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by order of Presidio County

A shortage of COVID tests and rise in cases afflict the tri-county area as the omicron variant approaches

By MARY CANTRELL
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TRI-COUNTY — Medical professionals in the tri-county region are running up against a lack of resources as the highly contagious omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus continues to spread nationally, leaving them unable to meet a growing demand for testing.

The Centers for Disease Control has reported the omicron variant is spreading rapidly throughout the U.S., but research determining the characteristics and severity of the variant is ongoing. It has been widely reported that the variant presents more mild, cold-like symptoms, but can still be hazardous for vulnerable and unvaccinated populations.

While local medical staff are unable to definitively say which variant is infecting their patients, they are noticing an uptick in positive cases and the presence of trademark omicron symptoms — and a dearth of testing supplies is preventing them from accurately gauging the breadth of the spread. The shortage of available tests is a national trend that the Biden administration is facing pressure to resolve.

Dr. Christie Alexander of the Marfa County Clinic said she has seen omicron symptoms — which can be similar to the common cold and include sneezing, coughing, runny nose and fatigue — in her recent patients, though she cannot definitively confirm the variant's presence. But the clinic is currently out of vaccines, booster shots and COVID tests and are awaiting their next allotment from the Quest Diagnostics lab they work with. The clinic ran out of rapid and PCR tests after testing around 75 individuals the week after Christmas, said Alexander. They have ordered more of the PCR tests, which are more reliable than the rapid or at-home antigen tests.

Last week, the clinic tested 10 to 15 people with rapid tests that were positive for the virus, and an additional three to five that had positive PCR tests. The actual number of positive cases in the Marfa area is unknown, but Alexander said the number of positive cases detected at Marfa County Clinic is likely higher than

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Staff photo by Maisie Crow

Ester Sanchez, former Marfa Public Library director and current board member, helps her great-grandson, Savian Enriquez, 4, gear up for the Noon Year's Eve event at Marfa Public Library on December 30. READ MORE ON PAGE 6.

Smuggling plane crash north of Presidio airport injures 5 passengers, pilot still at large

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — At 3:51 p.m. on December 30, county emergency services were dispatched to the site of a plane crash in a field north of the Presidio airport. The five passengers, undocumented immigrants suspected of being smuggled into the U.S., were located and offered medical care. Pilot Tobias Penner Peters, who is believed to be part of a human smuggling operation, fled the scene. At press time, he was still at large. The names of the five passengers have not been released to the public.

The plane — a 1969 single-engine Cessna registered to Henry Neufeld of Seminole, Texas — did not register a flight plan with any area airports, according to Chase Snodgrass, Presidio County airport director. Snodgrass reported no damage to the facilities at Presidio-Lely Airport, which is unmanned. According to the Presidio County Sheriff's Office, the plane was under-fueled and overloaded with people, which may have contributed to the accident.

Area agencies, including the Presidio County Sheriff's Office, are still seeking information about Peters. He has an address in Seminole, but regularly travels to Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Peters is described as a white man with red hair, approximately 6' 2" and 185 lbs. The sheriff's office believes he may have suffered severe head trauma and lost an eye in the incident.

The Sheriff's office has multiple warrants out for Peters, who could face charges of felony human smuggling, evading arrest and deadly conduct, the agency said.

"We received several calls and information from several sources which confirmed the identity of the pilot," said Chief Deputy Joel Nuñez. "The case is still under investigation by the Presidio County Sheriff's Office. If you have additional information, please contact the sheriff's office."

On the afternoon of the incident, eyewitness Adrian Billings had been struggling through his shift at the Presidio clinic. Billings commutes from Alpine once a week as a physician on-call because there isn't a full-time doctor living in Presidio. "It was a rough day," he said.

To cope with the stress, Billings did something he normally doesn't do on his way home: "I stopped at the bakery, and I bought a Topo Chico."

That several-minute delay made all the

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Community mobilizes to register voters ahead of the March primaries

By MARY CANTRELL
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TRI-COUNTY — Local volunteers have launched a concerted local effort to register eligible voters ahead of upcoming elections.

As the March 2022 primary elections loom, the Tri-County Voter Promoters organization is quickly mobilizing to register voters in the area before the January 31 deadline. To date, volunteers are scheduled to register voters from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. January 7 at the Marfa Post Office, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. January 7 at the Porters in Alpine across from True Value, from noon to 4 p.m. January 10 at the Terlingua Post Office, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. January 19 at the Panther Junction Visitor Center in Big Bend National Park and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. January 21 at the Family Crisis Center in Terlingua Ghost Town. More voter registration events will be announced in the future.

The group will host an upcoming meeting for those interested in getting involved at 5 p.m. January 11 at the Alpine Public Library. The meeting will also be broadcast via Zoom.

"The 2022 elections are critically important. They will determine control of the Texas Legislature and the U.S. Congress at a pivotal moment in our country's history. Everyone needs to vote. And we want to make sure they do," wrote organization member Roy Morey in an email.

Voter Promoters are seeking volunteers to operate voter registration tables, especially Spanish-speaking volunteers. Interested parties should contact Morey by phone (432) 426-0122 or by email remorey@bigbend.net. There is also a need for more volunteers to undergo training on how to register voters — to sign up for an online deputy voter registration course, visit https://campsite.bio/tcvdr. Voter promoters will also mail and distribute print materials providing information on deadlines for registration, ballot by mail applications, early voting and more.

The Big Bend Sentinel previously reported on candidates running for public office in the March 2022 primary elections in Presidio and Brewster counties. There were no additional updates in those counties after the final list of candidates was made available from the secretary of

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Big Bend National Park asks for help identifying vandals of ancient rock art

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK — On December 26, a panel of ancient petroglyphs in the Indian Head area of Big Bend National Park was irreparably damaged when vandals chose to boldly scratch their names and the date across the prehistoric art. Park managers have seen an increase in vandalism and graffiti in the area, and ask anyone with information about these incidents, or the persons involved, to contact the law enforcement staff of Big Bend National Park.

National Parks are treasured lands and protect the country's national heritage. Graffiti is vandalism, is costly and extremely difficult if not impossible to remove. It is also illegal. Damaging park resources is a violation of 36 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations). Rock art and ancient cultural sites are also protected under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA).

"Big Bend National Park belongs to all of us. Damaging natural features and rock art destroys the very beauty and history that the American people want to protect in our parks," said Big Bend National Park Superintendent Bob Krumenaker. "With each instance of vandalism, part of our nation's heritage is lost forever."

Since 2015, park archeologists have documented over 50 instances of vandalism to these priceless sites. If you discover vandalized rock art, please don't attempt to clean it yourself. Trained staff will attempt to mitigate the damage as quickly as possible, using highly specialized techniques. Staff have already treated the most recent vandalism at Indian Head, but much of the damage is, unfortunately, permanent.

Anyone with information about these incidents, or the persons involved, should contact the Big Bend National Park Communication Center at 432-477-1187.



Photo courtesy of Big Bend National Park

Vandals irreparably destroyed ancient rock art late last month, scrawling their names and a date across petroglyphs in Big Bend National Park. The park is seeking any information that leads to identifying the culprits.

County will pay $700,000 to settle lawsuit brought by former employee Katie Sanchez

By ABBIE PERRAULT
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Presidio County and its treasurer, Frances Garcia, have agreed to settle a civil lawsuit brought against them by former county employee Katie Sanchez. The county will pay $700,000 to Sanchez and her attorney, according to documents obtained through public records requests by The Big Bend Sentinel.

Sanchez worked as Presidio County's director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) until a majority of county commissioners — including former commissioner Loretto Vasquez and current commissioners Eloy Aranda, Jose Cabezuela and Brenda Bentley — voted in 2019 to remove the department from the county budget, and thus remove Sanchez's job at the county.

Sanchez alleged in a suit filed in July 2019 that the county and Garcia had retaliated against her when they abolished her department after she ran unsuccessfully against Garcia for county treasurer in the March 2018 elections — an act she claimed violated her first amendment Constitutional right to run for office without retribution.

Per the settlement agreement, the county will pay Sanchez $407,551.06 and her attorney, John Wenke, $292,448.94 for legal fees, in exchange for Sanchez agreeing to "release, discharge and acquit" the county and Garcia from all of her previous claims against them, and dismiss the lawsuit she brought against them. Sanchez will surrender any rights to future employment in the county and agree not to disparage Garcia any time in the future, while Garcia must not disparage Sanchez.

County Judge Cinderela Guevara, who was serving as judge during the abolition of Sanchez's department and voted against the move, called the settlement satisfactory for all parties, noting that the case otherwise might drag on for years.

Asked for comment on the case, Garcia said she was advised not to provide one, referring The Big Bend Sentinel to attorneys Amanda Crouch and Jon Mark Hogg of Jackson Walker LLP, who defended the county and Garcia in the suit. Neither could be reached for comment via phone or email before press time.

The Big Bend Sentinel also requested comment from Sanchez directly and through her attorney, Wenke, but did not receive a response, other than confirmation that a settlement agreement had been reached.

Prior to reaching the final settlement agreement, the case was heard at a jury trial in Pecos in July 2021, where attorney Hogg argued on behalf of Garcia and the county, saying Sanchez's office was eliminated because it was no longer needed. He also claimed that Garcia had no voting power or ability to control the county budget, questioning how she could be at fault for the abolition of Sanchez's department.

However, testimonies by county employees and emails written by Garcia painted a different picture — one of Garcia working to get commissioners to abolish the OMB and disparaging Sanchez repeatedly.

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COVID tests

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it would appear due the the fact that they sometimes tested only one person per household and received news of people testing positive at home.

"We heard all week last week from a number of people that were doing home tests and testing positive and calling for their symptoms or for instruction after testing positive at home. Those numbers I don't have," said Alexander. "It gives an idea that it's definitely more than we had seen on a weekly basis prior."

The clinic's small staff was doing testing by appointment in order to manage the time of their two nurses, who also have to tend to non-COVID-related patients. Alexander said the colder weather and movement of social activities indoors could lead to a rise in cases and recommends everyone continue to wear masks in public, even if you are vaccinated.

"Think about the community at large and who it is that we're protecting. Even if you're vaccinated, wear that mask because you could be an asymptomatic carrier that keeps this thing going on even longer," said Alexander.

Michaeleen Doucleff, a global health correspondent for National Public Radio who lives in Alpine, has been covering infectious diseases around the world for a decade. She said while Houston has been the epicenter of the omicron variant for the state of Texas for about a month, El Paso is now showing a dramatic increase in the number of cases, a telltale sign the omicron variant is present. She predicts it will begin to greatly affect the tri-county area within the coming week.

"Omicron is super fast. I have a feeling it's going to spread very quickly here," said Doucleff.

She said while the numbers of positive cases in the U.S. of the delta variant doubled every 10 to 14 days, omicron cases are doubling every two to three days. Doucleff said it can be hard to gauge exactly how the fast-moving omicron variant will spread in the region because of a lack of testing.

"There's not a ton of real testing in the tri-county area, relative to what a lot of the cities do," said Doucleff. "A lot of people are getting it here but [those are] not reported cases."

The aggressive spread of the omicron variant will present a number of challenges for the tri-county region where healthcare resources can be stretched thin. Individuals who had COVID in 2020 and early 2021 and are not vaccinated are very vulnerable to the omicron variant, said Doucleff, because they have little immunity against the new variant if they were infected over six months ago.

Vaccines and boosters are very effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization, and death from the new variant, according to the CDC. Since the effectiveness of vaccines and boosters can be delayed by a week or more, unvaccinated individuals should get their jabs as soon as possible, said Doucleff.

"If you're going to get vaccinated, this is the week to get it. Don't wait anymore," she said.

She said omicron will likely pass through quickly, and while transmission has been low locally, for the coming weeks it is a good idea to mask up in larger public spaces to mitigate the risk of catching and transmitting the virus.

But the lack of testing in the region makes it difficult to gauge omicron's presence — in addition to the Marfa Country Clinic, other local entities are reporting shortages. Linda Molinar, CEO for Preventative Care Health Services, said the phone has been ringing off the hook at their Alpine, Presidio and Marfa locations due to an overwhelming demand for tests and other COVID-related requests the clinics are unable to fulfill. She said the lack of adequate testing is concerning, and most of their current patients, many of whom are not regulars at the clinics, are experiencing COVID symptoms. Recently, 3 out of 10 patients tested positive upon using a rapid test.

Moderna vaccines and boosters for adults are still in stock, said Molinar. Appointments can be made for vaccinations and boosters on Mondays in Presidio, Tuesdays in Alpine, and for homebound individuals that may be located in Marfa, arrangements can be made for the immunization to be brought directly to their residence.

