

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Businesses across Texas reopen, despite lack of contact tracing

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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TEXAS — The state is progressing its reopening to phase two, Governor Greg Abbott announced on Monday. The update paved the way for bars, camps, children’s programming, sports and more to reopen as well as letting restaurants jump their dining room capacity up to 50 percent, despite a lack of comprehensive contact tracing efforts across Texas. Starting Friday, restaurants can open to 50 percent, bars, wine rooms and breweries can open to 25 percent, and drive-in concerts, bowling alleys and skating rinks can open with certain restrictions.

By Sunday, May 31, youth sports camps, little leagues with socially-distant spectating, summer camps, vacation bible schools, 4H camps and professional sports are permitted to begin. Abbott said the state is now looking into strategies to reopen theme parks, taking cues from other states and countries who are testing out how to open safely.

While the state swings its doors open, restrictions on the southern ports of entry between Texas and Mexico will remain in place. The government on Tuesday extended its limitations, keeping nonessential travel across the border closed until at least June 22.

Locally, Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties all applied for and were approved to extend their 25 percent reopening to 50 percent last week. The counties were eligible to expand their reopening beyond the state’s standard allowance because each has fewer than five confirmed coronavirus cases. It gave the three counties a jump start on the expanded capacity most other counties will get on Friday.

As part of the attestation counties had to give in order to apply for a wider reopening, judges were told to provide a comprehensive plan for “contact tracing,” a method where officials would need to identify individuals who tested positive for coronavirus, and then contact any individuals who had direct contact with the infected patient.

Presidio County Judge Cinderela Guevara said their attestation simply indicated that the regional health department would be handling the tracing. Regional officials told Presidio County that they would offer contact tracing services over the phone. The regional offices did not return a request for comment about their capabilities in implementing comprehensive contact tracing at this point.

Meanwhile, Dr. John Hellerstedt, the commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, said during the Monday press conference that the state is “ramping up on our case tracking, tracing” but that currently “we are not able to contact every single test

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Photo by Maisie Crow

Marfa High School senior Juan Martinez and his dog Butch took part in the class of 2020’s graduation parade last Friday evening. The school and city officials worked together to put together a parade that celebrated graduates from a safe distance, because of fears over coronavirus.

Despite coronavirus setbacks, Marfa celebrates its graduates

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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MARFA — “I’m nervous and happy,” Juan Martinez, Marfa High School senior said over the roar of a yellow Ford truck as he stood in its bed. His dog, Butch, was along for the ride. “I did not expect this at all,” Martinez said about the socially distanced graduation parade that was about to begin.

Last Friday evening, Marfa High School held its first senior parade, an event thrown together by school staff and city officials in place of the

usual prom, senior trip and graduation activities that have been canceled as a precaution against coronavirus.

“It’s different, but I think we’ll all get through it, and let’s hope for the best,” Martinez said. He’s off to El Paso’s Western Tech to become a diesel mechanic after graduation, a fitting choice for the young man smiling from the steadily rumbling truck.

Parents and friends were busy until the last minute, taping purple and white streamers, posters and shiny 2020 balloons to their parade float vehicles. In the school parking lot, one dad

helped his student ascend a step ladder onto the hood of a truck. Other students in purple caps and gowns rode in truck beds or passenger seats, while some drove themselves, honking ceremoniously before they set off toward the courthouse.

“Gotta love small towns,” outgoing principal Dr. John Sherill said through a smile as the graduating seniors circled their vehicles in the school parking lot.

Family members of the graduates were given parking spots on the parade route around the courthouse and asked to tune into Marfa Public

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Pandemic and alleged price fixing leave ranchers on hold

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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FAR WEST TEXAS — The cattle industry runs on supply and demand, as Bobby McKnight, president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, likes to point out. And right now is no different, even as the coronavirus pandemic and a controversy in the cattle world plunges some ranchers into uncertainty.

Ranchers are still waiting to see how the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdowns will affect demand — especially in exports to places like China, which, before the pandemic, many ranchers expected to become a big new consumer base.

McKnight says exports to the world’s second-biggest economy are still slowly increasing but said that ranchers are taking things day-by-day as coronavirus upends global economies and business-as-usual politics. “What happens tomorrow, I wouldn’t even begin to guess,” he said.

Meanwhile, a price-fixing scandal is blooming in the ranching world. Texas Agriculture

Commissioner Sid Miller, along with the attorneys general of at least 10 states, are investigating what they say is possible price fixing at packing plants. The USDA is also probing the matter.

It remains to be seen how the investigation will end, but Commissioner Miller is adamant that packing houses are ripping off ranchers.

“It’s got to stop,” he told *The Big Bend Sentinel* in an interview this week. “[Packing houses] have been doing it forever, and we’ve got to do something about it.”

Beef exports have always been a major part of the cattle industry. American consumers, after all, account for just around 4 percent of the global population — another fact that TSCRA President McKnight often mentions.

China had banned American beef exports for almost two decades, ostensibly over concerns about “mad cow” disease. But earlier this year, American ranchers were excited after the United States and China approved a deal to allow beef exports, as *The Big Bend Sentinel* previously reported.

In his interview this week, McKnight seemed confident that those markets will remain steady

— noting that exports were “very good” before the coronavirus crisis and that the U.S. ranchers still have “a good supply of beef cattle.” So far, the data supports that conclusion.

Even during the crisis, global demand for U.S. beef has stayed “very resilient,” said Joe Schuele, vice president of the U.S. Meat Export Federation. Still, he stressed that first-quarter data didn’t show the effects of temporary plant closures and that there will likely be “a bit of a slowdown” in exports. That is “because of supply challenges,” he said, and “not lack of demand.”

It isn’t just exports, though. Around 85 percent of U.S. beef is consumed domestically, Schuele said — and that market has taken more of a beating.

Around half of domestic beef sales go to restaurants, McKnight said — and “the demand is gone.” He said some of the losses are “absorbed through consumers cooking at home” but added that coronavirus has left a “big hit on the restaurant business” that “we’re feeling all the way back out here in the country.”

Another concern is weather. Much of Far West

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Porter’s sees half of price-gouging complaints in tri-county

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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TRI-COUNTY — As economic fallout builds from the coronavirus crisis, so has the number of price-gouging complaints filed in the tri-county area.

Since the end of March, there have been at least six price-gouging complaints in the tri-county. Three of them targeted Porter’s stores in Alpine, Fort Davis and Presidio.

A Stripes store in Alpine also saw a complaint, with one consumer alleging they were charging “way more than the average” for gas. But smaller businesses saw complaints too, including a gas station in Alpine and a general store in Terlingua.

The *Big Bend Sentinel* first started reporting on local price-gouging complaints in March, after Marfa City Council discussed increased prices at the local Porter’s. Councilmember Irma Salgado noted that egg prices had doubled from \$4 to \$8, while Councilmember Raul Lara also raised concerns about store pricing.

Porter’s acknowledged they had raised prices on some items, citing higher prices from suppliers. But they said they were not gouging.

“That’s not who we are,” Ky Ellison, a spokesperson for Porter’s, told *The Big Bend Sentinel* in March. “There’s never a situation where we think we can take advantage of customers.”

At the time, the only local price-gouging complaint concerned Quarters — a nonexistent grocery store in Alpine that was allegedly charging too much for meat. The Texas attorney general office has so far been unable to provide more information on the complaint, which the agency received by phone.

This latest batch of records, which *The Big Bend Sentinel* received last week, provide a more complete picture of complaints in the area. Still, an AG spokesperson stressed the records are simply “complaints received and processed by our office” and do not reflect “legal determinations of a scam [or] price-gouging.”

The local records come as complaints of price-

gouging balloon in Texas and across the country. At press time, there were more than 8,600 price-gouging complaints in Texas, up from around 3,000 in late March.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has accused major egg producers of possible price-gouging, and Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller (along with several state AGs) has accused four cattle packing houses of possible price-fixing. The USDA is also investigating the price-fixing allegations.

Meanwhile, price-gouging lawsuits in both Texas and California are targeting grocery stores and/or egg producers. The group suing, which also includes Texas AG Paxton, argues there was an illegal scheme to jack up egg prices.

Texas law says businesses can’t raise prices to “exorbitant or excessive” levels during a pandemic. But unlike other states, including California, Texas has no specific price limits.

That lack of clarity has been criticized by some legal analysts. In a blogpost from last year,

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What coronavirus means for graduation and beyond: This week at Marfa school board

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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MARFA — After weeks of virtual meetings as a precaution against the coronavirus crisis, the Marfa ISD school board has started meeting in-person again. But at a meeting on Monday night in the Shorthorn Gym, things hadn’t exactly returned to normal.

“We were spaced out about six feet in a giant U,” Superintendent Oscar Aguero said of the school board. “The few people in the audience were in the stands.”

Coronavirus loomed large over the meeting as the board grappled with what the pandemic would mean for graduation, the next school year and more. But the agenda was packed, and it wasn’t all coronavirus-related.

In his superintendent report, Aguero started off with good news. “In every area, we’ve actually brought in more income than we thought we would,” he said. The school district is below their budgeted expenditures on everything from school supplies to salaries — though Aguero predicted that salary expenditures will continue to rise, since the school still has three months of salaries to pay in this school-budget year.

During last year’s state legislative session, Texas lawmakers passed House Bill 3, a complex law that upended everything from property-tax collection and teacher pay to “recapture,” the process by which richer school districts help finance poorer ones.

With some of the policy details of HB3 still being worked out, school districts have been left uncertain about how to gauge future revenues. That’s been especially true at Marfa ISD, a historically “property-poor” district that now qualifies as a “property-wealthy” one as average home prices have risen over the years.

“We were trying to predict what we thought [our revenues] would be,” Aguero said — and since they were guestimating, they settled on a “very conservative” budget.

“We put our revenues lower than we hoped,” he added. But school revenue turned out to be higher than administrators worried it might be, and the school ended up with reserves.

Since the coronavirus crisis began, Aguero said, “the only thing our graduates ever asked of me is they wanted to have an in-person graduation.” He and other school officials were determined to make that happen.

They set up multiple alternate days stretching all the way into August — but as Texas reopens and Presidio County still has no confirmed cases, they decided a May graduation is feasible after all. After getting approval from the Texas Education Agency, the plan is official: graduation will happen at 7 p.m. at Martin Field next Friday, May 29.

There will be some big changes, though. For one, each graduate is only allowed 10 guests. Everyone will get assigned seating, have a temperature screening and be asked a questionnaire about symptoms.

Some traditions — like the one of seniors handing out flowers to people who had a positive impact on them — are unfortunately off the table, Aguero said. But other traditions will be continuing, albeit with big changes.

One tradition that will survive is the senior circle. The school is buying a giant rope and will mark spots six feet apart where seniors can hold on. It might not be as

(Continued on page 3)

Federal funds flow to PCHS to expand coronavirus testing and care

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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FAR WEST TEXAS — The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act is the gift that keeps on giving for Presidio and Brewster counties. The Preventative Care Health Services clinics are the recipients of another round of funding, this time adding \$192,409 to their budget.

PCHS, sometimes known as Presidio County Health Services, was awarded \$666,155 in early April to fight the novel coronavirus, and the new funds have been granted to expand coronavirus testing.

According to PCHS CEO Linda Molinar, the clinic’s testing is through the private lab Quest Diagnostics, “and they’re very limited. Presidio has the vial, not even the test,” Molinar said. Vials are used to transport patients’ samples to labs. “Alpine has a few, where Presidio has very little. It’s less than five in Presidio.”

While the state’s pop-up drive-through testing sites allow anyone to get tested, PCHS still says they have to screen patients for symptoms before determining if someone needs to be tested.

“We kind of go case by case,” Molinar said. If a patient is showing symptoms and needs to be tested, they will administer a test using one of the few vials they have. “It just takes a long time for the results to come in, about seven days, and at times ten days,” she added.

