

MHS Class of 2020 graduation parade Friday evening

MARFA — Families and friends of the Marfa High School Class of 2020, along with community members, are invited to honor this year’s graduating class during a parade this Friday evening, May 15. The parade begins at 7:30 p.m.

Marfa ISD and the Marfa Police Department ask parade attendees to park along the parade route, remain in their vehicles and practice social distancing guidelines at all times. Parking spots for each graduate’s immediate family will be reserved along the west side of the County Courthouse. All other parking spots along the parade route are open to the public.

Seniors will be driven in decorated vehicles and will proceed from the high school headed east down Lincoln Street. The parade will turn north to go all the way around the courthouse, then continue south down Highland Avenue, turning west on Oak Street where the parade will end.

Music, announcements, and senior highlights will be broadcast live on KRTS at 93.5 FM and streamed at marfapublicradio.org. The school will also stream the event live on the Marfa Shorthorns Facebook page.

Following the parade, KRTS will air a special hour-long program of dance music put together by the MHS junior class to honor the graduating seniors. Everyone is invited to tune in to 93.5 to join the socially-distanced afterparty.

More results roll in as Marfa gets tested today

TRI-COUNTY — Around 320 tests have been conducted in the tri-county region, Dr. Ekta Escovar of the COVID-19 task force said, up from around 230 last week. The hospital is waiting on results for one test, as well as results from mobile-testing conducted over the weekend in Fort Davis and Presidio.

So far, all results have been negative except for one patient: a South Brewster County resident who was tested at a state mobile-testing site last month. That patient has recovered, but Escovar said the other case near the tri-county region —involving a patient in Ojinaga — was still considered active.

Those testing figures mean the tri-county has tested 17.21 people per 1,000 — slightly below the Texas average of 17.73 and far below the national average of 28.57. Texas has the fifth-worst per capita testing rates in the country, she said. Escovar said Texas is “not seeing a downhill trend of active cases.”

“We want to get closer to where the U.S. is for testing,” she said, “and not where Texas is.” But in good news, the tri-county is also far behind the nation when it comes to coronavirus cases. Just 0.05 per 1,000 tri-county residents are confirmed to have the disease, compared to 1.38 in Texas and 4.14 nationally.

There will be another testing drive in Marfa today, Thursday — but “with zero active cases, we’re not high on the priority list for testing,” Escovar said. She hopes to build up local testing capacity over the summer before a second potential disease wave in the fall.

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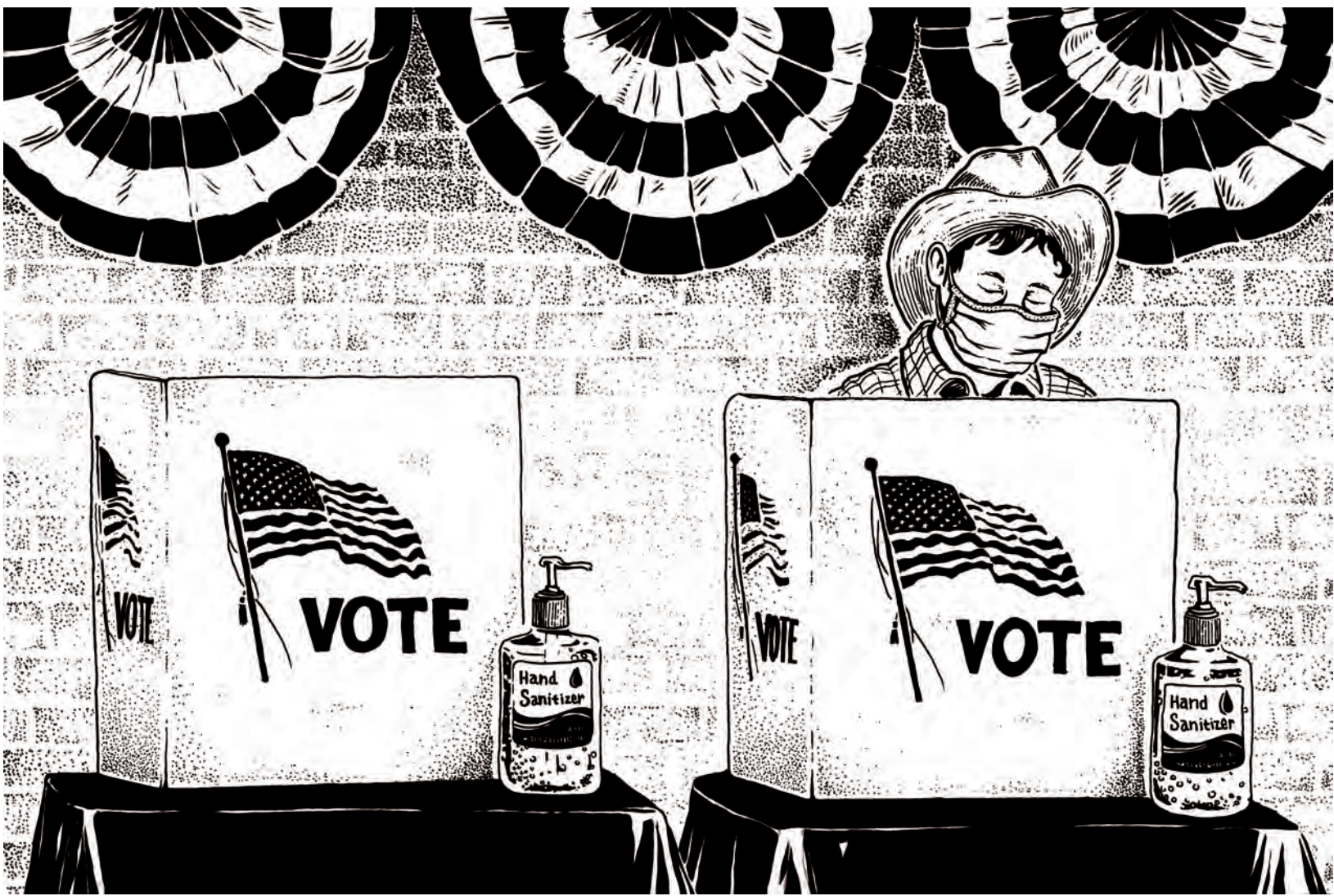


Illustration by Crowcrumbs

Coronavirus delays elections, reshapes campaigning in TX-23 and Marfa

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — May 2 came and went with no votes cast for the three Marfa City Council seats up for grabs. Later this month, May 26 will pass too, without Presidio County and their fellow voters across Texas casting ballots for primary runoffs. Instead, both elections have been pushed back, due to concerns that polling places might become vectors for the spread of coronavirus.

Governor Greg Abbott, in one of his coronavirus-related orders, allowed local governments to delay elections: Marfa will not vote in three councilmembers until November 3, leaving the three incumbents seated for another half a year, and the hotly contested congressional seat in Texas’ 23rd District, currently held by the departing Will Hurd, has a Republican runoff now rescheduled for July 14.

Entering the TX-23 Republican runoffs are Tony Gonzales and Raul Reyes. But how does

one safely campaign across a district that spans from the outskirts of El Paso to western San Antonio in a time where coronavirus is flaring on either end of the district?

Candidates have had to figure out how to digitally duke it out, since social distancing and previous stay-at-home orders have driven candidates away from traditional town halls, campaign stops and debates.

Democratic nominee for TX-23, Gina Ortiz Jones, is running her campaign with the November election in mind, hosting virtual town halls, contacting potential voters via email and spending a lot of her efforts talking about COVID as it impacts topics such as small businesses, Native American populations, rising domestic violence, veterans and border healthcare.

Meanwhile, Republican runoff contestants Gonzales and Reyes are going head-to-head until July 14 in the hopes of facing off against Ortiz Jones in November.

Reyes called the first month of COVID tough for his campaign. “You can’t do town halls. That

wasn’t going to happen.” Instead, Reyes went to social media. “We’re doing some town halls in Zoom meetings, anything we can to stay in contact while being sensitive to the times that we’re in. The good news is that we’re slowly opening up Texas. Even so, we’re wearing a mask and making sure we’re staying cautious.”

Canvassing, hosting events and shaking hands have long been integral parts of campaigning, and Reyes and Gonzales both mentioned June as a date they might begin in-person interactions again.

Gonzales said most campaigning has gone from in-person to being on the phone and online, though his campaign has traveled a few places across the district in recent weeks and will be doing a volunteer effort at a food bank this week. “We will continue to add campaigning and events in a safe way,” Gonzales said.

While Ortiz Jones’ campaign has honed in on coronavirus conversations, and Reyes says the

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Rental owners violated local rules on short-term renting. Now what?

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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MARFA — This much seems clear: when officials in Marfa and Presidio County temporarily closed short-term rentals as a precaution against coronavirus, some rental owners didn’t comply.

Last month, *The Big Bend Sentinel* reported on Michael Barnard, a Fort Worth investor who continued to rent out Airbnbs in Presidio County during the emergency orders. And while that story is the best evidence the city has of a violation, residents have also called in to report other potential violators, said John Washburn, Marfa city manager.

But it’s less clear if Barnard or any other rental owners will face consequences for the infractions. Both Marfa and Presidio County’s orders reference fines or even jail time for violations — including, for example, a \$1,000 fine for each violation in Presidio County’s shelter-in-place order from March 31.

So far, though, no rental owners have been fined — nor is it clear if they ever will be. The city is confronting the politics of fining short-term rental owners — awkward optics in a city that runs on tourism — as well as changing directives from Texas, where state leaders have expressed increasing skepticism not only of local rule in emergencies but of the concept of punishing Texans at all for violating public health measures.

When Governor Greg Abbott announced his initial “reopening” plans for Texas, he said his orders superseded local ones. That overturned a range of local measures, from Marfa’s short-term rentals ban to Presidio’s requirement that people wear face coverings while at stores.

Rather than uniting Texans, the state’s response to the coronavirus pandemic has descended into a partisan brawl. After a Dallas judge jailed a salon owner for contempt of court (she tore up Governor Abbott’s order, refused to close her salon and refused to apologize), state leaders from Governor Greg Abbott to Attorney General Ken

Paxton came her defense, with Paxton calling it “outrageous” that a business owner was punished for violating public health laws.

