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BURN BAN IN EFFECT, NO GROUND FIRES
by order of Presidio County

Border Network for Human Rights shares resources in Presidio, where it plans new office

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO — Last weekend, El Paso's Border Network for Human Rights (BNHR) hosted an event at the Presidio Farmers Market to help connect locals with information about human rights and immigration issues. The Presidio event was presented in solidarity with marches in El Paso, Pharr and Brownsville by a network of activist organizations including BNHR, Frontera Texas, Proyecto Libertad and Border Workers United.

There wasn't a march in Presidio — Saturday's event was aimed at spreading awareness of BNHR's mission. BNHR is hoping to have more of a presence in the small border city, and is currently looking for office space and potential employees. A handful of locals have signed on to attend training through the fall.

The actions in El Paso and other border communities, however, were intended to protest Operation Lone Star, Governor Greg Abbott's surge of funding and law enforcement to border communities. "For the first time, multiple border cities and counties unite to condemn Gov. Abbott's Operation Lone Star, which is responsible for the migrant deaths along the border and the misuse of Texans' money to fund anti-immigrant policies and operations," BNHR's Mynellies Negron wrote in a press release.

Though Presidio County has been receiving Operation Lone Star money for over a year, the debate over immigration policies has become more heated recently as County Judge Cinderela Guevara issued a declaration of "invasion" by undocumented migrants. Commissioner Brenda Bentley raised concerns about the use of that rhetoric at the last Presidio County Commissioners Court meeting.

At the meeting, Bentley reported that many constituents had written in to her decrying the use of the word "invasion." "It's the kind of language that incited what happened in El Paso," she said, referring to the 2019 mass shooting committed by a gunman who believed his actions

(Continued on page 3)



Photo by Cody Bjornson

Robbin Surber Myers stands in what remains of the Surber Ade feed store office, a business that was owned and operated by her father, Herb Surber, for nearly four decades before his passing on July 30 at age 84. The store held a final close out sale last week in which Herb's customers stopped by to give condolences. READ MORE ON PAGE 5.

Wonder School Marfa holds community open house ahead of inaugural school year

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — Wonder School Marfa, a newly-established kindergarten through eighth-grade "microschool," welcomed the community this week for an open house in their space located on the ground level of the First United Methodist Church on Washington Street. The tuition-funded school will begin its first school year in about a month with 10 students enrolled.

As attendees stepped down a short flight of stairs and were greeted at the school's entryway by sounds of children playing and gold letter balloons spelling out "WONDER," some ditched their shoes in cubbies and opted to roam barefoot on the bright red carpet. From the entrance nook, a large room opens up, where antique fixtures diffuse warm light across white walls and wooden furniture give off a homey ambiance. A project to create an origami fox, the school's mascot, was set out on a child-sized table.

This was the second public event for the school, the first being a preliminary meeting at the Marfa Public Library which took place earlier this April. Teachers, or "guides," Emily Steriti, Sam Watts and Kristal Cuevas, who also serves as the school's director, have been hard at work preparing their rented space for the upcoming school year.

Cuevas said the school's early info session this spring gave the staff valuable time over the summer to take in parent and community feedback and refine their program. The school hosted a garage sale over the summer, which the community helped support with item donations, and with the addition of a student-run lemonade stand, the school raised around $1,000. The school is still seeking supplies to outfit their computer room, including a table, chairs, Google Chromebooks and headphones.

The school will have, in total, 135 instructional days, with a schedule of 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and Friday field trips once a month. Cuevas said field trips are still in the works but may include locations like the Judd Foundation, Chihuahuan Desert Research Institute and the Museum of the Big Bend. Their school year is set to start on September 12 and end on May 25. The school will meet state homeschooling guidelines for its education requirements and will track attendance. Wonder School is not yet an accredited institution but might explore that possibility in the future, said Cuevas.

Tuition for the Wonder School is $400 per month per child, with a 20% discount for siblings and a $200 registration fee. Cuevas said the school's goal is to eventually become completely tuition-free, and they are working on becoming a nonprofit organization, which will open up more funding opportunities in the future.

At Monday night's open house, families already enrolled in the program showed up to hang out and enjoy refreshments, and a handful of new visitors also came through the space. The church ground floor the Wonder School is now occupying once served as a Montessori

(Continued on page 3)

City Council discusses anticipated hike in natural gas prices, appraisal district budget, open city positions

By MARY CANTRELL
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MARFA — City Council met for a regular meeting this week to discuss a forthcoming contract renewal with natural gas provider West Texas Gas — which will likely see a sharp increase for consumers, the Presidio County Appraisal District budget, and open positions in the public works and sewer departments.

All council members were present with the exception of Eddie Pallarez. Mayor Manny Baeza, City Manager Mandy Roane and City Attorney Teresa Todd were present.

The council meeting opened with discussion of the city's relationship with natural gas provider West Texas Gas, which the city is currently in legal negotiations with regarding a $114,000 natural gas invoice they received this past December that dates back to the February 2021 winter storm. The city's current contract with WTG is set to expire at the end of the month and negotiations regarding a renewal are ongoing. However, city officials made it clear that prices would increase significantly, possibly even doubling, for consumers.

Roane outlined the city's most recent contract proposal from WTG, stating rates vary depending on the day the contract is signed. The city's current rate, $3.60 per MMBtu, an energy unit, would increase to $8.43 for a 12-month contract (a 134% increase), $7.38 for a 24-month contract (a 105% increase) or, the city's best option, $6.96 for a 36-month contract (a 93% increase).

"The long and short of it is, chances are the rates are going to be going up for the customers, really no matter what," said Todd.

Todd said there were a lot of overlapping issues with WTG relating to the outstanding $114,000 gas invoice that still needed to be worked out. City administrators are to meet with J.J. King, vice president of marketing with WTG next week, she said. Council members Raul Lara and Jason Ballmann expressed concern for how the higher rates would trickle down to the City of Marfa's gas customers and asked whether an average household increase could be calculated.

But, because the city sets its own utility rates for natural gas and may absorb a portion of the cost, a percent increase would be difficult to determine before the forthcoming budget cycle, said Roane, while acknowledging rates would increase significantly.

"We can't absorb a 93% increase in the city budget," said Roane.

Because WTG owns the natural gas pipelines that service Marfa, even if the city tried to get another provider, WTG would charge them a transportation fee which would then get passed down to the city. Council decided to table the matter to their next city council meeting at the end of the month.

(Continued on page 2)

Brewster County sheriff seeking Apine man wanted for harboring runaway girl

By ALLEGRA HOBBS
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BREWSTER COUNTY — The Brewster County Sheriff's Office is asking for the public's help in tracking down a man who has disappeared with a runaway teenage girl.

The man, identified as Pedro "Kiko" Hinojos Jr., 39, is wanted for enticing a child and harboring a runaway child. Both offenses are misdemeanors under the Texas penal code, though if a person charged with enticing a child is shown, in the process of a criminal trial, to have intended to commit a felony against the child, that charge would be elevated to a felony.

Hinojos, an Alpine local, was last seen by authorities on Sunday, when he was released from jail on a criminal trespass charge, said Brewster County Sheriff Ronny Dodson. Dodson said Hinojos is believed to have taken off with a 16-year-old girl shortly thereafter, and his office has been searching for him ever since.

"We don't think his intentions are in the right place," said Dodson, of Hinojos' relationship to the girl.

The girl's mother had reported her as a runaway, said Dodson.

Since putting out a call for public assistance on Monday, the sheriff's office has received several tips about Hinojos' possible whereabouts, but he hasn't yet been located. Hinojos has been described by the office as standing at 5-foot-8 and weighing 175 pounds, with brown eyes and a shaved head.

(Continued on page 2)

3 years later, El Paso shooting impact seen in Presidio County politics

By SAM KARAS
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PRESIDIO COUNTY — Last week, West Texas passed a somber anniversary. On August 3, three years had passed since a shooting at an El Paso WalMart that claimed the lives of 23 people. The trial for the shooter, who faces 90 charges including hate crimes, has not yet begun and could be delayed until 2025.

Most Presidio County residents have some kind of relationship to El Paso as the place they do their shopping or hop on a flight, or a place to visit friends and family. For Marfa native L.H., it was her first taste of freedom after graduating from Marfa High School — she got an apartment and enrolled in a local college. "It was that stepping stone for me living on my own," she said.

L.H. asked to be identified only by her initials because she hadn't yet told everyone in her close-knit family about her experiences the day of the shooting. On August 3, 2019, she was back home in Marfa, working back-of-house at a local restaurant. She called into work to go spend time with family in the big city. As she got close to her family's neighborhood, notifications started popping up: there was an active shooter in the Cielo Vista Walmart.

She knew that her aunt liked hopping the bus at the Cielo Vista Mall on Saturday mornings to go downtown — her stop was just around the corner from the Walmart. "It scared the hell out of me, I couldn't get a hold of her on my device," L.H. said. "I kept messaging her and my cousins and — nothing. I was like, let me go see if I can find her."

