol, each plant is thoroughly inspected by Head Gardener Seth Hamby, prior to being repotted using his special cactus-mix soil and then finished with a sprinkle of decorative gravel as top dressing.

CDRI took note of the strong demand for the larger, attractively priced, cacti and succulents, so they continue to focus on sourcing large plants in three and five gallon



Photo courtesy of CDRI
A selection of succulents for sale.

containers, along with an abundant supply of one gallon-sized plants. Striving to have something for everyone, they also feature many beautiful, tiny cacti and succulents in miniature sizes. Prices will range from \$4 to \$70.

The sale will take place on the porch of the Powell Visitor Center with CDRI’s knowledgeable team ready to assist shoppers with their selections.

While visiting the Nature Center, be sure to stop inside and visit the gift shop, which offers a selection of nature-themed books, sotol walking sticks, prickly pear syrup and jelly, CDRI logo items including terracotta flower pot mugs, metal camp mugs, water bottles, t-shirts, totes, bandanas and caps. The gift shop will also have large tinaja stone pots for sale. The tinaja pots are the perfect container for cacti and succulents.

The CDRI Cactus Sale is one of only two yearly CDRI fundraisers, the other being the Cookout & Auction scheduled for August 15, 2020. CDRI invites you to come on out and support the local nature center, while finding that perfect cactus or succulent. *The event is at 43869 TX-118, Fort Davis, TX between Fort Davis and Alpine.*



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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) We Are Not Saints 6pm: Open Discussion St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Marfa Lights Group 6pm: Open Meditation Meeting 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	Daily Reflections 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday) We Are Not Saints 6pm: Open Big Book Study St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Marfa Lights Group 12pm: Open Meditation Meeting 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)	Daily Reflections 12:05pm: Open 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday) We Are Not Saints 6pm: Open Discussion St. Paul Episcopal Church 101 E. Washington	Step Study 12pm: Open Discussion 115 E. Oak St. (see Sunday)



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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice of Proposed Rule: Proposal to designate critical habitat for the western distinct population segment (DPS) of the yellow-billed cuckoo. On February 27, 2020, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, proposed to designate critical habitat for the western DPS of the yellow-billed cuckoo, currently listed as threatened under the ESA; and published the proposal in the Federal Register. The Service is seeking comments from the public on this proposed critical habitat designation.

Copies of the proposed rule and other information about this issue are available by contacting the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office at 916-414-6600, or by accessing the internet at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es>

/AustinTexas/index.html or <http://www.regulations.gov> under docket FWS–R8–ES–2013–0011.

Comments and materials, or a hearing request, from all interested persons or organizations must be postmarked or received by April 27, 2020. All comments must be submitted either to the Federal Rulemaking portal at: <http://www.regulations.gov> by following the instructions for submitting comments or by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to:

Public Comments Processing Attn: FWS–R8–ES–2013–0011

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Headquarters.

MS: JAO1/N: 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

We will not accept e-mail or faxes. We will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>

The Presidio County Appraisal District Office

**in Marfa will be closed on
March 9 – March 11, 2020**

**For Harris Govern software training
in Plano**

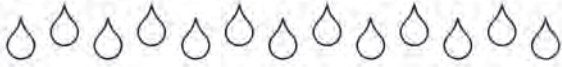
**If you need assistance, contact the
Presidio annex office**

@ (432) 229-3963

on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8 a.m.

**Thank you
Presidio CAD**

PLEASE CONSERVE WATER



NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Pursuant to chapter 59, Texas Property Code, Twin Peaks Self Storage will hold a public auction of property being sold to satisfy a landlord’s lien. Auction will be:

SATURDAY, March 14, 2020 at Twin Peaks Self Storage
10:00 AM at 2609 West Highway 90 in Alpine, Texas.

Property will be sold to the highest bidder for CASH. Seller has the right not to accept any bid and to withdraw property from sale. Property in each space will be sold as a lot. Tenant may redeem property up until bids are accepted, if tenant pays all sums due. Property being sold includes contents in the units of the following tenants:

Grady Lee, unit 267
Judy Reynolds, unit 111
Louis Davitt, unit 178

JOBS



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

POSITION AVAILABLE

The Bloys Campmeeting Association is now accepting applications for the position of Caretaker. Position is full-time, with duties throughout the year. Knowledge of construction, plumbing, and electric required. Salary is dependent on qualifications, but includes house and utilities. The Caretaker is required to live on the premises. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. For additional information and an application, contact Bart Medley via e-mail at bart@bartmedley.com or by phone at (915)526-6255.



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