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by order of Presidio County

FACE COVERING ORDINANCE IN EFFECT
by order of the State of Texas

Marfa seeks public comment on short-term rental ordinance

MARFA — Today, Thursday, October 1, Marfa City Council will hold a special meeting and workshop to hear comments on its proposed short-term rental ordinance. The meeting starts at 6 p.m. and will happen virtually, over Zoom.

This short-term rental ordinance, which will likely impose new regulations or even fees on local short-term rental housing like Airbnbs, came up at a Marfa City Council meeting earlier this month. At the meeting, Teresa Todd, the city attorney for Marfa, estimated it would take her and other city officials around three months to finalize a version of the ordinance.

But discussions of short-term rentals — and in particular, their effects on local housing and rental prices — are nothing new. Last year, the company Host Compliance estimated there were around 150 short-term rentals in Marfa, a 40% increase from 2018. And in general, the company estimates, only about 10% of short-term rentals fully comply with regulations or pay all of their hotel occupancy taxes.

The issue of short-term rentals also came up in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, where city leaders issued temporary bans on those rentals, along with hotels. And while those orders had the effect of closing local hotels, residents complained that Airbnbs were still stealthily operating outside of the law.

In April, for example, *The Big Bend Sentinel* reported on one Airbnb owner who was continuing to rent to visitors despite the ban. And one guest, who was visiting from Austin, said neither Airbnb nor the host ever informed her of the rules.

“I had no idea the orders were still in place,” she said. “I wouldn’t have looked into booking anything otherwise.”

Marfa has more information on attending the meeting on its website, which can be found at www.cityofmarfa.com. The identification number for the Zoom meeting is 935 8827 3000, while the passcode is 076784. Residents can also call into the meeting by dialing 346-248-7799.

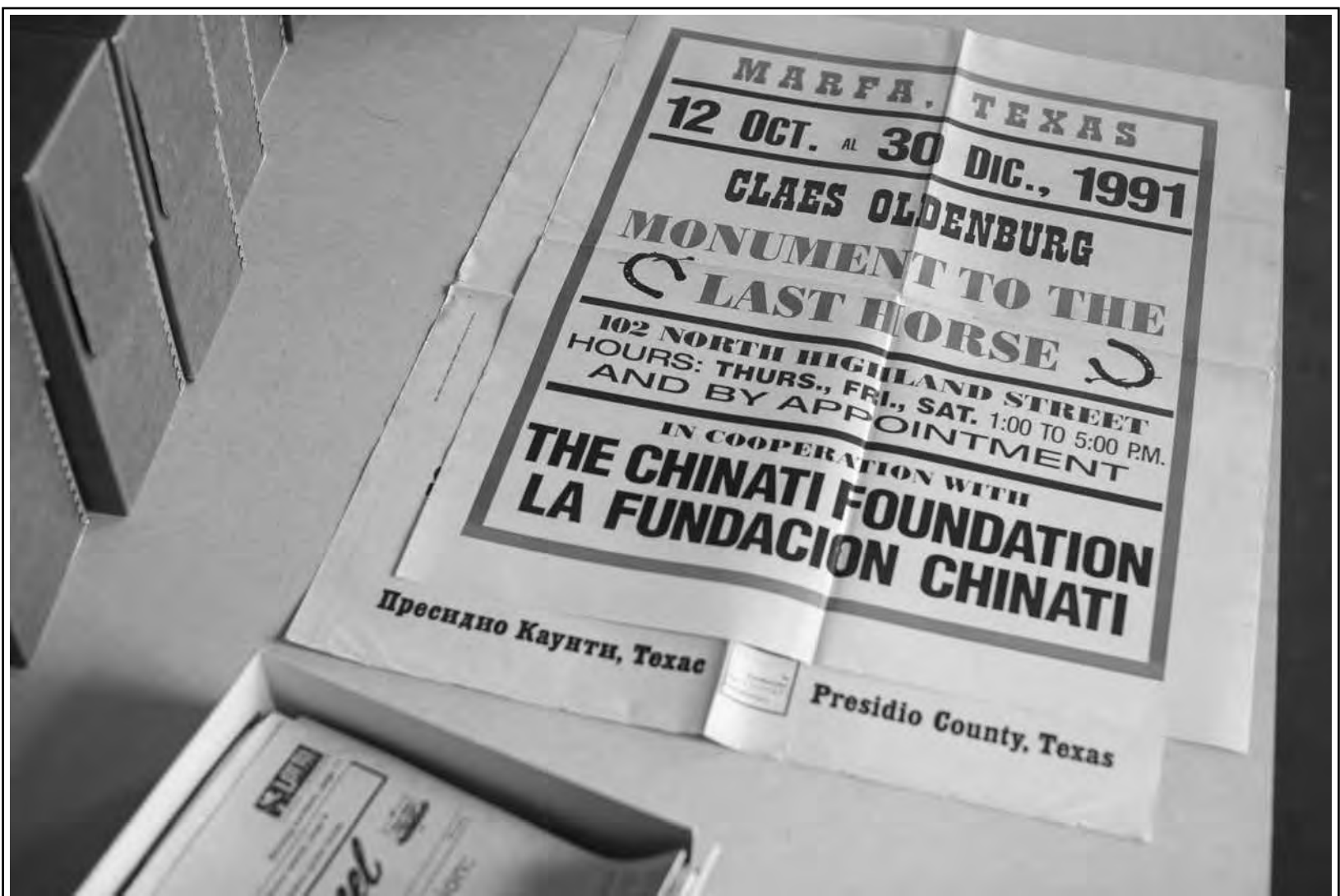


Photo by Maisie Crow

From the archives at the Chinati Foundation, a poster from Chinati Weekend in 1991 announces the unveiling of the Monument to the Last Horse. While Chinati Weekend 2020 is fully virtual, the Big Bend Sentinel is diving into the foundation’s archives, the education program and the history of Chinati Weekend itself in this special art edition. See the second section starting on page 9 for more.

Man gets pretrial intervention in case involving city council threats

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Michael Calvert, a local man previously charged with felony terroristic threat after he allegedly threatened to shoot Marfa City Council members, has taken a pretrial intervention deal that will allow him to avoid a full criminal trial.

Under the terms of Calvert’s agreement, which was filed in Presidio County courts last month, Calvert agreed to a number of conditions, including avoiding drugs, alcohol and people who have been previously convicted of felonies. He also agreed to break no laws himself.

Per that agreement, Calvert will also pay a monthly fee of \$60. His intervention period, which technically started in mid-July, is slated to last for six months.

Pretrial intervention — also known as pretrial diversion — is similar to probation in that it allows defendants in criminal trials to avoid prison time. But unlike probation, which comes after a person is found guilty or has even served part of their sentence, pretrial intervention happens before defendants are formally convicted of crimes and takes the place of a full criminal trial.

Calvert’s charges stemmed from a heated animal ordinance workshop at the Marfa City Council in 2019, at which Calvert told the council that he would “kill every one of you.” At the time, reactions from council members ranged from shock to laughter.

Shortly after the meeting, Calvert expressed regret for his remarks. He’d made them, he said, because it seemed like the city council “didn’t even want to listen” to public comments.

“Right after I said it, I thought, ‘You idiot,

you’re not going to shoot nobody,’” he told *The Big Bend Sentinel* after the incident. “If they need an apology, I’ll give it in writing, or whatever they need.”

Calvert was indicted in January, after authorities accused him of allegedly placing “the public or a substantial group of the public in fear of a serious bodily injury,” according to court filings. Authorities charged him with a felony terroristic threat. He turned himself in on a \$2,500 personal recognizance bond, meaning he didn’t have to pay the sum to secure his release.

Calvert, through his attorney Liz Rogers, declined to comment for this story. But in an interview on Monday, Rogers said both she and Calvert were glad the case was over.

“It is my pleasure to represent Michael Calvert,” Rogers said. “He looks forward to having this case behind him so he can address his health issues.”

Dr. Escovar exits Brewster County health authority position

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

BREWSTER COUNTY — Doctor Ekta Escovar, the health authority for Brewster County, has resigned her position “effective immediately,” Brewster County officials said Monday in a news release.

The news release, which came from Brewster County Judge Eleazar Cano, thanked Escovar for her “excellent job” throughout “these difficult past few months during the COVID-19 pandemic.”

“We thank Dr. Ekta Escovar for her service to Brewster County and wish her well on her future endeavors!” the news release stated.

Escovar, a pediatrician at Big Bend Regional Medical Center, was appointed as local health

authority earlier this year. The unpaid position, coupled with her hospital connections, made her a leading voice for coronavirus updates and status reports in the Big Bend region.

Escovar leaned into that role, giving regular presentations at meetings of the Alpine City Council and the Brewster County Commissioners Court. As a result, for some residents she’s been a calm and evidence-based voice throughout the coronavirus crisis, a homegrown version of Dr. Anthony Fauci.

Escovar offered the region early warnings on coronavirus. At a virtual Marfa City Council meeting in April, Escovar noted that the Big Bend region was short on medical resources and warned residents to stay vigilant. Within months, Alpine doctors would start sending their first serious coronavirus patients to hospitals in

Midland and Odessa.

“Overreacting and being alarmist now is going to save lives,” Escovar said at that meeting. To truly slow the spread of coronavirus, the region was looking at “months of social distancing — true, true social distancing.”

Escovar’s role as a leading public health watchdog in the area made her unpopular with those who oppose shutdowns, mask requirements and other coronavirus precautions. First, there was J.P. Bryant, owner of the Gage Hotel in Marathon, who sued Brewster County — and then Judge Cano personally — over the county’s temporary short-term rental bans.

Those lawsuits, which were primarily aimed at Judge Cano and county commissioners, never named Escovar as a party. But lawyers for

(Continued on page 3)

Union Pacific sues city of Alpine over train ordinance

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
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ALPINE — Earlier this year, Alpine City Council passed an ordinance to fine train companies for blocked crossings. Union Pacific was regularly parking its trains in the middle of town, city officials said, creating traffic headaches and hindering emergency response times.

Now, the company wants to kill that ordinance in federal court. In a complaint, the company argues that train traffic is regulated at the federal level, and that therefore Alpine has no business telling it what to do.

The lawsuit, which was filed in a Pecos court last Thursday, names the city of Alpine and its attorney, Rod Ponton, as defendants. It asks the court to keep Alpine city officials from imposing fines on the company, and to declare Alpine’s ordinance “void and unenforceable” under the Federal Railroad Safety Act and

other federal laws.

Union Pacific, whose train tracks cut across virtually every major north-south thoroughfare in Alpine, has for decades squabbled over these right-of-way issues with Alpine residents. But until recently, the city and train company had reached a truce.

In the late 1990s, the company promised the city it would do “periodic checks” on wait times and “review” concerns about “lengthy blocked crossings in the downtown area,” according to public records from that era. As a sign of cooling hostilities, the then-community-relations director for the company even told the city it had a “very impressive” railroad park and that he would be “happy to provide” decorative decals.

Then, last year, residents once again started complaining about blocked crossings. City officials noticed it, too — and they started considering an ordinance.

The root of the issue came down to a train

platform on the east side of 5th Street. If westbound trains park there, they’re blocking one of Alpine’s major thoroughfares. If they stop on the east side, where there isn’t a platform, they don’t.

In an email last year, Union Pacific told the city it “believes the best course of action is to leave the crew change at its current location” on the west side of the street. The company cited “safety concerns with our personnel crossing the street” and said it did not believe that using a city crosswalk was a “viable option.”

Alpine city officials said they regularly saw Union Pacific employees crossing the street, and they weren’t persuaded by the company’s explanations. City council passed the ordinance in February. Under the new rules, Union Pacific is fined \$1,000 if it blocks the 5th Street crossing for more than 10 minutes, as well as \$100 for

(Continued on page 3)

COVID-19 testing in Marfa, Presidio and Alpine next week

TRI-COUNTY — Military testing teams are coming back to the Big Bend region, with sites currently scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, at the City of Presidio EMS & Fire Station at 100 East FM 170 in Presidio; Wednesday, October 7, at the Marfa Visitor Center at 302 South Highland Avenue in Marfa; and Thursday, October 8, at the North Brewster County Emergency Response Center at 102 S. 2nd Street in Alpine.

These sites will run from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. or until capacity is reached. These will be oral-swab tests. Appointments aren’t required, but a form of personal ID is.

Presidio County Judge Cinderela Guevara named president of Rio Grande Council of Governments

FAR WEST TEXAS — The general membership of the Rio Grande Council of Governments selected officers to their board of directors for Fiscal Year 2021 on Friday, September 25 through a virtual meeting. Outgoing President Alexandra Anello passed her duties to incoming President Cinderela Guevara, the Presidio County judge. City of El Paso Representative Peter Svarzbein was elected as First Vice President, and Valentine Mayor Summer Webb was elected as Second Vice President.

The terms for all three board officers run from October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021. Judge Guevara is a native of Marfa and is a U.S. Army veteran. Judge Guevara said, “It has truly been an honor and privilege these past six years to meet with all of you to work on projects, set priorities, resolve situations, and all in all to embrace whatever goal is before us for the purpose and plan of each particular meeting.” She thanked the general membership for the opportunity to serve as president, and looked forward to the coming year despite the pandemic.

Guevara is currently the President of the Presidio International Port Authority, on her second term as Chairman of Big Bend Community Action Board, served two terms as Chairman for Presidio County’s appraisal district and is a member of several committees for the advancement of Presidio County. Guevara said, “It is an honor to have been nominated and look forward to working with everyone in the region.”

The RGCOG is a voluntary association comprised of local governments, school districts and special political subdivision districts along the Rio Grande border supporting the counties (as well as the incorporated and unincorporated communities) of Brewster, Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Presidio and Doña Ana in New Mexico.

Annette Gutierrez, who serves as their executive director, presented the annual budget, which is at \$8.8 million dollars, as well as the Work Program for 2021. For this coming fiscal year, Gutierrez highlighted new programs that will be administered. These programs include the Economic Development Administration CARES program and the Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Planning program. For more information about the RGCOG, visit www.riocog.org.

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ALPINE — Residents of West Texas are invited to attend a free webinar on October 8 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. “Landowners, Energy Development, and Conflict: Finding Common Ground” will explore how landowners and energy companies can work together to find solutions when conflicts occur. The webinar will feature experts in the field, including Dr. Chase Currie with San Pedro Ranch in South Texas, David Yeates with the Texas Wildlife Association and Chris West with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

Chase Currie graduated with his Ph.D. in Range and Wildlife Management from The Caesar Kleberg Wildlife Research Institute at Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He was the natural resources manager for the San Pedro Ranch in South Texas from 2012-2015, where he focused primarily on restoring land damaged by oilfield and pipeline activity in the Eagle Ford Shale, as well as watershed management and forage enhancement. In January of 2016, Currie became the general manager for the San Pedro Ranch.

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Dr. Escovar

(Continued from page 1)

Bryant nonetheless criticized the doctor, writing in court filings that she was expressing “personal fears ... without any scientific support” and “should not be regarded as an expert.”