It was early in the tragic events of that morning: local media hadn't yet started staging on the scene, but eyewitnesses were sharing reports on social media. Just as L.H. reached the bus stop, she got a message from her cousin that her aunt had already been picked up. It was at that moment she looked over her shoulder to the Walmart to see people fleeing the store. "I had clearly just missed something really bad," she said. "It looked like a bunch of ants running."

A week later, at a memorial service for victims of the shooting, an Australian television crew approached L.H. and asked if she'd like to be on TV — 8,000 miles away. Instead of asking about her personal connection to the city and the tragic events that had just unfolded, the news anchor asked how she felt about then President Donald Trump coming to town.

L.H. kept it cool on the recording, but inside, she was angry. "It pissed me off because they were already reducing it to politics," she said. "It already was a racist attack. It was really touchy, it really was not the time."

The gunman used blatantly racist language to explain his actions, saying that he was responding to a perceived "Hispanic invasion of Texas." In the years since, the shooting has become a flash point that has changed a lot of local politicians' views, especially regarding issues of gun control and anti-Mexican racism.

On the state level, State Senator Cesar Blanco, who represents

(Continued on page 2)

INSIDE

NEWS P. 1 - 3
OPINION P. 4
COMMUNITY P. 5 - 7
CLASSIFIEDS P. 8

The West Texan Media Group, LLC

El Paso shooting

(Continued from page 1)

the Big Bend region, has been using the El Paso shooting — and the more recent shooting at a school in Uvalde — as a moment to advocate for gun reform. Last session, Blanco passed SB162, which makes it a state crime to lie on a background check form when purchasing a firearm. "It's a step in the right direction, but we still have plenty of work to do to prevent another tragedy. I will continue to honor the victims and survivors of August 3, 2019 with action to end gun violence and hate that plagues our nation," he wrote in a press release.

The shooting has also made its mark on Presidio County politics. At a commissioners court meeting on July 28, Commissioner Brenda Silva Bentley invoked the El Paso shooting to explain why she was uncomfortable with the language of a declaration of "invasion" issued by County Judge Cinderela Guevara, noting it echoed the word choice used by the El Paso gunman. (Judge Guevara did not return requests for comment on the matter).

Just two weeks before the shooting, Commissioner Bentley had voted in favor of a measure to make Presidio County a "Second Amendment Sanctuary." The resolution was intended by gun advocates as a play on "sanctuary cities," in which local law enforcement are not required to enforce federal immigration law. In the event that the federal government handed down gun control measures, Presidio County law enforcement would not be expected to follow suit.

At the meeting on July 28, Bentley told the other commissioners how much she wished she could take that vote back. "It's the one thing I've done here I really regret," she said. "I cried for days [after the shooting] because we had just passed that Second Amendment Sanctuary."

Bentley did not return requests for additional comment.

But Precinct 4 commissioner candidate David Beebe, who was justice of the peace at the time, said the measure had ultimately been symbolic, carrying no real legal weight. Now that he's running against Buddy Knight — who introduced the measure — lots of people have asked him if he will work to appeal the Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution. "It's a box of air," Beebe said. "This is not a battle I'm going to pick because there's nothing there."

Despite their difference of opinion on the sanctuary laws, Beebe agreed with Bentley that the "invasion" rhetoric invoked by Judge Guevara's disaster declaration was dangerous. "At the time, I can tell you that a commissioners court was really despondent about the El Paso shooting. It was taken very seriously by Judge Guevara and every single commissioner," he said. "Fast forward three years, and we're going to use the same language and give ourselves emergency powers and celebrate it? Optics and language matter."

On the law enforcement side of the issue, Marfa Police Chief Steven Marquez passed the third anniversary of the El Paso shooting preparing for an active shooter training at Marfa ISD. Marquez said that mass shootings have made a massive impact in his line of work. "Since Columbine, that's when it started to evolve," he said, referring to the Colorado school shooting in 1999 that claimed the lives of 15 people. "Since then, we've had multiple other shootings, and it's become a big priority that law enforcement has had to prepare for."

In the nearly 10 years that Marquez has been an officer, he has also seen changes in gun policy. In 2016, the Texas Legislature passed a law allowing open carry of firearms; in 2021, that law expanded to roll back most permitting restrictions. "We do have situations where we'll have an individual that might not be of sound mind and there's a firearm in the house," he said.

As a father, it's important to Marquez to keep an open line of communication with parents about his department's ability to handle active shooter situations. "Growing up, I never went to school thinking that I would get shot at or not come home," he said. "Our kids didn't ask for this. Unfortunately, it's the reality we live in now. All we can do is prepare for it."

City Council

(Continued from page 1)

Council next moved into executive session to review updates on the $114,000 WTG bill, but no new action items were announced when they returned, other than for Todd to continue to work with their outside attorneys regarding the matter.

Next, J.D. Newsom, executive director of the Big Bend Regional Hospital District, invited council members to a day-long workshop on August 31 in Alpine to discuss a potential regional hospital solution. Newsom said a braintrust of representatives from local governments and EMS personnel is being formed in order to work through challenges and solutions relating to establishing a more centralized EMS system, something that has been on the minds of many following recent EMS challenges in Brewster and Jeff Davis counties.

"The long and short of it is, chances are the rates are going to be going up for the customers, really no matter what."

Newsom said the sudden passing of Mike Scudder, who owned and operated Alpine EMS, and the county's subsequent rush to secure an EMS provider revealed how precarious the system was.

"It was a really devastating loss to our first responder community in the region, but I think [it] opened our eyes to how fragile some of our emergency service operations are," said Newsom.

The tri-county area has a total of six different EMS providers, he said, which were facing similar, repeated operational issues that might be remedied by unifying services.

"I think it's fair to say that all of our EMS operators have a lot of challenges, whether it be funding new ambulances, recruiting personnel, providing these vital services for our residents in such a large geographic area, that I think it's worthwhile to look at what a different model might look like," said Newsom.

Roane said she was planning on attending the workshop along with Mayor Baeza and Marfa EMS Director Bert Lagarde.

Council then reviewed and ultimately voted against approving the Presidio County Appraisal District's amended budget for 2022, which includes a 5% pay raise for PCAD employees. After much back and forth over whether to approve it, council members were locked in a split tie which saw council members Ballmann and Mark Cash voting to approve the budget and Councilmember Lara and Mayor Pro Tem Irma Salgado voting not to approve — the mayor then broke the tie with a nay vote. Those against the budget were wary of approving a 5% increase in salary for PCAD employees before their budget cycle, which will determine if and how much city employee salaries will increase.

Last were the Mayor, City Manager and Police Chief Reports. Mayor Baeza notified council members the budget planning season was fast approaching, and his goal was to have a drafted budget available for the next city council meeting. Council will meet throughout September to finalize the 2022-23 budget. Roane reminded all the pool would close for the summer on August 12 and said the Sewer Department as well as the Public Works Department was hiring. Sal Roman recently retired after over 30 years in the Public Works Department.

Chief of Police Steve Marquez updated council on the department, stating that Marfa PD along with many other local law enforcement agencies were participating in a second active attack training drill at MISD this week. They were also able to fill their final open position, he said, and are welcoming a new officer from the Fort Stockton Police Department. Lastly, their new police fleet vehicles were not yet all complete due to camera technology outfitting delays.

Border Network for Human Rights

(Continued from page 1)

were combating a perceived "Hispanic invasion of Texas." (Neither Bentley nor Guevara returned requests for comment).

The materials distributed at Saturday's event echoed these concerns. "Immigrant advocates at the border will decry these policies and the dangerous spread of invasion rhetoric, which stokes fear and resentment, dehumanizes immigrants, and escalates violence, and will call for establishing humane immigration policies that welcome migrants in an orderly, just, and dignified manner," Negron wrote.

One of the BNHR's main outreach goals is helping people understand what their rights are when they interact with local law enforcement. A pamphlet titled, "Know Your Rights!" outlines five steps when apprehended by an officer. "What you say to the police is very important, because what you say can be used against you," the pamphlet cautions.

Though you may be required to show license, registration and insurance in a traffic stop, folks apprehended by the police or Customs and Border Protection are not required to show proof of nationality or immigration status. The pamphlet advises to remain calm and respectful but refuse to produce immigration documents or to submit to a search without a warrant, even if the officer threatens to enhance charges. "You can plead the charge later in court," it says.

BNHR is planning to open an office in Presidio, and are looking for locals hoping to offer their services. Celia Arzaga, a Presidio resident who has a long history of advocacy work for rural and underserved schools in Ojinaga, is hoping to use her knowledge of both communities to keep neighbors informed about their rights. "It's been one of my dreams to be a promoter of human rights, to make them known and put them into practice," she said.

Arzaga believes that questions of citizenship and nationality are complex in a place like Presidio, where people are used to crossing the border frequently and having a life split between countries. Her children are citizens; she and her husband are legal residents. "A lot of people have commented 'I don't want to renounce my Mexican citizenship,'" she said. "I tell them that when we come to this country for better opportunities, we are no longer going to think about ourselves but about our families."

Having families with mixed immigration status can provoke anxiety and uncertainty, especially when it comes to interacting with law enforcement. "I want to be that voice where I can change their way of thinking," she said. "Whether we're white, brown, short, tall, whatever we may be — we all have the same rights and we can help each other."