Never mind that the Dallas judge was following guidance from Abbott himself, or that the salon owner netted over \$500,000 in GoFundMe contributions after the incident. An online fundraiser for the woman went live before she even reopened her salon, *Texas Monthly* reported.

Then Abbott went a step further, retroactively removing any and all punishments for those who violated his orders. That put Marfa and Presidio County in an even shakier position as officials here try to determine how to handle any violators.

In an interview on Monday, Washburn said that in light of the new state directives, city council would likely need to decide what punishment, if any, would be meted out to Barnard and others.

Washburn, for his part, wasn’t exactly supportive of the idea of punishing violators. “It’s not our role to be punitive,” he said.

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Pilots, schools and scientists come together to fight coronavirus

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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FAR WEST TEXAS — Doctors, scientists, schools and pilots have formed a new collaboration, the West Texas 3D Covid-19 Relief Consortium, to fight coronavirus, and in Presidio, the school district is pitching in.

The group is using 3D printers to make personal protective equipment, and then pilots get it to small rural hospitals and other facilities like nursing homes throughout the vast West Texas region. The group so far has done at least one local supply flight in the tri-county, to the Big Bend Regional Medical Center in Alpine.

Though the consortium originally started in Lubbock, the efforts have spread. It has picked up volunteers as far away as Presidio, where Cruz Tovar, a guidance counselor at Lucy Rede Franco Middle School, is using the school’s 3D printers

to make supplies.

The idea started at Texas Tech, where, even before the pandemic, the university was already building relationships with its sister school, the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center.

“We’re always looking for ways to coordinate activities,” said Simon Williams, associate dean for academic affairs at the School of Medicine at TTUHSC. “The future of medicine is in tech.”

“Then the whole coronavirus started hitting,” Williams added, “and we realized there were some problems with supply chains.” The schools took a look at the preexisting relationships between medical and engineering students and started “thinking about whether we could do something for our healthcare workers,” Williams said.

The answer, it turned out, was yes. The budding group realized they could use 3D printers to make personal protective equipment. They started building relationships in the region with anyone

who had the devices.

That category includes school districts, Williams said, which often have 3D printing for activities like robotics classes — but weren’t using the devices right now. Much of the group’s work has gone towards making plastic face shields, but they’re also making other supplies, from “intubation hoods” designed to protect health care workers while they intubate patients to “ear adapters you can use to make face shields fit better.”

Then came the pilots. A group in Lubbock pointed out that “if you need to get something to a small community 100 miles away from a major city, it’s much quicker to fly there,” Williams said. Two flying groups — Angel Flight and West Texas Aviators — have since come on board.

The group has ballooned to include the local

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Getting an accurate census count in Far West Texas is always tough. The pandemic made it even harder.

By **CARLOS MORALES**
Marfa Public Radio

FAR WEST TEXAS — Concerns West Texans may be undercounted during the 2020 Census are mounting as the coronavirus pandemic complicates the work of surveyors.

The Census Bureau and local advocates already considered the Big Bend home to some of the hardest to count populations in the country: people living in rural communities, low-income residents, communities of color and undocumented immigrants. With the count now underway, census takers are having to navigate a new set of challenges as they try to reach every person living in the area.

In an effort to get ahead, boots-on-the-ground outreach began to ramp up in the Big Bend area back in early March.

For months, Peggy O’Brien was on the ground talking to residents and reminding them about the upcoming census. She had kept track of events like dog races, fish fries, block parties, school graduations, church services — anywhere she could meet face-to-face with Big Bend residents to encourage them to fill out the census.

“It was sort of like taking the temperature a little bit” and gauging residents’ willingness to participate in the count, said O’Brien, who’s spearheading local census efforts with the Rio Grande Council of Governments, an association of municipalities across seven West Texas counties.

It was a good start, she said. But then the pandemic happened.

By March 18, the Census Bureau had officially postponed their field operations. During the national count, Big Bend census workers were planning to drop off questionnaires in person since the bureau doesn’t mail directly to post office boxes. In rural corners of the state, where most mail is delivered to a P.O. Box, this was a major blow.

Now, O’Brien’s had to shift to other tactics like leaving informational pamphlets at food pantries and lunch pickups at schools to remind residents the census is still ongoing. Other outreach efforts are now largely limited to social media and newspaper ads.

“We were really starting to get some traction. And then right when we were going to hit go, we were told to hit stop,” said O’Brien.

But even before the pandemic, ensuring an accurate count in the Big Bend region was always a challenge.

“Where we’re at today and what the deadline is, it’s set to fail,” said Presidio City Manager Jose Portillo.

Portillo, who’s also on the city’s complete count committee, is concerned about the lasting impacts an undercount would mean for his community. “It’s worrisome,” he said.

As of this week, just over half the households in Texas have responded to the census, largely in the state’s more urban and suburban areas. The response rate in Marfa is 11.6% of all households, while in Presidio that rate is much lower at 3.6%.

The 2020 Census will determine how much federal dollars flow into the Big Bend and will play a big role in shaping the economic, social and political future of the region. The final count determines funding for assistance programs, political representation and influences where roads are built or fixed.

“It’s so important to have that accurate count so our communities have the money they need to be able to thrive for the next decade,” said Katie Martin Lightfoot with the Center for Public Policy Priorities. “If we have an undercount in Texas by just 1%, we will lose \$300 million per year for the next 10 years.”

During the last few national counts, officials throughout the tri-county area have said residents were missed and went uncounted. Officials offered anecdotal evidence

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City extends emergency order, closes pool and continues financial relief as coronavirus drags on

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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MARFA — Council acted at a quick pace Tuesday evening, due to technical struggles that forced the meeting to occur in 40 minute increments on Zoom, recessing and returning repeatedly throughout the night. In a meeting with a wide range of topics, the local disaster declaration was extended 30 days, a parade was approved for high school seniors, the city pool was shuttered for the summer, and those who pay bills to the city were granted an extended grace period.

At the top of the meeting, City Attorney Teresa Todd advised the city to separate what is state-mandated from internal city matters in its orders going forward. Council voted together to continue the City of Marfa’s disaster declaration for an additional 30 days after the May 12 meeting.

After technical difficulties took the meeting offline, council reconvened on Zoom once more, and unanimously endorsed approval of a parade of high school seniors this Friday at 7:30 p.m. in Marfa. “We’re just trying to do little things to make this special because many of our students, not just seniors, have lost certain memories because of this,” Superintendent Oscar Aguero told the council. More information about the parade and subsequent “prom on the porch” can be found on page 1 of this issue.

It was also announced that Nicki Ittner has been hired by the city as the new programming librarian. Ittner is working on her master’s in library sciences, with a focus on children’s

programming. For years, “she has been our super volunteer,” former library director and current Director of Community Services Mandy Roane said of Ittner.

Short-term rentals were previously reclassified as residential garbage beginning March 19 and lasting through 30 days after emergency orders are lifted. Council was resistant to revert short-term rentals back to commercial trash rates yet, saying those businesses need more time. The city then agreed to waive late fees for city water, sewer and gas utilities for the same length of time. The reopening of city buildings was then pinned to the same schedule. Phased reopenings for each location may be revisited at the council’s meeting later this month or on June 9.

After deliberation, the council made a difficult decision to keep the pool closed for the summer. Councilmember Buck Johnston shared advice from Dr. Ekta Escovar that reopening the pool would likely not be safe, suggesting it should remain closed for the season. Though the pool itself is treated with chemicals that may deter the spread of the coronavirus, its handrails, shared restrooms and potential coughing from water inhalation could make spread worse.

According to Johnston, the City of Alpine may close their pool as well, pending a vote from their council. Marfa has roughly \$22,000 budgeted for the pool, which Councilmember Natalie Melendez suggested could potentially be allocated toward digital summer programming.

“I can’t advocate for us keeping the pool open this summer, knowing our budget will be taking a huge hit,” Johnston said. A lot of effort has

been put toward revitalizing the pool and its programming, but “we’re here for the safety of our citizens,” Councilmember Raul Lara said. “COVID-19 came at us and we have to do everything we can to protect our citizens.”

Next up, EMS Director Bert Lagarde said the city’s EMS billing company, EMERGICON, recommended the city raise EMS transport fees from \$17 per mile to the maximum allowable \$23 per mile. “We’re charging the lowest rate for advanced life support and the lowest rate for basic life support,” Lagarde told the council. The city charges lower rates than most cities for oxygen supplies and welfare check-ins and has not revised its rates for at least six years.

City Manager John Washburn suggested throwing out the area’s highest and lowest rates and averaging the remaining rates to get a middle-of-the-road fee schedule for the council to vote on.

“I just hate to put a charge on a service that I think is so wonderful that we can offer to our citizens and elderly,” Councilmember Yoseff Ben-Yehuda said, preferring that residents “don’t hesitate to pick up the phone and get medical professionals there in minutes.” City staff will look into any potential changes and make recommendations.

The final new order of business was the Rio Grande Council of Governments proposing the city pay half the price for a banner promoting the census. Council approved the hanging of a census banner, as long as it was down before Marfa Lights Festival’s banner is hung this fall, and the city would only pay for 50 percent of the banner if it said “Marfa” and was bilingual.

Texas AG: Presidio ISD likely violated state transparency laws

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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PRESIDIO — It’s been an interesting few days for the school board at Presidio Independent School District.

The board met last Wednesday evening for what looked to be an eventful meeting. The board was considering employment renewals and the termination of at least one teacher: high school band director Molly Ferguson.

Ferguson submitted a resignation letter “for personal reasons” before the meeting, and in the end, “the board did not take any action or vote on any terminations,” Ray Vasquez, superintendent for Presidio ISD, said in an email. But the meeting was unfortunately still noteworthy for other reasons, after local school officials apparently violated rules on public meetings.

Like many events across the country during the coronavirus pandemic, the Presidio ISD meeting was broadcast online for those who wished to attend remotely. But when *The Big Bend Sentinel* attempted to tune in on Wednesday, a technical error stated there was no authorization to view the meeting. Others who tried to watch experienced the same issue.

Those technical issues appear to have been inadvertent. Superintendent Vasquez acknowledged as much in an email on Monday, saying it “has been a process to provide reliable technology connections” throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

“We will continue to improve our remote communication for all our meetings,” he added,

apologizing for the technical issues.

That was only part of the story, though. When *The Big Bend Sentinel* later contacted Presidio school officials to obtain a recording of the meeting, those officials said no recording was available.

