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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Marfa and Presidio schools extend free meals program for anyone under 18

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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FAR WEST TEXAS — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has expanded its meals programs in public schools through June 2022, offering free meals to anyone under the age of 18, regardless of income or enrollment status. While Marfa and Presidio schools are taking full advantage of the assistance program, neighboring Fort Davis ISD has said it will continue to pass on government assistance food programs, due to the financial burdens that come along with them.

Since the pandemic started, Marfa schools have been using the program first to offer free breakfast and lunch to all of its enrolled students, and then, after a policy change in November, to anyone in the community under the age of 18, regardless of their enrollment with the school.

Cynthia Hernandez, the school's child nutrition director, said they have been keeping on top of any free programs with the hopes of continuing to offer resources in the community. Even before the pandemic, Marfa ISD and Presidio ISD schools qualified under the Community Eligibility Provision program to offer meals for free to all students.

"We met a certain percentage target that allowed our school to operate free meals for everybody regardless of income status," Hernandez explained. That program reimbursed the schools at about 84%.

"In Presidio, all of our kids get free and reduced lunches, we don't qualify by income," said Dr. Laura Portillo, the federal programs and curriculum director at Presidio ISD. "The whole entire district qualifies."

Even though both schools were already providing free lunch, the USDA's continuation of its pandemic-era allowances will help schools by offering "higher-than-normal meal reimbursements" the USDA said, putting more money into the cafeteria programs' pockets.

In Fort Davis ISD, Superintendent Graydon Hicks said the financials, even with federal reimbursements, just don't add up. The school has never had a cafeteria, and although it offers free cold breakfast every morning, few students take advantage of it.

When auditing requirements became more complicated several years ago, Hicks said the district stopped taking state or federal assistance for meal programs all together.

"When we stopped taking the money, we were only getting $2,500 dollars and the auditing requirements were increased very dramatically from every three years to two years to every year and involved a very extensive audit –

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The West Texan Media Group, LLC



Photo by Dana Kurth for The Big Bend Sentinel

Kathylina Acosta, a Marfa local, takes in the art on display at the Marfa Invitational with her 11 month old son, Romeo. The Marfa Invitational is an annual art fair open to the public.

Marfa Invitational brings big crowds to town

By SACHI MCCLENDON
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MARFA — The second annual Marfa Invitational art fair swept through town last week, bringing with it some of the largest crowds since the coronavirus pandemic hit.

The four-day affair, which was largely open to the public, spread across town, but the majority of the art booths were housed in the Saint George Hall, just across the street from the hotel. While the crowds were slim at first at the opening at 5 p.m. on Thursday, groups began arriving in a steady stream to view — and purchase — art from galleries all over the globe.

With nine galleries making their way into town, there was a wide range of art on display — from Alexandra Grant's abstract text-based paintings to Grant Levy-Lucero's pop-culture ceramic sculptures.

One of the more popular exhibits featured still-life paintings from artist Nikki Maloof at the Nino Mier gallery. The gallery said that the series is about "the sourcing, preparation, cooking and enjoying of a grotesque, yet compelling feast." Most of Maloof's work on display had already been sold online prior to the fair, according to the gallerists at the booth.

At the German-based Natalia Hug Gallery, artist Jana Schröder presented her paintings based on post-it notes, "which are not at all revered," said Mary Etherington, a local writer showing the work. Etherington filled in for the gallerist who couldn't travel out of Germany, as she wasn't able to get vaccinated.

Etherington said she didn't see many people properly covering their faces with masks at the event. "Masks were not required, and I heard many, many times over the weekend, 'I'm fully vaccinated,'" she said. Etherington was the only Marfa resident showing work at the fair.

Throughout the evening some guests migrated to the Hotel Saint George Pool, where the VIP cocktail reception officially kicked off at 8 p.m. Upwards of 200 people mingled poolside, drinking cocktails and eating Tex-Mex. The fair's founder, Michael Phelan, was moving throughout the crowd, joining in on photos wherever he went. Near nightfall, a few guests plunged into the pool.

Suzanne Deal Booth, whom *ARTnews* listed in 2018 as one of the top 200 art collectors in the world, had nothing but nice things to say about the opening night. "I would never have thought that this would happen in Marfa," she said. "It's a great cross section of people, both locals and art

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Presidio residents report issues calling 911

By SACHI MCCLENDON
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PRESIDIO — Earlier this month Presidio resident Alfred Muniz got a call from his brother Victor Muniz who was experiencing terrible back pain. Victor was driving back from their family's cattle ranch on FM 170 and wanted Alfred to send an ambulance to him.

Alfred pulled over near the First Presidio Bank and tried calling 911 a couple of times, but he couldn't get through to a dispatcher. Rather than ringing, the line was silent. Alfred's other brother who was with him then tried calling. He also couldn't get through, even though they both had cell service.

Luckily Alfred saw Presidio Chief Deputy Joel Nuñez driving by who was then able to radio the dispatch and send an ambulance to Victor's location.

This is one of a few reports Nuñez has received recently about residents unable to get in touch with a 911 dispatcher in Presidio. Another resident mentioned that when they called they got a message saying the call could not be transferred or completed as dialed.

"This is something that is concerning in a small little town like Presidio." Nuñez said. "When you dial 911 you want to get an answer, right?"

"We've tested our 911 system. Our 911 system is functional. We haven't heard of this happening in Marfa, or on the highway or anything like that [other than in Presidio]," he said.

If residents are having trouble reaching an emergency operator, Nunez recommends they call the Presidio County Dispatch Office's direct line at 432-729-4911 and 432-729-4848. He also suggested they save these numbers in their phone contacts.

Monica Sanchez supervises the dispatch office for Presidio County. She said she has heard similar complaints from Presidio residents who tried calling 911 but were instead routed to dispatchers in Ojinaga.

"They're pretty vocal when they speak to us and I don't blame them," Sanchez said. She added that while she does get complaints from time to time, it doesn't happen on an everyday basis.

The same problem appears to be happening to Ojinaga residents. "I've had people call from Mexico wanting Mexico 911," Sanchez said.

Currently there are no protocols for dealing with people who need assistance in Mexico that have had calls routed to the Presidio dispatch. "All they can do is keep trying and keep trying. That's all we can give them, because we don't have a direct line to Mexico's 911."

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With two new congressional seats, Texas grows its political power

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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TEXAS — The first results of the 2020 Census are in and officials in the Census Bureau have used that data to reallocate representatives in Congress. At the Tuesday announcement, Texas gained two new representatives – more than any other state – adding political clout to the rapidly growing Lone Star State.

Pandemic conditions have delayed the census count and the release of its data, but this week's announcement proved Texas saw the most growth over the past decade. The state added just shy of 4 million residents over the past 10 years, reaching 29,145,505 residents in 2020, a 15.9% growth. Texas is part of the fastest growing region, the South, which had a 10.2% increase.

Karen Battle, chief of the population division at the bureau, explained just how states like Texas are showing such robust growth. "In terms of the population growth in the South, there really are different reasons for the growth. States like Texas and Florida definitely are experiencing natural increase, more births than deaths, and these states are also experiencing a lot of net migration, be it people moving internationally into those states or domestically into those states."

In West Texas, census data was gathered through online and paper surveys and through door-to-door visits on foot, by ATV and on horseback. Still, the difficult conditions of collecting 2020 data led some states to lag behind in the count, and in Texas, the state did not allocate funds to support the census count. According to data released by the Bureau, Texas' actual count came in over 140,000 less than it had estimated the Texas population to be – a wide difference that could have impacted the state's congressional seat count.

While experts had estimated Texas would gain three seats, it ultimately ended up with two. Texas was the third-runner-up to gain another seat, right behind second-runner-up Ohio, and first-runner-up New York, which would have held onto a seat instead of losing it, if only 89 more residents had been counted there.

To illustrate the need for the census, Acting Director of the Census Bureau Dr. Ron S. Jarmin explained this week that ahead of the nation's first census in 1790, it was estimated the United States' population was 2 million. When results of the first count were complete in 1793, 3.9 million people were found to live in the U.S., resulting in 40 additional Congress members. Since then, a census occurs every ten years, where the government attempts to count all of its residents.

While the number of congressional seats stays at 535, seven seats among that number were moved, affecting 13 different states; it's the smallest number of seat shifts since the country adopted its current reallocation method in 1941.

This year, Texas will gain two seats, and Colorado, Florida, Montana, North Carolina and Oregon will each gain one. But those gains

(Continued on page 3)

IN BRIEF

Election Day is Saturday

FAR WEST TEXAS — In cities and school districts around the region, early voting is well underway, and candidates will have their last shots at gaining a seat on Saturday when voters go to the polls for Election Day. Be sure to check out www.bigbendsentinel.com for election results as they roll in.

