

BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES

by order of Presidio County

Alpine student takes district to court over class rank calculations

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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ALPINE — When Dalee Sullivan crossed the stage at Alpine High School’s graduation this May, she had the feeling she’d been robbed of something. From the outside looking in, Sullivan appeared to have accomplished much in her high school career; the senior had posted a 4.0 grade point average, was headed to the College of Charleston Honors College in South Carolina with scholarships in hand and was ending her high school career ranking third in her class. But the student couldn’t shake the feeling that her class rank had been miscalculated, and she was preoccupied with thoughts of her upcoming court date against the Alpine Independent School District.

Since April 28, Sullivan and her parents have contested her GPA with the school. While her traditional GPA is a flawless 4.0, the calculations used for class rank gives varying weight to dual credit classes, Advanced Placement classes, courses needed for graduation and more.

The family believed AISD had conflicting GPA calculation policies and were inconsistent with the classes included in her calculations. Her final transcripts sent to colleges she applied for left out most of her AP scores, and her final report card showed no grades for her final semester of classes.

So on Friday, the young woman took matters into her own hands and headed to court after filing for a temporary injunction against AISD. She believed she had a reasonable claim to the second or first place ranking at Alpine High School.

“The attorney willing to take on a school district quoted us \$75,000, and that’s just a little too much money for an 18 year old to spend,” Sullivan said, laughing. Her father is a local goat farmer and her mother is a forensic interviewer for the Children’s Advocacy Center, and so the family agreed that the young high school graduate would represent herself in court.

Along with cheer, UIL science, social studies and public speaking, Sullivan has competed in Lincoln-Douglas debate over the past two years. Now she would put her argumentation skills to the test before Judge Roy Ferguson of the 394th Judicial District.

Sullivan explained the crux of her argument, saying, “As a student, it’s your job and your responsibility to take your classes, make the grades and get your education. It’s up to the school to make sure all of the formal things like documents are done correctly; people are paid to do that.”

She felt damage had already been done; Sullivan applied to eight

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Photo by Sarah M Vasquez for The Big Bend Sentinel
Marfa High School’s Class of 2021 participated in a graduation parade down Highland Avenue last Wednesday. Seniors graduated on Friday in a ceremony that celebrated students' perseverance and the continued support from the Marfa community.
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New report outlines how to preserve the region’s beauty while opening the door to energy companies

By **SACHI MCCLENDON**
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TRI-COUNTY AREA — The Respect Big Bend coalition released a new report last week that maps out how the tri-county region should approach future energy developments in the area. The project outlines the ways in which the Big Bend region could open itself up to oil, gas and solar investments while maintaining its natural beauty and character.

That energy companies are going to expand into the region is a given, the report reads. As the world’s population grows, there will be more demand for energy and West Texas – being one of the most “energy-intensive” places in the nation – will become increasingly attractive to

energy developers.

In the report, Respect Big Bend argues that there’s no collective group steering energy policy in the region and that pivotal decisions about oil, gas and solar development are left up to energy companies and private landowners.

Not all land is equal though, according to the report. In the study, Respect Big Bend pinpointed “areas of lower conservation value,” that can be given up to energy developers in order to spare the region’s more desirable land. The report writes, “The hypothesis underlying this approach is that, by identifying low-impact places where energy development might go, one also gains leverage to secure high conservation value and ‘no-go’ areas.”

In order to determine which land is most

suitable for energy development, Respect Big Bend convened a council of 14 community members, from county judges to landowners, that decided what the region’s conservation priorities should be. This “stakeholder advisory group” also worked alongside scientists and employees of energy companies to develop these priorities.

“The goal of the stakeholder advisory group was to develop a set of values that focused on the region’s way of life and natural resources, while maximizing the benefits of responsible energy development,” said Billy Tarrant, associate director of stewardship services for the Borderlands Research Institute, a Respect Big Bend Coalition partner. At the top of the list were ranching heritage and property rights, followed

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By **SACHI MCCLENDON**
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — In last week’s meeting, Presidio County commissioners heard from a company that wants to bring a horse racetrack to the city of Presidio, and then agreed to declare an emergency disaster in response to the growing border crisis.

Racetrack

Jose Valdez from Wisdom Advisors Group came in front of the commissioners court to pitch the idea of a horse racing track right outside of Presidio. The current vision is to build either a ½ or ¾ mile racing track on 20 acres of land just south of the Presidio airport. Wisdom Advisors Group would also construct a grandstand, a

restaurant, a bar and 160 barns for the horses. The working title for the track is “Presidio Desert Downs” and would be modeled off of the Ruidoso Downs in New Mexico.

Valdez said he expects there to be around 40 or 50 racing days throughout the year. During “major stake” races, Valdez said he expects around 7,000 to 10,000 people to attend. For races with no stakes, the minimum number would be 1,000.

“To give you an idea, we would probably have 50 to 70 trainers out there, and those trainers require grooms and hot walkers. So just in the operation itself we’re running, you’ll have quite a bit of folks out there,” Valdez said.

Valdez said that the company wants to put the racetrack in Presidio as many of the employees

are from the area.

Most of the questions from the commissioners revolved around whether the city of Presidio could handle this extra strain on its city infrastructure and public services. Valdez noted in his presentation that they would need to have EMS personnel on standby at the track on racing days.

Commissioner Brenda Bentley said, “I feel that, especially in our Presidio area, we have a definite shortage on ambulance availability, either because our ambulances break down or we don’t have enough to run those.” Right now the Presidio EMS service can only staff one ambulance at a time, according to EMS Director

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By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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MARFA — Marfa City Council waded through a packed agenda on Thursday evening last week, advancing plans to improve various city facilities, from the fire department to the USO and the Marfa Activity Center pool.

Fire Chief Gary Mitschke and Marfa resident Zeke Raney gave a presentation on long-anticipated plans to expand the fire department’s bay. The city has budgeted for the expansion multiple times, but efforts to begin construction have yet to get off the ground.

Currently, the fire department has a small bay, with an open air lot behind it. There, vehicles parked behind the main bay are exposed to harsh elements, which causes faster deterioration. The plans presented by Raney would more than double the size of the bay, offering covered, temperature-controlled space for the department

to store its vehicles and equipment.

The expansion would also install a kitchenette, a storage and wash area for bunker gear that has contaminants, and an ADA-compliant restroom with showers. It would also give city EMS (whose facilities are south of the railroad tracks) the opportunity to keep a backup ambulance in the facility north of the tracks, so that emergency response wouldn’t be as disrupted by a stopped train.

Raney, who runs local architectural firm Mud Lab with partner Elizabeth Farrell, is a volunteer firefighter in Marfa who volunteered his time to draw up the proposed building expansion plans for the fire department building.

“I just wanted council to know we haven’t given up on this. We appreciate the funds that you have allocated toward this and we intend to use them,” Mitschke said. “I’m willing to work any way to get this done.”

Councilmember Yoseff Ben-Yehuda, also a

volunteer firefighter, said they will ask the county for financial assistance on the project, since the county depends on the city’s fire department.