Instead, officials said minutes for the meeting would be available at a later date. At press time on Wednesday, those minutes were not yet published.

In light of the coronavirus pandemic, which has no doubt presented new challenges for public officials, the Texas attorney general’s office provided clarity on the most up-to-date open meetings requirements.

In general, public access to government meetings has been an enshrined part of American journalism for decades. Government meetings have largely been open to the public since 1967, when the Freedom of Information Act, a landmark transparency law, went into effect. Texas adopted its own version of the law in 1973, with the Texas Public Information Act.

A spokesperson for the Texas AG’s office said that some aspects of open meetings laws were affected by coronavirus. In March, Texas Governor Greg Abbott suspended parts of the law to allow public officials to meet virtually, in order to comply with social-distancing requirements.

Still, the spokesperson said, parts of state open meetings laws relating to transparency are still in effect. Meetings must be publicly accessible, she said, and any meetings held online must allow for two-way communication.

Most notably, the spokesperson also cited state

guidance stating that “a recording of the meeting held by webinar or teleconference must still be made available to the public following the conclusion of the meeting.” But in the case of the Presidio meeting, no such recording apparently exists.

While all members of the Presidio school board were contacted for comment on the issue, only the superintendent provided a response.

Vasquez defended the board, noting that visitors could have attended the meeting not only over the internet, but also by phone — though no such call-in number was included on the meeting notice. And he cited the part of state meetings laws that reference meeting minutes.

“As a district, we prepare and keep minutes that state the subject of each deliberation, and indicate each vote, order, decision, or other action taken,” he said. “Once those minutes are approved at our next board meeting, then they will be posted and available for viewing on our district website.”

When pressed on the recording requirement for virtual meetings, Vasquez emphasized that the meeting was technically not “a virtual meeting.”

“We had all seven boardmembers physically present in the PISD boardroom,” he said.

Still, a spokesperson for the AG’s office stressed that the recording requirement applied to all public meetings and had not been suspended by Abbott’s emergency order.

For more information, the AG’s office advised contacting the local district attorney. The Presidio County District Attorney’s office did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

Declining state sales tax revenue from March hints at larger deficits ahead

TEXAS — State sales tax revenue totaled \$2.58 billion in April, 9.3 percent less than in April 2019, the steepest decline since January 2010, according to Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar.

For Marfa, city sales and use tax are declining as well, with net payments for this period down 6.75 percent from the prior year and year-to-date payments already down 14.67 percent.

The majority of April sales tax revenue is based on sales made in March and remitted to the agency in April. Widespread social-distancing requirements were not in place across much of the state until late March, meaning the impact of those measures affected only a portion of sales tax remittances in April.

According to the comptroller, next month’s remittances likely will show steeper declines compared to a year ago, as the effects of both the shuttering of businesses related to COVID-19 and plummeting oil prices were manifest throughout April.

“State sales tax collections declined as a result of efforts to stem the spread of COVID-19 through business closures, crowd limits and stay-at-home orders adopted in the state, as well as a precipitous drop in worldwide demand for oil,” Hegar said.

“The steepest declines in tax remittances were from businesses most quickly and dramatically affected by social distancing: restaurants, performing arts venues, movie theaters, theme parks and fitness centers, as well as department stores and boutique retail shops. However, those losses were, to a degree, offset by increases from big-box retailers, grocery stores and online vendors. Remittances from oil- and gas-related sectors also fell significantly as oil and gas exploration and production companies slashed capital spending in response to the crash in oil price.”

Sales tax is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 57 percent of all tax collections. It can also be a lagging indicator of economic slowdowns. The recession associated with the financial crisis more than a decade ago began in December 2007 and lasted 18 months, but Texas did not see significant sales tax declines until early 2009. While the effect on sales taxes from the current economic contraction has been more immediate, the impact of rising unemployment and contracting economic activity in many parts of the state’s economy, including oil and natural gas exploration and production, likely will act as a drag on sales tax revenue for many months.

The effects of the March economic slowdown and falling oil prices were more evident in other sources of revenue in April 2020. Texas collected the following revenue from other major taxes: motor vehicle sales and rental taxes — \$164 million, down 45 percent from April 2019, the largest monthly drop on record in data going back to 1983; motor fuel taxes — \$284 million, down 12 percent from April 2019, the steepest drop since 1991; natural gas production tax — \$67 million, down 48 percent from April 2019; oil production tax — \$191 million, down 45 percent from April 2019; hotel occupancy tax — \$24 million, down 63 percent from April 2019, the deepest drop in data going back to 1990; and alcoholic beverage taxes — \$57 million, down 55 percent from April 2019.

Declines were driven by mixed beverage gross receipts and sales taxes, both of which are down more than 58 percent. Excise taxes on beer are up 16 percent from April 2019, while wine excise taxes are up 9 percent from April 2019.

Brewster county judge asks court to toss Gage suit

By **STEPHEN PAULSEN**
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ALPINE — The county judge in Brewster County is asking a federal court to throw out a lawsuit filed against him over Brewster County’s emergency hotel closures.

J.P. Bryan, owner of the Gage Hotel in Marathon, previously filed a lawsuit against several Brewster County officials over the county’s decision to close hotels and short-term rentals as a precaution against the coronavirus pandemic. A local judge denied Bryan’s request to grant a restraining order voiding the restrictions, and Bryan withdrew his lawsuit.

Then Bryan filed another lawsuit last month in federal court — this time only against Brewster County Judge Eleazar Cano. The lawsuit argues that local officials didn’t show coronavirus was an “imminent threat,” that the local health official isn’t an expert and that therefore Bryan is entitled to at least \$75,000. It also argues that the orders violated Bryan’s constitutional rights, including the Fourteenth Amendment (because Bryan was ostensibly discriminated against as a hotel owner) and the Fourth Amendment (because the hotel closures supposedly amounted to a seizure of property).

In his response — a motion to dismiss filed last Thursday — Cano asked the federal court to throw out the case.

Cano’s lawyer, J. Eric Magee, argues that during the Brewster County orders, state officials had also declared a public health crisis.

On March 13, Texas Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster in all Texas counties, the filing notes. John W. Hellerstedt, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, likewise said coronavirus was an “immediate threat” that “poses a high risk of death to a large number of people.” State law allowed Brewster County to implement its own emergency measures, Magee argues — especially while state officials were doing the same.

Magee also cites a coronavirus-era decision from the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled earlier this year that “when faced with a society-threatening epidemic, a state may implement emergency measures that curtail constitutional rights” so long as the restrictions have “some real or substantial relation to the public health crisis.” (The court at the time was ruling on Texas’s abortion restrictions during coronavirus, which it ruled were unrelated to the pandemic and tossed.)

With his lawsuit, Magee argues, Bryan is trying to have the court rule on a “political question” in an effort to “usurp the power of the governing local authority.” The filing asks the court to dismiss Bryan’s claims “in their entirety,” including the claim that Cano or any other Brewster County officials violated Bryan’s constitutional rights.

Cano could not be immediately reached for comment on the filing. Bryan’s lawyer, Frank Ainsa, did not respond to a request for comment.

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MPR sweeps regional Murrow awards with record-breaking 10 wins

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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MARFA — Marfa Public Radio has won ten 2020 Regional Edward R. Murrow Awards, the Radio Television Digital News Association announced on Tuesday. It is the most the station has ever received in a year, and the most wins of any small market radio station in the country this year.

The station was recognized for coverage of a revived drag racing event, the story behind a business’s wacky advertising, a school district’s secret to success and two tragic mass shootings. It’s a collection of stories Pepple describes as a “tapestry of West Texas.”

The station swept its category, winning every Small Market Radio award in Region 6, which covers all of Texas and Oklahoma. The ten awards honored the station, its social media and a variety of stories by reporters Sally Beauvais, Mitch Borden, Carlos Morales and Diana Nguyen.

The staff was initially wowed by their wins, but General Manager of Marfa Public Radio Elise Pepple described finding out MPR was the single most recognized small market station as a “wild moment.” The news brought tears to Pepple’s eyes, and she credits the tremendous success to the reporting staff and their exceptional dedication.

The ten awards are as follows: Overall Excellence, Continuing Coverage for “Mass Shootings in West Texas,” Excellence in Social Media, Excellence in Writing for “With A Good Gimmick And Catchphrase,

Short-term rentals

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As Washburn sees it, the goal of the emergency measures was to keep Marfa safe from coronavirus. There was “substantial compliance,” with the order, he said, and no cases of the disease have so far been confirmed in Presidio County. Therefore, the orders had been a success.

Washburn acknowledged that this decision might be unfair to local rental owners and hoteliers who did comply but expressed concerns about “hammering” violators.

“The goal [of the order] was much different,” he said. In short: public safety, not punishment.

The city’s change-of-tone sends an awkward message to tourist-industry workers in the area — including hoteliers who did close their hotels and nonetheless faced criticism.

Clark Childers, an owner of The Lincoln Marfa hotel, saw himself become the center of controversy over what city leaders described as “escape to Marfa during COVID-19”-type advertising.” Partly as a result of the advertising, local officials expanded their rules to include restrictions on long-term rentals. But Childers, who did not respond to requests for comment, continually complied with local rules.

The Thunderbird Hotel also closed to follow local orders. But for manager Jose Prat, these updates feel like vindication of a fact he’s long suspected: that the region’s short-term rental bans weren’t enforceable in the first place.

“Part of my issue with the original order was: ‘How exactly are you going to enforce that?’” he said in an interview Tuesday. “That’s always been a question.”

“As far as I’m concerned,” he added, local officials “were depending on owners being responsible and doing what the order tells them to do.”

When *The Big Bend Sentinel* asked Washburn if he was concerned about future noncompliance — why would short-term rental owners close their rentals during a second disease wave if violating the first orders had no consequences? — Washburn acknowledged that was a “good point” and said it would likely factor into the city council’s decision.

But the decision may not be entirely in the city council’s hands. Ordinarily, local-rule violations

One Man Made A Name For Himself In The West Texas Boot Game,” Feature Reporting for “How One Tiny School District In Rural West Texas Is Making It Work,” Hard News for “Box Of Ballots Found In Texas Could Change Outcome Of Midland Bond Proposal, Again,” Multimedia, News Documentary for “West Texas Talk: The El Paso Shooting,” News Series for “Tipping Point” and Sports Reporting for “In Presidio, Amateur Drag Racing Is Back.”