Texas recommends the return of Johnson & Johnson COVID vaccine

TEXAS — The state is officially recommending Texas vaccine providers resume the distribution and use of Johnson & Johnson's COVID vaccine, after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration completed an investigation that had put a "pause" on the drug.

A review and evaluation of the drug was announced earlier this month after a small number of people experienced a rare form of blood clotting after receiving the injection.

Officials from the CDC have reported 15 cases of blood clotting from the vaccine and 3 deaths, all in women. The shot, which only requires one dose, was proven to be "safe and effective for the vast majority of people," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said on Friday. Thus far, over 8 million doses have been administered, meaning 0.0001875% of recipients have experienced the severe adverse effects and 0.0000375% have died.

Panelists at the CDC voted 10-4 to not include a special warning for women under age 50 that the vaccine posed an increased risk, suggesting it would add confusion and that doctors could warn patients instead, and offer them alternatives like the Pfizer or Moderna two-shot vaccines against COVID-19.

Former TX-23 congressional candidate nominated for Department of Defense role

UNITED STATES — Gina Ortiz Jones, the two-time candidate for West Texas's U.S. congressional seat, was nominated this week by President Joe Biden to a position in the Department of Defense. Jones, a Democrat who ran for the seat in TX-23 against former Rep. Will Hurd and current Rep. Tony Gonzales, was nominated on Tuesday to be undersecretary of the Air Force.

Jones was previously an intelligence officer for the Air Force in Iraq and has since worked in the Defense Intelligence Agency and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative. She would be the first woman of color to hold the position of Air Force undersecretary.

Marfa Saturday Market kicks off May 1

MARFA — Marfa Saturday Market will open for the season on Saturday, May 1, at 9:30 a.m. at the pavilion behind the Marfa Visitor Center/USO Building. Formerly known as Farmstand Marfa, the market will kick off a new season with local foods, products, arts and crafts and more. Anyone interested in selling their wares should contact Malinda Beeman at marfasatmarket@gmail.com.



Photo by Dana Kurth for The Big Bend Sentinel

Karen Oswalt (left) of Austin, TX, and Alex Battisti, a temporary Marfa resident, explore the work on display at the Jake Longstreth / Nino Mier Gallery opening at the Marfa Invitational on Friday.

Invitational

(Continued from page 1)

people." Deal Booth said she had reserved a piece from the show but wouldn't disclose the artist or gallery.

Nino Mier, who owns the Nino Mier Gallery, also attended the reception. He was impressed with the way Phelan had marketed and curated the event. "90 percent of the art is great," Mier said.

The party was just one of many events VIPs got in return for their $800 ticket — for tri-county residents, the price was $425. Other VIP events included collectors talks and private home tours. According to the Invitational's website, the $800 VIP pass sold out.

As *The Big Bend Sentinel* previously reported, Phelan promised to gather both national and international art buffs for the fair, and flight records show that the Marfa airport was busier than usual this past week — the tiny airstrip welcomed planes out of Austin, Wyoming and California.

On the second day of the Marfa Invitational, artist Jake Longstreth showed his series of eucalyptus and pine tree paintings at the Marfa Invitational Annex by the Palace Theatre. "These are views that you would encounter pretty typically in a hike in like Glendale [California]," he said of his work.

Longstreth said that the invitational was unlike other art fairs that are in big cities like Miami and New York. "This is a very special fair for obvious reasons. We're in the middle of West Texas in this cool little town," he said. "There's a strong vibe here, I don't know how else to put it."

Alongside the fair, a number of local galleries hosted events over the weekend. Z Ranch, an outdoor exhibition space behind Marfa National Bank, had seven artists presenting a number of multimedia projects in a show titled "69 on Sunshine."

Mo Eldridge, who has been co-running the space for over two years, said "69 on Sunshine" was about challenging the idea of white-wall gallery spaces.

While Phelan promised to bring global artists, Eldridge was excited about showcasing art from the area. Benjamin Buxton, who was living in Marfa during the lockdown, showed three short films projected onto Z Ranch's adobe walls focused on labor in West Texas throughout the pandemic.

Eldridge was excited to see how many different pockets of the Marfa community came out to their event. "I'm interested in a dialogue with people in my community and people who are interested in this community of artists," they said.

At Marfa Open, another alternative art space, there was a show that opened on Thursday featuring large-scale oil paintings from Raciel Esperanza. "While we did plan this with the invitational in mind, it wasn't necessarily dependent on it," said Emily Esperanza, who curated the show. "A lot of people who walked in who came for the invitational said this was one of the strongest shows they've seen," she said.

As for how this year's invitational went, Phelan noted the "brisk" sales at some of the galleries in attendance. It is Marfa Invitational's core belief that "a rising tide lifts all boats," he said after the fair had come to a close, "and that supporting and championing our neighbors and community through collaboration and outreach heightens our human experience."









Smuggled pre-Hispanic relics returned to Mexico

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — Over 500 arrowheads, knife blades and tools were returned to Mexico by agents with Homeland Security Investigations earlier this month. The pre-Hispanic artifacts were given to Mexican Consul General Mauricio Ibarra Ponce de León by the top agent at HSI El Paso, Erik Breitzke.

"The theft of cultural property and artifacts is not merely a crime, it is an offense against a nation's history," said Breitzke in a press release.

The relics, which date back from before the Spanish conquest, had been smuggled out of Mexico in order to be sold in the United States back in 2016. HSI agents out of Alpine opened an investigation into the matter after rangers with the National Park Service discovered some of the smuggled goods in Big Bend National Park.

"They essentially stumbled upon them," said Courtney Whiteman, a spokesperson for the National Park Service. "[The artifacts] were stashed in Big Bend."

In August 2016, agents with the investigation seized the cultural relics and arrested a person involved in the smuggling operation. According to court documents, Andrew Kowalik was convicted of smuggling the items across the border in 2017, and the relics were handed over to HSI. Kowalik was given five years of probation and fined $10,000.

HSI is an investigative unit within the Department of Homeland Security that is able to seize cultural property brought into the United States through illegal means and then return these items back to their respective countries. HSI agents also investigate the illicit art trade.

Just this year alone, HSI has returned ninth century manuscripts to Italy as well as hundreds of other pre-Columbian artifacts back to Mexico. According to the press release, antiquity trafficking is estimated to be a multi-billion-dollar industry.





Photos courtesy of HSI

Above: Paul J. Jarrett, program manager for HSI Cultural Property, Art & Antiquities; F. Gus Sánchez, superintendent of Chamizal National Memorial; Mauricio Ibarra Ponce de León, Mexican consul general in El Paso, Texas; Erik P. Breitzke, special agent in charge of HSI El Paso; and Eric S. Cohen, consul general of the United States in Cd. Juarez, Mexico.
Left: Pre-hispanic arrowheads seized by HSI

The National Park Service said it was honored to be a part of the multi-agency investigation. NPS Deputy Direct Shawn Benge said in a statement, "It is a collective accomplishment that demonstrates our shared mission to preserve history for generations to come."

"The return of these pre-Hispanic pieces is a sign of the active cooperation between the governments of Mexico and the United States in the protection of cultural goods, as well as a commitment to historical and cultural legacies to return to their places of origin," the consulate general of Mexico said in a statement.

Apply for federal COVID-19 funeral assistance

UNITED STATES — Families who lost loved ones to COVID-19 can now apply for funeral expense assistance as part of the most recent COVID relief bill, the American Rescue Plan.

You are able to apply for monetary assistance if you lost a family member to COVID-19 between January 20, 2020 and now. Applicants are not required to prove financial hardship nor is there a requirement that the deceased individual was a U.S. citizen. It is, however, a requirement that the death certificate attributes the death to COVID-19 and the death must have occurred in the U.S. or a U.S. territory. There is no deadline to apply.

Applicants will be asked to provide funeral expense documents in order to be reimbursed, including receipts and funeral home contracts.

Applicants must apply via phone at 844-684-6333, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central time. Multilingual services are available.

School meals

(Continued from page 1)

we're talking 80 to 100 pages," Hicks explained. "It just wasn't worth it." Instead, the school pays for the cold breakfast out of its regular budget, and supplements students meals with snacks provided by teachers and principals.

"We keep a pretty close track of our kids, and if we believe that kids are maybe hungry, then we make sure we've got something for them," Hicks said.

Schools in Marfa and Presidio are offering their free meals through the USDA's National School Lunch Program Seamless Summer Option (SSO), a program normally only available in the summer.

"This option maintains the nutrition standards of the standard school meal programs – including a strong emphasis on providing fruits and vegetables, fluid milk, whole grains, and sensible calorie levels, while allowing schools to serve free meals to all children," the USDA wrote in its announcement last week, stating it would continue the program through June 2022.

The program expansion announcement also addressed another pandemic-related challenge cafeterias have faced: managing the growing costs related to pandemic-era operational and supply-chain challenges.