Then, in May, Escovar became the target of a social media controversy after parents of some of her pediatric patients said she’d dropped them. Those parents said they thought Escovar had stopped seeing their children because they opposed coronavirus precautions. As a doctor at a private clinic, Escovar can choose patients at her discretion.

But Art Martinez de Vara, a lawyer for one of the parents, nonetheless accused her of violating civil-rights laws. He said it was “very bad practice” to “deny a child health care because of the parent’s

political stance” and filed a medical board complaint. BBRMC put out a statement saying it was “committed” to local patient care but declined to address the criticisms of Escovar, citing the legal dispute. As the story gained traction, many residents jumped to her defense, posting social media comments of their own in support of Escovar.

By press time this week, Escovar did not respond to questions about why she decided to resign or what her future plans are. Judge Cano also did not respond by press time when asked whether any other candidates had stepped forward to take on the role of local health authority.

Under Texas law, local health authorities are appointed by the officials of the local government body they work for. In this case, that means Brewster County commissioners court will likely find her replacement. At press time, it’s unclear when commissioners will discuss the topic.

Union Pacific

(Continued from page 1)

each additional minute.

Since then, not a lot has changed. Union Pacific has continued blocking 5th Street in the center of Alpine, frustrating residents and emergency responders. In the process, it’s racked up around \$17,000 in fines, which Union Pacific says in court filings it has paid.

Those fines come from seven different ordinance violations, Alpine Police Chief Robert Martin said in an interview this week. But most of the total cost came from one incident a couple months ago.

“They actually broke down,” he said. In total, he estimates the train blocked 5th Street for almost two hours — and he said the company wasn’t fixing the problem. “They had engines where they could have pushed it back 30 or 40 feet,” he said. “They would not have blocked 5th and not been fined.”

When the ordinance first passed earlier this year, only one Alpine city council member — Ramon Olivas — voted against it. In an interview earlier this year, Olivas argued there were other street crossings in Alpine that could be used if 5th Street was closed. He urged the city to continue negotiating with Union Pacific rather than adopting a punitive ordinance.

“I made my stance by saying, ‘Let’s go back for renegotiations,’” Olivas said.

But as other Alpine city officials see it, there just isn’t much left to negotiate. Erik Zimmer, city manager of Alpine, stressed in an interview this week that Alpine

officials and residents only wanted one thing: to keep 5th Street unblocked, so that emergency response vehicles could use it.

“The negotiation is, you’re either going to park on the east or west side,” he said. “So there’s no negotiation on their part.”

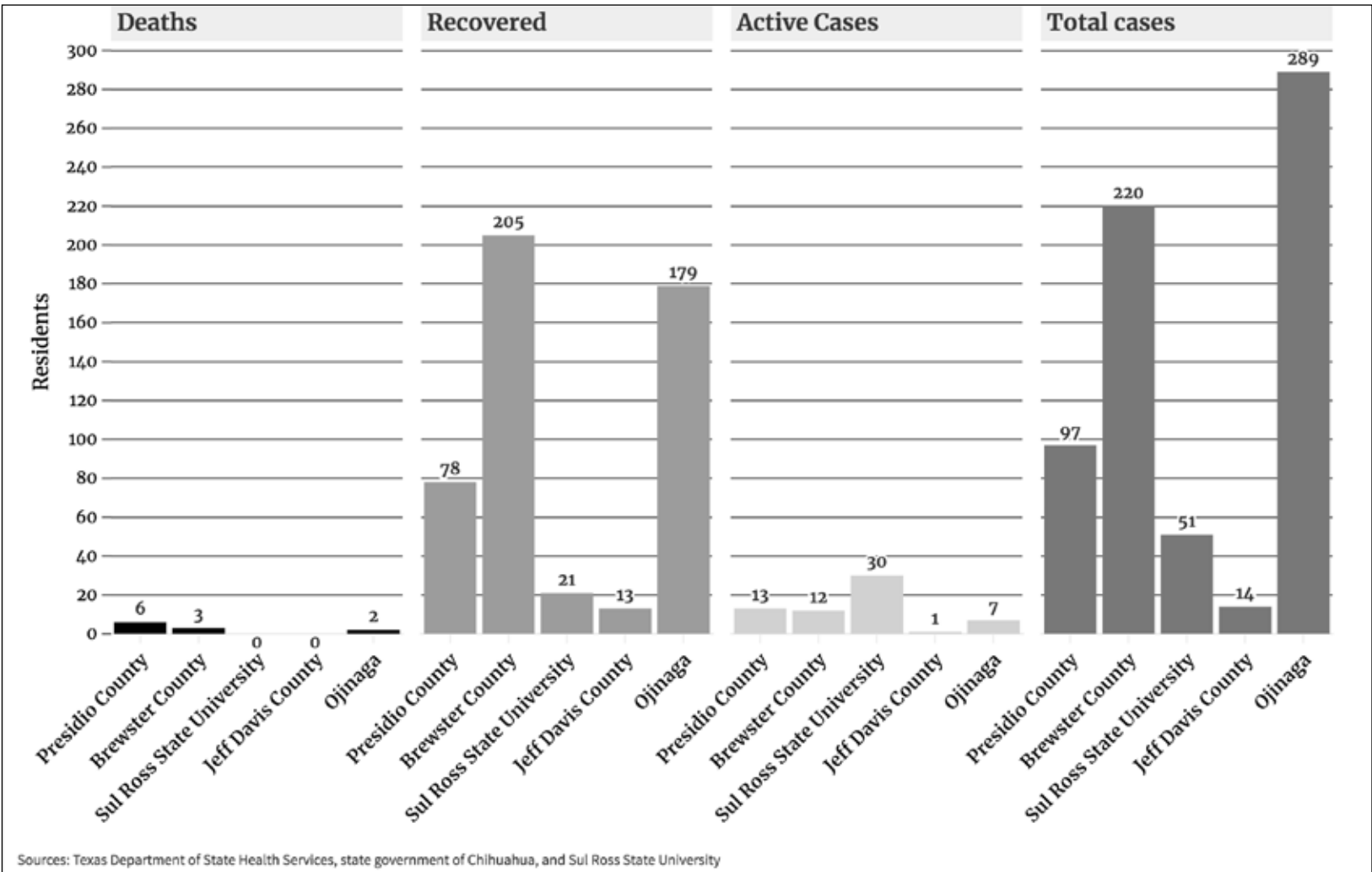
For now at least, city leaders aren’t too worried about the lawsuit. Rod Ponton, the city’s attorney, acknowledges that many aspects of train traffic are in fact regulated at the federal (not city) level. Alpine couldn’t pass a sweeping rule for all train tracks in town, he said.

But in a legal response, he argued that Alpine’s ordinance “is narrowly tailored to fix a specific, local problem dealing with local traffic and safety concerns caused by railroad operations at a single crossing.” And that, he says, means it’s well within Alpine’s rights.

“All they have to do is stop 20 feet short of that intersection, no problem,” he said of Union Pacific. “They’d rather go 20 feet past it and park by the depot.”

Asked about the lawsuit, a spokesperson for Union Pacific said the company decided to sue the city after City Attorney Ponton “ended discussions to find potential traffic flow solutions near the Alpine rail depot.” She said the depot was the “official crew change location” not only for Union Pacific, but also for regional Amtrak trains.

“Union Pacific encourages the City of Alpine to rescind the ordinance, which should remove the need for litigation,” the spokesperson added. “We are committed to working with the city council and welcome the opportunity to resume collaborative conversations outside of the courtroom.”



Graphic by Abbie Perrault

Coronavirus, by the numbers

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

TRI-COUNTY — The graph above shows coronavirus case and death counts for Presidio, Brewster and Jeff Davis counties, as well as for Ojinaga, a Mexican city bordering Presidio County, and Sul Ross State University in Alpine. The United States data is from the Texas Department of State Health Services and is current as of Tuesday, September 29. The data on Sul Ross State University is from the school’s online COVID tracker, and the figures for Ojinaga come from the Chihuahua State government and are up-to-date as of Monday, September 28.

County officials in Presidio and Brewster counties are reporting higher numbers of total cases than the state. As *The Big Bend Sentinel* has previously reported, there are often discrepancies in case counts from local and state officials, either because state officials have not yet updated their

numbers or because they are unsure whether a case should be classified in the region. State officials also do not include probable cases in their data, which local officials sometimes do.

For data purposes, readers might assume that cases at Sul Ross State University are a subset of Brewster County’s cases — but that isn’t necessarily true. At an Alpine City Council meeting in September, Ekta Escovar, then-the local health authority for Brewster County, explained that state officials typically count college students at their

their permanent address (where their parents live) over their temporary address (where they’re living for college). That means, for example, that a Sul Ross student from Marfa would be counted in Presidio County rather than Brewster.

That logic made sense, Escovar said, because the state didn’t want to double-count cases and because many college students across the state are currently taking remote classes. Still, she felt it was important for Brewster County to

track cases at Sul Ross, because those students typically live, eat and shop in Alpine. That’s another likely reason why Brewster County’s own numbers are often higher than the state’s.

Sul Ross State University provides information on total and active case counts. To calculate the number of recovered patients, *The Big Bend Sentinel* is subtracting the number of deaths and active cases from the total number of cases. But “recovered” in this case does not mean a patient is completely symptom-free or does not have any chronic issues. Rather, it just means that a patient is no longer contagious and that health workers no longer consider their coronavirus infection to be “active.”

Brewster County’s active case count has plummeted in recent months, a sign that Alpine has largely recovered from an outbreak in late June and early July. Presidio County’s numbers, meanwhile, don’t capture the fact that, so far, a disproportionate amount of its deaths have come from the town of Presidio.

MARFA CONTACT TRACING PROGRAM

If you live in the city limits of Marfa and are positive for COVID-19 or have been in close contact with someone who is, we invite you to call our City of Marfa Contact Tracing Team at 432-279-0279 to discuss your options for support and safety. Your identity and conversations will be kept confidential in accordance with HIPAA laws and our written agreement with the State. We’re here to help--call us at 432-279-0279.

Marfa City Hall will be closed
October 5th, 2020, from 1:00
pm to 4:00 pm for training.
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2020 ELECTION DEADLINES

Resister to vote: **Oct 5**

Update registration: **Oct 5**

In-person early voting starts: **Oct 13**

Apply to vote-by-mail: **Oct 23**

In-person early voting ends: **Oct 30**

Vote by mail ballot in by: **Nov 3**

Election day: **Nov 3**



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Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Attack, attack, attack. Is there anyone left to attack? Since the Republican Senate refused to remove Trump from office following impeachment, Trump has become unhinged. On the stump and in his midnight tweets, the president attacks the media (now including Fox), former members of his own administration who either left willingly or were fired, women (especially accomplished women like AOC and Hillary Clinton), the authors of tell-all books about Trump, and even his own niece. On and on it goes. Imagine if Trump is re-elected. Will the attacks stop or escalate? Trump’s conduct is the sign of an extremely insecure man, and given the power of his office, he is dangerous.

The eternal enemy, foreign or domestic, that is perceived to pose a threat to the nation is a defining characteristic of fascism. Does Trump offer his followers a better America or does he just praise himself for his imaginary achievement in office? Will the nation become more united in a second Trump term? No, that should be obvious. Will Americans have better health insurance? Will our children have better schools? Will America have an infrastructure that ensures our international competitiveness? Will we have foreign allies who support us internationally, or will we have foreign leaders who view our president as a bloviating fool with makeup?

In Trump’s Manichean view of the world there are only good people and evil people, winners and losers. The good people are those who support him and praise him and pay exorbitant prices to stay at one of his properties. The evil people are those who criticize him or remind him of his compulsive lying. Some of the good people today will become evil people in Trump’s world tomorrow. Such is the case with those generals who agreed to serve in his first term despite their misgivings about his character. The final straw for me and for many vets is Trump’s reference to those who gave their lives in military service to the country as “losers.” I often wonder how many of his most avid supporters have ever served their country. Membership in a private militia group or in Trump’s private army does not count as patriotic.

In my opinion Trump is the biggest loser of all. There can only be one rational choice in the coming election: anyone but Trump.

Thank you,
Joel Gormley
Alpine

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Dear Editor,

I am writing this letter to the reader. My name is Sam Salazar, I am a Marfa native, I’ve lived here my whole life. I’m reaching out hoping to find a reader like me, a young person who has been frustrated and confused with politics. I don’t think this only pertains to my demographic; it IS frustrating and confusing! It’s also intimidating if you don’t know where to start. I have found myself in conversations with friends about voting who share the same disappointment.

I’ve learned there is a massive disinformation campaign to make us confused, discouraged, and even impelling us not to vote at all because of these issues. If my generation were to vote in this election, we would outnumber the voters over 40 years old. This realization energized me; in the midst of all the confusion there is hope, and we can be the change we wish to see!

The last day to register to vote is October 5, it’s right now. If you are not registered, please do it today. You can start online or do it in person, but it needs to be submitted or postmarked by October 5. Beyond this action, I want to extend a hand out to anyone who needs help to register, talking through the steps or even printing out your registration form. I am just a normal person, I am not involved in politics. I just want us to be represented, I want change, and I want to help.

My email is salazarsam21@gmail.com

Thank you,
Sam Salazar
Marfa

Estimado Editor,

Escribo para el lector general. Me llamo Sam Salazar, soy de Marfa, y he vivido aquí toda mi vida. Escribo esta carta en busca de lectores como yo, un joven que se siente frustrado y confundido con lo político. Creo que este sentimiento no pertenece solamente a mi demográfico; la situación es frustrante y TODOS están confundidos! También es difícil saber cómo empezar. Me he encontrado con personas que comparten los mismos desilusiones. Y he aprendido que hay una campaña de desinformación masiva para confundirnos y desanimarnos; estamos desanimados de votar por la misma razón. Pero, si mi generación votara seríamos mas numerosos que los los votantes mayores de 40 años. Esta realización me dió cuenta, en medio de toda la confusión hay esperanza, y podemos ser el cambio que deseamos ver!

El último día para registrarse para votar es el 5 de Octubre. Ahora mismo. Si no estás registrado a votar, ¡hazlo hoy! Puedes hacerlo online o en persona, pero tendría que tener matasellos de 5 de Octubre. Más allá de esto quiero extender la mano a cualquiera persona que quiere ayuda en el proceso, hablando de los pasos, o incluso imprimir su formulario de registro. Soy una persona normal, no involucrada en lo político. Solamente quiero ser representada, quiero un cambio, y quiero ayudar.