Molinar stressed the need for another source or organization to help provide local testing to help alleviate the clinics. While they are doing their best to keep up with the COVID needs in the community, said Molinar, they have to balance those demands with scheduled, preventative appointments for patients with chronic illnesses and urgent requests for sick individuals. At the moment, the PCHS clinics are booking preventative appointments two weeks out and trying to see patients with more immediate needs within two to three days.

Earlier in the pandemic, the Texas National Guard ran testing sites in the region that were coordinated by the Texas Division of Emergency Management — but those sites were shut down in 2020 and have not returned since.

What testing is available, however, indicates an uptick in positive cases. At a testing event on January 4 in Presidio hosted by the Presidio ISD Police Department, 44 out of roughly 200 people tested positive for the virus — out of those with positive results, 14 were students, four were teachers, one was a school employee, and 25 were household members of students, according to Joel Nuñez, chief of police for Presidio ISD and emergency management coordinator for the district.

"This is a record in one day for positives," said Nuñez. "That's a lot for a small town."

Testing events use rapid tests and take place every day Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the PISD Police Department office.

On January 6 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., children ages 5-11 can receive vaccines at the Presidio Elementary Gym. Nuñez said it is preferable to call ahead at 432-229-1164 to get on the list.

On January 13 Presidio ISD Police Department will host another vaccination event for everyone ages 12 and older from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. January 13 at the Franco Middle School Gym. Both Moderna and Pfizer vaccines and boosters will be available, said Nuñez. The entire community is welcome and appointments are not required. Proof of vaccination cards are required for those receiving the second dose or booster.

Malynda Richardson, EMS director for Presidio Emergency Services, said she is actively requesting more tests for her EMS staff. She said there has been a surge in COVID cases in the area, but was unable to provide a precise number of cases. Richardson was primarily concerned about people with the omicron variant inadvertently spreading the virus because they believe themselves to have a common cold.

In Brewster County, Highland Drug in Alpine reported they have all vaccines and boosters in stock and are talking walk-ins. Like others, they said they have had a hard time keeping tests in stock. The Prescription Shop in Alpine is offering vaccines and boosters by appointment on Fridays. Tests are available sporadically, said pharmacist Meredith Schoch. She said she has seen a big increase in demand for tests since a few days before Christmas.

Given a likely omicron surge, educators will need to make determinations about in-person learning and preventative measures. Michael Pacheco, chief of staff at Sul Ross University, said a decision has been made to delay the start of the spring semester in person from January 10 to the following week. Classes will begin January 10 but will be online for a week to give students additional time to isolate and get tested after the holiday break in case they contracted the virus. The university has a self-report form online where students can go to notify the school of a positive test.

On-campus residents are required to test for COVID the day they arrive back on campus, said Pacheco. Sul Ross will provide the tests necessary for that procedure. They expect to continue to offer testing twice a week as they did in the fall semester. According to Sul Ross' website, during the Fall 2021 semester a total of 4,921 people on campus were tested with 52 testing positive for the virus.

Pacheco said Sul Ross has given around 800 or 900 COVID tests to Brewster County Emergency Services since this summer.

Plane crash

(Continued from page 1)

difference. As Billings was driving north on Highway 67 past the airport, he looked to his left and saw a single-engine aircraft at the end of the runway, struggling to take off. "I'm not a pilot, but you don't normally see a plane using the entire runway," he said. "So I thought that was a little bit odd."

The plane veered off its course and started losing altitude before disappearing over the hills just beyond the airport. A plume of dust filled the sky. "I really thought my eyes were playing tricks on me — did I really just see this plane crash? There was no fire, there was no smoke."

Billings hurried toward the scene and placed a call for help. Soon a sheriff's deputy arrived. "I stood on top of the gate [at the airport] and I could make out what I thought was the white top of the cabin," Billings said. "So we both started running towards it."

They hurried through the field and across a ravine, where they encountered the first person at the scene. "She was conscious, but she was in a lot of pain," Billings remembered.

About 200 yards from the wreckage of the airplane, they could see another woman standing. Billings called out to her, but she didn't respond and dropped to the ground. "Thankfully, she was okay," he said. He started asking her questions in Spanish. "She said there were three others that took off walking south, but she couldn't see them." Billings called the Texas Department of Public Safety in Alpine and requested that an aircraft be sent down to look for the missing people, who were likely injured.

Presidio EMS and the local volunteer fire department quickly arrived. Within an hour and a half, a DPS helicopter from Alpine and a medevac helicopter from Fort Stockton were also on the scene, and soon after medevac planes from El Paso and Carlsbad, New Mexico, touched down. Border Patrol and the Presidio County Sheriff's Office also lent vehicles and manpower to the effort. Mayor John Ferguson and City Administrator Brad Newton directed traffic for the first responders. "I got out there with my neon-colored flag and was waving people in," Newton said.

For EMS Director Malynda Richardson, coordinating efforts between multiple agencies is routine. "There were a lot of people working together, but it's such a small community that we all know each other. When something like that happens, everybody just jumps in and does their job and helps each other out."

Four of the undocumented passengers were transported away from the scene for medical care — three ended up at Big Bend Regional Medical Center. The fifth passenger refused assistance. Undocumented people who are transported to medical care from emergency scenes are monitored by a Border Patrol agent before they are processed for expulsion.

"There were the typical type of injuries you'd expect from someone who just fell 200 feet out of the sky," Richardson recalled. "You get compression injuries, you get broken bones, you get blunt trauma."

Those present at the scene estimated that the patients needing medical care were located 150 to 400 yards from the end of the runway. Luckily, the plane touched down on a flat surface.

As far as Customs and Border Protection is concerned, this type of incident — human smuggling by plane — is rare enough that it doesn't warrant its own statistical category on the agency's website. CBP operates a Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) throughout the borderlands that can spot low-flying aircraft within a range of 200 miles.

The agency has delayed sharing information to the public because of the number of organizations collaborating on this investigation. "We're getting close to releasing a statement, but there's some more investigative work we want to do first," explained Landon Hutchens, a spokesman for Customs and Border Protection who declined to comment further on the incident.

Sanchez lawsuit

(Continued from page 1)

The jury offered a resounding and unanimous finding against the county and Garcia, deciding that Sanchez's run for office against Garcia had motivated the elimination of her department, that there was "retaliatory animus" and that Garcia was not entitled to qualified immunity, a protection for government officials against being personally liable for reasonable damages caused by their job performance.

Jurors unanimously proposed Sanchez be awarded $1 million in compensatory damages and another $1 million in punitive damages from the county and Garcia. However, U.S. Magistrate Judge David Fannin, who has the power to recommend a decrease in the jury's verdict, said Sanchez could either accept a lower award of $370,362.03 or request another trial solely focused on the award amount.

In the wake of Judge Fannin's response, Wenke, Sanchez's attorney, told The Big Bend Sentinel, "I'm not sure what type of message is being sent if a $1 million dollar punitive damage award is reduced to $5,000." Rather than continuing through the appellate process where the final award could go higher or lower, both parties met for mediation late last year and reached a compromise to pay Sanchez and end the case.

Unlike the jury's and Fannin's recommendations, under the newly-reached agreement, Garcia will not be personally responsible for any of the settlement costs, leaving the price to be covered by Presidio County's insurers, the Texas Association of Counties Risk Pool.

"It's good news, but it's still a black eye for the county," County Attorney Rod Ponton said of the settlement. Ponton expressed concerns that not only would the outcome increase the county's insurance rates at the expense of taxpayers, it might provoke more employees to file claims against the county. "It will make the county be a target for other people that might think they've been unfairly treated by the county," he said.

"I just am glad that the county can put it behind us now," the county attorney said. "It should not have happened, and the county as a public entity needs to treat its employees fairly and not retaliate against them. I hope the county can learn from this."





















March primaries

(Continued from page 1)

state's office. In Jeff Davis County, where preliminary candidate filing results were previously unavailable, under the Republican Party incumbent Curtis Evans and opponent Graydon Hicks III, superintendent of Fort Davis ISD, are running for County Judge.

Hicks has served as an educator in Marfa and Fort Davis and has been in his position as superintendent for the past eight years. Hicks announced his candidacy via social media, stating he believes the county has been mismanaged for years and hopes to increase accountability on the local level.

"The county agendas have not been adequate and sufficient for the taxpayers of Jeff Davis County and have been lacking in proper reporting from the offices and departments of the county, including a proper assessment of county financials," Hicks said in an interview with the Jeff Davis County Mountain Dispatch.

Incumbents District/County Clerk Jennifer Wright, Treasurer Dawn Kitts and Justice of the Peace Mary Ann Luedecke are all running unopposed to serve another term. For the available County Commissioner Precinct 2 seat, Incumbent and Democrat Todd Jagger will run against Republican Roy Hurley. The County Commissioner Precinct 4 position will be a race between incumbent and Democrat Albert Miller, who has held the position since 2007, and Republican Royce Laskoskie.

Statewide, running to fill the Justice Place 2 position on the Texas 8th Court of Appeals, which represents the Western region of the state including Brewster, Presidio and Jeff Davis counties, are Democrats Lisa Soto and Veronica Teresa Lerma and Republican incumbent Jeff Alley.

Democratic State Rep. Eddie Morales Jr. filed for re-election to continue to serve Texas House District 74 which represents Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis, Kinney, Loving, Maverick, Pecos, Presidio, Reeves, Terrell and Val Verde counties. Morales will run against Republican Katherine Parker. Democratic Sen. Cesar Blanco is running for re-election to serve Texas Senate District 29, which represents Culberson, El Paso, Hudspeth, Jeff Davis and Presidio counties. Blanco will run against Republican Derek Zubeldia. Democratic Sen. Roland Gutierrez also officially filed for re-election to serve Texas Senate District 19, which includes Brewster County. Republican Robert Garza will run against Gutierrez.

Candidates who are successful in the primary election will go on to the general election in November 2022, with elected officials finally taking office in January 2023.

To check your voter registration status, visit https://www.texas.gov/living-in-texas/texas-voter-registration/.

George P. Bush visits Big Bend during 'Secure the Border' tour

By SAM KARAS
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TERLINGUA — Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush visited the Big Bend in December on the second leg of his "Secure the Border" tour. Bush is running as a Republican for Texas attorney general and hoped to gain valuable insight on border security issues by visiting U.S. Customs and Border Patrol officials and locals in each Texas Border Patrol sector. "Securing our borders is the first order of business," his campaign website proclaims. "I will ensure our border patrol is fully funded and stop drug cartels and illegal immigrants from coming into our state."

Bush decided to run against fellow Republican Ken Paxton after years of bribery and fraud allegations swirling around the incumbent's office (Paxton's own office cleared him last year of bribery allegations leveled by former top aides, though the FBI is reportedly conducting its own investigation; he was indicted for felony securities fraud six years ago). "When our attorney general was announced to be under FBI investigation, I felt that Texas deserves better," he told The Big Bend Sentinel. "It's unacceptable to have somebody who's abused the office, who literally claims he's above the law." Paxton's campaign office did not respond to a request for comment by press time.

The Texas attorney general provides legal representation to the state and monitors numerous agencies — child support, consumer protection laws and fraud protection all fall under the umbrella. With all of the negative attention focused on the incumbent, there's a crowded field this year: Louis B. Gohmert Jr. and Eva Guzman will compete with Bush and Paxton in the Republican primary, while Mike Fields, Rochelle Garza, Joe Jaworksi, Lee Merritt and S. T-Bone Raynor will face off in the Democratic primary.

Bush has claimed the necessity of a border wall across South Texas — even suing the Biden administration's halt on its construction and approving the construction of a state-funded wall on state land — but told The Sentinel that he plans to pursue "invisible fence" strategies on the Big Bend region's protected lands instead of investing in wall construction there. "You're not going to see that in this area, it's going to be more down [in the Rio Grande Valley]," he explained.

The "invisible fence" includes enhanced drone and sensor technologies that have been controversial with some Big Bend residents who feel that increased surveillance infringes on their privacy. "That's always an important balance under the Fourth Amendment, making sure that we're being fair," he said. "As a constitutional conservative, I think we have to respect all amendments, we can't just pick and choose. As attorney general, what I would want to do is deploy resources where necessary but leave ranchers and farmers alone if they feel there isn't a crisis."

After Bush's visit to Terlingua, he continued on to Del Rio, Eagle Pass, Laredo and McAllen, where he had scheduled meetings with local landowners and law enforcement.

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Terlingua Common School District prepares to break ground on a new multi-purpose gymnasium facility

TERLINGUA — Students at the modestly-sized Big Bend High School will soon have a new sports facility, and Terlingua CSD Superintendent Reagan Reed and the board of trustees are inviting the public to attend the ceremonial groundbreaking for the new multi-purpose facility at Big Bend High School at 10 a.m. on Friday, January 7.