Hernandez said costs have indeed risen during the pandemic. From a price hike on ketchup to an increased need to buy pre-packaged foods, the cafeteria expenses have grown. In Presidio, Dr. Portillo said styrofoam and plastic containers are "very expensive," and since the school is still offering grab-and-go meals for students who are remote, they have to pay for more packaging.

Some of those costs have been counterbalanced by a decrease in students utilizing the free meals program in Presidio though. "We lost a lot of kids during COVID, who went virtual or they withdrew, because they didn't want to come in person," Portillo explained. "We did lose a lot of kids, like in the elementary we lost about 100 kids." Because of that drop in enrollment, fewer students are using the program, which reduces the number of reimbursements the school cafeteria gets from the USDA.

"The more students we can provide a meal to – it's good for the district in terms of revenue," Hernandez said. "I'm not saying the school makes money, but we pretty much break even."

"It's ever changing," Hernandez said of the assistance programs that are available for public schools. "We're going with the changes, making sure things are compliant, so we can keep providing free meals to our kiddos."

New seats

(Continued from page 1)

don't come without corresponding losses; California, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia are all losing one seat.

Texas now sits at 38 seats, behind only California, which dropped to 52 this year. The Lone Star State also gained two votes in the electoral college, bringing it to 40 votes it can cast in presidential elections.

Aside from allocating the 535 seats of Congress, census data is used to help determine how many teachers are needed, how much public housing is needed, where to build public clinics, where to build new roads, and much more according to officials in the Census Bureau.

As more data is processed and released by the bureau, data about age, sex, race, ethnicity and more will become available, giving new insight into the changing makeup of the United States, Texas and Far West Texas.

However, the data provided on Tuesday was only broken down to a state-by-state level, so within Texas, the latest spread of the population across the state is still unknown. The Census Bureau is planning to release broken-down state data no later than September 30 this year. The information of where in the state Texans live is crucial for the state legislature to have, in order to redistrict Texas' 38 congressional seats, including the two new ones.

Because the data has not yet been delivered, there will likely be a rare special session called by Governor Greg Abbott to gather the state legislature to draw up redistricting maps. Texas has repeatedly drawn ire from the courts for discriminatory redistricting that marginalizes the voting power of its residents of color, even drawing required oversight from federal officials. This year's redistrict, however, will be the first in decades to not have required federal oversight.

911 issues

(Continued from page 1)

During the freeze in February, Presidio EMS Director Malynda Richardson dialed 911 but was misrouted to dispatchers across the border.

Richardson wasn't having an emergency. Earlier she had tried calling the dispatch office's direct line but wasn't able to get through. She then wondered if the 911 line was operational. "I knew I was in trouble when they picked up in Spanish," she said.

Many of the people spoken to for this story said that the problem stems from how the cell towers are directing the calls.

Marisa Quintanilla oversees the emergency dispatch services in the region through the Rio Grande Council of Governments. As she explained it, when someone calls 911 on their cell phone, the nearest cell tower picks up the signal and then routes it to a nearby dispatch office.

Considering Presidio's proximity to the border, Quintanilla said it's very possible that a call placed in Presidio could be picked up by a tower in Mexico that then forwards the signal to dispatchers in Ojinaga.

While Quintanilla, who is based in El Paso, hasn't heard of these exact issues, she said there are many problems with emergency calls being misrouted in the region as there are only three cell towers in the tri-county area. If one of the towers is overloaded with calls, it will begin forwarding them to the others. That's how, she says, 911 calls are sent to the wrong dispatch.

"It's the lack of infrastructure that we have within the tri-county area to properly send that call where it needs to be," Quintanilla said. "A lot of the cell companies have told us loud and clear that they won't build upon that infrastructure because the cost and return on their investment is not there."

At the time, it is unclear if residents who are unable to connect with a 911 operator, like Alfred, are experiencing the same issue as those who have been misrouted to dispatchers in Mexico.

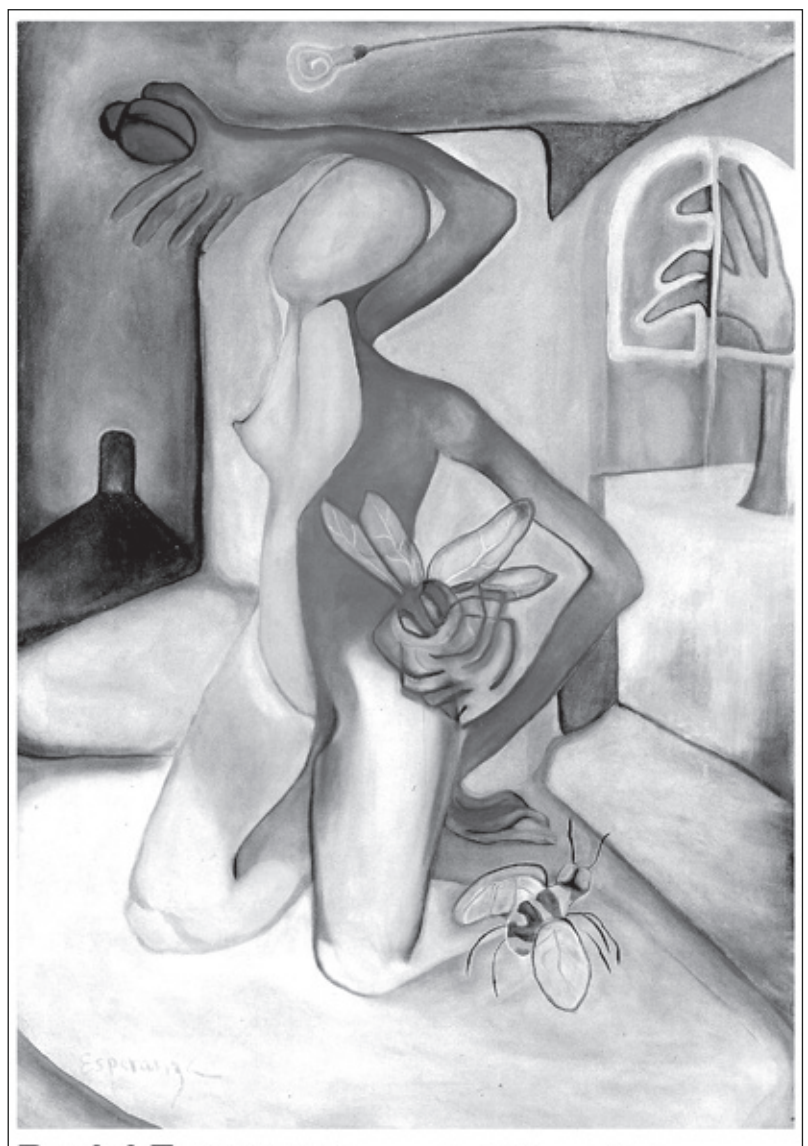
The FCC, which regulates cell tower operations in the United States, said in a statement to *The Big Bend Sentinel*, "The public needs reliable access to 911 during emergencies. FCC staff are looking into this matter."

"You never know what can happen," Alfred said. "Somebody could be in a worse situation and not be able to have access to the 911 dispatcher."

Have you had trouble getting through to a 911 dispatcher? Let us know at editor@bigbendsentinel.com or call 432-729-4342.

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Opinions

OP-EDS

The rattlesnake adventure continues

By MARY ETHERINGTON

"Enough already with the rattlesnake stories," you say. Please, I beg just this one last indulgence. When I first moved out here, the pool at Balmorhea fulfilled one of the requirements on my where-to-live list. Trading the Atlantic Ocean for the pool had one gigantic advantage in that I could swim year-round. In the winter months it was usually just myself and maybe a couple German tourists, maybe Lineaus Lorette, which translates in my world to a version of heaven, and many perfect moments. My goal of swimming while it's snowing still dangles out there somewhere, still tantalizing, although I did come close once.

So I was driving up to the pool two or three times a week to swim and started looking for a place up there, thinking: work, drive, swim, spend the night, swim first thing and drive back to Marfa in time to work. That's two swims per drive. I did not find a suitable rental or a place for sale in spite of countless hours spent looking and talking to people, however I learned of a local woman who paid her daughter's college tuition collecting live rattlesnakes at night to sell for their venom. Holy mackerel. I was still adjusting to poisonous spiders after my elegant and brilliant dog Ida Mae got bitten by a brown recluse on day eight of moving to Marfa, and now with the snakes ... yeesh. My previous homeland had ticks carrying dread diseases, which were tiny and nearly impossible to see, and yet not one poisonous snake or spider. I used to joke that I wanted to move to India because at least a person can see a cobra. Instead I moved to Marfa, replete with poisonous snakes and spiders. I realized after her spider bite I needed to toughen up if I intended to stay here, and then you tell me there's a woman out hunting rattlesnakes at night. Inconceivable.