The fire department has often opened its space up to be an emergency facility for any event that happens, and it’s used for a variety of things that go beyond the fire department, like county elections. City Attorney Teresa Todd said that if the facility is equipped with backup generation and could be used as a shelter, both the county and city could likely use American Rescue Act funds toward building it out.

Council approved the proposed design for the volunteer fire department building; the next step will be a bidding phase, where a bid proposal is created and put out for bidders.

Later in the meeting, council also voted to solicit design services for the addition of ADA-compliant bathrooms to the USO Building’s

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Rep. Morales defends decision to stay on the House floor during voting reform debate

By **ABBIE PERRAULT**
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TEXAS — The 2021 Texas Legislative Session came to a dramatic end on Sunday night, when all but a handful of Democrats in the Texas House walked out of the chamber, effectively killing a voting restrictions bill by breaking the House’s quorum. District 74 Rep. Eddie Morales Jr., whose district covers the tri-county and much of Far West Texas, was one of only six Democrats that skipped the walkout and remained on the floor Sunday night.

The Republicans needed two-thirds of the House to be present in order to take a vote on a contentious voting reform bill, Senate Bill 7, but the Democrats’ exodus promptly killed the bill. It was an abrupt end to the legislative session, which only takes place once every two years.

Earlier in the afternoon, leadership of the Democratic minority had directed Democrats to leave the building before the late night vote. “I wanted to support leadership in the Democratic party,” Morales told *The Big Bend Sentinel* on Sunday night after the House adjourned, “but personally I didn’t feel like it [walking out] was the best thing.”

Instead, Morales had planned “to stay back, defend my district and defend my right to vote no on it and state my opinion.” Five of the six Democrats that remained represent districts on the border, which Morales said was key to their decision not to leave with the others. “The border Democrats, we’re in a much more conservative district,” he said. “It doesn’t mean we supported it [the bill], but we all stayed back to fight it and to say what needed to be said about that bill.”

Prior to the walkout, the Senate had advanced SB7, and the House was on track to pass it and send it on to the governor’s desk for signature. The bill was a major overhaul of voting rules in the state, with provisions that would decrease the number of hours polls are open, expand the rights of partisan poll watchers, end drive-through voting and potentially criminalize those who help fill out mail-in ballots or drive others to the polls.

Democrats used procedural delays to push back a vote on the bill until Sunday night, and from Morales’ perspective, Democrats could have simply run out the clock rather than walking away. Each representative is allotted 10 minutes to speak, and there were enough of them to delay until the midnight deadline.

Morales wanted to speak about the already “very low” voter turnout in his district and the long drives many faced to reach an open polling location. He was ready to talk about the potential criminalization of “promotoras,” voter promoters from within the community, who build trust with unlikely voters, help turn them out to the polls and assist with ballots for English-second-language voters. The walkout killed the bill and Morales’ chance to share those concerns in the regular session.

Democrats have used the quorum-breaking walkout strategy sparingly in the state’s history. Most recently, the 2003 session of the Legislature ended with 51 House Democrats — including former Representative of District 74 Pete Gallego — absconding to Ardmore, Oklahoma, to avoid a vote on Republican-led redistricting and get out of the jurisdiction of Texas law enforcement.

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Alpine student

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schools but received admissions to only three. “If it looks like I took one AP class and got a 3, I can’t imagine anyone at a top university would give me any real consideration.”

At a virtual Zoom court date on Friday, she explained to the judge that her GPA had been recalculated four times since raising concerns in late April, each resulting in changes, but little transparency on how the numbers were reached.

Ferguson talked the teen through some of the legal process. While he couldn’t assist her by explaining some of the legal underpinnings required in presenting and admitting evidence, he did tell her to “lay the foundation” for the evidence and made sure the young woman understood what was taking place in court that day.

The district policy states that only classes taken for graduation are included for class rank calculations, but Sullivan alleged at court that the district, for example, counted her first semester of British literature but not the second in her GPA. In another instance, she alleges that her government course credit that was required for graduation was not counted, she said.

Sullivan also complained that the school had released the name of the valedictorian to local press while she was in the middle of disputing the calculations, and alleged she had not been invited to an awards ceremony where the valedictorian and salutatorian were announced. The AISD

counsel, attorney Kelley Kalchthaler, objected to that notion on the basis of irrelevancy, but Ferguson overruled it.

AISD’s counsel stated that Sullivan and her family had engaged in conversations with the district, but had not followed board policy to try and remediate the case through the district’s official grievance process. Kalchthaler argued that the court was not a proper venue to resolve the issue.

The student claimed she and her family didn’t know about the documents that could be submitted to the district to file a grievance and have a formal hearing. Instead, the family had met with school administration informally on multiple occasions to attempt to resolve the issue. The district’s grievance process is a three-tiered policy that ultimately escalates to a hearing from the school board and an issued written decision.

Sullivan said that all her family was asking in court that day was for the court to order an independent third party audit of grade calculations to happen.

Ultimately, Ferguson did not oblige that request, nor the request for a temporary injunction against the school. Instead, he asked the school to accept the Sullivan family’s complaints in place of the first two steps of the grievance process. The judge ordered AISD to offer a written decision in response to the tier-two grievance within 10 days, and then Sullivan could appeal to the third and final tier, a hearing before the school board. AISD said during the court hearing that

the grievance could potentially be heard during an August board meeting.

AISD Superintendent Becky McCutchen provided a written statement following the court hearing, expressing that the district was “gratified that the Court did not issue an injunction.” The district statement said that although they “respectfully disagree with the allegations in the lawsuit, we take student and parent concerns very seriously and will continue to address the student’s concerns.”

For Sullivan, the fight isn’t over. If the written decision from tier two does not satisfy her, she plans to pursue the final step in the grievance process. “I just want this to be right, and I’ve followed it this far, so I think I have to see it finished. If the school still refuses to make sure that policy is followed and that the recalculations are actually correct, I’ll definitely pursue further action on it.”

Judge Ferguson also told Sullivan and AISD that if the district’s grievance process isn’t satisfactory to the parties, either side can reconvene the court hearing and “continue on its merits.”

“It’s a really bitter end of four years of really hard work to know that I can’t even get an accurate GPA or representation of my high school career,” Sullivan said of the experience. “I told my parents that I didn’t even want to go to graduation, really, none of it seemed fair, but I made up my mind to enjoy it – you only graduate once.”

Commissioners Court

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Malynda Richardson.

“Whatever we can do to support them we definitely will do that, even adding on our personal EMTs if we have to,” Valdez said. “The city administrator and the mayor said that they thought we’d be okay.”

The racetrack would need to get its water from the city as well. Ferguson and Newton told Valdez that the city doesn’t have the funds to extend the water lines, but that they could provide the water.

More than just support from the commissioners, Valdez needs approval from the county to allow betting at the racetrack – meaning there would have to be a countywide election, funded by the county itself. “We budget elections and

there is an expense to doing that, so we have to weigh those options,” Commissioner Bentley said.

No action was taken by the commissioners on whether to approve this new racetrack.