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY AUNT DIXIE!

Dixie White, known to many as "Aunt Dixie," who is a former resident of Marfa, is celebrating her 103rd birthday in San Antonio this year.



The party will start at 7:30 PM on Saturday, August 20, 2022 at 124 Vassar Lane, San Antonio, TX 78212.

This is a backyard event, so it will be very hot outside. Dixie will be under A/C inside the main house so guests can cool off inside and visit with her there.

Many may remember befriending her over the years, and she has fond memories of you; and Marfans may remember her recent birthday celebrations at Planet Marfa, including a drive-by on Highway 90 during the COVID shutdown.

Thank you to all of you who have shown your friendship to Dixie, Jon and Aase.

No gifts, but cards are welcome.
Send these to Lillian White at the above address, please.

The party will continue until 10 PM.
Refreshments will be served.

Wonder School Marfa

(Continued from page 1)

school years prior. It consists of a main community room outfitted with a piano and numerous Montessori-inspired learning stations centered around practical skills, geography, language learning, and more. Rooms including a kitchen, library-slash-yoga room, bathroom, computer room and office space stem from the main room.

"When I speak to parents about that, it's focusing on all of the great things that we're able to provide instead of having this strict, regimented routine of subject to subject to lunch to recess and all of the time in between that maybe gets lost. We are packing our day with full-on learning in a very different way."

Cuevas said Wonder School wanted to host an open house in order to invite the community to view the new school space and ask questions. They timed the event before the start of Marfa ISD's school start date, August 17, in case some parents were still weighing their options, she said. While their school might not be the best option for everyone, said Cuevas, Wonder School is able to offer something unique — a hybrid focus on academics, life skills and spending more time outdoors.

"When I speak to parents about that, it's focusing on all of the great things that we're able to provide instead of having this strict regimented routine of subject to subject to lunch to recess and all of the time in between that maybe gets lost. We are packing our day with full-on learning in a very different way," said Cuevas, whose two children will be attending Wonder School.

Parent Stela Fuentez, who enrolled her two children, Amaya, 8, and Roman, 6, in Wonder School for the forthcoming school year, said their family was attracted by the program's emphasis on tactile learning and mindfulness. They also wanted to continue their children's education with Steriti, who her children had previous positive experiences with at MISD in the Montessori program. (As of the 2022-23 school year, MISD no longer offers any Montessori courses.)

"We're really excited about this opportunity for Marfa," said Fuentez. "Emily and Sam both do this for the love of the children. They really do. You can see it, they would do this for free. And that's what we want it for our kids to feel that energy and that passion they have in the philosophy that they carry."

Steriti previously founded the independent nonprofit Marfa Montessori, which operated for a few years before being incorporated into MISD in 2013. Looking ahead to the coming school year, she anticipates being challenged by educating a large age range of students and stepping outside of the strictly Montessori mindset. She said she was expecting more people to reach out to her who were curious about the Wonder School, but so far she hadn't heard from anyone. However, she said she is excited for the start of the year and hopes the school is successful.

Cuevas said the school is still hoping to attract a few more pupils, but regardless of enrollment numbers, she and her team are proud to be offering an alternative to traditional public school for local families looking for different educational routes.

"What matters is that those few families that want this are able to have it because we have a space and we have amazing guides that are putting their heart and soul into it despite [the fact that] we're so new," said Cuevas. "We are on a shoestring budget. There's very little right now, but we're willing to work, we're willing to do the hard work necessary to fundraise and to put our name out there and to establish ourselves as a school just to offer that option."

"It's just a personal choice that parents have to make in this community. I'm just glad that there are options, and that there isn't just one singular route to take," added Fuentez.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and families homeschooling their children in the wake of repeated school closures, many, including Cuevas and some of her fellow Wonder School Marfa families, came out of the experience rethinking the role and format of a formal education, she said.

"One of the silver linings of the pandemic is that we've been given permission, confidence and ways to take an alternate route and kind of see where that leads us," said Cuevas.

The school's daily schedule will consist of online learning in the morning for the two older children, ages 10 and 12, and hands-on project-based learning for the younger students, ages 5 through 9. The afternoon will consist of various "enrichment" activities including library time, art and music making, lunch and playtime outdoors, cooking, Spanish language learning, and more. There's also a plan in place for the two older students to accompany a Wonder School parent on their weekly Meals of Wheels delivery route.

"What is beautiful about this alternative program is that we can change things if we see there's a need for change. We can be flexible, we can see what the kids are interested in then follow that," said Cuevas.



Staff photo by Mary Cantrell

Wonder School Marfa, a new tuition-funded K-8 education program, held an open house this week at their ground floor space at the First United Methodist Church.

The online learning platform the school was previously considering utilizing, Prenda, is no longer a part of the school's programming. Instead, the school staff has opted for a combination of programs they deemed equivalent including Khan Academy, IXL Learning, and Spanish in Nature.

The Wonder School will seek to foster an environment with parent involvement, asking each family to donate 20 hours of time annually to a school-related fundraiser, project or classroom time. All parents are invited to chaperone and attend Fieldtrip Fridays. Cuevas said she already has projects in mind that would be aided by parent and community assistance.

"The playground in the back, it's basically all dirt, one tree, very little shade and zero place to sit down. We would love to make that into a fun Saturday project and invite not only parents but community members to give their time and maybe their skills or supplies to establish a more beautiful play space for the kids outside," said Cuevas.

Wonder School will continue to get the word out about their establishment, said Cuevas, and will have a children's arts 'n' crafts station run by Watts at the Trans-Pecos Music Festival as well as participate in the Marfa Lights Parade. Cuevas said she has been in conversations with individuals who worked closely with Marfa's defunct International School, which operated from 2013 to 2016 and closed citing financial issues, who shared advice on how to ensure the school's longevity, but for now she is taking one day at a time. While the Wonder School is still getting its wings, it will hopefully grow to draw in others, like Marfa families who send their kids to Alpine Montessori School, said Cuevas, but she understands that some may be hesitant to try something new.

"I want people outside of Marfa that want to move to Marfa but have kids, I want to give those families another option," said Cuevas. "There might be some families out there that want to see it just get started the first year or so and then they'll make their decision."

Fuentez said she believes in the staying power of the program and one of her main goals is to help make Wonder School available to everyone in the community — hopefully offering full scholarships down the road.

"It's going to attract more folks to come and be part of the community and really embed themselves instead of just being the weekend residents. Come in and bring your kids — there's wonderful opportunities here," said Fuentez.



Opinions

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Wonder School Marfa would like to thank those who came out in support of our recent open house. The refreshment donations we received from Frama and our parent community were especially generous. Our team enthusiastically looks forward to providing an alternative path for school-age children this year, and in the years to come!

With gratitude,

Kristal Cuevas
Director

• • •

Dear Editor,

The Supreme Court decree eliminating a constitutional right to privacy and bodily autonomy for women and the Texas Legislature banning abortion were myopic and cruel acts based on a myth that the only acceptable purpose of sexual behavior is to produce more babies. Obviously, that's not the case. Perhaps the most important function of sexual behavior is affectionate bonding, which enhances relationships and strengthens families. Billions of sex acts only rarely result in pregnancy, and it's estimated that between 30-50% of pregnancies naturally fail to result in a birth.

In 50 years of service to the Big Bend area, my father, Dr. W.E. Lockhart, cared for many women through their pregnancies and attended countless births. He cared for many with miscarriages or who suffered unsafe, illegal abortions and helped them recover to have and raise other children. For him, pregnancy wasn't the miracle, birth was, and the true miracle workers were the mothers who brought that about. Nature (or God, if you prefer) gave to women the responsibility to bring about the miracle, because it is they who bear great risk to their health and welfare. The choice must be theirs. So, if we would save babies, first help mothers. That's how we actually get more healthy babies and save more lives. Pro-women, pro-choice is the real pro-life.

Bloomberg News published an article August 8: "A Very Dangerous Place to Be Pregnant Is Getting Even Scarier," with the subtitle "Texas leads the U.S. in maternity ward closures, and nowhere is this more of an issue than in the western part of the state." The article is about Alpine and the Big Bend area. Medicaid pays for 42% of births, yet Texas banned abortion instead of expanding Medicaid to get women proper maternity care. This, not immigration, is our real crisis.

Mary Bell Lockhart
Alpine

• • •

Dear Editor,

The plan for a new MHS seems ill-advised. Marfa is a small town with few jobs, and without new jobs, no new students will attend. The cost is monumental. Why not repair the old school? That makes more sense than demolishing the existing structure, and repair could occur in stages.

Marfa is also a poor town. Higher taxes will be difficult for many families to pay. I would like to know who is pushing this project. It seems to me that something new is always being built. And I am certain the current structures are not full. I wish you would write an opinion piece laying out the issues.