I did find said warrior woman and did, in fact, confirm it was a true story, which to this day amazes me. I've had moments of being intrepid, however nothing like her nightly forays. For her, it was a way to make money from the abundant resources right out her backdoor in a locale with not that many opportunities. So hats off to ingenuity.

I found myself living in a small adobe house in the southeast corner of Marfa, with a very large backyard that was for all intents and purposes basically one large goathead. I committed myself to win in the battle of the prickers. I marched around the yard in flip-flops picking up the goatheads. I would count them into a bucket by the back door, my head resting against the back wall of the house in the hot sun, sometimes crying as my thumb got punctured, at least one hundred in each flip-flop. Pulling the plants and capturing those nasty goatheads took all my available non-work, non-swim hours. The yard had a good, years-long head start. And yet, in time, the plants began to yield to my advances. Then rain came. I walked into the yard one morning and thought initially it was covered in a layer of green moss, and then to my horror discovered it was a blanket of sprouting goatheads, a coverlet of tiny, tiny plants. I turned heel, marched into the house, and in that moment declared there must be something good, a very good reason for goatheads, and I intended to find it. And indeed, turns out the dried plant leaves were brewed into a tea to increase vitality, and that actual goatheads were ground up and used in Chinese medicine. (Goatheads are not native to this region and may have arrived in the fleece of sheep brought from Greece as breeding stock, back in the day).

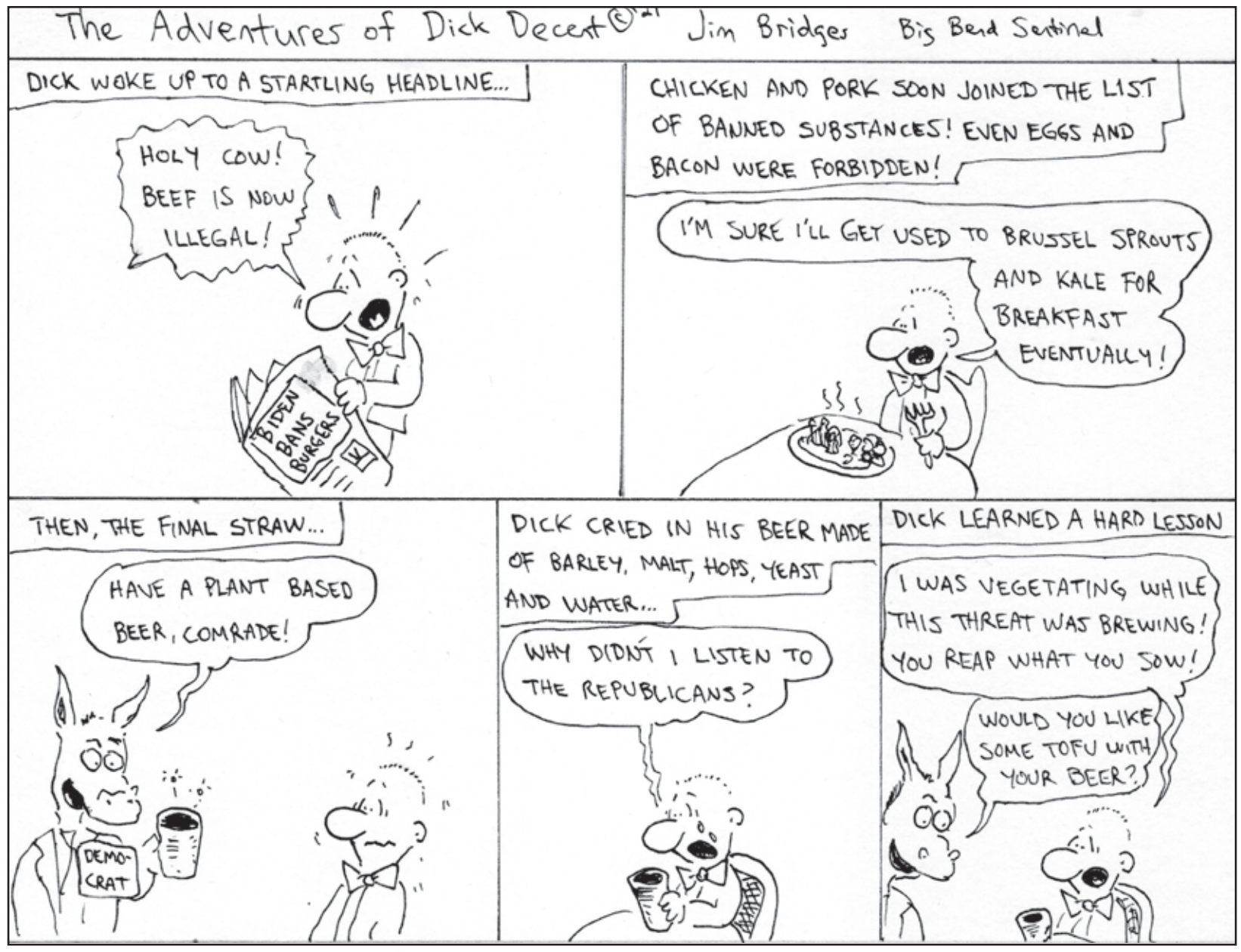
Allegedly, there was a market for these goatheads — that bucketful at my back door could be turned into cash. I never actually found the source willing to pay for goatheads, however I started to nurture my crop. When young, but flowering, I pulled up the plants, tied them in bunches in brown paper bags hung in my kitchen to dry. I was a proud farmer with a glorious crop.

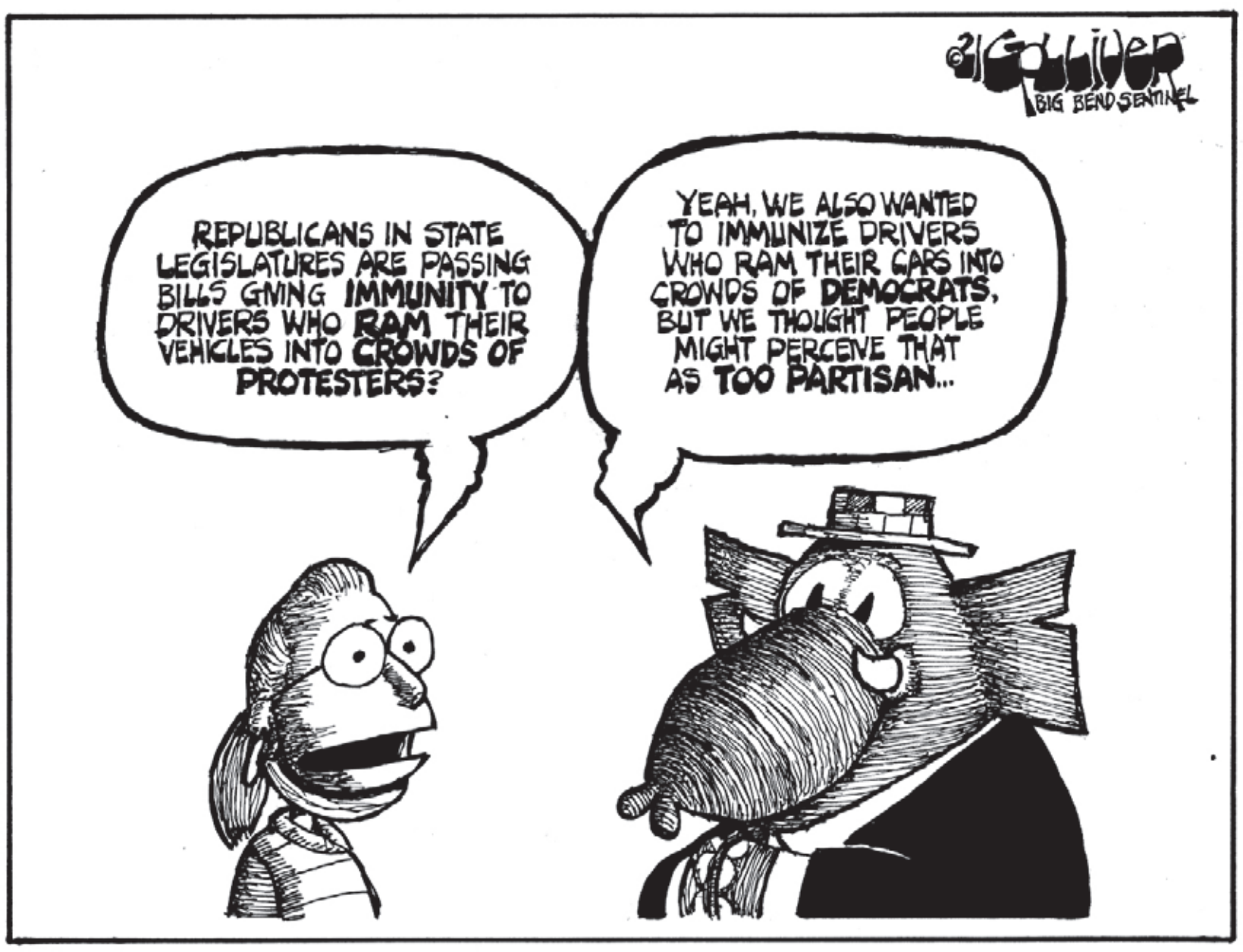
Later the brewing started, and the world of Marfa was introduced to goathead leaf tea. The next Chinati Weekend, while other galleries were offering shots of tequila, my gallery offered goathead leaf tea. Rather unexpected, I would venture to say, and much to the horror of Jennifer Bell, whom many of you knew, a Brit and a dedicated tea drinker, who was convinced I was going to kill everyone. She never so much as sipped the goathead leaf tea and yet happily loaned me a teapot. For the record no one died from drinking the tea. It's quite good — notes of grass and dirt.