By the time a case is confirmed, the patient could be well on their way to recovery. “I think a lot of people have been quarantining in Presidio,” Molinar said. It’s a method doctors use to keep people who have symptoms separated from the community until they might recover.

“We don’t have that many tubes. Alpine had the most and they didn’t even have that many. If somebody needs it, we go ahead and do the test and hopefully Quest will replace it,” Molinar said.

These federal funds have been a huge help, according to the CEO, as coronavirus has slowed the number of patients at the clinics and pushed the company to use telemedicine.

While the clinic normally has patients visit in person, “We’re doing medicare on the phone,” Molinar said, often meaning the clinic collects only \$12 from medicare reimbursement. “The government is helping with the losses of the organization.”

Telemedicine helps prevent disease spread by keeping ill patients from using the same facilities. But it’s a big challenge for a small, rural clinic which needed help boosting its technology to meet these new needs.

Even with the mandate to expand testing, Molinar said the latest funds can be used to expand coronavirus care more generally. “A lot of it will be spent on technology, on telemedicine over phones and cameras.”

“It will help us buy PPE, but that’s hard to find,” Molinar said, even when the clinic has the money to spend on it. PPE is personal protective equipment like gloves, masks, gowns and face shields that protect healthcare workers from contracting COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus. “It’s hard to find any kind of mask or gloves, much less proper masks or shields,” Molinar said.

In Presidio, PCHS has added a shipping container clinic that keeps those with coronavirus symptoms entirely separate from the usual patients the clinic sees. They’ve already used funds to add a second nurse practitioner to the Presidio clinic. Molinar said, “Right now the biggest need has been mostly in Presidio because they’re so remote.”

“In order to most effectively combat the spread of this dangerous virus in Texas, our health centers must be equipped to test for COVID-19 efficiently,” said Senator John Cornyn in a statement announcing the newly available funds. “I’m thankful to the Trump Administration for further expanding access to testing in Marfa.”

The Texas Expanding Capacity for Coronavirus Testing Awards distributed \$31,137,693 to support 72 health centers in Texas, with \$192,409 of that making its way to the Big Bend.

Presidio Police Department receives Homeland Security grant

By **BECK ANDREW SALGADO**

PRESIDIO — The Presidio Police Department received good news last Tuesday when Presidio City Administrator Jose Portillo announced via The Presidio County Facebook page that they have been chosen to receive a homeland security grant worth \$156,000.

The grant, which is competitive, was applied for last year by a team led by Portillo and was given to Presidio by the Rio Grande Council of Government. Portillo said the money was used to buy three fully-equipped police vehicles that are much needed by the Presidio Police Department.

Portillo worked with Marisa Quintanilla, regional services director for the Rio Grande Council of Governments, to get the information needed to acknowledge and evaluate the needs present at the Presidio Police Department. That information was then placed before a committee to decide whether or not they would receive the grant.

“We facilitate the process and put the group together to disseminate the applications for [the committee] to review, and then passed on the merit; that is how they prioritize those applications,” said Quintanilla.

Annette Gutierrez, executive director of the Rio Grande Council of Governments, also played a role in facilitating and recommending the Presidio Police department’s application for the grant. Gutierrez said that she was made aware through Quintanilla that new squad vehicles were needed for the Presidio Police Department.

“They presented the application to the committee that there was a need for new vehicles because of the limitations on what was available on hand and because of the age of the vehicles that they were currently operating,” said Gutierrez.

The funding for a grant such as this is given out on a year-by-year basis and Gutierrez said that they try to get money to as many communities as possible in any year.

“This funding source is made available to all of our communities in the six counties that we cover in Far West Texas as Brewster



Photo by Brad Newton

Presidio police department purchased three new trucks with the help of a recently awarded grant from the Rio Grande Council of Governments.

County, Marfa and Alpine have all been recipients of this grant,” said Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said that she feels the grant was a successful collaboration between the Rio Grande Council of Governments staff — especially Quintanilla — and Presidio, in terms of acknowledging the needs and determining how the funding could best be used there.

Brad Newton, Presidio Municipal Development District executive director, said that receiving the grant was helpful in the sense that Presidio could now focus on funding other areas of the city in a time when that is much needed, and cash flow is limited.

The money for the grant is only given to the recipient after an invoice is shown to the Rio Grande Council of Governments. That being said, Newton and PMDD made the decision to put down the money for the trucks in order to get the invoice and subsequently the grant. Newton and PMDD are doing this to help the city or Presidio keep that \$156,000 in the current cash flow as money is understandably tight, given the COVID-19 pandemic.

“By putting up the money that allows the city to stay in the positive,” Newton said, “it frees up the \$156,000 that they would have to lay down otherwise.”

Newton touched on the importance

Reopen

(Continued from page 1)

in the state.” Realistically, the state would need a workforce of 4,000, he said. “We have a web based application that will cover the entire state and enable case tracing across the state, but it’s still being developed.”

Across the state, restaurants, barbershops, hair salons and gyms are all deciding whether to open, how to open and how much to open. With the new directives, their options are expanding.

Notably, the governor has restricted some counties from entering phase two. El Paso, Randall, Potter, Moore and Deaf Smith counties are delayed by one week, with further delays possible. These counties have either experienced outsized coronavirus outbreaks (especially in meat packing plants and nursing homes) or are struggling to meet demand for hospital beds.

Abbott specifically called the hospital capacity in El Paso “too close for comfort,” which raises concerns for the tri-county area. Big Bend Regional Medical Center, the local hospital that services Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties, has previously mentioned plans to send critical patients to El Paso for care if their small capacity is exceeded. Thus far the area has been fortunate, with only one case confirmed and no hospitalizations yet.

Meanwhile, El Paso has recorded 1,852 cases as of press time, with the virus claiming the lives of 52 El Pasoans.

“The governor said we’re going to have to learn to coexist with this pandemic,” Judge Guevara said about the continued reopening of the county and state. “I feel reopening is necessary if businesses are going to survive and people are going to get back to work. It’s going to be up to every individual to be very responsible and very careful.”

“Hopefully they will see using masks and being extra careful as a form of charity towards their neighbor,” Guevara said. “Even if you’re not fearful of getting it, if you exercise all of the cautions, it’s a consideration for other people.”



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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.

Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

COVID-19 Paid Leave

As Texas reopens, most workers who cannot work remotely are understandably worried about their health and safety. Some do not know whether it's better to stay home for the health of their families, or go back to work to keep their job and pay for necessities.

While hardly perfect, new COVID-19 leave laws give workers the right to paid COVID-19 time off if they're told to quarantine, if they're taking care of a sick family member or child whose school is closed or if a child-care provider is unavailable because of COVID-19.

Even though most employers are required to share information about employees' leave rights, many workers don't know about the new law.

Most workers are now eligible for two weeks of leave at full pay if they are under a stay-at-home order, told to quarantine by a healthcare provider or have COVID-19 symptoms and are seeking a diagnosis. Most workers are also eligible for two weeks of reduced-pay leave to take care of a family member with COVID-19, and up to 12 weeks of reduced-pay leave to take care of a child whose school or child-care provider is closed.

The Department of Labor's charts, posters and guidance explaining the law are available online at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>. For more information about rules and eligibility, visit the TRLA website or talk to a lawyer.

If you think you need time off because of COVID-19, follow the policy that your employer has hopefully updated, or, if there is no updated policy, request COVID-19 leave the same way you request any time off. Make sure to say that you need COVID-19 leave and explain why you cannot work. Tell your supervisor the names of everyone involved — the health care provider who advised you to quarantine, the child or family member you are caring for, or the school or daycare that's shut down. A doctor's note isn't necessary.

However, not all companies have to provide COVID-19 time off. Companies with more than 500 workers are not covered. Employers of healthcare providers and emergency responders can choose whether to offer this leave. Small companies with less than 50 workers can also decide to not provide the 12 weeks of family leave for workers whose children are stuck at home if granting the leave might force the business to shut its doors. Regardless, those small companies must still provide sick leave to workers advised to quarantine or for those who are sick. All businesses should talk to a lawyer to clarify how the rules apply to them.

Even if a company isn't covered by the new laws, having a COVID-19 leave policy makes sense. The CDC explained that flexible and supportive leave policies are critical to maintaining healthy business operations. Employees who aren't given leave may come to work sick out of fear of losing their jobs, only to spread COVID-19 throughout their workplaces.

If a company is covered, tax credits may be available to recover the cost of providing COVID-19 leave. Check with your tax advisor. And having a COVID-19 leave policy in place (and posting the mandatory notice from the DOL's website) should reduce the risk of a lawsuit down the line. The COVID-19 leave laws allow workers to recover damages if they're wrongfully denied leave or retaliated against for asking for COVID-19 leave.

When employers follow these laws, and workers know their rights, Texas will be safer for everyone.

Texas RioGrande Legal Aid provides free legal services to people who cannot afford an attorney in 68 southwestern counties, including the entire Texas-Mexico border. TRLA attorneys specialize in more than 45 areas of the law, including employment, disaster assistance, family, foreclosure, bankruptcy, landlord-tenant, housing, education, immigration, farmworker, and civil rights. To apply for legal services, call our hotline at (888) 988-9996 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (CDT) Monday – Friday, or visit our website at www.trla.org.

Amanda Chisholm
Texas RioGrande Legal Aid Staff Attorney

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Dear Editor,

Dear Mack Fowler & Jenny Moore,

I'm writing you today as a concerned art neighbor and citizen of Marfa. I've heard that Chinati is planning some form of limited opening to the public with the assurance that you will be taking adequate safety measures on the Chinati campus in order to protect people from the coronavirus.

I think this is a bad idea any way you slice it. The town is already pretty open, the phones at the Hotel St. George are hopping off the receiver with requests for reservations and Airbnbs are being swamped with hopeful bookings.

Some restaurants in town with very close seating are also opening to the public. This is a real shit show and altogether will bring only the worst upon the town.

When we look at a map of the United States and then Texas and then we move it over to Marfa there is a profound absence of red dots. We've all seen it. I got tested last week. I don't know how many will test positive from the last round of testing here but it's probably still pretty low.

What that clear undotted map of America suggests is that this is a beach clear of COVID, and if you want a real vacation come here. Put your umbrella down. The state opening, the hotels opening in Marfa are abundantly sending that message and you, Chinati, will be the icing on the cake.

The Chinati Foundation is the gem of the town and the ultimate lure that will effectively draw people to this "safe space." Safe for who. Me? You and your husband and kids, Jenny, and all our friends. As you both know there is no safe space from COVID. If you were to open up in some limited way you might keep it "safe" on the Chinati campus but you have no control over the general effect, the consequences, the real and virtual viral load of saying to people outside of our town, "Come and get it. Get your safe vacation here."

One of the things that strikes me about the messaging coming out of the White House and probably from Greg Abbott's house is that they are all operating like a gated community. Everybody gets tested frequently in there, lots of sanitizer and masks and all of them have the option of keeping lots of private space around themselves. They don't need to shop in public, they don't need to pump gas, they don't need to go to bars. That does not strike me as the profile that you want associated with your institution. And life doesn't work like that here. Your visitors will walk around. They will spread.

Chinati is so prominent and as an art museum you are a vital messaging center.

I really beg of you to send a safe, human-conserving, progressive message, not a hamstrung locally-driven one. Art institutions around the country are staying shuttered and I guess I'm asking if you are part of that community or the one obeying the governor who is obeying the president and putting all of us at risk for the sake of capital and future elections.

What does Chinati put first, human values or political ones? I just don't get the politics of such an influential vanguard institution as yours opening to the public right now.

It messes with the message of your history and I think people will look back on this moment with shame if you forge ahead without a serious acknowledgment of consequences.

I hope by now you've put the issue to rest. It's a mistake to open, plain and simple and I hope to hear that that path already for the present time is firmly shut.

Thanks for your attention,
Eileen Myles
Marfa



Dear Editor,

"Aromagate"

Trump launched a predictable pre-election strike diverting attention from his unconscionable COVID-19 leadership failures. "Obamagate" has less authenticity than his birtherism and Hillary's emails. The fact is Trump lied; thousands died!