“I think the reporters at MPR are the next generation of journalists for our country,” Pepple says. One staffer, Beauvais, is already on to a new role at *The Texas Tribune*. The general manager lauded the staff for rolling up their sleeves and doing their jobs each time news breaks in the area. Earlier this spring, the *Washington Post* visited MPR, praising the station for “approaching reporting the way a big station would,” according to Pepple.

“We know that part of our role is to honor the stories in West Texas and the realities of residents of West Texas. That only happens through local stories.” Looking back on the station’s successes and its growth from one dedicated reporter to now a handful, Pepple summarized, “I can say for the whole team, we’re proud to be a team.”

Named after famed broadcast journalist Edward R. Murrow, the Edward R. Murrow Awards have honored outstanding achievements in electronic journalism since 1971. Marfa Public Radio’s regional wins will be entered into the national round of competition, with national awards announced later this year.

would be handled by city authorities like the police, said Teresa Todd, Marfa city attorney. But with Abbott now reopening the state and retroactively removing punishments for violators, “the water’s totally muddy now,” Todd said.

Todd and Washburn both questioned whether Abbott had the authority to supersede local orders. Todd pointed to a law that gives county judges discretion to handle local disasters — and which Abbott suspended in his own order. But it could be months before Texas courts work through the kinks of that disagreement.

As Todd wades through those statewide controversies, she’s also watching other legal challenges to local emergency orders — including in Brewster County, where the owner of the Gage has personally sued a county judge over orders closing hotels. She described the whole situation as a “train wreck.”

“Here’s the deal,” Todd said. “We [local officials] didn’t want to step up to the plate in March. We wanted the state to. And the governor didn’t.”

“After we stepped up to the plate, they got mad,” she added. “Well, you didn’t man up. Sorry.”

Another wrinkle in this saga involves the logistics of imposing rules on short-term rental owners.

The City of Marfa recently signed a contract with Host Compliance, a subsidiary of the government-services firm Granicus that promises to help city officials better monitor and regulate short-term rentals. And yet when *The Big Bend Sentinel* covered a violating Airbnb last month, Marfa Police Chief Steve Marquez said the property was not on city lists of short-term rentals.

In an ironic twist, officials said the City of Marfa was getting ready to unveil its new rental regulation system in April — and then coronavirus concerns hit, and the rollout got delayed. Host Compliance seemed amenable to moving back Marfa’s renewal date to make up for the weeks lost to the pandemic, City Manager Washburn said.

Ulrik Binzer, founder of Host Compliance, added that the company is “partners with the city” and that they will “do what we need to do to help our partners succeed in these crazy times.” Binzer said the delayed rollout means Marfa was “flying blind” as it tried to enforce its emergency orders.

“They’re not really using our program to its full potential,” he said. “They’re essentially relying on people self-reporting.”

support of both Will Hurd and Dr. Arredondo-Lynch, candidates who ran against each other in the GOP primary in 2018, I am showing that I can fully unify the Republican Party to win this seat in November.”

Reyes is glad not to have Hurd’s endorsement, since the TX-23 Republican has often run counter to President Trump during his time in office. Instead, Reyes draws a line of Hurd Republicans versus Trump Republicans, saying a vote for him is a vote for the Trump side, rather than Gonzales’ alignment with Hurd. Reyes has challenged Gonzales to a debate, though he hasn’t gotten a response as of yet.

In the more localized city of Marfa elections, candidates have all but ceased to campaign. Incumbents Buck Johnston and Yoseff Ben-Yehuda both said they were not currently actively campaigning.

For Johnston, Ben-Yehuda and Natalie Melendez, their campaigns are at least visible in the sense that their current positions on council afford them a place on Zoom while they continue their public decision-making on behalf of the city. “I think it’s a good way we all get to show our true colors in a public forum,” Ben-Yehuda said.

For the other two candidates vying for the three seats up for grabs, visibility can be more of a struggle. Stephen Boelter and Eddie Pallarez were hoping to get seats this month. Now they will have to wait half a year for their shot.

Pallarez will mostly avoid face-to-face encounters

Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce raising funds for service workers

FORT DAVIS — The Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce has launched a Go Fund Me campaign to raise funds for struggling service industry employees that have been laid off or had their hours drastically cut due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the April 3 launch, the fundraiser has raised \$3,660. The fundraiser will continue until May 15. Then all funds raised will be issued to applicants in the form of grocery store gift certificates. Donations can be made at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-fort-davis039s-service-industry> or mailed to the Fort Davis Chamber of Commerce at PO Box 378, Fort Davis, Texas 79734.

“Seventeen generous Fort Davis locals have already donated to the campaign,” said Melissa Henderson, director at the chamber. “I am so thankful for the

generosity of our community.”

Applicants can apply to receive the funds on the chamber website at www.fortdavis.com. To be eligible to receive the funds, applicants must be a Jeff Davis County service worker who has lost employment due to coronavirus-related closures. Employers must verify applicants’ employment and reasons for layoffs.

“Service workers are our servers, bartenders and restaurant employees,” said Henderson, “but also include cleaning crews, hair stylists, short-term rental management, landscaping and other management jobs for hotels and rentals.”

Interested donors or people that need the funds can find more information on the Go Fund Me site or at www.fortdavis.com.

Census

(Continued from page 1)

and looked at utility hook-ups, which suggested larger populations than what the Census Bureau ended up recording.

This year, Lightfoot said what’s made things even more challenging is state leadership didn’t put money toward the count, placing the burden on local governments and communities. Meanwhile, states like California shelled out nearly \$200 million for their census efforts.

While census workers in the tri-county area haven’t been able to get surveys out to residents, O’Brien said she’s “cautiously optimistic that people will respond on their own” as soon as workers can start delivering questionnaires to front doors, which could happen soon.

This month the Census Bureau is planning a “phased restart” of their field operations in 13 states. While Texas isn’t on that initial list, officials with the Census Bureau say they’re monitoring the coronavirus pandemic in the state and hoping field operations could start again in a few weeks.

“In some of the parts of Texas I know, it’s very close to being safe enough for our staff to be able to go out and continue with that questionnaire delivery process,” said Dennis Johnson, deputy regional director for the Census Bureau, whose district includes Texas.

While the pandemic upended the bureau’s efforts,

Come together

(Continued from page 1)

DA’s office in Lubbock (which is using its vans to make local drop-offs of supplies) and pretty much anyone “sitting at home with a 3D printer,” Williams said.

“It’s just amazing how people have stepped up,” he added.

The efforts have been uniting communities that are normally separated by vast stretches of land, said Chris Stanley, an associate professor of art at the University of Texas at the Permian Basin who has also joined the efforts. UTPB has helped distribute the plastic used in 3D printers, as well as tutorials on how to use the devices to make face-coverings and other medical supplies.

Stanley describes efforts in the Trans-Pecos and beyond as the “southern flank” of the consortium. If places like Presidio and Brewster County can become self-sufficient producers of medical supplies, he reasons, it’ll help the whole region, not only in the event of larger outbreaks here, but by keeping much-needed materials in nearby cities that are currently having outbreaks, like El Paso.

“I don’t think anyone has ever connected these communities together between all of us,” Stanley said. “Sadly, it took [coronavirus] to get those relationships built. Now, let’s hope those relationships stay intact.”

With the goal of creating a southern flank, Stanley started reaching out to Presidio ISD. One of his former students, Ramon Deanda, had worked at the school.

Deanda helped connect Stanley with Tovar, the middle school guidance counselor, who started working with the school district’s technology director, Larry Quintana, to make masks.

with potential voters, instead relying on “posters, some Facebook and maybe some phone calls.” He said his campaign is “basically on hold until a couple months before the election.”

That’s okay with him though. “I know we have some good councilmen now, so I don’t have any grief about it,” he said. “I’m just going to wait my turn. I’m enjoying retirement right now, but I’ll get in there whenever the time comes.”

The extended terms for the three council members, Johnston, Ben-Yehuda and Melendez, mean the council will have the unexpected opportunity to work on another budget together. Johnston called that a rare opportunity. The current council members have been through the budget cycle together already, and “it gives us a second opportunity to do that,” Johnston said. “We’re familiar with the budget and we’re familiar with each other. We have that historical knowledge.”

Pallarez also said the election delay was the right thing to do, mentioning elections in other states that proceeded despite coronavirus, and ultimately resulted in further transmission of the virus and extremely depressed turnouts.

Ben-Yehuda pointed out that the November delay could actually result in a higher turnout for city elections, which will now align with the 2020 presidential and congressional elections.

When elections were delayed, Governor Abbott said all options were “on the table” in response to questions

Johnson said people in the state have been responding to the survey online. But for rural communities like the Big Bend region, he said it’s still important to have workers dropping off questionnaires at homes.

“We need people on the ground to actually spot where that location is, so that we know exactly where it fits into the bigger picture,” said Johnson.

In order to ensure an accurate count, census workers in areas like the Big Bend region will visit homes to drop off a survey since the census response needs to be associated with the physical location— and not post office boxes.

When those door-to-door field operations begin again, the bureau has said census workers will go through safety training, practice social-distancing protocols and receive protective equipment before hand-delivering census forms.

Initially, the decennial count was to be completed by July 31. But because of the pandemic, the Census Bureau moved the deadline to respond to October 31.

While it’s unclear exactly when Peggy O’Brien will be back out in the field — tablet in hand, encouraging people to sign up for the census — she’s figuring out ways to keep up awareness of the national count.

“There’s a lot of legwork still to be done,” said O’Brien. “We just want to keep this on everybody’s radar right now.”

Residents can respond to the Census at <https://2020census.gov/> today.

Tovar hoped to get students involved in the efforts but realized it wasn’t feasible. Still, Tovar estimates he and other Presidio ISD employees have managed to produce around 150 to 200 plastic face-masks and other pieces of personal protective equipment, which they’ve distributed to local entities like the port of entry and Presidio EMS. They’ll soon be sending another 100 masks to Marfa, he said.

“We’re grateful that our community was considered by Dr. Stanley’s team,” Tovar said. “A lot of people forget we’re part of West Texas sometimes.”

His goal, he said, was to “provide for our local agencies — which I think, again, are somewhat neglected.”

The West Texas 3D Covid-19 Relief Consortium is part of efforts across the country and state to get non-medical workers involved in fighting coronavirus.