As you can see, it turns out I am teachable, and learned from the example of the woman with the expanse of rattlesnakes out her back door. Work with what you have. Also grateful my discovery was goathead leaf tea rather than live rattlesnakes. Thank you, Far West Texas, for being such a good teacher.

Also, I lied. There's one more rattlesnake story for another time. Cheers.

• • •





Texas needs an immunization registry that does what it's supposed to do

By ALLISON N. WINNIKE

Imagine you need to get somewhere quickly and safely. You call your ride-sharing company who sends Fred Flintstone in his family car. Not what you had in mind and not what you paid for. The Texas Immunization Registry, ImmTrac2, is not quite a stone-age vehicle for sharing our vital immunization records, but in its present form, it certainly is not what Texans have in mind or what we paid for.

The Texas Department of State Health Services consolidates and stores our individual vaccine records from healthcare providers, pharmacies, public health clinics, Medicaid claims administrators and the vital statistics unit of DSHS. Texas launched ImmTrac2 in 2017 to replace the legacy system, to enhance functionality, and to improve exchange of electronic health record data. Texas, however, is one of four states requiring "opt-in." This means parents and adults must fill out and submit a consent form when they get their first vaccination, but sometimes they must repeat the process the next time because their provider cannot access their information in the registry. Data in, but not always data out.

Cumbersome, yes. Inefficient, yes. A waste of provider time and taxpayer dollars, absolutely, especially as we try to vaccinate Texans against COVID-19. As of today, approximately 10% of Texans have received their vaccinations, but the daily entry of that data stretches the abilities of people and technology to keep up to keep us safe. And here's why. Ideally, your provider would submit your opt-in consent and vaccination information at the same time. However, Texas created electronic consent codes that conflict with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention national functional standards. The result: healthcare providers cannot directly input this medical information into ImmTrac2. Instead, providers and their staff work overtime creating spreadsheets they send to Austin, which DSHS staff physically enter into the registry. Anyone who has worked with data and spreadsheets can see the many opportunities for data entry errors and delays on the side of the registry. Also, many providers fax private information because that is the only method available to them.

Under the current system, everyone works harder, not smarter, to get around the registry's artificial barriers. We are happy to say help may be on the way thanks to bipartisan leadership and Texas tenacity. Rep. Donna Howard (D-Austin), and Sens. Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) and Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) filed legislation to streamline the registry so it will do what it is supposed to do.

Their companion bills, HB 325 and SB 468, switch off the conflicting codes to allow for easy and efficient entry of vaccine information. The bills also strengthen privacy protections and provide a simple way to opt-out permanently.

Easy in, easy out. Sometimes, though, easy solutions require hard decisions. These legislative champions have worked for more than a decade to fix the registry. Now, they need our help to make ImmTrac2 fully functional. They need us to ask our legislators to support this historic bipartisan legislation that will give Texans the immunization registry we expect and deserve. The irony is that the virus that is killing us may be the proverbial shot in the arm that motivates legislators to do what is right to save lives today and for generations to come.

Allison N. Winnike, J.D., is the President and CEO of The Immunization Partnership, a statewide non-profit organization that aims to create a community free from vaccine-preventable diseases by educating the community, advocating for evidence-based public policy, and supporting immunization best practices.

• • •

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- The Big Bend Sentinel Editorial Staff

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Arts

Chinati Foundation completes archives project

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — After two years of meticulous processing, organizing and documenting, Chinati Foundation's archive project was completed this spring, creating a digital database that will help the foundation chart its path forward and aid researchers in continuing the study of everything from Donald Judd's life and work to the history of Fort D.A. Russell.

Chinati's archives include paper records, correspondence, photographs, video footage, press coverage, printed ephemera and publications documenting everything from the cavalry era of Camp Marfa to the present day.

While the grant didn't specifically cover digitization of those items, the archival department selectively chose items that were at risk of deteriorating beyond functional use, anything of "high research interest," or an object that was inherently unique, like something handwritten by Donald Judd.

Hannah Marshall, the foundation's archivist, said all of it is now stored in an archives database that was built during the grant. "During the pandemic, the way COVID impacted remote learning and research was so dramatic that we actually changed our plan for the system we were going to use for our database, specifically so we could have something that would facilitate remote research going forward," Marshall said.

It would open up Chinati Foundation's resources not just to those with well-funded research projects that could pay for the travel to Marfa, but also those who previously might not have been able to make the journey.

For now it's open to staff use as an internal tool, but there is a function where digitized material can be freely and openly available on the internet, which they are troubleshooting now.



Photo by Maisie Crow

An early map of Marfa and the grounds of Chinati Foundation found in the archives.

The archive at Chinati has always existed, in that the material was on-site in a storage room, but it wasn't until the grant that Marshall was added to the staff as the foundation's first full-fledged archivist. While the grant paid for her to be brought on, the foundation's executive director, Jenny Moore, said the position would now be permanent, with much more work ahead in the archives.

"When I first started here, the archives were a black hole that no one knew about," Marshall said. "As soon as my name and email were up [on our website], we received requests; there was a demand we didn't even know was there."

"There's a very important resource in the material record of Chinati," Moore said. It became apparent during the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded master plan that Chinati undertook, and led the Mellon Foundation to fund the archival effort.

Moore remarked that it was incredible to see and read Judd's voice firsthand. "Seeing the statement that was written for Chinati and seeing his edits on that, why a particular word choice was so important, to have that sort of constitutional document of what the process was in real time, has been incredible," she said.

Moving past the initial two-year project, Marshall said, "We're building some internal research tools and doing things like oral histories and working on a really robust institutional timeline and source reviews to compile primary and secondary sources."

The archives are already being tapped internally, with the director of planning and preservation, Peter Stanley, using decades-old documents to guide restoration plans across the grounds of Chinati, identifying where the adobe for the different walls around town were purchased. "Where the bricks come from determines the color of the adobe," Marshall explained. "Knowing where the bricks for the wall at The Block versus from the Locker Plant are from is important in restoring those," and that's just the start of the archives' usefulness within the organization and beyond.

Ballroom Marfa broadcasts 'Birdscapes Radio' project

MARFA — Ballroom Marfa and Astral Spirits announced the release of *Chihuahuan Desert | Birdscapes* on cassette from musician and birder Rob Frye (Bitchin Bajas, Exoplanet, Flux Bikes). The cassette features Frye's original "Birdscapes" from 2018 in addition to "Chihuahuan Desert Birdscapes," commissioned by Ballroom Marfa in 2020.

Additionally, in anticipation of International Dawn Chorus Day, the worldwide celebration of nature's greatest avian symphony, Ballroom Marfa is presenting Birdscapes Radio from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 1, on Ballroom Marfa's website.

This freeform program will center on Frye's ever-evolving collaborative, sonic exploration into the world of birds. Listeners can expect to hear down-tempo dawn chorus, historical recordings, rare sounds and seabird colonies hosted by Rob Frye and Sarah Melendez, with guests Edbrass Brasil, Cristian Pinto, Martin Frye, Satya Gummuluri and more. The show will also include excerpts from "Experience the Birds," the first episode of *Maui Nui Seabirds: Mauka to Makai*, and Rob's performative lecture, "Hearing Hidden Melodies."

Birdscapes was originally realized as a video collaboration between Chilean artist Martin Kaulen and Frye, who met while touring with their respective bands Watch Out! and Bitchin Bajas in 2014. Years later, Kaulen coined the term "birdscape" while describing a video he made in which bird's flight paths are traced, yielding an inexhaustible source of tracks and lines. Frye provided the musical accompaniment, "In the Air Like Clouds," for the video, and while visiting Kaulen in Paris in 2018, the two hosted a "Birdscapes Sound Happening" at Chez Adel. They mixed Frye's process of slowing down bird song and flute with Kaulen's technique of using piezo transducers to amplify these sounds through resonant physical objects, such as the tables, chairs, windows and a piano.