Emergency declaration

The court next discussed declaring a local state of disaster in response to the growing number of undocumented immigrants attempting to illegally cross the U.S.-Mexico border. (County Judge Cinderella Guevara had already declared a disaster, but failed to follow up on it.) If the commissioners agreed to reinstate the declaration, Guevara would take it to the governor’s office to urge him not to do away with Title 42, which has allowed the government to expel undcommented immigrants

ostensibly in order to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

“I have not heard from too many ranchers or people outside of the county as far as complaints about the crisis that they are facing,” Guevara said. “But all around us they are catching a lot of illegal aliens, and these are not people trying to come here for asylum, for the most part. They feel like they are dangerous criminals.”

Guevara said she worries about the costs the county faces in handling the deceased remains of undocumented immigrants found within the county. “What’s happening in Hudspeth County, I do know that they have 11 bodies in the morgue right now of illegal aliens that have died in their county, and now the county is responsible for

the cost of the disinterment of those illegal aliens,” she said.

Commissioner Buddy Knight agreed, saying, “What bothers me worse than anything is that quite possibly there are bodies in the mountains of Presidio County right now that haven’t been found but will be, that we’ll be responsible for and that we can’t afford to do.” In fact, Guevara said that county employees recently came across two bodies in the county.

Guevara also mentioned that some of the county judges along the border are looking into whether they should sue the Biden Administration in order to recoup the costs of dealing with the crisis.

At the end of the meeting, the court passed the motion to declare the local disaster.

Energy companies

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by ecological and biological conservation, tourism and hunting, viewsheds and dark skies, quality of life and lastly, culture.

The group then mapped those values onto the land, establishing which areas would be able to host energy facilities, while at the same time having little impact on the region’s way of life. It was noted that Presidio County – where large swaths of land scored very high on the conservation value index – was particularly at risk for wind and solar energy development.

Respect Big Bend said that there has to be coordinated action between landowners and other community members in order to avoid the worst impacts of energy development in the area. Right now, there are few legal regulations in the state restricting where energy facilities can operate. “There’s really nothing you can do as a private citizen to try to influence the siting of oil and gas wells, of pipelines, of transmissions lines, of solar facilities, wind facilities. You don’t really have a tool to push back and protest with,” said Melinda Taylor, a University of Texas law professor who led the initiative.

In lieu of any legal or policy mechanism to stop energy expansion in the area, Respect Big Bend said that there has to be coordinated action between landowners and other community members in order to avoid the worst impacts of energy development in the area.

And Taylor says that private landowners do have an incentive to cooperate with one another and with the coalition. “They have a vested interest in the resources that are on their land. They care about the wildlife habit, the springs on their property. They care about the water quality of the springs. They no doubt care about their scenic views, because for them that’s one of their assets.”

However, with fewer ways to make a living off the land, these landowners often have to turn to energy companies for economic support, Taylor says. “It’s not really realistic to say don’t sign a lease with a wind developer, don’t sign a lease with an oil and gas company,” she said. “Instead, we’re giving them a roadmap for a way that they can minimize whatever the negative impacts of that development would be.”

Taylor said she also wants energy companies to use this report as a roadmap when negotiating with landowners, but acknowledges that there’s no legal mechanism ensuring that they follow these guidelines. “At the end of the day there’s no way to force the energy companies to adopt this methodology. But the hope is that just by having more information and more data, the energy companies can make decisions – with some pressure hopefully from the community members and landowners – to site their facilities in places that are less likely to negatively harm the environment and negatively harm those communities.”

Council meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Garden Pavilion through issuing a Request for Proposals, which is the final improvement planned for the USO Garden Pavilion project.

The plans for reopening the city pool this summer are still in limbo, with a few moving parts holding up the decision of whether to open for the summer season. “We need to get mechanical fixed, we need bathrooms and we need lifeguards,” said Ben-Yehuda, summing up the dilemmas at the MAC Building’s swimming facility.

While the pool pump is ready to go, the city is waiting on electrical repairs on the motor. Once complete, they will have to fill the pool to check for leaks or mechanical problems.

Mayor pro tem Irma Salgado flagged another perennial issue at the facility. The bathrooms at the pool are in poor shape, with dilapidated tiling. Salgado worried about the safety of the restrooms, and whether the broken tiling could cause cuts.

Councilmember Eddie Pallarez responded, volunteering to take

a look at the bathrooms and ask contractors for estimates on repairing or replacing tiling.

Earlier in the meeting, Councilmember Buck Johnston was appointed to the Parks and Recreation Board, filling Mayor Manny Baeza’s seat after a decade of service, and Salgado was re-appointed to her seat. Johnston laid her cards on the table, telling her fellow council members, “I got on the Parks Board because I’m going to be working towards a new pool for the city of Marfa. We need it.”

In the meantime, council seemed unsure whether the current pool would be able to staff up on lifeguards, since they did not want to hire before the mechanical and bathroom issues were resolved. “As far as opening up the pool this summer, I don’t know how soon we could do it. We’re going to need lifeguards as well. I don’t know if you want to open for a month or two or table this item until the repairs are done.”

Council voted to table the pool reopening, and will discuss it again at their first June meeting.

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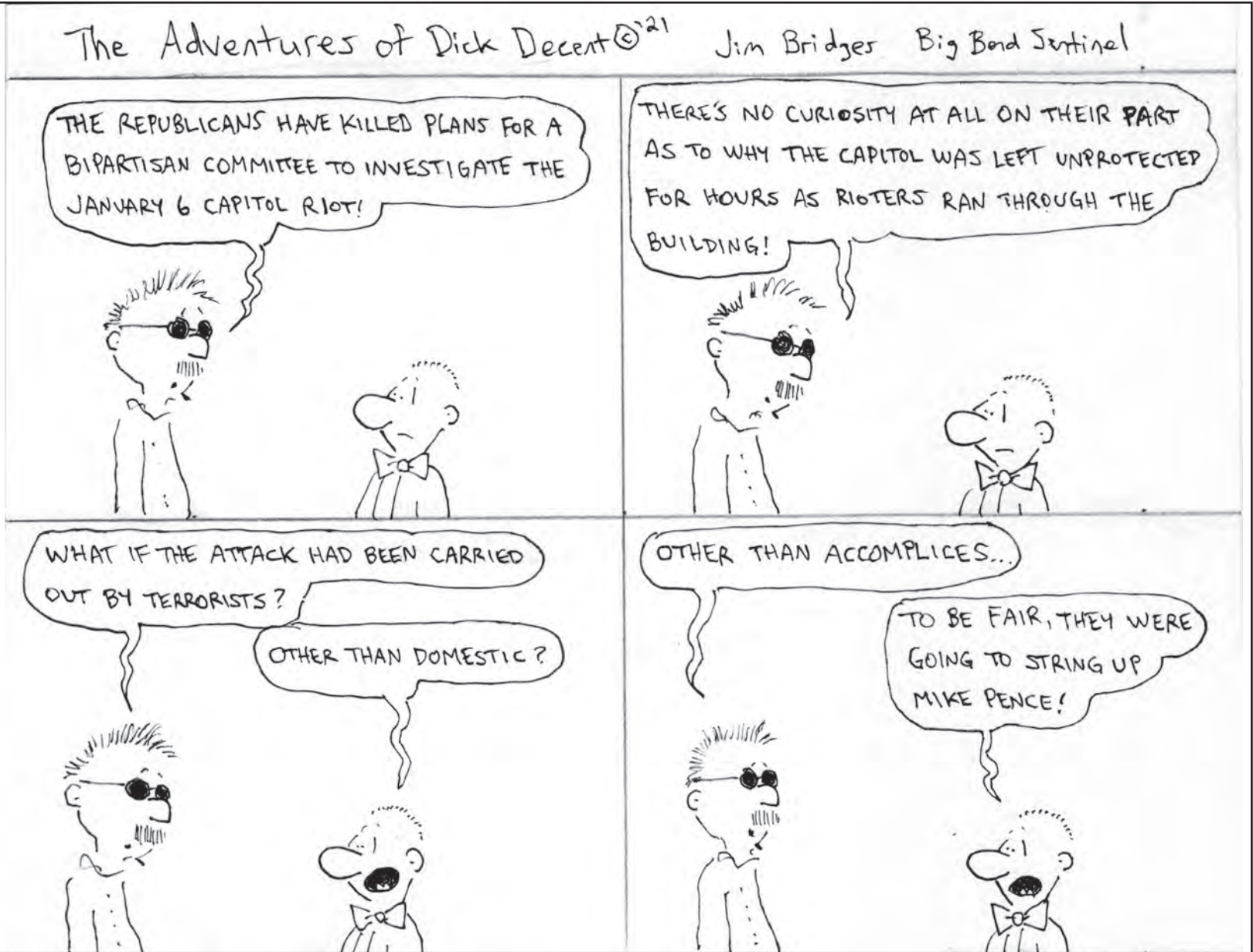
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Opinions