He also wants Obama's and Biden's testimony for additional obfuscation. It's the Senate's Benghazi, chasing a preordained rabbit down a nonexistent hole while a pandemic runs rampant! Priorities?

Instead, reply to Trump; copied to GOP Senators, "Après Vous!" with an attachment. The left column contains Trump-related scandals, associates and appointees' felony convictions, Emoluments Clause violations, charging the government for using his business facilities, family making millions in influence-peddled foreign business, Articles of Impeachment and 20,000+ lies keeping a long list short.

Obama's side is blank. Baseless accusations don't count. If his expecting cooperation from the GOP was problematic, okay, list it.

Remember, his appointees weren't convicted of crimes. We still have our 2nd Amendment guns. Obamacare "death panels" didn't kill grandmas. Death of vulnerable seniors is on Trump's shoulders for gross incompetence and criminal recklessness: gutting the CDC, inhibiting our ability to respond to a pandemic, all while ignoring Obama's detailed plans and stonewalling information.

His May 14th utterance added insulting ignorance to injury: "When you test you have a case, when you test you find something is wrong with people. If we didn't do any testing we would have very few cases."

Trump's "Aromagate" fails the smell test. Is his faithful base getting the whiff yet? Our COVID-19 face mask has an additional protective benefit.

Rev. Barry Abraham Zavah
Alpine

...

Dear Editor,

Every Thursday I look forward to the new issue of The Sentinel; during this pandemic, now more than ever. We are so lucky to have the talent and dedication of reporters like Stephen Paulsen and Abbie Perrault who are finding ways to cover both the geographic breadth and diversity of the social, political and cultural issues here in Far West Texas. Last week's profile of Mimi Webb Miller, updates on the city's coronavirus actions and the pending rabbit disease outbreak were all well written and are only a few examples of the topics covered every week. The Sentinel and Marfa Public Radio (award winning!) are the information lifeblood of this community. Thank you all for your ongoing contributions.

Laura Doll
Marfa

...

Dear Editor,

Last week I started hearing the phrase, "there are no active cases" (of COVID-19 in the tri-county).

My research of that term shows that "active cases" is defined as "people who have recently been tested positive and have not yet recovered."

Since the CDC informs us that a significant number of people can carry COVID-19 and be contagious without exhibiting symptoms, and since testing in the tri-county has not been widespread, having "no active cases" does not mean that there is no risk of catching and spreading the disease here.

I say this because this week the use of masks and social distancing by customers appears to have decreased in stores in Alpine, and I think it is still wise for us to be careful.

Pam Gaddis
Alpine

...

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Dear Editor,

An article in the Monday, May 18, 2020 Wall Street Journal in part stated, "the requirements requiring customers to cover up in stores, face coverings have become a flash point." The media has fostered cases of violence, and are often confrontational along our usual cultural divide. Among the objections voiced, it's a form of social control, a sign of fear or weakness or it doesn't actually work. No one wants to inconvenience ourselves for no reason, so whether wearing masks really works is a worthwhile question.

So the answer while not globally unanimous, is a clear yes. It does work if you are where you are going to be in a situation, especially indoors, if you cannot keep the minimum socially acceptable distance of six feet.

So what does this mean to us here in Alpine? We have had only one case in Brewster County – way out here in the last frontier – as has been the case in many rural areas within the U.S. But as the country begins to open up, and people travel, mix and no longer isolate, we find that we are surrounded by Texas counties and states that have much higher rates of infections than us, and their population is now beginning to migrate through our city from all directions.

To help keep it in context, if the kitchen and bathroom standards that McDonald's are expected (at no small cost) to bring their dining areas up to before they open to the public, then the city of Alpine is already behind the power curve. While subjective, I dare say that we do not have a restaurant in town that can meet those standards without a large financial burden. Yet "we" are open for business and who knows what is coming down the road.

So last Friday when the town started opening up along with the rest of Texas, I went by Stage's first open day. Only one clerk had on a mask, no customers had masks on (I did) and socially acceptable distance was a joke, like six inches. Then I went to the local grocery store. To get in the front door I was blocked by three folks, no masks, hugging and all that stuff, plus two kids on the floor playing with the gum machine — socially acceptable distance, forget it. Two people cannot pass through the same door and maintain socially acceptable distance. I went to True Value and every store employee was wearing a mask. Kudos!

I like Governor Cuomo of New York and his approach. He knows his stuff, just look what he did for New York and by default the rest of the country. Truthful, factual, and if he has an opinion you know what it is. If I wear a mask, I protect you and if you wear a mask, you protect me. I've got your back; do you have my back?

We have folks here in town that say the Constitution is being ripped out of our hands, our rights are being violated, "Give me liberty or give me death."

Those words were spoken by Patrick Henry several hundred years ago, but people that don't study history tend to make the same mistakes all over again. In this case, the background and circumstances of the time then do not apply to now.

So, I will give you my version, so you can have your cake and eat it too. Just remember what John F. Kennedy in part said, "Ask what you can do for your country." I was in the military for 30 years, went to war and was separated from my family. I gave up some freedoms temporarily; not for the long haul, but for a just cause. But I still have my life, family, etc.

So to you I offer a slight change to Patrick Henry's words to meet the times for your desired freedoms:

Give me liberty AND give me death...leave your mask off, don't practice socially acceptable distancing, get all the freedom and rights you demand and maybe the coronavirus will be your cake.

...

Godspeed and RIP,
Glenn Ramsdale
Alpine

NOW MORE THAN EVER IT IS IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO THE 2020 CENSUS.

COUNTY RESPONSE RATES AS OF 5/16/20:	
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HUDSPETH: 10.1%	PRESIDIO: 6.6%
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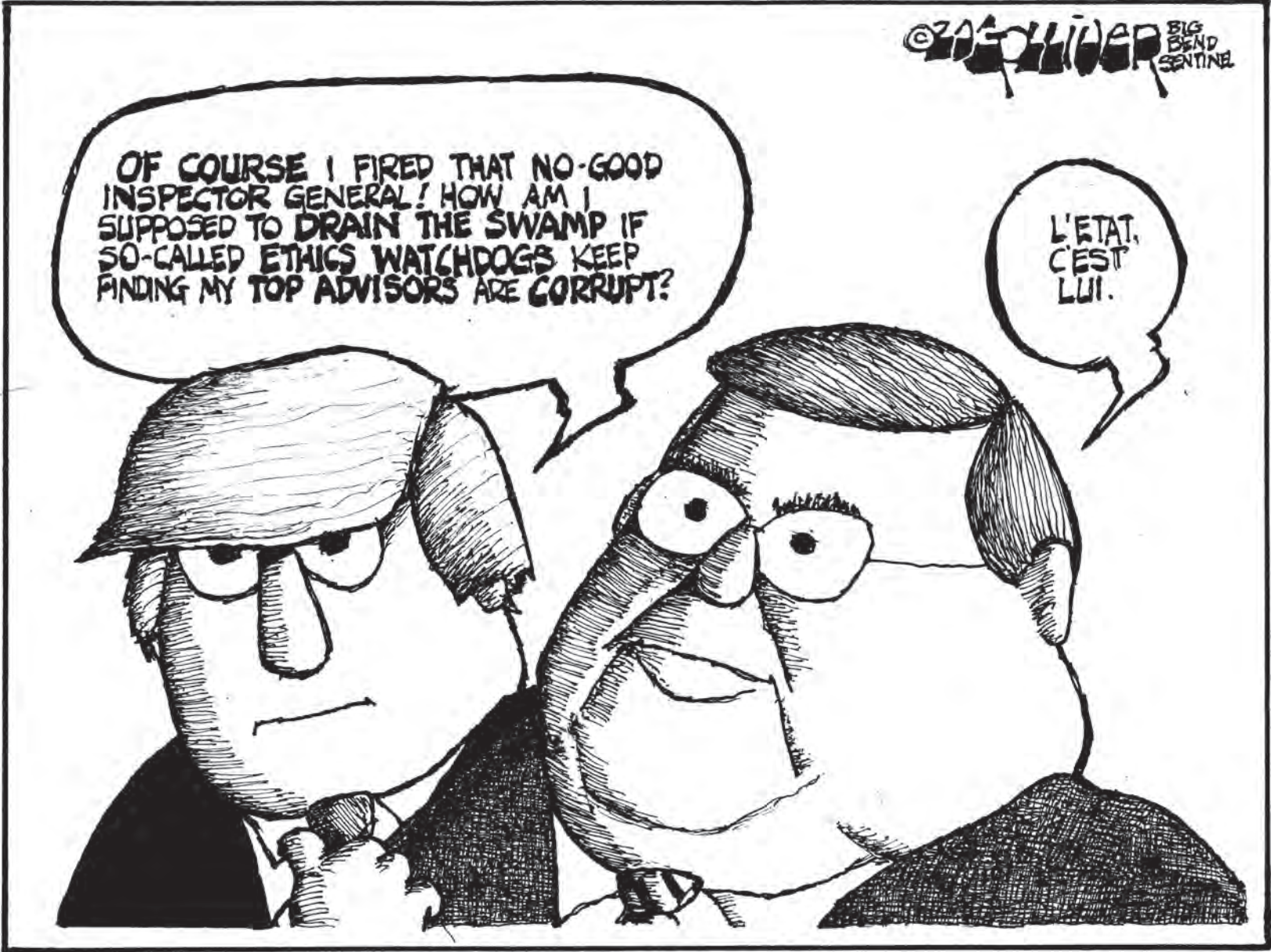


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HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

The landscape of COVID-19 dreams

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting people’s dreams around the world. The United States, Great Britain, France and China are among the nations that have recorded an increase in dreams from their populations. We all dream, and there is a certain commonality between the effects caused by the new pandemic.

I graduated from law school almost half a century ago, and I still occasionally dream of missing a law school final. In those days gone by, if you missed a law school final you were expelled. For the first decade, even though I had graduated and had passed the Texas State Bar, I would have almost weekly nightmares about missing a final. After another decade I would dream about missing the final several times a month. In the 22 years I’ve been in the Big Bend, I’ve had only two or three of those frightening dreams – it must be the altitude. I still wonder why I never once dreamed about passing the State Bar of Texas.

As more of us face more months in the “stay-at-home” policy of the state and federal government, scientists around the world have discovered that more people than ever are reporting dreams that reflect both their anxieties and the stress of our radical social changes. We are herd animals, and when we can’t get together we go a little crazy, and it is going to show in our dreams.



Common dream scenarios collected by a group of psychoanalysis students in London called Lockdown Dreams include the dreamer running away from something or discovering that they’ve done something wrong. “These are typical anxiety dreams. It’s very pedestrian stuff in that sense, but it’s acted out with such vivid imagination, it becomes very strange,” said a spokesperson for Lockdown Dreams. “Everyone’s quite shocked by the fact that they’re having incredibly vivid dreams. That’s so interesting because our material waking lives have become, in a way, more dull,” he added.

The British are not the only one doing this dream research. In France, a group at the Lyon Neuroscience Research Center began a study on dreams and dream recall in March. The French folks study has found a 35 percent increase in dream recall and a 15 percent increase in negative dreams. For people not on the front lines of healthcare and emergency response, fears of the novel coronavirus are projected onto threats like zombies, bugs, and shadowy figures, which represent the pandemic metaphorically.

Not only have the number of dreams increased during the COVID-19 troubles, but the types of dreams have interested scientists, particularly ones experienced during REM sleep. Dreams tend to occur during the rapid eye movement, or REM, phase of sleep. Anxiety and low activity during the day can make it harder to get a good night’s sleep, and frequently waking up during the night can increase the likelihood that dreams are remembered the next day. Researchers tell us we normally use REM sleep and dreams to handle intense emotions, particularly negative emotions. Some researchers have noticed that frontline healthcare providers are having the most horrific dreams, mostly very realistic about trying to save a patient’s life and failing; some about getting infected by patients and realizing they themselves are dying. Mental health practitioners are reporting an alarming increase in the number of post-traumatic stress disorder cases by frontline healthcare providers.