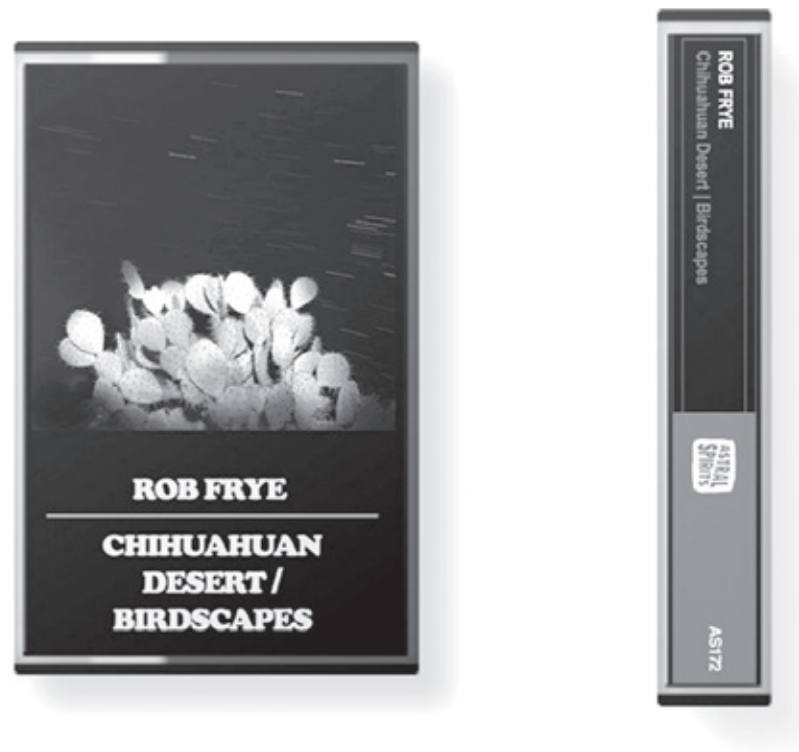


Photo by James Evans

The cassette release of Chihuahuan Desert | Birdscapes, 2020.

Self-released on Bandcamp in 2018, Frye's sounds from Birdscapes (side B on the cassette) featured processed sounds of South American species, including song wren, common potoo (both recorded by Peter Boesman) and musician wren (recorded by Richard Ranft), with Frye on flute and granular synthesis with voice contributed by Satya Gummuluri. Satya and Rob had performed together in Ritwik Banerji's Quintet in Chicago around 2009, and reunited in Ulm, Germany in 2018 for a duo performance at the opening of a group show at Kunstverein Ulm, "WIRKSAM VEREINEN – Kulturelles Erbe und zukünftige Wirksamkeit."

"Chihuahuan Desert Birdscapes" (side A on the cassette) was created while Frye was in residence at Ballroom Sessions – The Farther Place. The album is inspired by the avian populations of West Texas and features the sounds of handmade reed flutes intertwined with field recordings and birdsong selected from xeno-canto. With "Chihuahuan Desert Birdscapes," Frye tunes-in to the subtle consciousness of the natural world and dives deep into the sonic landscape of the Big Bend.

Positioned along migratory routes from South America to Canada, the Chihuahuan Desert region of West Texas is home to one of the most diverse bird populations in the Northern Hemisphere. "Chihuahuan Desert Birdscapes" highlights common and threatened bird species of the region, using granular synthesis to produce a series of vignettes supplemented by the rich texture of flutes handmade by Frye from invasive grasses collected on the banks of the Rio Grande. Processed samples of lesser nighthawk, Baird's sparrow, blue-throated mountaingem, and eastern meadowlark permeate the music that is an organic West Texas sound bath, where hypnotic woodwinds and synthesizers familiar from the artist's work with Bitchin Bajas intermingle with manipulated trills, warbles and whistles.

Chihuahuan Desert | Birdscapes will be available on cassette on April 30, 2021, through Astral Spirits on Bandcamp and Ballroom Marfa's website. In addition, Birdscapes Radio will be streamed on Ballroom Marfa's website on May 1 to encourage people to listen to the world of birdsong with a musician's ear. This project was organized by Ballroom Marfa Programs Director Sarah Melendez.

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Community

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



"Desert Landscape"
Drawing by Ally
Mrs. Barton's Montessori Class

2021 Marfa Live Arts award-winning playwrights announced

MARFA — Today, Thursday, April 29, the award-winning One-Act Plays will be presented at the Marfa Shorthorn Football Field at 2 pm. Masks and social distancing are required.

Sixty-eight plays were written last week at Marfa High School during Marfa Live Arts' 10th annual Playwriting Program taught this year by National Latino Playwrighting Awardee Octavio Solis.

When asked his assessment on the plays, Solis shared, "Overall, they were beautifully handled and really well done. Many students took their work to a level that really captured the ideas they were trying to express and convey." He continued, "All have an innate talent that if they attended to it diligently over the next couple years, many could blossom into writers of some significance … into the writers that are published and performed. I hope the teachers keep working on and fostering this type of creative writing. It's a fantastic outlet for exploration and these kids really want to do it."

2021 First-Place winners are: *The Brawl Down Under* by Tristan Kelly, ninth grade; *A Grim Tale of Waiting* by Dimetrey Stewart, 10th grade; *Wake Up* by Hannah Ibarra, 11th grade; *The First Conversation* by John Aguero, 12th grade.

Honorable Mention winners are: *The Hopeful Cow* by Annalise Marquez, ninth grade; *The Album* by Alexis Gonzales, 10th grade; *Broken* by Emily Hernandez, 10th grade; *40 – Tena* by Evelyn Sanchez, 11th grade; *Olvido y Orgullo* by Saul Lozano, 12th grade.



Photo courtesy of Marfa Live Arts

The 10th Annual Award-Winning Marfa High School Playwrights. From left to right: Emily Hernandez, Alexis Gonzales, Dimetrey Stewart, Tristan Kelly, John Aguero and Annalise Marquez. Not pictured: Hannah Ibarra, Saul Lozano and Evelyn Sanchez.

The top four winning plays will be brought to life by actors from the community including Lily Aguero, Pam Breithaupt, Nick Bustillos, Belen Garcia, Rachel Monroe, Tina Rivera and Yoseff Ben-Yehada.

Senior John Aguero talks about having his words brought to life, "You get to see what you wrote down and what other students wrote down and then you see it actually performed. It's much different than when you were writing it." Junior Cristian Ontiveros adds, "When my play won that was so awesome. I was able to come and see my play presented. It's a really good memory to have."

Shorthorn graduate and former winning playwright Isabella Morales shares her remembrance, "I really liked seeing my work being performed by other people and knowing I can write something good enough for other people to see. It's amazing to see how people envision things differently than the way you did … Is that how writers who write famous books feel? Do they go into little processes like that? Is that how it all starts?"

The Playwriting Program and the Marfa High School One-Act Plays supports Marfa Live Arts' mission of educating area youth and producing dramatic arts programming while bringing our community together.

For more information please visit www.marfalivearts.org.

Marfa Rotary Club hosts successful cleanup



Photo courtesy of the Marfa Rotary Club

The Marfa Rotary Club cleaned up two miles of highway on Saturday along the Fort Davis Highway.

WEST TEXAS — On Saturday morning the Marfa Rotary Club cleaned up trash on two miles of the Fort Davis Highway.

They collected around 25 bags of paper and sometimes unidentifiable items. Thank you, Marjo and Larry Skiles, Clint Weber and Verena Zbinden.

Not pictured: Joe Williams, Oscar and son John Aguero, and Gina Livingston.

If anybody has some extra time, please ask a Rotary Club member how you can help make Marfa a better place!



MARFA 12 STEP MEETINGS

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, 6:00 PM*** https://tinyurl.com/y25rsguo
- ***AA - Monday, Wednesday 6:00 PM*** St. Paul's Episcopal Church (masks, distance, sanitizer, wipe down surfaces required)
- ***AA - Saturday 12:00 Noon*** https://tinyurl.com/y686nnw2

*Please note, you can find online meetings at any time at https://aa-intergroup.org/oiaa/meetings/

Sul Ross taps new writer-in-residence

ALPINE — Sul Ross State University has appointed Sidney Balman Jr., a Pulitzer-nominated war correspondent and awarded author, as its new writer-in-residence.

Balman will teach journalism, creative writing and communications courses along with helping promote Sul Ross as an arts hub in West Texas. In addition, he will serve as faculty sponsor to student publications, working with undergraduates and graduates via *The Skyline* newspaper and *The Sage* literary journal. Balman will continue with his writing career, which includes journalism and fiction.