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I recently read in *The Big Bend Sentinel* that the city manager doesn’t want to cut off utility service, hoping folks would make arrangements to pay their delinquent bills while keeping service. The city needs to come into the real world and terminate service so bills can be collected; that’s the way utilities function. The city has become tangled up in its underwear as a result of actions not taken. People with limited income choose which bills to pay based on leniency of the provider. Sounds like the city wants to exacerbate a problem that’s already out of control!

Richard Long Stone
Austin

...

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HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

Filling your money bags
from the stock market

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON

The Blind Bard of the Big Bend will explain how to get rich on our modern stock market. There are two ways you can approach the stock market to increase your wealth. The first and oldest way is to use your common sense and research ability to pick a company who has a profitable product, competent management and the potential for future growth. This is the old-fashioned approach which requires skills and patience, most of which are in short supply these days. Surveys show that in the sixties and early seventies, the average stock was held for at least six years. One of the smartest investors in the late 20th century is Warren Buffett. He bought his first stock before reaching his teens, and at 90 he is now worth over one billion dollars. The modern American, be they rich or poor, wants to make their billions right now!

The second approach to the stock market is the easiest. You can either buy your own \$16 million supercomputer and the wizards to program it with the proper algorithms, or you can spend anywhere from a few \$100,000 to a few \$1,000,000 to “buy-in” to a hedge fund. Today, stocks are sold in milliseconds by the millions. The algorithms stuffed into the supercomputer will tell the computer when a stock has reached a certain high point at which time it will sell. As the stock goes down the algorithm will know when it has reached a certain low point and sells short. This up and down programming makes money no matter which way the stock market is going. One of the strangest paradoxes in the stock market is that some economic bad news will make stock prices go up, and some good news in the economic sector will make the stock market go down. It seems sometimes that logic pays no attention to the value of stocks. If, after following my sage-like advice, you think the stock market resembles something out of Alice in Wonderland, forget it! Alice has gone to Arizona and is recounting ballots.

While supercomputers and algorithms have made billions for some Americans, it has not added a great deal of wealth to the lower half of America’s economy. Wealth for the rich and our present tax laws have given billions to the top segment of the economy but little to the middle class and working poor.



Long-standing inequality in the United States has been exacerbated by the Fed’s role in touching off a multi-trillion-dollar boom in stock markets — and stock ownership is heavily skewed toward the wealthiest Americans.

Social Security is the top source of wealth for most lower-income households with workers nearing retirement, according to Teresa Ghilarducci, an economist at the New School in New York City who specializes in retirement.

If the guaranteed income stream of Social Security is treated as an asset, she estimates it amounts to 58% of the net worth for near-retirees in the bottom half of the U.S. wealth distribution. Other retirement savings represent only about 11% of their net worth, and stocks are just 1%. Home equity accounts for most of the remainder.

The stock market is soaring to new heights. But most Americans aren’t along for the ride.

Large swaths of Americans have essentially missed out on any direct wealth increase from the market’s near doubling since its bottom 13 months ago. Rather, the major beneficiaries have been the wealthiest 10% of Americans, who owned 89% of stocks and mutual fund shares held by U.S. households as of year-end, according to Fed statistics. More than half of that — 53% — is owned by the top 1%.

The Fed’s policies have helped generate jobs and reduce unemployment, which was their goal. In the process, however, the Fed has accelerated the decades-long increase in economic inequality by helping increase the wealth of people at the top far more than it has increased the wealth of working-class Americans.

There will be midterm elections in 2022, and if the working poor don’t start voting their self interest they are going to remain at the bottom of the totem pole. With so many recently added voter suppression laws now on the books it will be a hard battle. Maybe Alice will make it back from Arizona in time to help.

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.

Crowcrumbs is a Houston-based illustrator. Follow her on Instagram @crowcrumbs.

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Community



Photos by Sarah M Vasquez for The Big Bend Sentinel

Top left: Many Marfa High School graduates decorated their mortarboards for the 2021 Marfa High School graduation ceremony. Top right: Gabriela Soto waves to the crowd as she makes her entrance during the 2021 Marfa High School graduation ceremony. Bottom left: Christian Davis hugs a family member during the 2021 Marfa High School graduation. Bottom right: The Marfa High School Class of 2021 toss their mortarboards into the air after Friday's graduation ceremony.

Marfa High graduation celebrated the perseverance of Marfa seniors

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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MARFA — “There’s no easy way in life, much less high school,” Valedictorian John Aguero told his classmates on Friday evening when the Class of 2021 gathered to move their tassels and graduate from Marfa High School. This year’s class faced exceptional obstacles during the coronavirus pandemic, but overcame those challenges with the support of the Marfa community, who came out to celebrate the graduates at the senior parade and graduation ceremony last week.

The 25 seniors in the Class of 2021 spent nearly three semesters of their high school careers adjusting to changes brought by the pandemic. “It was really hard getting used to the way things are now,” said senior Andrea Torres on Wednesday before the senior parade.

Her parents, Abel and Cherry Torres, were there to support her, driving the truck that carried Torres in Marfa’s second annual senior parade. The new tradition

began for last year’s class, when the community wanted to safely show support for the students after the pandemic took away some of their final rites of passage through high school. The community lined the sidewalks of Highland and the courthouse last Wednesday, once again waving and cheering on the students.