No matter the content of the dreams, it is universally accepted that stress and anxiety are the cause of most distressing dreams. And as in all great disasters, this country needs a father figure to provide guidance and solace in our time of need. Unfortunately, all we have is a ranting Tweet Master who governs by personal vendetta and dispenses more bad information than the snake oil salesman of days gone by.

With all the stress and anxiety bouncing around the digital world, we need a nice Fireside Chat like those in the days of Franklin Delano Roosevelt from 1938-1944. Today, what we would get from President Tweet would go something like this: First, Tweet would find a burning house. Then, despite the cries of help, he would deny that it was burning. If a bystander called the fire department, Tweet would scream that he was a Trump-hating alarmist Democrat. When the firemen arrived, he would blame them for the nonexistent fire. When the fire was out, he would claim that if it ever existed, it was a conspiracy by Joe Biden and the Ukrainians to wreck his presidency.

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

We want to hear from YOU!

Write a letter to the Editor at
editor@bigbendsentinel.com



HURD ON THE HILL

A message to the Class of 2020

By U.S. REPRESENTATIVE WILL HURD – TX23

This time of year is always filled with excitement and celebration because we take the time to reflect on graduates from high school, technical school, trade schools, community colleges, universities and other types of educational institutions. While our celebrating will feel different than usual, that cannot and will not put a damper on the incredible achievements of each of you — each of our incredible graduates.

Normally I would be with some of you at your commencement ceremony talking with your families, hearing about your accomplishments, shaking hands and hearing about your future plans. But, because I can’t physically be there, I wanted to let you all know that I am incredibly proud of the achievements of this class.

The achievements of the Class of 2020 are different than my own class and that of all those before us because you succeeded in a completely unexpected way. You have rolled with the punches. You have overcome the difficulties of a pandemic and achieved your academic goals. Knowing this class is joining our workforce or our higher education institutions helps ease a lot of worries I have about the future.

I know many of you feel robbed because of how this year is ending, but I want you to know that even though you didn’t get to walk across that stage, we are all still here celebrating your accomplishments. We are clapping for you and eagerly waiting to see what you will achieve next.

And, for those of you who are worried about what the future brings, don’t fret. We’ve all had that moment of worry, and it is a moment you will encounter more than once in your life. That moment wondering what to do next. When I lost my first election for Congress, I had no plan B. The loss was tough and figuring out what to do next was trying. I literally talked to 75 people to get advice, and that 75th person was one of my best friend’s father. He told me he did not know what I should do, just that the next thing needed to be something “meaningful and hard” and it would all work out in the end. At first, I thought it was bad advice, but I realized all I had done in life up to that point had revolved around doing something meaningful and hard. It ended up being what encouraged me to run for Congress again.

So, that’s what I want those of you who feel uncertain to do. Go after something that is meaningful, and something that is hard because when you do you better yourself. You will often suffer defeat through this, and, even better, you will eventually taste victory. Let me tell you, the sweet taste of victory makes up for every defeat and every bitter moment of disappointment.

As our nation begins to come out of the dark tunnel we have been in for the last few months, there is still some uncertainty about what is next. When will life return to normal? Will life look different once we return to some type of normalcy? Will we have to reinstate stay-at-home procedures in the future?

When you reach the end of a significant journey in your life, many will ask your thoughts on the future, and what concerns you might have. It’s happened to me as I decide to leave Congress and pursue other avenues to serve our great nation. When asked this, it is important to contemplate from the journey you have just been on and do not be afraid to seek advice.

One thing I can tell you for sure though, if you were to ask me to make a list on what my concerns are for the future, the Class of 2020 would not be on it. Over the past weeks and months, these individuals have faced uncertainty and adversity, but they have confronted it head-on. They rose to the challenge this unusual time faced them with, and it shows the character and abilities they have acquired over their years in school.

I hope the Class of 2020 will take the same character and abilities into whatever is next for them in life. Because if they do, there is no doubt our country will be better off for it.

God bless all of this year’s graduates, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

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Marfa High School Class of 2020



Avery Beltran

Avery Grace Beltran is the daughter of James and Yvonne Beltran and has participated in volleyball, cross country, cheer, golf, softball, dance, track, qualified for the state summer

track meet in 2019 and was a regional qualifier for three years. Avery received runner-up honors for the Lions Club Essay Writing Contest her junior year along with honorable mention in her artwork, Honorable mention in Marfa Live Arts Playwriting contest, and also worked at Porter’s, Salsa Puedes, was also a babysitter. Avery’s most inspiring person is Coach Kelly because he taught her what it’s like to be strong and smart not only in school or tough situations, but in sports as well and demonstrated to her what it’s like to be brave and see the brighter side of things. Her advice for the underclassmen is, “what you see on the outside doesn’t matter, it’s what’s on the inside that counts... don’t judge a book by its cover life is too short”. After graduation Avery will attend Sul Ross State University to major in criminal justice and participate in cheer and after college she plans on attending the police academy to work in the K9 handling unit.



Miguel Borunda

Miguel Borunda is the son of Irma and Miguel Borunda and participated in football, basketball, golf, and welding during his high school career and received a Welding certification in 2F position D.11 7018 and lettered in basketball. Miguel also worked at Hotel Paisano for three years, and his most inspiring person is his sister Mirna Borunda because she inspired him through her hard work and her dedication to be the first college graduate in her family. Miguel’s advice to the underclassmen is to work hard and turn your work in on time. After graduation he plans to either enroll at the Tulsa Welding School in Houston to later work as a welder in the pipeline or enter the workforce after graduation.



Tais Chanez

Tais Mizaraith Chanez is the daughter of Elizabeth Gutierrez and proud mother to Emmanuel Elias. As a three year graduate, she has participated in FIRST Robotics,

folklorico, cheer, volleyball, basketball, cross country, track, softball, yearbook, and NHS. As a National Honor Society member she served as secretary her senior year and also volunteered for blood drives, trash pick-ups, campus recycling campaigns, and ice cream social, and was Co-Defensive Player of the Year in basketball and was selected as a playwright for the 21 Plays Book. Tais’s most inspiring person is her mom because she has taught her to never give up, especially when things get tough and her favorite person is her son because he is her greatest motivation in reaching her goals. The advice that Tais leaves to the underclassmen is, “Do not let your challenges stop you from reaching your goals”. After graduation, she will attend Sul Ross State University and aspires to become a labor and delivery nurse or neonatal nurse.



Jarad Forristal
Valedictorian

Jarad Forristal is the son of Pamela Franzheim; he participated in FRC/FIRST Robotics all 4 years, NHS, many machine-learning projects, Marfa Volunteer Fire Department., Jr Firefighter, 120+ hours of service, NHS recycling program, 12+ hours. Jarad was employed at Portersand also participated in band. He plans to attend UT Austin after graduation to earn a BS in Mathematics, MS in Applied statistical modeling, and a PhD in a subfield of optimization or machine-learning. His advice to the underclassmen is: “Take college classes in high school”.



Jared Fuentez

Jared Fuentez is the son of Michael Fuentez and Keli Morales and has participated in football, basketball, golf, and the National Honors Society for Marfa High School. After Graduation, Jared will attend college, and major in accounting and after college he plans to go to the police academy to pursue a career as a police officer.



Keanna Gates-Harkrider

Keanna Marie Gates-Harkrider is the Daughter of James Harkrider and Alexandra Gates. She participated in Basketball, Track, and Band all throughout her highschool years. After graduation, Keanna will be attending Texas Tech University in the fall, where she will pursue her dream of becoming a Pediatric Doctor.



Alyanna Hernandez

Alyanna Hernandez is the daughter of Raul and Connie Hernandez and participated in volleyball, basketball, softball, golf, cheer, and she lettered in basketball and worked at Buns and Roses in 2016. Alyanna states that the most inspiring people in her life are her loving parents because they have always been there for her to motivate her and push her to do the best. The advice Alyanna would like to leave for the underclassmen is “ In the blink of an eye you’ll be here (in our place) before you know it, so enjoy every bit of it’. After graduation Alyanna plans on attending Sul Ross State University or another university where she will pursue her career in the medical field as an RN, physical therapist, pharmacist, pediatrician.



Damian Hernandez

Damian Rene Hernandez is the son of Rosa Ramos and during his high school career he was a member of the school’s robotics program and was also employed at Mando’s Restaurant for three years. Damian was accepted to Odessa College and hopes to either enter the workforce after graduation or attend university or a trade school.



Elena Hernandez

Elena Hernandez is the daughter of Amber Serrano and Jimmy Hernandez. Throughout her time in high school she has participated

in volleyball, cross country, basketball, cheer, softball, track, Ballet Folklorico, student council, and National Honor Society. Some awards Elena has received are volleyball honorable mention, basketball 1st and 2nd team all-district, softball 2nd team all-district, All American cheer, cross country and track regional qualifier, freshman duchess, volleyball and basketball Academic All-District Honors. She lettered in softball her freshman year and was also the vice president of the senior class, student council, and NHS. Elena also participated in a playwright contest for the Marfa Live Arts where her play was one of the chosen works to be published in a book (21 Short Plays for the 21st Century). After high school Elena plans to attend Texas A&M San Antonio where she will study education and kinesiology in order to pursue her dream of teaching and coaching.



Jonathan Hernandez

Jon Andrew Hernandez Jr. is the son of Jon Hernanez and Christina Lujan, before going to Marfa High School he participated in football and in CTEC for a diesel program. After graduation he plans on attending Western Technical College where he will pursue his career in diesel mechanics.



Samantha Jimenez

Samantha Jimenez is the daughter of Rosemary and Sammy Jimenez and throughout her high school career, she participated in volleyball, softball, basketball, golf, band and was a two year Regional Qualifier in golf her sophomore and junior year. After graduation Samantha plans to attend Sul Ross State University and major in education to pursue a career in early childhood teaching.



Alexis Maldonado

Alexis Maldonado is the daughter of Francisco Maldonado and Shelia Maldonado, she participated in dance, worked at Lost Horse, Planet Marfa, Buns and Roses, El Camino cafe, and was a regional qualifier in track. Most inspiring person is: Her father, because he has always motivated her and believed in her. What advice would you leave to the underclassmen? Have faith in who you are, make every little moment worth everything, The problems you face aren’t anything compared to the memories worth remembering. After Graduation Alexis plans to attend Sul Ross State University or El Paso Community College where she will start with her basics and later pursue her dream of studying early childhood development.

Congratulations
class of 2020!



FROM THE
CITY OF MARFA

BEST WISHES
TO THE CLASS
OF 2020!

FROM THE STAFF AT



To:
Ruben David Watts-Ortiz

Congratulations on your graduation, may God bless you now and on all your future endeavors.

We love you and are very proud of the young man you have become!

*Love your Mom & Dad,
William, Max, Tiffany,
Ashley, Jennifer and families*





Juan Martinez

Juan Antonio Martinez Jr. is the son of Mariela and Juan Martinez and throughout his high school career participated in football, basketball, track, and was a member of the MHS welding program. The most inspiring person in his life is his father because he showed him what hard work really is and the advice he leaves to the underclassmen is “You miss 100% of the shots you don’t take” - Wayne Gretzky Juan was employed at Jett’s Grill and Hotel Saint George and plans to attend Western Technical College to study diesel mechanics and business after graduation.



Adonaka Marquez

Adonaka Marquez is the daughter of Denise Valerio and Jesus Licon, she participated in basketball and cheered her Junior year. After high school she plans to go to Midland college for cosmetology school.



Aron Morales

Aron Morales is the son of Maria Morales and participated in football, track, and was a member of the welding program for four years. Aron was employed at Mando’s and El Cosmico and plans on joining the workforce in pipelining after he graduates.