That includes everything from seamstresses making masks to a chocolate factory near Houston, which is now using the plastic typically used in packaging to make masks, *Texas Tribune* reported. The outlet compared the efforts to those during World War II, when those not directly involved in combat helped make supplies.

Nor is the consortium the only group in West Texas that’s helping to make supplies. Sul Ross State University is also using 3D printers to make PPE, the school announced in a news release this week, working with groups like the Alpine Public Library.

In an interview Wednesday, Williams, the associate dean at TTUHSC said the consortium wasn’t directly involved with the Sul Ross efforts but that they would be reaching out.

“West Texas is so vast that there are probably many other groups that are working in the same vicinity as us,” he said. “It would be good to communicate with them.”

about expanding vote-by-mail, which would reduce contact that could transmit coronavirus. In response, Texas Democrats pushed for expanding vote-by-mail through the courts. A requirement for a voter to have a sickness or physical condition in order to qualify to vote by mail could be expanded to everyone who fears contracting coronavirus, one lawsuit argued. Lawsuits are now volleying back and forth, with judges in turn saying more voters will and will not be able to access mail ballots.

This week, a handful of organizations filed together to claim that certain Texas voting rules are unconstitutional in light of a public health crisis like a pandemic. It remains to be seen where vote-by-mail lands for Texans come July or November.

Voting in the July 14 runoff will be at the County Annex building in Presidio and the USO in Marfa. Voters can vote at either location during early voting, which the governor has extended due to public health considerations. Early voting lasts Monday, June 29 through Friday, July 10. On voting day, precincts 1 and 7 will vote at the USO and 2 through 6 will vote at the Annex.

Workers wearing masks, available hand sanitizer and social distancing of six feet are all likely precautions at polling sites, according to Election Clerk Florcita Zubia. The clerk welcomes other ideas that will help make voting sanitary and safe for all Presidio County voters.

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Arts & Community

Local art is experienced from new perspectives during global pandemic

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

MARFA — If Marfa is a fabric, art institutions are woven into it, Judd Foundation Board President Rainer Judd said at a recent city workshop. The digital meeting was called to discuss the eventual reopening of hotels, motels and short-term rentals to the tourists that bolster the local economy. And in Marfa, a great share of visitors come for the art.

With the coronavirus changing the way physical spaces operate – from now through the foreseeable future – *The Big Bend Sentinel* spoke with three Marfa art institutions about their closures, adjustments and still-distant reopenings.

“We’ve been really redirecting ship, which is interesting,” began Sarah Melendez, programs director at Ballroom Marfa. The institution was exhibiting *Longilonge* by Solange Pessoa in March when concerns of coronavirus caused businesses to close their doors to the public. Though the exhibition had a vibrant, shoulder-to-shoulder opening in November, its late May closing shows just how much has changed this year.

Ballroom will host a free digital screening of *Landscape Film: Roberto Burle Marx* directed by João Vargas Penna on May 16 at 8 p.m., utilizing the Ballroom Marfa Film channel on streaming website Vimeo, a complementary event to *Longilonge* before it closes on May 24.

Melendez explained, “Our major efforts right away, when COVID happened and the gallery closed, was launching a new website. We canceled everything through August, quite a few programs, and we were able to refocus. It was all hands on deck.”

The institution is “rehoning in on our mission of commissioning new work with artists,” Melendez said, focusing on larger, integrative commissions. And with physical art being so tied to in-person visits, Ballroom is lucky to have a deep history working with musicians; in one project, the organization is commissioning DJ composers and producers to come together to create a sound library. With 20 composers from Mexico and 20 from Texas, it’s a cross-border collaboration that Ballroom will have mixed into an album, and eventually host a live performance, “hopefully in 2021,” Melendez said.

Ballroom is “thinking of ways to engage our audience that’s not in Marfa, rather than drawing them to Marfa,” Melendez said. Though Texas museums are officially allowed to reopen, according to the governor, “We have no plans to open up,” said the programs director.

Jenny Moore, director of Chinati Foundation, said, “As a public institution, to be closed to the public is difficult but necessary.” First and foremost for the safety of staff and community, and then of everyone else, she said.

Their education department has pivoted to new online programming that regularly engages participants through its Instagram account @chinatiedu, and has put together art material packages for prekindergarten through sixth grade students in need of supplies, available for pickup today, Thursday, from 9 a.m. to noon outside the school auditorium.

In an eventual reopening, the foundation is reimagining visits to Chinati’s 340 acres, perhaps occurring outdoors first and offering a different perspective on the architecture and outdoor works found on site.

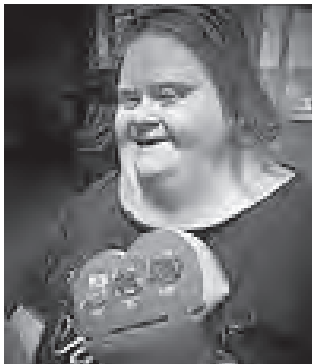
Like Ballroom, Chinati has just launched a new website that makes information and imagery more accessible. These institutions, along with Judd Foundation, are adding resources, online conversations, video and other content to continue to connect with patrons from afar.

“We have developed partnership events with organizations, including MoMA, to make content available to a global audience and free of charge,” Rainer Judd said. Their now-postponed or canceled community programming has always been free of charge, but the foundation is expecting a sizable hit to their bottom line due to loss of guided tours at both their Marfa and New York locations. But with all the pivots toward the internet, the foundation is also looking to connect with people in other ways that are not digital. Judd Foundation is also taking time to focus on “planning for building projects here in Marfa, exhibitions, publications and the future of our programs,” according to Judd.

For these three institutions, a return to normal is distant. “Although tourism in the area, such as parks, the observatory and other local wonders like Marfa Lights existed prior to Judd, we do feel a responsibility to lead in regard to those who come to Marfa for Judd,” Judd said. “It is important to us to follow local health official guidelines to protect our community which, as you know, does not have the medical resources to handle a spike in the COVID-19 cases arising from an increase of visitors to the area.”

The local institutions are in communication about reopening, though none have firm plans, together or separately. “I think the reason we do what we do is we recognize that art is a fundamental part of our lives,” Moore said. “Especially in times of hardship, people turn to art for solace.” A global pandemic just may force local art to be experienced from new perspectives.

Moore said, “The spirit of flexibility, creativity, generosity and openness – maybe not literally – is going to be the way forward.”



Bumpas

Libby Bumpas, 61, beloved sister, was called to her eternal resting place on May 5, 2020. She entered this world on August 22, 1958 in Madisonville, TX, firstborn child to Ted and Margaret Bumpas. She is survived by her sister Martha



Jamieson

Gwynne Garrette Jamieson was born November 2, 1945, in Kingston, Ontario and died in her sleep of natural causes at her home in Alpine, Texas, on April 29, 2020. She was 74 years old. She left home at an early age, becoming an eighth grade teacher in northern Ontario by the age of 17. She married John Burns Jamieson in 1965 and moved to Sydney, Australia, where she worked as a children’s librarian. Their son, John Garrette Jamieson, was born in Sydney in 1969. Their daughter, Eve Anne Jamieson, was born in Norwood, Mass. in 1970.

Gwynne became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1975, graduating from Curry College with a degree in education, and winning a grant to attend Library School at Simmons that same year. She started working at Acoustic Research as a secretary, and quickly became an important part of their marketing department.

She enjoyed a successful career in global high-tech marketing management, working for Millipore, WR Grace, and Data General. She founded her own public speaking company, Speakwell Presentations. Gwynne served as president of the Publicity Club of New England, and on the board of the New England Speakers Association, and the Sales and Marketing Executives of Greater Boston. She earned her Masters of Business Administration from Cambridge College in 1993 and later her Masters of Education.

Gwynne was a special education teacher for the Judge Rotenberg Education Center in Canton, Mass., and for other schools, both public and private, as well. She moved to Alpine, TX in 2013, where she became a substitute teacher and busy volunteer.

Literacy was a lifelong passion of Gwynne’s, reading at least one book per day. She served on the boards of the Morrill Memorial Public Library in Norwood, Mass., the Alpine Public Library, and the Literacy Volunteers of America. She was also an educational advocate for UnitedThroughReading.org, connecting overseas military personnel with their children back home through reading. Gwynne also served on the career councils of Brandeis University, the University of Lowell, Radcliffe College, and Curry College.

Bumpas, sister Beth Bumpas Kerzee, sister Emily Haj, and brother David B. Bumpas. Libby is also survived by five nephews: Jordan, Kyle, Kevin, Levi and Julian, and one niece, Sarah. She was a great-aunt to Zephyr Kerzee. Libby enjoyed attending church, singing, dancing and the television show, “Dallas.” She particularly loved her family very much.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Alpine Sunshine House, 402 E. Holland Avenue, Alpine TX 79830 sunshinehousealpine.com or Casa Hogarth, CHOI, PO Box 305, Alpine, TX 79830 or casahogarorphanage.org

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home.

Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com

Gwynne was passionate about the arts. She adored music of many genres, especially Country and Western, plays and musicals, and performed in several community theater productions. She was also a nature lover. Her beloved adopted home of Alpine afforded her the opportunity to become a Texas Master Naturalist, an active member of garden clubs, and a dedicated advocate for the Alpine Railroad Park and Station.

Gwynne was the proud foster mother of the many kids she took in from Vietnam, South Sudan, and Cuba. A giver by nature, she claimed that, “The more you give, the more you get.” She was also a mentor to many entrepreneurs and business people over the years.

Gwynne loved her “home, sweet home,” Alpine, for its friendly people, live music, vibrant arts scene, starry dark sky, mountains, rocks, climate, birds, flora, and fauna. She enjoyed being a member of the Unitarian Universalists of the Big Bend. She lovingly called Alpine her “Brigadoon.” Her seven years there were by far her happiest.