On Friday, as the Class of 2021 lined up together at Martin Field to graduate, family members offered words of advice and optimism in spite of a tough year. “Trust in God and do the right thing!” said the valedictorian’s grandfather, Rick Stains. Stains’ wife Bonnie added, “Don’t party a lot!” Cherry Torres’s advised graduating seniors, “Enjoy your summer and work hard.”

Aurora Mediano, whose grandson Isaac Mediano was graduating that night, said she felt sad to see her grandson grow up and graduate, “but I think he’s ready, and I have to be ready too.” Her advice to the Marfa class was to “keep going with your education, get good jobs, and just go for it!”

“Great things lie ahead,” said Billy Marginot, a parent

whose triplet sons, Catching, Charles and salutatorian Brooks, were graduating that evening. “I want them to go out and visit the world, and they’re ready.”

Jarett Lujan, a Marfa alumni and Texas Tech PhD student who returned to town as this year’s commencement speaker, also recognized the hardships that Marfa students have faced. “Perseverance in times of difficulty is no secret to Marfa students,” he told the class. “You graduates have persevered and you fought against this deadly pandemic to get here. I don’t know how you did it, but you did it, and for that I can say I’m truly proud of you for fighting for this day.”

“This has prepared you more for the outside world than you’d think,” he told them. “You are now even more strong-willed and determined than I ever was. Although this tragedy kind of sucked the life out of us all, we were all made stronger from it.”

“Parents, teachers, community members, you’ve done your job,” Lujan said, reminding the graduates of those who had helped prepare them for the outside world, and

offering praise to the supportive Marfa community.

“Education is so important in today’s society, but you know what is more important? Kindness. Being a good neighbor. This has been taught to you here in Marfa as well,” Lujan told the Class of 2021. “This community has shown you your passion and drive to help get you to this finish line, while at the same time showing you true kindness, and this is invaluable.”

Lujan advised the graduates’ family members, saying, “Trust in them, let them fly on their own, I promise they will fall, they will fail, and they will come to you when they need you. Until then, trust them and trust that you’ve done all you can to prepare them for this world.”

Reading from the school’s alma mater, Lujan said, “I’d rather be in Marfa than any other land,” encouraging the students to carry that sentiment far beyond the city limits as they ventured into the world. “Marfa will always be here, as she has always been there for me, and she will be here to welcome you back with open arms each time.”

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

SECOND DOSE OF PFIZER VACCINE AT MISD ON FRIDAY

Marfa ISD has confirmed with the Department of Health and Human Services that the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine will be administered to students Friday, June 4, 2021, in the Marfa Shorthorn Gym at 1 p.m.

Please note that all events are subject to change due to COVID cases.

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Community

June 7 deadline to protest property tax appraisal increase approaches

By LAURA TUCKER
Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc.

PRESIDIO COUNTY — If you own property in Presidio County, you may have received a “2021 Notice of Appraised Value” in the mail from the Presidio County Appraisal District. This is not junk mail. This notice tells you how much the tax office thinks your property is worth. This information is important because your taxes will go up if the tax office thinks your property value has increased from the year before.

What happens if you do not protest the appraisal value?

Your taxes may go up. It will depend on what kinds of exemptions you have on file.

Should you protest?

You have the right to protest. If you have not been able to afford to maintain your home, then the house may not be worth what the tax office says it is worth.

What is the deadline to protest?

The deadline for Presidio County is June 7. This is because notices were mailed on May 6, and the deadline is 30 days after that. If you did not get your notice until much later, you may have good cause to file the protest late, but you should try to meet the June 7 deadline.

How do you file a protest?

The form was mailed with the notice and it is fairly simple to fill out. If you lost it, you can find another copy from the appraisal district or on the website here: <http://www.presidiocad.org/index.php/Form>

You can file the protest at the appraisal district office or by mailing it. Be sure it is postmarked before June 7 or delivered on that day.

What happens after you file a protest?

After you file a protest, you are going to get a notice in the mail that tells you the date and time of your hearing. While you are waiting, start putting together evidence to show why you think your home’s appraisal value is too high. For example, take photos of the inside of the house that show where it needs repairs or improvements. If there are repairs that are needed, you can get estimates for the repairs or for remodeling from local contractors.

Sometimes there will be informal negotiations with the appraisal district office after you file a protest. The appraisal district office may offer a different appraisal value, which is a settlement which you can accept or reject. If you accept the settlement, then you will not have a hearing. If you do not agree with the amount they offer, then you will have a hearing. You may be able to get the chief appraiser to change their mind even without a hearing. You can do this by providing the information that you gathered to the appraisal office to see if they will change the amount. Sometimes you can reach a settlement. If you can’t reach an agreement, you will have the chance to present your arguments and evidence to a group of local citizens who make up the “appraisal review board,” or ARB. The ARB can then order the appraisal district to change the taxable value of your property based on the evidence they consider at the hearing.

Laura Tucker is an Equal Justice Works Fellow and the Richard L. Tate Rural Justice Fellow, sponsored by the Texas Access to Justice Foundation, in the Alpine office at Texas RioGrande Legal Aid, Inc. TRLA provides free civil legal services in a variety of areas. To apply for services, call 888-988-9996.

Astronomers disprove planet orbiting nearby Barnard’s Star

FORT DAVIS — Astronomers are announcing today that they have disproved a 2018-announced planet orbiting Barnard’s Star, the second-closest star to our sun. The findings, based on observations with the Habitable Zone Planet Finder (HPF) instrument on the 10-meter Hobby-Eberly Telescope at The University of Texas at Austin’s McDonald Observatory, have been accepted for publication in *The Astronomical Journal*.

Led by University of California, Irvine graduate student Jack Lubin, the large international team also includes UT Austin astronomers Michael Endl and William Cochran. The team said that archival data and new observations from HPF do not show signs of a planet in the Barnard’s Star system. Instead, the astronomers suggest signals initially appearing to be from a “super Earth” measuring 3.3 times the size of our home planet are more likely the result of starspots, stellar activity similar to the sunspots well known on our own sun.

“Around the time of the 2018 exoplanet announcement, our team was actually observing Barnard’s Star as part of a commissioning operation for the new Habitable Zone Planet Finder,” Lubin said. “But the more data we collected with HPF, and the closer we looked, the more convinced we became that

the proposed planet candidate is a false positive.”

Today’s disproved planet is not the first for Barnard’s Star. “The star is famous — or infamous — in the exoplanet field,” Endl said. “It was one of the first stars that astronomers believed to have detected a planetary system in the 1970s and ‘80s. Later these results were shown to be instrumental effects.”

The 2018 planet announcement drew a lot of attention because of the cultural lore and scientific fascination around Barnard’s Star. Due to its relative lack of magnetic activity, the star has been thought to be a “Doppler standard” by astronomers. The planet finding seemed incontrovertible; the international team that announced it based their findings on more than 700 observations over 23 years with seven instruments; their results were published in *Nature*.

But, according to Lubin, the HPF team had some questions about the relationship between the rotation period of Barnard’s Star, which is around 145 days, and the proposed exoplanet’s 233-day orbit. “They are one-year aliases of each other, so what we think has happened is that the rotation of Barnard’s Star was sampled in a way that produced a signal at a different period,” said Lubin. “That signal was ascribed to

an exoplanet that we now think is not there.”