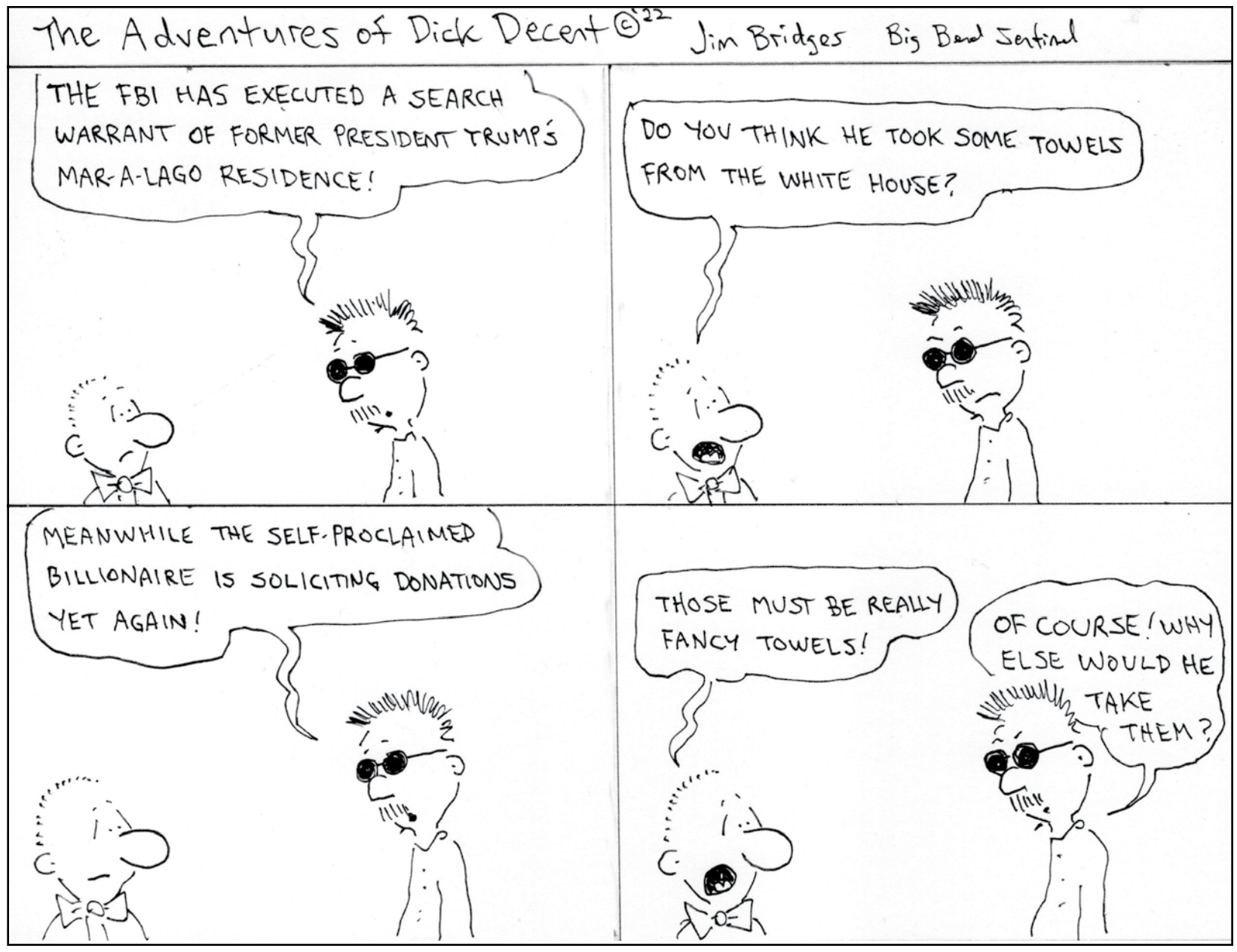
One final concern: if the school district defaults on the bonds, recovery may be impossible. Once the credit rating is gone, how could Marfa ever get it back?

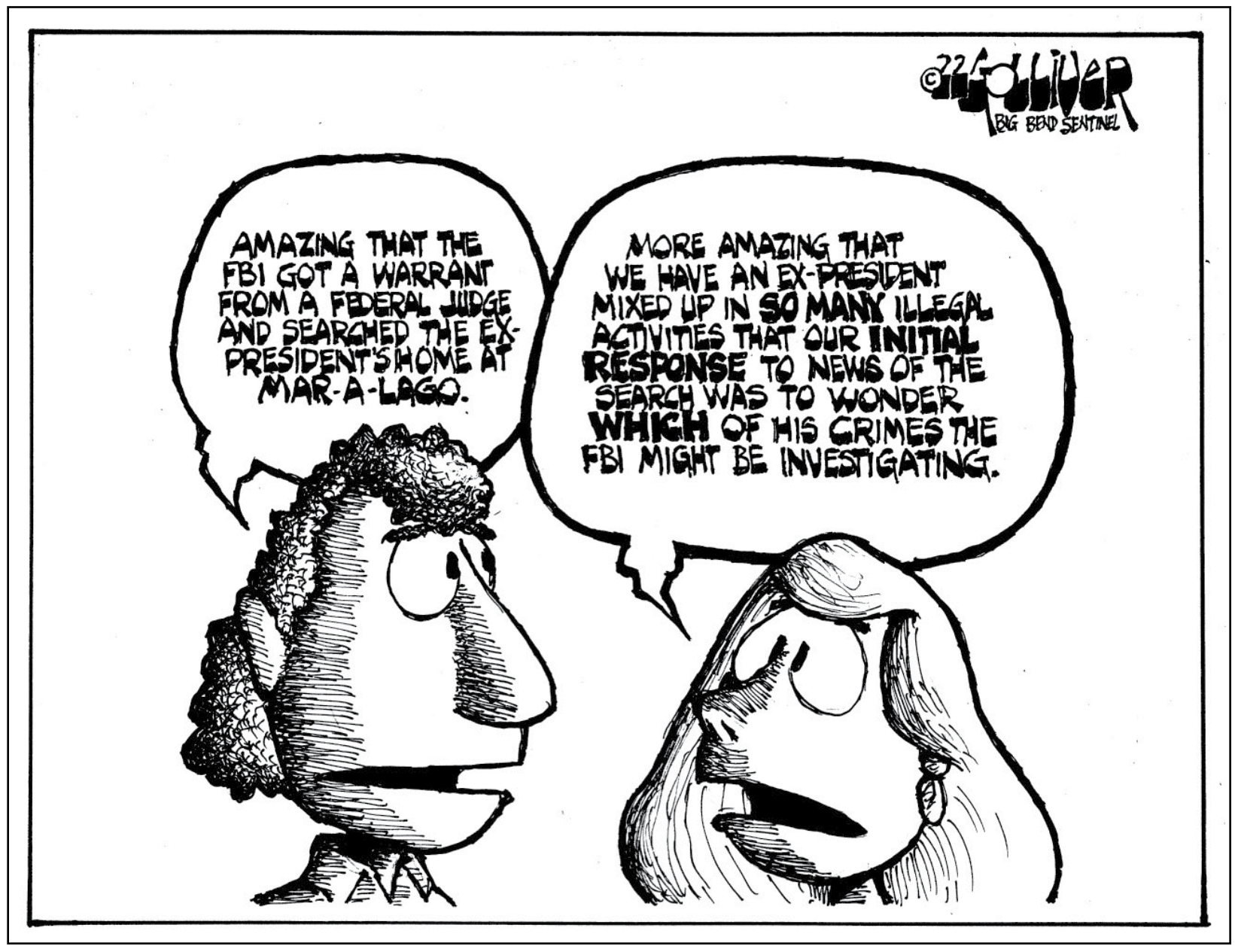
Elizabeth Tebeaux
College Station

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***





OUR WATER MATTERS

Balmorhea Lake: A desert diamond in the rough

By TREY GERFERS
tgerfers@pcuwcd.org

Each year, over 200,000 people visit Balmorhea State Park and its spring-fed swimming pool. But only a tiny fraction of those visitors ever experience nearby Balmorhea Lake. Originally called "Lower Parks Reservoir," Balmorhea Lake is located about two miles southeast of the town of Balmorhea. It is fed from the northeast by Sandia Creek, a tributary of the Pecos River, and from the south by Kountz Draw. Runoff from San Solomon Springs also comes into Balmorhea Lake from the Madera Diversion Dam and its canals, as well as surplus water from Phantom Lake Canal.

With its many spring systems, the greater Balmorhea area, also known as Madera Valley, has long been an oasis in the desert. San Solomon Springs alone once had a reported flow of 22 million gallons daily, according to the Texas State Historical Association. The earliest agricultural efforts involved hand-dug canals to divert water for growing crops. The reoccupation of Fort Davis at the end of the Civil War ushered in a lucrative era for the cultivation of grains, vegetables and cattle in the Madera Valley. In response to this increased demand, entrepreneurs organized several private irrigation companies in the ensuing years. One such operation was founded by four men: E.D. Balcom, H.R. Morrow, and Joe and John Rhea. According to Texas Parks and Wildlife, these three surnames were eventually combined to form the unusual name of Bal-Mo-Rhea.