Isabella Morales
Salutatorian

Isabella Jade Morales is the daughter of Yolanda Morales. Throughout Isabella’s high school career she excelled in all Marfa Lady Shorthorn Athletics and participated in cross country, volleyball, basketball, softball, golf, and cheer and lettered in volleyball her Freshman year. She was chosen as the 2019-20 Homecoming Queen and was a member of the Shorthorn band program through her junior year and received several All District athletic honors and was recently selected by the Texas High School Coach Association to the Softball Academic All-State Team. Isabella also excelled academically as a four year member and current president of the Marfa High Student Council, was inducted into the National Honor Society her sophomore year, and participated in many volunteer efforts that included the blood

drive and the recycling project. In July of 2019, Isabella was inducted into the National Society of High School Scholars and she will proudly display her gold cords. Throughout her high school years, she participated in the Aslan Ballet Folklorico group and is Marfa Class of 2020’s Salutatorian. Isabella has been employed throughout her high school years by Pizza Foundation, Dairy Queen, and is currently employed by the Hotel Saint George. She is a member of the Faith Alive Cowboy Church and the Marfa Young Life Club. Isabella’s most inspiring person would be her grandfather whom she called “Papa”. He inspired her in many ways like teaching her that happiness can be found in any situation. He also taught her that perseverance pays off—one can never give up in spite of any situation. He worked his hardest during his worst moments. Isabella’s advice to the underclassmen would be: “Here today, gone tomorrow. School is like that and so is life. Enjoy the time you have in any situation because it can be gone in the blink of an eye. Be kind, have fun and love one another!” After high school, Isabella plans to attend Sul Ross State University to complete her general requirements. She plans to pursue the Sul Ross State University BSN track in the summer of 2021 to pursue a career in nursing, following in her mother’s footsteps. Isabella plans to work as a RN in the pediatric oncology field. Even though she acknowledges that this will be an emotionally challenging career, she believes that she can bring light and happiness to the children and their families during their darkest times.



Angelica Quinonez

Angelica Quinonez Castaneda is the proud daughter of Julia Castaneda and throughout high school she participated in robotics, computer science, art, yearbook, basketball, volleyball, and golf. Angelica was inducted into NHS and as a member she has volunteered to help with the blood drive multiple times and has donated

as well and also participated in the NHS recycling project alongside the other members. Her biggest inspiration has and always will be her brother, Martin Quinonez. “Watching my brother, Martin, put so much effort and sacrifice to become a part of the Air Force made me want to work as hard to make all my dreams come true of becoming someone successful in the future.” Angelica would like to leave these words of advice and encouragement to the underclassmen : “Don’t be afraid to get out of your comfort zone and do things that you haven’t done, otherwise you will never know if you were missing out on something you liked and didn’t even know. You never know until you try. You might be surprised at how much you enjoy something new.” Angelica was employed at Hotel Paisano and Dairy Queen is undecided on where she will be attending college next year as well as for the career she would like to pursue but plans to attend college and figure it out while completing her basics. She plans to travel and see as many places around the world as possible.



Kimberly Soto

Kimberly Soto is the daughter of Juan Soto and Mayra Torres and participated in FIRST Robotics, Ballet Folklorico cheer and was a member of 4H, Yearbook, Art, UIL, and the National Honor Society. Kimberly lettered in Robotics and also she was an NHS Blood Drive Volunteer and helped with Blue Santa her Junior Year. Her advice to the underclassmen is to remember their priorities. She would like to thank her family for supporting and believing in her throughout her high school career. After graduation, Kimberly plans to attend Sul Ross State University where she will pursue her career in Neonatal Nursing.



Ruben Watts-Ortiz

Ruben David Watts-Ortiz is the son of Corina and Charles Ortiz. Throughout Ruben’s High School Career he participated in golf his

sophomore year and won the Marfa Live Arts Playwright competition his junior year, and worked at Dairy Queen and Hotel Saint George. Ruben’s most inspiring people in his life are his sisters because they taught him to always try hard and to be respectful. They set a great example for him in life because they are hardworking even if the odds aren’t in their favor. His advice to the underclassmen is “enjoy the moments you have with your classmates, really get to know them, because high school goes by fast and you will regret not getting to know them“. After high school he plans on attending college at Angelo State University to complete his basics and later transfer to the University of Texas at El Paso to earn his degree in business management and hopes to open his own successful business and in the future help provide for the less fortunate.



Bryan Torres

Bryan Torres is the son of Julio and Elida Torres and throughout high school he participated in football, basketball, track, cross

country, ballet folklorico, robotics and welding . Bryan has received several awards throughout his high school career including football honors, basketball second team all district, track and cross country regional qualifier. He is a 3 year member of the National Honor Society, Robotics, Welding, Student Council president, and also was employed at Hotel Saint George. Bryans most inspiring persons are his parents because with them he has realized that nothing in life is given, it’s earned through hard work. The only advice Bryan wants to leave for the underclassmen is to make the most out of their high school years and take smart decisions that will help them later in life. After graduation he plans to attend Sul Ross State University or The University of Texas at El Paso where he plans to graduate with a Civil Engineering degree.



Gerardo Ureste

Gerardo Ureste Sanchez Jr. is the son of Maria and Gerardo Ureste Sr. and has been employed at Porter’s Grocery Store for over a year and a half and he was a member of the school’s welding program. After graduation he plans on enrolling in college and hopes to become an architect in the future.



Congrats Jon Andrew!
We are proud of you!
Good luck at
Western Tech!
Keep rocking on!
We love you Bubba!
Mama, Frank,
& the Lulus



Kimberly Zapata

Kimberly Zapata is the daughter of Ellie Tejada and participated in several school clubs and organizations throughout her time at Marfa High School. Kimberly has been accepted to Sul Ross State University and she looks forward to completing her degree at the Alpine SRSU campus.

To the Marfa High School Class of 2020

CONGRATULATIONS



From the officers, directors & staff at the Marfa National Bank

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Photo by Maisie Crow

Family and friends of Marfa graduates, along with other community members, came out to celebrate along the parade path.



Photo by Maisie Crow

Tais Chanez gets ready to ride in the graduation parade while her son, Emmanuel, waves from her lap.

Graduates

(Continued from page 1)

Radio to hear senior spotlights and the traditional Pomp and Circumstance graduation song. Community members filled in the rest of the route along Lincoln and Highland Avenue.

From the hood of a white truck, senior Tais Chanez and her seventeen-month-old son Emmanuel waved to family and friends. Roxanne Lujan, Chanez' family friend, drove, and Chanez' mom ran along the route, finding her daughter three separate times to wave and cheer her on.

"The best part of it was when I was passing my family, because I saw

them, and they were just so proud because I've made it this far," Chanez said. "Having a son and becoming a single teen mom, then caring for him – I breastfed him for 15 months, still playing sports – it made them proud, and seeing how proud they were made me proud of myself."

For Chanez, it only felt fitting to include her son in the graduation celebration. "I've been trying to make him a part of everything I'm going through. Since the day he was born, everybody's been so supportive and loving of him." She fondly recalls friends touching her belly at school during her pregnancy and her babyshower, which friends came to after their basketball game. "For senior homecoming he was in the senior skit. I just needed him there, you know? He's been a huge part of everything. I wouldn't be a three-year graduate without him."

"For me personally, I worked my butt off since I got pregnant going into my sophomore year. I was looking forward to senior year," Chanez lamented.

She talked about the tough year Marfa High School seniors have faced

together. After a last minute cancellation from the opposing team, Marfa lost its homecoming game this school year. "Then we left for spring break, and we took for granted sitting together at lunch and things like that," Chanez said. "It's hard to not be able to go back, and knowing we will never be going back, in a classroom together, at lunch together, or just being there as students."

But the senior also feels like they are making a little Marfa history, "and I'm trying to look at it like that. The parade was something new and something we all enjoyed," she said. "Even though our prom and senior trip got canceled, we're trying to make the best of it at this point."

"I just felt happiness," she said after the parade. "It was amazing seeing how close our community is."

CONGRATULATIONS Marfa Seniors!

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Manuel Baeza

Licon, Haile highlight Honors Convocation Awards as SRSU Man and Woman of the Year

By TRAVIS HENDRYX
Sul Ross State University

ALPINE — Two recent Sul Ross State University graduates have been named SRSU Man and Woman of the Year in an announcement Tuesday, May 12. Tristen Licon of El Paso and Katherine Haile of Sisterdale were tapped as the top male and female students for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Each spring the president announces the outstanding man and outstanding woman among the senior class at the Honors Convocation, but due to the pandemic, the ceremony did not take place this year. To be eligible for this honor, students must be nominated by the faculty and staff.

Candidates for the honor must also have applied and cleared to graduate in May (or graduated in the fall or summer of previous year), have an overall grade-point-average of 3.00, display qualities of good citizenship and leadership, be active in student and/or community activities and not be a previous recipient of the award.

Tristen Licon, who graduated this month with a degree in strength and conditioning, and history, is a three-year letterman for the Lobo Men's Basketball Team. On the court, Licon was named a 2020 National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) All-Region West Second Team and a D3 Hoops.com All-South Region Second Team selection.

Earlier accomplishments from the 2019-2020 season include ASC West Division Player of the Year, All-Conference Team and All-West Division First Team. The El Paso native led the Lobos to their third West Division title, averaging 19.3 points per game, ranking fifth in the ASC, along with 53 steals. He also recorded 5.5 rebounds per game with 80 assists and shot 40.9 percent from three-point range.

Licon broke his career-best for points in a game three times during the 2019-2020 season.

His earlier best of 25 in 2018-2019 was broken after a 32-point performance against Colorado College on November 29, 2019. He then broke it again with 33 against Mary Hardin-Baylor on February 6 before making history again two days later with 34 against Concordia.

He joined the 1,000-point club in his Sul Ross career with a 21-point performance on January 25 against University of the Ozarks.

For his career, he was a six-time ASC West Division Player of the Week recipient. He is the fourth all-time leading scorer in SRSU history since Sul Ross joined the NCAA in 1996. Off the court, Licon was a Lobo Ambassador and was president of the Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) and an active member of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

He served as counsellor at numerous basketball camps including Texas Tech (Lubbock), Beyond the Goal (Meadow), Tanalian Bible and Basketball Camp (Alaska) and the Matt Mahoney Basketball Camp (Lubbock).

Academically, Licon was an American Southwest Conference (ASC) Springs Sports Distinguished Scholar Athlete and an ASC Academic All-Conference honoree.

"Tristen has brought pride and distinction not only to our men's basketball program but also to our university," President Bill Kibler said. "He has represented Sul Ross with tremendous honor and has been such a positive influence and mentor to his teammates and younger people."

Katherine Haile is a May 2020 graduate with a degree in natural resource management.

She has garnered several academic accolades while also serving as president of several student organizations.

Haile was the 2019 recipient of the Outstanding Range Student in Texas and the Outstanding Wildlife Student through the Texas Chapter of Wildlife Society. She was also named the Sul Ross Outstanding Upperclassman in Natural Resource Management in 2018.

Haile was recognized with individual and team placements at the Plant Identification Contest in 2017, 2018 and 2019. She also placed first in Membership Plant ID at the Texas Society for Range Management in 2018.

On campus, Haile was a three-year member (VP and President) of the Range and Wildlife Club. She was also a three-year member of the Student Government Association (SGA) and served one year as SGA Treasurer. Haile also served three years as a member and officer in the Cattleman's Club and the Sul Ross Honors Club and Program.

Earlier this year, Haile participated in pronghorn translocation from Pampa to Barnhart, Texas. She has assisted with eight Borderlands Research Institute research projects and has helped organize campus organization fundraising activities, including a turkey shoot. Haile also assisted in organizing two Mule Deer Foundation district banquets. She was also a 2018 Wildlife Conservation Camp College Mentor.