Also, features on the surface of stars, such as starspots, can cause signals in astronomical observations that mimic a planet’s orbit, causing a false positive exoplanet detection.

Endl explained that earlier studies hinted at magnetic interference going on with Barnard’s Star.

“From precise radial velocity measurements that we collected more than 20 years ago using the UVES spectrograph at the Very Large Telescope in Chile, we were surprised to detect that, even for such an old star, our measurements were affected by the magnetic activity in this star,” he said. “This is typical for younger and faster rotating stars, but it was not really expected for Barnard.”

The HPF team drew their conclusions after testing three different models of the Barnard system. In the first run, they analyzed for a single planet with the same characteristics as those in the 2018 paper with no stellar activity. Next, they ran the experiment accounting for the planet plus an additional signal of activity of the star. Then they performed on a test with no planet but with stellar activity.

“We found that the model which only accounts for stellar activity fits the data the best,” said Lubin.

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Marfa Lights Festival, Trans-Pecos Festival and Chinati Weekend all return this fall

By ABBIE PERRAULT
abbie@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Three of Marfa’s biggest events will return this fall after taking a year off during the coronavirus pandemic. The Marfa Lights Festival is set to return September 3 through 5, and just weeks later the Trans-Pecos Festival of Music + Love returns September 22 through 26 at El Cosmico. In early October, Chinati Weekend will return in-person from October 8 through 10 after its 2020 virtual gathering.

The 34th annual Marfa Lights Festival was canceled last year along with most public events in town, but for its 35th year, Marfa’s Chamber of Commerce is planning to bring the festival back in full force over Labor Day Weekend. The Friday through Sunday event will have vendors, live music and “the usual stuff that we have every year,” said Consuelo Chavez, the chamber’s treasurer, all centered around the Presidio County Courthouse.

A few chamber members have resigned their posts over the past year, but the group is planning to iron out festival details at their next official meeting. Chavez said that while they are running behind, information about tickets and performances will be announced as soon as possible.

September will also welcome the return of the Trans-Pecos Festival of Music + Love for its 15th year, which will look a little different than previous iterations of the festival. Ticket holders will get four days of music instead of the usual three, and capacity will be reduced by 50%, allowing visitors to spread out and enjoy even more music than before. While ticket prices have gone up for those who make the trip to West Texas, tri-county locals can still get a pass for the event for \$150 by stopping by the front desk of El Cosmico and showing proof of residency.

Tickets went live last Tuesday, and without a lineup announcement people were still buying. Monika Bernstein, the general manager of El Cosmico, thought ticket sales were good so far because after such a trying year, people need something to travel for and look forward to.

“It just feels so good to be able to gather, and of course I think it’s also important to note that we’re following whatever the CDC recommends, so if for some reason something changes, we’ll definitely enforce that as well,” Bernstein explained.

Music, vendors, programmed workshops and more will take place, and this year, Bernstein teased, “We’re going to have a speakeasy,” legally of course, which promises hard alcohol at the festival for the first time since the property upgraded its alcoholic beverage license.

Though the lineup isn’t out, “There will definitely be some returning artists and some new ones,” Bernstein said. The lineup will likely be announced in mid-June, with more names dropped as the festival gets closer.

Rounding out the events this fall is the return to an in-person Chinati Weekend from October 8 through 10. Ticketed attendees will be able to join in on brunches, cocktails and tours through the restoration of the Chamberlain Building, with tickets available in July. Locals and visitors will finally be able to come together again for the Open House Dinner at the Arena on Sunday, Oct. 9, an event that will be free to all and offer ranch fare with mariachi and tequila.

Bernstein reflected, “It seems like right now in Marfa, everything is back to normal.”



Photo courtesy of Oscar Agüero

Joe Portillo gives a speech three days before Memorial Day in front of the Presidio County Courthouse to honor military personnel who have died in the line of duty.

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Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg May 24, 2021

ACROSS
1 Hair that might be curled
5 Mauritania neighbor
9 Climate activist
14 Voice above tenor
15 Strange sky sightings
16 Lead-in to a new episode, often
17 Thin cut
18 Body part that a human lacks
19 Stopped snoozing
20 Oily fish that spends more time on the ocean floor?
23 “Yikes!”
24 This answer’s part of speech
25 Burrowing animal in clothes?
32 R&B legend
35 Berkeley school, for short
36 They lived in Russia’s Winter Palace
37 Cooking spray choice
38 One may be pierced
41 Actress Tyler
42 Right on the money
44 Barely squeak (out)
45 Ooze
46 Most kind bug?

DOWN
1 “Ted ____” (Apple TV+ comedy)
2 God in the Quran
3 Jellyfish attack
4 Ball Park Franks, e.g.
5 “Sorry, I was on ____” (Zoom apology)
6 In the distance
7 “The Giver” author Lowry
8 Common cruise stop
9 Person who’s usually older than a senior?
10 Opposite of “fast-forwards”

5/24
1 City on the Rhone
51 VIP at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
55 Snake that lives in the moment?
60 Like St. Patrick
61 Home ____ from home
62 Boarding area at an airport
63 “Justice for All,” for D.C.
64 Game piece in Azul or Scrabble
65 Taj Mahal’s continent
66 Tidy up a porch
67 Flames that burned out?
68 Bananagrams cry

11 Subj. with demand curves
12 Director’s shoot
13 Mimic
21 Activist ____ B. Wells
22 Burglarize
26 TV brand
27 Word after “candy” or “coffee”
28 Actress Pompeo
29 Strong wind
30 Great Lake with the shortest name
31 Invitation letters
32 Warm up the crowd
33 Joni Mitchell sang about a big yellow one
34 Apple desktop
38 Virtual store for a crafter

39 Gives the green light
40 Busy worker?
43 “Little Fires Everywhere” author Ng
45 Short-term solution
47 Nursery rhyme “piggy”
48 Present from birth
49 EMT’s skill
52 Comb toward the scalp
53 Loosen, like laces
54 Major bargain
55 Front of a ship
56 Formal ceremony
57 Left or Right candy
58 Telemarketer’s success
59 Potato features
60 Web chats

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

R	A	F	T	A	B	B	O	T	S	H	E
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5/24 Animalgrams by Michael Lieberman

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Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Marfa
Rotary Club of Marfa scholarship recipients from left to right are Catching Marginot, Bryanna Bentley, John Aguero, and Zach Gomez. Not pictured is the C. K. (Chuck) Stephenson Memorial Scholarship recipient Valentine ISD student Samantha Kuhlman.

The Rotary Club of Marfa awards \$11,000 in student scholarships

MARFA — The Rotary Club of Marfa is pleased to announce that, with the approval of a grant from Rotary District 5520, the club will be awarding one \$3,000 student scholarship this year in addition to scholarships funded by the Marfa club’s own fundraising efforts.

The club is awarding four additional \$2,000 scholarships. The club selected Marfa High School student Henry Catching Marginot as the recipient of the \$3,000 award. The \$2,000 scholarships have been awarded to Marfa High School students John Aguero, Bryanna Bentley and Zach Gomez. The C. K. (Chuck) Stephenson Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Valentine ISD student Samantha Kuhlman.