As agriculture and ranching increased, the Toyah Valley Irrigation Company was organized in 1909 to manage water use in the area. Major crops included maize, beans, cantaloupe, cotton and alfalfa. By 1915, Reeves County Water Improvement District No. 1 was formed and acquired the water rights in the area. Construction of a dam was completed in 1917, thus forming the current reservoir at Balmorhea Lake. The dam is about 4,000 feet long and 46 feet high. The top of the dam has an elevation of 3,192 feet above mean sea level. The lake has a surface area of 573 acres and holds up to 6,350 acre-feet of water. Its drainage area is approximately 22 square miles. Water levels tend to drop precipitously during the summer irrigation season and then recover in the winter. The Reeves County Water Improvement District No. 1, which is governed by an elected five-member board, continues to administer the lake and distribute its water to area farmers for irrigation purposes. But agricultural activity around the town of Balmorhea itself has declined in recent years. Most of the land currently in cultivation is located north of IH-10.

As the agricultural portion of the local economy continues to shrink, some are pushing for development of the lake's recreational potential, a facet that has long been neglected. Many of the picnic areas and camping sites have deteriorated over the years, while derelict buildings, trash and other detritus add to the general sense of decay. In response to the situation, several lake residents have formed the Balmorhea Lake Improvement Group (BLIG), which currently boasts some 300 members. Initial efforts have included several lake clean-up days with dozens of volunteers from around the region. According to lake resident and BLIG founder, Teresa Evan, "We're trying to clean up [the lake] because it's our home and we want it to be beautiful." She also stressed that "we want it to be beautiful for not only the locals, but for those visiting the area. It's the desert, but yet we've got this gorgeous swimming pool and we have this gorgeous lake. It's really unusual and we're just trying to make it better." According to Ellen Weinacht, a prominent rancher in the area, "This is important. This is a magnificent gift we have in this part of Reeves County. We have a lake for crying out loud, and it needs to be beautiful."

The creation of a trail linking the lake to Balmorhea State Park is also being explored. Texas Parks and Wildlife has been pursuing a public-private partnership to design an expansion of the state park itself and envision ways to integrate pool and lake amenities. Plans remain preliminary. But enhanced recreational options could give new life to this underappreciated West Texas jewel.

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

One of the last cowboys: Remembering Marfa's Herb Surber

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

MARFA — Last Friday, as Robbin Surber Myers prepared to close her father's beloved business, Surber Ade Feed Store, she fondly recalled the nearly 20 years she spent working alongside him.

"I was his secretary, his loader, his unloader, his mixer. I mean he was the owner, I was every title below that," she said.

Her father, Herb Surber, passed away at age 84 on July 30 in his Marfa home. He was in the process of closing Surber Ade, an 8,000 square-foot feed store he operated on San Antonio Street since the 1980s. His customers consisted primarily of local cattle ranchers and, more recently, birders and other wildlife buffs. Robbin said her father struggled with his mobility in the end, but said he didn't want to retire and that working kept him going.

"He lived a simple life. He bought what he needed. He didn't buy what he wanted. He was a very simple man. He didn't splurge," said Robbin. "He worked up to nine days before he died."

Robbin closed the doors to her father's business for the final time this past weekend after running a sale on remaining feed. Routine customers streamed in for their discounts but also to give their condolences and visit one last time. All that remained in the shop were small stacks of feed along the periphery, a hammermill, mixer and auger — equipment Herb used to make his specially formulated feed — and a couple of forklifts.

"We'd bag it, weigh it, sew it and stack it," said Robbin. "I enjoyed working in here. It was a lot of fun. Even though it was dusty and dirty and you left here filthy. There were a lot of good people that would come in and talk."

Just off the main warehouse space was Herb's office, which was mostly cleared out with the exception of a desk with piles of paper, a couple of chairs, and a deer antler chandelier he made but never got around to hanging. The space itself is colored by local lore — it was built on concrete forms that remained from the 1940s, when German prisoner of war camps were stationed at the site, said Robbin.

Robbin recalled her and her father's visits with customers, where they'd sit around and "hold court" in Herb's office on the couch, swapping old ranching stories. He'd give advice and relive the glory days of growing up in the Texas Hill Country choppin' cedar and breakin' horses.

"I heard those stories over and over and over. They liked telling them and then embellishing on them a little bit more each time. It was great," said Robbin.

Surber Ade and the accompanying lots are now for sale. Robbin said her father was looking for a buyer but didn't mind if the property lingered on the market — he liked an excuse to get out and visit with folks at the store. Looking around in the space, Robbin reflected on the time spent running the feed store with her dad.

"Sad to see what it looks like now when I know what it used to be — just full of feed, the work we did and the customers that would come in, and it was a lot of fun. It was a lot of work. But it was a lot of fun. You're sitting inside so you didn't have to worry about getting sunburned," Robbin laughed.

The Surber family moved to Far West Texas from Blanco in 1974 when Robbin was 2 years old. Herb is survived by Robbin and his other daughter, Lauren, and preceded in death by his wife, Dorothy May. Herb worked for local ranches, including Ryan Ranch west of town, and gained experience developing feed that worked for the area's cattle. He learned to speak Spanish from two young boys who came across the border from Mexico to work and send money home to their families. He taught them English in return, said Robbin. Given his rich ranching background, when looking for his next move in life he decided to open up a local feed store.

"'I know what cattle need. I know how to make it,'" Robbin recalled her father saying. "So that's what he did."

Herb made and sold mineral for cattle and was well known for his recipes and formulas, crafting tailor-made mineral and feed and selling to people all over, from Canada to New Mexico to East Texas. He also worked to share his knowledge with doctors, universities and associations.

He was born in 1938 on the heels of the Great Depression, an experience which helped shape him, said Robbin. Herb was good at fixing and making things and diversified his business throughout the years, fabricating gates and feed troughs and offering a wall full of tack, or supplies. He was well known for his reasonable prices.

"He did not believe in marking anything up any higher than what it needed to be," said Robbin.

"He [was] in the business to make money, but also understood that a lot of these ranchers, they didn't make a lot of money, and he wanted to keep them in business."

Marfa, which was once home to a number of animal feed stores, now has just one: Livingston's. Robbin, who lives in Missouri, said she would have kept Surber Ade open if the business hadn't dwindled so much due to fewer cattle ranches operating in the area. The coronavirus pandemic also further complicated the business with supply chain delays, she said.

"Back in the day, there were so many ranches, every piece of ground in town was a ranch. He did really good for a really long time and then as one generation of rancher passed down to his son, that one was like, 'I don't want to do this, it's too hard.' So then they'd sell that ranch to some rich person from California or San Antonio or wherever," said Robbin.

Herb was eager to lend a hand to anyone in the local community who needed to borrow a trailer, truck, forklift or any other equipment from him, and even gave out loans and free feed, saying, "Merry Christmas," no matter the time of year. He'd accept deliveries at Surber Ade for people because he had a dock. In return, he'd be gifted a pie or loaf of banana bread, being known for his sweet tooth.

"He was a very generous man," said Robbin. "And not everybody paid him back, and not everybody returned everything in the condition that he lent it out in."

When a bad drought caused a lot of ranchers to sell their land and move on from the area, her father encouraged one man to stick with it and supplied him with free feed for three years.

"He kept that man in business. And he still has cattle," said Robbin. "That's how he was"