Gwynne is survived by her son, John Garrette Jamieson and his wife, Nan, of El Rito, NM; daughter, Eve Jamieson; and grandchildren, Liam, Nolan, Patrick, Nora, Iris, and Desmond, all of Boothbay, Maine; foster children, Quan, Lynn and Hoang Nguyen and their families; and Mayuen Angara. Also special to Gwynne were her honorary daughters, Tammy Nguyen and Kathy Pham and their families. Gwynne is also survived by her sister, Lise Garrette (Steve); nephews, Graem and Geoffrey Garrette; and Carson and Patrick Smulders, all of Canada. She maintained contact with dear friends: Genie Berger, Mary Ann Buchowski, Joyce MacLean, Nick Reinhardt, Mort Glass, Sheila Watnick, Laurie Harrison, Eve Birch, and many, many others. Gwynne also leaves behind her cherished Jack Russell “Terror,” Mustang Sally, who is being cared for by Grand Companions of Fort Davis while awaiting her new forever home.

She was predeceased by her parents, Margery Edith (Angell) Garrette, and Grant Gwynne Garrette and Edith (Price) Garrette, brother Glen Garrette, and special aunts, Jeannette Porter and Marjorie Black, and ex-husband, John Burns Jamieson.

Her family is extremely grateful to the many organizations, friends, and neighbors who made her albeit too-short time in Alpine so filled with joy.

Arrangements are being handled by Alpine Memorial Funeral Home (AlpineMemorialfuneralhome.com). If desired, donations may be made in Gwynne’s memory to AlpinePublicLibrary.org or GrandCompanions.org.



McMahon

Margaret Bowman McMahon, 68, passed away surrounded by her family on Thursday, April 30, 2020 on her family ranch. She was born on January 11, 1952 in San Antonio to Ruth McLean and Jack Tibaut Bowman. Margaret attended Saint Mary’s Hall, then went to Grier School in Pennsylvania her freshman year of high school, returned to San Antonio for the spring semester and graduated from Alamo Heights High School in the spring of 1970. Margaret also attended Texas A&M and UT-Austin, but school was never really her thing- she was always something of a nonconformist. So, in August of 1972, at the age of 19, Margaret moved to the Hill Country and began ranching near the town

of Utopia. The ranches continued to be a central focus of Margaret’s life, but over the years, the work shifted away from cattle and toward raising horses, organic farming, range and wildlife management, and mineral resources.

Margaret always had great interest in property rights and liberty, and in that vein, she actively supported national liberty youth organizations and projects. She also promoted homeschooling and other innovative educational methods. But above all, her relationship with the land itself- both as an admirer and steward – was her greatest passion.

Margaret is survived by James McMahon, husband; Corrie Mauldin, daughter with grandchildren Jack Tibaut and Phoebe Juniper Foster; Bowman McMahon, son; and Shaw McMahon, son.

Her family will hold a private ceremony on their ranch where she will also be laid to rest. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Peterson Hospice, Kerrville, Texas.

You are invited to sign the Guestbook at www.porterloring.com. Arrangements with Porter Loring Mortuary, 1101 McCullough Avenue, San Antonio, TX 78212 – (210) 227-8221



Moore

David Rogers Moore, 70, passed peacefully into the arms of God the night of May 8, 2020, surrounded by his wife Zana Switzer Moore, and his three children, Brandi Arnold, Braydon Moore, and Dagan Moore. He entered this world as the only child of Edward and Mojella Moore on December 27, 1949, in Alpine, Texas. He lived in Alpine his entire life.

A graduate of both Alpine High School (1968) and Sul Ross State University (1972), he married Zana on December 31, 1976. They were joined in 1979 by their daughter, Brandi and five and ten years later, by two sons, Braydon and Dagan.

David lived a full life with many hobbies and businesses.



1 Cavalry Row/PO Box 1135
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www.chinati.org

The Chinati Foundation is a contemporary art museum founded by the artist Donald Judd. The collection includes work by thirteen artists and focuses on permanent, large-scale installations emphasizing the relationship between art, architecture, and the surrounding landscape.

CHINATI CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

At the Chinati Foundation, the safety and well-being of our visitors and staff are among our highest priorities. We are aware of the health concerns surrounding the coronavirus (COVID-19), and upon the recommendation of local West Texas health officials, Chinati has been advised to close to the public until further notice. The tri-county region has limited health resources, so to be a good partner to our local community and community of visitors, we are taking the recommendation seriously.

For those visitors who have booked tours on the dates effected, please email Visitor Services Manager, Abby Boyd, at aboyd@chinati.org or call 432.729.4362 ext.3 to reschedule or discuss other options.

Thank you for supporting the Chinati Foundation. As a public institution, we both rely on the public for support and believe it is our responsibility to be a good public partner in return. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and we look forward to welcoming you to Chinati in the future.

Please check www.chinati.org for further updates.

We have joined with members of our community to ensure the safety of all.

Judd Foundation has temporarily suspended public programs and guided visits of our spaces in Texas.

Please contact
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Education & Arts

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



“Owl”
Flavio Udave
5rd Grade
Marfa Elementary School

Marathon Library earns accolades from state library association

MARATHON — A state library association recently gave two awards to the Marathon Public Library: one for “small community librarian of the year” and another for “small community library advocate.”

The awards came from the Small Community Libraries Round Table, a program within the Texas Library Association. Dara Cavness, director at the Marathon Library, won the award for small community librarian. Board member Erin Albright won the advocate award for “demonstrating what it means to be an extraordinary volunteer,” the Marathon Library said in a news release.

In a statement, Arlene Griffis, board chair for the local library, said she was honored the library was winning awards — and to have Cavness and Albright working there.

The award was “thanks to Dara and Erin who, working as a team, have made the library what it is today,” Griffis added. She cited their work with Marathon Independent School District to bring more educational opportunities to the library.

Both Cavness and Albright have stood out for their work at the library. Cavness helped create a “warm and welcoming environment” for children and was “absolutely key as to why our library is flourishing today,” Griffis said.

Her success can be measured in the visits to the library. There were more than 9,500 unique visits in 2019, Griffis said — up from around 850 in 2013.

Albright, meanwhile, has long been an active community member at the library — serving as the secretary, president and board treasurer since 2013.

Albright’s communication skills helped the library expand its services and programs, Griffis said. And perhaps most impressively, she also netted the library \$300,000 in gifts by using those skills for grant writing.

Albright “exemplifies the very best of a servant leader — someone who always focuses on the needs of others first,” Griffis said.

“They lead by example,” Griffis added of both Albright and Cavness. “Thanks to them, today the Marathon Public Library is Marathon’s heart and soul.”

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Saturdays by appointment only

Marathon ISD picks superintendent finalist

MARATHON — The Marathon ISD board of trustees selected Dr. Peter Price as the finalist for the position of Marathon ISD superintendent on May 9. State law requires the board of trustees to wait 21 days to approve the final hiring of Dr. Price.

Dr. Price is currently employed in the Austin ISD as the director of Social and Emotional Learning. His career has spanned being a campus administrator for 20 years, a teacher for 10 years and a central office administrator for four years. Dr. Price has extensive background experience in budgeting, curriculum and personnel management.

Dr. Price earned his bachelor’s degree in Vermont at Middlebury College, his master’s degree from Texas State University and his doctorate from the University of Texas.



Dr. Peter Price

Dr. Price’s wife is a healthcare administrator and they have three grown children.

Dr. Price plans to transition to Marathon in early June. He is extremely excited about becoming part of the Marathon school family and the community.

The district received 12 qualified applications and narrowed the field to 5 who were interviewed. Dr. Price’s experiences, qualifications and passion for education and students made him a stand out in the interviews. The board of trustees is warmly welcoming Dr. Price who they feel will “hit the road running.”

Marfa Live Arts announces award-winning playwrights

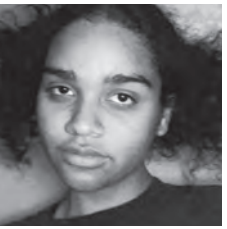
GRAND PRIZES



Aubrie Aguilar



Avery Beltran



Febi Brimhall



Devin Meierhoff

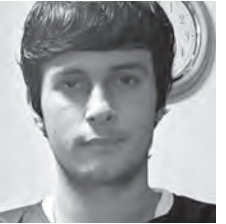
HONORABLE MENTIONS



Odalys Chacon



Samantha Jimenez



Saul Lozano



Charlize Martínez



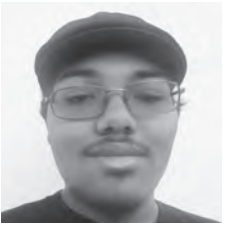
Isaac Mediano



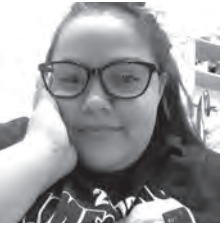
Janelly Pereira



Brianna Ramos



Dimetrey Stewart



Victoria Torres

MARFA — This spring, Marfa Live Arts’ guest playwright Caridad Svich facilitated the ninth annual Playwriting Program at Marfa High School via an online platform. Over the course of ten days, students were given prompts and led through a series of creative writing exercises.

Upon completion of the classes, each student wrote their own unique one-act play. When asked to give her overall thoughts on the quality of work from the Marfa students, Svich replied, “All students demonstrated to varying degrees a distinctiveness of voice, range, clear intentions, well-crafted theatrical dialogue, a sense of wildness/fearlessness and an ability to tell a complete story.”

When asked what she’d like to share with MISD’s young playwrights, she replied, “I was impressed by everyone’s commitment to dramatic form. I cannot stress this enough. Although in this circumstance there are ‘winners,’ I would like to think that all the students are winners.”

Marfa Live Arts is proud to announce the **Grand Prize award-winning Marfa High School playwrights for 2020 are:**

No Compass by Aubrie Aguilar, 9th grade. Svich shares, “This play caught me by surprise. On the surface it is very simple. A ditching-school-and-learning-something story. But it has a tenderness in its rendering of characters that is moving. Compassionate and sweet and driven by dialogue. It just moves and flies.”

It’s Not Always Sunshine and Rainbows at Coneset Hill by Febi Brimhall, 10th grade. Svich comments, “I LOVE THIS PLAY. An unexpectedly delightful lark of a play. Beatrice and Wayne are terrific characters, and theres a warmth in the telling of this tale about feeling/being othered that is truly captivating, smart and winning.”

Legend of the Hellhound by Devin Meierhoff, 11th grade. Svich adds, “A very funny, self-aware Western. Just a hoot. You can feel the FUN the writer is having on the page. Artful, sly, adventurous. Has a bit of Coen Brothers vibe to it in *Ballad of Buster Scruggs* mode.”