The club supports the youth of Marfa as one of our most important community projects. “We would like to thank all the citizens and businesses in Marfa who have purchased raffle tickets, participated in our golf tournament and have supported the Rotary Club in this community for almost 100 years,” said a spokesperson for the rotary club.

Museum of the Big Bend announces new exhibit: ‘At Night’ featuring local students' photography

ALPINE — *At Night* is a 50-image exhibition, juried by renowned night photographer Lance Keimig, spotlighting one of our greatest natural resources — the dark sky — while also building awareness about light pollution and its disruption of wildlife and ecological balances when the dark sky is impaired. Works by Marfa, Presidio and Terlingua high school students will be on exhibit as well. *At Night* is made possible through grants from the Texas Commission on the Arts and a partnership with Fujifilm.

The show runs from June 11 to September 3 and is presented in partnership with McDonald Observatory, Big Bend Conservation Alliance, Globe at Night and Texas Master Naturalist. A family-friendly opening reception will be held June 11 from 5 to 7 p.m., and June 12 will be the Alpine Photo Weekend Symposium at the Museum of the Big Bend from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission for Alpine Photo Weekend is \$10 per person.

The Museum of the Big Bend is free for members, children under 12 and current SRSU students, staff and faculty with current ID. The Museum of the Big Bend is located at Entrance 4 on the campus



Photo courtesy of Museum of The Big Bend

First Prize photo by Jeffery Maresh; Titled Last Gasp

of Sul Ross State University. To make a donation to enable the MoBB to continue the tradition of excellent and educational exhibits for the community and visitors from around the world or to learn more about *At Night*, visit www.museumofthebigbend.com or call 432-837-8145.

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Screenprint by Zach Gomez
12th grade

Dawn Healey to lead Mobile Comunidad programming

FORT DAVIS — Fort Davis resident Dawn Healey has been named program manager for Mobile Comunidad, an organization focused on offering support and programs in literacy, nutrition, health, social services and digital connectivity for residents of Jeff Davis County. It is a collaborative effort between nonprofit organizations Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library and the Food Pantry of Jeff Davis County, with program partner the Jeff Davis County Library.

Healey has been a Texas resident for more than six years and has lived in Jeff Davis County since 2017. She has an extensive customer service background in restaurant and retail establishments. She has volunteered with the food pantry since January of 2019 and has worked at the library.

“Dawn not only brings her library and food pantry experience to Mobile Comunidad but also her passion for this community. I’m so pleased to have her on our team,” said Library Director Gwin Grimes.

Healey enjoys meeting new people and learning something new every day, and believes that positivity and kindness are contagious. “I strongly believe that giving back to the community is essential to my personal well-being,” she said.

“Dawn’s wide range of skills makes her the ideal front-line

leader for Mobile Comunidad,” said Jeanine Bishop, president of the Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library. Healey will be managing the administrative aspects of the project and will be directly delivering services in the community.

“Dawn has been a tireless, cheerful food pantry volunteer for several years. Her enthusiasm is contagious and we are very fortunate to have her on the Mobile Comunidad team,” said Food Pantry Executive Director Vicki Gibson.

Mobile Comunidad is currently waiting for its custom outreach vehicle to be manufactured. Delivery has been delayed due to the worldwide shortage of computer processor chips for vehicles. Bishop said that until the van is received, Healey will coordinate programs from both the library and food pantry.

More information about Mobile Comunidad can be found at the website www.mobilecomunidad.org or on Facebook. Donations to support this unique program can be made online or by mailing a check payable to Friends of the Jeff Davis County Library, PO Box 425, Fort Davis, TX 79734. The organization is a 501(c)3. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Sul Ross student earns his degree from halfway across the world

ALPINE — Sul Ross State University is known by many to be in a remote corner of West Texas. However, in today’s world that doesn’t mean its reach isn’t capable of a global scale. International students have always made up a large portion of the identity of the campus. It works the other way as well. Students go out, in a more literal sense, into the world. Recent graduate Rodric Allen embodies the drive and determination to achieve your goals no matter how difficult or where one is — even stuck in Thailand.

Allen’s story is in a lot of ways similar to many of the students who attend Sul Ross. He saw it as an opportunity to better his future through higher education. He couldn’t possibly know how far this journey would take him. From Houston to China to Louisiana, Beaumont, Alpine and eventually Thailand. But every step of the way he kept his focus trained on earning his degree.

He found a position as a material and logistics manager for a major chemical expansion in Beaumont, Texas, for a petroleum engineering firm. While the home base was located in Texas, fabrication was outsourced to Thailand. They started off from scratch, and in 18 months, he had built up an infrastructure shipping \$118,000,000 worth of equipment back to Texas for use — during a pandemic. Over the course of that time, he lost none of his materials, which is a remarkable logistic feat in international commerce. But there was that one caveat. He couldn’t go home. He went for 15 months without seeing his family, with the added reality that if he left for home at



Photo courtesy of Rodric Allen
Rodric Allen

any time the job wouldn’t be waiting for him.

“They shut down the country. You couldn’t travel between provinces. There was a curfew enforced. You couldn’t leave certain areas, and if you did you would be fined,” Allen recounted.

Stuck in a faraway country and faced with the uncertainty felt by so many around the world,

Allen made the hard decision to stay and work. But he was able to immerse himself in a brand-new country and experience a new culture. However, Allen still needed to break through the next ceiling he was stuck under that only a college degree could allow.

Enter Dr. Eric Busby, department chair of the industrial technology program at Sul Ross State University. After connecting with Allen, Busby got him enrolled in the program and helped him move forward with his education, all from halfway across the world. Busby came to Sul Ross from a professional background with a mindset to change everything with the industrial technology program, retooling it to provide a more immersive and hands-on educational experience to better prepare his students for the workforce. His goal is to take students new to the industry and make them prepared to find a job and hit the ground running, but also to take students like Allen who are already working professionals but are looking to take that next step in their careers.

“At graduation I think I was happier than he [Allen] was,” said Busby.

Dr. Busby’s personal experience coupled with his innovation of the program has created a wonderful opportunity for students to become highly skilled, and quickly, in industrial technology at Sul Ross. But it’s also his passion and dedication to his students that is so indicative of the Sul Ross culture that attracts students like Allen to attend and take that next step with confidence.

☺ MARFA SUMMER SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

MAY	Thu, June 3	Fri, June 4	Mon June, 7	Tue, June 8	Wed, June 9
BREAKFAST	PANCAKE WRAP, YOGURT		PANCAKES, BACON	BREAKFAST SANDWICH	SAUSAGE, PANCAKES
LUNCH Menu courtesy of  Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	CHEESE PIZZA, BABY CARROTS, GARDEN SALAD, FRUIT, COOKIE	BREAKIN' FOR THE DAY ☺	PEPPERONI PIZZA POCKET, TINY TOMATO CUP, GARDEN SALAD, MARINARA SAUCE, FRUIT, COOKIE	CHICKEN FAJITAS, TORTILLA, SPANISH RICE, BABY CARROTS, SALSA, TINY TOMATO CUP, LETTUCE GARNISH, FRUIT	HAMBURGER, HAMBURGER GARNISH (LET. & PICKLES), TINY TOMATO CUP, OVEN FRIES, FRUIT

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Classifieds & public notices

First Data Center for the Permian Basin and West Texas

Power backup to ensure no loss of data during electrical outages

Alpine TX — BBT (Big Bend Telephone) is opening the first Multi-Tenant Colocation Data Center facility in Midland, TX. The Data Center is located approximately ten miles west of downtown Midland, adjacent to Midland International Space Port. The carrier-neutral facility will offer a multiple connectivity options and access to nation-wide locations. With capacity for 70 racks, Phase 1 of the 2,000 square feet of floor space will offer multiple options for custom solutions.