Mi correo es: salazarsam21@gmail.com

Gracias,
Sam Salazar
Marfa

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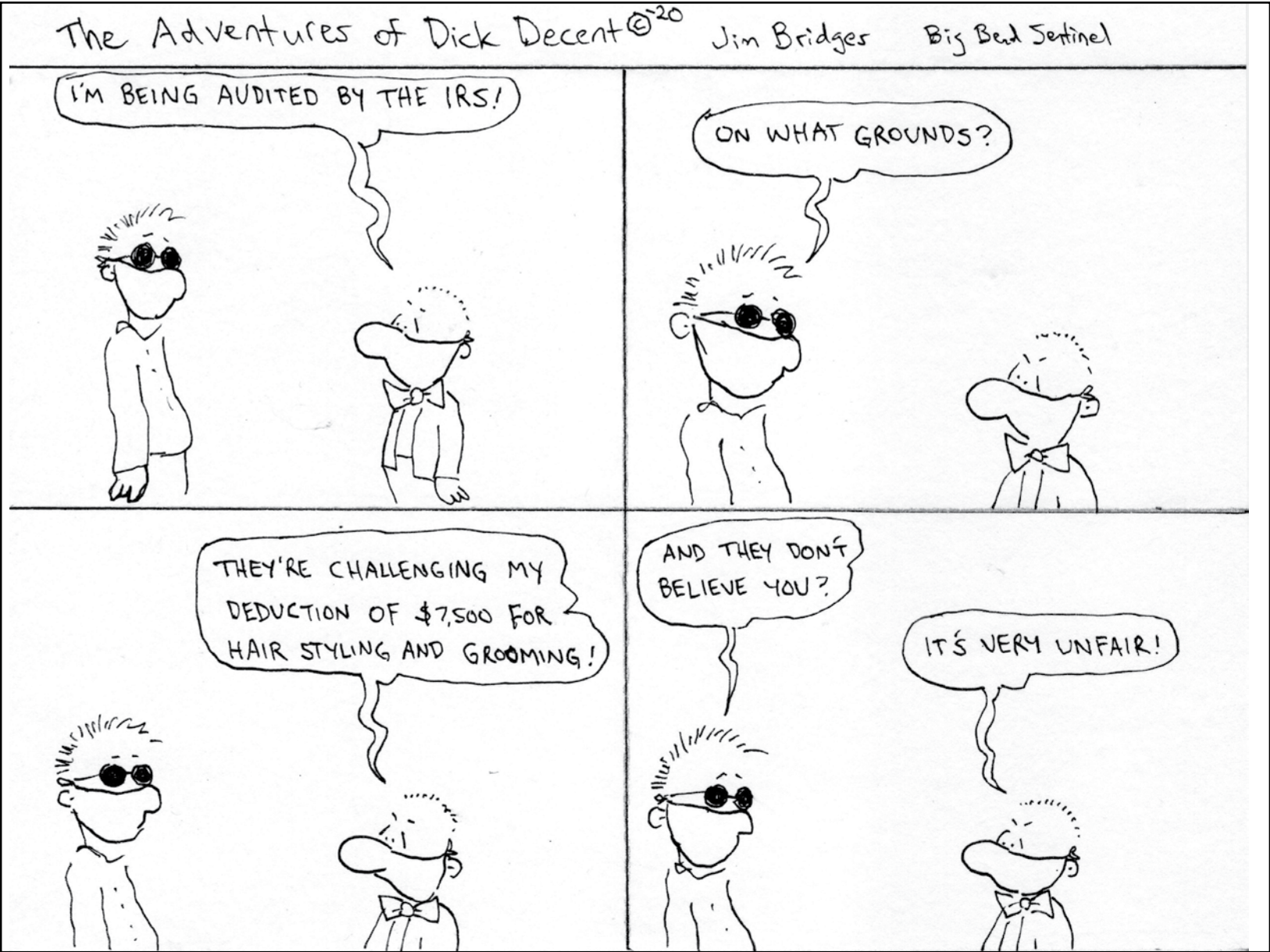
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Dear Editor,

On September 28, 2020, Fort Davis County’s Commissioners Court met. One of the items on their agenda was the declaration of a retroactive state of COVID emergency from September 15, 2020 onward. At that time, Fort Davis County had flourished without such a declaration since September 14.

I was curious as to how this body could declare an emergency retroactively. An emergency is “an unforeseen combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action.” At the time of this session, the emergency had taken a two week holiday, with no one calling for immediate action. This is a contradiction in terms. There was no emergency and the facts supported this assertion.

Had anyone in the county died of COVID-19 in that period? The answer is no. Cumulatively, Jeff Davis County has had a total of 14 cases, with no deaths whatsoever. Our last case was reported on September 4.

The story was similar in the rest of Texas: on the last day I looked at that had complete data, September 11, there were 57 fatalities statewide that day and the trend line was headed toward zero. Cases were a different story. On September 26, Texas had 3,283 new cases; but cases are not deaths, and often represent nothing more than a positive result on a test noted for its inaccuracy. Even the new case trend line was going down. There was no further need for masks, social distancing, self-isolation, the crippling of our economy or the restriction of our personal freedom.

In particular, Fort Davis didn’t need to spend another nickel of taxpayer money protecting itself from a nonexistent threat. Further such expenditures would border on disaster fraud. This madness must end.

Sincerely,
Frank McElhannon
Fort Davis

...



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Lauren Meader Fowlkes, Realtor

Dear Editor,

Precipice

Trump’s exhortations applauding extra-judicial (illegal) measures emboldening agents provocateur and/or individuals IS violence. Unidentifiable federal goons pulling people into unmarked SUVs and intimidating them for 1st Amendment conduct IS violence.

Words have consequences. Murder and serious injuries by radical right-wingers are off the chart. Those labeled left-wing aren’t a radar blip, according to research into politically motivated attacks in the United States.

Protesting generations of injustices and the wrongful death of Breonna Taylor, a black woman in her Louisville home, is NOT violence. Graffiti on public buildings, throwing debris or setting small, easily contained fires isn’t comparable with enumerated criminality of radical, right-wing gangs and rogue federal agents.

Making this perfectly clear: “Violence is not condoned!” Where probable cause exists, an arrestee is entitled to full Constitutional due process. Punishment is NOT the domain of a lawless mob!

Try explaining to Trump and supporters the U.S. is a “Rule of Law-Due Process” nation. His re-election places that in doubt.

Here’s where we find ourselves: The pandemic’s 200,000+ deaths are another consequence of Trumpism’s formula for disaster, aggravated by conservative ideology’s 40+ year charade of supply-side (voodoo) economics and deregulation policies contributing to the average person’s hardships.

A serial liar and dangerous authoritarian in the Oval Office brought us to the precipice. That’s too close for any nation’s well-being and too close for any individual’s peace of mind.

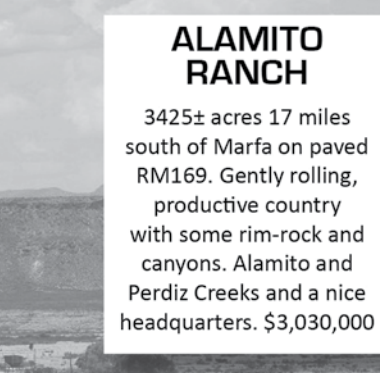
Rev. Barry Abraham Zavah
Alpine

...

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- Your letters may be edited for clarity and brevity. While opinions of all kinds are welcome, when it comes to claims of fact, we strive to only publish what is verifiable.
- We have limited staff capacity to fact check unsubstantiated claims, so letters that include those may be held or remain unpublished if information is not easily verifiable.
- We may reach out to ask questions and verify the identity of the sender. We do not run letters anonymously unless the sender is privately identified and has a reasonable claim to anonymity.

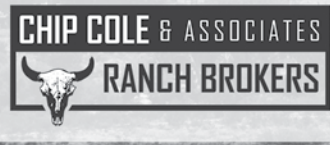
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HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

The difficulty of satire in 2020

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON

Welcome to Belorussia! It’s a fun-loving country with a self-absorbed, low intellect, vicious leader who loves to undermine and conduct national elections as though they were simply a nuisance he must undergo to maintain his dictatorship. He calls peaceful assemblies riots, and his secret police snatch people off the streets. He can’t lose an election because his side is the only one that would tolerate counting the votes, and he deeply does not believe in a peaceful transition of power. Sound familiar? Now, let’s get to the satirical part of this column.

This is one of the best definitions of satire I have found recently, “a genre of literature and performing arts, usually fiction and less frequently in non-fiction, in which vices, follies, abuses and shortcomings are held up to ridicule, ideally with the intent of shaming individuals, corporations, government, or society itself into improvement. Although satire is usually meant to be humorous, its greater purpose is often constructive social criticism, using wit to draw attention to both particular and wider issues in society.”

The problem with satire is that it is not appreciated by those who do not have a wide background in history, government, literature and poetry. Satire is particularly difficult in West Texas because most of the inhabitants of our prickly pear part of paradise are proud of and often boast of, their “straight talking.” This generally means that you should avoid using metaphors, irony and sarcasm. Unfortunately, I just described my three most favorite forms of communications.

The difficulty of satire in 2020 is that the highest elected official in the country starts his daily ranting with such outlandish and often total untruths that a number of institutions have begun to collect his downright lies, and by the end of July 2020 he was up to 20,000. The count began the day of his inauguration, and the sky’s the limit. It’s not a low bar for satire, it’s a *no bar* for satire. As the definition explains, it is used to point out the shortcomings of both individuals and society, and hopefully to shame them into changing their foolish ways. President Tweet does not understand shame and is incapable of recognizing it in his person, actions or words.



As we all know, California is burning. Despite the utterings of President Tweet’s followers, the state is not the home of Sodom and Gomorrah, and does not deserve to burn. It’s rumored that Trump’s accusation against California is that the fires were started by California lightening bugs or perhaps fireflies. The Tweet blamed California officials for not taking better care of the public lands. Nobody told him that California only owns 3% of the public lands and the federal government owns 60%. When told that the fires were a direct result of climate change, he replied, “it’ll cool,” although scientists have reported that glaciers around the world are melting at historic rates and that part of Antarctica is dumping millions of tons of water at such a fast rate that it alone could raise sea level by 15 inches in the next 30 years. Not only does Tweet not believe the measurable facts, he doesn’t believe in science or scientists.

In a world that appears to be on its way to being consumed by either fire or water, I’m certain that most of my readers are filled with deep degrees of anxiety. It is important to realize the way anxiety is dealt with by the more active members of our West Texas society. The right wing has it easiest. Some of the more intelligent might have qualms about certain statements made by their leader, such as, on September 21, he argued that coronavirus “affects virtually nobody,” as we sailed past 200,000 pandemic-related deaths. The right wing’s anxiety can easily be overcome by buying a Hawaiian shirt and an AR-15. We leftists can attempt to relieve our anxiety by asking our smart speakers to play Marfa Public Radio. I love their tiny porch concerts and their humorous public service announcements, like the lady who announces it is almost 100 degrees and she is going to feed her tiny chickens watermelon or the Hispanic gentleman who opens with, “Why do they come to Marfa, there’s nothing here. Why do they wear black, everything is black - black, black, black. And they wear cowboy boots with shorts – do they dress like this back home?”

Thank you Marfa Public Radio for providing voter information, and thank any deity you believe in that the Kardashian’s reality show has ended its 13 season run. There is still hope for America.

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.

URANUS IS AFOOT

As above, so below

By JACK COPELAND

And what’s above right now ain’t pretty. You don’t need a fake astromancer to tell you that the U.S. presidential election season is, and will be, oh what’s the word, *nasty*. So put on your surgical masks, gowns and gloves, and let’s explore the astrological anatomy of this crucial political campaign.

Earlier columns this year have already introduced the dominant cosmic alignments for 2020, known as the Capricorn Stellium – a rare triple conjunction of outer planets Jupiter, Saturn and Pluto, all in the sign of Capricorn within a single calendar year. Here on terra-not-so-firma, the stage has been set with a toxic stew of pandemic, multiple raging infernos, economic recession and violent social unrest. Now, just in time for the election, the planet Mars turned retrograde on September 9, and will turn direct on Friday, November 13 (you’re not superstitious are you?). As we move through autumn, the light may change but not the heat. Mars, the Roman god of war, represents aggression, confrontation and competition. What’s more, these traits double down in intensity because Mars makes this transit in Aries, the sign that it rules.

To borrow a phrase, the excrement encounters the rotary cooling device sometime between September 29 and October 19. This is when Mars makes a hard square with Jupiter, Saturn, and Pluto. Mars already had a tête-à-tête with these three clowns from March 20 to March 31 of this year. Hardly a joyous time – the pandemic panic was peaking, the economy was shutting down and stock markets were crashing. Now we re-test the themes that started this cycle. COVID-19 is again on the rise worldwide, re-employment is falling, and market volatility is increasing. When Jupiter squares Mars, there’s an expansion of the anger and passion that Mars energy represents. When Mars aligns in a square to Saturn and Pluto, the hostility index rises. No civil discourse here. By comparison, this symbolism makes the 2016 presidential campaign look almost pastoral.

It’s already widely speculated that come November 4, we will not know the outcome of the election. Astrology strongly supports that contention. Astrologer Ray Merriman, in early November 2019, wrote that a disputed election with delayed results was a strong possibility, *even before COVID-19 was known to exist*. He based this forecast on his understanding of our polarized political climate, blended with the clashing dynamics of Mars retrograde in this 2020 Capricorn Stellium.

But Mars retrograde is not the only astro-factor wreaking havoc at this time. Mercury, which symbolizes communication, also goes retrograde on October 13, just three weeks before the election. No bueno. Imagine a flow of miscommunications, changing numbers, *actual* fake news and untrustworthy polls – all of which intensify as Mercury goes direct exactly on Election Day, November 3. By the way, Mercury also changed direction during the 2000 Bush/Gore vote, leading to the infamous hanging chad chicanery in Florida.

Mercury retrograde is a trickster and he loves to obfuscate. Picture this: A fractious, contested vote on Election Day becomes delayed by an overwhelming crush of absentee ballots. The need for urgent resolution bypasses the appellate courts and goes straight to the Supreme Court, which could produce a 4-4 split vote if a ninth judge has not been seated.

Or, consider the possibility of a 269-269 tie vote in the Electoral College. Welcome to Presidential Purgatory. In either case, the process would then wind up in the House of Representatives. The vote would not be determined by individual members, but rather by state delegation, meaning one vote per state. If there are any Constitutional legal experts in our readership, or an exorcist, please feel free to weigh in.

Recently, Ray Merriman hosted an online discussion about the 2020 presidential election with four internationally known (genuine) astrologers. Here are some of their insights.

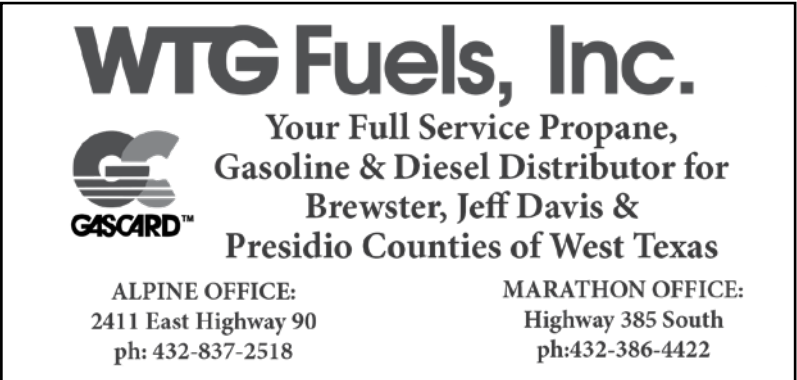
- (1) As in 2000 and in 2016, a split occurs between the popular and the Electoral College votes.
- (2) A very close and/or disputed election where the results may not be known until November 19, or possibly as late as December 14 (though they make no mention of Chad and his hangers-on).
- (3) With respect to their natal charts, *both* Trump and Kamala Harris have favorable transits of the North Node of the Moon, which is said to be associated with victory, confidence and success. But *both* also have a difficult alignment with transiting Pluto to their personal planets, which can indicate loss or a major life transformation.
- (4) The heightened drama and intensity surrounding this particular election is supported by the transit of Pluto over a portion of the U.S. birth chart. Where you find Pluto, you find complexity.
- (5) The Sun is in opposition to Uranus three days before the election. Uranus represents sudden change and unpredictability. The message? Once again, don’t trust the polls.