In 2018 and 2017, Haile helped capture and collect data for the East Foundation and Wagner Deer Captures. Presentations include: National Society for Range Management (2020 Speech Contest and Poster Session); Texas Chapter of Wildlife Society (2020 Presentation/2019 Poster Session); Annual Sul Ross Undergraduate and Graduate Symposium (2020 Presentation/2019 Poster Session); Texas Section of the Society for Range Management (2019 Poster Session/2018 Poster Session); Borderlands Undergraduate Research Symposium (2019 Presentation/2018 Presentation).

"Katherine is such an example of successful student involvement," Kibler said. "Her participation and commitment as an active member and officer in our campus organizations and her stellar performance in the classroom has prepared her for lifelong success in society and the workforce."

Pete P. Gallego named sole finalist for SRSU presidency

AUSTIN — Chancellor Brian McCall has selected Pete P. Gallego as sole finalist in the search for Sul Ross State University's next president. Gallego, an Alpine attorney who served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives and Texas House of Representatives, was selected from a field of nearly 40 candidates following a national search.

"The presidential search committee and I were fortunate to have a large field of well-qualified candidates to consider. Pete Gallego emerged as the frontrunner by articulating an exciting vision for Sul Ross and demonstrating his intimate knowledge of the university and the communities it serves," said Chancellor McCall. "I want to thank Chairman Don Flores and the entire search committee for their time, energy, and dedication to this process."

Gallego earned a bachelor's degree from Sul Ross State University and a juris doctorate from The University of Texas at Austin. He received Sul Ross' Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1997.

"Sul Ross opened the doors of opportunity for me and many from across Texas. I'm excited to work with the communities of Alpine, Del Rio, Eagle Pass and Uvalde to make sure our university continues to open doors and provide a top quality education for future generations of our sons and daughters," Gallego said.

Gallego is a member of the board of directors of Texas Access to



Pete P. Gallego

Justice Foundation and the Western Hemisphere Drug Policy Commission, and has served as president and chairman of the Texas Lyceum Association, founding chair of the Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs, and as a part-time faculty member at Sul Ross.

Texas law requires a 21-day waiting period before the Texas State University System's governing board can consider Gallego's nomination. If confirmed, Gallego will become Sul Ross' 13th president – and the only president who is a graduate of the university. Current president Bill Kibler is retiring this summer after six years of service to Sul Ross.

Wheless Search and Consulting, an executive search firm, assisted TSUS in the Sul Ross presidential search process. Sul Ross State University is a member of the TSUS, which consists of seven institutions serving more than 86,000 students from the Big Bend Region of West Texas to the Louisiana border.



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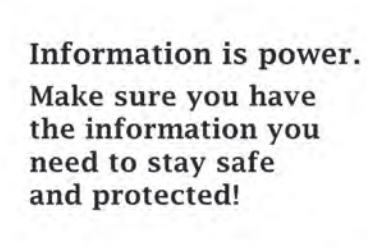


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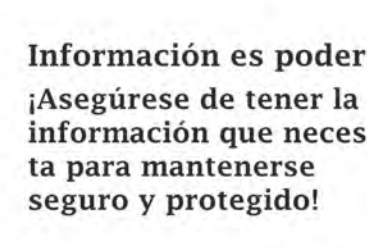


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Mensaje de texto Voz

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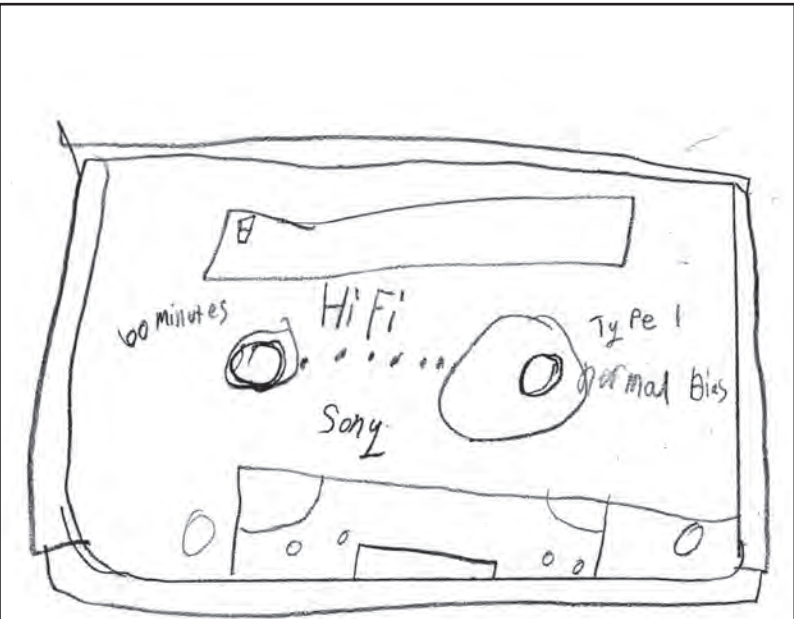
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Community

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



“Casette Tape”
Aaliyah Ramirez
5rd Grade
Marfa Elementary School

Marfa Public Library receives grant from the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to support summer literacy

MARFA — The Dollar General Literacy Foundation recently awarded Marfa Public Library a \$2,000 grant to support summer literacy. This local grant is part of more than \$8.6 million in grants awarded to more than 950 schools, nonprofits and organizations in communities where Dollar General operates.

“We’re thrilled to have the support of the Dollar General Literacy foundation for our Summer Reading Program,” said Community Services Director Mandy Roane. “Our events will be online and pick-up programs, and these funds will help us do as much as possible for all of our patrons.”

Marfa Public Library will use the Literacy Foundation funds to help support Summer Reading with an updated and engaging online tracking program, gift certificates for participants who reach their reading goals, exciting new books and materials and supplies for at-home programming.

“During these extraordinary times, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to support communities’ literacy and educational advancements through funds that will impact thousands of students across the country,” said Todd Vasos, Dollar General’s CEO and Dollar General Literacy Foundation board member. “We are proud to support the meaningful and impactful work that each of today’s recipients conduct and support their ongoing efforts to help individuals improve their lives through literacy and education.”

The Dollar General Literacy Foundation is proud to support initiatives that help others improve their lives through literacy and education. Since its inception in 1993, the Dollar General Literacy Foundation has awarded more than \$182 million in grants to nonprofit organizations, helping more than 11 million individuals take their first steps toward literacy, continued education or English proficiency. To learn more about the Dollar General Literacy Foundation, visit www.dgliteracy.org.

Memorial Day ceremony adjusted amid pandemic

PRESIDIO COUNTY — Memorial Day is less than a week away and this year’s services will look a little different. A Memorial Day ceremony will be held outdoors on the courthouse lawn on Monday, May 25 at 10 a.m. Normally, the ceremony is held at the visitor’s center, with close seating available for everyone. “We are committed to observing Memorial Day 2020 in a manner that honors those who sacrificed for our nation while protecting the health and safety of our visitors,” said County Judge Cinderela Guevara.

As an alternative to the traditional ceremony, veterans and family members are asked to gather on the courthouse lawn while implementing social distancing and wearing masks, if possible though not required. The ceremony will be expected to last a little less than an hour. The normal preamble can be expected during the ceremony with a warm welcome, an opening prayer, the pledge of allegiance, a few words from fellow veterans, the reading of the names of our fallen heroes and the playing of taps.

Veterans will then be asked to go into the courtroom, where social distancing can continue, to watch a short video in their honor. This is hosted by Gary Mitchke, the Presidio County Emergency Coordinator.

And lastly, because 2020 is an important anniversary in the life of the United States as it is the 75th Anniversary of the end of World War II, and we continue to lose the last of our WWII veterans, as another alternative to honoring veterans, the county judge said she hopes people will consider a vehicle parade to honor local veterans. The public is asked to gather at the elementary school at 10:45 a.m. and from there proceed to a route circling the courthouse where veterans will be awaiting the honorary drive by. The drive by is hosted by the Marfa Volunteer Fire Department and various law enforcement agencies. Everyone is encouraged to display patriotic colors and posters in honor of your loved ones by writing their names and branches of service.

Afterwards these posters can be dropped off at the courthouse, where they will be on display until July 4. “It is important that Memorial Day does not just become a holiday as the day that swimming pools and amusement parks officially open. It is a time of remembrance and we must not forget the men who sacrificed, the ones who died to give us the freedom to be proud to be an American and live in this great land,” Judge Guevara said.

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging
♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Comes together
5 Sail support
9 Drenched
12 Met melody
13 From the beginning
14 Wall crawler
15 Voles
17 Back talk
18 Man's hat style
19 Confound
21 First word of "America"
22 Gotham City super-villain
24 Renown
27 Standard
28 Linger
31 Chicken-king link
32 Recede
33 Mongrel
34 Two-wheeler
36 Ph. bk. listings
37 Relinquish
38 Occurrence
40 Letter after lambda
41 Discussion group
43 Insect with pincers
47 Hawaiian neckpiece
48 Crockett and Tubbs' show
51 Tolkien ogre

DOWN

1 Handled hook
2 Great Lake
3 Told a whopper
4 Biblical dancer
5 One of the Three Bears
6 Blackbird
7 Moment
8 Make slight

alterations
9 Grain also called water oats
10 Satan's forte
11 Work at the keyboard
16 Parched
20 Society newbie
22 Frilly blouse accessory
23 Spheres
24 "Great!"
25 Clay, today
26 "Stop fighting"
27 Teller's partner
29 Flop
30 Before
35 Leading lady?
37 Not straight
39 "Wabbit" hunter
40 — tai
41 Walk wearily
42 Prefix re planes
43 Flightless flock
44 — E. Coyote
45 Warhead weapon, briefly
46 The Bee —
49 Unfriendly
50 Exist

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Puzzle solutions for last week's issue

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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Isaiah 41:10

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“Every dog has its day”: Bad Hombres says goodbye

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — David Beebe arrived in Marfa in 2007. It would be years before he started Bad Hombres, but he had experience running music clubs in his hometown of Houston and wanted to try his luck on this side of the Pecos River.

At the time, Beebe was a 35-year-old musician who’d recently injured his vocal chords. He figured it to be “maybe the last time I’ll be able to jump off a cliff and see if I land.” And when he got an opportunity in Marfa, he thought, “Man, it sure would be cool to move out here for a couple years of my life.”

Beebe had come through Marfa a few times in the late ‘90s and early ‘00s and was “shocked” to find a small West Texas town with free shows on weeknights. He had been to the Big Bend as a kid and loved it. He always hoped he’d be back.

Under the circumstances, moving to Marfa felt like a relatively low-stakes adventure. “What do you have to lose?” he asked himself. “If it doesn’t work, you can just move back.”

But Beebe didn’t move back. Fast-forward 13 years and he has become equal parts town character and civic leader in Marfa, an affable man in pink-tinted glasses (“like old men wear”) and a red 1971 Oldsmobile Cutlass sports car. He served first as a city council member (three terms from 2008 to 2014) and then as a justice of the peace (2015 to present).

The whole time, Beebe kept a toe — or perhaps a whole foot — in the bar, restaurant and nightlife scene. He ran Padre’s, a dive bar in the building of what is now The Sentinel. He started Boyz 2 Men, a raucous food truck that later morphed into Bad Hombres, a brick-and-mortar on U.S. Highway 90.

Hombres soon became a mainstay for locals and tourists alike. It has been a place to socialize, watch Astros games, eat cheap-and-tasty cheeseburgers and maybe even drink some pickle beers.

Now, those days are ending. In a social media post, Beebe said the restaurant is closing permanently at the end of May.

“We’ve had the best run any Boyz 2 Hombres could have had,” he wrote. Business during coronavirus has been “stable,” he explained, but there is a “long-standing problem with our lease.”

The news was met with sadness. “So sad,” The Lost Horse wrote, while The Marfa Line proclaimed it “such a loss” for the town. Another commenter just replied with seven crying-face emojis.

“Beebe had a way of sharing not only the food, but the meeting ground that made everybody feel at home.”

In an interview last week, Beebe said it’s bittersweet closing Bad Hombres but that it’s time for him to move on to other projects.

“Every dog has its day,” he said. “I’ve got plenty of other things to do.”