Over the past 60+ years, BBT (Big Bend Telephone) has provided quality voice, high-speed broadband and advanced business services to thousands of customers in West Texas's vast remote territory. Headquartered in Alpine, TX BBT is the only fiber-based provider in the many rural communities served, and its service area covers 18,000 square miles, including 485 miles of border with neighboring Mexico.

This Data Center enables companies across the region to accelerate business performance by providing reliable facility for IT infrastructure.



Powerful backup generators are ready in the event of a power outage.

“The recent ice storm made it very clear that businesses need reliable options to make sure their critical information is not lost when the public power system goes down,” said Neville Haynes at BBT. “Our new Data Center is powered by block redundant power distribution and backup generators as well as utility power.”



West Texas has changed dramatically through the years and BBT has adapted alongside, introducing innovative solutions in communications. With an eye on prosperity and growth, BBT remains committed to economic development of the communities by investing in critical infrastructure to deliver vital fiber based broadband connectivity throughout the serving territory.

For more information on the new BBT data center, please contact Sales at dcsales@bigbend.com.

JOBS

Job Announcement

JOB DESCRIPTION
Administrative Assistant to Presidio County Attorney

DEPARTMENT
Presidio County Attorney
300 North Highland
Marfa, Texas 79843

POSITION SUMMARY
Work under the direction of the County Attorney by performing administrative legal support with regard to criminal prosecution activities

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Respond to inquiries from public, both in person and by telephone
- Prepare and process criminal case files
- Arrange for court appearances of law enforcement officers and civilians
- Effective and respectful communication and interactions with other county employees
- Maintain positive professional working relationships with all staff levels, other jurisdictions and outside agencies and, the general public
- Perform other related functions as needed or assigned

REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES

- Proficient in operation of personal computer and other office equipment
- Effectively and efficiently utilize word processor to obtain, manipulate and process data
- Use computer technology, including the internet, to effectively conduct research
- Ability to handle inquiries from the general public in a friendly and courteous manner
- Possess basic knowledge as to the structure and operation of the criminal courts
- Ability to organize and coordinate various assignments, and establish priorities to effectively work under pressure with minimal or no direct supervision.
- Ability to compose clear and grammatically correct correspondence.
- Ability to communicate effectively and tactfully both orally and in writing.
- Ability to be detail oriented and follow through with tasks.
- Perform administrative duties by drafting and preparing legal and general correspondence, processing case files and dispositions, and providing assistance to the public, prepare court docket, answering the phone, and filing, copying, and maintaining case files

EDUCATION

- High school graduate
- Some college

Competitive pay, and full county benefits package, including healthcare and retirement.

Applications may be downloaded from: Presidio County, Texas website, or Mail Resume to Presidio County Attorney, P.O. Drawer M, Marfa, Texas 79843 or email to pontonrod@gmail.com

Presidio County is an equal opportunity employer that is committed to diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We prohibit discrimination and harassment of any kind based on race, color, sex, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other protected characteristic as outlined by federal, state, or local laws.

Blackwell School is Hiring

We are hiring a temporary, part-time Volunteer Coordinator. The VC will formalize our volunteer program and recruit volunteers for a wide variety of tasks and projects. The position takes place in Marfa. Hours and work setting are flexible. VC should have at least two years experience in organizing and working with volunteers; significant community connections in Marfa, preferably Spanish speaking with familial ties to the Blackwell School; enjoy calling, emailing, and instigating direct contact with potential volunteers; possess professional good cheer and sensitivity to our story. **To learn more and apply, visit theblackwellschool.org/opportunities.**

Presidio County/District Deputy Clerk
Application Deadline: June 15, 2021 @ 4:00pm

The main duties of the Deputy Clerk are to act as recorder of deeds, and other instruments, all bonds, issue marriage licenses, birth certificates, death certificates, issue assumed name certificates and livestock brands. Assist with filing divorce petitions, civil suits, criminal and civil courts. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, not been convicted of a felony, have a high school diploma or equivalent, have a class C driver's license. Applicants must fill out a Presidio County Application and submit to Florcita Zubia at the Presidio County Courthouse, Mail to PO Box 789, Marfa, TX 79843, FAX: 432-729-4313 or email at flor.zubia@co.presidio.tx.us

The Chinati Foundation is accepting applications for a part-time housekeeper. Starting pay is \$15/hour up to 20 hours per week, Monday-Friday. Job duties include cleaning of the office building and apartments. Very active position, some outdoor work, a lot of walking. Also includes a variety of other assignments during Chinati sponsored events, which may include evening and weekend hours. Requirements include a valid Texas driver's license with acceptable driving record, knowledge of janitorial products and equipment. Some lifting required. Please apply by June 16, 2021 in person at Chinati Foundation, 1 Cavalry Row. For more information please call Sandra Hinojos @ 432-729-4362 extension 240.

Maisie Crow
Max Kabat
Abbie Perrault
Sachi McClendon
Ariele Gentiles
Claire Lindsay-McGinn
Brian Byrne
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State Sales Tax Revenue Totaled \$3.4 Billion in May

AUSTIN — State sales tax revenue totaled \$3.4 billion in May, the highest-ever monthly total and 30.1 percent more than in May 2020. Year-ago revenue collections to which this year's collections are compared were severely suppressed by the pandemic. Compared to May 2019, sales tax collections were up 12.9 percent.

“Resurgent consumer spending drove monthly state sales tax collections to a new high,” Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar said. “Supported by the end of pandemic restrictions, further vaccination progress and declines in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, continued recovery in employment, and federal stimulus checks and enhanced unemployment benefits, receipts from all retail sectors other than grocery stores surpassed pre-pandemic levels.

“Spending at restaurants also surpassed pre-pandemic levels, with increased dine-in patronage adding to still elevated take-out and delivery business. While total spending in the sector increased sharply from a year ago, the recovery was uneven, with business at large popular restaurant chains up sharply while many smaller venues continued to languish.

“Receipts from oil- and gas-related sectors fell below year-ago levels, as drilling and well development activity remained substantially below pre-pandemic levels despite the rise in crude oil prices in recent months.”

JOBS

PART TIME RECEPTIONIST FOR MARFA COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC

Applications may be picked up at 406 S. Summer, Marfa, TX. or call 432-837-4812. Please call first before arrival.

Marfa Community Health Clinic • 406 S. Summer St.

HELP WANTED

Construction help wanted for projects in the Tri-County area. Please call Jimmy Counts at 325-340-0175