People flock from around the world to visit Terlingua and the majestic Big Bend National Park, but the students living in the Big Bend region get to enjoy nature's beauty and its harshness day in and day out, even when playing traditionally indoor sports such as basketball and volleyball.

With the mountains creating a spectacular backdrop for the Big Bend High School's basketball court, it is easy to look right past the court itself. The poles holding the backboards are easily overlooked in the vast landscape of cacti.

When not in use by students, roadrunners make the court part of their habitat. That is why the school chose the iconic bird as its mascot — opting for the Spanish word, Paisano, for the males; and Paisana for females.

Though the students and teachers take pride in the toughness it takes to play sports outside in the desert, enticing competitors to play a game on the home turf (or concrete) has been a challenge. The Paisanos affectionately call their sports court the Sky Dome. With no roof or walls to serve as a backstop for wayward balls and fouled players, the desert surroundings have been inhospitable for visiting teams that would have to make an hours-long journey to Big Bend High School. For this reason, the school has not had the luxury of a planned schedule of games. The Paisanos and Paisanas take on any competitor willing to make the journey to Terlingua.

The Paisanos and Paisanas are especially proud of how they had to learn to play sports without the advantages of walls to stop you when falling out of bounds. "Most of us learned to just slide in gravel and hopefully not eat it," said alumnus Sierra Lowe. Perseverance is a defining trait for residents of the Big Bend region, and has been since people started settling there.

"Our isolated location and lack of resources will always be a challenge. Students and teachers have always taken this challenge head on as a source of motivation rather than an excuse," said Reed. He also serves as principal, coach and a parent to two children in the district.

Thanks to the vision and determination of the district, Terlingua CSD will soon have something new to be proud of – the new multi-purpose gymnasium facility, complete with restrooms and stands for spectators. Parents in more populated districts may take bleachers for granted, but for parents in Terlingua, the bleachers cannot come soon enough. Many have never seen their children play sports because there was no place to sit without the heat, blazing sun and inescapable desert sand.

Reed said the new building has long been a dream of past superintendents, trustees, teachers, parents and students. Through the years, Terlingua CSD's facilities have grown to include a library building, six-lane track, shaded playground and remodeled classrooms — all funded through fundraising and careful financial management that resulted in savings each year that have been applied to fund capital projects.

The new high school building, completed in 1996, garnered funding from donors around the country after a 1994 New York Times article highlighted the plight of high school students in the area who faced an 89-mile commute each way to school. These determined students had to leave their homes pre-dawn to get to the school bus stop by 5:20 a.m. to make the long trek to Alpine High School, nearly two hours away. The new Big Bend High School building was simple and provided students with classrooms and office space for administrators.

Through the years, the building has been well cared for, and as a result still meets the most basic needs of classroom learning. Though the new building did not have a space for athletics, students were not accustomed to having the privilege of playing sports when they attended Alpine High School anyway. They had to depart immediately after school to take the 115-minute bus ride back to Terlingua.

"This project is personal and emotional for me as a teacher and now a parent when I take off my superintendent hat. I started at Terlingua CSD the fall of 1999, and it was exactly where I wanted to teach after graduating," Reed said. "My student teaching was at a middle school in affluent The Woodlands, Texas. The facility disparity was night and day." Reed believes high school has to be an attractive option for students, to entice them to continue through to graduation.

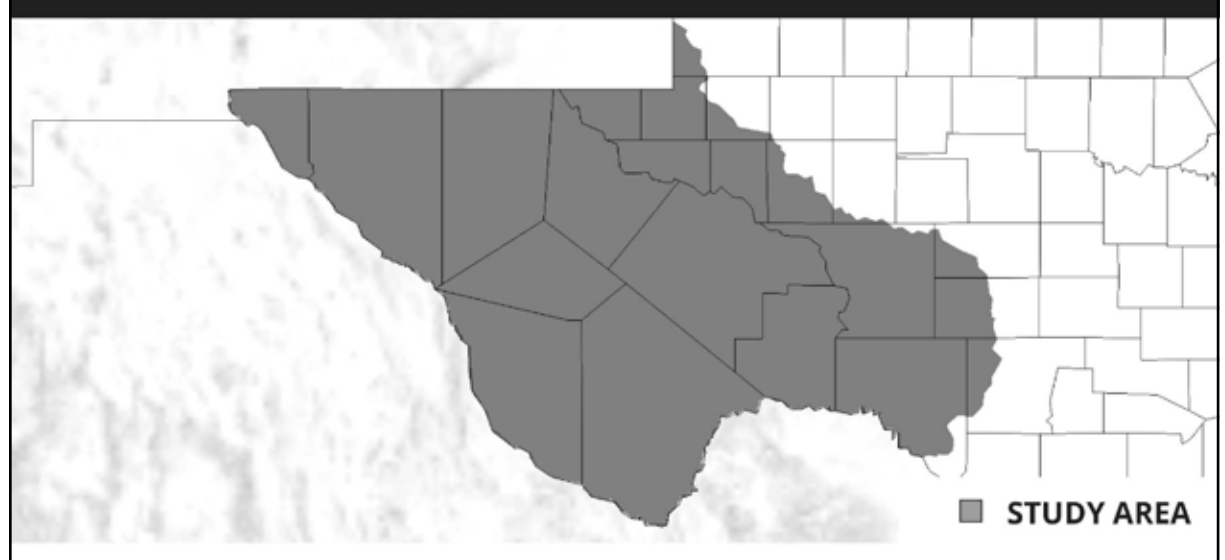
The superintendent told the story of one former student, Maira Tercero, now a parent in the district. Tercero is also the district's longest-serving member of the Site-Base Committee. As a youth, she made the difficult decision to abandon the prospect of a high school diploma because she felt her schooling was too much of a burden on her family. Tercero eventually completed her coursework online and now has a diploma.

Similar challenges exist for the district today. Many students stay in school for the high school experience and the opportunity to play sports and enjoy the camaraderie with fellow athletes. Tercero's two daughters will have more reasons to stay in school and get the full high school experience when the new multi-purpose gymnasium facility opens next fall. It will give the students a place to hold activities, sports, and participate in special career and technical learning opportunities such as robotics.

Larger high schools offer career and technical learning programs which are engaging for students. Without a place to work on programs like this and gain practical hands-on experience, students were at a disadvantage when they entered the workforce.

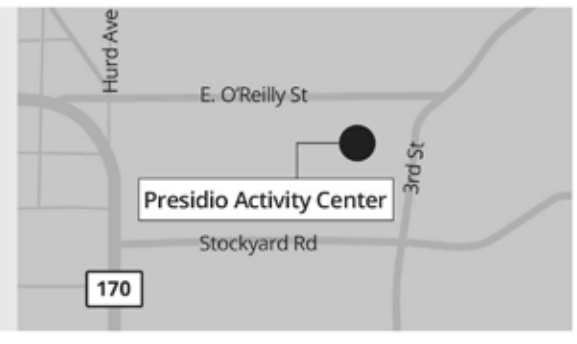
The new multi-purpose facility will be complete in summer of 2022, and now that this long-awaited facility is within reach, the district is setting its sights on a new elementary school building. It will also likely be funded through careful financial management and donations from foundations and individuals nationwide that are passionate about education. Parent and former student Tercero will have the special honor of representing the Site-Based Committee at the groundbreaking, turning the sand with a ceremonial shovel and hard hat.

PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE



As part of the Texas Water Development Board's statewide flood planning process, the Rio Grande Council of Governments has sponsored the Upper Rio Grande Regional Flood Planning Group to ensure West Texans from across the 23-county area have a voice in helping the state prioritize flood control projects. The ongoing Upper Rio Grande (Region 14) Flood Planning Group is identifying and evaluating projects to mitigate flooding for people, property, and businesses across the region.
No formal presentation will be given at this open house-style meeting. Instead, it is an opportunity for the public to review exhibits and provide their feedback to planners, engineers and others. Written comments may be left at the Presidio meeting or submitted by mail to: Barracuda Public Relations, Attn.: Region 14 Flood Planning, 2531½ East Yandell Drive, El Paso, TX 79903. Mailed comments must be received between January 26 and February 25, 2022.

OPEN HOUSE-STYLE PUBLIC MEETING
Thursday, February 10, 2022
From 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. CST
Presidio Activity Center
1200 E. O'Reilly St.
Presidio, Texas 79845



If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Annette Gutierrez, Executive Director, Rio Grande Council of Governments, 8037 Lockheed Drive, El Paso, TX 79925, (915) 533-0998 or annetteg@riocog.org.

For more information, visit www.urgfpr.org/meeting-notices/

UPPER RIO GRANDE FLOOD PLANNING

Opinions

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Things are slowly changing for the better for our local animals. The weekend of December 11 and 12 we hosted Animal Balance (https://www.animalbalance.org) to help us with the horrendous pet overpopulation problem in West Texas. On Saturday they spayed or neutered 30 dogs and cats in Presidio, and on Sunday an additional 26 in Marfa. This was the fourth Big Bend Big Fix spay and neuter pop-up, with the goal of having fewer unwanted and unloved animals suffering in our region, and to lower the rates of euthanasia of these cats and dogs, kittens and puppies. Fifty-six animals may not sound like a lot, but when one considers the hundreds of offspring they could have produced, it makes a tremendous difference.

A big thank you to Nina Dietzel of Marfa for stepping up and taking on the huge job of making this whole event happen.

And thank you to the awesome team from Animal Balance for making the trek out here all the way from Tampa, New Orleans and Austin. And Sergio Carrasco and George Gonzalez, the truly dedicated ACOs of Presidio and Marfa. And Jeanine Bishop (Alpine Humane Society) for help with coordination. And many other locals, including Hillary and Robert Summers, Susan Kirr and Mike Shurley, who donated time, money and accommodations for the vet team, to make this much needed event happen.

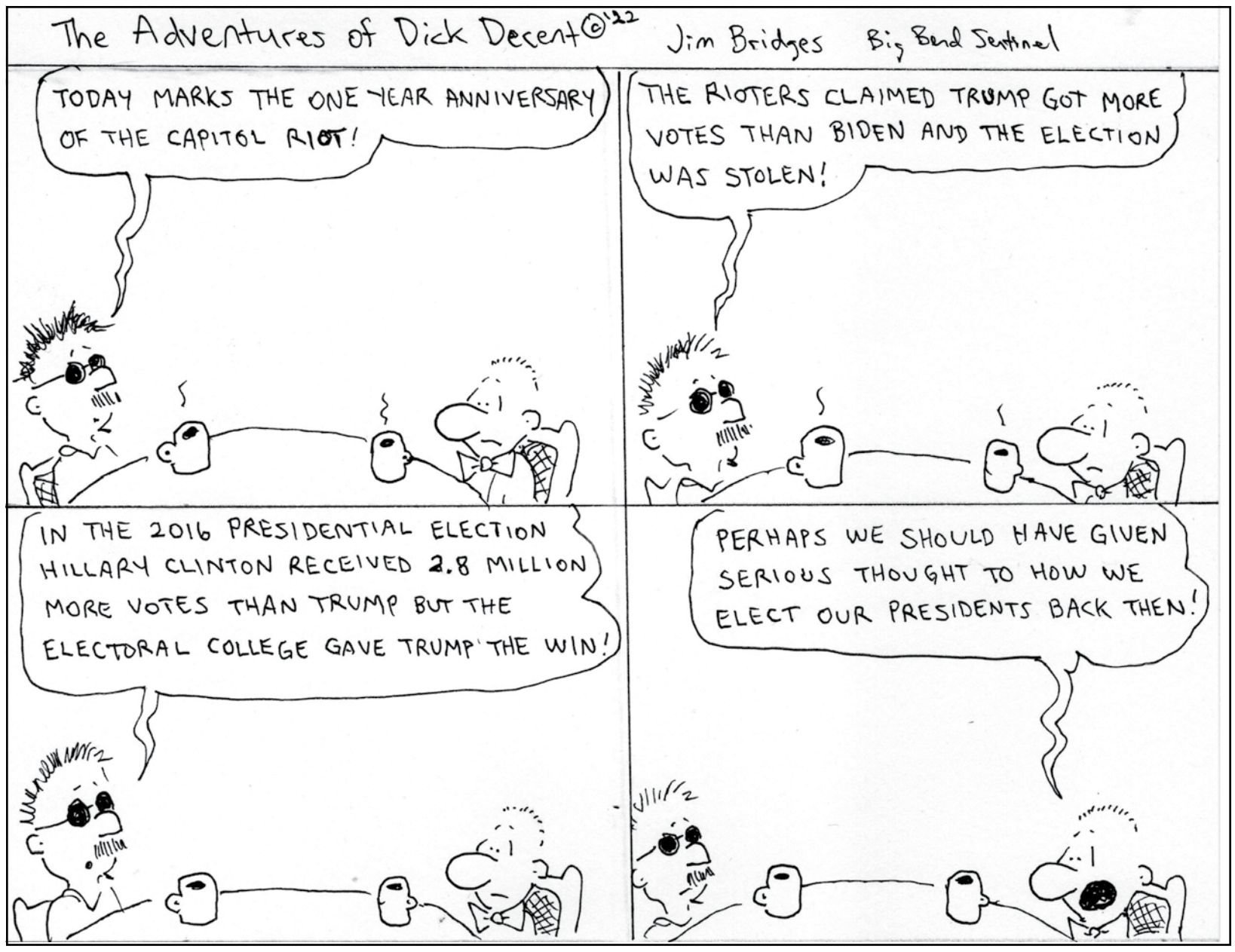
But it is especially important to thank all of the responsible pet owners for taking the time to do the right thing by spaying and neutering their beloved pets. THIS is how things will finally change for the better for our animals.