These are challenging astrological conditions. But by mid-November, Mars will be out of retrograde. And by year end, Saturn and Pluto start to socially distance themselves, and the political incivility begins to subside. Until then, be as zen as you can.

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

Sources for this column include: (1) *Forecast 2020 Book* by Ray Merriman. (2) *Weekly Forecast Columns* from 8/11/20, 8/17/20, 9/15/20, 9/21/20, and 9/28/20, by Ray Merriman @<https://www.mmacycles.com>. (3) *Learn Astrology Vol One* by Marion March and Joan McEvers. (4) *Declarations* by Peggy Noonan, Wall Street Journal, September 19-20, 2020.

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Sports

FOOTBALL



High School Football

(Front row, left to right) Justice Ortiz, Tristan Kelly, Nayar Flores, Jaden Nunez, Johnnie Gomez, Levi Hinojos, Jose Sandoval, Cristian Ontiveros, Uriel Torres, Diego Estrada; (back row, left to right) Luis Solis, Ian Marquez, Ethan Zubia, Nathan Pena, Christopher Connors, Juan Avila, John Aguero, Dedrick Campos, Saul Lozano, Andru Bentley
Not pictured: Adrian Catano



Junior High Football

(Front row, left to right) Samuel Estrada, CJ Garcia, JV Kelly, Manny Dominguez, Andres Solis; (back row, left to right) Guillermo Guardiola, Michael Holguin, Derick Campos, Diego Jurado, Darren Campos, Asael Zubia

HOMECOMING COURT



Homecoming Queen Candidates
Andrea Torres, Gaby Soto Reyes,
Nia Gallegos, Bryanna Bentley



Homecoming King Candidates:
Levi Hinojos, Zachary Gomez,
Dedrick Campos, John Aguero



**Junior Class
Duke & Dutchess**
Uriel Torres Hernandez and Natalie
Vandergiesen



**Sophomore Class
Duke & Dutchess**
Nayar Flores and
Alexis Gonzales



**Freshman Class
Duke & Dutchess**
Diego Estrada and
Ana Gallegos

HOMECOMING EVENTS AND TICKET INFORMATION:

Marfa Shorthorns will face off against the West Texas Co-op this Friday, October 2, at 7:30 p.m., looking to score a win in their homecoming game. But before the main event, local festivities will kick off at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 1 with the homecoming parade.

The homecoming court and athletic teams will be driven in decorated vehicles and

proceed from the high school, headed east down Lincoln Street. The parade will turn south on Highland Avenue at the courthouse, then continue south down Highland Avenue, turning west on Oak Street where the parade will end. Homecoming Court vehicles will continue to the football field for the pep rally.

Music, announcements, and senior highlights will be broadcast live on KRTS

at 93.5 FM and stream at marfapublicradio.org. The school will also stream the event live on the Marfa Shorthorns Facebook page. Marfa ISD and the Marfa Police Department ask parade attendees to park along the parade route, remain in their vehicles, and practice social distancing guidelines at all times.

The community pep rally is at Martin

Field, with the traditional burning of the M ceremony wrapping up the night. General admission tickets to Friday's game can be purchased by calling (432) 729-5500 to reserve tickets, limited at 4 per person, and \$3 a ticket. Reserved tickets must be paid for and picked up by 2 p.m. Friday at the high school office or administration office.

HARVEST MOON

Weekend

ART & MUSIC UNDER THE STARS IN ALPINE



Saturday, October 3rd

Don't let the months of hibernation get you down; enjoy a fresh new start at a "coming out" party to celebrate the revival of the downtown Alpine Arts and Music scene under the full Harvest Moon...

6:00 - 7:00

"RALLY IN MURAL ALLEY"

See the new murals and watch local artists creating works of mural art in the "AlleyArts" district between 5th and 6th Street downtown. Visit 6th Street Galleries and enjoy Music by Tom Griffith while visually reflecting on the influence of Alpine's original Sul Ross Art Colony dating back over nearly a Century of great art in Alpine.

7:00- 8:00

Enjoy the fabulous Mariachi Santa Cruz during a street-side serenade for Receptions featuring local artists at Gallery on the Square during their "Plein Air Arts" show; and the Catchlight Art Gallery next door featuring local jewelers' art in their "Desert Resplendence" exhibition.

8:00-10:30

And as the evening's "grand finale:" Cast away those indoor blues with an upbeat evening of "All That Jazz" in the outdoor Patio at the Holland Hotel, hosting the Alpine Jazz Quintet performing classic and modern jazz standards, Bossa Nova and more with featured guest artist, guitarist Jim McKay.

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LEGEND OF THE HELLHOUND

SUNSHINE & RAINBOWS
ON CONESET HILL
by Febi Brimhall

RONA **BY AVERY BELTRAN**

No COMPASS
by Aubrie Aguilar

ARTWORK BY MARFA ARTISTS



CROSS COUNTRY



High School Girls Cross Country
Emily Hernandez, Liani Salcido, Fernanda Rivera, Maryfer Martinez, Desiree Campos, Charlize Martinez



High School Boys Cross Country
Nayar Flores, Dedrick Campos, Juan Avila, Levi Hinojos, Johnnie Gomez, Uriel Torres, Ethan Zubia, and Adrian Catano



Junior High Boys Cross Country
Francisco Rosas, Gillermo Guardiola, Derick Campos, Clegg Fowlkes, Darren Campos

CHEERLEADING



High School Cheerleaders
Bryanna Bentley, Umimi Chanez, Emily Hernandez, Samantha Martinez, Bull-It, Aundrea Garcia, Zaley Porter, Lesly Torres



Junior High Cheerleaders
(Front) Loretta Rivera; (Back left to right) Taryn Klockman, Jessica Diaz, Amaya Gomez, Maryfer Martinez, and Sara Salgado

VOLLEYBALL



High School Volleyball
(Front row, left to right) Desiree Campos, Emily Hernandez, Odalys Chacon, Aundrea Garcia, Annalise Marquez, Fernanda Rivera; (Back row, left to right) Liani Salcido, Charlize Martinez, Umimi Chanez, Brianna Sanchez, Lesly Torres, Andrea Torres, Alexis Gonzales



Junior High Volleyball
(Front row, left to right) Katana Melendez, Giselle Torres, Ava Flores, Zoey Salgado, Claudina Gonzalez, Belen Soto; (Back row, left to right) Amaya Gomez, Raven Martinez, Maryfer Martinez, Daniella Fernandez, Loretta Rivera, Jayden Amaro, Kayla Vasquez

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Thursday, October 1, 2020
6:30 pm: Homecoming Parade
Post-Parade: Community pep rally and burning of the M at Marin Field

Friday, October 2, 2020
7:30 pm: Football Game at Martin Field - purchase tickets in advance

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OCTOBER	Thurs, Oct 1	Fri, Oct 2	Mon, Oct 5	Tues, Oct 6	Wed, Oct 7
BREAKFAST	PANCAKE WRAP	BISCUIT, SAUSAGE	PANCAKES, BACON	CEREAL BAR, YOGURT	MUFFIN, YOGURT
LUNCH Menu courtesy of Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	PEPPERONI PIZZA, BABY CARROTS, GARDEN SALAD, FRESH SLICED APPLES	ASIAN BOWL (GLAZED CHICKEN, RICE), EGG ROLL, BROCCOLI FLORETS, MANDARIN ORANGES	HAMBURGER/CHEESEBURGER, HAMBURGER GARNISH, OVEN FRIES ZESTY CUCUMBERS, APPLESAUCE	CHICKEN FAJITAS, SPANISH RICE, TORTILLA, REFRIED BEANS, BABY CARROTS, LETTUCE & TOMATO, FRUIT	PEPPERONI PIZZA, TINY TOMATO CUP, CORN, FRUIT, COOKIE

3rd annual Harvest Moon and Alpine Alley Art next weekend

ALPINE — The third annual Harvest Moon Celebration will be Saturday, October 3 this year with new attractions in Alley Art, including music and more. In concert with remaining concerns over Covid-19, most of the activity will be outdoors. Masks and social distancing still should be observed. “The last two Harvest Moon events were the most successful of our events, featuring both the visual and the performing arts,” Alpine Downtown Association President Jim Street said. “We dedicated one mural nearing completion in the first year and, last year, we inaugurated a new mural by Carole Fairlie and her Sul Ross art students in an area between 5th and 6th streets now known as Alpine Alley Art. New this year is a mural featuring several artists called ‘Postcards from the Desert,’ consisting of

several individual panels for different artists to create with a desert theme. It is just east of the Pauline Hernandez mural, ‘Fab Desert Mural,’ on the south wall of Carolyn and Tom Mangrem’s Alley View Gallery, which we dedicated in 2018.” Alley Art was created by Liz Sibley, Nancy Whitlock, Jan Moeller and others in the recently-repaved alley behind the 100 block of West Holland Avenue. Like the last two years, music will be provided during the alley art activities, this year by Tom Griffith starting at 6 p.m. John Ferguson’s Mariachi Santa Cruz of Presidio will perform street-side on Holland Avenue in front of the Catchlight Gallery and Gallery on the Square at 7 p.m.; both galleries will have events. The Gallery on the Square

will have a plein air art show, while the Catchlight will feature local jewelers’ art in the “Desert Resplendence” exhibition. From 8 to 10:30 p.m., attention will shift a block west to the Holland Hotel for “All that Jazz” with the Alpine Jazz Quintet featuring Fort Worth Jazz guitarist Jim McKay, and Ferguson will join in with his trumpet. “Our organization was created for a more vibrant and robust business climate in downtown Alpine and we have no greater draw than the many murals and art galleries that bring so many visitors to our city,” ADA President Jim Street said. “Many people think of art as paintings and sculptures, but the performing arts are very much a part of the brand,” he said. “And Alpine has a rich abundance of all art genres.”

OBITUARIES



Gonzales

Victor R. Gonzales, 73, of Odessa was called home by our Lord on Monday, September 14, 2020. He was born on October 13, 1946 in Bakersfield, California, to Elizabeth Gonzales. He grew up in Alpine with his grandparents, Andres and Augustina Gonzales. He attended Centennial School and Alpine High School. While in high school, Victor played the trombone in the Alpine High School marching band. He enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduation from Alpine High School and was stationed at Camp

Pendleton, California. He was honorably discharged from armed service on May 8, 1974. After his service in California, he lived primarily in Odessa. He attended Odessa College and Sul Ross State University, where he majored in English Literature. He trained in the culinary arts and held various positions as a cook before changing his profession. He moved on to become a professional contract painter, working with several construction companies throughout West Texas. His hobbies included reading and working crossword puzzles. He enjoyed dancing and listening to Tejano and country western music. His favorite shows were the old western cowboys movies. He was a die hard Dallas Cowboys fan. Victor is survived by his aunts, Juanita Silva of Odessa and Mandy Galindo of Union City, California; brothers, Stanley Echavarria, Andrew Orosco and John Rodriguez; sisters, Maria Alvarez, Sylvia Harman, Novella Rosales and Rita Herrera; and numerous grandnieces and nephews that he adored and that adored him.

Victor was preceded in death by his mother, Elizabeth Gonzales; brother, Carlos Manuel Orosco; grandparents, Andres and Augustina Gonzales; and several uncles. Visitation was held on Monday, September 21, 2020 at Frank Wilson Funeral Directors. The Rosary was recited at St. Mary’s Catholic Church. A Mass of Christian Burial followed with Fr. Bernard Getigan officiating. Graveside services with military honors were Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at Holy Angels Cemetery in Alpine with Fr. Pablo Matta officiating. Aaron Gonzales, Andrew Gonzales, Billy Gonzales, Joey Gonzales, Gilbert Marquez, Mario “Moe” Marquez, and Rene Ruiz served as pallbearers. Frank Gonzales, Fidel Marquez, Marcos Garcia and Steve Garcia were honorary pallbearers. The family of Victor R. Gonzales would like to thank family and friends for their prayers, love and support during this sad and difficult time. Thank you also for the floral offerings, food and courtesies extended to us. “Dios nos da amor, pero solo nos empresta aquin amamos.”

Drive-by blessing of the animals on October 4

MARFA — All creatures great and small, with fur, fins, feathers or scales are invited to St. Paul’s Episcopal Church on Sunday, October 4 from 4 to 5 p.m. for a contact-free, drive-by Blessing of the Animals. The event celebrates St. Francis of Assisi – patron saint of animals – who was born in 1182 and died in 1226. Legends say that Francis could communicate with animals, and the blessing is a sign of humility and respect, a reminder that humans are not the center of everything. Everyone is invited. If your animals cannot ride along with you, please bring a picture of your pet. The Rev. Michael Wallens will bless each animal in your vehicle. There will be plenty of treats for pets and their people. St. Paul’s Episcopal is the stone church just north of the Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa.



Torres

Joe Raul “Magoo” Torres, 69, resident of Alpine, Texas, passed away on September 26, 2020, in Odessa, Texas, after a brief illness. He was born in Alpine on March 6, 1951, son of Horacio and Paulita Torres. He was the oldest of eleven children. He was preceded in death by his parents, Horacio and Paulita Torres, and two brothers, Victor Manuel and Mark Anthony. He is survived by his spouse of 49 years, Marta Torres; children, Billy

Jack (Carmen) Torres of Alpine, Joe R. (Melody) Torres of Odessa, Victor Torres of Alpine, and John Carlo Torres of San Antonio; eight grandchildren, William, Daniella, Joseph, Maycee, Zane, Owen, Cole and Seth; and great-grandson, Rylan. He is also survived by his sisters, Laura Torres of El Paso; Irma (Cruz) Lechuga of Horizon, Texas; Elva Torres of Odessa; Oralia Torres of San Angelo, Texas; Lydia Torres of El Paso; and Pamela Torres of San Angelo; and his brothers, Jerry (Dara) Torres of Colorado and William N. (Irene) Torres of Midland. Joe graduated from Alpine High School and attended Sul Ross State University. He worked for Southwestern Bell/AT&T from 1980 until his retirement in 2005. After his retirement from the telephone company, he fulfilled his life-long dream of owning and operating a restaurant, Magoo’s Bar and Grill. Joe, who had a passion for helping people, also owned and

operated a bail bonds company. When he was not working, he enjoyed playing golf, playing cards, telling jokes, meeting new people and spending time with his grandchildren. He loved his family, and his grandchildren were his whole world. Joe never met a stranger and was the life of the party with his jokes which turned into long stories. He was an active leader and served on the board of the Alpine Country Club and various other community organizations geared to improving the community. He will be missed, and he is leaving a huge void in the Torres family and the Alpine community. A farewell service will be held on Friday, October 2, 2020 at 10 a.m. at Jackson Field so that the community can join the family in bidding him farewell. Alpine Memorial Funeral Home has been entrusted with his services. Online condolences may be left at: www.alpinememorialfuneralhome.com.