Beebe’s seen many changes since arriving as a musician 13 years ago. In the time since, he’s become a Marfa businessman and public official. Last year he married Hilary Scruggs, an architectural designer whom he’d met 10 years earlier. Beebe said the marriage also influenced his decision to close; he wants to focus on being a husband — not a line cook.

“When you get married,” he joked, “you need to see your spouse sometime.”

Beebe brushed aside the notion that he might reopen someday in a different place. Still, he stressed that running Boyz 2 Men and Hombres has been an “incredible reward.”

“It’s not the career I ever thought I would have,” he added, “but it turned into a part of my identity.”

He also dismissed another worry Marfans may be having — that the closure is linked in any way to the coronavirus pandemic. Instead, he said he’d wanted to buy the lot and his landlord didn’t want to sell.

Beebe understood his decision, but he couldn’t justify paying rent while also paying for “major repairs.”

Hombres’ closure will leave Marfa with vanishingly few affordable restaurants. Excluding chains like Dairy Queen and Subway, there are now just a handful restaurants that offer meals for \$10 or less.

Last year, *The Big Bend Sentinel* reported on the closure of Mando’s, a longtime Marfa establishment. And like Mando’s, Bad Hombres isn’t just a restaurant — it has been a place for locals to congregate, socialize and catch up.

“Hombres was a place you could go by yourself and know that any number of locals might already be there having a bite or watching a good



Photo courtesy of David Beebe

Marfans relax at Boyz 2 Men’s first crawfish boil in 2014. After almost a decade of running a food truck (Boyz 2 Men) that later morphed into a brick-and-mortar (Bad Hombres), restaurateur and public official David Beebe announced earlier this month that he was closing shop.

game,” said Cody Barber, a Marfa resident and Hombres regular. “Beebe had a way of sharing not only the food, but the meeting ground that made everybody feel at home.”

Barber stressed that Beebe would still be around in Marfa and that “it’ll be exciting to see his future involvement in the community.” But he sees the closure as part of a larger trend in Marfa, compounded by the coronavirus crisis, that’s making the town a pricier and more difficult place for small businesses to operate.

Beebe arrived in Marfa almost by chance — and it was arguably chance that kept him here. Padre’s, which he opened in 2009, turned out to be a “boondoggle” and a “total disaster,” he said. “The roof started falling in on us,” he said. “The power used to go out two or three times a week. The internet barely worked. Deliveries were hard to get.”

Collapsing roofs and a shoddy power connections were hardly his only worries, though. “I got picked on by the city when I first got here,” he said. “They didn’t like that I was renovating a funeral home into a bar.”

Partly in an effort to stand up for himself, Beebe ran for city council, taking office in 2008. He won, he says, by just two votes.

While the situation at Padre’s might have pushed him to leave Marfa, his new job in public service kept him around.

“I would never be that disrespectful,” he said of the prospect of leaving mid-term. He knew that “whether I stay or leave, I’m not going to leave until I’m done with what I promised the people.” That put him in Marfa for at least “the next nine or 10 months.”

Searching for another opportunity to keep him afloat, he gathered his savings and borrowed some money to buy an Airstream in Lubbock — a trailer that later became Boyz 2 Men. It turned out to be a defining moment for Beebe, and he soon abandoned Padre’s.

After leaving Padre’s in 2012, “everything was so much better for me,” he said. Boyz 2 Men opened the same year as a taco truck.

And while Beebe sold food out of his truck, he often cooked at the current Hombres building. He shared it with Adam Bork — a college friend who ran the Museum of Electronic Wonders & Late Night Grilled Cheese Parlour out of the building. (Bork also runs Food Shark.)

David Garcia, a local who used to work for Beebe, remembered the time as a “great era.”

“Anything involving Beebe from that era is pretty f---ing notable and funny,” he said. “I just had a great time working for the guy.”

Beebe first hired Garcia as a doorman at Padre’s “based on my attitude or whatever,” Garcia recalled, laughing. Later, Beebe “forced me to do sound.” And when Garcia told him he didn’t know how to work sound, Beebe “just threw me into the deep end.”

At Boyz 2 Men, Garcia recalled, “we’d often drink one too many Lone Stars” and would regularly perform a dance to “Cupid Shuffle.”

“It’s this R&B/rap song,” Garcia explained. “Every time the song would randomly come up — it didn’t matter how many people were there — we’d run outside, we’d suspend everything we were doing, and we would perform a line dance.”

To capture the halcyon days of Boyz 2 Men, Garcia pointed to early Yelp reviews — where tourists apparently reacted with a mix of fury and delight at the off-beat food truck.

A visitor from Minneapolis opined that while “they aren’t the nicest guys,” the tacos were

“damned good.” Another visitor from Houston said she “did not appreciate” the food truck’s “sass.” She added, “When asked for my name on the order, the server kept repeating it wrong on purpose.”

“Service is definitely full of sass,” a visitor from Dallas concurred. She called the brisket tacos “a must” and gave it five stars.

Barber, who ate at Boyz 2 Men before becoming a regular at Hombres, remembered those days similarly. “There was this kind of weird Jamaican thing going on,” he said.

“All the different ways that Beebe would present his menus were often confusing to anybody but a local,” he added. “That was kind of a way to have fun with tourism, I think.”

Beebe agreed the original Boyz 2 Men was at times polarizing. “There were people who really didn’t like it, but whatever,” he added. “I mean, come on: it’s a white Airstream that’s called ‘Boyz 2 Men.’ I don’t know what you expect.”

Reflecting back on the Boyz 2 Men ethos, Beebe riffed off a familiar saying in the restaurant industry: that the customer’s always right. On the contrary, “the customer’s almost always wrong,” he said. “And maybe someone needs to go ahead and tell them that.”

In 2016, Bork, the cook/artist behind the Grilled Cheese Parlour and Food Shark, told Beebe he was moving out of the Hombres building. Beebe didn’t want to pay rent on both, so he decided to move in full time.

Over the years, Beebe said, the atmosphere at the restaurant mellowed out. He attributed that to a couple factors, including getting older (he’s 48 now) and to losing the stress of working in a food truck that was scorching in the summers and freezing in the winters.

“By the time the day was over,” he recalled of the food truck era, “it was like you’d gotten in a fist fight.”

But Hombres stayed a popular hangout, a place where locals could see each other and visitors could get a taste of Marfa life. Beebe eventually got a Direct TV subscription, so he could play Astros games. He later even set up an online presence — www.hombresmarfa.com — where people could place food orders and pick up swag.

Now, those days are ending. By losing Hombres, Marfa is losing “an experience,” said Garcia, the former employee.

“David Beebe’s such a character,” he said. He thinks Hombres is a “really fun environment” and a “nice respite from the more austere environments created by more serious restaurants.”

Hilary Scruggs Beebe recently started doing a pop-up dinner, Jackie Pepper’s Thai Night, out of Hombres. In an interview this week, she was getting ready for the last one before the closure.

She was excited for the menu, which she said included some final specials. She’d have two curries instead of one, and she’d even talked Beebe into sharing some of his signature brisket, which she was planning to put on pad thai.

Hilary was open to the idea of someday opening another restaurant. “I’m a little bit more of a novice,” she said. “I’m more enthused and amused by the novelty of it.” She thinks that “once we can kind of settle down and settle in, it might be something we could bring back.”

For now, though, she said the closure is about “making the transitions we need to make to move forward with our lives.”

“It’s been a really fun thing,” she said. “I think we’re going out on a high note. We’re feeling really good.”

OBITUARIES



Pirtle

Mrs. Vernelle Stiles Pirtle, aged 98, born in Post, Texas, June 14, 1921, passed away peacefully, surrounded by daughters and family. She talked and smiled almost until her final breath. Vernelle was the matriarch of five generations, and on her final morning she “Facetimed” with Klay West, her year-and-a-half old great-great grandson. She is preceded in death by her husband of 47 years Pete Pirtle, her 98-year-old mother, Clara Stiles, her sister Clara Cotton, her brother RL Stiles, her aunts, Lena Yockstick, 98 and Melva Mayes, 96. We loved all the names her grandchildren and great-grandchildren gave to her: Tootie’s Mama, Batchu, Grandmother, Pete Grandmother, Auntie Vernelle and most famous of all, Gigi.

Vernelle got no greater joy than the home “invasion” of visiting out-of-town family members. Home-cooked meals always finished with Vernelle’s homemade ice cream and sitting on the porch. She was the

oldest member of the First Baptist Church of Marfa and a member of the community for 88 years. Vernelle left behind over forty descendants.

Her children, Patrica Helm and late husband Don; Roy Lee Pirtle; Carleen Navarte and husband Raymond, her grandchildren, Martha Wood Finger husband Richard; Becky Wood Ehrlich and husband Bubba; Christopher Pirtle; Bryan Navarette and wife Alica; Leanne Rodriguez husband Gabe; Jason and wife Chelsea and Nathan Pirtle, her great grandchildren, Quentin Baxter; Kandace Ehrlich West and Husband JT; Kelsey Ehrlich Carthel and Husband Colton; Taylor Villarreal; Ashely Villarreal; Peter (Pete Pete) Navarette; Romey Navarette; Riley Navarette; Arianna Finger; Ava Finger and Anabelle Finger, her great great grandchild, Klay West, her niece /daughter; Vickie Blackwell and husband Robert and Susan Rogers, her great niece, Lisa Kay Swofford and husband Jason, her great great niece, Adalyn Rogers, her great nephew, Justin Rogers and wife Candice, and her great great nephews, Mason Swofford and Landon Swofford.

Services will take place at the Marfa Cemetery on Thursday, May 21 at 10 a.m., officiated by Joni Powers, daughter of Pat and Don Helm. Reception to follow at El Paisano Hotel.

Donations can be made to the First Baptist Church at 502 N. Austin, Marfa, Texas, 79843.



Skinner

Joe Irby Skinner, age 69 of Fort Davis, went home to be with the Lord May 2 after a long battle with cancer. He was born April 13, 1951 in Austin, Texas to Everett and Ethel Skinner. Joe graduated from Robinson High School and received a degree in religion from Texas

Wesleyan University. Joe served for many years with the National Park Service and Texas State Parks. He was an active member of First Baptist Church of Fort Davis. Joe is survived by his brother and sister-in-law, John and Viv Skinner of Alto, New Mexico, many friends and caregivers.

A memorial service is being planned for later this year at First Baptist Church of Fort Davis, Texas.

Memorials may be made to First Baptist Church Fort Davis, (P.O. Box 809, Fort Davis TX 79734) or Meals on Wheels (Attn: Elizabeth Gonzales, Rio Grande Area Agency on Aging, 8037 Lockheed, Ste. 100, El Paso TX 79925; make check payable to: Rio Grande Council of Government, note “Meals on Wheels”).



VanCamp

Jeffrey M. VanCamp left this world on May 12, 2020 at 12:12 p.m. He fought cancer with grace and dignity. His life was full of love, laughter and adventure. Jeff had many stories to tell. He loved his hotel career in Marfa, Texas. He felt those who resided in Marfa were his second family. He was truly blessed to have many true friends who loved him. Thanks for welcoming and loving my brother. He was a great brother, uncle and mentor. He is now in no pain. Heaven has gained a true remarkable man. In Jeff’s words, “Live the life you love.”



Raul Lara City Council Member

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Classifieds & public notices

Big Bend National Park could begin phased reopening in June

By CARLOS MORALES
Marfa Public Radio

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — Big Bend National Park will remain closed for at least the next month and could begin a “phased reopening” as early as June 1 if certain public health criteria are met.

Spurred by concerns over the coronavirus, the wide-open 800,000-acre park first closed over a month ago. The closure began in stages with park officials first limiting ranger services and reducing camping to day-use only. Since the park’s complete closure, officials have been drafting a preliminary document outlining when and how the public will be able to visit park facilities and trails. As it’s written, the plan calls for Big Bend National Park to open gradually and in varying stages.