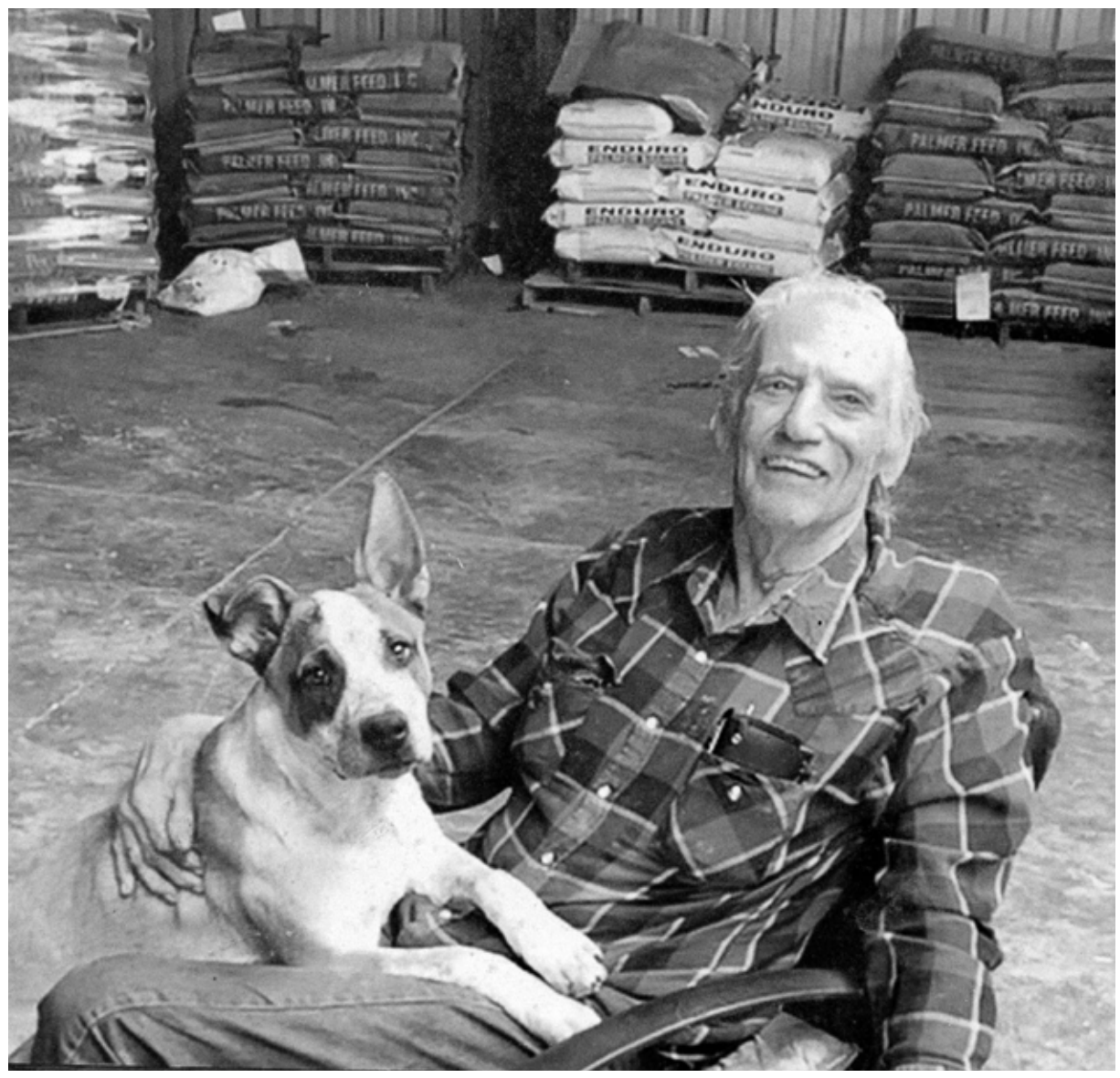


Photo courtesy of Robbin Surber Myers

Herb Surber at Surber Ade Feed Store in Marfa.

James Spriggs, 76, was more than just a customer of Herb's for 30 years — he was also a close friend. He spent holidays like Thanksgiving with the Surber family, and Herb would come help his wife during calf birthing season if he was out of town. He and Herb lost their wives within a year of each other.

Spriggs said operations like Surber Ade — where the owner would offer special deals for his customers — are now few and far between. Herb will be sorely missed, he said, and there is no one to take his place.

"He was just one of those [people] that was concerned about the community and took care of his customers," said Spriggs. "The mom and pop operations have gone by the wayside over the years, there's hardly any of us that have been able to survive. Kind of like ranches in general."

Spriggs said unlike the big box stores like Tractor Supply and Walmart, Surber Ade was more affordable and friendly and collaborative, with people dropping in to talk, ask questions and compare notes on things.

"A lot of us that are smaller operations could stay in business with people like Herb because he always treated you a little more fairly and didn't have any stockholders to pay off or anything like that," said Spriggs.

Robbin said Herb's goal after selling Surber Ade was to purchase some land off of Casa Piedra Road and make a birder's haven, planting milo and building a couple of tiny homes for people to come stay and appreciate the wildlife of the Big Bend.

"That was going to be his next big adventure, to sell this place and open up where people could go walk and walk through nature and see birds," said Robbin.

For Spriggs, his dear friend's passing represents the sunsetting of a certain breed of Big Bend character — cowboys with grit and honesty, as many of their kind have left the cattle ranching industry for greener pastures.

"There just aren't any cowboys left out here," said Spriggs. "The droughts have run them all off. They've had to go to driving trucks and working in the oil patch, and it's just a dying breed and Herb was one of the real stars."

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Tours last 2½—3 hours and cover 2 miles of walking.
Tickets are required.

The **John Chamberlain Building** in downtown Marfa is free to the public 9 A.M. to 5 P.M.

Reservations are encouraged and capacity is limited.
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For tickets and tour information, visit chinati.org.

COALICIÓN REPRODUCTIVA DEL BIG BEND
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Borderlands Research Institute hosts Trans-Pecos Wildlife Conference for first time in 6 years

By MARY CANTRELL
mkcantrell@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — Landowners, natural resource professionals, wildlife enthusiasts and more met last week for the Trans-Pecos Wildlife Conference at Sul Ross State University, co-hosted by the Borderlands Research Institute (BRI), Texas Wildlife Association and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD).

The conference, which occurs irregularly and last took place in 2016, was originally founded over 20 years ago with the goal of educating private landowners and the general public on the need for natural resource management for the Big Bend region. This year's programming included a full day of presentations followed by a day of field trips to ranches in the Marfa and Fort Davis areas for demonstrations of grassland and riparian restoration.

Over 150 people — including West Texans as well as visitors from Mexico, Arizona and East Texas — attended the first, lecture-focused day, with fewer returning the following day for excursions onto local ranches. Topics covered were diverse, ranging from how to live with bears in West Texas — including best practices for securing trash — to antler progression in mule deer and pronghorn restoration updates to conservation of grassland bird species, and how to raise bird-friendly beef.

"Historically, most of the interest for our conference stems from game animals. We had some great presentations on nongame topics like bird diversity, raptor behaviors and ecotourism. The audience really enjoyed those presentations, which is an indicator of shifting interests that our audience has," said Dr. Louis Harveson, founder and director of the BRI.

The conference sought to make attendees aware of the multitude of cost-share opportunities offered by entities such as TPWD and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for both small and large landowners looking to implement conservation-focused land and wildlife management strategies on their property. Ongoing environmental challenges faced by the region — such as rising populations of invasive aoudad and their role in spreading disease to bighorn sheep as well as Chronic Wasting Disease, drought and land fragmentation — were also touched on. Land fragmentation refers to the parceling out of relatively small acreages, a practice that is ultimately more threatening to species and habitat management than larger ranches, per organizers.

"We do our best to make sure the information we share includes the newest scientific information that is available, whether that is updates on the latest techniques to combat brush encroachment, modifying your management plan during drought, or recent updates on wildlife disease issues," said Harveson.

Madge Lindsay, vice president of the Trans-Pecos Bird Conservation group based in Fort Davis, a three-year-old organization, had a booth at the conference and was sharing pamphlets on the area's bird species, such as the Montezuma Quail, with passersby. Trans-Pecos Bird Conservation hosts the biennial hummingbird festival in Fort Davis to celebrate the many species of hummingbirds in the Davis Mountains and recently announced the dates for next year's festival — August 17-20, 2023. The organization also helps link up landowners who want to build bird habitats on their property with potential funding sources, said Lindsay.



Photo courtesy Borderlands Research Institute

Trans Pecos Wildlife Conference attendees visited local ranches last week to view and discuss successful riparian and grassland restoration efforts.

"We wanted to have an active bird conservation organization so we can get information not only to people coming here, but also to people that are on the ranch, who want to start a hummingbird garden, are going to improve their habitat or put in a nice water feature for birds. As it dries out, we're gonna need more and more people doing that," said Lindsay.

Rachael Connally, who has been working as Presidio County's Wildlife Biologist for TPWD for over two years, said the conference offered a valuable chance to share information across entities and further connect with local landowners.

"I do think it's nice to be able to all get together," said Connally. "Not only just us as professionals, but also with landowners, and then just people in general, in the public, to come in and see what is going on."

Connally and her fellow county-specific wildlife biologists work with private landowners, helping them understand which wildlife species inhabit their property, what their habitats are and how to achieve their conservation goals — how to attract more pronghorn onto their ranch, for example. Through their Landowner Incentive Program (LIP), TPWD provides funding for landowners for certain habitat work, including riparian restoration and more. Connally, in addition to working closely with landowners, performs regular surveys of pronghorn, mule deer, quail, dove and Texas horned lizards.

She said right now, TPWD is primarily focused on helping conserve the Marfa grasslands and areas of riparian habitat along Alamito Creek. And while she works with a number of landowners in those areas, she is always open to establishing more relationships.

"If there's particular parts of the county that are identified as good target areas where the department would like to do some kind of restoration, we may reach out to landowners and say, 'Hey, you know, this really important part of Alamito Creek is on your property, and we're kind of trying to do some restoration. Would you be interested in working with us?'" said Connally.

Connally said TPWD is always gathering data on wildlife sightings and asks Presidio County residents to report bear and mountain lion sightings to her via email rachael.connally@tpwd.texas.gov or by calling 432-244-8121.

Practical how-to first day presentations on fencing and desert riparian restoration, which has the potential to increase groundwater recharge and preserve bird habitat, prepped audiences for what they would witness in person on the second day of the conference. Harveson said the opportunity to leave the conference room and get out onto local lands to see progress updates from ranchers who are on the ground working toward various conservation goals is a special part of the event.

"It allows us to show prescriptions that work and even those that don't work. Ultimately, we want a dialogue with the land owner/manager, so that we can all learn from one another," said Harveson. "We rely on them for clean air and clean water and to provide food, cover and water for the wildlife we love, and they rely on us for information to manage those resources successfully."