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Valenzuela

Felicita Luna Valenzuela was born May 18th, 1934 in Terlingua, Texas. She passed away September 12, 2020. She grew up in Terlingua with her parents, Gilberto and Bonifacia Luna, at the Luna Jacal, which is a historical landmark in Big Bend National Park. She went on to be the proud mother of eight children: Ramona Valenzuela and

husband Oscar, Juanita Lara and husband Chris, Maria Luna, Luis Luna and wife Alma, Mauricio Luna and wife Jessica, Pete Luna and wife Maria, Gilbert Luna, and Rudy Luna. Her family went on to include 33 grandchildren and 75 great-grandchildren, along with their husbands and wives. Her happy outlook on life was a love of music and her present smile. She will be missed and remembered by us all.

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Special Arts Section

‘Ever changing, ever adapting’ Chinati Weekend

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

MARFA — In the 33 years since Donald Judd invited art patrons to Marfa to visit his museum and walk among his works, Chinati Foundation has defined and redefined Chinati Weekend. So what is essential to the event that has spanned decades?

There’s the art, with tours through the collection and lectures from preeminent scholars. There’s lots of food, be it quail and lobster tails or a Tex-Mex barbecue. Live music – but is it bagpiping or Sonic Youth? And performances that have ranged from then-board member Tommy Lee Jones doing a performative reading of Judd’s writings to Wallace Shawn in a play directed by then-curator Rob Weiner.

Through the years, the event has seen that and much more, and to Ingrid Schaffner, Chinati Foundation’s curator, the annual weekend event is “ever changing, ever adapting.” So its latest adaptation – a wholly virtual affair from October 9-11 – is “yet another iteration of this live and ever lively event,” Schaffner says.

The first year of Chinati Weekend was a small beginning, where a cohort of patrons trekked into the Chihuahuan Desert to encounter the nascent foundation. It was 1987, and Donald Judd was inviting visitors to see works by himself and John Chamberlain.

“But it seems it was Judd wanting to open up Chinati to bigger visibility. It was an important beginning for this being a destination weekend,” Schaffner said. Those who made the trip to Marfa were met with a “progressive” party, welcomed to a Judd exhibition in El Paso and a dinner, the first of many hosted by the Chinati Foundation. The group was then shuttled into Marfa, toured through the foundation, fed and sent off. The first Chinati Weekend, then called Open House, was in the books.

Each year, the crowd grew larger. The formal dinners “with quail and lobster tails,” Schaffner said, gave way to block party-esque events where locals, patrons and some of the art world’s biggest names feasted elbow to elbow.



Photo courtesy of The Chinati Foundation

A 2004 Chinati Weekend dinner gathered the community and art patrons alike to rub elbows and eat together.

Sam Schonzeit, now a Marfa resident, attended several times in the early 2000s. He came to work as a docent for Chinati Weekend, slept on the floor of the Thunderbird Hotel before its remodel and ate among the locals and visitors.

“I remember sitting at long Judd tables on Highland and eating barbecue off of paper, sitting next to people from the town,” he says. “The sensation of sitting in the middle of the street and that this town felt so remote and that they were able to shut down a street to have a giant block party was wonderful.”

“And the fact that everything was free felt so generous and unexpected,” Schonzeit recalls. “It was not a small amount of people, it was like the whole town, hundreds of people at these long tables – it felt democratic and utopian even as a visitor.”

Early on, the gratis meals were actually a necessity – there weren’t enough restaurants in town to feed every visitor for every meal. As Marfa has grown into a year-round destination, the local offerings have grown too.

Schaffner says of the weekend’s

essence, “it’s music, it’s food, and it’s really going to this ethos of Judd that hospitality is important and that we live with art, art should be a part of daily life, let’s eat with it, let’s hang out with it.”

When Judd was still at the helm of the weekends, there was food, music and revelry. “The Open House that is most memorable to me is the one held in 1991, the year that Claes Oldenburg’s Monument to the Last Horse was installed and dedicated at Chinati,” recalls Rosario Halpern, the foundation’s executive director from 1989 to 1992. “The weekend was lively and busy and full of excitement.”

“Besides the work of Judd, Oldenburg and Chamberlain, the exhibits that year included works by Josef Albers, prints by Agnes Martin and Barnett Newman, paintings by Richard Paul Lohse, among other works, plus an exhibit of one of the first artists in residence, Brian Wendelman of Sweden.”

Cueva de Leon of Fort Davis catered that weekend’s dinner, which fed hundreds. As the evening continued, Judd’s invited guest, Joe Brady Jr., entertained the crowd

with bagpiping, an art form close to Judd’s heart. Then, Esteban Alvarez and Lupe Cataño lit a bonfire on the arena grounds, and, as Halpern recalls, “We all watched the flames and drank beer and tequila and had a good time.”

To translate and channel these moments through the internet, the foundation has gotten creative. While it’s been years since any bonfire outside the arena, at this year’s online weekend, a “bonfire” event will welcome special guests dropping in to “share stores, lore, maybe a song,” and “reflect on the history of this program that is such an important part of Chinati’s identity,” says Schaffner.

And instead of bagpipes, Terry and Jo Harvey Allen are dropping in to perform, Primo Carrasco and David Beebe will present the Truckload of Music, and local artists recorded sets on the Chinati Foundation grounds that will be streamed over the weekend. As for meals, while the dinners are on hold, supporters of Chinati Weekend have the opportunity to have a whole brisket from local eatery Convenience West shipped

“It’s music, it’s food, and it’s really going to this ethos of Judd that hospitality is important and that we live with art, art should be a part of daily life, let’s eat with it, let’s hang out with it.”

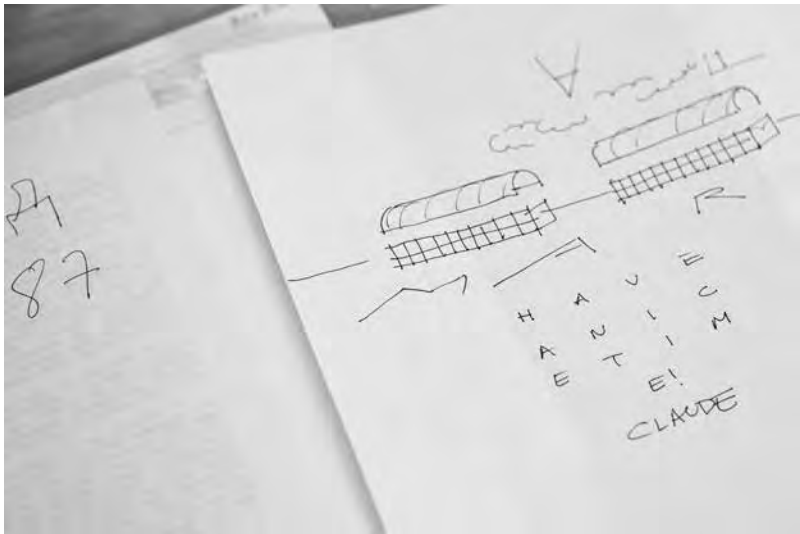


Photo by Maisie Crow

Claude Armstrong, an architecture student of Lauretta Vinciarelli’s, among other artists, drafted a concept for invitations to Chinati. The drawings were found among the Chinati Foundation’s archives.

to their door.

“There’s something to nourish all of my cultural yearnings, which have been sharpened by this moment of pandemic and the relative isolation that we are all in,” Schaffner says of this year’s programming.

Though tours of the grounds have radically shifted due to the foundation only offering outdoor walking tours through the collection, virtual visitors can still engage with Judd’s works this year. Lectures will go on virtually, including a talk between MoMA curator Ann Temkin and Judd Foundation archivist and program director Caitlin Murray discussing

the methodology of research for the

MoMA’s current Judd retrospective.

This month marks the 20th anniversary of the installation of the Dan Flavin works at Chinati, and thanks to the need to build the online platform for Chinati Weekend this year, the foundation plans to launch three online conversations about Flavin’s works this year, on their history, their materiality and the contemporary artists’ perspective, which can be attended by patrons around the world.

Even so, Schaffner hopes to bring everyone to Marfa again soon. “May this be a singular event and that we gather again next fall.”

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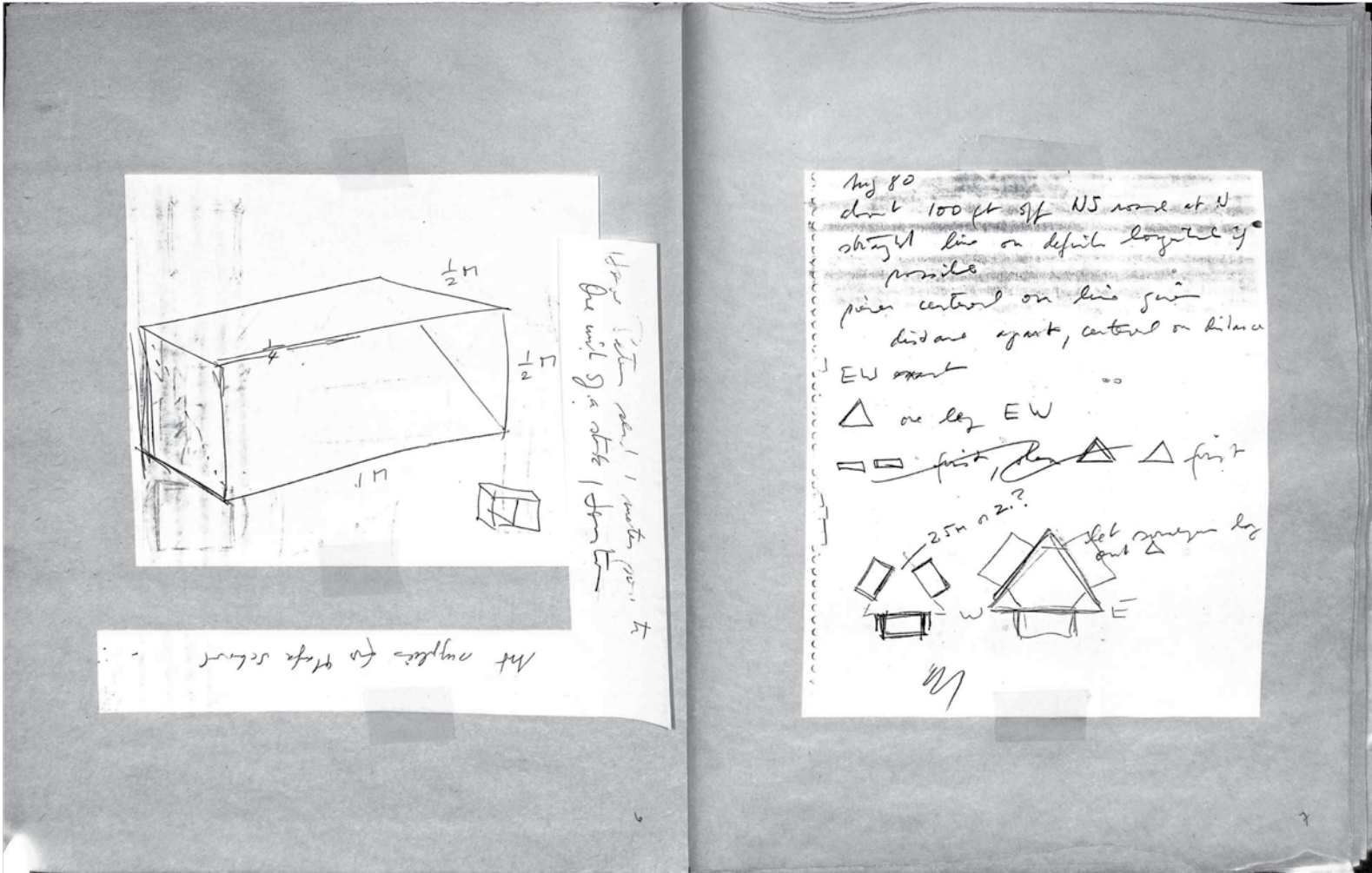
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A selected page from the unrealized catalog by Judd of his works in concrete.

The archives in Apartment 14

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — For decades, artists and employees at the Chinati Foundation would generate paperwork. As it stacked up, it would be swept into boxes and stashed away in Apartment 14, a room built into one of the barracks at Chinati Foundation in Fort D.A. Russell. While those who had been around long enough could point you to the box you were looking for, as decades passed, staff turnover meant much of Apartment 14’s contents were unidentified storage to be rifled through from time to time.

Hidden among the bank boxes, folders and stacks of paper in the dim apartment and storage closets are ephemeral treasures by Donald Judd, documenting the period where he worked through the creation and growth of the Chinati Foundation. Also in the apartment are jottings and ideas from artists in

the collection and documents that reveal the history of the institution itself, through project plans, artist-in-residence applications, local newspaper clippings, financial documents and much more.

It was the completion of the foundation’s master plan in the late 2010s that uncovered a need to process the archive. The foundation and Executive Director Jenny Moore applied for a grant from the Mellon Foundation and received funding for a two-year project from April 2019 to April 2021 to process Chinati’s paper archive.

It’s Hannah Marshall’s duty to sort it all out. Marshall initially moved to Marfa to work remotely for an archival software company – fortuitously, it was around the time the foundation began its search for its first ever full-time archivist. She took the job as archivist and, with the help of archives research fellow Hannah Yetwin, has spent over a year and half in Apartment 14.

As the pair sifts through 1,000 feet of physical paper, they are identifying items, categorizing them, conserving them and making them searchable for future use by scholars and the curious.

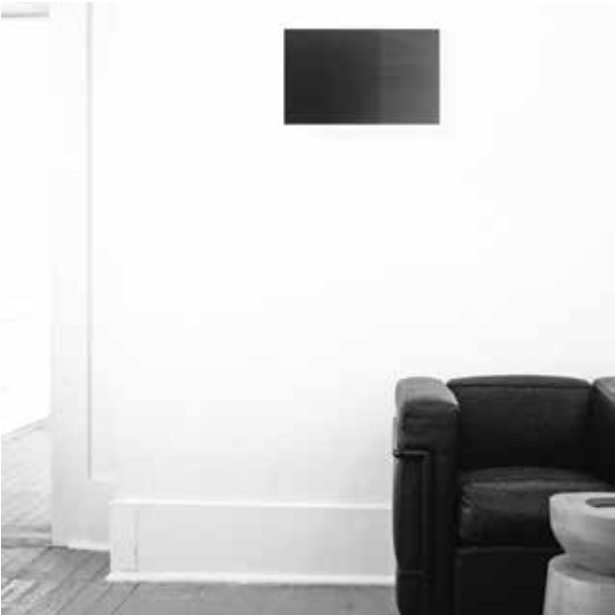
At the same time as they handle the physical, they’re also building a database that’s a guide for the collection. Items are sorted into individual record groups, and then the duo writes “finding aids” which help researchers learn what the collection has, including relevant history and the scope of the records. “You’re creating a lot of order where there wasn’t any,” Marshall said.