Mary Baxter
Marfa

We want to hear from YOU!

- Letters should be sent to editor@bigbendsentinel.com, and must provide the writer's full name, city of residence and an email or phone number, so that we may follow up and verify information as needed.
- Your letters may be edited for clarity and brevity. While opinions of all kinds are welcome, when it comes to claims of fact, we strive to only publish what is verifiable.
- We have limited staff capacity to fact check unsubstantiated claims, so letters that include those may be held or remain unpublished if information is not easily verifiable.
- We may reach out to ask questions and verify the identity of the sender. We do not run letters anonymously unless the sender is privately identified and has a reasonable claim to anonymity.
- We reserve the right to hold or refrain from publishing a letter for any reason and we thank you for always sharing your letters with us.

- ***The Big Bend Sentinel Editorial Staff***



Judd Foundation is open for guided visits of Donald Judd's home and studios.

Advance reservations are required and are only available online. For the safety of everyone, masks and social distancing are required. Group capacity is limited.

La Mansana de Chinati/The Block
Thursday–Sunday
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4:30–6:15pm
Guided visits begin at the gated entrance at 400 West El Paso Street.

The Studios
Friday and Saturday
2:00–3:45pm
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HIGH DESERT SKETCHES

Satire: A simple explanation for a very complex notion

By GEORGE A. COVINGTON
gcovington@mac.com

From time to time I find it necessary to explain the meaning of satire. I always start with Lord Byron's definition, "Fools are my theme, let satire be my song."

I also love the definition I received locally from internationally-renowned philosopher, educator, and girls basketball coach, Leo Dominguez. He said, "My definition of satire is simply the cognitive conjuring of complicated criticism that causes comical, critical and convoluted condemnation of a condition."

It was only after reading his definition that I realized his dictionary only went as far as the Cs, but he captured the essence of satire.

One of my two favorite writers of satire is Johnathan Swift, an Anglo-Irish cleric who wrote, among other things, Gulliver's Travels and "A Modest Proposal." In the latter, he proposed that instead of ignoring the starvation going on in Ireland during the potato blight, that the British accept a modest proposal from an American friend of his: to cook and eat Irish infants. Because he was a cleric, no one proposed burning him at the stake. My second favorite satirical writer is the Frenchman Voltaire, who wrote the novel Candide.

One of my longest and most enduring satirical targets are the Texas A&M University Aggies. I had to explain to my readers outside of Texas that Aggies are small, smelly rodents found throughout the state. In a follow-up column, I wrote that I was incorrect — that most Aggies aren't that small.

In another column, I described the Aggie wedding ritual as being conducted by a fundamentalist preacher wearing an uncured sheepskin with goat antlers, and that the ceremony involved a secret Aggie handshake and stale beer. It ends with the preacher saying "You are now married without possibility of parole!"

Finally, I had to write a column explaining that I was being satirical and that some of my best friends are Aggies.

Satire has a long representation in history. In 411 BC, the ancient Greek poet Aristophanes wrote Lysistrata, in which the protagonist convinces women to withhold sex from men in an effort to convince them to end the Peloponnesian War. It didn't work then, and it wouldn't work today, but it was a very funny play.

Today, we have Dave Barry and hundreds of stand-up comics to keep the spirit of satire alive. There have even been recent examples of young people using satire to comment on the insanity we have seen in recent years. My favorite is the "Birds Aren't Real" campaign that has swept many parts of the internet. On Instagram and TikTok, Birds Aren't Real accounts have racked up hundreds of thousands of followers, and YouTube videos about it have gone viral. Recently, Birds Aren't Real adherents even protested outside Twitter's headquarters in San Francisco to demand that the company change its bird logo.

The events were all connected by a Gen Z-fueled conspiracy theory, which posits that birds are really drone replicas installed by the devious U.S. government to spy on Americans. Hundreds of thousands of young people have joined the movement, wearing Birds Aren't Real T-shirts, swarming rallies and spreading the word.

It might smack of QAnon, the conspiracy theory that the world is controlled by an elite cabal of child-trafficking Democrats. Except that the creator of Birds Aren't Real and the movement's followers are in on a joke: they know that birds are, in fact, real and that their theory is just an example of outlandish fake news.

What Birds Aren't Real truly is, they say, is a parody social movement with a purpose. In a post-truth world dominated by online conspiracy



theories, young people have coalesced around the effort to thumb their nose at, fight, and poke fun at misinformation. It's Gen Z's attempt to upend the rabbit hole with absurdism and I applaud them all.

The creator of the movement is Peter McIndoe, 23, a floppy-haired college dropout in Memphis who created Birds Aren't Real on a whim in 2017. For years, he stayed in character as the conspiracy theory's chief believer, commanding acolytes to rage against those who challenged his dogma. But now, he said in an interview, he is ready to reveal the parody lest people think birds really are drones. The young man realizes that there's a thin line today between reality and fake news, but he has decided he must come out of character and disclose the satire he has created to prove almost anybody can create a worldwide phenomenon with no facts.

Last year, a group of artists and activists developed a project satirizing Mexico's mistreatment of the migrant "caravan" from Central America. When media outlets started broadcasting their satirical video, it triggered an outcry against what many cast as hypocritical racism and bigotry. Does it matter that the video was fake?

I am delighted to know that there are enough intelligent young people today that can create satire on a level that will be long remembered.

If you think we may run out of things to satirize, contemplate the fact that many of former President Tweet's followers are now fighting the pandemic by taking drugs meant to deworm cows and other livestock. What do they expect? To get more milk?

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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OP-ED

Texas Environmental News

By RICHARD MARK GLOVER

Cargill Inc. wreaks havoc

Cargill Inc., a major customer of the Port of Houston and one of the largest privately held corporations in the U.S., has earned the award from Mighty Earth as the worst company in the world. From buying cocoa inside protected national lands in Ghana to polluting drinking water in the Midwest to supplying McDonalds with chicken McNuggets (containing 37% chicken), to displacing indigenous people by deforestation in the Amazon for Cargill soy, former Congressman Henry Waxman concluded, "In my 40-year long career in Congress, I took on a range of companies that engaged in abusive practices. I have seen firsthand the harmful impact of businesses that do not bring their ethics with them to work. But Cargill stands out." Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro recently said, "It's a shame that the Brazilian cavalry wasn't as efficient as the Americans, who exterminated their Indians." Profiles in courage are hard to find among both the primarily white men who control Cargill and the Brazilian government to change a system evidently designed to see baby boomers die of old age while the later-birthed die of climate change. Bolsonaro's comments and the corporate drive for profit seem to be reflected in President Andrew Jackson's address to Congress nearly 200 years ago in 1830 when he asked, "What good man would prefer a country covered with forests and ranged by a few thousand savages to our extensive Republic, studded with cities, towns, and prosperous farms embellished with all the improvements which art can devise or industry execute, occupied by more than 12 million happy people, and filled with all the blessings of liberty, civilization and religion?"

Phillips 66 Company continues to poison Ponca Tribe

Houston-based Phillips 66 Company is experiencing another round of pushback from the Ponca Tribe in Oklahoma for alleged human suffering and environmental destruction from pollution caused by their 100-year-old refinery in Ponca City. Casey Camp-Horinek, a tribal elder of the Ponca Tribe told Inside Climate News, "We're being killed as surely as when they brought us the smallpox blankets, and wrapped us in poison. We're being wrapped in a poison that kills the air, the water and the Earth, and that kills my people." From leaking pipes and dark gaseous clouds venting from the refinery to thousands of adjacent abandoned oil and gas wells, along with a massive system of tank farms and pipelines supplying the refinery and fracking so intense the Oklahoma Republican Governor in 2016 mandated a no-frack zone in the region to stop the thousands of manmade earthquakes, Trey Howe III, a Ponca tribe member who lives a few blocks from the refinery, said, "It was like sitting next to a bomb." In 1990 one of the largest environmental settlements was finalized against Phillips 66 that, along with a $23 million check to settle over 6,000 claims, mostly health related, the refinery also bought out over 400 nearby contaminated residences. But according to the Ponca Tribe, the contamination continues: slime oozing from basements, homes membraned inside gaseous vapor, carbon particulate matter entering lungs and cracked walls from earthquakes are some of the phenomena that still exist. ICN wrote in their December report, "Interviews with local residents, historical records, legal depositions and internal government reports tell of a sacrifice zone, where oil rights were first taken from the Ponca Tribe and then exploited by the oil and gas industry with little thought given to environmental protection." According to Yahoo Finance, 34 hedge funds were bullish on Phillips 66 (NYSE:PSX) in the third quarter of 2021, including billionaire Bruce Kovner's hedge fund, Caxton Associates. D. E. Shaw is the largest Phillips 66 stakeholder as of Q3, with a $138.7 million position in the company. As of press time, Phillips 66 has not replied to TEN regarding the report.

Haliburton Inc destroys evidence

Houston-based Haliburton Inc. keeps losing evidence when it comes to environmental damage. Some of these damage incidents go to court. Pleading a tornado sucked up my homework on the way to school usually doesn't go far with teachers; but Haliburton, apparently, has gotten away with it at least twice, according to Gizmodo. The Aliso Canyon methane leak near Los Angeles belched 100,000 tons of the powerful greenhouse gas into the air for several months during 2015. SoCalGas, owner of the methane storage, contracted Haliburton-owned Boots & Coots to cap it. They failed. Eventually SoCalGas fixed the leak but now the California Public Utilities Commission wants to know why this environmental disaster, one of the worst in the nation, took so long to remedy. Prosecution is suggesting that Boots & Coots computer modeling was faulty and are demanding to see the data. Boots & Coots is claiming the laptop that holds the modeling was stolen. There's a sneeze in the fourth-grade teacher's sniff test according to Gizmodo, and it's not her first sneeze. BP contracted with Haliburton to manage the infamous Deepwater Horizon drilling rig that exploded in 2010, killing 11 workers and spewing more crude than a VLCC (very large crude carrier) can carry. Results from the investigation of that spill showed that a faulty cement mix that cased the pipes was partially to blame. Haliburton pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor in a New Orleans U.S. District Court for destroying evidence that showed the company knew of the bad mix.

Richard Mark Glover lives in the Chama Valley of New Mexico with his wife Lorretta and two children after many years in West Texas. He is an award-winning journalist and author

OUR WATER MATTERS

Origins of the groundwater district in Presidio County

By TREY GERFERS
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

Happy 2022, faithful readers, and welcome back to a new year of "Our Water Matters"!

In past issues we looked at how groundwater districts became established as the preferred method of groundwater management in Texas because they provide for local control by those most familiar with the resource and most affected by any regulation. The Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District was established by House Bill 2817 which passed the Texas House and Senate in May of 1993. This enabling legislation called for a five-member board of directors and empowered the district to levy an ad valorem (property) tax not to exceed $0.05 per $100 of assessed valuation. According to Teresa Todd, who was appointed Presidio County attorney in 1994 and then won election to the post in 1996 and served until 2004, the creation of the district involved a two-part process. Lawmakers had to create the district and then the voters had to approve it in a local election.

But first, a little background: Senate Bill 1, which passed in 1997, established the regional water planning process (see "Our Water Matters" #7). Todd and others including (former) Presidio County Judge Jake Brisbin and current General Manager of the Jeff Davis County Underground Water Conservation District Janet Adams were all deeply involved in the regional water planning group from the very beginning. "We had started regional water planning," said Todd. "And so there was a lot of regional awareness." Folks in the area were already nervous because the Public Service Board of the City of El Paso had purchased Antelope Valley near Valentine for $2 million in 1992 as a future source of water for its municipal users. This purchase was a sign of things to come.

Cities throughout arid West Texas and elsewhere have since been exploring ways to meet local demand through a practice known as "water ranching." Since the rule of capture in Texas essentially allows, with some limited exceptions, a landowner to pump as much groundwater as the landowner chooses, without liability to neighbors who claim that the pumping has depleted their wells, entities can purchase land for the groundwater beneath and export it out of the area to meet their own needs.