Balman, a fourth generation Texan who was raised in Dallas and has been based in Washington, D.C. for 25 years, appeared at Front Street Books in Alpine two years ago on a national book tour for *Seventh Flag*, the first novel in a trilogy tracing the arc of radicalism in America through the global experiences of two families in the small West Texas town of Dell City. His stop in Alpine led to an initial invitation to serve as a visiting professor this year at Sul Ross, capped by President Pete Gallego's appointment as writer-in-residence.

"It feels like coming home, and I have Pete as well as my colleagues at Sul Ross to thank for that." Balman said. "It's a dream come true on so many levels after decades as an ink-stained wretch in the trenches of journalism and fiction. I can imagine no better place than the magical high desert of West Texas to teach such a unique group of students, to work with such dedicated, gifted colleagues, to build the university's reputation as a literary and arts hub, and to pursue my writing career."



Photo courtesy of Sul Ross State University

Sidney Balman, Jr., a Pulitzer-nominated war correspondent and awarded author, has been named writer-in-residence at Sul Ross.

Additionally, Balman says he hopes to organize a West Texas writers' conference and award at Sul Ross in the spring of 2022.

Balman, a graduate of Vanderbilt University with an advanced degree from American University in Washington, D.C., began his 20-year daily reporting career as a crime reporter for the *Dallas Times Herald* and ended it after a decade as the diplomatic and national security correspondent for United Press International, at the time one of the largest global news organizations. During his tenure at UPI, he covered wars in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, and traveled extensively with two American presidents and four secretaries of state on overseas diplomatic missions. He received a Pulitzer nomination for his coverage of the Balkan wars.

With the emergence of the web and the commoditizing of content, Balman moved into the business side of communications. In that role, he helped found a news syndicate focused on the interests of women and girls, served as communications chief for the largest consortium of U.S. international development organizations, led two successful progressive campaigning companies, and launched a new division at a large international development firm centered on violent radicalism and other security issues on behalf of governments and nonprofits.

Sensing a growing radicalism in America, Balman stepped back from his career to write *Seventh Flag*, which was published in 2019 and has received a number of awards. One novel has grown into a trilogy, with the second installment, *Murmuration*, due for release in August with a first stop on a national tour July 30 at Front Street Books in Alpine.

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Do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid,
for I am your God;
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Isaiah 41:10

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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

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

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

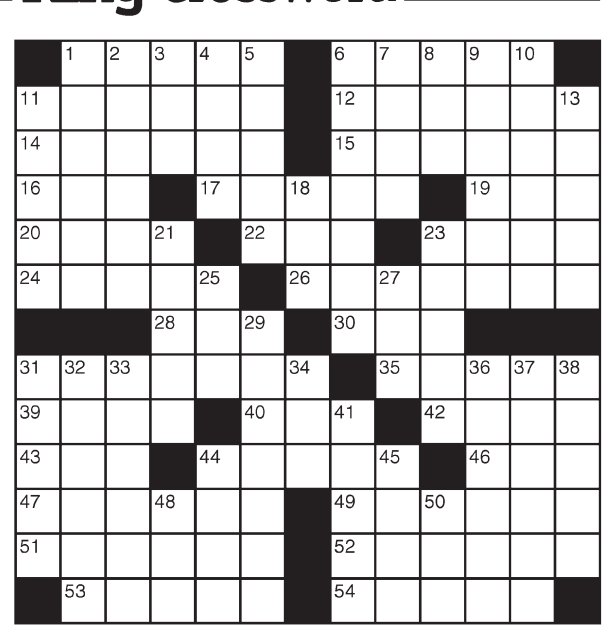
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Solutions from last week's puzzles:

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

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

King Crossword



ACROSS
1 Fashion
6 Cougars
11 Copier part
12 Sanford of "The Jeffersons"
14 Sweatshirt variety
15 "The Raven" maiden
16 Off-roader (Abbr.)
17 Burn with steam
19 Khan title
20 "Moonstruck" star
22 — -la-la
23 War god
24 "Praying" singer
26 TV actor Prinze
28 Business mag
30 Melancholy
31 Dagwood's lady
35 Chic again
39 Lariat
40 Neither mate
42 Actress de Matteo
43 — -de-France
44 Red Square figure
46 Last (Abbr.)
47 Sister of Moses
49 Restaurant fan
51 Sports venues
52 Not as small
53 Admin. aides
54 Plant firmly

DOWN
1 Mollify
2 Caches
3 Pay stub abbr.
4 Floral rings
5 Upright
6 Columns
7 Secondhand
8 Chess piece
9 On the train
10 Composer Prokofiev
11 Crude cabin
13 Rental contract
18 Canine cry
21 Bonn's river
23 Threw in
25 Moreover
27 Corn serving
29 Movie houses
31 Hat edges
32 Nabokov novel
33 Puccini works
34 Very long time
36 Plod
37 Counted (on)
38 Western flick
41 Sentry's weapon
44 Cannes milk
45 Linguist Chomsky
48 Check-cashing needs
50 Sphere

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Big Bend Open Road Race brings high speeds to West Texas

By SACHI MCCLENDON
sachi@bigbendsentinel.com



Photo by Hannah Gentiles for The Big Bend Sentinel

Agustin Gonzalez inspects the safety features in his Corvette before the race on Saturday.

FORT STOCKTON — The 23rd annual Big Bend Open Road Race returned on Saturday after it was canceled last year due to the coronavirus pandemic. It's one of just a handful of open road races in the United States and — according to the event organizers — it's the most challenging of them all.

The course runs from Fort Stockton down Highway 285 to Sanderson. Drivers then turn around and make the 59-mile trek back to Fort Stockton. This year, the fastest drivers made it down to Sanderson in under 24 minutes. Trophies and bragging rights are all that's at stake.

Throughout the course there are over 59 turns, some blind, with constant changes in elevation, which makes for difficult driving conditions, according to the race organizers.

Agustin Gonzalez, of Marfa, was one of 160 competitors who took part in the race — this was his third year to compete. He was in the 120-mph division with his 2018 Corvette that can reach speeds of up to 186 mph.

On turns, Gonzalez said he pulls an average of .75 G-forces. "You take that turn and the whole car is pulling and you want to let go and slow down because you think the car is going to go off the road," he said. "But you gotta have faith."

Gonzalez also has a lot of safety gear. For the 120-mph division, his Corvette is required to be outfitted with a five-point harness, a roll bar and a fire extinguisher. During the race, Gonzalez wears a helmet, a neck brace, arm restraints and a fire-resistant suit.

"We don't have guard rails. We don't have sand traps. We don't have anything like a race track does, like a closed circuit does, to help you if you go off the road," Gonzalez said.

To make the race a reality, event organizers have to get a permit to shut down Highway 285 from the Texas Department of Transportation. For 12 hours, the public road is designated as a private course, said Dustin Archer, the race director.

Unlike in NASCAR, drivers aren't tailing one another, jockeying to be the first across the line.

Rather it's a time trial, where cars are set loose on the highway in set intervals.

There are a number of divisions that entrants can compete in, ranging from the 85-mph category all the way up to the unlimited class where speeds average around 170 mph.

It's a little complicated, but the goal is to get as close to the target speed set in each division. "For the 150-mph class, the whole purpose is to try to get from A to B, start to finish, averaging 150," Archer said.

If a driver's speed is above the division limit, "they're obviously too fast [for the division]," said Archer. "You need to be under that limit. It's almost like the price is right. You can't overbid. You need to be under the speed or right on the nose."

This year, the 160 cars that entered in the race ranged from Subarus to Corvettes, from Miatas to purpose-built race cars. There was even a Dodge Charger that was formerly in the NASCAR circuit in the race. While the majority of the contestants live in Texas, there were drivers that came from all over the United States to compete.

The event organizers go to great lengths to ensure the safety of the participants. Sheriff's deputies, firefighters and EMTs are staged all throughout the course. There are three planes that are flying overhead to monitor any incidents. And before the race, the local air-medical helicopter does a flyover to calm any nerves the drivers might have.

There has been only one major incident in the past five years, according to the Fort Stockton race coordinator, Crystal Lopez. A Porsche going 150 mph lost control and slammed into a power line, knocking out the electricity in Sanderson. "We had a delay for a little bit, but honestly, the guys have so much gear and so much is required of these cars, the guys left [the crash] walking," Lopez said.

Due to the necessary safety precautions, the open road race isn't much of a spectator sport. But drivers aren't doing it for the fans, said Rhonda Parmer of Pasadena, who has been attending the race since 2011. "There's no police after you. You know the road is clear. It's the thrill of pure speed," Parmer said. "There's nothing better."

Many of the drivers in the race have a second person in the passenger seat — known as a navigator — who gauges the car's speed, monitors the time and alerts the driver to upcoming curves. "It's one of the most important jobs, and it's extremely stressful. The navigator is in charge. They are the boss," said Bryan Parmer, Rhonda's husband. There's even a school for navigators to train them how to "call the road."