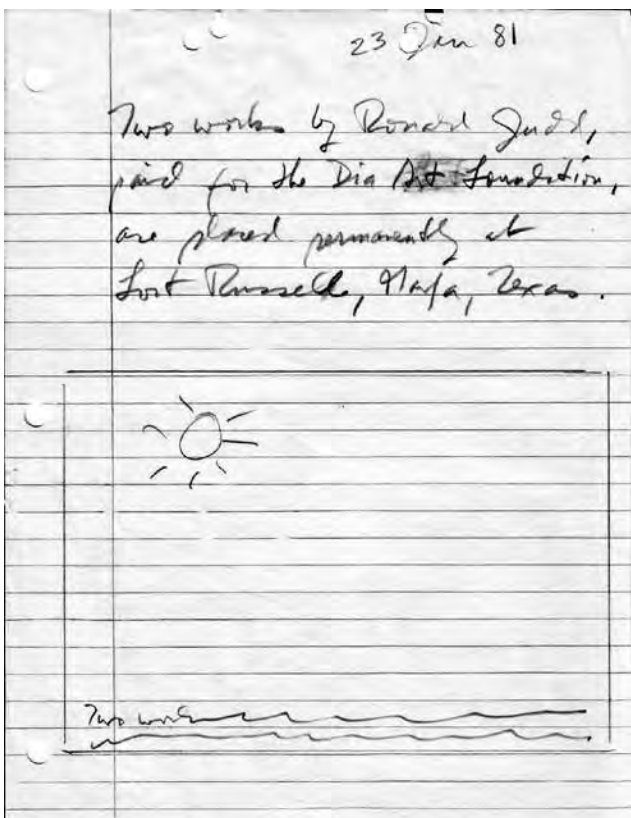
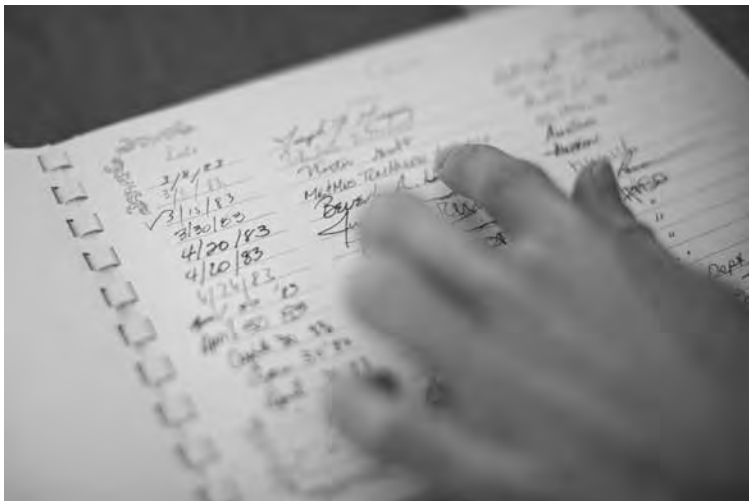
“A record group in our archive would be ‘the records of Donald Judd,’ and within that there’d be a series for the artillery shed, milled aluminum, the works of concrete. Here everything revolves around the art,” Marshall explained.

Among the records, Marshall has unearthed a draft of an unrealized book made by Judd and Coosje van Bruggen.

2d

After these months in a new kind of world I am grateful that this gallery, exhibitions2d, is still here, now in year eighteen. We are thankful for the long-term clients and collectors who value and support genuine, thoughtful artists. From opening in 2003, when visitors were often art Pilgrims, through the shift to kewl Marfa, gallery focus has remained steady. To that end the exhibition remains open to those who actively seek it. For an appointment, or available work, please message @exhibitions2d on Instagram or email x2d@exhibitions2d.com.





Top left: An early guest book from the Chamberlain building shows early visitors to the foundation.
Bottom left: In the archives, a binder of printed photos was sent to the foundation by a visitor compelled to share his experience visiting Chinati.
Center: Archivist Hannah Marshall sits in Apartment 14, home of the Chinati Foundation's archives.
Right: A draft of a postcard concept by Donald Judd that was inviting visitors to experience the early days of the Chinati Foundation.

Written on the cover of the assemblage is “Donald Judd, Drawings: Free Standing Concrete” and the ensuing pages of the book dated from 1990 are filled with scanned drafts of the concrete works, taped in place, revealing an order of creation that Judd saw as important.

“It’s clear they were trying to get a feel of what this book would look like if they made it, and it never got made,” said Marshall, “but I find it to be this charming and thoughtful document that is also, when you look through the really shabby mock up, it’s a really important document of what he thought was an important sequence of images to see to understand.” In it, there are sketches for configurations and units that never happened, she notes. “It’s such a great, weird thing to come across.”

Marshall also called it “unbelievable timing” that last week she came across the handwritten speeches of Rudy Fuchs, a Dutch curator, early board member of the foundation and

friend of Judd. The timing was notable, as the speeches were from early years of Chinati Weekend, which begins this year on October 9.

There is an archival photo of Fuchs delivering one of the speeches, and Marshall had heard they were legendary, but with no recording, it was unknown what was said in those early days of Chinati Foundation.

“He’s delivering a speech in that picture, and these are the handwritten drafts of one of the speeches he gave,” she remarked as she carefully showed the paperclipped speech, stored in an archival sleeve. “He’s a beautiful writer so his speeches sort of bring a tear to your eye,” and through the archiving project, those speeches will later be available to the public.

Even on more benign, day-to-day documents, Judd’s distinct handwriting is visible, and his doodles and marginalia dot the archive. A sheet of paper from 1981 shows Judd sketching out

a concept for a postcard – with a big rudimentary sun drawn in the top corner and sky taking up the large sum of the page. Written on it is a message inviting people to visit Chinati, back when he could sum up the collection by writing, “Two works by Donald Judd, paid for by the Dia Art Foundation, are placed permanently at Fort Russell, Marfa, Texas.” It was a message recording the early era of the Chinati Foundation as summed by Judd himself.

The Mellon Foundation grant is purely for the paper records, meaning records that have been generated in the last decade, like emails and digital design documents, are not included in the scope. Marshall said cataloging digital files would be a “next phase,” as would be any plans to digitize media like photos, film or slides. But Chinati is already looking ahead to the next phases, which would catalog other media, and collect stories, images and ephemera from those in the community and those with longstanding connections to the Chinati Foundation.

October 10, 2020

Visiting Scholar Ann Temkin

Judd Foundation presents a conversation with Ann Temkin, the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

This program is presented in conjunction with Chinati Weekend.

**Saturday, October 10
2:00pm CDT
Judd Foundation
Livestream**

Temkin will be joined by Caitlin Murray, Director of Archives and Programs at Judd Foundation, for a discussion of *Judd*, on view at MoMA through January 9, 2021. This conversation will address the role of Donald Judd’s installed spaces in New York and Marfa as well as the role of the Donald Judd Papers in the development of the exhibition, the first major US retrospective of the artist’s work in over three decades.

To watch, please visit juddfoundation.org/talks.

Judd Foundation spaces remained closed as we have temporarily suspended public programs and guided visits.

Judd Foundation maintains and preserves Donald Judd’s permanently installed living and working spaces, libraries, and archives in New York and Marfa, Texas.

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Making together, from a distance: How Chinati Education pivoted to virtual learning

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Earlier this year, educators at the Chinati Foundation and another local group, the Dixon Water Foundation, were working on a new project with eighth graders at Marfa Independent School District. The goal was to get kids learning about watersheds, and to realize that earth science didn’t have to be totally separate from art.

The Chinati Foundation took students to Dixon, where they learned about water absorption and soil types. Students started working on their own plaster landscapes. As a sign of how topsy-turvy life would soon become, Chinati had already implemented handwashing rules in its buildings as a precaution against coronavirus, which at that point had killed just a few people across the United States.

But that watershed project never finished — and by now, readers probably know the rest. Coronavirus was soon raging on the east and west coasts, and people as far away as the Big Bend started distancing.

Public schools across the region soon shuttered. Local officials imposed emergency rules, issuing stay-at-home orders and temporary hotel closures. The Chinati Foundation closed to visitors, as did countless local businesses. And educators at the foundation, who often relied on in-person activities and projects, were left scrambling to reassess.

Molly Bondy, the lead educator at the Chinati Foundation, said the weight of the pandemic first hit her when Marfa started shutting down. But at first, she said she figured it was just a temporary adjustment. “I didn’t think it was going to continue for as long as it has,” she said.

But as the weeks and months dragged on, and spring turned into summer, Bondy said she realized that she wouldn’t be giving class tours or meeting with students anytime soon. “I saw things were continuing to go in the same way,” she said. She figured “we’re going to be doing online learning for a while.”

In many ways, the position Bondy found herself in wasn’t so different from that of others across the state and country. At Marfa ISD, teachers were trying to find ways to keep students engaged and educated after students were told that they wouldn’t be returning to in-person classes after spring break.

Even Chinati itself was seeing changes. In the spring, like other institutions across Marfa, it closed to visitors.

In the summer, it started reopening to some guests for self-guided, socially distant tours of its outside spaces. “This is very much a process,” Jenny Moore, the group’s

executive director, told *The Big Bend Sentinel* in June. “We’re moving slowly, with safety first.”

Michael Roch, the director of education and curricula at Chinati, was blunt about the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The foundation has been working with children in the region for decades, he said, with events like poetry readings, workshops and public events.

“The pandemic has challenged us in so many ways,” he wrote in an email this week — and Chinati Education, he said, realized it needed to pivot. That meant reaching kids not with trips and projects, but through computer screens.

In March, a couple weeks after Marfa ISD closed, Chinati’s education department publicly announced its first virtual project, Making Together.

In a video outlining the project, Roch emerges onto a green-screen. “Hi and welcome, friends,” he said. “We’re living in a peculiar time. It might feel a little weird to you. It might seem a little scary. I promise you, you’re not alone.”

In the video, Roch outlined some of the challenges of this new era, from teachers who were trying to figure out virtual classes to students who were missing their friends.

“We believe making and sharing art together will make us feel connected,” he added. He stressed the project was open to families anywhere, whether they were in Marfa, Presidio or “even across the ocean.”

Making Together ran for seven weeks, with a theme each week inspired by works at Chinati. Students studied shapes, transformation, storytelling, movement, design, light/color and friendship. There were also videos focusing on particular works at Chinati. “It was sort of a virtual-ish tour of an artwork,” said Bondy, the lead educator.

Each of those themes came with its own sub-projects, which could be anything from designing a hat to choreographing a dance. “These simple projects work toward building student understanding of the fundamental elements of art and design,” Roch said in an email. And with all the projects shared online — including in prompt videos posted on Instagram — students and classrooms could join in whether they were in Marfa or not.

For Bondy, the lead educator who produced and appeared in many of those videos, working remotely presented new challenges. “In a classroom, it can be pretty evident if students are engaged,” she said. It wasn’t so easy to tell online.

As she sees it, interacting with students also became a more delicate task in the pandemic. “Teaching at this time means having an awareness that students are experiencing stress and anxiety and trauma,” she said.

Still, going virtual wasn’t all bad. On Instagram,



Photo by Michael Roch

As Summer Shake-up went virtual this year, educators at the Chinati Foundation put together bags of art supplies which families could pick up. Here, Molly Bondy, lead educator at the foundation, hands art supplies to a car outside Marfa High School.

Chinati’s education department could reach an audience well beyond Marfa. Soon, people from across the country were commenting on the posts — and some were even sending in their art pieces.

Teachers as far away as New York and California started using the curriculum. One of those was Genevieve La Riva, a elementary school special-education teacher at P.S. 110 in Brooklyn.

As a special-education teacher, La Riva said she found herself overwhelmed as schools in New York City shut down in the spring. “I had so many students,” she said. “Because they’re special-ed students, they’re mandated to have live [video] lessons. They’re also very young.”

Then La Riva said she came across Chinati’s lessons on Instagram. She loved them. She started incorporating the prompts into her own teaching, sometimes adding her own twists. Her students wrote and submitted poems, or drew visual representations of how they pictured sounds like bird songs and falling leaves.

La Riva said she especially loved how the Chinati curricula were open-ended and unpretentious. “They were very conceptual,” she said, “and yet they lend themselves to doing something that’s not intimidating.” They felt like projects that weren’t just the “providence of art teachers,” but something that she as a special-ed teacher could do.

La Riva also liked the soothing energy of Chinati’s videos and projects. “I like the slowness of them,” she said with a laugh. “It’s kind of like that Mr. Rogers thing.” Especially as coronavirus continues to disrupt the lives of children, “it’s better if everything’s not so speedy,” she added. She found the projects “calming and in-the-moment — like you’re sharing a space.”

Making Together was just the start of Chinati’s digital curriculum. Next up was Summer Shake-up — the Chinati’s standard summer programming for students,

which this year also went virtual. The topic this year was process. Parents could also stop by and pick up art supplies.

After Summer Shake-Up, Chinati educators spent four weeks studying local flora and fauna. Then they launched their latest project, “Discover, Play, Make,” a project exploring the materials behind art, from natural materials to found media.

Now, the Chinati Foundation is getting ready for the rest of its school-year programming. Typically, that might include everything from poetry workshops with high-school freshmen in the fall to screen-printing with seniors in the spring. Educators at both Chinati and Marfa ISD say they’re committed to have their poetry workshops this year — but with the coronavirus pandemic still disrupting daily life, it’s unclear what exactly that will look like.

“We’ve been talking to Michael and trying to figure out ways we can still partner together,” said Oscar Aguero, the superintendent for Marfa ISD. “We’ve looked at doing Zoom meetings and videos, kind of like we did for Summer Shake-up.” He says the poetry lessons will still happen for ninth graders this year — though he acknowledges the school is “still brainstorming” what that means.

“It’s a really hands-on activity [Roch] does with the poetry,” Aguero said. “They talk about space and how to line up words on paper. That’s a little harder to do on a Zoom meeting.”

Aguero, who also has two children at Marfa ISD, has been happy with Chinati’s virtual programming. “They’re well-designed,” he said of the foundation’s videos. His own daughter has enjoyed the prompts and activities.

Both Bondy and Roch said they didn’t tailor their projects this year to focus on coronavirus. At the same time, they acknowledged the virus and all of its disruptions was a theme that showed up in artwork by students.

“We find ourselves in this weird time, and art is kind of a way to think about and process what’s going on,” Bondy said. Also, “it’s a way for us to continue to share Chinati.”