One of the original parties to the Far West Texas Regional Water Planning Group was El Paso and, according to Todd, "El Paso wasn't being transparent with their plans, so it became apparent that we needed to protect ourselves [by forming local groundwater districts] … There was a very real sense that groundwater districts were the only way to protect your water from anyone that wanted it."

Todd recalled that, after the enabling legislation was passed, the groundwater district had to be approved by the voters by September 1, 1999. The cause of the delay between passage of the legislation and approval by the voters remains unclear. But by the time Todd found out about this "closing window," she only had about a week to get everything filed and approved for the actual election "with a grace period of something like one day. It's unbelievable that it happened at all."

The voters approved the creation of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District in an election on August 31, 1999. The district's original board of directors included Jim White (president), Johnny Surratt (vice president), Ike Livingston (secretary), Terry Bishop and Robby Cabezuela. The district's first general manager was Janet Adams.

When asked why the confirmation election did not include the property tax provided for in the enabling legislation, Todd said that there was a feeling that "it'll never pass." She personally felt that "once the voters saw the value of the groundwater district" there would be another election to approve the tax. But it never happened. "That was not the intention," Todd said. But by then, "property values started going through the roof." And "many of the counties around here just ended up funding the districts, so that was that."

In looking back, Todd recalled that the establishment of the district "was charmed. It was meant to be." She also emphasized that "concern about groundwater was widespread. The ranchers were really on board. Everybody cared about it a lot."

Despite the unpopularity of taxes and the tough odds of getting the voters to approve a new property tax for the groundwater district this coming November, Todd is hopeful that people of all political stripes will merely see this as a bit of unfinished business. Ultimately, funding the groundwater district is the only way to protect our own self-interest and ensure local control of our groundwater.

Trey Gerfers is a San Antonio native and serves as board chairman of the Presidio County Underground Water Conservation District. He earns his living as a translator of technical documents from German to English for the German and Swiss pharmaceutical and medical-science industries. Trey has lived in Marfa since 2013.

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Community

Marfa Public Library's 'Noon Year's Eve' party brings town youth to the dancefloor

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — At the stroke of lunchtime, everyone cheered as balloons fell from the sky. The DJ bumped a selection of kid-friendly hits as parents chatted on the sidelines. Except for the omnipresent face masks, there were no signs that COVID slowed down the party.

On December 30, the Marfa Public Library hosted "Noon Years Eve," a daytime celebration of the New Year for those whose bedtime rolls around well before midnight. For Nicki Ittner, who began serving as the library director during the pandemic, it's been a challenge to get kids excited about the library at a time when gathering in a public space isn't always the safest idea.

"What we're trying to do is have kids associate the library with fun," she explained. "As far as getting kids reading, that's really what we want — to have them think of the library as a positive place."

Ittner had originally planned to host some of the festivities inside, but as omicron cases started to rise, the team decided to keep things confined to the courtyard. They brainstormed ways to keep the event feeling festive and special. Somebody pitched the idea: what about a kid's-only nightclub?

Harry Crofton, a weekly volunteer at the library, went to work constructing a club entrance bedecked with pink glitter streamers. "I think the threshold really transforms the space — it's a little more special than just walking into the courtyard," he said. He printed posters for pop acts and stapled them to the walls, then set up a table where guests were encouraged to make an ID proving their "under 21" status. Inside, kids were treated to rows of activities, including a bowtie-making station manned by Marc Declercq



Staff photo by Maisie Crow

Maya Cuevas, 9, celebrates the new year at Marfa Public Library's Noon Year's Eve party on December 30.

and a dancefloor buoyed by the DJ expertise of the library's director of programming and volunteer coordinator, JD DiFabbio.

Local broadcaster Lisa Kettyle, formerly of Marfa Public Radio, ran the bar, where patrons showed ID to access a sophisticated selection of sparkling apple and raspberry ciders and juice boxes. "This is the easiest bartending gig I've ever had in Marfa," she said. Crofton echoed that sentiment as the event's official bouncer and reported no security incidents.

Kids and adults alike named the balloon drop as their favorite event of the day. "When the balloons were falling down, that was my favorite part," said Savian Enriquez, a pre-K student. When asked about his new year's resolutions, Savian said that in 2022 he plans to play in the snow and have fun.

For older kids, the chance to gather and run around with peers was a special event in and of itself. Easton Watts, a sixth grader who is homeschooled, reported a feeling of loneliness and isolation because of the pandemic. "My friend group is down to three people," he said. "My brother has a bunch of friends, but I don't see barely any." In 2022, he hopes to spend less time playing video games and devote more time to "other stuff."

Marfa kids who left anonymous wishes on the party's official wish board hoped for a year full of "peace," "cats," "ghosts and goblins and UFOs," "more adventures" and "good food." Someone with suspiciously adult handwriting wished for "the health of friends and family."

Ittner explained that children's programming at the Marfa Public Library is mostly grant-funded, but those wishing to make monetary contributions can do so through the library's Friends organization. The Friends of the Marfa Public Library are a 501(c)(3) organization that supports the library's mission of nourishing the community through educational programming and materials. Potential volunteers are encouraged to get in touch with JD DiFabbio.

"It's been such a weird time," Ittner said. "But it's been great to get the kids together, if only for a little while."

Cristian Ontiveros receives academic all state honors

MARFA — Senior at Marfa High School and football player Cristian Ontiveros was recently awarded a spot on the Texas High School Coaches Association's Academic All State Team. The designation is granted to student athletes that were able to maintain a grade point average of 92 percent or above during the sporting season.

"When it comes down to academics and sports, I always tell players that they're student athletes — they're students before they're athletes," said Coach Arturo Alferez.

Alferez said it can be a challenge for the team to balance game preparation with their studies during the busy football season, but Ontiveros successfully juggled dual credit courses and frequently learned new plays in his role as quarterback.

"Congratulations to him, to his family, to everybody that supported him. It just proves to me that great things are going to come to him later in life," said Alferez.



Photo by Blanca Jennings

Marfa Shorthorn and high school senior Cristian Ontiveros plays football on the home field.

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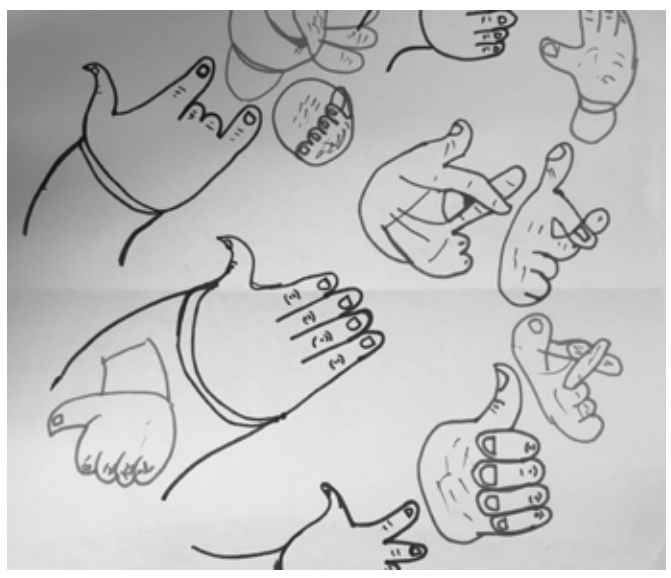
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	8	2		3	6	5		9
	7			2	9			4
6		4	1	7		8	2	3

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

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Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg December 20, 2021

ACROSS
1 Leafy side dishes
7 "Marriage Story" Oscar winner Laura
11 Type of therapy for people with autism: Abbr.
14 2017 skating biopic
15 Oregon Trail animals, once
16 Mire
17 *Primate exhibit
19 Disapproving noise
20 Spice Girl B or C
21 Afro-Brazilian dance
22 "Little Women" sister
23 Site that prohibits the selling of souls
25 "Respect your ___!"
27 Animal that plays dead
30 *Matcha, for instance
32 Park, e.g., in NYC
33 City where pesto originated
35 In any way
36 Whiskey flavoring
38 Nary a soul
40 Peace Prize city
41 Plot ___ (protagonist's "protection")
43 Assail
45 Casual shirt
46 *Have mercy
48 "Mister ___ Neighborhood"
50 Conundrum
51 Journalist Ifill
52 Group of performers
53 City near Dallas
55 Poke bowl tuna
58 Telecom letters separated by an &
59 *"Shocker!"
62 "To Kill a Mockingbird" author
63 "Sure about that?"
64 Hairdo whose "business in the front, party in the back" description hints at what can follow the two words in each starred clue's answer
65 New Deal prez
66 Oscar-winning director Chloe
67 Arranges, as hair

DOWN
1 Kind of card in a phone
2 Molecule component
3 Word before "wolf" or "Star"
4 Often-rolled joints
5 Good ___ Young (hair color brand)
6 Concludes a prayer, maybe
7 Apt rhyme for "gloom"
8 Jumping for joy
9 Transaction at a flea market
10 Washington-to-Syracuse dir.
11 Lingering flavor
12 Successful book
13 Word hidden in "Tutankhamun"
18 Stable staple
22 Box in Japanese cuisine
24 Creepy-crawly
26 Grp. that regulates LSD
27 Dads
28 Wasn't cool enough?
29 Kraken or Scylla
30 Like undercooked brownies
31 Soothing succulents
34 Feeling of longing for the Before Times
37 Namely
39 Songs stuck in peoples' heads
42 D&D, e.g.
44 Lower-body ring site
47 Mischievous
49 "Far out!"
51 Bearded antelope
52 Baby whale
54 "___ your other question ..."
56 "The ___ We Climb" (Amanda Gorman poem)
57 "Got it"
59 URL ender for a company
60 Place (on)
61 UFO occupants

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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

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☺ MARFA SCHOOL LUNCH MENU ☺

JAN	Thu, Jan 6	Fri, Jan 7	Mon, Jan 10	Tue, Jan 11	Wed, Jan 12
BREAKFAST	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	TEACHER WORKDAY	SAUSAGE KOLACHE, CHEESE CUBE	BREAKFAST BREAD, YOGURT
LUNCH Menu courtesy of PORTER'S SINCE 1945 Celebrating 70+ years of serving our customers. 432-729-4375 www.myporters.net	HOLIDAY	HOLIDAY	TEACHER WORKDAY	STEAK FINGERS, ROLL, SAVORY GREEN BEANS, CORN, PEACHES	CHEESE PIZZA, FRESH BROCCOLI FLORETS, MARINARA SAUCE, CINNAMON APPLESAUCE

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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU, JAN 6: JH Basketball vs Sierra Blanca at Sierra Blanca, Girls at 5:00 pm; Boys at 6:00 pm
FRI, JAN 7: HS Girls Basketball at Balmorhea
MON, JAN 10: JH Basketball at Balmorhea, Girls at 5:00 pm; Boys at 6:00 pm
TUE, JAN 11: HS Boys Basketball vs Dell City in Marfa, 6:00 pm

12/20 Mull It Over *by Rebecca Goldstein and Rachel Fabi*

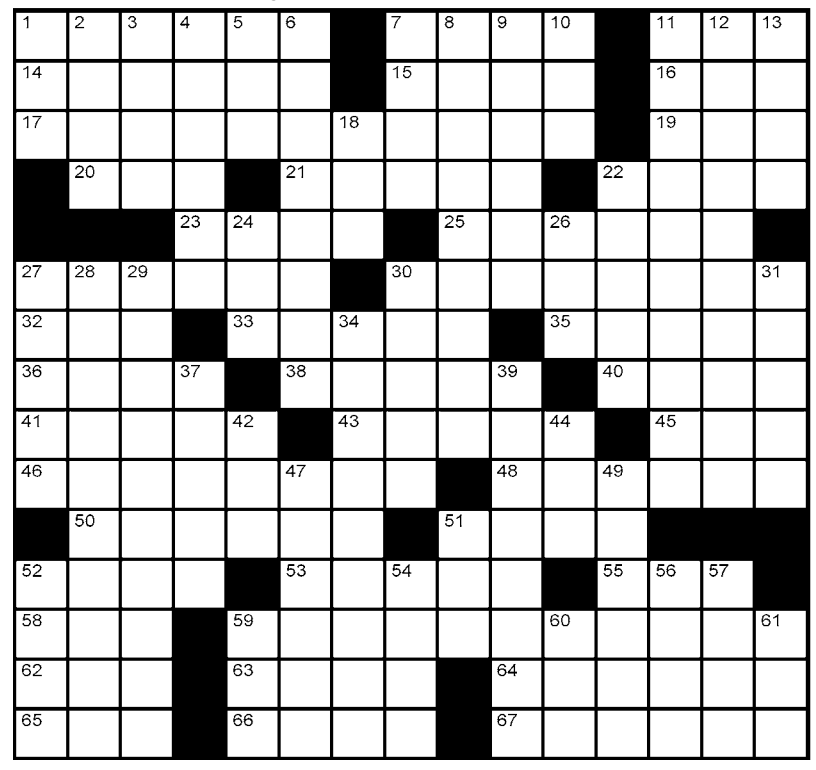




Photo by Tina Rivera

Marfa Live Arts shoots the music video, "Doble Nacionalidad," with singer/songwriter Ramón Vega Navarro of Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico, at the Marfa Spirit Company.