Rona by Avery Beltran, 12th grade. Svich shares, “A pandemic comedy/horror. Very funny. Extreme (intentional). Vivid. It just grabs the stage and doesn’t let go.”

The following student playwrights have been awarded Honorable Mention:

9th grade
Something Has to Change by Charlize Martinez
Sad Eyes Attracted to Bad Guys by Victoria Torres
The Panda and the Tortoise by Dimetrey Stewart
My Sun by Janelly Pereira

10th grade
Let the Unknown be Known by Odalys Chacon
The Space Between by Brianna Ramos

11th grade
en la boca de la guerra by Saul Lozano
Shelley Snaps by Isaac Mediano

12th grade
Quarantine Monologue by Samantha Jimenez

Svich concluded her time teaching by adding, “I was encouraged by the students’ honesty, enthusiasm and dedication, and for understanding the performative as a medium. All in all, it was a delight to see ALL the work and the passion down there in Marfa!”

Since 2011, Marfa Live Arts has taught the Playwriting Program at MISD. The program provides instruction and resources that build critical thinking skills while helping kids gain self-confidence in finding and expressing their inner voice.

To date, the Playwriting Program has produced over 825 student-written plays. For more information go to: www.marfalivearts.org

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Work units
- 5 Urban carrier
- 8 Wanders
- 12 Hoodlum
- 13 Bobby of hockey
- 14 Leave out
- 15 Atmosphere
- 17 With skill
- 18 Godlike
- 19 Indefinite interval
- 21 To and —
- 22 Regiment
- 23 Sheepish comment
- 26 Mess up
- 28 Manicurist’s concerns
- 31 Mater preceded-
- 33 Insult (Sl.)
- 35 Nike slogan, "Just —"
- 36 Unpaid bills
- 38 1960s Pontiac
- 40 Homer’s neighbor
- 41 Faraway fleet?
- 43 Actress Thurman
- 45 Help
- 47 Least adorned
- 51 Physician Niels
- 52 Food of the gods
- 54 Tourney situations
- 55 Wire measure
- 56 Soda fountain treat
- 57 Right on the map?
- 58 Snoop
- 59 Arctic diving birds

DOWN

- 1 "Zounds!"
- 2 Jim of sports radio
- 3 Asian desert
- 4 Express disdain nasally
- 5 Massachusetts city
- 6 Joan of —
- 7 The staff of life
- 8 Proceed
- 9 Drive
- 10 Pickling herb
- 11 Eyelid woe
- 16 Ireland
- 20 Victory
- 23 Evil
- 24 Brewery product
- 25 Surprise attacks
- 27 Tractor-trailer
- 29 Falsehood
- 30 Norm: Abbr.
- 32 Originally
- 34 Unshaven, in a way
- 37 "Mayday!"
- 39 Mr. Sharif
- 42 Postage buy
- 44 Scent
- 45 Singer Lane
- 46 Protein-rich bean
- 48 Birthright bar-terer
- 49 Symbol of smoothness
- 50 Body pics
- 53 Russian space station

Puzzle solutions for last week’s issue

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 21 mins.

O	F	F	S	O	P	T	H	A	S	P
S	A	L	K	N	E	E	A	L	E	E
S	Q	U	I	N	T	E	D	R	O	L
O	S	E	I	O	N	C	L	E	F	T
		E	S	P	J	O	E			
I	R	A	Q	I	B	A	N	Q	U	E
T	U	T	U	F	U	R	U	L	N	A
S	T	A	I	N	E	D	M	I	T	E
		N	O	W	P	E	N			
M	O	T	O	R	F	I	N	A	S	H
A	P	E	X	E	L	A	Q	U	I	N
L	U	R	E	M	U	S	N	U	G	
I	S	M	S	G	E	E	P	A	N	S

Terlingua woman portrayed on Narcos: Mexico recalls life with “The Ojinaga Fox”



Photo credit: Andrea Miner/Netflix

Mimi Webb Miller portrayed by actress Sosie Bacon in the second season of Narcos: Mexico.

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

TERLINGUA — Mimi Webb Miller is riding on horseback around her family’s Big Bend-area ranch when a group of unfamiliar Mexican men pull up at her house. They’re friends and business associates of Miller’s boyfriend, drug kingpin Pablo Acosta Villarreal, also known as “The Ojinaga Fox.”

Miller doesn’t know that yet, though. She brandishes her gun at them, firing a warning shot. The men duck behind their car.

After a moment, Acosta emerges. He’s up on the roof, doing repairs.

Don’t worry, he tells Miller: he knows these men.

That, at least, is how Terlingua resident Mimi Webb Miller is portrayed in the latest season of *Narcos: Mexico*, which came out in February. For those looking for something to binge while social distancing, *Narcos: Mexico* explores the 1980s roots of Mexican drug trafficking, from loose operations to organized empires. Miller’s appearance is thanks to her association with Acosta, who helped run the Juárez Cartel before he was killed in a shoot-out with Mexican and U.S. authorities in 1987.

Miller, who was romantically involved with the real-life Acosta for around a year in the late 1980s, is featured in four episodes. She’s portrayed by Sosie Bacon, an actress from California who adopted a trademark Texas twang for the role.

In real life, Miller, 70, doesn’t have a twang. Not anymore, at least. That’s despite the fact that Miller grew up in Wichita Falls in North Texas, and her uncle was former Texas Senator John G. Tower — an association that led *The Oprah Magazine* to call her “Texas royalty” in a recent interview.

Another person might brag about their ties to a drug kingpin and a politician. But when the conversation turns to her past, Miller is wary of having nearby visitors overhear her dramatic life story.

Dressed in a white-button shirt and a plaid sarape, she’s now a casting director in Los Angeles and a hotelier in Terlingua. She’s sitting outside her hotel, the La Posada Milagro Guesthouse in Terlingua, greeting visitors and locals as they stop by for lunch. She doesn’t always know what other people will make of her backstory.

A roadrunner, whose official name is “Rigaberta” but whom Miller prefers to call either “Bob” or “Ruth,” prowls the patio from crumbs and spare bits of food. As curious tourists watch on, Miller introduces them.

“Her name is Rigaberta,” she tells one group. “If there’s any crumbs, she cleans up real well.”

“She never gets in any trouble here,” she says. “She’s real tame.”

In some ways, it’s been a long journey for Miller. After Acosta was killed, she left the region, worried that someone would assume she knew too much (she was close to a top cartel leader, after all) and try to harm her. Those fears were not totally unfounded. Miller heard there were threats on her life and spent years trying to keep a low profile, but, “I’ve never been low profile,” she says.

“I had to hide, and I didn’t know how to not stand out.” And while she visited the Big Bend at least once a year, it wasn’t until the mid-1990s that she felt comfortable moving back.

In other ways, Miller’s journey is full circle. For one, she never could quite bring herself to fully leave the Big Bend. Now, from her home above Terlingua Ghost Town, she can still see the mountains in Mexico that were once her stomping ground.

She can’t quite see San Carlos, also known as Manuel Benavides, the small town in the mountains in the middle of Parque Nacional Cañon de Santa Elena in Mexico where decades ago she ranched, threw parties and guided horse tours. Occasionally, her tour group would come across some of Acosta’s men. “There was only one road in and one road out,” she says.

And with the release of the latest season of *Narcos: Mexico*, Miller has also seen a renewed interest in her past. That includes pesky journalists and media types as well as the visitors or locals who have made the connection between *this* Mimi Webb Miller and *that* Mimi Webb Miller. The other day, she got recognized at the Alpine tax office.

All of which brings to mind a question: is the portrayal of Miller in *Narcos* really accurate? Did she and Acosta really work with authorities in hopes that he could escape the business and lead a safe and normal life? Are all these plot points really true?

Yes and no, Miller says. She points to one big discrepancy: her ranch was in Mexico, not in the United States as portrayed in the show. “He never came over here,” she says of Acosta, referring to this side of the Rio Grande.

Her character’s subplot is *Narcos: Mexico* “is actually much less dangerous than what I lived through,” she says. “I have a lot of PTSD still. But as old as I am now, I thought maybe I could give myself some more inside peace by talking about it.”

“This is so bizarre to tell you outright,” she adds. And with that, she starts reflecting.

It was in the 1970s when Miller first started coming to the Big Bend. She visited Boquillas Canyon and boated down the Rio Grande. She quickly fell in love with its natural



Photo by Bill Wright, courtesy of Mimi Webb Miller

Mimi Webb Miller poses with a young Zane Ivey in her Terlingua Ghost Town home in 1996, a few years after Miller spent time with Pablo Acosta. Her experiences from that period are portrayed in the Narcos: Mexico series, now streaming on Netflix.

beauty and culture. The region back then was still a hinterland. Mexicans and Americans waded across the river, and Lajitas was just starting to transition to a tourism town. Miller attended a cockfight on an island in the middle of the Rio Grande.

At the time, Miller was living in Houston but coming to the Big Bend whenever she could. On one early trip, she remembers meeting Acosta. She was with a friend near Ojinaga when she says he came to the window of the car, leaned in and said hello. She remembers him having a little spittle on his lip.

Eventually, Miller decided to move to the region full time. She moved onto a 3000-acre ranch near San Carlos, replete with a 40-foot waterfall and “the best drinking water in the state of Chihuahua.” She met a man named Maño, fell in love with him and was soon helping to care for his two children. “I just thought I’d found heaven,” she says.

If the story so far seems fragmented and dreamlike, it feels a bit that way to Miller as she explains it too. Part of it, she says, is the PTSD — a condition that’s left her struggling to make sense of those years and especially her time with Acosta.

It was also the 1970s, and Miller was young and carefree. At the time, “it didn’t seem wild,” she said. “It just naturally progressed. And when you’re in your twenties...” she trailed off.

Living in San Carlos, Miller soon got to know Acosta. “This was his territory,” she says. “We all knew who he was.” Some referred to his posse as a “mafia,” but Miller didn’t quite believe it. “I thought they were just small-town, that they didn’t really know what they were saying,” she says.

In retrospect, maybe she could have noticed small signs. Like that group of women who used \$100 bills when they visited Lajitas.

“My rationale was literally, we don’t have a bank,” she says. “I could have probably thought it through. But in my head, we were remote from a grocery store — much less a bank.”

Eventually, Miller and Maño’s

relationship fell apart, and Miller started seeing Acosta. When another reporter asked her a few years back what she saw in the druglord, she put it succinctly.