Park Superintendent Bob Krumenaker says the region’s limited access to healthcare is a major factor when determining how to reopen. Krumenaker, who’s been with the park for nearly two years, says he’s in continual contact with public health officials whose input on the reopening “is critical.”

“This is one of the hardest decisions I’ve ever had to make,” Krumenaker told Marfa Public Radio. “There’s no right answer, but there’s a whole bunch of wrong answers.”

Big Bend National Park is roughly 100 miles from the nearest hospital, and Krumenaker says that’s one of the major considerations that went into drafting the park’s reopening plan. The park estimates it takes at least two park rangers to help transport an injured or sick visitor to Big Bend Regional Medical Center in Alpine. The one ambulance the park has would be out of service for almost half a day, according to Krumenaker.

“If we have to transport a single person who has COVID symptoms to Alpine, we lose our EMTs, we lose our ambulance basically for 14 hours. And then if we have a second case, then what do we do?”

Big Bend National Park has been more cautious than other national parks, some of which have limited their

services but never formally closed to the public. The federal government never issued a national shutdown of the country’s national parks, instead leaving the decision up to individual superintendents.

“The cautious approach is the most sensible one here,” said Krumenaker.

As the park eyes reopening in the next few weeks, the staff is keeping track of the number of coronavirus cases in the region and across Texas. According to Krumenaker, roughly 70 percent of the park’s visitors are from other corners of the state, so he wants to keep tabs on what’s happening in urban hubs like San Antonio, Houston and Dallas.

“As long as there’s no COVID here, we’re great,” said Krumenaker. “The problem is we’re so vulnerable if it does come here — we can’t lose sight of that while everyone else is in their zeal to open so fast.”

After the Memorial Day weekend, park officials will revisit the tiered reopening plan with the health authorities who have been advising them.

How the park could reopen

As it’s drafted, the tentative reopening plan — which could change depending on an increase in coronavirus cases — is made of five distinct stages. Officials would wait 14 days between each phase to determine whether to move forward with the next step in reopening or scale back, according to a document shared with Marfa Public Radio.

Each phase of opening requires there aren’t any upticks in coronavirus cases, that Big Bend National Park has sufficient staff on hand — including law enforcement officials, medical technicians, dispatch and maintenance — and that the park has appropriate personal protective equipment needed to maintain the park’s facilities.

Phase 1A/1B

The park would move forward with its preliminary stages to reopen if certain criteria are met, like a downward trajectory of coronavirus cases. At these stages, visitors would have access to limited paved roads for scenic driving and cycling. If there is enough

personal protective equipment, restrooms would be provided along various routes.

In these stages, park staff will practice social distancing and are encouraged to wear a cloth face covering as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Visitors must practice social distancing and “are strongly encouraged to wear a cloth face covering” as well.

The park’s visitor centers would stay closed during these phases, and no trail hiking will be allowed. The park would remain only open for day use.

Phase 2

Phase 2 is likely where Big Bend National Park will begin its plans for reopening. At this stage, which the park released details about earlier in a press release, the park will open front country areas. Trails accessible from paved roads would open for day-hiking, including Lost Mine, Window, Emory Peak and Santa Elena Canyon.

In this stage, park staff will continue to practice social distancing and are encouraged to wear a cloth face covering. Visitors must practice social distancing and are encouraged to wear a face covering as well.

The park’s visitor centers will stay closed during this phase, information booths will be set up in certain areas, and park rangers will be present throughout the park to answer questions.

There’s no camping at this level, and the park would remain open during daylight hours only. The river would open for public and commercial day use. The Boquillas Port of Entry would remain closed.

Phase 3

At this level, the park is accessible for day-use in frontcountry, backcountry and limited river use. Only the Marufo Vega, Hot Springs Canyon, and Mesa de Anguila trails will be closed.

The Chisos Basin Lodge will open for limited overnight lodging, but park visitor centers will remain closed. Cloth face coverings for employees and visitors are still encouraged and social distancing measures must be practiced.

There’s no camping at this level, and the park remains

open during daylight hours only. The river opens for public and commercial day use. The Boquillas Port of Entry would remain closed.

Phase 4

At this level, the park maintains previous stages of access and allows overnight backpacking and camping, but only for sites that can be reserved online.

Park visitor centers could open for the first time, and outdoor informational kiosks may be staffed during peak hours. The park may begin interpretive programs but only as social distancing and federal guidelines allow. Hotel guests and campers are able to stay up to five consecutive nights in the park.

While most roads accessible to the public will open at this level, Hot Springs Road will remain closed. Additionally, backcountry camping will be available by reservation, as will camping at the Chisos Basin campground (dependent upon volunteer camp host staffing availability).

All reservations will be made online and no in-person camping permits will be issued. The Boquillas port could open depending on approval from Customs and Border Protection.

Phase 5

At this level, federal, state, and local public health officials advise that most restrictions can be lifted on public activity.

All park facilities normally open for the season will be accessible, but some long-term operational changes may be in place for safety. All trails will open and overnight backpacking/ camping and backcountry or zoned camping is allowed with a permit.

Both the Chisos Basin and Panther Junction Visitor Centers will open. All campgrounds may be open at this stage, and interpretive programs may continue as long as they’re within federal guidelines. The Boquillas port could open depending on approval from Customs and Border Protection.

While the park moves to provide more services at this level, officials may make long-term operational changes out of concern for visitor and employee safety.

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2012 HYUNDAI	KMHHT6KD5CU067327	2009 PONTIAC G6	1G2ZH57N994139245	1989 CHEVY	1GNGG35K7K7124810
1998 HONDA	1HGCG2256WA005236	1999 SUBARO	4S3BG6850X7638208	1995 BUICK	1G4AG55MOS6480691
2001 CHEVY	2G1WW12E819130776	2001 FORD FOCUS	1FAFP33P61W151140	EZ TOWING	
2001 CHEVY TAHOE	1GNEC13T41R105427	1988 CHEVY PK	1GCFC24K4JZ250296	1999 TOYOTA	4T1BG22K6XU448367
2000 LINCOLN TOWN	1LNHM82W0XY808770	2001 MAZDA	JM1TA221111711813	2000	
2000 MERCURY	4M2ZU86P2YVJ01229	1996 SATURN 4D	1G8ZJ5271TZ318957	MITSUBISHI	4A3AA46G1YE117210
2002 CHEVY	1GNDDT13S82265761	1994 CHEVY SILVE	1GCDC14Z3RZ125669	ALBA	
2007 CHEVY COBALT	1G1AL55FO77214423	1994 FORD 4D- SUV	1FMDU32X8RUB27713	2004 DODGE	1D4HD48N84F128233
2005 INFINTY	JNKCVE35M405608	2001 CHEVY SUBU	1GNFK16T71J245439	1995 WINN	
1990 FORD MUSTANG	1FABP45E3KF235451	2000 JEEP	1J4G248S2YC25674	MOTOR HOME	1GBJP37W4F331032
1992 FORD RANGER	1FTCR10A7LUC14675	2004 LEXUS	JTJGA31U840027223	1993 FORD	
2004 FORD P/U	1FTRX12W54NB54108	2000 FORD F-150	2FTRX07L2YCA93997	MOTORHOME	3FCMF53G1NJA04392
2006 FORD MUSTANG	1ZVFT80N965186626	1998 CHEVY S-10	1GCCS19X5W8228731	2006 SUZI XL7	J53TY92V264102776
1998 HONDA CIVIC	2HGEJ6673WH576469	1997 NISSAN ALTIMA	1N4BU31D7VC249391	2006 HYUNDAI	KMHDN46DX6U375105
2002 HONDA 4D	1HGC655472A046697	2006 VOLKS PASSAT	WVWAK93C069082224	1997 FORD	1FMDU35P8VZC35581
2003 FORD F150	1FTRX17W73KA56688	2002 FORD EXPLORER	1FMZU63E52ZB26127	2003 VOLK	9BWGK61J834061182
2002 NISSAN	JN8DR09Y12W724185	1999 MITSUBISHI	JA4LS31H1XP030844	2004 TOYOTA	4T1BE32K74U265745
2007 GMC PK	1GTEC19Z07Z112081	2008 HYOS MOTORCY	KM4MP578581603177	2014 HYUNDAI	KMHCT5AE0EU172987
1999 HONDA CP	1HGEJ17128XLO68505	2018 MITSUBISHI	JA4AD2A30JZ067119	VIRDELL TIRE&TOW	
1997 TOYOTA LL	JT3GN87R4V00047904	2010 NISSAN	1N4AL2AP3AC142142	2003 NISSAN ALT	1N4AL11D25N496695
2005 PONTIAC SUNFIRE	3G2J812F255193066	2000 PONTIAC	1G2NF52E4YC505676	2000 CHEVY P/U	1GCEC14W342213629
2005 DODGE RAM	1D7HA18D3355267809	1990 WINNEBAGO	1GBKP37W7K3332085	2012 FORD FOCUS	1FAHP3F26CL391611
2006 FORD MUSTANG	1ZVFT80N665241517	1987 MBL HOME	2GBGG31M0G4168431	2010 MAZDA MZ3	JM1BL1SF9A1279709
2007 HYUNDAI AZERA	KMHFC46F67A170819	GMC VAN	1GBEG25K5RF161319	1998 FORD EXP	1FMRU18W2WLB78876
2002 HYUNDIA SANTA	KM8SC93D624304414	2000 FORD	1FAFP4044YF312921	2000 CHEVY S-10	1GCCS14W4Y8197571
2006 CHEVY PK	3GCEK14TX6G157212	2007 FORD FOCUS	1FAFP37N77W330935	2014 FORD MUST.	1ZVBP8EM5E5231322
2009 DODGE GR	2D8HN44E29R533263	1995 DODGE	1B7HF16Z4V5192306	2003 GMC	1GKDS13S932151267
2005 TOYOTA	2T1BR32E75C366365	1995 CHEVY S-10	1GCCS1949S8213536	1994 CHEVY	2GCEC19H1R1263398
2009 DODGE	2B3KA43D99H531977	1998 MERCURY	2MEFM75W8WX645783	2017 HYUNDAI	KMHD84LF2HU291683
2001 CHEVY	1GCHC23U41F102078	2007 CADILLAC	1G6DP577870100373	2015 FORD	1FADP3F21EL452624
2006 FORD EC3 VAN	1FBSS31L76HB41160	2005 TOYOTA	4T1BE32K75U056149	2006 HONDA	2HGFG12836H580347
2006 CHEVY	3GNDA23P665626955	2007 CHEVY	1G1AK15F077207144	2005 NISSAN	5M1AR18U45C775605
2003 MERCEDES	WDBUF70JX3A341954	2003 LINCOLN	5LMEU68HX3ZJ48737	2013 NISSAN	3N1AB7APXDL689401
2002 JEEP LIBERTY	1J4GL48K52W277188	2004 FORD	1FAFP38392W206719	2011 FORD	1FMHK7D89BGA64940
1990 MOTORHOME	17N640424LW025065	2003 DODGE	2BHD56M13H555457	1997 FORD	1FMFU18LXVLB48998
1996 FORD P/K	1FTHX26F8TEB19833	2004 OLDSMOBILE	1G3NLS2F74C150400	2000 TOYOTA	JT3GM84R7Y0062263
1990 TRAILER	1TKA0426LM125405	2009 GMC	1GKER23D79J188310	2006 HYUNDAI	5NPE446F36H073758
1980 MACK TRUCK	WS747LT51199	2002 ACURA	2HNYD18612H531495		
1989 TOYOTA	JT4VN93D0K5005277	2003 CHEVY	1GNEC13V93R308589		
1998 CHEVY	GNDT13W8WK133771				
1971 FORD	1K91T138091				
1980 FORD	0W81C182GCE				
1993 MCI BUS	1M8RCM7A3PP045540				
1986 FORD	1FDHF37L0GPA89214				
2000 FRHT	1FYUSZB9YLA88799				
2001 CHEVY	2GCEC19T311232873				

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