Ojinaga musician's ode to Village Farms workers is focus of Marfa Live Arts' first music video production

By JD GARCIA
Marfa Live Arts

MARFA — An Ojinaga singer/songwriter's ode to the workers of Village Farms — who take a daily two-hour round-trip drive from Mexico to grow and harvest tomatoes in Marfa — is now the subject of Marfa Live Arts' first music video.

Ramón Vega Navarro, a retired school teacher now focusing on music, sings of his allegiance to both his home state of Texas and the Mexican city of Ojinaga where he now lives in the video for "Doble Nacionalidad," which was directed and filmed by Marfa Live Arts Director Jennie Lyn Hamilton and producer Tina Rivera. Navarro's song was chosen by the jury of playwrights as the second-place winner of the Marfa Live Arts 2021 Short Playwriting Contest, which was open to all residents of Presidio County, Texas and Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico.

"When Marfa Live Arts received Ramón's entry, we knew that we had to share it," said Hamilton. "It exudes hope and is so beautiful and poignant. It pays tribute to an often overlooked but vital part of Marfa: the Village Farms workers who travel between Ojinaga and Marfa each day for work."

The song's lyrics not only tell of sights common to Marfa residents — the white vans that bus the workers from Ojinaga, the sunsets in the vast West Texas skies, and the fruits that are harvested by the hardworking folk that make the trek — but also delves into the minds of the workers who come to make a better life for themselves and their families.

"The song was conceived by the streets of Ojinaga," Navarro said. "I would see how those white vans would pick people up to go to work at Village Farms, and in the afternoon, they were back. Men and women who would descend from the vans, exhausted by the daily work. I looked closely at the work they were doing, which made me believe I had to write a song that spoke of this noble, difficult and productive work that also establishes an important bond among the communities of Ojinaga, Presidio, and Marfa." The song, he added, pays tribute to all Ojinaga workers who work in the U.S.A., whether it's in Marfa, Odessa, or elsewhere in the country.

"Those hardworking people with that privilege of going in and out to work make us feel proud to belong to this beautiful region," he said. In the song, he expresses the pride, courage and collaborative spirit of the workers who make the journey each day.

Navarro's music, Hamilton added, has been his main focus since retiring after a 30-year teaching career. "He's put all his energy into his music since he retired," she explained. "Coming from a long line of musicians from Chínipas — a small village in Chihuahua — he is an incredibly talented storyteller. His work is full of the belief that you can achieve your dreams and build a better future."

Navarro has been honing his musical craft since he was a child, watching his guitarist father play at parties in his hometown before picking up an instrument himself at the age of nine. "At nine years old, [the local musicians] gave me the opportunity to play and sing with them, touring neighboring towns and playing at different parties," he explained. "At the age of 20 I started my career as a teacher and continued with musical composition process, keeping active 100 percent in music, playing at social events with different musicians from Ojinaga such as Manuel Ramírez, Gerardo Morales, Tirso Gutiérrez, Juan Manuel Domínguez, among others."

As of today, Navarro said, he has composed around 230 songs, some with have been recorded by Conjunto Amanecer, del Maestro Vico Madrid, Conjunto Nuevo Horizonte, Sonoreños del Compa Tico, and Los Weritos de Sinaloa.

"The dream grows every day, making important steps with my music, which will be heard in the immediate future and sung by many people," he said. "I keep dreaming I'll keep writing good lyrics and tell beautiful stories. Music has been an essential component in my life. It's my greatest passion."

Navarro's song "Madre Ranchera" can be found on the album Las 15 Canciones Más Bellas a Mamá on Spotify, with a future release for a mariachi record eyed.

The video for "Doble Nacionalidad," which is currently still being shot, will premier in early 2022.

News of Navarro's upcoming collaboration with Marfa Live Arts has also started making the rounds, Hamilton said, as a former student and Tejano artist in Odessa, Texas, has reached out to the organization for a possible future project. "We are certainly open to the idea," Hamilton said.

In the meantime, Marfa Live Arts will continue to provide programs at Marfa High School with the 11th Annual Playwriting Program with Georgina Escobar returning this spring, along with the possibility of reviving the popular La Banda Music Camp in the summer of 2022.

For more information on Marfa Live Arts, past programs, and to keep up to date with the organization, please visit www.marfalivearts.org

Marfa Rotary Club gifts Marfa Food Pantry $1,000 at party thrown for Marfa students

MARFA — During the Rotary Club of Marfa's Christmas party for school children in December, the club presented a $1,000 donation to the Marfa Food Pantry. This donation helped the pantry with expenses for the holiday season. The rotary club makes an annual donation to the food pantry. In attendance for the party and the donation were Marjo Skiles, Genevieve Bassham, Virginia Platt, Patrick Daly, Eddie Pallarez, Verena Zbinden, Joe Williams, Mona Garcia, Rudy Garcia and Oscar Aguero, along with many Marfa students celebrating the holiday.

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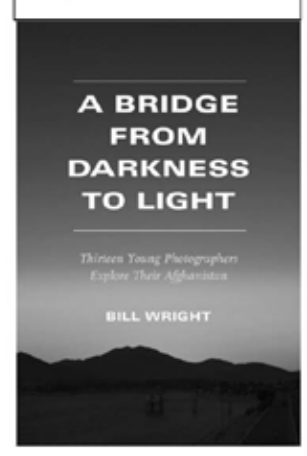
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NOTICE OF DEFAULT AND FORECLOSURE SALE

WHEREAS, on March 27, 2006, a certain Adjustable Rate Home Equity Conversion Deed of Trust ("Reverse Mortgage") was executed by MAISIE LEE, as mortgagor in favor of WELLS FARGO BANK N.A., as mortgagee and ROBERT K. FOWLER, as trustee, and was recorded on May 9, 2006 under Clerk's Instrument Number 74956, Book 198, Page 117 in the real property records of Brewster, Texas.

WHEREAS, the Reverse Mortgage was insured by the United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (the "Secretary") pursuant to the National Housing Act for the purpose of providing single family housing; and

WHEREAS, the beneficial interest in the Reverse Mortgage is now owned by the Secretary, pursuant to an assignment dated June 24, 2010, and recorded on July 20, 2010, under Book 261, Page 22 in the real property records of Brewster County, Texas; and

WHEREAS, a default has been made in the covenants and conditions of the Reverse Mortgage in that the Mortgagors are now deceased; and

WHEREAS, the entire amount delinquent as of February 1, 2022 is $238,822.85; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of the default, the Secretary has declared the entire amount of the indebtedness secured by the Reverse Mortgage to be immediately due and payable;

NOW THEREFORE, pursuant to powers vested in me by the Single Family Mortgage Foreclosure Act of 1994, 12 U.S.C. 3751 et seq., by 24 CFR part 27, subpart B, and by the Secretary's designation of me as Foreclosure Commissioner, recorded on October 15, 2007 in Dallas County under Clerk's File Number 20070369306, notice is hereby given that on February 1, 2022, at 01:00 PM local time or no later than three hours thereafter, all real and personal property at or used in connection with the following described premises ("Property") will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder:

ALL OF LOTS ONE (1) AND TWO (2) AND THE NORTH FIVE FEET (N. 5 FEET) OF LOT THREE (3), BLOCK THIRTY-EIGHT (38), ANDERSON ADDITION TO THE TOWN OF MARATHON, BREWSTER COUNTY, TEXAS, AS THE SAME APPEARS IN THE MAP OR PLAT ON FILE WITH THE COUNTY CLERK OF BREWSTER COUNTY, TEXAS.

Commonly known as: 201 LEE STREET, MARATHON, TX 79842.

The sale will be held in Brewster County, Texas at the following location: THE EAST DOOR OF THE COURTHOUSE OR AS DESIGNATED BY THE COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE or as designated by the County Commissioners Court.

The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development will bid $238,822.85.

There will be no proration of taxes, rents or other income or liabilities, except that the purchaser will pay, at or before closing, his prorate share of any real estate taxes that have been paid by the Secretary to the date of the foreclosure sale.

When making their bids, all bidders except the Secretary must submit a deposit totaling $23,882.29 in the form of a certified check or cashier's check made out to the Secretary of HUD. A deposit need not accompany each oral bid. If the successful bid is oral, a deposit of $23,882.29 must be presented before the bidding is closed. The deposit is nonrefundable. The remainder of the purchase price must be delivered within 30 days of the sale or at such other time as the Secretary may determine for good cause shown, time being of the essence. This amount, like the bid deposits, must be delivered in the form of a certified or cashier's check. If the Secretary is the highest bidder, he need not pay the bid amount in cash. The successful bidder will pay all conveying fees, all real estate and other taxes that are due on or after the delivery date of the remainder of the payment and all other costs associated with the transfer of title. At the conclusion of the sale, the deposits of the unsuccessful bidders will be returned to them.

The Secretary may grant an extension of time within which to deliver the remainder of the payment. All extensions will be for 15-day increments for a fee of $500.00, paid in advance. The extension fee shall be in the form of a certified or cashier's check made payable to the Secretary of HUD. If the high bidder closes the sale prior to the expiration of any extension period, the unused portion of the extension fee shall be applied toward the amount due.

If the high bidder is unable to close the sale within the required period, or within any extension of time granted by the Secretary, the high bidder may be required to forfeit the cash deposit or, at the election of the foreclosure commissioner after consultation with the HUD representative, will be liable to HUD for any costs incurred as a result of such failure. The Commissioner may, at the direction of the HUD representative, offer the property to the second highest bidder for an amount equal to the highest price offered by that bidder.

There is no right of redemption, or right of possession based upon a right of redemption, in the mortgagor or others subsequent to a foreclosure completed pursuant to the Act. Therefore, the Foreclosure Commissioner will issue a Deed to the purchaser(s) upon receipt of the entire purchase price in accordance with the terms of the sale as provided herein. HUD does not guarantee that the property will be vacant.

The scheduled foreclosure sale shall be cancelled or adjourned if it is established, by documented written application of the mortgagor to the Foreclosure Commissioner not less than 3 days before the date of sale, or otherwise, that the default or defaults upon which the foreclosure is based did not exist at the time of service of this notice of default and foreclosure sale, or all amounts due under the mortgage agreement are tendered to the Foreclosure Commissioner, in the form of a certified or cashier's check payable to the Secretary of HUD, before public auction of the property is completed.

The amount that must be paid if the mortgage is to be paid in full prior the scheduled sale is $238,822.85, plus all other amounts that would be due under the mortgage agreement if payments under the mortgage had not been accelerated, advertising costs and postage expenses incurred in giving notice, mileage by the most reasonable road distance for posting notices and for the Foreclosure Commissioner's attendance at the sale, reasonable and customary costs incurred for title and lien record searches, the necessary out-of-pocket costs incurred by the Foreclosure Commissioner for recording documents, a commission for the Foreclosure Commissioner, and all other costs incurred in connection with the foreclosure prior to reinstatement.

Tender of payment by certified or cashier's check or application for cancellation of the foreclosure sale shall be submitted to the address of the Foreclosure Commissioner provided below.

Date: January 3, 2022

L. Keller Mackie
Foreclosure Commissioner
Mackie Wolf Zientz & Mann, P.C.
Parkway Office Center, Suite 900
14160 Dallas Parkway
Dallas, TX 75254
(214) 635-2650
(214) 635-2686 Fax

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MAY 7, 2022 CITY OF MARFA
GENERAL ELECTION

CITY OF MARFA WILL BE ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS TO FILE FOR A PLACE ON THE MAY 7, 2022 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT.

- JANUARY 19, 2022 - FIRST DAY TO FILE APPLICATION
- FEBRUARY 18, 2022- LAST DAY TO FILE APPLICATION
- OPEN ELECTED POSITIONS: THREE AT-LARGE CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS
- APPLICATIONS CAN BE OBTAINED IN PERSON AT MARFA CITY HALL OR ONLINE AT HTTPS://CITYOFMARFA.COM/ELECTIONS
- APPLICATIONS CAN BE SUBMITTED BY THE FOLLOWING:
  - IN PERSON TO MARFA CITY HALL
  - VIA MAIL TO P.O BOX 787 MARFA, TEXAS 79843
- ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE DELIVERED BY 5PM FEBRUARY 18, 2022.
- IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR REQUIRE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT KELLY PEREZ AT SECRETARY@CITYOFMARFA.COM OR AT 432-729-4315.