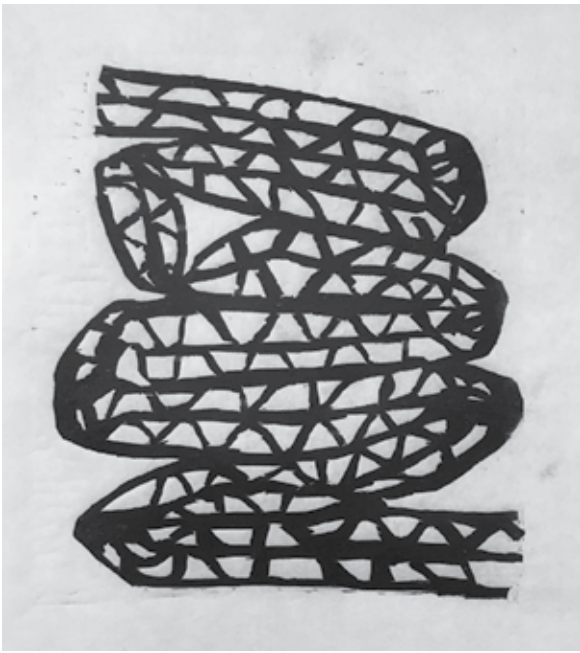
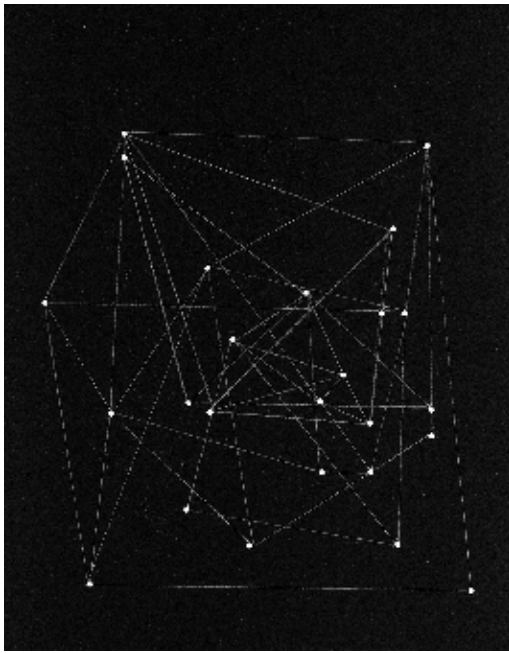
Bondy foresees Chinati’s all-virtual education continuing through at least the start of 2021. “Even if there’s a vaccine, it’s not going to be back to normal,” she said. “I think we’ll continue our Instagram presence. We’re remaining flexible.” She stressed that “any decision we make is based on the science and what public health officials are saying.”

Bondy misses seeing students in-person and looks forward to doing that again. “Being in person with the art is an experience that you can’t really replicate,” she said.

Still, being online has had its perks. “We’re able to provide greater accessibility to the collection, to the projects that we do, and that’s very exciting to me,” she said. Even after the pandemic’s over, she hopes to continue making lesson plans available online for students across the country. “Maybe that’s something we’ve learned along the way.”

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DIRECTOR'S WELCOME
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OPEN HOUSE
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COLLECTION TOURS — Friends of Chinati share
their knowledge of favorite works at the museum.

CHINATI 2020 — Chinati staff Peter Stanley, Hannah
Marshall, and Tobin Becker address current conservation,
archival and restoration projects at the museum.

CHINATI FOR CHILDREN — Donald Judd
interviewed by May Quick's 8th grade class from Marfa
Elementary School in November 1978. The interview
took place at La Mansana de Chinati/The Block, Judd's
home in Marfa, Texas, now Judd Foundation.

Video courtesy of Marion Quick, © 2020 May Quick.
Donald Judd Art © Judd Foundation/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

CASTING THE WORKS IN CONCRETE —
Archival footage of the work in progress.

CAVALRY DAYS — "Rambling Boy" Lonn Taylor
recounts Chinati's early history as Fort D.A. Russell.

Audio courtesy KRTS-FM Marfa Public Radio.

1-2:00pm
LUNCH BREAK
At the railroad tracks

2:00pm **tune in live**
**JUDD FOUNDATION VISITING
SCHOLAR: ANN TEMKIN**
*Hosted by Judd Foundation
in conjunction with Chinati Weekend*
Judd Foundation presents a conversation with Ann
Temkin, the Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief
Curator of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of
Modern Art in New York. Temkin will be joined by
Caitlin Murray, Director of Archives and Programs at
Judd Foundation, for a discussion of *JUDD*, on view at
MoMA through January 9th, 2021. This conversation
will include discussion of the role of the Donald Judd
Papers and his installed spaces in New York and
Marfa, Texas in the development of *JUDD*, the first
major US retrospective dedicated to the artist's work in
over three decades.

4:00pm **tune in live**
**CHINATI SPECIAL EXHIBITION:
DIALOGUE**
Ann Temkin, in conversation with
Jenny Moore
Explore the dialogue between rarely seen works in
Chinati's collection: Donald Judd, untitled works in
plywood, 1978, and Barnett Newman, *Notes (I-XII)*,
1968. Ann Temkin is the Chief Curator of Painting and
Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art, New York;
she has organized major historic surveys of the work
of Donald Judd (2020) and Barnett Newman (2002).

6:00pm **tune in live**
**CHINATI WEEKEND:
CONTINUUM**
Writer Sterry Butcher narrates an illustrated
history of Chinati Weekend.

6:30pm **tune in live**
BONFIRE
Gather around a virtual bonfire to listen in on
special guests sharing history and swapping
lore of Chinati Weekend. Bring a drink.

8:00pm **tune in live**
TRUCKLOAD OF MARFA MUSIC
Travel with musician hosts Primo Carrasco
and David Beebe for sets by W. Creeves,
Mia Valentini, Tilly Hawk, and the Marfa
Municipal Alliance for Dead Country and
Folk Singers performed at Chinati locations
around Marfa.

9:30-11:00pm **tune in live**
CHINATI WEEKEND AIRWAVES
*Hosted by KRTS-FM Marfa Public Radio
in conjunction with Chinati Weekend*
Marfa Public Radio dedicates tonight's
program to the many musical talents who
have performed at Chinati Weekend.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11 CHINATI WEEKEND

11:00am **tune in live**
LOOKING FORWARD
Lynne Cooke and Sarah Workneh,
in conversation with Ingrid Schaffner
Explore the role of the curatorial and community-
building in making cultural institutions more diverse
and inclusive. This conversation also introduces a year
of online programming in conjunction with a major
refurbishment of Dan Flavin's untitled (Marfa project),
which was publicly inaugurated at Chinati Weekend
20 years ago.

Lynne Cooke is the Senior Curator, Special Projects
in Modern Art, at the National Gallery, Washington,
DC; from 1991-2008 she was the curator at Dia
Art Foundation. Sarah Workneh is Co-Director of
Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture.

12pm **tune in live**
ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE
Explore new work with 2020 resident artists.
K.B. JONES — A studio visit at the Locker Plant with
the painter.

SAHRA MOTALEBI — *Resonators (psychoacoustic
drawing, Arena)*, 2020. Digital video, 3 minutes.

12:30pm **tune in live**
DIRECTOR'S TOAST
Jenny Moore raises a glass and Chinati
Weekend draws to a close.

BAGPIPES
Mahrla Manning, Pipe Major of Empyre
Pipes and Drums of El Paso, Texas

Support for Chinati Weekend 2020 is provided
by the Carl & Marilyn Thoma Art Foundation.

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Chinati's educational and public programming is supported with generous
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Vaughan Foundation. Chinati is grateful for the support and in-kind
contributions of the people of Marfa and far West Texas.

CELEBRATE CHINATI WEEKEND FROM HOME



Dan Flavin: untitled (Marfa project), 1996. The Chinati Foundation, Marfa, Texas. Photo by Douglas Tuck.

CHINATI WEEKEND 2020
WWW.CHINATI.ORG

Arts

Ballroom’s ‘unFlagging’ exhibit to explore the symbols of flags

By STEPHEN PAULSEN
stephen@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — This week, for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic, Ballroom Marfa is trying its hand at an outdoor and socially distant exhibit.

The outdoor exhibition, entitled “unFlagging,” will explore the symbols and rituals behind flags, including how “we learn to raise them, lower them, fold them, sing to them and respect them,” Ballroom stated in an online post announcing the event. unFlagging opens Friday, October 2, and will run into January.

The genesis for the project started over the summer. In June, as protests over the killing of George Floyd and other Black Americans spread across the nation, Ballroom raised a banner over its courtyard with a simple message: “Black lives matter.” At the time, Ballroom said it raised the banner in solidarity with the protesters, and to commemorate Juneteenth, the day in 1865 when many black slaves in Texas learned they were free.

That project was well-received, and it got Ballroom thinking about other ways it could use its courtyard and/or flags to safely display art during the coronavirus pandemic, Sarah Melendez, programs director at Ballroom, said in an interview this week. They ultimately settled on “unFlagging.”

Still, Melendez hesitates to call the exhibition “an opening” — a term that carries connotations of people gathering to view art.

“We’re not technically saying we’re open,” she says. “The indoor space is closed.” And as for the courtyard where unFlagging will debut, “the gate will be open, or

it won’t be.”

“We’re not really advertising,” Melendez adds of the event. Instead, she says that “if people walk by and hear something and feel intrigued to come into the [backyard] space, they’re welcome to.”

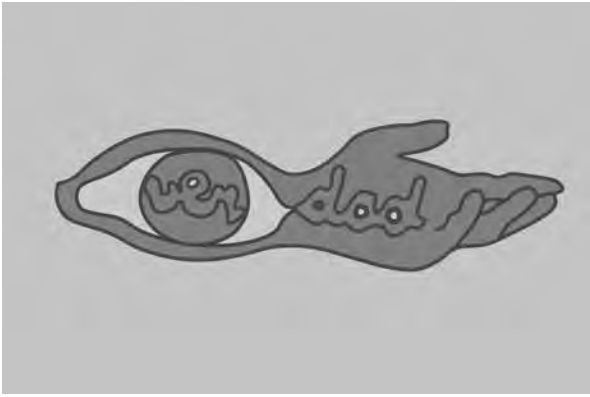
The exhibit will feature eight artists — Lisa Alvarado, Pia Camil, Jeffrey Gibson, Byron Kim, Kameelah Janan Rasheed, Hank Willis Thomas, Naama Tsabar and Cecilia Vicuña — each of whom will present a flag for two weeks.

In some cases, Melendez said, the timing of the flags was specially chosen — though that wasn’t always the case. For example, Hank Willis Thomas, the artist behind the “For Freedoms” project, will unveil his flag on Election Day. Kameelah Janan Rasheed, a Black Muslim artist, will display her flag in time for Martin Luther King Day.

The flags will be accompanied by a “sound-based work,” Ballroom said in its announcement, and artists will try to deconstruct some of the questions around flags. Questions like: “How is meaning constructed, produced, and perpetuated” by flags? And “can we invent new ways to make symbols and meanings?”

To prepare for the exhibit, Ballroom provided the artists with technical specifications (like the fact their flag pole is 30 feet tall) as well as research materials on the history and context of flags. Melendez, the program director, found herself particularly interested in the way flags sometimes convey not just sentiments, but specific messages — for instance, on the high seas.

“Ships used flags for communication,” she explains. There was “a black flag for pirates” or “a yellow flag



Courtesy of the artist
"Ver Dad" by Cecilia Vicuña.

to signify infectious disease” — as in “our boat is contaminated; don’t come anywhere near it.”

“I thought that was so interesting,” Melendez added. Two artists, she noted, have incorporated yellow into their flags, though she stressed she wasn’t sure if they intended the color as a specific reference to coronavirus.

This won’t just be Ballroom’s first coronavirus-era exhibition; it’ll also be the first exhibition involving Daisy Nam, the group’s new curator. Nam, who previously served as the assistant director at Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University, joined Ballroom in August.

In an interview this week, Nam noted she hadn’t yet worked in Marfa during non-pandemic times. Describing the “unFlagging” project as a “socially distant art-viewing situation,” she said she hoped it

would offer residents a way to get out of their homes and enjoy art while still remaining safe.

“It’s a good format for people to just have some art and be able to see something different,” Nam said. “During the pandemic — I don’t know about anyone else — but I’m getting tired of seeing art on my screen.”

Organizing an art exhibit during coronavirus posed special challenges, Nam said.

“In normal times, I would do studio visits in-person,” she said. Artists could come for a site visit, and “there’d be slightly more in-person moments where we could work things out in person.” But as the pandemic continues, Nam and other organizers have instead done much of their planning on Zoom.

Still, Nam says some aspects of putting on a show in Marfa are familiar to her. For example, there’s the focus of local art institutions like Ballroom on doing site-specific art over traveling exhibits, which show the same artworks in “quote-unquote neutral spaces.”

After all, she said, the Carpenter Center was designed by Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, often known as “Le Corbusier,” an eccentric 20th century Swiss-French architect who often designed brutalist buildings with sharp angles and unique features. That meant artists and curators at Carpenter also had to tailor their projects to the space.

“The space is so weird,” Nam said of the Carpenter Center. “There are so many windows, it’s all concrete — and there are no walls.” As a result, she said, “artists have to think through [their projects] and come up something very specific” — just as is often the case in Marfa.

Marfa Open Festival features local and visiting artists

MARFA — The fifth annual Marfa Open Art Festival kicked off the evening of Friday, Sept. 25, with a low-key reception, art opening, live music and outdoor film screening. Highlights included new work by Sara S’Jegers, an interactive “figure drawing” video installation by divinebrick (Josie J), Rumori and Chris Soohoo, and an outdoor socially distanced film screening with works by Joe Salinas, Glam and legendary punk filmmaker (and Marfa frequenter), Jon Moritsugu, who closed out the evening with a screening of “MOD F*** EXPLOSION” (1992), starring Amy Davis. It was the first part of an ongoing outdoor screening series highlighting underground, DIY, no-budget, experimental and off-the-wall cinema.



Photo courtesy of Marfa Open

The Marfa Open gallery located at 102 S Plateau.

for this year’s fifth annual MO Art Festival, MO has suspended the artist residence program and is focusing on participation by local artists, long-distance and digital participation by non-Marfa artists, and events that can be experienced safely outdoors and adhere to social distancing. Mask/face coverings are mandatory inside the gallery and to attend all events. Gallery visitor occupancy is limited.

Marfa OpenArts is a contemporary art gallery and event space in Marfa, Texas. Home to the annual MO Art Festival and AiR (Artist in Residence) program, MO focuses on serving as an accessible resource

and incubator for artistic expression and unexpected collaboration for artists across all mediums, backgrounds and skill levels. The annual Marfa Open Art Festival (held late September through mid-October) invites local, national and international artists to participate in a three-week long residency in our remote desert town to create, collaborate and exhibit work via gallery shows, installations, and live performances and events hosted at the Marfa Open House (102 S Plateau) and various site-specific locations around town. Local artist participation is encouraged and all events are open to the public.

VELDT Gallery opens LéAna Clifton’s I’MPERFECT NOW

MARFA — Opening October 9, 2020, artist LéAna Clifton will be showing the latest evolution of her work at the VELDT Gallery on North Highland Ave. in Marfa, Texas.