Many striking statistics were shared at the conference, including how 2.2 million acres of land in Texas was converted away from agricultural use from 1997 to 2014, and 1.2 million acres converted in just the last five years. Harveson said as Texans have shifted away from rural life, the majority now living in urban areas, and with the state's population increasing, land use is rapidly changing.

"This disconnection has serious implications on how Texans value the wild things and wild places of Texas. This demographic shift can also have serious implications on how Texans vote about natural resource issues," said Harveson. "If Texans don't value dark skies, scenic vistas, ranching heritage and wildlife habitat, then the beauty, splendor and quaintness of the Big Bend region, and all of rural Texas, is vulnerable."

THE SENTINEL

DRAWING OF THE WEEK



Vanessa Diaz
Oil Pastel

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Isaiah 41:10

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Sudoku & Crossword puzzles:

UNIVERSAL Sudoku Puzzle

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

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

7727

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution from last week's puzzle:

SOLUTION:

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

7718

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FOR ADVERTISING RATES

Universal Crossword

Edited by David Steinberg August 8, 2022

ACROSS
1 Play a guitar lightly
6 Freeway exit
10 Unit of power
14 Rub out
15 Youngest daughter of Tsar Nicholas II
17 Type of naval ship in "Top Gun"
19 Marie Curie's title: Abbr.
20 Ignited
21 Accumulate, as expenses
22 Quarter-back's shout before long pass
25 2021 award for Simone Biles
26 What a paper jam may cause
31 I, for Aristotle
32 Something borrowed
33 Item lugged by a roadie
36 Sticky note
39 Certain hockey or soccer player
41 Pigpen
42 Speaker's platform
45 Pepsi Max, for one
46 Bram Stoker or Stephen King, e.g.
50 Old-timey wizard
53 Was jealous of
54 Toad sound
56 Text paired with "thx"
57 "How cute!"
60 Railroad container for perishables
65 Out of it
66 Stove-top/ oven combo
67 Prankster in "The Simpsons"
68 Vehicle with treads
69 Preadoles-cent

DOWN
1 Fabric-to-fabric border
2 Cut back a little
3 Like many valuable stamps
4 School near UCLA
5 Red wine that lost market share after "Sideways"
6 Roof support
7 Industrious insect
8 Computer since 1984
9 Ad Council spot, for short
10 Surname of studio co-founders Harry, Albert, Sam and Jack
11 Japanese rival of Nike
12 Secure with ropes
13 Dawdle
16 Prefix for "color" or "cycle"
18 ___-de-camp
22 Swarming pest
23 Long fish jellied in England
24 Upside
26 Domino spots
27 Cube ___ (3, for 27)
28 Teeny
29 Use for an old T-shirt
30 Yoko heard on "Revolution 9"
33 Scads
34 5,280 feet
35 Bulbous-bottomed fruit
37 Nuptial agreement
38 Goo from coal
40 LSD
43 Fury
44 Thor, to Odin
46 Media baron who inspired "Citizen Kane"
47 Motor home campsite
48 Droop like a daisy
49 Word after "last" or "summer"
50 Elusive fast-food pork sandwich
51 Athletic stadium
52 Succeed at a high level
55 Snakebite ___ (hiker's safety set)
57 Benzoyl peroxide target
58 Earnings per hour
59 Bird on South Carolina's quarter
61 Home to your microbiome
62 Clean Air Act org.
63 Oregon senator Wyden
64 Like carpaccio or ceviche

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

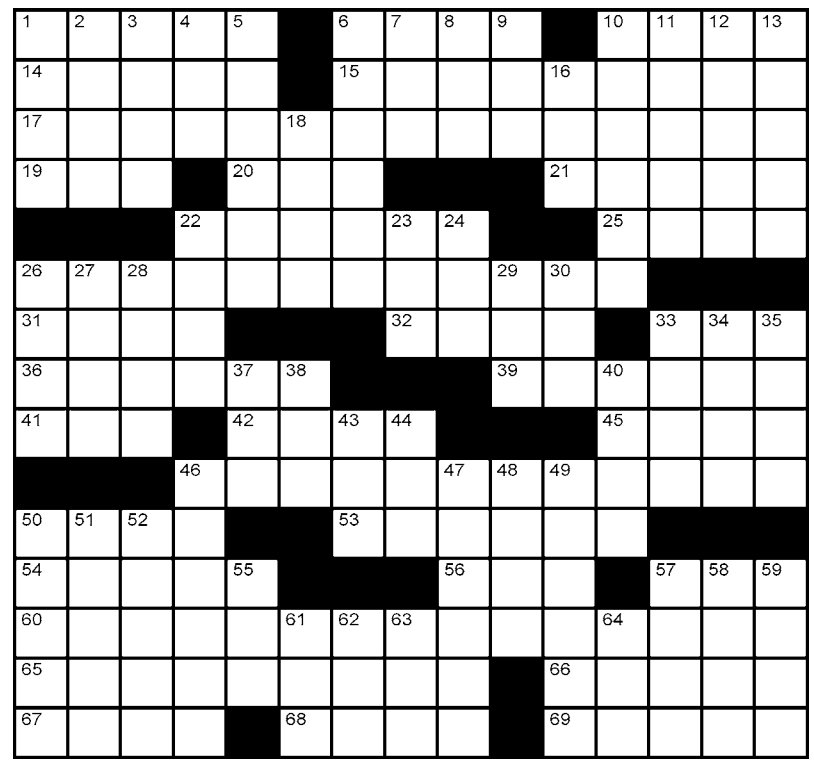
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P	I	E	R	R	E	V	I	E	W	S	■	U	S	A
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8/7

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8/8

Five TimeRs Club *by Jon Pennington*



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MARFA SHORTHORNS SPORTS CALENDAR

THU - SAT, AUG 11 - 13: Varsity Volleyball Tournament at Wink
FRI, AUG 12: Football Scrimmage in Grandfalls
MON, AUG 15: Meet the Shorthorns at Martin Field, 6:30 pm
TUE, AUG 16: Volleyball vs Fot Hancock/Fort Stockton in Marfa
WED, AUG 17: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL!!



Photos courtesy of Marfa Publi Library

From left to right: Summer Reading program winners Romeo Acosta-Fuentes, Cy Watts, and Giovanni Van Ettan.

Marfa Public Library announces Summer Reading contest winners

By BIG BEND SENTINEL

MARFA — Marfa Public Library this week announced the winners of its Summer Reading program, which was themed "All About for Reading" to invoke train adventures.

The winners are:
Romeo Acosta-Fuentes (Pre-K) (2 years old)
Cy Watts (Children's) (8 years old)
Giovanni Van Etten (Tween) (10 years old)
Dolores Maxwell (Teen) (15 years old)
Harrison Smith (Adult)

Participants earned points by reading and logging their progress — books, audiobooks, graphic novels and articles all counted, and being read to also counted for young children. Kids under 18 won a movie night in the library's theater, where they get to choose the movie, date and guests while the library will provide snacks. The adult winner has won a Vitamix blender.

22nd Annual Big Bend Ranch Rodeo to be held next weekend in Alpine

By SAM KARAS
sam@bigbendsentinel.com

ALPINE — This weekend, dust will rise again in the ring at the S.A.L.E. Arena in Alpine. Working cowboys from all over the Southwest will showcase their skills in events like cattle sorting, wild cow milking and ranch bronc riding. Gates open for ticket sales both Friday and Saturday nights at 5:30 p.m. for dudes and cowpokes alike hoping for a prime seat in the ring.

Self-proclaimed "head cat wrangler" Mattie Sargent explained that what makes Alpine's rodeo special is its partnership with the Working Ranch Cowboys Association (WRCA). Unlike pro rodeo events, WRCA competitors showcase skills they use in everyday life. "Our competitors have to prove that they work on a ranch somewhere to be a member of the WRCA," she explained. Many of the events require them to use the same saddles and gear they use every day, rather than investing in glitzy show tack.

Sargent serves as the point person for the Big Bend Ranch Rodeo Committee, which has hosted the event for over two decades. In 2020, the group was awarded the WRCA Rodeo of the Year. Allowing working cattlemen and women a place to show off their stuff brings prime family fun to Alpine year after year. "It's got different types of events than what you see in a normal rodeo," she said. "It gets you as close to watching cowboys on a ranch as you can without actually being on a ranch."

This weekend's festivities will also include a youth-led event, held at 2 p.m. on Saturday. John and Mary Ann Luedecke coordinate the Youth Working Cow Horse competition, a Ranch Horse Association of America (RHAA) event. "We started it for the ranch teams that were entered, to be able to bring their kids and have them have something to do," John Luedecke explained. The youngsters will compete in more or less the same events as the adults, with two brackets split between competitors under 12 and ages 13-17.

Ticket sales from the Big Bend Ranch Rodeo Committee benefit the Sul Ross Rodeo Team, nine-time national championship winners and the birthplace of the National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association. Next weekend's event will take place on the Sul Ross Rodeo Team's turf, with concessions provided by the SRSU Meat Lab and Wildlife Club. Stock for the competition has been provided by a number of local ranchers, including the Mellards, the Dyers and the Means.