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Community

Randy Jackson, 2021 Mr. Sul Ross, passes away



Rendering courtesy of Sul Ross State University

An artist rendering of the Randy Jackson Lobo Field House shows the name that will be added to the facility.

ALPINE — Sul Ross State University mourns the passing and remembers the life of Randy Jackson, a longtime supporter of the university and of Lobo athletics.

Jackson graduated from Sul Ross with a bachelor's degree in 1968 and master's in 1970 before becoming one of the university's first recruiters.

"Wherever he was, he never stopped recruiting," said Sul Ross President Pete Gallego. "Once back in Alpine after retirement, he still recruited — and he always advocated for and helped our students. We miss him already."

Jackson was named the first ever Mr. Sul Ross in 2021 during an October 9, 2021, pregame ceremony during football's homecoming. President Gallego awarded the honor to Jackson for his loyalty, love and continuing dedication to Sul Ross.

Randy and his wife Sherry were inducted into the Sul Ross Hall of Honor in 2019 as Outstanding Supporters. Over the years, the Jacksons purchased several banners for athletics events and helped raise funds for game jerseys and trips for football seniors to attend various postseason all-star games. They also led fundraising efforts to purchase rings for the 2017-18 American Southwest Conference Champion Men's Basketball team.

Jackson also assisted the sports information department as a stand-in photographer and organized several tailgates for former student athletes and alumni.

In 2007, the Jacksons started a newsletter called "From the Hill." It was distributed to old friends, baby boomers, and other interested individuals about current events at Sul Ross. It grew to have a larger circulation than many university publications.

During the most recent meeting of the Texas State University Board of Regents, the regents themselves honored Randy Jackson and his efforts on behalf of Sul Ross by naming the football field house at Jackson Field as the Randy Jackson Lobo Field House. The bright red lettering should be up in time for late spring workouts.

"This is just a small token of appreciation to a man who had a larger-than-life impact on our students, athletes, and this entire university," said Gallego.

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OBITUARIES

Chambers

Jennalee M. Chambers, 101, longtime resident of Albuquerque, passed away on Sunday, December 12, 2021, just five days shy of her 102nd birthday. She was born and raised in Marfa, Texas, to McKie and Ione Mitchell. It was in Marfa that she met and later married Courtney Tidwell in 1936. They lived in several places due to his work, eventually settling in Albuquerque.

Jennalee is survived by her daughter, Carolyn Saxe of Albuquerque; grandson, Scott Saxe and his partner Rose Doyle of Rio Rancho; granddaughter, Leigh Tidwell of Conroe, Texas; twin great-grandsons, Jocob and Tristan Lopez, and their father, Ben Lopez of Spring, Texas; nephews, Tommy Morris and wife A'del of College Station, Texas, and Jimmy Morris and wife Karen of Amarillo, Texas. She was preceded in death by her first husband, Courtney Tidwell; second husband, Lon Chambers; son, John Tidwell; daughter-in-law, Beverly Tidwell; and sister, Marjorie Morris.

Jennalee spent her early years on a ranch in Marfa, where she found a love for horses. In her adult years she loved to knit, crochet, sew and do all things involved with caring for her family and home. Her family would like to give a special thank you to Dr. Joy Levette, David Sandoval, Jeff Thompson, and their staff at Tres Hermanas Assisted Living for all of their care and compassion.

Jennalee will be laid to rest at Sunset Memorial Park at a future date. Please visit our online guestbook for Jennalee at www.FrenchFunerals.com.

• • •



Lehmann

It is with great sadness that the family of **Katie Lehmann**, age 73, of Perrysburg, Ohio, announce her passing on Saturday, November 20, 2021, due to COVID-19. She was born on April 30, 1948, in Marfa, Texas, to the late Carlos and Luisa (Aguirre) Valverde. Katie married the love of her life, Bryan Lehmann, on July 8, 1968.

Katie was a licensed cosmetologist, which led her to a successful shih tzu breeding and grooming adventure for many years — including 15 of her own shih tzus. She was highly regarded as "Mother Nature's sister," bringing life to plants and flowers from the exotic to the common. Her playground was a lush backyard oasis featuring a natural koi pond and countless mini gardens with plants and flowers she nurtured with Bryan.

Katie was a dedicated wife, mother and grandmother who embraced every moment with them. She was everything to everyone, and her vivacious personality always made people smile, laugh and find joy in life. Katie was a woman of countless talents and enjoyed all aspects of life from classic rock music, pottery, remodeling and painting to cooking, walking, traveling, shopping and everything in between. She celebrated extended family through social media and searching ancestry records. Katie was truly a one-of-a-kind person who was loving, selfless, and had a giving nature with an infectious laugh and most beautiful smile.

She attended the Blackwell School with her two brothers until third grade when the family moved away.

Katie will be forever remembered by her loving husband of 53 years, Bryan; daughters Milissa (Joseph) Clark and Kelly (Andy) McMullen; grandson Lincoln McMullen; siblings Luis (Angelina) Herrera, Otilia Thompson, Mary Lou (Catarino) Escobedo, Pauline (Joe) Rivas, Carlos Jr. (Janice) Valverde, Jesse Valverde, Bernardo Valverde and Ramona (Milo) Diaz. Katie was preceded in death by her daughter Millicent Lehmann, her son Max Lehmann, and brothers Nolberto and Ruben Valverde.

Funeral Mass was celebrated at noon, Saturday, November 27, 2021, at St. Rose Catholic Church in Perrysburg, the Rev. Monsignor Charles Singler presiding. Burial followed at Fort Meigs Cemetery, Perrysburg. Contributions in her name are suggested to the church.

• • •



Lewis

Ron Lewis, 80 years old, of Marfa, Texas, went home to be with the Lord on December 22, 2021, with his wife by his side taking care of him.

Ron was born in Groveton, Texas, to Marie Skidmore on April 14, 1941. He graduated from Marfa High School in Marfa, Texas. He married Shelley Lewis on August 5, 1977, in Alpine, Texas. He spent his life building his business, Lewis Aircraft. He loved what he did and was an excellent aircraft mechanic. On top of his business, he managed the Marfa Municipal Airport for several years. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War and served in the United States Army for six years.

Ron is preceded in death by his mother, Marie Skidmore Freeman and his stepfather, Jim Freeman.

Ron is survived by his wife Shelley Lewis; daughters Lesley Lewis, Brenda Alvarez and her husband Martin Alvarez, Janet Conners and children; son James Lewis; grandchildren Veronica Pogue and her husband Joshua Pogue, Erik Alvarez, Brandon Maldonado, Cordell Lewis, Michaela Serrano and fiancé Eduardo Amaro, John Serrano, Natalie Lewis, Haylie Lewis, Madilyn Lewis; great-grandchildren, McKenna Granado, Bentley Serrano and Gabe Amaro.

Pallbearers will be Brandon Maldonado, Cordell Lewis, John Serrano, Eduardo Amaro, Jr. Catano and Rudy Estor.

The viewing will be held Friday, January 7, 2022, at the Methodist Church in Marfa, Texas. Funeral services will be held at 11 a.m., Friday, January 7, 2022, at the Methodist Church. Burial will follow at the cemetery in Marfa, Texas.

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

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home in Alpine, Texas.

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- Fighting against policies that burden working Texans with higher prices and higher taxes
- Backing our law enforcement and our veterans

"It is the honor of a lifetime serving the people of TX-23 and I will never quit fighting for you."

Tony Gonzales

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OBITUARIES



Lusk

Joseph Calvin "Truck" Lusk passed away in San Antonio, Texas, on December 15, 2021, after a brief illness. Truck was born on April 6, 1931, in Las Animas, Colorado, and was raised on the family ranch in Fowler.

After graduating high school, he joined the U.S. Army, where he served at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, and later as an aide to General Miles Dawson in Columbus, Ohio. Truck left the Army after one round of service and enrolled in college. He earned his bachelor's degree in general secondary education from Colorado State, playing football while he was there, then earned his master's degree in education from Adams State.

To say that Truck was passionate about both sports and education would be an understatement, and he poured his heart into coaching, teaching and molding young minds for 37 years to follow. His first job as an educator was in Pagosa Springs, Colorado, where he coached the state championship basketball team in 1960. He then went on to coach in Tulia, Texas; the Navajo Reservation in Ganado, Arizona; Ruidoso, New Mexico; and Bovina, Texas. He earned the respect of the young men he coached and mentored and remained close to many of his former athletes for the rest of his life.

Truck eventually left the basketball court and football field to dedicate his career to classroom learning. He served as principal in Dell City, Texas, before becoming the superintendent of schools in Valentine, Texas, where he would serve 20 more years until retirement. He was a tough leader with a big heart. His expectations of others were always high, but he always made time to shoot baskets in the gym or comfort a student who was in need. His goal was that every student who walked through his doors would graduate from high school. He constantly strived to find ways to bring better opportunities to the Valentine school.

Outside of work, Truck was a constant figure at the Valentine Community Church. His deep and loud voice could be heard above all others, and he kept time for the preacher so that all would be home in time to watch the Dallas Cowboys play at noon. He also served many years with the Marfa Rotary Club.

In 1996, Truck hung up his suit and put away his checkered boots and spent the rest of his days golfing, fishing and spoiling his granddaughters. He loaded and unloaded his own boat at Lake Amistad until he could no longer do it and served as marshall at the golf course once it was too tiresome to swing his own clubs. He was a master at rushing foursomes along if someone felt the need for a mulligan. Truck was known for his quick wit and mischievous behavior.

Truck was preceded in death by his parents, Clifford and Bessie Lusk; wife Norma; and twin children, Reo and Renee. He leaves behind a daughter, Angela Becker (Tom) of Midland; a son, Speedy Lusk of Midland; granddaughters Sydney Stephens and Shelby Stephens of Midland; a brother, Keith Lusk (Bev) of Littleton, Colorado; numerous nieces and nephews; and many golfing and fishing buddies.

Arrangements are pending. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Lusk Memorial Library, c/o Valentine ISD, PO Box 188, Valentine, TX 79854 or Valentine Community Church, c/o LaNell Brown, PO Box 36, Valentine, TX 79854.

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Quintanar

Frank T. Quintanar passed away after a brief illness on December 20, 2021, at Methodist Metropolitan Hospital in San Antonio, Texas. He was born to Ramon and Teresa Quintanar on July 22, 1946, in Marfa, Texas.

Praying of the Most Holy was recited on Tuesday, December 28, 2021, at 7 p.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church with Mass of Christian burial on Wednesday, December 29 at 10 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic Church with burial at Merced Cemetery.

Frank is preceded in death by his parents, brother Roberto Quintanar, and sisters Consuelo (Quintanar) Molina, Elena (Quintanar) O'Hara and Hilda (Quintanar) Conners.

He is survived by sisters Margarita (Quintanar) Mata of Odessa, Texas, Catarina (Quintanar) Orosco of Marfa; brothers Ramon Quintanar and wife Irene, Ismael Quintanar and wife Maria, and Jose Quintanar and wife Linda, all of Odessa; numerous nieces and nephews, and many friends. Special children in Frank's life were Jade and Charlize Martinez.

Frank attended Blackwell School and graduated from Marfa High School in 1968. After graduation, he briefly served in the U.S. Army. Upon his return to Marfa, Frank worked in or managed numerous stores and bars throughout his life. Frank also was a self-employed contractor painter for many years. His most recent job was at the Marfa Thrift Shop.

Frank loved Spanish music, especially Little Joe. He would DJ at the drop of a dime. Those who were fortunate enough to attend one of his many parties throughout his life know what a generous host he was. Who can forget those tricky stairs at his apartment, especially after a few beverages, a couple of corridos and Frank's delicious food?

His most memorable visitor to one of his parties was Selena. As the story goes, Selena's tour bus stopped by in Marfa back in the early 1980s, and he invited them to come to his apartment and have menudo.

Frank was an awesome storyteller and would leave you in awe with his stories. He appeared in the movie Giant, and later in life he hosted country musician Deric Ruttan. Deric interviewed him in the making of "Main Street, 1979," which can be viewed on YouTube. Frank also had a famous neighbor, Randy Quaid. Even though Frank and Randy got along, Randy's wife wasn't as lucky.

His family and close friends will dearly miss him. He was truly a Marfa legend. Turn up "La Nubes" by Little Joe, and dance one for our beloved Frank.



Roberts

Susan Roberts, better known to everyone as Sue, entered eternal rest on December 26, 2021. Sue was born October 8, 1944, in Wolverhampton, England. She went to school in Erdington, Birmingham, at St. Agnes Convent School.

In June of 1966, Sue traveled to West Texas to work as a nanny for Gage Holland. She was only supposed to be in the U.S. for six months. However, things did not end that way. She met Ike Roberts a few weeks after she arrived in West Texas and the two were smitten with one another. After the six months were up, Ike traveled back to England with Sue and the two were married on January 4, 1967.