During the extended isolation of 2020, Clifton has been hard at work honing her technique, carefully combining various media with the goal of capturing color, light and time in immersive, abstract images. Her combination of these various media has evolved to a level to where it’s hard to define where one media ends and another begins.

Clifton is a Texas-based artist with a passion for large fields of color punctuated by bold line work. For the past decade she has focused on creating mixed-media, abstract artwork combining traditional art techniques with modern media, such as photography. In this new



Photo courtesy of VELDT Gallery
Artist LéAna Clifton

collection she achieves a soft, painterly effect by layering with various media. Finished works are typically mixed-media originals on paper.

In conjunction with Breast Cancer Awareness Month, a portion of this show’s sales will benefit METAvivor.org, an organization

that funds research into metastatic breast cancer, a somewhat overlooked yet vital area of cancer research. This research benefits all areas of breast cancer treatment including early detection. Clifton and VELDT raised over \$5000 for this organization in 2019.

VELDT GALLERY in downtown Marfa will be expanding in November. In an exciting development, the art space will be moving a few doors down Highland Ave. to the space formerly occupied by The Well. Moving to this larger space will allow VELDT to expand their offerings as well as pursue various other endeavors in 2021 with the goal of helping solidify Marfa as a destination for contemporary art and other creative disciplines.

For further information, contact VELDT GALLERY at 432-897-2360 or hello@veldtgallery.com.

VELDT GALLERY

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Conversation and inspiration at Willow House’s first Black artist residency

By BECK ANDREW SALGADO
beck@bigbendsentinel.com

TERLINGUA — Suitcases, toiletries and hiking boots. This is what usually accompanies the guests that stay in the Willow House — a desert-draped luxury getaway in Terlingua, Texas. But for two weeks during the dog days of summer, these suitcases were accompanied by canvases, and boots were swapped for brushes as the hotel became home to an art residency that was designed to highlight and support the works of several Black artists.

John Paul Jackson, a former West Texas resident and painter, was one of those artists, and he said that his return to the desert brought immediate inspiration as he detailed his routine of morning hikes and afternoon painting. Another thing Jackson was able to find in the desert was peace.

“I don’t know if it is West Texas, or if it’s nature in general, but it makes you put things in a different light ... I think it’s the peacefulness that exists with nature, there is so much noise going on in a city landscape and it just causes a lot of static in our brains. But in the desert it is so quiet, and it just allows our imaginations to be so much louder,” said Jackson.

Jackson said the increased inspiration from the quiet landscape was something that other artists experienced too, noting that they even had conversations about why they felt the roaming mountainsides of West Texas were so inspiring.



Photo courtesy of the artist
"Double Vision Double Cactus" by Jonathan Jackson.

Jackson said one of the reasons they came up with was perspective.

One of Jackson’s goals during the residency was to “start a conversation” with his art, especially in a time when perspective is so important. Jackson said the trip, by this measurement, was certainly a success as he recounted various conversations that he had with the other artists as well as West Texas residents saying it really reminded him of

“the importance of conversation.”

Lauren Werner, owner of the Willow House, made the decision to have a Black artist residency earlier this summer as a response to the ongoing racial unrest that was and still is being seen via countless demonstrations across the country.

Werner spoke about how the residency allowed her and others to have great conversations with so many creatives from different backgrounds and parts of the country about their experiences as Black artists and Americans.

And as a purely creative exploration, Werner said that having so many talented people at the Willow House was an experience in itself.

“We have never had the entire property occupied by just creatives, so that experience alone was great to be able to have, especially when everyone has a different artistic focus and you get to witness so many things come together at once,” said Werner.

Werner alluded to the unrest in the country, saying that she felt blessed to be able to be surrounded by such positive and creative people. Werner went on to say that it was great to see all of the artists embrace West Texas and see the work that emerged.

Werner hinted at wanting to do another artist residency at the Willow House but said that only time will tell whether or not that will become a reality, especially with the increased unpredictability that COVID-19 has brought.

DRAWING OF THE WEEK

"My Imagination" by Francisco Marfa Elementary School

Equality and peace: Judd Foundation’s installation for civic engagement

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — In its first of three partnered projects with For Freedoms, Judd Foundation is exhibiting two works, one in Marfa and one in New York, through October. In Marfa, a poster in the foundation’s window front by José Parlá reads “Igualdad y paz,” Spanish for equality and peace.

“We really identified with the values of For Freedoms in terms of the importance of encouraging civic engagement,” said Caitlin Murray, the foundation’s director of archives & programs. For Freedoms is an artist-founded organization that began in 2016 with a mission to provide a platform for creative civic engagement, discourse and direct action.

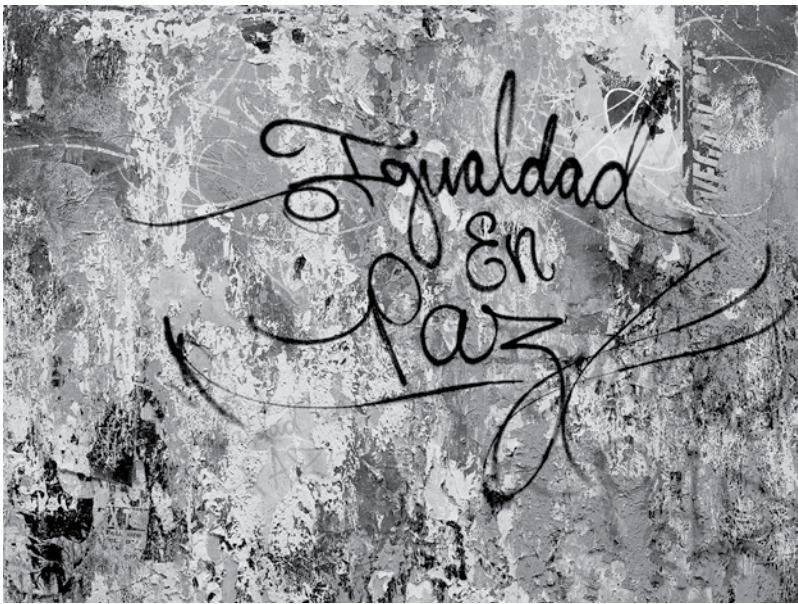


Photo courtesy of the artist
"Igualdad en Paz" by José Parlá, 2020.

politics, in organizations that will defend their rights and obtain more, that will decide on what should happen in all public matters. If you don’t act, someone will decide everything.”

That last sentence will be a part of another partnership between

Judd Foundation and For Freedoms, where the quote will be installed on a billboard leading up to and through the November election.

And along with the installations in New York and Marfa, the foundation is thinking about how contemporary artists are engaging with that question, prompting them to host a talk with Parlá and Carlos Motta (whose poster is installed at Spring Street) about the artist and politics today.

Parlá was born into being political, with parents who left Cuba “due to the political division that happened there,” he said. As a young person, he was introduced to underground hip hop culture, which he said gave a voice to people who were not part of the mainstream. “Hip hop was

born out of the ashes of the South Bronx after it had been through decades of fires and those were due to redlining, politics, insurance scams. As an artist, the things I came from and was born out of were highly politicized situations.”

The piece installed in Marfa by Parlá was reworked from a billboard made in 2018, and shows off the layering and texture added. In reworking the piece, he added what he imagined were desert tones, and sanded, layered, added washes and resized the work to fill the entire window, to “make something site specific,” he said.

Recently, Judd Foundation has partnered with a local organization, Marfa Steps Up, to encourage Marfa residents to complete the census.

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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Former freshmen

6 Squid squirt

9 Doctrine

12 Construction piece

13 Cattle call

14 IRS employee

15 1492 ship

16 SAT takers' equipment

18 Pet rodent, often

20 Warmth

21 Second person

23 More, to Manuel

24 Portion of a repair bill

25 Great Lake

27 Amulet

29 "Where the Wild Things Are" author

31 "Nighthawks" painter

35 Edition

37 Genesis maker

38 Sings like Ella

41 Apprehend

43 Promptly

44 Sea eagle

45 Downy ducks

47 Necklace ornament

49 "Psycho" star

52 Commotion

53 Tall tale

54 Rod of tennis lore

55 Actress Myrna

56 Toss in

57 Tools for duels

DOWN

1 Taste the tea

2 Japanese sash

3 Gotham City super-villain

4 Detest

5 Unctuous flat-tery

6 Mischievous

7 Yule refrain

8 "— -Tiki"

9 Less friendly

10 Pie-in-the-face sound

11 Sail supports

17 Winners

19 Supports

21 "Certainly"

22 Mined find

24 Expert

26 Rewrote, maybe

28 Winning

30 Fool

32 Musingly

33 Swelled head

34 Uncooked

36 One

38 Calyx component

39 Guiding principle

40 Bother

42 Ball VIP

45 Oklahoma city

46 Harvest

48 Carte lead-in

50 "Golly!"

51 Storefront sign abbr.

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Puzzle solutions for last week’s issue

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

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Classifieds & public notices

Big Bend Regional Hospital District Medical Enhancement Grants

BBRHD is now accepting grant proposals for the FY2021 Medical Enhancement Grant program, the deadline to apply for funding will be on October 30, 2020. Brewster and Presidio County entities that provide healthcare or other related services, consistent with the mission and objectives of the District, to residents of Brewster or Presidio Counties are eligible to apply. The grant application package and additional information are available at www.bbrhd.com.

JOBS

The City of Marfa is hiring for the following positions:

- Animal Control Officer (part-time)
- City Secretary (full-time)
- Library Assistant (full-time)

Call 432.729.4315 or visit www.cityofmarfa.com/employment for job descriptions and details. Applications are available online or at City Hall, 113 S. Highland Ave.



Procurement Coordinator

BBT is seeking a full-time Procurement Coordinator. This is an inventory control and purchasing position. The ideal candidate must be well organized, able to multi-task, work under deadlines, have excellent communication and analytical skills, complete cycle counts, have Excel knowledge and the following qualifications:

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Village Farms - Employment Opportunities

Village Farms is seeking a detailed oriented individual to join our team as Shipping/Receiving Clerk for our Marfa 2 location. Responsibilities include loading and unloading, forklift operation, preparation of shipping documents, verify deliveries, maintain warehouse and other general duties. Requirements: Must be willing to work flexible hours including evenings, weekends and holidays, ability to work independently, verbal and written communication skills, working knowledge of computers and forklift experience preferred. Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug screen. Interested candidates should email or fax resume to (432)729-5010 or texashr@villagefarms.com, applications are also available at Village Farms Security Stations 3 Miles N. Hwy 17 Marfa, TX or 3 Miles S. Hwy 17 FT. Davis, TX.



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Alpine's Artwalk 2020 goes full steam ahead

ALPINE — With Alpine's Artwalk just two months away, organizer Kerri Blackman feels sure the annual event will proceed smoothly despite coronavirus uncertainty.

"With the schools reopening and COVID cases on the decline, we feel that by late November, we will be in a good position for this event," she said. "As Alpine's Gallery Night, Inc. board, we decided to go full steam ahead with a safe, outdoor venue."

Alpine's 27th Annual Artwalk is scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Nov. 20 to 21, with a new lineup and new hours.

Fourth, Fifth and Sixth streets will be closed, with art vendors set up outdoors from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Artwalk organization purchased 20 10x10 exhibit tents with sidewalls for security. Art vendor tents will show on Fifth and Sixth streets, and Alpine's Gem and Mineral Show will exhibit on Fourth Street.

This year's honored artist is Tim Roberts, who exhibits his work at Catchlight Gallery in Alpine

and The Rare Find in McPheerson, Kansas. His work will be featured inside Trans-Pecos Bank and in its parking lot.

The Fort Davis resident works for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as the cultural resources coordinator for the West Texas Region. An archeologist by day, he paints and draws by night.

Of his art, Roberts said, "There is one rule of thumb that governs my work as an artist — it has to be something I genuinely want to do, something that will maintain my interest from beginning to end. To accomplish this, I look to a variety of inspirations, styles and media to transform my creative thoughts into something tangible. If I am successful, then the creative process is not only a positive, relaxing experience for myself, but I think it also results in a better-quality work of art that can be appreciated by others."

Food trucks will again be in the Union Pacific railroad depot parking lot, but separated more than in the past. Kiowa Gallery on Holland Avenue will host the official Alpine Artwalk

booth, where t-shirts, posters, coffee mugs and other items will be available for purchase.

At Kishmish Plaza, Alpine Public Library will hold its annual silent auction benefiting the library. Donations from all official locations and artists will be on display from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Said Blackman, "We're excited for attendees to experience the new alleys and showcase the alley artwork between Fifth and Sixth streets. Due to the current environment, we feel we are going back to our roots from 27 years ago with a great hometown event." She added that every effort would be made to have live music outdoors for attendees to enjoy.

All official locations will be responsible for complying with Texas Gov. Greg Abbott's guidelines that might be in effect at the time. Each location will have a maximum occupancy, and there might be delays.

Applications for this year's Alpine's Artwalk are available at artwalkalpine.com.



PIZZA. SALAD. BEER. WINE
TUESDAY - FRIDAY 12 PM - 6 PM
SATURDAY 10 AM - 3 PM
ORDER AT MARFAPARALLEVAR.COM

PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Short-Term Rental Ordinance Workshops

The Marfa City Council cordially invites owners, operators, neighbors, and the public to attend two Short-Term Rental Ordinance workshops. The workshops are scheduled for October 1, 2020 and October 6, 2020, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Meetings will be held via Zoom. Please check cityofmarfa.com for details.

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board is looking for energetic and committed new Board members. The Board meets the third Thursday of each month at 6 pm to discuss issues related to Blackwell Park, Coffield Park, Dog Park, Sunset Park, and Travis Self Park.

Interested applicants should send a Letter of Interest, outlining why you'd like to join, what you bring to the table, and what you'd like to do by October 15 to trey@stereoluz.net

Public Notice

The Presidio County Appraisal District is seeking proposals for Financial Auditor for year ending December 2020. Any and all proposals to be submitted to the Presidio CAD office at 107 E. Texas, P O Box 879, Marfa, Texas, (432)729-3431. All proposals must be received by October 16, 2020. The Board of Directors of the Presidio CAD reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal.

Public Notice

The Presidio County Appraisal District is searching for anyone interested in serving the taxpayers of Presidio County as an Appraisal Review Board Member for a 2-year term (2021-2022). If interested, please contact the Presidio CAD office at 107 E. Texas St. (432) 729-3431 or info@presidiocad.org. Application and Questionnaire for Appointment are available at the Presidio CAD or our website presidiocad.org, Applications must be submitted to the Presidio CAD by October 16, 2020.

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MARFA 12 STEP MEETINGS ONLINE

Go to zoom.us or download the app:
ACA - Thursday 5:30 PM
<https://tinyurl.com/y7qyghga>
Al Anon. - Sunday 2:00 PM
<https://tinyurl.com/yd78lsa6>
AA - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
<https://tinyurl.com/y6okgzry>
AA - Friday 6:00 PM
<https://tinyurl.com/yxw5bsu6>
AA - Saturday 12:00 Noon
<https://tinyurl.com/yafles7y>



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