“He was kind of like Kissinger,” she told *The New York Times* in 2014. “Not the handsomest man I’d ever met, but a strong guy, with a lot of charisma.”

It was around 1986 and ‘87. Miller and Acosta saw each other for less than a year before he was killed in the shootout with authorities.

Those years are about where the subplot of Mimi Webb Miller, the larger-than-life, Hollywood character in *Narcos: Mexico* begins. And much of what’s in the show is — spoiler alert — true, Miller says. More or less, at least.

It is true Acosta was considering a negotiation with U.S. authorities. “They offered him a deal,” she says. “At the last minute, he said he didn’t need to take it.” She thinks he knew the end was getting close.

But that wasn’t the only reason federal authorities wanted to talk to Acosta, Miller says. “There was a rumor put out that the Libyans were getting ready to cross the border,” she says. “Acosta had talked to the powers that be and investigated that in Chihuahua City.”

It was also true she was pregnant, though she never told Acosta. She thinks he probably figured it out.

She never delivered, though. A neighbor in Mexico fired at her ranch during a disagreement over his goat-grazing practices. Her horse was spooked, and the next time Miller tried to ride it, it bucked her. She miscarried.

After Acosta’s death, Miller returned to Wichita Falls for a school reunion. She joined a scientific study on depression in Fort Worth. She found work as a casting director in Los Angeles. She returned to Terlingua and opened a hotel.

It’s been an unusual life’s journey, to say the least, and even Miller seems to still be making sense of it.

“Some of it I really didn’t understand until now,” she says. “If that makes sense.”

Eighth annual Camp Summer Shake Up starts Monday, June 1

MARFA — Camp Summer Shake Up is a free, summer program for students in prekindergarten through eighth grade, offered by a group of area nonprofit organizations working together with Marfa ISD. The camp, started in 2013, provides fun activities and free, healthy meals each year during the month of June.

This year’s camp will feature the same kind of fun programs local kids are familiar with — DJ Camp, story time, physical activity, art classes, dance, and more — but will be offered through online videos, social media posts, and activity packets. Camp organizers are making sure that students will be able to participate in a safe, socially-distanced way and on their family’s own schedule.

Families can count on the Marfa ISD school cafeteria staff to

continue to provide free, nutritious breakfast and lunch to any student ages 18 and under through June 30. This summer the meals will all be served to-go.

Schedules, videos and all program information will be online at campsummershakeup.org. Packets and materials will be passed out at the school cafeteria. Meals will be delivered to the same five meal delivery sites set up since the school closed earlier this spring.

There’s no registration needed. Please check the website, campsummershakeup.org, regularly for updates and more information. For families who may need assistance getting their child online or accessing the website, please call (432) 935-1225.

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Classifieds & public notices

Local rabbits face outbreak of deadly disease

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

TRI-COUNTY — Readers who have felt anxious about coronavirus can take comfort in one fact: at least they’re not rabbits.

As coronavirus spreads across the United States, humans aren’t the only ones facing a deadly new disease outbreak, according to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.

Since March, the agency says it’s recorded the first cases of a new strain of RHD, or rabbit hemorrhagic disease, in Texas. The illness “appears to only affect” rabbit species and not humans or other animals, the agency said.

Like COVID-19 (the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus) this strain of rabbit hemorrhagic disease is caused by a virus, and is relatively new to the United States. It mostly affects adult rabbits and comes with scary-sounding acronyms like RHDV2 (short for “rabbit hemorrhagic disease virus 2”). But unlike COVID-19, which has an estimated fatality rate in the range of three or four percent, RHDV2 is “nearly always fatal” in adult rabbits, TPWD said.

There’s no sign that the disease can sicken other creatures besides rabbits. But if the disease gets out of control, it could still affect wildlife in other ways — especially in Far West Texas.

“The loss of this prey species can affect big game populations as well as other populations like rodents, due to a shift in what predators will go after,” John Silovsky, the deputy director for TPWD’s Wildlife Division, said in a statement. “That’s especially true in fragile areas like the Trans Pecos.”

The origins of rabbit hemorrhagic disease are murky. The first known outbreak occurred in China in 1984, where it killed 14 million domesticated rabbits before spreading across the globe, according to the Center for Food Security & Public Health at Iowa State University.

That first strain — RHD or

RHDV1 — was “extremely contagious” and killed “most or all” infected rabbits, according to the center. There were soon regular outbreaks of the disease in much of the world — but, in good news for North American rabbits, many or all rabbit species here weren’t affected, and the disease didn’t quite catch hold.

That isn’t true for RHDV2 — the latest strain that has descended on Texas.

While the strain first cropped up in Europe in 2010, it’s much newer to North America, first appearing in British Columbia around 2018 and Ohio in 2019. In recent months, it’s spread like wildfire through the desert Southwest — with cases recently confirmed in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and Mexico.

And like coronavirus, the disease appears to have stayed a step ahead of scientists. So far, researchers have found “no epidemiological link to the other areas where RHD has been found in North America,” said Megan Radke, a TPWD spokesperson.

The Texas Animal Health Commission reported the first Texas cases of RHDV2 in early April — around six or seven domestic rabbits living in Hockley County near Lubbock.

“Vaccines are not available or approved for use in Texas at this time,” Dr. Andy Schwartz, the state veterinarian, warned. In a statement, he urged rabbit owners to “practice strong biosecurity” to “mitigate the risk of disease in their rabbit herds.”

A few days later, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department announced bad news: some more Texas rabbits had been tested, and their results were also positive.

A wild black-tailed jackrabbit in Lubbock County had the disease, as did a wild cottontail rabbit in Hudspeth County. They were the first known cases of RHD in wild rabbits in Texas.

So far, the disease has killed rabbits across the Far West Texas region, including in El Paso, Hudspeth, Brewster, Terrell, Lubbock and Pecos counties.

While symptoms can include seizures and a lack of appetite, some rabbit-handlers may not even know their herds have it.

“Often,” the TPWD said, “the only clinical sign is sudden death.”

Rabbits can reduce the spread of rabbit hemorrhagic disease by practicing good hygiene and social distancing. Cages should be cleaned regularly, the TPWD advises, and pet rabbits should be kept away from other rabbits.

In a phone interview on Tuesday, Bob Dittmar, wildlife veterinarian for TPWD, said RHD has continued to spread. The agency has heard reports of RHD-like symptoms throughout Far West Texas and the Texas Panhandle — though results haven’t confirmed it yet. A dead rabbit in Presidio County had trademarks of the disease, but its test came back negative.

“The numbers that are tested are very small,” Dittmar said. Typically, veterinarians submit results from affected rabbits — though the

disease’s appearance in wild rabbit populations has complicated that image.

To estimate the number of Texas RHD tests, Dittmar suggested people “count the number of counties that are positive and multiply by one, possibly two” — a tongue-in-cheek way of noting that each county had, at most, two rabbits tested. But with such low testing rates, Dittmar stressed that infected rabbits are almost certainly hiding in the general rabbit public.

Asked if he sees parallels to coronavirus, Dittmar said yes and no. In a sense, all disease outbreaks are “very similar” because they involve factors like contact and population density, he said.

But he cautioned against drawing too many parallels between RHD and coronavirus, noting there are many questions about RHD that researchers still “don’t really have an answer for.”

“How did it get here?” he asked. “What caused it to pop up at this point in time?”

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- ✓ ¿Qué es la junta de revisión de tasaciones? (ARB, por sus siglas en inglés)
- ✓ Cuando presentar las protestas

- Conocerá los pasos a seguir para preparar una audiencia de protesta y decidir si la tasación efectuada por el distrito es razonable. Si usted decide lo contrario, el folleto Recursos Disponibles a los Propietarios Contribuyentes indica cómo presentar su protesta ante la junta de revisión de tasaciones.

- Aprenderá qué tipo de protestas se permiten y los documentos y pruebas que debe presentar ante la junta.

- Encontrará la lista de las fechas importantes y la acción a tomar para cada fecha.

Obtenga hoy su copia gratis en español de Recursos Disponibles a los Propietarios Contribuyentes en:

PRESIDIO COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT
P O BOX 879
107 E TEXAS ST
MARFA, TEXAS 79843
(432)729-3431/(432)229-3963
info@presidiocad.org

Visite: comptroller.texas.gov/taxes/property-tax

Este es un servicio público cortesía de su distrito de tasaciones del condado.

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, May 16, 2020 at Twin Peaks Self Storage
10:00 AM at 2609 West Highway 90 in Alpine, Texas.

Unit 65- Chris Sanderfur

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.

MARFA 12 STEP MEETINGS ONLINE

Go to zoom.us or download the app:

ACA - Thursday 5:30 PM

<https://tinyurl.com/y7qyghga>

AI Anon. - Sunday 2:00 PM

<https://tinyurl.com/yd78lsa6>

AA - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 6:00 PM

<https://tinyurl.com/y7uxgrcy>

AA - Saturday 12:00 Noon

<https://tinyurl.com/yd7opqwu>

JOBS



HR Generalist/Accounting Assistant

BBT is seeking a full time HR Generalist/Accounting Assistant who is an excellent multi-tasker with exceptional communication and time management skills. Candidates must have prior HR and accounting experience to coordinate Human Resource functions and assist the Accounting Department. Candidate must be skilled in personal computer using word processing and spreadsheet software. Preferred qualifications include a Bachelor’s degree and three years of experience or equivalent.

There is a \$1,000 signing bonus for new hires (terms and conditions apply) and long-term career potential for the right motivated person. Applicant may be required to work overtime or on weekends and holidays as needed and may be required to attend out-of-town training and/or meetings requiring travel by car, bus, plane or other means of transportation and overnight stays. Competitive Compensation and Benefits Package are included. This company participates in E-Verify.

Please mail a current resume to

BBT, Attn: HR

808 N. 5th St.

Alpine, TX 79830

Or email resume to: HR@bbtco.com

Please no phone calls.



CIBOLO CREEK RANCH

A TEXAS LEGACY
Established 1857

Cibolo Creek Ranch is seeking Servers, Bartender, Reservations Manager, Landscapers, Activities Supervisors and a Sommelier.

Experience in restaurants and the Hospitality industry is preferred.

If interested please send resume to obottois@cibolocreekranch.com



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

Postmaster: Send address changes to Drawer P, Marfa, TX 79843.