After the race on Saturday, all of the participants gathered in Fort Stockton's Rooney Park to celebrate. There, Gonzalez said he and his navigator Daniel Mendoza, a Marfa native and Midland resident, placed fourth in their division. "We do it to represent Marfa in something we believe we do well." Gonzalez said. "We do it to see if two small town boys can compete with the big boys from around the U.S. that come down for this race."

His Corvette — sparkly clean just hours before the race — was now painted in bug splatter.

☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

APRIL	Thu, Apr 29	Fri, Apr 30	Mon May, 3	Tue, May 4	Wed, May 5
BREAKFAST	BREAKFAST PIZZA	DONUT, SAUSAGE	MUFFIN, YOGURT	B-FAST BURRITO, HASH BROWNS	BISCUIT, EGG PATTY
LUNCH Menu courtesy of PORTER'S SINCE 1945 Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	MEATBALL SUB SANDWICH, TATER TOTS, TINY TOMATO CUP, FRUIT	GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH, MULTIGRAIN CHIPS, CELERY STICKS, BABY CARROTS, FRUIT	BREADED DRUMSTICK, BISCUIT, SWEET POTATO FRIES, CORN, FRUIT	FRITO PIE, TINY TOMATO CUP, CELERY STICKS, LETTUCE GARNISH, SALSA, FRUIT	CHICKEN NUGGETS, BAKED FRIES, TINY TOMATO CUP, LETTUCE GARNISH, FRUIT, COOKIE

MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

Please note that all games are subject to change due to COVID cases in the school districts.

Friday, April 30, 4:30: **SOFTBALL**, *vs Santa Anna at Midland MUGS Fields $2, $3*

❖ Thank you ❖

We the family of **Robert Garcia Sr.** wish to express our love and gratitude to our families and friends for all the acts of kindness shown to us in our time of sorrow.

A special thank you to Rev. John Paul at St. Marys for the beautiful mass and eulogy and special thanks to Porter's for the support.

Thank you to everyone for the visits, phone calls, prayers, cards, food, and donations.

Thank you to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home for loving service.

Thank you to all the pallbearers: Adrian, Fernando, Felipe, and Raphael Garcia; Junie Villarreal; Juan Zavala.

With Love & Prayers from,

Rosie Garcia, Robert and Christy Garica and family,
Rita Garcia and her daughters, Ruben Garcia and Sonya,
Rose Belen Garcia and Oscar

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Classifieds & public notices

'Mobile Comunidad' puts resources on wheels in Jeff Davis County

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com



Photo courtesy of Mobile Comunidad

Dennis Thorp of Stockton Ford reviews options for the Ford Transit van custom-ordered for Mobile Comunidad with, from left, Vicki Gibson, Executive Director of the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County, Gwin Grimes, Jeff Davis County Library Director, and Jeanine Bishop, President of the Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library.

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY — There's a new collaborative effort to bring vital resources to every corner of Jeff Davis County, and with an infusion of upstart capital, the "Mobile Comunidad" program is preparing to offer assistance with hunger, literacy, health and technology – all delivered straight to residents' front doors.

The idea sprang up among three friends and Jeff Davis County residents, Jeanine Bishop, Gwin Grimes and Vicki Gibson, who sought to create a "stacked" solution to a variety of issues that residents in the area face. In Jeff Davis, there are no social services, one grocery store, no daycare, no dedicated Veteran's Affairs representative and one medical clinic.

In the far flung county that has about one resident per square mile, access to some of those resources can mean a round-trip drive numbering hundreds of miles.

Bishop, president of the Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, and Gibson, the executive director of the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County, realized the best way to help people was to meet their needs where they are. A collaboration between the two was born, and with the help of donations and grants, the Mobile Comunidad effort was able to purchase a brand new van that will be equipped to traverse the rough roads, project a free wireless internet connection, bring food to residents and offer checkout of books, computers and iPads.

The year 2020 exacerbated economic hardships in the area, with the pandemic and a crash in oil prices impacting the area simultaneously. "Add to all of that a culture that prides itself on not asking for help," the group said, and it's a recipe for going without.

The library, which is a county entity, has joined the effort as a programming partner, but, "There's no county money in this, we're not asking for any; the county won't have any ownership in this van," Bishop clarified. Instead, it'll be nonprofit owned and operated.

It's not the first time these local groups have collaborated. In 2019, the library and food pantry developed the "Kids Pantry," a successful effort to provide meals to any children that want them, without any paperwork or proof of income level. After seeing that effort gain momentum, the group wanted to expand offerings further, creating a "mobile community," Bishop said.

With the van, these groups will bring services to isolated residents who need them the most, establishing a regular route that residents can get acquainted with. The library anticipates better summer reading participation when kids can have books dropped to their door, and the food pantry will be able to roll its Valentine food giveaways into the van, as well as an opportunity to add food drops in other communities like the Davis Mountain Resort and Cherry Creek.

The brightly colored van will also have trained staff that can help locals, with things like getting signed up for insurance in the healthcare marketplace or SNAP benefits. Community partners will also bring voter registration efforts, information about the COVID-19 vaccine, digital literacy training, access to social services and more. In the future, they hope telemedicine can even be available.

The van, with additional features like WiFi, a lift gate for food and a towing package for a trailer, costs around $50,000, and gas, insurance and maintenance adds another $10,000 a year. But operating expenses for two years have already been paid for through grants, and donations have been made toward the van purchase.

Earlier this month, Grimes, Bishop and Gibson visited a dealership in Fort Stockton to seal the deal. Though it's still uncertain when the van will finally hit the road, Jeff Davis County is miles closer to having vital resources at its fingertips.

To learn more, find the Mobile Comunidad on Facebook at jdc.mobile.comunidad and via phone at 432-756-5522. Tax deductible donations by check can be made to Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, PO Box 425, Fort Davis, TX 79734 or donated online at mobilecomunidad.org.



la fundación
the CHINATI foundation

The Chinati Foundation is a contemporary art museum founded by the artist Donald Judd.

Chinati remains closed until further notice.

The safety of our staff, community, and visitors is our highest priority. We look forward to welcoming visitors back on our grounds as soon as it is safe to do so.

Chinati's website is always a place to explore the collection, research, learn, shop, become a member and support Chinati.

www.chinati.org

JOBS

VILLAGE FARMS

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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. Opportunity to move to Supervisor level and pay within the first 6 months of employment. Must be able to pass a pre-employment drug screen. Interested candidates should email or fax resume to (432)729-3071 Ext. 607 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.

Big Bend Materials is immediately hiring general laborers for building projects in Marfa, Texas. $15 per hour.
Call (432) 386-5905 for more information.

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The Big Bend Sentinel and Presidio International are looking to hire a designer on an hourly basis.
Position will assist with page design, photo sourcing, photo editing, web graphics, and updating the newspaper website and social media. Desired skills include Adobe software, social media apps, and experience with Wordpress is a plus. Must be available on Wednesdays.
To apply, email editor@bigbendsentinel.com.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend (FCCBB) seeks an Executive Director. The ideal candidate will be a skilled professional with a demonstrated history of responsibility and accomplishment possessing a strong commitment to seeing survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence through effective programming and services. A bachelor's degree in social work, women's or ethnic studies, psychology, public administration, business administration or other relevant field is a preferred but not required credential. Five years of managerial experience in human services, public administration or business with a demonstrated record of accomplishment are required of applicants. A master's degree and bilingual proficiency in English and Spanish is highly preferred. Interested applicants are encouraged to visit the FCCBB's website www.familycrisiscenterofthe bigbend.com or Face Book page [Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend] to become familiar with the scope of the Center's community engagement. Interested applicants should submit a current dossier including a resumé or current vitae containing full employment and educational history, three letters of reference, and a 500 word conflict resolution essay to: Family Crisis Center of the Big Bend, P.O. Box 1470, Alpine, Texas 79831, ATTN: Executive Director Search Committee, PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL, by May 15, 2021. The conflict resolution essay should include a description of the most challenging job listed in your resume, identification of a difficult issue you encountered in that position, details of the issue including your role and approach to dealing with the issue, steps taken for its resolution, and the outcome. Applications may also be submitted electronically to Dr. Jim Case, Chair of FCCBB Personnel Committee, at jcase@sulross.edu.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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Sealed proposals must be received by May 6, 2021, at 4:00 pm and be clearly marked "RFP #21-02 – Vehicles," and delivered to:
Presidio County Auditor
PO Box 423
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LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Winery Permit by Alta Marfa, LLC dba Alta Marfa located at 1305 W San Antonio Street, Marfa, Presidio County, Texas 79843. Patrick Taylor - Managing Member.

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