Tickets for the rodeo will only be available the night of each event, starting at 5:30 p.m. for the 7 p.m. performances on Friday and Saturday. Children 12 and under get in free; tickets for everyone else are $10 a head. To pitch in to the "Buy a Cowboy a Meal" program providing catering for competitors, you can make a donation in person at Big Bend Saddlery and OutWest Feed or mail one in to Big Bend Ranch Rodeo, PO Box 2140, Alpine, TX, 79831.

The S.A.L.E. Arena is located just east of Alpine on Highway 90, on the same strip as the Sul Ross Meat Lab and the College of Natural and Agricultural Resources.

35th Marfa Lights Festival Sept. 2-4

MARFA — The Marfa Chamber of Commerce has confirmed that the 35th Anniversary Marfa Lights Festival will take place Friday, September 2, through Sunday, September 4, 2022, at the Presidio County Courthouse in Marfa, Texas. All events are free and open to everyone.

The Marfa Lights Festival will kick off with food and business vendors opening at noon on Friday, September 2. Live music will begin in the evening with sets by Primo y Beebe, Hector y su Grupo Ambicion, both of Marfa, culminating in a performance by Destino Band of Midland, Texas, who continue celebrating the band's 40th anniversary in Marfa.

Saturday, September 3, begins at 10 a.m. with a parade through downtown Marfa, led by Grand Marshall Jo Ann Rodriguez Betancourt, Jumano Nation of Texas tribal chair. Marfa is the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Jumano Nation, Lipan Apache and Mescalero Apache past and present. Betancourt will be joined by those with Jumano and Lipan Apache ancestry and welcomes all who identify as Indigenous to march with her to lead the parade.

Entertainment continues after the parade with a performance by Presidio's Mariachi Santa Cruz. Later, Marfa Live Arts will present an original play set in 1920s Marfa, "Juice Joint Criminals," written for the occasion by Sul Ross student Caitlynn Almance. In the evening, music will continue with Marfa's own Grand Tourists and La Reinas de la Noche and Alpine's Puro Party Allstarz. The evening will cap off with a performance by the weekend's headliners Erick y su Grupo Massore of San Antonio, Texas.

Sunday, September 4, is Family Day, and will kick off with Zumba at the courthouse led by Elizabeth Gutierrez of Marfa, Jessica Carrasco Meador of San Antonio, Angela De Valle of Presidio and Keila Vargas of Alpine. Marfa ISD's Ballet Folklorico will be the weekend's final performers at the county courthouse.

Ballroom Marfa will close out Marfa Lights Festival weekend with the West Texas premiere of MXTX: A Cross Border Exchange at the USO Hall, a collaboration of 10 musicians from across Texas and Mexico.

The Marfa Chamber of Commerce is accepting applications for vendors and parade participants. For more information, please visit marfachamberofcommerce.org or email marfachamberofcommerce@gmail.com.

Future announcements will be made through the Marfa Chamber of Commerce social media pages and on their website.



Photo by Sarah M. Vasquez

Marfa Lights, 2021.

OBITUARY



Plumbley

Terrill W. Plumbley, 64, passed away on October, 13, 2021, at his home in Marfa, Texas.

Terrill was born on March 4, 1957, in Raymondville, Texas. Terrill was raised in Marfa by his mother Patricia and stepfather Billy Bob Plumbley, along with his father James McDonald. He graduated from Marfa High School and then served in the U.S. Army. After leaving the Army, he built a home full of laughter in both Marfa and Austin, Texas.

He is survived by his sons, Terrill Flen (Sophie) and Neil; former spouse Lucia (Julio); brothers William Lynn) and Larry (Cathy); and sister Lynnetta. He was a devoted grandfather to Kaylee and Alejandro, whom he cared for deeply. He is also survived by many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends who were part of his family. We all love and miss him.

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Classifieds & public notices

PUBLIC NOTICES

The Marfa Parks and Recreation Board meets every third Thursday of the month at 6:00pm in the Casner Room at City Hall. The public is invited to attend.

The Sul Ross Small Business Development Center will hold office hours in Marfa at the USO on Tuesday, August 23, from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm.

The Sul Ross Development Center is a free resource for small business owners and new entrepreneurs, providing one-on-one business management advising, workshops, and technical assistance.

Contact the Marfa Chamber of Commerce for more information 432-729-4772.

REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS (RFP #2022-002) FOR J.E. GREGG AUDITORIUM PAINTING PROJECT MARFA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Marfa Independent School District ("MISD") is soliciting Competitive Sealed Proposals ("CSPs") for the J.E. Gregg Auditorium Painting Project, as specifically set forth in the CSP package and pursuant to Texas Education Code Section 44.031.

Interested parties must submit their submissions in person to the District Administration Building c/o Oscar Aguero at 400 W. Lincoln St, Marfa, TX 79843, no later than 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 18, 2022. Email and fax submissions will not be accepted.

For any questions, please contact Oscar Aguero, Superintendent at 432-729-5500.

REQUEST FOR COMPETITIVE SEALED PROPOSALS (RFP #2022-003) FOR J.E. GREGG AUDITORIUM CARPET INSTALLATION PROJECT MARFA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Marfa Independent School District ("MISD") is soliciting Competitive Sealed Proposals ("CSPs") for the J.E. Gregg Auditorium Carpet Installation Project, as specifically set forth in the CSP package and pursuant to Texas Education Code Section 44.031.

Interested parties must submit their submissions in person to the District Administration Building c/o Oscar Aguero at 400 W. Lincoln St, Marfa, TX 79843, no later than 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 18, 2022. Email and fax submissions will not be accepted.

For any questions, please contact Oscar Aguero, Superintendent at 432-729-5500.

FOR SALE

FOR SALE

211 State Street – The Sleeping Lion is a prime commercial property located in downtown Fort Davis. With 100 feet of State Street frontage and artisanal touches throughout, this versatile property is essentially a blank canvas for your vision.
Asking $1,500,000

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We are located next to the Family Dollar in Fort Davis.

For any questions about the position give us a call at (432)426-0004 or email us at highlandhereford@gmail.com

JOB OPPORTUNITY

The Presidio County Auditor's Office is accepting applications for an assistant auditor.

This is a part-time position with flexible hours.
Basic office and computer skills are required.

Applications should be submitted to the Presidio County Auditor
by mail to PO Box 423, Marfa, TX 79843;
by email to countyauditor@co.presidio.tx.us ;
or by hand-delivery to the County Auditor's Office, 3rd Floor, County Courthouse, Marfa Texas.

Application forms are available at www.co.presidio.tx.us or by calling 432-729-1990.

The Rio Grande Council of Governments

Regional Services Division, a division of the Rio Grande Council of Governments, announces the following position:

9-1-1/GIS Coordinator

Full-time position
Located in the agency's Satellite Office in **Alpine, TX**

Application and job description available at
http://www.riocog.org/employment/

Closing date: Until filled

FOWLKES CATTLE COMPANY INC. IS NOW TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR CLASS A CDL TRUCK DRIVERS WITH AT LEAST 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE.

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•DENTAL FRONT DESK SUPERVISOR•
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•CQI COORDINATOR•
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Please call Sarah at 432-837-4812 for more information.

Applications may be picked up at 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy Alpine, TX 79830 or call (432) 837-4555.

Please call first before arrival.

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PCHS is seeking a full-time Chief Financial Officer to oversee the financial responsibility of a federally qualified community health center.

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Please call Sarah at 432-837-4812 for more information.

Applications may be picked up at 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy Alpine, TX 79830 or call (432) 837-4555.

Please call first before arrival.

Family Health Service of Alpine • 1605 N. FT. Davis Hwy

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9-1-1/GIS Technician

Part-time position
Located in the agency's Satellite Office in **Presidio, TX**

Application and job description available at
http://www.riocog.org/employment/

Closing date: Until filled

GOVERNMENT CONTACTS

PRESIDIO COUNTY
Judge Cinderela Guevara:
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CITY OF MARFA
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City Hall: (432) 229-3517
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Alpine Mayor Catherine Eaves:
City Hall: (432) 837-3301
Email: mayor.eaves@ci.alpine.tx.us

JEFF DAVIS COUNTY
Judge Curtis Evans: *(432) 426-3968*

FEDERAL:
U.S. Sen. John Cornyn:
(202) 224-2934 (D.C. office)
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LEGAL NOTICES

CAUSE NO. 1995

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE	§	**IN THE COUNTY COURT**
	§	
	§	**SITTING IN PROBATE**
OF	§	
	§	**OF**
FRANCES E. HERNANDEZ, Deceased	§	**PRESIDIO COUNTY, TEXAS**

Notice to Creditors

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Frances E. Hernandez, Deceased, were issued on July 25, 2022, in Docket No. PR-1995 pending in the County Court Sitting in Probate of Presidio County, Texas, to:

ROLANDO HERNANDEZ
c/o Robert E. Steele
P.O. Box 1765
Alpine, TX 79831

All persons having claims against this estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. All persons having claims should address them in care of the representative at the address stated above.

DATED the 8th day of August, 2022.

/s/robertesteele
ROBERT E. STEELE
SBOT: 00794689
ATTORNEY FOR THE EXECUTOR

THE BIG BEND Sentinel

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