Ike and Sue settled in Marathon, Texas, and spent 54 years together there until Sue's passing. Ike spent his career working on the Catto-Gage Ranch and, by default, so did Sue for the most part. She was totally game. She helped Ike work cattle, work on windmills, cowboy cook, and whatever other chores there were. Their crew started growing with the birth of their first child, Joe. Two years later, Sally joined the group, and two years later Tim showed up.

When Sue was not at the ranch, she was an avid volunteer for the 4-H Club, taught Catechism for the Catholic Church, was a substitute teacher and an original member of the Cowbelles of West Texas. Sue was also a member of the Big Bend Amateur Radio Club. Later in life she could be found every weekend at the farmer's market in Alpine.

Sue was an avid traveler. She would travel back to England every few years. She also traveled through Europe, Mexico and the Holy Land. Getting to go to the Holy Land was very special to her. She gave the travel bug to each of her kids also.

Once all the kids were out of school, in 1993 Sue went to work as manager of the Chisos Gallery on the front street of Marathon. She worked there until 2009. By then she had too many grandchildren that needed to be spoiled.

Sue had five wonderful grandkids: Larry, Michael, George, Margaret and Sarah Roberts. She loved her grandkids; whether she was throwing a football with them, swimming with them, or riding on the four-wheeler with them, she was happy.

Sue was a parishioner of the Marathon Catholic Church since 1966. She could always be counted on to help at the church or anyone at the church anytime. Sue's faith was what drove her; nothing was more important to her.

Sue never met a stranger. With her beautiful British accent, she gathered friends from everywhere and she always made whoever she was with feel like the most special person in the world. She gave so much of herself so kindly and wholeheartedly. That will be missed; but most of all, she will be missed by anyone that ever met her.

Sue is preceded in death by her parents, Joseph and Maureen; three brothers-in-law — John, Travis, and John; and her beloved daughter Sally. She is survived by her husband Ike, sons Joe and Tim, their wives Zaira and Amy, and her grandkids. She is also survived by her sister, Jane "Auntie J" Palmer of England; her nephew Richard; her nieces, Joann, Clare and Nic; and many great nephews and nieces.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that a donation be made to St. Mary's Mission in Marathon.

Services have been entrusted to Alpine Memorial Funeral Home

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

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'Real magic': Terlingua Burlesque lights up Cinnabar Theatre

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

TERLINGUA — People started lining up hours before the doors opened, cracking beers from coolers tied down to the beds of dusty trucks. As the sun set behind Bee Mountain, the crowd got wilder and the line got longer. Boatmen in ballgowns still sporting muddy Chacos rubbed elbows with Ghost Town old-timers in their Sunday pearls. When the doors opened, not everyone assembled could fit inside the theatre. "Come back tomorrow night!" someone called out to a chorus of groans.

An outsider might take one look at the crowd assembled and assume Beyoncé had announced a one-night-only show in Terlingua. The star power inside, however, was all homegrown. It seemed like everyone within 30 miles had come out to see the post-pandemic return of Terlingua Burlesque, a local phenomenon celebrating South County talent and lots of glitter.

"It's a form of real magic I haven't experienced with anything else," said Courtney Farmer, the person who brought burlesque to Terlingua in its contemporary form. "You bring people to the room and they don't even know what it is, but they get caught up in the energy."

Farmer, a raft guide from Fort Worth who's called Terlingua at least part-time home since 2012, left for a year to spend time in Telluride, Colorado, which has its own small-town burlesque troupe. "I just kind of realized like, 'Man, I can bring this back to Terlingua — that'd be a great place for it." She started an informal troupe with her friends called the Desert Blossom Pearls. In 2018, she opened up burlesque classes to anyone interested. A movement was born.

Binky Sartain, an artist and stay-at-home mom who does brisk business selling eggs from her homestead in the shadow of Willow Mountain,



Photo by Mary Cantrell

Bryan Devonshire strikes a pose as Michael Oxlong while performing with Terlingua Burlesque at the Cinnabar Theatre.

remembers talking with some friends that year about a desire for more forms of expression. The ladies were all part of a workout group at the community center and felt like it was time to shake things up. "Not two days later, there was a flyer at the post office for free burlesque classes," she remembered.

Terlingua, a sprawling community near the entrance to Big Bend National Park, fluctuates in population with the seasons. In the 80 miles between Alpine and Terlingua, there are no gas stations, and — until recently — there wasn't a wisp of cell service on the hour-and-change drive. Old-timers remember the days there was a single telephone in town at the Study Butte Store.

The region's quicksilver mines shuttered in the 1940s, but a new crop of Terlinguans in the '70s and '80s quickly realized they had been blessed with a different kind of natural resource: creativity. In 1989, the Last Minute Low Budget Productions got its start behind the Terlingua Store, where homemade sets had to be annually deconstructed to make way for the famed Terlingua Chili Cookoff. Despite their self-deprecating name, the LMLB crowd put together sophisticated renditions of plays like David Auburn's "Proof" not far behind the Broadway circuit. Last Minute Low Budget brought literary legends like Sam Shepard, David Mamet and Carson McCullers to a South County audience, directed by local icons like Catfish Callaway, a storied boatman and dramatist.

Much of the offstage fun and frivolity at that time swirled around La Kiva, a bar and restaurant on Terlingua Creek helmed by Gil Felts and later by his nephew, Glenn. Glenn Felts was responsible for helming a series of infamous "Mad Hatter" parties, themed after Alice in Wonderland. "Party" is perhaps too casual a term for Felts' events — these were major undertakings requiring months of preparation. At one point, there were so many themed parties regularly hosted in Terlingua that a transient community of a few hundred people was able to support multiple costume shops.

The revelry was interrupted in 2014 when a grisly tragedy struck the small, close-knit community – Glenn Felts was found dead outside La Kiva, the result of blunt force trauma that would be ruled a homicide (a local river guide was charged with Felts' murder, but was ultimately found not guilty). Another local watering hole tried to continue the tradition of the "Mad Hatter" parties, but it just wasn't the same. In order to carry out Felts' last wishes, his friends put together a party he was never able to throw: Alien Fest, an alien-abduction themed bash at the Goat Pens, a campground and goat farm with a large outdoor stage. The party is now an annual event, and as part of a shift toward COVID-conscious outdoor programming, Terlingua Burlesque has become an intrinsic part of the festivities.

In the storied history of Terlingua residents coming together to put on a good show, Burlesque has carved out its own niche, performing a few times a year in multiple local venues. "I think it's a new tradition," said Bucky Love, self-described "master of the ceremony" for Terlingua Burlesque. Love got his start in 1997 as a guest on the Austin Music Network and debuted in Terlingua around 2010 at one of Felts' "Alter Ego" parties, where guests were encouraged to take on new personas. "They were really unique, probably the highlight of the year," he remembered. Love, known for his acid tongue, Jersey accent and '70s polyester flair, made quite the impression at the party. "The locals loved Bucky Love. Some tourists did not. But [physically imposing local bartender] Gumby had Bucky's back that night."

Though Love was the only member of Terlingua Burlesque to remain fully clothed at the end of the performance, he captivated the audience in his own way. The official bouncer for the weekend's burlesque performances was Eric Poling, a former football player and MMA fighter turned boatman, but no muscle was necessary to control the rowdy audience with Love at the helm. Fearing a verbal lashing, everyone stayed in their seats and no one violated the "no cell phones" rule. "That's what Bucky's job is," Love explained. "The show will have moments of going out of control, and Bucky brings it back. He makes sure that people keep focused on the stage, that they show respect to the performers. And if you don't, you're out."

At the return of Terlingua Burlesque, the Cinnabar Theatre, the physical home of Last Minute Low Budget Productions, was abuzz with energy as Bucky introduced each dancer. With the exception of Farmer, most of the performers don't have dance backgrounds. Many of them are raft guides or waitresses, working to make ends meet in the service industry grind of South Brewster County. Many of them are moms. "I think the uniqueness of it is that there is no type," Farmer explained. "It's just whoever decides they want to do it."

For Sartain, Burlesque has become a family affair. Her husband, Jeff, is the supervisor of buildings and utilities at Big Bend National Park, a role that he describes as "a glorified janitor." He brings professional experience to the stage as Troy Cop-a-Feel, donning a custodian's outfit and sweeping the black box between acts. At Terlingua Burlesque, that's no small task — by the end of the night, Sartain had neatly disposed of scattered Doritos, packs of playing cards, counterfeit hundred-dollar bills, pounds and pounds of glitter and a wild array of undergarments.

Multiple members of Terlingua Burlesque tapped Sartain as the major creative force behind the troupe's costuming. In a place as far flung as Terlingua, where 48-hour Amazon delivery is a fever dream, outfitting the troupe isn't always as simple as clicking a button online — in past years, members have taken to Facebook in a last-minute panic, looking for items like fake cheese heads and dinosaur onesies that never arrived. Complicating matters, the troupe's performances skew toward the avant-garde. Sartain took The Big Bend Sentinel on a tour of her wardrobe, which includes a giant papier-mâché sandworm head, old park service uniforms, stereotypical French maid regalia and a prosthetic third breast. "I need my own storage unit," she said. "It's all just stuff I scrounge up. Even if it's just a scrap of cloth it might come in handy for something."

Through years of trial and error, she's discovered that double-sided toupée tape is the secret to making pasties last through a sweaty performance: "It's pretty gnarly stuff." She's made a name for herself as an on-site tailor, preventing wardrobe malfunctions at every turn. "I made an emergency bag that has extra pasties, eyelashes, scissors, needles and thread, which I have used a lot this go-around."

Sartain took to the stage twice each night of the weekend's run under her stage alias, Miss Savory. The second performance was a more traditional burlesque performance, featuring fishnets and pasties with a bee theme. The first was notable in that Sartain wore a ball gown throughout and bared no skin, mesmerizing the audience instead with the metallic fluttering of her cape. "I wanted to do something a little more old school," she explained.

For Sartain, performing onstage as Miss Savory is a rush like no other. After the show, a young woman approached her at the Starlight Theatre. "She was like, 'You were so sexy and empowered up there, it makes me want to be empowered,'" she recalled. " I think it's a way to get together and share something that's truly fun and beautiful. I mean, who doesn't like to watch a good show?"

The women of Terlingua Burlesque have experienced surprisingly little community pushback given the nature of their performance. Before she started participating, Sartain shared some common misconceptions about the craft: "I always thought it was just clothes coming off, the typical stuff. And then I realized, no, it's not like that. It's theater."

Farmer has noticed what might be mild criticism, mostly in the form of light vandalism. "Someone keeps taking our posters," Farmer reported. "But we're not sure if they just liked the poster and they want to keep one or if they're tearing it down." She also recounted an incident where the troupe approached the school about doing a fundraiser, and the school politely declined. "We got them some money so they could build a garden for the kids, but it was totally under the table."

The weekend's performances were classic Terlingua: the town postmistress strutted her stuff for a "Best Dressed" competition. Someone's dog wandered in from outside and got onstage. Expletives were slung liberally and a good time was had by all. Even as the troupe's leader, Farmer is continually stunned by the creativity of her neighbors. "I was telling everyone this the other day. I was like, 'Man, I know you people. You're all my friends. And every year, you just weird me out with this s —.' It's pleasant surprises all over the place."

"I think it's just so wild and independent down here," she continued. "It's such a happy little 'let your freak flag fly' community. It's kind of a metaphor, just like the desert. Some people don't see anything, but it's actually teeming with life."

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
The City of Marfa invites all citizens to a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on January 11, 2022, at City Hall located at 113 S. Highland Street in Marfa to review performance and obtain comments regarding its completed 2019 Texas CDBG Program Community Development Contract 7219259 Street Improvements Project. Disabled persons or those who require auxiliary aids or services who wish to attend this meeting should contact City Hall at 432-729 4315 at least two days before the meeting to make arrangements.

AVISO PÚBLICO
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT
La ciudad de Marfa invita a todos sus ciudadanos a una audiencia pública el 11 de Enero del 2022, a las 6:30 p.m. en la sala municipal localizada en 113 S. Highland en Marfa, para evaluar el desempeño y obtener comentarios sobre el contrato CDBG del 2019, numero 7219259. Las personas discapacitadas interesadas en atender a la audiencia pública que requieren de acomodaciones o servicios especiales, deben comunicarse con la ciudad a 432-729-4315 no menos de dos días antes de la junta para hacer arreglos necesarios. Residentes que necesiten un intérprete deben comunicarse con la ciudad por lo menos 24 horas antes de la audiencia pública.

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During construction there will be possible delays and minor closures in parking and camp areas.

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Daily work schedules will be issued to the park and posted.

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